BATTLES NEAR AND FAR: A CENTURY OF OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT

THE 2004 CHIEF OF ARMY MILITARY HISTORY CONFERENCE

Edited by
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Preface

Nations have long seen the value of projecting power beyond their own shores, and of influencing events on and off the battlefield at and from a distance. The capacity to deploy a force is only the first of the challenges faced by militaries intent on acquiring expeditionary capabilities, however. Of equal and critical importance is the capacity to maintain those forces beyond the immediate reach of the infrastructure located within one’s national boundaries, to supply and reinforce them, and to maintain their capacity for manoeuvre. Any one of these is difficult; together, they present complex problems of the first magnitude.

To fail in them, moreover, is to risk disaster and even, on occasions, to hazard the safety of the state itself. The Athenian expedition to Syracuse, led by Alcibiades in 415BC, represented the most daring potential strategic stroke of the Peloponnesian War, with the possibility of securing Athenian hegemony through victory and the destruction of Sparta. Its inglorious defeat spelt the beginning of the end of Athenian power in its turn, and the fortunes of the polis never recovered from the blow thus dealt them. Nor did Alcibiades’ hitherto glittering reputation.

The peril and potential of projecting power and deploying forces is thus as old as warfare itself. Though not synonymous with amphibious warfare, necessarily, expeditionary deployments require mastery in two more environments simultaneously, greatly increasing complexity and, in its turn, risk. Phillip II’s great expeditionary Armada of 1588 failed in part because of the operational counter-strokes mounted by the English, but in large part through weather, tides and geography. The disastrous British expedition to Walcheren in 1809 was for a century a by-word for disorganisation and catastrophic failure in such endeavours, until it was eclipsed by the Dardanelles in 1915. Closer to our own times, historians have shown what the commanders at the time knew only too well, that the Allied expedition to begin the reconquest of western Europe on 6 June 1944 hung in the balance, or that at several points the British task force sent to oust the Argentinians from the Falkland Islands in 1982 faced failure, and attendant humiliation for the Thatcher government, but for good fortune and the skill and endeavour of troops and commanders on the ground and at sea.

Major General Julian Thompson, whose paper opens this collection, understands those imperatives only too well, having commanded the 3rd Commando Brigade, Royal Marines during the Falklands campaign itself. Reminding us that the concept
of expeditionary operations and expeditionary forces has passed in and out of favour in modern times, he goes on to identify the key features and characteristics of such operations as well as some of their dangers and pitfalls, before concluding that such operations have always been with us, whatever their label, and are with us still.

Governments have faced the need to raise forces for despatch overseas, in order to meet alliance commitments or through a desire to protect the national interest even when this involves participation in a geographically distant conflict. Such a need has typically faced the western democracies at the outbreak of both world wars, and the United States at that point where it has become involved, in 1917 and 1941 respectively. Ross Mallett’s paper shows how the Australian authorities raised an expeditionary force from scratch in 1914 for limited deployment in the immediate region, alongside the much greater force being raised for service in the main war in Europe. Jennifer Keene essays the measures taken by the US government in 1917, introducing the draft and initiating a field army that would ultimately send some two million Americans into the field by the end of 1918, but which could make little immediate impact on the course of the war in a year of desperate reverses to the Allied cause. Even when forces in being were more than sufficient to meet the needs of the operation concerned, as was the case with the German invasion of Norway in 1940, readiness and the suitability of the forces available for the tasks they faced still presented significant operational challenges, as Adam Claasen demonstrates.

Brian Linn suggests that the willingness of the United States to project force consistently outside the Western hemisphere, beginning with the Spanish-American War in the Philippines in 1899, marks the assertion of an American imperial predisposition, one that leads inexorably to the doctrine of ‘pre-emption’ enunciated by the Bush administration as a keystone of the war on terror. The United States has behaved imperially even when it has thought and said otherwise, and policy in the American present in fact is the legacy of events that stretch well back into the American past.

From the Syracuse expedition in classical times to the Fourth Afghan War in 2001, expeditionary forces have required the panoply of maritime forces and functions in order to achieve their objectives. In the 20th century—which is the focus of this collection—they have been almost as reliant upon airpower as well. Two distinguished Australian students of their respective services, James Goldrick and Alan Stephens, in turn look at the supporting and crucial enabling roles that maritime and air power have played in force deployment. The integration of land, air and maritime capabilities has long been intrinsic to the effectiveness of the US Marine Corps and its successful discharge of its roles and missions, but as Donald Bittner makes clear, the distinction between ‘expeditionary’ and ‘amphibious’ was a real and important one in Marine doctrine and conceptions of its function early in the 20th century. Marines formed part of the American Expeditionary Force in 1917-1918, fighting as a conventional ground force, but during the interwar period the doctrine, techniques and methods that were
central to the Marines’ conduct of the Pacific War evolved and were thought through.
The two traditions have recombined, Bittner argues, in the aftermath of Vietnam and
in the light of new challenges and missions beginning in the 1990s.

It is increasingly commonplace to observe that the administrative staff functions
of armies have for too long been downplayed in much historical writing, centre-stage
being given to the more glamorous, and easier to understand, operational/tactical
dimensions of a campaign or a battle. But as Clausewitz observed, ‘There is nothing
more common than to find considerations of supply affecting the strategic lines of a
campaign and a war’; to put it another way, as George S. Patton did, ‘the officer who
doesn’t know his communications and supply as well as his tactics is totally useless’.
The Athenians were neither the first, nor the last, to forget this. Ian Brown underlines
all of these points in his discussion of the logistics of the British Expeditionary Force in
1914-1915. Historians are now arguing that the disasters of 1916 and 1917 were part of
the operational learning curve that the British Army embarked on at the war’s beginning,
and must be understood in those terms in assessing the war’s overall outcome; equally,
the logistic successes that underpinned the ‘Hundred Days’ in the last months of the
war on the Western Front had their foundations in decisions taken in the war’s opening
year. Ian Speller’s treatment of logistic issues in the Falklands underpins some of the
strictures offered by Julian Thompson from direct experience of command in that theatre.
Albert Palazzo, in assessing the logistic effort behind Australia’s recent deployment to
Iraq, notes both the Australian Defence Force’s capacity to rise to the logistic occasion,
while emphasising the continuing tradition of logistic dependency in deployments that
raises interesting questions about future independence of action and decision-making.

This collection is comparative by implication, in that the individual papers invite us
to consider a variety of experiences in time and place. John Blaxland’s chapter draws an
overt comparison between Canada and Australia, cognate case studies united by a shared
history, even though one that has diverted noticeably in the course of the Cold War. He
suggests that strategically the two Dominions may see their interests and activities begin
to reconverge in the disordered post-Cold War world, and that their armed forces may
again find themselves operating together in a manner reminiscent of earlier experiences.
An obvious vehicle in this regard is the range of peacekeeping, peace support and
peace enforcement operations that both the Australian and Canadian armed forces have
increasingly engaged in during the 1990s, and which constitute another variation on the
theme of force deployment. Bob Breen’s chapter compares the Australian deployments
to Somalia and Bougainville at opposite ends of the decade, and finds that many of the
problems and shortcomings revealed by the deployment of the 1RAR battalion group
to east Africa reasserted themselves during the more limited operation within our
immediate region. David Kilcullen likewise argues that the deployment of INTERFET
to East Timor, widely hailed as a successful, even a model, multi-national operation
within the region, nonetheless revealed some serious problems that might have had a
greater immediate impact had the deployment faced more concerted opposition or been conducted at a higher level of operational intensity.

The bulk of this collection reflects a ready, and natural, assumption that deployments are operational in nature, whether for the purposes of warfighting, peace-enforcement or other related activities. Nicholas Floyd’s chapter deals with the deployment of an Australian force in support of diplomatic ends, to New Caledonia in 1940, and helps to underpin another aspect of the subject that is both topical and worth bearing in mind: the capacity to deploy and sustain forces in war can also provide critical support for humanitarian operations in the face of widespread natural disaster such as the tsunami relief effort at the beginning of 2005. As part of its assistance effort, the United States deployed the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group and an attendant Marine expeditionary group to deliver relief aid in a manner and with a reach, carrying capacity and timeliness available to no non-governmental or other aid agency anywhere in the world.

Francis Fukuyama’s notion of the ‘end of history’ may prove less durable than an equally significant insight: that technological innovation and the process of globalisation spells the ‘end of geography’, with all that this implies in defence terms for a country, like Australia, where geography has often shaped strategic policy. In a trenchantly argued chapter, Michael Evans places the broad issues encompassed in the rest of this volume into the specific context of Australian strategic and security policy. His observation, borrowing from Theodore Zeldin, that visions of the future must be firmly grounded in clear and honest visions of the past provides a sterling endorsement for a collection such as this, and for the renewed and continuing study of the history of war and the profession of arms by those claiming membership of it.

Most of these essays derive from papers delivered at the Chief of Army’s Military History Conference held in October 2004. Once again we are grateful to Roger Lee and his staff at the Army History Unit, for their efforts in helping to bring the conference to a successful conclusion, to the authors of these essays for their cooperation, and to Margaret McNally, without whom this volume would not appear.

Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey
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Lieutenant General Peter Leahy was appointed Chief of Army in June 2002. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1974, and was posted to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. From 1987 to 1990 he was the Australian Exchange Officer at the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, where he instructed in Joint and Combined Operations and Counter-Revolutionary Warfare and completed a Master of Military Arts and Science degree. For his services as an instructor he was awarded the US Army Meritorious Service Medal. In 1993 he was Military Assistant to the Chief of the General Staff, and in 1994-5 he was Director of Army Research. In 1997 he was promoted to Brigadier and posted as Commander of the 3rd Brigade, the Australian Defence Force’s Ready Deployment Force, and in 1999 he was appointed Chief of Staff at Headquarters Australian Theatre. He is a graduate of the Australian Army Command and Staff College, the United States Command and General Staff College, the British Higher Command and Staff Course, and is a Fellow of the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies.

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Ross Mallett holds degrees from University of Melbourne and Monash University, and completed a Master of Arts (Research) at University College, ADFA, on “Military Technology and the Australian Army in the First World War”. He works as a software engineer for Search Software America, and is completing a PhD on the logistics of the Southwest Pacific campaigns of 1943-45.
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Major General Julian Thompson served for 34 years in the Royal Marines including in the Falklands War of 1982, in which his brigade carried out the initial landings and fought the majority of the land battles. His responsibilities in his last tour in the armed services involved command and training of the Special Forces responsible for the United Kingdom’s response to maritime terrorism. Since retiring he has been a consultant advising on crisis management and terrorism, and is a visiting professor at the Department of War Studies, King’s College, London. A broadcaster and writer on defence matters, he has published eight books.
Introduction

Lieutenant General Peter Leahy

In 1902, when Australia was but one year old as a nation, there were already several thousand young Australians overseas on military service in South Africa. Ninety years ago, October 1914, Australia despatched 20,000 men of the first Australian Imperial Force to Europe to join their Empire colleagues in resisting German expansionism. The first applications of Australia’s military strength thus involved combat soldiers their transport, combat support and supply thousands of kilometres away from Australian territory. And that remains the enduring experience of the Australian Army since those early years. The Second World War, Korea and Vietnam were all fought on someone else’s territory, not Australia’s.

The Army exists to defend Australia’s territorial sovereignty and to assist Government in the pursuit of Australia’s national interests. With the possible exception of 1942, the Army has never had to defend Australia’s sovereignty—practically all our military experience has been in pursuit of Australia’s national interests, not on our territory but overseas.

We went to Europe in 1914, not because Australian sovereign territory was threatened but because the Empire of which we were part felt its interests were threatened. I find it puzzling that many depict this as fighting ‘other people’s wars’. That is ahistorical in the extreme. It applies the mores of contemporary Australia to a vastly different era.

The links between Australia and the Empire were deep and profound. To most Australians of that time our vital interests were threatened by Prussian militarism. It constituted a dire threat to a global system into which we were intimately integrated. I find very persuasive the thesis of Phillip Bobbitt to the effect that the war which broke out in 1914 only concluded in 1990 with the fall of the Soviet Union. He termed this the ‘Long War.’ At issue in this long global conflict which flared and raged over most of the last century was whether, communism, fascism or liberal parliamentarianism could coexist.

Viewed in that way it was unthinkable that Australia would not, on every occasion that it was required, support the forces of liberal democracy against its peer competitor. To paraphrase our Prime Minister, Australia has been confronted from time to time with choices between its history and values and its geography. Often the core values
governing the international system have been threatened and we have unfailingly been willing to venture afield to defend those values.

It was in that context that we went back to Europe in 1939 for essentially the same reasons: neither the Germans nor the Italians had territorial designs on mainland Australia but British—and therefore Australian—interests were again under threat.

Korea and Vietnam again were wars in which national sovereignty or national survival was not the issue. Given this background of experience, you would expect that the Australian Army of today would be well prepared to meet the challenges of long range deployments; you would expect us to be well resourced with appropriate equipment, doctrine and skills. If you do think that, then I am sorry to have to advise that you are mistaken. But, unlike in the past, we are now working on the problem.

Through the ongoing development of concepts such as MOLE (Manoeuvre Operations in the Littoral Environment), we are working to ensure that we break this cycle of unpreparedness and poor performance, correct the problems, and become better trained, structured and equipped. Note that Australia is an island.

The answers to the questions of why we have been ill-prepared in the past are not complicated or difficult. There are two and they are related. The first is, obviously, such skills are very expensive to develop and maintain. The second answer is that many influential parts of the Australian community had (and still have) differing views on the ‘proper’ role of the Army. Many in our community did not and do not understand or support the retention of any capability that they perceive to be offensive or aggressive. In this context I recall the debates in the early 1980s about the need for an aircraft carrier.

In terms of complexity, the Second World War provides us with the best indication of the potential range of skills needed to sustain deployed operations. The Army of 1943 needed specialist skills and equipments ranging from Port Operating Companies, bulk handling and transport capabilities, second and third line repair facilities and a myriad other, mainly logistics, skills. The requirement list is broadly extant today.

The other issue, general misunderstanding of the role and capability of the Army in the community as a whole, is also nothing new. Having the capability to project force does not mean that it will be used for aggressive purpose. There will always be instances though, both in direct defence of sovereignty situations and in pursuit of national interests, where military force needs to be deployed overseas. The recent peace operations in East Timor and the South West Pacific are cases in point.

This type of debate about where Australian forces should be used caused long delays in the passage of the first Defence Act in 1904 and was repeated in the 1930s debates over the ‘true’ role for the Army in national defence. At a more sophisticated level, the same issues crystallised in more recent years into a debate over which military capabilities were more relevant to ‘defence of Australia’, which had priority, and those more relevant to overseas deployment, which did not.
INTRODUCTION

While ultimately successful, we did experience difficulties in supporting and sustaining such recent peace operations as Somalia and East Timor due to inadequate capabilities in some critical areas. Fortunately, neither of these examples involved really serious fighting: but who can say what the outcome would have been had the militias put up serious resistance. These were not ‘offensive’ operations, yet the lack of appropriate capability threatened their success. I hope that with the development of operational concepts such as MOLE, this type of ‘intention based’ analysis is banished from the capability acquisition process for ever.

There is a third difficulty faced by the Army in acquiring and retaining a distant deployment capability—an obvious one when you think about it. The Army cannot deploy without the assistance of the other two Services. And these Services also need to be equipped for the role. The Navy has to transport, supply and frequently support the ground troops, as well as its numerous other tasks. A Navy focussed on coastal defence and harbour protection would be incapable of conducting and protecting an overseas deployment, irrespective of the Army’s own level of capability. The Air Force has to protect both the supply tail, the entry point and provide support over the battle area, in addition to its standard air superiority and interdiction roles. It could not do this if it was equipped solely with short range interceptors. The irony, of course, is that in a period of financial restraint, the three Services frequently have to compete against each other for the resources to acquire the capability to support each other. The inevitable outcome of such a process is that somewhere there is a deficiency in capability.

These problems are not unique to Australia nor are they new. I plan to use this conference, and the experience and insight from our panel of international experts, to examine these problems and see how others have dealt with them. The United States Army, the United States Marine Corps and British Army have arrived at remarkably similar conclusions about the role of land forces in the disaggregated global political order created by rapidly accelerating globalisation in the wake of collapse of the Soviet Union. I hope we will discover whether there are common consequences to inadequacies in specific capabilities and whether there are solutions, or even potential solutions, that the Australian Army can consider as it contemplates, as so often in the past, the possibility of battles near and far.
Expeditionary Forces and Expeditionary Warfare: Major Themes and Issues

Julian Thompson

In the years following the Second World War the word ‘expeditionary’ was used less and less frequently. It was a commonplace expression in the past. In the First World War the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) fought in France and Flanders; an American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France; the Australian, New Zealand, and British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force landed at Gallipoli; as did a French Expeditionary Corps. In the Second World War the BEF served in France and Belgium in 1940, and a French Expeditionary Corps participated in the Italian 1943-45 campaign. Perhaps to avoid the connection the acronym BEF had with their defeat in 1940, the British Army in North-West Europe in 1944-45 eventually came to be known as British Liberation Army, BLA for short, which the more cynical soldiers changed to ‘Burma Looms Ahead’, in recognition of their next possible task. The French forces in Indo-China from 1945 to 1954 were titled the French Far East Expeditionary Corps. It is at about this point that the word begins to fall out of favour.

Although the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade of the US Marines landed at Da Nang in Vietnam on 8 March 1965, General Westmoreland told them to change the name as the word expeditionary was unpalatable to the Vietnamese because of its French colonial association. So it was the III Marine Amphibious Force (MAF) that assumed control of Marine activities in Vietnam on 7 May 1965. Those who worked alongside the United States Marine Corps in the 1970s encountered Marine Amphibious Units, Marine Amphibious Brigades, and Marine Amphibious Forces (MAUs, MABs and MAFs).

Certainly one did not meet the word ‘expeditionary’ in the context of NATO or SEATO planning. As far as NATO was concerned, military activity outside its collective boundaries was demurely labelled ‘out of area operations’. There were, of course, plenty of ‘out of area operations’ involving NATO members, notably the United States and the British, in, for example, Vietnam, Malaya, and in too many other places to enumerate here, but as far as I can ascertain, none of these ventures were labelled ‘expeditions’.
The end of the Cold War changed all that. The safe assumptions that influenced Western Europe and the United States planning for so many years disappeared; the known enemy, with known capability, known tactics, and known objectives suddenly faded out. Like a row of figure targets on the rifle range, the Soviet formations stacked up against the west, dropped behind the parapet. With them went the ‘bean counting’ approach to planning that the Cold War engendered; certainly in the United Kingdom. The thought process ‘they’ve got that, so if we got this, we’ll be all right’ was no longer applicable. Although this description may appear to be a caricature, like all caricatures it contained more than a grain of truth. As an aside, it was easier to persuade politicians to sign up to defence budgets when you could point to those metaphorical figure targets, and say ‘we need this, this and this’, than it is now when the enemy is not so clearly defined.

The British were treated to a foretaste of the Post-Cold War world seven years before the Berlin Wall came down, in 1982 in the Falklands. Treasury cuts in Whitehall over the years had resulted reductions in the United Kingdom’s defence capability that made this expedition something of a ‘come as you are party’, and a close run thing indeed. But afterwards the British Politico-Military Establishment treated the Falklands War as an aberration, and the age-old cry of ‘now we can get back to proper soldiering, old boy, it will never happen again’ was on the lips of many senior folk.

Some of us got the impression that acknowledging that the United Kingdom’s defence posture should be configured for the unexpected was inconvenient, and distracted from the ‘real war’. Indeed if taken seriously, preparation and diversion of defence resources for expeditionary warfare could have threatened the existence of the jewel in the British defence crown: the four armoured divisions stationed in Germany and the agreeable life-style that went with serving there. A similar mindset also applied to the Royal Air Force. I mention this merely to underline how attitudes in the United Kingdom have changed in the course of some fourteen years; although not completely in some circles. A leading British air power commentator writing about the air warfare requirement as recently as the year 2000, dismissed the air war in the Falklands War as an anachronism.

In the United States, in the aftermath of Vietnam, ‘expeditions’ were looked upon with disfavour. Although before the end of the Cold War the United States intervened in Beirut in 1982, in Grenada in 1983, and in Panama in 1989, all expeditionary forays, and the latter two a throwback to the first half of the last century, when expeditionary operations, especially by the USMC in America’s back yard, were commonplace. The word expeditionary began to make a come-back when the USMC renamed their units and formations, Marine Expeditionary Units, Marine Expeditionary Brigades and Marine Expeditionary Forces, MEUs, MEBs and MEFs.

The huge changes in the world since the end of the Cold War really became apparent when Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990, and we got pictures from the Iraqi desert in 1991 that would have been unthinkable to most people in the United Kingdom, and indeed in the USA, Western Europe and Australia, right up to the time the Wall came down. We were to see more of such scenes round the world.

In the southern hemisphere, who in Australia would have forecast the Australian-led South Pacific force that went to the Solomons last year? Who in the United Kingdom would have foreseen a British contingent taking part in the Australian-led operation in East Timor in 1999?

Now Expeditionary is clearly recognised in doctrine in our countries, and hence I guess why we are here to discuss it. This is what the British Maritime Doctrine pamphlet, third edition dated 2004, has to say:

An Expeditionary Operation is a military operation that can be initiated at short notice, consisting of forward deployed or rapidly deployable, self-supporting forces tailored to achieve a clearly stated objective in a foreign country.\(^2\)

Expeditionary Forces are defined as Forces projected from the home base capable of sustained operations at distance from that base.\(^3\)

There is of course no mention in the doctrine of the size of force, or its composition and task. In addressing my remit—major themes and issues—I will not confine myself to any particular type of operation, but assume that we are considering Expeditionary Warfare in situations on the spectrum of conflict ranging from Operations Other than War, including conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peace building, and humanitarian operations, right through to War Fighting.

In doing so I have chosen to link what I have to say with the main points from the definition of Expeditionary Operations.

**Short Notice**

Although expeditionary operations are not invariably carried out at short notice, many have been and I am sure will be in the future. The implication for the force involved is clearly the need for readiness, which is itself the product of a number of factors, including:

- Training, from that of individuals up to unit and formation. While on the subject of training, there has been discussion in the UK, and no doubt elsewhere, on

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3. Ibid.
whether one should, for example, train a proportion of one’s forces only for peacekeeping duties, or whether it is better to train everyone for the highest intensity of warfare. I incline to the view, which most soldiers in my country share, that troops trained and equipped for war fighting can switch readily to the lower intensity of Operations Other Than War. It is far harder to do it the other way round, to scale up for proper fighting, including reshaping attitudes to such matters as taking casualties, the need for aggression, and acquiring the myriad battle skills which are indispensable for success in war. Several months would be need for retraining personnel at individual and formation level, and probably even longer to acquire and train on the necessary equipment; such a long period of time is unlikely to be vouchsafed. Which leads to the next point:

- Equipment for the operation must be in place or readily accessible.
- It is also a considerable advantage if contingency plans are available, even if it turns out that they need modification; on the basis that it is easier to start with something rather than blank sheets of paper. With or without a contingency plan, one must have the staffs with the experience and ability to make or modify plans quickly.

Still on the subject of short notice; although there may be a long lead time to a situation which generates the need for a short notice move, in the sense that you can see it coming, indecision at the political level, and other factors, may impose limitations, or even embargoes, on preparation, so that the actual process of moving to the theatre of operations is eventually carried out in short order. Even then there may be a great deal of waiting around in staging areas. Furthermore, even as the force starts deploying, political pressures may be brought to bear to change force structures. For example, before the first Gulf War, the UK Defence Secretary, Tom King, imposed force level ceilings down to individuals, a process which Major General Rupert Smith, the UK divisional commander, nicknamed ‘rate capping’. On one occasion Tom King even ordered back a complete battalion from the Gulf, just as it arrived. It had been deployed for perfectly good operational reasons, but had been sent without his specific permission. After some argument, he was persuaded to send it back again, and it arrived just in time to participate in operations.

**Forward Deployed Forces**

Forward deployed forces may be immediately deployed into the theatre, or to a place adjacent to the theatre of operations, or held at sea. The forward deployment of forces in Kuwait before the invasion of Iraq is a case in point. Deployment of forces at sea, especially for a protracted period, requires the correct mix of shipping, and doing so may require prior establishment of sea and air control, which I shall address later.
Rapidly Deployable

Again it is self-evident, but the ability for a force to be rapidly deployable carries with it the requirement for the appropriate means of movement, and what is ‘appropriate’ depends on the circumstances of the move itself. If the deployment is into a benign environment, with a ‘Red Carpet’ entry point; docks, warehousing, ro-ro terminals, sophisticated airfield, fuel, host nation support and so forth, a move by commercial shipping and air will be possible. At the other end of the scale if you have to fight your way in to a location with absolutely no infrastructure, through a beachhead or landing zone, the means of movement must be tailored accordingly.

In the latter situation, and depending on the threat and other circumstances, there could be a need for a whole gamut of ship-shore movement assets, from small craft upwards right through to heavy lift craft, air-cushion landing craft, air assets, tactical helicopter lift, and so forth with perhaps the accompanying fire support, from seaward and, if within range, land artillery, and preceded by advance force operations etc., plus of course the force trained to use these assets and deploy with them.

The distances over which troops and equipment may have to be lifted will vary with the circumstances. For example the troops of 45 Commando Royal Marines were flown by Chinook from a carrier in the Indian Ocean straight into Bagram in Afghanistan, which had already been seized by Special Forces.

This leads directly into the subject of force projection, which raises a number of issues. A robust command and control system may need to be deployed which is capable of gathering intelligence, deploying combat power, and generating influence over the battlespace. Full-scale amphibious and/or air-transported operations may be mounted, with all the implications for movement that I covered earlier. These could take the form of amphibious or heliborne raids, or demonstrations as a form of deterrence or deception. A full-blooded amphibious assault may be required. Last but not least a withdrawal or extraction of a force may be carried out from seaward or by air or both.

Self-supporting

For forces projected from the home base to be capable of sustained operations at a distance from that base of course requires that the logistic movement assets must be available as well as the necessary stocks. This also refers back to the need for stocks to be in place and available at short notice. Again this can be bedevilled by political decision, or rather indecision. For example one of the reasons for shortages of equipment experienced by British troops in Iraq last year, was the delay in the decision to commit by British politicians and hence the lack of authority to buy equipment to fill gaps in the inventory. When urgent operational requirements for a range of items came pouring in
from the UK Ministry of Defence to manufacturers at the last minute, they were either committed elsewhere and unable to deliver, or if they had spare capacity, rubbed their hands with glee as they skyrocketed the price.

The logistic chain from home base to theatre may be sea, air or a combination of both, again depending on the circumstances. There may be a need to establish sea and air control over the Line of Communication. If there is a sub-surface, surface, or air threat, or any combination of these, the use of civilian shipping may be severely limited, or even out of the question on certain legs of the route to the theatre of operations, because owners and crews may not want to put themselves at risk. This situation has not arisen recently. But given the threat in the South Atlantic in 1982, there would have been no question of using chartered shipping. The solution was provided by taking British Flag, and British-crewed, merchantmen up from trade, by Queen’s order, for under UK law it is only necessary to read the Articles of War to a British crew in a British-flagged ship, for them to be subject to Naval Discipline. Circumstances may demand that ships transporting your troops and supplies have to steam in convoy, observe black-out at night, operate without navigation lights, and refuel at sea (RAS) by day and night. In this case some merchant skippers and officers were Royal Naval Reservists, but all of them took to these and other warlike manoeuvres with like ducks to water. Ships may have to be converted, by, for example, adding helicopter-landing decks, installing fresh water capacity, beam RAS equipment, naval radio fits, and, depending on the threat, close-in surface-to-air weapon systems.

Likewise, the air or Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) threat will decide how easy or difficult air supply to the theatre will be, and therefore whether chartered air lift can be used or not; if logistic lift aircraft have to be escorted; whether or not air control has to be established before any lift can begin, and so forth.

The more benign the operational situation, the fewer problems that logistics within the theatre will pose; this is especially so if troops are not deploying on operations far from the base. Terrain, the distances involved, the enemy threat, the size of force to be supported, its locations, the intensity of operations and hence such matters as expenditure of ammunition and fuel, and how much host nation support is available, are all factors that will dictate how difficult logistics will be and how much you will need to bring with you. Supporting a mobile force moving away from its logistic bases, will present additional challenges and may require specialised vehicles, capable of cross-country movement.

As well as possessing sufficient stocks and the ability to move them to theatre and from there to the customers, sustainability also requires the ability to repair battle damage, which needs speedy access to spares, recovery of damaged vehicles, adequate workshops, and possibly the forward deployment of specialist repair ships if operating in a maritime environment.
An important consideration in logistic planning will be casualty and medical evacuation. History is littered with examples of the result of poor provision for casualty evacuation and care of the wounded. The inadequacies of the medical plan drawn up by Hamilton’s operations staff for Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli are a classic case.

Hamilton failed to take what today we call the logistic staff with him when he moved to Mudros from Alexandria. Working without the advice of the logisiticians, the operations staff planned that wounded would be evacuated to casualty clearing stations on the beaches, based on the assumption that the initial advance inland would clear enough elbow room for these to be established. There were other errors, such as underestimating the number of casualties.

When the Adjutant General eventually arrived at Mudros a week before D-Day, he was aghast at what was being proposed. It was too late to do much about it. As Michael Hickey has commented, ‘The medical plan was in trouble before a shot was fired’.

Tailored

Tailoring the force, or Force Packaging, to meet the requirement is sometimes easier said than done. But the correct mix of land, sea and air assets is important if the mission is to succeed.

Correct tailoring may include the need to get the combat loading of shipping and aircraft right. This may be difficult if the next requirement, a clearly stated objective, is not decided on early, or perhaps has been delayed until after the force has started to move to the theatre. By which time it may be too late to achieve combat loading, especially if the threat, or task, or both, have changed. Combat loading is not a new concept, as was made clear by General Wolsley before the Egyptian Expedition in 1882:

The plan of embarking mules in the same ships was in the first instance objected to on the grounds that some ships were better able to carry mules than others, and the comfort of the troops would be greater if all animals were placed in separate vessels; but this objection was overruled by the Commander-in-Chief, who stated that he was convinced by history, that the governing principle in preparing such expeditions, was so to embark the force that every portion of it should be able to disembark, completely equipped from the ship or ships conveying it. This he stated was absolutely necessary if the landing was likely to be opposed, and was the best means of preventing confusion and delay even if there were no opposition.

5. Ibid., 108.
Tailoring the force also includes ensuring that the command structure is right. The set-up will vary depending on the type of operation, and whether or not it is joint, involving more than one service, and/or multinational. I would venture to suggest that most expeditionary operations will be joint, and many multinational, except for the most benign and at the lowest end of the spectrum of conflict.

If the command structure is not right, trouble will ensue. For example it is an error, in my opinion, not to appoint an overall in-theatre commander. Commanders must also be in the right place. It is interesting to reflect on how many operations in the past have faltered, or been severely handicapped, because the command set-up was not right.

Command relationships are also important in coalition operations, and I will return to them when I address that subject.

**Clearly Stated Objective**

To begin with, of course, a Clearly Stated Objective presupposes the correct selection of the strategic aim. Professor Robert O’Neill, in his lecture to the Royal United Services Institute in London entitled ‘Alliances and Intervention from Gallipoli to the 21st Century’, points out that Churchill hatched his grand design for the Dardanelles alone, while Kitchener looked the other way until the Royal Navy had got itself into such difficulties in its abortive attack on the Narrows that the only options were withdrawal, or escalating to an amphibious operation, with the main point of effort being on the ground rather than at sea.\(^7\)

As Professor O’Neill went on to say, when President Bush decided not to let Saddam get away with the occupation of Kuwait in August 1990, he had to jump to a decision without a plan or an appreciation or estimate. But, Bush was careful not to enunciate a grand design that would invite controversy and dissent round the world. He chose simply to promise to repel Saddam’s aggression. The planning and preparation followed.

The clearly stated objective may take some time in coming, which makes the detailed planning further down the chain of command difficult. It took 42 days after the invasion of the Falklands by the Argentines for the clearly stated objective to be given to those who had to carry it out, by which time the majority of the force had been at sea for at least 36 days, including ships loaded with combat supplies—but that is another story.

In the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 the same problems arose, but for different reasons. The US 4th Infantry Division was to have spearheaded the main point of effort by invading Iraq from Turkey. When the Turks did not permit this, the plan had to be rejigged at short notice, to make the main point of effort from the south.

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As I mentioned earlier, UK planning on this operation was bedevilled by UK government indecisiveness: whether to take part or not, and if participating, at what level and with what objectives. The 3rd Commando Brigade had no less than thirteen major changes of plan before their landing on the Al Faw Peninsula, the first ground action of the war.

It may therefore be necessary for the planning to be carried out, at short notice, and very much 'on the hoof'. Which brings us back to the point, that expeditionary operations are possibly more testing for staffs than most other types of operation.

Foreign Country

Apart from the exertions involved in getting a force there, and sustaining operations far from home, operating in, intervening in, a foreign country raises a number of issues: such as causing collateral damage, a euphemism for killing and wounding innocent civilians, and destroying the infrastructure; through to the effect on public opinion at home, and the media. To complicate the picture further, there are the issues of selective morality, which I shall not address.

How the operation is perceived is crucial, because of its effect on the public at home, the media, and ultimately the force itself. ‘What are our boys doing fighting and dying out there?’ This question was asked of the Archangel Expeditionary Force in 1918 when the British Government intervened in Russia against the Bolsheviks, in someone else’s war. There are a number of more recent examples, of operations taking place, or at least being mooted, in far away countries of which the public knows little, and cares less, to misquote Neville Chamberlain. The UN operation in the Congo in 1960 is one. The debacle in Somalia in 1993 is another. Sometimes, of course, however right the cause, it may not necessarily be perceived that way back home. Certainly in the UK there was no great enthusiasm for the war in Korea, about which Harry Truman agreed with a reporter at a press conference, that it would it be ‘correct to call it a police action’; a phrase that came to haunt him after thousands of Americans especially, but also British and Australians and others, had died and been wounded.8

At the September 2004 Labour Party conference in the UK, a man threatened to hang himself outside the convention centre because he was so angry following the death of his son in Iraq. He accused the Prime Minister, Tony Blair of lying and demanded an apology.

If one is contemplating an intervention operation in someone else’s country, perhaps an examination at the politico/military level, into the chances of the operation succeeding might pay dividends, before the decision to intervene is taken; and I must emphasise

EXPEDITIONARY FORCES AND EXPEDITIONARY WARFARE

that intervention is what I am talking about, not other forms of operation. Charles Dick the conflict analyst came to the conclusion that conflicts that attract intervention usually have some or all of the following characteristics:

• They are as a result of a total collapse of government, creating a failed state, such as Lebanon, Somalia, Sierra Leone, or from the inability of governments to control portions of their territory effectively, as in Yugoslavia. Conflict is usually the result of ethnic/communal divisions, and reaction by a failing regime resorting to violence against its own citizens in order to hang on to power.

• Compromise over end-state is difficult or impossible. Negotiations are usually fruitless.

• Non-state actors are involved in addition to regional governors, warlords/bandits, ethnic or religious leaders, transnational corporations, and organised crime. We saw this in Angola, Congo and former Yugoslavia, and continue to see it in Afghanistan and Iraq.

• Conflicts involve several belligerents, and may straddle borders or spill across them, as in Lebanon, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan.

• Conflict may lead to, or be worsened by, economic and/or environmental disaster. By depriving people of food, clean water, shelter and so forth, these feed the conflict by preventing a return to normal life. Banditry becomes rife. Darfur in Sudan is a good example of this.9

What are the factors that lead to failed intervention operations? Charles Dick offers the following:

• The complexity of intra-state conflict and multitude of actors involved makes identifying them, and simultaneously persuading them to accepting a durable settlement usually impossible. The subjective rationality of many belligerents is difficult to understand and predict. The only thing clear is that in ethnic and communal conflict, the different sides see it as a zero-sum game in which compromise is unthinkable except as a temporary tactical move.

• So although interventionists have been occasionally able to suppress the symptoms of such conflicts they rarely eliminate the causes. Even where this may be possible, it requires a long haul, and probably the sacrifice on the altar of reality of some of the principles underlying the intervention.

Where outsiders had intervened in complex conflicts, they have frequently been drawn into a quagmire, as in Somalia, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, and that of western states in Lebanon. Outside forces have provided no solution to internal problems but rather exacerbated them, leading to a choice between a long stay, damaging national interests and unpopular at home, or retreat with tail between the legs.

What about the characteristics of successful interventions? Dick suggests that contributory factors towards a successful outcome include some of the following:

- Those opposed to intervention are militarily insignificant, geographically restricted and unpopular in the area of the intervention, which was carried out with overwhelming force as in Grenada and Panama. Where these features are absent, failure is likely; examples are Somalia, and the Indian action in Sri Lanka.

- If there is a weak, clearly identifiable enemy with no significant international support who is endeavouring to hold territory by conventional military means against the wishes of the bulk of the population, success is more likely, as in the liberation of Kuwait, and Kosovo.

- It is helpful if there is domestic support for intervention, and preferably international support also. This is especially so if there is a general perception that intervention is in the national interest and morally justified. But casualties must be held within acceptable limits and the operation not drag on too long. What is acceptable varies according to the public perception of the relevance of the intervention to important security issues, economic issues such as the supply of oil, or even national survival. So, Israel’s involvement with Lebanon dragged on for a decade, while Americans remained for only one year after 241 marines were killed by a truck bomb.

I alluded earlier to the ‘countries of which we know little’ mindset. During the Cold War an intervention in say Korea, Malaya, and Vietnam in the early days, was relatively easy to sell to the home public on the grounds of it being part of the global struggle between competing ideologies; whereas in Russia it proved impossible to maintain support for the first Chechen war even though it was in defence of national territory. Western governments were chary of getting their fingers in the former Yugoslav mangle, and show no enthusiasm for African adventures, except for the most limited kind such as Sierra Leone.

The recent intervention in Iraq was prompted by the belief that Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction. So perhaps it can be filed in the ‘national interest’ or ‘self-interest’ box, on the grounds, spurious though it eventually transpired, that he constituted
a threat to the region, and, through terrorism, to the world. It does not therefore fit the proposition by some analysts that future interventions will be a matter of choice not necessity.

The more likely reason for intervention is the moral imperative. The ‘something must be done’ push will always be with us, and the media, ever out for a good story, will pick up the cry. One only had to look at the press coverage in the United Kingdom of events in Darfur. There were frequent strident demands for intervention by a range of people, causing one to wonder if any of them had even looked at a map; one glance should have been sufficient to persuade anybody with a modicum of knowledge of the difficulties involved—even if the Sudanese government were willing to play ball.

There is another aspect, the ‘pain’ factor. The public over the last fourteen years, certainly in Britain, recent events notwithstanding, has become accustomed to pain-free interventions in, for example, Kosovo where not one shot was fired in anger by ground troops during the intervention stage; or if not totally pain-free, then not very painful, as in Gulf War One, or recently in Iraq (UK dead on 27 September 2004, after 17 months of operations, totalled 68, of which five were by natural causes, 31 were accidental, six were the result of ‘Friendly Fire’ (FF), and 26 were Killed in Action (KIA)). It is not beyond the bounds of possibility to envisage a situation in which a combination of public naiveté, media pressure, and badgering of government by a group of the more influential Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), might, some day, push Britain into an intervention against an enemy who has really got his act together; will fight hard and inflict large numbers of casualties. This will cause some ‘hand-wringing’ for paradoxically, the public, again in the UK, and possibly elsewhere, have become more sensitive to casualties. The recent loss (on 4 November 2004) of three Black Watch soldiers in the Baghdad area generated considerably more column inches and other media comment in the UK than the truck bomb in Northern Ireland that killed 19 soldiers of 2nd Battalion the Parachute Regiment and attached troops in 1979. Two or three deaths a day were frequent occurrences in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, especially in the ‘Bandit Country’ of South Armagh, and were hardly news in the UK.

Before I leave the subject of intervening in another person’s country and business, I want to touch on another potential problem that might follow in the wake of such an operation, Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations or NEOs as someone has christened them. An early concern once forces have started to arrive in theatre may be the protection of one’s country’s nationals, UK nationals in the case of the UK, US in the case of the USA, and Australian in the case of intervention by Australia, and so forth. In addition there may be citizens of other countries that also need protection or evacuation. In the

10. Other recent UK figures in comparison: Falklands (1982), six weeks of operations: 255 KIA (8FF), 777 WIA (22 FF), Gulf (1991), approximately two months of operations: 15 KIA (9FF), 43 WIA (16FF).
event of evacuation because of local instability, if the host nation cannot provide for the security of these people, the intervening force may have to provide the necessary coverage and run the evacuation, including protecting ports, airfields, and mustering points for evacuees.

**Risk Averse Policies**

Having dwelt on the subject of intervention in someone else’s country and some of the issues including public perception and support, I would like to touch on a related subject, that of Risk Averse policies, before moving to the next issue.

Risk Averse policies are the direct result of governments wanting to get involved for the reasons I have rehearsed: public pressure, moral issues, even wanting the kudos of participating for one reason or another, but, and a big but, without the ‘pain’, or risk that the whole situation will blow up in their faces if there are heavy casualties, or even relatively light ones attended by ‘inflationary’ reporting by the media.

Risk averse policies can put the commander on the ground in a difficult, even impossible position. Such was the Dutch battalion commander in Srebrenica, whose battalion was tasked with protecting some 40,000 Muslims in the enclave under threat from Serb attack. Before deploying he had been told by his government that not one man was to come home in a body-bag; pretty crass, I submit. Being ordered by his government to allow the Serbs to take away 7,000 Muslim males followed this. The Serbs sensing this lack of robustness murdered the 7,000 men. I do not blame the CO of the battalion, but the politicians who put him in that position.

Risk averse policies have another effect, that of placing limits on the manner in which troops operate, such as not patrolling on foot, but always in armoured vehicles. At its lowest level, this impinges on the relationship between troops and the public, with potentially serious consequences in the form of lack of trust, and inability to gather low-level information. Risk averse policies are of course the extension of a government operating to its own agenda, and may have a downstream effect on a whole range of operations.

Contingents operating to their government’s risk averse regime are not only a problem for the contingent commander, but also for the other contingents in a coalition operation. It is to that aspect of expeditionary warfare that I want to turn.

**Expeditionary Warfare as Part of a Multinational Coalition**

Benjamin Disraeli when Prime Minister of the UK in the nineteenth century is alleged to have said, ‘England does not love coalitions’. Why? Because coalitions are difficult. Once you have got them together, if you can form them, you spend a lot of energy on
keeping them together. There can be an enormous bureaucracy in coalitions because you may have to compromise, you may have to seek ways in which a coalition can act in a uniform way and not fracture, or lose direction and momentum.

You could argue that it is easier to manage a coalition in a warfighting situation; especially if national survival is at stake. Perhaps because the fear of failure concentrates people’s minds. I want to address coalitions in the context of expeditionary operations at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict, the more likely end, in my opinion.

The military commander may often find in any situation that it is difficult to take the overarching strategic aims and translate them into practical instruments that make sense on the ground. The problem gets worse when the strategic aim is based upon the best that the political process can put together, in other words declared in a manner to which everybody is agreeable. The military commander’s reaction on the ground is often one of disbelief; to wonder how can that particular declaration be translated into sensible military operations. Yet that is precisely the commander’s job.

The situation is further complicated by some nations requiring their commander to refer even the most trivial decisions back to them before action, the ‘long screw-driver’ method of command and control, while others allow a degree of freedom and initiative to theirs. If the commander of the coalition force is in the latter position, i.e. has some room for manoeuvre, he may find that others in the coalition may feel that he is riding rough-shod over them in arriving at decisions.

In a way, the more benign and slow-moving the operation, the more it encourages high-level political interference. Deadlines concentrate the mind, whereas spare time is quickly filled up with ‘waffle’. These sorts of operations also encourage prolonged inspection of what one commander called ‘the legal navel’, especially on rules of engagement. A British commander in Sarajevo found that a German battalion he had under command was unable to play a full part in operating vehicle checkpoints because they were not allowed to search a vehicle unless they had received information that contraband was inside—chicken and egg taken to absurdity. This legal constraint had a direct effect on their utility, and a direct impact on the force’s capacity to generate military force in the way, and in the area, that the commander wished. In the end the Canadians and British were forced to carry out the checkpoints, as he had no authority to override the German ruling.

Differing military cultures are another problem that can become apparent in a coalition. For example ex-Warsaw Pact countries have no conception of how we in the US, Australia and UK employ our NCOs and give them important responsibilities as a matter of course. This is true too of some European countries that lack a properly structured, long-service non-commissioned officer cadre held in high esteem.
Style of command is also influenced by the nature of operations. Slow-moving, benign situations encourage a safe and inclusive committee-based process, rather than productive decision making; whereas I suspect many Australian, British and American soldiers would incline to the view that in military situations, committees are acceptable, provided they consist of odd numbers of people, and that three is too many.

If an expedition is by definition an operation that cannot be sustained on a day-to-day basis from home or peacetime base, there has to be a collective mindset that accepts austere, ambiguous conditions, so that the mobility and agility of the force are optimised; planning is geared to long-term deployment in areas where events and conditions are difficult to anticipate; and there is a feasible and viable speed of response within the operational scenario (there is no point in speed of response that does not allow you to get inside the enemy’s decision loop). Adequate speed of reaction itself adds to the deterrence value of an expeditionary force.

**Interoperability**

Coalition or multinational operations bring with them problems of interoperability, which may extend into the joint operations arena, i.e. involving army, navy and air forces. In a pure logistic sense, the more benign and low tempo the operation is, the less interoperability matters, because expenditure of items such as high value equipment, major assemblies, ammunition, and spares is likely to be low, and timely provision of these can often be the critical path the higher the intensity of the operation.

Interoperability also requires components of the force to communicate with each other. Difficulties of interoperability have occurred even when attempting to put together forces from well-established alliances, within for example, NATO. They are made more complex when multinational forces are coalitions of willing nations, whose armed forces operate with different doctrines, procedures, equipment and capabilities. For example some armed forces may apply significant centralised control. Not all will apply Mission Command in the same way.

There may be a need for a comprehensive network of liaison officers, and interpreters. There will be a need for a system of exchange of information, and intelligence, and the whole subject may be set about with potentially divisive issues, such as who is and who is not allowed access to certain intelligence.

The command and control system must be robust and flexible, able to adapt to changing force levels and threat. Individual national component headquarters and command and control systems must be able to integrate with the coalition headquarters while meeting national requirements.
Again the higher the intensity of operations, the more important it is to have a thoroughly integrated set up for the use of assets such as artillery, naval gunfire support, close air support, and helicopter missions.

Summary and Unresolved Issues

Rather than running through a comprehensive list of what has been covered, some of the key issues in Expeditionary Operations are summarised below:

• Expeditionary forces are best based on ready, therefore regular, or high readiness reserve, forces.

• These forces must be prepared to operate over extended lines of communication and in insecure rear areas.

• Expeditions are more likely to be deployed to serve national interest or moral considerations, than national survival. So the operation may not enjoy the wholehearted support of the public at home. The public may be more exercised about collateral damage and keeping the casualties low.

• Expeditionary operations in today’s world are multifaceted and paradoxical. For example the Royal Marines in Iraq having taken part in the initial assault in 2003, followed by destroying a major armoured counter-attack found themselves patrolling the streets in berets a few days later, interacting with the civil population and finally playing football with the inhabitants. This was by no means a unique experience; the Black Watch and many others in the initial assault force experienced the same. These same Marines are now back in Basra and facing a kaleidoscope of problems, many of them different from those they encountered a year earlier. The Black Watch have also returned to Iraq, and are being similarly tested. One of the many questions that this experience raises is how do we balance force protection with engaging with the population?

• Translating the strategic aim to tactical level will continue to be difficult. This is especially relevant in the ‘War on Terrorism’. Perhaps Victory and Defeat are inappropriate terms. The British learned in Northern Ireland that terrorists do not surrender. ‘Victory’ may only be defined in a decrease in the level of terrorism.

I have not even begun to address the media. Some questions need answering. Do we really cope with real-time media coverage in the best way? Should journalists be embedded? Should there be some form of censorship, and if so what? Journalists are at best usually less than friendly. Journalists set their own agenda, driven as much by
their own egos and by profit as by anything else. Whether they drive or follow public opinion is open to debate. The commander may one minute find himself a hero and the next a villain, or worse.

The issues and themes involved in Expeditionary Operations are numerous, but many have been encountered before, and history is as good a starting point as any in the search for answers. That is why a conference like this has such an important part to play in our understanding of the themes and issues involved in Expeditionary Warfare, and indeed in most aspects of conflict in a general sense.
The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) holds a special place in the nation’s history. It was the first force to leave Australia in the Great War and the first to see action. Its soldiers and sailors suffered the first casualties, including the first army and naval fatalities, and were awarded the first decorations for gallantry. The AN&MEF were also, incidentally, the nation’s first jungle fighters.

Shortly before the outbreak of war in 1914, Australia committed itself to sending a force of 20,000 men for service in Europe, which became the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Its command was given to the Commonwealth’s most senior military officer, the Inspector General, Brigadier-General W.T. Bridges. The Army’s next most senior officer, Colonel J. G. Legge, was at sea when war broke out. An urgent telegram recalling him to Melbourne was sent to Adelaide, where Legge arrived on 8 August. He took an overnight train to Melbourne, where he took up the post of Chief of the General Staff. To allow General Bridges to concentrate on raising and preparing the AIF, Colonel Legge assumed responsibility for the overall defence of the country.

One of his first tasks was handling a cable that the British Secretary of State for Colonies had sent to the Governor General on 6 August requesting that the Australian government take action to seize the German wireless stations at Yap, Nauru, Pleasant Island and New Guinea. Legge met with the Minister of Defence, Senator Millen, shortly after his arrival in Melbourne on 9 August and that evening the Minister was able to publicly announce the formation of “a small mixed naval and military force for

service within or without Australia … quite distinct from [the AIF]

A telegram was sent to Britain the next day informing the War Office that a force of 1,500 men was being organised and would be despatched in a merchant cruiser carrying for 4.7-inch guns. This force soon became known as the AN&MEF.

Because the British government was urging that the undertaking be carried out as quickly as possible, Colonel Legge decided that preparations should be carried out in Sydney. On 10 August, Colonel E. T. Wallack, Commandant of the 2nd Military District which encompassed most of New South Wales, summoned Colonel W. Holmes, the senior militia commander in the state, to the Victoria Barracks, where on behalf of Colonel Legge, Wallack offered Holmes command of the expedition, which was to consist of a battalion of infantry, a medical detachment and a unit of some 500 Naval reservists. The Naval reservists would be organised by the Navy Department but Holmes would organise the infantry battalion. Holmes accepted his assignment at once.

Born in Sydney on 12 September 1862, Holmes was the son of Captain William Holmes, the chief clerk at New South Wales Military Forces Headquarters, who had come to Australia in 1845 as a private in the 11th Foot Regiment, and his Tasmanian-born wife, Jane, daughter of Patrick Hackett, also of the 11th Foot. He lived in the Victoria Barracks and was educated Paddington Public School. On 24 August 1887, he married Susan Ellen Green, whose family also lived in the Victoria Barracks.

Holmes worked at the Sydney Mint and then joined the accounts branch of the Department of Works as a clerk on 24 June 1878. He became chief clerk and paymaster of the Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage on 20 April 1888. In 1895 he became secretary and chief clerk. Under his leadership, the department underwent a great expansion and the Cataract, Cordeaux and Avon dams were built.

His military experience began at the age of 10 when he joined the 1st Infantry Regiment of the New South Wales Military Forces as a bugler. He served as an enlisted man before being commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1886. He volunteered for service in the war in South Africa. Although he was senior to his company commander, then Captain J.G. Legge, Holmes dropped a rank to lieutenant in order to serve with the contingent. In South Africa he was soon promoted to captain again. He saw action at Colesberg, Pretoria and Diamond Hill, where he was wounded. He was mentioned in dispatches, promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel and awarded the DSO, finally being invalidated home in August 1900. Afterwards, Holmes commanded the 1st Australian Infantry from 1902 to 1911 and then the 6th Infantry Brigade, a post he was holding at

6. Diary of Events in Connection with the Australian Naval and Military Expedition under the Command of Colonel W. Holmes, 10 August 1914, Australian War Memorial 33 2.
the outbreak of war. As New South Wales’ most senior militia officer, he was a natural candidate to lead the new force but his experience in civil administration certainly also favoured his selection.

Like the AIF’s General Bridges, Holmes was able to select his own officers. Unlike Bridges, his experience was largely limited to New South Wales but this was not so important a limitation as his force was largely to be drawn from that state. For his infantry battalion commander, Holmes selected Lieutenant-Colonel W. W. R. Watson. Lieutenant- Colonel J. Paton was taken along as his deputy. For a Brigade Major, Holmes chose Major F. B. Heritage, the Commandant of the School of Musketry. Holmes’ son Lieutenant B. Holmes became his aide de camp and Captain R.J.A. Travers, his Staff Captain. Major MacNaughton accepted the post of adjutant of the infantry battalion, only to relinquish it the next day, after being tapped by Colonel H.N. McLaurin as Brigade Major of the AIF’s 1st Infantry Brigade. Holmes then appointed Captain C.H.D. Lane of the 21st Infantry to the post.

Like the AIF, the battalion was organised on the old 19th century model of eight small companies under a captain or, occasionally, a major, each comprised of two sections. Holmes made arrangements with the Royal Agricultural Society for the showgrounds at Moore Park to be made available for the use his brigade. His staff moved into the buildings and offices there. Enlistments commenced the same day Holmes was appointed. No special recruiting campaign was necessary as the force was raised at the same time as the First AIF. Newspapers made vague references to a force being raised for service in the tropics.

Medical examinations were carried out at Victoria Barracks. Physical standards were high, being the same as that for enlistment in the Permanent Military Forces (PMF), although a few unfit men managed to slip through the net. Army doctors, accustomed to dealing with inductees for the nation’s Universal Service scheme, were unaccustomed to men attempting to conceal defects. Such men might be a burden not just to their units in the immediate future but to the nation for years to come, for they now had a medical record stating that they had no such medical problems when they enlisted, and consequently that they must be the result of their military service. Dental examinations were carried out by volunteers from the Dental Association of New South Wales, who carried out as much work as was possible in the available time.

8. The AIF was reorganised under the new organisation of four companies of four platoons after it arrived in Egypt.
9. Diary of Events, 10 August 1914, AWM33 2.
10. Ernest Scott, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Volume XI: Australia During the War (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936), 224-5.
The first 330 men passed by the medical examiners arrived at the Showgrounds on 11 August. There they were attested but no arrangements had been made for sleeping accommodation. Therefore they were allowed to return home that evening, with instructions to report back at 0900 the next day. Another 723 arrived that day. All 1,053 again returned home for the evening and returned the next day. Staff Sergeant Major Wilkinson was appointed Brigade Sergeant Major and Staff Sergeant Major Inglis was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major. The remaining 53 arrived on 14 August.

Originally, the men were attested on an improvised form similar to the stand Commonwealth Military Forces form, except that the period of enlistment was indefinite and they undertook to serve on land or sea anywhere in the world. This was later superseded by a new attestation form, which had been drawn up for the AIF. This was somewhat longer than the original form, requiring more details. The major difference was that enlistment became limited to six months. Colonel Holmes arranged for his men to be paid on 17 August for service up to that date.11

The medical unit reported for duty on 13 August. This had been organised at the Victoria Barracks by the Principal Medical Officer, Colonel Fiaschi. Major N.R. Howse, a Victoria Cross winner from the South African War, was appointed principal medical officer with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Accompanying him would be Captains F.A. Macquire, G.E. Donaldson and B.C.A. Pockley. Although there was a school of Tropical Medicine in Townsville, none of these officers had received any special training in tropical medicine. When he discovered that the expedition was bound for New Guinea, Colonel Howse secured some quinine and emetine and a microscope was requisitioned. Various medical stores including mosquito netting were supplied by the Red Cross Society. The unit was organised as a section of a field ambulance. A permanent army warrant officer was appointed and the remainder of the medical unit was drawn from those volunteers for the military detachment who held civilian qualifications in first aid or nursing. No dental officer was provided for on the establishment but Howse secured the services of a fourth-year Dentistry undergraduate from the University of Sydney, who enlisted as a private.12

The Director of Naval Reserves raised the Naval contingent, a force of 471 men who had responded to newspaper advertisements, consisting of about 200 from New South Wales, 100 from Victoria and 200 from Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. This was organised as six companies along the same lines as the Army contingent and placed under the command of Commander J.A.H. Beresford. Assisting him was Lieutenant

L.S. Bracegirdle, an officer with a distinguished record in China and South Africa.\textsuperscript{13} Two other naval officers, Lieutenant-Commanders G.L. Browne and C.B. Elwell, were attached to the battalion staff.\textsuperscript{14}

What kind of men volunteered for service in the AN&MEF? Some 83 per cent were single and eleven per cent were married, while the status of the remaining six per cent is unknown.\textsuperscript{15} This was similar to the first contingent of the AIF, where 90 per cent were single.\textsuperscript{16} Senator Millen was dissatisfied with this, for he had given explicit instructions that there should be a preference for single men. He thought that the proportion of married men in the AN&MEF was far too large and correctly foresaw difficulties in providing for wives and families once the troops had departed.\textsuperscript{17}

In other ways, too, the AN&MEF closely resembled the AIF. Their ages were similar, with about 40 per cent being over 25. With 60 per cent being Australian-born, the AN&MEF was similar to the 1st Infantry Brigade, although it seems to have had fewer Australian-born than its counterpart in the AIF.\textsuperscript{18}

### Ages of AN&MEF at Embarkation, 1914\textsuperscript{19}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1050</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{13} Jose, \textit{The Royal Australian Navy}, 74.
\textsuperscript{14} MacKenzie, \textit{The Australians at Rabaul}, 28.
\textsuperscript{16} Bean, \textit{The Story of Anzac}, I: 60.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Diary of Events}, 18 August 1914, AWM33 2.
\textsuperscript{19} Piggott, \textit{The Coconut Lancers}, 29; Blair, \textit{Dinkum Diggers}, 25.
The standard infantry weapon of the AN&MEF was the British .303-inch Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (SMLE) Mark III rifle, an excellent weapon that had first entered service with the British Army in 1907. It could be fired at up to fifteen rounds per minute and was effective at up to 800 metres. Best of all, when war broke out in August 1914, Australia not only had 87,240 on hand but the capacity to manufacture more at Lithgow, NSW. The two machine gun sections were each armed with two Maxim machine guns.

20. Ibid.
22. ‘Instructions in Regard to the Clothing of the Expeditionary Force, Australian Military Forces (Exclusive of Permanent Staff)’, 12 August 1914, AWM25 187/5.  
23. Bean, _The Story of Anzac_, I: 62,
This was water-cooled, with a condenser that enabled water to be recycled after it boiled off. It weighed 30 kg and could fire 600 rounds per minute. Range was about 4,000 metres. Ammunition was the same as that of the rifle but in 250 round belts.\textsuperscript{24}

The Australian Army had adopted a uniform based on its experiences in the Boer War, which had shown the benefits of camouflage and concealment now that the rifle was effective at ranges of up to a mile. A pea soup colour was chosen, with oxidised brass buttons that did not reflect sunlight. The jacket, made of pure Australian wool, was loose fitting and comfortable and did not restrict the arms, chest or the neck. It contained four large outside pockets and an inside pocket. A pleat down the back allowed it to be let out. This standard Australian Army uniform, manufactured by the Government Clothing Factory in South Melbourne, remained unchanged throughout the war but, being woollen and heavy, was hardly suitable for the climate of New Guinea.\textsuperscript{25}

Australian Army boots were brown, lightweight and superbly adapted for hard use in a dry climate. This was somewhat different from the conditions found in the tropics but it was noted in 1917 that Brigadier-General J. Paton was still wearing a pair of boots issued to him in New Guinea in 1914.\textsuperscript{26}

Perhaps the most distinctive item of the Australian soldier’s apparel was the slouch hat, chosen because it was more practical in the hot Australian sun than the British pith helmet or peaked cap. It looked identical to the British Army’s felt hat but the Australian version proved more durable. The AN&MEF wore it with the left-hand side brim turned up.\textsuperscript{27} Apparently, the AN&MEF did not wear it with a cap badge; neither cap nor collar badges are discernible in 1914 photographs of the force.

The Peninsular & Oriental Steam Navigation Company’s liner \textit{Berrima} had been charted by the Commonwealth for use as transport and then converted to an armed merchant cruiser by the addition of four 4.7 inch guns. One of a class of five sister ships, she had been built by Caird & Co of Greenock, Scotland, and launched on 13 September 1913. At 11,137 tons gross, she was 152 m in length with a 19 m beam, one funnel, two masts, twin screws and a speed of fifteen knots, with accommodation for 1,100 3rd-class passengers, which she ran between London, Capetown, Melbourne and Sydney.\textsuperscript{28} While the AN&MEF was assembling and training at the Showgrounds, workmen at Cockatoo Island fitted her out in new role as a transport. Although ‘none

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{24} Ian Hogg and John Bachelor, \textit{The Machine Gun} (London: Phoebus: 1976), 24-5.
\bibitem{25} F.A. Maguire et al., \textit{Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea}, 785.
\bibitem{26} ADOS AIF, ‘Report on Boots CP’, 17 September 1917, AWM25 121/1.
\bibitem{27} Bean, \textit{The Story of Anzac}, I: 60.
\end{thebibliography}
too large’ for the mission at hand, her design as a liner gave her desirable speed and sea-going qualities. Commander J. B. Stevenson, RN, was assigned as her captain.29

At 1020 on 18 August, the troops left the Showgrounds and marched down Randwick Road, Oxford Street and Macquarie Street to Fort Macquarie, from where they were conveyed to Garden Island by harbour ferries. Colonel Holmes visited the Customs House, where he was met by Senator Millen, who expressed his dissatisfaction at the fact that it had taken a whole week to recruit, organise, clothe, equip, train and embark the force! In any case, by 1330 the whole force was on board the Berrima.

Holmes had hoped to sail that evening but stores were still being loaded and the last punt was not due to leave the wharf until 1600. Commander Stevenson therefore moved the departure time to 0530 the next day but later that evening Holmes received word that he was not to leave Sydney until after the next day’s Mail Train from Melbourne, which was carrying important plans and documents for him from Army Headquarters, and was not due until about 1000. Accordingly, the Berrima undocked at 0600 on 19 August but sailed only as far as Farm Cove, to await the mail. The force finally set out at 1215, about a day late.30

On 18 August, the Governor General received another cable from the Secretary of State for Colonies, which read:

In connection with the expedition against German possessions in the Pacific, British flag should be hoisted in all territories occupied successfully by His Majesty’s forces and suitable arrangements made for temporary administration. No formal proclamation of annexation should however be made without previous communication with His Majesty’s Government.31

At the time, the rights and obligations of an occupying power were governed by the Hague Convention of 1907. This attempted to curb some of the excesses of military administrations in the past and restricted the occupier’s ability to make legal or administrative changes to those arising from its responsibility for ‘public order and safety’ under Article 43 and those for military necessity. An occupier was required to respect existing laws and private property.32 Yet, without annexation, which would have been ‘most inconvenient for propaganda purposes’, no form of administration other than a military one was legally possible. The AN&MEF’s mission would be for the duration.33

30. Diary of Events, 18, 19 August 1914, AWM33 2.
Holmes was already thinking about military government, always an important part of any military operation. He decided to appoint as Assistant Judge Advocate General Lieutenant C.E. Manning, a Sydney barrister, who was promoted to captain on 10 September. Captain E. Twynam would be officer-in-charge of native police, assisted by 2nd Lieutenant G.O. Manning, who had thirteen years’ experience as a resident magistrate in Papua. Lieutenant L.B. Ravenscroft, formerly of the Royal Scots, would be Provost Marshal. Holmes prepared a proclamation to be issued when Rabaul was occupied and planned a flag raising ceremony, with a march past and naval gunfire salute. Given that German Law would be in effect, some more thought might have been given to taking along more interpreters. The Navy had one, Lieutenant J.S. Lyng, but he was not part of the AN&MEF.

As the Berrima sailed north along the coast, the four 4.7 inch guns were fired to test their mountings and the stores on board were re-arranged and checked against the requisitions. It was found that mess tins had could not be located and had apparently not been loaded, so when the Berrima reached Moreton Bay on 21 August, Holmes sent a message to the District Commandant via the Navy Office in Brisbane requesting 1,043 mess tins. Although naval stores requested at the same time arrived in due course, the mess tins did not and Holmes became convinced that his message had not been passed on to the Commandant. After a series of exchanges of signals, a message was finally received from Sydney explaining that mess tins had been unprocurable in Sydney and pannikins and tin plates had been substituted instead. And with these, the men made do.

Another deficiency was signalling equipment. Requested on 21 August, the equipment was shipped from Sydney by express train on 26 August. It was supposed to have been loaded on the supply ship HMAS Aorangi. This arrived on 30 August but the equipment was not on board, having been placed into the Ordnance Store in Brisbane instead of being loaded on the supply ship. Arrangements were then made for the equipment to follow on the next ship.

Berrima proceeded up the coast to Palm Island, north of Townsville. Here, an enforced halt was called while Rear-Admiral Sir George Patey and his Australian Squadron completed the occupation of Samoa. A strong covering force was necessary as the German Pacific Fleet was still at large.

A landing rehearsal was carried out on 21 August. B and C Companies, three companies of the Naval contingent, the two machine gun sections and the AMC detachment were landed on Palm Island. As at Gallipoli, tows were utilised, with

34. Letter, OC AN&MEF to CGS, 9 September 1914, AWM33 4.
35. Diary of Events, 21, 26 August 1914, AWM33 2.
36. Ibid., 31 August 1914.
fourteen boats being divided into two tows of seven, one pulled by a steam cutter from the cruiser HMAS *Encounter* and the other by a launch from *Berrima*. The landing force disembarked from the boats, waded ashore and went through the procedures for an attack. Afterwards, they re-embarked and returned to *Berrima* by 1800. Similar practice landings were carried out on five of the next seven days, while Major Heritage conducted musketry training.\(^{37}\)

Holmes’ plan of action involved a landing to seize the German wireless station at Herbertshohe on New Britain, the occupation of wireless stations being one of the principal objectives of the expedition. He then intended to move on to Rabaul and to other wireless stations in the German territories at Yap and Nauru.

Arrangements were made to supply *Berrima* with 70,000 lbs of frozen mutton to top up her rations. This arrived on the morning of 1 September and was loaded that day.\(^{38}\) In all, the AN&MEF was carried provisions for 60 days. After that, they would require resupply from Australia. However, Holmes anticipated that there would also be a requirement to feed the civilian population, as normal maritime trade would have been disrupted by the war. Although under the Hague Convention an occupying army was under no obligation to feed the civilian population, Holmes knew that it would be politically impossible to let them starve.\(^{39}\)

Accompanied by HMAS *Sydney, Encounter* and *Aorangi*, *Berrima* finally departed for Port Moresby on 2 September, arriving three days later. There, Holmes found the *Kanowna*, with three companies of volunteers from the 2nd Infantry (Kennedy Regiment) from Far North Queensland. Normally based around Charters Towers and Townsville, this unit had, as part of the mobilisation that preceded the war, provided a garrison for Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, sailing there in the *Kanowna*, which was chartered for the purpose. At Thursday Island, volunteers were called for to make up the rest of a 2nd Battalion of the AN&MEF and about half the force there had responded. These volunteers, of whom about one third were militia trainees and the remainder drawn from Rifle Clubs, were organised into four companies. *Kanowna* took them to Port Moresby, where one company was landed to provide protection for the wireless station there.\(^{40}\)

Holmes was unimpressed. They were commanded by a major, Major Aitken, whom he considered ‘had little military training or experience and in addition, lacks personality and self-reliance’. There were two captains, who had eight and six years’ experience, a first lieutenant and nine second lieutenants. The lieutenants were young—seven of them were under 21 years of age—and inexperienced. There was no battalion staff so 2nd

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\(^{37}\) Ibid., 24-29 August 1914.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 31 August, 1 September 1914.

\(^{39}\) Letter, OC AN&MEF to CGS, 9 September 1914, AWM33 4.

\(^{40}\) *Diary of Events*, 5 September 1914, AWM33 2.
Lieutenant W.A. Le R. Fry of A Company, 1st Battalion, was appointed as adjutant with the acting rank of captain. There was one PMF sergeant major but otherwise no non-commissioned officers. The Senior Medical Officer reported that the men on Kanowna were in good health and there had been no serious cases of sickness since leaving Thursday Island. However, he reported that some of the men had ailments that unfitted them for active service. Also, some of them were aged under 18, despite instructions to the contrary.

They had been issued with only one uniform, which they had, of necessity, been wearing for five weeks. Therefore, some 400 suits of dungarees were obtained for them in Port Moresby. Some of the men had new or ill-fitting boots, while others were wearing non-standard boots, often in a poor state of repair. They had no tents or mosquito nets but had been issued 500 rounds of rifle ammunition each and had rations for 30 days. They also had some signalling equipment—two lamps, two heliographs, two telescopes and three message bays—which were transferred to the signal section on Berrima.

Holmes considered leaving the company that had been landed at Port Moresby behind but the Lieutenant Governor of Papua, Judge Murray, had organised a body of local troops for the purpose. Arrangements were made for 300 SMLE rifles and ammunition to be handed over to these troops from the tanker Murex.

Holmes had a very good idea of what might happen if the 2nd Battalion were sent into combat. However, he did not expect that this would occur. He wrote to Colonel Legge that the occupation of New Guinea, ‘will, as far as I can see, be carried out without a shot being fired’. In this, he was mistaken but he was confident enough at this point that, while recommending that he enough troops and the 2nd Battalion could be sent home, he deferred the decision to Rear-Admiral Patey, who would be in overall command of the expedition and Patey elected to bring it along.

A powerful naval force set out from Port Moresby on 7 September, consisting of the cruisers Sydney and Encounter, destroyers Warrego and Yarra, submarines AE1 and AE2, armed merchant cruiser Berrima, transport Kanowna, store ship Aorangi. The destroyer Parramatta, oiler Murex, and collier Koolanga would follow and the force would rendezvous with the battlecruiser Australia and colliers Waihora and Whangape. This represented nearly the entire fighting strength of the Royal Australian Navy. The RAN had no mine warfare ships so mines would have to be swept, as best they could, by picket boats from Australia.

41. Letter, OC AN&MEF to RAC Australian Squadron, 6 September 1914, AWM33 4.
42. Diary of Events, 5-6 September 1914, AWM33 2.
43. Letter, OC AN&MEF to CGS, 9 September 1914, AWM33 4.
44. Jose, The Royal Australian Navy, 78, 81.
A few hours after leaving Port Moresby, Kanowna suddenly stopped and hoisted a signal that it was out of control. The firemen on board, civilian merchant seamen who had not been consulted about their new mission, had refused to stoke the ship. Volunteers from the troops took their place. The captain of the Sydney recommended that Kanowna be sent back to Townsville and Holmes agreed. The ship returned to Townsville, stoked by the troops, and the 2nd Battalion was disbanded. Subsequently, many of its personnel served with distinction in the AIF.

On 11 September, two detachments of 25 men were landed at Kabakaul and Herbertshohe to seize the wireless stations. The met with unexpectedly strong resistance and a further two companies of naval infantry and a machine gun section were landed at Kabakaul and four companies of infantry and the other machine gun section at Herbertshohe. In the fighting, two officers, Lieutenant Commander C.B. Elwell, RAN, and Captain B.C.A. Pockley of the Army Medical Corps, and four seamen were killed and Lieutenant R.G. Bowen, RAN, and three seamen wounded.

The next day, the AN&MEF occupied Port Moresby and raised the British flag. On 17 September, the German governor capitulated, surrendering the whole of German New Guinea.45 The AN&MEF settled into its role as an occupying force, which would continue until 1921. Most of the force—some 727 out of 1,073—chose not to re-enlist when their six months were up in early 1915 but chose to return to Australia and enlist in the AIF, becoming the nucleus of the 5th Infantry Brigade, commanded by Colonel Holmes.46 Holmes subsequently rose to the rank of Major-General, commanding the 4th Division of the Western Front from January to July 1917, when he was killed in action. A 3rd, and later 4th, Battalion took their place in New Guinea.

The story of the preparation and deployment of the AN&MEF is indeed a remarkable one. That a force could be enlisted, equipped and shipped in little over a week must be considered extraordinary. The problems encountered in its deployment were many and various, yet in the successful conclusion of its mission, the AN&MEF changed the map.

45. Diary of Events, 11-12 September 1914, AWM33 2.
A resurgence of interest in the Great War in Britain and other Commonwealth nations is apparent over the past twenty years. In some scholarly circles (though not yet in the popular mind) two older schools of thought on the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) have been largely superseded by one which takes the best of both to provide a far more balanced view of British performance on the Western Front. Even so, much of the emphasis of recent studies has been on British performance during the war’s final two-and-a-half years. One reason for this is quite clear—the BEF had, by mid-1918, become the finest field army of the war, utilising a sophisticated all-arms offensive methodology, almost proto-deep battle or proto-air-land-battle in appearance and scope. Given the difficulties that the BEF had in the war’s early months, the metamorphosis from what amounted to a colonial police force into the finely tuned offensive force of 1918 is even more striking. This metamorphosis has driven much of the newer scholarship and superseded much of what the older schools of thought argue. The battles of 1916–18 attract a great deal of study precisely because they illustrate the changes in the BEF’s operational and tactical thinking. The 1914–15 period, however, is equally critical. During that period, the BEF put in place and fine-tuned a large proportion of the administrative groundwork to support the BEF’s operational and tactical growth.

The BEF’s administrative growth rested on the Field Service Regulations of 1909 (revised minimally in 1912 and 1914) under which all British expeditionary forces operated. These provided a sound strategic and operational framework for the BEF. The regulations rightly took a very general tone because the authors could not predict where the British army might find itself next at war. A war on India’s northwest frontier, for example, would require a very different organisation than one on the continent, or in South Africa. As Lieutenant-General Sir Travers Clark, the BEF’s Quartermaster

General (QMG) in 1918, later reflected, ‘unlike Continental nations, we had to be ready to operate in any part of the world, and whatever administrative system we devised, it had to be a system which was sufficiently elastic to meet practically the requirements of every possible theatre of operations’. As a result, the Field Service Regulations offered a useful general framework onto which details could be added as needed. On paper, the regulations created a fairly sensible division of duties and responsibilities between command and administration, leaving administrative officers free to go about their business. In practice this set-up encouraged field commanders to steer clear of administrative issues until a crisis brewed. Even in the midst of crisis, they might be tempted to stay uninvolved for fear of becoming responsible for whatever mess had been created. Given professionals on both sides, which the BEF had no shortage of, this set up could work because administrative officers knew exactly where they stood in the chain of command.

At this point the regulations’ simplicity broke down by creating a hybrid command–staff position, the Inspector General of Communications (IGC), who commanded the line of communication and yet functioned as a staff officer beholden to the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C). This created the potential for confusion because the IGC was not a ‘Staff’ officer, as British regulations delineated the ‘Staff’ as those officers trained in staff duties and working on one of the three parts of the Staff—General Staff Branch, Adjutant-General’s Branch, or Quartermaster-General’s Branch. The IGC and his direct subordinate line of communications units did not form a part of this ‘Staff’, rather they formed a pseudo-staff of their own. The IGC controlled and coordinated all traffic on the line of communications up to and including the rendezvous points with fighting formations—in effect, beyond the railheads—and commanded all line-of-communications units except for defence troops. The IGC was also responsible for creating and running bases as the C-in-C demanded, for forwarding all field force requirements and for deciding how to send such supplies forward. While the IGC made logical sense in its concept—a line of communications commander undistracted by operational concerns—the method used to define his position left a great deal to be desired because he needed to be part of the General Staff at General Headquarters (GHQ) in order to control the line of communications properly and to clarify his relationships

2. Lieutenant-General Travers Clarke in a discussion following a lecture by Lieutenant-General Sir H. S. G. Miles on 1 November 1922 at the Royal United Services Institute. The paper and discussion were published as: Lieutenant-General Sir H. S. G. Miles, ‘Army Administration’, Journal of the Royal United Services Institute 68 (1923): 38.
3. Ibid., 36.
4. This is very clear in James Edmonds, Military Operations France and Belgium, 1914–1919, 14 vols (London: HMSO, 1922–48), 1914, Volume 1, 471-84, 471-84, the Order of Battle of the BEF, hereafter BOH(Years, Volume). While the Directors of Administrative Services and line of communications units are listed, the IGC is not mentioned.
5. Field Service Regulations (II, 1909); 29. Field Service Regulations (II, 1912), 32-3.
with the CGS, QMG and AG. This did not occur, so the IGC caused potential problems by his very existence. The proximity of the IGC to Directors of services on the line-of-communications caused problems if the IGC and QMG or AG differed on priorities, more so because the IGC actually out-ranked both the AG and QMG.

