THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA

THE 2008 CHIEF OF ARMY MILITARY HISTORY CONFERENCE

Edited by
Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey

2008
The Army History Unit gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the sponsors in staging the 2008 Chief of Army Military History Conference.

THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA
First published 2008
Published by Australian History Military Publications (AHMP)
© Commonwealth of Australia
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.
Designed and set by Margaret McNally
Cover design:
Photographs:
Contents

Preface iv
Notes on Contributors vi

Introduction
Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie 1

The Military and the Media: Past and Future
Stephen Badsey 6

Mutilating Despatches? Australian War Correspondents in the Great War
Richard Trembath 22

Anzacs, Gallipoli and the Germans
John F. Williams 35

‘Everything, in fact, except respect’: The Military and the Media and the
Department of Information during the Second World War
Peter Sekuless 64

The Mosquito Network: American Military Broadcasting in the
South-West Pacific 1944-1946
Martin Hadlow 74

The Cold War: An Australian Perspective
Lyn Gorman 96

Military-Media Relations in the Shadow of Germany’s Nazi Past:
The Bundeswehr 1955-1965
Peter Busch 113

The Tet Offensive and the News Media: Some Thoughts on the
Effects of News Reporting
William M. Hammond 132

Who’s Telling the Story? The Military and the Media
Karen Middleton 147

The Military, The Media and the Propaganda War in Northern Ireland
David Welch 158

From Vietnam to the Gulf: A Personal Perspective
Joseph Galloway 174
Writing in 2000, before the September 11 attacks ushered in a new phase in the changing character of war, historian and media commentator Susan Carruthers wrote that ‘war isn't what it used to be’. True then, it is perhaps even more so now, at least when compared to the experiences of Western militaries within the living memory of their members—say, the last 30 years. The 1990s started with ‘domesticated’ journalists reporting on ‘technowar’ from Kuwait (a way station on the path to ‘embedded’ correspondents a decade later), and then seemingly inexplicably reverted to more basic, protracted and brutal conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere that challenged military responses as much as journalistic ones. This process has reached its logical outcome in Iraq and Afghanistan with the deliberate targeting of Western journalists by insurgent forces. The ‘management’ of journalists and their reporting from the field by their own side has become impossible as the technologies that enable military communications perform an analogous function within the civil economy as well. ‘Instantaneous’ coverage has now been matched by a ‘24/7’ news cycle, or at least broadcasting cycle, in which something, anything must go to air and be dissected, updated, or just endlessly repeated. Add to this the rise of the television defence pundit, frequently a recently retired more-or-less senior officer paid to second-guess his recent professional colleagues, and of the correspondent-turned-celebrity who is in regular danger of being bigger than the story, and both the military and the media may be forgiven for yearning for the relative certainty of earlier, and quieter, times.

The capacity for more-or-less total control of the flow of information out of the war zone that was achieved during Konfrontasi in the mid-1960s, or in the Falklands in the early 1980s, may be viewed with nostalgia by some, but is firmly consigned to history. For their part, journalists had best get used to the idea that the excesses of the Vietnam era, when accredited correspondents enjoyed a priority only below casualty evacuation and aerial resupply, are equally firmly an historical phenomenon. The al-Jazeera phenomenon coupled with the ability of soldiers in-theatre to bypass both the military and the media chain-of-command and post directly to the Web should serve notice on soldiers, journalists, officials and politicians, that old ways of doing business are anachronistic where not, indeed, redundant.
The stereotypes of ‘traditional’ military-media relations still feature strongly in the public mind, and in public culture, but relations and understanding between the two sides has improved immeasurably since Field Marshal Lord Kitchener attempted in 1914 to ban correspondents from reporting the war from the front in France and Belgium. Equally, it is difficult to conceive of any serious correspondent conforming to C.E. Montague’s description of war reporters in his memoir, *Disenchantment* (1922).

The average war correspondent - there were golden exceptions - insensibly acquired a cheerfulness in the face of vicarious torment and danger. Through his despatches there ran a brisk implication that the regimental officers and men enjoyed nothing better than ‘going over the top’; that a battle was just a rough jovial picnic, that a fight never went on long enough for the men, that their only fear was lest the war should end this side of the Rhine. This tone roused the fighting troops to fury against the writers. This, the men reflected, in helpless anger, was what people at home were offered as faithful accounts of what their friends in the field were thinking and suffering.

A prewar leader writer for the *Manchester Guardian* who opposed the war before its outbreak, he had joined up overage and served in an infantry battalion before being transferred to intelligence work.

The emergence of the war correspondent, in the Philip Knightley model at least, coincides roughly in time with the development and growth of the professional soldier, or at least officer, and the relationship of mutual dependence that each enjoys with the other helps to explain something of the tension and animosity that has informed their interaction historically. The two have always had different aims, functions and purposes, and perhaps it is a sign of maturity that this is now broadly recognised and understood. This not to say that soldiers or journalists do, or necessarily will, like each other any more than in the past. Had he lived in our own times, Clausewitz might have used the CNN factor as a prime example of ‘friction’ or as he put it, that which ‘distinguishes real war from war on paper’.

We are, as always, indebted to all those who contributed to the success of the conference: especially the speakers, the organisers from the Army History Unit (most particularly Roger Lee and Andrew Richardson), the sponsors, and our indefatigable typesetter, Margaret McNally.

Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey
Notes on Contributors

Peter Busch is a senior lecturer in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London. He holds masters degrees in journalism from the University of Dortmund, Germany, and in international history from the London School of Economics, and completed his PhD at the LSE in 2000. Before joining the Department in September 2004, he was Senior Broadcast Journalist in the news and current affairs department of Germany’s biggest TV station, ZDF. Dr Busch’s current book project is a study of the media coverage of new wars. He is also working on GDR propaganda against West Germany’s Bundeswehr in the 1960s.

Peter Dennis is emeritus professor of history at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy. His most recent publication is, as joint editor and author, the 2nd edition of The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History (2008).

Joseph ‘Joe’ Galloway is an American newspaper correspondent and columnist, the former Military Affairs consultant for the Knight-Ridder chain of newspapers and currently a columnist with McClatchy Newspapers. Galloway has worked for United Press International (UPI) and served overseas as bureau chief or regional manager in Tokyo, Vietnam, Jakarta, New Delhi, Singapore, Moscow, and Los Angeles. During the Vietnam War, Galloway served three tours in Vietnam for UPI, beginning in early 1965. Decorated for rescuing wounded American soldiers under heavy enemy fire during the battle at Landing Zone X-Ray in the Ia Drang Valley, he was the only civilian awarded the Bronze Star by the United States Army during that war. With Lieutenant General Hal Moore he co-authored We Were Soldiers Once … and Young (1992), an account of the Ia Drang battles, and their follow-up volume, We Are Soldiers Still: A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam, was published in August 2008.

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AO, DSC, CSM, enlisted in the Australian Army as an apprentice in 1968. He graduated from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea in 1972 and was commissioned into the corps of the Royal Australian Engineers. He has held a range of regimental and staff appointments. These include: instructor appointments at the School of Military Engineering and 1st Recruit Training Battalion; regimental appointments in the rank of Captain and Major in the 2nd, 5th, and 2nd/3rd Field Engineer Regiments and the 1st Construction Regiment; Company Commander at the Army Apprentices School; and Senior Instructor at the School of Military Engineering. During 1986 and 1987 he was the Australian Exchange Instructor at the Royal School of Military Engineering in the United Kingdom. In 1989 he raised, and then deployed as the second in command and operations officer, the 2nd Australian Contingent to
the United Nations Transition Assistance Group in Namibia. In 1990/91 he was the Standing Chairman of the Quadripartite Working Group—Engineers in the ABCA Armies Agreement. In 1999 and 2000 he was the Senior National Officer for Australia in the ABCA Program. Senior appointments have included: the inaugural commanding officer of the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, Staff Officer Operations to the Chief of the Defence Force, inaugural commander of the Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre (ASTJIC), and the inaugural Principal Staff Officer—Intelligence, Headquarters Australian Theatre. He was promoted Brigadier in January 1999. In this rank he was the Chief of Staff Training Command—Army, he commanded the United Nations Sector West multinational brigade in East Timor, and he was the National Commander of Australia’s contribution to Operation ‘Enduring Freedom’. He was appointed Land Commander Australia in January 2004 and in July 2005 he was promoted Lieutenant General and appointed as Vice Chief of the Defence Force. Lieutenant General Gillespie assumed the appointment of Chief of Army on 4 July 2008.

Lyn Gorman is Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Administration), Charles Sturt University. Previously she was Dean of the Faculty of Arts, also at Charles Sturt University. Her research interests include media history, particularly the emergence and development of mass media and their social and political impact, and Australian media and the Cold War. She is co-author, with David McLean, of Media and Society into the Twenty-first Century: An Historical Introduction. 2nd edition (forthcoming, 2008), also published as Media e societa nel mondo contemporaneo (2005).

Jeffrey Grey is professor of history at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy. His most recent publication is, as joint editor and author, the 2nd edition of The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History (2008).

Martin Hadlow is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland, following a career with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), where he served as director of several field offices (Afghanistan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Jordan, Malaysia, Sri Lanka), and as regional communication adviser in Asia, FSU Central Asia/Caucasus and the Arab States, and in senior communication sector roles at Headquarters in Paris. He has published widely and his research interests include media history, military broadcasting, and media in conflict and post-conflict situations. He holds an Honorary Doctorate from the Kazakh State University, Almaty, Kazakhstan, and an Honorary Scholar Award by the Kyrgyz State National University in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

fellowship from Harvard University’s Joan Shorenstein Center for the Press and Public Policy in 1999. On the side, he serves as a senior lecturer in University Honors at the University of Maryland, College Park, where since 1990 he has taught courses on the Vietnam War and the military and the media in American history.

Karen Middleton is Chief Political Correspondent for SBS Television. Based in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery in Canberra since 1989, Karen is an experienced television, radio and newspaper commentator. She writes a weekend column for the Canberra Times and does commentary for both ABC and commercial radio. She is also Press Gallery president. She has covered recent Australian operations in Afghanistan and events in Rwanda during the 1990s.

Peter Sekuless is an Australian author and lobbyist based in Canberra, and co-founder of the government relations firm Canberra Liaison in 1978. He has written several books, including two on lobbying, one on the Australian political activist Jessie Street, and a history of the RSL, Lest We Forget: The history of the Returned Services League, with Jaqueline Rees (1986). In 1998 he published a study of noted Australian war correspondents from the Second World War, A Handful of Hacks: Seven War Correspondents in War and Peace, and his paper draws on and expands that work.

Richard Trembath teaches history at the Australian Centre, University of Melbourne. He has co-authored All Care and Responsibility, a history of the nursing profession in Victoria, and in 2005 published A Different Sort of War about the Australian experience of the Korean War. Later this year Divine Discontent, co-authored with Colin Holden, will appear. This is a new history of the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Currently, he is completing a study of Australian war correspondents with Fay Anderson, also of the Australian Centre.

David Welch studied for his doctorate at the London School of Economics, and is currently professor of modern history at the University of Kent. He is also Director of the Centre for the Study of Propaganda and War, which he set up at Kent in 1995. His main research interest is in twentieth century political propaganda, and his publications include Germany, Propaganda & Total War 1914-18 (2000), The Third Reich. Politics, and Propaganda (rev. second edn, 2002), Hitler: Profile of a Dictator (Routledge, 2001), Propaganda and the German Cinema, 1933-1945 (2001), and Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia from 1500 to the Present [with D. Culbert and N. Cull] (2003). He is currently writing a major history of propaganda in the twentieth century. David Welch is an enthusiastic Spurs supporter and it is his ambition to see Tottenham win a trophy. He is the eternal optimist!

John Williams is the author of several books that exploit German records and perspectives in dealing with the history of the Great War. These include German Anzacs and the Great War (2003), Corporal Hitler and the Great War 1914-1918: The List Regiment (2005), and Anzac, the Media and the Great War (1999). Formerly a member of the Germanic Studies Department at the University of Sydney, he has enjoyed a distinguished parallel career as a noted black & white photographer, boasting many exhibitions. He describes himself as ‘an historian who makes pictures and a picture maker who writes history’. 
Introduction

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie

It gives me great pleasure to open this year’s Chief of Army’s Military History Conference. I have watched the progress and development of these conferences over the years and regard them now to be a major element in both the development of Army’s professional military education and in our interaction with the Australian community. I intend to continue this annual conference and its format of a mix of traditional historical topics and topics more obviously related to contemporary warfare. This year’s topic is clearly one that meets the latter description.

The relationship between the military—an arm of the state—and the media is traditionally a complex one. Both sides seem convinced that each sets out to make life as difficult for the other side as possible. Both sides have legitimate interests in what is being said and done. At the core of the problem is the question: does the traditional freedom of the press to report on any matter of interest to them outweigh any notion of responsibility to the subjects of the story? This question also raises the subjective dilemma of ‘responsibility’ in reporting. One reason reporters are traditionally regarded on about the same level as used car salesmen in community acceptability surveys is that their need for a story that is attention-grabbing on occasion leads them to put an unusual spin on the facts. Their need for a scoop sometimes leads them to release information that perhaps responsible reporting would suggest withholding. I acknowledge the other side of the coin is also true. Too often, errors are concealed to protect the guilty and, unless the media bring mistakes to public attention, the mistakes and the perpetrators are free to continue on. Where is the balance?

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Minister for Propaganda, once famously observed that ‘it is the absolute right of the State to supervise the formation of public opinion’. I suspect this is the view the media have of Army’s position. The contrary view, as recently noted by the US Commission on Freedom of the Press, is that ‘[t]he owners and managers of the Press determine which person, which facts, which version of the facts and which ideas shall reach the public’. By long tradition, the military generally are subscribers to this explanation of the relationship. Indeed, for soldiers on the Front Line, it is often difficult
to decide who is the bigger threat, those shooting at them or those writing about them in the media back home. So, I ask again, which view is correct? I am confident that this conference will help us gain a better understanding of this relationship and perhaps a better understanding of the two competing points of view.

I don't propose to talk more here this morning about the military and the media, or indeed directly about information warfare. We have assembled a world class field of experts for that purpose. What I do want to do is briefly raise with you a concern I have about the future capacity of historians to write the history of the Army of today. I perceive a growing and largely unforeseen consequence of the evolving technology of command and communication will be the complete absence of the essential building blocks of the historian's trade. Most of you here have some understanding of the process: finding and collecting evidence, weighing its relevance, assembling it and presenting it as the justification for an assessment of what happened. And most of you will be familiar with the basic components of this trade—written records.

Can I ask you all a question? How would you operate in an environment in which there were no records? How would you analyse, for example, the operations of the construction squadron in Afghanistan if none of the material, files, records, maps, intelligence summaries, signals, op orders and so on existed? It would be a challenge. It has happened before. For example, I understand that one of the most difficult periods for historians is the early medieval period, where the lack of substantial primary source written records can only be partially offset by archaeological or similar hard physical evidence. Given the way the military conducts its business today, I am concerned we are preparing to impose on future historians our own version of the 'dark ages'.

You are all well aware of the impact of electronic communication on our private lives. Few people write letters—e-mail reigns supreme. Mobile phones are now the preferred means of interpersonal communication. FaceBook has even started to push mass e-mail into redundancy as a means of people keeping their friends informed of developments in their lives. We all know this. We also all know that the military, especially the military on deployment, is just as switched on to communications technology as today's youth. Indeed, Telstra arrives on the battlefield almost simultaneously with the lead scout and installs satellite communications for the diggers to call home.

The problem, as we all know, is that when the phone call ends, the hard disc is wiped clear for the next day or the FaceBook page is updated, the data in that communication is gone. We all recognise this as a problem, but no one has yet devised a solution. And as a consequence, I am concerned that the history of the Australian Army of the late 20th-early 21st century is going to be a work of fiction—or of deduction and reconstruction if
you prefer. Only minimal holdings of written records may survive to provide the essential underpinning evidence. Without this evidence, history is, essentially, fiction.

It is not as if we are not creating records. If anything, modern operations seem to generate even more words. The word processing power of the computer has encouraged the production of enormous quantities of reports, analyses and administrative returns. The power of the internet then to send copies of this material everywhere compounds the phenomenon. My concern is not with the production of the written evidence, it is with the capture and retention of it. And my concern is for all types of records, not just the official ones. Those of you who specialise in the social history of conflict face a daunting challenge in the age of electronic communications. What is going to substitute for the boxes full of letters home from individuals from privates to generals? What is going to substitute for the diaries such as Pompey Elliott left us from the First World War or the exercise notes of young officers on field staff training courses? The troops in the field still make incisive observations about the mission, its conduct and command. They still voice their opinion about the food, their equipment and their interaction with the local people. How do we capture and preserve this so some future C.E.W. Bean can write the equivalent of six volumes on the private soldiers’ contribution to the war? It is a real challenge and I don’t at this stage have any answers.

If a solution to the problem of capturing personal opinions and recollections is elusive, it is equally so for official records. You may find this hard to accept—after all, the official records of our war-time operations held in the Australian War Memorial are comprehensive and extensive. But by and large, these are the records of a technologically less-advanced time. Back then, orders were written on paper, and the Orderly Room Clerk would file copies. The copies would then be attached at the end of every month to the monthly report that was prepared and sent back to the next highest headquarters and eventually found its way to the Memorial. In theory, that should still happen, but electronically. It sometimes does but my understanding is that this is more the exception than the rule. And even if it does occur, the potential for loss or destruction along the way is much greater than for a paper record. For a start, the individual can see at a glance what is on a paper record. A disc is just a disc.

Part of the problem is that we often forget the importance of good record keeping until too late. Our records from Vietnam are, for example, poor. I do not envy the authors of the official history of that war their task. I am concerned though about the impact the problems with the records cause our veterans of that war in sorting out their repatriation entitlements.
The new way of waging war has contributed to the problem as well. Today, we fight as both joint and combined forces. In the old days of single Service operations, we had an evolved structure of ops staff, admin staff and even records staff to prepare, collect and repatriate the records. In Army, the War Diary was explained in Staff Duties in the Field and every officer was expected to know of its existence and the process to be followed. There was a clear hierarchy of command and a complementary hierarchy of records responsibility. Even though each Service may have had a different way of doing it, it didn't matter as the same process was contained within the same Service.

That is not the case now. Even very junior headquarters can now be comprised of a mix of the three Services, each used to conducting the records management task differently. With headquarters individually structured for the specific task, coupled with the entirely justifiable desire to ensure that all of the HQ's limited staff resources are focused on the successful conduct of that task, taking along someone whose responsibility is the collection and repatriation of the records is usually not a priority. This generally means it is done as an afterthought and as a secondary task, by busy people with other concerns and often who have had no training and therefore possess little understanding of the responsibility. It is unfair on them but, with Government constraints on the numbers permitted in the deployed force, it is now a standard situation. While we still manage sometimes to deploy specialist teams into the field for limited periods, gone are the days of the AIF Historical Records Section within the AIF Headquarters in London. Yet as the staff resources available to deal with the task decline, the scale of the task is increasing. Both the actual volume of records, as I alluded to earlier, but more importantly, the way they are kept is providing a real challenge.

Let me provide some context. When Army deployed to East Timor, to INTERFET, a History Field Team was included. It was located within the Headquarters and managed to capture pallet loads of paper records, files and maps. It also brought back numerous CDs containing downloads of computer records. The same team, on the basis of short-term limited deployments to the Middle East, has brought back—so far anyway—mainly CDs or DVDs. In less than ten years, the method of administering and recording an operation had gone from a mix of paper and electronic medium to almost complete electronic. Even the hard copy maps on the command post wall are merely one-off prints to support a specific activity. First World War historians have innumerable copies of base data maps, many of which have hand-drawn data superimposed upon them, to employ when explaining the battlefield and individual operations that occurred. Current maps are produced from geospatial data and overlaid with specific data for a specific purpose. Only enough copies are made to support the mission. Unless someone literally thinks to pull one off the wall, secure it and repatriate it home, that data will be lost.
The challenge, though, is much greater than the simple matter of remembering to take down a map from a wall. The problem of format change is a major concern for the archivists. For those charged with collecting them it adds much to their task. Culling a paper file is tedious but at least each page is a self contained document: intelligible and assessable simply by reading. A CD with thousands of pages of data is still just a CD. If the capability to read what is on it is lost, then it is useless. Yet the military, by virtue of its need for, among other considerations, operational security, embraces format incompatibility. We use specialist command hardware and software that is incompatible with civilian systems. We use electronic security measures that, if we don’t cancel them before that system is changed, can permanently block access to the information. In the old days, a ‘Top Secret’ stamp on a document and locking it in a safe controlled access but when the need for secrecy has passed, simply taking it out of the safe makes it accessible. As the Army History Unit is currently finding, receiving data on a password-protected disc poses entirely different sorts of access problems when the password is lost. They are still trying to crack some CDs from East Timor, and that was less than ten years ago.

Clearly this is a potential problem that won’t be solved overnight or by any one individual, but it is a problem that must be solved. I am happy to advise that within the records management areas in Defence, and in the Joint Operations arena, the problem has been recognised and is being addressed. However, you people are the experts in what records need to be retained. You are the SMEs—the subject matter experts—on this. If you have a view, I urge you to pass it on to me. I will certainly be giving this as a task to the Army History Advisory Committee but I would welcome any suggestions for a solution.

The collection, interpretation, control and management of information is vital to the Defence Force. It is equally vital to a healthy, democratic society. The needs and wishes of various players are not always in harmony, and sometimes are in direct conflict. How these parties interact in the information sphere is the theme of this conference.
The Military and the Media: Past and Future

Stephen Badsey

In summer 2007, HRH Prince Henry ‘Harry’ of Wales, younger son of HRH The Prince of Wales and third in succession to the British throne (and constitutionally also that of Australia), who is a serving second lieutenant in the British Army’s Household Cavalry Regiment (principally an armoured reconnaissance unit), asked to join his men on active service in Afghanistan.1 This request raised serious issues of security if the prince’s presence should become known to hostile forces in Afghanistan or elsewhere, ranging from the likelihood of increased attempts to kill him and the soldiers with him (a phrase commonly employed was that the prince would become a ‘Bullet Magnet’) to the nightmare scenario that he might be kidnapped. It was because of the likelihood of an increased threat both to himself and his men that the prince had earlier in the year been refused permission to serve in similar circumstances in Iraq. So, the British Army’s senior soldier, General Sir Richard Dannatt, the Chief of the General Staff, approached the British and international news media for their co-operation. In turn, senior figures in the media agreed to a news embargo, whereby they would not announce or speculate upon the prince’s location. The rules agreed were based on those adopted by the media in cases of kidnap: they would keep the secret until the story broke or leaked, and in return they would be allowed greater access to the prince and his story later on. Prince Harry was able to join his men in Afghanistan, who were also briefed not to give away his presence in communications home. Over Christmas his absence from televised Royal family events was explained with rather careful phrasing to the effect that he was spending the festival with his regiment, which has its administrative headquarters in Windsor, not far from London. Despite some speculation from the German press in particular that the prince might be in Iraq, security held for more than ten weeks. The embargo started to unravel on 7 January 2008 when the Australian popular weekly women’s magazine New Idea, which had not been among

1 This account is taken chiefly from articles in the London Daily Telegraph, 1 March 2008; the Washington Post, 1 March 2008; and the archives of the websites Drudge Report www.drudgereport.com and BBC News news.bbc.co.uk.
the media outlets consulted by the British Army, ran a story speculating that he was on active service in Afghanistan. Over the next weeks, the news was picked up, verified, and on 28 February it was run by the Washington political website *The Drudge Report*. With the embargo broken, the world's media considered that they were free from their part of the bargain, and could report openly; and the prince was recalled home.

Understanding the history of the military-media relationship has never been more important to grasping its modern context. (This is particularly true of the present acrimonious debate within the international defence community over the meaning and consequences of Information Warfare, or Information Operations, as the United States armed forces have officially called it since 2006.) The very contemporary story of Prince Harry’s desire to serve in action highlights many of the conceptual facets of a very complex relationship, while remaining rooted in the practicality about which the armed forces often pride themselves. What stands out first about this story is that it illustrates the long-standing nature of military security and media publicity inherent in such problems, stretching back effectively to the origins of modern war reporting and the mass media in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Queen Victoria’s cousin the Duke of Cambridge commanded a British infantry division in the Crimean War (1854-1856). Balancing military security and favourable publicity had been an issue when Prince Harry’s uncle Prince Andrew (later the Duke of York) flew as a Royal Navy helicopter pilot in the Falklands War (1982), and when his great-grand-uncle Prince Edward (later King Edward VIII and Duke of Windsor) served as a Guards staff officer on the Western Front in the First World War (1914-1918). This story also illustrates the traditional and normal relationship between the armed forces and the mass media in most democratic countries for the last two centuries, which contrary to very commonly held beliefs has been one of co-operation through negotiation. It is a fact that, in peace or war, governments and their armed forces do sometimes lie, and do withhold the truth; and on occasion they will ask the national and international news media to lie or withhold the truth with them. It is also a fact that the media will sometimes agree to this, both for longer-term mutual benefit, and on the assumption that, as in this case, the public will overwhelmingly sympathise with their motives once the facts become known. No great military success or failure was at stake here; something like it had occurred in the past, and may well occur with some other VIP in the future. It was one of the common if challenging media issues with which modern armed forces on operations expect to deal. But although the problem was not new, the nature of the contemporary media provided its particular shape and context, in particular the fact that General Dannatt felt able to take a large part of the ownership and management of the world’s media into a shared confidence. What is especially modern about the episode is that from the start of the agreement it was accepted on all sides that,
no matter how hard anyone tried, any attempt at secrecy would be temporary. It is the nature of the modern global media that the story would eventually and inevitably leak; and in the event speculation which led to the breakdown of the embargo bounced from Afghanistan to Germany to Australia and finally to the United States, before returning to Great Britain.

A further significant point is that neither the voluntary embargo nor its eventual collapse depended in any way on the visual media, particularly television, although internet websites did play an important part. It has become a truism that media coverage in our modern age is dominated by visual images, either moving pictures or dramatic still images. Quite often, existing public disquiet or sympathy can coalesce around a photograph that somehow exactly catches the mood. A case from recent times is the shocking pictures of prisoner abuse by US Army troops at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad that leaked to the United States media in April 2004. The public impact of the Abu Ghraib photographs bears some comparison with that of the photographs released in 1968 of the massacre at My Lai village (in what was then South Vietnam) by US troops. But an argument may be made for the impact of similarly shocking pictures almost from the development of photography as a cheap and popular hobby a century ago. This includes photographs of children dying of cholera taken at the British-run concentration camp at Bloemfontein during the Boer War (1899-1902), and given prominence in the British press by Emily Hobhouse, also causing an international scandal. Neither these photographs, nor those of Abu Ghraib, were taken by a professional journalist. In all three of these cases, and others, the photographs challenged the perception of the war that the US and British people respectively held of their armed forces, and of a war that was being conducted in their name. As a general rule, it has become increasingly true that in war if a scandalous episode occurs it is more likely to be documented or recorded, and if it is recorded then it will leak; by definition it is impossible to know how often those who have relied on this not happening have succeeded, but the balance has shifted firmly against them. Throughout the history of the military-media relationship, there has been an argument as to whether the military desire for secrecy and security should outweigh the media’s investigative role. But whereas in the case of Prince Harry an argument was successfully made that military security should predominate, few would make such a claim for either Bloemfontein or Abu Ghraib.

---


This is not to pretend that nothing has changed about the military-media relationship over more than a century. Over the last three decades in particular, and at an increasingly accelerating pace, changes in communications technology have produced a new age of military-media relations, often characterised as that of ‘Media War’, which remains a useful phrase since no-one has yet successfully defined it, and it has not yet become the victim of military doctrinal one-upmanship.  

Whereas the existence of the media has always been an important long-term factor in military planning, recent military operations have mostly taken place in an environment permeated by the media in all its forms, and there are good reasons for believing that this trend will continue. This new place for the media in international relations and the global use of force has become almost universally accepted within academia by historians and political scientists, but has not yet been properly grasped by conventional strategic thinkers or their equivalents in the armed forces, one of the most important exceptions being the recently retired British General Sir Rupert Smith, who in an influential book has recently argued that ‘Whoever coined the phrase “the theatre of war” was very prescient. We are conducting operations now as though we were on stage, in an amphitheatre or Roman arena.’ It is presently a core military doctrinal issue, as well as a matter of considerable interest to military historians, whether recent changes in the media, including the partial replacement of a traditional media by new methods of communication including the internet, have meant or have contributed to a fundamental and permanent change in the way that the armed forces need to think about military planning and indeed their own existence.

The military-media relationship is also one of those areas of understanding in which a deep knowledge of the present military thought, doctrine and practice of a number of countries, alliances and other groupings, important though this may be, is not in itself adequate to make an informed assessment. In order even to approach the study of this relationship, it is not enough for armed forces to know themselves and know their enemies, and assume that the media will fit in somehow. An understanding is also required, at a high professional level, of a number of other fields including the political structures and civil society in which both armed forces and the media exist and operate, how the media function as an industry, and how communications technology has and will change the media as well as changing warfare. This requires the sharing of ideas by specialists from a

---


wide range of skills and disciplines, including professional media practitioners, political
and social scientists, and historians of society, the media and communications as well as
of warfare.

While probably no practising historian has ever claimed or believed that history
should be treated as an unfailing guide to the future (and many have been critical of any
kind of future predictions), one of the most valuable functions of history to policy makers
and defence professionals is to act as a safety check, on military doctrine and planning
just as much as on political or cultural ideas. It is quite common for people in positions
of authority to develop cherished ideas on what happened in the past, based on half-
remembered readings or early educational experiences, only for these to have no actual basis
in fact. At best, it is the role of historical research to act as a touchstone for new ideas and
old beliefs, and even at worst it will throw a valuable light and perspective on the military
problems of the present. This is particularly true of the current debates over strategy and
methods evident in what the US government proclaimed after the terrorist attacks of 11
September 2001 (‘9/11’) as the ‘Global War Against Terror’, and re-branded in 2006 as
‘The Long War’. One of the major issues has been to identify the methods by which this
war should be fought, and even if it is best characterised as a war at all. The importance
of the media and propaganda has loomed large in this, with Al-Qaeda’s innovative use of
websites, videotapes and radio, and sweeping claims made about the nature and intentions
of its propaganda directed at the USA and other Western countries. As an example of how
historical insight could help to illuminate the problem, Dr David Kilcullen, the former
Australian Army officer turned counterinsurgency adviser to the US government, has
very recently observed (quite correctly) that modern insurgents exploit the internet as a
form of sanctuary for information and propaganda, and that ‘Classical counterinsurgency
theory has little to say about such electronic sanctuary’; but has gone on from this to argue
that while media issues feature in classical counterinsurgency, ‘media penetration has
reached unprecedented levels, largely through the emergence of insurgent mass media’.6
This conclusion, that for insurgents to target their enemies through the generation of
mass propaganda and through the mass media is a new departure of the internet age, is
quite simply false. In 1929 one of the more influential theorists of insurgency, Colonel
T.E. Lawrence (‘of Arabia’) wrote in his classic Encyclopaedia Britannica entry on guerrilla
warfare that for a rebellion or insurgency ‘The printing press is the greatest weapon in the
armoury of the modern commander’, and the point may be taken back to the very early
days of anarchist terrorism theory as Johannes Most’s ‘propaganda of the deed’. The 9/11

6 David Kilcullen, ‘Counterinsurgency Redux,’ (2008) 3-6, downloadable from the website Small Wars Journal
smallwarsjournal.com.
attacks have themselves recently been identified by Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman as a classic case of this form of propaganda.\(^7\) While some of the methods and the scale of this mass propaganda may have changed, the underlying concepts and doctrines have remained much the same.

It is something of a cliché to point to cultural differences between the news media and the armed forces of democracies on operations. One thing that all such armed forces have in common is that they approach almost any situation as a series of problems to be solved, or at worst to be managed. But there are many aspects of the relationship between armed forces on active service and the news media that have recurred throughout the decades for nearly two centuries, almost regardless of the nationality or the arm of service involved, or of other contingencies, and the reoccurrence of such issues has been sufficiently prevalent to suggest strongly that they constitute between them not a series of problems to which solutions must be found, but rather the collective context within which the military-media relationship functions. One of these is often expressed in the apparently self-evident statement that ‘A soldier’s right to life is greater than the public’s right to know’, and draws sympathy from many members of the media themselves. On the freedom of the press in a war zone, international law is complex as it is on many other issues. But there does not appear to be any basis for a claim that there is an inherent media right of access to either any specific military unit or a battle, nor does freedom of speech extend to recklessly placing lives in danger. The issue here is that such a definition is in theory infinitely extendable: who exactly is to judge what actions of the media might place a friendly soldier’s life in danger, and is there any means of assessing when the risk has become too great? In major wars such as the Second World War (1939-1945), the media have been excluded temporarily from military operations by special legislation. But to exclude the media arbitrarily from a lesser military operation is a power that the military do not and should not have, although they have done so by main force more than once in the past. This behaviour contradicts the basic function of the media to act as a witness on behalf of society, to investigate and if necessary to criticise.

This presence of the media in a situation that may well be already potentially or actually life-threatening will always cause some military resentment, although this may be offset by a military desire for publicity and recognition. The relationship is, and has been, further complicated by a well-recognised cultural conflict that arises from military values of hierarchy and deference, and also a real military sense of their own integrity.

---

when set against a media culture that is and should be no respecter of rank or persons, especially in the case of front-line reporters. Part of this is a military belief that on active deployment they are entitled to popular support at home, including the support of the media. In recent times this has extended from a belief that national forces deserve the patriotic support of a national media to a wider view that forces involved in humanitarian operations deserve and are entitled to the broad support of any reputable media outlet. In an age of increasingly globalised media structures, even the existence of a national or patriotic media is no longer an automatic assumption. Nevertheless, there is a belief on both sides of the military-media divide that media coverage of ‘Our Wars’ is, and should be, different from that of ‘Other People’s Wars’. Modern armed forces are fully prepared to use the media as a platform to demand popular and media support, which they sometimes characterise as their inherent right; and often their main justification for engaging with the media at all is to obtain that support. Against this must be offset the sad if understandable fact that few military institutions also give full weight to their constitutional obligation to inform the public through the media.

The modern military-media relationship has shown an increasing willingness of armed forces to engage with the media in a collective fashion and with their own distinct agenda and purpose, along with an increasing appreciation that the media will be present in many military deployments. This has led in recent decades to a more systematised and institutionalised military approach to the media’s presence. A suggestion first made popular with the British armed forces in the early 1990s was that they needed to be aware in any operation of a ‘Media Flank’ (on the analogy of an air flank or a sea flank for ground operations): not as a hostile area but as a source of legitimate concern to be included in military planning. Another suggestion was that, as an extended metaphor or simile, it may be helpful to see the media on operations as equivalent to the weather: media presence and coverage of an operation might be slight or massive, perhaps good or bad, predictable but not absolutely, not under military control, but not something that can or should be ignored completely, and something that a good commander should make part of his plans.

Because the media do not feature heavily in all military deployments, and on rare occasions may not feature at all, it is often hard for serving members of any armed forces to develop specialisms in media relations, including a deep understanding of the media’s impact on military matters, and the practical experience of working in a media

---

8 For this characterisation of ‘our wars’ and ‘other people’s wars’ see, for example, Susan L. Carruthers, The Media at War (London: MacMillan, 2000), 197-243.
environment. The Australian Army is unusual in having a specialist permanent military unit for media and public relations, the Australian Army Public Relations Service; the US Armed Forces (including the US Coast Guard) have permanent Public Affairs units to which personnel are assigned as required; many countries including Great Britain have media relations units with a permanent peacetime existence which may be activated for operations. Nevertheless, it remains true that the media are now approached in military planning in a much more systematic manner than was true even a few decades ago. That there has been no equivalent systematic adjustment on the part of the news media has often placed them, or at least their reporters, at a marked disadvantage when dealing with their own armed forces in recent conflict. Particularly critical of this development is what may be loosely described as an Australian school of thought on military-media relations which has developed over the same time-frame, including the very experienced and distinguished journalists Phillip Knightley and John Pilger, who are utterly uncompromising on matters of the truth in war and the media’s duty to tell it, and whose intense scepticism of authority in general and military authority in particular is supported and reflected in the work of some Australian or Australasian scholars.9

Even if they can overcome such inherent levels of mistrust, when the military speak to the media, and vice versa, it is important that they do not begin by misunderstanding each other. Within the last quarter-century or so, doctrinal issues and exact definitions have loomed much larger in military thought in most armed forces than they had in the past, and members of the armed forces can be quite dismissive of anyone who does not know or speak their own presently preferred doctrinal language. One of the roles of the media, in contrast, is to take highly specialist information and translate it into terms that the average reader or viewer can understand easily. So, the media will prefer to speak of ‘bombing’ rather than ‘air support’, of a ‘tank’ rather than an ‘infantry fighting vehicle’, and of ‘censorship’ (which in legal terms has not existed for the armed forces of any democracy for at least half a century) rather than the more accurate if more cumbersome ‘prior voluntary security review’. Fortunately, the terminology used by most English-speaking armed forces to describe and define the relationship and dealings between the armed forces and the news media as seen from the military side, and the organisations which carry this out, is quite homogeneous. The Australian armed forces tend to use ‘Public Relations’ (PR) and the American term ‘Public Affairs’ (PA) largely interchangeably. In the

British armed forces the older term ‘Public Information’ (PI) is supposed to distinguish peacetime and non-operational units, but it has largely given way to ‘Media Operations’ (Media Ops), a term introduced by the British to NATO in 1992 in order to emphasise that media issues should be considered as a command function, and a reflection of their increasing importance.

All these terms are quite straightforward, but defence and military terminology and doctrine also include related terms that may be misunderstood or misused on both sides. This is particularly true of the use by the media of the word ‘propaganda’. Up until soon after the end of the First World War this was considered a reasonably neutral term, used to mean what might now be called public relations in an ordinary domestic context, or political or commercial advertising, and there was nothing in its practice to suggest deceit rather than the use of rhetorical skills to put forward an argument. The British heads of government propaganda in the First World War stressed the factual nature of their work, and the importance of avoiding outright deceit (in which they did not always succeed). Subsequent practitioners of propaganda up to the present day have emphasised not so much its factual accuracy as the irrelevance of truth or falsehood to what is seen as a method of persuasion. According to a definition proposed at a conference sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1985, propaganda is ‘a dissemination of information—facts, arguments, rumors, half-truths or lies—to influence public opinion’, and as such ‘it is an act of advocacy in mass communications’ which ‘is not necessarily deceptive’. Modern academic specialists have also taken much the same view of the term ‘propaganda’ as ethically neutral and too valuable as a descriptor to be abandoned. But outside the ivory tower of academia this battle has been lost: the association of propaganda with lying and illegality has simply become too strong in popular discourse, including the media, and there seems little point in complaining that the world is at fault and needs to see things one particular way. Already towards the end of the First World War the British preferred to use the term ‘information’ rather than propaganda. A relatively recent search among politicians and diplomats for a phrase that conveyed the idea of an information policy as part of grand strategy, including public relations and the media, while avoiding the word ‘Propaganda’, resulted in the presently preferred term ‘Public Diplomacy’, which in fact dates back to at least the nineteenth century; but there is no immediate equivalent for military operations. Also, just as much as governments and their armed forces will try to avoid the use of the word ‘propaganda’, so there will be some sections of the media which will continue to use it.

This problem over terminology, which may appear both arcane and rather theoretical, leads directly to an immensely practical and significant dispute, over the relationship between military Public Affairs and ‘Psychological Operations’—Psyop to the Americans and Psyops to the British. A term that originally came from the ‘Psywar’ or ‘Psychwar’ of the 1940s and 1950s, which was seen chiefly as using various methods, overt and covert, to weaken enemy morale and induce surrender, Psyop has now expanded so widely as to become effectively meaningless in many contexts, embracing everything from humanitarian relief advice to operational security, but for most people it retains its basic meaning of influence through deceit or deception.\footnote{12}

Historically any connection between psychological operations and military-media relations in democracies has been indirect and occasional. The central issue has been whether, and under what circumstances, it is legitimate for governments or their armed forces to deliberately lie to the media for some immediate advantage, and by extension lie to the public. As with so much about the military-media relationship, this is not an issue of absolute truth versus absolute falsehood. In the normal discourses of peacetime there are occasional circumstances under which even the most reliable source will mislead the media, without impairing a longer-term working relationship. Equally, careful selection of words and phrases has developed over the last century as part of the related skills of mass advertising and mass politics, and this also has had many applications in wartime. George Creel, who masterminded the United States’ domestic public affairs in the First World War, called his account of the campaign \textit{How We Advertised America}.\footnote{13} Rather, the distinction is one of degree and identifying where the mutually acceptable boundaries might lie: it is the difference between occasionally bending the rules and throwing them away; and also the difference between a rare and perhaps understandable lie and institutionalised deception through the media. This is particularly important. The traditional military position in democratic countries, as it has developed over more than a century of experience, is that any activity that may involve deception as an inherent characteristic, including psychological operations, must be institutionally separated from any activity involving direct contact with the media, such as public affairs, although they may and should be co-ordinated as part of the wider military plan. The analogy presently popular among the US armed forces is that there must be a ‘firewall’ between them.

\footnotesize
The basis of this doctrine, which is largely unwritten, is that long term credibility is too important as a strategic advantage to be given up for short term opportunism, and that the peacetime values of a society retain some importance, even or especially in war. Among those who held and practised this style of public affairs and propaganda (using the term in its neutral sense), there have been variations in views on the best strategy and tactics, often leading to internal arguments. There was, for example, a marked difference in British propaganda strategy during much of the First World War and that used by British forces in the Irish War of 1918-1922. In any such campaign involving the media, credibility was also never seen as an absolute which might be lost completely and forever: it might be given up temporarily, attacked, weakened or recover. But exponents of this approach can point to many cases of governments and armies that found that a loss of credibility through persistent falsehood or exaggeration restricted their military effectiveness.

This traditional and generally successful approach to military-media relations has been severely challenged by the current debate over Information War or Information Operations. This may at first appear strange, as the concept of Information War began as an aspect of the Revolution in Military Affairs or RMA debate, known in Australia since 1997 as the ‘Knowledge Edge’. This approach to Information Warfare has almost nothing to do with the media, being chiefly concerned with electronics and computerisation, emerging on either side of the Gulf War (1991) as first ‘Command and Control Warfare’ (C2W) and then ‘Cyberwar’. At present, Australian doctrinal definitions of Information Warfare remain classified, but a recent description from Australia’s Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) is that ‘Information warfare is action taken to defend and enhance one’s own information and information systems and to affect adversary information and information systems’.15

This very widespread interpretation of what is meant by Information Warfare has found itself in competition with another approach, which impacts very directly on the military-media relationship, and which emerged at about the same time in US strategic and military thinking, with an important step forward being made in 1996 with the simultaneous publication of the ‘Full Spectrum Dominance’ concept by the US National Defense University (later popularised as ‘shock and awe’ from the publication’s title) together with the US Army’s first field manual on Information Operations, published in

---

14 Brian P. Murphy, *The Origins & Organisation of British Propaganda in Ireland 1920* (Cork: Aubane Historical Society & Spinwatch, 2006), has begun the work of uncovering this campaign and posed a challenge to our existing understanding of events, although at present his conclusions go far beyond his evidence.

15 The author is grateful to Professor Jeffrey Grey of ADFA for providing this information. See also Elinor C. Sloan, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: Implications for Canada and NATO* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 62-3 and 108-12.
August 1996. According to this manual, ‘C2W, CA [Civil Affairs], and PA [Public Affairs] are interrelated operations that are conducted to support the Army objective of achieving information dominance in any operational environment—combat or peace’ while at the same time ‘C2W uses deception, PSYOP, electronic warfare (EW), operations security (OPSEC), and destruction to attack an adversary’s capabilities’.16 Two years later a joint US armed forces doctrine for information operations withdrew slightly from this position, placing Public Affairs among activities that might contribute to ‘offensive IO’ [Information Operations].17 However, this was followed in October 2003 by a Pentagon ‘Information Operations Roadmap’, further blurring the distinction between Psyop and Public Affairs.18 In 2004, the US Army publicly re-affirmed its traditional position, opposing the idea of any link between media relations and deception, only to have generals who have adopted the new thinking boast in public that they had found ways to ‘bridge the firewall’.19

This idea that relations with the media should be seen as a subordinate activity to Psyop and deception to obtain a temporary operational advantage, rather than a parallel activity, subordinate only to the longer-term strategic requirements of the nation, is the core of a debate that still continues within the informed defence community. The era of media war has proved extremely controversial, but it still retains much of the older traditions of military-media relations, including that the practical results need to remain acceptable to the mass of public opinion, and at least tolerable to both sides of the military-media divide. But the same may not be said of information war in its radical version, which has drawn considerable criticism for sacrificing both fundamental values and long term strategic advantages for short term operational ones. As Phillip Bobbitt wrote in 2002 in his well-regarded work *The Shield of Achilles*, ‘Political leaders may find they are able to inspire a sense of mission only through the shrewd manipulation of the media, a short-lived tactic that ultimately must invite contempt’.20

18 ‘Information Operations Roadmap’, US Department of Defense (30 October 2003), 26; this document was released under the Freedom of Information Act in 2006 and is accessible from the National Security Archive at George Washington University, website www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv.
This is therefore a very important time at which to re-examine the history of the military-media relationship, and for the armed forces of every democracy to decide where they stand on these doctrinal issues. If, in what is now something of a truism, the manner in which a society conducts war is a test of that society’s values and institutions, so the way that armed forces relate to the media may be seen as a test of how well they fit into the democratic societies that they exist to serve. Just as older military history dwelt on the role of generals and of front-line soldiers in battle, the old ‘drum and trumpet’ history that has now been subsumed into studies of war and society, so a study of the military-media relationship that consisted almost exclusively of the flamboyant activities of war reporters, together with the equally larger-than-life personalities of some press barons, has given way to a study of institutions and structures, in which the freedom of the war reporter has often in practice been severely restricted. In this way, we have come to what we hope is a better historical understanding of how this relationship works in reality.

From a historian’s viewpoint, the fundamental problem in the military-media relationship is that the roots of most of our Western military thought and culture come from the highly authoritarian Napoleonic tradition, in which the idea of a free media has little place. The Emperor Napoleon I himself kept very tight control over the French press throughout his reign. This tradition of authoritarianism was further increased and interpreted by the German experience, later including the experience of Russia and the old Soviet Union, which had many military ideas in common with Germany. This authoritarian German influence has often been particularly evident in the military culture of the United States, from Baron von Steuben at Valley Forge through to AirLand Battle and the Central Front, and beyond. This deep military culture almost inevitably conflicts with a political culture that is even older, emerging out of 18th century England and the Enlightenment, which finds expression in our democratic view that the media plays a critical part in our political and social existence. It is not surprising that the country that feels the conflict between these two traditions most strongly from both sides is the United States, as simultaneously the world’s military superpower and self-proclaimed upholder of democracy.

But in the same way it is also not surprising, given that the American Civil War (1861-1865) was the first modern war to be fought by a literate democracy, and by means of industrialisation and mass armies, that the United States should have been the first country to develop a practical solution to the issue of military-media relations at war, a solution that has endured for all democracies ever since, in one form or another. Like all political expedients it is far from perfect, and it is both a paradox and the nature of any political process that the United States and other democracies have tried from time to
time to deviate from this solution, only to find themselves drawn back to it. It is also one of those important occasions on which the history of the military-media relationship can provide genuine illumination and important guidance. By the middle period of the Civil War, faced both with claims that the emergency of the war should lead to the suspension of the Constitution, and counter-claims that preserving the Constitution intact was why the war was being fought, President Abraham Lincoln’s government adopted a policy of bending or interpreting the law on a pragmatic basis, proceeding by negotiation with the press and its owners. Since a voluntary system was judged to be inadequate to the needs of military security and political necessity, these negotiations were augmented by very severe laws, in the justified hope that these would act as deterrents rather than have to be used with any frequency. In this, as in all subsequent wars, the attitude of individual politicians and generals to the press varied greatly, some preferring to employ trust, others arguing that all reporters should be shot as spies.21

Evidently, the exact methods that were employed by all sides of the military-media relationship in United States in the 1860s have not prevailed in all democracies at war ever since. The Civil War came in what has often been called for convenience the ‘Golden Age’ of war reporting, the period up to the First World War when many of the practicalities of the relationship between armed forces and the new mass media were worked out, including the difficult discovery that they usually could not ignore one another and were obliged to seek various unequal forms of co-operation. Many reporters’ legends come out of this period, including that this was the age in which they enjoyed unparalleled freedoms, and brought down governments with their pens and typewriters. Since then, the circumstances of different wars have seen greater or lesser legislation, including the use of prior censorship enforced by law, while the general trend has been that of increasing governmental and military power. But the basic model of a relationship by co-operation and negotiation between policy and strategy, the media in its widest sense, and mass public opinion (which bears an interesting comparison with Clausewitz’s ‘remarkable trinity’ better known to the armed forces) has continued. There has never been an American war that has not been at heart a public relations war (quite possibly not an Australian or British war either) and it has always been necessary to justify or promote the need for war to the people, often by reducing complex arguments to very simple symbols. One of the more noteworthy aspects of the present ‘Long War’ is that despite the occasional nod in other directions the United States government has aimed its information policy squarely at its existing

presumed supporters, the middle-American public, even at the expense of alienating its supporters in other countries. Al-Qaeda also has aimed its information campaign not, as has often been claimed, at a fragile western public opinion, but overwhelmingly at Muslim opinion in the developing world. As an economist might describe it, both sides have aimed to secure and maximise their home market, leaving very little for any kind of middle ground.

