

2009 Chief of Army's Military History Conference
Raise, Train and Sustain: Delivering Land Combat Power

The 2009 Chief of Army's Military History Conference was held at the National Convention Centre, Canberra on 1 and 2 October 2009. The theme was *Raise, Train and Sustain: Delivering Land Combat Power*, with an impressive list of international and Australian speakers gathered to discuss the topic. The Australian Army and Army History Unit are deeply grateful to the Conference Sponsors for their support of this world class event, with particular thanks extended to the Department of Veterans' Affairs who were the Conference's Major Sponsor.

The evening of 30 September saw Conference guests assemble at the Royal Military College Duntroon Officers' Mess for the annual Chief of Army's History Conference Dinner. Sponsored once again by our good friends Point Trading Group, the evening was an entertaining and enjoyable start to the Conference festivities. The food and drink were excellent and the Acting Chief of the Australian Army, **MAJGEN John Caligari** presented the 2009 CEW Bean Prize, which is awarded to the best honours or postgraduate thesis submitted in any Australian university focusing on the history of the Australian Army. This year's winner was Dr Noah Riseman, for his PhD thesis "Colonising Yolngu Defence: Arnhem Land in the Second World War and the Transnational Uses of Indigenous People in the Second World War."

The Conference proper was opened on the morning of Thursday 1 October by MAJGEN Caligari who spoke about the three distinct areas of the Conference theme, raising, training and sustaining an army. He noted that while technologies move on, and while nation-states change their character, certain constants about the supply and use of military force remain, and the Army can learn a great deal about how to deal with these issues by looking to analysing of past efforts.

MAJGEN Caligari then introduced the Keynote Speaker **Prof Brian Holden Reid** (Kings' College London). Prof Holden Reid is a highly distinguished scholar with a profound knowledge of the US Civil War. He spoke at length about the difficulties encountered by both the Union and Confederate armies in raising and sustaining armies for a prolonged conflict, at a scale not previously seen in history. The paper was extremely well received and Prof Holden Reid was presented with gifts of appreciation by both MAJGEN Caligari and Mr Jon Linehan, the Chief Executive Officer of Defcredit who were sponsors of the Keynote speaker.

Following this, MAJGEN Caligari was pleased to launch *Lighthorse, A History of Australia's Mounted Arm*, the latest in the Australian Army History Series published by Cambridge University Press by Dr Jean Bou. Dr Bou delivered his reply before being interviewed by ARMY newspaper and then the adjournment for morning tea.

The next session engaged issues of Raise, Train and Sustain in the Great War, with two presentations by American academics. **Dr Jennifer Keene** (Chapman University) concentrated on the American experiences, while **Dr Timothy Dowling** (Virginia Military Institute) spoke on the less covered issues encountered in mobilising and sustaining the vast Imperial Russian Army. Dr Keene's lively presentation included examples of intelligence tests that US recruits sat that assisted the Army in

determining which role would best suit the individual, while Dr Dowling delved into his excellent paper after beginning his presentation with the humorous Russian joke that, 'An army is a collection of those who failed to evade conscription.'

Following a break for lunch, the Conference moved onto the Second World War with presentations by **Dr Craig Stockings** (ADFA), and by **Dr Steve Bullard** (AWM). Dr Stockings' paper looked at the raise, train and sustain aspects of the Second AIF in the early stages of the Western Desert Campaign. In contrast to many other examples presented throughout the Conference, it was noted that on this occasion the Australians had got it right and were very well prepared when they assaulted Bardia. In fact few armies in history were as well prepared. Dr Bullard's presentation was eagerly anticipated as an opportunity to examine the issues of raise, train and sustain from the perspective of an enemy combatant, that being the Japanese in New Guinea. Dr Bullard noted the great honour and fanfare that accompanied the drafting of a Japanese son into the military, however, he did note the old Japanese maxim, 'Java is Heaven, Burma is Hell, and you don't return alive from New Guinea.'

After breaking for afternoon tea, the final session of the first day saw **Dr William Donnelly** (US Army's Center for Military History) examine the Conference's themes in relation to the United States Army in the Korean War. Dr Donnelly's paper highlighted the numerous difficult issues confronting the United States army at the time, which included the threat of a third World War with the Soviet Union as an adversary, multiple occupation duties, and the lingering idea that the importance of the Army's ground forces would be superseded in future conflict by the Air Force and atomic weapons. In addition, the paper expertly illustrated the problems in raising, training and sustaining the Army in the final two years of the Korean War, when the conflict had developed a holding-pattern of sorts.