In practice, the IGC, AG and QMG displayed tremendous professionalism and pragmatism throughout and, in spite of occasional differences, managed to establish a suitable working relationship. The BEF’s administrative reporting structure, as laid out in the Field Service Regulations, placed six of the QMG’s Directors—Railways, Remounts, Works, Veterinary Services, Postmaster General and Ordnance Services—physically on the line of communications and, thus, in closer proximity to the IGC than QMG. This led to the potential of dotted-line reporting should the IGC need to make a decision based on information from these directors—it would be easier to simply ask them for the information than to go through channels to get it from GHQ. Luckily for the BEF, the three parties involved—Major-General Robertson (QMG), Major-General Macready (AG) and General Robb (IGC)—hammered out a working solution in which the IGC agreed to semi-subordination to both the AG and QMG.6 The IGC wound up exercising effective control over the Directors mentioned above, with the exception of the Director of Railways over whom the QMG retained effective veto power. The IGC accepted direction from both the QMG and AG and endeavored to meet their requirements while retaining the actual command of the line of communications. This structure functioned well until reorganisation in late 1916 eliminated the IGC’s position in its entirety, replacing it with a Director-General of Transportation at GHQ and effectively part of the Staff there, and a General Officer Commanding Lines of Communication, responsible to the QMG.7

It was fortunate for the BEF that its senior administrators proved so willing to work together since the BEF began a period of rampant growth within weeks of arriving in France. This turned the BEF rapidly into a force outside the bounds of British tradition and experience; a force that needed a sound, coherent support infrastructure to succeed. Accompanied by a proportionate expansion in numbers of horses and artillery pieces, this remarkable growth, illustrated below, forms at the core of British administrative issues during 1914–15 and, in fact, lies at the root of the BEF’s apparent slowness in learning how to fight on the Western Front.

6. WO 95/3950, IGC, War Diary, November 1914, Entry 502, National Archives, Kew. This indicates that the system as laid out in the Field Service Regulations broke down as soon as the fighting had begun, so the new and more satisfactory system had been developed as a result.
The First Battle of Ypres (19 October–22 November 1914) stretched the BEF’s administrative services because it came right on the heels of the BEF’s arrival in the Ypres area and exceeded the scope of previous British efforts. Shortly before the encounter battles which opened First Ypres, the QMG warned the IGC that the BEF’s movement to the west and German activity limited his ability to forward ammunition from railheads. The QMG had to ask the IGC to slow down deliveries as a result, but remain prepared to increase them once the front stabilised. Shortly after the Germans opened the battle, the QMG and IGC faced serious problems with the railways. Late-running trains from Boulogne forced the QMG to put British railway engineers temporarily under the control of the Commission Regulatrice (the French Railway Authorities) in an effort to get the trains back on schedule. Tangled British, French and Belgian lines of communication followed the BEF’s move westwards and further exacerbated the pressure on the line of communications to keep supplies flowing forwards while the battle intensified as each found itself drawing supplies across the others’ lines of communication. Nonetheless, four days after the battle opened, Robertson expressed his appreciation of the administrative efforts, writing a number of positive things but showing concern about ammunition, stating, ‘I have no anxiety, and never have had any worth mentioning, in regard to food supplies, but from the very first I have had a very great deal of anxiety with respect to ammunition’.

8. WO 95/27, QMG Branch, War Diary, October 1914, QMG to IGC, 16 October 1914, Appendix 11.a.
9. Ibid., Robertson to Maxwell, 22 October 1914; General de Division E. Laffon de Ladebat (French IGC) to Maxwell, 17 October 1914.
10. Ibid., Robertson to Maxwell, 23 October 1914, Appendix 16.a.
Unfortunately, the hard fighting led the QMG and IGC the next day to both express concern over the lack of field artillery ammunition to the War Office and on 25 October the QMG restricted 18-pounder ammunition distribution while the ominous words ‘per diem’ entered the BEF’s lexicon.\textsuperscript{11} Per diem, or daily allowance, rationing of ammunition expenditure became the single greatest factor inhibiting the BEF’s tactical and operational growth in 1915.

The type of warfare faced by all armies in 1914–15 placed unprecedented demands on lines of communication because of the sheer quantity of shells consumed during active fighting. Add to this a continuous front from the Swiss border to the sea and the enormous manpower involved on both sides, and all armies found themselves facing similar challenges. Early on in the preparation for the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Rawlinson (General Officer Commanding, or GOC, IV Corps) recognised the vital importance of artillery, and provided an early push towards an artillery intensive, and line-of-communications intensive, operational system. Following experiments destroying a German trench opposite I Corps, General Sir Douglas Haig (GOC, First Army) passed the findings on to Rawlinson, who concluded that an overall bombardment of 45 minutes, followed by a barrage, and the use of a large number of heavy howitzers (6\textquotedbl{}), would succeed. Indeed, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle largely succeeded on the first day, though a follow-up effort aimed at Aubers Ridge did not. Rawlinson decided ‘to use artillery to crush the German defences’ at Neuve Chapelle, but his bombard-and-storm ideas left his Corps with little in reserve to follow-up the success.\textsuperscript{12} Rawlinson’s plan for Neuve Chapelle used a primitive form of the methodology which the BEF would use successfully in 1917–18 but the BEF quite simply lacked the materiel (ammunition, other supplies and manpower) to repeat Neuve Chapelle at the time.

The crippling nature of the ammunition shortage is illustrated by Haig’s First Army and the chart below, which illustrates the shortage, in shells per gun, for the four main field artillery pieces. On 7 February a 9.2\textquotedbl{} howitzer fired 30 per cent of the ammunition available for that gun (a mere 91 rounds), which resulted in a letter from Robertson, now the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), asking why so much had been expended. Haig’s frustration is evident from a diary entry of the same day, writing, ‘we certainly are badly supplied with all descriptions of gun ammunition. The 4.5\textquotedbl{} How[itzer] which is our most useful field howitzer is reduced now to less than five rounds a day.’ A month later Haig wrote, ‘this lack of ammunition seems serious. It effectually prevents us from profiting by our recent success and pressing the enemy before he can re-organise and

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 24 and 25 October 1914.

strengthen his position.’ Four days later, having been informed by Robertson that the shortage would likely continue, he asked, ‘how can we order Officers Commanding Corps to “press on with vigour,” and at the same time say “mind you must not expend more than 7 rounds a gun in a whole day!”’ Haig’s question is a good one and may be rephrased to ask: how could the BEF create or enhance an operational methodology when the primary tool central to battlefield success in the twentieth century could not be used effectively?

The ammunition problems worsened. The Festubert attack in May used only 1,800 tons of ammunition over the course of twelve days, while on 8 May, Rawlinson’s IV Corps failed in their attempt to seize Aubers Ridge overlooking Neuve Chapelle. A significant reason for the failure is the relatively light weight of shell which supported the attack. In fact, the attack failed before it ever started because ‘Haig and Rawlinson failed to apply at Aubers Ridge the principles of bombardment established at Neuve Chapelle’. Even the slight support provided by the guns at Aubers Ridge, however, strained the BEF’s ammunition stocks to near breaking point. Haig noted in his diary on 10 May that the CGS had warned him that the BEF might run out of ammunition for its most useful types of artillery in two to three days. Haig and Rawlinson erred in missing,

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14. Artillery Ammunition, 27 June 1915, Robertson Papers I/5/12, Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King’s College London, hereafter LHCMA.
15. Prior and Wilson, Command on the Western Front, 93. See 77-93 for a description of the planning failures and battle itself.
16. WO 256/4, Haig, Diary, 10 May 1915.
or at least misplacing, the lessons of Neuve Chapelle, but they did not have the capacity to provide Neuve Chapelle’s intensity of fire in later battles so the lost lesson should not be a great surprise given the pressure to attack. 17 Haig wrote optimistically ‘owing to ammunition being somewhat short … I decided to concentrate all my efforts on breaking the enemy’s front south of Neuve Chapelle’, 18 but his hopes proved fruitless as by 27 May, having planned further attacks, he wrote, ‘judging by a return of ammunition on the lines of communication which the CGS sent to-night, it is a waste of time to make plans!’ 19 Throughout 1915 a number of actions, notably Aubers Ridge and Festubert, forced the CGS ‘to report to the Commander-in-Chief—to use the phrase current at the time—“the battle must now cease” for lack of ammunition’. 20 This, however, does not represent a failure of the administration in France, because they could not send what they simply did not have. As a result, the BEF had to adopt the defensive in France, because they could not support offensive action.

Ironically, the shell crisis and per diems probably helped more than they hurt since, while the BEF was unable to attack or innovate effectively, it gave the administration the breathing space to deal with a multitude of other issues. The chart below illustrates the BEF’s artillery expenditure, in thousands of tons per quarter, over the course of the war.

![Total Artillery Expenditure, 1914-18](chart.png)

Note the minimal tonnage until mid-1916 and the rather eye-popping change during the war’s final two years. Had the production in England not been inadequate, artillery resupply almost certainly would have broken the BEF’s administrative infrastructure.

17. Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, 70.
18. WO256/4, Haig Diary, 10 May 1915.
19. Ibid., 17 May 1915.
20. BOH (1915, 1), 37.
The additional administrative difficulties following First Ypres resulted from the BEF’s unprecedented expansion the speed and scale of which had not been imagined. An insufficient cadre of trained officers in Britain, and the expanded administrative services required, left the line of communication staffed increasingly by inexperienced officers. This began as early as 1 November 1914 when Maxwell wrote Robertson to advise that access to Nantes should be retained if possible rather than being abandoned completely. Maxwell predicted a much larger BEF in the spring, using at least three base ports and two or three separate lines of communication and he wanted to keep open the option of using Nantes as a base. The motorised transport also faced severe strain. For example, the reserves of motorised transport in the United Kingdom were badly depleted. As Maxwell’s prediction of a much larger Expeditionary Force looked likely to be proved correct GHQ sought alternate means of moving supplies almost immediately and considered such options as canal traffic, expanding the railways, and utilising light railways to supplement the existing system. The BEF ultimately used all of these but the root problem, that the BEF had been unprepared for the scale of their effort in comparison to previous wars, remained.

In addition to the inadequate level of production the QMG had to cope with what had become a multi-national army. The arrival of the Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) in late 1914 gave the BEF its multi-national character and also caused some difficulty. Due to the varying religious beliefs the Director of Supplies faced large variations in their ration requirements. The Director of Supplies, clearly frustrated, wrote a number of scathing entries in his war diary regarding these rationing problems, the most telling of which read, ‘The feeding of the Indians is becoming more difficult … As far as I can see in a very short time we shall have at least half a dozen different classes of rations for Indians.’ Further complicating matter, the IEF drew supplies over a dual line of communications, part from the channel ports and the rest from Marseilles. The combination of multiple ration classes and the dual line of communications gave GHQ’s administrators considerable difficulties but the BEF’s small size and desperate need for more men and formations drove the administration to find ways to deal with the IEF’s requirements. The IEF represented the leading edge of the BEF’s growth and, while the BEF remained relatively small, expedients and ad hoc adjustments to the way things got done sufficed.

21. WO 95/27, QMG Branch, War Diary, November 1914, Maxwell to Robertson, 1 November 1914.
22. Ibid., ‘Troopers’ to C-in-C, 2 November 1914; reply to QMG5b.
23. WO 95/74, Director of Supplies, War Diary, October 1914 to January 1915, 3 November 1914. See also entries for 6, 8, and 13 November 1914.
Burgeoning manpower brought a corresponding increase in equine numbers that demanded a substantial change in the overall amount of supplies sent to France. Robertson wrote to Cowans on 16 December expressing frustration with the number of horses attached to the BEF’s cavalry divisions and brigades, which he felt would not be of any use in the trench warfare being experienced in France and complaining that ‘the cavalry take, as you know, by far the greater proportion of the lorries we have, with their double echelon of M[otorised] T[ransport] and their enormous requirements in hay’. When added to increased requirements for horses in artillery and ASC units due to the mud in the front areas, one can understand this frustration. Based on the establishments of the original divisions, admittedly not uniform, the horse and manpower requirements for the fighting services alone grew enormously. Although the cavalry comprised only 16.7 per cent of the manpower available to the BEF, their horses represented 34.4 per cent of the horsepower. Since much of the horse power found itself effectively idled by trench warfare, Robertson’s complaint is easily understood.

With the growth, and prospect of armies on the horizon (as opposed to mere corps) the IGC (Maxwell) suggested to Robertson that ‘the time is not far distant when any great increase of formations from England will necessitate the consideration of having two Lines of Communication for the maintenance of the Army, and these lines will have to be to a certain extent independent in so far as their organisation and administration are concerned’. The *Field Service Regulations* prescribed this (the creation of a B line of communications), but raised the spectre of a fifth senior administrative officer—the CGS, QMG, AG, and two IGCs (one for each line of communications). Given the teething troubles with the original IGC’s unclear mandate in 1914, there would have been serious difficulty with two in 1915, and perhaps more later as the BEF continued to expand and potentially added additional lines of communication. The *Field Service Regulations* are not clear on how two IGCs would have split control of the Directors at their headquarters; suffice to say that the issue would have been even less satisfactory than the original one. Maxwell, however, had no other option having received estimates which indicated that ‘in the very near future’ the strength of the BEF would reach 706,200 men and 244,200 horses—more than double the strength then being fed. Maxwell’s concern is easily understood as is his solution: two lines of communications capable of feeding 850,000 men and 360,000 horses.

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25. Robertson to Cowans, 16 December 1914, Robertson Papers I/7/45, LHCMA.
26. Robertson to Cowans, 12 November 1914, Robertson Papers I/7/2, LHCMA.
27. An ‘A’ line based on Le Havre and Rouen for 350,000 men and 120,000 horses and a ‘B’ line based on Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk for 500,000 men and 240,000 horses.
Although initially opposed to the creation of army commands within the BEF, Robertson ultimately agreed to them, in part, because he found himself forced to make the decision that, while supplying eighteen stationary divisions remained feasible, they could not be supplied while moving—either advancing or retreating—and the BEF, not yet cognisant of the crippling effect of per diems, still planned to move. Robertson’s ultimate sanction of the creation of army commands came, in considerable measure, from the prodding of the IGC, who recognised that many problems might be avoided by testing the system before it became too large. On 20 December 1914, Maxwell again raised the issue, writing Robertson to suggest that the BEF be immediately split into two armies. Maxwell felt that the extra administrative level that would be created when army headquarters came into existence might complicate supply arrangements, and he wanted to determine how the new system would work while the BEF remained of a manageable size. In other words, he wanted to try out the new system while he retained the capability to revert to the old one should it not succeed. At the same time, this effort represented a subtle prod from the IGC to indicate wharfage needs and thus reinforced his views on the second line of communications. By arguing in favor of an immediate split, on the issue of manageability, Maxwell may have hoped to make Robertson ask himself why the IGC had such concerns. Reluctant to tamper with the supply system until it became necessary, Robertson refused Maxwell’s request. Three days later Maxwell again wrote Robertson, to state, ‘I would submit for the Commander-in-Chief’s consideration that the time has come when some fairly definite policy as regards the future scheme for the maintenance of the Army is required to be laid down’. He went on to reiterate the numbers he had provided earlier in the month, stating that the maximum capacity of Havre, Boulogne, Rouen and Dieppe was 392,500 men and 166,500 horses and that, ‘as soon as this number is exceeded we must open Northern ports, therefore when the new armies arrive we cannot do without Calais and Dunkirk’. Finally, he noted that it took four to six weeks to get a new Base (base port) into operation, and that if a third new army arrived without his having access to Calais and Dunkirk, the BEF would need to use Ostend and Zeebrugge—both of which happened to be in German hands. In addition, the French would need to be persuaded to allow more railway traffic to be dedicated to the BEF’s use. Maxwell’s anxiety regarding the new level of administration can be understood by examining the huge demands placed by the new armies. He had, for example, on 21 December, received a letter from the Director of Supplies advising that the hay ration for horses should be cut during the winter because the 11,018 tons of forage per week required for the BEF’s 125,000 to 130,000 horses had begun causing

28. WO 95/3951, IGC, War Diary, December 1914, QMG to IGC, 20 December 1914; QMG to IGC, 22 December 1914, entries 819 and 854.
29. Ibid, QMG to IGC, 23 December 1914, entry 853.
30. Ibid.
considerable strain.\textsuperscript{31} The addition of up to a quarter of a million more horses to support the projected strength of the New Armies must have caused Maxwell tremendous unease.

Maxwell had to find some way to force the issue without overstepping his ill-defined office. In January, Robertson experienced first-hand the problem that his refusal to raise the ports question had posed the IGC. At this time Robertson wrote to tell Maxwell that Kitchener had ‘hit him with a bomb’—the proposal that the BEF do away with base ports in France which, at the time, was where the BEF kept its reserve stocks. Maxwell responded by informing Robertson that he had, indeed, been discussing that very possibility with General Sir John Cowans, the British Army’s Quartermaster General, who must have discussed the issue with Kitchener. He went on to explain that he and Cowans had been thinking of making England the main base of the Expeditionary Force and planned to load ships in England such that they could be directly off-loaded onto trains in France. In theory, this would allow him to leave only fifteen days’ supplies in France. He stated that, ‘provided the Railways could get the stuff out of Havre and Rouen we could by working 24 hours daily in shifts, in lieu of 12 as now, deal with twice the quantity of stuff by direct loading to train from ship’.\textsuperscript{32} By reducing the reserves at the base ports, Maxwell could reduce the space needed to handle supplies there, as at that time the BEF off-loaded supplies from ships to trans-shipping facilities where they held them briefly before loading on to supply trains destined for the front. Direct loading would cut out this step, but would require a great deal more planning on both sides of the Channel. In fact, direct loading was something of a mirage. The potential savings in its use would have been difficult to obtain in 1915 because the War Office and GHQ did not plan jointly, so GHQ often had little idea of the manifests of ships arriving in France. Without better co-ordination direct loading would have failed. However, Maxwell used its threat as a goad, and went on to say that Dunkirk was the key. Given access to Dunkirk, he could continue to supply the Army using current methods; if the French denied them access, or, it must be presumed, if Robertson did not force the issue, direct loading would become the only viable option, as the projected force would require 4 400 tons of food and forage per day. The somewhat ironic nature of these discussions between IGC and CGS is revealed by the fact that, as Figure 4 showed, the BEF exceeded Cowans’s projected 727,000 man strength in France during August. The IGC achieved this without direct loading in part by making much better use of existing ports and in large measure by getting access to the additional ports and wharfage for which he had campaigned so hard. The IGC and QMG also decided that, while the two lines of communication Maxwell proposed would be required, only one

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid, IGC to QMG, 24 December 1914, regarding Director of Supplies to IGC, 21 December 1914, entry 858.

\textsuperscript{32} WO 95/3952, IGC, War Diary, January 1915, Maxwell to Robertson, 3 January 1915, entry 1005.
IGC would actually be needed. He would control both lines—a most pragmatic and sensible decision. This resulted in the Northern and Southern Lines, and GHQ split up the IGC’s headquarters personnel to staff these new lines.

The static front and a pragmatic outlook allowed the QMG and IGC to make logistical improvements that better supplied their troops while reducing the paperwork required to keep that supply flowing. In particular, they replaced a rather inefficient ‘pull’ system of supply with a standardised ‘push’ system supplemented by ‘pull’ capability. In 1914 and early 1915, each unit requested the supplies it believed it needed on a regular basis. At the same time, the IGC attempted to predict the pull and try to have the requirements already in transit. This worked reasonably well early on but caused problems as the BEF expanded. The amount of paperwork involved forced the Director of Supplies on 18 May 1915 to try out the idea of pushing up a standard ‘divisional pack’ for each division and its sub-units containing that formation’s typical daily requirements. The QMG supported the concept and gave it his official approval a month later. Following favourable reports from corps and armies, the divisional pack became standard in the BEF on 11 July 1915.  

Extra needs in preparation for anything out of the ordinary could be demanded (pulled) by formations, and the new system worked quite smoothly. Ironically, the stable front and shell crisis helped in this regard by allowing the Director of Supplies the time to devise and test the system while under a relatively light load—heavy fighting might have caused delays and more serious problems down the road.

The divisional pack, though ultimately a great success, did not provide an instant panacea because the fighting in the winter and spring of 1914–15 had left the BEF with a number of formations of varying size. Cowans wrote, ‘owing to the sedentary situation a patchwork system may meet the case, but not if any advance of retirement be necessary. I am convinced the present organisation would not have stood the strain of the retreat from Mons’. While the change to divisional packing likely exacerbated some issues while the Director of Supplies implemented it, when the amount of paperwork involved in the 1914 methods is considered it is not surprising that the practical nature of the BEF’s senior officers led them to the eminently sensible divisional pack. Due to the stationary nature of the War, the problems faced by the patchwork system, and by the expansion of the BEF, proved troublesome, but less than had the War been fluid.

In addition, the heavy casualties in 1914 depleted rapidly the supply of trained officers and forced GHQ to make shortsighted decisions regarding redistribution of administrative officers. By July 1915, concern over the lack of trained staff officers in combat formations led the AG to ask the IGC to see who he could release from administrative duties. The administrative echelons offered the only ready source of

33. WO 95/75, Director of Supplies, War Diary, January to December 1915, 11 July 1915.
34. First Ypres, for example, cost the BEF 2,298 officer casualties. See WO 95/25, AG Branch, War Diary, 30 November 1914.
fully trained officers in the BEF. The operations side of GHQ had a vested interest in getting trained officers into the fighting branches, but this meant the administrative side might lose men whose expertise made them extremely valuable. In early November the IGC had to fight to maintain his bases in a short-staffed position. The IGC’s lukewarm response to suggestions that he release experienced administrative officers for the front lines instead of keeping them doing valuable work in rear areas, proved an upstream battle in a system that devalued administration in favour of operations and command. The IGC, facing the loss of three of his most important Base Commandants wrote ominously, ‘[w]e shall carry on whatever happens, and make the show go, but you will certainly be trying us a bit, and there is always a breaking point’. What the IGC hinted at, but never actually came out and bluntly stated, was that good administrative officers were probably more valuable to the BEF doing ‘safe’ administrative work on the line of communications than they would be in field commands and, until the administration had been sorted out, the BEF could not expect to succeed in their goal of advancing. Cowans’s response clearly indicated the growing pains the British Army and BEF were experiencing, even if only partially. He stated, ‘[t]he real truth is we are getting jolly hard up for good officers to do any of these jobs, particularly commanding Brigades in the field’. While the BEF needed officers at all levels, Brigade command should not have been as important as solid administration. Until GHQ’s administrative echelons had been properly sorted out, no amount of desire, planning, offensive spirit or wishful thinking could move the lines forward.

The paradox, of course, is that the BEF also felt keenly the shortage of trained administrative officers and few easy solutions existed. A partial and highly practical solution to the lack of staff officers had been suggested by the Director of Supplies (Clayton at that time) as early as late October 1914. He felt that civilians from large firms, such as Harrod’s, might be either loaned by their firms or enticed into volunteering by the provision of either warrant officer or temporary officer rank. Many civilians from such large firms possessed practical experience in moving consumer goods around Britain (and around the world) in a timely manner. In addition, the employees of the numerous British railway firms had practical expertise in moving freight and passengers in a timely manner around Britain. These former civilians could be used in essentially the same roles in France as they had filled with their firms in Britain. Their age would not necessarily be a handicap and in fact might have been advantageous as an older, experienced civilian could free a man of serving age for front line duty, and would, himself, be less likely to be combed out for combat in the future. What they lacked

35. WO107/15, Clayton to Cowans, 8 July 1915.
37. WO 95/74, Director of Supplies, War Diary, October 1914 to January 1915, 27 October 1914. See also 18 and 21 November 1914, and 1 January 1915 in WO 95/74; and WO 95/75, Director of Supplies, War Diary, January to December 1915, 1 January 1915.
was military experience, but military requirements could be taught more easily than the effective distribution of materiel. The fact that young officers might be freed for front line duty by the employment and temporary commissioning of civilian expertise did not mean that it could occur overnight, however, and the BEF still needed young men at a ferocious rate.

Concurrent with the preparations and planning for Neuve Chapelle, a very important discussion took place regarding the Bassin Loubet (one of the docking basins in the Port of Boulogne) which had the potential to radically alter the way in which the BEF operated that port and test just such a mix of civilians and military men. As early as 9 January 1915, the QMG had indicated that he felt the Bassin Loubet, including the railways, needed to be under some sort of central administration. This may have been prompted by the Director of Railway Traffic’s comment to his Deputy that insufficient use was being made of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Company’s (SE&C Railway) personnel, ‘who have practically been placed at our disposal by Mr Dent, General Manager’. At the time, the Royal Navy had control of shipping up to and while vessels were docked in Boulogne, workers in the port unloaded the ships under the direction of British officers, while the railways were controlled by the French railway authorities. This led to inefficiency, both as ships unloaded, and while trains both loaded and re-marshaled simultaneously at the port. Robertson also favoured using Francis Dent’s services to aid the Base Commandant in Boulogne. Dent was actually a civilian at the time of the discussions, yet the administration of the BEF was not put off by this fact. Rather, they took the pragmatic approach that the SE&C Railway had worked extensively with French Railways (particularly the Nord Railway system that served much of the BEF’s area) prior to the War, and that the approach was worth trying if it increased the efficiency of the Bassin Loubet. The discussion proceeded through various channels and concluded on 23 February with the Commander-in-Chief writing the Secretary of State for War to suggest that the SE&C Railway control the Bassin Loubet. On 25 February, the IGC also wrote Kitchener to ask that Dent be empowered to act as the War Office’s agent in Boulogne. In spite of the urgency of the request, the War Office delayed, possibly out of unwillingness to use civilians in such a fashion, and

38. WO 95/3976B, Director of Railways, War Diary, October 1914 to July 1916, DRT to DDRT, 12 November 1914, Appendix to December 1914. F. H. Dent, later Sir Francis Dent, had been a member of the Railway Executive Committee formed in 1912 to prepare to nationalise Britain’s railways in time of war.
40. WO 95/3976B, Director of Railways, War Diary, October 1914 to July 1916, Commander-in-Chief to The Secretary of State for War, 23 February 1915, Appendix to March 1915; WO 95/3953, IGC, War Diary, February 1915, IGC to the Secretary of State for War, 25 February 1915, entry 1393. For the various discussions, see: WO 95/3953, IGC, War Diary, February 1915, IGC to Base Commandant (Boulogne), 1 February 1915; IGC to the Secretary of State for War, 4 February 1915; QMG to IGC, 7 February 1915; IGC to Principal Naval Transport Officer (Havre), 16 February 1915; ‘Proceedings of 2nd Meeting of Committee on Mr. Dent’s Scheme Held at Boulogne on 15th February 1915’, entries 1094, 1142, 1187, 1240.
possibly because they did not fully understand the administrative issue and the BEF’s need for a prompt response. This forced the IGC to raise the issue again on 5 March. The War Office did not inform him until 16 March when the Army Council approved the scheme. This, combined with physical improvements at Abbeville, Abancourt, and Boulogne, eased the worst of the supply difficulties—though the improvements were not to be fully completed until May.

During 1915, the BEF more than trebled in size and threw an immense problem at its administrators—how to both handle the expansion and provide for the BEF to fight at the same time. In only ten months the BEF absorbed a net 320 per cent increase in ration strength, not counting the replacement of wounded troops. At the end of the year, October through December, this explosive growth ceased for a short while. Yet, the fact that the BEF had grown by over 650,000 men between January and October makes the success of the administrative services most impressive. The greatest monthly influx had been July, where an additional 137,901 men added nearly 22 per cent to the BEF’s size. The lines of communication handled approximately one million men, 220,000 animals, 460,000 tons of forage, 305,000 tons of food, 120,000 tons of ammunition, and hundreds of thousands of tons of other stores during 1915. That the administration accomplished this without great hardship for the soldiers and animals being moved and supplied is a credit to the men working on the lines of communication in their unglamorous but vitally important side of the War. The expansion of port facilities and the railway allowance, the institution of divisional packing, the use of increasing numbers of civilians and civilians temporarily in uniform, the strengths of flexibility in the Field Service Regulations, and enlightened administration meant GHQ had coped with the difficulties of the year. The artillery crisis had the paradoxical effect of helping the administration by allowing them to focus on other things, such as tapping into the latent administrative expertise of civilians in Britain. This resulted in a system that was less flexible than the one set out in the Field Service Regulations but one that coped with the growth of 1915 and laid the groundwork for continued expansion and the ultimate successes of 1918.
Raising the American Expeditionary Forces: Early Decision Making in 1917

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When the United States entered the First World War on 6 April 1917, the obstacles it faced to raising, organising, training, and transporting an expeditionary force appeared truly overwhelming. During the period of neutrality, the nation had made few preparations for war. There were no fully organised divisions, corps or armies, and available active duty and reserve troops numbered fewer than 350,000. No attempt had been made to stockpile the artillery, tanks or airplanes the nation would surely need in the event that it entered the world war. The nation entered the war with 55 planes in questionable condition, enough artillery and ammunition to support approximately 220,000 men, and no tanks.¹ The Americans were somewhat more prepared with rifles, possessing enough to arm 890,000 troops.

It was only in the aftermath of the political decision to send a sizeable American force overseas that would retain its independent national identity and occupy its own sector of the Western Front that this lack of preparation became problematic. If Woodrow Wilson had followed his initial inclination to offer mainly material and financial to the Allies and send only a token force overseas, the nation would have been perfectly equipped for the mission ahead. Instead, the President quickly resolved that the United States needed to play a definitive role on the battlefield both to ensure an Allied victory and to place America in a powerful position to influence the eventual peace settlement. Within a few weeks of the American declaration of war, therefore, this one political decision largely defined the practical problems the country faced in sending an expeditionary force overseas which now included raising, training, and transporting a mass army, coordinating with Allies, and retaining the American Expeditionary Force’s (AEF) national identity and independence to conduct combat operations.

'I hope you have not arrived too late.' This was the greeting that General John J. Pershing received from the American Ambassador to France upon his arrival in Paris, a mere two months after the American declaration of war. By 11 November 1918, the Americans would look back over the past nineteen months and marvel that they had managed to raise an army of over four million men, transport two million to France, and command a field army of 1.2 million in a major offensive operation along the Western Front. The latter accomplishment was contrary to all expectations in 1917. For the first eight months of the war, the United States kept its sights firmly fixed on 1919 as the period when American forces would make their decisive contribution to the war. Many of the criticisms made of American combat operations in the fall of 1918—the disorganisation in the rear, the high casualty tolls, constantly changing leadership—were symptomatic of an army forced to fight before it was ready. A sustained look at policymaking and early decisions in 1917, therefore, tells perhaps more about the way Americans wanted to fight, then predicting how unforeseen events would eventually determine the fate of the AEF in 1918. At the same time, however, the United States made many key decisions in 1917, especially concerning conscription, training, and strategy that proved decisive. For a look at both the war that was and the war that was not, 1917 was a most interesting year in the history of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The American Army on the Eve of the War

From 1914-1917, the professional military establishment in the United States did not completely ignore the war in Europe, but with Congress only willing to authorise a small increase in the size of the Regular Army, there was little the army could do to prepare adequately to enter the fray at a moment’s notice. Doing their best to keep up with the innovations emerging from Europe, professional military journals published scores of articles analysing new developments in tactics and weapons, while the army translated and distributed documents from foreign armies to its staff. In addition, internal reforms in 1916 increased federal control over the training of state-maintained National Guard units and authorised the president to send these state militia troops outside the United States. These changes helped centralise planning and control over manpower resources within the army on the eve of the war.

As late as 1916, war plans prepared by the Army General Staff in the event of war with Germany focused on protecting the United States from invasion. In part, this preoccupation with the defence of the United States was justified. In 1916, the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa organised a raid across the Mexican-American border. Concern about

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the nation’s territorial integrity also figured prominently in the American decision to enter the world war the following year when Germany resumed unconditional submarine warfare and began sinking American ships headed to Britain. In February, 1917 the German Foreign Minister Alfred Zimmermann made a bungled attempt to encourage Mexico to attack the United States. When British intelligence operatives intercepted the telegram and turned it over to the United States, it only confirmed American suspicions of Germany’s hostile intentions towards the United States.

The mobilisation of the country’s military resources to subdue Villa served as a dress rehearsal of sorts for the following year. General John J. Pershing led 12,000 Regular Army troops into Mexico while 158,000 state militia troops were called into federal service to guard the border. The Punitive Expedition earned Pershing a national reputation that made him the logical choice to head the American Expeditionary Forces in 1917, and gave the civilian soldiers called into service a smattering of training. Pershing’s expedition into Mexico covered hundreds of miles and included possibilities for manoeuvring on open battlefields that did not exist along the Western Front. When Pershing began to develop his strategic plan for fighting in France, his recent experience fighting in Mexico, for better or worse, strongly influenced his decision to make open warfare the cornerstone of American doctrine. The expedition also made clear the nation’s woeful lack of preparation to fight the kind of industrial war raging in Europe. Each infantry regiment, for instance, only carried four machine guns into Mexico, at the exact same time that millions of European soldiers faced machine gun slaughter on an unprecedented scale along the Western Front. Congress made a gesture towards closing this gap by authorising $12 million for machine gun development, a measure that had little discernable impact by April 1917.4

Given the distance that most Americans felt from events in Europe it was perhaps fitting that it took an American military attaché in Greece to envision the unthinkable: sending American troops to Europe. In 1916, Captain Edward Davis took the initiative and developed a plan to send a force of 500,000 American troops overseas in the event of war with Germany.5 Describing Macedonia as the soft underbelly of the Central Power alliance, Davis proposed landing the American force in Salonika and launching a campaign to force Bulgaria out of the war. Davis’s plan received serious consideration by the Army War College and Secretary of War Newton E. Baker in the months leading up to America’s declaration of war in April 1917. Once the United States actually entered the war, Baker and the War College quickly endorsed committing American troops to France, yet the competing Salonika proposal continued to intrigue President

Woodrow Wilson. When British Prime Minister David Lloyd George voiced increasing scepticism about achieving a breakthrough on the Western Front and suggested seeking an advantage in the eastern theatres, Wilson asked the War College to give Macedonia a second look. The War College obediently studied the Macedonia proposal more thoroughly, but concluded that ‘the Western Front is nearest to us; it can be most readily reached and with the least danger; we there fight with England and France with whom we have the greatest natural interests; and we can make our power felt on that front quicker and stronger than anywhere else; and we are there opposed by Germany, who is our only real enemy’. The search for an alternative to sending American troops to fight along the Western Front therefore ended by November. From this point on, the United States focused its attention almost exclusively on France and only grudgingly sent small contingents of American troops to Italy and North Russia.

Although nothing came of it, the exercise of considering another point of entry into the war revealed the misgivings that many Americans felt about sending American troops into the bloody morass that had produced cataclysmic casualties at the Somme and Verdun. This sentiment was expressed best by Senator Thomas S. Martin, who when he heard of the War Department’s initial request for $3 billion to equip the wartime force, exclaimed, ‘Good Lord! You’re not going to send soldiers over there, are you?’

**Drafting an Army**

The decision to send the American Army to fight over 3,000 miles away was an historic precedent for the United States, and another precedent was quickly set with the decision to immediately implement a wartime draft. In previous wars, the government had waited until enlistments began to wane before introducing conscription. This time, Congress agreed to institute a draft without delay before the AEF commander General John J. Pershing had determined exactly how many men the army would need. The legislators initially intended to maintain the traditional American practice of using conscription to spur enlistments. An expanded Regular Army and National Guard continued to accept volunteers, while a new yet-to-be formed National Army was reserved for conscripts. For those who agreed with congressman James Beauchamp Clark’s view that ‘there is precious little difference between a conscript and a convict’, volunteering was expected

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6. War College Division study, October 1917, quoted in David F. Trask, *The AEF and Coalition Warmaking, 1917-1918* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 7. The point of Germany being the only real enemy was well-taken since the United States never declared war on Bulgaria or the Ottoman Empire, and waited until 7 December 1917 to declare war on Austria-Hungary, which it did in part to prevent Italy from leaving the war.

to prove a more appealing way to enter the wartime military. One potential draftee explained his decision to volunteer this way to his father: ‘You remember what Phil said about being two jumps ahead of the draft, that also has a very practical value which you do not seem to realize’, Greager Clover wrote in July, 1917. ‘You can pick any branch you want now, later they pick you.’

The past weighed heavily on nearly every decision about how to conduct the draft. The nation’s last experience with conscription had been in the final two years of the Civil War from 1863-65. In that conflict, opposition to the draft became the catalyst for race riots and much anti-government sentiment. Provost Marshal Enoch H. Crowder resolved to avoid certain particularly objectionable features of the Civil War draft, including visits by federal agents to individual houses to register potential conscripts and allowing men to pay a substitute to serve in their place. Instead, the federal government resolved to funnel its requests for men through 4,647 local boards. These ‘friends and neighbors’ granted exemptions and selected soldiers for the wartime army. To register men for the draft, again in deference to lessons learned from the past, the government replaced individual house visits by federal agents with a national day of celebration. On 5 June 1917, ten million men between the ages of 21 and 30 registered amid patriotic festivals throughout the nation. The government also took heed of the popular perception that a draft forced reluctant men into the army by referring to conscription as ‘selective service’. Selective service, the government repeatedly told the American public, was a modern management technique designed to place men where they could best serve the war effort. The caption on one wartime propaganda poster perfectly encapsulated the government’s message: ‘Selective draft and Service not like the old-time conscription of the unwilling, the President says. It is rather a selection from a Nation which volunteers in mass.’

The initial experiences of local boards in selecting men revealed that registering men was not the same thing as raising an army. In 1917, local boards dismissed nearly two-thirds of the three million men they called into service. One million were declared physically unfit for service, while local boards granted another one million exemptions to workers in critical wartime industries, men with dependents, immigrants with no intention of becoming American citizens, and those with religious objections to fighting the war. The government had hoped to put most of the remaining million in uniform by September 1917, but shortages in clothing and equipment forced the government to stagger the first draft call well into 1918.

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It soon became evident that the nation was not volunteering en masse to support the cause. Enlistments came in fits and bursts, as individuals weighed their chances of being drafted and their desire to control where they served. Alongside the national efforts to register, exam, and select draftees, the Regular Army and National Guard launched massive recruitment drives to bring their units up to war strength. When the United States declared war on Germany, the Regular Army consisted of 121,797 enlisted men and 5,791 officers. The National Guard, whose units were controlled by state governors until President Wilson drafted them into federal service, stood at 174,008 enlisted men and 7,612 officers.\textsuperscript{11} Volunteering fell off throughout the late summer and fall after the War Department decided the order in which numbers assigned to draft registrants would be called. In September 1917 when the army began inducting 324,248 of the 687,000 slated for the first draft round, for example, only 24,367 men volunteered. Enlistments for the army then picked up dramatically in December when the War Department announced that after 15 December 1917 draft registrants could no longer volunteer except for service in specialised branches, the Navy or Marines.\textsuperscript{12} That month, 141,931 men voluntarily entered the army ranks. As the Provost Marshal noted, ‘there persisted always, for many at least, the desire to enter military service, if needs must, by enlistment rather than by draft—that is, to enter voluntarily in appearance at least’.\textsuperscript{13} With few opportunities remaining to enlist, the ratio of volunteers to conscripts changed dramatically over the next year. Draftees went from representing 43 per cent of the armed forces in December 1917 to making up 72 per cent of the American army by November 1918.

The lacklustre pace of enlistment throughout most of 1917 took Army officials by surprise, and the army eventually revised its initial decision to maintain three distinct military entities within the American Expeditionary Forces. At first, War Department planners intended to form Regular Army divisions solely out of volunteers who enlisted for the duration, National Guard divisions that represented distinct states or regions, and then finally National Army divisions that drew their personnel from the draft. In 1917, well before the need to replace battle casualties played any role in diluting the makeup of the Regular Army and National Guard, the War Department found itself forced to funnel conscripts into these divisions to bring them up to war strength. As one postwar report

\textsuperscript{11} John Dickinson, \textit{The Building of An Army} (New York: Century Co., 1922), 86-8. It took until May 1918 to fill the first draft quota of 687,000 initial troops and a replacement reserve of 300,000. ‘Replacement of Personnel in the American Expeditionary Forces in France’, Thomas File #3347, Entry 310, Record Group 165, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter NA, MD).

\textsuperscript{12} When Congress expanded the draft to include men from the ages of 18-45, the War Department stopped accepting any volunteers into the army, navy or marines in August 1918. Until that point, an average of 25,000 men volunteered each month, as compared to monthly inductions that ranged from 100,000-400,000 per month in 1918. Over the course of the war, the Regular Army and National Guard enlisted 230,509 and 296,978 men. Office of the Provost Marshal General, \textit{Second Report of the Provost Marshal General to the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Selective Service System to December 20, 1918} (Washington, DC: GPO, 1919), 223.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 224.
noted, in 1917 ‘the estimates of 200,000 men from the National Army necessary to fill the Regular Army and National Guard units to their authorised strength were found to be approximately 100,000 short of the actual needs’. By the end of 1917 the American wartime army was already well on its way to becoming a national mass army, although it took the War Department until April 1918 to formally eliminate Regular Army and National Guard designations and rename all divisions components of the United States Army.

Lack of enthusiasm for voluntary military service was one early factor in diluting the regional identity of National Guard units. Equally important was the systematic campaign initiated by the War Department to use the war to weaken the National Guard’s autonomy. Since the turn of the century, the Regular Army’s drive to either professionalise, control, or eliminate the National Guard had dominated army politics. The firm control that professional career soldiers and West Point Academy graduates exercised over the planning and organising of the AEF was a substantial victory for the professional military establishment. The mandate to build a wartime army now gave the Regular Army an opportunity to fulfill its dream of professionalising the National Guard. For the first time in American history, political clout was not enough to secure a commission. Regular Army inspectors visiting National Guard units inevitably attributed poor discipline to deficiencies intrinsic to the citizen-soldier ideal of the National Guard, which they sought to replace with the professional standards of West Point. ‘Irresponsibility and unwieldiness are the dominant characteristics, and discipline is an unmeaning and inapplicable word to apply to these National Guard Divisions’, fumed one inspector after touring six National guard Divisions. This inspector was particularly incensed that one battalion in the 31st Division felt it was their right to have the day after the Thanksgiving holiday off and simply failed to show up for trench training. French advisers working in the training camps offered a similarly dismissive appraisal of the National Guard, claiming that ‘false democratic sentiment’ created lax discipline and led to too much socialising between ranks after hours.

The campaign to professionalise the National Guard by improving the training and quality of its officers was part of the much broader effort to cull the general officer corps and train large numbers of capable line officers quickly throughout the entire army. From the beginning, Pershing insisted on youth and vigour in his general officers, and secured from Baker the authority to replace any general officers he found unsuitable.

15. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 8 December 1917, file #10049-15, Entry 296, RG 165, NA, MD.
17. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War, I: 231.
In 1917, the War Department also created a system of officer training camps for line officers modeled on the semi-official summer camps for businessmen that General Leonard Wood had organised in the wake of the Lusitania sinking in 1915. From 15 May–11 August 1917, the War Department sponsored sixteen Officers’ Training Camps for 30,000 civilians and 7,957 Reserve Corps officers, and offered commissions to 27,341 graduates. By the end of the war, the army had trained 182,000 officers, including nearly half in officer training camps.¹⁸

Many officers continued their training in France, where an elaborate system of officers’ schools honed the skills of these ‘90 day wonders’. At the end of the war, Brigadier General H. B. Fiske felt compelled to defend this system of training officers which critics lamented took officers away from their men for too long. Because the major fighting came much earlier than expected, some of the AEF’s most talented officers spent much of the war studying behind the lines rather than leading men into battle. ‘We frequently hear it said that the best school for war is war. No idea could, however, be more fallacious’, Fiske wrote. ‘One has only to visualize the conditions at the front to appreciate how limited is the view of any man and how little opportunity he has to understand what is actually occurring and why … If he cannot understand the how and the why of what is happening on the battlefield, he cannot there learn to make successful war. Service in battle hardens officers and men, an important part of training, but it does not school them.’¹⁹

**Racial Politics within the American Army**

Balancing external and internal politics guided many decisions related to the draft, and in no area was this truer than in conscripting black troops. Negotiating the minefield of American race relations created a thorny dilemma for the military by pitting its driving need for capable soldiers against the civilian concern (especially in the South) that military training for blacks would destabilise race relations by increasing the chances for armed conflict between whites and blacks. Policies intended to raise an effective and combat-worthy expeditionary force had to pass more than the test of expediency. Instead, manpower policies that contained social or economic ramifications deemed unacceptable by the larger society soon became politically impossible to implement, regardless of whatever merits they had from a military standpoint.

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On the eve of the declaration of war, Assistant Chief of Staff Major General Tasker Bliss outlined the dilemma facing the army in a private letter to General Robert K. Evans. Bliss wrote:

In talking with the southern members of Congress I find a very natural repugnance to the idea, due to their own local conditions. It is not that they disbelieve in more or less universal training on principle. But they do not like the idea of looking forward five or six years by which time their entire male negro population will have been trained to arms. It is a serious problem. As you know, the negroes seem to take naturally to military service and at this moment at the snap of a finger we could recruit all of our colored regiments to war strength and raise plenty more.\(^{20}\)

A week later, in official correspondence, Bliss further attested to the military value of the Regular Army’s two black infantry and two black cavalry regiments, noting that their ‘loyalty is not to be questioned’.\(^{21}\) But his private comment about southern resistance to universal training proved predictive of the region’s reaction to the idea of training black soldiers as combatants and underscored how political rather than strictly military considerations affected the fate of black soldiers during the war.

As Bliss had suggested, the 4,000 slots available to black volunteers in Regular Army and National Guard united filled quickly. Now the issue became organising the black draft. From the beginning the army considered more than its own manpower needs in deciding how many black troops to raise from the draft, where to assign them, and how to train them.

The concentration of the black population in the South presented the War Department with two controversial possibilities: transferring large numbers of black draftees throughout the country to maintain an acceptable racial balance in each camp or placing black troops in southern training camps closest to their homes. Both solutions contained the risk of arousing strong regional objections. Southern communities had already protested in response to rumors that northern black National guard units would train in the South. The War Department was also concerned about inviting protests from the North if the army sent southern black draftees to train there. Brigadier General Joseph E. Kuhn, the Chief of the War College Division, advised that the recent ‘migration of colored men for labor from South to North is resented by the white labor element in the North; and the presence of colored regiments from the South in Northern cantonments might lead to as serious disturbances as their presence in Southern cantonments’.\(^{22}\)


\(^{21}\) Memorandum for the Adjutant General of the Army, 14 April 1917, file #8142-8, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.

\(^{22}\) Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 31 July 1917, file #8142-12, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
The War Department quickly concluded that the first approach offered the lesser of two evils by ensuring an overwhelming white majority in each camp. Except for this concession to existing racial prejudices, the first mobilisation plan accepted by the General Staff and approved by the Secretary of War on 31 July 1917 proposed a fairly equitable approach to absorbing the 75,540 black soldiers anticipated out of the first draft call of 687,000. The Chief of the War College Division acknowledged that his department had considered, then rejected, the possibility of assigning black soldiers solely to non-combatant positions in transportation, engineering, and bakery units or having black draftees serve primarily as cooks throughout the National Army preparing meals for white troops. Instead, the War Department embraced an initial plan that would train 45,000 (6 per cent) for combat and assign 30,000 (40 per cent) to communication and labor units. ‘The proportion of drafted colored men to be thus utilised will be approximately equal to the proportion of drafted white men to be used for similar [noncombatant] service’, the planning report concluded to underscore the War Department’s commitment to ‘no racial discrimination in the National Army’. Black regiments would ‘be an additional regiment to those included in the normal division’, suggesting that the US National Army, like the French Army, would include integrated battalions and divisions, although remain segregated on a regimental and company level.

This early plan gave black soldiers the opportunity to prove their valor and bravery on the field of battle and included at least a partial step toward organisational integration of the American armed forces. It was not, however, to be. Instead, during the war over 89 per cent of black soldiers served in non-combatant roles, with a mere 45,000 out of the 400,000 who eventually served assigned to combat divisions. Black combatants, furthermore, served in either the all-black 92nd Division or in four black regiments assigned individually to French divisions, not as part of integrated battalions or divisions in the US Army.

What happened? Within a month of announcing this plan, the War Department began revising this partial commitment to racial equality. Kuhn admitted that the July plan ‘would not solve racial problems; the subject was treated on the basis of service requirements’. But the army’s pressing need for infantry troops no longer dominated discussions on mobilising black troops. Instead, political pressure to maintain the status

23. The idea of using blacks as cooks in white units persisted throughout the war, although it was duly rejected each time it was suggested by divisional commanders. See for example. Division Commander, 81st Division, to Adjutant General, 31 August 1917, file #8142-21, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
24. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 31 July 1917, file #8142, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
25. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 21 August 1917, file #8142-17, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD. The Supreme Court ruled in 1896 that laws segregating public facilities were constitutional as long as they were ‘separate but equal’ in quality, a meaningless principle that sustained legal racial segregation in the United States until reversed by the Supreme Court in 1954.
quo of civilian race relations beyond simply segregating black and white regiments began to affect General Staff views on how incorporate blacks into the wartime army.

Upon taking a second look, a General Staff committee veered wildly in the opposite direction, even going as far as to study the feasibility of constructing ‘separate but equal’ training camps within a few miles of each other to segregate white and black troops both physically and organisationally.26 Kuhn studied the cost of constructing these additional camps and asked the Provost Marshal to examine the ramifications of delaying the induction of black troops until separate camps could be built. If these options proved too undesirable, Kuhn recommended at the very least scuttling any plan to assign black and white units to the same tactical organisations. In presenting this revised policy to the Secretary of War, Bliss acknowledged that the cost of building segregated camps was prohibitive. Instead, Bliss, newly appointed as acting Chief of Staff, embraced Kuhn’s recommendation to segregate the army completely. Bliss now claimed that creating a fifth black regiment for every division was ‘very objectionable from the military point of view’.27 A division, he maintained, consisted of four regiments and ‘our allies have insisted, and rightly so, that our organisation in the field much correspond with theirs’.

Bliss’s true motivation for suggesting a policy change became clear when he urged Baker to accept a new plan that delayed calling out the black draft until they could be quickly organised into Quartermaster and Engineer units and shipped to France. Bliss couched his appeal in both the rhetoric of military need and the realities of racial politics in the United States. The demand for laboring troops overseas was so great that even by absorbing the entire black draft in this way the army would still have to organise white service units, Bliss contended. He also saw significant political benefits to this approach. Service units required ‘a minimum of training under arms’, Bliss noted, and by getting black troops out of the country quickly, the chances for ‘trouble arising from racial differences’ in the training camps would disappear.

Through a twisted turn of fate, Bliss happened to submit his final recommendations on the morning following a clash between black Regular Army soldiers and white civilians in Houston, Texas. The Houston riot convinced a hesitant Baker that there was merit to Bliss’s claim that if either white or black troops got out of hand while training in the United States ‘nothing short of a national calamity would be the result’. Strict organisational segregation and using black draftees solely as labourers was now the official wartime policy.

26. Ibid. The sharp deviations that the American Army would take from the European divisional model were still far in the future when Bliss made these comments.
27. Memorandum for the Secretary of War, 24 August 1917, file #8142-17, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
White civilians, however, were not the only ones who had vocal representatives pleading their case to the government as the army decided the fate of black conscripts. The decision to assign all black draftees to noncombatant units immediately raised the question of what to do with the 622 black men expected to graduate with commissions from the Fort Des Moines Officers Training Camp for black men. Colonel P.D. Lochridge, acting director of the War College Division, suggested commissioning the graduates in the Officers Reserve Corps, but the Adjutant General pointed out that these men ‘would immediately use all the ‘influence’ they could bring to bear on the War Department to have themselves put on active duty.’

The leaders of national black organisations who had pressed hard for the Fort Des Moines camp joined with the officer candidates to mount a vigorous lobbying campaign when they got word in September that the candidates’ graduation would be delayed a month. All feared that the War Department was backing away from its promise to commission black officers. In reality, Secretary of War Baker had just approved yet another revised plan that created one black combatant division from the 40,000 black conscripts entering the army on 3 October 1917. The delay in graduation simply helped solve the problem of what to do with these black officers for the month between their original graduation date and the arrival of black conscripts in the training camps. Black civilians were right, however, in detecting a noticeable lack of official enthusiasm for black officers. War Department policy strictly limited where these officers could serve, mandating that all generals, headquarters officers, regimental adjutants, supply officers, commanding officers of engineer, ammunition, and supply trains, and all captains of field artillery units be white.

The creation of the 92nd Division was recognition of sorts that organised black opinion wielded some political clout. Bliss hoped that this concession to the African American community would make the larger policy more palpable. ‘The colored race, knowing that a combatant division is being formed, will realize that in the non-combatant service, they are doing no more than their share along with similar white troops, and there can be no reasonable cause for ill feeling’, Bliss wrote optimistically to Baker in September, 1917. Although the creation of the division did draw much black media attention away from noncombatants, the poor treatment of the 92nd Division ultimately invited rather than muted protests about discrimination. Despite the official announcement in August of strict organisational segregation, the idea of assigning black regiments to white divisions remained alive a bit longer. Confronted with the reality of sagging enlistments in the South, Army officials realised in November, 1917 that the white draft quota from the region was not large enough to fill these states’

28. Memorandum for the Secretary of War, 4 September 1917, file #8142-20, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
29. Memorandum for the Secretary of War, 7 September 1917, file #8142-25 and Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 10 September 1917, file #8142-20. Both in Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
30. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 20 October 1917, file #8142-34, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
three National Guard Divisions as well as its designated National Army Division, the 81st Division. Therefore, when the commander of the 81st Division at Camp Jackson, South Carolina, suggested bringing his division up to strength by incorporating an unauthorised black regiment that he had created, the War College Division approved his request. Any gathering momentum to return to the initial plan of creating integrated battalions and divisions in the National Army immediately evaporated, however, when the white commanders of National Guard divisions that had provisionally been assigned northern and western black National Guard companies, regiments, or battalions from their respective regions initiated a campaign to divest themselves of these units. The New England-based 26th Division sailed for France without its all-black companies from Massachusetts and Connecticut, while the 15th New York Regiment was rejected from inclusion in the 42nd Division, the so-called Rainbow Division that included units from 26 states, because ‘black is not a color of the rainbow’. The commander of the 33rd Division flatly refused to accept the black field officers of the 8th Illinois Infantry Regiment. The War Department finally resolved the matter by creating a provisional division to contain these disparate National Guard units and the Camp Jackson regiment. They were reorganised into four regiments, each of which went on to serve independently with the French in 1918.

Developing a Strategic Plan

Developing policies to raise the wartime army consumed the attention of the General Staff in 1917. Well before the draft called even one man into uniform, AEF Commander-in-Chief General John J. Pershing was in France devising a strategic plan to determine how many men he would need, the training they would receive, where they would fight, who would command them and how they would get to France. In Pershing’s one and only wartime meeting with President Wilson, the two discussed Pershing’s recent adventures in Mexico and his acquaintances in France without the President ever mentioning America’s role in the war. Wilson preferred to let military professionals handle the details of actually winning the war, and only demanded that the American contribution to the final victory be large enough to guarantee the United States a leading role in shaping diplomatic relations in the postwar world. As Pershing biographer Donald

32. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 1 November 1917, file #8142-38 and 7 November 1917. Both in Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
34. Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 13 November 1917, file #8142-46 and Memorandum for the Chief of Staff, 2 January 1918, file #8142-64. Both in Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
35. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War, I: 37.
Smythe aptly notes, ‘perhaps no field commander in history was ever given a freer hand to conduct operations than was Pershing by Wilson’. 36

Secretary of War Baker offered a bit more guidance, instructing Pershing that ‘in military operations against the Imperial German Government, you are directed to cooperate with the forces of the other countries employed against the enemy; but in so doing the underlying idea must be kept in view that the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved’. 37 Except for outlining these general principles, Baker later recalled, he gave Pershing ‘only two orders, one to go to France and the other to come home’. 38

The journey toward creating an American-controlled sector of the Western Front began in the summer of 1917 when Pershing developed an overall strategic plan for of the AEF. From the outset, Pershing insisted on taking the time to organise an independent American army capable of commanding and supplying a large-scale military operation. War Department officials and Pershing agreed that such an army would not be ready for battle until 1918 at the earliest; 1919 to make a decisive impact. In July, Pershing told the War Department that he wanted one million men in France by May 1918, half of whom would head for the trenches. 39 In the General Organisation Project that he submitted that same month, Pershing urged the War Department to make preparations to equip three million troops by 1919. 40

Besides establishing the basic parameters for the size and shape of his overseas force, Pershing and his small staff immediately set to work reading maps, touring the front, and studying supply routes to decide where the AEF would fight. In the end, they settled on taking over the Lorraine sector of the front, exactly where the French wanted them. From the French perspective, placing American troops in this relatively inactive sector far from the British would ensure French influence over training and even combat operations involving American troops. Railroads also connected this region to ports in Brest on lines running south of Paris, thus avoiding already overtaxed routes straining to supply the French and British further north. For the Americans, the Lorraine sector offered advantages as well. Many of Pershing’s staff officers were already intimately familiar with the terrain in Lorraine as a result of intensive pre-war study of the 1870

40. *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919*, I: 4-5. In this report, Pershing also outlined a six-phased schedule of shipping priorities that envisioned sending a complete corps (consisting of four combat divisions, a training division, and a replacement division) with a smattering of support troops in each of the first five phases.
Franco-Prussian War. Perhaps more importantly, Pershing believed that the key German railroad lines and iron mines above Metz and the coal mines in the Saar gave the AEF the kind of targets that would help Pershing fulfill his goal of launching a definitive attack in 1919.41

With the selection of Metz as the AEF’s key target, breaking out of the trenches to resume a war of movement became a strategic necessity since attacking Metz meant fighting in the open terrain on either side of the Moselle Valley.42 Open warfare, Pershing’s mantra throughout the war, was not conceived in a strategic bubble, but rather was a concept that fitted perfectly with Pershing’s dual goals of taking Metz and developing a distinctly American combat doctrine. In open warfare, Pershing had an approach that not only justified, but required, the creation of an independent American army.

‘It was my opinion’, Pershing wrote in his memoirs, ‘that the victory could not be won by the costly process of attrition, but it must be won by driving the enemy out into the open and engaging him in a war of movement’.43 Pershing derived this principle from the strategic goals his staff had developed for the AEF in 1919, his own professional formation, and finally his reading of what had gone wrong for the Allies on the Western Front. Trench warfare, the AEF commander concluded, had weakened the aggressive spirit of the Allied forces, and now their troops fought ineffectively when forced out of the trenches and into the open battlefield. As a tactical strategy, Pershing defined the difference between trench and open warfare as follows:

Trench warfare is marked by uniform formations, the regulations of space and time by higher command down to the smallest details, absence of scouts preceding the first wave, fixed distances and intervals between units and individuals, voluminous orders, careful rehearsal, little initiative upon the part of the individual soldier. Open warfare is marked by scouts who precede the first wave, irregularity of formation, comparatively little regulations of space and time by the higher command, the greatest possible use of the infantry’s own fire power to enable it to get forward, variable distances and intervals between units and individuals, use of every form of cover and accident of the ground during the advance, brief orders, and the greatest possible use of individual initiative by all troops engaged in the actions.44

41. Historian Allan Millett has questioned the selection of Metz as a decisive target, pointing out that the critical railroad line that Pershing expected to cut at Metz actually turned west much further north at Thionville, while the key coal and iron reserves Pershing intended to seize in the Saar region only accounted for ten percent of Germany’s available resources. Allan R. Millett, ‘Over Where? The AEF and the American Strategy for Victory, 1917-1918’, 239, in Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present, eds Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986).
43. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War, I: 152.
44. Combat Instructions, September 5, 1918, United States Army in the World War, II : 491.
To further this goal of open warfare, Pershing decided to form divisions that were twice the size of their Allied counterparts, each with nearly 28,000 men. The hope was that their increased strength would give these units greater staying power in the field as the American Army surged forward towards Metz. ‘With the deep and very powerful defense developed in the World War, no decisive stroke could be secured in battle without a penetration necessitating several days of steady fighting’, Brigadier General James Harbord, Pershing’s chief of staff, later wrote in his memoirs. ‘It was thus reasoned that the infantry of the division must be of such strength as to permit it to continue in combat for such a number of days that the continuity of battle would not be interrupted before decision was reached.’

Open warfare privileged the firepower of the infantry over the artillery, a preference apparent when Pershing rejected an early suggestion by Colonel Charles P. Summerall to double the size of both the infantry and artillery. As a result, American divisions went into combat with the same sized artillery as European divisions half their size.

With his sights fixed firmly on 1919, Pershing rebuffed Allied suggestions to amalgamate American troops into their standing armies and set about defining a training program to ready the expeditionary force for the task ahead. In outlining the general principles governing the training of the AEF, Pershing underscored that ‘the methods to be employed must remain or become distinctly our own’. The aim of all training was to undertake a vigorous offensive, he continued, asserting that despite the ‘special features’ of combat along the Western Front the rifle and bayonet remained the principal weapon of the infantry soldier. ‘An aggressive spirit must be developed until the soldier feels himself, as a bayonet fighter, invincible in battle’, Pershing maintained. To underscore how differently Pershing expected his troops to fight, trainers in the camps emphasised to recruits that Americans’ innate individualism and aggressiveness made them naturally superior to French, British, and German soldiers. Senior officers, who predicted the war would last another two years, believed that unless American soldiers maintained an aggressive determination to win, they would be unable to fight for that long.

Alongside this emphasis on developing individual marksmanship and combat skills, came Pershing’s dictum for how to turn civilians quickly into professional fighting men. Quite simply, he declared, the standards of discipline in the American Army must be

47. ‘The General Principles Governing the Training of Units of the American Expeditionary Forces’, October, 1917, file #7541-60, Entry 296, Record Group 165, NA, MD.
those of West Point. In this expectation, Pershing set a goal that his officers would never achieve.48 In 1917, the emphasis was solely on teaching men to obey, and like many other early ideas, this one underwent some modification over time. With so much to teach its new civilian force in a short amount of time, a rigorous application of professional military disciplinary standards proved too burdensome in the face of stiff resistance from newly-recruited citizen soldiers. Even Pershing predicted the problems that the army would face when he noted in September, 1917 that ‘a prompt military salute is often misunderstood our people [as a sign of subservience] but it simply emphasizes an aggressive attitude of mind and body that marks the true soldier’.49 Changing ideas about the role of an enlisted man in combat also convinced the army that simple obedience was not enough. Increasing, the army expected soldiers do more than react in battle. The 1917 version of the Infantry Drill Regulations, for instance, simply required a soldier to memorise the answers to questions asked during inspections. By May 1918, however, lessons from the limited fighting experiences of the AEF came trickling back to the United States, and now Infantry Drill regulations cautioned soldiers that during inspections they would have to learn to think for themselves when asked hypothetical questions about tactical situations, and to give the solution that ‘advances the line farthest with the least loss of men, time, and control’.50

Pershing expected recruits to follow a uniform training program in the states that gave troops ample marksmanship practice, close order drill and a rudimentary introduction to open and trench warfare. The state of confusion in domestic training camps throughout the war seriously undermined these plans. Shortages of supplies and barracks forced the War Department to stagger new camp arrivals, meaning that men trickled into the camps unevenly for months. Many recruits arrived at camps still under construction and spent their first days in the service building their own training trenches and rifle ranges. Equipment shortages seriously hampered the adequacy of rifle training. ‘I thought we ought to be getting acquainted with the rifle but we only had the wooden type play gun’, Sergeant Richard McBride recalled.51 In frustration, Congress launched five investigations into the functioning of the War Department. After a major re-organisation in 1918, the chaos and confusion that characterised the first eight months at war lessened considerably.52 Even with adequate supplies, however, the army’s tendency to transfer trained men to fill specialist units or to bring divisions about to depart for France up to

48. For a more developed version of this point, see Jennifer D. Keene, Doughboys, the Great War and the Remaking of America (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), ch. 3.
strength, and then replace them with raw recruits, made it difficult to follow a coherent divisional training program.\footnote{53} Delays in mobilising, supplying and transporting the AEF threatened to derail Pershing’s plan to have one million men in France by May 1918. Now, the War Department informed him, the United States would be lucky to have half that many in place by the spring. These difficulties were exactly what the Germans had counted on when they provoked the United States into declaring war with the resumption of undeclared submarine warfare in February, 1917, and exactly what the Allies feared. Despite Pershing’s desire to go it alone, the United States needed help from the Allies to train, equip, and transport its army. Britain and France, therefore, played a critical role in creating the AEF.

\textbf{Conflicts with the British and French}

Only days after the American declaration of war a French military mission led by Marshal Joseph Joffre, well known in the United States as the hero of the First Battle of the Marne, left for the United States. Joffre urged the United States to send an immediate token expeditionary force to France to raise morale in the wake of the spring mutinies in the French army.\footnote{54} On 26 June 1917 the hastily composed First Division began arriving in France. Although designated as a Regular Army division, about two-thirds of the men were raw recruits. In an emotional 4 July ceremony before the Marquis de Lafayette’s tomb in Picpus Cemetery, Colonel Charles E. Stanton declared, ‘Lafayette, nous voici!’ (Lafayette, we are here!), a quotation ever since attributed to Pershing, to suggest that Americans had come to repay their debt to the French for aid rendered during the American Revolution. A battalion of the 16th Infantry from the First Division traveled from Saint Nazaire to Paris for the ceremony, and joyful crowds cheered the troops, lavishing them with wreaths and bouquets. ‘Many people’, Pershing recalled, ‘dropped on their knees in reverence as the column went by. These stirring scenes conveyed vividly the emotions of a people to whom the outcome of the war had seemed all but hopeless.’\footnote{55} This outpouring of emotion confirmed Pershing’s sense that France was a beaten nation that required American salvation, a conclusion that reaffirmed his commitment to insulating his American force from the contaminating influences of Allied defeatism.

\footnote{53} Major General H.B. Fiske, “Training in the AEF,” lecture at the Army War College, 21 April 1920, 10-11, file #215-70, Curriculum Files, Carlisle.
\footnote{54} Robert B. Bruce, A Fraternity of Arms: America and France in the Great War (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 40.
\footnote{55} Pershing, My Experiences in the World War, I: 92.
Yet immediately, after much feting and celebrating, the Americans settled down to train, not by themselves, but with the French 47th Division. The training regime of the First Division would seem downright leisurely compared to the often rushed programs followed by divisions that arrived overseas in 1918, but ensembling these troops with the French set an important precedent. Despite Pershing’s insistence on developing an independent training regime, over the course of the war 25 American divisions spent time training or fighting with the French while nine divisions encamped with the British. In addition, hundreds of French and British instructors traveled to the United States to help train National Guard and National Army training camps divisions at home.56

By the end of 1917, Britain and France pressed for a more active role in helping prepare the American Army for combat. By then, the Second, Twenty-Six, and Forty-Second divisions had joined the First Division in France, approximately 200,000 of the two million troops who would eventually travel to France.57 These scant numbers were not enough, in the eyes of the Allies, to help repel the expected Germany spring attacks. Renewing their demand for amalgamation, the British and French went above Pershing’s head and appealed directly to Washington. ‘We do not desire loss of identity of our forces’, a concerned Baker cabled Pershing, ‘but regard that as secondary to meeting of any critical situation by the most helpful use possible of the troops of your command’.58 In reply, Pershing reassured Baker that he would willingly provide troops to the Allies in the event of a true crisis along the Western Front, yet argued forcefully that getting fully trained American divisions into the line quickly was the best way to appease Allied concerns and fulfill his mandate from Wilson to create an independent American army.59 This statement satisfied Baker, who advised Wilson to let Pershing ‘decide this kind of question, as he is on the ground and sees the needs as they arise and, of course, will desire to preserve the integrity of his own forces for independent operations unless the emergency becomes overruling’.60 Despite Allied attempts to undermine his independence, Pershing remained firmly in control of the AEF.

Pershing responded to increased demands for amalgamation by making his own request for Allied assistance in transporting American troops to France. In January,
1918, Pershing wrangled with the British over what concessions he would have to make to secure British shipping for American divisions. At first, the British offered only to bring over 150 battalions and demanded that they serve with British divisions. With Britain reducing its divisions from twelve to nine battalions due to a shortage of manpower, the addition of American units offered one way to retain the overall strength of the British Army. ‘The British government’, General William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, told Pershing, ‘could not run the risk of going short of food for a scheme to bring over 2 or 3 divisions, although they would be prepared to take the risk for the very urgent purpose of getting a large number of infantry into the line within a shorter period than was possible for divisions.’ Pershing at first agreed to Robertson’s proposal, then reversed himself, arguing that placing American troops under foreign command would roil morale within the American army. There would be substantial political ramifications within the United States as well, Pershing proclaimed. Such a move was likely to cause Americans at home to question Wilson’s stewardship of the war and provoke an outcry from an Irish-American community already embittered over providing any aid to Great Britain.

After a month of tense discussion during which Pershing continued to vacillate over the merits of the British proposal, Pershing emerged with a major victory—an agreement from the British to provide shipping for six divisions in return for sending the infantry and auxiliaries of those divisions to complete their training with the British rather than French. This agreement opened the door to substantial British help in transporting the AEF overseas. Ultimately, over half of the AEF traveled to France in British ships.

Besides shipping, the United States also turned to the Allies for help in arming its expeditionary force. In developing his training doctrine, Pershing placed heavy emphasis on the one weapon that the United States possessed in abundance, the Springfield Model 1903 rifle. Yet in 1918 most American troops ended up fighting with modified British Enfield rifles because American factories were already producing these rifles in large quantities for the British when the United States entered the war. For field artillery,
both light and heavy guns, the United States quickly realised that it needed help from
the French armaments industry to supply the American army. With the French offering
the Americans an ample supply of 75mm guns and 155mm howitzers, as well an initial
delivery of 1 million shells with subsequent daily allotments of 30,000 75mm shells and
6,000 155mm shells, the War Department officially adopted these as the field artillery
pieces of the AEF on 9 June 1917.66 American armaments manufacturers received
licences to build these guns, but the war ended before any American-produced 75mm
or 155mm guns reached the Western Front. Pershing also turned to French to provide
machine guns. In July, the French government agreed to provide Hotchkiss machine
guns and Chauchat automatic rifles for the initial AEF contingents.67 The Americans
depended on these weapons until September 1918, when enough American-produced
Browning machines guns and automatic rifles arrived at the front.68 In exchange for these
munitions, the French received much needed raw materials, especially steel, smokeless
powder, brass, and high explosives.

Conclusion

After eight months of frantic, at time bordering on chaotic, preparation, where did the
AEF stand at the end of 1917? By January 1918 the United States had raised nearly a
third of the 3.7 million men it would place in its wartime army. Of the 1.2 million men
in uniform, 516,212 were conscripted and 200,000 were in France.69 Over the course of
the year, Pershing had established key training principles and strategic goals for the AEF
and accepted instructional and material aide from the Allies, not as they hoped as a first
step toward amalgamating his troops with their armies, but to hasten the creation of an
independent American army in control of its own sector of the Western Front. He had
also begun negotiations with the British to share the burden of transporting American
troops to France. The year ended with the first blood-letting of the American Army.
On 3 November 1917, the American Army suffered its first combat casualty during a
training exercise with the French that brought the First Division into the line over the
course of ten days. That same month, three American engineer units fought alongside
the British at Cambrai.

To the Allies, the only measure of progress that mattered was the American presence
on the battlefield.70 The defeat of Russia meant that German divisions from the Eastern

67. Ibid., 104.
68. Weigley, History of the United States Army, 364.
69. Ibid., 223.
70. British and French did not consider their expectations of immediate American involvement unrealistic
considering that it had taken Canada less than six months to field a division and little more than a year to
place a corps in the line. Similarly, the Anzac forces had organised, trained, and transported two divisions
to Gallipoli within eight months. Smythe, Pershing: General of the Armies, 69.
Front would soon be making their way to the Western Front, and Allied commanders expected the German manpower advantage over the Allies to increase by as much as 60 per cent. Could Britain and France count on the United States to negate that advantage? At the end of 1917, commanders of both armies were doubtful. ‘The raising of new armies is a tremendous task for any country’, wrote General Robertson to the British War Cabinet, ‘and although one might expect that America, with her two previous experiences, and her supposed great business and hustling qualities, would do better than other countries, the fact is she is doing very badly. My general impression is that America’s power to help us win the war—that is, to help us to defeat the Germans in battle—is a very weak reed to lean upon at present, and will continue to be so for a very long time to come unless she follows up her words with actions much more practical and energetic than any she has yet taken.’

General Philippe Pétain echoed these sentiments more diplomatically during a Supreme War Council Meeting in January, stating that ‘the American army, if it wished to retain its autonomy, would be of no use to the Allies in 1918, except, perhaps, along some quiet section of the front’. Even Pershing later professed ‘much embarrassment’ over the failure to make a greater contribution to the fighting along the Western Front in 1917.