The experience of the Civil War, while it did much to establish in practice the parameters or ‘war rules’ for the media in democracies at war, also could not eliminate differences of interpretation or of behaviour, for the solid reason that debate about these rules remains an essential part of the nature of any democracy at war. Because conflict makes a good story for historians as well as reporters, attention tended to be drawn to what was actually the exception: the rare occasions when journalistic freedom clashed with official secrecy, such as the famous Gallipoli report in 1915 involving Keith Murdoch (the comment of the British commander, General Sir Ian Hamilton, on this episode was that he had mistakenly assumed that in Murdoch he was dealing with a gentleman).22 Much more typical of wartime military-media relations, especially in the Second World War, was the pronouncement in 1944 by General Dwight D. Eisenhower that he saw the press correspondents at his headquarters as ‘Quasi-Staff Officers’, recruited with their organisations into the wider war effort.23 Indeed, the closeness of this relationship has been seen by some journalists as a matter or criticism rather than applause. If the media have their mythology of the ‘Golden Age’, then the military have their own mythology of the First and Second World Wars as a period when all reporters and editors knew their place, and if they were not as patriotic as they might be then they at least learned to shut up and obey orders, while a soldier who talked to a reporter in the wrong way, or took a photograph in the wrong place, could be shot. The importance of historical research as a safety-check on such cherished but largely fictitious ideas is evident.

Wartime prior censorship backed by law ended in most democracies about a decade after the Second World War, but the habits of mind that had accompanied such a major conflict largely continued on all sides, including a broad military-media consensus in the early years of the Cold War that the ‘war rules’ were still largely in force. The Cold War also saw the first widespread and permanent institutionalised attempts in what was officially peacetime by democratic governments to generate their own sources of information, as well as to propagandise the news media, often with the media’s consent or

---

22 Jenny Macleod, Reconsidering Gallipoli (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 34-44.
at least acquiescence. For some exponents of the Cold War, especially in its early years, it was as self-evidently a war for national and cultural survival as the Second World War had been. The major change in military-media relations came in the early 1960s, with a shift from the acceptance of state control or influence over the media (although as always, mostly on a voluntary basis) reflecting a shift away from the expectation of an imminent global nuclear war to the actual fighting of what were usually known as ‘limited wars’ in various parts of the world, including by proxies or surrogates. One of the few points of agreement between the military and the media was that this era of limited wars presented problems and unhappy compromises for both of them. For a soldier deployed on active service in a war zone, there is nothing ‘limited’ about the risk to his life, or the support that he feels he should receive. There is some debate in academic circles over whether the impetus towards the major changes in the military-media relationship came first from governments and the defence community, or from the media seeking a greater authority in war zones. But by the 1990s the relationship had moved to that of Media War as presently understood, including a highly systematic and pre-planned exploitation of the news media by governments and their armed forces during military operations, orchestrated around the globe from the centres of national policy and public opinion. Future debates will be concerned with, doubtless among other issues, whether the present period of military advantage or even dominance in their relationship with the media will continue, what the relationship should be between any dealings with the media and the role of deception or propaganda, and how far it is legitimate in a democracy for the armed forces to intrude into the sphere of domestic politics, including the media, in pursuit of their own aims. But history also suggests that the critical issues will remain the same, including perhaps the most important, which is where the boundaries of the military-media relationship lie, and who determines how they should be set.


On 29 December 1915 Major ‘G.S.’ wrote to Charles Bean, the official Australian war correspondent, regarding the latter’s despatches describing the evacuation from Gallipoli:

These despatches were sent by me through GHQ where, special orders having been issued by the commander in chief, they were recensored. In view of the commander in chief’s special orders it was necessary seriously to mutilate the despatches.¹

Bean’s censored article, which emphasised the total success of the operation, did not appear in Australian newspapers until 1 January 1916.²

Censorship is a perennial issue for all war correspondents as they attempt to work under the supervision of military authorities on the one hand and their editors and proprietors on the other. The Great War provided great opportunities for Australian journalists covering fighting at Gallipoli, the Western Front and the Middle East. It also placed strict restrictions on how the operations of Australian troops were reported, restrictions which often placed severe demands on the journalists.

In this paper I shall examine the background to Australian reporting of the Great War, outlining the experience of Australian war correspondents prior to 1914 and emphasising the development of strict censorship regimes. I shall examine how censorship affected Australian journalists between 1914 and 1918, concentrating on Gallipoli and the Western Front.³ Inevitably, there is an emphasis on the activities of C.E.W. Bean who was the only Australian correspondent to work from Anzac to the end of the war. Journalists in the Great War have been much criticised for their apparent failure to convey the ‘truth’ about that conflict. I argue here that Australian war correspondents certainly omitted much of what

1  Major ‘G.S.’ to C.E.W. Bean in the Charles Bean Collection, 3DRL6673, Item 270, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
2  See Sydney Morning Herald, 1 January 1916.
3  For reasons of space the reporting of the AIF’s role in Palestine is not discussed here.
was really happening at the front but this was not due solely to regulations imposed by their political and military masters. Australian journalists were, for the most part, willing participants in their own reticence. The most important censorship was that imposed by themselves.\(^4\)

The first Australian war correspondent was Howard Willoughby of the Melbourne *Argus* who covered the Waikato or 3rd New Zealand War between 1863 and 1864.\(^5\) Willoughby is less famous than his successor William Lambie from Sydney who was wounded during the Sudan War of 1885 and was later killed in the early stages of the Boer War—the first Australian war correspondent to die on duty.\(^6\) Australian journalists were present too at the Boxer Rebellion and in conflicts not involving Australian troops such as the Greco-Turkish War of 1897, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 and the Balkan Wars of 1912-13. Australian journalists in these conflicts worked for both Australian and British newspapers, often representing several at the same time.\(^7\)

Prior to the Great War the largest contingent of Australian war correspondents to cover a conflict had gone to South Africa in 1899. A number of these were well known literary identities such as A. B. ‘Banjo’ Paterson and A. G. ‘Smiler’ Hales. In South Africa Australian journalists first encountered a tough system of press censorship. For many war correspondents this censorship was something new and sinister. For example, ‘Smiler’ Hales, working for the London *Daily News* and a string of Australian newspapers, wrote in his popular history of the first Australian operations in South Africa that:

\[
\text{For some reason which I have been unable to discover, the military authorities talk of sending all correspondents away from the front. It seems to me that it would be better to give bona fide newspaper men every reasonable opportunity of discovering the truth instead of hampering them in any way. I fail to see why Great Britain and her Colonies should be kept in the dark concerning the progress of the war ...}
\]

---

4 This paper draws on research undertaken as part of an Australian Research Council Linkage project in which Dr Fay Anderson and I, both from the University of Melbourne, are investigating the history of Australian war correspondents from the New Zealand wars to the current engagements in the Middle East. The results of this research will appear as a book to be published by Melbourne University Press in 2010.


According to Hales the effects of censorship were to blind the public to the disastrous mismanagement of the war in South Africa. The army pretended that censorship was necessary to prevent the flow of information to the enemy but Hales argued that that ‘flimsy, paltry excuse can be dismissed with a contemptuous laugh. That is not why the military people want our work censored. The real reason is that their awful blunders, their farcical mistakes, and their criminal negligence may not reach the British public.’

During the Great War Hales’s criticisms of censorship were as bluntly expressed, though by this time he had ceased working in the field.

Other Australian correspondents in South Africa such as Donald Macdonald, who endured the siege of Ladysmith, agreed wholeheartedly with Hales. Major W.T. Reay wrote that ‘what awful pests to the army’ war correspondents were, especially if they were ‘not wholly employed either in recording the wonderful doings or in contemplating the unimpeachable wisdom of the staff’. Frank Wilkinson contrasted the more liberal attitude of the United States authorities in contemporary conflicts in the Philippines and Cuba with South Africa where the work was as arduous and the war correspondent had ‘to fight the whole of the British Army system into the bargain’. Again it is notable that these journalists waited until they had returned home before expressing their dissatisfaction with the system.

The Australians in South Africa experienced a transition phase in the relationship between military authorities and war correspondents. In the era between the Crimean War and the turn of the 20th century the military censorship regime in Imperial or colonial wars was more relaxed than it would be after 1900. A number of British historians of colonial era war journalism have labelled the era as the ‘golden age’ of military reporting, with correspondents being (relatively) unfettered in their work. To a certain extent this is a romantic view, inspired in part by the rigid regimes and bureaucratic controls that

---

9 Ibid., 296.
10 As his career as a war correspondent drew to a close during the Great War, Hales repeated his criticisms of inappropriate censorship in his autobiography. He wrote, for example, that ‘we should be much nearer Berlin than Calais today [1918] if from the beginning of the war all the Allied armies had been served by a frankly independent press’, and reiterated his belief that the Army opposed the newspapers through ‘fear of criticism of blunders and mismanagement’: A.G. Hales, My Life of Adventure (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1918), 221.
14 Wilkinson-Latham has written that though the press in South Africa often complained at the time they accepted ‘the rigid rules laid down by the military censor’. See R.J. Wilkinson-Latham, From Our Special Correspondent (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1979), 264-5.
came later. Yet it remains true that the British authorities in South Africa did establish more stringent press regulations than had been the rule in the past. It was this new system which provided the ideological basis for the system established by the War Office in 1914, though the screws in the Great War were twisted even tighter. Several factors influenced the new regime of press censorship by the military authorities, though it is not possible to discuss them here. Increased fear of espionage appears to have been one factor. The most significant factor, though, is the changed nature of the enemy. Unlike the Maori, the Ashanti or the Mahdi, the Boers had access to newspapers and the telegraph. Fighting technologically advanced societies required different ground rules for the press.

In this period it was not only the British who attempted to more strictly control war correspondents. The Japanese during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 adopted a twin policy of cossetting correspondents and controlling them. ‘Smiler Hales’ greatly admired the Japanese as soldiers and as patriots when he observed them in the Russo-Japanese War. However, he wrote in his autobiography that his ‘work in the Russo-Japanese war was hampered by the restrictions of the Japanese authorities’ and he considered that ‘nearly every European correspondent who went to the East’ could say the same.16 Denis Warner, distinguished Australian war correspondent of the Second World War and subsequent Asian conflicts, argued that the Japanese system was the prototype for the censorship systems adopted by many protagonists in the 20th century. According to Warner the ‘Japanese came up with the original idea that if you gave the correspondents enough food, alcohol, comfort and women you could keep them safely away from embarrassing situations at the front’. The Japanese also ‘devised the concept of escort officers, a concept … that was adopted with alacrity by the Australian Army and has remained in consistent practice ever since’.17 As Hubert Wilkins discovered, by the time of the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, journalists, including photographers, were often simply regarded as spies until they could prove otherwise.18

In 1914 the War Office under Lord Kitchener, who was completely antipathetic to the press in wartime, attempted as far as it could to keep the journalists away from the front. If this was not always possible they restricted both their numbers and their movements. Complaints about the exclusion zone cast around the Western Front came early from journalists. H. W. Nevinson, who would eventually report from the Dardanelles, wrote as early as September 1914 that in the past war correspondents might have operated with

16 Hales, My Life of Adventure, 238.
17 Denis Warner, lecture, c.1980s, Denis Warner Papers, MS 9489, Series 11, Box 68, National Library of Australia, Canberra.
excessive freedom and lived up to Lord Wolseley’s description of them as ‘the curse of modern armies’. But not the modern journalist who knew what was expected under the new system. It was impossible, argued Nevinson, to imagine his colleagues ‘giving away our country or making dangerous revelations of mistakes, even if they stood under no regulations at all’. Yet they were no closer to the front than on the day war was declared for though the journalists were ready ‘we are kept chafing here, week after week, while a war for the destiny of the world is being fought within a day’s journey’. Eventually, policy changed and the incorporation of war correspondents into the war machine took place. This was the situation by the time Australian troops went into action on the Western Front in 1916.

One result of this policy was the small number of Australian journalists who actually reported on the Great War. During the course of the war a dozen Australians can be classified as having been a ‘war correspondent’ at its broadest definition. There is Bean of course. F. S. Burnell was an early observer of the brief period of fighting in German New Guinea in 1914. Phillip Schuler and C. P. Smith represented the Melbourne Age and the Melbourne Argus respectively in the Middle East. While they were mainly based in Egypt during 1915, both visited Gallipoli between July and August 1915. Schuler, who was also a skilled photographer, later wrote a book about his experiences of the Dardanelles campaign and then transferred to the AIF; being killed in Belgium in June 1917. Smith reported from the Balkans before returning to Australia in 1916. ‘Banjo’ Paterson reported from Egypt for a period during the Gallipoli campaign. Keith Murdoch spent just four days on Gallipoli in September 1915 and arguably had more effect on the fate of the campaign than the other Australian journalists combined. After reporting on the activities of the British Army on the Western Front, H. S. Gullett covered the Australian troops in Palestine. On the Western Front Louise Mack had a brief period as a correspondent for two London newspapers, most famously describing the fall of Antwerp in 1914. F. M Cutlack was eventually appointed as Bean’s deputy as official correspondent on the Western Front in late 1917. Also in that year Frank Hurley and Hubert Wilkins commenced work as official photographers. The most forgotten of the Australian journalists from the Great War is

---

21 Jenny Macleod, Reconsidering Gallipoli (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 104-05. At least two serving soldiers in the AIF at Gallipoli—‘Trooper Bluegum’ (Major Oliver Hogue) and H. E. Yarra—sent articles home to the Australian press though the latter’s efforts were suppressed.
22 For the effect of Murdoch’s letter criticising the conduct of operations on the Dardanelles see Macleod, Reconsidering Gallipoli, 39-44; Les Carlyon, Gallipoli (Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia 2002), 493-9.
probably Gordon Gilmour from the Australian and New Zealand Press Association whose vigorous style in the latter stages of the war was popular with proprietors and editors back home.

Frederick Burnell accompanied the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force which quickly seized German New Guinea in 1914. It was a small operation with few casualties. As far as can be determined Burnell also had few problems with censorship. A long account of the capture of New Britain emphasised the ‘fierce resistance offered’ by German forces which ‘far surpassed the expectations of practically everyone in the expedition’. After a few follow-up articles on the surrender of the colony the tone changed and descriptions of this unknown and exotic region concentrate on its commercial possibilities, for example, in copra plantations. Like many other war correspondents before and since Burnell subsequently published an account of ‘his’ war.

At Gallipoli the Australian journalists operated under regulations which forbade them moving ‘beyond such limits as from time to time shall be laid down, without a permit signed by the chief censor’. They could not use any other means of communicating with their newspapers except ‘the recognised postal and telegraph service’ which of course was in the control of the armed forces. As the Gallipoli theatre was geographically isolated and journalists’ despatches had to pass through several bottlenecks and administrative layers getting news away could be a protracted business. However, compared to France, relations with the military hierarchy—on the surface at least—appeared to be promising. The Commander, Sir Ian Hamilton, was welcoming to the journalists. He told the Age journalist, Phillip Schuler, that he believed ‘that the Press should have representatives with the forces … to tell the people what is being done … By all means have censorship, but let your articles be written by a journalist, and not literary men who think they are journalists.’ For it was the ‘trained man who knows how to interest things that cannot matter to the army’. And then the affable Hamilton added that it was impossible for Schuler to actually witness the landing—even to write about the matters of no concern to the army. General William Bridges, the Commander of the 1st Australian Division, placed few formal restrictions on Bean’s movements. Captain Maxwell, the chief censor, was an old war correspondent himself who was admired by the imperial journalists for his evenhandedness.

---

23 Melbourne Argus, 6 October 1914.
26 Schuler, Australia in Arms, 95.
28 Ibid., 166-7.
At Gallipoli accreditation problems arose early for Australian journalists. Most famously Bean’s original press licence did not give him authorisation to despatch any articles from Gallipoli. He could go ashore and write but not transmit until the precious approval came through.\(^{29}\) This, plus some journalistic nous from the British journalist, Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, explains why it was the latter’s despatch that first announced the landing at Anzac to an eager Australian public on 8 May 1915.\(^{30}\) Bean’s article finally appeared on 14 May 1915.\(^{31}\)

Control of the journalists’ movements was also an issue. As noted above Schuler and Smith were only permitted to visit Gallipoli relatively briefly in the summer of 1915. Schuler ran into problems early on in the campaign in attempting to get around the ban on him attending the landing. Despite his valiant efforts to take a circuitous route to the battlefields via the islands of the Aegean he was detained at Lemnos and again at Mudros and firmly escorted away from anywhere near Anzac Cove. On one occasion a British officer initially assumed that Schuler was a spy.\(^{32}\)

In both the Mediterranean and on the Western Front the Australian journalists faced at least two layers of censorship. Firstly, there was the field censorship exercised by the army. Then there was the often severe censorship applied within Australia under the provisions of the hastily passed *War Precautions Act* which gave the Australian government unprecedented powers over what was published and distributed.\(^{33}\) The ‘mutilated despatches’ affair was an example of the military censorship. The sinking of the *Southland* involved both the military and the domestic censor. The *Southland* was an Allied vessel sunk in September 1915 off Lemnos. Bean’s original despatch describing the incident was first returned by Maxwell to be rewritten in order to give a more positive spin on a tragedy and to avoid negative references such as the actual number of men who drowned. When the despatch finally did reach Australia it was held up once again because of fears about its effect on public morale. Eventually, Bean’s revised article was published nine weeks after the sinking, basically in order to dispel rumours of a greater loss of life than had actually occurred.\(^{34}\)

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{30}\) *Argus*, 8 May 1915. Also *Age*, Brisbane *Courier* and *Sydney Morning Herald* of the same date.

\(^{31}\) In most Australian dailies. Also see *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, 17 May 1915.

\(^{32}\) Schuler, *Australia at Arms*, 90, 98.


\(^{34}\) For details of this episode in censorship see ‘Censorship’ in *Despatches from Gallipoli—Online Exhibition*, National Library of Australia, http://www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/3-censorship.htm. This excellent resource has been extremely useful in the preparation of this paper.
Yet far more important at both the Dardanelles and in France was self-censorship which can best be understood by looking at how the war correspondent’s role was interpreted by its practitioners. Bean provided several versions of what he saw as his role or combination of roles. Bean’s most detailed statement concerning his role came when Hamilton, responding to the criticism of his conduct of the campaign by Ashmead-Bartlett, decided to shift all the correspondents off the peninsula to Imbros. In a spirited protest against this move Bean stressed three points. He eschewed any desire ‘to sum the general trend of the campaign’, that is to review strategy or to comment on current or future operations. According to Bean this was more the responsibility of ‘correspondents responsible to newspapers’. He was there for two purposes. Firstly to ‘satisfy the poignant anxiety of Australians for news of their own men’. Secondly, and in Bean’s mind this was probably more important, to collect the raw material for ‘the history of the Australian part of the war’, a task upon which the Minister of Defence and his colleagues had ‘laid special stress’.

Bean may have left commentary on the course of campaigns to the commercial journalists but no Australian correspondent, with the exception of Keith Murdoch, ever fulfilled this role in any theatre of the war. Firstly, they were not permitted to do so. Secondly, their time as war correspondents was much briefer than Bean’s, and thirdly, they saw themselves as part of the war effort, working with the army, to pursue the morally justified objectives of the conflict. Thus, Schuler and Smith’s articles from Gallipoli, like those of Gilmour from France, gloss over the obscenities of war in favour of optimistically toned accounts of Australian daring and dash. The soldiers remain uncomplaining and cheerful despite the odds.

The journalists’ self-imposed restrictions extended to not including descriptions of suffering or cowardice for example. In December 1917 Bean in another analysis of his job described the duties of the official Australian correspondent as giving ‘Australia a knowledge of what the men and officers of the force are doing, and what is really happening in the war as far as they are concerned in it’ while at the same time ‘not giving information to the enemy’ and ‘not needlessly distressing their families at home’. Finally, according to Bean, the ‘rule of the censorship also forbids criticism’. Kevin Fewster is one of several historians, Australian and international, to point out that self-censoring was universal. It had two major aspects: sparing home readers the true ugliness and visceral horror of total war and avoiding criticism of the political and military command of the war.

36 C.E.W. Bean to CSO 1st Australian Division, 27th June 1915, in Fewster, Frontline Gallipoli, 135.
37 Fewster, Frontline Gallipoli, 13.
38 Ibid., 16-17.
Bean of course did distinguish himself firmly from ‘unofficial’ journalists though to his intense annoyance the distinction was not always observed by the army. As ‘official’ war correspondent Bean felt that he did not have to dance to a tune played by Australian newspaper proprietors. The First World War created the position of official war correspondent and to large extent Bean developed that role as he went along, seeing himself and Malcolm Ross, the New Zealand correspondent at Gallipoli, as occupying similar positions. Early in his career, over two months before the Anzac landing, Bean expressed in his diary his annoyance that the British command had conflated his position, and that of the other ‘Eyewitnesses’ or official correspondents from Britain and the Dominions, with mere newspaper representatives. Bean stressed that his post-war role of historian was what made him different:

I have to get the story of the war for them [the Australian government] for subsequent publication and I can’t possibly do that without seeing something or hearing something more than I am at present allowed to do under these restrictions …

Several historians have stressed that Bean was a close and constant observer of the action as he filled hundreds of notebooks and interviewed and photographed constantly. For example, Inglis noted that Bean ‘became famous on Gallipoli for his bravery’ and that he was right up with the AIF ‘there to observe and describe their every action’ in France. This is an exaggeration. Bean did take the appellation ‘Eyewitness’ seriously. He was wounded on several occasions and just escaped death on several others. But he could not be everywhere all the time. For example, he only found out about the 5th Division’s immolation at Fromelles the morning after the battle but typically changed his plans on the spot to get to the battlefield to talk to the survivors and to see the ground for himself. While assiduous in collecting information from participants in France and going over the sites of battle, he did not enjoy the proximity to the frontline he had enjoyed for much of the Gallipoli campaign. Bean was not one of those ‘closeted pressmen on the Western front’ where no French or British Empire correspondent was ever killed (a stark contrast to other wars) but essentially Bean took his information from the staff...

---


40 Bean Diary, 2 February 1915, in Fewster, *Frontline Gallipoli*, 42. Bean returned to this theme a month later: see diary entry for 14 March 1915 in Fewster, *Frontline Gallipoli*, 44.


afterwards and supplemented it with post-battle interviews. This provided the enormous amount of detail in his despatches, diaries and histories, and specific Australian references, but the gist of Bean’s French despatches was material that could have emanated from headquarters.}\(^{43}\) From the middle of 1915 accredited correspondents were finally permitted on the Western Front. By the middle of 1917 the relationship between the military and the British media had become much cosier with some of the cossetting that Warner had mentioned in connection with the Russo-Japanese War. The price of co-operation was clear:

The daily routine of the war correspondent, with official censor in tow, at all times, tended to be one of piecing together stories of the valour and achievement of the British Army—watching preliminary bombardments, trying to get as safe as was possible to the fighting front and then interviewing anybody behind the lines …\(^{44}\)

Bean was less restricted in his movements than British journalists and he certainly took more risks. He was also constitutionally averse to the marked hyperbole of Fleet Street’s finest but otherwise the above description is true of his daily round.

Despite Bean’s enormous productivity editors in Australia were often reluctant to take his work. At first he was relatively philosophical about this situation, arguing that Schuler’s and Smith’s editors could be expected to prefer their own staff.\(^{45}\) There was also the matter of Bean’s style which some saw as too prosaic. Les Carlyon is perhaps going too far when he describes Bean the journalist as a ‘clerk of facts’ whose ‘opening sentences often washed over the reader like an anaesthetic’, but there were also contemporary critics.\(^{46}\) In June 1915, for example, the Sydney *Bulletin* argued that Bean’s articles ‘don’t serve the Australian who wanted the story of Australian arms to be written so that he could visualise it. The fact is he’s too small for the job. It demanded a man able to make images with the vocabulary of a literary man and the eyes of a photographic lens, and it got—a reporter.’ Between September 1915 and April 1916 the two Melbourne newspapers, the *Argus* and the *Age*, complained several times about Bean’s lack of dash and vigour though they did continue to take Bean’s articles.\(^{47}\)

\(^{43}\) John F. Williams, *Anzacs, the Media and the Great War* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1999), 3.


\(^{45}\) See Bean’s diary entry for 26 June 1915 in Fewster, *Frontline Gallipoli*, 134.

\(^{46}\) Carlyon, *Gallipoli*, 248. Carlyon implies that the Melbourne newspapers never resumed taking Bean’s material, which is untrue.

Bean attributed the lack of enthusiasm for the *Age* and *Argus* to three causes. Firstly, they had apparently never wanted an Australian representative anyway, preferring to use Reuters. Secondly, they preferred wildly exaggerated articles, ‘sensational invention’ in Bean’s words. Finally, Bean alluded to a real problem which has not been given the attention it deserves by media historians—the regional bias in the Australian media:

I suppose the Age and the Argus think them [Bean’s depatches] uninteresting because they have their own correspondents in Cairo who can send them stuff which is bound to arrive weeks before mine and is not subject to censorship. They are not Victorian and therefore what the Age and Argus want, and it doesn’t make them any the less interesting that about 1/3 of what they say is not true …

The equivalent of Fleet Street as the great metropolitan centre of the national media did not exist in Australia but state preferences and jealousies did. It was not a new problem nor would it cease with the Great War. ‘Banjo Paterson’, while ostensibly representing both Melbourne and Sydney papers in South Africa, found the Melbourne publications far more liable to edit his despatches or not print them at all. In the Second World War one of Australia’s greatest war correspondents, Osmar White, often wrote to his wife from the Pacific that outside his base of Victoria he received less column space.

Australian newspapers took their war news, as they took all their foreign news, from a variety of sources. They pooled their various sources of information—communiqués, official war correspondents, American sources, British war correspondents. Leaders and editorials would take Bean or Gilmour or Gullett and extemporise on the despatches as they had received them. As the British War Office modified its policy on war correspondents, permitting access to a privileged—and often famous—few, these British articles often took precedence over the local version in Australia. Philip Gibbs, probably the best known journalist in the Empire, was often preferred to any of the Australian correspondents.

---

49 R. W. F. Droogleever (ed.), *From the Front: A. B. (Banjo) Paterson’s Dispatches from the Boer War* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2000), 5. Only 30 of Paterson’s 75 letters to the *Sydney Morning Herald* were published in the *Argus*.
50 Osmar White, letters to Molly White, copies in possession of author. White’s copy went to at least three states.
51 Farrar, *News from the Front*, 66-79. The authorship of articles from the Western Front has been exhaustively analysed by my colleague, Fay Anderson.
A corollary of this policy of combining a variety of sources into the one report, or series of reports, was the lack of by-lines, that is, failure to attribute reports to particular individuals. The official war correspondents such as Bean, and later Cutlack and Gullett, were more fortunate here as their longer despatches were often identified as written by the ‘Official Press Representative’ and Bean was often personally identified.\textsuperscript{52} But individuals such as Schuler and Smith can be very hard to identify and often shrewd guessing is required. Perhaps the hardest hit of all were Hurley and Wilkins, the two official photographers, who already had international reputations by this stage. Not one of their photographs was used in an Australian newspaper during the war.\textsuperscript{53}

Thus Australian press coverage of the AIF’s operations on the Western Front drew only in part from the work of Australian representatives. In some cases, for example, from the troops’ arrival in early 1916 until the battles of Fromelles and Pozières, there was little coverage at all of their activities. Bean did report at length on those battles but after the Somme his articles appeared less in the Australian press or were severely edited. As Bean was, until late 1917, the only Australian reporter on the Western front this meant that coverage of the two battles of Bullecourt in April and May 1917 was generally taken from sources other than Bean. By the time of the battle of Passchendaele Gordon Gilmour was reporting regularly for the Melbourne \textit{Argus} in preference to Bean. Gilmour’s style, vigorous and ‘over the top’ as any action he purportedly described emphasised Australian valour, mateship and a never-say-die spirit. It was also good propaganda as recruiting became more difficult in a country totally dependent on a voluntary system to fill thinned ranks.\textsuperscript{54} With the appointment of Frederick Cutlack as Bean’s deputy the latter could devote more of his time to preparing for the collection of records and artefacts necessary for postwar commemoration and the Official History.

In his groundbreaking history of war journalism Phillip Knightley mounted a sustained attack on the failure of the war correspondents to tell the truth about total war and what it was really like in the trenches.\textsuperscript{55} More recently this position has been criticised. For Martin J. Farrar it is incorrect to say the press was dancing to the generals’ tune or merely adhering to a government line. The press—and this is true too of the Australian press—believed in the war much as did any government or army commander.\textsuperscript{56} Macleod has also attacked

\begin{itemize}
\item[53] Again, this point derives from Anderson’s extensive research.
\item[54] Any number of Gilmour’s articles could be cited here. For a typical example about Ypres see the \textit{Argus}, 24 September 1917. For Australians constantly ‘spoiling for a fight’ see the \textit{Argus}, 10 March 1918 and 13 March 1918.
\item[55] Phillip Knightley, \textit{The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo} (London: Prion, 2000), 83-120.
\item[56] Farrar, \textit{News from the Front}, 75-6.
\end{itemize}
Knightley’s position that there was ‘a great conspiracy’ to prevent the truth being known on the Home Front. For Macleod this is ‘too simplistic an interpretation of the motivations of all the correspondents and all those engaged in censorship’.  

While press regulations were tough in Australia during the war the newspaper proprietors were, like their counterparts in Britain, too powerful to be simply told what to write. Journalists, their employers and the generals were in broad agreement about the war and the journalists were volunteers in the causes of omission and silence, not conscripts. The Australian volunteer tradition was not just restricted to the soldiers.

57  Macleod, _Reconsidering Gallipoli_, 137.
Anzacs, Gallipoli and the Germans

John F. Williams

Should the Dardanelles fall, the world war has been decided against us.
Grand Admiral Tirpitz, 1915

The more ships sunk in the eastern Mediterranean, the fewer can be used in the North Sea, and the more troops find graves in Gallipoli, the fewer can take the field against us in Flanders.
Berliner Tageblatt, April 1915

A quoi bon tuer des Turcs? Kill Boches.
Sir John French

Liman von Sanders

Of the 35 monographs in the Reichsarchiv series Schlachten des Weltkrieges (Battles of the World War)—mostly written during the interwar years—only volume 16, devoted to the Dardanelles campaign of 1915, deals with fighting in which German combat troops played a numerically minor role. Even so, as an indication to the weighting given Gallipoli by German official historians in the interwar years, its treatment in this series equals that accorded such a classic Western Front siege campaign as Third Ypres (Passchendaele) of 1917. For a German audience, the series editor evidently deemed an explanation necessary, arguing that the ‘battle for the Dardanelles’ was not only of ‘quite special significance’ for the ‘general course of the world war [but] arouses special interest because of its uncommon difficulties and many-sidedness’.

He might have added that the Germans regarded this as a German campaign, organised by Germans and directed by a German general. As for its importance, Grand Admiral

1 Alfred von Tirpitz, Erinnerungen (Berlin: K. F. Koehler 1927), 491. All translations from German are by the author.
2 Berliner Tageblatt, 27-28 April 1915.
3 A 1915 remark by Sir John French quoted in Figaro, 2 August 1917.
4 Foreword to Carl Mühlmann, Schlachten des Weltkrieges, vol. 16, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915 (Berlin: G. Stalling, 1927), 7. See also Werner Beumelburg, Schlachten des Weltkrieges, vol. 27, Flandern 1917 (Berlin: G. Stalling, 1928).
Tirpitz was not alone in recognising that the loss of the Dardanelles would be disastrous for the Central Powers; even dedicated Westerners like Erich von Falkenhayn were in total agreement on that point. And since Gallipoli was an Allied defeat, it was right that the operational commander, Prussian general Liman von Sanders (variously called Liman, Liman Pasha or Sanders), should be acclaimed as the campaign’s mastermind, hero and victor. To be all these things, Liman needed a worthy foe, and found one in Sir Ian Hamilton. In German sources, Gallipoli can appear as a battle of wits between two skilled adversaries in which Liman always had the upper hand. As an example, Hamilton’s ‘brilliantly planned’ Anzac offensive at Sari Bair failed only because ‘Hamilton met in the commander of the Fifth Turkish Army [Liman] a master who in a few moves answered “check” with “checkmate”’. 5

This was not an interpretation designed to please Turks, who later counter-claimed that by denuding Gallipoli’s coastal defences Liman almost lost the campaign on the first day. In their version it was only the intervention of Mustapha Kemal’s astutely positioned division that broke an Anzac thrust which threatened to sever the Turkish lines and lead to a crippling defeat. This was good myth-making but half-baked history. Liman had found himself in charge of an army in which ‘the troops were scattered all along the coast like the frontier detachments of days gone by. Everywhere, the enemy would meet with a certain amount of opposition, but the absence of reserves precluded the possibility of a sustained and vigorous defence.’ In response, his first orders on assuming command of Fifth Army were for the coastal defences to be thinned and the main strength of his divisions be at high points from where they could be rushed into combat and contain the invaders. Mustapha Kemal became the beneficiary of Liman’s strategy. 6

This Turkish tendency to play down the German contribution to the Gallipoli victory did not begin with Attatürk in the 1920s. During the campaign Enver Pasha told the US ambassador that he felt no obligation towards the Germans. ‘They have lent us some money and sent us a few officers, it is true, but see what we have done! We have defeated the British fleet—something which neither the Germans nor any other nation could do.’ Thus, while the Dardanelles campaign of 1915 is often seen as a Franco-British versus Turk affair—or even, in Australasia, as an Anzac versus Turk event—the Germans were

5 German assessments of Hamilton hardly accord with his modern-day image in the old British Empire. In Australia particularly, Hamilton is portrayed as intelligent, but weak and ultimately irresolute—a failure who must share a large portion of the blame for the Gallipoli disaster. Yet Hamilton’s failings, real or imaginary—rather than Liman’s strengths and the resilience and courage of the Turkish infantryman—are too often blamed for the failure of a campaign in which Liman was also denied much of his due credit (at least in Turkish and Allied writing) in favour of Mustapha Kemal: Anon. Officer of the German Staff, ‘Failure at the Dardanelles’, in Charles F. Horne and Walter F. Austin (eds), Source Records of the Great War, vol. 3 (New York: National Alumni, 1923), 269.
entitled to view it differently. With the adulation attaching to the image of Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, it is easily forgotten that Kemal, at Gallipoli, acted under the orders of a German general. While nominally responsible to the Turkish war minister and, indirectly, to the Kaiser, Liman possessed powers roughly equal in 1915 to those of Hindenburg on the Eastern, and Falkenhayn on the Western fronts.7

The background: Churchill, Britain and Turkey

Despite Winston Churchill’s claim that ‘No State plunged into the World War so wilfully as Turkey’, Turkey seems to have had little choice. As the architect of a Dardanelles adventure for whose failure he bore much of the blame, Churchill was keen to justify an invasion of Ottoman Turkey by portraying that empire’s entry into the war as an act of treachery. It was hardly this simple. Once it became clear that Great Britain was likely to enter on the side of France and Russia — the Turkish hereditary foe — the Turks turned to a German Empire only too willing to have the ‘Sick Man of Europe’ as its ally. The Germans were fearful that Russian control of the Dardanelles and a subsequent conquest (in alliance with Turkey’s Balkan enemies) of European Turkey would ensure that the Mediterranean became an Entente lake and further threaten Germany’s already shaky Austro-Hungarian ally. In July 1914, in this spirit of mutual self-interest, Enver Pasha entered into a secret treaty committing Turkey to the Central Powers’ cause. Despite Churchill’s claim that the ‘requisitioning of these ships, so far from making Turkey an enemy, nearly made her an Ally’, Britain’s decision to renege on the contracted sale of two battle cruisers was a diplomatic insult that sealed the matter.8

By 1914, the idea of a naval expedition to seize control of the Dardanelles had long been contemplated by British planners, but ‘generally considered impractical’. In 1906 with Turko-British relations at a low ebb, the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir John Fisher, considered using a ‘squadron of His Majesty’s least valuable ships [to] rush the Straits’ and reach Constantinople. But given the losses this squadron would suffer, he thought this ‘mighty hazardous’ and therefore ‘much to be deprecated’. As far as any supporting amphibious landing was concerned, the British General Staff ‘in view of the risks involved, [was] not prepared to recommend its being attempted’. Yet by late-March 1915, despite the failure of these ‘least valuable ships’ to make an impression on the forts defending the Straits, this same enterprise was about to be undertaken. In September 1914 even

---

Churchill acknowledged that the ‘price to be paid in taking Gallipoli would no doubt be heavy’, but justified on the grounds that a ‘good army of 50,000 men and sea power—that is the end of the Turkish menace’. And so the die was cast.\(^9\)

Churchill was ignoring the fact that, by 1914, the Ottoman and German empires shared enough mutual concerns to make them natural allies. The pan-germanist dream of a Germanic Reich stretching from Dunkirk and Ostend to the Tigris and Euphrates was no international secret, nor was the fact that its realisation depended on Ottoman acquiescence. But contempt for the military power of Europe’s ‘Sick Man’ caused the western allies to ignore intelligence from Russia (whose divisions had struggled to beat a weaker Turkish force in the Caucasus in winter 1914-15) which suggested that the Turkish army of late 1914 might no longer be the motley, ill-trained and -equipped mob which had performed so poorly in the recent Balkan wars. But a subsequent Turkish defeat inflicted by an Indian division at Basra encouraged the British ‘to underestimate the efficiency of the Turkish military machine’, a miscalculation for which the British Empire would pay heavily.\(^10\)

**German-Turkish relations**

The man mostly responsible for the heightened efficiency of this despised military machine was the aforementioned Liman von Sanders. In 1913, Enver Pasha initiated a program to modernise the moribund Ottoman Empire, a program which, with the appearance of neutrality, involved inviting the co-operation of both sides of the likely coming war. Then aged 57, Liman was appointed director of a German military mission, while the British instituted a naval mission and the French were supposed to reform the police. The appearance of Turkish even-handedness was, though, just that—an appearance, for the wide-ranging powers granted the Germans far exceeded those accorded the Entente allies. The Russians, out in the cold, were seething at the prospect of a German general

---


\(^10\) Although the liberal German press dismissed the Pan-Germans as a lunatic fringe, both the Kaiser and Crown Prince were known to share some of their views. Wilhelm’s pet project, a Berlin-to-Baghdad railway (with Constantinople as its junction), could be read as a first south-eastwards step in Pan-Germanism’s grandiose vision. Should Ottoman Turkey become a vassal state in the process, then at least it would continue to exist, under the patronage of the principal power of Mitteleuropa. The most forceful and well-known exponents of the pre-World War I Pan-German world-view are Heinrich Class (the Pan-German leader) and General Friedrich von Bernhardi. Fritz Fischer credits Class with outlining a program that was adopted almost verbatim by Hitler and the NSDAP: Class [Daniel Frymann, pseud.], *Wenn ich der Kaiser wär*—*Politische Wahrheiten und Norwendigkeiten* (aka *Kaiserbuch*) (Leipzig: T. Weicher, 1925); Bernhardi, *Germany and the Next War* (New York: Longmans Green, 1914); Fischer, *Hitler war kein Betriebsunfall* (München: C.H. Beck, 1998). For some recent examinations of the Pan-German phenomenon see Roger Chickering, *We Men Who Feel Most German: A Cultural Study of the Pan-German League 1886-1914* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1984), and Michel Korinman, *Deutschland über alles: Le Pan-Germanisme 1890-1945* (Paris: Fayard, 1999); Aspinall-Oglander, *Gallipoli*, vol. 1, 132.
in charge of the Corps responsible for the defence of Constantinople. Keeping up appearances, Enver Pasha formally acceded to the Russian complaints, demoting Liman to a position of lesser rank but greater actual power. Now a Turkish marshal, he became inspector-general of the army in early 1914. Liman needed ‘but a few weeks’ to determine that ‘from top to bottom the Turkish army was thoroughly unready for war’. Yet by 31 July 1914 ‘the army had gone far to recover from its plight of the previous December, and thenceforward it enjoyed the advantage of three undisturbed months in which to place itself on a war footing’.  

The influence of the German mission was crucial. By the last half April 1915, two of the six divisions in Liman’s Fifth (Ottoman) Army were commanded by Germans, with the other four under de facto German command. A Saxon commanding 3rd Division, Lt. Col. Nicolai, was also placed in charge of improving the peninsula’s primitive roads and reinforcing the inadequate Ottoman defence systems. For this work he used ‘work battalions of non-Moslems … Armenians, Greeks and Jews, whose use as front line troops [was] inappropriate’. Germans also provided expert artillerymen as well as machine-gunners—whose skills had recently been honed on the Western Front. Yet the most effective German combatants would not fight on the land at all. Captain Hersing of the submarine *U-21* (who torpedoed and sunk at least one and maybe two pre-Dreadnought class battleships in the Dardanelles) became a national hero and the first German U-boat ace of two world wars. Other Germans served no less effectively without bearing arms. Battling both the enemy and a casual Turkish attitude towards hygiene, German medical orderlies would save countless wounded Turks as well as Allied prisoners. All told, only a few hundred Germans were directly involved in the Gallipoli fighting (of whom 52 lost their lives), but their presence was fundamental to the outcome.

**Ethnic purging**

The Germans did more than command and organise. With Liman’s blessing, they were involved in the ethnic segregation of the Turkish Army—although evidence suggests this was mainly or wholly for military reasons. While Germans knew that a motivated, well-organised force, astutely commanded, could defend the rugged and ravine-scarred Gallipoli peninsula against almost anything, they were far from confident that Turks were up to

---

11 Liman was shocked to discover that ‘Except in the capital the men were ill-fed. Their uniforms were in rags. The infantry was physically unfit to execute any manoeuvre, and in many cases could not march for lack of boots. Staff and regimental officers alike were for the most part ignorant of their duties. Hospitals were in a deplorable state. And the disorder in the administrative service was chaotic’: Liman, *Fünf Jahre Türkei*, 81-2; Aspinall-Oglander, *Gallipoli*, vol. 1, 18.

the task. Their mixed ethnicity and conflicting religions was a potential nightmare since Arabs, Kurds, Christians and Jews, all reluctant Ottoman subjects, made poor soldiers.

On the other hand Anatolian and Thracian Turks possessed of ‘outstanding frugality and self sufficiency [were] strengthened by a fatalistic view of life [which] brought great aptitude to military service’. But what of the Ottoman officers? Many of these had come ‘through the ranks without proper schooling; there were even company commanders who didn’t know how to read or write … The number of officers capable of reading a map was extremely rare.’ There was little that could be done about the middle-ranking officers, but with potentially disloyal Ottoman subjects segregated into forced-labour battalions, Liman was confident about the patriotic ardour and devotion of his combat troops. Further, he could count on the fact that the low esteem in which the Turk was held in the Entente powers would cause the British and French to underestimate their enemy, a fact which would only play into his hands.13

Liman had begun his tenure in command of the Turkish First Army in the Bosporus. It was not until early March, when the Allied invasion threat became obvious, that he was put in charge of Fifth Army at Gallipoli. He first had to familiarise himself with the territory and in late March rode off, ‘with the casual elegance of an old cavalryman’, to reconnoitre the peninsula. He soon discovered that the defending troops would stand ‘scarcely a chance if the English attacked without loss of time’. If only they would allow Liman ‘just eight days. Only eight days!’ As it transpired he would ‘not get eight days to prepare, but four weeks’. The cause is only hinted at in the British official history, but the Germans appear to sympathise with Hamilton over the enormity of the task facing a commander at Lemnos whose harbour, Mudros, was entirely unsuited ‘as a base for a large military force’. There was only a ‘precarious’ supply of water for ‘at most 10,000 men’, meaning that they would have to live onboard ship ‘to the great detriment of their health’. It was then decided to move to Alexandria, ‘seven hours from Mudros’. The result was shipping chaos, which caused Hamilton, ‘sick with rage’, to order the ships reloaded. From Alexandria, he expected the invasion fleet to be at sea in ten days. ‘It will need a month.’14

13 Perceiving themselves (and rightly so) as oppressed minorities, the Ottoman Empire’s Christians and Jews were clearly unfitted for combat, and should be either ‘evacuated’ or if used, then only in the most degrading of menial tasks. On the other hand, Turks from Anatolia or Thrace, fighting on their native soil against a hated infidel, brought some of the ‘very best qualities to military service’: Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 17; Generalmajor Hans Kannengiesser Pascha, Gallipoli: Bedeutung und Verlauf der Kämpfe 1915 (Berlin: Schlieffen, 1927), 117, 146.