The day concluded with the chance to socialise at the Networking Drinks session hosted by Defence Health.

The second day, Friday 2 October opened with a presentation by **Prof Ian Beckett** (University of Kent) entitled the *Compulsion of Destitution*. Prof Beckett's paper examined the British Army and the dilemma of Imperial defence from 1870-1914. Professor Beckett noted the substantial size of the British Empire and the inevitable logistical difficulties the army faced in defending such a vast amount of territory spread far across the globe.

The morning session was followed by the second book launch of the Conference, on this occasion, a relaunch of Alec Hill's classic biography, *Chauvel of the Light horse*. The book was launched by the **Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General David Hurley**. Pleasingly, it was fantastic to see so many members and friends of the Hill and Chauvel families in the audience who were able to witness the relaunch of Hill's enduring tome before joining the Conference delegates for morning tea.

The mid-morning session of the Conference saw **Captain Dayton McCarthy** (Army) present a paper on the contributions of the Citizen Military Forces and the role of non-regular units in the Australian Army. Captain McCarthy's paper was very well received and sparked a flurry of questions from the floor. In particular, many current

and former Army reservists were eager to gain insights from Captain McCarthy's extensive research on the topic.

Following lunch, two noted local presenters were on hand to examine some of the more modern Australian experiences. **LTCOL Malcolm McGregor** (Land Warfare Studies Centre) firstly dealt with the challenges faced by the Australian Army when it returned from the Vietnam War. LTCOL McGregor illustrated many of the transformations the army needed to undertake as national service came to an end, and Australia began to concentrate on self-reliance with a focus on continental defence. Following this presentation, **Prof David Horner** (ANU) delivered a presentation on the deployment and sustainment of INTERFET. Prof Horner noted that while the mission was highly successful, in many regards this shrouded considerable shortcomings in logistics that may have proved more serious had greater resistance been encountered by Australian troops in East Timor. In effect, this then served to highlight improvements that could be made in the future prior to other large scale overseas deployments.

The afternoon then saw Conference delegates treated to the Canadian experience of Raise, Train and Sustain with **Prof David Bercusson** (University of Calgary) examining the Canadian Army's evolution following the Cold War. Prof Bercusson was forthright in his analysis, and the different perspective proved insightful given the similarities between the Australian and Canadian Armies.

With afternoon tea out of the way, **Dr Jim Storr** (UK) rose to deliver the final presentation of the Conference on the British Regimental System in the Army. The presentation scrutinised the 2006 restructuring of the Regimental system and the impact these reforms had on raising, training and sustaining British units. Dr Storr's paper was topical and particularly interesting to the uniformed personnel in attendance.

With the end of presentations, it fell to Conference organiser **Prof Jeff Grey** to formally close the Conference proceedings.

The Conference enjoyed a solid attendance of both military, former-military and civilian delegates. It was fantastic to meet many new people attending the CA's History Conference for the first time, in addition to the familiar faces of delegates who have loyally supported the Conference over a long period of time. The organisers would like to thank everyone who attended this year's Conference. In light of the continuing tight economic conditions, your support of these Conferences is appreciated and ensures that they will survive into the future. The Army History Unit would like to thank Mr Roger Lee, Prof Jeff Grey, Prof Peter Dennis, Dr Andrew Richardson, Mrs Tania Hampson, Mr Nick Anderson, SGT Greg Cahill and Ms Denise Penfold for their invaluable assistance in organising the Conference and the speakers.

In addition, Dr Jean Bou, Professor Glyn Harper, LTCOL Bill Houston, and Mr Neil James are to be warmly thanked for chairing Conference sessions. AHU would also like to thank the National Convention Centre, who admirably accommodated all the requirements of the Conference at the eleventh hour after the noted mishaps with original venue location.

AHU must acknowledge the wonderfully generous support of our sponsors – Major Sponsor **Department of Veterans' Affairs**; Conference Dinner Sponsor **Point Trading Group**; Keynote Speaker Sponsor **Defcredit**; Networking Drinks Sponsor **Defence Health**; and Satchel Sponsor **The Military Shop**.

The 2010 Chief of Army's Military History Conference will examine demobilisation and how Armies have dealt with the challenges encountered at war's end. The Conference will be held on 30 September and 1 October at the same venue, with the Conference Dinner to be held on 29 September.

The published papers from this Conference will appear in a professionally edited and produced volume early in 2010. Conference delegates will receive a copy free as part of their registration. All other interested readers can purchase a copy from The War Book Shop, Ph: (02) 9542 6771 or warbookshop@bigpond.com