In hindsight, Allied fears proved overly alarmist, but these pessimistic predictions do underscore the significant accomplishments yet to come. The German spring offensives and subsequent Allied counter-attacks in 1918 forced some alterations of Pershing’s grand strategic plan, requiring Pershing to temporarily lend the Allies American infantry units in the spring and summer, send under-trained American soldiers into battle in the fall of 1918, and revise upward his estimate of the American troops needed to secure victory in 1919. The war ended before Pershing had time to demonstrate either the wisdom or folly of attacking Metz, although in September, 1918 the AEF successfully executed part of Pershing’s initial plan by straightening out the St Miheil salient. Pershing had expected this battle to put the Americans in a better position to launch their planned 1919 attack on Metz. Instead, it proved a costly diversion that left the Americans with only two weeks to get into position 60 miles away to begin the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the American component of the final Allied attack along the Western Front. Contrary to American expectations, the American double-size divisions often proved unwieldy and difficult to maneuver during this final 47-day battle. With a lack of confidence in his troops’ training, Pershing and his staff tended to give units carefully constrained instructions that undermined rather than encouraged the individual initiative that open

73. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War, I: 278.
warfare depended on for its success. In the end, critics charged, these larger divisions simply led to increased numbers of casualties.\footnote{Nenninger, ‘American Military Effectiveness in the First World War’, 142-53.}

Despite the evident problems that still remained, by the fall of 1918 the American Army had transformed itself from the 1917 force of questionable significance to one that controlled its own sector of the front, albeit one that still relied on its Allies for shipping and munitions. Perhaps more importantly, Pershing had successfully fulfilled his government’s key political objective by ensuring that the American Army had a prominent place on the battlefield when the guns fell silent on the Western Front. The first eight months of the war were important in establishing key policies that put the American Army on course to achieve this goal, but 1918 proved the decisive time of action.
The US Military and Expeditionary Warfare

Brian M. Linn

For something once dismissed as a relic of the imperial past, expeditionary warfare has enjoyed a remarkable revival. Indeed, the dispatch of military forces for preemptive strikes against terrorist threats throughout the globe is a central tenet of President George W. Bush’s National Security Strategy, and some of these forces, at least, are openly titled ‘expeditionary’.\(^1\) Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has declared that the objective of his controversial ‘military transformation’ of the nation’s armed forces is to create ‘rapidly deployable, full integrated joint forces capable of reaching distant theaters quickly and working with our air and sea forces to strike adversaries swiftly, successfully, and with devastating effect’.\(^2\) According to one pundit, this will result in a US military capable of waging ‘global expeditionary warfare’.\(^3\) Indicative of the priority accorded to this goal is that instead of being awarded Iraq or Afghanistan campaign ribbons, veterans receive the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

The Bush Administration’s commitment has accelerated the already strong debate within the armed forces over which service will be given the primary responsibility for expeditionary war. The US Navy staked its claim in its first major post-Cold War strategic vision, *From the Sea* (1992), that declared the service’s new mission was ‘power projection’ in the ‘littoral regions’ using, among other assets, ‘naval expeditionary forces’.\(^4\) Analysts at the Center for Naval Warfare Studies have coined the acronym

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1. Of many examples of the Bush Administration’s preemptive strategy, perhaps the most overt is the pledge to defend the United States ‘by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders … to exercise our right of self-defense by acting preemptively against such terrorists, to prevent them from doing harm against our people and our country’, ‘The National Security Strategy of the United States’, 20 September 2002, www.whitehouse.gov/NSC.
XP2 to describe ‘Expeditionary Power Projection’. This ‘operational concept’ seeks to engage the enemy in his own territory, seizing and striking land targets; ‘dominating the battlespace’; and supporting logistics. XP2 will be implemented by proposed ‘Naval Expeditionary Task Forces’ that could be ‘rapidly assembled, and will attempt to take advantage of mobility and stealth to achieve surprise’. The Navy also explored an ‘Expeditionary Strike Group,’ an organisation built around a Marine landing force that purports ‘to ensure a fully capable, flexible, and global naval presence’ through a ‘networked and distributed combat force’ with ‘cooperative engagement capability’. For its part, the Marine Corps boasts it is the ‘premier Expeditionary Total Force in Readiness’. The Corps—which in the 1930s forbade any unit from being designated ‘expeditionary’—is now configured into Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU), Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB), and Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF). The US Air Force has been almost as forward as the Navy. An ad hoc Aerospace Expeditionary Force was deployed to the Persian Gulf in 1995, and in 2003 Air Force Chief of Staff John Jumper created ten ‘Expeditionary Air Forces’ that ‘could take turns responding to small contingency missions that seem to dominate national strategy at the turn of the century’. The US Army is also devoting a great deal of attention to expeditionary warfare, perhaps realising, as one naval officer noted, that if it does not it will be ‘consigned to be a garrison force, sent in to mop up after the dirty work is already done’. Its most recent mission statement—‘Serving a Nation at War’—declares the service’s new motto is ‘A Campaign Quality Army with Joint and Expeditionary Capabilities’. A central component of this is the development of an ‘expeditionary mindset’ in which service personnel are organised, trained, and equipped to deploy anywhere, any time, and against any opponent.

7. ‘The Premier Expeditionary Total Force in Readiness’, scetc.temcom.usmc.mil. The MEF is defined as ‘the largest of the Marine air-ground task forces, [it] is normally built around a division/wing team, but can include several divisions and aircraft wings, together with an appropriate combat service support organization. The Marine expeditionary force is capable of conducting a wide range of amphibious assault operations and sustained operations ashore. It can be tailored for a wide variety of combat missions in any geographic environment’, usmilitary.about.com/library/glossary/m/bldef03821.htm.
8. Ibid., 2. Richard G. Davis, Anatomy of a Reform: The Expeditionary Aerospace Force (n.p.: Air Force History and Museums Program, 2003). The Air Force’s adoption of ‘expeditionary air forces’ appears to be less a result of strategic or tactical requirements than a response to the personnel and management problems caused by repeated overseas deployments: see Michael E. Ryan, introduction to Anatomy of a Reform, iii.
Given both policymakers’ and the armed forces’ interest in expeditionary warfare, an overview of the subject prior to the Second World War is needed, but it faces three major problems. The first is historical: within the United States the study of expeditionary warfare has all but disappeared into the closely related, and exhaustively detailed, subfield of the US Marine Corps’ development of amphibious warfare. Indeed, within the United States military there is a tendency to apply the term amphibious to any waterborne expeditionary force.  The second is a semantic problem. The conclusion of a Center for Naval Warfare study that ‘Expeditionary Warfare, although understood as a general idea, will probably continue to elude a consensual definition for the foreseeable future’, is equally true when applied to the past. The problem is compounded by that fact that military intellectuals and defence analysts often use words that have a specific historical context—such as sea power or modern warfare—but which now may mean something quite different. Since the Second World War the widespread adoption of ‘Pentagonian’, that tribal dialect of constantly changing acronyms and buzzwords, has so muddied definitions as to render much of the current military discourse virtually unintelligible to the literate public. The third problem is that the armed forces’ current interest as well as recent events in the Balkans and the Middle East, and the partisan debate they have engendered, makes impartial analysis of the past very difficult. Yet even with these reservations acknowledged and accepted, the benefits still appear worthwhile.

It is important to emphasise that the existing literature on American expeditionary warfare focuses almost entirely on offensive operations, and neglects the fact that for most of the nation’s history expeditionary warfare was something considered by American strategists as more a threat than an opportunity. This fixation on the deterrence or defeat of enemy expeditionary forces had its origins in the American military system.

11. Thus, for example, the standard textbook on expeditionary warfare is Merrill L. Bartlett (ed.), Assault From the Sea: Essays on the History of Amphibious Warfare (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1993).

12. The study’s authors offered as a working definition, ‘Expeditionary Warfare is the application of military force (or threatened application of military force) outside the United States short of a Major Regional Contingency (MRC). In can be characterized as flexible, adaptable, limited in objectives, sustainable, and tailored for specific regional requirements. It also entails committing forces on another country’s territory, under U.S. command, to control or influence events.’ See Jack A. Frederoff and Christopher A. Leblush, ‘Expeditionary Warfare and Conflict Deterrence’, 1994, Center for Naval Warfare, Box 94, RG 37, NWC Naval Historical Collection, Newport, RI. The latest ‘official’ definition I have found dates from 1961: ‘Expeditionary Force—An armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country.’ (16) Joint Chiefs of Staff, ‘Glossary of Terms Relating to Strategy, Forces, Weapons, and Arms Control,’ 1961, Arms Control—Strategy Glossary File, Command Files, Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC. A dictionary definition of ‘expedition’ is ‘an excursion, journey, or voyage made for some specific purpose, as of war or exploration’, which would seem to include most military operations: see Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Gramercy Books, 1996), 680. Prior to the First World War, American military authorities made some distinction between ‘landing parties’ or ‘naval brigades’ which were ships’ crews sent ashore; an ‘expedition’ which referred to a force dispatched for a particular mission, though not necessarily overseas; and ‘combined operations’ which meant joint army-navy affairs.
Populated by Europeans who had fled what they viewed as state-imposed military despotism, Americans were deeply suspicious of standing armies, something their experience with the British Army did nothing to dispel. As a result, Americans placed their faith in the citizen soldiers of the militia, which under the Constitution (ratified in 1788) and the *Militia Act* of 1792, could only be called into federal service ‘to execute the laws of the Union’ and for the defensive purposes of suppressing insurrection and repelling invasion. Militiamen, and most Army officers, interpreted this to mean they could not be sent outside the nation’s borders; and in some military operations of the first post-Constitution war many refused to cross the border into Canada. Despite repeated pleas from the armed forces, for most of the nineteenth century Congress used its constitutional power of the purse to keep the peacetime Army and Navy so small as to virtually preclude offensive operations against any but the weakest opponents.

The devastating British amphibious attacks that occurred during the two Anglo-American wars of 1775-83 and 1812-14 played a major role in focusing attention on continental defense. Although Americans still sing, or try to sing, the ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ to celebrate the repulse of one such expedition, a far more accurate summary was given by President James Monroe: ‘In whatever direction the enemy chose to move with their squadrons and to land their troops, our fortresses, where they existed, presented but little obstacle to them. They passed these works without difficulty.’ Monroe’s conclusion—‘The great object, in the event of war, is to stop the enemy at the coast’—serves as an excellent summation of the nation’s strategic priorities for the next century. So important was defence against expeditionary warfare that one president described the Navy in 1826 as ‘floating fortifications’. Even more indicative of the impact of the British raids is that barely a year after the conclusion of the second Anglo-American war, the government created the Board of Engineers for Fortification, the first, and for decades the only, agency in the armed forces charged with strategic planning. The Board devoted itself to developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for the


14. The US Army averaged between 6,000 and 15,000 between 1815 and 1860 and 26,000 from 1877 to 1898. The Navy’s peacetime strength in the nineteenth century rarely exceeded 40 warships.

15. This terminology avoids more commonly used, but more controversial, chauvinistic, and inaccurate titles such as the Revolutionary War, War of American Independence, and War of 1812 (which actually refers to a war that was fought from 1812 to 1815).


fortification of the Atlantic coast against an every changing, but ever present, threat of foreign expeditions.\(^{18}\) Ironically, the elaborate fortification system it devised to defend the coastal ports would prove itself not against foreign opponents, but against the United States government’s own armed forces during the Civil War. Indeed, the Board’s vision of the enemy raiders launching ‘dashes’ into ‘weakly defended ports for the object of destroying commerce’, imposing tribute, or disrupting mobilisation continued to haunt American military officers until the end of the century.\(^{19}\)

Concurrent with this emphasis on defence was the increasing use of expeditionary forces to secure American political and economic objectives (the two were and are rarely separate) to expand its borders. Indeed, often both defensive and offensive measures occurred at the same time. Thus, for example, the US Navy stationed long-range cruisers that could protect and defend overseas commerce while also building armoured monitors for coastal defence. Thus President Thomas Jefferson sent sailors and marines to chastise the Barbary corsairs while at the same time trying to create a gunboat fleet manned by a naval militia for the defence of the nation’s ports.\(^{20}\) Thus in 1845 President James K. Polk sent Brigadier General Zachary Taylor’s expeditionary army to secure both a larger chunk of the disputed Texas border and to prevent Mexican incursions. Thus in 1881 the Naval Advisory Board recommended the US Navy continue its two-decades-long policy of constructing study coast-defence monitors and wide-ranging overseas cruisers for foreign service. Although senior naval and marine officers at times displayed considerable skill in conducting punitive and commercial expeditions around the globe, the Navy developed no doctrine for expeditionary warfare, nor did it create an agency to plan or direct such operations. Moreover, Navy officers agreed with their Army counterparts that the primary duty of the Navy in wartime was to protect the nation’s coast and seaborne commerce and to raid the commerce of its opponents, not to land and conquer foreign territory. As with the Army, the Navy treated expeditionary

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warfare either as a danger to be guarded against or an ad hoc contingency that could be dealt with by adapting existing tactical organisations and technology.21

Although the entire Mexican War (1846-48) might be considered a series of expeditionary campaigns, it was not until after the Civil War that a distinct body of literature on expeditionary warfare emerged.22 For a variety of reasons—the development of heavily armed and armoured steam warships, a renaissance in professional military thought, an increase in the importance of global markets, the ending of the ‘Indian Wars’, the shift in the European Balance of Power, and a number of war scares with European powers—American officers began to conceive of expeditionary warfare in an offensive context more than a defensive one.

This development was first apparent in the Navy, which increasingly viewed expeditionary warfare in the context of an offensive naval campaign. In a prize-winning 1880 article on ‘The Naval Policy of the United States’, Lieutenant Charles Belknap wrote that ‘navies are the police of the world at large’ and required for ‘peace and order’ through ‘instantaneous and determined naval intervention’.23 That same year, Lieutenant John C. Soley provided an overview of the tactics and training such naval intervention would require. Soley noted that in every war the Navy had deployed ‘naval brigades’ (ship’s crews and equipment operating ashore) and that in peacetime ‘it is principally by landing operations that the Navy acts’. Although in the past naval brigades had been successful even if unorganised and untrained, ‘modes of warfare have changed entirely in fifty years and even the savage of the present day is no mean enemy’. It was thus necessary for ship’s companies ‘operating, in large or small bodies, in a town or country unfamiliar to them, in the midst of a hostile people, in guarding consulates, in repressing insurrections, in bush fighting, or perhaps, in storming fortified places’ to receive specialised training. Fortunately, American sailors—innovative, courageous, and self reliant—were naturally suited for this type of warfare; indeed, they were better suited than soldiers.24 In contrast, Commander Henry Glass argued that the complexity

24. John C. Soley, ‘The Naval Brigade’, Proceedings 6:13 (1880): 271-90. Soley did not distinguish between sailors and marines, though in recounting the 1871 assault on Korean forts he noted the naval brigade had comprised 746 sailors and only 100 marines (see pp. 277-8).
of modern warships meant Navy personnel would become ‘too valuable material to be lightly risked to accomplish the small results that have usually followed sending parties of seamen away from their ships. The part of hostile operations ashore had much better be left to land forces’. In 1891 the Navy appeared to resolve this discussion in favour of Soley when it issued a tactical manual for naval brigades that included instructions for loading and deploying landing craft, fire support, and ship-to-shore logistics. There were also efforts to test these ideas in practice. The Navy’s incipient battle fleet, the North Atlantic Squadron, landed a naval brigade at Newport, Rhode Island, as part of its 1887 fleet exercises. Some naval reformers even went so far as to urge that the Marine Corps be transformed into a permanently organised expeditionary force, but the Corps’ leadership objected.

Perhaps the greatest indication of the reawakening interest in expeditionary warfare was that the leading journal of naval thought, the US Naval Institute’s Proceedings, selected for its 1887 prize essay topic ‘The Naval Brigade: Its Organization, Equipment, and Tactics’. The winner, Lieutenant C. T. Hutchins, warned against the commonly expressed view that a sailor belonged on ship and should never be sent for duty ashore. American landings in the Far East and the allied attack on Alexandria in 1882 had demonstrated that ship-borne ground forces could be highly effective. The problem was not that infantry training made sailors unfit for ship duty, but that the current tactics focused too much on the ‘niceties’ of the manual of arms and too little on what needed for ‘modern warfare’. Hutchins would have naval brigades trained in basic marksmanship and marching, teach them to deploy in simple formations, and provide them with a semi-permanent organisation well suited to using several ships’ companies together. Such naval brigades had an important domestic function, as witnessed by the emergency naval forces that had helped quell urban violence during the Great Strike of 1877. Indeed, seaborne expeditionary forces were ideally suited for riot duty; they could move rapidly form coastal city to coastal city, avoiding the hazard of strikers and rioters blocking railroads as they had in 1877. Finally, Hutchins made it clear that he envisioned naval brigades as emergency forces against non-Western opponents or rioters and was not countenancing using them for amphibious assaults on ‘well-organized and trained forces of infantry’—something he believed ‘would not be expedient.’

The commentaries on Hutchins’ paper, which also appeared in the Proceedings, illustrate a wide range of officers’ views. Many noted the difficulties encountered by

the ad hoc expeditions in Formosa (1867), Korea (1871), and Panama (1885). There was general agreement that the current improvised organisation of naval brigades was unsatisfactory and widespread dissatisfaction with the current drill manual and the level of training. One officer proposed that every US squadron assigned to a geographical area—or station—should have its own permanently organised naval brigade, and another recounted an incident in which a landing expedition had been so untrained that it could not deploy into an attack formation and had had to retreat. But, as was (and is) often the case with military officers, the discussants tended to get sidetracked into the minutiae of weaponry, command relations, and small-unit tactics.28

Further evidence of the Navy’s interest in expeditionary warfare is its incorporation into the curriculum of the newly-formed Naval War College. In 1894 Commander Charles Stockton urged students to remember that naval forces had operated ashore in every past American war, and that future wars were likely to see even more landing operations, especially in the Caribbean. The railroad and mass army had made overseas invasion of a ‘first class power’ almost impossible, but the modern tendency towards ‘sudden and quick moving war’ made it likely that at the very outbreak trained expeditionary forces would need to seize strategic objectives immediately. Without such forces, without intensive planning and preparation, and without the closest cooperation of army and navy commanders, the result was likely to be disaster.29 Lecturing on the same subject a few years later, Captain Asa Walker emphasised the importance of seizing advanced bases to achieve campaign objectives. Walker’s attention to the details of expeditionary warfare—the necessity of planning, the type of equipment needed, the establishment of defences—all indicate that the Navy was beginning to think of expeditionary warfare a valuable offensive tool.30 The War College and the newly-formed Office of Naval Intelligence developed fledgling war plans that emphasised the use of marines and ships’ companies to capture naval bases from potential enemies.31

It is important to understand the late nineteenth century Navy’s interest in expeditionary warfare within the context of the ideology of ‘sea power’ and the service’s efforts at professionalisation. In 1881 the Proceedings essay prize had gone to an author who championed commerce warfare and light cruisers, and declared ‘the necessity for the transportation and convoy of land forces is, with regards to the United States of the least of all probabilities’, because it was totally against the US government’s policy to engage
in overseas wars. Fifteen years later the Proceedings, and indeed the majority of the naval intellectual community, had become avowed disciples of Alfred Thayer Mahan’s offensive doctrine of ‘Sea Power’. These navalists argued that the laws of history (or Social Darwinism) demonstrated the interconnectedness of maritime commerce, large navies, and national greatness. For most Navy officers, Mahan’s chief attraction was that he provided a justification for a greatly expanded blue-water navy based on offensive control of the seas through the battleship fleet. As part of this offensive doctrine, the US would need to establish fortified naval stations where this battleship fleet could refuel and reequip itself as it exerted power throughout the globe. During war, it would first destroy the enemy’s fleet, and then launch seaborne expeditions against colonies, naval bases, and communications. Both the protection of these bases and the offensive operations against enemy colonies would require powerful expeditionary forces.

As the Navy incorporated offensive expeditionary war into its new concept of sea power, the Army remained fixated on protecting the nation’s coast from enemy expeditions. Writing in 1897, former Commanding General John M. Schofield summed up the attitudes of most of his fellow Army officers: ‘It may be that in special cases military forces may be needed to act in support of naval operations, or to hold for a time important points in a foreign country, but such service must be only auxiliary, not a primary object.’ In an 1894 article, ‘Which are more Needed for our Future Protection, More War-Ships or Better Coast Defenses’, Lieutenant George W. Van Deusen argued that coast defences were more important, since ‘it is contrary to all the principles of our government to engage in foreign wars’. A year later, in an article revealingly entitled, ‘If Attacked, Could the United States Carry on an Offensive War’, coast artillery officer William R. Hamilton emphatically answered to the negative. Indeed, he doubted whether the nation could successfully mount an invasion of 100,000 troops against a lesser power such as Chile in less than a year.

In contrast to its hesitancy about offensive expeditionary warfare, there was a very strong belief within the Army that an enemy expedition (one authority claimed the consensus was of 150,000 troops) could attack a major American city, either destroying...
it or holding it for ransom. In what one author has termed ‘hysterical extravagance’, successive Corps of Engineer heads painted a doleful picture of the state of the nation’s coastal defences and of the threat of imminent attack. In 1886 a joint Army-Navy board informed Congress that the nation’s ports were easy prey to enemy raids and recommended a coastal defense program that would cost tens of millions of dollars—and Congress approved. It should be noted that not all officers fell victim to such fears. Despite his contempt for his own nation’s expeditionary capabilities, Hamilton believed it was ‘utterly impossible’ for an enemy to invade the United States: ‘It would strain them to their greatest to transport one hundred thousand men, and such a number would be a bagatelle to land on our shores with any hope of conquest of anything more than a few sea-port cities, from which, not withstanding their fleets, they would soon be driven away.’ The Army’s senior line officer, William T. Sherman, wrote in his 1880 annual report that ‘the idea of a hostile force landing on our coast is simply preposterous’. Nevertheless, it is clear that within the Army, interest in expeditionary warfare was almost entirely confined to the problem of defending against it.

Rising tensions with Spain over its efforts to suppress a Cuban rebellion in the 1890s turned the problem of expeditionary war from theoretical to practical, and in the process revealed a number of problems. Despite growing indications that war was imminent, the services made no effort to establish a joint planning agency until barely a month before hostilities began, and then only at the instigation of their civilian superiors. Nor did their representatives discuss the possibility of joint operations.

The Navy began planning for war with Spain in the 1890s at the Naval War College, which in the absence of a Navy General Staff functioned as the service’s primary strategic planning agency. In 1894, students worked on two potential conflicts growing out of the Cuban rebellion, one involving a European alliance and the other Spain alone. A year later all students worked on a war plan against Spain and in 1896 the War College

38. Clary, Fortress America, 111-12.
critiqued a plan drawn up by the Office of Naval Intelligence. Although many of these plans featured land attacks against Cuba or naval defense against Spanish raids, they showed considerable naiveté about expeditionary warfare. For example, the 1895 War College plan required the entire 30,000-man Regular Army to be shipped to Cuba two weeks after the declaration of war, followed two weeks later by another 25,000-man volunteer force. Together with the fleet, this expeditionary force would assault Havana. A Navy strategic board that met in 1896 and 1897 also included Army expeditions to Cuba, and perhaps Spain, but without providing any details of how these expeditions would be assembled, transported, or landed. Overlooked by the Navy planners were such crucial realities as that the Army lacked a tactical organisation larger than a regiment, that many of those regiments were scattered into small garrisons, that there was no General Staff or any similar planning and coordinating organisation, that the militia, the only source of trained soldiers in case of expansion, was largely under state, and not federal control, and that there might be constitutional restrictions on it being sent overseas; and that the Army lacked transports, storage facilities, training camps, and virtually all the other necessary support for expeditionary war. Even more peculiarly, although they shared the same office building the Navy Department did not share its plans with Army colleagues in the somewhat misnamed War Department.

If Navy plans for expeditionary war were unrealistic, those of the Army were non-existent. Although one participant recalled that the Army’s Military Intelligence Division ‘had been long convinced that war with Spain was inevitable’, war planning was confined to ‘collecting, sifting, and classifying all the information possible … relating to Spain and its colonies’. In what might be seen as commendable deference, but was more likely a textbook case of passive aggressive behaviour, the Army leadership held that since any war with Spain would be primarily a naval war, it was the Navy’s task to provide direction. Even after war was declared on 26 April 1898, the War Department operated on two assumptions that would both prove incorrect: first, that the Army’s task would be to guard the coast (and naval bases) against Spanish attacks; second, (and this with war almost certain), that a small but well-trained expeditionary force could be provided by a modest expansion of the Regular Army.

Given the lack of preparation, the US armed forces did perhaps better than might be expected. One notable success was the landing of a US Marine Corps battalion at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to establish a protected naval base. The landing went smoothly, and the Marines beat off a three-day counter-attack and secured an essential harbour

43. [Navy Department Board], ‘Plan of Operations Against Spain’, 17 December 1896, Box 11, Entry 289, RG 80, National Archives and Records Administration [NARA], Washington, DC. A good summary of Navy strategic planning for war with Spain is in Spector, Professors of War, 89-97.
44. ‘On the Edge: Personal Recollections of an American Officer’, 1: 184-5 (1934), Cornelis de Witt Willcox Papers, Special Collections, US Military Academy Library [USMA], West Point, NY; Spector, Professors of War, 89-95.
for coaling and supplying the blockading naval squadron. The Marines’ rapid success, especially when contrasted with the slow pace of the Army, provided a great deal of favourable publicity and encouraged those naval reformers who had envisioned the Corps as a permanent expeditionary force.\textsuperscript{45} Although overshadowed by the Cuban expedition, the dispatch of the Army’s Eighth Corps from San Francisco to the Philippines was perhaps even more impressive. The Army faced considerable problems: the need to capitalise on the Navy’s victory over the Spanish squadron at Manila Bay and the uncertain situation in the archipelago demanded the utmost speed, yet the expeditionary force was composed largely of untrained but enthusiastic volunteers, and training facilities and supplies had to be extemporised. Perhaps most difficult, the expedition’s leaders were operating under vague presidential directives that might require no more than the capture of Manila or no less than the military occupation of the archipelago. Yet despite these handicaps, an efficient Army staff under the direction of Major General Elwell S. Otis managed in less than three months to concentrate, train, and transport almost 11,000 soldiers across the Pacific and effect the almost bloodless conquest of Manila on 13 August.\textsuperscript{46}

But these successes were overshadowed by the administrative ineptitude displayed in mobilising and transporting the Army’s Fifth Corps to Santiago, Cuba. Nagged by the Navy Department, and increasingly by President William McKinley, the War Department shunted nearly the entire Regular Army into the primitive Florida port of Tampa, creating a logistical nightmare and causing railroad cars to be backed up for hundreds of miles. As the media, political leaders, the enthusiastic volunteers, and the American public all demanded the Army immediately liberate Cuba, Major General William R. Shafter, an old and infirm mediocrity, tried to make sense of the chaos. The troops sweltered in their tents and scavenged for supplies. McKinley, yielding to popular pressure, suddenly ordered them onto their decrepit transports, where they remained for days while the Navy searched for ghostly Spanish raiders. The disembarkation of the expedition in Cuba was equally chaotic: supplies piled up on the beach but in-shore logistics collapsed almost at once, leaving the troops at the front lacking even the most rudimentary necessities. In the meantime, the services engaged in an acrimonious debate over the objectives and the leadership of the campaign, issues that McKinley had failed to clarify. Admiral William T. Sampson insisted that Fifth Corps attack the batteries guarding Santiago harbour, forcing the blockaded Spanish squadron out to be destroyed by his fleet. Shafter was just as insistent that his objective was the city itself,


and determined to attack it from a direction that would all but preclude naval support. Although Teddy Roosevelt and the Rough Riders would become nationally famous for their part in the attack on San Juan Heights, and although Sampson succeeded in annihilating the Spanish fleet, the Cuban expedition soon became synonymous with military incompetence and interservice rivalry. Having taken serious casualties in the disorganised and chaotic battle for San Juan Heights, Shafter discovered the Spanish defences remained intact. His logistics were in disarray and his troops were exhausted and sick, and there was a widespread belief that the entire Fifth Corps was on the verge of collapse. Only the Spanish surrender of Santiago averted a disaster. The subsequent spectacle of the heroes of Cuba returning emaciated and fevered, and then being dumped in the mud and rain at an incomplete Army camp, further lowered the expedition’s prestige.  

The Cuban campaign played an important role in shaping American views of expeditionary war. Participants were scathing in detailing the failings of the supply services, the personal rivalries among officers, and the War Department’s administrative incompetence. George van Horn Moseley, a veteran of the expedition and later deputy chief of staff of the army, summarised the problems as a ‘lack of preparedness, trained leaders or staff officers, our ignorance of large questions of supply and logistics, and inability to properly cope with medical questions involved, especially sanitation’.  

William Lassiter, another veteran, dismissed the expedition as a farce, but drew the serious lesson that victory was due almost entirely to the Navy’s ability to control the surrounding waters. Even then, had the Eighth Corps faced a more capable opponent at Santiago, or had it been required to attack Havana, the Americans would probably have been defeated. But it was not just the confusion and chaos of the expedition’s dispatch that officers objected to. One officer bitterly recalled, ‘There was a useless slaughter of our men at San Juan through the worst possible mismanagement, but the blunderers were promoted with indecent haste, while most of the army thought they would be courtmartialed.’  

Another veteran, seeking more balance, noted that Shafter had little leeway: his plans were dictated by the Navy and the War Department, but even so, there was little excuse for the fact that his ‘force was handled in violation of
every rule and principle of the art of war’. 51 Indeed, within the American armed forces the operation was so reviled that four decades later Marine officers preparing to fight amphibious warfare across the Pacific were careful to study it in order to learn what not to do. 52

The most immediate legacy of the Spanish-American War was the follow-up Philippine War of 1899 to 1902. Having taken Manila, the Eighth Corps soon found itself besieged by a Filipino nationalist army under Emilio Aguinaldo. Fighting broke out on 4 February 1899 and ‘major combat operations’ ended eleven months later, only to be followed by a long and controversial guerrilla war that took nearly two years to suppress. The struggle was expeditionary warfare in a large sense. Some 125,000 Americans, five times the number of the entire prewar Army, served in the Islands between 1898 and 1902. To win the war the US had to create three separate forces: the first a combination of a few Regular regiments and a great number of volunteers from the individual states sworn into federal service; the second a roughly equal mix of Regulars and a 35,000-man federal volunteer force; and the last predominantly Regulars but with a significant number of Filipinos. The supply and reinforcement of the expeditionary army required the creation of an overseas transport system, complete with and special ships for the shuttling of troops and refrigerated ships for the importation of Australian beef and lamb.

This was also expeditionary war in another sense: the use of small combined forces to achieve specific missions. Control of the archipelago’s waters allowed the Americans to isolate individual islands, thus preventing a truly national resistance. Virtually every major port in the Philippines was taken by an amphibious force, sometimes against spirited resistance that involved bloody fighting on the beaches and city streets. Throughout the war, seaborne mobility allowed the Americans to land troops almost at will and to sustain expeditions deep in the interior, including the amphibious raid that captured Aguinaldo. Philippine operations provided both Army and Navy officers with extensive experience in rapidly assembling task-specific combined units, in landing operations, fire and logistical support, coastal and riverine combat, and in a variety of other sub-fields of expeditionary warfare. As in the nineteenth century, expeditions were largely extemporised operations. Typically, an Army commander would learn of a probable insurgent camp, contact a naval gunboat assigned to his locale, assemble a scratch force of infantry, and, perhaps supplemented by a naval crew with a machine gun, steam to the target area, land his forces (often under the direction of the naval officer),

52. Karl K. Louther and Donald W. Fuller, Lecture: ‘Expedition of Shafter’s Corps at Tampa, 1898’, 2 May 1940, Folder 12/8, Box 8, Lecture Collection, USMC University, Quantico, VA.
and carry out a sweep of the territory. On the whole, officers showed a commendable willingness to put aside service differences and develop efficient procedures.

Unfortunately, the ‘Waller Affair’ on the island of Samar in 1901-2 demonstrated the limits of the American reliance on cooperation and improvisation. Following a surprise attack that almost wiped out an infantry company stationed at Balangiga on 28 September 1901, the Navy sent Major Littleton W. T. Waller’s provisional US Marine Corps expeditionary battalion of 317 officers and men to the two southern Samar towns. From the beginning, command relations were so unclear that the Army’s judge advocate was unable to determine them; Waller’s defenders made the somewhat contradictory claim that he was acting under Army orders and yet not subject to Army authority. On 28 December 1901, with five officers, 50 marines, two Filipino scouts, and 33 native bearers Waller set out to march across the southern tip of Samar, a distance of some thirty miles in a direct line. He failed to inform either his superiors or the Army garrisons in the area of his route and disregarded the advice of Army officers familiar with the area. The trail soon disappeared, the inexperienced Waller soon ran out of supplies, and he found himself unable to continue or go back. In what in retrospect seems a poor, and perhaps panicked, decision, Waller took a picked force and struggled through to the coast, and returned later in search of the men he had left in the jungle. He not only failed to locate his lost command but also to inform his superiors of the situation. By the time Army relief forces located his expedition, ten marines had either died or disappeared, and an eleventh was to die shortly afterwards. Mentally distraught and judged by his surgeon as incapable of command, he nevertheless executed ten Filipino porters without conducting either a trial or an investigation. Although Waller was acquitted at the subsequent court-martial, President Theodore Roosevelt issued a general order declaring his actions ‘sullied the American name’. To some, Waller was a scapegoat; to others his conduct was an aberration that tainted the otherwise good record of the armed forces in the war. In either case, it was a graphic example of what could go wrong with the Americans’ ad hoc approach to expeditionary warfare.53

The Spanish-American and Philippine Wars dramatically increased the US presence in the Far East and led to yet other instances of expeditionary warfare. During the Boxer Rebellion, 1900-1, 50 marines served as part of an allied force defending the Beijing Legation from Boxer and Imperial troops. A small naval brigade of sailors and marines culled from the ships’ crews of the Asiatic Squadron took part in Admiral Seymour’s abortive relief expedition. For the subsequent International Relief Force of 18,000, the US

furnished a contingent of some 2,500 soldiers and marines under the overall command of Major-General Adna R Chaffee. Expeditionary service as part of an international force did little to encourage racial or cultural understanding. The Americans were furious at the vague orders that sent the 9th Infantry Regiment into a costly frontal assault on Chinese fortifications, and they were appalled at the allies’ indiscriminate looting and killing. Captain Joseph Dickman informed his fellow officers that ‘The impression I received of foreigners … is that they are not to be trusted, except the English. American generosity and straightforwardness, coupled with a lack of experience in international matters, cannot hold their own against European duplicity and cunning.’ He noted ‘there was a great friendship between the Americans and the Japanese soldiers, and the relations between our officers and theirs were of the pleasantest kind … but it must be remembered they are Orientals and that all Asiatics are tricky’.  

The imperial wars of 1898-1902 and the continuing turmoil in the Far East led some Army officers to conclude that the Philippines might serve as a base for US expeditionary warfare. Indeed, the continued Great Power rivalry in the Far East and imperial efforts to seize parts of China led to fears of an imminent world war. In January 1904, having been in existence barely four months, the new Army General Staff made as one of its first priorities to secure from the equally new Philippines Division staff a contingency plan for a seven-regiment expeditionary force to China. The request was soon common knowledge and provoked rumours of an immediate deployment. With all the wisdom of a subaltern passing judgment on his superiors, Lieutenant Courtney B. Hodges argued that the force was far too small and that ‘our whole Regular army wouldn’t be more than a drop in the bucket to the immense armies Russia can pour into China’. Such concerns did not prevent Hodges from dreaming of the promotion opportunities offered by a war in the Far East.

A year later, angered at a Chinese boycott, President Theodore Roosevelt instructed the Army to prepare an expedition to break this civil resistance. Not satisfied with the Philippine commander Major General Leonard Wood’s initial plan for 8,000 soldiers, Roosevelt requested that Chief of Staff J. Franklin Bell increase the force to 15,000. He also requested that the Army conduct a full survey of China, and in 1906 at least five Army officers were conducting intelligence missions in China studying the major cities and mapping possible areas of operations. A year later another war scare prompted

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55. Campbell B. Hodges to My Dear Mother, 11 February 1904, Campbell B. Hodges Papers, USMA. On the 1904 war plan, see ‘Problem: To be transmitted to the Chief of Staff in Manila’, 16 January 1904, Army War College Report No. 3, Serial No. 44, and J. B. Kerr, ‘Solution of Problem dated Army War College, Washington, January 16, 1904’, (nd), both in Entry 299, RG 165, NARA.
another request from Roosevelt, and a promise by Wood that he could dispatch virtually the entire American garrison and 2,000 Filipino troops—a total of 14,000—and maintain them in the field for three months.\textsuperscript{56} Although neither China expedition was sent, the Philippine garrison remained tasked with planning for expeditionary duty in China. These \textit{YELLOW} plans were not simply theoretical exercises: in February 1932 the 31st Infantry sailed from Manila with only fourteen hours’ notice, remaining in Shanghai until July.\textsuperscript{57}

Although many soldiers disliked the discomfort and hardships of expeditionary duty in the Far East, it appealed to significant constituencies in the Army such as the cavalry, which was finding it increasingly difficult to justify both its elite status and high cost now that the Western frontier was pacified. With more passion than historical accuracy, authors such as Charles D. Rhodes claimed that mounted forces had been the decisive factor in the imperial wars and urged that all further expeditions have a large cavalry component. In an interesting juxtaposition of strategic, moral, and career interests, some officers urged the creation of a distinct Filipino expeditionary force for operational and occupational duty in the Far East. In part due to persistent fears of rebellion, the General Staff concluded in 1905 that ‘probably the only troops that could be safely withdrawn from the islands for service … would be the native contingent’.\textsuperscript{58}

Army officers serving with Filipino troops argued that under white officers, their soldiers would be more effective in the guerrilla warfare that was predicted to occur and they would also be far cheaper to maintain. Moreover, ‘the demoralizing influence of cheap alcoholic beverages and drugs, and the oriental social evil, will be less, it is thought, with Filipino than with American troops’.\textsuperscript{59}

The imperial wars of 1898-1902 also turned the Caribbean into an American lake and made the likelihood of expeditionary war there much greater. Indeed, in 1906, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{56} Leonard Wood to Theodore Roosevelt, 13 December 1907, 1907 File, Box 39, Leonard Wood Papers, LOC; Challener, \textit{Admirals}, 243-64; William Reynolds Braisted, \textit{The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1897-1909} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 187-8; Joseph H. Dorst to Esther Dorst, 22 February 1906, Box 3, Joseph H. Dorst Papers, USMA. On Army intelligence activities in China, see File 3509, Roll 6, Microfilm Collection 1023, Record Cards of the War College Division, Related General Staff, and Adjutant General’s Office, 1902-19, NARA.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Prior to the Second World War, American war plans were colour coded, with Red being Great Britain, Black being Germany, and so on: Philippines Department, War Plan Yellow, 1932, File 471X, Box 30, RG 407, NARA. In a note that will certainly be familiar to today’s overstretched Army, one officer astutely pointed out that War Plan Yellow called for the dispatch of troops from the Philippines to China and War Plan Brown for the dispatch of troops from China to the Philippines, thus making it impossible to execute both: see James H. Reaves to Assistant Chief of Staff, War Plans Division, 5 May 1925, File 320, Box 88, RG 407, NARA.
\item \textsuperscript{58} Memorandum Report of a Special Committee of the General Staff … ‘, \textit{Journal of the U.S. Infantry Association} 2 (July 1905): 101.
\end{itemize}
Secretary of War told sceptical congressional leaders that far from ending overseas involvements, recent events indicated that the next war would likely require sending American forces abroad to defend the Monroe Doctrine. That very year, the Army dispatched what became a 4,400-man joint occupation force to Cuba. Although this Army of Cuban Pacification trained extensively in small-unit tactics, fieldcraft, and marching, its mere appearance in the countryside proved sufficient to keep guerrilla resistance and banditry to a minimum. In the meantime, a civil administration largely staffed by Army veterans of the previous Cuban and Philippines campaigns, developed a civil reform programme that included road building, school construction, health reforms, rewriting the legal code, and so forth. But these accomplishments were not sufficient to balance the deleterious effects of the Cuban pacification. As one soldier pointed out, to deploy the Cuban expeditionary force ‘practically cleaned up all the available armed forces of the republic’ and demonstrated its ‘pitiable’ state of readiness.\(^6\) The Army’s nascent efforts to overcome the problems revealed in 1898—to concentrate its scattered forces into permanent tactical organisations, to train itself in the intricacies of modern warfare, and to educate its officers in their professional responsibilities—were all disrupted by the Cuban deployment. It revealed to many officers that the Army was stretched too thin, and that expeditionary duty could be done only by sacrificing the service’s many other, and perhaps more important, missions.

The Army’s experience in offensive expeditionary warfare after 1898 did not end its preoccupation with defence against it. In 1904 a board under Secretary of War William H. Taft reviewed the 1886 coastal defence programme and extended it to the new Pacific territories. Officers continued to publish articles warning of enemy raids upon harbours and cities, and demanding further resources for their defence. In the Pacific, the ability of the Navy to secure American interests required safe and protected fleet bases, which in turn demanded the protection of Honolulu and Pearl Harbors in Hawaii and Manila Bay in the Philippines. Initially, the threat was perceived as most likely from a European rival who would steam into the naval base and destroy America’s Pacific squadron much as Dewey had destroyed the Spanish squadron at Manila Bay. With the major US fleet in the Atlantic, some three months’ voyage away, the enemy would have little trouble in landing a small military expedition and capturing the capital city; and then using the precedent set by the United States vis-à-vis Spain to claim the entire

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60. Robert L. Bullard, ‘The Army in Cuba’, *JMSI* 41 (September-October 1907): 152-7. This was not an overstatement: in 1907 Chief of Staff J. Franklin Bell noted that to mobilise one 18,000-man division for expeditionary duty ‘it would be necessary for us to practically denude every cavalry and infantry station in the United States’; see ‘Report of the Chief of Staff, Annual Report of the War Department, 1907 3: 195. On the Cuban occupation, see Birtle, *U.S. Army Counterinsurgency*, 168-74; Allan R. Millett, *The Politics of Intervention: The Military Occupation of Cuba, 1906-1909* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966); ‘Collation of Reports of the Various Staff Officers with the Army of Cuban Pacification, 1906’, Appendix 6, Serial # 11, Entry 299, RG 165, NARA.
Accordingly, the Army began building what would eventually become the nation’s most complex and expensive coastal fortifications in Hawaii, the Philippines, and later, the Panama Canal zone. But the Japanese overseas operations against Russia in 1904-5 showed that instead of a European colonial force of perhaps 10,000 or 15,000, the enemy might consist of more than 80,000 highly-trained Japanese, backed up by one of the most efficient fleets in the world. Thus, for America’s colonial garrisons, expeditionary warfare became more an object of dread than opportunity.  

For the Navy, the imperial wars of 1898-1902 provided convincing evidence that in any future conflict it would act on the offensive, seeking out and destroying the enemy fleet. To do so in the three theatres in which a conflict was judged most likely—the Far East, Western Pacific, and Atlantic—the Navy would need to establish an ‘advanced base’, a ‘natural strategic point’ where the fleet could recoal and refit in a protected harbor, safe from attack but free to seek out the enemy fleet. So intrinsic was this idea that in 1903 a strategic committee reported that future war plans would accept as a basic premise ‘the seizure and fortification of an advanced base and fortification of an advanced base, either as a place upon which to rest naval operations, or possibly combined naval and military operations’. The Marines’ establishment of such an advanced base in Guantanamo as well as the bitter fight between Sampson and Shafter, convinced naval officers that the Corps should now serve the nation’s expeditionary needs. To Commander William Fullam, the Marine Corps had to dispense with its traditional duties and become a ‘splendidly organized, mobile force to serve with the Navy by garrisoning and holding all our colonial possessions, and in providing for the contingency of seizing and holding naval bases’. The ‘advanced base force’ would require personnel highly skilled in constructing and defending fortifications who could also operate as conventional infantry. Obviously, such a specialised group could not be created overnight; moreover, its personnel and its essential armament and equipment—referred to as the ‘advanced base outfit’—would henceforth have to be maintained as a special unit both for training and for immediate deployment. No longer could USMC mean ‘Useless Sons Made Comfortable’; Marines, particularly Marine officers, would now have to undergo professional training so intensive as to preclude many of their former obligations. The advanced base mission received valuable support from Admiral Dewey, who maintained, in spite of a multitude of contrary evidence, that had he possessed a 5,000-man expeditionary force, he could have captured Manila unassisted in 1898. In 1900, Dewey, now president of the newly formed Navy

62. James H. Oliver, et. al to President, NWC, 24 October 1903, GB 425, 1900-1904 File, Box 122, RG 80, NARA. A good summary of the advanced base concept is in Challenger, Admirals, 43-5.
General Board, declared that the Corps’ primary mission should be the protection and seizure of advanced bases.\textsuperscript{64}

The Marines experienced considerable difficulty in turning these directives into reality, as the experience of their advanced base unit in the Philippines indicates. The Philippine War and Boxer Rebellion led to the transfer of some 64 officers and 1,934 marines to the Philippines, roughly a third of the Corps’ total manpower. Nevertheless, the Navy was convinced that more were needed. In 1900 the General Board recommended the permanent stationing of a battalion in the Philippines, trained and equipped to capture a naval base in China in the event of general war among the Western powers or other sudden emergency. Accordingly, on 21 July 1903, the Navy ordered the Corps to keep 1,500 men in the Philippines. From this garrison, the marines were to organise an expeditionary force of 1,000 men permanently stationed at the Subic Bay Naval Reservation. These troops were to be ready to field immediately an advance base force equipped with mines, cannon, searchlights, and two months’ supplies.

For a variety of reasons the Corps was less than successful in its attempts to make the Philippines a launching pad for American intervention into Asia. Although Commandants tried to maintain the Islands’ garrison as a two-regiment brigade, they faced competing manpower demands for domestic duties and for garrisons in China and Latin America. The Corps’ enforcement of a two-and-a-half-year tour of duty in the Islands insured a high turnover in personnel and prevented sustained training. There was also considerable hostility from the Army, which believed both that it should provide expeditionary forces and furnish the major component of land defence in the archipelago.

The Corps was also involved, probably inadvertently, in the bitter Army-Navy controversy over locating the main naval base at Manila or Subic Bay. Army officers believed the marine brigade at Subic encroached upon their responsibility for the coastal defence of the Philippines, and furthermore that the brigade’s guns and troops were desperately needed for the defence of Manila Bay. The Navy maintained that the advanced base force was an offensive force. It was not intended to protect the naval base at Subic; it was only practicing there. The brigade’s guns and troops could not be integrated into Army defence plans because it needed to be ready at a moment’s notice to secure a base in the Far East for the fleet. Relations between the two services were often strained. When, in 1904 and 1907, sailors and marines cooperated in joint landing expeditions at Subic, the Army protested that such activities intruded on its prerogatives and potentially threatened its defence plans. For its part, the Army did not include the marines in its own manoeuvres. After 1909 the decreasing likelihood that the US would locate its major Pacific naval base at Subic removed both a primary reason for a large marine detachment and left the Army responsible for most of the land defence of the

\textsuperscript{64} Shulimson, \textit{Marine Corps’ Search}, 193-201.
Islands. The Corps’ role in the Philippines had become so diminished by 1913 that during one of the war scares with Japan, Navy strategists recommended that the main body of marines be transferred to Guam. A year later, the Marines had only 161 officers and men stationed in the Philippines.

A primary reason for the failure of the Philippine force was the Marine Corps’ inability to reconcile the Navy’s demand that it prepare for two different types of ‘expeditionary’ warfare: one to secure an advanced base for the fleet and defend it against another Great Power; the other an intervention and occupation force to impose US foreign policy on the bankrupt and chaotic Latin American republics. Usually the latter priority won out. Thus in 1911 an effort to form a ‘semi-permanent’ advanced base regiment for deployment to the Caribbean ended a year later when it was stripped to send forces to Cuba.65 A year after that, the advanced base school was again stripped to man a provisional expeditionary force for the Caribbean. By then the growing American military involvement in the Mexican Revolution all but shattered any hope of a permanent advanced base force.66

On 21 April 1914 a naval brigade of some 6,000 marines and sailors stormed ashore at Vera Cruz, engaging in a prolonged and bloody firefight with Mexican citizens and soldiers. Intended by President Woodrow Wilson as a show of force to compel President Victoriano Huerta to resign, the landing galvanised Mexican public opinion against the United States and forced Wilson to dispatch a 4,000-man Army expedition under Major General Frederick Funston. Together with 3,000 marines, the soldiers devoted the majority of the eight-month occupation to social reform projects: creating a civil government, cleaning the streets and prisons, prohibiting gambling and narcotics, enforcing sanitary regulations, and so on. The occupation confirmed Army views of the necessity of combining civil and military measures and led to a brief interest in urban warfare. But though it achieved a remarkable improvement in Vera Cruz’s health and civic services, the expedition’s long-term benefits were largely negative. The Mexicans did not elect a government that met Wilson’s lofty moral standards, Vera Cruz quickly reverted to pre-occupation corruption and decay, and throughout Latin America the US was perceived as an imperialistic bully.67

65. William Biddle to Josephus Daniels, Sub: Duties of the Marines and their connection with advanced base outfits, 16 September and 18 December 1913; Josephus Daniels to William Biddle, Sub: Duties of Marines and their connection with advanced base outfits, 30 January 1914, all in Box 239, Entry 18, RG 127, NARA.
66. William Biddle to Josephus Daniels, 24 February 1913, File 408-1913, Box 33, General Board, RG 80, NARA.
Even worse, the occupation helped escalate conflict along the Mexican-American border. Banditry, guerrilla raids, and even a putative insurrection by Texas Hispanics kept Southern Texas in turmoil. Cavalry patrols, semi-lynch law by the Texas Rangers, and a somewhat chaotic deployment of the militia (National Guard) failed to lessen the violence. Army planners believed that to secure the border would require a full-scale invasion, extensive military operations, and a long period of pacification. The 1913 Army war plan was based on the immediate deployment of the ‘1st Field Army’ comprising most of the Regular Army (including a division drawn from the coastal artillery and a 40,000-man volunteer force) that was to land in Vera Cruz and march to Mexico City. It would be reinforced by further volunteer forces until it totaled 170,000 men, with yet another 60,000 deployed on the Rio Grande border. Inordinately sensitive to any hint that the military might influence his administration’s policies, Wilson was probably unaware of such planning. With an optimism that could all too easily pass as arrogance, he remained as willing to threaten force as he was reluctant to use it. His grudging support of Venustiano Carranza enraged his rival, Francisco ‘Pancho’ Villa, who raided Columbus, New Mexico, in March 1916. In response, Wilson directed what became known as the ‘Punitive Expedition’ to pursue Villa until either he was captured or his armed band was broken up. Brigadier-General John J. ‘Black Jack’ Pershing led a 12,000-man force, primarily cavalry, deep into Northern Mexico, scattering Villa’s followers. But Carranza and the Mexican population perceived Pershing’s intervention as an invasion. Resistance increased, and after a clash at Paral and a bloody setback at Carrizal, the US faced the possibility of a full-scale war. Already considering hostilities with Germany but desperate to secure some face-saving concessions, Wilson kept Pershing’s expeditionary force in Mexico until February 1917 before he withdrew it. The Army came out of its service in Mexico highly resentful of Wilson, but there was the discovery, at least among some officers, that Americans ‘ought to realise that punitive expeditions, or expeditions to dispossess the government in power are worse than useless and are not to be undertaken’.  

The First World War marked a dramatic change in the American military’s approach to expeditionary warfare. By November 1918 the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) in Europe exceeded 2,000,000, a number almost twenty times as large as the entire US Army two years earlier. The experience of recruiting, training, deploying, and fighting such a large force made American officers aware both of the scale and complexity of such warfare. Although most were justifiably proud of their accomplishments, and more

69. ‘Some Unfinished Business’, 22 July 1930, Diary, Box 5, Lassiter Papers.
than inclined to boast about them, there were some who recognised that the armed forces had displayed serious weaknesses. Indeed, one veteran of the 1898 Cuba campaign sardonically remarked of that earlier war that ‘the stupidity and ignorance displayed, though glaring, did not exceed that in the World War, for which we had two years and a half to prepare’.

The end of the war left American planners scrambling to identify new threats. The Navy, still holding to Mahanian sea power concepts, concluded that the primary danger was a war with an Anglo-Japanese coalition (RED-ORANGE). In such a war, the Navy would need to concentrate its battle fleet in the Atlantic to defeat the threat of the Royal Navy and deploy only its older warships to the Pacific. However, the Navy was convinced that either by blockade or battle it could prevent either opponent from massing significant land forces against the continental United States. As a result, its 1920 plan called for aggressive expeditionary warfare, with the Marines seizing a Caribbean island as a fleet base and the Army seizing the Bahamas, Jamaica, Halifax, and Vancouver. But most Navy officers agreed that a RED-ORANGE war, while the worst possible scenario, was a far less likely contingency than war with ORANGE alone. Such a war, fought over thousands of miles, entailed serious challenges. Given that the Japanese would certainly send a large expedition to attack the isolated American garrison in the Philippines and seize the sole protected anchorage of Manila Bay, the Navy had two choices. Should it immediately dispatch the fleet and a relief expedition to Manila Bay, seeking a decisive fleet engagement with the Japanese? This strategy might lead to a quick and cheap war and save the Philippine garrison, but it risked a catastrophic naval defeat in enemy waters and the slaughter of the expedition in its transports. A more cautious strategy was to concede the fall of the Philippines and, with Hawaii as the main base, embark on a series of limited advances across the Pacific, seizing bases to supply and protect the fleet before moving forward. The latter strategy attracted strong support from Marine Corps Commandant, John A. Lejeune, who directed his brilliant staff officer, Major Earl H. Ellis, to develop an operational concept for expeditionary warfare in the Pacific. Ellis’s ‘Advanced Base Force Operations in Micronesia’, approved in June 1921, would serve as the blueprint for the Corps’ development of amphibious assault during the interwar period.

70. Rockenbach, ‘Some Experiences and Impressions’, 42.
In contrast to the Navy-Marine Corps focus on offensive expeditionary (and later amphibious) warfare across the Pacific, the Army’s immediate problem was on continental defence. In 1920 the General Staff’s newly formed War Plans Division (WPD) outlined a scenario in which the Anglo-Japanese alliance gained maritime control of the North Atlantic and the Japan-Alaska-British Columbia triangle and sponsored Mexican attacks along the border and an uprising by Hawai’i’s Japanese. Then, having taken the Philippines and Hawaii, it would ship an expeditionary army of perhaps 5,000,000 and invade through the Great Lakes. Students at the Army War College war gamed a RED-ORANGE war in 1920 and concluded that the United States would face overwhelming enemy forces. Indeed, given the clear superiority of the nation’s opponents, the only possible solution was an immediate attack on Canada.73

Although not nearly as impressive as the Marine Corps’ development of amphibious warfare, the interwar US Army devoted a great deal of attention to expeditionary warfare. Indeed, by 1926 every Army war plan but one anticipated the immediate dispatch of an expeditionary force of at least a division.74 War Plans Division’s first major strategic analysis—its 1920 ‘A Basis for the Development of War Plans’—declared that the Army must be organised so as to be able to deploy as many as 200,000 soldiers overseas within a year.75 That same year, students in the Army War College studied a number of World War expeditionary campaigns, a topic they would continue to pursue throughout the interwar period.76 The Army’s interest in expeditionary warfare was due in a large measure to the twin contingencies of the ORANGE and GREEN (Mexico) war plans. The first required the dispatch of at least 50,000 troops in what was alternately termed the Blue Expeditionary Corps, the Philippine Relief Expedition, Philippine Reinforcement Expedition, or the U.S. Army Asiatic Force. Like their naval counterparts, Army officers


74. Stanley D. Embick to James Parsons, 12 July 1926, WPD 1549, RG 165, NARA.

75. William G. Haan to C/S, Sub: A Basis for the Development of War Plans, 29 December 1920, MID 242-12-22A; W. F. Clark to C/S., Sub: Projects and plans for national defense—their development, 2 May 1919, AWC 8921, both in RG 165, NARA. Some planners advocated restructuring the continental US Army to form a permanent three-division expeditionary force: see John L. Jenkins to Colonel Keller, Sub: Comments on Colonel Parson’s Plan for Reorganizing the Regular Army, 13 July 1926, WPD-1549-2, RG 165.

were torn between a high-risk rush to relieve the Manila Bay garrison or a slow advance across the Pacific undertaken only after securing Hawaii. In contrast, Mexican military power was regarded so lightly that in 1922 WPD urged that the GREEN plan be retitled as ‘Special Plan Green’ because ‘it is really not a war plan but a plan of occupation … for occupying a country incapable of serious military resistance’. Initial plans called for expeditionary columns to seize and occupy most of the country, establishing a military government that would reform the education and legal systems, create an honest police force, and establish an independent and apolitical civil service. When WPD wargamed the Special Plan in 1924, its director concluded that the Mexicans would avoid battle and instead launch guerrilla attacks on isolated units, raid the border, and cut the expeditionary columns’ vulnerable logistical lines. Despite the claims from aviators on the staff that air power could protect communications and shatter enemy resistance, WPD concluded expeditionary war in Mexico would be a long, slow, and frustrating process.

Perhaps chastened by this, WPD’s 1927 plan called for a single rapidly moving column to depose the government and then withdraw. It ‘[did] not envisage a military occupation of Mexico, nor . . . operations against the Mexican nation as distinguished from the Mexican government.’ Fortunately, this early version of regime change was never implemented.

The current policies of the Bush Administration may lead to the mistaken conclusion that offensive expeditionary warfare is an essential part of the American Way of War. But the historical record reveals a more ambiguous conclusion. The traumatic effect of British raids in the two Anglo-American wars created a deeply defensive mindset that almost precluded development of either forces or doctrine suitable for offensive expeditionary war. Although US Navy captains sent sailors and marines ashore to chastise locals, secure commercial advantages, and impose US foreign policy, they developed no corpus of thought on expeditionary war. Similarly the Army chose to


78. Briant H. Wells to C/S, Sub: Revision of Special Plan Green, 3 March 1922, Green 573, Box 266, Entry 282, RG 165, NARA.

79. War Game, Special Plan Green, 27 March-6 June 1924, Green 1683, Box 266, Entry 282, RG 165. Edward J. Boughton to Judge Advocate General, Sub: War Plan—Green, 24 April 1920, AGO 381 (12-5-20), Box 52, Entry 37B, RG 407, NARA; Briant H. Wells to John J. Pershing, Sub: Discussion with the Commanding General, 2nd Corps Area … Green, 3 October 1923, Box 266, Entry 282, RG 165, NARA; Appendix No. 5: Civil Affairs and Legislation, Special Plan Green, 1923, AGO 381 (2-23-23), Box 33, Entry 37B, RG 407, NARA.

80. Harry A. Smith to C/S, Sub: Plan 2, Special Plan Green, 18 January 1927, 2005-51; Stanley F. Ford (ACS/G-2) to ACS/WPD, 21 June 1927, Green 2005-64, both in Box 266, Entry 282, RG 165, NARA.
regard its stellar expeditionary service in the Mexican War as an aberration, convincing itself that it would never again fight on foreign shores. It was not until a century after the nation’s founding that American navalists began to explore the possibility of offensive expeditionary warfare as a means of imposing US foreign policy throughout the globe, and incidentally to secure the creation of a large battlefleet. For the Army, the transition to offensive expeditionary warfare began with the sudden shock of the war with Spain, the ensuing conquest and pacification of the Philippines, and the Boxer Rebellion. In the early 20th century Army planners envisioned an expedition to China and the Navy and Marine Corps experimented with creating an advanced base force to seize overseas territory, but the most common expeditionary deployments—Cuba, the Caribbean, Mexico—remained those of imposing order, chastising indigenous populations, and winning commercial concessions, albeit on a larger scale. But the concern with defence against expeditions remained very much part of the American military ethos, particularly in the Pacific territories.

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A second conclusion is that American strategists have almost invariably considered expeditionary war to be a quick, cheap, and easy solution. From the 1880s discussions on naval brigades to the glowing predictions that emerged from the Gulf War, interventionists have either ignored or downplayed the inherent difficulties of expeditionary war. These same errors are now being made by many advocates of the New American Way of War, who predict that future conflicts will be rapid, decisive, and cost neither blood nor treasure. It is doubtful that the prolonged and bloody conflict in Iraq will undermine such an inherently faith-based strategic tradition, any more than the three-year struggle
for the Philippines did a hundred years ago. Indeed, given the propensity for enthusiasts to ignore the past, we must assume that the expeditionary wars of the 21st century will exhibit the same lack of foresight, and even some of the same operational problems, that occurred in the 19th. Such consistency, both in assumptions and consequences, that helps make expeditionary warfare such an inherent part of the American Way of War.
It is appropriate to start a survey of the maritime contribution to Australian deployed joint operations with a statement of historical fact, one that is little understood even in the Navy. This is that the majority of the RAN’s major warship losses in its history have been sustained in operations in direct support of land or amphibious operations. The submarine AE1 disappeared on patrol after the 1914 occupation of German Rabaul. AE2 was lost after penetrating the Dardanelles, just as the ANZACs went ashore at Gallipoli. The destroyer *Waterhen* and the sloop *Parramatta* were sunk on the Tobruk Ferry run. The cruiser *Perth* was sunk by the covering force of a Japanese invasion convoy off Java—but only after she and her American consort had destroyed a number of transport ships—forcing the Japanese invasion force commander to swim ashore. The cruiser *Canberra* was sunk after a battle to protect the assault shipping after the landings on Guadalcanal. The destroyer *Voyager* and the corvette *Armidale* were both lost in operations to support the Australian forces in Timor. Of our other major losses, *Sydney* was returning from escorting a troop convoy to Singapore when she encountered the raider *Kormoran*, while the *Yarra*, sunk defending a small convoy fleeing from the archipelago, had only recently distinguished herself in the rescue of troops from the stricken *Empress of Asia*. Even the *Nestor*, lost in the Mediterranean, was supporting an effort to resupply Malta. The interaction of seaborne operations with those of the land is thus an abiding feature of the Australian naval experience—and, be it emphasised, of the Australian military experience in our own region.

One associated point is worth noting. Ships exist to be used and risks must be taken with them. It is not the loss of a ship itself that is of concern to the navy—although it will inevitably be a cause for grief in the human cost involved—but the possibility that such a loss may not have been justified. Admiral Cunningham’s insistence on continuing the seaborne evacuation from Crete in 1941, despite the appalling casualties, was based on his understanding that the navy had no alternative but to support the army to the utmost. ‘The Army could not be left to its fate. The Navy must carry on.’

THE MARITIME CONTRIBUTION

There are, however, three caveats for land commanders—and others—to bear in mind. The first is that amphibious operations are not the single or even the most important form of maritime support to land operations. It is a particular frustration for those who argue the importance of maritime power that its very success in British and then largely Anglo-American hands over the last two hundred years should have created almost unlimited confidence in the ability of the Western alliance and its friends to exploit the maritime environment as a mechanism for the transport of global commerce and for the projection of land power. Innumerable campaigns within those two centuries have been conducted within a protective framework so transparent that it has been practically invisible. Korea and Vietnam are two examples in the increasingly distant past—Afghanistan is one that is much more recent.

Maritime support of land operations extends to many activities related to the protection of logistics that are unseen by land forces but profound in their effects. The maritime environment is one of many linkages and many of those linkages relate eventually—and critically—to the success of land operations. The Australian Navy’s success in intercepting the mining efforts of Iraqi forces in the north Persian Gulf in 2003 was not only a source of great comfort to the warships in area, it also caused those responsible for the seaborne movement of supplies into Kuwait to supply the land campaign to sleep considerably more easily.

The second point is that control of the sea and control of the air are inextricably linked as concepts in themselves and in their achievement, although they are by no means the same thing and each possesses its inherent complexities—as well as the odd apparent contradiction. In terms of supporting land operations, the sea and the air cannot be considered apart.

The third relates to the relationship between navies and armies. Julian Corbett, perhaps one of the most useful maritime thinkers in relation to contemporary issues, stated the truism that all operations at sea were conducted in the final event to achieve effects on land, where people live.² No naval force would deny this, but there is one distinction which needs to be made clear in accepting this statement and that is that the achievement of effects on land by navies is not necessarily confined to the support of land operations, even though many campaigns may have land operations as their primary or even their sole focus. As Corbett noted in a sentence that is far less often quoted, it may even be that ‘the command of the sea is of so urgent an importance that the army will have to devote itself to assisting the fleet in its special task before it can act directly against the enemy’s … land forces’. In short, ‘The delicate interactions of the land and sea factors produce conditions too intricate for … blunt solutions.’³

3. Ibid.
Navies can, do and will often have tasking additional to and separate from the support of land operations, whether that support is direct or indirect and even if hostile naval forces do not exist and require engagement. The classical naval task of blockade, for example, is one that may not involve any interaction with land forces, but will be very clearly intended to achieve effects on land. The state of Iraq’s military forces in the 2003 war certainly bore a relationship to the progressive effects of the UN sanctions which had been in force since 1990 and in the enforcement of which the Australian Navy played a substantial role.

Navies will very often be the handmaidens of armies, but there are also occasions on which they will be the brides. If the author can make a special plea it is that soldiers do not, to paraphrase the British journalist Libby Purves, fall into the trap of believing that the navy is a subversive organisation which goes to sea where no-one can see it for the purpose of wasting taxpayers’ money that might otherwise go to the army.4

Access

The first issue for maritime support of land operations is that of access. This has three components, environmental, human and tactical.

Environmental Access

Environmental access may be defined as the reality that just because there are bits coloured blue on the map does not mean that they are all easily used parts of the ‘great ocean highway’. Many coastal areas are so shallow close to land that they cannot be approached by conventional ships, many other areas are too exposed to wind and sea for safe anchorage or, even if the anchorage is safe for big ships, they are too exposed for the working of cargo and the operations of small craft ship to shore. The number of beaches which are fully suitable for over the shore work, even from small landing craft rather than bigger units such as Tobruk, sent a very small percentage of the whole5—and many may be safe in one season of the year but practically inaccessible in another. The fact is that operations over the shore represent practically a means of gaining immediate access and not a mechanism for the sustained support of land operations on any scale. This is all the more true when such operations must be conducted in anything other than a sheltered harbour—something of which the planners of D-Day were well aware when


5. The American estimate is that only 15 per cent of the world’s beaches are suitable for ‘conventional’ landing craft. The use of air cushion landing vehicles (LCAC) raises this to 70 per cent. See Stephen Saunders (ed.), Jane’s Fighting Ships 2004-2005 (Coulsdon, Surrey: Jane’s Information Group, 2004), 867.
they determined to provide artificial harbours on the bare Normandy Coast. Even then, the weather very nearly ensured that God disposed of what man had proposed in the way of blockships and manmade breakwaters. If they are to be supported from the sea, large-scale land operations need harbours—and there are not all that many good ones.

**Human Access**

Human access has several facets. In the first place, there must be adequate mapping of the local environment. Knowledge is essential. The most critical, but not the only aspect of this mapping is that in the conventional sense of hydrography—the charting of the seabed in order to determine safe operating areas for ships. But hydrography and oceanography have many other dimensions that are vital for successful maritime operations—amongst them are understanding the nature of the local water mass, its tidal range, temperature, salinity and movement, as well as its turbidity and, in certain areas, its behaviour in high wind conditions.

Two examples of a failure of knowledge of the maritime environment in the Australian experience of conflict are sufficient. First, in the initial landings in the Dardanelles on 25 April 1925, it is arguable—albeit strongly disputed—that an under-estimation of the local currents resulted in the troops being deposited on the wrong beach, with disastrous results. If not the current, however, then the mistake must at least partially be ascribed to confusion over the identity of prominent points on the coastline. In 1943, the failure over many years to devote sufficient resources to the charting of the South West Pacific—despite the best efforts of an under-resourced and hard working Hydrographic Branch—meant that the units working in support of Australian Army operations along the New Guinea coast were considerably restrained in their activities and sometimes disappointed the expectations of the land commanders.

Most of the landings of the South West Pacific campaigns had to be preceded by extensive and lengthy local surveys, of both inshore waters and the beaches themselves. These surveys were often conducted within range of enemy shore defences and under the fire of coastal batteries or under air attack. Not surprisingly, the naval surveyors finished the Second World War as one of the most decorated branches of the RAN.

It must also be understood that covert operations, because they are generally conducted in a passive mode, without the use of radar, echo sounders or other sonars or active ranging devices, become increasingly dependent upon the fidelity of the pre-

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7. Nigel Steel & Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 54-7, has one of the most convincing recent assessments of the events that brought the landing parties to the wrong beach.
existing knowledge of the local environment as they become more discreet. A submarine inserting special forces will want to be in no doubt about the comprehensiveness and the absolute accuracy of the chart that it is working on. Hydrography and oceanography, as Australian Maritime Doctrine\(^9\) indicates, are combat enablers and vital naval roles with land implications. Navy’s recent integration of various sub-specialisations into an environmental management branch reflects that recognition.

The second facet of human access is the existence of port facilities and, closely associated, effective means of movement on land between the port and the areas of land operations. It is possible to provide some substitutes for fixed facilities, and the Americans in particular have gone to great lengths to provide organic unloading capabilities to their seaborne logistic forces. It is worth a look at *Jane’s Fighting Ships* to see the resources that they have devoted to this issue.\(^10\) Nevertheless, land operations of any scale are much easier to supply from the sea when they can be supplied through ports—wharves are the first requirement and cranes and warehouses come about equal second.

**Tactical Access**

Tactical access is the third issue and the focus here is not so much on the physical means of getting men and materials ashore, but the tactical issues that may arise in a hostile environment for naval forces in getting them ashore and in supporting their operations when ashore. Let us first consider the problem of getting forces ashore. If there is any opposition, or the possibility of opposition, then maritime precursor operations may well be required, not only to eliminate or neutralise local forces ashore but to render safe the waters through which shipping will pass. The achievement of air control—preferably of command of the air—is a key aspect, but there are two other areas that can pose considerable challenges for maritime forces – submarines and mines. If there is a submarine threat, it may require days or even weeks of systematic patrol and surveillance effort to locate and eliminate even a single submarine that is already on station—and, particularly in the case of diesel-electric submarines, that effort must be constant. Even a gap of a few hours can give a submarine the opportunity to recharge its batteries and buy itself another period of underwater life. The advent of submarines with air independent engines, which provide the capacity for almost indefinite slow speed submerged operations, will only make this problem worse. It is possible—in the opinion of some observers—in the contemporary environment to consider the submarine threat as one that will factor only in the unlikely event of state on state war. For larger submarines this may well be true, but small submersibles are not outside the capabilities

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of many non-state organisations to acquire and run. They may not all be able to fire torpedoes or other high technology weapons, but they can deliver swimmers and lay underwater charges.

The second problem is that of mines and this is one that is in no way confined to state-based conflicts. Sophisticated mines are available on the world weapons’ market and unsophisticated but still deadly systems can readily be manufactured. Mines can and do change the course of entire campaigns, the extensive delays (and the heavy losses of MCM forces) that accompanied the attempt in the Korean War to repeat the successful assault at Inchon with one at Wonsan should be engraved on the heart of every amphibious force commander. The most effective form of mine countermeasures, as in the Persian Gulf in 2003 (but not in 1991), is to ensure that mines are never laid at all, but the reality is that mine warfare is one of the elements of conflict most open to bluff and psychology. It only requires the belief that mines might have been laid to create an unacceptable level of risk for entry to the area concerned. The only way of avoiding the creation of such uncertainty is either the achievement of complete surprise in an entry operation—easier said than done—or of absolute sea control.

Mine countermeasures take a long time—how long is dependent upon a wide variety of factors, in particular environmental factors. Strong currents and turbid water often go together—if combined with a soft and shifting seabed, they can make the task of locating, identifying and neutralising mines intensely difficult. The smarter the mine—and there are many available which combine three of four actuation triggers as well as anti-interference devices—the more difficult it is to approach and destroy safely. It should be noted, in fact, that mine clearance operations are actually exercises in risk management. No mine warfare commander would ever assert that clearance of 100 per cent of a hostile minefield had been achieved unless the number of weapons neutralised could be clearly proven to match the number of weapons laid—not a common achievement.

The third challenge is that of improvised explosive devices or other measures of sabotage, particularly underwater, which will require extensive efforts to clear. This was one of the primary activities of the naval clearance diving teams in both Gulf Wars—in the second, the RAN efforts were vital in getting the port of Umm Qasr open as quickly as possible for humanitarian relief as well as the support of the forces ashore.

There is an associated aspect of the protection of shipping which bears directly upon the efficiency of the logistic support of maritime forces. The more secure the environment, the easier it is for ships to load, transit and unload in the most efficient manner. This is not simply a matter of preventing shipping being sunk with the associated loss of cargo, but also of avoiding the extra costs of war risk insurance and crew charges, the delays that are inevitable with any system of convoy, both in terms of port usage and in transit times. East Timor was not, by most standards, a particularly large land
operation. Nevertheless, the dependence upon the sea of both the military and the relief effort was demonstrated by the fact that there were often no less than eighteen ships in Dili Harbour, with two to three shipping arrivals a day. Over 90 per cent of military cargo went into and out of East Timor by sea—and much of the intra-theatre transport, particularly to the Oecussi Enclave, was also seaborne.

**Support of Forces Ashore—Bombardment**

Let us now turn to the combat support of forces ashore. The activity with the longest history is that of bombardment or of naval gunfire support (NGS). This has had mixed results over the years because it requires a high degree of joint co-operation and it needs to recognise certain physical realities—naval weapons, for example, fire on a very flat trajectory compared with most land weapons. Land forces in most circumstances soon pass out of the range of seaborne gunnery, unless they have been pinned down by local resistance or unless their direction of advance is along the coastline rather than away from it. Nevertheless, naval gunnery can be and has been vitally effective and progressive advances in fire control technology as well as the achievement of easily reconciled sea and land tactical pictures through the advent of global positioning have given NGS substantial potential. This was recently demonstrated very clearly on the Al Faw peninsula, when the *Anzac* and three British frigates successfully provided the necessary and extremely effective fire support to Royal Marine forces which had not been able to get their own artillery ashore and whose promised close air support had been stymied by reduced visibility and stormy weather. In fact, the single 5-inch and three 4.5-inch guns of the ships provided all that was needed. Rocket assisted guided projectiles have some promise for increasing the role of surface combatants in the support of land forces, particularly in a region such as ours in which so many areas of human occupation—and thus of potential military significance—are within 100 kilometres of the sea.

**Seaward Defence of the Land Flank**

Seaward defence of the army’s flank is a naval activity that is often forgotten or underestimated. Such operations are an art in themselves and one at which the Russian Navy proved particularly expert in areas such as the Black Sea and the Baltic during the Great Patriotic War. The American Civil War also saw extremely effective interaction between the naval and land forces of the Union, particularly during the final campaigns in Virginia. The trend of technological development suggests that this role will become more important for navies, rather than less, particularly through the increasing integration

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of air defence systems at sea with those on shore. The increasing ability to network sensors and share data effectively in real time means that shore stations may be able to control the operation of missiles remotely fired from ships offshore for whom the targets are masked by land from their own sensors. This is a development parallel to and closely associated with those related to bombardment. While these two areas are probably the most important, it should be noted that there are other activities, such as electronic warfare, in which navies may well have the potential to support land forces in increasingly significant aspects.

**Seaward Offence against the Land Flank**

Defensive operations are not the only way in which the sea can be exploited to achieve advantage on land and the technological developments described above would suggest that offensive operations supported from the sea may well become a key item in the toolboxes of modern armies. Furthermore, seaborne movement remains a mechanism for outflanking land forces in the classical sense of manoeuvre. Despite advances in the technology of both air and land transportation, it is still true that complete packages of land forces—in other words, combined arms units of any size together with their immediate logistic support—can be moved more quickly by sea than by any other means. Even on the small scale, when the advantages that ships have of mobility in mass are not so significant, there are conditions in which seaborne means remain more effective than any other—most notably when there is little infrastructure and the terrain is difficult. This was demonstrated very effectively by the Japanese during their 1941 campaign on the Malayan peninsula. Small craft were repeatedly employed to put forces ashore behind the defences. Although neither navy has received much publicity, both Israel and South Africa have experience of extensive support being rendered by their navies to operations ashore. In the future, this may be an activity which sees increasing use of very high-speed craft in addition to covert deployments from submarines.

**Conclusion**

The history of the interaction of the land and sea in the Australian military experience is clearly one that is both long and proud. Although there have been periods, particularly during times of extended peace, in which the armed services have been too little involved with each other, the record of operations—when it really matters—is and has always been otherwise. Frequent enough when Australians have operated in other theatres of war, such as the Middle East, the interdependence of sea and land—and, in more recent

12. See, for example, Allan Du Toit, *South Africa’s Fighting Ships Past and Present* (Rivonia: Ashanti, 1992), 231-2 and 244.
years, the air—has been almost universally the experience within our immediate region. From the landing of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force in New Guinea in 1914 to the most recent activities in the Solomons, the relationship has been one of effective and sustained mutual support.

In both strategic and technological terms, the prospects for the future maritime support of land forces appear equally strong. While classical maritime capabilities, particularly that of mobility in mass, will continue to provide us the potential to conduct manoeuvre operations in just the same way as our forebears, so the new developments in weapons, sensors and communications promise to improve substantially the ways in which seaborne forces can supplement the efforts of those on land against other forces on land. If the land component of the littoral can be described as that area in which seaborne forces can exercise direct influence over operations on land, we must become accustomed to applying this description to an increasingly large component of the earth.
The first strike from the sky took place during the Turko-Italian war in Libya in November 1911 when an Italian pilot, Lieutenant Giulio Gavotti, dropped four 2-kilogram grenades by hand on enemy troops. Lieutenant Gavotti’s aircraft, a Taube monoplane, had been deployed to Tripoli by steamship from Italy, which meant that his action qualified not only as the first air strike but also as the first offensive air expeditionary mission.