14 A German report—sympathetic to Hamilton—described how the War Office in London, ‘thinking more like shopkeepers than soldiers, has planned the loading with clean and orderly separation in mind. The troops on their own, sundry military equipment by itself, the horse teams on their own, the gun barrels and their carriages on different ships, in short, the whole military force sent off on its expedition in the most magnificent [dis]order. And now no poor devil [in Mudros] seems capable of straightening out the mess’: Clemens Laar, Kampf um die Dardanellen (Berlin: P. Neff, 1936), 202-03.
Liman exploited this month's grace to the full. Enver had provided him with five reliable divisions, and then added an additional one, the 3rd, reinforced by a cavalry brigade. Enver was also astute enough to ensure that while Germans would fill most of the key Fifth Army posts, capable Ottoman officers should be given adequate representation; Liman was obliged to choose as his chief of staff Colonel Kiazim Bey, who would remain with him until the Ottoman surrender in October 1918. While the command structure and the numbers and quality of troops seemed adequate, their dispersion made the German anxious. Although it met with hostility from Turkish officers, Liman ordered that the main defensive strength be consolidated ‘in groups at central points, from where the troops could be moved forward rapidly and in sufficient numbers in all directions against the invaders’. But the coast was long and the landing possibilities extensive. ‘Where, then, were these suitable central points?’ Since he could at least ride around the peninsula, Liman had an advantage over invaders who had to make do with inaccurate and out-dated maps. He also knew that many of his Anatolians (men ‘made of iron’) and Thracians had acquitted themselves well in the recent Balkan wars. Of comfort also was the knowledge that ethnically unreliable civilian elements on the peninsula and its opposite Asiatic shore (in 1913 the town of Gallipoli was half Greek) were to be ‘evacuated’. Not only could he depend on his troops, but on the loyalty of the populace as well.15

Preliminary German intelligence

By mid-April German intelligence was suggesting that his six divisions should be more than a match for what appeared to be a very mediocre invasion force. The French in the main were Senegalese and African colonials, men whose faith might incline them to be less than ardent foes of their fellow-Moslem Turks. The British were mostly white, from two trained but scarcely battle-hardened BEF units, supported by ‘mercenary’ volunteers from Australia and New Zealand, men deprecated in the Berliner Tageblatt as ‘a miserable collection of troops, got together anyhow and partly untrained—coloured Englishmen and Frenchmen and colonial rowdies of all sorts, Cairo Australians, Canadians and so on—who may frighten old women and might rob and plunder, but can do nothing against

15 Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanelen 1915, 80-2. History is unclear as to the fate of these evacuated Greeks. Able-bodied men were drafted into forced-labour battalions, but the fate of the women and children and less-able men is unknown. At the end of the war Liman was charged with war crimes for his alleged part in the Armenian genocide—which Turks still claim never happened. Not just Armenians; some 32,000 Greeks were evacuated from Gallipoli on Liman’s orders. His murky involvement in these ‘evacuations’ is increasingly coming under scrutiny. See, for example, J.M. Winter (ed.), America and the Armenian Genocide of 1915 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 178; Edward J. Erickson, ‘Armenian Massacres: New Records Undercut Old Blame: Re-examining History’, Middle East Quarterly (Summer 2006), 67-75.
serious national armies like the Turks'. The Germans too were in danger of underestimating their enemy.\textsuperscript{16}

Yet Liman was taking no risks. His acquaintance with the topography of the peninsula convinced him that if the invaders could be confined to their beachheads there was little chance of a breakout, with Hamilton's sole chance of success lying in a rapid breakthrough carried out heedless of losses. The first 24 hours would be vital. If, in the wake of the initial shock offensive, Liman's army could hold on to what Hamilton defined as his strategic high points then, with reinforcements pouring in from all parts of the peninsula, the Turks should be impossible to dislodge. Should the Allies then decide to reinforce their forces in the hope of wearing down the opposition, Turkish troops could tie up, possibly for months on end, Allied divisions that could otherwise be used against Germany on the Western Front. It was Liman's good fortune and Hamilton's bad that by the early April 1915 any pretence at secrecy had disappeared. The official monograph tells of 'report after report [of] troop assemblies in Egypt and on the Greek islands and about transport movements in the Mediterranean Sea following an easterly course'. Hamilton also had to contend with a daily leakage of information though Cairo's \textit{Egyptian Gazette}. Whether this turned his hair grey, as the Germans assert, is uncertain. He could only pray that these reports would 'never reach the eyes [of] Marshal Liman von Sanders'. If they did, he would find it impossible to believe 'such obvious stupidity on the part of his opponent'.\textsuperscript{17}

By early April 1915, Liman had done everything possible to counter the coming landings. From intelligence and what could be read in the \textit{Egyptian Gazette}, the size of the invasion force was calculable as was the quality of the invading troops. As for the date, the build-up suggested the last week of April. All that was lacking was information as to where on the peninsula landings would be attempted. A glance at a map suggested that Bulair, near the harbour at Buklar on the Gulf of Saros, was ideal for invaders. Barely ten kilometres to the north of the town of Gallipoli, the isthmus at this point was just five kilometres wide, offering the invaders the prospect of cutting off and isolating the whole

\textsuperscript{16} It must have been inconceivable to the Germans that men from the dominions should willingly volunteer to fight for a 'decadent' British Empire so clearly on the verge of breaking up. The high rates of pay on offer were assumed to be the only attraction for these 'mercenaries'. There were some Newfoundland non-combatant personnel at Gallipoli. In 1915 Newfoundland was yet to be incorporated into the Dominion of Canada. The imaginary Canadian presence was possibly due to confusion over the 'C' in 'ANZAC'. Capt. Persius in \textit{Berliner Tageblatt}, 26 April 1915: Mühlmann, \textit{Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915}, 81; Walter von Schoen, \textit{Die Hölle von Gallipoli: Der Heldenkampf an der Dardanellen} (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1937), 65.

\textsuperscript{17} 'Calculations as to the strength of the enemy landing corps fluctuated between 50 and 100 thousand men. The generals Sir Ian Hamilton and d'Amade … had supposedly already arrived in the Dardanelles … There were further rumours to the effect that, in Piraeus, the harbour of Athens, great numbers of tugs and lighters were being bought up by English officers. Consequently, there was high probability of a military action, of a landing on a major scale in the Dardanelles': Mühlmann, \textit{Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915}, 80. See also Laar, \textit{Kampf um die Dardanellen}, 203-04.
of Liman’s army at one fell swoop. Liman was also concerned about Besika Bay, on the Asian shore some 15 kilometres from the southernmost Gallipoli tip. He was wrong on both counts. Yet such was the disposition of his forces that he was still able to engage the enemy in strength and close to actual landing points.

Through all these preparations, Liman was aware that there was one prospect which could not, properly, be factored in. For the Franco-British Entente partners, Gallipoli per se was not the aim of the exercise. As Liman well understood, control of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles straits was but a necessary stepping stone to the conquest of Constantinople. But the third Entente partner, Russia, also had a vital interest in the occupation of Constantinople. Rumours abounded as to Russian intentions. It was said that in Black Sea ports ‘a hundred and fifty ships were under steam and ready to transport three army corps to the Bosporus’. Liman was not taken in. He knew that the Russian armies were reeling from Austro-German blows in Galicia and Poland and—even if 150 ships could be found—must have doubted that sufficient trained troops could be available for a major assault on the Ottoman Empire. Even if Russians were to be involved, he knew that the enemy must land, ‘not near Smyrna or on the Bosporus, but at Gallipoli’. He had to be ‘on his guard against unnecessarily denuding the peninsula of troops [and] his army will stay where it is, as he has installed it … Should the enemy come now, he will find a well-prepared army.\(^{18}\)

The first landings

On the morning of 24 April, Liman, accompanied by two aides, made a brief inspection of the Asian shore. Crossing over to the European side, they found that all reports ‘from the coastal sectors indicated … nothing that could give rise to suspicion’. On the morning of the 25th however, they were awoken by ‘heavy cannon fire booming out from various directions’. Initial reports indicated a large fleet anchored by the isthmus of Bulair, where a ‘warship had opened fire, while countless transports sat at anchor’. From the Asian side came reports of more transports and warship approaching the bay of Besika, while by Kum Kale the coastal positions were under fire.

So the great day had come! … All along the heights could be seen an imposing spectacle. A whole armada—20 battleships alone—lay at anchor in the Gulf of Saros … The guns of the warships … spewed forth smoke and fire. The high towering earthworks of Bulair were blanketed in smoke and dust … yet on the transports there was nothing pointing to a troop movement into the boats. Did the enemy want to await the oncoming of darkness for this?\(^{19}\)

\(^{18}\) Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 80; Schoen, Die Hölle von Gallipoli, 66.

\(^{19}\) Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 93.
At the southernmost tip of the peninsula Allied troops were ashore and ‘heavy fighting was in progress’; 9th Division reported that it intended ‘to counter-attack once darkness fell’. The enemy had also landed near Ari Burnu but Kemal’s 19th Division ‘was at the point of throwing [them] back into the sea’. Off Bulair, the enemy was showing no sign ‘of taking measures to land troops’, strengthening an ‘impression that only a demonstration was intended here’. Even so, there was still a possibility that the British were seeking to draw Turkish strength to the south, and then, if this was successful, to make the main landing in the Gulf of Saros. In spite of the uncertainty, Liman believed by the evening of the 25th that he could safely dispatch a few battalions from the 5th and 7th divisions. These were sent promptly from Bulair to Maidos so as to join the embattled 9th Division. ‘Only a few labour battalions were kept back at Bulair.’

On the evening of the 25th the situation began to clarify. It was now known that the first sighting of the invasion armada had been at dawn near Kum Kale on the Asian bank, where Turkish lookouts had sighted ‘countless’ ships. Five warships had opened fire at the shore and the hinterland. ‘A successful landing followed after several hours of bombardment, which the weak coastal defences were unable to hinder.’ During the day ‘further embarkations followed, so that by evening some 3,000 French troops stood on the Asian shore’. Third Division, opposing these troops, was able to do little during the day, since fire from the ships continued to range over the shoreline all day long. The Turks had been more successful at Sedd ul Bahr on the European tip of the peninsula, where the first British landing troops suffered heavy losses from ‘annihilating fire’. The defence had been so resolute near Sedd ul Bahr, ‘that it was only at nightfall that the enemy could land reinforcements’. But by Cape Tekke the landing force had managed to ‘silence the deadly fire of the Turkish machine guns on their flanks and through concentrated team work had succeeded in gaining firm holds in two places’. For the British 29th Division, their few ‘footholds’ on the ‘southern tip of the peninsula came at a heavy price: of the 9,000 men who landed, 3,000 were either killed or wounded’.

All German accounts agree that an Anzac landing and breakout from Ariburnu provided the greatest threat that day. Failure to block an Anzac push inland must entail the loss of a strategic height known to the Allies as 197, on whose possession the Germans saw the success or failure of the whole campaign. German descriptions of the landing around Anzac Cove agree that as a British surprise was intended, a ‘preliminary bombardment

20 Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 94-5.
21 Every movement by the Turkish division was met by a murderous and sometimes flanking fire. Only at nightfall could the division attempt a counter attack. In bitter hand-to-hand combat the enemy was pushed back out of Jeni Schehir, but with the break of day on 26 April, it became impossible to remain in the village lying under fire from the ships’ guns’: ibid. 96.
was therefore abandoned. All lights dimmed, the fleet approached the coast. On a mirror-smooth sea and favoured by moonlight, the landing troops climbed into the boats. No noise or loud command was detectable from the shore.’ In almost complete darkness, a fleet of boats moved up to the shore.

In the uncertain light of daybreak, Turkish advance posts suddenly see a powerful fleet of boats emerge … The advance battalion immediately opens fire on boats a few metres from the shore, whose occupants jump into the water so as to reach land as quickly as possible. The Turks are forced to withdraw against overwhelming numbers—about 1,500 men are now ashore. They pull back, weaving their way up the rugged cliff face pursued by Australians, upon whom the need for a rapid and powerful assault had been impressed.\textsuperscript{22}

Turkish shell fire and shrapnel ‘from the south out of guns installed near Gaba Tepe, covers the landing place, bringing about confusion and casualties’. In response, ‘the guns from the enemy battle fleet … open fire on the Turkish artillery and seek in vain to silence it’. ‘As surprise is no longer an issue, the position where the Turkish reserves are supposed to be is also brought under fire. Heavy calibre shells howl over the heights and burst, causing the air to vibrate in Maidos.’ The widely spread defenders of (Turkish) 27th Infantry Regiment immediately counter-attacked, but were unable to ‘halt the powerful advance of Birdwood’s Australians and New Zealanders’. The task for the defenders was made more difficult by the terrain, as the deep, rugged ravines and the abundance of thick shrubbery ‘conceals the movements of the enemy troops. And so close to the fighting scene soars the massif of Kodjadschemendagh [197].’ Just as all seemed lost, the Anzacs ‘flushed with victory … fresh Turkish troops charge against them on a broad front, pulling retreating battalions forward with them. Help in the moment of greatest need, help at the last minute. It is none other than Mustapha Kemal-Bey … with his 19th Division.’\textsuperscript{23}

A brigade of Kemal’s division had been holding exercises in the area in the night of 24 and 25 April. Kemal first heard ‘cannon fire and battle noises in the early hours of the morning.’ For the moment panic reigned. Gendarmes were ‘running around like headless chickens. “They’re coming, the English are coming!”’ Mustapha Kemal immediately recognises the danger, and does not hesitate. One regiment, accompanied by a battery [artillery] is sent off in order to occupy and secure the important mount of Kodjadschemendagh.’ The remaining troops were sent forward in the direction of Kaba Tepe-Ariburnu, Mustapha Kemal himself in the lead.

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 99-100; Schoen, \textit{Die Hölle von Gallipoli}, 94.
The area becomes more and more fissured and the noise of battle ever more deafening. Now he knows what's at stake, knows that everything is in the balance. He leaves his troops charging on in the gullies and gallops himself to the heights, whose possession had been fought over so bloodily. He brings the battery with him into position, and the shells carry out their bloody work.24

But the Anzacs were continuing to pour onto the beachhead and succeeded in landing two Indian batteries, installing them in the frontline. By 2 pm near Ariburnu 12,000 were already ashore. 'The struggle in the ravines is fierce and merciless. One bayonet charge succeeds another. Sometimes the Australians rush forward with naked weapons, sometimes the Turks. This decisive fighting seesaws to and fro in the ravines and the fissured land.' Isolated groups struggle bitterly. Squads from both sides charge into ravines that are blind alleys, from which no escape is possible. Machine guns mow them down. 'The fighting rages from early morning [and] through the whole day until evening', with the losses on both sides heavy and 'exhaustion great. Hunger and thirst torment and weaken the strength. Wounded foes lie in endless rows on the beach, to be transported to hospital ships. Hard pressed by the Turks, the Anzacs gradually give ground, their situation becoming more critical by the hours.' And thus, according to the Germans, 'General Hamilton's great pincer, thought through and planned so skilfully', was broken up by Liman's 'clever positioning of his troops [and] the timely intervention of Mustapha Kemal'.25

By late afternoon the situation facing the Anzacs 'caused the English deputy commander [Birdwood] to consider evacuation'. Birdwood contacted Hamilton, who insisted that evacuation was out of the question. In a now famous message, Hamilton told Birdwood that 'You have got through the difficult business. Now you have only to dig, dig, dig until you are safe.' The Germans likewise acknowledged that for the Anzacs to have attempted an evacuation at this point, 'under the fire of a Turkish division', would have been suicidal. So at great cost '[t]hrough the continuously engaging powerful barrage of the fleet and the engagement of fresh, new landed, reinforcements, the Australians and New Zealanders succeed in clinging onto the rocky cliffs and hanging onto their bridgehead'.26

---

24 Schoen, *Die Hölle von Gallipoli*, 94.
25 'His clear view … readiness to take on responsibility, his self confident conduct, and contempt for death and attacking spirit of his troops have torn a sure and complete victory out of Hamilton's grasp. Supreme commander Liman von Sanders' clever positioning of his troops, in having them not split up along the whole coast, rather to concentrate the 19th Division near Maidos for the decisive battle at the most endangered position, has proven to be correct. No longer will the enemy succeed in breaking through and reaching the back of Tschananak through the broad Valley of Maidos': ibid., 94-5.
26 Mühlmann, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915*, 100; Aspinall-Oglander, *Gallipoli*, vol. 1, 269-70; Schoen, *Die Hölle von Gallipoli*, 96.
Early media reactions

The first comprehensive coverage of the landings appeared in the German press on 27 April. The Berliner Tageblatt led with ‘Assault on the Dardanelles Beaten Back’; its lead article implied the reverse of ‘successes’ at which Franco-British papers were hinting. ‘The enemy tried under the protection of its warships to land at four points on the west coast of Gallipoli’, but a ‘bayonet charge by our troops threw the enemy troops who landed on the coastal stretch from Teke-Burun back into the sea’.

[The] troops who landed near Kumkale, sought to make havoc under the protection of their warships, but despite heavy fire from all sides our troops followed through with their [counter] attack and threw the enemy back to the coast. ‘The enemy had 400 dead; we took as well 200 prisoners. Our losses are insignificant … At the other position in front of Kaba-Tepe we took a number of English and Australian prisoners, among them a captain and a lieutenant. Today [26 April] our troops successfully continued their attacks at all points.27

The German public could be forgiven for believing that ‘we’ and ‘our’ applied to Germans, and for reading the Gallipoli invasion as a disaster for the Entente. The enemy had been ‘forced to withdraw along the whole front’ and ‘our’ troops had ‘inflicted extraordinarily heavy losses’. Part of the invasion force, ‘which was fleeing back to the sea, escaped in its sloops and immediately made itself scarce. Those who were unable to escape displayed white flags and gave themselves up en masse.’ This was followed by ‘News from Constantinople [that] the English and French attacking force has been victoriously struck down on land’. The Germans and their ‘brave Turkish allies will turn to our advantage the mad onrush of the English and French against the Dardanelles fortifications’.28

On the 29th German papers described the events of 25 April as the ‘Great Victory in the Dardanelles’; a final victory no less, for the Kaiser had his ambassador congratulate the Sultan on the ‘victory of the allied [Turkish and German] armies’ in Gallipoli. While the Sydney Daily Telegraph had the Anzacs about to crash though the gates of the Turkish capital, the Berliner Tageblatt was reporting ‘Jubilation in Constantinople’. ‘The great victory in the Dardanelles, of which first details became known from the evening papers, caused indescribably deep jubilation through the whole city.’

The streets [were] filled with thick crowds. Turks congratulated one another on how quickly the enemy had been hunted down … In the evening hours the town was richly

27 Berliner Tageblatt, 27 April 1915.
28 Ibid., 27-28 April 1915.
illuminated [and] the Palace, following yesterday’s anniversary reception, [was] especially brilliant. The Grand Visor at the head of the members of cabinet, the dignitaries of the court, many generals, countless high state officials, members of parliament, delegates from patriotic associations and representatives of the press all attended the reception.29

The Germans, whose Western Front communiqués and dispatches, while often mendacious, were usually sober-seeming and plausible, must have been embarrassed to print some of the material issuing from the war office in Constantinople. A week before Ashmead Bartlett’s famous dispatch in the London Times, under the heading ‘Failed Landing Attempt’, the following appeared in the Berliner Tageblatt:

Probably no trace of the enemy landing force lingers at this moment on the coastal fringe of the Aegean Sea ... Although long in preparation, the landing attempt has disintegrated. As yet one is not completely informed as to the strength with which it was undertaken. Statements in the press of all countries oscillate between 150,000 and 50,000 men. In reports from Turkish headquarters, four brigades are said to have been thrown back into the sea near Kaba-Tepe.30

Writing in Berlin, the Tageblatt’s Major Moraht questioned whether Hamilton’s troops had been adequate for the failure of this ‘most difficult of undertakings in war’. Although mistakes had been made in the ‘organisational arrangements’, Hamilton’s greatest difficulty, lay, as ‘to be expected’, with a ‘landing corps … of poor quality material’.

The effect on Great Britain’s prestige in the Orient is inevitable. The negligible cohesion of the English mercenary army will be deeply shattered by this failure. If the moral motive of the military administration is to obscure the effects of the defeat, this, together their purpose in the war, must be deeply felt … among Canadian [sic], Australian and New Zealand mercenaries. We learnt of the low standard of the rank of file of the British Army that had been established in Egypt. They soon became more dangerous to their British officers than to the enemy. The same applies to French troops units … Among these are contingents that were unsuitable for the French theatre of war, as well as Sudanese and Algerian-Moroccan regiments.31

29 Ibid., 29 April 1915. To quote from the Sydney Daily Telegraph’s equally fantastic version of reality, ‘Australian troops should now be approaching the gates of the old Byzantine citadel, with orders for the Turk to quit, and a sentence of eternal doom to Moslem power in Europe, is one of the most striking examples of the romance of destiny that ever the world has seen … Australia writing in blood a new history of civilisation, in view of the site on which the walls of Troy stood, is a contingency that the boldest imagination would have hesitated to vision’: Daily Telegraph, 30 April 1915.
30 Major Moraht in Berliner Tageblatt, 1 May 1915.
31 Ibid.
The fighting continues

Morah was only interpreting what was widely believed, at the time, to be true. As for the events at Anzac Cove (where the Anzacs had supposedly been thrown back into the sea), these were corrected years later in the *Reichsarchiv* monograph, which described British artillery and naval fire, intense throughout the night of the 25th, rising to new heights of violence with daybreak. Since ‘territorial gain was for the attacker a matter of self preservation’, the Australians were obliged to ‘gain ground’, while the Turks were ‘no less dominated by the idea of throwing the enemy into the sea, before he had consolidated himself’. And then Kemal launched his offensive, on 26 April 1915.

After a brief artillery preparation, the whole of the 19th Division and the 27th Regiment of the 9th Division stormed against the English lines. In hand-to-hand fighting the soil in many areas was coloured red. Neither of the two parties succeeded in realising their objectives. As evening fell, they lay, greatly weakened and exhausted, in approximately the same positions as they had at daybreak.  

Fighting continued throughout 27 April. There was too much at stake for the Turks to be ‘satisfied with the situation as it stood’. Reinforced by battalions from the 5th Division the ‘Ottomans dashed against the English position, which had been strengthened in the night. This time the attack succeeded, especially on the right wing, where the English [Anzacs] were thrown back almost into the sea, but heavy losses and the troops’ exhaustion prevented the maintenance of this territorial gain.’

---

32 Mühlmann, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915*, 103-04.
33 In recording this Turkish ‘success’, Mühlmann inserted the footnote ‘According to Turkish accounts’—thereby figuratively washing his hands of responsibility for the accuracy of the information he was conveying: ibid., 103-04. There is some confusion over 26-27 April. Fighting all along the front had been intense and ferocious; something of which no participant was likely to have been oblivious. This is the story as presented by Bean in his first volume of the Australian official history of 1921. In this, what he subsequently (in 1946) considered to be the quiet days of 26-27 April, seem very lively indeed. Bean’s detailed 1921 account of 26-27 April makes them seem filled with violent skirmishes all along the front.

Like Bean, Mühlmann was on the peninsula throughout the campaign. A general staff officer and member of Liman’s military mission, he was privy to the strategic thinking of his commander-in-chief to an extent that Bean, a journalist turned correspondent, could never be, either with Birdwood or Hamilton. As for the ‘big picture’, Mühlmann can be impressive and appears even-handed. When it comes to detail, he can be on shakier ground, which he tacitly acknowledges in quotes like ‘according to Turkish sources’. Yet, in presenting the German version of events, he had little choice but to quote the former allies, since the communiqués, media reports and, above all, the essential campaign documentation was of necessity carried out by Turks writing in the (then) Arabic-scripted Turkish language. Otherwise he had to confine himself to his own necessarily limited observations and notes, augmented by generalised (and often self-justifying) works by Hamilton, Churchill and d’Amade, or those of his compatriots Liman and Prigge. As well, Mühlmann was writing years before Aspinall-Oglander’s British history, which would have filled in gaps for him (as it doubtless did, later, for Bean). But there was one work available in 1927 that did offer Mühlmann more substance than the post-1919 Turkish version of events or the blustering of soldiers and politicians with reputations to defend, a source to which Mühlmann acknowledges his debt: Bean’s official history, volume one of 1921, for many years the only national military history of the campaign to which credibility could be attached. C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 1, *The Story of Anzac: From the Outbreak of War to the End of the First Phase of the Gallipoli Campaign, May 4, 1915* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, [1921] 1981).
The Allies were hanging on, even consolidating in places around the peninsula. But Liman could feel relieved that the feared landing and offensive towards Bulair had been a bluff. He did indeed mass a strong force here, and first sight of a large fleet steaming towards the Gulf of Saros seemed to confirm this decision. The transports had hardly dropped anchor, however, before he was ordering troops south. In what must have been one of the dumbest feints in history, the ships had sailed into the bay so high in the water that it was clear they could not be carrying men and materiel for an amphibious landing on a grand scale. Even so, after three days Liman was confronted with a situation that was far from ideal.

The enemy now stood in dangerous proximity to the core of the whole Dardanelles defence [from] which ensued the demand that [he] be thrown back into the sea. This could only be achieved through an attack carried out with the greatest possible speed … The more the offensive was delayed, the more time the enemy had to make himself at home, to land heavy war materiel and develop reasonably fortified positions on territory already captured.\(^{34}\)

He was encouraged however, by the news that the British 29th and the two Anzac divisions had suffered ‘frightful’ losses; a third of all combat troops for the 29th and upwards of 40 percent in the case of the Anzacs. The Turks had lost heavily too, but troops from Bulair and other reinforcements from the north were supposed to outnumber those that the British had landed.\(^{35}\)

By 29 April all German accounts rated the beach upon which Anzacs had landed as the ‘most dangerous’ sector of the front, particularly because of the ever present threat posed to Hill 971. Driving these troops into the sea justified sacrificing the best of Anatolia’s shock troops. The man to lead the ruthless, frenzied assault against the Anzac front was already in command.

In the early hours of 1 May … Mustafa Kemal assigns all his troops to the offensive. From the early morning they clamber up the steep hills, suffering great losses … yet all endeavours to throw the Australians into the sea are in vain, for the superior firepower of the warships called to assist is too enormous … Attack and counter-attack follow in constant succession. Trench warfare has its beginnings here. The warriors have no idea the cold of winter and snow will find them in the same trenches.\(^{36}\)

\(^{34}\) Mühlmann, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915*, 105.
\(^{35}\) Ibid.
By now, both sides should have recognised the futility of massed attacks without adequate artillery preparation. While both claimed to be inadequately supported by artillery and shells and to be short of machine guns, they were not equally matched. As Mühlmann put it, ‘The bitter consequences of technical inferiority is illustrated precisely and in a striking manner by the Gallipoli campaign.’

As frightful as the English figures are, the vastly greater losses of the Turks originate not in errors of leadership or the superiority of the Englishman in hand-to-hand fighting, but to the powerful technical superiority of the enemy ... The Turkish Army had to make up for the advantage of the enemy in heavy weapons with ... ever rising blood sacrifices. Up to 5 May inclusive, Turkish losses at Arıburnu amounted to around 200 officers and 14,000 men, while the English [Anzacs] lost 8,000 men.\(^{37}\)

After Kâmel's failed counter-offensive of 1 May, only holding actions would be possible at Arıburnu. During a lull, troops from the 2nd Australian and New Zealand brigades set off on the night of 5/6 May to join a combined Allied offensive at the southern tip near Cape Helles due to begin that day. Although they might have been less tired than the British, Indian and French troops involved in this second battle of Krithia, these two brigades were hardly fresh. Yet this ad hoc, hurriedly assembled force was all Hamilton had left for an offensive which the Turks were supposedly in no state to resist. After three days Allied casualties 'amounted to about 6,500, or nearly 30 per cent of the numbers involved'. About 20,000 Allied troops had been involved (Mühlmann claimed 50,000) against a slightly smaller Turkish force (although Churchill boosted the official Turkish figure of 15,000 to 30,000). Except on the French front, the attack had been unable even to press back the enemy’s advanced troops or to locate his main line'. Apart from a few forward trenches, ‘the Turkish main position was everywhere intact’.\(^{38}\)

The Allied commanders had been outsmarted and their fatigued troops outfought. Anticipating the offensive, Liman appointed General Weber (Weber Pasha) to take charge of the new Army Group South in what became 2nd Krithia. All Weber’s energy and competence was needed to bring the Turkish defences up to standard in the few days at his disposal.

---

\(^{37}\) Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 123-4.

\(^{38}\) Had 30,000 Turks opposed 20,000 Allied troops this might explain why the Allied line nowhere advanced more than six hundred yards. ‘Even the Great War’, wrote the British official historian, 'furnishes few examples of a series of offensive operations being entered upon with troops so worn out by continuous fighting and lack of sleep as those who took part in the Second Battle of Krithia' [the official name for this futile attempt to capture the strategically critical heights at Achi Baba, some four miles from Helles. The forces involved were both fatigued and] ‘entirely new to their surroundings [with] no knowledge of the ground to be traversed.’ Aspinall-Oglander, Gallipoli, vol. 1, 333, 347.
On 6 May the English attack burst forth. The hour-long artillery bombardment … exceeded in power everything that had hitherto been experienced. Turkish fortifications and their hinterland disappeared in clouds of smoke, steam and dust … [But] the Turks [under Weber’s direction] had not failed to make good use of the days of 4 and 5 May … Not strong enough to wage an offensive, they sought to make themselves as strong as possible in defence in the shortest possible time, in order to have the security needed to thwart the forthcoming English attack.39

Mühlmann and Weber watched the Franco-British offensive from near Achi Baba, as if at a ‘field exercise’. They saw ‘groups mown down, thinned-out ranks swept back to their trenches, the engagement of reserves, the Turkish counter-attack, and [we] pursued with satisfaction how the enemy columns were scattered by the explosions of well-aimed Turkish artillery’.40

Hamilton tried again the following day, 7 May, after an even more powerful seaboard bombardment, but ‘the enemy was only able to work his way forward enough to capture a single trench.’ On 8 May the offensive resumed ‘with undiminished violence’, allowing Allied troops ‘towards evening to carry the attack forward and occupy a few positions in the front line.’ After three days Allied attacking strength was exhausted and Second Krithia was called off.

An average territorial gain of less than half a kilometre was bought with sacrifices of unprecedented blood and munitions … Achi Baba, was still three kilometres away; between this and the English lines stood an opponent, who, while inferior in numbers and heavy fire-power, had demonstrated a fresh and shining proof of his unbroken power of resistance.41

39 At Liman’s insistence, Weber, who had been part of Liman’s pre-war military mission and then acted as liaison officer with Turkish headquarters, now replaced General von Sodenstern, who seems to have brought to his task little of the dedication and drive Liman demanded. But Liman was too chivalrous a Prussian to dismiss Sodenstern. He was allowed to retire graciously to a less onerous task, under the official excuse of a ‘severe knee wound’: Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 118-21. Weber’s appointment was welcomed all round. Kannengiesser would later write: ‘General Weber was an excellent man, equally liked by Germans and Turks. Everybody had the greatest confidence in his quiet and just character, in his imperturbable calm, in the objective manner in which he pursued his aim. As an engineer, he was perfectly at home in this static war, while we were more accustomed to the war of movement, with its varied incidents. General Weber was well supported by his chief of staff, Major von Chauvenay’: Kannengiesser, Gallipoli, 162.
40 Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 123-4.
41 Ibid., 121.
The Allies were now paying the price for underestimating the army of the ‘Sick Man of Europe’. Skilfully led and employed, this force was forging a completely new image, in the process winning the respect of British soldiers.42

**Fiasco: the Turkish offensive of 19 May**

Meanwhile, around Anzac Cove, ‘firing continued day and night and rose at times to a powerful intensity’. ‘Aggressive intent’ was still evident on both sides, but the ‘necessary strength’ was lacking. The transfer south of Australian and Turkish troops eliminated scope for a Turkish offensive against Anzac Cove, or an Anzac attempt to break out from the beachhead. When Mühlmann wrote of constant firing, he meant small-arms fire, for by 3 May most British warships had moved south to provide artillery backup to for 2nd Krithia. Since neither side was adequately equipped with field artillery or shells, there were days when nothing seemed to be happening. By 8 May, after the failures of the Turkish 1 May offensive at Ariburnu and the Franco-British fiasco of 2nd Krithia, ‘both sides should have recognised, especially in this unsuitable land for offensives [that] superiority in large-calibre firepower, put to good effect on the foremost front lines, was an essential pre-requisite to success’.43

But this self-evident prerequisite to success was ignored, at least on one occasion. To explain the fiasco that began with the Turkish offensive of 19 May it is necessary to look to political rather than military considerations, in particular those of the Ottoman war minister, Enver Pasha. Three weeks into the campaign and despite Enver’s boastsings, the invading force, while not making inroads, at no point had been pushed back into the sea. Enver was demanding of Liman that he accomplish this once and for all, and believed that the ideal place to make a start was at Anzac Cove. Here, the territory held was barely a sliver and there was scarcely room for any more invading troops. Enver and Essad Pasha visited Ariburnu in early May. In the ‘unusually quiet’ conditions prevailing that day, Enver assumed that the enemy was ‘weaker there than had been apparent’. This led him to believe that ‘an attack at Ariburnu could be undertaken with an expectation of success’ and force the enemy ‘to evacuate his position’. Nowhere near ‘so hopeful as Enver’, Liman

42 An unfinished letter from the time of 2nd Krithia and taken from an Australian officer speaks of this newfound regard: ‘It’s always the same: the Turks fight like lions, they are untiring in attack, and despite the heaviest casualties and the incomparable bravery of our men, we only advance step by step. Weeks have been used up since 25 April and it might be perhaps months before we can achieve our aim … If it wasn’t possible to surprise the enemy in the first days of the landing, it’s certainly not possible now. Will we be able to maintain our present positions in the long term? This spread of the coastal stretch we occupy is so narrow. At our backs the sea, and in front of us a tough opponent on steep heights and cliffs in exceptionally strong positions. If it wasn’t for the superiority of our artillery, based on the heavy guns of our fleet, we would only be able to hold on through the most extreme mobilisation of all our strength’: Australian officer’s letter in C.R. Prigge, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen* (Weimar: Gustav Kiepenhauer, 1916), 87.

43 Mühlmann, *Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915*, 122.
reluctantly agreed to ‘undertake a new offensive’. And so, four divisions of some 42,000 men ‘in thick masses on this narrow front’ went out early of the morning of 19 May. Given the lack of field guns and ammunition, surprise was meant to compensate for the absence of the softening-up barrage that had become the prerequisite for any massed offensive, but the Anzacs, ‘warned by reports from pilots’, were ready and waiting.

From their well-prepared positions, [they] directed murderous rifle and machine-gun fire onto the attacking Turks. At a few places, the attackers certainly succeeded to break into the enemy lines, for the most part however, the attack was stopped with frightful losses. As evening approached, the blood of the 2nd Division, 9,000 men dead or wounded, lay between the two lines.44

In 1916 the Germans were still claiming that the ‘fighting had led to significant losses on both sides’, when in fact it was a one-sided debacle. Bean adds 1000 to Mühlmann’s 9000 Turkish casualties, but his figure of only ‘628 men hit’ among the Anzacs has never been refuted. Prigge incorrectly assumed that Birdwood’s personal intervention allowed ‘a brief cease fire’ to be negotiated, ‘during which the dead of both sides, which filled the ravines [and] were spreading an unbearable stench of rotting flesh, could be interred’.45

Bleech-Schlombach, writing the same year, made no mention of Birdwood. With Turkish troops ‘beseeching’ their leaders to do something, General Essad is supposed to have made the initial approach, offering ‘in a chivalrous manner to provide the necessary guarantees’. But the British would only deal with Liman von Sanders, ‘with the transparent aim of being able to broadcast: “Look, how the German slave-driver of the Turkish Army knuckles under!”’

After consultation with the supreme commander however, General Essad answered the English, ‘You settle with me immediately and I will sign, or—your dead will remain unburied.’ In the ranks, the brave but exhausted Australians were threatening mutiny, breathing had become agony for them, and so Sir [sic] Skeen [Major General A. Skeen], the English chief of staff, had to acquiesce.46

44 Prigge, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen, 75.
45 Ibid., 76; also Bean, Anzac to Amiens: A Shorter History of the Australian Fighting Services in the First World War (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1968), 130.
46 The following day Skeen, accompanied by another staff officer and two translators, left the Anzac trenches and met with officers from Essad Pasha’s staff in no-man’s-land, to arrange the burial details and pace out the ground where the graves were to be dug. The participants in this grim encounter had to struggle to ‘preserve their equanimity in the face of the ghastly spectacle and frightful stink’. ‘Only Skeen’s British phlegm permitted him to let words escape: “You see gentlemen, where civilisation has led us! I would like our diplomats, ministers and journalists to see what lies here between these trenches—only for a brief moment!” The Turkish officers remained silent. The Australian mercenaries were eager … on this gloomy May day to bury their dead comrades by the appointed hour. At half past four in the afternoon it was all finished [and] the troops disappeared into their trenches again’: G. Bleech-Schlombach, Allah il Allah: Mit den Siegesfahnen an den Dardanellen und auf Gallipoli (Leipzig: O.G. Zehrfeld, 1916), p. 108.
A media lull

Following Turkish-inspired overreactions to the ‘successes’ in the last days of April and early May, mention of the Dardanelles almost disappeared from German newspapers. Land operations on the peninsula were now summed-up in sentences like: ‘Our Turkish friends in the Dardanelles are masters of the situation everywhere.’ If Gallipoli was the least newsworthy of war fronts, then the northern, or Anzac front, was the least newsworthy of Gallipoli fronts. During June and July, as the British and French in the south attempted to claw their way towards Achi Baba, the Anzacs had the task of keeping a substantial Turkish force occupied in two months of unspectacular trench warfare (where disease accounted for almost as many casualties as enemy action), during which time debate as to whether the campaign should continue raged in London and Paris. Although British GHQ in France continued to argue against demands that Hamilton ‘be supplied with all the troops he needed for an early success in Gallipoli’, Churchill’s counter-argument used the appalling losses at Aubers Ridge and Festubert to aid his case. Churchill could explain Hamilton’s failures in the fighting for Krithia on the grounds that the British were trying to make do with ‘less than one-third of the pre-war proportion of artillery’; with howitzers and ammunition ‘in the proportion at present available for British formations in France’, he claimed the Allies ‘would have long since opened the Narrows’.

Hamilton never would be supplied with the troops or matériel needed. The demands of the Western Front saw to that, while U-boat activity had made transporting anything through the Mediterranean a very risky business. On 29 May ‘an English battleship of the “Agamemnon-Class” was torpedoed’ in the Dardanelles, the latest in a series of sinkings which created predictable jubilation in the German press:

… already four hundred thousand tons of British naval strength lie at the bottom of the [Mediterranean] sea. The previously acknowledged total losses of the English fleet consisted of 9 passenger liners, 7 armoured cruisers, 5 light cruisers, 10 submarines and 5 large auxiliary cruisers. In the opinion of neutral observers, it should be still more.

---

47 Die Woche. Moderne Illustrierte Zeitschrift, Nr. 22, 29 May 1915, 764. The British official historian added: ‘In France, at the Battle of Aubers Ridge, 11,000 casualties had been incurred without the gain of a single yard of ground … The Battle of Festubert had taught the same lesson … nearly 17,000 casualties, or roughly 40 per cent of the numbers actually engaged, had been sustained by the British without any compensating gain.’ For the French the figures almost defy comprehension: from mid-May to mid-June, ‘the casualties of the French Tenth Army alone had exceeded 100,000’. Aspinall-Oglander, Gallipoli, vol. 2, 57–60.

48 Die Woche, Nr. 23, 5 June 1915, 794, 800.
The hitherto unthinkable—that a tiny submarine could send a warship or large ocean liner to the bottom with a single torpedo—was being learnt time and again. In a situation of escalating risk for the British, the Germans enjoyed a moral victory when the most modern and powerful battleship in the world, the Queen Elizabeth, was sent home to safer waters. More secure harbours were also found for the more expendable pre-Dreadnoughts. The Royal Navy was being taught a brutal lesson ‘By German U-boats in the Mediterranean.’

U-boat activity was ensuring that the artillery support earlier provided by the Royal Navy’s big guns would decrease. The pride of the British maritime fleet, the Mauritania, Aquitania and the Titanic’s two sisters, the Olympic and Britannic, were all pressed into service to move troops and supplies to and from the Dardanelles. Such was their speed, that all, except the Britannic, were able to outrun the U-boats. But space was never found in their holds for the guns that could have turned Hamilton’s ‘not very promising’ situation into a more hopeful one. While the Germans, with justice after 1915, were fond of stressing their enemy’s advantage in what they called the ‘Materialschlacht’, Mühlmann also recognised that Hamilton had to make do with far less hardware than victory in such a difficult campaign demanded:

By the middle of July the commander of the English army had to recognise that this second phase of the planned offensive had failed. What had been achieved? Territory had been gained on both flanks; the left wing had advanced about three, and the right about one and a half kilometres. The lost Turkish trenches had been, as it were, rejoined together to the rear, so that the depth and strength of the Turkish position had not decreased.

By the end of July, after almost two months of crawling towards Krithia, the British had gained just 1000 metres. Of the 45,000 men from the six divisions involved, one-third were now casualties. Further attacks were now ‘temporarily forbidden by the munitions situation. Only 5000 rounds were available for the field artillery.’ Yet Hamilton was not alone in facing serious problems. ‘The future outlook was also serious for the commander of the Turkish army. Certainly it was pleasing that all the major English attacks had been beaten back and both fronts [north and south] stood unbroken, but the defence had cost streams of blood.’

---

49 ‘This performance by our navy has as its consequence, that the war-fleet has been moved from the Dardanelles and dispersed among [safer] bays. The landing troops are consequently without the protection of the guns of ships that have themselves been repulsed. After the terrible weakening which they suffered through the heavy losses at Krithia, at Ari burned and Seddul Bahr, the situation for the invading force on Gallipoli is not very promising’: Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 121.

50 The naval war off the Dardanelles is the central focus of most German histories. Hersing’s role in this is most extensively covered in Schoen, Die Hölle von Gallipoli, 159-84, and Mühlmann, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915, 139-40.
The casualty list of the 5th Army, from the beginning of fighting until the middle of July, reached the frightful heights of nearly 60,000 men. The reservoir of young Turkish men was, however, in no way inexhaustible. However pressing the need to take remedial measures, [Liman] was helpless in face of the certainty that this blood sacrifice must continue.\footnote{Mühlmann, \textit{Der Kampf um die Dardanellen 1915}, 139-40.}

\textit{Stellungskrieg}

Nevertheless, by mid-July, Liman was also becoming aware that the Allies would either have to evacuate the peninsula or throw everything into one last massive effort. A Prussian cavalryman, for whom belief in an offensive war of movement was ingrained, his frustration in having to conduct a defensive \textit{Stellungskrieg} (lit: positional static or trench war) can only be imagined. Yet Liman was conscious that by tying down Allied divisions—and using Turkish troops to tie them down—he was playing as vital part in Germany’s overall war effort as Falkenhayn in the West, or the by now almost god-like Hindenburg in the East. By now too the Germans had developed a whole new respect for the ‘mercenaries’ and ‘colonial rowdies’ of yore: Liman could be confident that his Turks were keeping good troops back from the Western Front. And the fears of Russian intervention in the Dardanelles, which he had never taken seriously, were now clearly misplaced. Much like as on the Western Front, the Allies on Gallipoli were caught up in a \textit{Stellungskrieg} for which there seemed no immediate answer.

By mid-July 1915, German interest in the Dardanelles, now considered by them as an Allied lost cause, had all but disappeared. Even if the Allies decided to reactivate the campaign, how were they to do it? By now the war was not going well for them. No one could realistically pretend that the British attacks in French and Belgium Flanders or the much larger French offensives in Artois and Champagne had been more than pointless bloodbaths. On the Balkan front likewise the situation was becoming critical. Serbia could hardly hold out much longer and with Bulgaria poised to join the Central Powers, the Pan German dream of a rail-link from Berlin to Baghdad via Constantinople was a looming reality. The day when the way ‘for German munitions and artillery transports were free’ to supply the Ottoman Army seemed almost at hand, so where evacuation might have seemed the most viable, but least face-saving option, Great Britain and France were being squeezed by circumstances into continuing the Gallipoli campaign in the slim hope that the deadlock might yet be decided in their favour.\footnote{Ibid., 141.}
Liman therefore expected further landings and make-or-break British offensives. ‘Once again the guessing games began as to where the new landings were likely.’ A strengthening of the British offensive from Sedd ul Bahr seemed unlikely given the ‘narrowness of the front and the difficult offensive terrain that had already caused the English to make such limited progress.’ Liman rejected the likelihood of a landing on the Asiatic shore out of hand, but a further landing at the existing Anzac position and ‘to the north of Ariburnu certainly was under consideration by the English. The possibility existed here for close collaboration with the securely placed [Anzac] groups and the strategic goal was close.’ But even the most careful consideration brought Liman no closer ‘to certainty as to where the new blow would be expected. For every combination, there were points for and against, and it only remained possible to prepare for all eventualities.’

Liman had failed to double-guess Hamilton in April, but was closer to the mark in August. As expected, Hamilton planned to employ his ‘increased forces in a great effort at and just north of the original Anzac landing, in the hope of conquering the heights of Sari Bair and commanding, if not reaching, the Narrows of the Dardanelles’. If successful, as one German report (sanctioned by Liman) put it:

[The] way to Constantinople would have been open; hard-pressed Russia could have received the longed-for help by way of the Black Sea; the Turkish army on Gallipoli would have been in an extremely dangerous situation, and the name of Sir Ian Hamilton would have been inscribed on the roster of the great strategists of the world.

**Friendly fire**

Hamilton had at his disposal and ideally placed, the bulk of the by now battle-hardened Anzacs who, in the ensuing fighting, won unreserved praise from at least one German source. ‘Any one who observed the ensuing conflicts will unhesitatingly give the highest praise to the death-defying courage of [the] “Anzacs,” as the English newspapers called the Australia-New Zealand Army Corps [who] fought like lions.’ From Flanders to the Dardanelles, these once-disparaged volunteers were proving themselves very able soldiers indeed; so able that the Germans sought to portray them as cannon fodder for the evil designs of the English. Prigge, in 1916, used the attackers’ bravery as a *raison d’être* for divisive anti-British propaganda which, had they read it, might have had many Australians and New Zealanders nodding in agreement. ‘The senseless assault on the Turkish positions

---

53 Ibid., 141.
was carried out by Australians and New Zealanders—Old England again for the most part keeps her own sons in the background—and costs the attackers at least 20,000 men. All the worse since some of these casualties, if the German official account is to be accepted, were caused by friendly fire.\textsuperscript{55}

During the late afternoon of 6 August, an artillery barrage poured into the Turkish positions defending Sari Bair ‘with a stupendous expenditure of ammunition’. The Germans accused the British of setting up ‘great tents’ at one point and ‘marking them each with the sign of the Red Cross; and for this reason they were not fired upon’. In fact these tents were ‘not intended to serve as shelters for the wounded. Under cover of night, the English set up heavy howitzers at this point, only thus was it possible for them to undertake a surprise attack here.’ After a bombardment of ‘an hour and a half, 4,000 Britons attacked the strongly entrenched positions of the defenders’. The situation grew critical. Indeed, the enemy’s plan of compelling the Turks to call up reserves and thus divert troops succeeded. Enver Pasha could do nothing but call up reinforcements from all quarters. Liman offered the services of Kannengiesser’s division, which in the interval had arrived from the southern front.\textsuperscript{56}

During the night of 7-8 August Kannengiesser set off ‘to march against the right wing of the northern group’. As the dawn was breaking, he arrived with two regiments ‘just as the enemy [was] making preparations to dig in there. The order to attack was quickly given. Some rapid fire salvos were discharged at the Anzacs, busy at the work of entrenching; then the colonel himself led his troops in an assault on the surprised foe.’ The Anzacs were ‘about to abandon the heights in wild flight when the colonel, pressing forward far in advance of his men, was struck in the breast by a rifle bullet and fell unconscious’. Kannengiesser himself remembered the event differently. In his version he was leading an attack against the Anzacs, but was simultaneously threatened on one flank by a counter-attack by two battalions of Ghurkhas, who had ‘succeeded in installing a machine gun’. As this was tying down Kannengiesser’s offensive, he ‘ordered that fire be directed by two cannons on the left wing at this machine gun’:

> At the moment I returned to the left wing, which seemed to me the most threatened … I received—it was 8 in the morning—a bullet from this machine gun full in the chest. It was very painful for me. Until then, I’d always returned safe and sound from many other situations, it was now necessary for me to abandon my brave infantry division in critical circumstances … Brandl, who had already studied medicine in Munich for three years, diagnosed a bullet in the chest close to the heart, and fitted a temporary bandage.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{55} ‘By an Officer of the German Staff’, 268-9; Prigge, Der Kampf um die Dardanellen, 76.
\textsuperscript{56} ‘By an Officer of the German Staff’, 267-8.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 270; Kannengiesser, Gallipoli, 195.
Whether unconscious or not, Kannengiesser's wounding was a blow to his troops' morale. 'Their dearly loved German leader might have led them to certain victory' but now they 'wavered' and, although they had 'already won much ground, were inclined to retire slowly'. Suddenly, the Turkish 4th Division appeared. Its commander 'took in the situation at once, assumed command of the troops and infused them to carry forward their invincible attack. Everywhere the British were thrown from the heights. Not till halfway down the slope could they make a stand, and under the protection of their ships' guns dig in.' Perhaps, but this version of events hardly accords with that of Mühlmann, in what provided the basis for the German official history. In this account, the ships' guns were to play a vastly different role.58

In Mühlmann's version, there was no 'sudden appearance' of a Turkish division to turn the British attack around. In fact the combined Anzac and Indian offensive did not take place until 9 August, the day after Kannengiesser's wounding. 'Once again' on that day, British naval fire subjected the Turks to 'unbearable fire'. It was this which caused the defenders, in their 'hastily dug trenches, to disintegrate'. In the strong infantry attack that ensued, the attackers were able to capture a further section of the high ridge. 'That day the campaign seems lost! Then comes the turn of fate!' Suddenly, the protective British artillery cover ceases. In Mühlmann's account the 'English' (Anzac) and Indian battalions use the pause to plunge onwards, 'victoriously', against the now retreating Turkish forces. With this, the British guns recommenced.

\[
\text{Where a moment before squads of men, filled with the scent of victory, had been plunging forwards, now hundreds of these same men were wallowing in their own blood. Fate or accident—or both combined? In any case one of the incalculable frictions of war had struck down the victor at the moment of apparent victory! A salvo from heavy-calibre English ships' cannons … had struck in the storming masses of infantry. And as always in war nothing is more unbearable as to have to suffer under one's own fire, so this fire coming abruptly from the rear had broken the troops' morale. From the heights survivors now poured back to their lines of the previous day … It was the work of a few seconds.59}
\]

Not all the British had become victims of friendly fire. A number had managed to occupy a stretch of trenches on the commanding heights. On 10 August a massive counter-attack, led by Mustafa Kemal, drove these remaining troops out but at a further exorbitant cost. 'At the end of the day, the bodies of 12,000 Englishmen and 10,000 Turks covered the battlefield.'60

58 'By an Officer of the German Staff', 270.
60 'By an Officer of the German Staff', 271.
Other German accounts make no mention of friendly fire. All versions, however, note the part played by the British fleet, which, ‘calmly anchored between two tongues of land forming the bay, protected against U-boat attack by a steel net stretched between the two headlands’, was once again able to play its designated supportive role. All agree upon the puzzling pause in the British offshore barrage, but only Mühlmann recognised the disastrous consequences of its recommencement. A contemporary report by an aide, sanctioned by Liman, first described how the fleet offshore directing its fire ‘against the summit of Kodja Djemendagh, which soon looked like an active volcano … enveloped in a cloud of multi-coloured smoke and dust. A terrible and yet fascinating sight! Still nothing stirred in the Turkish lines.’