Air services deployed as an integral component of a larger joint force constitute the first of two forms of expeditionary air power this essay will discuss. The examples which illustrate those forms will be chosen generally, but special attention will be paid to the Australian experience.

As it happens, Australia did not lag far behind Lieutenant Gavotti in exploiting air power to add a revolutionary dimension to surface warfare. Shortly after the start of the First World War the Indian Government unexpectedly asked Australia to contribute pilots, aircraft and supporting services to Indian Flying Corps operations against the Turks in Mesopotamia, where vital oil supplies were being threatened. No aircraft could be spared, but four officers and 41 airmen with their own ground transport, including motor vehicles, horses and mules, were dispatched to the Middle East via Bombay in April 1915. Known as the Half Flight of the Australian Flying Corps, this little-known unit was thrown into action only weeks after the epic landing at Gallipoli.

Some of the Half Flight’s experiences cast a good deal of light on the nature of air expeditionary campaigns. Three points are noteworthy. First, just like soldiers, airmen who leave their permanent base for an extended period of service abroad must decide very carefully what they will, and will not, take with them. It is for that reason that, over the years, good air forces have become expert in logistics management, with no single skill being more important than the ability to identify so-called ‘critical maintenance items’ on which continuing aircraft serviceability depends, and which therefore must be priority inclusions in any deployment kit, within which space and weight almost certainly will be limited.
Critical maintenance items tend to be aircraft specific and idiosyncratic. In 1915 the Half Flight used to experience engine failures on almost a weekly basis, a logistics challenge that was difficult to manage because of the size, weight and expense of replacements. By way of contrast, perhaps the most critical failure-prone item on the Caribou light transport aircraft operated by the Royal Australian Air Force in support of the Army since the 1960s has been a small, cheap, rubber oil seal in the propeller assembly. Regardless of the nature of critical maintenance items, they must be identified by meticulous inventory keeping so that they find their way in the right numbers—not too few, not too many—into expeditionary maintenance kits.

The second general point arising from the Half Flight’s experience is that, perhaps surprisingly, the list of what to take need not always include an air force’s fundamental weapon, the aeroplane. The Half Flight received its aircraft when it arrived in-theatre from British sources, a precedent which was followed with all eight AFC squadrons that eventually operated during the First World War in the Middle East, England, and on the Western Front. The example is by no means isolated. The RAAF’s No. 3 Squadron arrived in North Africa in mid-July 1940 to support the 6th Division, and for the next five years its aircraft were supplied through the (British) Royal Air Force. And in an initiative which is more typical of contemporary practices, the RAAF’s No. 78 (Fighter) Wing which spent two years in Malta in the early 1950s leased its Vampire FB.9s from the RAF.

The final observation regarding the nature of air expeditionary forces concerns the supporting infrastructure, of which there are two essential components: airfields; and petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL). Irrespective of how good or how indifferent everything else in the logistics system may be, without those two critical components aircraft simply cannot operate.

From the First World War until about 1950 when jet-propelled and (comparatively) heavier aircraft began to enter service in increasing numbers, the preparation of airfields, while often challenging, was nevertheless manageable in most circumstances. With the general exception of the heavy bombers which only began to proliferate in World War II, most aircraft could fly from unsealed movement surfaces—grass, dirt, pierced-steel-planking, etc—which were relatively easy to prepare.¹

In highly mobile campaigns such as those in the Middle East in both world wars, in North Africa, the Pacific, and Europe after D-Day in the Second World War, and in Korea until mid-1951 (after which the fighting reached a geographic stalemate), squadrons were constantly on the move. That is, it was the access to rapidly prepared airfields that underpinned expeditionary operations. The achievements of the RAAF’s

¹ ‘Movement surfaces’ is a general term which includes dispersal areas, taxiways, runways, holding areas, arming areas, and so on.
airfield construction squadrons illustrate this point. From their beginnings in the Second World War until their disbandment in the 1970s, the self-styled ‘flying shovels’ of the ACSs made an exceptional contribution to Australian expeditionary warfare.

The conflict in the Pacific was above all else a war of frequent, large-scale movement. As the allies’ senior airman in the Southwest Pacific Area, General George C. Kenney, noted, the theatre consisted of a number of islands, and those islands in turn were ‘nothing more or less than aerodromes’ from which operations could be launched.\(^2\) Sometimes they were ‘true’ islands, like Wake and Midway, and sometimes they were isolated areas, like Port Moresby, Lae and Buna, which shared a common land mass but realistically could be linked only by air. That was where the airfield construction squadrons came in.

In 1939 the RAAF had no civil engineering capability whatsoever, but by the end of the war it had raised ten airfield construction squadrons to build runways, taxiways, revetments, base camps, hangars, supply dumps and other facilities throughout the Southwest Pacific. The men of those squadrons sometimes began bulldozing runways out of the jungle or rehabilitating battle-damaged airfields only hours after the fight for the particular piece of ground had started, occasionally while it was still in progress. Operational air bases were routinely constructed within days. Without its airfield construction squadrons the RAAF could not have mounted an expeditionary campaign in the Southwest Pacific.

And after the war it was those squadrons that built the infrastructure which today is fundamental to almost any operation the Australian Defence Force might mount within the Asia-Pacific region. Post-war security planning explicitly identified forward defence—that is, expeditionary activities—as Australia’s key strategic posture, which in turn demanded the construction of major bases from which that posture could be implemented. Thus, between 1951 and 1998, the RAAF’s ACSs and, later, civilian contractors, built a system of major air bases.\(^3\) Overseas the most important were the airfields at Cocos Island and Butterworth (Malaysia), complemented by Momote, Rabaul and Port Moresby; on the mainland, the works at Darwin, Tindal, Learmonth, Derby and Weipa were critical. Today that network of strategic bases across Australia’s vast northern reaches provides both the foundation for operations in the defence of Australia, and the springboard for any regional expeditionary campaign.

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3. As the nature of the Australian economy and of the Defence forces continued to change during the 1960s and 1970s, the decision was taken to disband the RAAF’s airfield construction squadrons and to outsource the work to civilian contractors. The RAAF retained a small number of specialist engineers in uniform to oversight the work of those contractors. The last construction squadron, No. 5 ACS, was disbanded at the end of 1974 once Learmonth was finished.
Airfields also serve to illustrate a significant development in the nature of air expeditionary operations. Korea offers a good example. For the first eighteen months of the war, United Nations air forces flew out of scores of airfields as they constantly moved to stay near their armies. In general, the closer to the front squadrons can be the better, as this minimises the time needed to reach the fighting and maximises the often limited flight endurance of single-engined strike/fighter aircraft. Few better illustrations can be found than No. 77 Squadron’s pivotal role during the battle for the Pusan perimeter in August-September 1950, when RAAF Mustang pilots would roll on to enemy targets almost immediately after taking-off from the pierced steel planking runway just inside the perimeter.4

But the need for any kind of large, fixed movement area, even a temporary one, has inherent disadvantages, including the known location, high construction costs, and relative inflexibility. Air services consequently have turned to technology to try to provide more flexible options. Two approaches have predominated, one associated with aircraft carriers, the other with vertical take-off and landing aircraft. The logic of each is self-evident: for the first, take your airfield with you; for the second, in effect, eliminate the requirement.

Prototype aircraft carriers began to appear in the last stages of the First World War and so rapid was their development that by 1942 they had become the main fleet units in the world’s most powerful navies (Britain, Japan and the United States), although it took the brutal evidence of the battles of the Coral Sea and Midway for many admirals to grasp that fact.

The great merit of the carrier is obvious: two-thirds of the world is covered by sea, most of which is open to international traffic. Consequently, for the past 60 years American naval air power in particular has been a potent contributor to expeditionary campaigns in many corners of the globe. Few forms of military power equal that of a United States Navy carrier battle group, with its unrivalled ability to take its immense self-contained airborne firepower where and when it pleases, fairly quickly.

Equally immense, however, are the associated costs. It is no coincidence that today the USN has the only significant carrier force in the world. Australia’s foray into expeditionary air power via the aircraft carrier provides a salutary lesson.

Influenced by the success of carriers in the Pacific during the Second World War, in December 1948 the Royal Australian Navy took delivery of the former Royal Navy ‘Majestic’ class carrier HMS Terrible, which it renamed HMAS Sydney. A second ‘Majestic’ class carrier, HMAS Melbourne, was delivered in 1956. But for a medium-

sized economy and military power like Australia, aircraft carriers were always likely to sink under the weight of their expense and relative ineffectiveness.

It soon became evident that the small ships Australia could afford were incapable of embarking modern, high performance aircraft. HMAS *Sydney* had arrived with Fairey Firefly fighter/reconnaissance aircraft and Hawker Sea Fury fighters; both were obsolescent even before their introduction into Australian service. And none of their successive replacements—Gannets, Trackers, Sea Venoms, Skyhawks—could compete with front-line land-based aircraft. The decision to scrap carriers together with the fixed-wing component of the RAN’s fleet air arm in 1983 was an acknowledgment of operational and fiscal realities.

Broader success has been enjoyed by the second major technological attempt to escape the penalties of fixed airbases, namely, rotary-wing aircraft. Since their tentative combat debut in the China-Burma-India theatre in 1944, helicopters have become so ubiquitous that in many defence forces they now out-number fixed-wing aircraft. It is hard to imagine any advanced defence force mounting an expeditionary campaign today without a substantial rotary-wing component to provide mobility, reconnaissance, command and control, medevac and, increasingly, strike.

But like every other aircraft, helicopters come with some baggage, in their case, poor performance relative to fixed-wing aircraft (inferior manoeuvrability, speed, range, endurance, and payload); and greater vulnerability to anti-aircraft defences. The US Army’s chastening experience when it tried to deploy a contingent of AH-64 Apache attack helicopters to Albania for operations in Kosovo in 1999 exemplified the difficulties that can accompany rotary-wing deployments to remote locations; furthermore, the limited range and endurance of many helicopters can cause serious logistics headaches in any circumstances.5 Nevertheless, aeronautical engineers continue to address those issues, and the value of helicopters as expeditionary air platforms will continue to increase.

The picture is less clear regarding the future of fixed-wing vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) aircraft which, in theory at least, like helicopters, should not have to rely on permanent bases. Thus far only one operationally successful model has been built, the British-designed Harrier ‘jump jet’ which entered service with the RAF in 1969 and later with the RN (as the Sea Harrier) and the US Marines. It is noteworthy that the RAF, which had hoped to deploy its Harriers very close to army front-lines and fly it from improvised or easily deployable pads, found instead that the aircraft’s complexity and the concept of operations combined to create a logistics nightmare, to

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5. For a detailed account of the many problems that adversely affected Task Force Hawk, see Benjamin S. Lambeth, *Nato’s Air War for Kosovo* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2001), 147-58.
the extent that the Harrier was unsustainable in the field. Consequently, to all intents and purposes, the Harrier has been operated in precisely the same way as non-VTOL strike/fighters, that is, from large permanent air bases.

On the other hand, when the British expeditionary force deployed to the Falkland Islands in 1982 following the Argentinean invasion, embarked Harriers flying off ‘ski-jump’ equipped aircraft carriers played a vital role in air defence, interdiction, and close attack. That precedent may hold some interest for Australia, where the RAAF’s current proposal to replace its F-111s and F/A-18s with the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter includes the option of acquiring a squadron of the Short Take-off and Vertical Landing variant.

Turning to the second critical component of air expeditionary forces—that is, petroleum, oil and lubricants—far less needs to be said, such is their self-evident importance. Military aircraft frequently fly with ostensibly essential equipment not working, including radios, navigation systems, weapons and, in extreme emergencies, even engines (typically a four-engined aircraft taking-off with one engine inoperative). Suffice to say that with the best will in the world, no aircraft can fly without fuel or oil, a truism that both the Luftwaffe and the Japanese air services learnt to their cost during the Second World War. For example, while the German Army’s blitzkrieg succeeded in the compact theatre of Poland, the Low Countries and France where there was a ready availability of airfields and POL, it failed only a year later in the vast theatre of the Soviet Union, where the sheer distance the Nazi army advanced in such a short time created immense logistics problems for the Luftwaffe (among others).

In short, guaranteed access to airfields and POL are non-negotiable requirements for expeditionary air services, and the need for both presents challenges which are usually absent during operations from permanent bases.

Before leaving the example of joint forces to discuss the second model of expeditionary air power, brief mention should be made of the enormous development of deployed Australian air units in the two world wars.

By 1918 the Half Flight’s successor in the Middle East, No. 1 Squadron AFC, had grown from the most humble of beginnings into a formidable unit. It was operating one of the war’s best all-purpose aircraft, the Bristol Fighter, and had expanded its range of capabilities to include almost every role known today, including control of the air, reconnaissance, interdiction, close attack, and strategic strike. The squadron demonstrated its capabilities to stunning effect in the last weeks of the war at the battle of Armageddon, when it slaughtered a trapped enemy force of 3,000 troops.

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6. Sea Harrier pilots shot down 23 Argentine aircraft in air-to-air combat without a single loss themselves, although three Harriers were lost to ground fire.
But in terms of size and potential No. 1 Squadron pales into insignificance compared to the RAAF’s premier expeditionary force in the Southwest Pacific a quarter of a century later, the First Tactical Air Force. Formed in October 1944 as a ‘mobile striking force’ which would be able to move rapidly and fight alongside advancing allied land forces, the First TAF consisted of an attack wing, two fighter wings, two airfield construction wings, and supporting repair and maintenance, logistics, administration and medical units. At its peak it numbered some 20,000 personnel.

The first (joint) form of expeditionary air power contains a number of distinctive characteristics compared to land and sea power, but in general it represents a common approach within the three environmental services to deployed operations. The second form, however, is unique to air power, involving as it does extended operations abroad which are conducted from permanent bases either in the homeland or occupied territory, and which may be thousands of kilometres from the front-line.

Even before the German industrialist/soldier Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin’s prototype dirigible flew in July 1900, strategists were speculating on the possibility of mounting campaigns against enemy homelands using long-range aircraft. Germany’s armed forces formed a Zeppelin unit for precisely that purpose in 1909; and Zeppelin raids originating in Belgium began against the United Kingdom in January 1915.

Experience soon revealed that dirigibles were not well suited to the air strike role, but the concept was promising. More robust technology was needed. Subsequently, few events during the war caused greater public outcry in Britain than the raids on London by Gotha heavy bombers in the middle of the day in June/July 1917. Again flying from bases in Belgium, the Gochas had a range of 800 kilometres and could carry 500 kilograms of bombs; later they were joined by Giant bombers with four times the payload. As a direct consequence of those raids, the (British) Royal Flying Corps was instructed by the government to establish a so-called Independent Force in the east of France for the express purpose of conducting a similar ‘expeditionary’ bombing campaign against the German homeland.

Since then this model has been in continual use, the only substantial change being the constantly improving reach, payload and accuracy of strike aircraft. Between the wars, for example, in a little-known campaign, Japanese Naval Air Force crews flew some of the longest missions conducted to that time when from 1937 to 1939 they ranged throughout China, hitting major population centres including Beijing, Shanghai, Nanking, Hankow and Chungking.

7. The First Tactical Air Force was originally known as No. 10 Operational Group.
The best-known campaign remains the bomber offensive conducted by the Royal Air Force (including some 13,000 RAAF aircrew), joined later by the United States Army Air Forces, against Germany and Italy in the Second World War. That expeditionary campaign had been in progress for almost five years before any Commonwealth armies set foot in occupied Europe; and, once it stabilised, saw hundreds of aircrews fight their way from their bases in East Anglia to their targets in the Nazi homeland and back, most days and nights.

A similar kind of campaign was waged from 1965 to 1972 when American warplanes flying from bases in Thailand and Guam mounted a sustained offensive against North Vietnam during the American-led war in Indochina. Air-to-air refuelling added a new dimension to the model, among other things allowing B-52s to make a ten-hour, 3,000-kilometre round trip from Guam.

Recent conflicts may indicate a growing preference for this form of expeditionary air power, with NATO Operations Southern Watch in Iraq and Allied Force in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia illustrating the point.

Operation Southern Watch was a remarkable campaign which ran for more than ten years, starting in August 1992 when Saddam Hussein breached United Nations resolutions, and continuing until the second invasion of Iraq by an American-led coalition in March 2003. Southern Watch involved the successful enforcement of a no-fly zone for all Iraqi aircraft in the area south of latitude 33° North, a vast space which was dominated by NATO air forces flying primarily from Turkey and off carriers in the Gulf. A similar prohibition was enforced north of latitude 36°. There is no doubt that, if necessary, the air blockade could have been extended to include vehicular surface movement. In effect, an expeditionary force operating from its home bases occupied about one-half of Iraq.

NATO’s air-only campaign against Slobodan Milosevic in 1999 was by comparison a brief affair, lasting only 78 days before the Yugoslav leader capitulated. Missions into Kosovo and Serbia were flown primarily from bases in Italy and the United Kingdom, and from aircraft carriers in the Adriatic Sea. Also of note, and perhaps providing a preview of air expeditionary operations in the future, some sorties were flown by B-2 stealth bombers from the continental United States, a round-trip of 28 to 32 hours which required four inflight refuels. Similar missions were flown two years later during the war against the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, this time with some flights taking 40 hours.

8. Lambeth, Nato’s Air War for Kosovo, 89-94.
In conclusion, two distinct forms of expeditionary air power can be identified. The first has seen air services deploy alongside surface forces, and stay as close as possible to those forces for the duration of the campaign. The two world wars provide some of the better case studies. Invariably, logistics has been the key to success, with special importance attached to the availability of airfields, POL, and expert spares management.

At the same time, technological advances have continued to make an alternative form increasingly feasible, first, by reducing reliance on large, fixed air bases through the use of rotary-wing and VTOL aircraft, and aircraft carriers; and second, by improving the range of strike aircraft through a variety of means, including bigger and/or more efficient aeroplanes, and air-to-air refuelling. The latter initiatives have seen campaigns mounted from secure bases in one country sustained for years against enemies in another country, hundreds or even thousands of kilometres distant. This model represents an extraordinary advance from Lieutenant Gavotti’s modest but symbolic expeditionary air operation flown less than 100 years ago.
Taking the Right Fork in the Road:  
The Transition of the US Marine Corps  
from an ‘Expeditionary’ to an  
‘Amphibious’ Corps, 1918–1941

Donald F. Bittner

We have a reputation for innovation. After the battle of Gallipoli in World War One, a badly blundered amphibious attack, the instant wisdom became: ‘You can’t accomplish an amphibious operations under hostile fire against a hostile beach.’ But the Marine Corps decided, ‘We don’t agree with that,’ and we created the nation’s invaluable World War Two amphibious capability.

General Tony Zinni, USMC (Ret.)

Prologue

As dawn approached, the ships of the amphibious task force approached their assigned positions. At the appropriate time, their commanding officers gave the order, ‘Set Condition 1-Alpha.’ Sailors hustled to their assigned stations, and embarked troops repaired to their below decks assembly areas. The order : ‘All boats to rail!’ resulted in the next evolution: Landing Craft Vehicles and Personnel and Landing Craft Mechanized (called LCVP and LCM, respectively) were lowered to the rails from their wells and davits, or lifted from their positions by ships’ booms on the Amphibious Attack Troop Transports (APAs) or Amphibious Attack Cargo Ships (AKAs). Then came the following orders, ‘Away All Boats!’, whereupon all boats were lowered to the water as rapidly as possible and then circled off their respective ships’ sterns.

Finally the amphibious task force commander gave the order, ‘Land the Landing Force!’. Immediately, flags went up from the ships calling their boats along side various debarkation stations and nets dropped into them; simultaneously, the combat
cargo officers, US Marine Corps company grade officers on Amphibious Attack Troop Transports and Amphibious Attack Cargo Ships called the embarked troops to their debarkation stations, i.e. ‘Boat team 1-1, make for debark Red-1, Boat team 1-2, make for Red-2’, etc. The troops then descended into the boats, which subsequently circled off the bows of their ships—until formed into landing waves. Upon order, these assault waves would head for their respective coloured and numbered beaches. Naval gunfire and close air support occurred before, during, and after the landing. Once ashore, the troops consolidated their beachhead, while landing force shore party units administered and organised the beach area from the water in-land and navy beachmasters did so in the surf zone. Eventually, the landing force would breakout and conduct ‘subsequent operations ashore’, to include seizing nearby airfields or areas where such could be built. As needed, equipment, ammunition, supplies, and more troops landed. When conditions warranted, the Commander, Landing Force, shifted his headquarters ashore and become responsible for operations there. This is the image of the US Marine Corps from World War II (especially the operations of 1944 and 1945 at Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Pelelieu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa) through the 1970s, a portrayal conveyed through film, documentaries, photographs, paintings, and literature before and after V-J Day.

However, fifteen years prior to the end of World War II the public would have had a different image of the United States Marine Corps. Then, it would have been Leathernecks wearing khaki uniforms, leggings, and campaign hats, operating in small countries in the Caribbean area, i.e. Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua; and, within recent memory, Mexico, Cuba, and Panama. In the Far East, other images competed with those of their ‘banana wars’ brethren, as Marines served in China (and recently in The Philippines) at Peking, Tientsin, and Shanghai. In northern China, mechanised and horse-mounted leathernecks dressed, as appropriate, from cold weather clothing to dress blues, and were armed with Springfield bolt-action rifles and .45 calibre pistols, plus sabres. In other words, a Corps focused on and involved in colonial constabulary missions and not amphibious operations.

How had such a drastic change occurred in such a sort time? In Corps mythology, articulated to Marine recruits and young officer candidates, through comments by flag officers to field grade officers, it is simply stated that Lieutenant Colonel Earl ‘Pete’ Ellis developed a plan to win World War II, went to the Pacific on a reconnaissance of the islands where the assaults would occur, the Japanese killed him, amphibious warfare doctrine emerged, the modern Corps was born, and World War II won. Or, as flag officers still challenge officers of all grades in the Corps’ professional education system, ‘Who will be the next Pete Ellis?’ A follow-on comment often ensues about helicopter vertical assault doctrine beginning with the Korean War and that conflict’s immediate post-war years, with the same challenge to the listeners.
Of course, it was not so simple. The Corps of the interwar years was a complex one, not every officer was a visionary, its mission and role was not agreed upon by all, and other factors impinged on its capabilities. In reality, the US Marine Corps could have taken one of two evolutionary paths: that of a colonial constabulary or an amphibious warfare force. It chose the latter, not inevitably but as a result of eight complex and inter-related trends.

**Mission and Role**

The origins of the United States Marine Corps are rooted in the American Revolution, in reality a civil war within the 18th century British Empire. The British had Marines on their ships, so the newly-created naval forces of what became the United States did likewise. Into the early 20th century their function paralleled that of the Royal Marines: ships’ detachments for various duties to include combat at sea and landing parties on shore, barracks at naval bases, and, as needed, operations ashore in ad hoc raised units. As technology and changing patterns of recruitment affected naval warfare coupled with changed international priorities, the Marine Corps had to ascertain its proper role in the defence establishment of the United States, including within the Department of the Navy. Operations in the Spanish American War via Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntingdon’s battalion in Puerto Rico would be a harbinger of the future, although other commitments (i.e. especially the Small Wars and World War I) obscured this.

Still, over the first three decades of the 20th century indicators of the future emerged. After the acquisition of the Philippines, the Corps gradually (with much prodding from the US Navy’s General Board and certain naval officers) created the Advanced Base Force which in theory would seize in a benign environment and then defend advanced naval bases for the United States Fleet. In 1922, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps, John A. Lejeune, defined the functions of the Corps based on federal laws and instructions from the Secretary of the Navy. These reflected both the past with a glimpse into the future: ships’ detachments, guards at naval installations (generally via barracks), garrisons in foreign areas (e.g., Haiti, Santo Domingo [Dominican Republic], Virgin Islands, Guam, Peking, etc.), a mobile force for expeditionary operations (this did not mean amphibious), and, most noteworthy, the war mission of the Corps: ‘To supply a mobile force to accompany the Fleet for operations on shore in support of the Fleet’; it could also be detached, when appropriate, for service ashore with the Army. In 1927, the General Board of the Army and Navy made the Corps’ role more specific. Recognising a conceptual, if not actual, capability, it restated the mission of the nation’s Marines: ‘Provide and maintain forces for land operations in support of the fleet for the initial seizure of advanced bases and for such limited auxiliary land operations as are essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.’
Another factor also loomed behind these events. With the acquisition of the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, as well as Guam in that conflict and Hawaii and American Samoa before it, the United States had assumed responsibility for the defence of these possessions. Gradually, the US Navy identified Japan as its probably enemy—and commenced planning accordingly, although concerns about German penetration into the Caribbean also existed. From this evolved War Plan Orange. In its various forms, Orange ultimately foresaw a drive across the central Pacific. Planners assumed temporary naval bases would have to be seized and defended. Someone would have to do this, and that someone was the US Marine Corps. Still, a formally assigned mission, a role in the Navy’s basic war plan, and assumed historical deeds did not equate to a capability. More would be needed.

Organisation

In the early 20th century, other indicators of change appeared. The first, shortly after the Spanish-American War, was the establishment of the Advanced Base Force in 1900 with the theoretical task of seizing (in a benign environment) and defending a temporary advanced naval base. Between 1900 and 1914, amidst some tension, this force moved from concept to permanent organisation. By 1915 it was headquartered with appropriate equipment in Philadelphia, with the 1st Regiment (Fixed Defense) and Advanced Base School. Plans called for a mobile defence element to be composed of regiments on the east and west coasts. Early manoeuvres in 1902-03 and 1904 focused on the Marines seizing and defending an advanced naval base, culminating in 1914 with an exercise with the Atlantic Fleet to test its organisation and equipment (soon overshadowed by the Marine landing at Vera Cruz). Linked to this were studies by field grade officers (e.g. John Henry Russell, Eli Cole, Dion Williams, Pete Ellis) on the defensive aspects of amphibious operations while students or faculty at the Naval and Army war colleges. However, this organisation with its still defensive orientation was overtaken by various ‘Small Wars’ commitments and the Marine Corps’ role in World War I.

In the post World War I era of reduced numbers and financial restraints, the Corps reaffirmed its traditional missions amidst a gradual self-conception that in war it would ‘supply a mobile force to accompany the Fleet for operations on shore in support of the Fleet’. In 1922, Major General John A. Lejeune recommended to the General Board the creation of a permanent, albeit in reality still nucleus, mobile standing force ready to conduct operations. It approved this, and in November 1923 the Marine Corps Expeditionary Force, MCEF (one each on both coasts), was created. Although weak in numbers, the East Coast and West Coast Expeditionary Forces, based at Quantico, Virginia, and San Diego, California, respectively, at least were raised, equipped, and manned on a permanent basis. Essentially, the organisation and mission of the newly renamed entity theoretically remained those of Advanced Base Force.
With a headquarters, and ground combat, aviation, and supporting units, the Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces could respond as needed to various needs. In the 1920s, this meant overseas deployment in the small wars of the period. Although in theory landing operations could be done, the East and West Coast Expeditionary Forces had no real capability to do so—unless landing in a benign environment. Thus, a problem existed, which Colonel C. J. Clifford readily identified: ‘On paper, the MCEF looked good—good organization, good equipment. The drawback, however, was the fact that post-World War I Corps had had no experience in training with the Fleet and, conversely, the Fleet had no experience with the Marine Force’—this despite exercises between 1922 and 1925 with the Fleet in the Caribbean (Culebra and Canal Zone) and Hawaii, which focused on loading and unloading of boats, equipment, and weapons. Moreover, because of diverse commitments in the decade after World War I and the small size of the Corps, manoeuvres with the fleet ceased after 1925—not to be resumed till the mid-1930s.

The final step, the foundation of what would be the Marine Corps’ organised combat capability, occurred in 1933. Navy General Order 241 of 7 December 1933 created the Fleet Marine Force. This was more than a name change for the forces on the east and west coasts. By it, the Fleet Marine Forces on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts became an inherent part of the United States Fleet, under the command of the fleet commander for planning, training, and operations, while the Commandant of the Marine Corps raised, equipped, and trained them. Simply stated, this brought about a ‘marriage’ between the Navy-Marine Corps team in planning and executing a naval campaign. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General John H. Russell, addressed this in 1934 in his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy. Russell, who steered the concept through the Department of the Navy as Assistant Commandant and with his predecessor’s concurrence, started his report with remarks on the Fleet Marine Force:

The Fleet Marine Force takes its place as part of the organization the fleet and will be included in the force operation plan for each year. This was an important step, as it places an essential element of the fleet under the control of the [Fleet’s] Commander-in-Chief and should result in simplicity and increased efficiency in the event of emergency operations requiring the use of Marine Corps forces in connection with active fleet operations.

Still, this was only an initial step in the creation of an amphibious warfare capability. Limited strength, financial restraints, and other commitments ensured this remained only a base for future development. At the end of fiscal years 1936 and 1940, the strength of the Marine Corps stood at approximately 17,000 and 26,567 officers, warrant officers, noncommissioned officers, and troops, respectively. The limited strength of the Fleet Marine Force reflected both the small size of the Corps in these years before World War II, its competing traditional roles, remaining overseas postings, and training commitments:
Reflective of the change, General Russell in 1935 banned the use of the word ‘expeditionary’ with respect to Marine Corps units. Headquarters, Marine Corps, bluntly and clearly stated the intent: ‘It is desired that the service be alive to the significance of the authorized designation [Fleet Marine Force] and avoid obsolete, less inclusive terms.’

**Doctrine**

On 2 September 1936, the outgoing Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps proudly reported to the Secretary of the Navy that the Corps had developed three major doctrinal publications: the soon to be most significant *Tentative Landing Operations Manual*, the generally unknown *Tentative Manual for Defense of Advanced Bases*, and the well known *Small Wars Manual*. As General John H. Russell wrote, ‘The three works form an invaluable source of professional instruction.’ The Commandant’s comments were significant. They represented both clouette on a part of the Corps’ recent history and commitments (the Small Wars) and looked forwarded to what was coming in the future (amphibious warfare). Indeed, the two manuals on amphibious operations formed the core of the professional education system of the Corps and the foundation upon which Fleet Marine Force units would be trained. Most significantly, Russell had overseen (and ordered remedied) a significant gap in the Corps’ approach to amphibious operations: The lack of a doctrine upon which to base education, training, exercises, and procurement of equipment. Amidst the various strains coming together on this subject, without a doctrine much would be done in a void.

The background of this can be briefly stated. In March 1931, four officers on the staff of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Majors Charles D. Barrett, Pedro A. del Valle, and Lyle H. Miller, and Lieutenant Walter C. Ansel, USN, formed a team to work on a doctrinal manual for amphibious operations—in essence, draft a manual for attacking a defended shore from the sea, integrating both naval and Marine forces. Work progressed slowly till October 1933—when the schools were ordered to cease their course of study and produce a working draft manual, this coming from the then Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Russell.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1936</th>
<th>1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Officers</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant Officers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlisted Marines</td>
<td>2805</td>
<td>7695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2973</td>
<td>8035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Field Officers Course dissolved into committees and produced a draft. Especially studying Gallipoli, the students and faculty dwelled not on the subsequent operations ashore, i.e. the ground combat after landing, but on those aspects of the operation specifically associated with the amphibious landing. Eventually, the schools identified six key areas: command relationships, ship-to-shore movement, naval gunfire support, aviation support, securing the beachhead, and logistics. In January 1934 the initial draft Tentative Manual for Landing Operations (1934) was submitted to a conference committee of 67 officers (including four Navy and one Army) in grades from lieutenant to Brigadier General. The host commander, Brigadier General J. C. Breckinridge, in his opening remarks articulated both the challenge and objective:

Up to this conference we have been largely groping in the dark; and this conference is to state and clarify what we have found there—to bring it out into the light and look at it. When we have it all before us we will eliminate and dissect it, group together what the manual should contain, and leave the rest for further decision when we begin to elaborate in the construction of the text book which should logically follow immediately after completion of the manual itself.

Committees worked in general and subcategory areas linked to tactics (including landing and defence of bases, general discussion of landing operations, and purpose of the manual); staff functions, logistics, plans, and orders; training; and naval and aviation matters. Under various guises and names, the draft was issued for comments—and in May 1935 a board headed by the now Lieutenant Colonel Barrett convened to revise the 1934 draft based on all the diverse input.

From these endeavours came the now retitled Tentative Landing Operations Manual (dated 9 July 1935). The Commandant of the Marine Corps distributed it for further comment, critique, and study, with General Russell requesting that comments be submitted no later than 1 July 1936. The Manual’s table of contents revealed how far the Marine Corps conceptually had come since the previous decade’s fleet exercises with the Navy and the resumed, and soon to be enhanced, ones of the 1930s: I. Landing Operations, General; II. Task Organization; III. Landing Boats; IV. Ship to Shore Movement; V. Naval Gunfire; VI. Aviation; VII. Communications; VIII. Field Artillery, Tanks, Chemical, and Smoke; and IX. Logistics.

Equally important, the manual immediately and clearly stated the objectives for the type of operation it addressed:

For securing bases for our fleet or components thereof; for denying bases or facilities to the enemy; for bringing on a fleet engagement at remote distance from an enemy main base by causing the enemy fleet to operate in protection of the threatened area; for protection of life and property in connection with small wars; for the conduct of such other land operations as may be required in the prosecution of the naval campaign.
With minor revisions, the manual became official US Navy and US Marine Corps doctrine when *Fleet Training Publication 167, Landing Operations Doctrine, 1938*, was promulgated. The United States Army then adopted it in 1941, under the title *Army Field Manual 31-5, Landing Operations on Hostile Shores*—changing nothing in the text or the original Marine Corps illustrations except the cover and name.

In 1936, the *Tentative Manual for Defense of Advanced Bases* appeared. Although the subject of the Manual is now often forgotten in the Corps, it is still legally one of its missions. In the years leading to and into World War II, the issue was not a theoretical but a real one—as the defence of Wake Island in December 1941 showed. Hence, it was seriously studied, and defence of advanced naval bases was a Fleet Marine Force mission. The preface identified the inherent challenges to be overcome: ‘The defense of advanced bases will involve the combined employment of land, sea, and air forces’, while also noting ground forces in face of a ‘general landing attack’ would ‘constitute the basic element of the defense’. The final charge to its readers clearly articulated the obvious, but often in practice hard to achieve—as the Japanese experiences in the forthcoming war illustrated, ‘Nothing is so essential to success as unity of command and singleness of purpose’.

**Professional Military Education (PME)**

Although raised in 1775, the Marine Corps did not institute its first professional military education school until 1891, when the School of Application was founded for newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenants. After World War I, the Corps recognised a need for further schooling for its career officers and established a three-tiered PME system: for newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenants, The Basic School, and for specially selected officers the Company Officers School (which convened its initial course in 1921) and the Field Officers School (which opened in 1920). In establishing this system, the Corps addressed a significant issue pertinent to its officers: ‘The old curse of “this is in addition to your other duties”, will not be applied to the students, for they will assigned no duty but their school work’. Furthermore, by policy, ‘Unless under very exceptional circumstances, student officers will not be detached until they have completed their course.’

In articulating his goals for the schools, John A. Lejeune, the Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps, commented in 1920, ‘It is our aim for all of our officers to have as good opportunities to obtain a military education as the officers of the Navy and the Army. Education is absolutely essential: An educated officer makes for educated men and an ignorant officer makes for ignorant men.’ The educational ‘Godfather’ of the Corps’ professional military education system of the interwar years, Lieutenant General James Carson Breckinridge, added to this in 1929: ‘Military
reasoning should be analytical and critical above anything, because military problems are not susceptible of academic proof ... There is no formula for waging war or fighting battles; to apply a rule is to invite, or demand, disaster.' The then Colonel Breckinridge continued, drawing the logical conclusion and issuing the challenge to all officer students: 'They are taught to dissect, to analyze, and to think. They are taught how to develop their inherent intelligence and to use their minds for original thinking ... we need officers who are trained to reason briefly, clearly, decisively, and sanely.' So was the stated goal, but of course achieving it took time, effort, analysis, and change.

In creating the second and third tiers of its professional military education system, the Corps drew upon the experience of the service which already had one, the United States Army. This was reflected in its founding era, which lasted until 1931. Curriculum-wise in the 1920s, the schools instructed in some Marine Corps subjects, but primarily drew upon materials from the US Army schools at Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Thus, students studied major ground operational problems in the offensive and defence, including utilising cavalry as part of the manoeuvring force. There were also exercises set in Baltimore, Maryland, Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio—in which Marine forces were injected into internal labour strife situations, i.e. strikes or lockouts, euphemistically called 'domestic disturbances'. Amphibious operations were scarcely to be seen, e.g. two hours on landing operations in the 1924-25 academic year, subsequently gradually increased to 47 the following year and then to over a hundred in 1927, albeit still small in a one-year course.

An assessment of the Field Officers Course for the 1925-26 academic year clearly reveals the Army influence in the curriculum of this new system, as it focused heavily on ground combat operations in a land campaign. To its credit, the students studied this from the division level perspective—a key point when the initial Marine divisions were not raised till 1941. Not until the 26th week did 'landing operations' appear in the schedule; thus, for that week the officers had Overseas Expeditions (after another class on domestic disturbances!), Forced Landing by a Division, The Division Assaults, The Division Pursues, Withdrawal of Landing Force, and Defense of Coast Lines. The 26th week concluded with a class on Domestic Disturbances and an outside lecturer. From this, the course continued into its final phases of land operations ashore.

By the 1939-40 academic year changes had occurred in the 42-week course. In addition to basic instruction on tactics, aviation, artillery, logistics, chemical warfare, communications, engineering, military intelligence, infantry weapons, and law, the course included 131 hours on 'overseas operations', a 98 hours Landing Operations problem, a second Landing Operations problem of 114 hours, a Base Defense problem of 76 hours, a second Base Defense problem of 85 hours, and two Map Maneuver Landing Operations problems (set in Culebra and St Croix) totaling 51 hours. Military history
also addressed the new focus of the curriculum, with three classes totaling seven hours on Gallipoli, three hours on German landing operations in the Baltic, two hours on the British Tigris operation of 1917, two hours on the Spanish landing at Alhucemas Bay in 1925, and two hours on the British raid on Zeebrugge of 1918. In comparison with the 26th week of the 1925-26 academic year, that for 1939-40 included the following subjects pertaining to amphibious operations: Boat Assignment Table, Landing Diagram, Requested Naval Gunfire Support, Brigade Administrative Plan, Artillery in Brigade Support, and Embarkation and Transport Loading.

Indicative of how things had changed, Small Wars classes totaled only 73 hours; in the syllabus, the students had seventeen reserved for equitation to only sixteen of lecture, demonstration, and seminar in Small Wars, the latter however supported by a map problem of 57 hours. This reduction was by deliberate policy, 55 fewer hours in Small Wars than were allotted in the 1937-38 academic year. The future General O.P. Smith analysed the curriculum for that year, and recommended curtailment of Small Wars instruction. He based this on a key point: Small Wars tactics were not necessarily different from those of other ground operations, hence hours could be saved and shifted elsewhere. Hence, no need existed for discussions of chapters in the Small Wars Manual totaling 21 hours, nor written evaluations of its chapters; the 21 hours of tactical walks and terrain exercises on patrol operations in the field could be replaced by two demonstrations of three hours each, while other Small Wars chapter discussions could be addressed via historical examples. The time gained would be better used for tactical terrain situation exercises at the battalion and regimental levels.

What had happened? The change commenced in the early 1930s with the shift away from the Army-oriented curriculum to one oriented towards amphibious operations linked to a naval campaign. Spearheading this concept was Brigadier General James C. Brekinridge and his chief of staff, Colonel Ellis Miller. Colonel Miller, unknown to late 20th and early 21st century Marines, did this internally via proposing (with Brekinridge’s approval) and implementing curriculum reform. On 15 August 1932, he identified a curriculum problem and candidly said so to Brekinridge, the Commandant, Marine Corps Schools: ‘The prolonged use of this Army material, now taken from all of the Army schools, has so saturated the entire Marine Corps Schools system that its foundation is still resting on Army principles, Army organization, and Army thought.’ This had to change, for to Miller the Schools’ courses ‘must involve Marine organizations, Marine equipment, Marine problems, Marine operations, with a Naval, not Army, background’. As he succinctly noted, ‘The Marine Corps is not the Army; the Army is not the Marine Corps.’

Miller also became a publicist for the newly emerging mission within and outside of the Marine Corps. He wrote and the Commandant had distributed a booklet titled The
Marine Corps in Support of the Fleet (1933). Resting on solid professional and historical research, he became via writing and lecturing a prophet for what was coming: ‘The Navy is a war machine already constructed and capable of immediate action. The Marine Corps is part of that machine, must produce, on call, a well-trained force, familiar with naval methods, and organized and equipped for conducting shore operations essential to the success of the naval mission.’ Miller specified what was needed: in war, the fleet needed bases, but for a variety of reasons did not have them. It could have them, and the means existed with the US Marine Corps and its Fleet Marine Force: ‘The solution of this problem was accompanied by including as a part of the fleet, a force sufficiently strong and possessed of the necessary material to seize, establish, develop, maintain, and defend a temporary base from which the fleet might operate against the enemy …’ Although Miller exaggerated the then capability as much still had to be done—he had identified where the Corps was heading.

By the end of the 1930s, students’ operational problems and attendant solutions began to take the form of conceptual, if not actual, landing plans. These included such annexes as naval gunfire support, aviation support, the ship-to-shore movement, etc. Within the schools, future reality and theory merged in the annual Advanced Base Problem sent to the Marine Corps Schools by the Naval War College. Initially coordinated by colonels on the staffs of each institution, by the mid-1930s this was an inherent part of the senior officers’ course curriculum. By the 1939-40 academic year, the course provided for 66 hours of student ‘exercise’ for the ‘Naval War College Problem’ (4-18 March 1940), and six hours of ‘Illustrative Problem’ for the solution on 1 May.

Newport sent the problem to Quantico, the students divided into several study teams to prepare solutions, and from these a ‘Schools Solution’ was prepared—and a presentation team briefed it, complete with script, slides, and maps. They did this thrice: at the Naval War College, at the Department of the Navy, and at the Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia. For these, the focus was clear in two areas: (1) a gradual shift away from a study of a landing in an initially benign environment and then defending a base against an enemy counter-attack, to one of amphibious assault; and (2) with two exceptions, the enemy was obviously Japan and problem scenarios linked to War Plan Orange. The change is reflected in the problem of the 1937-37 academic year. In the section ‘Estimate of the Situation’, the mission of the Fleet Marine Force read: ‘To subdue the hostile forces defending the Dumanquillas area in order to assist in the seizure of that area.’ Later, in the assessment of the area where the landing would occur, the conclusion stated: ‘In general the topography and vegetation may be said to provide an almost insurmountable obstacle to any major military operations in the area surrounding the Bay. It tends to limit the defenders to a defense of the coast line with little depth, which in turn forces the attackers to effect several costly landing operations against strong coast line defenses.’
With a curriculum, the schools obviously had students to teach. Between 1920 and 1941, 361 individual Marines started the senior course of study, and 330 graduated. From the sister services, six US Army officers and 40 US Navy officers were students. No international students attended; in fact, because of the curriculum in the 1930s, by policy they were excluded. For the junior course, a total of 683 officers started its academic year; of these, 620 were regular officers and 47 were reserves, sixteen US Navy, and no US Army or international; of these, only 66 did not complete the curriculum.

World War II transformed classroom study into real world practice. On the outbreak of war, of the 330 graduates of the Corps’ senior course, 186 remained on active duty. These formed the nucleus of commanders and key staff officers who led the corps between 1941-45 (six divisions, five aircraft wings, 33 regiments, twenty defence battalions, four raider battalions, four parachute battalions, two amphibious corps headquarters, and an appropriate supporting establishment), while maintaining the traditional missions of ships detachments (for every battleship, battle cruiser, heavy cruiser, light cruiser, and aircraft carrier) and barracks. During the war, of the eleven generals commanding Marine Corps divisions, nine were graduates of its staff college; of the fourteen assistant division commanders, eleven graduated from the Quantico institution. Thus, twenty of 25 generals who commanded divisions or were assistant division commanders graduated from the Corps’ senior professional military education institution; of the other five, three served at the Marine Corps Schools as instructors on the staff. At corps level, the Marine Corps formed two operational, Marine Amphibious Corps, III MAC (with the former I MAC becoming III MAC) and V MAC. Six Marine generals commanded these, and four graduated from the Quantico staff college, and the two who did not served on the faculty of the Marine Corps Schools.

At the regimental level, the figures are similar. During World War II, the Corps raised 33 regiments (twenty infantry, six artillery, four engineer, two raider, and one parachute). Theoretically, 772 officers of the grades of Colonel (70), Lieutenant Colonel (144), Major (232), and Captain (326) could have potentially commanded one. Of this total, however, only 138 officers are named as commanders, although only 122 served in such a capacity due to twelve officers commanding two regiments and two others three regiments; reducing the number further due to four reserve officers commanding for a short periods of time and one Major (a mustang commissioned from the ranks) commanding the Parachute regiment as it was disbanding, a total of 117 regular officers commanded regiments and would have been of the grade to have attended one or more of the Corps’ and/or sister service professional military education schools before the United States’ entry into World War II. Of these, in addition to The Basic School, 70 were graduates of one or more of the Corps’ professional military education schools, fourteen of a Corps PME school and a US Army company grade and/or field grade officers’ school, eighteen of schooling only in the US Army system, and three of a combination
### Table II
Summary: Advanced Base Problems Naval War
College—Marine Corps Schools, 1931-1941

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Samana Bay and Trinidad</td>
<td>Samana Bay – In the Dominican Republic, the Advance Base from which Trinidad would be seized. Problem scenario: Great Britain (limited war aims, but on tactical and level unlimited, i.e., the destruction of the British Fleet.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>Malampaya Sound</td>
<td>Palawan Island, The Philippines, 500-600 miles south of Manila, and west of Mindanao. In War Plan Orange, possible fleet assembly site after its move across the Pacific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-33</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Dumanquilas Bay</td>
<td>In Mindanao, southern side of a western arm, in the Southern Philippines. In War Plan Orange, possible fleet assembly site after the move across the Pacific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933-34</td>
<td>[I]</td>
<td>Dumanquilas Bay</td>
<td>Same problem, repeated, as in 1932-33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934-35</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Truk</td>
<td>In the eastern Caroline Islands. One of the possible islands to be seized in War. Neutralised by naval air strikes in 1944.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-36 latitude</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Palau Islands</td>
<td>East of the Philippines, similar to Mindanao. Invaded in 1944, with major fighting on Peleliu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-37</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Dumanquilas Bay</td>
<td>Why a return to this site/scenario?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-38</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>Why a return to a war scenario with Great Britain (similar to 1930-31)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-39</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Guam</td>
<td>In the Southern Marianas Islands; invaded in 1944.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Saipan and Tinian</td>
<td>Spelled ‘Tenian’ in the records. In the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Marine Corps/US Army and French War College PME courses. Only eleven did not attend a Marine Corps or sister service PME course after The Basic School and two, the aforementioned mustang and another officer, had no TBS designation after their names in the official registers.

In a relatively short period of time, the US Marine Corps had established, developed, refined, and altered its professional military educational system—while also continuing to send Marines to sister service educational and training schools, and a selected few to France. It not only nurtured its future leadership, but also helped write the doctrine used in future combat. In January 1940, the leader who had shaped the Marine Corps Schools through three tours of duty at Quantico, Lieutenant General James Carson Breckinridge, wrote, ‘It has been my belief for years that the schools shape the Corps … the schools are the cause and the Fleet Marine Forces … are the effect.’ In so many ways, Breckinridge was indeed correct—thus fulfilling the 1920 goals of Major General John A. Lejeune.

**Promotion Reform**

Another significant issue confronted the Corps’ leadership: who would lead in the challenging tasks associated with amphibious operations? This was a significant question, as prior to 1934 the Corps had a promotion system from First Lieutenant to Colonel based on seniority and vacancy, not selection based on merit. Stated another way, a method had to be found for advancing those officers who, based on past performance and perceived ability, could do well in the future. This meant that promotion was not simply a reward for past services. Linked to this would be removal from active duty of a percentage of officers not selected for advancement. Even the revered John A. Lejeune could not succeed in having Congress change this system. This key reform occurred in 1934 and the results were immediate.

The last previous attempt had died in the Senate in 1928, but when John H. Russell assumed office in 1934 he made this a top priority. On 20 April of that year, he (along with his staff) testified before a subcommittee of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee and clearly stated his support of proposed legislation which would change the Corps’ promotion. Russell stated his intent to ‘reward ability and merit; … only the fit should be promoted’, and said ‘we [shall] promote the efficient’. The Commandant described the ‘grave condition’ of the officer corps as ‘the most serious problem confronting the Marine Corps since I joined in 1894’. He said the officers in every grade but Second Lieutenant were generally over-aged and physically unfit, i.e., ‘many of our officers are too old for active field service’. Troops, he emphasised, had to be led by physically able and active officers, equal to or in better condition than their men. However, the situation was exactly the opposite: the age of Colonels ranged from 52-62, Lieutenant
Colonels from 49 to 57, and Majors from 38 to 56. For company grade officers, 70 per cent of the Captains were over 40, and 37 per cent of the First Lieutenants over 35! As he commented, ‘the over-age condition of these grades strikes at the very heart of the efficiency of the Corps; namely its fighting effectiveness’. His staff provided further detailed testimony, postulating that, without any change, the situation would become worse in the ensuing decade: without reform or relief, by 1946 all officers above the rank of Major and 81 per cent of the Captains would be over 50 years of age, with some spending over 30 years as a company grade officer! As the Commandant noted at the end of hearing, ‘I think it is understood, sir, that our only method of promotion now is by retirement, resignation, or death’.

Unfortunately, the Commandant addressed had identified reality. Officers could serve until age 64 forced retirement, and annual attrition amounted to only 2.5 per cent a year; hence, stagnation resulted. As The New York Times commented on 15 January 1934, under the current system and promotion rate, an officer would serve 140 years before becoming eligible for general officer rank, including 55 years in the grade of Captain! Or, as the paper noted, ‘Methuselah would have a better chance than almost anyone else of becoming a general in the Marine Corps’. At the same time, two Marine officers stationed at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, ‘figured one night we’d have to be 102 years old by the time we made Major’. By the early 1930s a Naval Academy jibe reflected the problem; midshipmen who elected the Navy razed their peers who opted for the Marine Corps: ‘I’ll see you in 20 years when we’re both Captains’.

Thus, the real issue was the inability of young men of talent and proven ability to advance. Real life examples illustrated the problem, not humorous postulations of the New York Times or younger officers speculating late at night in their quarters. In the interwar years, officers could realistically expect to remain a company grade officer for two decades, as some examples show: Brigadier General Robert Devereux, a Second Lieutenant for five and a half years and a First Lieutenant for ten and a half, and General Jerry Thomas for 15 years as Second and First Lieutenant from 1918 to 1932, while Colonel John Thomason remained a Captain for 14 years and General Oliver P. Smith for 17 years! This pattern also appeared in the junior field grade ranks: General Holland M. Smith served as a Major for 14 years and General Roy Geiger for thirteen-and-a-half years.

General Russell had identified the real issue: the advancement of talent. In his final report as Commandant to the Secretary of the Navy in 1936, he significantly began with comments on promotion reform: ‘Another serious defect of the seniority system was that an able, zealous, active and efficient officer could not be promoted over the head of another who lacked such qualifications. Mediocre officers were promoted as rapidly as the most efficient and there was no incentive to excel.’ He clearly stated the implications, as there should be ‘reward for merit and elimination for unfitness’.
Russell indeed succeeded where his predecessors had failed. On 29 May 1934, the Marine Corps personnel bill was enacted into law. It provided for promotion based on merit by selection board, thus eliminating advancement by seniority and vacancy—and the results were immediate. On 25 June 1934, the Secretary of the Navy appointed a senior officers promotion board and a junior promotion board. As Brigadier General John C. Letcher later wrote, ‘the boards affected the incompetent officers of the Marine Corps like scythes cutting through ripe grain’, while General Merrill Twining succinctly commented that, ‘the first board … was ruthless and intended to be’. In an understatement, the Commandant commented on this in his annual report to the Secretary of the Navy: ‘It is believed that the application of selection to the Marine Corps will result in greatly increased efficiency.’

For the Marine Corps, the names on the promotion lists of the initial senior officer boards reads like a ‘who’s who’ of the leadership who led America’s Soldiers of the Sea in World War II. Russell intended talent and ability to rise, and the new system ensured this. The first Brigadier Generals’ list contained the name of Colonel Thomas Holcomb, who in 1936 would succeed Russell as Commandant of the Marine Corps; the Colonels for 1934 included Clayton Vogel, Holland M. Smith, and Charles F. Price; and the Lieutenant Colonels Julian C. Smith, Joseph C. Fegan, Alexander A. Vandergrift (another future commandant), Roy S. Geiger, Charles Barrett, Harry Schmidt, William Rupertus, and Pedro del Valle. The total numbers revealed what was occurring: two of eleven Colonels selected for Brigadier General, eleven of 45 Lieutenant Colonels for Colonel, and 53 of 99 Majors for Lieutenant Colonel. In Russell’s report of 25 June 1934, to the Secretary of the Navy, he wrote that those selected were ‘the best fitted of all those under consideration to assume the duties of the next higher grade’.

The effect was immediate. As Colonel (and Marine Corps historian) Robert Heinl would later write, capable officers who had remained in the Corps ‘found themselves promoted with bewildering speed after years of stagnation’. This process continued the next year: in 1935, Joseph C. Fegan, A. A. Vandergrift, Roy Geiger and Charlie Barrett were selected for Colonel, while another board picked Julian C. Smith and John Marston for that grade; those two boards also recommended for advancement to Lieutenant Colonel two future commandants, Clifton B. Gates and Lemuel Shepherd, plus Graves B. Erskine, Maurice Holmes, and Leo Hermle, all future general officers. The company grade boards had an even more drastic effect. In 1934, only 92 of 259 Captains were recommended for promotion to Major, and only 89 of 198 First Lieutenants to Captain. The officers not selected, if not physically or professionally able to perform their duties, would be retired.

With the new system in place, officers studied, trained, and eventually executed the Corps’ expertise—and train they did. The good ones made the transition from Small
Wars to amphibious warfare. Still, the pre-war training showed how much still had to be learned about this new type of operation.

Training

Eventually, doctrinal theory had to be tested in realistic exercises in order to correlate it with its associated means, i.e. tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) with the appropriate troops and equipment needed to implement it. As early as 1933, Colonel Ellis Miller had stressed inherent problems existed because of a lack of ‘combined training’ (i.e. Navy and Marine Corps); Miller especially stressed that: ‘Experimental exercises with landing boats, guns, ammunition, tanks, aircraft, bombs, smoke, land and underwater obstacles, fire control observation, spotting, communications, by day and night, with present and newly developed equipment, should be made a part of the fleet major training schedule and not relegated to an occasional investigation’.

On the evolutionary path towards amphibious warfare capability, three major series of fleet training exercises occurred. These were separated by periods of no activity, hence institutional continuity was broken although individuals partook, remembered, and reflected. The early exercises of the Advanced Base Force in 1902-03 (Culebra), 1904 (Subic Bay, The Philippines), and 1907 (again, Subic Bay) focused on seizing an advanced base in a benign environment and then erecting defences against an enemy counter-attack. These emphasised the defensive aspects of the force and rudimentary techniques and procedures. They also revealed major weaknesses in basic capability, friction with some US Navy officers on the role of the Advanced Base Force Marines, and tension with the Army who viewed such activities as encroaching on that service’s role and especially the defence of the Philippines. These culminated in the Caribbean exercises of 1914, but were soon discontinued due to commitments elsewhere.

After a break of eight years, the second phase of major exercises with the fleet occurred in the 1920s. In 1922 at Guantanamo Bay and Culebra, the focus was on landing heavy artillery during the ship-to-shore movement, with an emphasis on defence; landing craft deficiencies also appeared. The 1923-24 exercises occurred on Culebra and in the Canal Zone; these focused on seizing, and defending an advanced naval base. A hostile landing force was added—which illustrated problems for the attacker! Other identified difficulties included command and control problems, poorly loaded transports (although the genesis of the Marine Corps combat cargo officer appeared here on USS Sirius which was loaded and unloaded efficiently), and naval gunfire support issues, none of these a surprise. During these manoeuvres, testing of two prototype amphibian vehicles occurred: a landing craft based on those the British used at Gallipoli and an amphibian tank, the Christie, at Culebra. In April 1925, the exercises were held in Hawaii, with the faculty and students from the Corps’ senior professional military school at Quantico,
TAKING THE RIGHT FORK IN THE ROAD

the Field Officers Course, participating as part of the invading ‘blue’ force. A common theme in these showed the inherent problems associated with suitable landing craft for the ship-to-shore movement and amphibious shipping, a situation not resolved until just before and early into World War II.

In 1934, landing exercises resumed but lasted only five days and were in essence a repetition of those of the early-to-mid 1920s. Then, between 1935 and 1941, annual pre-war fleet landing exercises (FLEXs) occurred. These reflected the difference between creating an organisation, developing a doctrine, teaching the doctrine to officers who would execute it, and identifying problems associated with executing amphibious operations. Recurrent themes in these important landing exercises included the need for amphibious shipping and its associated landing craft, naval gunfire and close air support techniques and procedures, communications equipment and command/control difficulties in the ship-to-shore movement at night or under smoke, and logistics issues pertaining to organisation of the beach and surf zone to medical evacuation of wounded.

Succinctly stated, the FLEXs could not prepare the Corps to immediately conduct amphibious operations; neither it nor Navy had the required personnel and equipment to do this. Rather, they identified problems that had to be resolved.

**Equipment**

Various types of new and different equipment would be required to execute amphibious operations in which the Corps was gradually developing its expertise. Some of this would be normal infantry, artillery, and related equipment, procured in conjunction with the United States Army. Aviation-wise, the Corps’ air arm would continue its development within naval aviation, hence training, aircraft, and various roles would be within that broader context. The United States Navy would have the responsibility of designing and procuring the types of shipping and supporting capability needed for assaults from the sea. However, the Corps assumed the lead in one vital part of the ship-to-shore requirement: the type of landing craft needed for this movement. The older means of going ashore from age of sail to the early days of steam, including Gallipoli, which were studied, were clearly inadequate.

Lieutenant General Pedro del Valle, one of the key officers who would work on amphibious warfare doctrine in the 1930s, described the problems in reflective comments on two traditional types of landings. For a pre World War I landing at Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic, he wrote that, ‘if there had been resistance we should have perished in the attempt to land, for the boats available were motor sailers and whale boats and the beach only large enough for one whale boat at a time’. Later, in describing a planned 1933 landing in Havana where yet another revolution was occurring, the hastily
### Table III
Fleet Landing Exercises, 1934-1941

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flex Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- 1934</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Landing exercise; five days, little focus on debarkation and ship-to-shore movement. No naval gunfire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 1936</td>
<td>Culebra</td>
<td>Shipping and landing craft needs re-appeared; command and control problems in darkness or under smoke. Naval gunfire and air operations problems still apparent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 1937</td>
<td>San Clemente</td>
<td>Problems identified included ship-to-shore movement, especially in rough surf; small boat and coxswain training problems; and naval gunfire and air operations ordnance, spotting, and communications. Positives: cargo nets used for debarkation, tactical radios (Army) improved communications, and 75mm pack howitzers functioned well; close air support at right angle to direction of supported troops so as to avoid fratricide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 &amp; 5 1938</td>
<td></td>
<td>Umpired landings at Vieques and Puerto Rico made against US Army defending force. Experience in handling supplies and medical evacuations. Deficiencies of small boats/landing craft again appeared, although boat crews experienced. Naval gunfire: Navy began to revise area bombardment approach, i.e. point-target counter battery fire, plus special ships for this role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 1940</td>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>Similar to previous ones; lack of amphibious ships for the landing force. Tested</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
assembled landing force disembarked in Colon, Panama, for a pre-operation check; it then embarked for Cuba although, ‘the sad condition of our landing force was made shockingly obvious’. Although a plan had been prepared to restore order in Havana, he continued, ‘thank God we never had to make this crazy landing’, for the 12-inch guns of the battleship Wyoming did not work and the landing force had poor boats, few troops, and both the Marines and sailors lacked training. Something clearly had to be done.

With regard to landing craft, this occurred but somewhat later than other aspects of the development of amphibious warfare. An early and premature effort in the mid-1920s failed. This involved an amphibian vehicle which could also have provided some form of fire support, the Christie tank. A combination of other commitments, uncertainty in the Corps, financial constraints, and early technology doomed this endeavour.

The familiar image of the ship-to-shore movement shows the workhorse of the US Navy’s fleet of landing craft, the LCVP (and its various progeny). Its procurement involved many years of controversy within the naval services, but the Corps (whose members would have to ride in any craft adopted by the Navy) strongly supported this simplistic, inexpensive, and reliable vehicle. Ironically, it was conceived by a civilian, Andrew Jackson Higgins, from New Orleans, partially self-financed, and had to compete with other and less effective craft supported by the Navy. Capable of mass production, eventually 20,094 of the various types of landing craft were built—and performed yeomen service throughout the globe for decades. Another irony with regard to these craft occurred with respect to debarking troops; despite good seaworthiness, ability to land on and retract from a beach, and adequate troop and cargo space, debarking troops (and cargo) quickly onto the beach posed a problem. The answer was simple and obvious when suggested and acted upon: A front ramp which could be dropped and raised quickly. From where did this idea come? A Marine officer saw one on a Japanese landing craft in China in 1937, and eventually this was adopted for the various landing craft Higgins designed.

However, troops making the ship-to-shore movement in open boats, even if self-propelled and capable of independent movement, were susceptible to high casualties. Some formed of amphibian armoured vehicle was needed. From this need came the Landing Vehicle Tracked or LVT, also called AMTRACs by Marines. This again came from private industry, in this case a Floridian by the name of Donald Roebling. Originally designed to rescue people after hurricanes and downed aviators, gradually it was adapted for amphibious warfare use. By 1938, test models were being used in landing exercises. Also called the ‘alligator’, it was first used during the amphibious assault on Tarawa in 1943. By the end of the war, 15,654 were built—and usually used in the initial assault waves. In addition to troop carriers, engineer and artillery models were also constructed.
Finally, it is a truism but none the less most significant: individuals mattered. The right persons with the appropriate vision and capabilities came into positions of influence from the Corps’ senior leadership down to the officers who would have to design a conceptual capability, ensure it became a reality, and then implement it against a most determined and capable foe.

At the top, three significant commandants served in the 1930s. Two functioned as a de facto overlapping team and laid the foundation for what would come. Ben Fuller and John Russell had the vision and ability to shift the Corps’ focus from a traditional expeditionary capability to that of amphibious. Russell’s successor, although the second most junior flag officer in 1936, not only enhanced what his predecessors bequeathed to him—but also led the Corps in World War II until his retirement for age in 1944. Indicative of an on-going process of the interwar years is why Holcomb succeeded Russell as Commandant of the Marine Corps as opposed to more senior generals; Lieutenant General Julian C. Smith provided a succinct and simple answer to this basic question: Russell picked and supported Holcomb, although the two were not personally close, for one basic reason: ‘He was the best material for Commandant.’

Beneath the Commandants and their staffs, others had to implement their vision. These officers ranged from Lieutenant General James Carson Breckinridge, thrice involved in the professional military education development and reforms at Quantico, to Colonel Ellis P. Miller, strong willed and capable, who helped conceive and implement the doctrinal and education initiatives. For the doctrine, three capable officers initially spearheaded this initiative, the future Major General Charles Barrett and Lieutenant General Pedro del Valle, and Rear Admiral Walter C. Ansel; Barrett ultimately led the initiatives which culminated in FLT-167, and, later when he died in the Southwest Pacific, was Commanding General of I Marine Amphibious Corps. Aviation wise, numerous leaders helped develop the air side of the Corps before the war and then into it. Foremost amongst them was General Roy Geiger, who stressed Marine aviation was not a separate arm but existed to support the ground forces in combat; ultimately, he commanded the joint and combined air forces on Guadalcanal, then III Marine Amphibious Corps in the Central Pacific, and finally 10th US Army on Okinawa. At the lower tactical level, younger officers would have to execute on the battlefield what the visionaries had developed. Amongst these were the commander and chief of staff of the 1st Marine Division at Guadalcanal, respectively, Alexander A. Vandergrift (later Commandant of the Marine Corps, succeeding Holcomb) and Gerald C. Thomas; the most decorated Marine officer of World War II, Major General ‘Red Mike’ Edson; and officers whose careers and wars spanned that conflict and thence into Korea, Oliver P. Smith and Lewis ‘Chesty’ Puller.
A major visionary who helped develop techniques, conducted training, and led in combat was General Holland M. ‘Howlin Mad’ Smith. He more than anyone symbolised the trend and new capability of the Corps with regard to amphibious warfare. He defined this type of operation as, ‘The art of conducting an operation involving the coordinated employment of military and naval forces dispatched by sea for an assault landing on a hostile shore’. Smith then stated the implications of this: ‘It was only when the naval phase of our amphibious operations—the seaborne approach and the ship-to-shore or shore-to-shore movements—was visualized, not as a ferry boat ride, but as a tactical movement, that successful landing operations were possible.’

These officers, and the subordinate leaders and Marines they trained and led, ultimately fulfilled the vision of the leaders who correctly foresaw the general role of the US Marine Corps in the defence establishment of the United States and the specific capability the nation would soon require. Cumulatively they realised the old traditional roles of ships’ detachments and Marine barracks at naval bases was one of the past (although it continued in reduced form for decades later), while realising the Corps had also come to a proverbial fork in the road and confronted two choices as to its future. They rejected the colonial constabulary option (i.e. traditional expeditionary operations), significantly not captured by the immediacy of its Small Wars commitments of the early decades of the 20th century. Instead, they chose the ‘right’ fork in the road, that of the conceptualisers and practitioners of amphibious warfare, the assault from the sea—and just in time. Thus, as the Corps slowly withdrew (except for China) from its ‘Small Wars’ commitments, it now concentrated on its emerging maritime mission: the seizure of advanced naval bases. As historian Robert Sherrod wrote, these leaders in the 1930s took the Marines out of the expeditionary business and turned them from ‘a rough and ready gang, which could fight banana wars or serve the Army as infantry, to a specialized organization with a primary mission’. Sherrod also noted they did so with ‘gusto’ and dedication of ‘sincere practitioners’.

**Conclusion**

What ‘take aways’ are there from this assessment of an era so significant in the evolution of the United States Marine Corps? Four points are especially significant:

(1) Regimental (and mythic) history has a role in the initial entry and socialisation of new members into any service. However, over time the reality of the past fades and subsequent generations may indeed begin to believe its own simplistic and varnished history. In other words, beware of the ‘Liberty Valance syndrome’. Recall, at the end of the film *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* when what really occurred is known, the newsman discards his notes, saying ‘This is the west [or Corps!], sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.’
(2) The armed services are keen to mine history for ‘lessons learned’. All countries and their respective services have rich and diverse histories—it can be of valuable use, if questions are phrased properly. The wrong approach is to use history to reinforce an already established position, which then becomes a misuse of history. Dr Jay Luvaas addressed this in his introduction to a book on staff riding at the US Civil War battlefields of Fredericksburg (1862) and Chancellorsville (1863). While at the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, he and his colleagues responded to a tasking from the Chief of Staff of the United States Army—‘To develop a series of battles in history where one side “had fought outnumbered and won”’. As Professor Luvaas wrote: ‘Obviously Chancellorsville was prominently on the list that dutifully made its way to the Pentagon. None of us had the courage, unfortunately, to point out the obvious: Whatever gave Lee the victory, its works best when Hooker is the opposing commander.’

(3) All the services of the any nation have multiple heritages. The issue is how to assess and draw upon this vast and diverse history of human and institutional experience. Assessing the future and knowing how to relate this to an existing challenge or threat is a judgmental call—and hopefully leaders will make the correct decisions. But the answers are not always obvious. At the turn of the 20th century, the United States Army confronted such a dilemma. The Indian wars were over, its role in nation building essentially completed, and the challenge of major conventional war seemed far away; for some officers, it seemed the service had one of two choices: Continental defence or a role in urban constabulary operations. Few initially foresaw foreign constabulary operations in China and The Philippines, followed by overseas commitments in major wars. What is obvious in retrospect is not always so to contemporaries who must make decisions on policy, strategy, force structure, weapons, supporting systems—and who might be the future enemy.

(4) Finally, and related to the above, institutions approach crossroads, decisions points where decisions must be made as to which evolutionary path they will take. For the United States Marine Corps, as it entered the 1930s an apparent ‘choice’ could have been that of a colonial constabulary mission. Appearances and commitments certainly might have dictated this; it could have opted like the French Marines (Troupes de Marines)—but it did not. In this sense, the visionaries who led it and those who implemented various decisions selected a different course, that of amphibious operations, one appropriate to the nation and Corps’ needs. However, this was not inevitable. Even the acknowledged pre-eminent maritime power, Great Britain with her apparent heritage in amphibious operations, did not do so. Multiple reasons resulted in a conscious decision for the United States Marine Corps to develop its capability to execute amphibious warfare during World War II. Not pre-ordained but sound judgment and leadership, linked with strategic needs, ensured this occurred. It was indeed more complex than ‘regimental history’ and mythology suggest.
Today, the United States Marine Corps, as do all the US services and those of its allies and friends, confronts a crossroads. The question is what aspects of their respective past experiences can be drawn upon for insight and guidance as an uncertain future is confronted. The contextual challenges and its associated dilemmas have been recently addressed not by a Marine Corps officer, but a former British Army officer. As Lieutenant Andy Arkell wrote in June 2003, ‘Gone are the days when an enemy would oblige us by displaying its weaponry and intentions, and wearing a particular costume or kind of hat. War as we have known it, as we grew with, is finished … Operations such as that in the Falklands, with a definite, identifiable enemy, definable front lines and limits of exploitation, we must now accept as being the exceptions.’

Unfortunately, Lieutenant Arkell’s assessment has become a harsh reality—which command and staff college graduates (and those all too many PME and training schools, from private to colonel) are learning all too quickly. As Lieutenant Colonel Willard Buhl, USMC, a recent graduate of the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and now a battalion commander in Iraq, recently wrote:

I am constantly conducting mission analysis and reviewing how I’ve allocated my resources. You can address many missions simultaneously but must constantly assess priorities—all things overlap but it is hard to know where you are being most effective in this type of fighting. Meanwhile, the country [Iraq] is fascinating and I am truly the military governor of seven small cities and many villages. I am dealing with city councils and tribal sheiks, coordinating civil affairs projects, standing up police forces and Iraqi Ntl Guard Companies, etc.

Or, as General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant of the Marine Corps, so presciently articulated on so many occasions, the tactical, operational, and strategic aspects of ‘the three block’ war … and its attendant need for the ‘strategic corporal’. The net result is that the realities, complexities, and challenges of the 21st century have matched or surpassed those of the practitioner of arms’ forbearers of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. As Lieutenant Colonel Buhl so correctly noted, ‘It’s a small unit leader’s fight!’—albeit with major strategic implications in a very asymmetrical world. The United States Marine Corps’ visionaries of the interwar years were correct in assessing the forthcoming looming challenge and what was needed to meet it; for succeeding generations, General Krulak, a descendant of one of those officers, likewise viewed the challenges of the early 21st century, when he commented, ‘The future is not the “son of Desert Storm,” but the stepchild of Somalia and Chechnya’.

The reality of the world today is not one of ‘either/or’ with respect to the Corps’ heritage. The issue is not the ‘small wars’ or ‘amphibious warfare’ heritages. Rather, it is both, and mastering the contemporary challenges associated with each—which means the lives of Marines are more complicated, the demands greater, and the need to possess multiple skills more necessary, than their predecessors.
Ironically, this is exemplified by the United States Marine Corps issuing Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 3, which merges both heritages under the title of *Expeditionary Operations*. Amidst a larger discussion, MCDP 3 defines expeditionary operations thus: ‘The defining characteristic of expeditionary operations is the projection of force into a foreign setting.’ If Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps John H. Russell in 1935 banned the word ‘expeditionary’ as a term of the past and stressed ‘amphibious’ for its future, the merger of the Corps’ two heritages is evident in the foreword to this 1998 publication by his successor, the then Commandant, General Charles C. Krulak, whose verbiage is both historical and contemporary in many respects:

*Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 3, Expeditionary Operations ... emphasizes the naval character of Marine Corps forces. This naval expeditionary character provides capabilities both to forward-deploy forces near the scene of potential crises as well as to deploy sustainable, combined arms teams rapidly by sea and air. With reduced overseas presence in terms of force levels and bases, these capabilities have become essential elements of our national military strategy.*
Germany’s Expeditionary Operation: The Invasion of Norway, 1940

Adam Claasen

The invasion of Norway offers interesting insights into expeditionary warfare as it was one of the few instances in which the Germans moved away from their traditional land-based mode of war. Hitler’s continental ambitions often meant that greater emphasis was given to army considerations in planning and carrying out his war in Europe. Thus, few of the Führer’s initiatives involved an equal billing for all three services. By its very nature though, the invasion of Norway could only succeed with land, air, and sea co-operation in its fullest measure. Rather than serving as mere ancillaries to an army-initiated and planned campaign, Norway was a naval project that would require not only ground troops but an unprecedented aerial airlift if it was to succeed. Added to the joint services nature of the campaign was the fact that it would be undertaken in the backyard of the Royal Navy. This meant that the nascent Third Reich navy, the Kriegsmarine, would lack the naval superiority normally expected in such an enterprise. Furthermore, while Oslo lay within reasonable proximity to northern Germany, one of the key geo-strategic objectives would lie above the Arctic Circle. The reinforcement and re-supply of German advance forces spread over such dispersed region would challenge German ingenuity to its limits. The operation’s tripartite service requirements, the need to operate in an area in which the Germans lacked naval superiority, and the extremely elongated theatre of operations make this an excellent study in expeditionary warfare. This essay will, in turn, examine the origins and planning behind the campaign; the role of each of the land, air and sea components; the competing Allied-German initiatives for Norway in early 1940; the 9 April 1940 invasion itself; and the problems associated with the more distant strategic objectives; and finally an assessment will be made of some of the campaign’s more notable features.
The Invasion of Norway, 1940.
Genesis and Early Planning

The overwhelming success of the German assault on Norway, particularly under the very nose of the Royal Navy, gave the impression that Hitler had long had a Norwegian adventure in mind as part of his conquest of Europe. Many, then and now, reasoned that long-term and careful planning had provided the foundation from which German land, sea and air forces had sprung upon Norway. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. In actuality, Hitler was more of a mind to keep Scandinavia, and Norway in particular, out of his fiery struggle for the mastery of the Continent.¹ His rationale was relatively simple: why draw another region of Europe into the conflict, a move that would inevitably result in a dispersal of effort. Moreover, what would be gained from an occupation of Norway that Germany did not already possess from continued Norwegian neutrality? As a non-belligerent, Norway served as an excellent conduit for Swedish iron ore to Germany, via the northern Norwegian port of Narvik, while the Leads, the protected channel running down the Norwegian coast, offered numerous outlets for German blockade runners in time of war. Consequently, when, a month into the war on 10 October 1939, Großadmiral Erich Raeder, broached the subject of obtaining bases in Norway for his surface vessels and U-boat arm to lay ‘siege of Britain’, the Führer offhandedly replied that he would merely consider the issue.²

Although Hitler was more than content to let matters drift on this northern flank over the months of October and November, two events drew his eyes northward in the last month of the year and in the first couple of months of 1940: the Russo-Finnish Winter War, and the Altmark incident. Running from 30 November 1939 to 13 March 1940, the Winter War presented the worrisome prospect of an Anglo-French operation to bolster the Finnish effort against the Soviets, a move that would most likely result in the Allied occupation and control of the northern Swedish iron ore mines.³ Should this take place, the Third Reich’s war industry would be deprived of its most important supply of iron

¹ Hitler’s desire to keep Norway and Scandinavia out of the war was declared directly to the states themselves on 1 September 1939, then in a speech to the Reichstag on 6 October, and finally to members of his inner-circle in a secret memorandum of 9 October. US Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945 Series D, Vol. 7, Doc. 525 [hereafter DGFP D/7/525] (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1956), 502-3; M. Domarus, Hitler: Reden und Proklamationen 1932 bis 1945: Teil II Untergang, Dritter Band (Leonberg: Pammlinger and Partner, 1988), 1385; unsigned memorandum from Hitler to Brauchitsch, Raeder, Göring, and Keitel, 9 October 1939, in Trial of Major War Criminals by the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg, Germany Vol. 37, Doc. 052-L (Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947-1949), 466-86.
² Fuehrer Conferences on Matters Dealing with the German Navy [hereafter Fuehrer Conferences] (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources in cooperation with the US Naval Historical Center, 1983), October 1939.
³ Allied intervention was a very real prospect, with Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, its most ardent and vocal supporter. For British interests and initiatives see D. Dilks, ‘Great Britain and Scandinavia in the “Phoney War”’, Scandinavian Journal of History 2 (1977): 29-51.
ore.4 This very real possibility had been foreseen by Hitler back in September, when he had supported Norwegian neutrality, but with the caveat that he ‘would naturally be compelled to safeguard’ German interests should a breach of Norwegian and Swedish neutrality by a third party take place.5 What forced Hitler to take a second look at Norway was the possibility of just such a threat to the Third Reich’s vital iron ore source.