Just as the hellish concert reached its climax, the Turkish howitzers, which during the night, through prodigious exertions, had been placed on the heights north and south of Anafarta, joined in. Only a single shot fell here and there. On our side the costly ammunition had to be most carefully husbanded. Very cleverly the enemy had set upon the landing places field hospitals, from which fluttered, in plain view from a great distance, the sign of the Red Cross. This, according to army orders, must be rigorously respected.  

Liman now decided that his ‘presence was needed. Up on Kodja Djemendagh two divisions were stationed’. These had been placed so skilfully ‘in the numerous fissures, ravines, and declivities of the mountain that they were enduring fairly well the terrific fire from the ships’ guns. Signals flashed among the fleet, and suddenly, at one stroke, every cannon stopped firing’. This was the moment Liman and his divisional commander had been waiting for. Quickly they hurried to the observers’ stand of the mountain artillery, from where they saw ‘the Anzacs, ascending the heights in broad storming columns’.

Now the attackers, climbing laboriously … drew nearer—to fifteen hundred metres, to a thousand… At this moment the mountain artillery started its salvos; the machine guns began to crackle and snap; from the lines of riflemen a hail of bullets sped forth against the Anzacs. It was a scene of Death, of raging, frightful Death, mowing down all. Not a man [on] the slope survived.

New troops stormed forward [led] by athletic young officers overflowing with enthusiasm … Too late! Struck by the ceaseless hail of iron, hundreds rolled upon the ground … Fearful confusion resulted … First individuals, then small groups, and finally great masses of the survivors, turned back. It was the signal for the Turkish lines everywhere to advance. With bayonet and rifle stock the Ottoman horde stormed down the slope. The Anzacs suffered terrible losses. Only a few remained alive. Hundreds of unwounded prisoners fell into the hands of the Turks."

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 271-3.
The last dispatches

There was no mention of Anzacs, Australians, New Zealanders or a place or battle called ‘Lone Pine’ in the German press reports of August 1915. Gallipoli by now was of little consequence, and the second series of British invasions—in part designed to support a major Anzac offensive—were treated as tokenistic events with no chance of success. As far as can be determined, no German newspaper bothered with even a single analysis of the most recent events in the Dardanelles, being content to publish verbatim material issued by official sources in Constantinople. This was naturally one-sided, and began on 8 August with the mention that ‘after a fortnight of relative quiet the promised Allied large-scale offensive in the Dardanelles commenced yesterday evening’. In admittedly ‘bitter fighting’ the Turks had ‘brought the attack of the English on the southern flank [to] a complete standstill’, inflicting ‘significant losses and managing to seize a few trenches as well. Two thousand English bodies could be counted in front of the Turkish position. The Turks also took prisoner 104 Englishmen and two officers.’

The first mention of fresh invasions ‘in the Dardanelles on the night of 7 August’ appeared on 9 August; the enemy, ‘under the protection of his fleet’, had landed part of a fresh striking force [in] the north of the Gulf of Saros and the rest at two places to the north of Ari Burnu’. These troops, ‘under the protection of the fleet’, had managed ‘to advance a little’. But on the morning of 8 August the Turks ‘forced the enemy back and inflicted considerable casualties’. On the 10th the news was all good:

On the Dardanelles front to the north of Ari Burnu on the night of 9 August, we beat back a new offensive and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. Further north we drove the enemy back to the shore with a heavy attack … Near Ari Burnu on the left flank, we recaptured with a bayonet charge a part of the trenches occupied by the enemy for the last few days … Little happened on the remainder of the front.

Some attempt at summarisation occurred on 12 August, when it was noted that ‘reliable supplementation and reports on the English landings of 6 and 7 August’ led to the conclusion ‘that these operations do not possess the significance that the English and French want to attribute to them. The landing … on the northern coast of the Gulf of Saros involved barely 350 men, who were quickly thrown back to their ship leaving behind some 20 dead’.

63 Constantinople 8 August (Private telegram), Frankfurter Zeitung, 8 August 1915.
64 Constantinople 9 & 10 August (Wolff Bureau), Frankfurter Zeitung, 9 & 10 August 1915.
A more significant landing took place at the Gulf of Anafarta, the disembarking English troops, some 15,000, went next in a south-westerly direction … with the doubtless intention of striking the flanks of Turkish troops near Ari Burnu. But thanks to the diligence and impetuosity of our brave troops, the advance of the enemy was blocked and then driven back.65

On this casual note, the German press lost interest. The papers were now filled with news of the unsuccessful French offensives in the Vosges and Argonne and the on-going Austro-German successes on the Eastern Front. It was rightly assumed that this last offensive in the Dardanelles posed no threat to the Central Powers and that failing outright eviction, an evacuation would only be a matter of time. By October 1915, German newspapers were selectively paraphrasing dispatches by British correspondents, under headlines like ‘The Unsuccessful Attack on the Dardanelles’. The ultimate and inevitable evacuation, two months later, went almost unnoticed.66

65 Constantinople 12 August (Wolff Bureau), Frankfurter Zeitung, 12 August 1915.
66 ‘Die Kämpfe auf Gallipoli—Die Erfollosen Angriffe auf die Dardanellen’, Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung, 10 October 1915. The story of the British general Stopforth and of the bungled landing at Suvla Bay has nothing to do with Australians and is therefore beyond the scope of this enquiry, much as the Australian attack at Lone Pine seems to have been beyond the scope, or interest, of any German chronicler.
I come to this table very much from the perspective of the war correspondent but the topic of this conference—Information Warfare—is actually more substantial fare.

My original interest in World War II warcos was what their war correspondence led to rather than their war reporting per se. For instance, Kenneth Slessor was an indifferent war correspondent but the experience produced Beach Burial, arguably our most significant war poem; likewise George Johnston’s despatches are long forgotten but his novel My Brother Jack lives on.

Information Warfare is similarly, and obviously, much broader than war correspondence. In his briefing to me, Professor Jeffrey Grey—by good luck or acute judgement, I don’t know—put his finger on an aspect of this subject that makes the Australian experience even more fascinating. He asked me to draw on my previous work, then added the following: ‘It would be most welcome if you could also speak to the relationship between correspondents and the media owners and their expectations as well.’

Why is that such a good instruction?

Let's go back and look at who were the media owners for the first contingent who accompanied the 6th Division to the Middle East in 1940. Three correspondents from the Australian newspapers, four from the Department of Information—a film crew and a photographer, an official war correspondent and an artist also employed by the Department of Information. Finally, the ABC’s five-strong team but it was not the ABC as we know it today. That is a total of fourteen, nine of whom were on the Government payroll one way or another. However, this is far from a ‘them against us’ story, as we shall see. Also, when you look at Information Warfare, war correspondents, particularly those from newspapers, are only a part of the picture.
One more caveat. Looked at from this perspective, for Australia there were two wars. First: 1940 and 1941 with the 2nd AIF—sons of Anzacs off to the Middle East again. So many bad decisions were made by government, military and the media because their heads were still firmly stuck in the First World War groove. Second: 1942-45—everything changed. New government, new enemy, new principal ally but did we have the people and institutions to meet the communication challenges of total war and threat of invasion?

Who were the main players? (This is where it gets interesting)

Information Warriors:

- Department of Information
  - official warcos, cinematographers, photographers
- Australian Broadcasting Commission
  - warcos, Post-Master General operatives
- Media proprietors
  - *Melbourne Herald, Argus, Sydney Morning Herald, Telegraph*

Warcos

Media:

- Department of Information
  - propagandists, censorship, others
  - ABC
  - willing and otherwise agent of government and military
  - Media proprietors
    - Sir Keith Murdoch
  - Director-General Department of Information
  - Military
    - Australian
    - US.
Department of Information

Unlike World War I where the military handled censorship, the Australian Government decided to follow the British example of placing responsibility for monitoring and vetting correspondents’ work in the hands of a civilian agency, the Department of Information, with unfortunate consequences. From the outset in 1939 relations between the Department and the armed services were strained. According to John Hilvert in his history of the Department:

To the Armed Services, the Department represented the chief government protagonist for full disclosure and therefore posed a major security problem. The Army and Navy were reluctant to furnish the Department with current background information on military conditions, however necessary, for propaganda. As a result, the newspapers were able to scoop the Department’s releases with their own cable services, ridiculing the Department’s objective of prompt information. Censorship was a particularly sore point between the Services and the Department. Publicity censorship had been removed from the para-military context. Nevertheless, many of the first censors were former military personnel, used to following service orders and inclined to defer to the Services’ advice about censorship. In consequence, in the first months of the war, the military authorities were able to apply a strict censorship. In practice, they took over from the Minister, the issue and interpretation of censorship instructions. Furthermore, the Services proved capricious and inconsistent in their censorship ‘advice’.

Hilvert believes that the Department of Information was dysfunctional to a considerable degree because of an inherent contradiction between its twin roles of suppressing news on one hand and promoting dissemination of morale-boosting information to encourage the war effort on the other. On paper, Australian censorship, staffed almost entirely by journalists replacing the military personnel of the First World War, should have been ideal. In fact the Department succeeded neither as a censor nor as a public relations agency. ‘It is not surprising’, he writes, ‘that the Department acquired a poor reputation. It was at one time or another berated by politicians, the press, the public, the government and the military services.’ In his official history Paul Hasluck characterised the Department as “singularly useless” in realising the government’s communication objectives.

In an effort to boost the war effort on the home front Prime Minister Robert Menzies appointed Sir Keith Murdoch as Director General of Information in June 1940. In one

2 Ibid., 5
3 Paul Hasluck The Government and the People 1939-1941 (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1952), 629.
of the less illustrious moments of his career, Sir Keith alienated his fellow newspaper
proprietors by persuading the government to give him powers to force them to publish
whatever he decreed without attribution, and alienated radio listeners by insisting on
inserting at inappropriate times supposedly morale-boosting items prepared by newspaper
journalists with no broadcasting experience. The Labor Government, which came into
power in 1941, did not fare much better. Information Minister Arthur Calwell ruled over
such a restrictive regime that newspapers often appeared on the street with blank spaces
where the censor had struck.

In his official history of the ABC Ken Inglis wrote that ‘Australia went to war by
wireless’.\footnote{K.S. Inglis, ‘War: 1939-1945’, This is the ABC: The Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983 (2nd edn) (Melbourne: Black Inc., 2006), 78.} The ABC clearly had a propaganda function. The mobile ABC unit was a story
in itself, including the engineer and two technicians plus the two broadcasters. The utility
truck, which saw considerable action, comprised a mobile recording studio capable of
making sound recordings into gramophone records which had to be physically sent back
to Australia, a very far cry from today’s digital age. Needless to say, the obstacles were
enormous. Flying sand in the desert would get into the grooves of the recording discs, and
then subsequently in a bitter Greek winter, the engineer had to clasp the discs to his body
to make the frozen acetate pliable enough to make a recording. Chester Wilmot recalled
the difficulties in a broadcast about the ABC field unit’s escape from Greece on 8 May
1941: ‘That day Bill MacFarlane (the engineer) struck the first of the technical problems
which were created by the sudden transition from the hot dusty desert to the cold damp
mountains. The soft acetate discs on which the recordings are made got so hard that the
cutter wouldn’t cut properly and the recording could only be made after he had hugged
the disc to his chest for 15 minutes or so to warm and soften them.\footnote{Neil McDonald,
Chester Wilmot Reports: Broadcasts that shaped World War II (Sydney: ABC Books, 2004), 136-7.}

Radio came into its own with the siege of Tobruk, with a poll recording that half of
all Australians were listening to radio more than previously and mostly for war news. The
commercial stations were required to take three daily bulletins from the ABC and most
were broadcasting more.

Radio was not the only new medium to blossom in the conflict. ‘With the outbreak
of war, the 1930s newsy newsreel, screened as light entertainment ahead of the main
cinema program, was transformed, under pressure of public demand, into a source of
vital information, complementing press and radio reports of the progress of the conflict’,
wrote Alasdair McGregor in his biography of the photographer Frank Hurley.\footnote{Alasdair McGregor, Frank Hurley: A Photographer’s Life (Camberwell, Vic.: Viking, 2004), 354.}
The media of cinematographic film and wireless broadcast allowed two Australian war correspondent superstars to emerge, cameraman Damien Parer who won Australia’s first Oscar in 1943 for his documentary film *Kokoda Front Line*, shot in New Guinea, and radio reporter Chester Wilmot who was foremost in the coverage of the D-Day landing in Normandy in 1944 for the BBC.

Newspapers also rose to the challenge. Journalists who covered the First World War could be counted on the fingers of two hands, but for the Second ‘the *Sydney Morning Herald* had 23 war correspondents, compared with fourteen for the *Daily Telegraph*, ten for the [Sydney] *Sun*, and nine for the *Melbourne Herald* and *Sun-News-Pictorial*, wrote the *Sydney Morning Herald’s* official historian proudly in 1981. The SMH ‘sent more correspondents to the world’s battlefronts than any other Australian newspaper, or indeed than most other newspapers of any nationality ... In quality as well as quantity, its coverage was among the world’s best.’ Maybe.

Many of the problems related to the First World War mentality. Prime Minister Menzies’ go-to man on information matters was Sir Henry Gullet, who was close to Bean and had been one of the official war correspondents. Gullet was instrumental in the appointments of both Slessor and Murdoch, neither of which was a success and harked back to an earlier era.

Other newspaper proprietors initially welcomed the Murdoch appointment because they thought he, as a fellow newspaper man, would thwart the development of a competitive, independent ABC radio news service. Another problem was the pre-existing hostility of the newspaper proprietors—especially those in Melbourne—to the Commander-in-Chief General Blamey dating back to his controversial role as Victorian Chief of Police in the period 1925-36.

However, much can be attributed to blinding incompetence as evidenced by the supposed morale-boosting *Women’s Weekly* visit to 8th Division troops in Malaya in 1941. The military and civilian information system proved no less clumsy in its efforts to ‘promote’ positive stories about Australians at war as when it was seeking to restrict journalists. Its attempt to provide a jolly story about troops in the field backfired. It involved a visit in early March 1941 to the diggers on the Malay peninsula by a correspondent for the *Australian Women’s Weekly*. Miss Adele Shelton Smith of the *Weekly* and a photographer were sent to report ‘direct to its thousands of women readers just how their menfolk are faring’.

---

According to Wendy Willcocks,

Adele Shelton Smith freely admitted that she had no military expertise and even a cursory reading of the articles reveals both her pride in the Australian soldiers and her patriotic and ‘friendly’ intentions. Both the AIF and Shelton Smith were to blame for the furore that followed. The AIF feted her, staged performances for her and posed for her photographer. She believed that she had seen the men training in the jungle and in the rubber plantations; that the food that they ate regularly was the food that she ate when she was with them; that they could visit the exotic city of Singapore as she could and they danced in the dance halls as she did. Shelton Smith, enjoying every moment of her visit (or so her stories suggest) remained insensitive throughout to both the realities of the troops’ everyday lives and to the plight of many of their wives left behind in Australia.10

The value for us is what happened next. When the articles appeared in Australia, resentful wives wrote angry letters to their startled husbands, many of whom had not yet been granted more than afternoon leave since arrival. In addition to being hurtful and, in some cases, damaging relationships, the articles raised another issue which might have been anticipated. It drew invidious contrast between a ‘holiday camp’ atmosphere in Malaya and Singapore and the hardship being experienced by the AIF in the Middle East.11

How, then, did we get through this mess? The situation actually got worse before it got better with dissatisfaction arising from the Australian capitulation to General MacArthur on information about its own forces, and public disagreements between Information Minister Arthur Calwell and Army Public Relations. But, get through it we did.

Did we win the information war? Yes.

Was Australia in the broadest sense mobilised? Yes.

Did we win the ‘Battle for Australia’ at home and on the battlefield? Again—yes.

How come? I think the answer is that within the Government at the political level, within the monstrously useless Department of Information and the ABC, there were individuals and groups of individuals of such quality that they rose up and soared above the dross.

A measure of the failure of Australia’s civilian and military information regimes was the departure of two of the country’s outstanding war correspondents for overseas media organisations. Damien Parer resigned from the Australian Department of Information in disgust in 1943 following disagreements over petty departmental instructions and

11 Ibid.
expenses, and Chester Wilmot’s accreditation as a war correspondent was withdrawn, allegedly for attacking the authority of the commander-in-chief, effectively ending his career in Australia. Another Department of Information photographer, George Silk, ended the war working for *Life* magazine in Europe following a frustrating time at the hands of his employer. The offer from *Life* came after publication of his most famous shot, the ‘Blinded Digger’, which portrays Raphael Oimbari, a Papuan dressed in little more than a loin cloth, leading with the utmost care a blinded, barefoot Australian soldier, Private George Whittington, to a field hospital. ‘When he returned to Australia, Silk was frustrated when none of his pictures was published. A friend offered to get the so-called “Blinded Digger” shot through the American censor; George agreed, and a few weeks later it turned up as picture of the month in *Life* magazine. The Australian newspapers were furious that that such a great shot had not been offered to them first.’12

Australian journalists experienced the added frustration during this period of being subjected to another layer of control. In the South West Pacific, including New Guinea, General Douglas MacArthur reigned supreme in all matters, including press management aimed at servicing his oversize ego. The following extract from George Johnston’s *New Guinea Diary*, comparing Kokoda with Gallipoli, written on 16 October 1942, could not have been published at the time due to censorship:

16 October 1942: Up here everybody is incensed at new censorship bans including MacArthur’s personal censorship of ... (articles) ... on his visit here which have been slashed to ribbons to convey the impression (a) that he went right up to the front line (which he certainly did NOT), and (b) that this was NOT his first visit to New Guinea ... Censorship now is just plain Gestapo stuff.13

In his introduction to Johnston’s *New Guinea Diary*, David Horner, who has specialised in this period, wrote:

Throughout the campaign MacArthur had shown a consistent lack of understanding of the nature of the fighting in New Guinea. From Brisbane he issued repeated exhortations to the Australian troops and did not even visit New Guinea until 2 October, when he travelled by jeep to the beginning of the Kokoda Track at Owens’ Corner.14

12 Neil McDonald, ‘George Silk’, *Quadrant* (December 2004), 60.
14 Ibid., 3.
Political leadership

On the matter of political leadership, how did Curtin and his Hollowmen succeed where Menzies and Murdoch failed?

Throughout his prime ministership, Curtin was effectively the supreme propagandist of the Australian war effort, shouldering the burden for conceiving, coordinating, articulating and managing news and information policies in the interests of a sustained national war effort,\(^5\) according to Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall in their book *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin’s War*, from original notes taken by Frederick T. Smith:

> Inevitably, the public information politics of government intermingled with the demands of wartime censorship, not always administered with either finesse or sensitivity. Throughout the war, there were squabbles and rivalries between the central information agencies of government, particularly the Department of Information and the public information units of the armed services, notably the Army. In such a tumult of contending news and propaganda interests, the formidable task of presenting the government’s war direction fell back upon the Prime Minister, already burdened by heavy strategic and public policy responsibilities.

> This is where the saga of John Curtin’s off-the-record wartime briefings to senior journalists begins, the era where he exhulted in demonstrating that wars were not planned by newspapers.

> As a former journalist and editor for industrial journals, and a long-term member of the Australian Journalists Association, Curtin prided himself on his associations with the press and his affinity with journalists. He recognised the practical and professional virtues of the methodology put forward by Don Rodgers [his press secretary] and he chose to implement it. Curtin utilised these press briefings to issue guidance on evolving war strategy, and to ensure that as far as possible government information was put before the press proprietaries in a manner conducive to sustaining the war effort and avoiding the spread of inaccurate information and damaging speculation. In particular, he sought the aid of the news media in influencing public opinion on the home front regarding several crucial issues notably conscription and the use of militia forces, and the wartime complacency of the Australian people.\(^6\)

Second, Curtin actually made effective use of parts of the dreaded Department of Information. As war-time Department of Information official Ron Younger outlines in his National Library of Australia oral history interview, Curtin established a forerunner of the sort of media unit which is common today, at least in part because he did not trust the military and wanted his own sources of information.\(^7\)

---


\(^6\) Ibid., 17-19.

Third, of course, within the Department of Information was the film group, Damien Parer himself and the team who produced *Kokoda Front Line!* and his other propaganda masterpieces. For a description I am going to rely on another later warco Murray Sayle who saw *Kokoda Front Line!* for the first time as a schoolboy in Sydney. Like Wendy Willcocks on the *Women's Weekly*, Sayle’s account published in *Quadrant* has the virtue of describing the impact on Australians at home. He remembers vividly the results of Parer’s labours—only nine minutes long—during a Saturday matinee at his local movie theatre in Sydney in September 1942:

First we saw the cartoon, then the Cinesound Review, ‘The Voice of Australia’, with its endearing ear-twitching kangaroo, a cousin of MGM’s roaring lion, leaping out of the frame. This newsreel was nothing like we had ever seen before. No gun flashes, no crashing bombs. Intrigued, our chiyacking fell silent. The title *Kokoda Front Line!* came up, with a short explanation: ‘Damien Parer (a name new to us) ace war correspondent, in four weeks took his cameras to the far corners of New Guinea, securing many amazing pictures ... ’ Still no bang-bang. Instead we see what looks like a suburban lounge room with books and a vase of flowers. A serious young man seated on a stool gazes squarely at the camera. He is in uniform, and at first we think he might be some sort of official spokesman. He uses a quiet, measured tone, remote from the spurious excitement of most war commentaries, then and now. He speaks unobtrusively but unmistakable Australian. To our ears he is one of us, delivering the most eloquent to-camera speech in our history.  

Sayle concludes his description of the film with a peroration which draws on his own decades as a correspondent covering later and less patriotic wars:

War itself is morally ambivalent—the soldier has conflicting roles in our imaginations, killer and victim—but in New Guinea Parer found an invisible, all but non-human enemy whose motive was entirely evil and young warriors—ours—resisting him with little more than courage and their vulnerable bodies. Unspoken, a universal religious resonance and visual skill make *Kokoda Front Line!* despite some crudities, a triumph. From this unforgettable epiphany the film speeds to a close. Rain sheets down, fog descends, soldiers’ boots squelch through mud on an endless, agonising climb. They fade, and in a powerful close ... Parer reappears to reprise the theme of his opening. *Kokoda Front Line!* is patriotic propaganda of the highest order, not in the debased modern sense of exaggerations, half-truths and lies concocted to deceive gullible audiences, but with the older meaning of a statement of belief and call for appropriate action, a cinematic editorial or sermon, driven home by unforgettable images. It is a form that film can do better than any other medium, but seldom does, because of the difficulty of getting a committee to decide, clearly and unequivocally, what the message is.  

---

19 Ibid.
In conclusion, how do we assess the performance of the various players in the information war of the Second World War. The Department of Information, despite its manifold deficiencies, played a very important role both in providing filmic and press material and a media unit for the Prime Minister. The ABC was an agent of both propaganda and radio news. In the course of the war it grew into a significant news gathering and disseminating organisation. The newspapers’ traditional war correspondents, despite prodigious boasting by their historians, were severely restricted in what they would report. This came about due to a combination of over-zealous censorship by Australian authorities and mendacious promotion of their general by the Americans. In short, the overall performance was decidedly mixed.
The year is 1944 and the world is at war. In the South-West Pacific, US soldier and radio broadcaster, T/5 Hy Averback, presents the *Atabrine Cocktail Hour* program on the airwaves of the American Expeditionary Station (AES) on Guadalcanal in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. To keep his audience of GIs and other service personnel amused and interested, Averback invents make-believe locations and situations for his show:

From the fungus-festooned Fern Room, high atop the elegant Hotel DeGink in downtown Guadalcanal, we bring you the dance music of the *Quinine Quartet*.

With Harry James' version of the ‘Flight of the Bumble Bee’ as its musical theme and accompanied by background sound effects of a murmuring crowd, women’s laughter and ice tumbling into cocktail glasses, Averback’s program is a daily reminder to troops to take their anti-malarial Atabrine tablets.

The *Atabrine Cocktail Hour* was, in reality, only 15 minutes in duration, but went to air at an appropriate cocktail time (18:00hrs) each day. Dusk was also the time when malaria-carrying mosquitoes were active. Averback’s inventiveness knew no bounds. If the show wasn’t coming from the Hotel DeGink, then it was ‘From the Lizard Lounge in the exclusive Lunga Beach Club’, or some other concocted location. Captain Spencer Allen, the Station Manager of AES, Guadalcanal, recalls that the message of the program was irresistible:

---

1 Military rank of Technician, 5th Class (similar in status to Corporal).
2 Each US base had a Hotel DeGink, essentially a tent or barracks for transient service personnel between assignments.
3 Letters from Spencer Allen to author, 1983-89.
5 AES, Guadalcanal, Program Schedule, April 1944.
6 Letters from Spencer Allen to author, 1983-89.
Occasionally, so help me, a tired and dirty soldier would show up at the studio and ask
‘About this Hotel DeGink—just where is it?’ He didn’t really believe there was such a place,
but he wanted to check it out to make sure.7

The American Expeditionary Station on Guadalcanal was just one of a grouping of
United States military radio stations providing entertainment programs and news from
home for American service personnel posted to the South-West Pacific. The stations were
known, collectively, as the ‘Mosquito Network’. Others in the chain were located at Munda,
New Georgia (British Solomon Islands Protectorate), Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville
(New Guinea), Espiritu Santo (Anglo-French Condominium of New Hebrides), Noumea
(New Caledonia) and Auckland (New Zealand).

In the cases of Guadalcanal, Munda, Espiritu Santo and Bougainville, the stations
were situated within the perimeter of US military bases. The New Caledonia station was
originally established in the Red Cross building in Noumea and later moved to a location
on the Baie de l’Orphelinat (Orphanage Bay) on the city’s waterfront.8 In Auckland, radio
station 1ZM of the National Broadcasting Service (NBS) was temporarily loaned by the
authorities to the US military for use as an American Expeditionary Station.9

While the Mosquito Network serviced the radio entertainment and information needs
of military personnel in the South-West Pacific Area of war operations, another AES
grouping, known as the ‘Jungle Network’, operated in New Guinea. A further chain was
established in the Central Pacific. The radio stations were not networks in the sense that
they shared programs and news simultaneously. Rather, they were individual medium-
wave stations of common parentage. Several instances are recorded of attempted relays
of programs when the AES stations tried to link with their sister stations. However, poor
radio reception conditions made the attempts only partially successful. In late-1944, a
four-station link-up, with AES, Noumea, as key station, was finally achieved.10

In mid-1941, several months before the 7 December attack on Pearl Harbor, Colonel
Jack Harris was Deputy Director of the Radio Branch of the Bureau of Public Relations
in the United States Army.

I well remember a Colonel [R.A.] Bolling of the Army Ground Forces coming to the
Munitions Building, which was Army headquarters prior to the building of the Pentagon,
and telling us that General [J. Lesley] McNair, CG of all ground forces, commanded us to
get some entertainment to the ground forces manning the Iceland outpost.11

---

7  Ibid.
8  Larry Dysart, interview with author, San Diego, 1990.
of Southern California, 1951, 442.
11 Jack Harris, letter to author, 1983.
In response, the Radio Branch instituted a shortwave program, alternating two well-known radio personalities, Ted Husing of CBS and Bill Stern of NBC, giving the latest sports news and events.

This was titled *Your Grandstand Seat*. It was the first overseas broadcast to troops. Then, we initiated a program, *Command Performance*, which was an all-star Hollywood half hour, which became the premier short-wave show for the troops.\(^{12}\)

However, some enterprising US soldiers in Alaska took it upon themselves to develop their own infrastructure. Immediately following the Pearl Harbor attack, service personnel in the lonely military base at Kodiak in the Aleutian Islands started work on building their own small radio station. The transmitter was constructed in seventeen days and began broadcasts on 24 December 1941.\(^{13}\) Although the Armed Forces Radio Service had yet to be officially established, the Kodiak station became, in effect, the first (albeit unauthorised) AFRS outlet. It operated for a year before its existence came to the attention of Army Headquarters in Washington, DC.\(^{14}\)

In early 1942, the US Army, realising the importance of the psychological welfare of its troops, established the Morale Division of the Army Service Command. The Division’s role was to provide broadcasts and entertainment from home to the troops. Jack Harris recalls the early days:

> Thomas H.A Lewis, then husband of Loretta Young [the famous Hollywood actress], was brought in from Hollywood, commissioned a Major and headed the Armed Forces Radio Service.\(^{15}\)

With Major (later Colonel) Lewis in charge and with one other officer and three civilians administering a newly established office in Los Angeles, the Armed Forces Radio Service began its work.\(^{16}\) Initially, its key task was to purchase commercial radio programs for eventual re-broadcast to the troops serving outside mainland USA. At the time, the most popular shows could cost anything up to $50,000 per program. However, the AFRS was able to get them for $65.58 each.\(^{17}\)
By June, 1942, President Roosevelt had established the Office of War Information (OWI). In charge was Elmer Davis, formerly a *New York Times* writer and CBS commentator.\(^{18}\) However, Major Tom Lewis was concerned about any perceived link between the OWI, which he saw as a Government information machine, and the radio broadcasting service he was developing for US service personnel:

It was imperative in my mind that the OWI or any other propaganda organization not be in charge, nor indeed be present, when we were broadcasting to troops. One of the things I was sure of when I was called to Washington to make the master plan for the joint Navy and Army committee was that our troops would hear the same news service that they could hear were they at home and that their families were currently listening to.\(^{19}\)

Within months of the Pearl Harbor attack, American forces were being deployed to the South Pacific to prepare to stem the Japanese military tide. Almost all of South-East Asia had quickly been occupied by Japan and its soldiers were also now based in strength in Rabaul and elsewhere in New Guinea.

General Douglas MacArthur, Allied Supreme Commander in the South-West Pacific, rapidly established his Headquarters in Brisbane, Australia. The US forces under his command began to be deployed, their initial assignments taking them to staging areas, bases and training camps in Australia and New Zealand. With them went their home-style radio entertainment. As early as July, 1942, it was reported that four of the ZB radio network stations in New Zealand were broadcasting transcriptions of popular US commercial radio shows.\(^{20}\)

However, it was initially no easy task to get the transcription discs from mainland America to the broadcast sites. Without a system in place, Tom Lewis improvised by simply giving the gramophone recordings to friendly Air Force pilots flying to the South-West Pacific theatre of war. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not get official permission from General MacArthur, or his subordinates, to send the radio show discs by official means. Eventually, he wrote a letter to several Command personnel in the Pacific explaining the problem. The result was as Lewis had envisaged:

He [General MacArthur] was furious that some amateur young Major was giving orders to ‘his’ radio operations in the South Pacific. The order that we had failed to get was issued very promptly, and we never had any trouble with those shipments of transcriptions again.\(^{21}\)

---

By mid-1942, Japanese troops had ventured far down the chain of islands constituting the British Solomon Islands Protectorate (BSIP) and had identified a potential aircraft landing field on the Lunga plains of Guadalcanal. On 7 August 1942, US Marines landed on Guadalcanal from the sea. Their objective was to capture the airfield, then under construction, and hold it against all odds. A series of fierce battles soon developed as the Japanese military re-grouped and attacked in force. Fighting on land continued along ridge lines, in the jungle and on beaches. At sea, huge naval actions saw many capital ships sunk or damaged. Within a few months, the Allied forces began to prevail.

As the Allies took the offensive and moved forward through the chain of islands in the BSIP, their military radio equipment, usually operated by the US Signal Corps or specialist Marine or Army units, gave them access to operational information as well as entertainment. California-based AFRS short-wave transmitters pumped out signals able to be heard clearly in the South-West Pacific. Former commercial radio man, Bob Thomas (of WJAG, Norfolk, Nebraska), was, for two-and-a-half years, Officer-in-Charge of the AFRS San Francisco operations:

We maintained a 13 station network of powerful short-wave stations on the West Coast 24 hours daily on various frequencies and azimuths.22

The signals were coming in loud and clear far across the sea, so much so that a request for ‘Command Performance’, the popular program initiated by the Radio Branch of the US Army, was even received from US Marines fighting on New Georgia in the western Solomons. The request was written on a captured Japanese battle flag.23

To further bolster entertainment for the troops, Presto Y-model recorders (consisting of an amplifier and turntable and capable of both playing gramophone recordings and cutting new discs), were sent to Guadalcanal and other operational theatres. By early 1943, portable, low-powered radio transmitters (stored in five suitcases) were also made available. These fully mobile radio broadcast stations moved with the troops and were usually operated by either US Signal Corps personnel or Marine Corps engineers.24 Some of the small studios were reported to be in use on New Georgia and Vella Lavella during the latter part of 1943.25

---

22 Bob Thomas, letter to author, 1983.
23 Kirby & Harris, Star-Spangled Radio, 49.
24 Ibid., 56.
Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles and Washington, DC, the whole concept of developing American Expeditionary Stations (AES) was taking shape. Short-wave transmissions from a distance were fine, but what was really required was a locally-based medium-wave radio presence, thus enabling a greater diversity of news and entertainment programming to be developed and broadcast. The first AES station went to air in Casablanca in Morocco in March 1943. By late-1943, Guadalcanal was becoming a major US military staging area and rear base in the South-West Pacific. Clearly, such a location would be a prime candidate for an AES station. However, it was not the first of the Mosquito Network outlets to be developed, that honour going to New Caledonia.

Tontouta, north of New Caledonia’s capital, Noumea, was a major airfield for Allied forces in the Pacific. Noumea also housed extensive hospital facilities and was used by the US military for wounded personnel evacuated from forward operational areas, such as Guadalcanal and New Georgia. Already, a radio transmitter, operated by the Red Cross, and said to have been purchased in Australia, was broadcasting news and entertainment to the troops. It was based within the Red Cross building in Noumea, although American service personnel were already involved in managing the station and broadcasting programs.

On 5 September 1943, the Noumea station was formalised as a military entity when it came under the control of the US Army’s Information and Education (I&E) unit. It operated with one kilowatt of power on 975 kilocycles and later took the call-sign WVUS. While New Caledonia’s radio station was on the air and operational, troops on Guadalcanal in the BSIP would have to wait until March 1944 before their first radio station (later to be known as WVUQ), was established.

By December 1943, the Marines had established their own medium-wave radio station at Munda on New Georgia. Coastwatcher Martin Clemens recalls visiting the island at Christmas and hearing the station on the air. A Solomon Islander thumping bamboo band played for Clemens and his US military guests over lunch.

Their signature tune was ‘You Are My Sunshine’ and this, in fact, their recording, became the opening for the broadcast.

26 Broadcasting, 29 December 1943, 27.
27 Time, 15 July 1944.
29 Ibid., 446.
30 Martin Clemens, letter to author.
31 Several large bamboo tubes tied together and placed on the ground. The ends are beaten in rhythm, either with a wooden implement or slipper, to produce tunes.
32 Martin Clemens, letter to author.
In January, 1944, Major Purnell (‘Mike’) H. Gould (formerly commercial manager of WFBR, Baltimore), became South Pacific Radio Officer of the AFRS with Lieutenant Bob LeMond as one of his assistants and Major Clifford A. Frink as Chief Radio Engineer. Based in Noumea, these officers brought together the core of the staff for the future Mosquito Network and Jungle Network stations. While the Noumea team moved forward with its planning, personnel with backgrounds in the radio industry were being drafted for military service back in the USA.

Rudolph Luukinen (formerly with WSDM, Superior, Wisconsin) and destined to be one of AES, Guadalcanal’s engineers recalls that, upon induction to the armed services, he asked to be assigned to the Signal Corps. This request was granted.

I received my basic training at Camp Kohler in California and, upon completion, was sent to New York City for familiarisation with high-powered transmitting equipment destined for the European theatre. I was there [in Hicksville, NY] when my ‘call’ came.

Another eventual AES, Guadalcanal, staff member, George Dvorak, who had worked with radio KFI in Los Angeles before the war, enlisted as a Radio Control Tower Operator in Colorado. He was later called back to Los Angeles to join the team heading for Guadalcanal. Allen Botzer, who also became a Guadalcanal hand, started in radio with KOL and KIRO in Seattle. He went on to KMTR and KHJ in Los Angeles, eventually joining KNX, the CBS outlet in that city. He also enlisted as a Control Tower Operator and was sent to Roswell, New Mexico, later returning to Los Angeles and joining the AFRS crew bound for Guadalcanal. Two Texans, radio engineers Rudolph Rubin and Ivan Saddler, also became part of the team.

Captain Spencer Allen, previously with WGN, Chicago, was destined to head the Guadalcanal group. He recalls that four broadcasting teams (for stations on Bougainville, Guadalcanal, Espiritu Santo and New Caledonia) were given training at AFRS headquarters in Los Angeles. Rudy Luukinen remembers that, for the engineers, ‘our orientation was at the American Television Laboratory on Sunset near Western Avenue’.

---

33 *Broadcasting*, 8 May 1944.
37 Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
The Mosquito Network

Under AFRS Special Order Number 10, teams of AFRS graduates were dispersed to the South and South-West Pacific. The Guadalcanal radio team comprised Captain Spencer Allen, Station Manager, Captain Wilford Kennedy, Chief Engineer, and Staff Sergeant George Dvorak, Program Director. Program staff were Corporal Allen Botzer, T/5 Hymen Averback and PFC Richard Sinclair. The technical team was T/5 Rudolph Rubin, PFC Ivan Saddler, PFC Rudolph Luukinen and PFC Steve Johnson.

On 23 January 1944, the Guadalcanal group boarded the USAT Cape Mears in San Francisco. After a day staging at Angel Island, the vessel got underway on 24 January 1944. Spencer Allen recalled: “We lurched along at about 10 knots with a permanent 10 degree list to starboard.” George Dvorak remembers that he jokingly called the ship “The Wretch of the Hesperus.” For Allen Botzer, it was also a great new experience:

“This is it and it’s the darnedest thing I have ever encountered. I have a bunk right under the ceiling next to the ventilators. Makes it a little on the coolish side right now, but would be fine in hot weather.”

The ship left the US West Coast without escort and headed south-west, crossing the Equator on 8 February 1944. George Dvorak, Hy Averback and Allen Botzer filled their shipboard days as Chaplains’ Assistants. At noon each day, they utilised the ship’s public address system to run a one-hour music and news show for the troops on board.

The 15 minute newscast at 1230 was with material copied by ‘Sparks’ [the ship’s radio officer]. All in all, the duty was pretty good, compared to some of the other details, such as KP, latrine or garbage.

The respective AFRS contingents carried with them, on board their ships, all the equipment they would need to establish fully-fledged radio stations at their future destinations. Luukinen itemised the AES, Guadalcanal, gear as an RCA one kilowatt transmitter, a Rosen studio console, a pair of RCA junior velocity microphones, turntables, a Presto disc-cutter and some short-wave radio receiving equipment.

---

40 Franklin K. Tourtellotte, letter to author, undated.
41 PFC: Private First Class.
43 Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
44 Ibid.
46 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
47 Ibid. KP (Kitchen Police) duty is the form of work least liked by service personnel. It involves menial kitchen duties, such as washing dishes and cleaning floors.
48 Brand name for Radio Corporation of America.
The USAT *Cape Mears* made landfall at Espiritu Santo in the Anglo-French Condominium of New Hebrides on 11 February 1944 and the various AFRS teams disembarked to go their separate ways.\(^50\) Two days later, Captain Spencer Allen’s group again boarded a ship, this time for Guadalcanal, finally reaching their destination on 16 February.

The American trade magazine *Broadcasting* patriotically heralded their arrival.

The Guadalcanal station had its beginning when a crew, complete with equipment, was put ashore on a lonely stretch of South Pacific beach. Cpl. Allen Botzer had a .45 thrust into his hand and was told to guard the equipment. The rest of the men were dispatched on a scouting tour to determine what the next move would be”.\(^51\)

Botzer didn’t quite see things in the same way. In a letter home, he wrote:

> Of course that business about the .45 isn’t true. The rest of the stuff vaguely corresponds to the truth. What really happened is that we sat around on our duffle bags waiting for transportation, very hot, very wondering what happens next. A dull procedure, to say the least. The only thing we had to avoid was having a coconut fall on our noggins.\(^52\)

Once ashore, Captain Spencer Allen was relieved to find that Army engineers and Signal Corpsmen had constructed a studio building, ‘the first made of clapboard in the camp, he recalls,\(^53\) and a smaller transmitter shack about 200 yards away. When the AFRS contingent arrived, it had eight quarts of Scotch whisky for bartering purposes: ‘One quart brought us a Navy ‘reefer’—a huge refrigerator. We mounted it next to the studio building, installed some ducts with blower fans and had the only air-conditioned structure on Guadalcanal.’\(^54\)

The studio building was in a huge military encampment about half a mile from Lunga beach and one mile from Henderson Field, the airstrip wrested from the Japanese. The base comprised tents, huts and storage facilities in an area still being used by the Levers company as a commercial coconut plantation, copra being a prime ingredient in soap making. ‘There was a major east-west road just south of us which we called Highway 50’,\(^55\) Spencer Allen recalls. Coastwatcher Martin Clemens distinctly remembers AES, Guadalcanal, as announcing, ‘It was between Fifth Avenue and unimproved ground’.\(^56\)

---

50  Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
51  *Broadcasting*, 8 May 1944.
52  Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
53  Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
54  Ibid.
55  Ibid.
56  Martin Clemens, letter to author.
Continuing the New York theme, the AES staff dubbed their small studio shack in the coconut grove, ‘Radio City’, an ironic reference to the imposing headquarters of the NBC network in New York City. Everyone had to lend a hand to ensure that the station met its deadline for starting transmissions. ‘We aren’t only running a radio station—we’re jack of all trades as well’, wrote Allen Botzer. ‘We’re putting transite on the studio walls, building our own shelves and cupboards.’

Meanwhile, under the command of the radio station’s Chief Engineer, Captain Wilford Kennedy, Rudy Luukinen and his fellow technicians, Rudolph Rubin, Ivan Saddler and Steve Johnson, were hard at work placing studio equipment in the new station building. They had been given two weeks by Island Command to get everything in place. In reality, the job took about ten days.

One of the more complicated tasks was to install a flat-top (long-wire) antenna between two coconut palms. Luukinen called on his Signal Corps training experience to get him up the trees. He used ‘climber’s hooks’ on his boots. Normally, they were used for scaling telephone poles, but they had the same effect on coconut palms. Carrying the long-wire, he reached the top and, inadvertently, put his left hand into a wasps’ nest. ‘I just about fell from a 60 foot coconut tree, but luckily I grabbed the tree with my other hand and hung on until I got the wasps off my face and hands.’

A greater challenge than stringing the aerial was in gaining a reliable power supply. Without constant and stable electricity, AES, Guadalcanal, would never go to air. Claimed the Chicago Sunday Tribune newspaper: ‘Power for the broadcasts comes from a Signal Corps generator driven by a jeep motor burning two gallons of gasoline per hour.’ The reality was not quite so romantic. Captain Spencer Allen reported that, initially, the station had to rely on the US military’s central power supply. At that stage, the current was coming from a large diesel generator (dubbed ‘The Tojo Power and Light Company’) left behind by the Japanese. However, the fluctuating cycles of the output of the generator played havoc with the AES equipment. Captain Allen knew he had to get something better, especially before AES, Guadalcanal, officially went to air.

In the meantime, it was important to begin test transmissions to ensure that the transmitter output matched the capabilities of the antenna and that the studio equipment functioned properly. The evening of 2 March 1944 was the occasion on which AES,

---

57 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944. Transite, solid grey sheeting mainly for walls and ceilings, was a commonly used type of interior building material.
59 Chicago Sunday Tribune, 19 March 1944.
60 An ironic reference to General Hideki Tojo, War Minister and (later) Prime Minister of Japan during World War II.
Guadalcanal, first broadcast a test signal. It was an historic day as this also marked the inauguration of radio broadcasting in the British Solomon Islands Protectorate. Allen Botzer also saw it as a momentous occasion and wrote home to his family: ‘We’re down at the station this evening running a two hour test transmission. Right now, it’s one of those thrilling moments! I just made a station break in my most well-modulated tones.’

The Station Manager, Captain Spencer Allen, had sought assistance from the Navy in checking the strength of the signal from a range of locations. These sites were between 25 miles and 60 miles away from the transmission point near the Lunga River. ‘At the moment, we’re putting out about 800 watts’, he wrote to Major Mike Gould in Noumea.

Already, the station was being deluged with queries as to when it might begin a regular schedule. Spencer Allen, in liaison with South Pacific Radio Command in New Caledonia, had chosen 13 March at 05:30hrs as the date and time when full AES, Guadalcanal, transmissions would commence. As the day of the opening came closer, Captain Allen had to deal with the military bureaucracy over the make-up of the official opening program. This program, known as the ‘Dedicatory Show’, was to be broadcast some ten days after the station started regular transmissions. It was vital that all the ‘top brass’ were involved in the show and thus able to take some measure of credit for the establishment of such a popular facility as a radio station. However, G-2 (the intelligence arm of the Army) told him that names of individuals could not appear on any programs broadcast by AES, Guadalcanal. Spencer Allen remonstrated with them, but he was cautioned that neither general officers nor flag officers could be mentioned by name ‘nor must their presence here be advertised’.

On the night before the opening broadcast, Captain Allen gathered all the station staff for a last check session. Then, he took out a bottle of Johnny Walker Red Label whisky. Corporal Botzer reported: ‘We each had about two drinks to toast the success of the station. Man, that tasted good!’

Regular programming started, as scheduled, at 05:30hrs on 13 March, the ‘Dedicatory Show’ being planned for transmission on 22 March. Daily programs from AES, Guadalcanal, were broadcast from 05:30hrs to 08:05hrs, again from 11:00hrs to 13:00hrs and with evening sessions from 17:00hrs to close-down at 22:00hrs. The station broadcast

---

61 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
62 Spencer Allen, letter to Mike Gould, 1944.
63 Ibid.
64 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
65 AES, Guadalcanal, Program Schedule, March 1944.
on a frequency of 730 kilocycles (later changed to 690 kilocycles) with a power of one kilowatt. Originally, it did not use any call letters and just announced itself as AES, Guadalcanal. It also proclaimed that it was part of the Mosquito Network.\textsuperscript{66}

Credit for creating the Mosquito Network name has been attributed to several people. However, the consensus indicates that it was coined by the Program Director of AES, Guadalcanal, Staff Sergeant George Dvorak. Captain Spencer Allen wishes he had thought of it: ‘I would like to take credit [for it], but it belongs to somebody else. But who, I don’t remember.’\textsuperscript{67} When consulted on the matter, almost half a century after AES, Guadalcanal, went to air, George Dvorak modestly said that he did not remember the real truth.

Probably I did [devise the name], I don’t know. The big issue at the time was malaria and they had some fancy name for the radio station, which was American Expeditionary Forces, or Services, or whatever it was. And that was a little cumbersome. And it didn’t give a personality. So, we just all decided, and probably I was the first one—I don’t know—to call it the \textit{Mosquito Network} and it caught on. Everybody liked it. They remembered it. So, we dropped all the rest of it.\textsuperscript{68}

On opening day, things went mostly to plan and a day-to-day routine was soon established. George Dvorak operated the morning shift, with Hy Averback taking over from him as required. Allen Botzer started at 13:30hrs, prepared programs during the afternoon and then announced the evening transmission through until sign-off. On Sunday, all staff operated shifts during a 12-hour working day.\textsuperscript{69}

\textit{A Chicago Sunday Tribune} journalist waxed eloquent in his praise of the opening days of AES, Guadalcanal, and its welcome news and entertainment output:

Up in the hills back of Lunga Ridge, members of an artillery unit pause and move nearer their portable radio. Along the Tenaru River, infantrymen look at each other puzzledly. In a coconut grove, Marine veterans dreaming of home they haven’t seen for months, break into smiles. Guadalcanal at last has its own radio station, real American entertainment—‘just like home’.\textsuperscript{70}

An Army General visited the new station on opening day. He was accompanied by a Colonel from Special Service Command. When the General asked what was needed to

\textsuperscript{66} Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
\textsuperscript{67} Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
\textsuperscript{68} George Dvorak, interview with author, Los Angeles, 1990.
\textsuperscript{69} Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
\textsuperscript{70} \textit{Chicago Sunday Tribune}, 19 March 1944.
assist the development of the AES, Spencer Allen asked for additional transportation, while Captain Kennedy, his engineering officer, made a specific call for a new generator. He explained that even the coffee pot in the office could fail at any moment because the power supply was overloaded. The General turned to his accompanying officer: ‘Well Colonel, they’ve got to have more power. See that they get it, even if you have to rob somebody else of a bigger generator.’ The next day, Captain Allen could report to Major Gould in Noumea: ‘The General I mentioned cast out a few orders and tomorrow, b’God, we get a brand new PE-95-G 10-kilowatt generator.’

‘To many, the station is still unbelievable’, wrote the Chicago Sunday Tribune correspondent about this newest Mosquito Network radio outlet: ‘Guadalcanal is still too near the front, still too closely identified with misery and hardship in the minds of weary, mud caked veterans, to have them understand that a real, modern American radio station is broadcasting to them from their own island, thousands of miles from home.’

On 16 March 1944, the first ‘live’ studio musical performance was initiated by AES, Guadalcanal. A group of US soldiers from Hawaii, calling themselves the ‘Royal Hawaiians’, presented a variety of islands songs and tunes. Next, the radio station decided to venture out into band concerts and, later, ‘live’ commentaries of boxing matches. The first outside broadcast of the ‘fights’ was on 18 March. Spencer Allen was commentator:

The Saturday night boxing matches were one of our most popular programs which we broadcast live from an outdoor ring, set up near the Service Club building. For security reasons, the unit names of the boxers could not be broadcast, only their names and rank. The most exciting and good humoured boxers were the Fijians. They loved to fight and seemed impervious to injury. But the only boxing manoeuvre they knew was the ‘round-house swing’. It seldom connected, but when it did, the match was over!

Each AES radio station received a basic library of recorded music from the USA. While this was not the back-bone of the station’s programming, it was the key day-to-day material needed by the program staff. Allen Botzer noted the contents of the library: There’s stuff in it like Andre Kostalanetz and chorus playing and singing ‘And Russia is Her Name’. Lena Horne, Crosby, Haymes, all the orchestras, Kostelanetz ‘Holiday for Strings’ and a lot of other first-class music.
The system that Colonel Tom Lewis had put in place in 1942, namely providing recordings of major American network radio shows (from which the commercials had been deleted) to US military radio stations, ensured that AES, Guadalcanal, could present top programs to its audience. The very latest and most popular radio shows from the USA were soon available on the island, the transcriptions being on 16-inch acetate discs.

Apart from the ‘de-commercialised’ (or ‘de-natured’) network transcriptions, the Armed Forces Radio Service in Los Angeles also produced a range of specific programs tailored to American service personnel overseas. The weekly package contained 42 hours of radio programming. Lieutenant Bob LeMond wrote in the trade magazine, *Broadcasting*, that 28 hours of this programming were ‘de-commercialised’ shows:

[These] included the Bob Hope show, Bing Crosby’s ‘Music Hall’, Jack Benny, ‘Radio Theatre’, the Boston and NBC Symphonies and many others. The remaining 14 hours are made up of programs which are produced by the Armed Forces Radio Service especially for the men [sic] overseas. These are shows rarely heard by civilian audiences, but to the man [sic] in the service, such names as ‘Command Performance’, ‘Mail Call’, ‘Jubilee’, ‘G.I. Journal’, ‘G.I. Jive’, ‘Sound Off’ and others are ‘tent-hold’ words.77

As each American Expeditionary Station (AES) broadcast, on average, 85 hours per week, half of its output came from transcription programs from the USA, the remainder being produced locally.

Religious programming usually came from the Chapel adjacent to the military cemetery near the Tenaru River on Guadalcanal. Church services, both Catholic and Protestant, were re-broadcast. News broadcasts continued to be primarily relayed ‘live’ from short-wave transmissions received from the West Coast of the USA. The AFRS had its own news service based there and Mosquito Network stations would pick-up and carry the signal on the hour. Local news was difficult to collect and broadcast because of security regulations. Even weather forecasts were considered to contain information of a secret nature and were thus not able to be broadcast.78

The ‘Dedicatory Show’, or official launch, of AES, Guadalcanal, took place on 22 March, 1944.79 The weekly ‘Command Performance’ program was especially dedicated to AES, Guadalcanal, with messages from such stars as Kate Smith, Randolph Scott, Billy Gilbert and Jimmy Wakely. Although the Guadalcanal radio station had received

---

77 *Broadcasting*, 8 May 1944.
78 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
79 Ibid.
an advance copy of ‘Command Performance’ on transcription disc, short-wave reception from San Francisco was of such quality on the night of the ‘Dedicatory Show’, that they simply relayed the program. However, the transcription disc was synchronised and running on the station’s turntables, just in case reception deteriorated and the recording had to be cut in.\(^{80}\)

Apart from ‘Command Performance’, AES, Guadalcanal had prepared its own additional programming to celebrate the launch. The senior officer on the island, Vice-Admiral Aubrey Fitch, then Commander of Allied Air Operations in the South-West Pacific (ComAirSoPac), gave a ‘live’ address. A pre-recorded message had been made on disc by the Naval Commander, Admiral William F. ‘Bull’ Halsey. However, this speech caused the only problematic moment of the entire ‘Dedicatory Show’. In a letter the next day to his superiors in Noumea, Captain Spencer Allen reported accordingly:

> During Admiral Halsey’s speech, the goddam pickup head jumped a groove and skidded all over the transcription. We got it going again after about a ten second pause. We did a dry run on the whole business that afternoon, and everything was jake then. But it would have to happen on Halsey, of all people!\(^{81}\)

The sixty-five minute ‘Dedicatory Show’ was well received by listeners on the island, with many, according to Spencer Allen, thinking that ‘Command Performance’ from San Francisco had been presented ‘live’: ‘They [listeners] were quite impressed that Kate Smith and Randolph Scott were staying up until 2 a.m. just for us.’\(^{82}\) Meanwhile, Allen Botzer had come into the possession of some rye whiskey and brandy to celebrate the official start of AES, Guadalcanal. He wrote: ‘We’re going to adjourn as soon as we sign off the air in a few minutes and toast the formal opening of the place.’\(^{83}\)

Regular daily programming then set into a routine pattern. Since opening day, the technical facilities of AES, Guadalcanal, both the transmitter and the studio equipment, had been performing well. The station’s Chief Engineer, Captain Wilford Kennedy, wrote to Major Frink, South Pacific Radio Command’s senior engineering officer, in Noumea: ‘We have over 200 hours on the rig now and no air-time lost. I have a very rigid maintenance schedule set up that keeps the boys busy.’\(^{84}\)

---

80 Spencer Allen, letter to Mike Gould, 1944.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.
83 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
84 Wilford Kennedy, letter to Clifford Frink, 1944.
Programming was becoming increasingly innovative, with airtime being made available for indigenous Solomon Islanders to be featured on musical programs. Captain Allen visited one of the camps used by Levers plantation labourers, mainly recruited from the island of Malaita, and talked with their Australian overseer about having some choral groups record programs: ‘We learned that there were two groups of natives who had nothing to do with each other because of their songs. One sang only Anglican hymns; the other, non-secular songs such as “Humonderange” (Home on the Range) and “Cummin round the montan”’.\(^\text{85}\)

The two groups visited the AES, Guadalcanal, studios and made recordings that were broadcast on 12 April. During the studio sessions, Captain Allen tried to explain to the indigenous Solomon Islanders what radio was all about. The Australian overseer translated it into Pidgin\(^\text{86}\) as ‘Music-him-fella-go-long-way-round-come-out-someplace-else’.\(^\text{87}\) In his diary, Spencer Allen noted the occasion:

> Much laughter when they heard themselves on the loud-speakers. We gave them [the recordings] to play on their gramophone back in the camp. I don’t know if the natives were from Guadalcanal or Malaita—maybe both. That might be the rivalry because of their song preferences.\(^\text{88}\)

One of Hy Averback’s popular radio programs was a ‘Swap Shop’ where he would call for items to be listed for sale or exchange. The items included radios, binoculars, cameras, Air Force sunglasses, records, fountain pens and watches. Japanese battle flags and Samurai swords were much in demand. The only things not allowed to be traded were Service issue items and alcohol. Captain Allen recalls the Navy Seabees\(^\text{89}\) flooding the program with fake ‘battle flags’ and ‘genuine’ traditional weapons:

> We discovered that the flags were made of American parachute cloth with a locally painted-on meatball. The war-clubs were beautiful—ebony, the Seabees claimed, with silver and jewelled inlays. The ‘ebony’ turned out to be ordinary pine wood from packing lumber, stained with Shinola shoe polish. The ‘silver’ was polished aluminum, and the ‘jewels’, cats-eyes.\(^\text{90}\)

\(^{85}\) Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
\(^{86}\) Pidgin was (and still is) the lingua franca of Solomon Islands.
\(^{87}\) Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
\(^{88}\) Ibid.
\(^{89}\) Seabees were the Construction Branch (CB) of the US Navy and had a formidable reputation for handling major engineering and building projects.
\(^{90}\) Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
News broadcasts were becoming more numerous as AES, Guadalcanal, developed. By May, 1944, it was presenting complete news bulletins seven times a day. In addition, two-minute ‘Headline Highlights’ bulletins were presented on the hour. A few months later, news in Pidgin was being broadcast on an occasional basis. A Fijian medical doctor, Dr Eroni Leauli Taoi, who was serving on Guadalcanal, visited the station to translate the scripts into Pidgin and present the newscasts on the air.

Apart from locally produced programs and the regular transcription package, visiting USO shows often travelled to the island. Ray Milland and three Hollywood actresses visited Guadalcanal in February 1944. In May, Eric Peabody came with a small group. Other visitors included entertainer Bill Lundigan and, later, Lieutenant Bob Crosby with a troupe of Marines. In August, Bob Hope arrived with his entourage, including showbiz personalities Francis Langford, Jerry Colonna, Tony Romano and a bevy of singers and dancers. Captain Spencer Allen interviewed Bob Hope for AES, Guadalcanal, while Allen Botzer recalls that Bob Hope’s show, held at the outside theatre, was attended by ‘to put it mildly, an enthusiastic crowd’. Jack Benny visited the island in the latter part of August 1944, his concert being broadcast ‘live’ by AES, Guadalcanal.

As AES, Guadalcanal, continued to develop, it was joined by other new stations in the Mosquito Network. On 3 April, 1944, AES, Munda, New Georgia opened transmissions, having taken-over from the unauthorised station already in operation, with AES, Bougainville, following on 15 April and AES, Espiritu Santo, on 4 August 1944.

With the war situation changing, so staffing movements within the Mosquito Network began to gather speed as some stations closed and program and technical staff were transferred to new theatres. One of the first to go from AES, Guadalcanal, was T/5 Hy Averback. In September 1944, after just over six months with the station, he was transferred to WVUS, Noumea, with plans for onward travel to the AES operation in Auckland, New Zealand. However, the latter move never eventuated. Averback was replaced at AES, Guadalcanal, by T/5 Jimmy Lake. At the same time, Corporal Allen Botzer was promoted to Sergeant, while one of the station’s key engineering personnel, T/5 Rudolph Luukinen, was transferred to AES, Espiritu Santo.
Management changes were also in the offing. On 18 September 1944, Captain Spencer Allen was promoted Major and transferred to Noumea as Chief of the Armed Forces Radio Service with the title South Pacific Command Radio Officer (SoPacBaCom). Following his departure, the engineering officer, Captain Wilford Kennedy, assumed responsibilities as Station Manager of AES, Guadalcanal.

One of Kennedy’s first actions was to upgrade the aerials of the station. Allen Botzer watched the system being erected.

We have a new antenna being put in and in order to clear for the 90 foot poles and the guy wires, several palm trees had to be pulled down and pushed over by bulldozers. That’s quite a process in itself.

A long-wire was strung between the poles, giving much better broadcast coverage, the upgraded AES, Guadalcanal, signal even being noticed by radio listeners as far away as New Zealand. At the same time, the radio station’s broadcast frequency changed from 730 kilocycles to 690 kilocycles.

Across the board, the AES outlets were improving the quality of their technical output. This resulted in an experiment being conducted to see whether the Mosquito Network, a ‘network’ in name alone until then, could, actually, broadcast programs simultaneously. The attempt was made in November 1944. The New York Times reported the success of the venture:

Coming over the transmitters of the American Expeditionary Station at Guadalcanal, they heard the voice of an announcer from ‘AES, Noumea’, which is in New Caledonia. They heard the same voice over ‘AES, Espiritu Santo’ in the New Hebrides and over ‘AES, Auckland’ in New Zealand. The whole South Pacific couldn’t be ‘island happy’. Last month, the Headquarters of the AFRS in the South Pacific announced they weren’t. The four stations had done the impossible. Without telephone lines or ‘point-to-point’ pick-ups, they had rebroadcast one program picked up from a central transmitter.

On 13 March, 1945, AES, Guadalcanal, broadcast its first anniversary program. It was presented ‘live’ from what was called the ‘Tropicana Theatre’, an outside venue

---

100  Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1944.
101  Ibid.
102  Tune-In, NZ Radio DX League (via Ray Crawford), 31 January 1945.
103  Ibid.
in Lunga Camp. Messages were presented on-air by Major General Maxwell Murray, Commanding General, Guadalcanal, and other dignitaries, with music from the ‘Foxhole Four’ and various other groups and bands.\textsuperscript{106}

The anniversary performance marked the highpoint in the existence of the Mosquito Network. A month later, the US Military Command structure in the Pacific changed.\textsuperscript{107} The islands of Bougainville and New Georgia stayed under South-West Pacific Command auspices, while Guadalcanal was absorbed under Pacific Ocean Command, this being a combination of the former South Pacific Command and Central Pacific Command.

In another sign of the changes then taking place, Major Spencer Allen, as South Pacific Command Radio Officer, decided in March 1945 to introduce call letters for all the radio stations within his Command area. He did this because ‘announcers were more used to the W and K\textsuperscript{108} call letters of the USA’.\textsuperscript{109} The AES station on Guadalcanal became WVUQ and, according to Allen Botzer, first used this new call-sign on 24 May 1945.\textsuperscript{110} However, the other stations used their new calls earlier. AES, Munda was assigned WVTJ, AES, Bougainville, announced as WVTI (although WSSO was another call given to this station in the early days of its existence, probably because it was originally a Special Service Office operation), while AES, Espiritu Santo, went on the air as WVUR.\textsuperscript{111}

Staff changes increased apace. Both Ivan Saddler and Rudolph Rubin were commissioned as Second Lieutenants and later transferred from Guadalcanal to Noumea.\textsuperscript{112} On 5 June 1944, Captain Wilford Kennedy stepped down as Officer-in-Charge and was re-assigned to AES, Espiritu Santo. Sergeant Allen Botzer was, nominally, then in charge of the Guadalcanal station. However, as he noted at the time:

\begin{quote}
This station has been in operation so long that there really isn’t much to worry about. There are no salesmen, no accounting department, no money to be made or lost. Just stay on the air really.\textsuperscript{113}
\end{quote}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{106} Audiotape of the first anniversary concert supplied to author by Wilford Kennedy, Florida, 1990.  \\
\textsuperscript{107} DeLay, ‘Armed Forces Radio Service’, 443.  \\
\textsuperscript{108} In the USA, radio stations west of the Mississippi River were usually assigned K--- call signs, while those east of the river had W--- calls. The American Expeditionary Stations in the South Pacific were probably given W--- call signs as the US Army had Washington, DC (east of the river), as its headquarters.  \\
\textsuperscript{109} Spencer Allen, letters to author. 1983-89.  \\
\textsuperscript{110} Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1945.  \\
\textsuperscript{111} Various sources, including letters and documents from Adrian Peterson (USA), Arthur T. Cashen (NZ), Ray Crawford (Australia) and AES personnel.  \\
\textsuperscript{112} Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1945.  \\
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
In July, 1945 Major Spencer Allen and the majority of the AES, Noumea, team began preparations for AFRS stations to be established in newly liberated locations such as the Philippines. In consequence, the group was airlifted to Manila, gathering equipment and personnel along the way. However, history had its own ending in store. On 6 August 1945, the US Army Air Force dropped the world’s first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in Japan. Another, three days later, destroyed the city of Nagasaki.

For Major Spencer Allen, the detonation of the atomic bomb occasioned an opportunity for him to end his Service career. He had reached the Philippines from Noumea when the bomb was dropped. As there was no need for him to continue onto Japan and take up a role within the occupation forces, he was transferred from Manila to Hawaii and onwards to mainland USA. ‘I had enough years of service to leave the Army, which I did.’

Earlier in 1945, the AES had started to close down its Mosquito Network stations as US military forces moved to new operational theatres from rear staging areas. The first to close was the AES station in Auckland which was returned to the local authorities, staff being transferred in January 1945 to Noumea where they waited orders for their next assignments. Also in January, AES, Bougainville, left the air. By April, 1945 AES, Munda on New Georgia had also closed down, with some of the staff being re-assigned to AFRS stations in Manila and elsewhere in the Philippines.

As AFRS crews left the American Expeditionary Stations, operations were often taken-over by other Units, such as the Army Air Force Communications System (AACS) or the US Signals Corps, and kept on the air under local auspices. By July, 1945, AES, Noumea, AES, Guadalcanal, and AES, Espiritu Santo, were the only three AFRS stations still broadcasting using staff who had been with the original teams trained in Los Angeles.

Elsewhere, the AACS kept local radio stations on the air, with their own specialists handling programming and engineering duties.

With the war coming to an end, it was Allen Botzer’s turn to leave Guadalcanal, which he did in late August. He was assigned to an AFRS station in the Philippines and handed over the reins of the Guadalcanal operation to Richard Sinclair.

114 Spencer Allen, letters to author, 1983-89.
115 Ibid.
117 The Army Air Force Communications System (AACS), also known at various times as the Army Air Force Communications Service and the Airways and Air Communications Service, handled air-traffic control work, as well as inter-base signal transmissions and links between overseas and mainland USA.
118 Private correspondence, Allen Botzer, 1945.
119 Ibid.
However, AES and the Mosquito Network had little time to live. Its purpose in the South-West Pacific was almost over. Now, the AFRS would take on a new life broadcasting to US forces based in the Philippines, occupied Japan and elsewhere in north Asia. Meanwhile, a joint military plan was prepared to enable the Army Air Force Communications System (AACS) to take-over completely radio broadcasting from the Mosquito Network. The AACS, primarily responsible for air-traffic communications and point-to-point transmissions between the Pacific and the US mainland, would not only have engineering responsibility for the radio stations, but would also provide its own staff for programming and announcing duties.\textsuperscript{120}

In October, 1945 only AES, Guadalcanal, AES, Noumea and AES, Espiritu Santo, were operational as AFRS units. By November, all that had changed. According to the AES, Guadalcanal, station manager, Corporal Richard Sinclair, AES, Noumea, was shut down by Lieutenant Ivan Saddler and the WVUS transmitter flown by US military air transport to Guadalcanal that month.\textsuperscript{121}

At the same time, the AACS established its own radio station, using a separate transmitter, at Tontouta, the huge air base just north of Noumea, rather than in the New Caledonia capital itself. The original WVUS transmitter was reconditioned on Guadalcanal by AES technicians Rubin Taylor and P.V. Johnson, and was then placed at its new transmission site near the AACS centre located on a hill close to Henderson Field.\textsuperscript{122} While the technicians installed the equipment, Richard Sinclair gave a hand to the incoming AACS on-air personnel and programmers who would be broadcasting on the former WVUS transmitter.

By this time, AES, Espiritu Santo, in the New Hebrides had already been handed-over to the AACS, all the AES staff there having being sent to Guadalcanal.

On the orders of senior officers, Richard Sinclair was told that AES, Guadalcanal, the last of the Mosquito Network, would go off the air on 30 November 1945. Sinclair had a plan for the final evening of transmission. In particular, he decided to use portions of the recordings made by the station since it went to air in March 1944. He wrote to his friends: ‘Will use a bit from George’s [Dvorak] \textit{Native News}, quite a hunk from your [Botzer] first anniversary show, and several other cuts we made.’\textsuperscript{123} He then decided to put the final recordings in boxes and send them to the former staff members concerned. ‘I think that perhaps you would like some of the stuff we have made here’, he concluded.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[120] Richard Sinclair, letter to Allen Botzer, 1945.
\item[121] Ibid.
\item[122] Ibid.
\item[123] Ibid.
\item[124] Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
When the US Marines had first landed on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942 they had found little, if any, permanent infrastructure on the island. Later, Guadalcanal became one of the biggest Allied military bases in the world. The camp constructed between the Lunga River and Henderson Field catered for hundreds of thousands of personnel, with thousands more living on troop transports offshore. Hospitals, cinemas, theatres, wharves were all built on the island. Less than three years later, it was all over. Corporal Richard Sinclair wrote in November 1945 to his former colleagues: ‘All the offices, Special Service, I-E [Information and Education] etc. have moved out of the area. The boxing ring is completely knocked down and burned up.’

At the conclusion of the last transmission of AES, Guadalcanal, on 30 November 1945, Richard Sinclair carried out the orders he had received concerning the disposal of the station’s equipment. ‘The Signal Corps will box up our old transmitter for shipment to Japan. All the other stuff will go in the junk pile, I guess.’ As Sinclair left the studio on the final day, he took the banner hanging from the microphone and packed it in his kit for home. The banner bore the words ‘The Mosquito Network’.

After the departure of the AES personnel, transmissions from the AACS-operated WVUQ continued into the following year. The last reported transmission of WVUQ Guadalcanal was in September 1946. A listener in New Zealand heard the station on 21 September on 690 kilocycles. However, when a letter was sent to WVUQ later that month, it was returned by the Post Office bearing the words ‘Unclaimed. Moved—no address’. An era was over.

125 Ibid.
126 Ibid.
128 NZ DXTRA, NZ DX Club, September 1946 (via Ray Crawford).
129 Ibid.
The Cold War: An Australian Perspective

Lyn Gorman

This conference on the military, the media and information warfare provides a welcome occasion to reflect on an area for which there is now a wealth of research and a voluminous literature. This paper offers an Australian perspective on media and the Cold War, revisiting detailed research in primary sources (audiovisual as well as print) for the Korean and Vietnam wars, reviewing conclusions drawn from that research in the light of recent literature, and considering the findings on Australian media coverage of war in the 1950s-70s in the context of dominant themes in military-media historiography, including contemporary preoccupations.

To sketch in the larger themes first, as a backdrop for the Australian Cold War focus, the following are necessarily summary. Any survey of the history of media and war would foreground several approaches. One has been a focus on the role and impact of individual war correspondents.¹ Another much researched theme, particularly with the expansion of mass media in the twentieth century and the advent of total war in 1914-18 and 1939-45, has been the importance of media as tools of persuasion and means of disseminating propaganda (including their use by ministries of ‘propaganda’ or ‘information’).²

It hardly needs saying that, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Vietnam War cast a long shadow over historical writing on war and the media. The traditional view, put simply, was that the media, particularly television, ‘lost the war’. Television, a relatively new mass medium, was sufficiently widespread in the US that it brought images of war into most American living rooms; the American public turned against the war; and continuing US


² There is a wealth of material on the mass media and propaganda; for a bibliography see Lyn Gorman & David McLean, Media and Society into the Twenty-first Century: A Historical Introduction (Malden: Blackwell, 2009).
involvement in this South-East Asian conflict became untenable. The view of oppositional media during war had emerged. It did not take long for vigorous debate to occur, and various versions of an alternative view were advanced. It was argued that, essentially, the US failure in Vietnam was due to other causes, and the media followed rather than led as anti-war sentiment developed.³

During the final decades of the twentieth century one of the main themes in the historiography was military management of the media. Regardless of academic debates, in limited conflicts in the 1980s (Britain and the Falklands War, US military engagements in Grenada and Panama), the military took to heart the supposed ‘lessons of Vietnam’, controlling media access and coverage. In the Gulf War of 1991 the ‘pool’ system epitomised tight military management of the media. Some historians saw an inexorable progress in the military-media relationship, still based on traditional perceptions of the supposedly oppositional stance and the power to influence public opinion of the media during the Vietnam War, and characterised by ever-tighter ‘reining in’ of the media. In the framework of this interpretation the ‘embedding’ of journalists with military units during the Iraq War of 2003 was a further step in controlling the media during war.⁴


Since 2001 and the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on ‘9/11’, there has been a growing media-and-war literature framed by the ‘war on terror’/‘war on terrorism’, emphasising the importance of media as powerful ‘instruments of warfare’, particularly in the context of globalisation and taking account of the rise of non-Western media with global reach (Al-Jazeera being the outstanding example).  

Given the theme of this conference, it is important to note a related emphasis alongside the military-management-of-the-media paradigm. Based particularly on the experiences of the 1960s and 1970s (although there is a much longer ‘pedigree’ if we consider the role of media in earlier wars), the military has given more overt attention to the management of public opinion. ‘Soft power’ has emerged as deserving more proactive management, and information operations or psychological operations/’psyops’ now have their place alongside strategic, operational and tactical planning. Recent studies, building on earlier work on psychological warfare, have analysed how public relations and strategic communication approaches have become part of the military ‘arsenal’. In the ‘war on terror’ ‘both sides are engaged in information warfare defined in a much broader sense than that outlined in narrow military doctrines’ (regardless of the descriptions used—‘information campaigns’, ‘public diplomacy’, ‘information operations’, ‘strategic communications’).


What might be considered a sub-theme of recent writing is a tendency to judge the adequacy of coverage of a particular conflict, often linked with technological change and its impact on war reporting. The Vietnam War, the ‘first television war’, was followed by the ‘first real-time war’ in 1991, the first Gulf War (when CNN delivered 24-hour-news to global audiences). Some judged this to be one of the worst reported wars because of restrictions on journalists, which resulted in selective and ‘sanitised’ coverage. Subsequent conflicts were ‘firsts’ as new media emerged: the 1999 NATO air war against Serbia the ‘first Web war’; the US-led war against Afghanistan in 2001 the ‘first videophone war’; the 2003 Iraq War the ‘first warblog war’ (with the Internet providing a globally accessible platform for ‘citizen journalists’, including the victims of war); and, most recently, the ongoing battle between the US and al Qaeda the first ‘YouTube War’.7 While new technology is pushing the redefinition of media—and military—practices, it has been suggested that the quality of war reporting has declined for a range of reasons (including audience parochialism, ‘intellectual isolationism’, the dominance of particular entertainment genres—lifestyle, ‘reality TV’—over news and current affairs, the difficulty of maintaining traditional journalistic standards in an age of saturation coverage and citizen journalism).8 One contemporary view implies that we should abandon the whole notion of research on war reporting: Martin Bell has argued that ‘war reporting as we have known it no longer exists’. He refers to changes in recent decades, especially since ‘9/11’, including embedding during the 2003 Iraq War, the rise of ‘rooftop journalism’, war looking more and more ‘like a video game’, the ‘reporter-as-celebrity’, television news increasingly mere ‘froth and fluff’, describing his commentary as an obituary for war reporting.9

Against this background of sustained interest in military management of the media, greater military emphasis on information operations and strategic communication, the impact on war reporting of technological change, globalised media and apparent audience preferences, what does examination of Australian media coverage of Cold War conflicts reveal?

---

8 See, for example, Seib, Media and Conflict in the Twenty-first Century; also Gorman and McLean, Media and Society into the Twenty-first Century, ch. 10.
9 Martin Bell, ‘The Death of News’, Media, War and Conflict 1: 2 (2008), 221-31 (online version at http://mwc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/1/2/221).
Australian Media and the Cold War

While there is an extensive literature on American media and Cold War conflicts, there is relatively little on Australian media and the Cold War. In this paper the focus is on Australian engagement in two particular conflicts, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, rather than on the entire period of the Cold War.  

Australian Media and the Korean War: The Literature

The most common description of the Korean War is ‘the forgotten war’. The war itself has attracted relatively little attention from Australian historians, although Richard Trembath has recently attempted to redress the neglect with *A Different Sort of War: Australians in Korea 1950-53*. More specifically, Australian media coverage of the Korean War has received even less notice. The official history gave only passing mention to the press and the war; O’Neill commented that the war ‘… was not a very controversial issue … After the opening months of intense fighting the war became mundane and confusing to the readers of Australian newspapers and, once the truce talks had begun in mid-1951, it ceased to be newsworthy for long periods.’ Others accepted American media domination and did not consider it necessary to provide Australian comparisons, or they simply did not discuss media coverage of the war.

Individual journalists/war correspondents have attracted some attention. Philip Knightley noted that ‘Australians were there in force, probably because the Australian government was well aware how important good relations were with the USA at a time when Britain, the “Mother Country” was beginning its withdrawal east of Suez’, naming Denis Warner, Norman Macswan, Warren White, Harry Gordon, Lawson Glassop, Ronald Monson and Desmond Telfer. The Australian Wilfred Burchett has remained a controversial figure, with several recent publications keeping the debate alive. These works...

---

allow a reassessment of Burchett’s importance; Nick Fischer has concluded that his reports on post-Hiroshima survivors and on the American Army’s use of germ warfare and Allied mistreatment of prisoners of war in Korea distinguish him ‘as Australia’s most influential and important reporter’; but government ‘prosecution of Burchett … prevent[ed] the Australian public from asking whether Western governments had a case to answer in relation to their conduct of the Korean War’.\(^\text{16}\) Despite Burchett’s investigations in prisoner of war (POW) camps of both sides—he visited Allied POWs in camps in the far north of Korea in 1952 and also tried to investigate the treatment of Chinese and North Korean POWs in the United Nations (UN) camps in South Korea—there seems to be consensus that Australian media interest in Korea fell away after the first year of the fighting (and by early 1952 many correspondents had been withdrawn).\(^\text{17}\)

In summary, the literature on Australian media and the Korean War is meagre. Apart from recent reawakening of interest in one individual (Burchett), who was certainly not representative because of his ‘reporting from the other side’, there has been an absence of research on how Australian media covered the war, what that coverage reveals about preoccupations at the time and the role of the media during that war.

*Australian Media and the Korean War: Print and Audiovisual Sources*

Notwithstanding this neglect by historians, analysis of Australian media sources during the Korean War (1950-53) indicates that, perhaps unsurprisingly, they did have much to say about contemporary Australian concerns. Some of the messages illustrated classic Cold War perceptions: any threat from ‘the reds’ was part of a worldwide communist conspiracy hatched in Moscow and supported by Peking; war in Korea was part of global communist aspirations; if one country fell to communism, others would follow like a tumbling row of dominoes; failure to halt communist advances was analogous to appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s.\(^\text{18}\)

Audiovisual archives convey some of these messages most vividly. During the Korean War it was newsreels that brought images of the war to Australian audiences. Units of Fox Movietone and Cinesound (Greater Union Theatres) had been operating in Australia since the 1930s and had reached a peak of influence during the Second World War. Television broadcasting did not begin in Australia until 1956, so Australians saw images of the

---

Korean War as photographs in print media or in newsreels in cinemas. It is important to note that newsreels were very much part of an entertainment environment; they were not a tool of investigative journalism, as some television current affairs programs were in the 1960s during the Vietnam War.

There are two full-length Cinesound Review newsreels from the first year of the Korean War that show just how vivid and emotive were the imagery and accompanying commentary. These productions (by Geoffrey Thompson and Bede Whiteman) were released on 1 and 22 September 1950 and entitled ‘Special Edition: Exclusive—Australia at War in Korea’ and ‘Battle in Korea’. The commentary is laden with Cold War rhetoric: ‘the relentless tide of the Red advance’; ‘The democratic peoples must fight—and continue to fight—until the grim Red shadow that shrouds the world is dispelled. They cannot afford to lose.’ The films depicted the terrain and the Korean people, napalm being poured into aircraft belly tanks, napalm-spray attacks on enemy foxholes and ‘rockets hiss[ing] down with terrifying accuracy onto the Reds below’ (filmed by remote-controlled camera fitted to a Mustang belly tank). Surviving newsreel footage from the remainder of the war offers only shorter segments; nothing was identified with quite the impact of these full-length newsreels from the early period of Australian engagement in Korea. The later segments showed servicemen leaving for, or returning from, Korea, as well as the release of Australian POWs. After the war ended, newsreels maintained some interest in Korea, with both Cinesound and Movietone News showing ‘diggers’ who had served in Korea being welcomed home as late as 1956.

In addition to the newsreels there were newspaper photographs of the Korean War. Major metropolitan papers such as the _Age_ in Melbourne and the _Sydney Morning Herald_ published numerous photographs (often on the front page) of Australian troops on the Korean peninsula (in a number of instances emphasising the benefits of modern technology and the exclusive nature of this visual material).

Even in the press there was more than has been implied by histories of Australian involvement in the Korean War. Earlier accounts of press coverage indicated that attention faded after the first months of the war; however, despite censorship being tightened and

---

19 Held at the National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra. The Archive publication, _The Cold War: A Listing of the National Film and Sound Archive’s Holdings_ (Canberra: NFSA, 1997), includes summaries of newsreel segment content (pp. 6-14).
21 For example, _Age_, 15 August, 25, 26 September, 4, 18 December 1950; _Sydney Morning Herald_, 3, 8, 25, 26, 27 September 1950.
important matters such as the truce negotiations and POW camps being ‘off limits’ to war correspondents, news items did continue to appear. They ranged over the ceasefire talks, the lengthy armistice negotiations and prolonged UN efforts to find a resolution, various issues relating to POWs (including riots in the camps in 1952 and 1953 and arrangements for POW exchanges), casualty rates, and even the domestic political situation in South Korea. Interestingly, in the light of the dominant view of this as ‘the forgotten war’, the press noted a role for itself in challenging domestic apathy through continuing to print stories about Australian servicemen in Korea, even urging readers not to let these troops become ‘forgotten men’.22

Furthermore, newspaper articles from the period provide valuable insights into Australian concerns and perceptions. There was unease about America’s role in the world after the Second World War and about the impact of US policy and practice in the Asian region, particularly the effects for Australia as an ally. There was some opposition to independent US moves in Korea, with a preference for the UN to determine policy and strategy (although there was also evidence of ambivalence about the UN, with fears expressed that it might be seen as an agent of US colonialism in Asia, and that it was not displaying adequate leadership in the war). There was concern about the ‘emotionalism’ of American opinion and leadership and about differences between the US and Britain, and the US and other allies such as France. American non-recognition of Communist China was a persistent point for comment; Britain’s more pragmatic approach to China, and British emphasis on avoiding a limitless commitment in an Asian war, were preferred. There was criticism of US support for Syngman Rhee in South Korea; and US military leadership and strategy, and US responsibility for slow progress in the peace talks, came in for criticism. Interestingly, the conflict in Korea was interpreted as a civil war; and there were predictions that US support for reactionary cliques in Asia would lose much Asian goodwill.23

It was evident that, although the American alliance was seen as critical to Australian defence, pro-British and pro-Commonwealth sympathies remained strong in the early 1950s. Australian newspapers argued for a stronger role for Britain in both the truce talks and in discussions on post-war Korea. There were efforts to provide reassurance to

22 _Sydney Morning Herald_, May 1951; _Age_, reports by Keith Sinclair, early 1952.
Britain that the new Pacific-focused security arrangements concluded in the ANZUS pact would not diminish Australian ties with Britain. There was general acknowledgment of the importance of the British Empire and Commonwealth not just in Korea but in Asia and the world more generally.\(^{24}\) Notwithstanding the importance of these historical ties, there was also a strong sense of Australia’s own national interests and the need to have ‘a mind of our own’, even if it meant dispensing with established Cold War prejudices. There was a need for better knowledge of Australia’s Asian neighbours, greater sensitivity to Asian perspectives, and acknowledgment of Asian realities, which included accepting the strength of the communist revolution and recognising Communist China.\(^{25}\)

There were characteristically Australian aspects of the way the media linked participation in Korea with involvement in previous wars. The press referred frequently to ‘diggers’ and ‘Anzacs’ fighting in Korea. Newsreels invoked nationalist symbolism and emphasised the continuity of Australian war legends. A Cinesound newsreel of October 1950 covered the landing of Australian troops in South Korea, noting, ‘the Aussies sang Waltzing Matilda through two world wars. They’ll sing it again as they march through Korea, and anywhere else they go to punch home the lesson, aggression does not pay.’ In March 1952 a Movietone newsreel drew on archival footage of the Australian Light Horse during the First World War to link ‘the men who were to immortalise the name of Anzac on many a front’. Other newsreels referred to soldiers leaving for Korea, facing ‘the job with a grin as the Anzacs always do …’, to ‘the spirit of Anzac’, ‘the burning torch of freedom’, and ‘the fighting men who have upheld the finest digger traditions’. Newsreels on returning Australian POWs also contained digger imagery. A Cinesound segment of May 1953 showed Australian prisoners released in Korea near the ‘Welcome Gate to Freedom’ outside Panmunjom. One of the men took off a Chinese hat and donned the Australian army slouch hat: ‘boy, oh, boy! It’s great to feel that old digger’s hat on his head again!’ Similar to this approach by the newsreels, a 1952 government documentary on Korea, One Man’s War, produced by the Film Division of the Australian News and Information Bureau, stressed links with the Gallipoli and Anzac traditions.\(^{26}\)


Australian print and audiovisual archives from the 1950s demonstrate that media coverage of the Korean War reflected peculiarly Australian concerns based on history, past allegiances, post-Second World War uncertainties, geopolitical realities, and elements of Australian nationalism. Pervading them is a sense of the need to determine Australia’s place in Asia, and to redefine its relations with major allies and with the key international organisation of the period, the UN. Australian media not only provided greater coverage of the Korean War than previously acknowledged but also contributed to reconceptualising Australia’s place in the world in the 1950s. Not all the coverage considered here falls into the category of ‘serious investigative journalism’; the newsreels were part of a predominantly entertainment environment, and they did not aspire to offer in-depth analysis—as would some television current affairs programs of the next decade. However, the images they provided of Australian military involvement in Korea between 1950 and 1953 confirmed some of the doubts, uncertainties and fears of these early Cold War years, just as they drew on established Australian military tradition and nationalist legends to counter uncertainty with confidence in ‘digger’ and Anzac traditions.

**Australian Media and the Vietnam War: The Literature**

There is a richer literature on Australia and the Vietnam War than on Australia and the Korean War, and greater attention has been given to Australian media during the Vietnam War. However, again, there are limitations in existing analyses, and the emphasis has been overwhelmingly on the press.

Early work on Australia and the Vietnam War depicted the media as conformist and lacking in independence. In 1970 Dennis Altman stated: ‘the media … tended to underline the government’s case through its coverage of the war.’ Rodney Tiffen, having compared Australian and American press coverage of the main phases of the war, saw Australian news media as ‘overwhelmingly timid … [with a] far more restricted range of opinion and analysis … deplorably inferior to their American counterparts’. Seven years later Tiffen concluded more strongly that ‘in Australia it would be ludicrous even to raise the issue [of an oppositional media]. The Australian news media lost the war of trying to cover Vietnam.’

---

27 I have not included radio here. For discussion of what the (not very extensive) radio archives yield, see Gorman, ‘Australian and American Media,’ 135-8.
the war, or summarised what there had been as inaccurate, lacking comprehensiveness, uncritical, merely endorsing the policies and attitudes that led Australia to war, and generally favourable to the troops.\textsuperscript{31}

Recent analyses have been more nuanced. In 2000 Prue Torney-Parlicki argued that, although the traditional view was that the Vietnam War was ‘uncensored’, there is evidence that censorship ‘was applied under different guises’—in the Australian case including ‘intervention by government, the services, and news editors and managers in the content and presentation of war news’. Her conclusions differ from those of Tiffen: Australian correspondents did complain about efforts to control dissemination of information about the war, but their frustrations were the product of ‘the struggle to understand the war’s wider issues, the apprehension regarding its indeterminate boundaries, and the alienation from Vietnamese people …’.\textsuperscript{32}

Similar to much of the work in the 1990s, the most recent research on Australian media and the Vietnam War has concentrated on the press. Trish Payne has provided a detailed analysis of Australian press reporting of four major policy decisions and a domestic controversy (the decision to send Australian advisers in 1962, the two major escalation decisions that followed—commitment of a battalion in 1965 and a taskforce in 1966, the public controversy in 1968 regarding alleged torture of a female prisoner in Vietnam by an Australian interrogator in 1966, and the 1969 announcement that Australia would withdraw its military commitment from Vietnam) in \textit{War and Words: The Australian Press and the Vietnam War}.\textsuperscript{33} No doubt influenced by the growing preoccupation with military management of the media, she provides a useful summary of slow progress (between 1965 and 1970) by the Department of the Army to a ‘proactive approach to public relations’ with the establishment of a PR Steering Committee. Reminiscent of Knightley’s emphasis on individual Australian war correspondents in the Korean War, Payne considers that the strength of Australian Vietnam War coverage was the output of specialist journalists (including Denis Warner, Bruce Grant, Creighton Burns, Michael Richardson, John Williams, Richard Hughes—and she does not ignore Wilfred Burchett whose copy ‘was ignored by the Australian dailies’ because of the ill-will generated by his reporting during


\textsuperscript{32} Torney-Parlicki, \textit{Somewhere in Asia}, 194-5, 206-7.

the Korean War). She is particularly concerned with the way in which political imperatives overrode military priorities—the federal government was very successful in setting the press agenda in Canberra. Payne agrees with Tiffen that the debate about American coverage cannot simply be transposed to Australia: Australia, as junior ally, could invoke the importance of the American alliance, and, short of questioning US intervention in the first place, if was difficult to question Australian involvement in support of its ally. Payne’s summary comment on the Australian press during the Vietnam War is that ‘it was largely a selectively reflective institution during the years of involvement’.

Paul Ham, in a large volume on Vietnam published in the same year as Payne’s study, is drawn into the oppositional media debate:

Did the media lose the war? The short answer is, no. This tiresome refrain of soldiers and politicians ignored the fact that until 1968 the Australian media were almost unanimous in their support for the war and troops … The media thus largely followed public sentiment … The more severe charge against the press concerns the quality of coverage and the failure to report the biggest stories. Many media outlets simply misrepresented the Vietnam War.

Insights from recent works such as these notwithstanding, for the Vietnam War as for the Korean War, analysis of audiovisual archives and revisiting other media coverage assist in identifying distinctively Australian approaches and assessing the influence of media development on coverage of these ‘hot spots’ in Australia’s Cold War.

Australian Media and the Vietnam War: Audiovisual and Print Sources

In the decade following Australian involvement in Korea, Australian media again reflected specifically Australian concerns when servicemen were sent to Vietnam. However, the foreign policy context had changed; while British and Commonwealth ties still figured prominently in the early 1950s, the American alliance dominated Australian foreign policy in the 1960s. Nonetheless, one should not assume either that interpretations of US media automatically fit the Australian case or that Australian media simply succumbed to American dominance. There is strong evidence from television archives in particular to mount a different argument.

---

34 Ibid., 20-2, 297-8, 301, 308, 316.
As far as the press was concerned, major metropolitan newspapers did report uncritically, accepting the wisdom of Australian policy and taking stories from overseas news agencies. This meant that American operations dominated Vietnam War coverage in Australian newspapers. Editorials in papers such as the *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* depicted Australia in the 1960s as locked into its defence alliances with the US. Other geographically close problem areas (such as Malaysia, under threat from Indonesian confrontation) attracted some attention, but there was little sign of independence from US policies in Asia. One distinctively Australian sentiment was fear that, if Australia did not fulfil commitments alongside her US ally, America might desert Australia in a future time of need; but on the whole, as reiterated in recent work such as that of Payne and Ham, the press largely followed public opinion and did not lead in setting any critical agenda.

There was, however, one exception among national newspapers: *The Australian*, the new national daily first published in July 1964. *The Australian* opposed involvement in Vietnam and saw Prime Minister Menzies’ decision to commit troops as reckless; it emphasised Australian, rather than US, interests in the region and objected to Australia acting merely as a US satellite. As the war went on, this newspaper argued that it was impossible to win what was a civil and revolutionary war politically; and it continued to criticise American and allied involvement as indefensible. In 1971 it considered the withdrawal of Australian troops as merely righting a six-year wrong.36

As for the Korean War, Australian audiovisual archives from the Vietnam War add an interesting dimension, in this case not only revealing distinctively Australian themes but also demonstrating how the new medium of television could be used to engage in sustained critique. Elsewhere I have argued in detail that the new current affairs program, *Four Corners*, first broadcast in 1961, provided such a wealth of critical coverage of Australian involvement in Vietnam that, contrary to earlier interpretations, it is not at all ‘ludicrous to raise the issue’ of oppositional media in Australia during this conflict. Moreover, *Four Corners* took a critical stance on the war in the early and mid-1960s, before US media opposition had developed to any substantial extent.37

---


During the course of the war *Four Corners* included more than 40 segments or entire programs on the Vietnam War, as well as many others on the anti-war movement in Australia and on other Cold War conflicts in South-East Asia. *Four Corners* included many of the well-known images of the war, but the program also broadcast less-known images such as the interrogation of Vietcong prisoners (February 1965) and footage from ‘the other side’ (film taken in Hanoi and other areas of North Vietnam, shown in May 1966 and March 1973). During the course of the war this current affairs program included material on Vietnamese history, politics, society and religion; critical analysis of American and Australian involvement in Vietnam, including the broader policy context, arguments for and against Western intervention, the impact of war on the Vietnamese people, including the children, and specific strategies (such as ‘pacification’ at village level); matters such as Australian autonomy in relation to the US and the likelihood of the small Australian military contribution making any difference. From 1968 programs examined the difficulties of the peace process as well as considering the broader impact of the war in the region (Laos, Cambodia). At home *Four Corners* helped to give voice to growing dissent and the anti-war movement; it posed questions about conscription, and it covered conscientious objection and official responses to dissenters. In the final years the program critically appraised the process of ‘Vietnamisation’ and the problems of ending the war; and by November 1971 it was assessing the war’s costs. Even in 1973, as *Four Corners* continued to give attention to the war, it seemed to be out of step with the low level of public interest in Vietnam. In April 1975 one program, entitled ‘Vietnam in Retrospect’, asked ‘some anguished questions’ about Australian involvement in the war, in particular whether Australia should have been involved in the first place, and if the cost in suffering and human life was in any way worthwhile.38

These programs epitomised the ‘serious and probing’ investigation that was generally absent from the Australian press. They contextualised the war and portrayed its complexity. They questioned assumptions underlying Australian involvement. They refused to treat the Australian-American alliance as sacrosanct. The extent of coverage also negates the traditional view of media neglect of the war during its final years (at least for television current affairs). As I have concluded elsewhere, ‘this current affairs program demonstrated during the Vietnam War how the relatively new medium of television could be used by investigative journalists to fulfil the class “watchdog” role within a democracy, representing diverse viewpoints, questioning and providing sustained critique of long- and short-term implications of foreign policy decisions’. It was able to do so because of the strength of the

---

public service broadcaster ethos and institutional arrangements in Australia at the time. The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) was not ratings-driven, and members of this current affairs team ‘had a reputation for independence and for “deliberately setting out to test the limits”’.

It is worth noting, moreover, that some Australian commercial television programs were not averse to criticising the war, particularly as it affected the individual soldier. Commercial television current affairs included themes of alienation and the soldier-as-stranger in a war in which it was difficult to identify the enemy. Even a government documentary film, *Action in Vietnam*, produced in 1966, although it represented the well-established ‘footsoldier-experience-of-war’ genre, showed the misery and tedium for the soldiers and depicted Australian ‘otherness’ in what was seen as an Asian civil war.

In summary, detailed analysis of audiovisual archives—particularly public service current affairs materials from the 1960s and 1970s—supports the view that there was much more sustained Australian coverage of the Vietnam War than interpretations based on newspaper sources have maintained; that labels such as ‘mediocre’, ‘conservative’, ‘complacent’ are not warranted; and that this Australian coverage was not subservient to American. Moreover, and interestingly given the long-running debate about adversarial US media (especially television) during the Vietnam War, *Four Corners* current affairs programs provided an avenue for adversarial opinion on Australian (and American) involvement even before the period when it is argued that American media played an oppositional role.