In this environment, and feeding on reports from Vidkun Quisling and other pro-Nazi sympathisers in Norway, that the Norwegians government favoured British intervention, Hitler in mid-December tentatively ordered the establishment of a ‘small staff’ in the German Armed Forces High Command (OKW) to carry out an investigation of ‘how one might occupy Norway’.6 The delivery of the OKW deliberations on 13 January 1940 proved less than convincing even among Raeder’s own operations staff who concluded that they need not worry about British intervention since the enemy lacked the will or resources for such an undertaking.7 Nevertheless, the Großadmiral pushed along internal considerations until in late January when the Führer put deliberations on a firmer footing with the establishment of a much more solid staff under Kapitän Theodor Kranke. Over a three-week period of intensive work Kranke’s staff were able to draft a reasonably detailed plan of the undertaking.8 Given the fact that much of the country’s population was scattered in a smattering of widely dispersed urban settlements, or in small farming communities, it was possible to gain control of the country by the occupation of a relatively limited number of strategically important cities and ports. The plan outlined a simultaneous occupation of Oslo, Kristiansand, Arendal, Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, and Narvik by army units delivered by warships. A significant point of divergence from the navy’s deliberations was a much greater role for the Luftwaffe in the delivery of assault and consolidation troops and supplies. In all, German aircraft would deliver half the invasion forces.

5. DGFP D/7/525, 502-3.
Yet with the Kranke Plan completed, Hitler was still no nearer to ordering an occupation of Norway. Rather, the work still had an air of contingency planning about it, with the Führer non-committal about its implementation in the near future, if at all. While he appreciated Raeder’s strategic interests in Norway, Hitler was less enamoured with any activity that did not appear to bear directly on his continental ambitions. Moreover, though an Allied expedition in the region would have serious ramifications for the Third Reich, he remained unconvinced that Britain would breach Norwegian neutrality anytime soon. This last consideration would be dealt a blow in the second week of February when the British engaged in a newspaper headline-grabbing act of ‘piracy’ in Norwegian waters.

The *Altmark* and Hitler’s *Weserübung* Directive

The event that galvanised the German leader’s intention to invade was the British boarding of the German supply ship the *Altmark*. Having refuelled and provisioned the German raider *Graf Spee* in the South Atlantic, the *Altmark* entered Norwegian territorial waters above Trondheim on 14 February 1940. As a naval auxiliary flying the colours of the German merchant navy the vessel was entitled to unhindered use of the Norwegian Leads. The only complicating factor was the British suspicion that the *Altmark*’s cargo included prisoners captured by the *Graff Spee*. British reconnaissance aircraft spotted the *Altmark* on 16 February and a cruiser-led Royal Navy flotilla outside the Leads tracked the vessel as it made its way south under the protection of Norwegian territorial waters. The German supply ship sought shelter in Jössing Fjord when a destroyer attempted to close in. Meanwhile, Berlin was bombarding Oslo with diplomatic censures demanding that they prevent breaches of their waters and protect a vessel of the German merchant navy. Around midnight, HMS *Cossack* brushed past the two Norwegian torpedo boats at the fjord’s entrance, entered the snow-clad enclave and a boarding party set about the task of liberating over 300 prisoners. While the British considered the rescue of the prisoners a great propaganda treat, the event proved a decisive turning point for Hitler.

The 16 February 1940 entry of the German naval staff’s diary ably summarises the feelings at the time: ‘It is quite clear from Admiralty orders and the steps taken by the British forces that the operation against the supply ship *Altmark* was carefully planned and directed with the clear object of using all available means and if necessary violating Norwegian territorial waters, in order to capture the *Altmark* or to board her and free the prisoners.’ Hitler was livid. The ‘*Altmark* outrage’, as he dubbed it, convinced him

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9. *War Diary Operations Division German Naval Staff: Kriegstagebuch der Seekriegsleitung, 1. Abteilung* [hereafter *KTB Skl*] (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources in cooperation with the US Naval Historical Center, 1984), 16 February 1940.
that Britain was more than willing, and able, to breach Norwegian neutrality. Oslo’s failure to prevent the boarding was also seen as a sign that claims reaching Hitler’s ears of an Anglo-Norwegian secret agreement might have some credence. Five days later he met with General die Infanterie Nikolaus von Falkenhorst, who had been involved in Germany’s intervention in Finland at the end of Great War, to determine the feasibility of an invasion. Falkenhorst was favourably disposed to the proposal and a staff, which included Kranke as the navy’s representative, was assembled to undertake the campaign. Following a whirlwind thirteen days, Hitler released his ‘Directive for Case Weserübung’. The concerns surrounding Norway where neatly drawn together in the preamble of Hitler’s directive for the invasion:

The development of the situation in Scandinavia necessitates the commencement of preparations for the occupation of Denmark and Norway by formations of the armed forces (Case Weserübung). This would anticipate English action against Scandinavia and the Baltic, secure our supplies of iron ore from Sweden, and provide the navy and the Luftwaffe with expanded bases for operations against England.

The directive made it clear that Falkenhorst, as commander of Gruppe XXI, remained in ‘all respects’ ‘immediately subordinated’ to Hitler. Weserübung, therefore, fell under the operational command of the OKW. This would allow for the completion of rapid planning required for the undertaking; preserve the secrecy so vital to the attack’s success; and finally aid co-ordination between the independent minded land-air-sea services. This latter problem was evidenced by a good deal of inter-service fighting in the wake of the release of the invasion plan. While the Kriegsmarine was only too happy to see its Nordic hobby-horse finally get backing from the Führer, both the Army and the Luftwaffe were decidedly unenthusiastic. The Army was against a Norwegian side-show reducing its capacity for the upcoming war in the West and resented that it had received scant consideration in the planning for Weserübung. Generaloberst Franz Halder, chief of the Army General Staff, jotted in his diary that Hitler had not ‘exchanged a single word with the commander of the army on this matter.’ For his part, head of the Luftwaffe, Hermann Göring, resented the subservient position his
own command (OKL, *Oberkommando der Luftwaffe*) would have to OKW and that the campaign was the brain child of another service, in this case, the Luftwaffe’s main rival for the Führer’s attention and support, the Kreigsmarine. The displeasure of the Army was mollified by a small reduction in the land forces to be deployed, and Göring, after a particularly nasty *Weserübung*-inspired temper-tantrum, was banned from meetings with Hitler for a month.\(^{16}\) Over the following week, Falkenhorst and Göring’s deputy, Erhard Milch, both entreated the Luftwaffe leader, and to a certain degree were able to bring him around to seeing reason. The resulting command structure left a good deal to be desired. Falkenhorst remained ‘first among equals’ alongside Raeder and Göring, since any changes to orders required his assent, but he had only direct control over army units, as naval and air components fell under the operational command of their respective service leaders. In this sense then, Falkenhorst was not a true joint service commander even though placing him under the umbrella of OKW gave an appearance of a unified command. The success of the operation would be dependent more on the military professionalism and the operational co-operation of officers in the field and less on unanimity among the service commanders.\(^{17}\)

**Operational Details: Land, Sea and Air**

The campaign would be broken into two components: the occupation of Denmark (*Weserübung Süd*) and the occupation of Norway (*Weserübung Nord*). The southern venture would centre on a rapid northward advance across the shared frontier to Skagen, as the navy entered Danish ports, and the Luftwaffe secured northern airfields and undertook threatening flyovers of Copenhagen. The Norwegian invasion was by far the larger of the two undertakings. In line with the Kranke’s staff’s previous work, *Weserübung* would aim to control the country through the occupation of important centres stretching from Oslo in the south to Narvik in the Far North.

The operational command for *Weserübung Nord* fell to Falkenhorst’s Gruppe XXI. The *General die Infanterie* had five infantry divisions at his disposal (the 69th, 163rd, 181st, 196th, and the 214th), and two infantry regiments of the 3rd Mountain Division (the only experienced combat division). Firepower was boosted by a tank battalion, four batteries of 10-cm calibre guns, two batteries of 15-cm calibre guns, and two companies of railway construction men, plus a communications battalion. The Luftwaffe supplemented these units with three paratrooper companies and three anti-aircraft battalions.\(^{18}\) The delivery of these forces would take place in two stages:

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the initial *Weser*-day lightning assault of 9 April 1940; and the following build-up of strength in the days and weeks thereafter.

The bulk of Gruppe XXI’s men and material would have to be transported by sea, a dangerous mission given the proximity of the Royal Navy. As Hitler explained to Raeder on 9 March 1940:

> This operation runs counter to all the lessons of naval warfare, which indicate that it would only be justified if we possessed the necessary sea power, and this is not the case. On the contrary the operation will have to be carried out in the face of a greatly superior British Fleet. I believe, however, that given complete surprise the dispatch of the troops can and will succeed. History shows many cases of success in operations, which have violated the principles of war, always provided there is the element of surprise.¹⁹

The rapidity of the assault would be assured by the use of warships as troop transports in the 9 April attack. The six operational groups were created for Norway were: Group 1, Narvik, the battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and ten destroyers (2,000 troops); Group 2, Trondheim, the cruiser *Hipper* and four destroyers (1,700); Group 3, Bergen, the cruisers *Köl n* and *Königberg*, and the service ships *Bremse* and *Karl Peters* (1,900); Group 4, Kristiansand-Arendal, cruiser *Karlsruhe*, the special service ship *Tsingtau*, and three torpedo boats (1,100 troops); Group 5, Oslo, the pocket-battleship *Lützow* and the cruisers *Blücher* and *Emden*, three torpedo boats, two armed whaling boats and eight mine sweepers (2,000); and finally, Group 6, Egersund, four minesweepers (150 troops).²⁰

Hitler, however, did not leave the success of the entire operation to speed of deployment alone. For the most exposed northern foray, cover would be provided by the troop-less battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*. These vessels would then attempt to divert Royal Navy attention once the British caught wind of the large-scale German naval movements. Twenty-eight U-boats, under the codename Operation *Hartmuth*, would also be deployed off the coast of Norway to protect German warships in Norwegian fjords.²¹ The Luftwaffe would furnish air cover in the southern to central coastal regions and minefields would be sown in the entrance to the Skagerrak as a shield to the western flank.

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¹⁹. *Fuehrer Conferences*, 9 March 1940.
Nevertheless, once the British were alerted to *Weserübung*, reinforcement and consolidation of these relatively small numbers of men would prove difficult, especially in the northern sector of operations where British counter operations were expected. Thus the ‘Export Groups’ were created. Their name derived from the fact that they would be disguised as normal merchant traffic, but in reality laden with heavy equipment and reinforcements. The fifteen ships of the ‘1st Naval Transport Group’ bound for Copenhagen, Oslo, Kristiansand, Stavanger and Bergen would carry 3,761 men, 672 horses, 1,377 vehicles, and 59,035 tons of army supplies. To enable these to arrive in the immediate wake of the operation these vessels would depart German ports in advance of the warships. Over the next twelve days the ‘2nd to 8th Naval Transport Groups’ would ferry the remaining reinforcements of 54,500 men, 5,850 horses, 12,600 vehicles, and 48,200 tons of army supplies. The return of the northern-most warships would be facilitated by the deployment of three tankers of fuel oil to refuel the destroyers of Groups 1 and 2, and five smaller tankers would cover the other Groups. Although lacking the carrying capacity of these water-bound transports, the Luftwaffe was to make a considerable input into the assault and reinforcement phases and at crucial junctures of the battle.

German air power came of age over Norway. *Weserübung* was the first occasion that paratroopers were used by the Third Reich in war: ‘objectives were secured solely by air power; large quantities of men, equipment and supplies were delivered to the forefront of battle by air; and the Luftwaffe engaged in large-scale operations over the sea’. The 20 March 1940 order covering air power’s role in the upcoming assault detailed the wide-ranging tasks Göring’s Luftwaffe would have to undertake:

The support of land and sea operations for the seizure of Norway and Denmark through: aerial demonstrations, paratroop operations as well as transportation of airborne army units. It is responsible for the breaking of enemy resistance which might arise, providing covering fire for disembarked units against air attack and fighting off an eventual interference attempt by a British airborne operation and/or naval forces.

To carry out these extensive activities, X Fliegerkorps was considerably enlarged with greater numbers of combat, reconnaissance and transport machines. On the combat side, Fliegerkorps X’s Kampfgeschwader 26 (KG 26) and KG 30 (three groups of Heinkel He 111s and three groups of Junker Ju 88s respectively) were augmented by elements

of KGr (one group He 111s) and KG 4 (two groups of He 111s and one group Ju 88s).\textsuperscript{26} The primary role of these aircraft was the protection of German naval units operating in central and northern Norway. Bombers would also engage in aerial demonstrations over the major Norwegian and Danish urban areas to frighten the governments and populations into submission during the invasion.\textsuperscript{26} Supplementing the U-boats off the coast of Norway were the Luftwaffe reconnaissance aircraft. X Fleigerkorps He 111s of (F)/122 were to provide valuable information on the disposition of the Royal Navy, while a squadron of He 111s and Dornier Do 17s from (F)/120 was to cover strategically important zones around Oslo, Stavanger and Bergen, and finally naval aircraft including Heinkel He 115 floatplanes were to cover inland fjord waters. The invasion’s great weakness (to be subsequently exploited by the British) was that there were simply too few reconnaissance aircraft (no more than 50) and a lack of truly long-range aircraft to support the northern-most part of \textit{Weserübung} at Narvik. Nevertheless combat and reconnaissance wings would number close to 500 machines.

Air power came into play also in a transportation role. First, this included the speedy and timely conveyance of paratroops and air-landed forces to the very forefront of battle. This would facilitate the capture of vital Danish and Norwegian airfields, fields that after being secured could be used for advance Luftwaffe operations. Second, transport aircraft would prove the only means for rapidly reinforcing vanguard forces once warships began their return passage. Third, after the \textit{Weser}-day assault, a continued flow of fuel and equipment, troops and forward command staffs would only be possible in central and northern Norway by airlift, as the Royal Navy would make sea-borne supply nearly impossible. Moreover, it was uncertain what kind of resistance would be met and, therefore, how long it would take to secure inland communications and transportation lines. Seven transport wings, made up largely of Junkers Ju 52 transport aircraft, were deployed for this task. This would be the first large-scale military airlift in the history of warfare and some 500 transports were dedicated to the role.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} A \textit{Fliegerkorps} was the largest operational command with an air fleet (\textit{Luftflotte}) and could number between 300 and 750 aircraft. A wing (\textit{Geschwader}) was ordinarily composed of three groups (\textit{Gruppen}) totalling about 90 aircraft. Most \textit{Fliegerkorps} were placed under the overall command of a \textit{Luftflotte} but on occasions could operate independently as \textit{X Fliegerkorps} did in Norway until it was upgraded to a \textit{Luftflotte}.

\textsuperscript{26} ‘Norwegen (Aus einer Bearbeitung des Nachkriegsprojekts von Rohden. ‘Europäische Beiträge zur Geschichte des Weltkriegs’ II.1939/194. Luftkrieg, Heft 14, Seite 114-171)’, 8-9, USAFHRA, K133.305.

\textsuperscript{27} Claasen, \textit{Hitler’s Northern War}, 49-51.
The ‘Race for Norway’

On 4 April 1940, the first tanker bound for the port of Narvik slipped its moorings for Trondheim and the following day the ‘Export Group’ left German waters. On Weser-day minus three, that is 7 April 1940, the Hipper-led Group 1 and the Scharnhorst-and-Gneisenau-led Group 2 were racing towards Narvik and Trondheim. Air reconnaissance covered the area between the Shetlands and Norway and for the other vessels at sea bound for Kristiansand, Bergen, and Oslo. Although these large naval movements had been picked up by the British they still remained oblivious of German intentions. Intercepts by German intelligence indicated correctly that the ‘Admiralty has not yet drawn conclusions about a full-scale German action with Weserübung from the air reconnaissance information, but rather expects a breakthrough into the Atlantic by a pocket battleship.’

With the prospect of a German warship escaping into the Atlantic, Admiral Charles Forbes, commander in chief of the British Home Fleet, sent elements of his forces on a north-easterly interception course and thus away from the fast unfolding events along the Norwegian coastline.

Unwittingly complicating matters for the Germans though was an Allied decision to lay mines in the Norwegian Leads on 8 April. The determination not to embark on an Allied operation in support of Finland had not ended discussions on some other means of stopping Swedish iron reaching German via Norwegian territorial waters. The result of such deliberations spawned Operation Wilfred: the laying a series of minefields along the Norwegian coast.

Bearing in mind that this might in turn act as tripwire for a German operation in Norway, the Allies had a supplementary initiative ready to implement: Plan R4, the landing of British and French troops in Norway. Therefore, while the mining was taking place, warships in British east coast ports were loaded with British and French forces just in case the mine-laying provoked German landings in Norway, for which they would be immediately deployed in counter-landings. However, having misread German naval intentions on 8 April, the minelayers and their escorts were ordered to rejoin a covering force well off the Norwegian coast. This meant that they were no longer in a position to directly intercept German vessels due to pass directly through the area. Compounding this decision, the Admiralty felt that given the strength of the German vessels at sea they needed every ship ready for naval operations. Winston Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, ordered the warships that had been loaded for a possible implementation of Plan R4—the Allied expedition to Norway—to be unloaded and sent north to join the Fleet. In any event the British

misreading of intelligence and German subterfuge meant that the Royal Navy would not be able to intercept the German vessels before they reached their destinations and that an immediate counter-landing was now no longer possible.

With London still uncertain about Berlin’s intentions, the only thing standing in the way of the German onslaught was the weak Norwegian defences. As a firm supporter of the League of Nations and ideas of collective security, Norway’s military defences had been run down since the end of the Great War. To protect its 2,600 kilometre coastline, Norway had only 63 warships, many of them better suited to a museum than defending the country from an aggressive foe. Similarly, the army had been reduced in size; its regular and non-commissioned officers had fallen from over 3,700 strong to less than 500 since 1933. Once mobilised the regular army now boasted only six brigades, not the six divisions of the 1920s. Further limiting the capacity of these units was that mobilisation would take at least twelve to fourteen days given the nature of the terrain and the fact the call up would be made through the postal service. If anything the aerial defences were even worse. The Norwegians did not have an independent airforce and the small numbers of machines they had were attached to the navy and army. Of the 150 or so aircraft in total only twenty of them might have been considered a threat to the German invasion about to take place. The Norwegians had also established coastal artillery forts at the entrance to most important fjords. However, since it was generally accepted that Germany was not going to invade Norway in the face of massive Royal Navy superiority, these were only manned at a third of their required strength. In addition, the armament arrayed at these forts was considered for the most part weak and of antique vintage.

The Invasion

At 0520 on 9 April 1940, Curt Bräuer, the German foreign minister, delivered what he call a ‘friendly’ ultimatum to his Norwegian counterpart, stating that German troops did not set foot on Norwegian soil as ‘enemies’ and any resistance would lead to ‘useless bloodshed’. The Norwegian was swift to respond: ‘We will not submit voluntarily; the struggle is already under way.’ Although clearly the Germans had by far the upper hand, news had reached the capital that the weak and antiquated defences in Oslo still had some teeth left in them. The heavy cruiser Blücher had reached the inner defences of Oslo Fjord at about 0500 leading Group 5 past the Dröbak narrows. The Germans were attempting to take the capital quickly, capture the government, and thereby force a coup

32. DGFP, D/9/65, 102.
de main and capitulation. The assault was about to go badly wrong for the Germans as the Norwegians held fire until the enemy vessels were close to point-blank range. The leading ships were strafed with fire from the steep-sided fjord setting the aviation fuel and munitions stacked on Blücher’s deck ablaze. Torpedoes were launched that hit the heavy cruiser’s hull and at 0730 the ship capsized taking with it about one thousand lives. This delayed the landing of the sea-borne force until the following morning. Fortunately for the Germans, the capture of one of Oslo’s airfields, Fornebu, after a short but heated assault secured another route to the capital around 0900. As soon X Fliegerkorps was notified, 159 transports began ferrying in troops, aviation materials and Luftwaffe ground staff. By 0330, a military band and six companies from Fornebu marched into Oslo. The delay was costly though, as it enabled the King and government to flee, promising continued resistance to the invaders.

The landings at Kristiansand, Stravanger, and Bergen were less troublesome but there were casualties. In particular, at Bergen Vizeadmiral Hubert Schmundt decided to press into the fjord before the protective batteries were silenced by landed ground forces. Two service ships were struck and Königsberg was hit three times incurring heavy damage. Significant was the assault on Stravenger’s Sola airfield, the most modern in western Norway. Twenty-four transports loaded with 150 paratroopers delivered their cargo over the airfield shortly after 0920. In the hours that follow the securing of Sola, an airlift incorporating over 100 aircraft brought in ground crew, aviation fuel, and flak personnel and equipment. As night descended on Sola, the base was already operational home for 22 Stukas, four Messerscmitt Bf 110s, and He 115s tied up in the harbour. The rapid conversion of the Norwegian airfields to German purposes was a striking characteristic of the campaign. Twin-engine bombers flying from Northern German and these freshly-acquired bases in Denmark and Norway would thwart the efforts of the Royal Navy off the Norwegian southern and central coastal regions.

The effectiveness of land-based aircraft against surface vessels lacking adequate air cover became apparent in the afternoon of 9 April when nearly 90 He 111s and Ju 88s attacked the Home Fleet laying 150 kilometres of Bergen over a three hour period. The destroyer Gurkha was sunk, and three cruisers received minor damage. The most significant statistic, however, was that Forbes’s warships had expended 40 per cent of their anti-aircraft ammunition for a return of only four German aircraft shot down. Although the Luftwaffe successes were not great, Forbes was not prepared to chance his arm against an increasingly confident Luftwaffe and moved the Fleet off the coast, effectively surrendering supremacy to Göring’s airmen. Generalmajor Alfred Jodl, head of the OKW’s operations section, noted that ‘The Luftwaffe has provided a proof,
decisive for the future developments, that no fleet (however strong it may be) can operate in the long run within the close effective range of an enemy aircraft”.34 Meanwhile, not only would these airfields act as forward bases for Luftwaffe operations against the Royal Navy but reinforcement and supply junctions for army forces.

This latter point was to be extremely important further north, where the small vanguard units deployed by the warships would not be reinforced anytime soon by sea, and where Norwegian resistance impeded land-based strengthening. At Trondheim the capture of the port was soured by the failure of the ‘Export Group’ supply ships to appear. Although Hipper had enough fuel for the homeward leg, the destroyers would first need refuelling and the floatplanes occupying the harbour were grounded by a lack of aviation fuel. These latter machines were supposed to provide an aerial early warning system in the advent of an enemy counter-attack on Trondheim and subsequently reconnaissance for the warships when they made their run home.

Similar problems were surfacing at Narvik. At 0400, destroyers entered Ofot Fjord sinking two old coastal defensive ship before landing Generalleutnant Eduard Dietl, commander of the mountain forces, and his men at Norway’s most important northern port. At 0800, Dietl radioed Falkenhorst that Narvik was in their hands. But not all the news was good for the Germans. Dietl had hoped to take over the Norwegian defensive batteries at the fjord’s entrance to ward off any Royal Navy foray but soon found that they were non-existent. Compounding this was the non-appearance of any of the ‘Export Group’ vessels laden with military hardware for Narvik, and the fact that the army’s equipment carried on the destroyers had been damage by heavy seas on the northward journey. The destroyers were also particularly vulnerable as only one of the three tankers had appeared and the refuelling could only be completed two vessels at time. As a result Narvik had relatively weak and poorly-equipped ground units and destroyers that were ill-prepared to face a potential Allied initiative.

Norwegian Resistance

Nevertheless, when the sun set on 9 April 1940, the Naval Staff concluded that although the losses ‘which have been incurred, especially that of the newest heavy cruiser Blücher, are grievous; they are, however, in proportion to the risk run and anticipated, and cannot be considered high’.35 The real fly-in-the-ointment though was the successful escape of the Norwegian king and government. Norwegian resistance soon solidified when the traitorous and unpopular Vidkun Quisling attempted to seize the reins of power and assembled his own ruling cabinet. Up until this point, Bräuer had been confident that

34. ‘Jodl, Norway’, 6, USAFRH 512.621.
35. KTB Skl, 9 April 1940.
a settlement could be brought into effect. By the time it became apparent that Quisling was actually making matters worse for Berlin it was too late and Norwegian military resistance was firmly established in central Norway. This was of crucial import in the north of the country. Norwegian troops now occupied the Norwegian interior and most importantly the road and rail links that joined Oslo to Trondheim. This prevented overland reinforcement of city. Narvik was even more isolated due to the fact that the Royal Navy now effectively controlled the sea-lanes in the Far North and lacked its own airfield. Significant aerial support from the Trondheim airfield was not immediately possible as the field need considerable work before it could be used operationally.\footnote{36} Although the ten or so floatplanes at Stavanger could reach Trondheim, 500 kilometres distant, they could not hope to make the 1,000 kilometre journey to Narvik, also an impossibility for the shorter range Ju 87s based at Sola. Even the newly captured airfields at the northern most tip of Denmark did not really offer much hope of the larger twin-engine Luftwaffe machines being able to provide support for the small isolated mountaineers at Narvik because of the distances involved.

**Trondheim**

Due to inclement weather and British attacks on Luftwaffe controlled airfields the Allies were able to assemble 6,000 men either side of Trondheim by 19 April with little difficulty. Improved weather and work on Trondheim’s Vaernes airfield, however, saw the Luftwaffe step up its reinforcement and aerial assault duties. On 20 April, over 90 machines brought in further and men and equipment and over 23-24 April 120 Ju 52 sorties delivered flak elements.\footnote{37} With regards to direct attacks on the enemy, Hitler issued the following instructions:

On 20 April the main point of effort for Luftflotte 5 will be attacks on the disembarkation at Namsos. Likewise similar operations are to be urgently undertaken against the landings at Aandalsnes. By order of the Führer the towns and rail junctions of Namsos and Aandalsnes are to be destroyed without consideration for the civilian population, the rail line and roads near these junctions are to be interrupted for a considerable duration.\footnote{38}

\footnote{36. British aerial operations were also instrumental in hindering the German exploitation of the Norwegian airfields in the week following the initial landings at Namsos and Aandalsnes: Claasen, *Hitler’s Northern War*, 102-3.}
\footnote{37. *KTB, Ski*, 20 April 1940; W. Gaul, ‘The Part Played by the German Air Force and the Naval Air Force in the Invasion of Norway,’ in *Essays by German Officers and Officials About World War II* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources in cooperation with the US Naval Historical Center, n.d.) 32; Shores, *Fledgling Eagles*, 283.}
The furiousness of the ensuing assault was to break the back of the Allies’ northern and southern pincers. Namsos, in particular, was heavily struck on the same day of Hitler’s order with the railway station, rail line, and rolling stock set alight, eventually resulting in the loss of the French ammunition and equipment. The destruction of the wooden port was so complete that General Carton de Wiart, commander of the Allied forces at Namsos, notified London not to send further ships because docking facilities simply no longer existed. 39 Two days later the southern pincer was attacked with impunity by 34 He 110s and eighteen Ju 88s dropping 37 tons of incendiaries and high explosives on the disembarked men and routes leading out of Aandalsnes. 40 Attempts were made to counter German aerial supremacy by landing eighteen Gladiator biplanes on a frozen lake near Aandalsnes on 24 April, but the Luftwaffe effectively shut down the operation and two days later the remaining aircraft had to be torched. With the German ground forces pushing up from Oslo and their northern and southern advances stalled by German aerial superiority, the Allies were left with no alternative but to instruct Admiral Forbes on 28 April that the Namsos and Aandalsnes forces were to ‘re-embark—as soon as possible’. 41 Remarkably the evacuation carried out under cover of darkness over the period 30 April–3 May was generally successful and the damage to the convoy fleeing Norwegian waters was not as high as London had feared it might be. Nevertheless, the withdrawal was another blot in the Allies’ copybook which they were keen to not repeat further north.

**Narvik**

With the resolution of the Trondheim contest London and Berlin would once again shift their gaze towards Narvik. The trapped destroyers had been first to feel the brunt of the British resolve in the First and Second Battles of Narvik on 10 and 13 April 1940 respectively. 42 The first battle saw five British destroyers enter the waters off Narvik, sinking two German destroyers and damaging a third, for the loss of two of their own. Three days later the Royal Navy concluded the contest with a force that centred on the battleship *Warspite* and included nine destroyers. The remaining German vessels were either sunk or forced aground. ‘This evening a serious and depressed mood marks the Naval Staff’s impression of events’, recorded the German navy’s war diary as it reflected on the loss of ten of its most modern warships. 43 Although Dietl’s force of 2,000 men

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41. Roskill, *War at Sea*, I:188.
42. Although British success in these two battles was greatly added by the ineffectual defence offered by the U-boats positioned at the fjord’s entrance. Torpedo failures effectively rendered the U-boats impotent. *War Diaries of the German Submarine Command (BdU, KTB)* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources in cooperation with the US Naval Historical Center, n.d.), 1 to 14 April 1940; Doenitz, *Memoirs*, 84-5.
43. *KTB Ski*, 13 April 1940.
had been supplemented by 2,600 survivors of the beached destroyers, they were ill-equipped and becoming increasingly outnumbered as the Allied expeditionary troops began to close in on the town towards the end of April. The only saving grace for the Germans was that the enemy ground forces were under the command of the extremely cautious and methodical Major General P. J. Mackesy, who advocated a slow build up and a staged overland advance as opposed to a direct attack on the port from the sea. Nevertheless, Dietl was fully aware that he lacked the numbers and equipment to repel a concerted Allied assault when it did come. His main concern was directed towards his weak forces to the north of Narvik, Group Windisch, which was protecting his (Group Dietl’s) northern flank and the rail line to Sweden. On 4 May 1940, he vented his frustration to OKW:

Request the following: (1) In spite of repeated and urgent requests, I have received neither snow-shoes nor snow-glasses. Detachment is as a result at a great disadvantage vis-à-vis the Norwegians, who are splendidly equipped and extremely mobile in the snow. (2) In spite of urgent requests, we have had no supplies dropped by air for five days. The serious position of Group Windisch regarding ammunition and provisions can only be remedied by the air since, owing to the difficult terrain, German forces cannot bring up a sufficient supply. Group Windisch cannot hold out unless supplied soon, particularly with ammunition.44

The dire situation facing Dietl was all-too-well known in Berlin. Because of complete British naval superiority in northern Norway and the difficulty of speedily linking up with Dietl by land—between Trondheim and Narvik lies 480 kilometres of rugged mountainous terrain—the fate of the German forces did not bode well in Narvik.45 Hitler’s whole rationale for invading Norway had really been about controlling the supply lines for Swedish iron ore, and although the Germans had secured nearly all other objectives over the last six weeks, the jewel in the crown was Narvik. *Weserübung’s raison d’être* was this northern port with its rail line linking it to the northern Swedish iron ore mines. The prospect of its loss threw Third Reich planners into a frenzy of activity.

Three plans of note were considered. First, Hitler called for a large glider force to deliver mountain troops to the port.46 However, numerous delays and difficulties reduced the number of gliders available to a paltry six. The Führer attempted to resurrect the aerial reinforcement idea by proposing the insertion of two paratroops battalions totalling 1,800 men. As with the glider idea this was overly optimistic as there simply were not

44. Gaul, ‘Part Played by the German Air Force’, 44.
45. Although the Allies believed the terrain was impassable, the Germans did eventually link up with Dietl, albeit only after the Allied withdrawal from Narvik in early June. Ziemke, *German Northern Theater*, 95-9.
46. *Jodl Diaries*, 16 May 1940; Ziemke, *German Northern Theater*, 102.
enough trained men to undertake the drop. Second, OKW suggested, under the code name *Naumburg*, the use of two fast passenger liners, *Bremen* and *Europa*, in a dash to Lyngen Fjord north of Narvik. From here the 6,000 landed troops would advance into the rear of the Allied forces pressing on the town. This would be complemented by an audacious Luftwaffe capture of the Bardufoss airfield. Third, and linked to *Naumburg*, the German navy, after covering the passenger-liners’ journey, would launch an all-out assault on the Royal Navy ships in the region. The vessels to be put to the sword were *Scharnhorst*, *Gneisenau*, and *Hipper*. Raeder’s logic behind this grand, not to mention near suicidal, action was that given the high likelihood of a German victory in the war, the navy would be well placed for Hitler’s post-war largesse. Fortunately for the Germans these rather desperate and dubious preparations were to be overtaken by events before they could be implemented.

While fanciful plans were being drawn up, the Luftwaffe was left with the reality of supplying and reinforcing the Far North force. In spite of the reduced operational radius, thanks to the securing of Trondheim, the distance between this city and the port of Narvik was still considerable and, moreover, the airfield still lacked the facilities for a large scale deployment of machines. Consequently, most of the aircraft still had to fly from northern Germany and Denmark or the southern Norwegian fields at Oslo and Stavanger. The Luftwaffe was, therefore, limited to deploying relatively small numbers of specific aircraft for these duties, including Blohm-and-Voss and Dornier flying boats, Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condors, and a small number of Ju 52s. Between mid-April and the first week of May, 260 long-distance sorties delivering ammunition and supplies and two mountain battalions and artillery were flown. With no suitable airfield in the vicinity, nearly all personnel and material had to be airdropped in. Over the period 23-30 May, a further 650 paratroops were delivered in this manner. As valiant as these attempts were the numbers of Allied soldiers had been steadily increasing so that by the end of April the Allies’ 27,000 well-equipped men heavily outnumbered Dietl’s 6,000 ill-equipped men. Moreover, the Royal Navy had free movement within the waters off Narvik, and the establishment of a British-operated airfield at Bardufoss meant that the Luftwaffe no longer had aerial ascendancy in the Far North.

Poised to launch an all-out assault on Narvik, Mackesy was replaced by Lieutenant General Claude Auchinleck. The new commander’s brief was at variance with that which Mackesy had brought to the region, since the German invasion of France

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48. Ziemke, *German Northern Theater*, 104-5; *KTB Skl*, 18, 22 May 1940.
and Low Countries on 10 May 1940 began to effect decisions regarding Norway. The rapid German Blitzkrieg in the West, and the growing realisation that the British position on the Continent was untenable, led Whitehall to reassess its priorities. The question now being asked was: how much importance could be given to this small Norwegian town, when Britain itself could well be directly threatened with a German invasion? Accordingly, even before the final push on Narvik was launched, it had been agreed that the once Auchinleck had secured the town, the port and iron ore facilities would be destroyed before withdrawing to Britain in preparation for its defence.

High-flying Luftwaffe aircraft reconnoitring Narvik on 27 May reported that enemy vessels were bombarding the port and rail line. By the next day, no less than ten ships were pounding German positions within the town. Under heavy bombardment and with an intense aerial battle being played out above him, Dietl was forced to abandon Narvik to the Polish, French and Norwegian forces making advances on land and a British landing at the port itself.51 Cleverly sidestepping entrapment within the town, he tracked the rail line east leaving much of his Group’s heavier equipment for capture. The Naval Staff war diary summed up the grim situation on 3 June:

Superior forces are diary attack. Our forces’ powers of resistance are greatly diminished by long-drawn-out bad weather and lack of ammunition supplies. It is not possible at present to bring up reinforcements by parachute troops because of the unfavourable weather. A strong enemy attack is expected.52

The Naval Staff assessment was correct in every aspect except one: the Allies were not preparing to attack but to withdraw. Having successfully departed from Namsos and Aandalsnes only four week previous, and currently in the throes of their Dunkirk miracle, the Royal Navy was well suited to evacuations.53 With the German Naval Staff under the misapprehension that the Allies were preparing a final assault on Dietl and inclement weather concealing the evacuations from the prying eyes of the Luftwaffe, the withdrawals began on 4 June and concluded on the night of 7-8 June. On the evening of 8 June 1940, Dietl reported that Narvik was ‘again occupied by our troops’, thereby signalling an end to Weserübung.54

52. KTB Skl, 2 June 1940.
54. KTB Skl, 8 June 1940.
The Norwegian campaign is often cited as an excellent example of how to undertake a successful expeditionary enterprise, and in many respects this is fittingly so. As a joint operation involving the three services, \textit{Weserübung} is unique in the German Second World War experience. Unlike nearly all other campaigns, it required in almost equal measure close cooperation between land, air and sea contingents. Remarkably this occurred despite blatant antagonism between the supreme commanders of the respective services. Overcoming friction at the higher echelons was a feature of the invasion that came in for special mention in the after-action report produced by Falkenhorst’s Gruppe XXI:

That the commands and troop contingents of the three armed forces branches worked together almost without friction cannot be credited to purposeful organisation of the commanding staff. It was, instead, entirely an achievement of the personalities involved who knew how to cooperate closely in order to overcome the inadequacies of the organisation.\footnote{Ziemke, \textit{German Northern Theater}, 32.}

Without such a pronounced collaboration the operation could have stalled at a number of points, particularly on \textit{Weser}-day, 9 April 1940. With the loss of \textit{Blücher}, an unravelling of the campaign looked possible but for the intervention of the Luftwaffe, which delivered forces to Fornebu airfield and allowed a rapid march on the capital. This example of inter-service teamwork was repeated throughout the invasion.

The campaign also demonstrated the value of good intelligence, land-based aircraft over unprotected warships, and innovation, to an expeditionary operation. Given Hitler’s reluctance to incorporate Norway directly into his war plans, it was a notable achievement that the intelligence proved so accurate about Norwegian coastal and airfield defences. Despite the cavalier approach to the coastal fortresses of Oslo Fjord, which cost the lives of over 1,000 naval personnel, the Germans in general made better use of intelligence than their Allied adversary. The use of twin-engine bombers operating from increasingly northerly airfields overcame one of the major threats to the campaign: the Royal Navy. While Britannia might rule the waves elsewhere, the coastal waters of southern and central Norway were gradually turned over to the Luftwaffe. This was, of course, not the case in the Far North, where the relatively short range of German aircraft precluded the same degree of operational freedom. With regards to innovation, two aspects of \textit{Weserübung} stand out: first, the use of warships and disguised transports to deliver the initial assault forces: and second, the Luftwaffe airlift. Both these features were essentially designed to overcome the Royal Navy’s considerable maritime superiority in the northern reaches of the invasion. Utilising surprise and
rapid deployment through the synchronisation of the so-called ‘Export Groups’ with
the warship groups was a considerable accomplishment. The exploitation of warships
suggested the possibility of an Atlantic breakout and at the same time facilitated the
rapid deployment of Falkenhorst’s assault force which in turn allowed for the more
leisurely disembarkation of the transport-delivered units. The ruse was successful and
the landings, excepting Oslo, were speedily completed. With regard to the Luftwaffe
airlift, it was an unprecedented air power undertaking in 1940. The timely insertion of
paratroops and air landed troops via transport aircraft enabled the Germans to secure
the widely scattered airfields of northern Denmark and the fields of Fornebu and Sola
in Norway. Their capture was quickly followed by making the fields operationally
ready—in some cases within hours—for the arrival of reinforcements and supplies
for the relatively weak vanguard forces that had arrived by warship. In April alone,
580 machines in over 3,000 flights, delivered 2,370 tons of supplies, 29,280 men, and
1,178,100 litres of fuel.56 The clever use of naval and air power resources had made
possible the improbable. The combined German navy and Luftwaffe effort of 9 April,
in a theatre that was greater in length than the distance between occupied Poland and
Moscow in June 1941, allowed the Germans to essentially occupy Norway in a day.
However, maintaining German ascendancy over such an elongated theatre proved much
more difficult.

This was overlooked at the time and has been underemphasised in subsequent
narratives of the campaign. The greater the distance from the expeditionary operation’s
place of origin, the greater the logistical and support difficulties. At Trondheim, Allied
inexpertitude and the proximity of the newly converted Norwegian airfields to the purposes
of the Luftwaffe, plus the steadily advancing German ground forces from Oslo,
eventually put paid to the Namsos and Andalneses counter-landings. The situation in
the Far North was much less favourable: Narvik did not have an airfield; the port was
beyond the effective operational range of German two engine bombers and single-
engine fighters; and an overland advance on the town would be extremely slow given
the tortuous terrain that required navigation between Trondheim and Narvik. Thus
resupply and reinforcement could only be made by airdrop, and this was restricted by
the small number of aircraft suitable for such tasks. This highlighted the limited quantity
of long-range aircraft in the Luftwaffe’s inventory, a point that would become very
evident in the Battle of Britain and in the increasingly important Battle of the Atlantic.
The consideration of a series of fanciful and impractical reinforcement plans underlined
the helplessness of Dietl’s beleaguered mountaineers and sailors. In fact, the success
of the whole enterprise hung on the retention of Narvik, and its retention lay beyond

56. ‘Norwegen (Aus einer Bearbeitung des Nachkriegsprojekts von Rohden. ‘Europäische Beiträge zur
13, n.1, USAFHRA K133.305.
the power of those commanders and forces dedicated to the region. Only the events in France and the Low Countries, and the Dunkirk evacuation, left Narvik in German hands on 8 June. Nevertheless, with the triumphant conclusion of *Weserübung*, the Norwegian campaign had passed into history as an illuminating study in joint-service expeditionary warfare. Upon receipt of Dietl’s communiqué Hitler issued the following missive:

*I transmit the expression of the proud admiration of the German people to the fighters of Narvik. All you who stood together there in the Far North, soldiers of the Austrian mountains, crews of our warships, paratroops, combat fighters, and transport pilots, will go down in history as the best representatives of the highest German soldiership. To Generalleutnant Dietl I express the thanks of the German people for the honourable page he has added to the book of German history.*

An Expedition in Regime Change: Australia’s Party to the Ralliement of New Caledonia During the Second World War

Nicholas Floyd

In case of a conflict between two great powers in the Pacific, their respective positions with regard to naval forces could perhaps be completely dependent upon whether France puts her ports at the disposal of one or the other of the belligerents.

Kintomo Mushakoji, Japanese officer, 1924

France has lost the battle, but France has not lost the War.

General Charles de Gaulle, proclamation, 20 June 1940

France’s defeat in 1940 by the victorious advancing German armies precipitated the assumption of power by Marshal Pétain, the Great War hero and French national figure. With the transferral of the seat of government to Vichy, a relatively unknown yet passionate French general, Charles de Gaulle, defied the call to cooperate with Germany, and appealed to all French not under the ‘Nazi jackboot’ to continue the struggle.

Australia appears as a reluctant yet resigned participant in the ensuing drama that surrounded the Free French coup de force in New Caledonia in September 1940. Though little known—subject as it was to wartime censorship—this action was not only a small, albeit important step towards eventual victory for the Allies, but it also marks one of the earliest opportunities Australia had to exert its own diplomatic interests, and not merely act as an agent of the British Empire. The inklings of Australia’s eventual pursuit of its own international agenda can be seen in her dealings with this early wartime dilemma, and in the foreign policy decisions subsequent to the coup.

This essay examines the role of Australia as portent of the popular choice of government and a glimmering hope of autonomy for the colony of New Caledonia, and the effects on the conduct of the war in the Pacific brought about by this action.

**Background**

The French naval and military forces in New Caledonia were undoubtedly the enduring—and for the most part, the most publicly recognised—threat to Australian sovereignty and her interests in the Pacific during the colonial period. Without such an unambiguous Damoclean presence, it is unlikely that British forces would have been tolerated—even welcomed—in Australia until 1870, and the clamour for sizeable, unified and effective defence forces that continued for the remainder of the 1800s would not have reached such levels as they did by the turn of the century.3

The French in New Caledonia were mistaken in viewing the taunts and threats of a vocal minority in Australia as the harbingers of conflict. As Caledonian anticipation of an Australian invasion waxed, and French resources to counter such action waned, the decline of metropolitan France’s investment in the colony incontrovertibly hampered her development. Her penal colony continued to be a distasteful heritage—even after transportation ceased—and the uncertainty surrounding the fate of the New Hebrides (and thereby a safe egress from the New Caledonian archipelago in time of invasion) caused further doubt on Nouméa’s viability as a thriving colony. As British imperial might eclipsed both French and Russian power projection in the 1890s, a fatalism of the impending loss of France’s possessions discouraged Paris’ augmentation of her colonial defences, and New Caledonia was no exception. Even so, local military efforts to optimise Nouméa’s abilities to repel attack remained strong until after the signing of the *Entente Cordiale* in 1904.

As it turned out, British, Dominion and French alliance during the Great War extinguished any foreseeable chance of conflict, and the shared battlefields of the Dardanelles, Palestine and the Western Front secured the mutual amity of these Coral Sea neighbours, despite the short-lived resurgence of Australian expansionism during the cession of ex-German Pacific possessions after the Great War. But as this new chapter in the relationship between Australia and New Caledonia developed, Australian disagreement with and deviation from British foreign policy towards Japan gave her a greater impetus to follow her own diplomatic agenda. Growing suspicions of British inability to effectively counter a two-ocean threat—even with the development of

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3. It is asserted by a number of authors that calls for a unified Australian defence force such as the Edwards report contributed towards Federation: see C.M.H. Clark, *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962), 463-7.
the much-vaunted Singapore bastion—finally galvanised Australian acceptance of self-reliance and precipitated a new focus on New Caledonia. Once again, the islands’ strategic position to Australia was recognised, and fears of occupation by both Japan and Australia surfaced.

**A Prologue to War**

The maintenance of cordial relations between Australia and New Caledonia was now of mutual significance, and the conduct of official fleet visits such as that of the new Australian cruiser HMAS *Canberra* to Nouméa over 11-16 September 1931 was instrumental in the maintenance of such relations. A letter from Governor Guyon to the Ministre des Affaires Étrangères records the event, and contains transcripts of various speeches made by both Caledonian officials, and Australian Squadron Commander, Commodore L.S. Holbrook. The official welcome speech provides insight into the depth of official friendship, which had obviously progressed dramatically since before the War, with Guyon employing terms such as ‘Brothers in arms’, and ‘dear neighbours’, and expressing admiration for ‘your Navy, its traditions of honour, valianc[e]s, courtesy and generosity [sic] in time of war as in time of peace’.

With similar effusiveness, the welcome of the Australian officers to the Cercle Militaire in Nouméa by Lieutenant-Colonel Amalric, Commandant Supérieur des Troupes, directly addressed their countries’ recent shared sacrifice:

> [the] Sentiments of the French of the Pacific are particularly strong for their Australian neighbours ... and especially, a sentiment of admiration for the splendid Australian Youth who had come to fight, and mix their blood with ours on the battlefield: at Suez, at the Dardanelles, in Artois, on the Somme. Immortal glory to the Anzacs! Glory also to the valiant Sydney, and the Australian squadron which put a tragic end to the odyssey of the *Emden*, and freed the [Pacific] islands’ populations of the menace of the raider! ... the British and French nations are united by a community of sentiments and interests; our Armies and our Navies are the vigilant guardians of the peace, this peace of the *Entente Cordiale*, founded on a friendship and a reciprocal trust ...

However, with the demise of British and Australian power—globally and regionally respectively—as reductions enforced by the League of Nations bit deep, the myth of invincibility of the British Empire went into serious decline. Australian—and French—suspicions of Japanese intentions grew, and the British Empire’s Singapore strategy attracted considerable criticism, particularly from the Australian Army, and from the

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5. Ibid., 13.
Australian Chief of Naval Staff, Rear-Admiral Sir Percy Grant, who continually raised the spectre of Britain having to face multiple aggressors on two or more fronts.  

Australia’s investment in the development of Fortress Singapore had appealed to the proponents of the forward defence theories: Hong Kong was intended to hold out to an aggressor (implicitly Japan) for long enough, while the British Eastern Fleets assembled at Singapore, ready to repel an amphibious invasion that would be limited by the distance of its voyage from Japan. Singapore, meanwhile, with its back to the seemingly impenetrable wall of the British-held Malay Peninsula, fairly bristled with guns, but outwards. The folly of such assumptions would eventually be brought out, as Japanese troops fairly breezed through Malaya, and had access to the ports of Vichy Cochin-China and Annam, which all had dramatic effects on reducing the logistic considerations of invasion.

The reactions of the French Southeast Asian colonies should not have been a surprise, however, had attention been given to contemporary analyses such as that of the French strategist Rear-Admiral Castex. He foresaw that France could not defend Indochina against the Japanese, and considered that French interests in the Pacific were so small as to warrant the disposal of New Caledonia and the New Hebrides to Australia or New Zealand, at whose mercy they were anyway. For the time being, territorial speculation aside, however, Australian attempts to make the best of relations with her powerful northern neighbour were themselves hampered by her participation in the Singapore strategy, and also her vehement White Australia Policy. It was a shortfall not lost on the French observers of the day:

> It is evident that the Commonwealth [of Australia] continues to live and evolve in the orbit of the British Empire from a political viewpoint. The unity of race within the Empire, and the loyalty of Australians to the Crown, permits no doubt of it.

**How War Came to the Pacific**

The redemption of New Caledonia by de Gaulle’s Free France in September 1940 appears a somewhat insignificant side-issue within the frame of the first tumultuous years of the Second World War. Yet, as with the outcomes of each of Britain’s scrambling attempts

to win over—or at least, to neutralise—French overseas possessions prior to their being subsumed by the collaborationist Vichy government, the implications of a Gaullist New Caledonia were indeed important, albeit indirectly, to the Allied war effort. As well, common to all of the early Anglo-Free French operations, the reactions of the local French populace greatly influenced both the action taken, and the eventual outcome.

After the fall of France on 22 June 1940, Britain and the fledgling Free French administration embarked on a desperate bid to annex or neutralise French colonial and naval power d’outre-mer.10 In the Pacific, the overseas French territories of les Etablissements français d’Océanie (now French Polynesia), New Caledonia and the Anglo-French joint-administered ‘condominium’ in the New Hebrides, faced the dilemma of choosing between the respective validities of Vichy and Free France. Indo-China’s decision to retain loyalty to the Pétainist Government was swift and prudent—given nearby Japan’s predicted actions in the coming months—but for the isolated island colonies, the choice was less clear.

In New Caledonia, declaring for Vichy was agonised over by the recently installed yet already alienated Governor, Georges Pélicier. New Caledonia was becoming more heavily reliant upon Japanese trade in nickel, and her links with Germany promised a valuable conduit with a market that was cut off from virtually all other nickel sources for its critical armaments industry.11 Japan herself was dependent upon this nickel source, and also for her iron. Since 1935, Japan had sizeably increased her ore shipments from New Caledonia, and by 1938 was importing 3,596,000 tonnes of trade from New Caledonia, and in 1939 imported 24,000 tonnes of iron ore.12 Such trade benefits were neither matched nor guaranteed by the British, through her Dominions. France’s continued policies of large trade tariffs on trade with Australia and others ensured New Caledonia’s reliance upon metropolitan France,13 though the uncertainty of Vichy shipping’s future status with the Allies cast doubt on this source. While imports from Australia amounted to over five times that of Japan, French analysts had realised as early as 1934 the importance of trade to Japan. They assessed that when Japan ‘considers her interests at stake, whether or not she has previously been consulted, she will not

hesitate to act and will do so—and this is to be feared—abiding by her treaties or not’. 14 Japan had an option to ensure continued access to the minerals she required: a maintenance of friendly relations with New Caledonia, or the occupation of the island. It is unclear whether Australia was mindful of Japanese investment in New Caledonia, and the importance placed upon continued access. The information was available, but the assessment may not have occurred that redeeming New Caledonia to Free France might precipitate Japan’s entry into the War.

Prior to the War, Australian expansionist designs on her Pacific neighbours, whether real or imagined, had been demonstrated in her prosecution of the campaign in and annexation of German possessions during the Great War. 15 Patriotic, yet vaguely autonomous, the Caldoches—the white inhabitants of New Caledonia—and their colonial masters feared substitution of one colonial power for another. As war threatened to engulf the Pacific, Australia would become increasingly cognisant of the strategic stepping-stones to its north. Australia could not risk New Caledonia becoming a base for hostile forces: as the entry of Japan into the War on the Axis side became increasingly likely, it was assumed this would precipitate an Australian occupation. 16 At the same time, Australia was regarded as a somehow kindred colonial entity, with many lifestyle hardships considered shared between them that transcended their ancestral rivalry. 17 Contact between the two was nevertheless discouraged by their European masters, erstwhile and current.

Such were the factors facing the Caledonians regarding the colony’s political future as they related to Australia, and for Pélicier, the balance favoured siding with Vichy. However, the Caldoches, and in particular the broussards (the bushmen and farmers of the Interior of the Grand Terre) believed that, patriotic honour aside, their aspirations for autonomy would be probably better served by de Gaulle. 18 In a vain attempt at compromise, the Governor opted secretly to condone allegiance to Vichy, but tell the locals that the colony was for Free France. This short-lived attempt at fence-sitting was doomed to fail, and the hapless Governor was deposed on 28 August, and replaced by the ageing local Army Commandant, Lieutenant-Colonel Denis. 19

15. R. Aldrich, France and the South Pacific since 1940 (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1993), xx.
17. Burchett, Pacific Treasure Island, 222.
There is dispute as to whether Australia jumped or was pushed into her minor, yet pivotal role in New Caledonia’s *ralliement*. Menzies’ Government was cognisant of the issues related above. The then Minister for External Affairs, John McEwen, asserts that he and his Department had battled with Cabinet’s inertia and indecision to pre-emptively act against the pro-Vichy Government in Nouméa, particularly in light of Japan’s actions in Indo-China.\(^{20}\)

According to John Lawrey—assistant to the Australian Government Representative in New Caledonia from December 1940 to 1943—however, the Australian Government was reluctant to act against an outpost of Vichy France, which was by this stage an implicit ally of Germany and thus Japan.\(^{21}\) At the same time, Australia was mindful of Britain’s exhortations to emasculate or redeem all French possessions on the Gaullists’ behalf.\(^{22}\)

The Anglo-Free French plan was to transfer—by overt naval presence—a suitable pro-de Gaulle French official, and depose the Vichy administration, at the bequest of the Gaullist populace.\(^{23}\) However, as part of the British Empire’s global naval coverage, the Australian Naval Station was obliged to carry out such British Admiralty directives in this area of the Pacific. A conflict of interest was emerging, and Australia’s hesitation to act as *agent provocateur* for Britain can plausibly be viewed as the beginnings or even the catalyst for increasing divergence between British and Australian foreign policy and war aims, as the War continued.

Meanwhile, by 21 July, the French in the New Hebrides had declared themselves for Free France, and by doing so had provided both a moral precedent and a personage suitable to replace Pélicier. Following his leadership in the declaration of the New Hebrides for Free France, Henri Sautot, the French resident Commissioner of the New Hebrides, had distinguished himself as a candidate for the task.\(^{24}\)

20. M. Salmon, ‘Nouméa ’40: Australian Gunboat Diplomacy, Kidglove Style’, Pacific Islands Monthly, 59. Lawrey disputes McEwen’s recollections. He cites evidence that on 8 September, the Department of External Affairs transmitted a signal to its London Liaison Officer, noting ‘at the moment position in New Caledonia is satisfactory from our point of view, and to stage a de Gaulle revolution on lines indicated is just playing into the hands of the Japanese without benefiting Allied cause’ (National Archives of Australia [NAA], CRS 2937 item: New Caledonia, quoted in ‘A catch on the boundary’, 78).
23. Burchett, *Pacific Treasure Island*, 206. Lawrey (‘A catch on the boundary’, 76-7) cites PRO FO371/24329/6278 as providing evidence that the Australian High Commissioner to London, S.M. Bruce, suggested on 9 August that de Gaulle take control of New Caledonia, while National Archives of Australia, CRS A816, item 19/311/74, records the suggestion of the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Harry Luke, that de Gaulle use a French warship with French officials to achieve the same.
Australian misgivings over such a coup de force stemmed also from doubts surrounding the confusing reports as to the real balance of local opinion to such an action, by an increasingly agitated population. The British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, Sir Harry Luke, made only infrequent visits to Nouméa; until Australia’s decision to establish an official Representative to New Caledonia in B.C. Ballard, the benefit of regular, lucid analyses of the local situation was denied to both Britain and Australia.\(^25\) The US had a consul in Nouméa, Harry MacVitty, but his potential as a source was overlooked.

On the balance of presented evidence, it is more probable that it was as a result of pressure from Britain that Australia eventually accepted the task. As a contingency though, Captain Harry Showers, commander of HMAS Adelaide, had been already directed to Vila, ostensibly to search for the German raider Orion before the decision was finally taken by Canberra.\(^26\) Adelaide had been chosen as the only ship in the area capable of outgunning the Vichy French sloop Dumont d’Urville, which since August 23 had been at anchor in Nouméa harbour, providing moral and implicit military support to Pélicier’s shaky authority. A transmission from its commander, Toussainte de Quievrecourt, implies a secondary role that reflected the continuing French fears of Australian annexation.\(^27\)

On 16 September Sautot, having agreed to the proposition—and having been officially recognised by de Gaulle as Governor-elect of New Caledonia—embarked for Nouméa. Broussard Gaullist sympathisers had assured that they would be able to depose the Governor by 19 September, and be waiting to receive Sautot. In deference to Franco-Australian relations, Showers embarked Sautot on the Norwegian tanker Norden, and escorted ship and human cargo, ready to provide firepower if required, but technically not yet engaged as a party to the coup.\(^28\)

The first minutes of entry into Nouméa harbour were undoubtedly the most tense of the entire action, as confirmation could not be made that Commandant Denis had been deposed. With the guns of the town’s shore battery and those of Dumont d’Urville trained upon him, Showers decided he could not risk Norden further, transhipped Sautot to Adelaide, and steamed directly into the lion’s mouth.\(^29\)

\(^{25}\) Gill, Royal Australian Navy, 253; Lawrey, ‘A catch on the boundary’, 75.

\(^{26}\) Gill, Royal Australian Navy, 256; Aldrich, France and the South Pacific since 1940, 3, 7.


\(^{28}\) Gill, Royal Australian Navy, 264, 265; Sautot, Grandeur et Décadence du Gaullisme dans le Pacifique, 39.

\(^{29}\) Sautot, Grandeur et Décadence du Gaullisme dans le Pacifique, 44; Gill, Royal Australian Navy, 265. See also Salmon, ‘Noumea ’40’, 59, and Burchett, Pacific Treasure Island, 211 and 216, the latter reflecting the wartime censorship that could not allow mention of Adelaide’s participation, yet hints at local French approval of Australian involvement in the colony.
The battery’s garrison, having been ordered to fire by a panicked Denis, revolted, and ran up the flag of the Cross of Lorraine. De Quievrecourt remained steadfast, despite being fully aware that *Adelaïde* could easily overwhelm his ship. With typical French élan, and in the absence of direction by radio from mainland France whether to fight or surrender, de Quievrecourt elected an even more risky course, to remain in Nouméa as a sovereign Vichy ship in order to broker expatriation of Vichy supporters to Indo-China.\(^\text{30}\) At 12.30 pm, when the Gaullists finally consolidated their position, Sautot was picked up by motor launch after a pre-arranged signal, and delivered to the crowds of now-Free French at the dock.\(^\text{31}\)

Local reaction to Sautot’s eventual arrival was enthusiastic to the point of embarrassment. Though appreciated to varying degrees by the community, Australia’s role was overshadowed by the *ralliement* itself, and the general relief on all sides that it had been bloodless.\(^\text{32}\) Sautot, however, summarised his personal appreciation thus:

… to Captain Showers, to his officers and ratings of the cruiser *Adelaïde*, without the support of which the *ralliement* to General de Gaulle no doubt would not have succeeded. Their professionalism was equalled only by their human compassion, because they were very judicious in avoiding a bloody and futile struggle with the Vichy gunboat *Dumont d’Urville* and the coastal forts of Noumea.\(^\text{33}\)

Showers remained until 5 October, when the rumours of the *Dumont d’Urville*’s sister ship, the *Amiral Charner*, arriving for a counter-coup were finally quashed, and the pro-Vichy citizens were aboard the steamer *Pierre Loti* bound for Saigon. De Quievrecourt was permitted to sail as well, under strict conditions, and the fledgling Gaullist regime turned to the prospect of preparing for war.\(^\text{34}\)

Australia had clearly acted in the best interests of the Caledonians. Many, including Sautot, developed firm working relationships and friendship as ties between the two countries consolidated.\(^\text{35}\) By 17 April 1941, Australia had conducted a provisional assessment of New Caledonia’s defence requirements, and in December inserted an independent rifle company to continue the reconnaissance and train the locals. It had recommended the immediate construction of three air bases and development of other

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\(^32\) Thompson & Adloff, *The French Pacific Islands*, 268. Lawrey, *Cross of Lorraine in the South Pacific*, 16, describes how the *ralliement* itself mostly passed the Kanaks by, much less Australia’s involvement in it.


infrastructure, and although preliminary survey of the sites was under way, bureaucratic inertia and misunderstanding somewhat hampered direct, swift action.\textsuperscript{36}

Australia advocated a direct liaison with Sautot’s administration, but a fear of losing control of the colony, complemented by de Gaulle’s centralist methods, stifled this burgeoning autonomy. Despite having only the vaguest ideas of the local situation, de Gaulle refused to sanction direct official liaison between Sautot and the Menzies Government,\textsuperscript{37} and insisted that all decisions affecting New Caledonia’s military and economic preparedness be staffed through his HQ. He was supported by British diplomatic officials who were concerned about Australia’s inexperience in international dealings.\textsuperscript{38}

The question of financial accountability and reparation of Australia’s support to the colony concerned not only de Gaulle—which undoubtedly added weight to his decision—but Australia also. Acting Prime Minister Fadden’s correspondence on the matter demonstrates Australia’s deft handling of the issue, and debunks the allegation of ‘diplomatic inexperience’.\textsuperscript{39} Nevertheless, fears of overt Australian influence precipitating bids for New Caledonian autonomy—or worse, Australian annexation—still existed in Free French HQ.\textsuperscript{40} Within a few months, however, French opinions regarding the Allies’ plans for the island, and regarding Australia became largely academic when, on 6 December 1941, the United States was plunged into the war. Her massive involvement in New Caledonia would essentially marginalise such relatively petty squabbles.

New Caledonia’s role became pivotal as the war in the Pacific progressed. It acted as a ferry-pilot staging base from mainland United States, and in March 1942 it became home to the American-Caledonian (i.e. Americal) Division, which under the leadership of General A.M. Patch formed the backbone for many subsequent US offensive operations in the South Pacific.\textsuperscript{41} Sautot records a translated statement by Admiral Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, on the importance of New Caledonia:

\begin{quote}
Sautot records a translated statement by Admiral Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Areas and Commander-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, on the importance of New Caledonia:
\end{quote}
After the early success of the Japanese in the South Pacific, New Caledonia became a stronghold where the Americans regrouped their forces and from where the main offensives against the Solomons and Philippines were launched.\textsuperscript{42}

Nouméa also served as the headquarters for Admiral Ghormley, then Admiral Halsey, as successive Commanders-in-Chief Pacific Fleet, South Pacific Area. From 1942 to the end of the war, especially for the Battles of Guadalcanal, Santa Cruz and Savo Island, Nouméa’s port and her airbases—started by the Australians and recently completed by the US—were critical for the back-loading of crippled ships, aircraft and men, and as a reinforcement and resupply node.\textsuperscript{43} It was the second biggest Pacific naval port (in tonnage) in 1944 and 1945, after San Francisco.\textsuperscript{44}

Conclusion

Given the importance of the availability of New Caledonia to the prosecution of the remainder of the war, it can be argued that the \textit{ralliement} in New Caledonia was the most important of all of the French colonies. Had New Caledonia remained Vichy by the time Japan had entered the war, its potential role as forward base for Japanese operations would have undoubtedly changed the course, and possibly the outcome of the Pacific War.

Australian involvement in providing the Caledonians with a Free French government should not be understated. The Australian government’s dilemma of wanting to stabilise the condition in New Caledonia, countered by its reluctance to interlope when interference may have precipitated overt Japanese action is understandable. Additionally, the difficulties of undertaking such a detailed activity, when both British Foreign Office and the Free French Government refused to condone direct liaison between Australia and New Caledonia, in an attempt to discourage ideas of independence of policy from either, should be acknowledged as a significant step in Australia’s foreign policy maturity.

While playing a small part in the actual decision, the availability of HMAS \textit{Adelaide} and her presence during the \textit{coup de force} undoubtedly ensured its success. The actions of Captain Showers and his men during and after the \textit{ralliement} were both courageous and astute. The political \textit{impasses} and difficulties experienced in the ensuing months were no legacy of Showers, nor the Australian Army advisers and project teams who reconnoitred New Caledonia’s defences. Australia’s novice status in international relations may have not helped a \textit{rapprochement} between Canberra and de Gaulle, but it appears that it was more a function of Free French officials’ suspicions that most

\textsuperscript{42} Sautot, \textit{Grandeur et Décadence du Gaullisme dans le Pacifique}, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{43} Lawrey, \textit{Cross of Lorraine in the South Pacific}, 115-21.
\textsuperscript{44} Sautot, \textit{Grandeur et Décadence du Gaullisme dans le Pacifique}, 17.
affected opinion of Australian involvement in New Caledonia. The Cross of Lorraine may indeed have been a hard cross to bear, but the dividends for the Allies in securing New Caledonia for the remainder of the War were undoubtedly worth the passion.

As Australian perceptions of New Caledonia continue to evolve and change, it is worthwhile then to consider the effect of this relationship on the evolution of Australia as a nation. From origins of enmity transitioning through distaste and intimidation, to alliance and finally to redemption, Australia’s neighbour across the Coral Sea had from its conception to the Second World War elicited an emotive sentiment. From her Annexation in 1853 to its *Ralliement* in 1940, New Caledonia’s presence was an undeniable influence upon Australia as she appears today.

The *Ralliement*: A Who’s Who

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title and Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. M. Bruce</td>
<td>Australian High Commissioner to London</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Harry Luke</td>
<td>Governor of Fiji, British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henri Sautot</td>
<td>French Resident Commissioner of the New Hebrides, Free French Governor of New Caledonia 20 September 1940-1942</td>
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<tr>
<td>R. D. Blandy</td>
<td>British Resident Commissioner of the New Hebrides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georges Pélicier</td>
<td>Vichy French Governor of New Caledonia, 1939-16 September 1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.C. Ballard</td>
<td>Solicitor, Australian Representative to New Caledonia, 1940-42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harry MacVitty</td>
<td>United States Consul to Nouméa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Captain Harry Showers</td>
<td>Commander HMAS <em>Adelaide</em></td>
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<td>Capitaine Toussainte de Quievrecourt</td>
<td>Commandant <em>Dumont d’Urville</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lieutenant-Colonel Denis</td>
<td>Commandant Colonial Troops, Nouméa, 16 September 1940, Governor Nouméa 16-20 September 1940</td>
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On 2 April 1982 Argentine forces occupied the Falkland Islands/Malvinas.¹ These islands are situated in the South Atlantic, approximately 400 miles east of Argentina and 8,000 miles south of the United Kingdom. The Argentine operation, code-named Rosario, involved around 940 troops supported by three destroyers and two frigates, with distant cover provided by the aircraft carrier Veinticinco de Mayo and the remainder of the Argentine navy. The force defending the islands consisted of 68 lightly-armed Royal Marines, eleven sailors from the patrol ship Endurance and 25 members of the Local Defence Force. Outgunned and outnumbered they were over-powered quickly. The following day Argentine forces occupied the Falkland Islands dependency of South Georgia, although not before the tiny Royal Marine detachment there had managed to shoot down a Puma helicopter and damaged the corvette Guerrico with an anti-tank missile, rockets and machine gun fire. The Royal Marines had no real chance of preventing occupation of either the Falklands or South Georgia. However, in both cases they ensured that Argentina would have to fight to secure the islands and that neither occupation would be bloodless.² Within three days of Rosario the first ships of a British Task Force sailed from the United Kingdom. Twenty days after this South Georgia had been recaptured and after a further 50 days, on 14 June, the Argentine commander in the Falklands, Brigadier-General Mario Menendez, surrendered all forces in the Falkland Islands to his British counterpart, Major-General Jeremy Moore. On 12 July the British

¹ For ease of reference I will use ‘Falkland Islands’ in preference to ‘Malvinas’ throughout this paper.
² The British forces suffered no casualties in the Falklands Islands and only one man wounded at South Georgia. Fortunately there were no civilian casualties. This reflects the Argentine desire that the occupation of the islands should be as bloodless as possible. Figures for Argentine losses vary. David Brown states that three were killed and seventeen wounded in the Falklands. Martin Middlebrook suggests that the figure was one killed and two wounded, with a further three killed in South Georgia, one in the Guerrico and two in the Puma helicopter. Freedman and Gamba-Stonehouse concur with Middlebrook’s figures for the Falkland Islands but suggest that at South Georgia five men were killed and two wounded in the Puma, with a further five casualties in the corvette.
government announced that it considered active hostilities to have ended. After a total of 102 days the Falklands conflict was over.³

The Falklands conflict was unusual in a number of respects. It was far removed from the traditional strategic and diplomatic concerns of the Cold War. Both belligerents had close ties to the United States and were considered by them to be valuable allies in the struggle against communism. Despite the long-standing dispute over ownership of the Falkland Islands and their dependencies, Britain and Argentina generally enjoyed a cordial relationship. It was a conflict that neither side really wanted. As one commentator noted, it represented one of the ‘very few wars in history in which one nation had no real intention of invading and the other fought for territory which it had spent twenty-years saying that it did not really want’.⁴

It is not possible to do justice to every aspect of the Falklands conflict in a single short essay. As a result, I intend to focus specifically on Operation Corporate, the British attempt to restore sovereignty over the disputed islands. I will not scrutinise Argentine actions and motivations in depth, except in so far as they impacted upon the British.⁵ Nor will I study in detail the political and diplomatic wrangling that was associated with the crisis. Even with these provisos my focus must remain somewhat limited. It is not my intention to try and provide a detailed history of Operation Corporate.⁶ Rather, my aim is to examine some of the ways in which the expeditionary nature of the operation had an impact upon its conduct on land, sea and air and to assess the degree to which any conclusions that may be drawn remain relevant today.

3. The 200 nautical mile total exclusion zone imposed around the islands by the British was lifted on 22 July. Argentina continues to claim sovereignty over the islands but since 1982 has chosen to exert this claim through diplomatic rather than through military means.


Maritime Operations

Simple geography determined that Operation Corporate would be maritime in nature. The sea provided the medium through which to transport, land and provide logistic support to the forces necessary to evict the Argentineans. However, before the troops, vehicles and aircraft could be transported, landed and supported ashore the navy first had to win the battle for sea control. Whether or not one has to fight for it, sea control is a basic prerequisite for any maritime expeditionary operation. In 1982 the British did have to fight. The outcome was by no means certain. Indeed, even when the threat posed by enemy action had receded simple wear and tear on the ships of the task force and worsening weather conditions placed a definite limit on the time that the navy could maintain and exploit such control. This had an important impact on the conduct of operations at sea and on shore.

American commentators were quick to view the narrow margin of British success as indicative of the dangers of conducting expeditionary operations beyond the range of land-based air cover without the type of large aircraft carrier that was at the heart of their maritime strategy. Less fortunate navies could take solace in the ability of two rather smaller carriers, operating a total of only 31 Harriers, to be able to contest air superiority against a land-based opponent who employed around 80 fighter and strike aircraft against them. The superior availability of the Harriers, and the impact that this had on force ratios, was important, as was the fact that Argentine aircraft were operating at the very edge of their range and, with the exception of the four navy Super Etendards and eight A-4Q Skyhawks, in a role that they were not trained for. Nevertheless, in many respects it had been a close-run thing. British air defence missile systems, designed to operate in the open ocean of the North Atlantic against high altitude Soviet bombers, proved vulnerable to low-flying aircraft in close proximity to land. The lack of airborne-early warning (AEW) made it difficult to employ the Sea Harriers efficiently and often limited their impact to hitting aircraft after they had conducted their bomb runs. Fortunately for the British, the Sea Harrier/Sidewinder missile combination proved rather effective at this, claiming twenty confirmed and three probable ‘kills’ compared to only eight for Sea Dart, the navy’s medium-range air defence missile. No Harriers were lost in air-to-air combat.

7. During Operation Corporate HMS Hermes operated fifteen Sea Harriers, six Harrier GR3, and six Sea King, two Lynx and one Wessex helicopters. The newer but smaller HMS Invincible operated ten Sea Harriers, and nine Sea King and one Lynx helicopters. Brown, The Royal Navy, Appendix 1.
8. Ibid., 117.
9. Six Sea Harriers were lost, of which two were the result of enemy action. Three RAF GR3 Harriers were also lost as a result of enemy action.
Notwithstanding the interest in such results there were some high profile authorities that did not believe that the conflict had any useful lessons to offer. According to the commander of the British battle group, Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward, in September 1982 the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic, Admiral Harry Train USN, informed him that ‘there are no lessons to be learnt from your little war. Well, no new ones, anyway.’ Train also informed him that Admiral Anaya\(^{10}\) was his son’s godfather, which Woodward took to mean that Train was pro-Argentinean rather than pro-British.\(^{11}\) Of course, the discovery that there were no new lessons to learn should in itself have been valuable.

From the perspective of expeditionary operations, and despite Admiral Train’s comments, there is much to commend the study of the Falklands conflict. Information on the performance of particular weapon systems may have become dated in the past twenty years. Nevertheless, broader issues relating to the general challenges facing maritime forces are likely to remain relevant. For example, the impact that submarines had on both British and Argentine naval commanders was instructive. The latter were forced to, in effect, withdraw the surface fleet from the conflict in recognition of the fact that they had no way of dealing with the threat posed by British nuclear-powered submarines (SSNs) after the sinking of the cruiser General Belgrano by HMS Conqueror on 2 May. Similarly, the British expended considerable effort in an attempt to protect themselves from a rather inadequate force that included only three seaworthy boats.\(^{12}\) In 1982 the Royal Navy was recognised as the leading expert in the field of anti-submarine warfare. Despite this, and notwithstanding the successful attack on the Santa Fe off South Georgia on 25 April, the submarine threat continued to vex the British throughout the conflict.\(^{13}\) Argentine sources even suggest that torpedo attacks were initiated against British ships by the Type-209 submarine San Luis but that these were thwarted by problems with the torpedo guidance systems.\(^{14}\) British sources tend to be a little sceptical about such claims. Nevertheless, they were fortunate that Argentina did not possess a larger or more capable submarine force, particularly given the vulnerability of a supply route that crossed 8,000 miles of ocean.