**Conclusion**

In the literature on Australian media and the Cold War, and more particularly the attention given to specific conflicts—Korea in the 1950s, Vietnam in the 1960s-70s—analysts have too readily concluded that coverage was insignificant or, if viewed in the context of American paradigms, deficient. Debate over the claim that ‘the media lost the war’ in ‘the first television war’ has dominated the historiography of American media and the Vietnam War. In turn, that debate has influenced research on the media and the earlier Korean War, with Korea seen very much as a precursor of Vietnam; subsequently the historiography has been influenced by the theme of ever-greater military management of the media to escape ‘the Vietnam syndrome’.

40 An example is the ATN7 program, *Seven Days*.
One starting point for this paper was interest in the extent to which historical investigation might reveal how Australian media reflected distinctively Australian perceptions of Cold War events. The print and audiovisual sources indicate that the Korean War remained more newsworthy in Australia than other accounts have implied. Moreover, media coverage of the war reflected specifically Australian concerns not only about Korea but more generally about Australian foreign policy, Australian relations with Asia, and Australia’s place in the world in the 1950s. A case has also been made here to modify others’ conclusions about Australian media and the Vietnam War. While the argument about The Australian newspaper’s critical stance to the war is not new, there is a need to reappraise Australian television’s contribution during the Vietnam War. Television in the 1960s (particularly in the public service broadcasting context) provided an avenue for investigative reporting and for the expression of dissent from mainstream views and government policies via what was in Australia a new visual medium (first broadcasting in 1956). The content of current affairs programs, particularly the ABC’s Four Corners, indicates that there was a sustained critique of Australian and American involvement in Vietnam. Other moving image material supports the argument that Australian war coverage in the 1960s and 1970s deserves scrutiny in its own right.

Beyond the case for a revision of conclusions about Australian media and these particular Cold War military engagements, there is, finally, a question about ways in which evolving military-media historiography might influence research on this topic. That is, do the themes identified in the ‘Introduction’ suggest additional areas for investigation?

The well-established approach that focuses on war correspondents is represented to some extent in the (not extensive) literature on Australian media and these Cold War conflicts, and recent publications on Wilfred Burchett show continuing interest in such an approach. Further research on individuals—including those who contributed to the reputation of current affairs investigative reporting during the Vietnam War (for example, Robert Raymond, Michael Charlton, Frank Bennett, John Penlington, Richard Oxenburgh, Robert Moore)—might be illuminating.

With respect to the media and wartime propaganda, this paper touches on the media as tools of persuasion (more blatant examples include the newsreel commentary during the Korean War), but there is room for a comprehensive study of Australian media and propaganda throughout the Cold War period.

As far as work on military management of the media is concerned, the Korean and Vietnam wars occurred before this became significant and before proactive Australian defence force public relations management. However, research to determine military
reactions to war reporting in Korea and to the Vietnam War coverage described here would be interesting, particularly to shed light on the Department of the Army’s move in the late 1960s to establish a public relations steering committee and as a precursor to more overt public affairs and strategic communication practices in later decades.

Insofar as the impact of technological change is concerned, this paper illustrates the importance of considering war reporting in the context of the history of media institutions and changing media capabilities based on evolving technologies. The Korean War ‘reporting’ offered by newsreels in the entertainment context of the cinema differed considerably from the television current affairs approach to the Vietnam War within a public service broadcasting context.

Linked to technological change are the issues of extent of coverage and quality of war reporting. The period covered here pre-dated expectations about instantaneous, 24-hour, global coverage of conflicts. Australians received news of the Korean War in much the same way they had received news of the Second World War, with delays and sporadically. During the Vietnam War television was just becoming established in Australia as a mass medium and, notwithstanding the argument advanced here about the quality of the investigative journalism of *Four Corners*, a program such as this only reached a minority of the population. It is clear from the analysis in this paper that certain assumptions have been made about what constitutes high quality war reporting. Harking back to Martin Bell’s contemporary view cited above, namely that ‘war reporting as we have known it no longer exists’, I conclude on a more positive note about the quality of Australian media coverage of both the Korean and Vietnam wars, as evidenced by the print and audiovisual sources considered here. There was critical, independent reporting of Australian involvement in each of these conflicts, and the media coverage contributes to understanding of Australian concerns during these decades of the Cold War. In the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s Australian war reporting was ‘alive and well’.

---

42 In Gorman, ‘Television and War’, 145-6, I present data on *Four Corners*’ popularity and ratings, as well as Inglis’ assessment that the program, in its early years, was seen regularly by up to one-tenth of the Australian population and that its audience reach was still good in 1975.

43 Bell, ‘The Death of News’.
On the evening of 26 October 1962 reporters and editors of West Germany’s most important political weekly, Der Spiegel, were putting the finishing touches to their latest magazine. It was a Friday and they had a lot to report on. A momentous week lay behind them, a week that saw the world on the brink of war. On Monday, US President John F. Kennedy had stunned—and frightened—his American television audience: US spy planes had detected Soviet missile sites in Cuba. Consequently, the president had ordered the US Navy to ‘quarantine’ the island to prevent further Soviet shipments. Hours before Der Spiegel’s deadline that weekend, the crisis was nearing its peak. While negotiations with the Soviet Union were under way, the Americans felt it necessary to inform their NATO allies that time was ‘growing shorter’, that the US and its allies had to be prepared to take ‘whatever military measures may be necessary to remove this growing threat to the Hemisphere’.  

Little did the Spiegel journalists rushing around their offices at the magazine’s Hamburg headquarters that Friday evening know that they, too, were about to be embroiled in a major crisis, a crisis that was to bring down West Germany’s minister of defence and that would raise serious doubts about the Federal Republic’s commitment to democratic procedures and values. This paper takes the events at the Spiegel headquarters as a starting point to ask if the government’s heavy-handed move against the magazine were an expression of deep-seated problems in West Germany’s media-military relations in the formative years of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

What became generally known as the ‘Spiegel affair’ began at 9pm on that fateful Friday, when eight Federal German police officers stormed pass the Spiegel’s porter Wilhelm Mügge without explaining their business. They went straight to the sixth floor,
walked into the office of Claus Jacobi, informing the editor-in-chief of his arrest and that the magazine’s offices were to be closed. More police were on their way to seal the building and search for incriminating documents. The charge: high treason and bribery.\(^2\)

The allegations centred on the publication of an article on ‘Fallex 62’, a NATO exercise. Drawing together mostly well-known facts, the *Spiegel*’s defence correspondent, Conrad Ahlers, criticised Bonn’s military strategy that relied on the use of nuclear weapons. In Ahlers’s view the exercise demonstrated that the *Bundeswehr*, West Germany’s army, was not quite fit for purpose.\(^3\) The German Ministry of Defence, headed by Franz-Josef Strauss who had been the target of *Spiegel* reporters for some time, claimed the article was putting West Germany’s defence in the Cold War at risk as it contained many military secrets. It persuaded Federal prosecutors to order the closure of the magazine’s offices and the arrest of several editors, among them Conrad Ahlers, and of Rudolf Augstein, the publisher. What seemed on the surface an extreme case of the permanent tension in liberal democracies between the public’s ‘right to know’ and the military’s need for secrecy soon revealed questionable government practices. In parliament, the minister of interior, Hermann Höcherl, admitted that some of the actions taken by Strauß and his Ministry were ‘a little outside legality’.\(^4\) Strauß soon lost his job, but the legal wrangling continued and Rudolf Augstein remained in prison for 103 days. Germany’s high court eventually dismissed the case against *Der Spiegel* in 1965. The damage had been done, however, as the Nazi-style police action had raised doubts about the ‘new’ Germany—at home and abroad. American newspapers talked of ‘Gestapo methods’.\(^5\) In Britain, the *Economist* expressed the ‘suspicion that the roots of German democracy may still be perilously frail’.\(^6\)

To this day, the ‘Spiegel affair’ is regarded as one of the defining moments in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. It continues to be remembered in mainstream documentaries as the moment when the German public and the West German parliament successfully opposed the government’s blatant attempt at undermining the freedom of


\(^3\) Conrad Ahlers, ‘Bedingt abwehrbereit’, *Der Spiegel* 41/1962 (10 October), 34-53.


\(^5\) It was drawn to Chancellor Adenauer’s attention that except for the Swiss and Portuguese press, international reactions to the affair were very ‘negative’ with US papers talking of ‘Gestapo methods’ and French papers *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde* also evoking parallels to Germany’s past: ‘Compilation of important foreign press comments’ by Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. Attachment to von Hase to Adenauer, 7 November 1962, BAK, B145/4125.

\(^6\) *The Economist*, 3 November 1962, 41.
the press. This paper seeks to determine if the ‘Spiegel affair’ was only the tip of the iceberg. It will use documents held at the German Federal archives in Koblenz and the military archives in Freiburg to suggest that, in matters of defence and security, government officials of the Adenauer era were happy to employ methods that smacked more of Germany’s authoritarian past than the ‘new’ Germany. While disrespect for press freedom seemed widespread, it will be argued that many journalists as well as publishers were not simply innocent victims of government manipulation; they were willing to either turn a blind eye or support these practices.

The paper is divided into four parts. To begin with, it will be necessary to explain the rather delicate position of the West German military from its inception in 1955. An exploration of media-military relations in this era needs to take the army’s World War II legacy into account, as well as the new Cold War context, particularly the division of Germany into East and West. Against this background, three case studies of hitherto unexplored areas of covert government attempts to influence public opinion through the media will be explored. These cases—direct government payments to an independent press service to report on military affairs, covert distribution of pro-Bundeswehr articles in Germany’s provincial press and the campaign to counter East Berlin’s ‘defamation’ of one the FRG’s highest-ranking generals, Hans Speidel—will demonstrate a willingness to influence and manipulate the public with little or no respect for democratic norms and values.

The ‘new Wehrmacht’

On 12 November 1955, former Wehrmacht officers and generals gathered in an indoor riding arena in Bonn. It was the 200th birthday of Gerhard von Scharnhorst, the reformer who had given the Prussian military its ‘modern’ look in the wake of the defeat by Napoleon’s armies. It was also the day the new armed forces of the Federal Republic of Germany were born. While ‘reform’ was one of the messages this date symbolised, it also stood for the continuity of Prussian military tradition. In fact, the tension between a new, reformed democratic military in a democratic state and two centuries of highly cherished Prussian military tradition characterised the first decade of the new West German armed forces.

---


The ceremony in November 1955, however, made clear that the ‘traditionalists’ had initially the upper hand. The official photo taken at the event depicts the founding fathers, all former Wehrmacht generals, under the Prussian iron cross. This was to be the new ‘old’ symbol of the armed forces, which did not have a name at the time. Talk was simply of a ‘new Wehrmacht’. In order to draw on appropriate expertise, the new military leadership had to be recruited from the old officer corps. Importantly, however, West German military reformers around Count Wolf von Baudissin, who had opposed the adoption of the Prussian iron cross for the new army, were sidelined. While German lawmakers instituted a modern, democratic framework for the new ‘parliamentary army’, the reality looked different. West Germany’s ‘new’ military elite valued its Prussian military tradition. The World War II generals had little affinity for the democratic institutions of the Federal Republic. It could therefore come as little surprise that the generals had failed to invite representatives of parliament to the founding ceremony.9

The Bundeswehr was a child of the Cold War. Only weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer suggested that West Germany could play an important role in Western military defence against the Soviet bloc. Adenauer believed that West Germany would benefit from a military contribution to NATO. It would cement the Federal Republic’s integration into the Western bloc and it would simultaneously pave the way for regaining sovereignty, the two corner-stones of Adenauer’s foreign policy.10

There is no room here for a detailed discussion of the domestic and international debates surrounding West Germany’s rearmament in the early 1950s. For our purposes it suffices to point to three major aspects. First, Adenauer’s rearmament plans found little support among the citizens of West Germany. After the horrors of World War II, pacifism was wide-spread. In 1949, only a year before Adenauer’s suggestion to build up military forces, the Christian Socialists—the party of Franz-Josef Strauß—had won the election in Bavaria with the slogan ‘The hand should wither that once again takes up a rifle’.11 While peace activism was still nascent in the early days of the FRG,12 opinion polls demonstrated the aversion of the majority of West Germans to the formation of a new army. In 1950, 52 per cent opposed the idea, only 33 per cent were in favour.13 Had

9 Bald, Die Bundeswehr, 7-17.
there been a referendum on the issue in 1955, the polls suggest that Adenauer’s plans would have been defeated.\textsuperscript{14}

Second, the new political elites in West Germany were deeply divided on rearmament. Gustav Heinemann, Adenauer’s minister of the interior, resigned in protest in 1950 and formed the Emergency Association for Peace in Europe (\textit{Notgemeinschaft für den Frieden}). The major opposition party, the Social Democrats (SPD), had campaigned as the ‘party of peace’ since 1946. The SPD vehemently opposed rearmament. Apart from its pacifism, the SPD feared that a West German military contribution to the Western alliance would make reunification of the divided Germany impossible. The SPD continued its anti-\textit{Bundeswehr} policy until 1960, when it finally accepted that the new German armed forces were there to stay.\textsuperscript{15}

Third, in his effort to push through West German rearmament, Chancellor Adenauer forged a close alliance with former \textit{Wehrmacht} generals Hermann Foertsch, Adolf Heusinger and Hans Speidel. Soon after Adenauer had suggested a military contribution in 1950, Foertsch and Heusinger convened a meeting of former \textit{Wehrmacht} officers and generals at Himmerod Abbey, a monastery in Rhineland-Palatinate. The outcome was the so-called \textit{Himmeroder Denkschrift}, a paper that became ‘the blueprint for Germany’s contribution to the defence of Western Europe’.\textsuperscript{16} Himmerod showed that the generals around Foertsch had in mind armed forces that very much looked like the \textit{Wehrmacht}, a heavily mechanised force, relying on tanks and equipped for battles in the Eastern steppe. Conveniently, the new West German army would face the same enemy as the \textit{Wehrmacht} had, so the generals planned for the kind of war they had fought against the Soviet Union in the 1940s. More importantly, the opening paragraphs of the Himmerod paper called for the rehabilitation of the honour of ‘the German soldier’ and for the release of members of the \textit{Wehrmacht} still in Allied prisons. Moreover, it urged that German public opinion had to be influenced in such a way as to strengthen the willingness of West Germans to take up arms and defend themselves. Count Baudissin, the reformer, took part in the meeting but was outnumbered by traditionalists. He barely succeeded in getting even a token commitment to democratic values. Only when he threatened

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 438.


not to sign the Himmoroder paper did the other generals agree to insert a few sentences stating that the members of the new armed forces had to believe in democratic values and support democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{17}

Adenauer sanctioned the paper. He established the ‘Office Blank’ in 1951, the predecessor of the Ministry of Defence, to put the plans into practice. The ‘office’ was not subject to the scrutiny of parliament. It soon had more than 700 employees and was far bigger than most ministries.\textsuperscript{18}

In establishing the new army, Adenauer chose to rely on former \textit{Wehrmacht} generals Heusinger and Speidel who tried to minimise the influence of reformist elements in the military.\textsuperscript{19} The Adenauer government sought to capitalise on public fears and suspicions of the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{20} The anti-communism of many Germans had its roots in the legacy of Nazi ideology,\textsuperscript{21} and certainly explained the eagerness of former \textit{Wehrmacht} generals to resurrect the German armed forces. However, the reliance on military leaders tainted by their role in Nazi Germany made the \textit{Bundeswehr} vulnerable to criticism—not only by a sceptical domestic public, but, more importantly, by communist East Germany in its effort to undermine the FRG’s integration in the Western alliance. Military-media relations in the early years of the Bundeswehr have to be seen in this context—and also against the background of the Himmorod paper of 1950, which had called for public information campaigns to strengthen the population’s willingness to fight.

\textbf{West German post-war media}

In the immediate post-war era, the Western allies decided to dissolve German newspapers. German media had become part of the Nazi propaganda machine and nothing short of a new beginning was deemed sufficient. Consequently, former publishers were not allowed back into the business. Instead the allies issued newspaper licences only to ‘new’ publishers.\textsuperscript{22} This policy proved fairly successful in major towns and cities where larger newspapers were based. The German media landscape, however, had always been dominated by smaller newspapers—one of the reasons why back in 1933 Nazi authorities had found it necessary to gain control of the provincial press before moving

\begin{footnotes}
\begin{footnote}Bald, \textit{Die Bundeswehr}, 28-33.\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}Ibid., 42.\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}Alaric Searle, \textit{Wehrmacht Generals, West German Society, and the Debate on Rearmament, 1949-1959} (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 281-2.\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}Oppenheimer, ‘West German Pacifism’, 355.\end{footnote}
\begin{footnote}Kurt Koszyk, \textit{Pressepolitik für Deutsche 1945-1949} (Berlin: Colloquium, 1986).\end{footnote}
\end{footnotes}
against nationwide publications. Although the allies applied the same licensing criteria to these small papers, the licensing policy came to an end in 1949. The following year ‘old’ publishers moved back into the market and founded 750 new, mainly provincial, newspapers. It also soon proved impractical to prevent journalists who had worked during the Nazi period from re-entering their profession. There were simply not enough ‘untainted’ journalists to do the job. While the licensing policy had democratised large parts of West Germany’s media landscape, remnants of questionable publishers and journalists remained in the news business and began to reassert themselves in the 1950s, mainly in provincial newspapers.

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer dominated the first post-war West German government and he concentrated a lot of power in his Chancellery. This was not only true for defence matters and foreign affairs, but also for information policy. The FRG’s Press and Information Office—known as Bundespresseamt (BPA)—controlled the government’s relations with the media and the German public. The BPA was instrumental in what some termed Adenauer’s ‘rearmament propaganda’ in the early 1950s. In 1952 the BPA formed its own Department for Questions of Defence, which became in 1954 the considerably larger Department of Public Relations in Defence Matters. While it was known that the BPA covertly funded, at least partly, several defence magazines like Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau, Europäische Wehrkorrespondenz, Der Frontsoldat erzählt and Deutsche Soldaten-Zeitung, its routine involvement in promoting defence issues in West German media has remained obscure.

The following case studies will shed light on this carefully hidden part of the BPA’s activity and demonstrate the long-term and sustained covert information policy on behalf of the FRG government, the Ministry of Defence and its armed forces, the Bundeswehr.

Case 1: DIMITAG—Press service for medium-sized newspapers

DIMITAG was an association of more than one hundred German provincial newspapers that provided its members—and subscribers—with news stories and

---

28 According to the Association of German Newspaper Publishers (BDZV), DIMITAG (Dienst Mittlerer Tageszeitungen) was founded by Erich Wagner in 1938 and then reorganised after 1945. Wagner later founded several subsidiary services, which were later merged into Standortpresse. DIMITAG/Standortpresse ceased to exist in 1999. Its business was taken over by Lokalpresse Service GmbH, Berlin. BDZV intern, 16 December 1999, http://www.bdzv.de/bdzv_intern+M501f12a9876.html, accessed 28 September 2008.
background information. In the early 1960s, DIMITAG claimed that it reached more than two million readers through 150 newspapers that relied on its various services.\textsuperscript{29} Syndicated material from news wires and press services formed the basis for the survival of Germany's provincial newspapers as the cost of covering national and international news independently was prohibitive.

In 1958 DIMITAG began to distribute a new press service on defence matters called \textit{Wehrpresse-Dienst}. The editor of the service, Egbert Thomer, contacted the BPA in October 1958 to draw attention to the new service and to explore the possibility of cooperation.\textsuperscript{30} The Ministry of Defence also became involved and informed the BPA that it would be interested in supporting DIMITAG financially in its new endeavour.\textsuperscript{31}

The BPA had plenty of money to do this. The Adenauer government had set up a secret fund, in the federal budget referred to as \textit{Titel 04-03-309}, to promote its defence policy and convince its citizens to support the \textit{Bundeswehr}. Between 1957 and 1963, more than 63 million Deutschmarks (DM) were available. The BPA funded publications, films, conferences, visits of foreign journalists as well as public relations campaigns on behalf of the \textit{Bundeswehr}.\textsuperscript{32} The lion's share of these funds was spent on publications—books, pamphlets, magazines, brochures and also press services like DIMITAG's new defence service.\textsuperscript{33} Technically the BPA was in complete control of the funds, but it readily agreed to liaise with the Ministry of Defence in deciding which projects to support.\textsuperscript{34}

Although neither parliament nor the public were informed of exactly how the money under \textit{Titel 04-03-309} was spent,\textsuperscript{35} it is apparent that press services in Bonn and elsewhere in West Germany were aware of the BPA's spending power. In 1958 DIMITAG showed a clear desire to reach into the BPA's large pockets.

Following several informal meetings, DIMITAG asked the BPA to fund its \textit{Wehrpresse-Dienst} in early 1959. While some in the relevant BPA defence department felt that the federal press office should not be 'used to fund DIMITAG's expansion',\textsuperscript{36} the BPA quickly agreed to sign a three month contract with \textit{Presseplan}, a subsidiary of DIMITAG. The contract stipulated that \textit{Presseplan} would make available 25 reports, features, editorials and interviews on defence matters to DIMITAG's members and subscribers per month.

\textsuperscript{29} DIMITAG letter to the editor, \textit{Der Spiegel}, 50/1963 (11 December), 14-15.  
\textsuperscript{30} Thomer to Küffner, 4 October 1958, B145/1718, BAK.  
\textsuperscript{31} Küffner minute, 14 March 1959, B145/1564, BAK.  
\textsuperscript{32} ‘Öffentlichkeitsarbeit in Verteidigungsfragen’, attachment to Küffner to Glaesser, 1 July 1963, B145/3991, BAK.  
\textsuperscript{33} Küffner to Colonel Drews, 2 December 1957, B145/816, BAK.  
\textsuperscript{34} Drews to Küffner, 29 April 1959, B145/816, BAK.  
\textsuperscript{36} BPA minute, initialed PW, 16 March 1959, B145/1564, BAK.
The BPA would pay DM 3750 for the articles and an additional DM 1750\(^{37}\) to cover the costs of one secretary and one editor—in this case Egbert Thomer who had contacted the BPA a couple of months earlier.\(^{38}\) Despite some misgivings about the quality of the service provided, the BPA found that funding the DIMITAG project was in line with the desired information policy on defence matters and it therefore regularly renewed the contract until 1966.\(^{39}\)

What did the BPA get for its money? To justify the monthly payment from the BPA, DIMITAG-\textit{Presseplan} produced long lists that detailed its articles on defence matters. As the number of articles listed exceeded the 25 stipulated in the contract, it was difficult to discern what exactly the BPA had paid for. In November 1963, for example, DIMITAG claimed to have distributed 61 articles on defence matters. They ranged from general political stories on US global policy after President Kennedy’s death (26 November 1963) to features about East German border guards (12 November 1963). Information on which stories were taken up by provincial newspapers was patchy, but demonstrated that articles on spies and East Germany were fairly popular. Nevertheless, even ‘successful’ articles that were printed in ten or more provincial newspapers reached only about 100,000 readers.\(^{40}\)

There is no evidence in the surviving documents that the BPA directly influenced DIMITAG’s defence reporting. It never expressed dissatisfaction with a particular article or voiced complaints, at least not in writing. By 1965, however, the BPA became increasingly unhappy. Not only did it find DIMITAG’s coverage of the recent federal election too ‘non-committal’, questions were also asked about the limited reach of the service.\(^{41}\)

For the BPA the advantage of subsidising an independent news service’s defence coverage was offset by the lack of influence. The government’s money might have increased the number of defence stories DIMITAG produced, thereby putting defence matters on the agenda, but the BPA could not shape the message itself. And this was what the BPA liked to do: when the officials at the BPA knew that their secret funds formed the main revenue of a press service, they did not shy away from giving direct instructions. This was the case with \textit{Wehrpolitische Informationen} published by Lothar Lohrisch. The BPA told

\begin{itemize}
  \item \(^{38}\) Minute by Marcks, 28 April 1958; Thomer to Küffner, 8 May 1959, B145/1564, BAK.
  \item \(^{39}\) Gellenthin to Küffner, 23 June 1959; Minute by Küffner, 15 February 1960; Minute by Küffner, 16 March 1966, ibid.
  \item \(^{40}\) \textit{Presseplan} to Marcks, 10 March 1964, B145/4102, BAK.
  \item \(^{41}\) Minute by Küffner, 29 October 1965, B145/4103, BAK.
\end{itemize}
Lohrisch in 1959, for example, to report prominently on a NATO event—and Lohrisch complied. The Ministry of Defence found this direct control useful—particularly in its covert psychological warfare campaigns, as we will see later. However, the Ministry of Defence warned that care had to be taken that Wehrpolitische Informationen continued to appear ‘neutral’ to prevent its customers, particularly newspapers, from suspecting that the government was funding it. In the end, it became clear that the BPA preferred to have direct control. In 1966 they redirected their funds from DIMITAG-Presseplan to Lohrisch’s Wehrpolitische Informationen. In effect, they merged the two projects as Lohrisch was forced to use the additional money to employ Egbert Thomer, formerly DIMITAG’s defence editor. The difference was that the service was completely at the BPA’s mercy.

The DIMITAG case showed that an independent press service was keen to secure funding from the BPA. It was more than happy that the BPA paid for some of its staff. This eagerness certainly demonstrates business acumen, but it also shows a lack of journalistic integrity. There is no evidence of direct manipulation of DIMITAG defence stories by the BPA, it is true, but the DIMITAG’s defence coverage never went against the government line. What the BPA did not like in the end was that DIMITAG’s articles on defence failed to make it into the targeted newspapers in sufficient numbers. Moreover, the BPA had no direct control over the information DIMITAG distributed. This was very different in the case we turn to in the following section.

**Case 2: Matrices for provincial newspapers**

In 1829 French inventor Claude Genoux patented a technique that was to revolutionise printing. Genoux used paper pulp (papier-mâché) to create an exact impression of type. These matrices—or molds—could then be used to duplicate articles and eventually whole pages. Matrices were light, easy to ship and type could be cast from them locally. This method facilitated the distribution of syndicated material. From the late 19th century onwards, matrices were widely used in the US, particularly by rural papers. Here publishers usually called them boilerplates. The term soon stood for unoriginal writing as most of the syndicated material was of low quality or badly disguised advertising. In 1946, Time magazine found that the Western Newspaper Union, the world’s biggest newspaper

---

42 Lohrisch to Küffner, 5 April 1960; Marcks to Lohrisch, 29 May 1959; Trentzsch to Küffner, 1 October 1961, B146/1714, BAK.
43 Marcks to Lohrisch, 29 May 1959, ibid.
44 Contract between BPA and Lothar Lohrisch, 3 June 1966; Küffner to Thomer, 13 May 1966, B145/3674, BAK.
45 Joachim-Felix Leonhard et al. (eds), Medienwissenschaft: Ein Handbuch Zur Entwicklung Der Medien Und Kommunikationsformen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 452.
syndicate at the time, was ‘most responsible for the creeping, canned mediocrity that is overtaking a good many of the nation’s rural papers’.\(^{46}\)

Local German papers had also learned to rely heavily on syndicated material. Companies that provided matrices (\textit{Materndienste}) became particularly influential in the late 1920s. Ultra-conservative publisher Alfred Hugenberg dominated the business. By 1933 more than 1000 German newspapers cast their type from Hugenberg matrices.\(^{47}\)

In this way, articles reflecting his nationalistic and anti-democratic views were printed all over Germany. After 1945, the allies tried to prevent the emergence of a similar monopoly by licensing only newspapers that were sufficiently large to survive without relying on syndicated matrices.\(^{48}\)

In its effort to promote West German defence policy and the image of the \textit{Bundeswehr}, the BPA found the distribution of ready-made newspaper pages in the form of matrices an ‘excellent method of public relations’.\(^{49}\) There were three major advantages. First, the BPA had complete control of the contents of the matrices. Second, it was easy to conceal from the newspapers and their readers that the West German government was the source of the information provided. Third, with the end of the licensing regime in 1949, many small newspapers that entered the market needed syndicated material to be economically viable. Provincial papers saw matrices as a means to boost the number of pages of their papers for little cost.

The BPA worked with a private company, \textit{Graberg & Görg}, in the 1950s and 1960s to distribute newspaper pages on the \textit{Bundeswehr} and defence-related issues. The content was provided by the BPA, \textit{Graberg & Görg} was responsible for designing the page and for sending the matrices to its clients. For this service, \textit{Graberg & Görg} charged between DM 900 and DM 3600, depending on the number of matrices circulated. \textit{Graberg & Görg}'s letterhead boasted its ‘independence’ and it is therefore not surprising that the company preferred not to enter into direct contractual relations with the BPA. Instead, it made use of ‘partners’, in this case the press service \textit{Rhein-Main Pressedienst} and printing company Oertzen KG, which would bill the BPA.\(^{50}\)

The federal press office struggled to find suitable authors for their matrices. Although the BPA paid well,\(^ {51}\) authors with the relevant expertise, solid writing skills and a willingness to undertake ‘work of this kind’\(^ {52}\) were rare. Sometimes members of the BPA’s press department would undertake the task. This, however, was not part of their job.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[49] Minute by Hilgers, 26 November 1965, B145/3647, BAK.
\item[50] Reichertz to Röttcher, 10 April 1964, ibid.
\item[51] DM 300, for authoring one newspaper page, ibid.
\item[52] Minute by Hilgers, 31 May 1965, ibid.
\end{footnotes}
description. As the BPA refused to pay its own employees an additional fee for authoring this material, the BPA usually hired freelancers.\textsuperscript{53}

Many of the newspaper pages distributed by \textit{Graberg & Görg} were authored by Hellmut Hermann Führing.\textsuperscript{54} Born in 1910, Führing served in World War II and moved up to the rank of colonel.\textsuperscript{55} While this might have given him the necessary expertise, his political credentials seem dubious. In 1939 he published a book on Hitler’s Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War.\textsuperscript{56} The books he co-authored after the war showed that he was a strident anti-communist who did not tire to warn of the military dangers the Soviet Union posed. Führing also admired German rocket scientists who had worked in the Nazi period.\textsuperscript{57} His post-war books were published by \textit{Athenäum Verlag}, whose owners had run the \textit{Junker und Dünnaht Verlag} in Nazi Germany that had published, among other political books, the official history of the SS.\textsuperscript{58} While the BPA did not rely on Führing exclusively,\textsuperscript{59} the choice of hiring Führing as a freelance author suggests that the BPA tapped into an ultra-conservative network that had played a significant role in Nazi Germany and that was now eager to promote anti-communism.

What were the messages the BPA wanted readers of provincial newspapers to receive through the sponsored matrices? Each ready-made page usually dealt with a single topic or one event. In most cases they focused narrowly on the \textit{Bundeswehr} and lives of ‘average’ German conscripts.\textsuperscript{60} One major theme was to illustrate the break with German military tradition by demonstrating that the West German army rated ‘character’ higher than

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} Minute by Hilgers, 26 November 1965, ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{54} The by-lines were either ‘H.H. Führing auf der Erk’ or ‘Auf der Erk’. Führing lived on a street called ‘Auf der Erk’ (see BW2/5112, Bundesarchiv—Militärarchiv, Freiburg (hereafter BAMA)).
\item \textsuperscript{56} H. H. Führing, \textit{Wir funken für Franco—einer von der Legion Condor erzählt} (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1939).
\item \textsuperscript{59} The newspaper page ‘Im Raketenempo durch die USA’ of 1 July 1958 (B145/3647, BAK) was authored by Olaf von Wrangel whose father had been prosecuted by the Nazis and who later pursued a distinguished career in journalism and politics. See his entry in \textit{Munzinger Archiv}.
\item \textsuperscript{60} ‘Bundeswehr im Aufbau’, 15 March 1957; ‘Was steckt hinter der Uniform’, 19 March 1958; ‘Umsorgt wie bei Muttern’, 18 November 1960; ‘Rekruten fahren in die Garnison’, 9 January 1961; all in B145/3647, BAK.
\end{itemize}
'drill'. ‘The Bundeswehr can start from scratch’, one article claimed. ‘10 years lie between the downfall of the old Wehrmacht [and the foundation of the Bundeswehr], but there are no ideological or political bridges between then and now.’

Reports on conscripts were complemented by stories about reservists and the new educational support the Bundeswehr had to offer. ‘Soldier today—sought after skilled worker tomorrow’, read one headline, epitomising the spirit of a modern military that strove to equip young German men with skills that were important for the army but also useful in later civilian life. In short, the Bundeswehr was portrayed as an institution that produced ‘good civilians’—it was part of the new democratic German society. Cooperation with NATO allies was another major theme. This possibly contributed to the fact that by 1960 most Germans knew that Bundeswehr soldiers were trained abroad.

These portrayals were in line with the political determination to build a new, parliamentary army, true to the spirit of Innere Führung. If one defines Innere Führung as ‘integrating the armed forces as a conscription army, a parliamentary army, and an alliance army into the political system’, then the contents of most matrices reflected this. One might therefore conclude that while the way the BPA published the material was questionable, many messages promoted democratic and parliamentary values.

Yet not all of the government-sponsored matrices communicated a clean break with the Wehrmacht and promoted the image of a modern army that cared for its conscripts and equipped them with valuable skills for civilian life. Rather, the tone of many stories reflected the tension between ‘new beginning’ and German military tradition that bedevilled the Bundeswehr in its formative year. In 1956, for example, the BPA sponsored the publishing of unreflected reminiscences of a World War II pilot who was one of the first new members of the West German Luftwaffe. He proudly talked of his colleagues, all World War II veterans, who had fought all over Europe and had been highly decorated. To illustrate this, the article included a photo of the first group captain of the first fighter squadron of the new Luftwaffe, Major Gerhard Blankenhorn. He had flown ‘1104 missions in the war’, the article boasted, ‘and was awarded the Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross with Oakleaves and Swords’.

---

63 In November 1960, a survey showed that 94 per cent of German men knew that Bundeswehr soldiers were trained in France: Noelle & Neumann (eds), The Germans, 452.
64 McGregor, ‘The Role of Innere Führung’.
65 ‘Bei den Fliegern der deutschen Bundeswehr’, 28 November 1956, B145/3647, BAK
Also in 1956, the BPA’s matrices promoted Chancellor Adenauer’s nuclear policy. In quick succession in May and June that year, they first downplayed the danger of nuclear weapons, particularly the hydrogen bomb, and then went on to praise the possibilities that nuclear power plants offered future generations.\footnote{66} From 1958, the task of countering nuclear fear or even ‘panic’ among West Germans was taken on by the Bundeswehr’s psychological warfare unit.\footnote{67}

Heroism and adventure was another traditional theme. One example was a report by Hermann Führing about the training of Special Forces. The individual soldiers were trained to develop ‘great courage’ for every situation. A photo depicting some soldiers around a camp fire romanticised army life. ‘With only basic equipment soldiers are frying fish—it tastes excellent’, read the caption.\footnote{68} Führing also authored an article that countered press criticism of the Bundeswehr’s alleged secrecy regarding its training of frogmen. Not only had the Bundeswehr nothing to hide, Führing claimed, but soldiers in these companies led exciting lives, like ‘Olympic sportsmen’.\footnote{69}

The BPA’s use of matrices to get unattributed government material published in provincial newspapers was systematic and widespread. It demonstrated a lack of respect for the role of journalists in a liberal democracy and it also displayed suspicions about the German people. Aware of this dubious practice, the BPA justified its actions as vital for the national survival of the FRG in the Cold War. Hanns Küffner of the BPA explained in a minute he wrote in preparation for a meeting with a member of parliament from the Social Democrats, who still opposed the very idea of a West German army: ‘The charge that Titel 309 is used to fund party-political propaganda is somewhat justified, as in the Federal Republic it proves impossible what seems natural in any other Western European state: that there is bi-partisan support for issues of national defence.’\footnote{70}

The topics covered by matrices revealed that the BPA walked a fine line between promoting ‘new’ values and evoking memories of German military tradition. Some articles were clearly written in the ‘old’ spirit, which is no real surprise as the BPA employed freelance authors with a dubious background in Nazi Germany.

However, many reports praised the norms and values of Innere Führung. While this shows on the one hand a recognition of the primacy of the political, it also made clear that in terms of public relations a modern army that cared for its soldiers and was integrated in a democratic society was easier to ‘sell’ to a largely pacifist German public. There is no indication that the editors of small newspapers had any idea of the origin of the material

\footnote{67} Briefing paper for Drews for meeting with minister of defence, 10 July 1958, BW2/20206, BAMA.
\footnote{68} ‘Kein Mangel an Freiwilligen trotz 80 Stunden Woche’, 6 August 1964, B145/3647, BAK.
\footnote{69} ‘Sie leben wie Olympia Kandidaten’, 23 April 1960, ibid.
\footnote{70} Minute by Küffner, 3 November 1958, B145/816, BAK.
they were printing. As many provincial papers were politically conservative, they might have agreed with the more traditional line of many articles. However, the mere fact that the BPA had difficulties finding good authors suggests that the large majority of the journalists in Germany had moved on from the days of state-controlled government propaganda—they certainly did not want to produce it.

**Case 3: Countering the Communist campaign against General Speidel**

The BPA coordinated the spending of the secret funds under *Titel 04-03-309* with the Ministry of Defence. In fact, the main point of contact was the Ministry’s psychological warfare unit *PSK im Frieden* (Psychological Warfare in Peace Time). This unit, led by Major Dr Karl-Christian Trentzsch, was tasked to fight ‘aggressive world communism’ by unconventional means. At the border to communist East Germany, it tried to undermine the morale of the GDR military. At home, the unit was to counter communist subversion ‘from abroad and the German underground’ that threatened the will of the West German people to defend their country.

The West German public was largely unaware of the existence of the psychological warfare unit. What was known at the time was the unit’s activity at the border where it was sending leaflets to the GDR by balloon. The press, more amused than concerned, accordingly dubbed Major Trentzsch and his men ‘balloon warriors’. So far, the psychological warfare unit has received scant scholarly attention and the few existing studies focus on the activities at the border, the institutional organisation of the unit or its covert funding of educational societies in West Germany. Its other activities, including the manipulation of the West German media to achieve its aims, have not been explored.

Bonn’s psychological warriors were particularly interested in countering East German defamation—the GDR preferred to call them ‘revelation’—campaigns against leading *Bundeswehr* Generals. One of these campaigns was directed against Hans Speidel, the

---

72 Minute for Drews for meeting with Minister of Defence, 10 July 1958, BW2/20206, BAMA.
73 *Der Spiegel* 22/1965 (25 May), 47-50.
FRG’s high-profile general who was Commander of NATO Land Forces Central Europe (LANDCENT). The campaign culminated in 1958/59 with the release of a documentary entitled *Unternehmen Teutonenschwert* (Operation Teutonic Sword), allegedly the German secret service’s code word for the assassination of the Yugoslav King Alexander I and the French foreign minister Louis Barthou in Marseille in September 1934. The film argued that Speidel, then German assistant military attaché in Paris, was implicated in the plot. It also claimed that Speidel was responsible for the execution and deportation of communists and Jews in occupied France. The GDR’s leading documentary film makers Annelie and Andrew Thorndike quoted documents and witnesses to make their case. To establish the link between then and now, they constantly switched between archival footage from the 1930s and 1940s and contemporary pictures of Speidel.  

While recent historical research and French President Charles de Gaulle’s later pressure to remove Speidel from NATO suggest that Speidel’s role in occupied France would have been the stronger case, the Thorndikes devoted most of their attention to the assassination of the Yugoslav king. In turn, the West German psychological warfare unit focused on the same case to prove that the allegations were false. Major Trentsch and his men decided on a two-pronged approach. On the one hand, they concentrated on the production of material that documented what had ‘really happened’. On the other, they tried to influence media reporting on the film as best they could. All measures were aimed at the West German population, but also at the publics of the FRG’s NATO allies. In order to debunk the Thorndikes’ claim, the psychological warfare unit sponsored two books. One was mainly factual, the other was more polemic, implicating the Soviet Union’s involvement in the assassination. Both books were translated into English, French and Spanish and sent to all diplomatic missions of the FRG. The psychological warfare unit also produced a critical study of the documents used by the Thorndikes, pointing out why the evidence seemed fabricated. The aim was to reach journalists and

---

76 A detailed scene by scene description of the documentary is available as part of the Fritz Bauer Institute’s cinematography of the holocaust, [http://www.cine-holocaust.de/cgi-bin/gdq?dfw00fbw001290.gd](http://www.cine-holocaust.de/cgi-bin/gdq?dfw00fbw001290.gd), accessed 29 September 2008.


80 Themistokles Papasissis (pseudonym), *Der König muß sterben* (Berlin: Heinrich Bär Verlag, n.d. [1959]). It is worth noting that decades later both books were cited in an academic article—among other works—as proof that historians have refuted allegations that Germany was behind the assassinations. See Bennett Kovrig, ‘Mediation by Obfuscation: The Resolution of the Marseille Crisis, October 1934 to May 1935’, *The Historical Journal* 19: 1 (1976), 219.
other ‘gatekeepers’ who would then spread the message. This method of approaching journalists, Major Trentzsch stressed in a personal letter to Speidel, had proved successful in the United Kingdom, where the premiere of the documentary went unreported.\(^{81}\) Subsequently, however, Speidel gained a court order that prevented the screening of the documentary in Britain. The following libel case against the British distributor inevitably caused publicity,\(^{82}\) but Major Trentzsch told Speidel that he had acted swiftly. With the help of a British anti-communist organisation he distributed material to support Speidel’s case in the United Kingdom. More importantly, back home he also managed to place articles in German newspapers.\(^{83}\) As we have seen, the psychological warriors in Bonn found the use of apparently independent press services and matrices very useful. But its willingness to influence media reporting went further. Trentzsch did not provide any details as to where his articles were published. There is, however, evidence that the psychological warfare unit had a network of contacts, which enabled them to place articles that seemed to have been written by newspaper staff, but were penned by the psychological warfare unit or one of its freelancers.\(^{84}\)

In its effort to counter aggressive communist propaganda, the psychological warfare unit concentrated on the audiences at home and in allied countries. The covert methods explored in the first two cases were used, but in addition, the psychological warfare unit also managed to infiltrate larger newspapers to place articles in the editorial section. Abroad, ‘friendly’ non-governmental organisations distributed the counter-propaganda material. The target was newspaper editors and politicians—those who were seen as the gatekeeper of the public sphere.

**Conclusion**

Historian Dirk Schindelbeck observes in his study of the Ministry of Defence’s ‘balloon warriors’ that West Germans have no recollection of their government’s propaganda activities.\(^{85}\) They certainly did not see themselves as the target of government-sponsored information policy. Consequently, West German newspaper readers did not look at

---

\(^{81}\) Trentzsch to Speidel, 5 March 1959, BW2/4444, BAMA.

\(^{82}\) The court case ended three years later at the British High Court in a compromise: Speidel dropped his demand for damages. In return the film distributor apologised for screening a documentary that had made accusations against Speidel without any factual basis and agreed to hand over the copies of the film. Minute by Bruneß, 27 June 1962, BW2/4444, BAMA. The film was also shown in other countries, among them Australia: ‘Speidel Film in Canberra’, *Der Morgen* (East Berlin), 28 October 1959.

\(^{83}\) Trentzsch to Speidel, 5 March 1959, BW2/4444, BAMA.

\(^{84}\) An article countering claims that West Germans were fighting in the Vietnam War was placed in *Kölische Rundschau*, 9 September 1965, BW2/5112, BAMA.

\(^{85}\) Schindelbeck, ‘Propaganda mit Gummiballons’, 213.
stories in the editorial pages with the same scepticism that populations in dictatorial countries often develop. This was the BPA’s and the psychological warfare unit’s great asset. It was essential that the reader believed to get information from an independent source. The fact that Adenauer authorised the secret funding of the projects legitimised the undertaking in the eyes of the officials involved. The extra-parliamentarian alliance the Chancellor had forged with old military elites in the early 1950s found its expression in the Defence Ministry’s views of how to use the media. Market forces and transparent reporting were not trusted to achieve the vital aim of strengthening morale. In Cold War Europe, deterrence was everything and a lacklustre, war-weary public was deemed a dangerous weakness.

In promoting defence related issues, encouraging anti-communism and fear of the Soviet Union, the government’s press office and the Ministry of Defence appeared to have essentially the same view as totalitarian regimes: a ‘free’ press could not be trusted to reflect the security needs of the nation. Enemy propaganda, on the other hand, could easily sway public opinion. Therefore, the audience had to be ‘educated’, if not directed. If this could not be done directly, ‘gate keepers’ had to be used and ‘fed’ with the right information.

There might be a tendency to be overly-dramatic and overly-critical of the West German government given Germany’s Nazi past. The British government pursued a secret information policy in the Cold War through the Information Research Department, and while the focus was on foreign information, British journalists were also on the IRD’s distribution lists. Similarly, the United States Information Agency (USIA) concluded that its information material abroad was useless if it was attributed to the US. Moreover, reeducation (later termed ‘reorientation’) was an important part of denazification in West Germany and government bodies like the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (Federal Centre for Political Education) played a crucial part in this undertaking and ultimately a positive role. To some extent the BPA’s activities could be regarded as an attempt at educating West Germans about their new armed forces. However, not only did some of the messages the BPA promoted smack of German militarism, the methods employed showed that ‘reeducation’ could quickly become ‘manipulation’.

---

87 Memorandum from the Director of the USIA (Murrow) to all US Information Agency Media Heads, 24 April 1962, FRUS, 1961-1963, vol. XXV, document 135.
Similarly, one could argue that the information the BPA provided in its matrices, for example, correctly reflected the state of the *Bundeswehr*. The legislative framework of the new, parliamentary army was in place, and the concept of *Innere Führung* was slowly getting accepted. At the same time, traditionalist elements remained in place, and it took years, if not decades to purge them from the German military. The controversy an exhibition caused in the 1990s that detailed the crimes committed by the *Wehrmacht* in Eastern Europe, demonstrated that the myth an untarnished *Wehrmacht*, which the first generation of *Bundeswehr* generals had promoted, proved very persistent indeed.88

However, while using ‘black propaganda’ against the enemy may be acceptable, liberal democracies have little excuse for subjecting their own people to this treatment. The one lesson we can learn from the cases studied is that choosing the path of covertly manipulating media messages could lead down a slippery slope. In employing ‘black propaganda’ techniques the BPA and the Ministry of Defence had to fall back on conservative, traditionalist and essentially anti-democratic networks, essentially endangering the very state the officials wanted to defend.

The West German government did not fully learn this lesson until 1989. With the onset of *Ostpolitik* in the early 1970s, Bonn agreed to stop sending balloons across the GDR border and the BPA stopped funding press services like Lohrisch’s *Wehrpolitische Informationen*. The psychological warfare unit was renamed psychological defence unit. However, the unit continued to use covert methods in West Germany. When investigative reporters found out that the psychological ‘defenders’ were behind a nominally independent political society that tried to indoctrinate young Germans at school in order to make them join the *Bundeswehr*, its time was up. The Ministry of Defence dissolved the psychological defence unit in 1990 and formed a new section for ‘information operations’, which was—it was claimed—only to target non-domestic audiences.89

---

88 Debates were so heated that a committee of historians was tasked to scrutinise the claims the exhibition made. While criticising some of the polemics and generalisations made, the committee’s final report upheld the exhibition’s claims. Omar Bartov et al., ‘Bericht über der Kommission zur Überprüfung der Ausstellung „Vernichtungskrieg: Verbrechen der Wehrmacht 1941-1944“’, November 2000, www.his-online.de/download/Kommissionsbericht.pdf, accessed 29 September 2008.

The Tet Offensive and the News Media:
Some Thoughts on the Effects of News Reporting

William M. Hammond

The month of January 2008 marked the fortieth anniversary of the first phase of the Tet Offensive.¹ There were two other offensives, a second in May and a third in August, but the first is the one that everyone remembers, probably because of the negative press and television coverage that accompanied it. As can be expected, the anniversary evoked considerable commentary, not all of it favourable to the news media. ‘The Americans had won a tactical victory’, historian James H. Willbanks asserted in a 5 March commentary in the New York Times:

But the sheer scope and ferocity of the offensive and the vivid images of the fighting on the nightly television news convinced many Americans that the Johnson administration had lied to them, and the president’s credibility plummeted. Perhaps more important, the offensive shook the administration’s own confidence and led to a re-evaluation of American strategy … On March 31, 1968, [President Lyndon Baines] Johnson went on national television to announce a partial suspension of the bombing campaign against North Vietnam and call for negotiations … The following year, President [Richard M.] Nixon began the long American withdrawal from Vietnam, paving the way for the triumph of the Communist forces in 1975.²

Willbanks, the director of the Department of Military History at the US Army Command and General Staff College, blamed no one for anything, but he left no doubt that, to his mind, media coverage of the offensive played an important role in the formation of both public opinion of the war and President Johnson’s own decision

---

¹ The views expressed in this article are the author’s own and should not be attributed to the Center of Military History, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense. The author first approached this subject in William M. Hammond, ‘The Press in Vietnam as Agent of Defeat: A Critical Examination’, Reviews in American History 17:2 (June 1989), 312-23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2702936>.

to seek negotiations. Another historian, Arthur Herman, writing in the *Wall Street Journal*, was hardly as restrained: ‘On January 30, 1968, more than a quarter million North Vietnamese soldiers and 100,000 Viet Cong irregulars launched a massive attack on South Vietnam’, he declared. ‘But the public didn’t hear about who had won this most decisive battle of the Vietnam War … until much too late … In truth, the war in Vietnam was lost on the propaganda front, in great measure due to the press’ pervasive misreporting of the clear U.S. victory at Tet as a defeat.’

Yet a third historian, Lt. Col. Robert Bateman, responded to Herman on the same day his commentary appeared. Noting that the US commander in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland, had conducted a whirlwind tour of the United States in November 1967 in support of President Johnson’s policies on the war, he emphasised that that the general had set up false expectations within the American public by claiming that the enemy was on the ropes. ‘With 1968’, the general had insisted, ‘a new phase is starting … we have reached an important point where the end begins to come into view.’ Two months later, the Tet Offensive occurred. In that light, Bateman said, it was ‘intellectually dishonest’ for any historian to pretend that Westmoreland and the Johnson Administration had not created the context within which the negative news coverage had occurred and to blame everything that had happened on the press. ‘It is counterproductive for our current efforts, dangerous for our country, and a bad history lesson for our developing junior officers to pretend that the media lost the Vietnam War.’

So, what actually happened? Who is right? Did media coverage of the Vietnam War poison American public opinion of the conflict and lead to the American defeat in Vietnam as Herman charges? Did it distort President Johnson’s view of the war and that of his administration as Willbanks suggests? To get an answer, we have to look at the whole of the news media’s coverage of the conflict, not just that of the Tet Offensive.

**The Media and Public Opinion**

At the start of the war in Vietnam in 1965, the Johnson administration considered press censorship but rejected the idea as impractical and unnecessary. Although a few newspapers such as the *New York Times* questioned American strategy in South Vietnam, most of the news media supported it. If they disagreed at all, it was with the tactics

---

the United States was using. Both they and their reporters in the field believed that Americans should take charge of the war and carry it to a quick, clean conclusion.\textsuperscript{5}

Under the circumstances, the United States adopted a policy of voluntary cooperation with the press that succeeded in preserving military security without infringing upon the rights of reporters. In exchange for an agreement to observe guidelines that banned all mention of plans, operations, air strikes, and other sensitive information, the US command provided the press with 24-hour consultation services, daily briefings, and transportation into the field. Those who kept the rules could accompany the troops anywhere in South Vietnam on a space-available basis. Those who broke them would lose all the advantages the system provided. The press responded. Only eight of the more than six thousand reporters who served in Vietnam suffered disaccreditation for security violations.\textsuperscript{6}

General Westmoreland set the tone for how his command dealt with the press by holding background briefings for selected reporters and by inviting individuals to accompany him on trips into the field. Between 1965 and 1968, reporters often criticised the general’s strategy of attrition, the violence of American tactics, clandestine US operations in Laos and Cambodia, and the corruption and ineptitude of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Even so, Westmoreland’s Chief of Public Affairs, Major General Winant Sidle, insisted that the bulk of news reporting favoured the American cause. A survey of television reporting before the Tet Offensive of 1968 found the same thing. According to its author, researcher Daniel Hallin, spokesmen for the war predominated over critics on news programs during the period by a ratio of 6:1. After 1968, the supporters still predominated but by a much narrower margin of 1.5 or so to 1.\textsuperscript{7} In that sense, far from being critics of government, some would say the media were its lapdogs.

The effect, however, did not last. Whatever the good results of Westmoreland’s public affairs policies, there was no way to compensate for flaws in the American strategy. By choosing to leave enemy sanctuaries in Laos and Cambodia intact and by declining to invade North Vietnam or to block its ports, the Johnson administration left the initiative to the enemy, who could control the rate of his own casualties by choosing when and

\textsuperscript{5} Unless otherwise indicated, this section is based upon William M. Hammond, \textit{Reporting Vietnam: Media and Military at War} (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).


where to fight. For the war to succeed, moreover, President Johnson had to persuade the Communists that they could not prevail, but to do that, he had to convince Americans that South Vietnam was worth the cost. For many reasons—immaturity brought on by years of French misrule, corruption, a lack of will induced by the ‘can-do’ attitude of American forces—the South Vietnamese were incapable of the political and military reforms that would have made their cause attractive to the American public.

In fact, public opinion of the war had been on a downward slide almost from the beginning of the war. As researcher John Mueller has noted, American public support as measured by the Gallup Poll’s famous ‘Mistake’ question (‘In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?’) was highest when the troops went in, but the number of those who did not regret the war or consider it a mistake fell progressively as casualties rose, falling fifteen percentage points every time the total of killed and wounded increased by a factor of ten (going from 100 to 1,000, 1,000 to 10,000, 10,000 to 100,000, and so on). The fall-off was steepest at the beginning of the conflict, with those who were most reluctant turning away quickly. Then it slowed because those with stronger opinions were harder to move. The number fell to 48 per cent in September 1966, but a series of successes in the field seems to have provided a tonic of sorts. A minor surge of support followed between November 1966 and May 1967, when Operations Attleboro, Cedar Falls, and Junction City made heavily publicised inroads into enemy base areas in South Vietnam, uncovering great stores of enemy supplies, weapons, and ammunition. After that, however, the decline continued, turning definitively negative in July 1967, when the figure fell to 48 percent and never recovered (see Tables). The pattern is especially remarkable because much the same correlation between casualties and public opinion occurred as well during the Korean War.8

8 John E. Mueller, ‘The Iraq Syndrome’, Foreign Affairs 84: 6 (November-December 2005), 44-54. See also, Hazel Erskine, ‘The Polls: Is War A Mistake?’, Public Opinion Quarterly 34 (Spring 1970), 134-50. Often taken as a measure of opposition to the war, the so-called ‘Mistake Question’ measures only regret. Many people, for example, consider their marriages ‘mistakes’ but for reasons of their own would never seek a divorce. So it was with the Vietnam War.
Table 1
Support for the War in Vietnam as Measured by the ‘No’ Response to the Mistake Question

Question: ‘In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the U.S. made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?’ (Gallup)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Percent ‘No’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 1965</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1966</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1966</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1966</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1966</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1967</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1967</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 1967</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1967</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1967</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1968</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1968</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1968</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1968</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1968</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1969</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1969</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1970</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1970</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1970</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 1971</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1971</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

As the conflict in Vietnam lengthened, the American public’s regret at ever going to war grew.

Table 3

Casualties & Public Opinion: Vietnam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes Response, 1965 - 1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>350000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-50000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Casualties  Regret  Log. (Regret)  Log. (Casualties)
To allay public concern, Johnson conducted public relations campaigns to show that the South Vietnamese armed forces were effective, that programs to win the hearts and minds of the country’s peasantry were working, and that the American effort in Vietnam was succeeding. The press replayed all those themes, but since each assertion of optimism had a pessimistic counterpart and each statistic showing progress an equally convincing opposite, it noted those aspects of the war as well. The president turned to Westmoreland for help in making his case. Questioning the propriety of returning to the United States for public appearances while the fighting continued, the general demurred for a time, but he eventually yielded out of loyalty to his commander-in-chief. Returning to the United States in April 1967, he joined the president’s efforts to market the war with an address to Congress. The optimism campaign that followed extended to Vietnam, where military spokesmen, despite their own judgment that the justification of war was best left to the political sector, sometimes became as involved in selling the conflict as the presidential appointees they served.9

The effects of those efforts were of little avail. According to General Sidle, prior to Westmoreland’s first trip to the United States, the general’s credibility was so high that a rash of favourable news stories almost inevitably appeared after he gave a background briefing for the press. Some repeated the general’s remarks almost word for word. Everything changed afterwards. The reporters became more critical. The general was no longer the soldier doing his job. He had become a possible tool of the Johnson administration with a line to spin. Westmoreland compounded the error in November by returning to the United States and remarking during a speech at the National Press Club that the enemy was so worn down he could no longer mount a large unit operation near any of South Vietnam’s major cities. The enemy responded two months later with the Tet Offensive, attacking every city in South Vietnam over a two-day period.10

As the offensive lengthened, reporters questioned every word the general and his public affairs officers spoke. The stories the reporters produced, as a result, were often overblown or in error, but what happened was still understandable in context.11 In covering the enemy’s attack on the US Embassy in Saigon, for example, correspondents at the scene got their story from military policemen who mistakenly believed that the enemy had entered the building and had been firing at them from the roof. When official spokes-

10 Interview, author with Major General Winant Sidle, 5 June 1973, Center of Military History (CMH) files; Address by General W. C. Westmoreland to the National Press Club, 21 November 1967, CMH files. See also, Msg., Westmoreland HWA 3455 to General Creighton Abrams, 26 November 1967, Westmoreland Papers, CMH.
men issued a correction, the reporters had to balance the command's record of over-optimism against the word of the troops who were fighting the battle. They sided with the troops.

As with Herman, many believe that the exaggerated press coverage which occurred turned the American public against the war. In an extended analysis of the period's public opinion surveys, however, pollster Burns Roper argues that Americans, for all of their doubts, clearly suspended judgment during Tet in anticipation of a presidential response. Forty-five per cent responded 'yes' to the Mistake Question, the same percentage that had given that answer in December 1967; 42 per cent answered 'no', a drop of four per cent from the previous poll; and 12 per cent had no opinion, an increase of 3 per cent. More to the point, rather than suffering a loss of morale or fighting spirit, a majority of Americans rallied to their president. Before the offensive in January 1968, 56 per cent of those responding to a Gallup Poll had classed themselves as 'hawks' on the war, 27 per cent as 'Doves', and 17 per cent had no opinion. By contrast, at the height of the fighting in early February, 61 per cent considered themselves hawks, 23 per cent doves, and 16 per cent had no opinion. Meanwhile, the number of those who expressed confidence in US military policy in Vietnam rose from 61 per cent in December 1967 to 74 per cent in February 1968. If Johnson had decided to escalate the war at that point, author Peter Braestrup argued, the public might well have sided with him.\(^{12}\)

**Press Coverage and the President**

As with Willbanks, some will argue that if the public mind was already set, press coverage of Tet turned the president and his administration against the war. They call upon two famous quotations for support. The first is a remark by presidential speechwriter Harry McPherson, who told an interviewer that as the Tet Offensive proceeded:

> I was extremely disturbed. I would go in two or three mornings a week and study the cable book and talk to [National Security Adviser Walter W.] Rostow and ask him what had happened the day before, and would get from him what almost seemed hallucinatory from the point of view of what I had seen on network television the night before ... Well, I must say that I mistrusted what he said … I put aside my own interior access to confidential information and was more persuaded by what I saw on the tube and in the newspapers.\(^{13}\)


The second quote came from Lyndon Johnson. When CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite returned from a fact-finding trip to Vietnam he summarised his conclusions by asserting that the United States was ‘mired in stalemate’ in Vietnam and should negotiate with the North Vietnamese ‘as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to victory and democracy and did the best they could’. Learning of the report, the president is supposed to have said: ‘If I have lost Walter Cronkite, I have lost Middle America.’

McPherson’s comment is the speech writer’s own personal testimony to how he felt. Those who cite it fail to note the second part of what he said:

I assume the reason this is so … was that like everyone else who had been deeply involved in explaining the policies of the war and trying to understand them and render some judgment, I was fed up with the ‘light at the end of the tunnel’ stuff. I was fed up with the optimism that seemed to flow without stopping from Saigon.

Once this is added, it becomes clear that a number of Johnson’s staff members had strong misgivings that predated the offensive. That they were also suffering from the same lack of trust in official assessments of the war goes without saying.

The effect of the Cronkite remark on the American public, to whom it was directed, and on the president himself is even more difficult to gauge. Cronkite himself certainly wanted to have an effect. During the reporter’s trip to Vietnam, the Commander of II Field Force, which included the region around Saigon, Lt. Gen. Frederick C. Weyand, had revealed to him at General Westmoreland’s request that during the weeks preceding the Tet Offensive his command had learned from the interrogation of captured enemy soldiers, captured enemy documents, and other intelligence that the enemy was planning an all-out offensive. It even had the name the enemy had given the attack, ‘General Offensive, General Uprising’. Weyand added that US intelligence had indicated that the attacks would come on or close to January 30 at the beginning of the traditional Tet holiday celebrations. As a result, on the night of the offensive, all of his units were on alert. Cronkite took it all in, Weyand said, and responded that

the story I had to tell was a very heartening one but that he would probably not use any of it in his documentary because he had been in Hue and had seen the open graves containing the bodies of hundreds of innocent South Vietnamese civilians who had been slaughtered and he had decided that he was going to do everything in his power to see

15 Schandler, *The Unmaking of a President*, 81.
that this war was bought to an end. I never saw the final documentary, but I am told that Cronkite did not use any of the information I had given him … I don't mean to imply any Machiavellian motives to Cronkite in this instance nor that his documentary had any great impact upon the American conscience, but it does bother me that a journalist of his stature would report [at the conclusion of each of his newscasts] 'and that's the way it was' when, in actuality, he was reporting only part of the 'way it was.'

As far as the public is concerned, whether Cronkite's comment had any effect is difficult to determine. The best information seems to indicate that people imposed their own preferences on the anchorman and his reporting. Northwestern University researcher Lawrence Lichty, for example, found during a 1968 public opinion survey that 75 per cent of those interviewed who favoured the war considered Cronkite and the other anchormen hawks while a majority of those who opposed the war considered them doves.

As for Johnson himself, whatever his remark about losing Middle America, he had been on a downward course with regard to Vietnam for close to a year before Tet, if not longer. His difficulties came to a head in August 1967, when an article in the *New York Times* alleged that the war was in stalemate and quoted an anonymous senior American general in Vietnam to the effect that, 'I've destroyed the ___ Division three times ... I've chased main force units all over the country, and the impact was zilch: it meant nothing to the people.' The last thing anyone responsible for the war wanted to hear, the report disturbed both Johnson and General Westmoreland. Years later, Westmoreland would avow that no general of his would ever have said such a thing. In fact, the source would be revealed in 2006 as none other than a future Chief of Staff of the Army, General Weyand himself.

Hard on the heels of that story came a leaked revelation in the *Times* that the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, had questioned the value of the bombing campaign against North Vietnam in an executive session before the Preparedness Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee. After two-and-one-half years of escalation and a build-up to 500,000 troops, the paper charged, the secretary's testimony had shown that the military situation was little better than it had been when American forces first entered the war: ‘The stalemate has merely … moved to a higher level of combat, casualties, and destruction.’

---

In mid-October, with questions mounting in Congress and public opinion on the slide, Johnson conducted a private, confidential survey of where the members of his own Democratic Party in both houses of Congress stood on the war. The results were chilling. Of the 137 Congressmen and 32 Senators interviewed, 104 were negative on the subject of the war, 25 were noncommittal; 18 expressed reservations of one sort or another, and only 22 were outright positive. A comment by Senator John Pastore of Rhode Island was particularly troubling. A long-time supporter of the president's policies on the war, the senator remarked that “our problem is Vietnam—boxes coming back, casualties going up—back home not a good word from anyone … We're losing Democrats in droves … Attitude now is any Republican can do a better job.”

The report on Pastore was written by a trusted adviser to Johnson, the Postmaster General, Lawrence O'Brien. ‘It didn't much impress Johnson to learn that, say, Senator [George] McGovern was talking against the war’, O'Brien later recalled, ‘because he'd been against it for a long time. But when someone like Pastore questioned the war, someone who'd been a staunch supporter … the President had to be impressed with the seriousness of the situation.’

As the bad news mounted, the president became increasingly defensive. Between 30 October and 1 November 1967, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey visited South Vietnam. The conclusions he reached during the trip were deeply pessimistic. ‘I'm damn sure we’re not doing the Vietnamese or ourselves any good’, he told a friend. ‘We’re murdering civilians by the thousands and our boys are dying in rotten jungles for what? A corrupt, selfish government that has no feeling and no morality. I’m going to tell Johnson exactly what I think, and I just hope and pray he’ll take it like I give it.’ Whether Humphrey did as he said is unknown, but before an 8 November briefing on the trip for the National Security Council, Johnson handed him a note across the table that read, ‘Make it short, make it sweet, and then shut up and sit down’. Humphrey’s assessment was brief and upbeat.


By that point, President Johnson was himself developing a sense of impending doom. On 21 November, he held a meeting on the war with the US Ambassador to Vietnam, Ellsworth Bunker; General Westmoreland; Vice President Humphrey; Secretary of State Dean Rusk; Secretary McNamara; and the heads of other government agencies that had important roles in the war. During it, he asked if State and Defense had done all they could to obtain additional troops from other allied countries as well as those promised by the South Vietnamese. ‘The clock is ticking’, he said. ‘We need to get all the additional troops as fast as we can.’ Later, when the subject of the air war came up, he repeated that ‘the clock is ticking’. It was necessary, he said, to ‘get the targets you have to hit. The bombing arouses so much opposition in this country.’

On 18 December, after studying a proposed course of action for the war drafted by McNamara, Johnson wrote a memorandum for file stating where he stood. Under the circumstances prevailing at the time, he remarked, a unilateral and unrequited stand-down in the bombing would be interpreted on all sides as a sign of weakening American will. ‘It would encourage the extreme doves; increase the pressure for withdrawal from those who argue “bomb and get out”; decrease support from our most steady friends; and pick up support from only a small group of moderate doves.’ He refused to rule out a change in his position, but he insisted that anything of the sort would come only when ‘hard evidence’ appeared that such a course would be profitable. For the same reasons, he declined to announce a policy of stabilisation, but he remained unconvinced that there was any basis for increasing US forces above the approved level of 500,000 men. As for the movement of US forces across South Vietnam’s frontiers, he was ‘inclined to be extremely reserved unless a powerful case can be made’. The political risks were grave, and the process would divert the force from its most important goal, the effort to push the Viet Cong away from populated regions so that the pacification program could proceed unimpeded. Johnson concluded by agreeing that one of McNamara’s recommendations had particular merit. ‘We should review the conduct of military operations in South Vietnam’, he wrote, ‘with a view to reducing U.S. casualties, accelerating the turnover of responsibility to the GVN [Government of South Vietnam], and working toward less destruction and fewer [civilian] casualties in South Vietnam.’

23 A thorough discussion of the meeting is in Gibbons, Executive Roles and Relationships, 898.
Johnson’s memorandum showed clearly that if he agreed the war would have to continue until the Communists either surrendered or decided to negotiate, he still questioned whether military victory was any longer possible and doubted whether air power could either break the will of the North Vietnamese or prevent them from continuing to infiltrate men and materiel into the South. In the same way, he accepted the word of his advisers that the war had to be won in the South by the South Vietnamese. But given the slow progress the Saigon regime was making in achieving effective self-government, he still doubted whether enough time remained to achieve that end before public discontent in the United States forced him to pull back.25

In effect, whatever the facts of the Tet Offensive and the way the news media reported them, the president was contemplating an effort to pull American forces back and to ‘Vietnamize’ the war over a month before Tet. As historian Graham Cosmas observes, his approach had yet to be ‘embodied in formal operational plans and orders, but the direction seemed clear. For the Military Assistance Command, as for the rest of the U.S. government, the years of escalation in Vietnam were nearing an end’.26

Did press coverage of the offensive have any effect on Johnson? Although we will never know for certain, a case can be made that it did, by giving the president the leverage he needed to begin the process he had already decided upon of pulling American forces back and of turning the bulk of the fighting over to the South Vietnamese. In a private meeting with General Westmoreland during November, the president had given clear indication that he would not seek a second term in office: ‘He was tired’, the general later observed; ‘his wife was tired; he was concerned about his health. He had obviously made up his mind.’27

On 31 March 1968, acutely aware that support for the war by the American public and Congress was falling and that some of the most forceful proponents of the conflict to that date were wavering, he made his move. In a televised speech to the American people, he announced the deployment of 13,500 more troops to Vietnam in response to a request from Westmoreland but balanced it with a partial bombing halt in North Vietnam in hope that the move would lead to early negotiations. He stated no time limits after which the bombing would resume and laid down no conditions for the North Vietnamese to fulfil. Issuing a plea for national unity, he then underscored everything by announcing that he intended to spend all his time in the pursuit of peace and so would not accept the nomination of his party for a second full term as president.28

25 Gibbons, Executive Roles and Relationships, 893.
26 Cosmas, MACV: The Joint Command, 22.
27 Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports, 283.
A situation that occurred in 1993, when President William J. Clinton decided to pull the United States out of Somalia, bears a striking resemblance to what occurred with Johnson at Tet. As researcher Warren Strobel observed in his study of the so-called CNN effect:

There is little doubt that the [televised] image of a dead U.S. soldier being desecrated in October 1993 forced President Clinton to come up with a rapid response to calls in Congress for the withdrawal of U.S. troops … Often forgotten, however, is that by September 1993 the Clinton administration already was making plans to extract U.S. troops. Just days before the images of the dead soldier were aired, Secretary of State Warren Christopher had told U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Washington’s desire to pull out. Congress had withdrawn its approval, and public support for the mission, documented in opinion polls, began falling well before the gruesome video started running on CNN.29

In that case, according to Strobel, the Clinton administration had allowed the mission in Somalia to evolve from humanitarian relief to nation-building without explaining to the public and Congress the new costs, risks, and goals. The images were, as one US military officer observed at the time, ‘a graphic illustration of the futility of what we were doing’.30 As with press coverage of the Tet Offensive, the news media here appear to have set the stage and to given the president the context he needed to explain actions he already wanted to take.

Conclusion

In the end, when problems with press coverage arise, they are usually not problems with the press at all; they are policy problems. Either the policy or the strategy or something else is defective. When a line of action loses its bearings or becomes fractured in some way or another, consensus within and outside of the government also fractures. And if the fracturing is serious enough, it will be reflected in media coverage, particularly where a war is concerned. In the case of Vietnam, the war itself rather than the news media alienated the American people. Despite some very tough stories of the sort that almost always occur in any war reported by a free press, the United States began the conflict with a largely compliant media and a public affairs program that upheld military security without violating the rights of reporters. The Saigon correspondents followed along,

30 Ibid.
replaying official statements on the value of the war and supporting the soldier if not always his generals. Over time, under the influence of many deaths and contradictions, American society moved to repudiate the commitment. As it did, the nation's establishment reflected the trend. When protest moved ‘from the left groups, the anti-war groups, into the pulpits, into the Senate’, Max Frankel of the *New York Times* remarked, ‘... it naturally picked up coverage. And then naturally the tone of the coverage changed.’

Over all, General Sidle remarked years after the war, ‘You don’t need much public affairs when you are winning. Your success shines forth. The opposite, however, is also true. The best public affairs program imaginable will not disguise failure.’

---

32 Conversation with the author, undated.
I am here today not as a historian nor as a member of the Defence Force but as someone who might on occasion be seen as the nemesis of both—a journalist. I’ve worked for 20 years in newspapers and the past four in television, of which 19 years have been covering politics and national affairs in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery. These have included, to varying degrees, the defence portfolio. The views I express here are my own and those of a few of my colleagues who feel strongly about the subject.

I bring very much a contemporary practitioner’s view of the media, the military and the tango we attempt together in theatres of war—be they away on operations or here at home, on that stretch of tar between Parliament House and Russell Hill.

I’m here to talk about my own experience and to explain a bit about what we in the media try to do and how and why we do it. I may also make the odd observation about the interaction between governments, the Defence Force and the media in these thoroughly modern times.

You know you’ve spent too long hanging around the soft edges of a hard war when one of the coffee shops at Kandahar Airfield offers you a loyalty card. I received mine on day 9 in Afghanistan at the British PX’s Starbucks-style coffee house on an unscheduled second pass through Kandahar after a few days visiting the Reconstruction Task Force at Tarin Kowt.

To be clear, my long-black, ‘fourth-cup-free’ epiphany on 16 March 2007 was not prompted by staying too long at the war. If anything, my time there was too short. My frustration was about being confined to what felt like the edges. Or, rather, just being confined.

It’s a cliché to say it, but the process of embedding journalists with defence personnel on military operations carries pros and cons for both sides. For Defence, it allows civilian reporters to be exposed to what they do and better comprehend—and explain—the role
of the ADF at war. But it also means allowing largely untrained, sometimes uncooperative and regularly intrusive eyes and ears where instinct might suggest it’s better not to have them.

For the media, it requires sacrificing independence for the sake of an inside look at a force on operations. Often these days, it’s the only way for us to get there at all, especially in the case of an insurgent war like the one in Afghanistan. It’s valuable and frustrating at once.

Going in a group is complicated, too. From the Defence side, it limits mobility and multiplies responsibility but is less labour-intensive than taking journalists one by one. For the media, it’s all that’s on offer. At our end, it restricts movement because what restricts Defence restricts us. And there’s further discomfort in that the journalist’s instinct is not necessarily to share information. Contrary to popular myth, we prefer to hunt alone. But these days, with the habit of governments and agencies to deal with us en-masse, that is becoming more and more difficult.

In short, the whole embedding process is a risk—and a compromise—for both sides.

Many of us who go to cover war these days are not specialists with the discipline or training which time in the field—or even long periods involved with the subject matter—provides. That, too, presents its challenges for both sides. In Australia, we don’t cover wars like we used to. We no longer have the Charles Beans or Keith Murdochs or Wilfred Burchetts. Now we have defence writers—of which I was one, for a while, some 14 years ago for Melbourne’s Age newspaper—but with very few exceptions, we don’t have those war correspondents who based themselves at a conflict for months on end. So, these days, for those of us based in the Press Gallery or serving as defence correspondents for Australia’s national media, much of our war experience is gained when Defence takes journalists on escorted tours of operations or provides controlled access to Australian forces when they turn up on their own.

I had had only a smattering of operational and conflict experience when I went to Afghanistan last year: I had spent a few days with peacekeepers in Rwanda in January 1995, and participated in ‘Kangaroo’ military exercises in northern Australia. I had been caught on a Bangkok street back in 1992, when Thai soldiers opened fire on pro-democracy protesters. I was too curious for my own good and on that occasion there was nary a Defence escort in sight.

As for Kandahar and my loyalty card, I was already reasonably caffeine-dependent when I went to Afghanistan in 2007 on what the ADF likes to call a ‘bus tour’. I went with a cameraman colleague Jamie Kidston, a former reservist who was to become so
fired up by our visit that he would quit our television network, SBS, two months after we got home and return to Afghanistan to work for NATO. (I should add here that four months ago, he was shot through the forearm while filming with Canadian and Afghan National Army forces near Kandahar. A lucky man, he found bullet grazes on his helmet. The bone healed well without permanent damage and after some recuperation at home, he went back. War seems to do that to some people.) Jamie and I were part of a group of six media representatives who left Darwin on 7 March 2007, escorted by an ADF officer who, for his sins (and ours), became our constant companion.

Defence has run media tours off and on since 2002 and regularly since early last year, now transporting media using spare capacity on their own sustainment flights to the Middle East to cut down on costs. In 2008 they ran six such tours, to Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the Gulf, visiting Army, Navy and Air Force. Defence tells me it has carried 28 media representatives from 17 agencies on those specially escorted tours this year and another 12 on other special visits, including VIP trips (accompanying prime ministers, defence chiefs and the like), forces entertainment tours (there was some publicity surrounding one of those) and on what they call the ‘boss lift’ program, taking the employers of reservists to see where their staff are serving.  

Ask Defence why they do it, and they say it’s to provide an opportunity for us to see theatres of operations which are otherwise hard to access. They say it helps give us a context for the way we report on these conflicts, not just while we are there, but also for afterwards; that it aids accuracy to have an understanding of where something has happened or is happening, the landscape, the conditions, the climate and other factors at play.

And they are right. It helps a great deal and for those of us who might never otherwise go, these are very valuable trips. I am grateful for the opportunity, lest I’m about to sound like I’m not.

My respect for ADF personnel serving in Afghanistan is greater for having been among them, not less. And having been willing to go—with the degree of personal danger that naturally involves—has helped my relationships in Defence. I am better informed about the conflict, about the role of Australian forces, and about what it might be like to be stationed there for six months at a time, than I would be, had I not gone.

---

1  Defence spokesman, interview, Wednesday, 8 October 2008.
But I am not as well informed as I should be. And this is an important point. Our objective, as journalists in theatres of conflict, is to report on multiple levels. We are trying to capture and convey a sense of the conflict and its progress overall. What sort of conflict is it? What’s behind it? How long might it last? And, in the most base sense, who’s winning and who’s losing and by what definition?

We are also trying to grasp and depict the roles of our own forces within the conflict. What are they doing? How valuable is the work within the greater war effort? How much danger do they face? Where there is a coalition, are all countries’ forces pulling their weight equally? And we are telling the human stories of those who have been prepared to go in service to their country and others. Who are they? Why are they there? How do they feel about it?

In my view, and that of a number of my colleagues, the Australian Defence Force and Defence Department sometimes place more emphasis on trying to stop us from knowing things than on helping us to understand. What could be gained by trusting us a little more—or at least some of us, and particularly those who have demonstrated they can be trusted—is lost in the zeal to control what we see, do and find out. Rightly or wrongly, we sometimes feel Defence does not see it as its role to help us work.

That can require more than just taking us over there. It may be a lack of understanding of how we work. Perhaps we could offer to come and do some de-mystifying for those in Defence unfamiliar with the media process. In the wake of my tour, I went and visited the Joint Public Affairs unit at their invitation and took some of its personnel on a tour of the Press Gallery in an attempt to do just that.

But back to my own visit to Afghanistan. By the time I received that coffee card in Kandahar, we were on borrowed time. The visit was winding up and we were supposed to head for home. But our departure arrangements had been disrupted, due to a separately arranged, and unconnected, flying visit to Tarin Kowt by then-Prime Minister John Howard (we didn't know that at the time), which requisitioned the C-130 earmarked for us and left us a bit stranded. By the time we became aware of the top-secret incoming VIP—and the news came privately, from Canberra, not officially from Defence—we were in a completely different part of the country, left to explain to our employers why we were at the same war, with the same Defence Force, but unable to cover the PM.

The explanation from Defence—and I understand the explanation, though I struggle with the inflexibility—was that the Prime Minister had a handful of media with him already and thus his ‘objective’ had been met. Our tour’s ‘objective’ was separate from that. As one officer put it to me recently: 'synchronising them [the two tours] for a media
outcome was not the highest priority for us’. For us, of course, it was an extremely high priority. The mushroom treatment left this Chief Political Correspondent looking and feeling pretty silly.²

A day or so before the PM’s arrival, we were flown back to Kandahar in a Chinook. It was a colourful flight and we weren’t to know quite how colourful until later, when the tape shot by my cameraman colleague, Jamie, from the ramp harness revealed what was declared to be an RPG whizzing past the rear gunner. Jamie was so busy keeping the camera still and focussed in the wind, he hadn’t seen the split-second projectile. Neither had anybody else. Being fired on and not knowing it until later is quite a strange thing. The incident had been missed by everyone on our aircraft, all of those in the Chinook behind and those in the Apache riding shotgun. Once discovered, it was duly reported, and we were quickly visited by the CO, and several others, all of whom inspected the video in huddles in the corner and discussed it in hushed tones. For a while, we thought they might refuse to discuss the incident on the record, try to seize our tape or demand it be erased as they had done with some other vision of the aircraft discharging anti-missile flares. (With the RPG, I confess, we’d been left unguarded for a few minutes and had managed to take precautions against that. We dubbed it.)

I’m happy to report that none of this occurred. In fact, it was a very good example of how negotiation and cooperation can work. The CO asked how we planned to treat the incident and then agreed to conduct an interview with us as a group. I told him what time I expected the story to break back home, so he knew when the phone would start ringing.

We began doing radio interviews and filing print and television reports, which were transmitted over the ensuing hours, either by phone, or email or via the portable Bangan satellite transmitter—about a foot square—which we set up outside the tent. The CO had a night of very little sleep, answering the anticipated incoming questions from colleagues back home.

That was the good bit.

But after all the excitement of not realising we hadn’t been hit, things got frustratingly constrained. Nobody was very sure how or when we would be going home and we were, as they say, put on a short leash. The next day, our escort officer gathered us together to pass on a message from Canberra. Meaning no offence but causing some nonetheless, he quoted his superiors, announcing that Defence was very pleased with the work we had done on our tour. (As we weren’t there to work for Defence, you can imagine how that went over.)

---

² Background discussion with Defence official, 2008.
But, the message continued, as our official program had ended, Defence did not believe it had any obligation to facilitate our work any further. In other words, we would not only get no more help in securing interviews or briefings (help we had received upon our arrival), we would be prevented from seeking them. Unless we were going to the toilet or being escorted to get food or coffee, we were to be confined to barracks until somebody figured out how to get us out.

At this, I pointed our satellite phone in the direction of a certain brigadier back in Canberra and dialled, relaying our ‘concern’ at this new arrangement. Our employers, it was explained, had not sent us to Afghanistan to sit on upturned tins throwing stones at rows of bottles or to discuss the penmanship of whoever had practised his life-drawing skills on the inside wall of the concrete bunker during the last rocket attack. This, I observed to the brigadier, was a big military base hosting forces from many nations and, with or without assistance, we intended to go find ourselves some stories.

The response was swift. They arranged a little PR exercise (it was something, nonetheless) in the form of an interview with an Australian helicopter pilot and camera access to his crew and craft. Remarkably, a C-130 came to collect us the following day.

Reporting from a ‘bus tour’ is what the Americans might call a crap shoot. You can’t be sure what will happen during your allotted time in country or what kind of stories you will be able to do. You have to be flexible, because plans change. You have to trust that those who’ve taken you there are willing to both protect your life and help you do your job. You can be absolutely certain you will be subject to considerable restriction. You may have your reports or pictures vetted. In fact, sometimes you may actually ask for the once-over, to ensure you haven’t inadvertently endangered someone by showing their face—a local interpreter, a member of the special forces—or assisted the enemy by revealing the size, location or nature of equipment or the detailed layout of a camp or airfield.

It goes against our instincts somewhat to do this, but as a journalist, you become very aware, and respectful of, the need for operational security. But where we become frustrated is when ‘operational security’ is used not to protect life and avoid compromising an operation, but to promote a political objective, preserve reputation or prevent embarrassment.

Defence is not the only culprit. Sometimes it is subject to pressure from its master, government. We in the media are then left asking: for a defence force, where is the line between serving a government’s policy objectives and serving it politically? I’m sure we’re not alone there.
In my opinion, the previous Australian Government, on more than one occasion, harnessed organisations and agencies which were seen as credible, respected and somehow above party politics—including the Defence Force, the Australian Federal Police and intelligence agencies—for party political gain. In the now-nicknamed ‘children overboard’ affair, the Howard Government asserted that asylum-seekers on a sinking boat had thrown their children overboard. The assertion was not supported by evidence from Defence, yet the words and actions of high-ranking officers and lower ranks alike were manipulated and misrepresented to sustain this argument publicly: it was unfair to Defence and the public, and highly inappropriate.

In relation to the Australian Federal Police’s activities, it became routine to publicise the arrest of suspects in politically useful cases with increasing disregard for the presumption of innocence; I refer particularly here to drug busts and alleged terrorism-related offences. Intelligence agencies had their work selectively quoted to support claims that Iraq had and/or was trying to source materials to develop weapons of mass destruction.

All of this was done under the cloak of operational security—secrecy—which is so important to these agencies. It prevented anyone from speaking up. This damages those agencies’ credibility which, in turn, affects the trust relationships they have with other agencies, including those in the media. In relation, particularly, to the ADF and AFP, these relationships are essential. But sometimes it feels like the system is designed to work against them.

It’s not that we don’t understand the need for secrecy. And it would be naïve of us not to realise we are, in some respects, another tool of warfare. But frankness can be the best form of public relations—at least frankness with people who have proven themselves worthy of trust. There has certainly been a diminution of trust between journalists, the department and the ADF, over the past decade or so. I have good relations with some senior members of the Australian Defence Force, but they aren’t always able, willing or designated to speak publicly.

It is a source of constant frustration to working journalists that when we have questions, we can’t always get access to the people who might be able to actually answer them. Instead, we engage with public affairs officers—there are some hundred or so in the department. They are mostly decent and hard-working people who proffer carefully crafted responses and are frequently unable to deal with a supplementary or clarifying query, without referring up. This is not true of everyone. But it is a significant process problem.
'Referring up' is the bane of our lives. We realise that, with a tri-forces structure, it’s important that everyone knows what’s being said. But the degree to which the smallest thing needs to be checked, tickled, tweaked, twiddled and sanitised beyond recognition is, well, considerable. And counter-productive.

Whether any of us like it or not, we now operate in the world of the 24-hour news cycle. But when we submit a question of any complexity (and sometimes even simple ones), it’s rare to be able to get an answer in the same conversation and sometimes not on the same day. This doesn’t work for us. And it doesn’t really work for them either. I hope we can find a way to ease the frustration on both sides.

We still also sometimes encounter outright obstruction, without explanation. When Australian combat forces were withdrawn from Iraq in June 2008, several media organisations lodged requests with Defence to cover the operation. All were rejected. As ABC TV’s Media Watch reported on 9 June, Channel Nine was told that ‘logistic constraints’ made it impossible, despite having offered to make their own way to the Middle East. A statement from public affairs incorrectly said no organisation had made that offer. But Channel Nine and the ABC both insist they did. When the ABC was knocked back, it was given ‘operational security’ as the reason. Instead, Defence distributed its own selective video material.

Now, often we appreciate having access to Defence video when it’s not possible for our own cameras to get there so some may accuse me of shifting the goalposts here. There was an example of this in November 2008, with the repatriation of the Vietnam War soldier who’d been MIA. But in this case, these varying explanations were frankly unconvincing. Perhaps it might have upset one or two of our allies to have media covering the Australian withdrawal. But Iraqi media were there.

A number of us suspect it was because Australian media organisations wanted to talk to troops about how their role—and the withdrawal—might be perceived. A story in the Sydney Morning Herald on 27 May had aired criticisms from unnamed lower ranks, first reported in the Australian Army Journal, about the kind of work they had been given. Perhaps there were genuine operational reasons for refusing direct access to the withdrawal but these were never made clear. It has left an ongoing bad taste for several organisations and reinforced a sense that there is no trust.

3 Media Watch, ABC Television, 9 June 2008: www.abc.net.au/mediawatch.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
There must be trust. And the relationship works best when there is. I don't expect us to return to the days of Prime Minister John Curtin and his daily briefings of correspondents on the contemporary details of war. Curtin briefed not just on what had happened, but on what was about to happen—unthinkable today. To think journalists these days would keep a government's confidence—become part of the architecture—to that extent is unrealistic. It would not sit well with those who believe we are here to hold government to account, not to keep its secrets.

Having said that, it does still happen and sometimes for the greater good. In his paper to this conference, Professor Stephen Badsey outlined the circumstances of His Royal Highness Prince Harry’s secret service in Afghanistan and then the blowing of his cover. Professor Badsey spoke about how once others had broken the embargo, those who had kept the secret considered themselves free from their part of the bargain and ‘could report openly’. (I might note that it was not any of the organisations who had been part of the bargain who broke it.)

If I may be permitted to make this observation from the media side: it’s not just that once a story like that is out, we feel we can then report openly; it is that, as journalists, we are obliged to then report openly. It is simply not feasible for public debate to be raging all around and for some of us to stand mute because we have struck a bargain made defunct by the actions of others. If we do that, we will feel noble and true, and be quickly unemployed. For this reason, we must be careful about the bargains we strike. And whoever is on the other side of them—Defence in this case—must be prepared for the realpolitik that if that cover is blown, those original bets may be off.

Of course, that doesn’t mean we should abandon all ethics and consideration for the protection of life or privacy (yes, some of us do have such consideration). That is something for us to remember when swept into the eye of that kind of storm. And we have to remember it when we agree to the conditions on offer in return for being embedded, too. Having said that, there is a sense among a number of my colleagues that our way of embedding is more constraining than it needs to be.

News Ltd’s national defence writer, Ian McPhedran, recently travelled to Afghanistan independently of the ADF, along with photographer Gary Ramadge, precisely so as not to be constrained in this way. They spent three weeks in Afghanistan through August and early September, flying into Kabul on commercial aircraft and then catching rides with

---

7 Background interviews with Defence writers for Australian media, October 2008.
Australian and British forces, down to Kamp Holland, where the Australians are stationed with the Dutch at Tarin Kowt, on down to Kandahar, out to a British forward operating base and back to Kabul. McPhedran reports that the access to operations ‘outside the wire’ was much less restricted with the British (and indeed with the Americans and others) than with the Australians.8

Certainly with Australian forces, those activities are extremely limited—they say, because of their obligation to keep us safe. (And again, I acknowledge here that the best-laid plans for travel may be stymied by unforeseen events. We know and accept that.) But in going into areas of operations at all, we have acknowledged the risk to personal safety. To go there and see very little reduces the point of the exercise.

I am dismayed to have to assert that other countries’ forces are also generally considered more forthcoming than ours. Both McPhedran and the Age’s Brendan Nicholson say they have had fewer restrictions placed on their access to members of other forces in Afghanistan and Iraq—especially, but not only, the British—and received far more frank assessments of the state of the conflicts from them, than from Australians.9

My own more limited experience concurs. During my Afghanistan visit, the most telling descriptions of the level of preparedness and resourcing and state of mind of soldiers in the field came from a British officer, obtained in casual conversations while our escort officer slept. It’s not the latter’s fault. A man has to sleep sometime. He’s a good bloke who followed orders and did his job. And I had to do mine.10 And certainly our having a television camera always makes it harder to capture such views for the record. But even the background was extremely useful.

Now, Defence may congratulate itself that no such musings emerged, through us, from its own forces. But why? It means we end up with a British perspective, not an Australian one. Would you rather we gain a real, human sense of the conflict from other countries’ forces than from our own?

The silent answers to that question around this room might differ from military officer to historian. Some will say we don’t want those stories told now, not publicly, and I do understand the reasoning behind those arguments. But we will want to have them to read and hear, later. In order to do that, who is gathering them, if not us?

8 Interview with News Ltd Defence correspondent Ian McPhedran, Thursday, 9 October 2008.
I concede there’s a dilemma in working out how to weed out the petty gripes of exhausted, homesick men and women from the legitimate grievances of people whose service and sacrifice should afford them a decent hearing. But, largely, we aren’t allowed to hear either. The default position is to try to keep all of it out of sight. Certainly there are issues of morale to consider and the feelings of the families back home. Having been there, I understand these things better than I did before. But the Australians in whose name they fight also deserve to know what’s really going on there. And I ask again: if we don’t record it, who’s going to?

We do get to speak to members of the ADF on operations. They are permitted, though not strongly encouraged, to talk to us and it’s not surprising that they are reluctant to be too frank, given the culture of secrecy. It doesn’t help that in the Army, they joke that any soldier whose mates spot his or her face in a television report will face a fine: a case of beer.

In his opening remarks, the Chief of Army lamented the loss of this military generation’s history, obliterated by the electronic non-recordable static, the babble of Facebook and the blur of quick phone calls and under the dark, heavy blanket of security. Soldiers on operations are not allowed to carry personal cameras. All this makes it hard for ADF personnel to keep personal records of their time on operations, records which are important to them and, ultimately, to Australia. And it may make future historians even more dependent on our records, imperfect as they—and we—are.

Where there are no letters, no cables, and no personal photographs, we journalists are (mostly) still here, ready, willing and able to try to do what Charles Bean did back at the beginning, at Gallipoli. (And I don’t mean to insult anyone who thinks we aren’t in the same league.) How much of history we are able to record depends on how much we are allowed to record. Lieutenant General Gillespie remarked on the cliché that journalists were writing the first draft of history and that he hoped it did not become the only draft. I can understand the sentiment. But he also said he was concerned that the history of the Australian Army of the late 20th and early 21st century is at risk of becoming a work of fiction. So are we.

With greater cooperation, I’d like to think we can all endeavour to ensure it’s neither inaccurate nor a blank page. And for the record, despite my frustrations with the embedding process, I do still think that going on operations on a restricted basis is better than not going at all. I hope, after this, that the Australian Defence Force is still willing to take me back.
On Wednesday 10 September 2008, the Ministry of Defence marked the end of military operations in Northern Ireland with a service in St Paul’s Cathedral. Thus ended one of the most extraordinary military experiences in modern history, one that had lasted for 37 years. According to General Sir Mike Jackson, the military operation which started in Northern Ireland in 1969 (known as Operation Banner), ‘will, without doubt, be seen as one of the most important campaigns ever fought by the British Army and its fellow Services’. ¹

The military campaign—waged on United Kingdom soil—is one of the longest to date and one of the few (according to Jackson) ever brought to a successful conclusion by the armed forces of a developed nation against irregular forces. While many served in Northern Ireland, nobody actually experienced the campaign in its entirety. Sent with the declared aim of ending the sectarian fighting and supporting the legally elected government of the province, 28,000 British soldiers were deployed at the peak of the campaign in the summer of 1972 and over 600 were killed during the conflict.²

While the roots and antecedents of the conflict (often referred to as ‘the Troubles’) can be traced to the turn of the twentieth century, the propaganda war has been waged largely through the media and has presented the British Government with a challenge not dissimilar to that presented by Vietnam for the American Government; namely, could a democratic state which deployed its troops in the full glare of the modern media succeed in achieving its military objectives?

I would like to thank my colleague Dr Tim Bowman and Dr Martin Doherty (Westminster) for critically engaging with me in the preparation of this work.


² 697 British servicemen were killed between 1969 and 2006. In the worst year (1972), 102 British soldiers died or were killed—the largest number in one year since Korea. For a detailed breakdown of casualty figures see Operation Banner, 2-12. For a comparison, roughly 250 British servicemen died in the Falklands conflict (1982). Over 10,000 terrorist suspects were arrested.
However, the Troubles represented a different type of warfare from that in Vietnam—both from the military perspective and from the point of view of the propaganda war. Not only were British troops being deployed on UK soil in a lower intensity conflict, but their opponents were also dressed as civilians. British propaganda attempted to demonise the IRA as ‘terrorists’ or to explain the military presence in terms of protecting Northern Ireland from itself (i.e. from two warring sectarian factions). However they underestimated the effectiveness of IRA counter-propaganda and the sight of heavily armed British troops confronting stone-throwing children in the streets of Belfast night after night on news bulletins throughout the world was a public relations disaster—especially in the American cities with large expatriate Irish populations.

The British Government sought initially to treat the Troubles as a ‘domestic’ problem which concerned no one else. Ulster came, however, to be viewed by many critics as a cancer that eroded freedoms and exposed the hollowness of British claims to be championing democracy. The introduction of internment and trial without jury in 1973 (under the Emergency Powers Act) only served to reinforce such views (both in Britain and around the world).

The long running conflict in Northern Ireland has served to demonstrate a principle that is now well established; namely that democracies cannot fight terrorism on their own terms. As Philip Taylor has maintained, the terrorist bomber invariably holds the advantage and, in the age of the mass media, thrives on publicity. ³

In its attempts to combat the so-called ‘men of violence’ the British military were clearly circumscribed (by fighting a domestic war) and resorted to a wide range of measures and strategies through the secret services, intelligence-gathering, the law (for example, the Prevention of Terrorism Act) and, in the 1980s, efforts to starve terrorists of the ‘oxygen of publicity’ via a broadcasting ban.

Historical Background

In the late 1960s a determined campaign of civil rights by Catholics led to violent rioting (Belfast and Londonderry) and in August 1969 to scenes of such ferocity that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) alone was unable to contain them. On 14 August 1969 the Stormont Government requested military help from Great Britain and two companies of the Prince of Wales’ Own Regiment of Yorkshire were deployed to the province. It

was the first step in a campaign that would last for 30 years. Initially welcomed by the Catholics as the protectors of the Catholic minority, the troops employed the principle of ‘minimum force’ in aid of ‘civil power’.