\(^{10}\) Admiral Anaya was head of the Argentine Navy and a leading member of the ruling Junta.
\(^{12}\) Argentina had four submarines. One, the Santiago del Estero was an old US-built ‘Guppy’ class boat that had been decommissioned in 1981 and was used for static training. The second, Santa Fe, was also an old ‘Guppy’ class vessel. The navy also had two modern German-built Type 209 class boats, San Luis and Salta, although problems with excessive noise meant that the latter was considered unfit for combat operations. Robert Scheina, ‘Where were those Argentine subs?’, US Naval Institute Proceedings, March 1983, 115-20.
\(^{13}\) For example, see Brown, Royal Navy, 90, 156-7.
\(^{14}\) Middlebrook, Argentine Fight, 80-1 and 132. See also Scheina, ‘Where were those Argentine Subs?’, 115-20. For an example of the British view see Woodward, One Hundred Days, 197-8.
The problem that enemy submarines could pose to the deployment and sustainability of forces was demonstrated by the British. The speed and security inherent in the deployment of nuclear-powered submarines enabled both HMS *Spartan* and HMS *Splendid* to depart covertly for the South Atlantic even before the Argentine invasion, sailing from Gibraltar and Faslane respectively on 1 April.\(^{15}\) HMS *Conqueror* followed three days later and eventually five SSNs were deployed to the South Atlantic.\(^{16}\) These boats combined global reach with an impressive submerged speed of 25 knots. It was the arrival of the first SSNs that gave credibility to the declaration by the British of a 200-mile Maritime Exclusion Zone around the Falklands on 12 April, a factor that inhibited the Argentine use of surface transport to support its military build-up in the Falklands. This in turn meant that much of the heavy equipment required by some infantry and engineer units in the Falklands never arrived.\(^{17}\) It is an open question whether an earlier deployment of the SSNs, to have enabled their presence off the Falklands before 2 April, would have deterred the invasion altogether.\(^{18}\)

Later in the conflict British SSNs apparently performed the unusual task of providing early warning of air attack for the task force, by sitting off the coast of Argentina and monitoring air activity. More conventionally, the diesel/electric submarine HMS *Onyx* arrived on 31 May and undertook covert operations inserting and extracting SBS patrols, a role for which the large SSNs were not well suited and which had hitherto been conducted using helicopters from the ships offshore. It is indicative of the slow speed associated with SSKs that *Onyx* did not arrive until comparatively late in the conflict.\(^{20}\)

The conflict also demonstrated the vulnerability of surface warships to attack by aircraft. This assessment must be mitigated by the fact that the Royal Navy did secure a sufficiently favourable air situation to conduct an amphibious landing and subsequent land campaign despite being equipped with missile systems designed to operate in a very different environment. The initial success of the Type 42/Type 22 Sea Dart/Sea Wolf ‘combo’ provides an insight into what a purpose built air-defence cruiser might have achieved.\(^{21}\) In any case, the navy’s missiles were able to claim thirteen ‘kills’ and

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15. The public were not informed that *Splendid* and *Spartan* had sailed. The media did report that the SSN *HMS Superb* had sailed from Gibraltar for the South Atlantic. They were mistaken; it was actually en-route to Faslane.
16. HMS *Conqueror*, *Courageous*, *Spartan*, *Splendid* and *Valiant*.
18. Twenty years after the conflict Admiral Woodward suggested that they would have deterred the attack, Sir John Nott suggested otherwise—naming that even had they been deployed, they would have been unlikely to have been given permission to sink any Argentine ships prior to the actual act of aggression. The Argentine Junta, however, would not have known this. ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 9-10.
19. Special Boat Squadron. Now known as the Special Boat Service.
20. HMS *Onyx* could manage fifteen knots submerged, ten knots less than the SSNs.
contributed to a situation where Argentine aircraft were forced to fly so low and so quickly that they were unable to target the vulnerable amphibious ships and many of the bombs that were dropped did not have sufficient time to arm. After the conflict the capabilities of both the Sea Dart and Sea Wolf systems were improved. The value of such improvements appeared to have borne fruit when a Sea Dart missile, fired by HMS *Gloucester* during Operation *Desert Storm* in February 1991, successfully shot down an Iraqi Silkworm missile. Nevertheless, the experience of 1982 appears to reinforce the received wisdom that it is much better to shoot down the enemy aircraft before it releases its missile rather than trying to deal with the missile itself. This requires protection from fighter aircraft. In 1982 this meant aircraft from the two aircraft carriers, HMS *Hermes* and *Invincible*. Unfortunately the limited number of aircraft that could be embarked, the short range and limited speed of the Harriers and the lack of airborne early warning all served to reduce the cover that they could provide. Despite these limitations, the task force could not have operated off the Falklands without the cover provided by the Harriers.

The key threat posed to the Royal Navy’s surface ships was believed to be the combination of Super Etendard attack aircraft and Exocet missiles. Argentina possessed only a small number of the latter, yet these sank the destroyer HMS *Sheffield*, the merchant ship *Atlantic Conveyor* and damaged the destroyer HMS *Glamorgan*. In the latter case the missile was fired from a mobile launcher on East Falkland. In retrospect Woodward has questioned the danger posed by Exocet. In 2002 he said, ‘Don’t get impressed by Exocet. They gave us a hard problem … but we had it reasonably well in hand.’ In support of this position one should note that, of the three successes for Exocet, one was an undefended merchant ship (*Atlantic Conveyor*), one was a destroyer (*Sheffield*) whose demise owed something to human error, and the other was an old destroyer (*Glamorgan*) that was cutting the corner across a known danger area on its way back from the gun line. The performance of the navy’s anti-missile missile (Sea Wolf) against Exocet was not tested. In addition to the victims of Exocet, three warships and one Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) were sunk by conventional bombs with eight warships and two RFAs suffering various degrees of damage. Most of the damaged vessels remained operational, although this may not have remained the case if all of the bombs that struck these ships had exploded. These figures may appear shocking to a peacetime audience. They were less than had been anticipated by the Royal Navy and the Minister of Defence. The First Sea Lord, Sir Henry Leach, subsequently argued that he expected to lose six destroyers/frigates and would have been able to tolerate losses of twice that number. He appears to have

23. ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 59-60. HMS *Glamorgan* was armed with obsolescent Sea Slug and Sea Cat air defence missiles.
had a realistic understanding that escort ships are not irreplaceable, despite the terrible human cost associated with their loss. His own experience of battle in the Second World War may have been useful in this respect.

The retreat of the Argentine navy after the sinking of the Belgrano removed the possibility of a significant surface engagement. Argentine patrol vessels were attacked and neutralised by Harriers, missile firing helicopters and traditional naval gunfire. The latter proved useful in providing gunfire support to the troops ashore in both South Georgia and the Falklands. It had been recent British practice to remove the 4.5-inch gun armament on frigates in order to make space for Exocet missile launchers. This decision was reversed in the light of experience in the Falklands. The gun was recognised as providing a versatile weapon in a variety of circumstances.

The Royal Navy eventually deployed a total of six submarines, two aircraft carriers, 23 frigates and destroyers, two offshore patrol vessels, the ice patrol ship HMS Endurance and three survey ships, employed as ambulance ships. In addition to this the RFA contributed a total of sixteen tankers, replenishment and support ships, plus six Landing Ship, Logistic (LSL). On their own these would not have been sufficient to support Operation Corporate. Requisitioned merchant vessels played a vital part supporting the grey-funnel navy. In total three luxury liners, fifteen tankers, eight roll-on, roll-off ferries, one container ship, ten passenger and cargo ships, four offshore support vessels, three tugs and one cable ship were taken up. Five trawlers were also taken up and converted into mine-counter measures vessels. The ability of the merchant navy to provide and man these ships was fundamental to British success. Similarly, the ability of British dockyards to prepare Royal Navy vessels for sea and to make emergency alterations to merchant ships, such as the addition of helicopter landing platforms, played an important part in eventual victory. In his memoirs John Nott recalls his admiration for the selfless contribution made by the dockyard workers. Many of these workers had already received redundancy notices as a result of his defence review the previous year. It is not certain that contemporary British shipyards could be so responsive.

The simple deployment of forces was not enough. The navy had to be able to land the embarked force on a hostile coast without recourse to conventional port facilities. These forces had to be able to build up sufficient combat power ashore to deal with any enemy counter-attack, all in a situation where air superiority could not be assured. It would not have been possible to do this without the specialist amphibious ships and craft

25. Early Type-22 frigates and Batch II and III Leander class frigates lacked the traditional 4.5-inch guns.
27. MVs (HMS) Cordella, Farnella, Junella, Northella, and Pict: ibid.
with the Amphibious Group. In particular, the assault ships (LPDs) HMS *Fearless* and *Intrepid*, plus the landing craft that they carried, were vital. The command and control facilities available in *Fearless* were also important. The British were fortunate. John Nott had originally intended to decommission the LPDs as part of his 1981 defence review. Thankfully for all concerned this decision was reversed prior to the Falklands conflict although it would be another twenty years before these ships were replaced by new construction.

At least as critical as the specialist amphibious shipping was the expertise in amphibious operations possessed by Brigadier Thompson, Commodore Clapp and their staffs. Without such expertise it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to have planned and executed the amphibious landing so quickly and successfully. They achieved this despite a range of challenges that were, to say the very least, daunting. This expertise was the result of years of training and exercises. It could not have been generated overnight. Such expertise was not, indeed, could not be, general throughout the services. It should also be noted that such skills are perishable. Without them the British would have failed.

One area where the British were not seriously discomfited, but where they could have been, was that of sea mines. With the exception to the approaches to Port Stanley, the Argentineans did not deploy sea mines in any numbers. This was fortunate as the British were short of mine counter-measures assets. By virtue of their design such vessels lack the speed, sea-keeping and endurance of larger warships. As a result the only way in which it was possible for Admiral Woodward to check whether Falkland Sound had been mined was to ask the Type-21 frigate HMS *Alacrity* to sail through the sound to see if it hit anything! Considerable steps have been achieved in the development of deployable mine counter-measures capabilities for use in expeditionary operation since 1982. This will be important as sea mines remain a relatively cheap and easy way of denying access to the littoral. A point reinforced during both Gulf Wars. It should be noted that in both 1991 and 2003 the extended warning period prior to the outbreak of hostilities facilitated the pre-deployment of mine counter-measures vessels. This was not possible in 1982.

In the aftermath of the conflict the Royal Navy took steps to both enhance its own capabilities and to reduce vulnerabilities. The addition of Phalanx close-in-weapon-systems on the carriers, LPDs and Type-42 destroyers, and the introduction of Sea King helicopters equipped with Searchwater radar to provide AEW offer an example of such measures. The aircraft carrier HMS *Invincible* was reprieved, and the government announced that it would maintain destroyer/frigate strength at ‘about 55’ rather than

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29. It had been intended to sell HMS *Invincible* to Australia.
the 42 envisaged before the conflict. Nevertheless, the government remained convinced that the conflict supported its previous contention that out-of-area (i.e. beyond NATO) contingencies could continue to be met by forces devoted primarily to NATO. The key focus on Europe and confrontation with the Warsaw Pact remained. Thus the conflict was used to justify existing priorities. It is worth noting that part of the reason that the Royal Navy performed as well as it did was that it still retained the legacy of the larger fleet that had been tailored to conduct power projection operations beyond Europe. HMS *Hermes*, launched in 1953, carried twice as many Harriers as the *Invincible*-class ships that would replace it. Both LPDs had been launched in the 1960s and only narrowly survived the 1981 defence review. Similarly, the RFA’s six LSLs had been launched in the 1960s to support expeditionary operations beyond Europe. Even the older escort ships were in some ways more flexible than their modern counterparts. Unlike the Batch II and III *Leander*-class frigates and new Type-22 frigates they had 4.5 inch guns and thus could be used to provide naval gunfire support to the troops ashore. Indeed, the old County-class destroyers and Type-12 frigates each had two guns compared to only one in the newer Type-42 and Type-21. The latter were equipped with a more modern gun. However, the danger of relying on a single barrel to provide prolonged fire support was demonstrated when the Type-21 frigate HMS *Arrow* was designated to support the advance of 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment (2 PARA) on Goose Green. A fault with the gun stopped it from firing, reducing the fire support available to the hard pressed paras.30 Much of the flexibility demonstrated by the Royal Navy in 1982 rested on the legacy of a previous capability and one that had been out of favour with the Ministry of Defence for a number of years.31

**Land-based Air**

Despite the maritime nature of *Corporate* the operation demonstrated a number of interesting things about land-based air power in expeditionary operations. Most obviously it confirmed that, whatever one might wish, crises do not always occur within range of a friendly air base. The nearest friendly airfield, on Ascension Island, was 3,500 miles north of the Falklands and was thus beyond the range of any British military aircraft without air-to-air refuelling. Despite this, land-based aviation did make a significant contribution to British operations. A joint forward operating base was established at Ascension and the RAF transported over 5,800 people and 6,600 tons of stores there in over 600 sorties by Hercules and VC10 aircraft. RAF transport aircraft were supported

30. Thompson, *No Picnic*, 76.
by three chartered ex-RAF Belfast heavy-lift aircraft. The airlift to Ascension was assisted considerably by the agreement of the French and Senegalese governments to allow British aircraft to stage through the French base at Dakar, en-route to Ascension. Aircraft could not match the bulk carrying ability of ships. Merchant vessels alone transported around 100,000 tons of stores, plus 9,000 personnel and 95 aircraft to the South Atlantic. Nevertheless, the rapid transfer of personnel and supplies by air to Ascension made an important contribution to the military build up. Subsequently Hercules aircraft equipped for air-to-air refuelling were able to fly over the Task Force and drop high priority items, including mail and Special Forces personnel, to be picked up by the fleet. Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft flew 130 patrol sorties from Ascension. Use of in-flight refuelling allowed patrols of up to nineteen hours. The aircraft were armed with Sidewinder missiles for self-defence and Harpoon anti-ship missiles in addition to Stingray torpedoes. None of these were used in action, although the British government report into the lessons of the conflict claimed that the aircraft’s Searchwater radar enabled the Nimrod’s to monitor shipping at extended range, outside the missile engagement zones of possible enemy warships.

The most famous, and most controversial, employment of land based aircraft were the ‘Black Buck’ raids flown against Stanley airport by the RAF’s ageing Vulcan bombers. The first such mission took place on 1 May. In order to put a single Vulcan over Stanley the aircraft had to refuel eighteen times, supported by fifteen Victor tankers. A total of 21 1,000lb bombs were dropped from an altitude of 10,000 feet. One bomb hit the runway. The raid was followed up in daylight by nine Sea Harriers, also dropping 1,000lb bombs. A second ‘Black Buck’ mission was flown on 4 May. This time the bombs were dropped from 16,000 feet. None hit the runway. Neither the Vulcan nor the Harrier attacks on Stanley airport were decisive. Despite subsequent attacks by Harriers the runway remained operational and Argentine Hercules aircraft continued to bring in supplies at night throughout the campaign. Later in the conflict two Vulcan missions were flown using SHRIKE anti-radar missiles in order to destroy the Argentinean TPS-43 radar. Neither mission was successful and, after the second attack, the Vulcan was forced to fly to Brazil due to a technical fault and therefore it was unavailable to undertake further operations.

32. Cmnd. 8758, 6.
35. Brown, *Royal Navy*, 258-9 and 277. The key TPS-43 radar remained undamaged. The final SHRIKE mission did succeed in destroying a Skyguard fire-control radar used to direct 35mm AA guns.
Attitudes towards these missions tend to depend on the shade of blue worn (or preferred) by the commentator. The Fleet Air Arm were scathing about the futility of employing fifteen tankers to put a single aircraft over Stanley airfield. The commanding officer of No. 801 Squadron on HMS *Invincible* calculated that the single flight would have required 137,000 gallons of fuel, sufficient to fly 260 Sea Harrier missions over Stanley, dropping 1,300 bombs. He was particularly annoyed as the raid on 1 May put paid to a plan to attack Stanley that night using his own aircraft.\(^{36}\) On the other hand, those in light blue have suggested that the Vulcan raid, while unsuccessful in its primary mission, demonstrated to the Argentineans a British capability for long-distance bombing. This, it is claimed, reinforced their decision not to base fast jets at Stanley and demonstrated the vulnerability of the homeland to British bombers, thereby diverting air defence assets to the defence of Argentina rather than the fight for the Malvinas. There seems little reason to lend much credence to either argument. The runway at Stanley was not long enough to accommodate fast jets loaded with weapons and fuel; as such it could be no more than an emergency landing strip for aircraft that were damaged or low on fuel. It is conceivable that, by demonstrating a threat to the mainland, the raids caused Argentina to hold back some fighters.\(^{37}\) In fact the Argentine Air Force’s primary interceptors, seventeen Mirage IIIEAs, played little active part in the conflict after 1 May. This appears to have been the result of losses in air-to-air combat with Sea Harriers on that day.\(^{38}\) They continued to fly escort and decoy sorties to the Falklands after this date but, understandably, kept well clear of the Harriers.\(^{39}\) One might argue that the ‘Black Buck’ missions actually demonstrated to the world that Britain did not have any serious long-range bombing capability. It is hard to believe that the Argentine Air Force was unduly worried by the threat of a single obsolescent bomber dropping dumb bombs well beyond the range of friendly fighter cover. In any case, the political costs of conducting bombing operations against the mainland, particularly if they inflicted civilian casualties, would have made any such attempt by the British somewhat foolish. Nevertheless, and despite the scepticism of his aviators, Woodward took a pragmatic view of the raids. He welcomed anything that caused problems for Argentine forces and noted that, by bombing from high altitude, the Vulcan had a much better change of putting the runway out of action than through low-level attack by Harriers.\(^{40}\) The fact that something failed does not mean that it was not worth trying.

\(^{37}\) In 2002 Air Marshal Sir Michael Beetham (Chief of the Air Staff in 1982) stated that the primary mission of the Vulcan raids was to try and close Stanley airfield. However, he suggests that it ‘must’ also have caused the Argentines to recognise the vulnerability of the mainland and act accordingly. Admiral Woodward supported this view. ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 29-30.
\(^{38}\) Two Mirages were shot down by Harriers on 1 May and a third damaged aircraft was shot down by Argentine air defences as it tried to conduct an emergency landing at Stanley.
\(^{39}\) Hobson, *Air War*, 164-5.
The most valuable contribution made by air power to Operation Corporate was that of the helicopters and Harriers operating from the ships of the Task Force. This reflected previous experience in expeditionary operations off Aden in 1968, East Africa in 1964, Kuwait in 1961 and Suez in 1956 when sea-based aviation, both fixed and rotary wing, made a critical contribution to success in each operation. In this context the most useful role played by RAF fixed-wing aircraft was the embarkation of RAF GR3 Harriers in HMS Hermes. These Harriers boosted the limited number of Fleet Air Arm Sea Harriers that were available and provided a superior ground-attack capability to the Sea Harrier, which was designed primarily as an interceptor. The utility of this approach was not forgotten. The employment of RAF Harriers at sea alongside Fleet Air Arm aircraft in the Invincible-class aircraft carriers is now commonplace, a fact reflected in the Joint Force Harrier organisation introduced in April 2000.

In view of their heavy reliance on just two vulnerable aircraft carriers, the British made provision for the construction of an airfield ashore after the amphibious landings. Unfortunately much of the equipment required for this airfield was lost onboard the Atlantic Conveyor, sunk by an Exocet missile on 25 May. Despite this setback the Royal Engineers constructed a 280-yard runway at Port San Carlos, christened HMS Sheathbill. The runway was completed on 1 June, eleven days after the amphibious landing, but its use by Harriers was delayed by the need to add the necessary hard standings and tracks. On 5 June the first Harriers from HMS Hermes landed on the strip. The airfield had four readiness hard standings and was able to extend the endurance of the Sea Harriers on Combat Air Patrol by offering somewhere to refuel without having to return to their aircraft carrier. It also provided somewhere for the GR3 Harriers to wait on-call for close air support missions, significantly reducing their reaction time. Unfortunately only fuel was available at first. Aircraft had to return to their parent ship to re-arm. The presence of this airstrip had the additional advantage of allowing HMS Hermes to withdraw from the Total Exclusion Zone on 7 June in order to conduct maintenance to its boilers yet still to contribute aircraft to operations in the Falklands. HMS Sheathbill provided a useful enhancement to the Task Force’s two aircraft carriers, it could not replace them. It lacked the carriers’ command and control capability and their accommodation, support, supply and repair facilities. It was not possible to truly replace the capabilities offered by the aircraft carrier until after the conflict when a new

42. Brown, Royal Navy, 269.
43. Ibid., 282-3.
44. On 30 April the British declared that the 200 mile Maritime Exclusion Zone was now a Total Exclusion Zone, excluding Argentine air as well as maritime traffic.
45. Brown, Royal Navy, 290.
One should note that had the existing runway been extended prior to the conflict it might have been possible to fly in reinforcements at short notice, potentially pre-empting and deterring the Argentine invasion.

**Land Forces**

In contrast to the obvious dangers and difficulties facing the Task Force at sea, and the amphibious group during the landing phase, most British observers were confident that, once ashore, the superior professionalism of the British forces would bring victory. Those actually tasked with bringing about this victory were a little more sanguine, but in the event the optimists were proven right. On occasion Argentine troops put up stiff resistance but, in comparison to their opponents, they suffered from low morale, poor leadership and limited tactical awareness. Argentine conscripts, some with very limited time in service, were simply no match for the well-trained, well-motivated, and well-led professional soldiers that they faced. If any one factor explains how the men of No. 3 Commando Brigade and the 5th Infantry Brigade defeated an enemy force who outnumbered them, who had had over six weeks to prepare defensive positions and who had an advantage in both numbers and weight of artillery, it is this.

Nevertheless, British forces faced problems. As with almost every British operation throughout the century, experience in the Falklands highlighted problems with some of the troop’s personal equipment and clothing. The marines and soldiers were short of land manoeuvre assets. The boggy conditions that prevailed in the Falklands, combined with a paucity of roads, meant that wheeled transport was of limited use beyond Port Stanley. No heavy armour was employed by either side, although light tracked vehicles were used, including Scorpion and Scimitar light armoured reconnaissance vehicles and the Royal Marines’ BV202 over-snow vehicles. The later made a significant contribution to the famous ‘yomp’ conducted by No. 45 Commando, taking equipment and supplies that could not be carried on foot. The mobility of British forces was undermined by the loss of helicopters in *Atlantic Conveyor*. Fortunately the Argentine force also suffered from a lack of tactical mobility, relying on a dwindling supply of helicopters. Facing an opponent able to exploit the manoeuvre potential of amphibious forces to land at a time and place of his own choice, this severely constrained their defensive options. The continued British ability to use the sea for both logistic and manoeuvre purposes was demonstrated by the creation of a Forward Brigade Maintenance Area for No. 3

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46. Unless such an airfield was properly defended it would also have presented a tempting target for a *coup de main* by Argentine special forces or airborne troops.
47. Argentine forces had 26 helicopters in the Falkland Islands prior to the arrival of the British Task Force: Middlebrook, *Argentine Fight*, 63.
Commando Brigade at Teal Inlet in the north and the deployment of troops by sea to Fitzroy and Bluff Cove to the south-west of Stanley.

Problems with transport ashore exacerbated the logistical challenge of keeping the troops and artillery supplied. If the fighting had continued much longer a number of units may have experienced serious problems in this respect. Many of the tactical challenges facing the logisticians were a result of the shortage of helicopters. At a strategic level it was a notable success that a campaign conducted 8,000 miles from home could be supported at all. Ammunition usage proved greater than had been anticipated and the forces, both ashore and at sea, were kept supplied by the use of stockpiles intended for NATO use.\textsuperscript{48} One area where the British felt satisfied was the medical and casualty evacuation system. Extensive use was made of helicopters and hospital ships, with VC10 aircraft also employed to return casualties speedily to the UK. According to the government report, casualties were in surgery within six hours or less and, as a result, over 90 per cent of casualties survived.\textsuperscript{49}

One issue of concern for the ground forces was the poor performance of ground-based air defence systems. The British designed man-portable air defence missile, Blowpipe, was a notable failure. Despite government claims of nine kills and two probables, it appears likely that, despite 95 firings, Blowpipe accounted for only one enemy aircraft. A limited number of US-made Stinger missiles were supplied to and operated by the SAS. They were responsible for one kill.\textsuperscript{50} Unfortunately, the only individual trained to operate Stinger died in a helicopter crash on 19 May.\textsuperscript{51} Rapier, the army’s and RAF’s primary point defence missile system, did not live up to expectations. Some of its bulky second-line support equipment plus the missile’s DN181 Blindfire radar trackers were left behind at Ascension Island due to lack of space on ships. The systems also suffered from their prolonged storage on the journey south and some were damaged in the process of loading and unloading. It took some time for the systems to become operational. Rapier did not prove itself to be a particularly robust system for use in the early stages of an amphibious operation. Official claims of fourteen ‘kills’ appear to have been exaggerated. It now seems likely that only one aircraft was shot down by Rapier alone.\textsuperscript{52} Both Admiral Woodward and Commodore Clapp expressed disappointment in the system. A final line of defence was provided by the machine guns and small-arms fire of the soldiers themselves. The Scots Guards are reported to have fired 18,500 rounds

\textsuperscript{48} Cmnd. 8758, 25.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{50} Hobson, \textit{Air War}, 161.
\textsuperscript{52} Hobson, \textit{Air War}, 162.
in only 45 seconds to drive off an attack on Bluff Cove by four A4Q-Skyhawks.\footnote{Anderson, \textit{Falklands}, 60.} In practice, effective air defence during \textit{Corporate} rested on systems and aircraft that were based on ships.

The Commando Brigade was deliberately structured to enhance its deployability. The provision within the brigade of additional logistics and artillery elements, provided by the army, was based on experience in expeditionary operations in the 1960s and proved valuable again in the 1980s. Similarly, brigade assets such as the recce troop made the unit more suitable for the Falklands campaign than its army equivalents. The Parachute Regiment was also an inherently deployable force, although a combination of geography and the nature of the enemy forces meant that the Paras would operate as makeshift marines rather than in their primary role. Prior to 1982 John Nott had decided to increase British airborne capabilities, at the same time as he contemplated a decline in amphibious forces.\footnote{This was reflected in the early decision, later reversed, to scrap the LPDs.} Unlike the amphibious fleet, which retained its Cinderella status, these plans survived the experience of 1982 and in the years after the conflict airborne capabilities were enhanced. In 1986 the government was able to announce that Britain was now ‘better able to launch a rapid and effective battalion group parachute assault, if the need ever arises’.\footnote{Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1986. Part One, Cmnd 9763-I (London: HMSO, 1986), 38.} Experience suggested that the need would not arise, it had not done so since 1956.\footnote{The British amphibious landing at Port Said on 6 November 1956 was preceded by British and French airborne landings on 5 November.} The particular circumstances of the Falklands conflict made a British airborne assault impossible as airborne forces lacked the reach of their amphibious counterparts. They also struggled to match the vehicles, artillery, heavy weapons and logistic sustainability available to troops landed from the sea. As such, traditional airborne forces were too vulnerable to be used against sophisticated and organised opposition without the prospect of rapid support by land or amphibious forces. The same limitations would not have applied to troops and equipment landed by helicopter from an assault ship offshore.

The lack of a helicopter assault ship (LPH) was a significant weakness in British capabilities. The Royal Navy had, until recently, operated two such vessels, each capable of accommodating a Commando unit plus supporting arms and landing them using the ship’s complement of around sixteen medium-lift helicopters. Unfortunately the last dedicated LPH, HMS \textit{Bulwark}, had abandoned this role in 1976 and was paid off in March 1981 after a brief period operating as an ASW carrier. The aircraft carrier HMS \textit{Hermes} retained a secondary role as an LPH, but was required in its primary role for \textit{Corporate}. The lack of a helicopter assault capability placed limitations and complications on the planning and conduct of the main amphibious landing and significantly reduced...
the mobility of British forces once ashore. This was particularly significant after the loss of four Chinook and six Wessex helicopters on the Atlantic Conveyor. The paucity of helicopters, in conjunction with the difficult terrain ashore and lack of roads, forced the famous ‘yomp’ across East Falkland by No. 45 Commando and 2 PARA. It contributed to the losses that befell the Welsh Guards at Fitzroy/Bluff Cove, and it reduced the amount of fire support that could be provided to support the infantry. Julian Thomson recalled that at times the lack of helicopter lift resulted in so few rounds being brought forward to his gun batteries that his 105-mm light guns were limited to firing only sixteen rounds per gun, per day. The lack of an LPH forced the British to adopt an approach to the conduct of amphibious warfare that would have been recognised as being old-fashioned twenty-five years earlier. This cost them time; it also cost them lives.

The entire land campaign depended on the military and logistic support that could be provided by the ships offshore. The ability of the Royal Navy to maintain sea control around the Falkland Islands was the bedrock upon which the land campaign was founded. This had important implications for the conduct of that campaign. A combination of likely enemy action, general wear and tear and the approach of the South Atlantic winter meant that the Task Force would be operating according to a strict timetable. On 17-18 April Woodward informed his colleagues that from the end of May his ships would begin to face problems of serviceability and by ‘about mid to late June’, equipment failure on the majority of ships originally deployed with the Task Force would cause severe restrictions on their operational capability. The campaign would thus need to be over before the end of June. This had a number of consequences. It reduced the time available for pre-landing reconnaissance and it meant that the land campaign would have to be completed as quickly as possible. As a result Brigadier Julian Thompson was to come under considerable pressure from both Woodward and the overall task force commander, Admiral Fieldhouse, to advance beyond the bridgehead at San Carlos at the first opportunity. They may not have understood the sound military reasons why this was impractical. As Thompson notes, ‘there was absolutely no point in rushing out of the beachhead with a packet of sandwiches in one pocket and 5 rounds of ammunition in the other in order to engage the enemy, who were some 50 miles away, until we had our logistics ashore’. Fortunately the land campaign was completed in time, although it is clear from Woodward’s account of the campaign just how worried he was becoming about the sustainability of his forces. Delay was not an option.

57. By necessitating an amphibious rather than an airborne lift forward.
58. Thompson, No Picnic, 98.
59. Indeed, 26 years before Operation Corporate British forces conducted the first ever helicopter assault during an amphibious operation when No. 45 Commando was landed at Port Said on 6 November 1956 by helicopters from the aircraft carriers HMS Ocean and Theseus during Operation Musketeer.
60. Thompson, No Picnic, 18.
61. The commander of the Landing Group.
63. Woodward, One Hundred Days, passim.
Of course, one alternative to putting the logistics ashore would have been to keep them sea based. Unfortunately, given the threat of Argentine air and submarine attack such an approach would have increased rather than reduced overall vulnerabilities. In any case, in the absence of appropriate ship-to-shore assets and given the reliance on STUFT as well as specialist amphibious ships sea basing in the modern sense of the word was not possible in 1982.

Special Forces

Special Forces played an important role during the Falklands conflict and their employment demonstrates some of the advantages of such forces. It also demonstrates some of the problems associated with their use. The SAS initially sent two squadrons (D and G) to the South Atlantic, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Michael Rose. These two squadrons amounted to 128 men and were later reinforced with B Squadron after twenty men were killed in a helicopter accident.64 The SBS sent 85 men from 2SBS, 3SBS, and 6SBS.65 Both the SAS and the SBS performed a number of vital roles including intelligence gathering, monitoring Argentine positions and beach reconnaissance. Inserted initially by helicopter and later, in the case of the SBS, by submarine, they were one of the factors that contributed to British success. Examples of their employment include the discovery on 20 May of an Argentine helicopter park which led to the destruction by Harriers of four valuable troop-carrying helicopters. Similarly, the following night, immediately prior to the main landing at San Carlos, men from 2SBS and 3SBS, supported by naval gunfire, were responsible for dislodging the half-company of Argentine troops discovered at Fanning Head. Equipped with a 105-mm recoilless rifle, these troops could have posed a real threat to British forces going ashore in vulnerable landing craft. To further reduce the possibility of opposition at San Carlos a diversionary raid was launched against Darwin by D Squadron SAS, supported by gunfire from HMS Ardent, in order to keep troops there and at Goose Green occupied.66

The most famous Special Forces operation saw the SAS acting in a fashion reminiscent of the activities of their founder, David Stirling, in the Western Desert in the Second World War. Argentine forces had established a base for Pucara attack aircraft

on the airfield at Pebble Island, north of West Falkland. An SAS raid, conducted on 15 May, resulted in the destruction of eleven Argentine aircraft with no fatal casualties in the assaulting force. The propensity of Special Forces to ‘get stuck in’ was often useful, as when D Squadron SAS was used to seize Mount Kent between 25-29 May, occupying this important position and holding off attacks by Argentine special forces until reinforced by troops from No. 42 Commando on 30 May. However, the debacle at South Georgia when SAS soldiers had to be rescued from the Fortuna Glacier, at the cost of two crashed helicopters, provides an example of a situation where what should have been a relatively simple operation was unnecessarily complicated by the presence and involvement of Special Forces. Similarly, the final raid of the war, a diversionary action conducted by a mixed team of SAS and SBS across Hearndon Water (to the north of Stanley Harbour), appears to have been ill-advised and narrowly avoided disaster in the face of intense enemy fire. Claims that the raid assisted the assault of 2 PARA on Wireless Ridge appear optimistic. The activities of Special Forces always make good reading, they may not always make good sense.

One area where further research is required is into the question of Special Forces operations on the South American mainland. The discovery of a Royal Navy Sea King helicopter abandoned and burned out south of Punta Arena in Chile has resulted in much speculation, and this has been added to by a number of memoirs published recently. It appears probable that the British landed at least one Special Forces team on the mainland in order to monitor and report on Argentine air activity. It is also possible that some form of attack was planned against Argentine air bases, although no such attack materialised. It has been suggested that there was a plan to crash land two Hercules transport aircraft loaded with B Squadron SAS on Rio Grande airfield in order to destroy the aircraft and kill the pilots, before making off into the countryside to seek safety across the border in Chile. It is reported that the plan caused a ‘mutiny’ amongst B Squadron who saw it as a suicide mission. Given the political implications of extending the conflict to the Argentine mainland it is probably fortunate that no such operation was ever conducted.

68. See Finlan on this matter.
70. Punta Arenas is 500 miles from the Falkland Islands and 200 miles outside the British Total Exclusion Zone. It is, however, only about 140 miles from the Argentine air base at Rio Grande and 125 miles from Rio Gallegos: Geraghty, Who Dares Wins, 159.
Command and Control

One of the areas of Corporate that has provided a continuing source of controversy is that of command and control. The arrangement adopted for this operation was as follows. At the grand strategic level direction was provided by a ‘War Cabinet’ consisting of the Prime Minister (Margaret Thatcher), the Foreign Secretary (Francis Pym), the Defence Secretary (John Nott), the Home Secretary (Willie Whitelaw) and the Chairman of the Conservative Party (Cecil Parkinson). The Attorney General (Sir Michael Havers) attended when required. It is notable that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not represented in this group. Financial considerations would not be allowed to determine the course of the operation. The full Cabinet was kept informed of key developments but played only a minor part in the decision-making process. Similarly, and in common with most government business, Parliament had only a very indirect impact on the War Cabinet’s decisions. The political decision making process was assisted throughout by a national press that supported military action and the fact that journalists with British forces in the South Atlantic were dependent on the Task Force for all communications with the outside world. According to John Nott, such problems as did occur with the media were a result of leaks and unofficial briefings by the Downing Street press office.72

The Chiefs of Staff Committee provided direction at the military strategic level. This committee was comprised of the professional heads of the three services plus the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), Admiral Sir Terence Lewin. The institution of CDS had recently been strengthened by reforms introduced by Nott and Lewin, with CDS becoming the government’s senior military adviser, unrestrained by collective responsibility as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. It was thus CDS, rather than the service Chiefs, who acted as the main military adviser to the War Cabinet, although the Chiefs attended meetings when required. As Stephen Prince has identified, it was Lewin who acted as the ‘primary focus for military advice and the exclusive channel for orders’.73 The system was clear and unambiguous and it worked extremely well. Lewin and Thatcher co-operated well together and their relationship was supported by a high degree of mutual respect. Unusually for a naval officer, Lewin also received the praise of John Nott.74

Difficulties were more apparent at the operational and tactical levels. Operational command was vested in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Admiral Sir John Fieldhouse. Fieldhouse established a tri-service command at his headquarters

74. Nott, Here Today, ch. 9.
at Northwood, building on a staff that was already joint in nature. He was directly responsible to Lewin. Forces deployed to the South Atlantic were organised into two Task Forces: Task Force 317, consisting of the surface ships, and Task Force 324, consisting of the submarines. The latter was controlled by Flag Officer Submarines, collocated at Northwood. TF 317 was subdivided into three groups: a Carrier Battle Group under Rear Admiral Sandy Woodward; the Amphibious Group under Commodore Mike Clapp; and, the Landing Force under Brigadier Julian Thompson. Major General Moore took overall command of land forces upon arrival at San Carlos on 30 May, whereupon Thompson reverted to his position in command of No. 3 Commando Brigade.

There was no in-theatre operational level commander able to adjudicate between the different priorities of the task group commanders. Woodward considered himself to be, and acted as if he was, primus inter pares. This was a natural reflection of his rank and of his control of the vital assets necessary for the prosecution of the entire operation. It also appears to have reflected the wishes of Admiral Fieldhouse. Unfortunately this arrangements left room for confusion. The other task group commanders were less than clear about their position vis-à-vis Woodward. Clapp and Thompson had both hoped that Rear-Admiral Derek Reffell would be appointed as overall commander of the Task Force at sea. Reffell was Flag Officer Third Flotilla, which gave him responsibility for the navy’s amphibious ships and aircraft carriers. As such he was an officer who was more likely to understand the requirements of maritime power projection than Sandy Woodward, a submariner by profession. Nevertheless, Woodward, as Flag Officer First Flotilla, had been in command of forces undertaking exercises off Gibraltar when the crisis broke and it was he who gained command of the battle group that sailed south.

Problems in the relationship between the three task group commanders were evident from their first meeting off Ascension Island on 17 April. Woodward made a poor first impression on both Clapp and Thompson and this appears to have damaged their faith in him. It is possible that this was a reflection of the very different challenges facing the three. Clapp and Thompson were co-located on HMS Fearless and their staff had experience of working together in peacetime. They were both focused on the problems of conducting an amphibious operation. Woodward’s responsibilities were more wide ranging and included the requirement to ensure the continued survival of the battle group in general, and the aircraft carriers in particular. If he had little knowledge and understanding of the problems facing his colleagues, perhaps the same might be said of them as regards the challenges that he faced. This was probably inevitable. Unfortunately, without an in-theatre commander able to co-ordinate the activities of the three and adjudicate between them Woodward himself had to adopt this role. It is unsurprising, therefore, that both Clapp and Thompson tended to believe that the interests of the

75. Thompson, No Picnic, 17-18; Clapp, Amphibious Assault, 56-8.
battle group were sometimes pursued in preference to the interests of their commands. The presence of an in-theatre operational level commander might not actually have changed any of the key decisions, but he might have been able to foster a greater degree of understanding between his subordinates. He might also have been able to ensure a greater degree of co-operation and co-ordination.

In the second edition to his book, *One Hundred Days*, Admiral Woodward sought to address criticisms of his style of command contained in the memoirs of Clapp and Thompson, amongst others. It is clear that his personal style did little to win him friends in the Amphibious Group or Landing Force. Woodward had to maintain a delicate balance between the survival of the battle group and the support that he could provide to the other elements of the Task Force. This was never going to be easy. It is evident that his personal style did little to foster an environment of mutual support and understanding with Clapp or Thompson, but it is by no means clear that this was primarily a function of personalities rather than competing priorities. In the aftermath of the conflict the British recognised that changes should be made. Contemporary British doctrine envisages both a Joint Commander in overall command and a Joint Force Commander to exercise operational command in-theatre. The first edition of British Maritime Doctrine, published in 1995, used the experience of the Falklands conflict to illustrate the need for this reform.76

Another issue that continues to invite controversy is that of political interference into military decision making. Commentators have noted that a variety of military actions, and also in-actions, appear to have been driven by political rather than military logic. As Clausewitz identified, war may have its own ‘grammar’ but it has no ‘logic’; this can only be provided by the political aim.77 As such it is hardly surprising that political ‘logic’ should occasionally impinge on military ‘grammar’, particularly as this was a limited conflict rather than a general war. Examples of such impingement include restrictions on the rules of engagement that meant that Woodward was unable to shoot down an Argentine Boeing 707 aircraft that was used to snoop on the Task Force as it made its way south.78 Similarly, the SSN HMS *Splendid* had kept the aircraft carrier *Veinticinco de Mayo* under surveillance but was refused permission to engage this high value target. Only on 30 April was permission granted to sink the aircraft carrier if it moved out of territorial waters and posed a threat to the Task Force.79 Unfortunately, by this time *Splendid* had lost contact with the ship. Aircraft from the carrier subsequently deployed ashore and were responsibility for sinking HMS *Ardent*.80 The most famous

decision relating to rules of engagement was, apparently, the easiest. John Nott recalled
that the decision to allow HMS Conqueror to attack the Belgrano was based entirely
on military grounds and describes it as ‘one of the easiest decisions of the war’.81

There were occasions where politicians have been accused of forcing the pace
of military operations. The attacks on South Georgia and Goose Green may provide
examples of this. However, one must note that there were good military reasons for
undertaking both actions. In the case of Goose Green it now appears that the primary
rationale for this offensive was military rather than political. At the time Brigadier
Thompson did not wish to attack Argentine force there, considering it to be an
unnecessary diversion. He has subsequently stated that he undertook the attack because
he was ordered (by Northwood) to do so, but that he now recognises that the order was
correct. He is candid enough to admit that his only regret is that he could have handled
the attack better, primarily by allocating more artillery and some light armour.82

Less spectacular, but perhaps more insidious than the above, was the confusion that
existed for a time within the Task Force over their ultimate aim. The first ships sailed
according to a diplomatic rather than a military timetable and it is fortunate that there
was an opportunity to reorganise and re-stow equipment at Ascension Island. Despite
appearances, it was by no means clear what, if any, military action might be undertaken.
Admiral Fieldhouse was forced to consider a variety of possibilities, including the
imposition of a sea and air blockade of the islands without a landing, a landing on West
Falkland in order to build an air-strip, or the seizure of an enclave on East Falkland. The
latter option might have been forced on the British if, after landing, pressure from the
UN forced a cease-fire. Clearly the requirement to find a site suitable for development
as a defensible and sustainable enclave might be rather different from a site suitable as
the jumping-off point for an advance on Port Stanley. An assault directly against Stanley
itself was ruled out on both military (strong enemy defences) and humanitarian (fear of
civilian casualties) grounds. Woodward recalled that such confusion continued to cause
difficulties until 12 May when the instructions to the Task Force finally changed from
‘prepare to land with a view to repossessing the Falkland Islands’ to the instruction simply
to repossess the islands.83 Once this instruction was given, the politicians provided solid
support to the military. Admiral Lewin, claimed that the politicians met every request
that he issued to them.84 Major General Moore recalled that he never felt under any
pressure from wither the politicians or from Admiral Fieldhouse.85 Part of the reason
for this may have been that he was proactive in controlling his superiors. Moore sent

81. Nott, Here Today, 308.
82. For a discussion of these issues see ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 43-7.
85. ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 45.
nightly reports back to London which, according to Clapp, were ‘the biggest bullshit you ever saw, but Maggie lapped it up’.\(^ {86}\) Thompson was later to note that Moore handled London much better than he had done.\(^ {87}\)

**Conclusion**

In 1982 the Falklands conflict provided the British with what was then a relatively rare opportunity to test the performance of both men and equipment in actual combat. It is an unfortunate fact that such opportunities are rather more common today. The strategic and political environment has changed considerably in the past twenty years and there have been commensurate changes in the structure and role of most western armed forces. Many now place an emphasis on expeditionary warfare that was rarely seen at the height of the Cold War. There have been numerous technological developments that have changed the way in which the military operate at a tactical level. As a result, contemporary armed forces are perhaps more likely to examine recent operations in Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan or Iraq rather than the Falklands conflict in order to derive lessons about the future of expeditionary warfare. Nevertheless, Operation Corporate remains the only occasion since 1945 where a major western navy has faced a serious and sustained challenge to sea control from a reasonably well equipped and sophisticated opponent able to deploy conventional military forces on land, sea and in the air. As a joint expeditionary operation conducted at the margins of British reach and capability there may well still be useful conclusions to be drawn.

In some senses Admiral Train was right in his assessment that there were no new lessons to be derived from an examination of the Falklands conflict. His judgement was perhaps least valid with regard to detailed tactical and technological issues that, while instructive in 1982, have become dated in the course of the last twenty years. The performance of the various missile systems provides a good example of this. On a more general level Admiral Train may have been right. The primary requirement for the navy to gain and maintain sea control, the difficulty of securing air superiority without a large aircraft carrier, the threat posed by submarines and mines, the requirement for specialist amphibious skills and shipping, logistical problems facing the landing force ashore, problems with command and control in joint operations and most of the other issues raised in this paper were all old lessons that could be gleaned from an examination of any number of battles or campaigns. The particular circumstances of the Falklands conflict may have exacerbated some of these problems, but few of them could be described as new. However, the fact that the conflict tested and reinforced existing ideas about expeditionary operations was useful, despite Admiral Train’s apparent scepticism. At a

87. ‘Falklands Witness Seminar’, 43.
time when the value of amphibious ships, aircraft carriers and, indeed, surface warships in general had been questioned by the Minister of Defence, a restatement of some basic truths about the nature of expeditionary warfare was timely. Today, an understanding of what happened in 1982 and more importantly, why it happened in the way in which it did, can be useful as it forces one to focus the mind on a range of issues that are likely to remain important. An examination of Operation Corporate will not provide many answers for planners and analysts in the twenty-first century, but it may raise some useful questions. In this sense the study of the conflict remains useful. It has always been interesting.
In theory, operational deployments to Somalia in 1992 and to Bougainville, a western island province of Papua New Guinea (PNG), in 1994 should have been trouble-free dry runs for the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Though each operation was different, both involved force elements from 3rd Brigade in Townsville, the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF),\(^1\) that was on high levels of preparedness and readiness. Force command and sustainment arrangements as well as deployment procedures should have been mature after several offshore operations in 1987,\(^2\) 1989\(^3\) and 1991\(^4\) as well as during Exercise Kangaroo 89.\(^5\)

In practice, there was significant room for improvement in generic and specific force preparation and deployment, as well as force command, protection and sustainment during each of these two deployments. They were exhibits A and B for change, not endorsements of ADF capacity or capability for operational deployment. There were no disastrous consequences of deficiencies in the functions of force projection because there were no military contests or embarrassing incidents to expose the problems the

1. At the time of the deployment of the Combined Force to Bougainville (Operation Lagoon) in 1987, 3rd Brigade was called the Operational Deployment Force.
2. Operation Morris Dance (May–June 1987) was the deployment of a navy task group with additional embarked force elements (120-strong Infantry company group, two landing craft medium and several helicopters) to the waters off Fiji in anticipation of evacuation operations during a period of civil unrest precipitated by a military coup.
3. Operation Picquresque (February 1989–April 1990) was the deployment of an army construction squadron to Namibia in support of a UN election mission.
4. Operation Damask (December 1990–March 1991) was the deployment of two navy warships to the Gulf in support of the US-led Operation Desert Storm, a retaliatory operation to free Kuwait from Iraqi occupation. Operation Habitat (16 May–16 June 1991) was the deployment of a 72-strong medical team to northern Iraq to participate in a UN humanitarian operation among displaced Kurdish refugees.
5. Exercise Kangaroo 89 was an intra-national rehearsal of force projection from the east coast of Australia to the northwest coast in conformity to a strategic scenario related to the defence of the Australian mainland. Activities began in May 1989 when the first logistics elements deployed to the Northern Territory and continued through to mid-October, when the last logistics support unit for land forces returned to the east coast from Darwin. Kangaroo 89 involved the deployment of 18,000 ADF personnel, the most significant domestic projection of Australian military force since the Second World War.
ADF had in despatching forces on time and in good order, and protecting, commanding and sustaining them effectively after arrival. In terms of outcomes, each operation was successful because neither competent opponents nor particularly difficult circumstances tested Australian forces. In terms of process, competent opponents could have taken advantage of force projection deficiencies and more difficult circumstances would have exposed them.

The aim of this essay is to identify some the gaps between the theory of prompt, strong and smart operational deployment and the practices that applied for expeditions to Somalia and Bougainville in 1993 and 1994. The approach is to examine gaps between best-practice theory and actual practices employed; often the gap between doctrine and pragmatism. The focus is on the cutting edge of each operation—the tactical level, the level where hostile forces are defeated or desired effects of military action are caused. Focus on performance at the tactical level to measure the overall performance of the ADF is metaphorically ‘getting down into the weeds’. However, it is from these weeds that seeds of military disaster—inadvertently sown by circumstance as well as by well-meaning higher levels of command and political leaders—are either harvested or overcome. It is also from these weeds that strategically important images of military operations are broadcast instantly around the world for millions to see and scores of experts to interpret.

The essay will discuss these operational deployments within the context of the ten functions of military force projection. The functions of military force projection are as old as the formation of nation states. In rudimentary form they predate the nation state. From the earliest times when humans gathered in collective defence of their territory, or for the conquest of someone else’s territory, they have executed all or some of the functions with varying degrees of proficiency and sophistication. Early nation states of ancient Greek and Roman eras maintained extant military capability (generic force preparation) under some form of command and control (force command). Periodically they assembled force elements, and then equipped and prepared them to fight campaigns (specific force preparation). After plans and preparations were made, force elements moved to advantageous terrain and formed up in the best disposition possible for battle with weapons ready (force deployment). Typically, nation states preferred to deploy forces beyond their borders, often after thorough reconnaissance, to meet their opponents in battle so that their homelands would not be laid waste. After deployment, force elements would then be employed (force employment) under designated command arrangements, protected (force protection) and sustained (force sustainment) to win the initial and subsequent battles and, eventually, campaigns. Force protection involved activities such as gathering intelligence, employing agents, protection, Rotation, Sustainment, Redeployment and Reconstitution.

reconnaissance groups and cavalry screens to warn forces of threats and to intercept enemy groups who were also gathering intelligence and screening their main forces. In more modern times force protection also included means employed to protect force elements from harsh operational environments, such as protection from disease and climate through preventative health measures.

During campaigns, force elements would be reinforced, relieved, rested, retrained and re-equipped, possibly with revised missions and new capabilities, to maintain pressure on enemy forces (force rotation). After defensive or offensive campaigns ended, force elements would redeploy (force redeployment) back inside borders or to occupy territory beyond borders. They would then be reconstituted (force reconstitution), either with more capability or less, depending on the perceived level of remaining threat or, more generally, national will to maintain generic military capability for ongoing defence or for further conquest. Force reconstitution completes the cycle of force projection back into generic force preparation.

These functions are common to all schools of strategic thought for Australia’s defence. They are relevant to force projections from the east to the north-west coast of continental Australia, into the northern archipelago and region beyond Australian shores, or anywhere else around the globe that the Australian Government assesses that it is in Australia’s interests to take military action. The preference will always be for the ADF to take military action in the company of strong allies. However, the battle for Australia in 1942, and projections to the waters off Fiji in 1987, to Bougainville in 1994 and 1997, to East Timor in 1999 and to the Solomons in 2003 are reminders that the

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12. Operation *Anode* (July 2003-present) was the deployment of an Australian-led, 2,500-strong Regional Assistance Mission —Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to the Solomon Islands to create a secure environment for restoration of the economy and civil society.
ADF may have to lead as well as participate in regional military force projections at the behest of the Government—often at very short notice.

The ADF had been warned about gaps between theory and practice during an operational deployment in 1987. Poor performance had been well-documented and considered by the Chiefs of Staff Committee in December 1987 after a joint force had been deployed to the waters off Fiji in May in anticipation of emergency evacuation of over four thousand Australian nationals after a military coup had precipitated a breakdown in law and order. Operation *Morris Dance* had been a near-disaster because the crisis machinery of Government was slow and secretive, and generic and specific force preparation, deployment procedures, and force command and sustainment failed

13. The POR (HQ ADF, MPD 87/25649, 22 September 1987) was presented to Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) on 21 October 1987 after several months of pointed exchanges between various headquarters and also with the First Assistant Secretary Strategic and International Policy. The members of COSC endorsed the POR and ‘directed specific follow up action on the recommendations of the POR’ and for them to receive a progress report in April 1988. (HQADF MPO 87/25649, 15 December 1987)

14. The strategic level of command would not authorise reductions in the notice to move of force elements in the Operational Deployment Force because the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and COSC were still developing and considering options for presentation to Government and the service chiefs were not disposed to assign force elements to Operation *Morris Dance* until ordered to do so by the CDF after he had considered options, presented them to Government and received direction from the Minister of Defence. D’Hage, ‘Operation Morrisdance’, 5-7. D’Hage describes ‘High Command Planning Sequence’ in these pages.

15. The Advance Company Group (ACG) had not trained for any contingencies involving force projection to the near region. In 1986 1RAR had trained for low intensity conventional operations to defend the north-west of Australia from raids and small-scale enemy lodgements. There had been no training for evacuation of Australian nationals from overseas countries in a situation of civil unrest that would require an airfield or wharf to be secured and for troops to obey strict Rules of Engagement (ROE) for the minimum use of force. There had been no training for deployment on navy vessels; all deployments to northern Australia had been by road or air. The ACG did not have body armour, night vision goggles or sufficient communications equipment. Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report - Operation Morrisdance 21 May to 7 Jun 87’, 1RAR 611-10-1 (2), 29 July 1987, 8.

16. There was no time to train for evacuation operations or rehearse securing an airfield or wharf, or to test fire weapons to ensure serviceability or to zero them to ensure accuracy. Specific force preparation was disrupted further by having to follow ‘ridiculous’ repacking and weighing of stores ‘as higher direction added or deleted items’. Ibid., 9.

17. Air Vice Marshal P.J. Scully, ‘Operational (sic) Morrisdance—Post Action Report’, MPO 87/25649, Headquarters Australian Defence Force, 15 December 1987; Anon., ‘Operation Morrisdance—Post Action Report’, undated (attached to Scully, Operational (sic) Morrisdance’). Extracts from Anon., ‘Operation Morrisdance’: ‘… the Service Offices’ staff responded in different ways in the provision of planning data to HQ ADF’, 4. ‘The “either/or” command arrangements proposed resulted in a deal of “ad hoc” co-ordination at lower levels … and contributed to the general comment of “interference” and overlaps in actions taken and directions given by HQ ADF and the Service Offices … the whole process was unnecessarily complicated’, 6. ‘The directives do not make clear whether this assignment is to be through the Service Chiefs of Staff or direct … “a cumbersome process’, 7. See also Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’.
when tested by a regional crisis. There were two incidents before deployment and three activities during deployment that could have resulted in death or serious injury. There was no surgical capability on ships to have treated anyone who was injured.

Fortunately, the situation in Fiji stabilised rather than deteriorated during the deployment phase of Operation *Morris Dance*. There was no requirement for an evacuation. The last elements of the 120-strong Advance Company Group (ACG) were back in Australia by 7 June, fifteen days after they had flown to Norfolk Island. The adventures of the ACG and embarked helicopters should not go down in Australian military history as a benchmark for prompt, strong or smart joint force projection. Hindsight should not disguise difficulties that would have faced this small, lightly armed and protected group of Infantrymen if the situation in Fiji had deteriorated further and troops had been ordered to protect an evacuation of four to five thousand people.

The deployment of a navy task group to the Gulf War in late 1990 and early 1991 marked a substantial improvement in the execution of functions of force projection, especially in command and control, ‘a coming of age of the ADF’. David Horner in *The Gulf Commitment* wrote that ‘The Gulf crisis was the first major test of the new command arrangements’, and concluded that ‘it [Operation *Damask*] would seem to

18. Air force C 130 Hercules transport aircraft arrived late at RAAF Garbutt in Townsville for an intended pre-dawn secret departure. In the subsequent rush the 1RAR duty officer’s vehicle was loaded accidentally with a full fuel tank and the wrong way round. After take off, a leakage of fuel from this vehicle was discovered early enough for the aircraft to return to Townsville; undiscovered, the fuel may have been accidentally ignited during flight if there was an electrical fault. Air force crew discovered a small Butane gas stove leaking gas while loading another aircraft; undiscovered, it would have exploded after takeoff with ‘catastrophic’ consequences. The stove had been packed 36 hours before in anticipation of movement by road to a training area, not a high altitude air move to an operation in the South Pacific. Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’, 9.

19. After arrival a staging base at Norfolk Island, vehicles were ferried ‘from shore to ship in small lighters’. This was dangerous for both the civilian crew of the lighters and military personnel. ‘This was a difficult task and it was surprising that a craft did not capsize’. Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’, 10. Helicopter flights were the other dangerous activity at the Norfolk Island staging base. ‘Helicopters were not equipped for night flying over water, which made height extremely difficult to judge, and furthermore, with the exception of the senior pilot, the air crews were not current on the aircraft’. Gubb, ‘The Australian Military Response’, 15. There was further danger on the voyage. Troops had to be transferred to frigates and destroyers after HMAS *Tobruk* was directed to another task. During this transfer three helicopters became unserviceable and another crashed on to the deck of *Tobruk*. Troops were winched down from helicopters in windy conditions; first time for the soldiers, the UHIB helicopter pilot and the crew of HMAS *Parramatta*. Gubb, ‘The Australian Military Response’, 13; Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’, 11.

20. If there had been serious injuries sustained during these risky transfers of personnel, the navy had no surgeon, anaesthetist or surgical facilities on board—‘a serious deficiency’. Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’, 7.


be an ideal model for future ADF activity’. \(^{23}\) He gave the ADF a glowing report card. \(^{24}\) Strategic policy making machinery was ‘highly effective’. Cooperation between military and civilian staff had been ‘excellent’. Defence staff had ‘reacted quickly to provide viable military options to government’. Between 20 August 1990 and 29 February 1991 the augmented COSC [Chiefs of Staff Committee] had met on ‘60 occasions to discuss the Gulf Operation’. ‘Planning benefited from the recent reorganisation.’ ‘The new role of DIO [Defence Intelligence Organisation] with its responsibility for operational as well as strategic intelligence was vindicated.’ ‘The Gulf operation appeared to justify the broad ADF command arrangements that had been introduced during the previous five years.’ David Horner was also right to point out that ‘the ability to support and sustain air or land units was not tested’. \(^{25}\) He might have added that the operational deployment to the first Gulf War in 1990 only involved the navy and a small anti-aircraft detachment from the army and a few air force resupply and administrative sorties. The cumbersome processes that bedevilled Operation *Morris Dance* did not recur because this was an uncomplicated maritime operation in the company of major allies.

The stimuli for the operational deployments of a 930-strong battalion group to Somalia in 1992\(^{26}\) and a 1000-strong joint and combined force to Bougainville in 1994\(^{27}\) were different but both tested Australian Government crisis machinery for taking military action in response to international and regional events. For Somalia, the stimulus was US Marines landing on a beach in Mogadishu on 9 December 1992. The Government decided within a week to despatch a battalion group for a four-month tour of duty to establish a deterrent presence to protect distribution of humanitarian aid. For Bougainville in 1994, the stimulus was the announcement of a ceasefire and a peace conference by the PNG Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan, a renewed attempt to end an insurgency in a secessionist province. The Government decided in two weeks to assemble and despatch an armed regional Combined Force (COMFOR) to establish a deterrent presence in assembly areas and the site of the peace conference.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 210.
\(^{24}\) Horner, ‘The ADF in the Gulf War’; Horner summarises *The Gulf Commitment* in this article. The quoted words and sentences used in this paragraph are from page 40.
\(^{25}\) Ibid.
\(^{26}\) The Australian Force—Somalia (AFS) consisted of a national headquarters of 39 personnel from HQ 1st Division in Brisbane and other units. All the force elements were from the 3rd Brigade in Townsville: an infantry battalion of 650 personnel (1RAR), a Battalion Support Group of 100 personnel from 3rd Brigade Administrative Support Battalion, 36 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC) and 90 personnel from B Squadron, 3rd/4th Cavalry Regiment, a Civil-Military Operations Team of 22 personnel from 107 Field Battery, 4th Field Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery, a field engineer troop of 35 personnel from 17 Field Troop, 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, and a communications element of fifteen personnel from 103 Signals Squadron. All these units and sub-units had been ‘down-sized’ to fit a limit of 930 personnel. The tactical elements of the AFS were dubbed the 1RAR Group.
\(^{27}\) *Operation Lagoon* initially involved 548 ADF personnel: 305 navy, 208 army and 35 air force personnel. Numbers of ADF personnel peaked at 656 to support a 386-strong combat force from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu (Fiji 232, Tonga 107 including patrol boat crew and Ni Vanuatu 47), a total of 1042
Secrecy was the striking feature of both Government and ADF responses to the prospect of taking military action. Understandably, the Government and the ADF did not want a premature disclosure of Cabinet and higher command consideration of military options. However, Headquarters ADF (HQ ADF) in Canberra appeared not to trust lower levels of command in Townsville and Sydney to keep secrets and take prudent preparatory actions, such as contingency planning and checking preparedness and readiness. Strategic warning time did not equal tactical preparation time.

Commanders at the tactical level only needed to monitor the media to take their cue for checking preparedness and readiness. The prospect of the Americans intervening in Somalia to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid was obvious in the media from early November 1992. With the Americans in the lead and international and domestic public opinion supporting intervention, Australia and over twenty other nations quickly pledged their support. In November HQ ADF and the operational level of command began to consider military options. However, contingency planning was severely hampered by the imposition of secrecy. Staff at HQ ADF in Canberra and at Land Headquarters in Sydney had little information to work with and were not permitted to involve Maritime or Air Headquarters also located in Sydney, or subordinate headquarters, such as HQ 1st Division in Brisbane, in their planning considerations. Consequently, they could not discuss the options for deploying army force elements by sea and air to Somalia with their navy and air force counterparts, or other army headquarters staff. Strict secrecy also left staff without access to crucial planning information from units within the army, including the RDF in Townsville which was the most likely formation to provide force elements. They were forbidden to warn the army’s logistics system.

On 9 December 1992 American Marines landed in Mogadishu unopposed. Senior US Government officials made no secret of their intention to take over southern Somalia through the deployment of overwhelming force. The US force projection was prompt, strong and smart. The Marines were postured for expeditionary operations, acted quickly after receiving Presidential orders and established a strong deterrent presence

29. Ibid., 18-21.
31. The author has not been able to ascertain why this level of secrecy was imposed. Earlier in 1992 a far more politically sensitive contingency plan for the overseas deployment of units of the ODF had been developed. This planning had involved all of Land Headquarters’ subordinate headquarters, including 1RAR and 2/4RARAR. Major S.J. McDonald, annotations on first draft of A Little Bit of Hope, 11 December 1995.
32. Retter, interview.
33. Military posture is a combination of capability and intent.
a few days after US diplomats and senior military officers had forcefully convinced warlords that there would be dire consequences if they opposed the arrival of a US-led coalition; military and civilian lives were saved.\textsuperscript{34}

The Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), located in Townsville, the combat unit on the highest readiness to move (28 days), Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, was told informally on 8 December, four days after 3rd Brigade and his battalion had stood down for Christmas leave, about the likelihood of his battalion deploying to Somalia early in the New Year. On 15 December the Government announced Operation \textit{Solace}. Hurley now had about four weeks for specific force preparation over the Christmas-New Year period. The recall, administration and training of personnel would relatively easy compared to concentrating stocks in Townsville and loading assigned ships, HMAS \textit{Tobruk}\textsuperscript{35} and HMAS \textit{Jervis Bay};\textsuperscript{36} by the end of December.

Unlike Operation \textit{Morris Dance} in 1987, generic force preparation for Operation \textit{Solace} was relevant and timely. 1RAR had conducted rapid deployments by air and sea in 1992. In March most of the battalion had deployed by sea in HMAS \textit{Tobruk} to Melville Island, located in the north west of the Northern Territory, to participate in Exercise \textit{Kangaroo 92}. During this exercise 1RAR soldiers had practiced evacuation operations. They had set up vehicle checkpoints; simulated crowd control and had operated under strict Rules of Engagement (ROE).\textsuperscript{37}

The prospect of Australia supporting renewed PNG Government efforts to negotiate a political solution to the Bougainville Crisis in 1994 began with a telephone call between Sir Julius Chan, the PNG Foreign Minister, and the Australian Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, in May.\textsuperscript{38} Chan’s approach depended on Australia facilitating the deployment of a South Pacific peace keeping force to Bougainville by providing security, logistics and other specialist military support. The peace keeping force’s mission would be to deter armed groups from interfering with the conduct of a peace conference to be convened by Chan at Arawa; where the crisis had begun and he hoped to finish it.

\textsuperscript{34} Breen, \textit{A Little Bit of Hope}, 24-5.
\textsuperscript{35} HMAS \textit{Tobruk}, a Landing Ship Heavy, was the first purpose-built major amphibious ship in the navy, a clone of a 30-year-old \textit{Belvedere} class British Navy vessel. \textit{Tobruk} was commissioned in 1981 and designed to carry troops (350-550), vehicles and stores, and put them ashore without the aid of port facilities.
\textsuperscript{36} HMAS \textit{Jervis Bay} was the navy’s training ship. Formerly MV \textit{Australian Trader}, a roll-on-roll-off passenger vehicle vessel. Purchased in 1977.
\textsuperscript{37} Breen, \textit{A Little Bit of Hope}, 20. Rules of Engagement: directives issued by competent military authority which specify the circumstances and limitations under which Australian forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagements with other forces encountered. Australian Defence Force Publication 101, Glossary, 1994.
\textsuperscript{38} Confidential source.
Evans promised to help. He briefed Senator Robert Ray, the Minister for Defence, on 23 May that the ADF might be asked to assemble, prepare, deploy, sustain and redeploy a South Pacific peace-keeping force to and from Bougainville in a few months time. Subsequently, Ray briefed Admiral Alan Beaumont, the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF), directing him to develop options as well as indicative costs. Beaumont formed a secret planning compartment of five officers: no logisticians were included. Beaumont later briefed Senator Ray on Operation Lagoon, advising that the ADF could deploy a combined force to Bougainville in three weeks after Cabinet approval. Operation Lagoon was filed as a contingency plan from June until August untested by wider analysis from staff at HQ ADF or lower levels of command.

While HQ ADF kept Operation Lagoon a secret, Senator Evans addressed the Senate in June and August about Australia supporting a ‘small scale, short time deployment’ of a South Pacific peace keeping force to Bougainville. These indicators of ADF involvement did not prompt HQ ADF to begin contingency planning with subordinate headquarters, or for them to take their cue from Senator Evans’ statements to conduct any contingency planning or readiness checks independently.

Further indicators that Operation Lagoon was in the offing occurred on 27 August 1994 when PNG foreign affairs officials met with secessionist representatives from Bougainville in the Solomon Islands and agreed to begin negotiations. A senior Australian diplomat wrote that ‘this was a clear signal to Australia that more detailed planning was now urgently required’. Chan gave further impetus on 30 August when he used his inaugural speech as Prime Minister to state that he would be personally negotiating for peace in Bougainville with the secessionists. The ADF response was to expand the planning compartment to include the three environmental commanders, one senior plans staff officer and two additional staff from HQ ADF.

Events now overtook this compartmentalised planning process before staff had time to dust off the Operation Lagoon contingency plan. Prime Minister Chan, after a meeting

40. ‘I am confident we could mount the operation successfully given the appropriate political climate … it would require approx three weeks from receiving your approval to proceed until all arrangements were in place to commence the conference’. Cover note on CDF 160/1994 ‘Outline Plan for OP Lagoon’, 8 June 1994.
42. Australian Parliament, Senate Hansard, 24 August 1994. He said that Australia would most likely support a limited duration, tightly defined ‘Pacific-Island-formed peacekeeping operation’ in Bougainville, if the PNG Government continued its dialogue with intermediaries in Bougainville.
43. Confidential source.
in Honiara with secessionist leaders, released a document on 3 September specifying that discussions about raising a regional peace keeping would be conducted in Nadi, Fiji, on 9 September, a cease-fire would begin in Bougainville from midnight on 12 September and a peace conference would begin on 10 October. The ADF now had six weeks to assemble, train and deploy a South Pacific peace keeping force (SPPKF) that would have to establish a deterrent presence in three neutral zones in Bougainville, set up and protect a peace conference site for an unknown number of delegates and collect fire arms from those attending. Major General Peter Arnison, Land Commander-Australia, received a warning order from HQ ADF later that day nominating him as the lead joint commander. Arnison notified Brigadier Peter Abigail, Commander 3rd Brigade, who was in the field in the Gulf of Carpenteria on Exercise Swift Eagle, that he would command COMFOR for a deployment to Bougainville in five weeks time.\(^45\)

There had been plenty of public warning for Operation Solace and Lagoon. Neither operation was politically sensitive because they were about Australia being a good world citizen and a helpful regional neighbour. Yet, in both cases secrecy at the strategic level and lack of initiative at the operational level of command left the tactical level of command with four weeks and five weeks respectively to assemble, train, administer and deploy force elements. For Operation Solace this timeframe included the Christmas-New Year period and annual military posting cycle. For Operation Lagoon it encompassed having to train, equip and incorporate three South Pacific contingents from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. Even another two weeks earlier authorisation to conduct contingency planning and check preparedness and readiness would have allowed useful ‘thinking time’ and administrative anticipation.

Unfortunately, specific force preparation for Operation Solace was further complicated by the imposition of arbitrary caps on numbers of personnel, as had been the case for Operation Morris Dance.\(^46\) Based on preliminary cost estimates, the CDF, General Peter Gration, had selected the option of recommending to Government the deployment a battalion group of no more than 1,000 personnel for seventeen weeks at a cost of $20 million.\(^47\) Major General Murray Blake, the Land Commander, directed that

46. The Army Component Commander, Major G.J. Stone, was ordered to reduce numbers from 154 to 120 personnel because the CDF had only been able to secure agreement from the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence for deployment of 120 personnel. Furthermore, Prime Minister R.J. Hawke had announced a 110-strong force, which made restoring numbers to 154 politically risky. Gubb, ‘The Australian Military Response’, 20-1.
47. M.P Blake, interview with author, 5 July 1993. Capping the force at 1,000 personnel and the cost at $20 million was a ‘guesstimate’ by one of the planning staff at HQ ADF in Canberra who was under pressure to provide ‘a cost to numbers’ estimate for seventeen weeks. He advised General Gration that this was the best estimate he could give. At this point there had been no detailed analysis of the costs of a seventeen-week operation involving a battalion group of 1,000 personnel supported by APC. HQ ADF had no automated means for costing operational contingencies. See Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 25, for reasoning behind selecting a duration of seventeen weeks for Operation Solace.
numbers in the land component would not exceed 930 personnel. Members of 1RAR who thought their unit of 713 personnel was going to Somalia were told that over 60 personnel had been stripped from 1RAR’s establishment to fit an arbitrary figure of 650 and that 56 soldiers from the neighbouring 2/4RAR would join 1RAR to overcome a shortage of riflemen. This personnel turbulence and down-sizing did not enhance the cohesion of the small infantry, cavalry, engineer and Intelligence teams who would be in harm’s way in Somalia.

Force command for both Operation Solace and Operation Lagoon had a number of ad hoc features that reduced cohesiveness. Like Operation Morris Dance this ad hoc approach resulted in ‘unnecessary deviation from practised deployment procedures’. For Operation Solace, General Gration decided to include a national headquarters of about ten personnel from staff at 1st Division in Brisbane, not HQ 3rd Brigade where staff had systems in place and habitual relations with deploying force elements. In order to be able to do its job, numbers allocated to the national headquarters eventually increased to 39 personnel in an ad hoc and incremental manner. National command and control arrangements for Operation Solace began on the wrong foot and, to varying degrees, remained on the wrong foot for the remainder of the operation. After the first six weeks, HQ Australian Force Somalia (AFS) in Mogadishu was given the authority of a tactical brigade headquarters and a third line logistics support headquarters and tried to behave like both. In reality it could do neither and performed a sometimes unhelpful inspectional role astride the 1RAR Group’s line of communications back to Australia.

There were no effective joint command arrangements for Operation Solace. The CDF had specified in his operation order that the Land Commander was the lead joint commander and the Maritime and Air commanders would provide the AFS with strategic lift and logistics support. HMAS Tobruk and its embarked Sea King helicopter were

48. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 34; Retter, interview.
49. Ibid., 54.
50. A tactical headquarters was not raised from HQ 1RAR as was the practice when an army sub-unit was put under the command of another service and deployed on offshore operations (Plan Benefactor). Salter, ‘Post Deployment Report’, 5.
51. The national headquarters would have the dual role of liaison to a senior American headquarters and also being a ‘watch dog’ on the fortunes of a 1RAR Group under the American command. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 36.
52. Captains M.R. Fulham and I.A. Young, staff officers at HQ 3rd Brigade, were told on 12 December 1992 that they had been selected to serve in Somalia with the national headquarters. Both were puzzled that a headquarters group was not coming from HQ 3rd Brigade which commanded the units and sub-units making up the AFS. The provision of such a headquarters was already in 3rd Brigade Standing Operating Procedures for situations when one of the two infantry battalions was deployed. M.R. Fulham and I.A. Young, interview with author, 20 August 1993.
53. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, ch. 6.
54. Ibid., 350-66.
commanded from Maritime Headquarters in Sydney. Neither the Commanding Officer, Commander Kevin Taylor, nor Colonel William Mellor, the National Commander in Mogadishu, has discretionary control on the use of the ship or its helicopter. 55 Land Headquarters staff found Air Command staff reticent to task C-130 transport aircraft to support the 1RAR Group for resupply. The army had to reallocate air hours to be used for domestic training to support Operation Solace. 56

For Operation Lagoon, political and diplomatic imperatives forced Brigadier Abigail to be a low profile commander who would be located on HMAS Tobruk and not come ashore. He would command through a Fijian tactical headquarters as well as a Tongan coordination cell ashore. He had no time to train either in 3rd Brigade Standing Operation Procedures. 57 He also had the distinction of being the first army commander to have operational control over Australian maritime force elements. 58

For the short duration of the operation, Abigail exercised command through his Fijian and Tongan subordinates. However, he and they relied heavily on the military expertise, cultural and language skills as well as facilitation of attached Australian and New Zealand liaison officers. 59

Operational command from Australia to Bougainville was difficult. General Arnison and his staff had to exercise command from Land Headquarters in Sydney to HMAS Tobruk using INMARSAT communications equipment that was not suited for a maritime platform. 60 Other communications equipment failed completely for 16 hours after HMAS Tobruk docked at Loloho near Arawa on 9 October. 61 The major problem thereafter was that operational, administrative and Intelligence information was be transmitted back and forward along the same frequencies. 62 These communications difficulties sowed the seeds for a near-disaster when human and technical Intelligence assets discovered that rogue elements of the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) had laid an ambush for delegates en route to the conference. 63 The Fijian commander had already issued a public warning that his troops would accompany delegates and ensure their safety through the use of

55. Ibid., 225; Colonel W.J.A. Mellor, interview with author, 10 November 1993; Commander K.B. Taylor, interview with author, 25 May 1995.
56. Ibid., 365; Lieutenant Colonel G.K. Martin, interview with author, 24 November 1994. Martin was Commanding Officer 1st Ground Liaison Group, the army unit responsible for coordinating air force support to army.
58. Commodore J.S. O’Hara, interview with author, 30 November 1996. O’Hara was the navy component commander for Operation Lagoon.
60. Ibid, 60-1 and 65-6. See Note 36 for list of army communications equipment taken on Operation Lagoon.
61. Ibid, 66.
62. Ibid., 67 and 72.
63. Ibid., 85; see Note 14.
force if necessary. The ROE only permitted firing weapons in self-defence, not applying lethal force to protect Bougainvillean delegates and their families and friends. The scene was being set for an incident that would end the peace initiative and embarrass all governments involved. Fortunately, Abigail’s liaison officers ashore were able to persuade the PNGDF to pull out of their ambush. However, this did not occur before a group of secessionist delegates was shot at and one member wounded in the arm, an incident that was not publicised.

Logistics preparations were ADF fiascos, not ADF fortés. Within 24 hours of the Government’s announcement on 15 December 1992 administrative staff at the 1RAR Group put over 1,000 requests for resupply into the ADF logistics system to make up for deficiencies in stock holdings and to acquire 30 days stocks for 1RAR and its assigned force elements, as well as an additional 30 days’ stock for the Battalion Support Group. Scores of demands followed each day. Generic force preparation was again exposed, as had been the case in 1987. The 1RAR Group did not have the stocks on hand or in Townsville to deploy. Major John Caligari, Hurley’s Operations Officer, and his Quarter Master, Major Rod MacLeod, faced the challenge of getting an army on annual leave, ten days before Christmas Day, to respond quickly to the needs of the 1RAR Group. Caligari wrote in his diary, ‘Despite the urgency and priority of this deployment, no one of any suitable rank is manning any of the agencies likely to be able to help us’. There was no formal recall of any personnel from leave by higher logistics headquarters or Land Headquarters.

When the Government announcement came, the navy was in the awkward position of having HMAS Tobruk, its only landing ship heavy, ‘in pieces and alongside’ at Garden Island in Sydney for six weeks. Maintenance tasks that had been scheduled over the next six weeks had to be completed in ten days and some tasks had to be cancelled. Concurrently, the ship had to be loaded with provisions for a six-month deployment and embark a SK50 Sea King helicopter and additional medical personnel. The other assigned ship, HMAS Jervis Bay, was not in a mandatory maintenance cycle and completed preparations for the deployment in four days, sailing for Townsville on 19 December.

For Operation Lagoon, secrecy at HQ ADF had not only left the logisticians in subordinate headquarters and at Logistic Command in Melbourne in the dark until early September but also logisticians within HQ ADF itself. They took 60 minutes to declare that the HQ ADF contingency plan for Operation Lagoon was unworkable. In early September there was no information on the structure of the Combined Force

64. Breen, Giving Peace a Chance, 62; see Note 47 for extract from ROE.
65. Ibid., 74.
66. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 40-1.
67. Ibid., 39-40.
68. Captain R.W. Sharp RAN, Interview with author, 19 March 1997. Sharp was Director Joint Logistic Operations and Plans, HQ ADF. See also Breen, Giving Peace a Chance, 29.
(COMFOR), duration of the operation, modes of transport to be used and the locations of forward mounting and operating bases to inform logistics preparations. It was not until 13 September—less than three weeks before Prime Minister Chan was starting the peace conference in Bougainville—that the Acting CDF, Lieutenant General John Baker, signed a planning directive. By this time, Abigail and his staff in Townsville had already begun to develop a concept of operations for delivery to Land Headquarters on 15 September. In effect, Brigadier Abigail was working without logistics guidance from above and Captain Russell Sharp, RAN, Director Joint Logistics Operations and Plans at HQ ADF, was working without operational and tactical guidance from below.

For Operation *Lagoon*, tactical level logisticians took the initiative. Initially, staff at Logistic Command in Melbourne recommended that assigned ships HMAS *Tobruk* and HMAS *Success* should be loaded at their home port of Sydney, close to issuing depots and the Defence National Stores Distribution Centre. Major I.K. Hughes, Abigail’s senior logistics staff officer, wanted stores to be concentrated in Townsville, checked by the people who would use them, accounted for by his staff and then loaded on HMAS *Tobruk* under his supervision;69 concentration of stocks in Townsville began after this difference of opinion was sorted out. While higher headquarters logistics staff waited for operations staff to develop concepts of operation so they could develop administrative instructions, Hughes was ordering in stock as fast as his staff could produce supply demands and concentrating them on the wharf in Townsville. He recalled:

> The concern I had was whether we could get sufficient stores in on time. We were told early in the piece that we would be responsible for setting up and supporting the entire conference. We did not have time to debate the issue or seek clarification of exact requirements. I had staff working long hours ordering all of these items.70

By the time Brigadier Abigail’s concept had been approved by Major General Arnison on 15 September and Lieutenant General Baker on 17 September, and subsequent operations and administrative instructions had been issued on 20 September, Hughes had submitted all demands for stocks for Operation *Lagoon*, including his best guess at the requirements for the South Pacific contingents.71 These stocks would not have arrived in Townsville in time to load on ships if he had waited for higher headquarters direction.

Once again having an assigned ship alongside undergoing a six-week Extended Assisted Maintenance Period hampered the navy. This time it was HMAS *Success* that had to rush maintenance tasks and cancel others before sailing. The salient feature of the navy’s response to short notice deployments for Operation *Solace* and *Lagoon* was

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70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
the capability to overcome maintenance cycle coincidences and still sail on time and in good order; a testament to organic maritime capability for force projection.

There was a gap between the theory and practice of loading ships assigned to Operation Solace and Operation Lagoon. Concentrating vehicles and stores on the docks ready for loading on HMAS Jervis Bay and HMAS Tobruk was a major challenge for the staff at HQ 3rd Brigade and the 1RAR Group in December 1992. There were no enabling administrative orders from higher headquarters. By the time staff at Land Headquarters in Sydney and Logistic Command in Melbourne planned to provide administrative guidance, Jervis Bay and Tobruk would be at sea, Lieutenant Colonel Hurley’s advance party would have left and the main body of troops would be on their way.

Loads of stores were arriving in Townsville in semi-trailers and by air around the clock. Until semi-trailers and aircraft were unloaded, no one in Townsville knew what stores had arrived. Similarly, it was difficult to track stores in transit and ascertain quickly what stores were overdue. It was also expensive to move tonnes of stores to Townsville from the major supply depots in Albury, Sydney, Brisbane and western New South Wales to top up the 1RAR Group and reconstitute 3rd Brigade stocks at short notice just before Christmas.

The loading of Jervis Bay after her arrival on 22 December and Tobruk on 29 December was rushed and expedient. Stocks were loaded as they arrived in unpredictable order from the ADF supply system. Soldiers, who should have been training for operations in Somalia or spending time with their families, formed human chains and manhandled boxes up gangplanks as they had done in Port Moresby in 1941 and 1942. All vehicles were stuffed with stores and sandbags, and rolls of barbed wire were stacked on top—a nightmare to unload. Tonnes of stores on the wharf that had not been loaded on to Jervis Bay were transferred to Tobruk amidst almost hourly amendments to load lists to accommodate arriving consignments of stores. Often pallets of stores were broken up and boxes stuffed into every bit of spare space available. The ADF logistics system did not have sufficient standard shipping containers to efficiently load either Jervis Bay or Tobruk. HMAS Tobruk was loaded to the ‘gunwales’, but bulked out on 31 December. Over 50 pallets of stores and six specialist vehicles remained on the wharf and consignments of stores continued to trickle in over the next few days as mute testimony to the gap between the theory and practice of operational deployment: the gap between operational intentions and tactical level outcomes. These stores and vehicles never reached Somalia.

72. Breen, *Giving Peace a Chance*, 45-7. Those deploying were guided by an administration order produced by HQ 3rd Brigade staff on 19 December, four days after the Government announcement.
74. A description of the loading of HMAS Tobruk is included in Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, 52-3.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid., 362.
There was no improvement in ship loading for Operation *Lagoon*. HMAS *Tobruk* berthed in Townsville on 28 September 1994. Despite efforts by the CO of *Tobruk* and staff at Maritime Headquarters—located only ten minutes drive from Land Headquarters in Sydney—there was no information from the army on logistics requirements before *Tobruk* sailed from Sydney.\(^{77}\) Loading *Tobruk* was a similar ‘hand-to-mouth, manpower intensive’ activity as it had been the year before for Operation *Solace*.\(^{78}\) Once again there were too many stores on the wharf to be loaded on *Tobruk*. The Maritime Component Commander, Captain J.S. O’Hara, RAN, decided to load HMAS *Success* until she ‘bulked out’ and then overload *Tobruk*. With the promise of calm weather during the voyage to Bougainville, O’Hara, took the risk and ordered *Tobruk* to sail top heavy—200 tonnes over its authorised weight limit.\(^{79}\)

Another gap between the theory and practice for specific force preparation for both Operation *Solace* and *Lagoon* was the lack of timely Intelligence, liaison and reconnaissance. In December 1993 both Generals Gration and Blake had understood the urgency of flying a small liaison team to Mogadishu as soon as possible to negotiate with the Americans for a suitable area of operations for the 1RAR Group and to determine what logistics support the Australian Force Somalia (AFS) could expect from the Americans.\(^{80}\) This team left on 21 December. There was a belated reconnaissance conducted on 5/6 January by three majors from the 1RAR Group in Somalia. Unfortunately, information gathered by these officers did not reach Hurley and his advance party in time to influence their preparations or those of the main body of troops. Ships were already loaded and inbound.\(^{81}\)

With hindsight, Hurley and his subordinate commanders and senior staff as well as logistics and engineer officers supporting Operation *Solace* should have accompanied the liaison team to conduct a reconnaissance once the Australian area of operations had been negotiated. With perfect hindsight, liaison and reconnaissance groups comprising representatives from the three levels of command should have been pre-positioned in Nairobi ready to go into Somalia when the Government announced its commitment of a battalion group on 15 December.

For Operation *Lagoon*, a reconnaissance party comprising the Fijian and Tongan tactical commanders and a small group of Australian officers was put on 12 hours’ notice to move from 6pm 18 September 1994 in anticipation of the Australian Cabinet

\(^{77}\) O’Hara, interview.

\(^{78}\) Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, 60.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., 64.

\(^{80}\) Ibid., 36.

\(^{81}\) Ibid., 58-60.
approving Operation *Lagoon* on 19 September.82 At this stage, no decision had been made in Canberra on whether Brigadier Abigail should go on the reconnaissance or not.83 At the last minute he was included and, in a rushed two days, was able to meet both PNG Government officials and Bougainvillean secessionist leaders. With hindsight, his senior staff should have been accompanied him to allow them to get a first hand understanding of the challenges that lay ahead. After his reconnaissance, Abigail modified specific force preparation and made timely decisions about force design.84

Early and comprehensive reconnaissance would have enabled better Intelligence support to the 1RAR Group for operations in Somalia. Major Caligari and his operations and Intelligence staff had to rely on the media and the local Townsville libraries for their information. General Blake was frustrated by the lack of Intelligence.85 No one at the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO) in Canberra was recalled to gather information and brief the 1RAR Group before Christmas.86 When specific force preparation began in earnest in the New Year long lectures by DIO staff members were unhelpful.87 Cataloguing the military capabilities of the warlords raised expectations among members of the 1RAR Group that they would be involved in conventional, war-like operations when they would be involved in maintaining a deterrent presence constrained by ROE. Complex and inaccurate explanations of Somali culture and the Muslim religion confused many soldiers and created inaccurate expectations of Somali behaviour. Most useful information was obtained from Australia aid workers recently returned from Somalia88 as well as from aid workers in Mogadishu who had worked in Baidoa.

For Operation *Lagoon*, the ADF was responsible for Intelligence and communications. This meant that the CDF was to ensure that the Australian Intelligence community in general and the assets deployed to Bougainville in particular swiftly anticipated any threats to peacekeepers or delegates to the conference. Sufficient communications assets had to be in place to ensure that urgent messages could be transmitted for timely decision making, especially in response to threats.

The force design for COMFOR—including its internal working arrangements as well as the relationships each force element had with equivalent elements at higher headquarters—would be crucial for success. For example, sufficient human intelligence

82. LHQ OPS SIG E3L/4S 160557ZSEP94 ‘Members of the Recon Gp: SPPKF CO (Fiji), Vanuatu Rep, Tonga Rep, HQ Combined Force Rep (MAJ John Eastgate), Comms Recon Offr (Nom by HQ 3 Bde) Navigator Tobruk (Leut A.G. O’Malley) Airfield Engr (Nom by AHQ) Int Branch Rep LHQ CAPT Shaun Castle-Burns, HQSF Rep Interpreter, consulate rep to be nominated by AUSCOM POM.’
83. Abigail, interview.
86. J.G. Caligari, personal diary from Operation *Solace*.
88. Ibid.
gatherers, analysts and specialist technical assets had to be deployed to identify any armed groups on Bougainville intending to disrupt the peace process. Just as importantly, Intelligence gathered by these assets had to be communicated efficiently up and down the chain of command so that counter-measures could be taken to monitor threats and take evasive action or neutralise them.

Secrecy at HQ ADF stymied operational level Intelligence planning from June to September 1994. During that time there was no warning from strategic Intelligence agencies to Intelligence staff at Land Headquarters that the ADF might be going to support a peace operation in Bougainville. Lieutenant Colonel R.A. Hill, Arnison’s senior Intelligence analyst, took the initiative himself to have his staff brief Arnison and key operations staff on the situation in Bougainville every week during this period. Hill was aware that Senator Evans was talking about Australia supporting a SPPKF in Bougainville. Despite this briefings, no action was taken to conduct contingency planning for supporting a regional peace operation in Bougainville until after the CDF issued his warning order to Arnison for Operation Lagoon on 3 September.

Hill assessed immediately that Intelligence support could not follow the doctrine of conventional warfare. There was no specified enemy, but there were several ill-defined threats. He based his assessment on the premise that despite none of the antagonists in the Bougainville Crisis declaring publicly their intention to disrupt the peace conference by attacking peacekeepers or delegates, there were rogue elements from each group capable of taking violent or destructive action without authorisation of their superiors.

In the following days and weeks, Hill received no Intelligence guidance from higher headquarters or agencies in Canberra. No requests for specific Intelligence came from General Arnison or his operations, communications or logistics staff. This ambivalence, accompanied by an inference that Intelligence was an irrelevant contributor to a peace support operation, did not augur well for force protection on Operation Lagoon. Representatives from the Intelligence agencies at the strategic, operational and tactical levels who would be supporting Operation Lagoon did not meet during the initial planning phase in early September. Consequently, there was no Intelligence architecture or procedures worked out for the operation. If a threat arose quickly and unexpectedly, there was no shared understanding of how information would be passed in a timely way to key decision makers. There was no system for separate Intelligence communications for Operation Lagoon. All Intelligence communications would go

89. Lieutenant Colonel R.A. Hill, interview with author, 31 October 1997. Hill was Staff Officer Grade One, (Intelligence) at Land Headquarters.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. For a description of the Intelligence preparations for Operation Lagoon and an analysis of their impact on force protection, see Breen, Giving Peace a Chance, 26-9 and 89 respectively.
through the same equipment and facilities as operational and logistics traffic; a seed
for military disaster was sown.

There was also a gap between theory and practice of liaison for Operation Lagoon. The concurrent nature of diplomatic negotiation, strategic and operational planning meant that HQ ADF had difficulty keeping subordinate headquarters informed of the latest developments. The outcomes of a meeting in Nadi on 9 September to specify arrangements for assembling and training the South Pacific contingents were communicated to HQ ADF to be incorporated into an evolving planning directive, but planning had already begun at Land Headquarters and HQ 3rd Brigade based on earlier advice. As quickly as some aspect of the operation was planned at the tactical level, changes arrived from HQ ADF.93 With hindsight, liaison officers from these headquarters should have witnessed diplomatic negotiations and higher command responses to give maximum warning to the tactical level as well as to brief diplomats and strategic level staff on the progress of tactical level preparations. The provision of liaison officers to accompany Fijian, Tongan and Ni Vanuatu contingents was amateurish and ineffective.94

While the specific force preparation and deployment phases of both operations were conducted without the benefit of effective reconnaissance or liaison. There was also room for improvement in reception arrangements. The arrival in Mogadishu and onward movement of the main body of the 1RAR Group on 15 and 16 January 1993 was facilitated by the Australian movement unit serving with the UN, but reception arrangements did not work well.95 The national headquarters did not have the resources and Land Headquarters did not despatch force elements to assist. There were a number of unhelpful incidents and misunderstandings, including the theft of a rifle,96 that could have led to negative publicity. As it was the Australian media reported that Australian troops were fired on at Mogadishu airport on arrival while their weapons were still packed in bubble wrap in the holds of Qantas aircraft.97

One of widest gaps between theory and practice of operational deployment for both Operation Solace and Operation Lagoon was in the function of force sustainment. If

93. Hill, interview, 37.
94. On 16 September Brigadier Abigail telephoned Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Martin, CO 1RAR, directing him to have three officers ready to deploy the next day. Most of Martin’s officers were on leave or about to depart on short leave after Exercise Swift Eagle. He went down to the 1RAR Officers’ Mess and nominated three of the officers he found there having a late afternoon beer. The next afternoon, Major J.O. Cronin, Captain G. Ducie and Captain S.J. Grace received their briefing from Abigail. The following morning Cronin flew to Fiji, Ducie to Tonga and Grace to Vanuatu. Their information did not prevent a number of problems with reception arrangements and logistics support. See Breen, Giving Peace a Chance, 24-5 and 56; see Note 23.
95. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 63-4; S.J. MacDonald, diary entry, 14 January 1993, and annotations on draft of A Little Bit of Hope. Major MacDonald was OC Administration Company, 1RAR.
96. Breen, A Little Bit of Hope, 65.
97. Ibid., 63.
logistics preparations, including the loading of ships were fiascos, force sustainment was amateurish and sowed seeds for disaster if the 1RAR Group had faced a military contest. The absence of effective joint command and control meant that there was no effective joint logistics support because logistics is a function of command. For Operation Solace the failure of the supply chain to deliver critical items and spare parts reduced the numbers of Armoured Personnel Carriers and other vehicles available for operations. These deficiencies interfered with the tempo of operations and increased risk in an already risky environment. Drivers had to operate vehicles that were at the limit of their maintenance cycles or with maintenance tasks not completed in difficult terrain. Items of supply were loaded in the order of arrival at warehouses in Moorebank, Sydney. Priorities were not managed well. No one knew what items were in transit. The ADF had no automated logistics management system for deployed forces.

Air resupply was disorganised. Funds had been made available to air force by HQ ADF to organise commercial air freight services. After the operation it was discovered that, metaphorically, air force staff had pocketed these funds and then forced the army not only to use air force transport aircraft but also reallocate air hours from the army’s domestic training program to Operation Solace. The air force would not land aircraft at Baidoa airfield adjacent to the 1RAR Group base, unlike aircraft supporting UN and aid agencies also located there. This forced a 600-kilometre round trip from Mogadishu to Baidoa—a metaphorical ambush alleyway—to pick up supplies; another drain on 1RAR Group resources.

Logistic Command in Melbourne that had responsibility for resupply and selecting the mode of transport for movement of supplies to Somalia, but was not allocated funds or air hours by HQ ADF to fulfil these responsibilities. Staff there were unable to make the supply chain work or to persuade air force to provide a better service. In effect the demands for supply from Somalia went into the ADF logistics system and reappeared as containers only marked with size, weight and delivery priority; most were priority one. After this problem became known, the General Officer Commanding, Logistic Command, delegated responsibility for making the resupply system work down to the Moorebank Logistic Group in Sydney—the tactical level—rather than up to strategic level logistics staff at HQ ADF who might have persuaded the CDF to metaphorically ‘bang heads together’ and produce effective joint command and logistics support.

98. There is a detailed description of the failures of resupply for Operation Solace in ch. 6 of Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*.
100. G.K. Martin, interview; Breen, *A Little bit of Hope*, 255; see notes 130 and 132.
101. Ibid., 266 and 272; Lieutenant Colonel R.G. Greville, interview with author, 7 February 1996. Greville was Staff Officer Grade 1 (Operations), at Land Headquarters during the conduct of Operation Solace.
103. Ibid., 268-9.
arrangements. The Moorebank Logistics Group also failed to fix the resupply system. The operation ended in May 1993 with 190 demands for supply unsatisfied.\(^{104}\)

Though the duration of the Australian commitment in Somalia was limited to four months, the living and working conditions of the Australian troops demonstrated a lack of foresight that may have been overcome with more timely reconnaissance and Intelligence. Sufficient tentage to house all members of 1RAR had not been brought because 1RAR planning officers had not anticipated setting up a tented camp. They had expected that the tactical situation in Somalia would require a fortified position.\(^{105}\) The Australians occupied tents that had been abandoned by the Marines and, assisted by a neighbouring US engineer unit and US Navy Sea Bees, were able re-roof derelict buildings for battalion and sub-unit headquarters and storage. The Australians had not deployed with sufficient engineers to do this work.

Living conditions were cramped, hot and austere. Sections were accommodated in platoon-sized tents (30 man) in long rows of stretchers on dirt floors opposite each other. Each officer, NCO and soldier had about 200 cm of living space around their stretchers. There was no privacy, no power and, therefore, no refrigeration or other amenities. The heat demanded that sides of the tents were rolled up which meant that dust bellowed in over sleeping areas. Rats, snakes and insects, such as scorpions and different varieties of African spider, were co-tenants.\(^{106}\) These living conditions might have been excusable during a two-week field exercise but they were inexcusable on a four-month operational deployment into harm’s way. Adding to the austerity of the operation, mail was slow and intermittent and for several weeks there were no canteen supplies.

The short duration of Operation *Lagoon* did not expose whether the supply chain worked or not. The strategic concept for logistics support arrangements were that COMFOR would be self-sufficient. One example serves to confirm that the resupply system was still ineffective and unresponsive. Shortly after arrival at Loloho near Arawa the Seahawk helicopter embarked on HMAS *Success*, one of three supporting the operation from offshore, was grounded due to a defective fuel pressure gauge. A new fuel gauge was delivered to the air force base at Richmond in Sydney from the navy’s supply depot at Zetland in Sydney within 24 hours but never made it from Richmond to Bougainville for Operation *Lagoon*. Ad hoc repairs had to be made to the helicopter to ensure it was on line for the operation.\(^{107}\)

For the duration of Australian operations in Somalia and Bougainville the tactical level worked competently and effectively. In Somalia junior leaders and small teams performed well in difficult circumstances and won all of the fire fights they had with

\(^{104}\) Ibid., 274.
\(^{105}\) Ibid., 81.
\(^{106}\) Ibid.
\(^{107}\) Breen, *Giving Peace a Chance*, 86.
hostile groups and individuals with only a few soldiers wounded and no fatalities from combat.\textsuperscript{108} In Bougainville support troops worked hard to provide services to the peace conference and enterprising Intelligence staff discovered threats to delegates and helped avoid strategic embarrassment for all governments contributing to Operation Lagoon. Both operations were deemed successful and a credit to the force elements participating.

The projection of a 1RAR Group to Somalia in 1992 and the Combined Force to Bougainville in 1994 exposed gaps in the theory and practice of the functions of force projection identified but not rectified since Operation Morris Dance. There were still serious gaps in getting force elements offshore in good order and then commanding, protecting and sustaining them thereafter. Beyond the dusty, dangerous environment of Somalia in 1993 and the tense, tropical environment in Bougainville in 1994 there was a chain of ADF headquarters, units and organisations including ships and aircraft, that needed to be synchronised in support of the men and women in harm’s way. There was room for improvement. The ADF journey to effective joint command and control arrangements continued. The question was whether lessons identified in Somalia and Bougainville would be applied next time?

\textsuperscript{108} Breen, \textit{A Little Bit of Hope}, chs 3 and 4.
Canada has rarely featured as a popular point of comparison for Australian military professionals—being seen by many as far too ‘soft’ and providing little of value that merits closer scrutiny. Mention Canadian military prowess and many think of peacekeeping or Somalia. Such a view is based on a not unreasonable appreciation of the divergence of force ‘trajectories’ between Australia and Canada that occurred after our combined feats of arms during the Korean War. Indeed, from the Boer War through to Korea, we did very similar things, going to the same kinds of places for the same kinds of reasons. But then there was a marked divergence. For Canada, the Cold War focus was on Europe, commitments to NATO, mechanised forces and peacekeeping. In contrast, Australia’s Cold War focus was primarily on Southeast Asia, dismounted operations and jungle warfighting—although they both experienced a shift from British to American equipment and procedures as well as ‘alliance’ leadership.

This essay argues that this strategic divergence has been replaced since the end of the Cold War by a little-recognised reconvergence in force structures and operational priorities and that this reconvergence endures as the War on Terror continues and as the Australian Army becomes more hardened and networked. I would suggest, however, that the reconvergence has been obscured by poorly-informed and out of date perceptions of where Canada stands and what likely benefits might accrue for Australia from closer cooperation. My argument is based on a consideration of their differences and similarities, and on a review of their parallel post-Cold War experiences.
Similarities

First of all, there are many remarkable similarities between Australia and Canada, their armed forces and the policies of their governments towards the use of expeditionary forces. After all, expeditionary operations are what Australian and Canadian forces have been tasked with doing for over a century. Indeed, Australian forces have operated alongside Canadians since Britain’s Major-General E.T.H. Hutton commanded the 1st Commonwealth Brigade in South Africa during the Boer War between his postings to Australia and Canada.

Today, Canada and Australia are ‘post-modern’ and post-industrial middle powers with democratic ideals and parallel constitutional, sociological and legal circumstances that are distinct from the United States and Europe. Hence the focus in this essay is made on these two nations in relation to each other, rather than the more frequently considered alternatives of the United States or the United Kingdom. After all, Canada and Australia face similar issues, and pursue policies that reflect the same enlightened self-interest, supporting co-operative international security measures. They both also continue to contribute to the fight against terrorism. They have a similar defence and intelligence partnership with the United States, share membership in the ‘ABCA’ Armies forum, and both are widely respected internationally for their military, humanitarian and diplomatic initiatives and capabilities. In addition their forces increasingly reflect a similar mix of light, mechanise and special forces as indicated here.

Differences

But before we look at the similarities, it is worth keeping in mind the enduring differences that separate Australia and Canada, and that have long discouraged closer cross-examination.

The most important of these is the different geo-strategic settings that have made Australians more anxious about their place in the world. By contrast, Canada’s proximity to and protection provided by the United States helped to justify not taking defence as seriously as we more remote, isolated and nervous Australians. In addition, this proximity has led Canada to pursue distinctiveness itself as a foreign policy priority. Yet the search for distinctiveness, ironically, has in part been negated by the military priority placed on inter-operability with US forces. For example, the Canadian Army prides itself on its ability to integrate seamlessly into a US joint task force. But the same level of priority does not appear to be placed on tri-service teamwork and interoperability between Canada’s own services—a phenomenon not unfamiliar to us here in Australia.

1. That is, forces ‘organized to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country. This is an American definition. Australian, Canadian and NATO glossaries do not define the term. See http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/e/01957.html downloaded on 22 April 2003.
Australians also have a greater sense of nervousness about their place in the world, but a greater degree of internal self-confidence, lacking Canada’s concerns over internal unity. Ultimately, the criterion by which any Canadian policy has to be judged revolves around the preservation of national unity due to the unique French-Canadian influences. As a result, Australia has maintained a more forthright military stance (such as in Vietnam and Iraq) than its safer and more comfortable northern ‘cousins’. Particularly since the late 1990s, the Australian Defence Force also has placed greater emphasis on a maritime concept of strategy that focuses on the littoral environment. Canada lags behind Australia in some respects militarily as a consequence of not maintaining these skills.

One result of Canada’s contrasting circumstances was that Canada contributed to the Cold War through more politically acceptable peacekeeping. Still, the Canadian altruist ‘peacekeeping’ mantra was also useful in terms of the Cold War’s calculus, providing peacekeeping forces in defence of British nuclear bomber bases in Cyprus, protecting uranium resources in the Congo from falling into the hands of the Soviet bloc and supporting US interests in Vietnam by acting as the West’s so-called ‘neutral observer’ on the International Commission for Supervision and Control. Indeed, this peacekeeping rhetoric was most credible prior to the end of the Cold War when UN missions were often inter-positional and mandated under the more benign Chapter VI rules of the UN Charter.

**Gulf War**

As the Cold War was ending, however, Canada and Australia were called to be part of the US-led coalition of the willing to contain and then reverse Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. With the onset of the Gulf War, the Canadian and Australian political scenes revealed remarkable similarities. Both countries made limited contributions and faced contentious debates at home over how and whether to contribute; although in both countries opinion polls showed that 60 per cent or more of respondents approved of the actions of their respective governments.

3. This argument is made in some detail throughout Sean Maloney’s *Canada and UN Peacekeeping: Cold War by Other Means*, 1945-1970 (St Catherines, Ont.: Vanwell Publishing, 2002).
5. Ibid., 134.
As in the Korean War, both countries sent their navies early on, each contributing two warships and a support ship to naval operations in the Gulf.\(^7\) Canada even looked to Australia for an appropriate joint task force command and control model for its similarly-configured forces. Indeed, the Australian model was then used to manage Canada’s deployed forces.\(^8\) Despite this, neither Canada nor Australia felt prepared to contribute substantial ground forces to battle, particularly given their lack of state-of-the-art tanks and the abundance of ground forces support from other nations.\(^9\) Nonetheless, after the war, Australia and Canada both helped provide assistance to the Kurds in northern Iraq.\(^10\)

Clearly, diplomatically and militarily their contributions were similar. But of particular interest is the matter of just how similar were the ground forces that they had available to contribute had they considered deploying a combined joint task force. After all, the equipment, tactics and procedures for the Canadian brigade group in Germany were remarkably similar to those in use by their Australian equivalents—including the M113s and Leopard tanks. Canadians have written about the ‘missed opportunity’ to deploy the 4th Canadian Mechanised Brigade Group (4CMBG) to the Gulf War. Indeed, Canadians briefly considered contributing to a British-dominated Commonwealth Division along the same lines as the Canadian brigade commitment during the Korean War. But reliance on American equipment and spare parts and the colonial cringe made such an arrangement unworkable.\(^11\)

Conceivably, however, a combined Canadian-Australian force could have been organised that would have been more tolerable politically and easier to put together logistically and procedurally. Indeed, it could have been virtually as combat-capable and as lethal as the French 6th Light Armoured Division, with its three mechanised infantry battalions in wheeled armoured personnel carriers. After all, while unsuited to frontal assault, the French forces proved instrumental as a flank guard for the main effort. Part of the problem, however, was that extreme casualty estimates and concerns over the vulnerability of the older armour made such a deployment politically unpalatable—despite the fact that the French managed to face down such fears. Indeed, Canadian military planners calculated that, erroneous casualty estimations aside, the Canadian

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8. Ibid., 200-2.
11. Ibid.
brigade (4CMBG) faced no serious impediment to deploying. In the end Canada’s decision was a political one, but it was made with little thought given to the option of joining up with their historically most successful partners—the Australians (that is, if the Battle of Amiens and the battle of Kapyong are anything to go by).\textsuperscript{12}

Thereafter, the post-Gulf War period saw a resurgence of so-called peacekeeping missions. But these post-Cold War missions marked a shift from predominantly interpositional, or ‘first-generation’ peacekeeping—at which Canadian troops had gained extensive experience.\textsuperscript{13} The Canadian and Australian contributions to numerous missions to places such as Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Yugoslavia and East Timor demonstrated the complexity of such ‘second generation’ peacekeeping.

**Namibia/Cambodia**

In Namibia in 1989-1990 Australia contributed about 300 personnel to provide engineer support while the Canadians provided another 300 for logistics, policing and election-related tasks. In Cambodia between 1992 and 1993, while Australia provided the communications support with about 500 personnel, Canada provided about 240 military personnel as observers and to assist with transport.

**Somalia**

In Somalia, Australia and Canada once again demonstrated a similar commitment, contributing remarkably similar combat forces and supporting elements as part of the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF). These contributions included similar light infantry battalion groups, naval assistance and joint-force command elements.\textsuperscript{14} Yet despite the similarities, and the high regard in which Canadian and Australian forces were held by many aid organisations and military forces involved in Somalia, there are marked differences in the legacies of Somalia.\textsuperscript{15}


\textsuperscript{14} Lieutenant Colonel Bernd Horn argues that the excellent overall performance of the Canadians through most of their tour in Somalia is belied by the obsessive focus on the death of a local Somali at the hands of Canadians. See Bernd Horn, *Bastard Sons: An Examination of Canada’s Airborne Experience 1942-1995* (St Catherines, Ont.: Vanwell Publishing, 2001).

\textsuperscript{15} D. Bercuson, *Significant Incident: Canada’s Army, the Airborne and the Murder in Somalia* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1996), 230.
Canada’s forces had, for years, been on a tight budget, increasingly tasked to do more with less. Moreover their peacekeeping training, procedures and handbooks were oriented towards benign peacekeeping. Indeed, the Canadian forces had anticipated deploying to Somalia under a UN Chapter VI mandate only to see that changed at short notice prior to deploying. With no clear mission, clearly defined rules of engagement, or proper reconnaissance, the Canadian force under Colonel Labbé tried to adjust one plan for a different and more challenging eventuality.

The problems reached a crisis following the revelations of torture and the killing of a Somali teenager in March 1993. The Canadian forces were stigmatised by the scandal, as charges of cover up and damage control unfolded. The Commission of Enquiry lent credibility to perceptions that the Canadian Forces in the 1990s were deficient. There was a long casualty list from the scandal that included a Minister of National Defence and the battalion-sized Canadian Airborne Regiment. Such turmoil suggested that there remained little of value for Australians to consider from the Canadian experience. But, as with the US armed forces after Vietnam, these events triggered a demand for professional renewal beyond mere organisational change in Canada.

In contrast, the Australian forces escaped unscathed from negative reports from Somalia, perhaps by good fortune as much as good training. After all, Australian soldiers in Somalia faced similarly testing challenges and there were several incidents where soldiers’ frustrations conceivably could have resulted in similar fiascos as the Canadians faced.


17. This was despite the fact that the government wound up the commission just before it started scrutinising the role played in the fiasco by the higher machinery of government. See Lee Windsor, ‘Professionalism Under Fire: Canadian Implementation of the Medak Pocket Agreement, Croatia 1993’, *The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin* 4:3 (Fall 2001), 20.


20. Australian soldiers in Somalia faced similarly testing challenges and there were several incidents where soldiers’ frustrations could have resulted in similar incidents as the Canadians faced. The different command approaches of company commanders—Majors Anthony Blumer and Doug Fraser—reflect these tensions. See Breen, ‘Securing Baidoa’ (ch. 3) in *A Little Bit of Hope*, 153-88.

For Canada, however, Somalia was not the only disappointment. In Yugoslavia, for instance, Canada found itself with little peace to be kept.22 Canadian troops were involved in a significant firefight in the Medak pocket in Croatia in September 1993 and remained engaged in neighbouring Bosnia for the remainder of the 1990s and beyond.23 This experience, perhaps more so than the Somalia experience, has shaped the Canadian Forces since. In fact, involvement in Croatia and Bosnia was the most dangerous operation for Canada since the Korean War, with eleven Canadians killed and over 100 wounded between 1992 and 1995.24

In the mid 1990s, missions to the Balkans, Somalia and Haiti pointed to what Canada’s Joel Sokolsky called the ‘Americanization of Peacekeeping’ whereby the United States took a more direct role. Peacekeeping, or peace ‘enforcement’, under these circumstances still offered Canada an international role separate and distinctive from the United States.25 At the same time, Canada’s contributions, in a sense, gave the United States, under the cover of supporting the United Nations, the kind of global commitment of forces that Canada had ceased to give to the British Empire after the First World War.26

Zaire

Still, Canada sought to remain distinctive, taking the lead in a humanitarian relief operation in Zaire in 1996.27 This deployment relied on the Canadian deployable joint force headquarters, not unlike its Australian equivalent that would be used in East Timor three years later. However, problems soon emerged demonstrating Canada’s inability to deploy and operate an autonomous joint task force—particularly in the face of lukewarm US support. Not only was the mission virtually beyond the reach of its Hercules aircraft, but it was remote from major seaports. As a result, the mission, described as ‘the bungle in the jungle’, was short-lived and stood in sharp contrast to the successful mission that Canada launched at Suez 40 years earlier—the mission that virtually launched Canada’s reputation as a nation of peacekeepers following the 1956

23. Rempel, The Chatter Box, 158-60.
25. Ibid., 45.
Suez Crisis, when Canada largely self-deployed.\(^{28}\) According to one commentator, the Canadian answer to the defence planners’ question ‘How much is enough?’ has been ‘just enough’; although, arguably, a similar calculus has applied in Australian strategic planning as well.\(^{29}\)

**Kosovo**

In Kosovo, in 1999, Canada actively supported the US-led NATO bombing campaign, despite the lack of UN Security Council authorisation.\(^{30}\) In Kosovo, Canada faced a ‘real war’, particularly for the Canadian Air Force which contributed to the bombing campaign with its CF-18 aircraft. In fact Canada borrowed ‘Nighthawk’ pods from Australia’s FA-18 fleet to enable it to deliver precision guided munitions—an event that reflected on the low-key but enduring collaboration between the two air forces. After the cease-fire, Canada also deployed significant ground forces, including one troop of tanks (that is, four Leopard tanks), a step Australia has not taken since the Vietnam War.\(^{31}\)

The Canadian experience, in the Balkans and Africa, stands in contrast to Australia, which refrained from committing forces to the Balkans, seeing it as a primarily European concern (although New Zealand chose to contribute forces there). Instead, Australia sought to focus on its own region, particularly in Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, East Timor and Cambodia; but even in this regard Canada also contributed to the Cambodia and East Timor missions.

**East Timor**

In East Timor, the Australian command element, like its Canadian equivalent used in Africa in 1996, was based around the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters or DJFHQ. Several aspects of that operation are relevant to my overall theme.

First, just a few months before the operation, a command post exercise had been conducted based around DJFHQ. That exercise involved members from the armies of the ABCA countries and certainly helped to ensure that techniques and procedures were


\(^{30}\) Canada deployed an 800-person contingent of ground forces that was later reinforced by another 500-person contingent. Rempel, *The Chatter Box*, 99, 106 & 110-11.

well understood and practised in advance.\textsuperscript{32} This common base is a key foundation for enduring co-operation between the Australian and Canadian forces.

Second, Canada ended up contributing a ship (HMCS \textit{Protecteur}) which provided critical afloat support for the mission, as well as Hercules aircraft and a reinforced company from the French-speaking \textit{Royale 22e Regiment} (known as the ‘Van Doos’). Their inclusion served as an important reminder of how much Canada and Australia share a common heritage and outlook, being prepared to face adversity together for the common good.

In hindsight, the 1990s witnessed Canadians and Australians deploying on many similar missions around the world, but often with contrasting experiences. For Canada, the contrast with Australia sparked re-invigoration and greater professional debate.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{War on Terror}

Following the events of September 11th, 2001, however, Canada had an unprecedented incentive for cooperation with the United States—that being to keep its vital cross-border trade flowing, particularly as the US border posts and airports were blockaded in the immediate aftermath of the twin-towers’ collapse.\textsuperscript{34}

In contrast, for Australia, its gnawing sense of isolation and perceived need to work harder at preserving its alliance with the United States has spurred co-operation. But despite coming from different directions, like so many times in the past, Canada and Australia have ended up approaching the issues in similar ways.

In Afghanistan, for instance, both countries played important supportive roles alongside US forces. Their contributions included elements of both Canadian and Australian special forces.\textsuperscript{35} Canada also deployed a light infantry battalion, the 3rd Battalion Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry. This battalion was involved in Canada’s largest ground offensive since the Korean War.\textsuperscript{36} The 3PPCLI Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Pat Stogran, happened to be a former exchange instructor in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{32} Canada, Department of National Defence, \textit{The Canadian Army Reading List: A Guide to Professional Reading} (Version 1, Land Forces Doctrine and Training System Kingston, September 2001). These circumstances have also helped generate professional debate in the \textit{Canadian Military Journal} and \textit{The Army Doctrine and Training Bulletin} that were launched in the late 1990s.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Joel Sokolsky, ‘Glued to its Seat’, in Bernd Horn (ed.), \textit{Forging a Nation: Perspectives on the Canadian Military Experience} (St Catherines, Ont.: Vanwell Publishing), 402.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Including a 50-man Australian SAS team and a 40-man Canadian special forces team. See David Pugliese, \textit{Canada’s Secret Commandos: the Unauthorized Story of Joint Task Force Two} (Ottawa: Esprit de Corps Books, 2002), 117-18.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Cohen, \textit{While Canada Slept}, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{36} See Sarah Anderson, et. al., \textit{Coalition of the Willing or Coalition of the Coerced} (Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, DC, 24 March 2003).
\end{itemize}
tactics with the Australian Army. Stogran’s troops, as well as the Canadian special forces, encountered similar issues with coordination and collaboration to the Australians.

**Iraq**

Afterwards, as planning for the war in Iraq progressed, Australia felt greater certainty in backing the United States. As is now well known, the Australian task group in Iraq played a significant role in neutralising the missile threat to Israel in the opening days of the war. But conceivably, Canada and Australia could have collaborated to form a combined joint task force, had the will and greater awareness of compatibilities been evident. After all, Canada also maintained ships in the Gulf, and deployed a comparable number of staff officers to the same US headquarters.

Yet for Canada, comfortable in its secure environment, the apparent absence of a direct and imminent threat has also meant being able to pick and choose which international military missions to support. Thus in this instance, for example, Canada chose to commit up to 3,000 troops to relieve US forces in Afghanistan. By so doing, Canada attempted to side-step the issue of direct involvement in Iraq, largely for what were short-term domestic political reasons. Hypothetically, the military contributions to Iraq in early 2003 could have been otherwise. For instance, if the United States had succeeded in obtaining a greater UN mandate and the Quebec provincial elections of April 2003 had preceded the start of the war in Iraq, conceivably Australia and Canada could have operated alongside. Had Canada agreed, a combined Australian-Canadian force may have been able to make a significant contribution.

**Resemblances**

Despite the distance and locations, the two countries, and particularly their armed forces, have an amazing resemblance. They both have an enduring requirement for similarly organised and equipped expeditionary forces, each with their own distinctive yet similar traditions and ethos. That expeditionary requirement springs from different national interests yet it results in remarkably similar net effects. In the case of Canada, it is in its national interest to defend itself against unwanted help from its southern neighbour. This leads Canadians to want to work closely with the United States to ensure that US

37. See for instance, William Thorsell, ‘Canada can no longer ignore the world’s siren call’, in *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 2003, A13; and Kim Lunman, ‘Canadians “dead split” on supporting war, poll reports’, in *Globe and Mail*, 7 April 2003, A7. Lunman reported that a survey conducted from 1-3 April 2003 by CTV/Globe and Mail found only 29 per cent of those surveyed in Quebec expressed support for the US-led war in Iraq, compared to 54 per cent in the rest of Canada.

security concerns over the ‘strategic depth’ to its north are sufficiently looked after. Canada also addresses this concern over its security and sovereignty by its deployment of expeditionary forces in support of shared military endeavours. Such expeditionary measures have repeatedly helped to ensure that, if fighting is necessary, then it happens far away from the North American homeland.

In effect, the contrast between the contributions of the Canadian and Australian armed forces to international stability over more than a century has been principally apparent at the political level. In contrast, the working-level similarities stretch back over a century and reveal a closeness that belies the ebb and flow of the political and strategic differences. Indeed, these countries’ troops have deployed alongside each other in recent years with similar organisations and equipment in remote places—much as they did under British direction in earlier times, while rarely pausing to consider one another.

Both the Canadian and Australian governments also recognise that they cannot easily afford large readily-deployable forces, but they can, and do, pursue quality force structures that reflect this understanding and which yield strategic leverage.39 If as some suggest ‘size does matter’40 when it comes to military deployments in support of alliances, then Australia and Canada, out of enlightened self interest, should perhaps seek ways to pool their resources to contribute to their common national interests in support of world peace and stability.

For Australia, Canada’s advantage of proximity to and trade with the United States, its vast experience with NATO and complex multi-lateral military operations and remarkable force structure, doctrine and equipment similarities make it truly worthy of closer examination. For instance, the Canadian experience provides opportunities for Australia to benefit from its efforts to adapt and downsize concepts and lessons from US and European experience.

Sceptics may argue that Australia cannot count on Canadian military involvement in the Asia-Pacific region. Yet Canada has a long history of military involvement in the region, having deployed forces to Vladivostok (in 1919), Hong Kong, India, Burma, the Aleutians and Australia (during the Second World War), South Korea (1950 to 1957), West New Guinea (early 1962 to 1963), Cambodia (1993) and East Timor (1999-2000) as well as its ICSC monitors to Indochina (1954 to 1965 and 1973). Indeed, if the 21st century is to be the Asian Century, then Australia and Canada may be drawn together, even more so than during the last century.

39. I am indebted to LTCOL Graeme Sligo for the suggestion of this likely angle of criticism.
Having been reluctant to concede the merits of my argument so far, critics may stress the contrasts inherent in the geographic and economic differences. Such critics would argue that, despite the range of issues in common with Australia, Canadian military and social consciousness is absorbed by its enormous southern neighbour. However, virtually the same could be said for Australia. Even so, the allure of all things ‘American’ does not mean that both Canada and Australia cannot make more out of their relationship than they have done so far—much as we strive to do with New Zealand and the United Kingdom, for instance.

Critics may further argue that the combined effects of the cousins’ rivalry, the different geo-strategic settings and the cultural disparities are such enduring features that they cannot easily be overcome. Yet such critics must weigh the many factors that Canada and Australia have in common. In terms of this Chicago University World Values Survey, no two countries are more akin than Canada and Australia. Some critics may further argue that the ADF has nothing to learn from the Canadian Forces, given their traumatic and funding-deprived recent experiences. The Canadians certainly have had to address significant issues, but the Canadian Forces’ leadership has shown determination to achieve renewal and transformation. Yet this still misses the point: there is plenty to gain by working more closely together to leverage each others limited diplomatic and military strength on the world stage. After all, both face constraints that necessitate smarter, smaller and more adaptable force structures. In addition, time and again, Australians and Canadians have contributed to multi-national military operations beyond their shores that are consistent with their mutual self-interest. More frequently than ever, Australians and Canadians are bumping into each other in remote corners of the globe on multi-lateral military operations.

Critics may still offer resistance, arguing that the political sine waves identified in the Chart shown here leave Australia and Canada predominantly at odds politically, with conservatives in office in one country and liberal progressives in office in the other.

Certainly, the historical trend would support this contention. Indeed, for Canada and Australia to make more out of their relationship, our political leaders must come to see the benefits of such collaboration. Admittedly, so far neither country’s leaders has encouraged that process, but perhaps this lack has been due to ignorance of what is shared more than anything else. Even so, this political constraint does not stop more effort from being made one-level down from the political level; to effect coordination and collaboration between senior policy and decision makers in the respective departments of defence and foreign affairs.

With a re-convergence in outlooks and structures, and renewed common experiences, the armies and other forces of such remarkable and similar countries may have much to gain from more closely working together. They could do this, for instance, by increasing
their reciprocal attaché staff, sponsoring shared military exercises and supporting individual exchanges along the lines of Australia’s ‘Long Look’ program with Britain. With an increased level of mutual understanding, contingency plans could be developed and short-term domestic political priorities could be managed, thus allowing both countries’ forces to pursue co-operation. Such measures, capitalising on the strength of both nations, likely would generate greater effect than either could generate on their own, and in a way that suits the different but often complementary interests of both nations. Arguably, interoperability has more to do with shared language and culture than with common and compatible skills, let alone the ‘dits and das’ of the shared command and control architecture. With this in mind, there would appear to be significant scope for such arrangements to be implemented with relatively little effort or cost.

Perhaps in future, these two nations will not only accidentally end up on operations together, as they have done so many times before, but will do so having strengthened ties and improved mutual awareness, understanding and interoperability in advance.

This reasoning does not suggest that the way ahead is for Australia and Canada to reduce their military ties with the United States, let alone its other allies and partners. Instead, what I am proposing is that when Australia and Canada have worked together, their actions have complemented the goals of their major allies as well.

For Canada and Australia, throughout their histories, their basic strategic interests have been bound up with those of their ‘cousins’—that is, in the Anglo-American-led ‘West’. While this grouping revolved around Britain and the United States, the extended family includes the old Commonwealth, including New Zealand, Australia and Canada. And while the older great powers of Europe and Japan also became allies, they have done so effectively by ‘marrying into the family’, into the ‘cousinhood’, and accepting its rules and ways of working with each other. Canada, even more so than Australia, likes to operate within the UN framework. But as their experiences in Cold War and post-Cold War peacekeeping shows, even in this supposedly signature-Canadian activity, Canada has invariably worked with and for the old Anglo-American alliance.

To be sure, strategy is as much about choices as about history and geography, and the foundations and arguments are there if Canadians and Australians want to pursue a closer relationship. Arguably, in future there may well be convergence, built around the Asia Pacific and the security challenges likely to emerge this century. But the convergence is not certain, and identity insecurities in both countries are a formidable inhibitor. For Canada it seems like it is Quebec. For us Australians it is our insecurities about Asia. Cousins indeed can choose to ignore each other. But what I have argued is that there is a real alternative path that may be chosen—particularly if these two nations, out of enlightened and mutually beneficial self interest, choose to work more closely together.
On the South African plains at the dawn of the twentieth century, at Versailles following the monumental combined efforts at the Battle of Amiens, at the battle of Kapyong, in Cambodia, East Timor, in Afghanistan, and on the countless occasions, as shown on this chart, when Canadians and Australians have worked together in between, their combined efforts have proven more noteworthy than their sometimes scattered individual contributions. This suggests that similar benefits may be gained by working more closely together in future.

For over a century, Australian and Canadian military concerns have remained with tactical and technical issues and only rarely have their combined efforts had strategic ramifications. Often, their ignorance of the profound degree of commonality that they share has prevented them from seeing beyond the obstacles and envisaging the exponential strategic benefits of co-operation. The argument outlined here indicates that in an ever shrinking global village, and with the blinkers removed, Australian and Canadian military planners, and even their US and other counterparts, are now well placed to gain from closer collaboration between the expedition-oriented forces of these ‘strategic cousins’.
East Timor—Model of a Modern Deployment?

David Kilcullen

Since the late 1990s the frequency and intensity of Australian operational deployments has increased substantially. One of the earliest and largest of these deployments was the multinational intervention in East Timor in 1999, under the Australian-led International Force East Timor (INTERFET). In operations since INTERFET—in the Solomons, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the successor missions in East Timor under the United Nations—patterns or themes that first began to appear in Timor have emerged as typical characteristics of the early-21st century conflict environment. This essay addresses those emerging patterns: it is not so much about the INTERFET deployment itself, but rather about what that deployment tells us about the current and future conflict environment.

The essay’s thesis is that East Timor was a model for modern deployments. It was Australia’s last warlike deployment of the pre-September 11 world, the last of the 20th century, and yet also the first of this century and a relatively gentle precursor to the operations now ongoing. Timor exposed the Australian Army to issues that have become central in modern conflict. As such, Timor was the ‘model of a modern deployment’. Not because we performed particularly well—indeed, as the essay will indicate, we did rather badly in some areas. Rather, it was a model because it generated experience that was extremely helpful in later deployments.

The essay first provides an overview of the campaign, from my viewpoint as a company commander in the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR). It then outlines some issues that emerged from the deployment, as I perceived them, and shows how these have proven relevant for modern operations.
This is a personal viewpoint, not an official position. So it probably overstates Support Company 2RAR’s role in the campaign, or my personal involvement, which was peripheral. Moreover, my specialisation is not military history, but counterinsurgency and irregular warfare. So, this is not an historical analysis, just a personal account by someone who was there, and who has considered the issues since.

**Campaign Outline**

1999 was one of those watershed years in history, when long-standing assumptions and conceptual boundaries shift. I can remember sitting in the Officers’ Mess at RAAF Williamtown in March 1999, having just completed an amphibious operations course, reading newspaper coverage of negotiations between Indonesia, Portugal, the UN and Australia over the future of East Timor. I recall thinking that the fundamentals of Australian policy on Indonesia and Timor were shifting, and that virtually anything might now happen. For my entire career to that point, Australia had recognised Indonesian sovereignty over Timor and regarded the insurgency there as an internal Indonesian matter. It went almost without saying that Australia’s relationship with Jakarta was more important than the aspirations of Timorese separatists, and that a weak independent Timor was less in our interest than a strong stable Indonesia.

Most Australian soldiers had been brought up on a policy of close engagement with Indonesia; my own experience was typical. After a year of language training in 1993 I had commanded training and advisory teams with Indonesian forces, trained Indonesian officers in jungle tactics at Canungra, and worked as an adviser with Indonesian battalions in the field. There was still a degree of caution in the relationship, but even after the Suharto government fell in May 1998, Australia was still working closely with the Indonesians under the terms of the 1995 bilateral Defence treaty, the *Agreement on Maintaining Security.*

From May 1999, all that began to change. The Indonesians agreed to hold a referendum for the Timorese population to choose between independence and autonomy within Indonesia. A campaign of intimidation, violence and political killings began to sweep across Timor, in two phases—one in April-May, and a later phase in the lead-up to the referendum. These were known in Indonesian as *Operasi Sapu Jagad Satu* and *Dua*—roughly, Operation Clean Sweep or Universal Sweep.

For 2RAR in Townsville, where I was commanding Support Company, it was not immediately clear whether we would be involved in a potential deployment. Our sister battalion 1RAR was the online Ready Battalion Group, at short notice for either a company or battalion group deployment. As the situation in East Timor deteriorated, 1RAR began planning Operation Spitfire, a company-level operation to recover Australian nationals in the event of a crisis.
2RAR was due to assume duty as the online battalion on 13 September. Normally there would have been a smooth handover period, transfer of essential stores from one battalion to the other, workup training, and reallocation of tasks and priorities. But 1RAR was understandably reluctant to start transferring stores and personnel when they had been warned for Spillfire and expected to deploy at any time. Similarly we had no stocks of body armour and other essential stores as they were allocated to 1 RAR. Eventually the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Mark Evans, resolved the issue by directing that the transfer of online status would go ahead at midnight on 12 September. If a deployment was called before then, 1RAR would deploy, if afterwards, 2RAR.

In the event, the referendum of 30 August went ahead with a substantial amount of intimidation by Indonesian Army, police and locally raised irregular forces—the militias, who existed in at least sixteen main groups and (contrary to subsequent popular belief) were almost 100 per cent ethnic East Timorese and Catholic. The referendum result was 87.5 per cent in favour of independence from Indonesia. This provoked an almost total breakdown of law and order, violence, killings and deportations. The absolute number of deaths was relatively small, in the thousands only. But the militias began deporting the Timorese population en masse to West Timor, destroying the province’s buildings and infrastructure, and attacking the UN and other international organisations. Under pressure from the international community—including Australia, but predominantly the United States—Indonesia agreed to an Australian-led multinational intervention force to restore order, as an interim measure until a UN peacekeeping force could be established. So from almost no officially sanctioned military preparations, we went from virtually a standing start on 30 August to a full deployment of a Brigade (+) less than three weeks later: a major undertaking.

Ironically for 1 and 2RAR, the Brigade commander’s deadline of midnight 12 September had just passed when, at 0300 on Monday 13 September, the Government directed the deployment of the Ready Battalion Group which had been 2RAR for less than three hours. 1RAR were understandably disappointed, but helped as best they could in our preparations. For 2RAR it was a frantic week: conducting the planning and orders process, loading stores, zeroing weapons, finalising medical preparations, confirming Rules of Engagement, language and cultural awareness training, intelligence preparation, and vehicle loading. My company was to deploy as a rifle company, with five platoons—recon, snipers, mortars, pioneers, signals, and a surveillance section – a total of 179 personnel. As OC Spt I also had responsibility for the security of Battalion Headquarters, and as patrol master I was responsible for patrol planning, and for tasking the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance group which included my company’s elements plus a variety of intelligence assets.
In a sense this was the ‘hundred-year flood’, the eventuality for which the Brigade had been established in 1981. But almost the entire Brigade was now deploying, and so cross-leveling between units became very difficult. A company group of the Royal Gurkha Rifles, our British colleagues from Brunei with whom we had exercised periodically, arrived and came under the CO’s command for the deployment phase of the operation. We also received augmentation of specialists from across the Army—intelligence people, linguists, signallers, logisticians. By the time we deployed my company tactical headquarters, usually seven people, had nearly twenty in it. By Friday evening the battalion was confined to barracks, all was prepared, communication with families was forbidden and we spent the weekend waiting for the word to deploy. The Prime Minister visited, with the Leader of the Opposition, and there was intense media speculation about the deployment. But because of the Army’s action in raising 1 Brigade’s readiness, almost all the interest focussed on Darwin, whereas in fact the troops for the initial deployment came almost entirely from Townsville. It was possibly a well-considered piece of strategic deception, or possibly just good luck, but our deployment from Townsville came as a surprise to most people, including the media.

Deployment

3 Brigade began to deploy after dark on Sunday evening, 19 September, pre-positioning some companies and specialist platoons in Darwin. The main body of the battalion deployed from Garbutt airfield in Townsville, starting at first light on Monday 20 September, flying direct to Komorro airfield in Dili. The same C130s that dropped the first wave then returned to Darwin, picked up the other companies and were back in Dili within four hours, rather than the fourteen hours required for a return trip to Townsville. Simultaneously 3RAR and other elements departed Darwin by amphibious ship, and arrived that night in Dili, disembarking at the port facilities which B Company 2RAR had already secured.

Support Company headquarters was on the seventh plane in the initial deployment, the second company in after A Company, about 40 minutes behind the lead elements of the battalion. Brigade Tactical Headquarters was on our aircraft. SASR, British SBS and other specialist elements had arrived ahead of the battalion with armed land rovers, and so we arrived to a reception party, including the Australian Army attaché, Colonel Ken Brownrigg. The battalion, under direction of the CO, rapidly shook out on the ground, secured the airfield and key points in the town, exploited on foot to the port and secured it, and began to consolidate control of a point of entry for the follow-on elements to arrive. There were limited clashes with militia and the occasional confrontation with TNI, but there was no actual armed combat. This was lucky because we were carrying enormous amounts of kit. As we passed through the weigh-station at Garbutt airfield
in Townsville, I had written down in my field notebook the weights being carried. The lightest load in my company was 57 kilograms, my own gear weighed 62kg, and the heaviest in the company—one of the SFMG gunners—was 96 kg.

Dili was a surreal sight. Almost the whole town was on fire, and as the aircraft banked for the final approach into Komorro we found ourselves flying between tall columns of black smoke, stretching up thousands of feet into the sky from the burning buildings. The city itself was a ghost town. There was hardly a civilian to be seen, but there were plenty of dead animals and the occasional human corpse. There were signs of looting and forced evacuation, but otherwise the city presented a silent landscape of burning and ruined buildings and tattered referendum posters flapping in a hot breeze that stank of ashes and excrement. The columns of smoke from the burning town towered over us, periodically blocking the sun. Distant gunfire could be heard, and every seven minutes or so another C130 landed with a roar as the airlift continued. Small teams of Special Forces and our reconnaissance people, some in commandeered Land Rover Discovery vehicles that had been abandoned by the UN when UNAMET evacuated, were moving furtively about the town. Patrols were sneaking along the quiet streets, and helicopters periodically flew low overhead. The militia fell back as the battalion advanced, and the TNI either stood aside or waited sullenly for orders. But I remember thinking to myself: where are all the people? The whole civilian population seemed to have simply vanished. On the whole it was rather disquieting.

2RAR spent the first few days establishing control of Dili, and on 23 September A Company deployed by C130 to secure the airfield at Baucau, in an independent company operation. D Company secured Liquica on the 27th, and B, C and Support companies worked central Dili, having several stand-offs and confrontations with militia and TNI. Mortar Platoon patrolled the area between the airfield and port, while Pioneers secured government buildings and the abandoned Australian consulate, and Recon Platoon pushed out patrols along the coast and into the hills. The remainder of the company protected Battalion Headquarters, which had been established in a ruined housing complex east of the aerodrome.

The major operation of the period in Dili was a two-battalion security sweep in central Dili, with 2RAR providing a blocking force and 3RAR sweeping through the downtown area (what was left of it) and trying to flush out any major militia elements. Although there were some clashes with TNI and militia, the sweep achieved little other than a show of presence—it was a foretaste of later events in the operation, when large-scale multi-unit sweeps generally achieved little tangible outcome, while small team operations (though less spectacular) often yielded far greater results. Although it might be argued that large-scale shows of force achieved a psychological dominance over the enemy and the population, it was often very difficult to gauge the true effects of specific operations.
By the end of September the battalion had concentrated back at Komorro in preparation for an air assault to secure Batugade and Balibo in the Western border area. At dawn on 1 October 2RAR launched, in aircraft from 5 Aviation Regiment with support from 162 Recce Squadron and Special Forces. Support Company landed in the centre of Balibo, and BHQ quickly secured the 16th century Portuguese hilltop fort that dominates the town, as the battalion deployed against little or no opposition. The battalion command post was established, after a few days, in a converted cellar in the castle wall.

This air assault was an ambitious and somewhat risky undertaking. It was the largest airmobile operation by Australian forces since Vietnam, and the largest ever undertaken using purely Australian helicopters. Not for the first or last time, we were extremely fortunate not to incur substantial non-battle casualties, in atrocious road and flying conditions. Luckily it was a relatively clear morning and no air or SAM threat materialised. The smooth execution of the air assault was largely a result of the detailed, professional planning for this operation, which was conducted entirely by the CO, OPSO and Battalion 2IC in person, with aviation and Special Forces advisers. The planning compartment was kept extremely tight in order to maintain operational security. The plan was for the battalion to seize the main border crossing points on the north coast, at Balibo and Batugade, both known militia strongpoints, and hold the border while the rest of the force shook out behind us.

On the day 2RAR occupied Balibo, there were still almost 8,000 TNI in East Timor, and about the same number of militia, most of whom were positioned between 2RAR and the rest of the force. In the event of a major confrontation the battalion would have been quite isolated. It was a bold manoeuvre, one that wrong-footed the opposition, and silenced a variety of media critics who had accused General Cosgrove, the force commander, of being slow to break out from Dili. But it had its risks, and the first few weeks were a tense time, as we were effectively on our own until the rest of the Brigade moved into position.

Like Dili, Balibo was a ghost town. Other than about 40 militia with whom the battalion clashed at various times during the air assault and who fled rapidly toward West Timor, the entire population of Balibo at this time was one old lady and about seven dogs. Whole districts were completely destroyed by fire, the town centre was destroyed, and only the castle was relatively undamaged.

Over the next several weeks, up until about D+21, there were a series of armed clashes with militia and TNI, as the militia sought to escape across the border into West Timor, taking large numbers of the civilian population with them, often against their will. This led to a series of contacts which, together, formed the most intensive period of the campaign. These included the SASR ambush at Suai, the contact between C Company 2RAR, TNI, Police and militia at Motaain, another SASR contact at Aidabasalala, and
numerous smaller contacts across the breadth of the Brigade area.

By D+21 the campaign began to settle into a ‘steady state’ of border security operations. These involved patrolling, observation posts, population control measures such as vehicle checkpoints, occasional large-scale sweep operations, and humanitarian support to the population, who were slowly returning. There were periodic incursions by TNI and militia from West Timor, which had to be dealt with, but little internal unrest. The rest of the Brigade arrived and deployed along the border, so that the battalion soon had 3RAR on the left flank and 5/7RAR to the rear covering Dili. There were numerous incidents during this ‘steady state’ period, but broadly speaking, it seemed that their defeats in the first weeks of the campaign had convinced the militia and TNI to bide their time, waiting until INTERFET left before attempting any significant operations. During this period companies rotated between areas of operations about once every ten days. There was some concern expressed by the rifle companies about the frequency of rotation, which some commanders felt denied them the ability to develop a detailed ‘feel’ for a local area of operations (AO). On the other hand, companies often found that a fresh set of eyes coming into an AO would spot things that had eluded the company that had been there previously. In hindsight the policy of rotation was definitely correct, as the civilian population was still negligible in many areas and AO rotations prevented the companies becoming ‘stale’.

Unlike the rifle companies, Support Company did not have to confront the issue of AO rotation, as the company spent most of this period in the same AO. This was a relatively remote jungle-covered area known to INTERFET as the Salore Pocket (and known as the ‘Horse’s Head’ to subsequent generations of AUSBATT troops under UNTAET). This area abutted the East-West Timor border but, despite sitting astride some of the main militia infiltration routes into the battalion sector, was very quiet and lacked many of the problems with refugees and civilian population that affected other AOs.

This steady state period lasted until late November, when the campaign began to enter a transitional phase. The population was returning and local groups such as CNRT began to take control of civil administration. Aid agencies and UN organisations became more prominent, and control of movement across the border was regularised through a series of checkpoints and border liaison measures. There was strong pressure from aid agencies, headquarters and other units to relax our force protection stance (which was the toughest in the Brigade sector), adopt a less ‘tactical’ posture and concentrate on aid to the population. The campaign had initially been almost a pure counterinsurgency operation, but was now transitioning into a humanitarian and internal security phase. Unlike some other units, at the CO’s direction 2RAR maintained a very tough policy on force protection. This was definitely the right approach, given our proximity to the border, the small number of local civilians, and the active militia camps only a short distance away. If not for the CO’s active stance on ‘maintaining the edge’ right until
the end of the deployment, it is likely that the battalion would have suffered a number
of casualties.

From mid-December we began preparations for extraction. With a brief interlude
for Christmas (during which Support Company briefly secured the entire battalion AO
while the rest of the battalion concentrated at Balibo for a battalion Christmas dinner
and an extremely popular visit from Kylie Minogue) patrolling continued as usual right
up until the last moment. As the first unit into Timor, 2RAR was one of the first to be
extracted, handing over to 5/7RAR on New Year’s Day 2000. 5/7RAR assumed control
of the AO and the battalion returned by road and helicopter to a Force Extraction Centre
in Dili. Again, the CO and OPSO personally planned the extraction and maintained
an extremely small planning compartment in order to preserve operational security.
The force logistics people had done a fabulous job in difficult conditions to prepare
the extraction centre. We moved relatively smoothly through a process designed to
refurbish weapons and equipment, complete personnel administration, meet AQIS and
customs requirements for returning to Australia, and prepare a movement plan. During
this period, Support Company did a few days on standby for internal security tasking
as a Quick Reaction Force within Dili Command sector, but in the event we were not
called on and the extraction began as planned on 10 January 2000.

The battalion moved by a combination of C130 and navy ship from Dili to Darwin.
Support Company sailed on HMAS Jervis Bay, the navy’s high-speed catamaran
troopship, which provided a very comfortable and rapid transit. The crew were extremely
welcoming, despite a hectic schedule which required them to transit between Darwin and
Dili, and back again, every three days. The battalion arrived in Darwin on 11 January.
After a few hours’ rest we flew on to Townsville, arriving in the early morning of 12
January and dispersing a few days’ later to a much-needed period of annual leave.

**Emerging Factors**

Over the course of the campaign a number of issues emerged that foreshadowed many
factors that have become crucial for modern deployments.

*Inter-Agency Operations*

Timor was an inter-agency operation from the start. UNAMET involved integrated
police, military, DFAT and electoral teams operating together on the ground. Similarly,
during INTERFET we had to work with a variety of UN teams, aid agencies, policy
staffs, and other organisations. At the tactical level, this went very smoothly. We lacked
SOPs initially but good, workable systems were developed in the field as we went
along. At the strategic level, though, things were not so smooth. Arguably there seemed
to be something of an institutional tug-of-war between DFAT and Defence during the planning phase. DFAT appeared almost to regard handing the problem to Defence as an admission of failure and a loss of control, and so seemed reluctant to authorise preparation of military options for government. Conversely, Defence stood up various assets in order to be ready in case a military option was required. This led to some delay and confusion, and meant that the policy approach was less smooth than it could have been. Joint Interagency operations are now very much the norm, so Timor was a foretaste of things to come. Operation Gold (support to the 2,000 Olympic Games), the Solomon Islands, Iraq and to a lesser extent Afghanistan were all executed by joint interagency teams working in an integrated fashion. Fortunately, we have also learnt a great deal since Timor about interagency work at the strategic level. Partly this is because better procedures are in place and because all agencies have worked hard to create better liaison, cross-training and advisory relationships. Partly, it is simply that Timor was our first real exposure to this type of operation, whereas agencies are now all increasingly familiar with this style of tasking, largely because this is what we do on a day-to-day basis as part of the War on Terrorism. Also, we now arguably have one of the most experienced and well-practised strategic leadership group—in the form of the National Security Committee of Cabinet—in Australia’s post-war history.

Diverse Threat Picture

The threat picture in Timor was extremely diverse. INTERFET faced both the militia and the TNI simultaneously in a number of engagements and confrontations, with elements ranging from poorly armed street gangs to well-armed regular TNI infantry and police. TNI possessed armoured vehicles, artillery, submarines and fighter aircraft, though none of these came into play in Timor. They also fielded well-armed amphibious ships and capable special forces. So we found ourselves having to adjust to a wide range of potential lethality levels—one day a patrol might meet locals armed with spears or swords, the next day it might meet TNI regulars, or militia armed with SKS or SS1 rifles. The threat picture also included non-military elements such as hostile media, intelligence agencies, and other elements, which had the capacity to deny us mission success, but could not be opposed with armed force. Again, an extremely diverse threat picture is now the norm. Deployments today do not face purely conventional or purely irregular threats, rather they face both at once. Also, because highly lethal weapons are now cheap, easily concealable and widely available, it is possible to run into an extremely lethal individual with little warning in almost any scenario. This has been the case in Afghanistan, the Solomons and Iraq, and we are addressing it through enhancements to our protection, hitting power and situational awareness through the Hardened and Networked Army initiative.
**Pervasive Media Presence**

The news media in Timor had a pervasive presence, ranging from international media, Indonesian media, Australian media and cyber-media such as web bloggers and propaganda websites. This was our first real taste of the pervasiveness of modern media coverage, and it took time for some people to realise how important the media were as a strategic tool. To his credit, General Cosgrove recognised this immediately and used the media to great effect in his campaign plan. Others were slower to adjust and tended to regard use of the media as ‘grand-standing’ or, at best, wasted effort. We have since seen how the media have become a key player in modern conflict. The demeanour of an individual soldier on a street corner in Baghdad can have an immediate strategic effect, through the media. Similarly, use of ‘embedded’ or cooperative media has become a key element in campaign planning. For example, arguably the key element in the battle for Fallujah in April 2004 was the Al-Jazeera television network—and it was probably al-Jazeera’s coverage that caused the US to suspend operations, making the media a true combatant, but one against which we cannot apply armed force. One solution is to drown out the enemy’s media campaign through a focussed supportive campaign of our own—something Timor demonstrated, and which we are getting better at doing.

**Complex Terrain**

The terrain of East Timor was incredibly rugged, ranging from bare razorbacked hills to dense jungle and almost Australian bushland. But the vast majority of our operations occurred in complex terrain—a mosaic of open and restricted terrain as found in urban areas, areas of crop cultivation, littoral zones and industrial areas. The bulk of this terrain was urbanised, and (certainly towards the end of the mission) heavily populated. This created difficulties in identifying targets and discriminating between enemy and civilians. Again, complex terrain has become the norm for modern deployments: all eleven major combat engagements of the 2003 Iraq war occurred in, or on the edge of, urban areas, while current Australian operations in Iraq are overwhelmingly in populated, urbanised areas. We have recognised this factor by developing an enhanced urban operations capability, additional urban training and better weapons and sensor systems to help distinguish friend from foe in cluttered environments.

**Primacy of Unit-Level ISR**

3 Brigade went into Timor with a doctrinal approach to ISR that involved collecting information at unit level, passing it into a formation and strategic-level ISR system, then receiving a fused, analysed, collated intelligence product that we could use to prosecute operations. In fact this rapidly broke down, and we found that despite contributing information into the ISR system, we got little actionable, timely intelligence in return.
Indeed, there were only two occasions during the whole deployment when accurate, timely intelligence was received from force-level assets in sufficient ‘granularity’ to be actionable. On the other hand, ISR sources and assets controlled at unit level often proved highly responsive to the CO’s needs and allowed a great deal of tactical agility, while the battalion’s own operations generated the vast majority of raw information that subsequently resulted in actionable intelligence product. We found we needed a greater reliance on human and police intelligence, and ISR assets that the CO could control and task, and which were responsive to him. This, again, is highly typical of modern deployments. In Iraq the most common complaint by US commanders today is lack of actionable intelligence, because, like ours in Timor, their system involves units contributing information to a central system and receiving processed product in return. In the Solomons, Afghanistan and Iraq, we applied the lessons of Timor to enhance ISR capabilities at unit level, responsive to the CO’s direct control, with collection, collation and analysis at unit level. We found the need for intelligence staffs at company level, and are even contemplating platoon intelligence officers under certain circumstances in the future.

**Leveraging Local Assets**

In Timor we rapidly found that we needed to leverage local assets, including scouts, interpreters, informants. INTERFET, at the force level, developed close relationships with local irregular forces of CNRT, FSP and Falintil, and used these relationships to generate information, create a permissive operating environment, and enhance flexibility. We found that generating prestige with local people through relationships with tribal and clan elders was an important factor, and that local religious leaders were highly influential. For example, one of the CO’s best decisions was to re-start village church services in Balibo, even before the population had returned in any numbers. Our own padre said mass initially, then a local priest came out of hiding, the population began trekking in to go to church, and the town gradually revived around a core of tribal and religious identity. Similarly, on one occasion in late October 1999, I used a close relationship with tribal leaders in the Salore Pocket to broker the return of some 150 displaced persons to the Balibo area. Tactical success often resulted from the ability to leverage personal influence and connections with the local population. The same factor has become a major issue in subsequent deployments—particularly in the Solomons and Afghanistan. Needless to say, this depends on language and cultural capability, deploying sufficient linguists (of the right rank and experience levels) and intelligence specialists, treating every individual soldier as an agent of influence and an intelligence collection asset, and having a command culture that allows close cooperation with locals. The Army is improving on all these fronts, although there is still some way to go.
Small team operations

Small teams proved the most effective in this environment. Because of the terrain complexity, Timor was a ‘disaggregated battlespace’—broken up into small terrain compartments, fleeting engagements and rapid contacts. So small teams came into their own. Timor was very much a section commander’s operation, and we almost never operated above company level. On the rare occasions when we did, operations usually netted very little in tangible results. By contrast, small team operations generated good intelligence, resulted in most of the force’s captures and engagements with militia, and gave a feeling of omnipresence that reassured the population. The same has been true in current operations, where the terrain forces a series of small-team fleeting engagements. Operating in small teams comes with risks—teams can be overwhelmed if they lack firepower, protection and situational awareness. But we are working hard to enhance those aspects, and current operations are showing the value of the small team approach in modern conflict.

Integrated SF operations

At different times in the campaign, conventional and special forces worked in the same area, on the same task. This was a new factor in Timor—we had rarely worked closely with SF before, and often assumed they would be in depth, on strategic tasks, or otherwise operating on a different plane from the regular battalions. In fact, we often shared patrol AOs with SASR, shared tactical intelligence with them, and many of their tasks were basically regular infantry tasks. We quickly established liaison arrangements and worked hard to cooperate effectively. The CO and OPSO, again, maintained an extremely tight liaison compartment with SF, with a liaison officer working exclusively to the OPSO and CO, and the remainder of battalion staff operating on a purely ‘need to know’ basis. Again, integrated operations have become characteristic of modern deployments, with SF operating in close proximity to, and integrated with, regular forces. We are seeing a merging of capabilities, with today’s regular battalions beginning to look increasingly like SF operators, and SF engaging in conventional tasks while also developing new, unconventional capabilities. This trend is set to continue.

Logistic austerity

The heavy loads carried on deployment have already been mentioned. This was due to the need to be self-sufficient for 72 hours while the airlift brought in the rest of the force, and the battalion could not rely on resupply. Because of the heavy loads, water usage was extremely high—according to the battalion 2IC, usage averaged eighteen litres per man per day in the early phases. All this water was bottled and brought in by air. Due to the battalion’s mobile operational patterns, fresh meals did not begin to be
available on a regular basis until D+61. Similarly, later in the operation there was some
concern over the requirement to constantly wear body armour, which was mandated
by General Cosgrove. This loaded us down to the point where patrols had difficulty
keeping up with the enemy. As mentioned earlier, this was definitely the right decision
from a force protection standpoint, but one of the key lessons that emerged from all
this was the need for improved deployable logistics. The logisticians got a great deal of
criticism in Timor, but in fact they performed extremely well given the lack of attention
paid to logistics over many years of cutbacks during the ‘Defence of Australia’ period
when it was argued that the Army would never again operate outside Australia. A key
reason for this criticism is that logistics is one of those areas that is impossible to fake.
It is often difficult to know whether intelligence is faulty or operations are ineffective,
but commanders definitely know if they have enough food, water, ammunition and
medical supplies. So a key lesson was logistic austerity — enhancing deployable
logistic capability, but also reducing demand by learning to do without inessentials,
and adopting a philosophy of ‘come as you are’, which has stood us in good stead in
current deployments from the Solomons to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Lessons Unlearned

Finally, it is appropriate to highlight some lessons that were not learnt in Timor, largely
because issues did not arise. These represent areas we still need to address in order to
succeed in current operations.