However, while the Army could claim some experience of counter-insurgency in Malaya and Kenya, it had no experience of this type of war—especially against its own countrymen. In October 1969 (on the recommendation of Lord Hunt) B Specials (armed Protestant special constables) were disbanded and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR), controlled by Westminster, was formed. The move infuriated the Protestant community and led to further riots.

In April 1970 during serious riots between Protestants and Catholics in the Highfield and Ballymurphy estates, the Army fired 104 CS gas into the Catholic crowds. This action that combined with the IRA’s defence of the Short Strand in Belfast in June and the Falls Curfew of July, ultimately brought the gunmen of the IRA to act as ‘defenders of the (Catholic) people’ and turned much of Catholic community against the army. From this moment onwards the army was no longer viewed as a peace-keeping force but as an army of occupation. The IRA bombing campaign started in 1970 and in February the first British soldier was shot.

In the summer of 1971 the RUC (with support of Stormont) recommended a policy of internment—again this proved to be a flawed decision that brought more trouble than benefit. The Army was not in favour and internment placed them in a difficult position. It proved, however, to be a propaganda gift to the IRA who made considerable capital out of it. The policy of imprisonment without trial or conviction not only undermined Britain’s political objectives but the internment camps became a running sore in the wider propaganda war (see Fig. 1).

For their part, the security forces retorted by waging a propaganda campaign (largely through the medium of the poster) that suggested that far from being freedom fighters, the IRA were terrorists intent on undermining the Irish community by means of indiscriminate violence and despair.


The Republican News, for example, beneath a drawing of a man imprisoned behind barbed wire and the headline ‘Internment’ wrote: ‘Name … Could be you; Crime … None; Reason for Internment … Being an Irishman’: *Republican News*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (December 1970-January 1971). Arguably, however, internment had worked successfully in defeating earlier IRA campaigns in 1920-24, 1939-45 and 1956-62.
Bloody Sunday (30 January 1972 in Londonderry) was played out in the media and formed something of a catalyst. Prior to this (in fact as early as 1969), large parts of Catholic Derry had become no-go areas for British troops (and the RUC). The Widgery Report, set up to look into the ‘events’ of the day which led to the loss of life, eventually exonerated the Army (1st Para Regiment), but the widespread perception was that it had suffered a grievous defeat at the hands of the media and the IRA (note that Unionists were hardly more than a footnote) and thus Bloody Sunday came to be seen as a major propaganda disaster.6

The first serious mistake made in the immediate aftermath of Bloody Sunday was to claim in briefings that a number of the people shot were suspected terrorists. Disseminated by British embassies around the world, it was discovered almost immediately that the information was untrue and subsequently retracted. This specific example raised a wider ethical issue for the British media: should one ‘conceal’ such information if it is thought to be of operational use to the army. ‘We were asked to plant deliberately false information

---

6 In contrast to Widgery’s findings, the City Coroner in Londonderry, Hubert O’Neil, described the incidents at the inquests as ‘unadulterated bloody murder’: D. Hamill, Pig in the Middle: The Army in Northern Ireland (London: Methuen, 1985), 93.
in the media.’ News management’ (or news manipulation) is, of course, a key part of any counter-terrorist war. It was imperative in the Northern Ireland context to win over the hearts and minds of the local population in order to wean them away from giving support to the terrorists.

According to most critics, the major failing of British military propaganda was that the army information service was used as a psychological warfare medium. Army public relations officers used MI5 and MI6 to spread ‘black’ propaganda in order to undermine and damage the IRA. The mistake was to use a credible source information service for the dissemination of ‘black propaganda’. There are a number of examples of British ‘dirty tricks’ campaigns that can be cited; two of the most extraordinary were the ‘satanic magic circles’ and the case of the so-called ‘exploding underwear’. British soldiers were not allowed to carry out body searches on women even when the para-military bombing campaign intensified. The IRA identified this weakness and sought increasingly to use women to carry explosives through checkpoints. The military countered this by planting a story that as IRA explosives were often home-made and therefore unstable, women wearing nylon underwear ran a high risk of creating static electricity which could trigger an explosion. The campaign was intended to frighten off women from carrying explosives into the cities, but such black propaganda also served to satisfy the news-hungry desks in Fleet Street.

The years 1969-72 were learning years for the British Army in confronting what it perceived to be an increasingly critical media. Its response to the media was secretive, unreliable and hostile. According to General David Mostyn (who was deeply involved at the time), ‘a seething anger existed throughout the Army in Northern Ireland that the British media, for the first time in history, should give the Queen’s enemies a “top spot” in their reporting’. Such statements betrayed a naïve understanding of the changing role of the media in modern warfare and failed moreover to recognise the complexity and ‘domestic’ nature of the conflict—which posed real dilemmas for British reporters torn between supporting their own troops and their duty to impartiality and ‘truth’. The Army took a while to learn that Ulster was a different proposition from colonial campaigns of the post-war period, which were sufficiently far removed from home for the media to be

---

7 Charles Moore (Sunday Telegraph) quoted in the BBC Television documentary, The Information War. See also E. McCann, Bloody Sunday in Derry (Ireland: Dingle, 1992).
8 The Magic circles’ campaign was linked to the influence of the Church and a wider interest in mysticism in Ireland. The idea of ‘satanic circles’ (meeting places) was intended to frighten away people from derelict houses which were often used by the military for covert operations. The military staged a number of satanic circles by using black candles and chicken blood (from the canteens) and set these up in various derelict places only to expose them to the press as ‘finds’. Again this black propaganda was eagerly taken up in the press.
relatively uninterested or easily misled. As one experienced British journalist explained, ‘Reporting a war on one’s own doorstep is always more difficult than reporting someone else’s war’.  

Moreover, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) set in 1972, precisely because it treated the unrest as a wartime emergency, exerted considerable pressure on newspapers and broadcasters to avoid airing the views of the terrorists. It would often attempt to manipulate the reporting of events by suggesting to editors that certain journalists were ‘misguided’ or ‘irresponsible’ and were undermining political and military objectives. Later, in the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher introduced a more draconian form of censorship by resorting to the Prevention of Terrorism Act in an attempt to starve the IRA of ‘the oxygen of publicity’.

In the Spring of 1972 (in the aftermath of Bloody Sunday), the Army took stock and recognised that the conflict had escalated into a war of words and pictures and that in future they would need a ‘voice’. It would be more appropriate, in fact, to talk of a ‘face’, for the Troubles have largely been defined by a series of enduring images (the RUC officer beating demonstrators, the blood-stained white handkerchief held up to authorities during Blood Sunday and the funeral of Bobby Sands etc). As Peter Taylor noted, ‘history will view the Northern Irish conflict through the camera lens—rather than through what has been written’.

During this period of retrenchment, new methods were introduced in the pursuit of the propaganda war. Senior officers would have to appear before the media and ‘represent’ the Army and its objectives. To this end a privately run school was established (in Glasgow) to provide the Army with specific training for TV appearances. The training was put to good use and had the effect of forcing the military to become more media conscious. After 1977, all Army units had to field a press officer. The Army learned a

---


11 A case in point was when Andrew Stephen, an experienced reporter on Northern Ireland, switched from the Observer to the Sunday Telegraph, one of his new editors was phoned by a senior official at the Northern Ireland Office and taken to lunch when it was suggested that Stephen should be put on other stories. For examples of television programs dealing with Northern Ireland that were subjected to censorship of one form or another, see Paul Madden, ‘Banned, Censored and Delayed: a chronology’, in The British Media and Ireland—Truth: the first casualty, edited and produced by The Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland (1979?). The volume is now out of print but can be found on the excellent CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet) website [http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/] based at the University of Ulster.

12 Hudson & Stanier, War and the Media, 152.

13 Peter Taylor, quoted in BBC Television documentary, The Information War.
profound propaganda truth as far as British people were concerned: ‘the lower the rank, the higher the credibility’.\(^\text{14}\) Junior officers, now given appropriate training, did a good job of appearing on camera in the immediate aftermath of an incident.

In July 1972 ‘Operation Motorman’ (the plan to re-enter the no-go areas of both Londonderry and Belfast by direct military action) was launched. From a military perspective the troops were now available (13,600 by the end of 1971 and 28,000 in the summer of 1972) — but the operation was fraught with the real danger of a media catastrophe. In fact it was one of the first military actions by the British Army that incorporated a complete and detailed media plan. It proved to be a great success and incurred little media criticism — certainly not in Britain (although there was some evidence of this in Germany). From a military perspective ‘Operation Motorman’ was seen as a turning point in the campaign, changing it from a counter-insurgency to a counter-terrorist operation.

After the debacle of Bloody Sunday, much of the Army’s propaganda continued to be channelled (‘tasked’) through MI5 and MI6. Colin Wallace, who had been serving with the Army Press Office since 1968, had been seconded to work closely with the Army Information Policy Unit (AIP — or Army Information Services) that had replaced the Information Liaison Department in September 1971 and now issued briefings through the Ministry of Defence. After he was dismissed from the civil service in 1975, Wallace controversially revealed the extent to which AIP was employing psychological warfare by disseminating ‘black’ propaganda on its own terms, including the covert insertion in the British press of articles etc discrediting leading IRA figures.\(^\text{15}\)

---


\(^\text{15}\) See M. Dillon, *The Dirty War* (London: Hutchinson, 1988). See also Wallace’s contribution in the BBC Television documentary *The Information War*. For a detailed official breakdown of military information activity in Northern Ireland written in response to Lord Widgery’s report on Bloody Sunday see Appendix. Military Information Activity in Northern Ireland, Archive/CS2, http://www.bloody-sunday-inquiry.org.uk/reports/reports/Archive/CS2-441.pdf. This is a fascinating document that can be found on the Saville Inquiry website (officially referred to as ‘The Bloody Sunday Inquiry’). In 1998, Prime Minister Blair set up a Tribunal (chaired by Lord Saville) to ‘enquire into a definitive matter of public importance … in the light of new information’. In his statement to the House of Commons justifying the Saville Inquiry, Blair stated: ‘I want to place on the record our strongest admiration for the way in which our security forces have responded over the years to terrorism in Northern Ireland. They set an example to the world of restraint combined with effectiveness, given the dangerous circumstances in which they are called on to operate. Young men and women daily risk their lives protecting the lives of others and upholding the rule of law, carrying out the task that we have laid upon them. Lessons have, of course, been learnt over many years—in some cases, painful lessons. But the support of the Government and the House for our armed forces has been and remains unshakeable’. *Parliamentary Debates* (Hansard), 29 January 1998. The Saville Inquiry has still not reported after 11 years. It has, however, posted a considerable amount of material on its website including the document on military information activity.
During proceedings for the Saville Inquiry set up by Tony Blair some years after Lord Widgery's original findings, Wallace's claims were denied by those giving evidence. Colonel Maurice Tugwell, who had been appointed head of AIP in August 1971, maintained that he did not give Wallace psychological operations work and furthermore questioned the need for such operations. Tugwell's evidence was supported by Hugh Mooney who had been seconded to Northern Ireland from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Information and Research Department (IRD) to improve the public's perception of British government policies and Army operations. Mooney testified that he was engaged in counter-propaganda which did not involve him in forgery or in disseminating untrue stories. The information that he used was low level intelligence.\textsuperscript{16} If Wallace's claims are to be believed, the AIP was operating in Northern Ireland in a similar fashion to the IRD, which had attempted similar techniques with Communist sympathisers until it was closed down in 1978.\textsuperscript{17} (Fig. 2)

Whatever the merits of Wallace’s claims the Army and the NIO continued to focus on propaganda campaigns designed to isolate the men of violence and win the hearts and minds of the Ulster community. To this end they adopted a policy of identifying all terrorists as the ‘enemy from within’ [the community]. However the IRA in particular developed their own highly sophisticated use of black propaganda and rapidly learned how to control the media, operating invariably at an emotional rather than an intellectual level (c.f. the hunger-strikers portrayed by the IRA as Christ-like martyrs, this time doing the suffering, instead of inflicting suffering, and the funeral of Bobby Sands—see Fig. 3). The army's response was generally more low key and less emotional. When the IRA started its bombing campaign, the security forces attempted to drive a wedge between the Catholic community and the IRA (invariably referred to as terrorists). A poster and handbill campaign was used to encourage citizens to use the Confidential Telephone line and inform on illegal and violent activity. This was extended to bus and train tickets. One of the first posters showed two images of violence (including a hooded gunman—an image frequently employed) and a telephone with the heading:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid., Day 239/111. According to Mooney, the Information Unit’s brief was ‘to fight the propaganda war and it guided and supplement PR. branch’s work’: KM6.1 para. 5. In July 1971 INQ 1873 proposed that a Psyops Committee be established, along with a smaller Psyops Working Committee to deal with day-to-day matters [KM6.108, KM6.109, Day 242/10]. Colonel (now Brigadier) Tugwell in evidence to this Inquiry described the documents setting out these proposals as ‘a monument to an aspiration’ [Day 241/115]. Although the proposals predated his arrival in Northern Ireland, he was quite sure that the Psyops Committee had never met.

\item \textsuperscript{17} For a detailed analysis of IRD activities, see P. Lashmar & J. Oliver, Britain's Secret Propaganda War, 1948-1977 (Stroud: Sutton, 1998). In terms of the veracity of Wallace’s information, see Archie Hamilton's (Armed Forces Minister) statement to the House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), 30 January 1990. See also P. Foot, Who Framed Colin Wallace? (London: Macmillan, 1989), and P. Foot, ‘The Final Vindication’, The Guardian, 2 October 2002.
\end{itemize}
‘All of us together could stop it! Use the confidential telephone’ (Figs 4a and b). More dramatic was a poster targeting Belfast: ‘Your finger on the dial can take the finger off the trigger’ (Fig. 5). One of the most emotional and explicit images (issued by the RUC after La Mon House Hotel attack) showed the charred remains of a body and the accusation of ‘Murder’ (repeated 12 times): ‘This is what the bombers did to a human being.’ Details on the back of the handbill provided background information and a call to ‘Help us stop the slaughter now’ (Figs 6 & 7). The security forces also used posters offering rewards for any information given (‘£50,000 reward is offered for information leading to the conviction of any person or persons found guilty of murder or explosions …’) (Fig. 8). Invariably, however, propaganda focused on IRA criminality and the senseless violence destroying the fabric of community (‘One of the best shops in Rosslea … So the Provos blew it up! This is the Provos’ contribution to your Community’. Mace!) (Fig. 9). The problem was that many Catholics no longer saw themselves as ‘stakeholders’ in the community.

Fig. 2 Military Information Activity 1972
Fig. 3 IRA Poster after the Introduction of H Block

Figs 4a & 4b Confidential Telephone Campaign
Fig. 5 Confidential Telephone Campaign

Fig. 6 Handbill ‘Murder’

Fig. 7 ‘Murder’ the background information

Fig. 8 Poster Reward
In fact there was little that propaganda could do to change this perception—especially in the face of sustained IRA accusations (and intimidation). Ironically a contemporary IRA counter-propaganda poster reminded the Catholic community that ‘Loose talk costs lives’—a familiar British propaganda slogan from the Second World War (‘Whatever you say—say nothing’) (Fig. 10). It is interesting to note that the Army rarely mentioned its original peacekeeping role in Northern Ireland (difficult in any case after Bloody Sunday, as it had lost the moral and political high ground to IRA propaganda.) Indeed, images of the army and its role largely disappear at this point from official propaganda.

This can be explained partly because the British government’s policy towards Northern Ireland changed in the mid to late-1970s, when they decided that they were not fighting an ‘insurgency’, but rather a crime wave—or at least, that’s what they pretended to believe. This was reflected in three linked new policies: Ulsterisation, normalisation and criminalisation. The latter led to the phasing out of internment and ‘special category’ status for convicted paramilitaries (in which they were treated like POWs) and instead the building of the H-Blocks, making convicts wear uniforms, and do prison work. The IRA continued, not surprisingly, to claim in their propaganda that they remained prisoners of war (see Fig. 3). The second meant that Northern Ireland was just a ‘normal’ part of the UK, with high unemployment and crime, while the first meant ‘primacy of the police’, which meant that the role of the Army was downgraded, while the RUC would take the leading role in the fight against ‘crime’. However, it was the politicians (not the Army) who led the propaganda battle against the hunger-strikes, exemplified by Mrs Thatcher herself:
'Crime is crime is crime. It is not political.' The Army were to support the police and to carry out covert and SAS-type attacks on the IRA. This is one of the reasons why one rarely saw 'Army spokesmen' on television even after events in which the Army was involved, such as the killing of eight IRA members at Loughgall in 1987. The reduced public profile of the Army was to reinforce the argument that this wasn't a 'war', but a crime wave. You don't use the British Army to find criminals.

The NIO and the British Army remained constantly on the defensive in the face of an increasingly hostile (or at least, sceptical), audience. Relations between the government and the media also reached a low point in 1988 when IRA spokesmen (and other proscribed organisations) were banned from appearing on radio or television—although it was circumvented by the broadcasters who dubbed interviews with their words subtitled or 'spoken by an actor'. Not only did it prove counter-productive in that it drew attention to what the IRA had to say, but the absurd nature of the censorship presented the IRA with the propaganda initiative—which they skilfully exploited. John Simpson, then the BBC's foreign editor, wrote, ‘There is no more ludicrous sight on television than the lip-synched soundbite'.

The propaganda initiative was reversed in the early 1990s, largely due to changing political and economic circumstances. A battle-fatigued province now looked enviously at the growing political confidence and economic prosperity in Eire. In 1985, an Anglo-Irish accord sought to lay the groundwork for talks between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Dublin agreed not to contest Northern Ireland’s allegiance to Great Britain in exchange for British acknowledgment of the Republic’s interest in how Northern Ireland should be run. A 1993 Anglo-Irish declaration offered to open negotiations to all parties willing to renounce violence, and in 1994 the IRA and, later, Protestant paramilitary groups declared a cease-fire. A resumption of violence in 1996 by the IRA (bombing in Manchester) threatened to derail the peace process, but some years later, negotiations to seek a political settlement went ahead nonetheless.

---


19 Simpson’s condemnatory piece was in written on the fifth anniversary of the Broadcasting Ban: The Guardian, 18 October 1993. The paper also printed under Simpson's article an extract from L. Curtis, A Catalogue of Censorship: Interference on the Airwaves. The Broadcasting Ban, The Media and Ireland (Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 1993) which listed the casualties of the ban (which lasted until September 1994). It is often forgotten that in Eire, during this period, spokesmen for terrorist organisations or their supporters were completely banned on RTÉ (which had a broadcasting monopoly in the Republic.) Critics have pointed out the hypocrisy of the government of the Republic in decrying human rights abuses in the North, when their own anti-terrorist legislation was even more draconian.
During the early 1990s a series of television advertisements was commissioned by the NIO in support of the Confidential Telephone campaign. Produced by McCann-Erickson, they attracted a considerable amount of interest within the advertising industry—although to this day they remain largely unseen on the British mainland. Employing sophisticated advertising techniques, the television commercials supplanted the old poster campaign and raised the techniques of persuasion to new levels. Convinced that the people of Ulster wanted peace and therefore were receptive to new initiatives, the commercials urged the community, ‘Don’t suffer it—Change it … Anything You Know Can Help’.

These were slick productions employing subliminal advertising techniques and popular music. Individual productions such as ‘Lady’, ‘I wanna be like you’ and ‘Carwash’ targeted specific groups and individuals. ‘Lady’, for example, told the story of two women, two traditions and two tragedies within Ulster: ‘One married to the victim of violence, one married to the prisoner of violence. Both scarred, both suffering, both desperately wanting to stop it.’ The commercials pulled no punches by depicting in graphic detail the senseless violence brought about by sectarian para-militarism and the affirming message that the time was right for change. Interestingly enough the military and security forces rarely appear in these commercials and when they do, only fleetingly. In ‘Carwash’ for example, it is the RUC, not the Army, who turn up to prevent a senseless killing.

In summary, the British Army recognised gradually that there was little point in attempting to ‘convert’ the Republican community away from their support of the IRA. Instead, they tried their best to avoid blunders like Bloody Sunday or the Falls Curfew, while making it next to impossible for the IRA to operate in Belfast and Derry, through surveillance, infiltration, informers and sheer exhaustion. Propaganda campaigns such as ‘Don’t suffer it’ attempted to profit from the changing political situation by appealing to all sections of the community to end para-military criminality and violence. The IRA’s own propaganda disasters—like the Enniskillen Remembrance Day bombing—convinced Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness that the political route, which the Republican movement had been pursuing since the hunger strikes, was the more potentially productive, and ‘armed struggle’ was actually impeding it. If official propaganda had a role to play here, it was in helping convince Adams and Sinn Fein that this was true.

20 Revealingly, a spokesman for the Northern Ireland Office claimed that the commercials were not intended as propaganda: ‘… they do represent an official attempt to persuade the people of the wisdom of using the Confidential Telephone, if they have any knowledge whatsoever of terrorist activity, and to influence public opinion in support of the drive to counter terrorism, we certainly do not see ourselves as being involved in the business of “propaganda” which has entirely different connotations …’; Letter from F.S. Wood (Information Service) to Martin Doherty, 8 October 1993. I am extremely grateful to Dr Doherty for allowing me to cite this correspondence.
The conflict in Northern Ireland represents one of the most media-saturated conflicts which spanned over 30 years. It was unquestionably a protracted, 'dirty war' and not surprisingly the British Army made mistakes. In the period 1970-71, the Army over-reacted to the success of the crude IRA propaganda and consequently there was a breakdown of confidence between the British media and the Army PR system. During this period, official statements were often overly defensive. Ulster represented a very different proposition from post-war colonial conflicts such as the Malayan Emergency and the campaign against the Mau Mau, yet successive governments and the Army expected self-censorship and filtration of news stories up the chain of command and looked upon criticism as unpatriotic and saw it as inevitably leading to lowering morale amongst the troops. The sense of frustration with the perceived impartiality of the (British) media prompted Airey Neave (MP)—who would himself become a victim of a terrorist (INLA) bomb—to declare that 'we are losing the propaganda war'. In fact the British media, particularly the press (with honourable exceptions) also took a battering for its partisanship and for failing to measure up to its own professional standards.

In its official report, published in 2006, on military operations in Northern Ireland (‘Operation Banner’), the Army took credit for what it termed a unique success against an ‘irregular force’. However the report raised serious concerns about information policies and concluded that they were ‘ill-coordinated with other government bodies; they were reactive; and often missed significant opportunities’. Part of the reason for the ineffectiveness lay in the lack of a single unitary authority for the campaign, and the lack of a joint forum to agree Information Operations priorities, messages and means of dissemination. Moreover, according to the report, constant criticism in the republican media was not seriously challenged. Coming to terms with the demands of the modern media was a long and painful learning curve for the military in Northern Ireland. From a starting point of what can only be described as insouciant amateurism, the Army did

---

22 Quoted in R. Bolton, Death on the Rock and Other Stories (London: W.H. Allen, 1990). See also Taylor, British Propaganda in the Twentieth Century, 250. Bolton directed the controversial TV program Death on the Rock (1988) which claimed the existence of a ‘shoot to kill policy’ operating in Ulster. Generally speaking, the print media allowed themselves to be manipulated and fed by the state propagandists quite contentedly. It was The Times that led the critical onslaught against Thames TV over ‘Death on the Rock’.
learn a number of important lessons; most importantly that it was involved in a battle not confined to lives and territory but also ‘hearts and minds’. According to the military version of events, the lessons learnt from these mistakes have already served as a blue-print for military-media operations in the Balkans, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq. A more accurate assessment, however, is that the British Army has been rather poor in developing COIN (counter-insurgency) doctrine as a whole and therefore has had to (re)learn the painful lessons all over again in each campaign.
Something that I noted in some of the presentations here is that you kind of bad mouthed your own war correspondents, and it puzzled me because I have known quite a few of them and I have great respect for them. When I was wandering around Vietnam my first year I ran across some remarkable correspondents who hailed from this place, Pat Burgess among them. I would find myself out with some special forces outfit in a bad place and look up, and there would be Pat Burgess dragging in off some patrol. I didn't see what he wrote but I knew he was there, I knew he was getting the story. One of my roommates hailed from here, a fellow named Martin Stuart Fox who later went bad and over to the groves of Academe and became a professor in Brisbane and is the world's leading expert on Laos of all places, but in every capital I lived and worked in there were a few very fine Australian correspondents, quite often not working for Australian publications but working for Reuters, working for UPI, working for AP. So don't sell them short.

You know I am not an academic. I was driven out of college after six weeks by an eight a.m. class in the German language taught by a fat lady with poorly fitted dentures who would come in every morning and say ‘Guttentarg’ and spray the first three rows; I couldn't bear it so I left college and got my education on the city desk of a daily newspaper starting at the age of seventeen. When I went to Vietnam I was twenty-three years old, I was already fairly well a veteran working for United Press International. The movie [We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young] would have you believe that in the Ia Drang I was fairly green, but that's Hollywood. I had been already seven months covering the Marines in the northern part of Vietnam, went on every operation they had including a combat amphibious assault landing, and there aren't even many people wearing a marine uniform who can say they have been on one of those now.
I have been covering wars for forty-three years: ours, others, upheavals of various sorts, so probably I am the luckiest man you have ever seen. My roommates and I had an animal house in Saigon, two Brits, two Aussies, two Americans and various odd sods who pitched up and slept on the floor. We used to make odds which of us would live to see the ripe old age of twenty five, and some of us didn’t make it so luck plays a good part of it. There are benefits to coming of age, if you will, in a war zone, on a battlefield. I would go out, march with a company from the Marines, Army or whatever and I might stay three hours or three days or a week. I would leave and write my story, ship my film with the sure certain knowledge that my story and pictures would probably appear in the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper which would make its way in a week or so out into the field to the company I had marched with, and if not *Stripes* then it would appear in some newspaper in Iowa and mom would clip out the story and put it in her next letter to her son. And also I knew that I would be back marching with that company at some point.

Now my mother did not raise such a fool as to write lies and make mistakes about men who are armed and dangerous and whom I am going to see again. So it made me a very cautious and careful reporter, and I also had the great good fortune to make my way into the first major [American] battle of the Vietnam War and the bloodiest battle of the entire war in the Ia Drang Valley. Getting there wasn’t all that hard because I had marched with Colonel Moore’s battalion three, four days before and they had had a look at me and I had a look at them. I found myself in an artillery base firing support for the battle that was just beginning, and I wanted to desperately get in there. There were five other correspondents in that same firebase including my nemesis of the time, Peter Arnett, and we were all trying to get in, but I had the ace up my sleeve because I recognised Hal Moore’s operations officer, Captain Dillon, as he rushed past and I grabbed him. I told him ‘I want in there’, and he said, ‘I am going in as soon as its dark with two helicopters full of ammunition and some water jugs but I can’t take you without the old man’s say so’. I said ‘well get him on the radio’, and I followed him into the tent and he got on the PRC25 and in the middle of this cliff-hanger battle he had Hal Moore on the other end and he reported ‘I’m coming in, this is what I am bringing as soon as its dark and oh, by the way, that reporter Galloway wants to come along’. I listened carefully as I wanted to hear his answer. Back came the answer, ‘If he’s crazy enough to want to come in here and you got room, bring him’. Then all I had to do was hide out for about three more hours and as it got near dark Arnett and the other odd sods got on a helicopter to going back to Pleiku and a hot meal and a cold shower and a warm bed and I got a ride into the pages of history.

Every time I see Pete Arnett he reminds me of this and it’s a good thing because otherwise I should remind him. I stand here as a correspondent, a war correspondent,
forty-three years of doing it from Vietnam in 1965 to Iraq in 2006. I am happily retired from actively doing such madness. In 2006 I looked up and said ‘What am I doing? I’m right at 65 years of age, I am wearing thirty five pounds of body armour and a five pound hat, my back hurts, my neck hurts and I am running up sand dunes behind nineteen-year-old marines. I am gonna quit this because the young ones can have it, I know they can’t do it as well but by God they are gonna have to learn.’

So to get right to the title of this conference, we really must define information warfare. For those who don’t know, it does not translate to shooting the first reporter who you see. Bad form, but it would discourage the others. I’ve noticed over the years that military-media relations, at least in the American army, operate rather like the pendulum on one of those old fashioned clocks that moves slowly but steadily from one extreme to the other extreme. Let’s not start with Vietnam; let’s go back to that remarkable Civil War General, William Tecumseh Sherman, who said famously that if he caught another goddamn reporter in his camp he would hang him for a spy, and he added, ‘I am sure that if I did so he would be filing dispatches from hell before noon’. He went on in his memoirs to say that there were those generals who preferred to make their reputation with these correspondents, who were mischievous and represented owners who were likewise mischievous and caused trouble for professional military men. He called it a modern difficulty and he said we got to do something about it, but he said hanging them really won’t work, we’ve got to figure out a way to do this. We still haven’t but it goes back a good ways.

Vietnam was the most openly covered, freely covered war in the history of my country. No censorship. You turned up, you had a press card or you had a letter from an editor of even a puny publication and they would give you a press card that was your ticket to ride. It was mentioned by my good friend Bill Hammond here that they had a milk run that made its way twice daily from the south of Vietnam to the northern parts, stopping at five or six different places. You went out there, you got manifested, you got on, you went where you wanted, you found an outfit, you were welcome to stay as short a time or as long a time as you wished, no problems. You, in exchange for this press card, you signed a one page document, I think five or six points. I will not report troop movements while they’re underway, I will not report the actual number of casualties in battle while the battle is still underway, I will not report the actual number of casualties in battle while the battle is still underway, instead I will characterise them as light, moderate or heavy and a couple of other points he mentioned: very simple.

By contrast to be an ‘embed’ in the invasion of Iraq one was required to sign a thirty-six page, single-space, double-sided agreement of all the things you would not do. Everything imaginable. I am sure a committee of JAG officers put in several man-years
of labour figuring this out. Now how do things really work in the world? I think I may be the only person besides that said JAG committee who actually read this document; nobody else did, not those who signed it, not those who commanded the battalions who were ordered by the Pentagon in a brilliant move to accept seven correspondents each (and it was not optional, you will take seven of them and you’ll see that they’re fed and sheltered and whatever else and give them an opportunity to do their job). It may be that the only smart thing about that whole damn operation is that they set up this system and it worked. I had been preaching for years to the military—I find it useless to preach to journalists and especially to editors, and even worse to publishers, they don’t listen, they don’t educate, they don’t self-educate, but more about that later.

It’s a remarkable opportunity because from Vietnam came this idea that the press lost the Vietnam War, which we all know is complete and utter bullshit. We had not the power to win or lose then, now or ever; it doesn’t work that way. I think most of you understand that but we were a convenient scapegoat and an opportunity to put the blame there on the messenger, shoot him if you will and thus excuse yourself of the necessity of looking at the fact that it was failures of political leadership by no fewer than four consecutive presidents that lost the war along with the help of some of the stupidest generals operating. Westmoreland’s own aid once wrote that the general’s strategy of attrition was proof he had no strategy whatsoever. And further, in the wake of the Ia Drang battles when the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division urgently sought permission to pursue the fleeing enemy into Cambodia, this thing bucked all the way to the White House, and it came back ‘absolutely not’, at which point we conceded strategic and tactical initiative to the enemy and from that point on General Giap and his friends would decide when we fought, where we fought, how long we would fight and when it would end. Now that’s a very handy thing to have if you are the commander of the opposing forces. We gave it to them gift-wrapped and they made the most of it, and in the end they won. I think it was from that moment probably preordained that they would, but it’s much easier to say the press did it, and it polluted the Officers’ Clubs, this red herring, for a generation and more.

Now it comes back to us again, it’s got to be knocked in the head. I didn’t lose the war, Pete Arnett didn’t lose the war, and certainly Walter Cronkite did not lose the war. The war was lost, and let me tell you what it looked like. In the small towns of America—wouldn’t happen today because we no longer have a draft, no conscription—an all-volunteer army. So most of your soldiers, marines come from probably seven states, the bulk of them from counties with fewer than ten thousand population; they join because of a lack of any other opportunity either economic or otherwise. Back then at
the height of the war the draft was sucking in twenty thousand young men per month in America and they were dying at the rate of three thousand per month. So the machine was sucking them up and it was sending the coffins home. Now the first coffin arrives in a town of four thousand and it’s greeted with all due respect and honour, and a big funeral and a parade and the VFW comes out and they do the honours over the coffin and everybody’s quite proud; and then the second one comes and then the third, then the fourth and even in a small town where patriotism is very strong people begin to say, ‘When is this thing going to end, how long, how much longer and to what end because we don’t seem to be winning, we may not be losing but not winning is losing itself and especially in a democracy?’

Old Giap knew this; he did an analysis probably around 1949 or so of the French and their prospects and he said they cannot win, their Blitzkrieg will fade away to a defence, and it will go on endlessly and they cannot win because they represent a democracy and democracies are not set up to fight long wars with no immediate results. Well, that same prescription applied to us, applied to the Americans, so that’s how it ended. The results in terms of the military and the media were that the military didn’t like the media anymore. You move along to Granada where a Naval person was in charge of the operation, and he decreed that there would be no correspondents allowed on the island until the war was over, and when some of them threatened to charter boats and sail up his orders were simple, ‘sink the bastards’; that stopped that. So there were howls of outrage and in the Pentagon they sat down and they negotiated with the bureau chiefs and editors in Washington and they said ‘We’ll form a ready reaction pool of a dozen correspondents, and they’ll all wear beepers and keep a little ditty bag with their shaving gear and their meds below their desk and if the beeper goes off they can’t tell anyone where they are going, they just proceed off to Andrew’s air base and they go away to some critical operations’.

That pool system seemed to take the edge off the complaints for a while and then came Panama. They alerted the pool and they carried them south, promptly locked them up in a hangar on the airfield there and kept them incommunicado until the war was over. More howls of outrage, so more discussions, we’ll do better next time I promise, the cheque’s in the mail, we’ll give you a kiss first, all of that and then we come to the Gulf War. Now we’ve got 500,000 plus American troops, 200,000 allied troops scattered over three very large, empty desert countries and this is to be covered, the Pentagon says, by ten pools of ten journalists each. Each with its own colonel escort who will have complete authority over movement and complete authority over pool reports: he can censor them, he can roll them up in a ball and throw them over his shoulder into the desert. Oh, and
by the way, the system for getting the reports off the battlefield and back to the rear was quite similar to that which Eisenhower set up for the invasion of Normandy. There was a lieutenant who drove a jeep along the tap line road and the divisions were supposed to get the pool reports back to him and he did a 250-mile round trip back to King Khalid airfield and hitched a ride on a C130 down to the international hotel in Bahrain where a thousand screaming journalists penned up, angry as hell, totally incompetent, sat waiting breathlessly for the pool reports. Well, sometimes they got there and sometimes they didn't. Some of them arrived three days after the war. Eisenhower's plan worked much better than this one.

That's how it went for most of them and it was not satisfactory for covering the war, but there were two people who were outside that system: one was a lady from the Washington Post who quite wisely attached herself to Walt Boomer, a former chief of information for the Marine Corps and now the Marine ground commander. While the army was stiff-arming the press, Boomer was backing deuce-and-a-half trucks up to the hotel international, saying 'Give us fifty more', and hauling them off.

The other exception to the rule was me. I arrived two weeks before the air war began on what they laughingly called the bigfoot pool plane in mid-January, and I was told by my boss, 'Well you're an old man now you can just cover Schwarzkopf's headquarters and tell the young ones how not to get killed', and that seemed alright. I had a suite at the Marriott Hotel across the street and a buffet lunch that would choke a king and communications that worked; all of this was quite nice and so it went along for a few days. Suddenly I was summoned to Schwarzkopf's office, escorted over by his press personage, a Naval Captain, who said, 'Why didn't you tell me you knew the General?', and I said 'Well I know a lot of Generals, I don't talk about it too much'. 'Well', he said, 'he wants to see you, come along.' We went over and the first thing Schwarzkopf did was throw the Naval Captain right the hell out on his ass, slammed the door and takes the cover off his battle map and tells me what he was and was not going to do.

You see we had marched together when he was a brand new major in August of 1965 in Vietnam. There's a little subtext: an old foreign editor once told me the secret for becoming a famous war and foreign correspondent is you go abroad when you're very young, you make friends with the third secretary political in the embassies, and the lieutenants in the armies and you live long enough for them to rise to become Secretary of State and four-star generals and you will be a success. I had gotten there. The general went through roughly his battle plans and he said, 'I know you want to go ride with the 1st Cavalry but they're my division and my reserve and probably not going to get into the war because it's only going to last a 144 hours according to the plan'. He said,
'I will send you to a better division, at least to the division that has the commanding general who’s most like General Hal Moore’, who incidentally taught cadet Schwarzkopf infantry tactics at West Point.

It’s a very small world, you know, he said, and he also has the most challenging and dangerous mission in my battle plan, and I said, ‘Thanks Norm, I thought we were friends’. So he says then, ‘The Marines are beating the crap out of me, they want to have an amphibious assault landing on the beaches of Kuwait and I’m not going to let them, it would be a blood bath’. And he says, ‘What does it look like from across the street there?’ I said, ‘Sir, with all due respect you are in far greater danger from the 300 reporters in the Marriot Hotel than anything north of the berm’, and he said, ‘What do you mean?’ I said, ‘Well I hate to break this news to you but they are the most illiterate—militarily speaking—bunch of fools I have ever seen, they don’t know one end of a rifle from another, they haven’t a clue what an M1A1 Abrahams will do or how much fuel it uses, nothing, they know nothing. Christ, there’s even a food writer and a fashion writer among them. The city editors have swept up whoever is least able to do and most able to go and they have shipped them all off.’ He said, ‘Well, why is this my problem?’ I said, ‘They are a danger to you and this command’, and he said, ‘What do I do about it?’ I told him, ‘If I were you, since there is still time I would start “War 101” over there; you know, give them a two-hour background briefing every morning, bring in the world’s leading expert on the fire-finding radar, next day bring in the world’s leading expert on the M1A1 tank, etcetera’, and his eyes lit up and he said ‘Damn good idea’, he said, ‘I can do that’.

Well, it started the next morning and they brought in the radar artillery guy to talk about the enemy guns and our guns and what the fire-finder could do in terms of counter-battery. Then came the tanker and there on the third day—now we’re coming to information warfare and how you do it skillfully. The third day was the world’s leading expert on Marine combat amphibious assault landings and I am sitting there thinking ‘Oh you dirty bastard’, and the guy briefed brilliantly on how you do it, and I listened very closely, he never once said we are going to do it, just how you would do it. The next day on every major newspaper front page, on the evening news were all these informed reports on how the Marines were going to storm the beaches of Kuwait. The pools were run by—now this is brilliant and evil—a committee of journalists themselves. I have never seen such backstabbing, double-dealing, thieving, lying bastards in my life. They rushed to give themselves what was obviously the most glorious pool position of all, floating around in the Persian Gulf with the Marines. So what happened? Saddam moved two divisions off the line to cover the beaches and when there was no landing and
the sea-sick correspondents for the amphibious assault made their way to solid ground again no one said a word, not one complaint, and to this day I think it stands as the finest information operation I have ever seen won; they didn't lie. Never lie to people who buy ink by the barrel; it's a bad idea, they will pursue you until the death. They didn't lie, the results were evident, lives were saved, the press looked at it and there may have been some of them quite pissed off but dared not say a word. So that is my definition of information warfare done at its best, and if you're going to undertake it do it with a scalpel not a hatchet. You really want to do it carefully and don't lie, never lie.

So I had my ride, had a great story, rode with the 24th Mech. On its 250-mile charge through the western Iraq desert, ate more sand and dirt than anyone could ever imagine, and we came out on Highway 8 and they never thought we were coming, they never knew we were coming, had no idea. They wouldn't go in that desert, they knew if you did you would probably die. I did not file through the pool. The Public Affairs Officer was given his own Black Hawk and he flew out each evening before dark tasked to find me and the pool and pick up the material and see that it got back. Now I worked for a weekly magazine; I don't care about daily deadlines, I'm just hoping this war's over by Thursday because Friday is when the magazine goes to bed and you know that's exactly how it worked. I could have planned it myself and when it was over I was flown back to the rear and they had a dedicated fax line to Washington for casualty reporting and there were so few casualties that it was unoccupied and the General said let him, let Galloway, have it.

During my two weeks with the division I had been given the freedom of the division, throughout I had been welcomed into the evening briefing, the division commander's evening brief. He said, 'I trust you Galloway because Schwarzkopf trusts you, but more than that I trust you because you are fucking well coming with me'. Now that is a very potent argument and I must confess that I would sit there of an evening—we had the talk wired for at least the sound of CNN (you couldn't get a good picture at that distance but we could hear what was being said)—and I would sit there listening to one retired general after another commenting on how he would do this operation, and I am sitting there saying shut the hell up, you know this is my ass out here on the line and after the war I suggest that retired generals should have a clause in their contract that for at least six or eight years prevented them from commenting on television on possible military operations in advance of them. They ought to make them sign that thirty-six page JAG letter.

So at the end of all this the press were unhappy, and the pool system did not really work. We had a conference in Chicago at the McCormick Foundation and the division commanders were on one side and we were on the other side of a long table, and over
on the Army's side were nothing but long faces and complaints and I said ‘Where was your pool, general?’ ‘Well’, he said, ‘I locked the bastards up in the rear.’ Well there you are, and another one said, ‘Well I took them forward but I forgot to lay on a helicopter to get their stuff back’, and on and on. What they had succeeded in doing, by following a Pentagon plan to punish the press for supposed transgressions and losing the Vietnam War, is hiding the efficacy of ten long years of effort in training and equipping the finest army the US had ever put in the field. They did not have the confidence in their own work, in their own product, and what they also did by doing this—besides sticking a finger in the eye of the media—was they denied the parents, the wives, the children of those troops the great good pleasure of seeing just a snippet of their son's division or his battalion on TV doing a good job.

I think the Brits call it too clever by half. Well that's where they ended up and immediately the pendulum began swinging the other way and you started hearing talk about 'embeds'. 'Embeds' were first tried in Bosnia and it worked seemingly fairly well there, and you move along to operation Iraqi Freedom and the 730-odd 'embeds' in total, seven per battalion. The whole objective besides giving the people a truer picture of what an army does at war, what a battalion does at war, what the individual soldier does at war. The objective should be a closer-knit cooperation between the military and the media. Now I don't mean to say by any means that the reporters are going to go in the tank; some may, but not likely. What you need is a new generation of correspondents who understand your institution and your junior officers need to understand our institution. Familiarity in this case does not breed contempt; generally it breeds respect. So what you do by the embed process is to put the young lieutenants and the young reporters together in the great good hope that one day a few decades along the lieutenant may be the four-star general and the reporter may be the editor of the *New York Times* and they can call each other up on the phone and take those calls and talk frankly to each other.

I know that this worked to some extent because at the end of the war I was asked to run a panel discussion at the Army War College. The panel was composed of former battalion commanders who had been brought to the War College to do the course there and the journalists who had been embedded with those particular battalion commanders, at least a couple each. If you're running a panel you're going to have some friction, but the only friction that I could find as we settled in to do this panel was between the journalists arguing over 'my battalion was better than yours'. The battalion commanders had no complaints; like I said, they ignored the thirty-six-page double-sided document from the JAGs; they sat down their quota of correspondents and they said, 'Ok guys, here's how it's going to work. We're gonna be moving fast, we won't stop so you can take pictures,
we won't stop so you can have a whiz, we're not gonna stop so you can set out your little satellite dish and do your thing, these things will come to pass when we naturally come to a halt and not before and, by the way, I will tell you when it is safe for you to put up your little satellite dish and file your copy, and if you would like I would happily take a look at your copy and make sure you are not screwing things up security-wise’, and the wiser among them, who trusted their battalion commanders, would say, ‘Yeah, that sounds fair dinkum, we’ll let you do that’.

More often it operated that way at higher headquarters and it also operated with people who had never been around the military and didn’t understand about radio codes, and other things like that that you really shouldn’t put in your story. But it all worked, it all worked well, and I wrote a story saying that it was a win-win situation: the military won because for the first time in a generation the American people, indeed the people of the world, got a chance to see what soldiers do in the opening stages of a war and the journalist for the first time in a generation actually got to ride to war across the full spectrum of the front line. I put that out as a column and immediately got an email back from a lady who said, ‘Mr Galloway, you missed one very important win’, she said. ‘My son is a soldier, he is in this particular battalion and division and I know which correspondent was embedded with his unit.’ She said during the war, during the invasion, I came to recognise his voice so I kept the TV on 24/7. I could be in the kitchen washing dishes, I would hear that voice and I would know he was on and I would rush in and listen to the report. Now, I may not have seen my son personally, but I knew the context in which his battalion was operating and it is so much greater a thing to know than not to know if you are a mother.’ I just wrote her back and said, ‘Yes ma’am, you are absolutely right’. So we’ve gone on and I think we got the pendulum back over here and I think it’s kinda come this way to an extent but we’ll see where it ends up. I hope not at the far end but somewhere in the middle.

We talked some earlier about what is, to me, one of the great problems today: the paucity of coverage out of a place like Iraq, the few correspondents who are actually based there and able to go out and embed with units that then write the stories. It costs about forty thousand dollars per month US to keep one correspondent in Iraq by the time you add in insurance, by the time you add in security, by the time you add in transportation, preferably an armoured vehicle of some kind, they’re quite expensive and then, oh yes, in Baghdad you can’t have one car to do your office’s work, you have to two and they have to be carefully chosen because licence plates ending in even numbered numerals are allowed to operate on one day and odd numbered on the next, so you got to keep two cars on hire just to do your daily running around. So it’s a very expensive proposition at
a time when newspapers in America, and I guess around the world now, are under a great deal of pressure moneywise, earnings-wise, circulation, all of that. I don't know if we are coming to an end of newspapers—I certainly hope it doesn't happen while I'm still alive, I enjoy reading them—but next year is my fiftieth year in the newspaper business and by god I am glad I got it all out of my system.

There has to be some understanding between your institution and mine. I've had it easy because I've always understood from the beginning what a tight-knit community the professional military officers are, I understood that if you screwed one of them you might as well have screwed them all because the word will pass. I also understood that if you dealt fairly with one you've dealt fairly with all of them, or the presumption is that you will, and that stood me in great stead. I've always tried to deal fairly with everyone and so they say, 'Well, Galloway's a friend of the soldier, Galloway is a friend of Army, the Marine Corps', and I say, 'Yes, that's true too'. But because of my love of the soldier if I see the institution screwing it up, setting up a situation where soldiers may die needlessly, everybody understands I'll skin them and salt them alive because my love of the soldier is greater than my love of the institution. I think that's understood fairly clearly and fairly well too and I wouldn't have it any other way.

I have a hard time defining myself as one thing or the other, I feel half a correspondent and half a soldier myself. I left Landing Zone X-Ray after three days of that experience knowing one thing for certain: I knew that 80 young soldiers had died so that I might live. I knew that 130 had been terribly wounded in the same pursuit. I knew that I had an obligation to tell the truth about them, to tell their story and that obligation extended far past just that battalion; in that year it extended to all soldiers, to all Marines that I have come in contact with in 43 years of covering the military. I don't think that puts me in the tank by any means. I think if anything it makes me a better reporter for loving soldiers, for caring about them and how they live and how they die and that's the way I'd look at the situation. There may be journalism professors who would say 'well, Galloway has the life boat syndrome', or something. Well, fuck them.
PUBLICATIONS FROM THE CHIEF OF ARMY MILITARY HISTORY CONFERENCE

Edited by Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey

*From Past to Future: The Australian Experience of Land/Air Operations*

*Serving Vital Interests: Australia's Strategic Planning in Peace and War*
Canberra: School of History, UNSW/ADFA, 1996.
Pp. x + 153. ISBN 0 7317 0357 X.

*The Second Fifty Years: The Australian Army 1947-1997*
Canberra: School of History, UNSW/ADFA, 1997.

*1918: Defining Victory*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 1999.

*The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2000.

*The Korean War: A 50 Year Retrospective*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2000.

*A Century of Service: 100 Years of the Australian Army*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2001.

*The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1962-1972*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2002.

*The Foundations of Victory: The Pacific War 1943-1944*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2004.

*Battles Near and Far: A Century of Operational Deployment*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2004.

*Entangling Alliances: Coalition Warfare in the Twentieth Century*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2005.

*An Art in Itself: The Theory and Conduct of Small Wars and Insurgencies*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2006.

*1917: Tactics, Training and Technology*
Canberra: Army History Unit, 2007.