As I visit units in my role of developing Army tactical concepts, I periodically hear
soldiers talking as if we are now a combat-experienced Army—an attitude of ‘don’t talk
to me about combat operations, I’ve been to Timor’. This is a very dangerous attitude.
Operational experience in the Army is more widespread than it has been for decades, but
actual combat experience remains very rare. There was virtually no combat in Timor,
nor any serious opposition, and the campaign was in no sense a ‘war’. We over-inflate
the deployment, or believe our own propaganda, at our peril.

We also faced no serious threat from mines or Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)
in Timor, whereas this has become very characteristic of modern deployments. Mine
awareness in the Army, and understanding of IEDs, is dangerously weak. Luckily some
of our best officers have experience in this field from Iraq, so we have the tools at hand
to improve performance in mine warfare. This is a critical development area that needs
to be addressed urgently.

There was no substantial enemy electronic warfare (EW) capability in Timor, and
there is a tendency to assume that communications will be workable, the enemy will be
unable to crack our crypto, and electronic attack will be rare. Indeed, on most occasions
the only interference and jamming we experienced in Timor was self-generated. By contrast, in most modern operations hostile EW is a key factor. In Iraq the insurgents regularly use GPS jammers, radio monitoring and other forms of EW to track and attack coalition forces. We need to become used to operating in a much more hostile EW environment than was experienced in Timor.

Again, the enemy employed no significant indirect fire or anti-armoured capability. Both these capabilities are major sources of threat on current operations. We have recognised the risk to our armoured vehicles, and are going through several programs to upgrade them. But planners need to assume a capable enemy, unlike in Timor where the opposition either lacked, or chose not to use, these assets.

Finally, we suffered virtually no casualties in Timor and experienced no serious domestic political opposition to the deployment. Much as it was pleasant to have the Australian people on side, this will not always be the case, and in future deployments we can expect the enemy to take action to undermine domestic support. Strong unit identity and professional pride—which the Army already has in large measure—is a key asset when popular support is lacking. So we need to preserve and build that aspect of our morale.

**Conclusion**

In essence, this essay has argued that Timor proved a timely wake-up call, a relatively gentle introduction to the harsh world of 21st-century expeditionary operations. It exposed Australia for the first time to a range of factors that have become characteristic of modern deployments. These included interagency operations, diverse threats, pervasive media, complex terrain, the primacy of unit-level ISR, the need to leverage local assets, small team operations, integration of SF and conventional forces, and logistic austerity. These have been part of all subsequent deployments, and the lessons of Timor helped us deal effectively with a suite of current operations. But, on a note of warning, there were elements to which Timor did not expose us: heavy close combat, mines and IEDs, enemy EW, indirect fire and anti-armour capability, serious casualties and domestic opposition. We still have a lot to learn in order to master the new conflict environment.
Organising and Dispatching the ADF’s Expeditionary Force for the War in Iraq

Albert Palazzo

Introduction

On 20 March 2003, Australian sea, ground, and air forces joined with their coalition partners, the United States and the United Kingdom, in the invasion of Iraq. Within a few weeks victory seemed imminent. By mid-April American forces had occupied Baghdad, the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, had gone into hiding, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, announced victory, and the President of the United States, George W. Bush, declared the period of intensive combat over.

Admittedly, these claims proved premature and victory illusionary. Peace has not returned to Iraq, and daily incidents at the lower end of the conflict spectrum continue to wrack the country. The United States has suffered more combat fatalities during the year of chaos that followed the capture of Baghdad than it did during the march on the city. At the time of this writing the war’s end remains elusive. Despite this, there is no denying that in the war’s opening campaign the coalition forces easily out-manoeuvred and out-fought their opponent’s regular army. The result was the rapid and overwhelming defeat of the Iraqi Army, which resulted in the demise of the Hussein regime.

Australia’s contribution to the coalition’s rapid success over the Iraqi Army was minor, when compared to the size of the forces fielded by the Commonwealth’s senior partners. Yet, by Australian standards the commitment was significant. It was the
Commonwealth’s largest war-fighting deployment since the Vietnam War. It was also unlikely that Australia could have despatched a larger force.

For the Australian Defence Force (ADF) the projection of power to the Middle East, and the subsequent maintenance of its forces in a distant theatre of war, was a major and taxing undertaking. How ADF planners fulfilled this task is this essay’s subject. This is not a story of combat but of military administration, or to use contemporary parlance, logistics.

That Australia’s forces were ready to commence war-fighting was due entirely to a massive, but largely hidden, logistic operation. The deployment’s movement to the Middle East was not a simple job. It was fraught with problems and impediments that required urgent solution under severe time constraint. At several points planners confronted impasses which if not resolved satisfactorily and quickly would have delayed deployment to the point that Australian troops would have arrived too late to participate in the operation, if they managed to leave home at all.

This essay will focus on four areas that the planners had to manage. Each contained their own challenges. Each was critical to the success of the subsequent combat phase. They were:

1) a short time frame for planning;
2) the transfer of personnel and materiel to the Middle East;
3) overcoming readiness deficiencies; and
4) in-theatre sustainment.

The ADF’s Command Organisation and Force Structure

Before turning to the challenges that Australian planners faced, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of the deployment’s chain of command and order of battle.

Australia’s intervention in Iraq divided into three distinctive operations. The designations that the ADF gave to them, and their associated tasks, were:

1) Operation Bastille: pre-deployment of forces to the Middle East, acclimatisation and in-theatre training;
2) Operation Falconer: combat operations to disarm Iraq; and
3) Operation Catalyst: stabilisation and recovery operations.

The division between the three operations was not rigid. A degree of overlap existed. For example, for some units their deployment to the Middle East took place as a part of Catalyst, not Bastille. In addition, sustainment was an ongoing logistic concern that extended across all three operations.
The ADF arranged its forces for Operation *Bastille* in five component commands. They were:

1) Task Group 633.0—Australian National Headquarters—Middle East Area of Operations (ASNHQ-MEAO);
2) Task Group 633.1—Maritime Component;
3) Task Group 633.2—Maritime Patrol Aircraft Component;
4) Task Group 633.3—Special Operations Component; and
5) Task Group 633.4—Air Component.

Despite its title the ASNHQ–MEAO was not an operational headquarters. Its commander, Brigadier Maurie McNarn, did not have authority for operations over the other Task Groups. Instead, the ASNHQ—MEAO’s function was to represent Australian interests before the coalition and to oversee national command. For example, one of its duties was to make sure that Australian troops did not participate in any missions that violated the Australian government’s rules of engagement. McNarn reported to the Chief of Defence Force, General Peter Cosgrove.

Operational command over the four other Task Groups rested with the Commander Australian Theatre, Rear Admiral Mark Bonser, at Headquarters Australian Theatre (HQAST). Subordinate to Bonser were Australian Theatre’s four force element headquarters. They were: Maritime Component Command, Land Component Command, Air Component Command and Special Operations Component Command. Each of these commands was responsible for the conduct of operations in their environments. During the war in Iraq the deployed Task Groups lines of communication ran from the Middle East to the appropriate Headquarters Component Command. The Component Command headquarters in turn reported to Bonser.

The Component Commands and associated Task Groups were:

1) Task Group 633.1—Maritime Component Command;
2) Task Group 633.2 and 633.4—Air Component Command; and
3) Task Group 633.3—Special Operations Component Command.

For *Bastille* and *Falconer* Land Component Command did not deploy any units to the Middle East. Therefore it did not set up a chain of command to the theatre. The ADF did deploy ground troops but they were under control of either Special Operations Component Command or Maritime Component Command.

Since Bonser’s command arrangements did not include an in-theatre joint headquarters it meant that each of the four field Task Groups, 633.1, 633.2, 633.3 and 633.4, reported back to their respective Component Commands, and on to him, separately. In effect the
Australian expeditionary force had not one but four chains of command—five including the ASNHQ–MEAO—between Australia and the Middle East. While this arrangement gave Bonser an effective way to exert command from a distance it did handicap intra-theatre cooperation and communication amongst the Australian forces. For example, if one Task Group needed to liaise with another Task Group it had to first follow its own chain of command to Sydney, and then retrace the route back to the Middle East down the other Task Group’s chain of command.

Each Task Group fielded an array of forces suited to their mission and the operational environment. Table 1 outlines the deployment’s force order of battle.

### Table 1
#### Force Structure for Operation *Bastille*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Force</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task Group 633.0</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Headquarters staff and liaison officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Group 633.1</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>Fleet Command Element; HMAS <em>Darwin</em>; HMAS <em>Anzac</em>; HMAS <em>Kanimbla</em> with embarked LCM8 and helicopter detachments; Logistic Support Element; Clearance Diving Team – 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Group 633.2</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>PC3 detachment and 381st Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Group 633.3</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>Forward Command Element; element Special Air Service Regiment; element 4 RAR(Cdo); Combat Service Support Group; CH47 detachment; Intermediate Support Base; element Incident Response Regiment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Group 633.4</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>Forward Command Element; Combat Wing Headquarters; F/A-18 Squadron, C-130H detachment; 382nd and 386th Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total personnel allocation was 2,058.
The Task Groups were responsible for their own 2nd, and 3rd line support. To this end each Task Group had its own in-theatre 2nd/3rd level support unit. They were:

1) Maritime Forces—Logistic Support Element;
2) Air Forces—three Expeditionary Combat Support Squadrons; and

Units provided for their own 1st line support.

Fourth Line (or base level) support was the responsibility of Joint Logistic Command, an agency within the Defence Material Organisation. The Chief of the Defence Force, General Cosgrove, gave Joint Logistic Command the job of providing for all logistic support from its origins in the national support base to an agreed handover point in the Middle East. Since there were multiple chains of command there were also multiple handover points. It was Joint Logistic Command’s job to transport units and stores to the Middle East. It was also to source all deployed unit’s support requirements from within Australia, or the world market place, that could not be met in-theatre.

The commander of Joint Logistic Command was Major General Peter Haddad. For Bastille Cosgrove made Haddad responsive to HQAST. Bonser in turn allocated to Haddad the 1st Joint Movement Group. This unit is the ADF’s organisation responsible for the planning and implementation of all operational movement by personnel, equipment and stores. It is the movers’ job to make sure that forces arrive in place and on time according to the commander’s requirements. It fulfils its role by sourcing transport assets, organising march tables, and determining cargo loads and priorities. The work of 1st Joint Movement Group touched upon all aspects of the deployment.

**Operation Bastille’s Timeline**

Logistic planners for the Operation Bastille faced extremely tight deadlines in organising the deployment’s departure and providing for its ongoing sustainment. This was not by choice. Rather it was a result of the government’s refusal to make an absolute commitment to Australia’s participation in the war until the last possible minute.

Planning did take place prior to the government’s announcement in January 2003 that Australia would send troops to the Persian Gulf. This commenced in mid-2002, and included the attachment of Australian officers to American planning teams. However, at all times and at all levels, Australian preparations took place under the mantle of what the ADF termed ‘prudent planning’. This meant that all planning was on a contingency basis and did not imply a commitment for war. American staff officers knew and accepted this condition.
Prudent planning protocols did allow logisticians to make considerable progress in remedying some of the ADF’s deficiencies, most notably in securing additional stocks of critical materials, vaccines and transport capacity.

Yet, the government’s reluctance to make an early operational commitment did severely handicap planning staff. It was also had serious implications for strategic decision making. Firstly, it compelled the ADF to deploy by air, instead of making greater use of the slower but much cheaper sea option. Secondly, it boxed the Howard government into a decision corner. The Australian deployment was just a small part of a world-wide movement plan coordinated by USAF Transportation Command. Australia would have access to the air assets it required only during a limited window of availability, after which these planes had other tasks to perform. If the ADF missed its window the deployment would not arrive in time for the invasion. The Howard government, therefore, had a United States imposed deadline by which it had to make its decision. An earlier decision would have given the Australian government and the ADF more options, and it would have eased the planning pressure on staff.

Planning at the tactical level commenced last, starting only after the government made its formal commitment. Consequently, units had only a few weeks in which to finalise their preparations before departing for the Middle East. These were frantic days during which units had to identify the trades required and personnel to deploy, complete personnel work-ups and medicals, draw necessary stores, commence vaccination, undergo IT training of logistic systems, undertake reconnaissance of assigned areas, and farewell family and friends, amongst other tasks. The result was that most units left without all their stores, and upon arrival in-theatre flooded JLC with demands for missing materials. For example, almost immediately urgent requests arrived for camouflage clothing, body armour, ammunition, and cold weather gear.

**Movement to the Middle East**

There were three major impediments that planners had to overcome if Australia was to project its power successfully to the Middle East. They were:

1) the ADF’s complete lack of a strategic air lift capability;
2) the need to indemnify airlines against loss resulting from incidents occurring in a war zone; and
3) Australia’s limited basing and accessing rights in the region.

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN), in the form of HMAS *Kanimbla, Manoora* and *Tobruk*, does offer the ADF a significant lift option, but for Operation *Bastille* most movement by sea was not feasible due to the extremely tight timeframe. By necessity then, most troops and materials transited to the Middle East by air.
The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) does have an air transport fleet. However, the capacity, range and speed of its craft are suited more for the transport of small quantities of materials within Australia, or between Australia and the nearby areas of the South-West Pacific. The RAAF does not have any transport planes that are capable of the strategic transfer of personnel and stores.

The RAAF’s workhorse transport is the C-130 Hercules. While a reliable craft, its capacity of 16,000 pounds and a limited range is too modest when compared with the capabilities of larger and more modern aircraft. The RAAF’s other transport planes, the Boeing 707 and the de Havilland Caribou, are even less able to fulfil a strategic lift requirement. All of the RAAF’s equipment required multiple refuelling stops for a transit to the Middle East. By contrast, the United States Air Force’s (USAF) C-17 transport had a capacity of 66,000 pounds, and sufficient range to span the gap between Australia and the Persian Gulf in a single bound.

The planners at 1st Joint Movement Group knew the limitations of the RAAF’s assets. They accepted that the only way by which they could assure the deployment’s movement to the Middle East within the required time frame, and then provide for its subsequent maintenance, was by the charter of heavy lift transport planes. There were only two realistic sources for such equipment: the United States Air Forces Transportation Command and the commercial market place. Australia would exploit both.

It is not possible to break down the strategic lift utilisation by the three phases of Australia’s involvement in the Middle East. Instead, only summary figures are available. As of mid 2003 Australia had employed strategic lift consisting of:

- USAF C-17—two flights;
- USAF C-5—eleven flights;
- Commercial Ilyushin 76—61 flights;
- Commercial Antonov 124—28 flights;
- Commercial Boeing 747—three flights;
- Commercial Boeing 747 (freighter)—thirteen flights;
- Commercial Boeing 757—six flights; and
- Commercial Boeing 767—flights.

In addition, there were 62 flights by chartered Boeing 727 between Sydney and Perth.

By mid 2003 the cost of these charters was in excess of $69 million. After that point additional hirings would have increased the cost further to meet the operation’s ongoing requirements.

The movement of United States and British forces to the Middle East created an enormous surge in world-wide demand for transport aircraft. As a result of international
transport shortages 1st Joint Movement Group had to liaise closely with the USAF Transportation Command in order to coordinate Australian aircraft requirements with availability. The deployment’s initial wave of movement was done largely by either USAF planes or by commercial air freighters hired by the Americans and mission allocated to the ADF. In this way the ADF gained access to thirteen Boeing 747 (freighter) planes.

In order to access additional capacity, and to provide for strategic lift on a regular basis, 1st Joint Movement Group entered into a contract with Adagold, an air transport jobber. Their primary sub-contractor was a company called Volga-Dnepr. It provided the Ilyushin 76 and Antonov 124 transports. Adagold also sourced the Boeing 727s for the Sydney-Perth route, and Boeing 757s belonging to Air Holland for the carrying of personnel to the Persian Gulf.

In addition to USAF and charter capacity, the RAAF did meet some of the deployment’s lift requirement with its own assets. As of mid 2003 this consisted of:

- RAAF C-130—sixteen flights; and
- RAAF Boeing 707—twelve flights.

From a perspective of quantity the RAAF’s contribution was minor, but volume alone is a deceptive measure of importance. 1st Joint Movement Group employed the RAAF to move cargos which it was unable to transport by other carriers. For example, chartered airplane operators would not transport munitions. In addition, the ADF needed a means to ship sensitive items that required a secure cargo hold. This included items such as communication equipment and cryptographic devices.

For most personnel and material the movement to the Middle East by air was a two-step process. The movers consolidated shipments that originated in the eastern states at RAAF Base Richmond. From there they flew to RAAF Pearce in Perth on the twice-weekly chartered Boeing 727 service. Once a week the plane also stopped in Adelaide to collect materials originating in South Australia.

In Perth, Joint Logistic Command had raised a temporary unit called Mounting Base West. Its task was to consolidate loads arriving by the regular 727 service with cargos that had originated in Western Australia, or had reached Perth by defence’s road haul service. Mounting Base West then loaded the shipment into larger chartered craft for the flight to the Middle East, usually an Ilyushin 76, or for larger quantities, an Antonov 124.

Easing the pressure on 1st Joint Movement Group was the fact that a considerable portion of the equipment required by Special Operations Task Group was already in theatre. In 2002, after Australia committed special forces to Afghanistan (Operation Slipper) to help the United States in the war against terrorism, the ADF established a
support base in Kuwait. It called it the Intermediate Support Base. At the deployment’s conclusion the Special Air Service Regiment stored most of its vehicles, equipment, munitions, and rations at the Intermediate Support Base, instead of bringing it back to Australia. This prepositioning of equipment greatly reduced the tonnage the movers had to ship, thereby easing pressure on strategic lift capacity.

The ADF did employ a few other lift methods whose utility should be noted. The most important was the *Kanimbla*. The ship had been due to sail to the Persian Gulf to take its turn as Australia’s contribution to the routine maritime blockage of Iraq. As *Bastille* developed Maritime Component Command brought its departure date forward. The vessel sailed from Sydney with a Sea King helicopter from the RAN’s 817th Squadron and two LCM8s from 10th Force Support Battalion. Also on board were 40 tons of stores, including nuclear/biological/chemical protection equipment. At Darwin the *Kanimbla* loaded approximately 20 tons of vehicles and stores belonging to Clearance Diving Team—3. Some mail also went by commercial carrier, such as Emirates.

If sourcing sufficient aircraft was one challenge, providing airline companies with an indemnity for service in a war zone was another. Qantas was reluctant to fly military cargos to the Middle East without a guarantee against liability for death or injuries to crew and passengers. The airline was also concerned with the potential for damage to its brand names.

This was not a new issue. In 1997 the Commonwealth had negotiated a memorandum of understanding with Qantas and Ansett Airlines that offered the carriers a blanket indemnity. Changes to Commonwealth Law in 2002 made it necessary for the government to revisit the issue. Commonwealth attorneys were concerned at the extent of the country’s exposure in case of a claim.

Negotiations were still under way in January 2003 when the government announced that it would send troops to the Middle East. If the Commonwealth was unable to charter passenger planes from Qantas the situation could have become a real ‘war stopper’. Without this transport Australia would be unable to move its personnel quickly enough to the Persian Gulf.

In the end it was a near run thing. In fact, the first Qantas plane load of troops left Australia before the parties had reached a new accord. Qantas made the flight on the basis of a one-off indemnity. A new agreement went into effect a few days later, allowing the ADF access to the Qantas fleet.

If having the physical ability to move its forces to the Middle East was one essential prerequisite for Australia to project its military power, than a second was the necessity to obtain entry permission from the region’s governments. Without such authority the ADF would not be allowed to disembark its Task Groups in the Middle East, nor gain access
to the region’s facilities. Had this happened Australia’s contribution to the coalition’s effort against Iraq would have been limited to a maritime presence.

American forces had had a long-standing and widespread presence in the Persian Gulf, and the United States government had functioning agreements in place that allowed its forces a wide degree of operational freedom. Being the United States’ ally did not mean that the Commonwealth’s Task Groups automatically received similar rights. As a sovereign state it was Australia’s responsibility to obtain entry and operating rights of its own.

During the planning period leading up to the war’s commencement Australian diplomats negotiated a number of agreements with Gulf nations to provide for the ADF’s operational requirements. These countries were called ‘Host Nations’, and the ensuing protocols were known as ‘status of forces agreements’. The rights sought included: permission to insert military forces, access to bases, and right to transit through and over Host Nation territory.

No single status of forces agreement covered the entire region. Instead, Australia had to negotiate a separate one with each host nation. The result was a variety of differing requirements and paperwork conditions that personnel had to meet, depending on the Gulf state they wished to enter. Each border crossed required the transiting personnel to meet a different standard.

The status of forces agreements also covered the entry of vehicles, equipment and supplies. While meeting the requirements for personnel access was at times awkward, the rules that covered materials were more problematic. All incoming items had to receive diplomatic clearance before host nation customs officials would allow them into the country. In many cases, host nations imposed mandatory waiting periods of several weeks’ duration on newly arrived stores.

In effect, the Australian contingent was importing war materials into the host nation. As with any imported good, the items had to be accompanied by properly filled out and timely submitted paperwork. This became was one of 1st Joint Movement Group’s more onerous tasks. The movers had to provide host nation customs authorities with completed cargo manifests in advance of a plane’s arrival. If the load deviated from the manifest in any way Australia risked having the cargo impounded in bond storage until customs officials received corrected paperwork. Moreover, each host nation required its own clearance approval, thereby complicating the movement of materials across regional borders.

The need to obtain diplomatic clearance caused a significant delay in the time it took items to reach the end user. This was particularly true of munitions which host nations routinely subjected to delay. The fastest transit through host nations’ customs control was ten days, the slowest 21.
More significantly, had the Special Operations Task Group needed to import more of their equipment they would almost certainly not have been combat ready when the war began. The use of the Intermediate Supply Base allowed the Special Forces to avoid the importation time delays that plagued so much of the other Task Groups’ equipment.

Diplomatic clearance restrictions also affected the ability of Joint Logistic Command to manage the deployment’s sustainment. Logisticians had to factor custom delays into all supply demands. What saved the ADF from an embarrassment was the Iraqi Army’s rapid collapse. Had the war gone on longer, or had it been fought at a greater level of intensity, Australia’s status of forces agreements would have impaired Joint Logistic Command’s ability to maintain an appropriate flow of supplies to the fighting troops.

**Overcoming Readiness Deficiencies**

To ADF planners working on the operation’s plan it was obvious that the force faced capability shortfalls in a number of categories. In order for the mission to be a success logistic staff knew they had to rectify these deficiencies. These shortfalls ran the gamut of the ADF’s equipment pool, but several major categories did stand out. They were:

1) nuclear/Biological/Chemical protection equipment;
2) vaccines; and
3) advanced munitions and electronic warfare devices.

As part of its planning, the ADF addressed the potential for Iraq to employ Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). After the war’s conclusion the truth of their existence has became a contentious issue, but that is with the benefit of hindsight. For senior officers and planners who had to make decisions about the war at the time, there was a real fear that Iraq did hold significant stockpiles of these weapons, as well as sophisticated delivery systems.

In particular, intelligence reports high-lighted the need for Australia to protect its troops against anthrax. Reports also raised the threat of smallpox but accorded it a lower danger. In addition, there was concern that Iraq would employ chemical weapons, including mustard and nerve gas, since it had used both agents before against Iran and its own civilians.

It is now apparent that these intelligence reports were wrong, and investigators have been unable to locate any Iraqi WMD. In fact, it appears increasingly likely that Iraq abandoned its WMD program some years before, and did not possess any of these munitions at the time of the coalition’s attack.
To counter the threat of WMD the ADF decided upon two policies: inoculation and protective equipment. All personnel deploying to the Middle East, or already in theatre, were to be inoculated against anthrax. Those deemed especially at risk, mainly special forces, would also receive the smallpox vaccine. In addition, all personnel would receive several sets of chemical warfare protection suits and respirator equipment.

Unfortunately the ADF did not have sufficient stock-holdings of any of these items. With deployment looming the ADF had to seek supplies on the world market. This was not the first time this had occurred. During Australia’s intervention in East Timor in 1999 (Operation Stabilise) the Department of Defence realised that it had a procedure requirement for the streamlined purchase of operationally essential stores that were not in the force’s inventory. This resulted in a mechanism called the ‘Rapid Acquisition Program’. It was first used for Operation Slipper.

For Operation Bastille Joint Logistic Command initiated two rapid acquisition requests. Number 9 was for the purchase of additional stocks of existing capabilities. It included items such as nuclear/biological/chemical suits, combat body armour and cold weather clothing. It listed six items and had a value of $12.5 million. Number 10 was for either an improvement in an existing platform or for the acquisition of an entirely new capability. It included items such as vaccines for anthrax and smallpox, satellite terminals and other communication equipment, and personal location beacons. It contained 290 items and had a cost of $144.1 million.

In addition to the Rapid Acquisition Program the Defence Material Organisation also made use of the United States Congress Foreign Military Sales program. United States law prohibits the sale of certain items to a foreign power. Generally, these are sophisticated high-tech weaponry, computer hardware and software, and electronic warfare devices. Amongst the items the ADF sought were precision guided munitions, several types of FA/18 borne missiles, and a variety of avionic electronic warfare counter-measure devices.

Australia entered into two agreements to facilitate the in-theatre purchase of these materials. They were called ‘Letters of Offer and Acceptance’. One letter was with the USAF and the other was with the United States Navy (USN). During the war Australia only made use of the USAF agreement. The ADF returned unexpended items to the United States at the end of the conflict.

Obtaining sufficient stocks of vaccines and protective equipment was not an easy task. Tight time frames, combined with a rush on the world market, made it difficult for JLC to obtain the stocks the deploying forces needed. In fact, most personnel left for the Middle East with fewer sets chemical protection equipment than mandated, and virtually no one had completed their course of three anthrax vaccine inoculations. Even
on the eve of the war the majority of personnel still awaited further inoculations. Table 2 outlines the deployment’s anthrax inoculation status as of 17 March.

Table 2
Status of Vaccination Program, 17 March 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Group</th>
<th>Personnel in Task Group</th>
<th>Personnel Receiving 1st Inoculation</th>
<th>Personnel Receiving 2nd Inoculation</th>
<th>Personnel Receiving 3rd Inoculation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>633.0</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>633.1</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>633.2</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>633.3</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>633.4</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,057</td>
<td>2,047</td>
<td>1,837</td>
<td>801</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difficulties Australia faced in obtaining needed stores of vaccine and chemical protection equipment highlighted a fundamental problem that small military powers face when they attempt to purchase needed stores from the world inventory in a seller’s market. The United States and Britain had requirements and budgets that dwarfed Australia’s. To manufacturers, the senior coalition partners had more clout and were more attractive customers.

There was another factor which accounted for the difficult that Joint Logistic Command had in acquiring stores from overseas. Resources are finite, and usually insufficient to meet total demand, at least within a specified time-frame. This is particularly true during a period of mobilisation when units, who have been equipped on a peace time basis, simultaneously make requests to bring themselves on to a war footing. Of course, from each unit’s perspective their own requests are more urgent than those of other units. It is one of the tasks of the planner to set priorities.

For Australia it meant negotiating priorities with American logisticians, since most of the items the ADF required could only come from either existing United States’ stocks or from commercial sources under American control. This put the ADF at the mercy of their partner’s logistic prioritising system, the ‘Force Activity Designator (FAD)’. Both countries employ similar FAD systems, which although slightly different, are mutually understandable to the planners of both countries.
The FAD systems employ a sliding scale consisting of five levels, each with five sub-levels. Units participating in a war have the highest priority (Priority 1) while those assigned to non-operational duty have the lowest. The most urgent priority is 1:1, and units with this designation receive attention before a unit classified as 1:2, 2:4 or 4:3.

For all of Bastille and much of Falconer the United States penalised all Australian supply demands by applying an automatic FAD reduction of one step. This meant that a demand from an Australian unit would have a lower priority than that of an American one, even if the two requests were of equal importance. This assured that the United States supply chain satisfied American demands first, thereby placing the units of their junior ally at a disadvantage.

That JLC and deployed units received the high level of support that they did was only due to the ability of Australian managers to massage the system. The two nation’s military forces have a close relationship and liaison officers were able to lubricate personal approaches. Yet some demands required prodding at the highest level by Embassy Staff in Washington, as well as by exchange officers in the Pentagon and at other United States headquarters. It was not until late in the operation that Australia was able to get the United States to remove the FAD penalty.

**In-Theatre Sustainment**

Once deployed the Task Groups required ongoing sustainment until they returned to Australia. To accomplish this task logistic planners at HQAST and JLC drew up a supply plan. While a complex document in scope, its underlying assumptions are readily understandable.

The supply plan contained a number of compromises that were to affect the force’s sustainment pipeline for the operation’s duration. The most important one was a reiteration in a modern form of the Australian logistic tradition of relying on a senior partner, or partners, for much of their force’s operational support. As it had in the past, for the war in Iraq Australia absolved itself from much of its sustainment responsibility and abdicated this task to an ally.

Once deployed, the Australian national support base was to be the supplier of last resort. Units in the Middle East were to do everything possible to obtain their stores from a non-Australian in-theatre source. To facilitate this policy the ADF established commercial arrangements with Middle Eastern contractors, and drew upon established support sharing protocols with the United States and, to a lesser extent, Britain and Canada. The priority sources outlined in the support plan were:
1) in-theatre commercial;  
2) coalition partner;  
3) coalition-arranged contractor;  
4) host nation support; and lastly the  
5) Australian National Support Base.

The planners had hoped that host nations would serve as a source of considerable support but this did not eventuate. The local economies were too small and lacked the expansion depth necessary to provide for anything more than a tiny part of the coalition’s requirements.

The deployment’s support plan broke down supply requirements into types and identified a preferred source. Table 3 outlines supply type and source.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supply Type</th>
<th>Australian Sourced</th>
<th>Coalition Sourced</th>
<th>Contractor Sourced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Space—Work</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation Space—Living</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Engineering</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Products</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammunition</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical (level 1)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical (levels 2-4)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Biological Chemical</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detection</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Support</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement Control</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force Protection</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If more than one source was able to provide the same support, the HQAST instructed field commanders to favour non-Australian sources. Ideally, the national support base would provide only items which were ADF specific, namely those materials for which there was no other source. Bulky items, especially rations, fuel, water and coalition common ammunition, were to come from Persian Gulf sources. Part of the rationale for these sourcing decisions was financial. Cargo from the National Support Base to the Middle East went by chartered transport planes. By minimising loads the ADF required less transport capacity, thereby saving on charters. This decision also was a reflection of the ADF’s policy of maintaining relatively low stock levels.

The primary contractor for the Task Groups was Inchcape Shipping Services, a stevedoring company with a long presence in the region. Inchcape’s role was akin to that of general service provider, sourcing whatever a Task Group needed, from photocopiers to replacement tubes for tyres. The ADF also used Seven Seas, who provided fresh food to the Maritime Task Group, and Superior Foods who offered the same service to the Special Forces Task Group. The ADF also entered into special contracts for the performance of specific tasks. For example, as a part of mortuary plan JLC signed a standing offer with Kenyon International Emergency Services to assist in the return of remains. There were also a number of local service contractors, such as a shipyard that repaired the RAN’s small boats.

As part of its routine procedures for exercises and exchanges, Australia and the United States Pacific Command have a standing policy for the mutual support of their forces. When elements of Pacific Command are in Australian waters the ADF and local contractors serve as supply sources. The favour is repaid when Australian units exercise in Hawaii. These types of agreements are called ‘Implementing Arrangements’. As a precaution, before the outbreak of the Gulf War, Australia entered into a similar agreement with the United States Central Command, the United States headquarters responsible for the conduct of war against Iraq. Australia also reached Implementing Arrangements with Britain and Canada.

All of these arrangements called for the parties to support a partner when called upon. They did recognise that a national force would have first call upon their own stores, particularly in periods of scarcity, but the agreements committed the signatories to providing for the requested demand when ever possible. Settlement was at cost. In effect, Australian forces in the Middle East would buy part of their required support from a coalition partner, just as they would from a commercial supplier. The reverse was also true. The Kanimbla served as a resupply platform for a number of non-Australian coalition vessels.

The deliberate policy of pursuing logistic dependency did offer considerable benefits to Australia. They included:
1) It allowed the ADF to ‘punch above its weight’. That is, the ADF was able to mount a field force that disproportionately favoured the combat arms at the expense of the support arms.

2) It lowered the operation’s cost because forces deployed with reduced quantities of stores, and thereby required less transport capacity. This in turn lowered the scale of lift that the movers hired to carry out the deployment.

3) It allowed the ADF to minimise its stockholding, thereby lessening storage and inventory costs.

4) It allowed the ADF to avoid over commitment to particular systems which might become obsolete.

However, dependency did come at a cost, most notably:

1) The ADF accepted that the ability of its Task Groups to fulfil their missions was dependent upon the cooperation of military organisations that it did not control, and over which it had limited influence.

2) It forced the ADF to conform to the deployment schedule and operations of the senior partner.

3) It placed ADF units at the mercy of commercial operators whose primary motivation was to maximise earnings not mission fulfilment.

4) It made the assumption that the senior coalition partner would make key materials available at all times.

5) It forced the ADF to accept that in case of critical shortages, coalition members would provide for their own units first and accommodate Australian ones when convenient.

6) It gave the senior partner an operational veto on any Australian mission for whose undertaking an ally’s support was essential.

In many ways the supply plan worked. However, it was not universally successful and there were a number of occasions where things could have turned out quite badly if any one of a number of factors had gone against the coalition. A key factor in the plan’s success was the location of the unit requesting support. RAAF units operating from an American base were more likely to receive the desired support than a unit operating in a remote area off established lines of communication.

The problem of remoteness affected the special forces most. To maximise their mobility all of the coalition’s special forces carried with them minimal stocks of supplies. They were dependent on rapid resupply upon request. American logistic staff made it clear to the SAS that they would take care of their own troops first. The Australians lacked a fall-back option.
A more significant contribution to the success of the supply plan was the rapid collapse of the Iraqi Army. A war measured in only weeks did not begin to test the plan’s robustness. Had the conflict gone on longer, or had the Iraqis waged it with greater skill, the pressure on Task Groups’ supply lines would have grown more intense.

The unit which received the poorest logistic support in the Middle East was Clearance Diving Team—3. For much of its time in the Middle East it was unable to access regular support, even while serving behind coalition lines. In the end, lacking an effective line of communication, the divers became dependent on the charity of nearby British and American units for their needs.

Part of Clearance Diving Team—3’s difficulties was a result of command control misunderstandings, and the failure a distant Maritime Component Command in Sydney to appreciate the unit’s plight. As a RAN unit the divers belonged to the Maritime Task Group. However, throughout the campaign it operated not from a ship but from ashore, clearing mines and disposing of ordnance in Southern Iraq. Removed from the fleet, the divers received only intermittent resupply via the Kanimbla’s overworked Sea King helicopter. The unit’s equipment establishment did recognise the need for trucks. The divers did have several Land Rovers, but not enough to move the unit in a single lift. Instead, the divers hitched rides with passing vehicles.

The contractor provider, Inchcape, should have been able to meet most of the divers’ demands, but a unit with a mere 32 sailors did not attract its commercial interest. Instead, Inchcape found it far more profitable to support a Royal Marine brigade which was in the divers’ area. On one occasion, without the intercession of the Royal Marines, the divers would have run out of water. It was only through such charity that the unit functioned at all.

**Conclusion**

By any military measurement Australia’s role in the Gulf War was a great success. The ADF accomplished its missions, contributed to the coalition’s overwhelming victory over the Iraqi military, and helped remove an onerous dictatorship. Recent events, however, have tarnished these accomplishments. When peace will return to Iraq, and an effective national government replaces an American satrap lies in the future.

The coalition’s battlefield success came from the vast superiority in the art of war it possessed over the enemy. Underpinning this battlefield prowess was the organisation, planning and improvisation skills of the coalition’s logisticians. Without their specialist abilities the combat arms would not have enjoyed such a rapid victory, if they managed to arrive in theatre at all.
Australia’s projection of military power, and its forces in-theatre sustainment fell on the shoulders of a relatively small number of logisticians based in headquarters and units scattered across the Commonwealth. It was up to them to arm, provision, dispatch and support a field force thousands of miles from the Australian support base. More impressively, the logisticians accomplished their tasks within an extremely short time frame. In just over two months from the Prime Minister’s announcement the ADF was in action.

This was an impressive achievement, one made more so by the scale of impediments planners had to overcome. Had not a timely resolution been found for problems such as the sourcing of strategic lift, the development of a movement plan, or the acquisition of critical stores, the operation, or at least Australia’s part in it, would not have come off.

However, it would be unwise for logisticians to rest on the laurels of victory. The scale of the coalition’s battlefield success was misleading. Its opponent proved an unworthy enemy who was incapable of serious resistance. In short, the coalition possessed abundant over-kill. A more challenging foe, in a more difficult operational environment, might prove a greater challenge.

The campaign also demonstrated that the Australian tradition of logistic dependency remains one of the corner stones of national security policy. Australia did not send a balanced force to the Middle East that was capable of its own sustainment. Instead, it dispatched niche elements who were dependent upon coalition and commercial contractors for their sustainment. This is a valid policy when Australia’s strategic interest converges with that of its allies. But, it must be asked, what happens when it doesn’t? The cost of Australia’s logistic dependency is the surrender of its strategic and operational options.

Tasked with the need to support the nation’s armed forces in the Middle East, the logisticians of the ADF rose to the occasion. Shortcuts were taken and reliance on others for support was heavy, but when the time came to cross the border the ADF was ready, and ably fulfilled its part in the coalition’s battle plan. The ADF’s success in Iraq once again illustrated the central role of the support arms in the waging of war, and also demonstrated the great professionalism of the nation’s military logisticians.
Towards a Strategy of Security: Theory and Practice in Australian Defence Policy

Michael Evans

In 1989, the American scholar, Francis Fukuyama, became an instant celebrity with an article called ‘The End of History’. Fukuyama sparked a debate in West in the 1990s that argued that, with the collapse of communism, liberal democracy had triumphed and that history as a great clash of ideas had ended.\(^1\) Much less well known, but just as important, was another debate that began during the same period, namely, ‘the end of geography’. Advocates of the ‘end of geography’ argued that, with the arrival of information technology and globalisation, the age of frontiers had disappeared and that conflict anywhere could, and would, be felt everywhere.\(^2\)

On 11 September 2001, when al-Qaeda suicide cadres attacked the United States, Fukuyama’s proposition that we had arrived at ‘the end of history’ was proven to be premature, and liberal democracy confronted yet again another implacable ideological foe. For the ‘end of geography’ advocates, however, 11 September was seen as a vindication. The world’s sole superpower had been struck grievously, not across its borders, not by an invading army, not through a conventional assault, but from within its frontiers by a networked enemy employing the tools of globalisation and interconnectedness. As the leading American scholar, Joseph Nye, put it:


September 11 was a terrible symptom of the deeper changes that were already occurring in the world. Technology has been diffusing power away from governments and empowering individuals and groups to play roles in world politics—including wreaking massive destruction—which were once reserved to governments. Privatization has been increasing, and terrorism is the privatization of war. Globalization is shrinking distance, and events in faraway places, like Afghanistan, can have a great impact on American lives.¹

The implications for Australia of the attacks of 11 September 2001 were, and remain, far-reaching because prior to that day in 2001, successive governments had for almost three decades designed their defence policy around the principle of an immutable geography. For nearly 30 years, declaratory policy had stated that offshore deployment would not be a determining factor in ADF force structure planning. The geographical Defence of Australia approach that dated from the early 1970s reflected a powerful influence in 20th-century Australian peacetime strategic culture, namely that primacy of geography should serve as the focus of peacetime defence planning. And yet, in every war and security crisis from the Boer War of 1901 to the Iraq War of 2003, Australia has sent its military forces, usually soldiers, overseas. This disjunction between strategic theory and operational practice is one of the most remarkable features of Australia’s strategic culture, and this essay seeks to investigate what might be called the ‘tyranny of dissonance’ that has pervaded, and continues to pervade, Australian defence policy.⁴

If Geoffrey Blainey’s tyranny of distance helped to shape Australian society for much of the 19th century, then a tyranny of dissonance has infused Australian defence for long periods of the 20th century.

Three areas are examined. First, the essay examines the reasons why, over the past century, in its peacetime strategic theory Australia—despite being an island continent—has tended to favour continental defence over island defence. Second, the essay seeks to demonstrate how, despite peacetime strategic theory favouring a defence of geography, such theory has been irrelevant to operations, with Australian military practice always resorting to offshore deployment. Finally, some of the principal features of the changed 21st-century security environment are outlined in order to demonstrate that Australia can no longer afford a ‘tyranny of dissonance’ between its strategic theory and its military practice. Several suggestions are presented that might assist in ending the paradox between ideas and actions in defence policy through developing a national security strategy. Such a strategy would afford the offshore deployment of forces a secure and enduring place in future defence planning.

Continental Defence: The Geographical Imperative in Australian Peacetime Strategy

In peacetime, Australia’s vast continental geography has usually suggested that the best strategy for the country is one that mobilises the nation around a Fortress Australia. Strategic theory and geography have often been fused together through the agency of bastion defence. In the course of the 20th century, this approach towards defence policy gave Australia three great fortress strategies: the Federation-era strategy of continental naval defence between 1901-14, the Singapore bastion strategy of the 1920s and 1930s, and finally the Defence of Australia ‘sea-air gap’ strategy of the 1980s and 1990s. All of these strategies exploited geography and favoured naval and, later air forces, over land forces.5

Paradoxically, however, none of these strategies proved indicative of the reality of war or security crisis, and each strategy in its time became an orthodoxy that could only be altered by the bitter lessons of offshore military practice. Why has Australia so persistently embraced geographical determinism in its peacetime defence policy? The principal reason for the geographical imperative in Australian strategic thought can be related to the problem of continental-awareness over island-consciousness in Australian national culture. In 1964, the leading geographer, Saul B. Cohen, described Australia as a classic ‘trade dependent maritime state’ whose interests were tied a larger offshore Asian and Oceanic geostrategic region.6 Maritime nations invariably prepare to fight offshore wars in defence of their interests. For example both Britain and the United States have traditionally employed offshore strategies involving sea power and expeditionary warfare as the core elements of their security policies.7

Yet the notion of Australia as a ‘trade dependent maritime state’ has never been central of the Australian strategic psyche. In terms of strategy, continental-awareness has dominated over island-consciousness from the moment Edmund Barton described the 1901 Federation as representing ‘a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation’.8 Indeed, in many respects, Australia’s defence policy in the 20th century has been based on a strategic interpretation of Barton’s formula. Thus, while the Anzac sacrifice on the beaches of Gallipoli in 1915—the greatest amphibious operation of the First World War—dominates Australia’s conception of modern nationhood, neither Gallipoli nor

a genuine maritime consciousness has ever dominated the mainstream of Australian strategic thought. For example the Second World War amphibious operations of the 7th and 9th Divisions of the 2nd AIF in the South-West Pacific campaign have tended to be overshadowed by the 1st AIF’s experience of the First World War continental battles on the Western Front such as Pozières, Bullecourt, Hamel and Amiens.  

Given this powerful sense of continental-awareness, Australia has mainly sought to pursue its peacetime defence policy based around the security of its physical geography. As naval writers such as Alan Robertson and Lee Cordner have argued, Australian strategists view the sea not as a manoeuvre space that facilitates offshore deployment, but as a defensive moat that defends a land perimeter. For many Australian strategists, the sea separates a continental landmass from the South-East Asian archipelagos. Such a strategic approach has more in common with the ‘continental outlooks’ of Russia and China than with the tradition of Anglo-American maritime strategy.

Such a continental view of the sea ignores the reality of a maritime environment in which the northern archipelagos comprise a large number of islands, and essentially form what is a ‘sea-air-land gap’ that requires the use of joint military forces in offshore operations. Since the late 1990s, when Australia belatedly rediscovered the value of a maritime concept of strategy, its advocates have spent much of their energy struggling to escape from the straitjacket of continental defence. A June 2004 parliamentary inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade into Australian maritime strategy found that a focus on a sea-air gap strategy was too inadequate for future national security requirements. The Committee’s report stated that Australia’s defence strategy must now be focused on mounting effective military operations in Australia’s sea air land gap so as to influence affairs in the Asia-Pacific region and to defend non-territorial interests. The inquiry concluded, ‘[the committee] is convinced that an effective maritime strategy will be the foundation of Australia’s military strategy, and serve Australia well into the 21st century’. One of the great intellectual challenges facing Australian strategists over the next decade will be to ameliorate the power that continental geography has exercised over the Australian strategic psyche in peacetime.


12. Ibid., 71.
The Australian Approach to Warfighting: The Irrelevance of Strategic Theory in Australian Military Practice

No one can study 20th-century Australian military history and not be struck by the fact that Australia’s peacetime strategic thought based around continental geography has seldom matched the reality of its way in war. With the exception perhaps of the ‘forward defence’ era of the 1950s and 1960s under the Menzies Government—in which strategy matched military practice—peacetime strategic theory has usually tended to be not only irrelevant, but also more often than not, the exact opposite of operational practice. At the heart of Australian strategy lies a tyranny of dissonance, a clear disjunction between strategic ideas and military action.

From the Transvaal veldt in 1901 through the World Wars, Korea and Vietnam to East Timor and the sands of Bagram in 2003, Australia’s way of war has always been one of offshore deployment. Australia has always fought in defence not of its geography, but to uphold its history of Western values and political interests, because these features have been central to its identity, prosperity and place in the world. The Australian way of war may be described as being based on fusing strategy and statecraft through the agency of overseas warfare using volunteer forces in coalition operations. This approach to national warfighting was used both in the unlimited struggles of the World Wars and in the limited wars that have occurred since 1945.13

For all the peacetime belief in an immutable geography and for all the attachment to continental-awareness, in times of war and crisis Australia has found that strategy cannot be confined to geography for three principal reasons. First, a defence policy built around geography is seldom compatible with geopolitics. Second, one cannot formulate successful strategy based on ignoring the lessons of military history. Third, adherence to geographical determinism often tends to decouple a nation’s diplomacy from its defence and its strategy from its statecraft—a perilous situation for any nation.

Geographical Determinism and Geopolitics

One reason for the paradox between Australian strategic theory and military practice is that Australian strategists have frequently misunderstood the relationship between geography, which is static, and geopolitics, which are fluid. As the great Dutch American geopolitician, Nicholas Spykman, once observed, ‘the primary characteristic of any geopolitical analysis as distinguished from a purely geographic one, is that it is dealing with a dynamic rather than a static situation’.14 Spykman went on to note, in a famous phrase: ‘Geographical facts will not change but their meaning for foreign policy will’.15

15. Ibid., 7.
The dangers of allowing geographical determinism as opposed to geopolitics to dominate Australian strategy are well demonstrated by events during the era of the Defence of Australia ‘sea-air gap’ strategic era that extended from the mid 1970s to the late 1990s. In 1982 Professor Robert O’Neill warned those who were then devising the Defence of Australia bastion strategy that a narrow geographically-based approach to defence strategy was an ill-advised policy. He warned:

The security of the [geographical] home base is still a *sine qua non* of sound posture, but Australia would be ill-advised to pursue that strategic policy alone, with dedicated perfectionism. To do so would be to misunderstand how the balance of international power normally works. *Diplomacy and strategy must go hand in hand.*

O’Neill’s warning was largely ignored. The Dibb Report of 1986 and the strategic guidance of the 1987 and 1994 White Papers made the defence of geography the principal force structure determinant of Australian strategy. Yet security practice continued to follow the time-honoured Australian warfighting tradition of sending forces—particularly troops—overseas to defend values and uphold interests. Such operations, which included the Gulf War of 1991 and subsequent interventions in the first half of the 1990s in Cambodia and Somalia, were declared to be marginal to the primary role of defending the geographical homeland.

Yet as military deployments proliferated between 1999 and 2003 with missions in East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Solomon Islands, the dissonance between strategic theory and operational practice became too obvious to ignore or to justify as merely marginal activities. In 2002, the current Minister for Defence, Senator Robert Hill, recognised the mismatch between Australian strategic theory and operational practice, observing:

[There is] a disconnect between [strategic] doctrine and reality. Our primary responsibility is the direct defence of Australia yet our troops are more heavily engaged [than] at any time since at least Vietnam, in a multitude of tasks around the world.

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Several leading American analysts also noticed the disjunction between theory and practice in Australia’s geographically based defence strategy. In 2003, echoing the view of Robert Hill, the leading US strategic analyst, Eliot A. Cohen, commented:

[Geographical] ‘Defence of Australia’ remains intact in theory, but abandoned in practice, as Australian soldiers, sailors and airmen patrol East Timor, restore order in the Solomons, fight alongside American commandos in Afghanistan and Iraq, and prepare to intercept dubious merchant ships off the Korean coast. Governments rarely explicitly foreswear their strategic doctrines: rather they modify them quietly in theory, or simply abandon them in practice.

The response of the geostrategists to such criticisms was to argue that the success of offshore operations validated the defence policy adopted in 1987 and subsequently refined in the 1994 and 2000 Defence White Papers. For example, in February 2003, Paul Dibb, the architect of the sea-air gap strategy of the 1980s, informed his critics:

There is a naïve and simplistic view around that there is a conflict between practice and doctrine [in Australian strategy] … Yet within the force structure we have developed … within a very limited budget—1.9 per cent of GDP, we have deployed 5,000-plus troops to East Timor—and people have forgotten the 1,200 troops deployed to Somalia in 1993—and there was Angola [sic], Cambodia and so on.

Yet, as the Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, has pointed out, Dibb’s view seriously underestimated the impact of continental-based strategic guidance on the Australian Army’s force structure. The adoption of a geostrategy during the 1980s severely diminished land force capabilities, creating a loss of strategic agility and a unit hollowness that was only overcome in East Timor in 1999 by the tremendous efforts of uniformed personnel in the field. Indeed, the Army’s difficulties at the dawn of the new century were a reflection of how the dynamism of post-Cold War geopolitics had eclipsed the imperatives of Australia’s geographically-based defence planning.
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Ignoring Lessons from Military History

One of the major weaknesses of Australia’s late 20th century geostrategy was its lack of historical appreciation. For instance, in a major study of Australian defence policy published in 1980, one of the main architects of Australian geostrategy, Ross Babbage, wrote: ‘Australian ground forces are unlikely to be deployed again in the South-East Asian region, except possibly for small-scale operations of short duration’. Such a view ignored the entire experience of Australia’s military history which demonstrated that warfare in Australia’s region had since the Korean War been waged predominantly by ground forces. Moreover, in the predominantly maritime South-West Pacific campaign in the Second World War, the army had still carried the heaviest burden of the three Australian services and incurred the greatest number of casualties. Nonetheless, the belief that troops would not be required for offshore deployments became central to the geostrategy that was formulated in the wake of the 1986 Dibb Report.

One of the few leading strategic thinkers who dissented from the Dibb-Babbage view of a reduced role for ground forces was Robert O’Neill. O’Neill argued that regional deployments of Australian troops in time of crisis or conflict was likely to occur in the future, if only to maintain a favourable regional security environment and to uphold Australia’s political values and political interests. O’Neill noted Australia’s long history of overseas deployments and cautioned the geostrategists:

Warfare in Australia’s neighbourhood has been waged predominantly by ground forces in the past three decades … it would be foolish to foreswear for ever the use of one of [Australia’s] applicable military strengths … Australia’s interests have been well served in most cases, with the arguable exception of the Vietnam War, by its capacity to contribute forces to support allies and help defeat aggression in other parts of the world.

Unfortunately, such historically informed views were generally ignored by advocates of the geographical Defence of Australia doctrine. The strategic guidance documents between 1976 and 1994 generally avoided or downplayed the possibility that Australia would use troops in a Southeast Asian contingency. Only in 1997 was the issue of force readiness for troops seriously reconsidered and only some eighteen months before the crisis in East Timor led to the biggest deployment since the Vietnam War.  

Decoupling Defence from Diplomacy

The final reason why strategic theory based on geography has never succeeded in practice is the reality that it has the effect of decoupling defence from diplomacy. As Sir Garfield Barwick once observed, ‘a foreign policy depends on three things: effective and available military power, remembered military prowess, and sheer diplomatic skill’. The final reason why strategic theory based on geography has never succeeded in practice is the reality that it has the effect of decoupling defence from diplomacy. As Sir Garfield Barwick once observed, ‘a foreign policy depends on three things: effective and available military power, remembered military prowess, and sheer diplomatic skill’. 28 Strategy cannot be confined to geography; it must become the handmaiden of foreign policy. If a nation’s military posture is consciously divorced from its foreign relations then a state is likely to find itself facing a contradiction between its available military means and the requirements for armed force that might be dictated by diplomatic obligations.

Australian strategy in time of war and crisis has frequently tended to seek an organic link between the complementary aspects of foreign policy and defence policy in order to uphold security interests through alliances. As Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs in the Menzies Government, put it in 1950 during the Korean War:

A nation’s foreign policy must be closely integrated with that of defence, for if the foreign policy that is followed proves incapable of achieving or maintaining peace, the departments of war must take over. Indeed, the military strength of a nation may largely condition the means employed by foreign policy in seeking to achieve its purpose. 29

The combination of statecraft with strategy, of diplomacy with alliance politics and offshore warfare, provided the principal means for Australia to counter 20th century threats of German militarism, Japanese imperialism and Chinese communism. In all of these cases, Australian forces were employed in offshore deployments in order to uphold a global balance of power that favoured Australia’s long-term development as a democratic state. Indeed, Australia’s military experience is a good illustration of John Gooch’s observation that ‘ultimately, the effectiveness of any armed force must be measured by the degree to which it successfully supports its country’s foreign policy up to and beyond the point of war’. 30 It is likely that a strategic calculus based on close cooperation between diplomacy and defence will provide the principal method by which Australia will prosecute the 21st century war on terror against Islamo-fascism.

The New 21st Century Global Strategic Environment

How will the new 21st century security environment affect Australia’s propensity for developing strategic theory that does not match military practice? To answer this question we must examine the main features of the security environment that are emerging.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the traditional international security system the world has known since 1945—one that links sovereignty to Westphalian-style territorial borders—is under pressure from the new strategic reality of the age of globalisation. That reality is that in an interconnected world of the internet, satellites and mobile phones, global and transnational threats including mass-casualty terrorism, weapons of mass effect, and civil war now bypass the barriers of national geography and can no longer be easily quarantined within states or even within regions. Distinctions between civil and international conflict; between internal and external security; and between national and societal security have begun to erode.31

The electronic interpenetration of borders has created a world that disrupts national traditions—a process that ensures that global consciousness will be accompanied by lethal forces of polarisation and particularism. In the new millennium we face a bifurcated international security system—that is a system that is split between a traditional 20th century state-centred paradigm and a new 21st century sub-state and trans-state strata. The great change in the early 21st century international system from that of the last quarter of the 20th century is the transition away from a dominant state-centric structure towards a structure marked by a greater number of sub-state and trans-state actors.32

The globalisation of security, and the bifurcated international system it has created, have brought with it three other important changes—first, a shift in strategic thinking from territoriality to connectedness, second, a merging of foreign and domestic policies


and third, a merging of modes of armed conflict. The first change, the shift in 21st century strategic thinking, involves a transition away from ideas of state-based war based on territoriality towards a greater appreciation of non-state and non-linear conflict based on connectedness.

Some strategic thinkers believe that the rise of connectedness means ‘the end of geography’—not as a factor in the waging of war—but as the main factor that conditions our strategic preparation for crisis and conflict, an important, indeed crucial distinction, that must be understood. In this respect, a growing number of both Western and non-Western analysts now believe that a relative decline of strategic geography at the hands of globalisation may represent the most important change occurring in international security during the first decade of the 21st century.33

For example, the leading American strategic analyst, Phillip Bobbitt, has observed, ‘national security will cease to be defined in terms of borders alone because both the links among societies as well as the attacks on them exist in psychological and infrastructural dimensions, not on an invaded plain marked by the seizure and holding of territory’.34 Similarly, two Chinese strategists, Quiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, have pointed out that the world is entering an age of unrestricted warfare in which ‘there is no territory that cannot be surpassed; there is no means which cannot be used in … war; and there is no territory or method which cannot be used in combination’.35

These views reflect a growing consensus that most advanced societies, particularly in the West, are now most vulnerable, not so much from external attack, but from an internal disruption of the connectedness of their government, financial and economic institutions and critical infrastructures. Threats to networked societies now form an indivisible mosaic with the potential to bypass the security once afforded by physical borders.

The second change caused by globalised security and bifurcation is the reality that in the 21st century, the defence strategies and homeland security policies of advanced states are now intimately connected, simply because the growing array of global threats now blurs the distinction between internal and external crises. The grim realities of the 21st century security environment place a new premium on advanced liberal democracies

34. Bobbitt, The Shield of Achilles, 813.
35. Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, Unrestricted Warfare (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 199.
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possessing flexible strategies involving a mixture of agile, joint forces for offshore coalition operations and vulnerability-based homeland security measures designed to defend critical infrastructures.\(^{36}\)

The third change created by globalised security and a bifurcated international system is the diffusion of modes of armed conflict. The rise of an interconnected security environment has seen threats such as state failure, rapid weapons proliferation, mass-casualty terrorism and modes of conventional and unconventional conflict emerge—threats that cannot simply be quarantined behind borders or diminished by distance. There are no longer any neat categories of conflict; rather we face the possibility of continuous, sporadic, armed conflict, blurred in time and space and waged on several levels by a large array of national and subnational forces employing missiles, machetes and Microsoft. In the new millennium, the new enemies of peace and order are dynamic, unpredictable and above all networked and global.\(^{37}\)

In the age of globalisation, the reality is that the nation-state has lost its monopoly over violence. As Philip Bobbitt has put it, the real military revolution of the age of globalisation is this: for the first time since the birth of the modern state in the 17th century, it is possible to organise violence outside a state structure on a scale that is potentially devastating to an entire society. To quote Bobbitt:

We are at a moment in world affairs when the essential ideas that govern statecraft must change. For five centuries it has taken the resources of a state to destroy another state; only states could muster the huge revenues, conscript the vast armies, and equip the divisions required to threaten the survival of other states … This is no longer true, owing to advances in international telecommunications, rapid computation, and weapons of mass destruction. The change in statecraft that will accompany these developments will be as profound as any that the State has thus far undergone.\(^{38}\)

Nor is Bobbitt is not alone in this belief. The eminent British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, has written, ‘the material equipment for warfare is now widely available to private bodies, as are the means of financing non-state warfare. In this way, the balance between state and non-state organisations has changed’.\(^{39}\)

Australia and the ‘End of Geography’: The Need for ‘A Strategy of Security’

Where does Australia stand in respect to the new international security era outlined above? We are, unfortunately, on its cusp due to our geopolitical location in the Asia-Pacific. In the words of two observers, ‘instead of being at the forefront in the Pacific Century, Australia now finds itself on the front line of the New World Disorder’.40 The new world disorder has seen Australian military involvement in East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq and the Solomons, police support for a faltering Papua New Guinea. At the same time the nation faces the ominous spread of Islamist terrorism into Southeast Asia symbolised by the 2002 Bali and 2004 Jakarta Embassy bombing attacks and by the interlocking of global and regional terrorist networks in places such as the Southern Philippines. In the future, Australia is likely to confront the merging of what Defence Minister, John Moore, called in 2000 the rise of a regional ‘sea of instability’ and what Senator Hill described in 2003 as the emergence of a ‘global ‘arc of terrorism’.

Australia has, therefore, entered a new age of globalised security and the Cold War concept of a geographically defined defence perimeter conceived in terms of a series of concentric circles is no longer sufficient. The age of globalised security is one in which the threats of car bombs in Melbourne, potential suicide attacks on Sydney shopping malls, failing governance in the South Pacific, counter-terrorism cooperation with Indonesia and the problem of terrorist base camps in the Southern Philippines, represent more realistic issues of security than imaginary armadas and phantom raiding forces in the sea-air gap. Moreover, sovereignty protection in the form of a modern concept of homeland security has, in 21st century conditions, become a greater priority than a focus on military defence of Australia’s northern geography. In short, the geostrategy designed in the 1980s is now an obsolescent approach to national security simply because Australia is located in a dynamic 21st century geopolitical environment which necessitates constant adjustment both in terms of geopolitical thinking and in security policy practice.41

Three measures must be adopted by strategists and policy makers in order to improve the theory and practice of Australian strategy in the early 21st century. First, if Australia is to counter the twin perils of a regional ‘sea of instability’ and a global ‘arc of terrorism’ and prevent them from merging, it must align its declaratory strategic


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theory with actual military practice. In an era of ‘come as you are forces’ the cardinal rule for force structure planning in such conditions is simply ‘organise as you intend to fight’. And the way the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is most likely to fight will be through a combination of offshore deployments using task forces and paramilitary homeland security measures.43

In an era of networks and vulnerable societal infrastructure, the ADF will need to fight threats at a geographical distance and to prepare for multiple contingencies across a complex spectrum of conflict. Consequently, cooperative security agreements, coalition operations and a strategic interdependence between national, regional and global security contingencies are the issues that are likely to dominate Australian security policy over the next decade. As the Prime Minister, John Howard, put it in April 2003, ‘while the circumstances are different, the importance of national security interests [in Australian politics] now rivals the importance they occupied in the 1950s and 1960s’.44

Second, Australia clearly requires what Nicholas Spykman once called a ‘strategy of security’ or, in today’s language, ‘a whole of government approach’ to security.45 Such an approach is based on the premise that, in modern global conditions, ‘all fronts and all areas are interrelated’.46 An Australian strategy of security would help to temper the tyranny of dissonance between strategic theory and military practice that has often afflicted national defence policy. A national security strategy would bring a degree of integration between competing national, global and regional security requirements embodied in such documents as the 2003 Defence Update, the 2003 Foreign Affairs White Paper and various documents on counter-terrorism policy.47

Third, a national security strategy would assist Australia to adopt a holistic rather than a fragmented methodology to mould defence, diplomacy and counter-terrorism into a cohesive quick-reaction system. A national security strategy is also required in order to integrate new operational concepts as multidimensional manoeuvre, maritime operations in the littoral environment, network-centric or enabled warfare and complex

44. For Howard’s comments on Australian defence and security, made in the wake of the first phase of the 2003 Iraq War, see Paul Kelly, ‘Howard delivers verdict on war’, The Weekend Australian, 26-27 April 2003.
45. Spykman, The Geography of the Peace, 45.
46. Ibid.
47. Commonwealth of Australia, Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2003); Advancing the National Interest: Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2003); Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004); Protecting Australia Against Terrorism: Australia’s National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Arrangements (Canberra: Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2004).
warfighting into a new strategic calculus. Such a new strategic calculus should clearly define the direction and type of force structure that the ADF will require over the next decade.

Conclusion

The distinguished social historian, Theodore Zeldin, once wrote that in order ‘to have a new vision of the future, it has always first been necessary to have a new vision of the past’. Australia’s new vision its strategic past must be study and comprehend the tyranny of dissonance that has divided our theory of strategy from our practice of warfighting. For too long, Australia’s peacetime strategic history has been marked by a tendency to build strategy around continental geography when in fact geography can only ever be the grammar, not the logic, of strategy. So it is that in every war and security crisis faced since Federation, the geographical ideal has always been eclipsed by the political reality of offshore deployment in order to defend Australia’s vital non-territorial interests and Western liberal democratic values.

In an age of strategic unpredictability marked by the rise of networks and transnational threats, Australia faces ‘the end of geography’ in the sense that what one scholar has called the passing of the ‘barrier conception of geographical space’. As a result, Australian defence policy makers would be ill-advised to continue to build military strategy around a Fortress Australia and a sea-air gap. Instead, Australia needs a multi-faceted security outlook—one that is simultaneously globally attuned, regionally focused and alliance-oriented. Australian policy makers and military professionals must understand that in the 21st century, successful strategy will require an intuitive synthesis of national security requirements—one that embraces policy, political purpose, geopolitics, national values, military power, force readiness, economics, logistics and diplomacy. Only by developing such a multidimensional approach to security can Australia overcome the extraordinary tyranny of dissonance that has, for long periods of its military history, impaired its readiness for war and security crisis by divorcing strategic theory from operational practice.

‘That Magical Word of War’

*Peter Pierce*

There are two key small scenes in Shakespeare’s play *Antony and Cleopatra*, which was written four hundred years ago, and is where I want to begin. In performance they are often excised, but they have much to say about making, and writing about war, and of the connections between them. At the beginning of Act Five, having overcome his surprise at the news of Antony’s death (‘the breaking of so great a thing should make a greater crack’), Octavius Caesar asks his generals for a moment in private with them:

| Go with me to my tent, where you shall see                  |
| How hardly I was drawn into this war,                      |
| How calm and gentle I proceeded still                      |
| In all my writings. Go with me and see                     |
| What I can show in this.                                   |

That is, the surviving Roman triumvir knows how inseparable are war and the words that celebrate, justify, make sense of it. Even before the final stages of his campaign in Egypt, Caesar has taken charge of its written record. He has anticipated of what strategic and propaganda value such a record will be.

Act Three opens in another place far from Rome, in Parthia. Antony’s general Ventidius is being praised for avenging—by his victory over the Parthians—the death of the Roman general Crassus. But Ventidius quells the acclaim, cautioning that ‘A lower place, note well./May make too great an act’. The accomplishments of the lieutenant must not exceed those of his general. The victory has been won, but the military business is not concluded until Ventidius writes to Antony: ‘I’ll humbly signify what in his name,/ That magical word of war, we have effected’. Thus Ventidius provides the title of this excursion into writing and speaking about ‘Battles Near and Far’ with his phrase ‘that magical word of war’. The reference is to Antony. This is another of the play’s many hyperbolical judgments of him. The stress is very different from that on Caesar’s written words: Antony’s name becomes a word propelled into action, a magical word. Drier

This is the text of a speech given at the conference dinner prior to the formal opening of the conference.
reckonings of events are not an aspect of his genius, but that concentration on, and of, action may also be his doom.

Tonight I want to construe Ventidius’s phrase more broadly to refer to military language. I had thought to discuss military speeches, but the field is a slippery one. Where were such speeches delivered? Who were they for? Who heard them, and what is it that they thought they heard? How does the script differ from the written text? Why are some speeches remembered, and most forgotten? At Gettysburg, in November 1863, Abraham Lincoln self-deprecatingly said: ‘The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here’. But the world has remembered.

Public speeches, more or less accurately reported, are one thing, but what of those famous, overheard, informal words of war? Attributed to Wellington at Waterloo was the cry of command ‘Up guards and at them again!’ In retrospect, Wellington wanted to edit himself: ‘What I must have said … [was] Stand up guards’. Enthusiasm was to be avoided, but those second thoughts are not what the world has remembered. In Les Murray’s tonic and very funny poem, ‘The Quality of Sprawl’, he quotes a famous moment before the sack of a city in southern France in the early thirteenth century which was occupied, not exclusively, by Cathar heretics:

Sprawl is never Simon de Montfort
At a town-storming: Kill them all! God will know his own.
Knowing the man’s name this was said to might be sprawl.

Finally, before we return to the certifiable, if no less memorable words about war, were not some of the noblest of them this mangled reassurance by an unknown Australian to a distressed French woman at Villers-Bretonneux in April 1918: ‘Fini retreat, madame, beaucoup Australians ici’.

That earlier mention of Lincoln reminds us that military speeches are not only the preserve of military men. Notoriously they are part of the rhetorical armoury of politicians, both in peace and in war. In consequence of the questions that I raised before—although I wish to address some of them—my speech is more broadly concerned with what has been written and reported about war, and also with inscriptions on memorials to the war dead. One of the things that we would expect to find is how a solemn, or perilous, or triumphant occasion heightens the language employed. Another, perhaps less predictable, is how speakers revise previous texts, not excluding their own (see Wellington, above). It needs also to be emphasised that we will be dealing not only with the words of literary men, but with those of highly literate and well-read soldiers.

As one of England’s most famous authors, a member of the Imperial War Graves Commission, but hardly an unqualified imperialist, Rudyard Kipling was invited to write the inscription for the tens of thousands of Great War graves to which no name could be
attached. These were his eloquently plain words: ‘A Soldier of the Great War. Known Unto God’. Yet set that besides some other plain, but this time bitter words by Kipling. They are from a poem written after the death of his son John, who was serving on the Western Front with the Irish Guards in 1917. Kipling wrote: ‘If any question why we died/Tell them, because our fathers lied’. Here deeds in war, especially those leading to the loss of life, are contrasted with words about war, by implication the bellicose propaganda of those who will not have to fight. More pointedly it is the older generation, the ‘fathers’, whom Kipling indicts, even though he is one of them.

The terms in which he does so recall famous words from many centuries before, or more exactly, what has subsequently been made of them. This was how Simonides memorialised the sacrifice of three hundred soldiers that helped to save Greece: ‘Go tell the Spartans that we lie here in obedience to their laws’. If there is any reproach, it is implicit, rather than grimly accusatory, as in Kipling’s redaction. Another version of Simonides, which was in part a response to the war in Vietnam, but which kept general, as the title indicates, was A.D. Hope’s ‘Inscription for Any War’. It ends ‘Go tell those old men, now in bed, We took their orders and are dead’. A Roman poet, Horace, declared ‘dulce et decorum est pro patria mori’; an English poet of the Great War, Wilfred Owen, rebuked those ‘old lies’, and sarcastically rhymed ‘patria mori’ with ‘desperate glory’. Yet a few lines later, Horace had castigated the rhetoric of politicians who make war.

Generals have more opportunity than private soldiers to ensure that their words might be remembered. Owen’s friend Siegfried Sassoon had little time for them, as he bluntly indicates in his poem ‘The General’:

He’s a cheery old card said Harry to Jack
As they marched up to Arras with rifle and pack.
But he did for them both with his plan of attack.

War correspondent and poet Kenneth Slessor was similarly scornful, in ‘An Inscription for Dog River’, in particular of General Blamey’s vainglorious desire to have an inscription cut to celebrate an Australian victory. The words of generals are often recorded in orders of the day. Here are some famous examples. Nelson at Trafalgar: ‘England expects that every man will do his duty’. Pétain at Verdun in February 1916: ‘Ils ne passeront pas’. Haig on 12 April 1918: ‘With our backs to the wall, and believing in the justice of our cause, each one of us must fight to the end’. These are words uttered in extreme circumstances. Their drama is intensified because there are no rhetorical embellishments to distract from the sense of crisis.

Napoleon, of course, was different, telling his soldiers before the Battle of the Pyramids on 21 July 1798: ‘Soldats, songez que, du haut de ces pyramides, quarante siècles vous contemlent’. John Monash’s order of the day before the battle of Amiens in August 1918 also ended upbeat, on a note of exhortation:
I earnestly wish every soldier of the Corps the best of good fortune, and glorious and decisive victory, the story of which will echo throughout the world, and will live forever in the history of our homeland.

An implicit hope is that Monash’s words will also live. Certainly they have a better claim to do so than the awkward inscription that he wrote for the Victorian Shrine of Remembrance, with the improbable aid of the radical poet Bernard O’Dowd.

Who were the men who would listen to these words of generals, and what did they think of them? Who are the audiences for ‘that magical word of war’. Cromwell had a characteristically firm idea:

Such men as had the fear of God before them and as made some conscience of what they did … the plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for and loves what he knows.

Cromwell is lauding those to whom military speeches are directed and who presumably can respond to them in appropriately sober and responsible ways. Shakespeare’s Falstaff, as we might expect, takes a different tack. In the first part of *Henry IV* he speaks of those he has impressed into the king’s service. His ‘whole charge’ consists of ‘slaves as ragged as Lazarus in the painted cloth, where the glutton’s dogs licked his sores: and such indeed as were never soldiers, but discarded unjust serving-men, younger sons to younger brothers, revolted tapsters, and ostlers trade-fallen, the cankers of a calm world, and a long peace’. Falstaff nonchalantly announces the terrible fate of the handful of these ‘ragamuffins’ who are left alive at the end of the battle: ‘they are for the town’s end, to beg during life’. Here is no ‘happy few’, nor that ‘band of brothers’ whom Shakespeare’s Henry V addressed before Agincourt. Rather Falstaff offers an acrid opposition to such rhetoric.

Shakespeare wrote his two tetralogies of medieval history plays against chronological order. His audience already knew—from the three parts of *Henry VI*—of the squandering of English possessions in France before we see Henry V’s oration on the stage on St Crispin’s Day. But Falstaff—who denies the claims of honour (‘can honour set a leg … take away the grief of a wound?’), of dynasty, of majesty save his own anarchic kind, has already called in question ‘that magical word of war’. It is right that he dies before Henry V’s heroic expedition, in which his anti-heroic ethos could not have been accommodated. Before leaving these plays, we should note that no-one before Kipling, or since, gave such trenchant voice to the views of the common soldier as Shakespeare did here. Ragamuffins have their say about war, especially in *Henry V*, as kings and generals do.

The anguish of war has enriched every European language. The effect has not been deterrence, but neither have words about one war usually been enlisted to provoke
another. However much these ‘magical’ words have circulated, they are indelibly coloured with the speaker’s or writer’s personality. They remain individual witnesses to shocking, mass circumstances in common. Think of these examples—of French ruefulness, words as an admiring shrug, Marshal Bosquet at the Charge of the Light Brigade: ‘C’est magnifique, but ce n’est pas la guerre’. Or the crazy élan of Marshal Foch: ‘Mon centre cède, ma droite recule, situation excellente. J’attaque’. Blücher, visiting London in 1814, disarmingly remarked ‘What a place to plunder’. In 1872, Bismarck showed his scepticism about military speech-making. He advocated a policy that ‘cannot succeed through speeches, and shooting matches, and songs; it can only be carried out through blood and iron’.

The British war leader who conjured more magic than most with words gives us the still potent adjective Churchillian. In particular this refers to the series of speeches delivered to the House of Commons in a period of just over a month in May-June 1940. They were soon published, and broadcast on radio. They were counsels of resilience and resistance. Their key phrases endure in memory and rhetoric. Their power also perhaps ensures that they are always ripe for misappropriation. On 13 May he had ‘nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat’. By 4 June ‘we’ had replaced ‘I’ as he spoke in the voice of, and on behalf of, the whole people: ‘we shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds … we shall never surrender’. A fortnight later, casting a glance into the future if not so far as Napoleon’s into the past, Churchill urged ‘us’ to ‘brace ourselves and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire last for a thousand years, men will still say, “This was their finest hour”’. Churchill had not been in battle for a quarter of a century, but this was magnificent and it was war, a vital rhetorical sally to win a psychological combat long before the fighting was finished.

Hemingway, who gave us the phrases ‘a separate peace’ and ‘a farewell to arms’, reckoned that the test of a good short story was how much good stuff had to be left out. So it is with this digressive accounting of ‘that magical word of war’. One could have developed the contrast between Grey’s elegy: ‘The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime’ (Lord Grey of Fallodon on 2 August 1914) and Kaiser Wilhelm II. Surprised for once into poetry, he farewelled his troops by assuring them that ‘You will be home before the leaves have fallen from the trees’. Not surprisingly, military language is full of famous last words. This was Philip Sidney on a Dutch battlefield in 1586: ‘Thy necessity is yet greater than mine’. Then there is whatever it was that Nelson said to Hardy at Trafalgar. But because this is a conference for the Chief of Army, let me leave my last words—as they were his—to Napoleon: ‘Tête de l’armée’.
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