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This edition of the *Australian Army Journal* hosts a broad range of articles from an equally wide variety of authors. There has been a conscious effort to attract authors from within the uniformed ranks, regardless of position, who have something to add to our collective knowledge. It is no easy task to write an article, particularly when you may not have a history of writing or publishing. For that reason alone everyone’s contributions are warmly appreciated. But it is particularly pleasing to see this edition contain contributions from warrant officers, commissioned officers and retired officers.

The articles also cover a broad range of topics. Training issues are the focus of Warrant Officer Walsh’s views on unarmed combat in the ADF, and Major McLennan’s piece on the challenges inherent in training an army coming out from an extended period of operational service. Force structuring considerations have motivated both Allison Casey and Paul Scanlan to respectively address the competing future demands that drive such planning, and the continued utility of a conventional parachute capability.

An examination of the operational art is evident in the contributions of several contributors. Ian Langford sets out to look at ways of defeating a complex adaptive system, while Nick Floyd critiques a doctrinaire approach to ‘population-centric’ operations. Ben Pronk and Mick Say from the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis look at a possible method of enhancing decision-making within Army through using complex adaptive systems methodology.

Finally, Justin Kelly looks at the way in which the concept of the AirSea Battle was developed in response to the future growth of China and is now being looked at anew as the commitment to Afghanistan winds down.

Of special note are the comments contained in the interview conducted with a former Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling. His experience of an army that emerged from Vietnam with little strategic guidance to give it direction, through to the time that it was called upon to conduct brigade-level operations in our near neighbourhood, provides lessons that are extremely pertinent to the
immediate future of Army. I commend the interview to all readers who wonder how past commanders have dealt with the challenges today’s Army is possibly going to face.

A forthcoming edition of the Journal in mid 2013 will be a dedicated Cultural edition. The topic is one of great contemporary relevance to the Army, made even more pertinent by the recent release of the Asian Century White Paper. During the recently completed Chief of Army’s exercise, the issue of cultural awareness of the broader region was widely discussed. The issue of gender within the ADF has been addressed in the recent Broderick Inquiry report. These are just two aspects of culture that have an impact on the day-to-day running and the operational commitments of the Army. Given the broad range of issues that can be discussed under the rubric of culture, the call for contributions will allow for a wide range of cultural issues to be addressed.

Contributors are encouraged to submit articles or provide submissions in other formats on the subject of Army culture. Exact details on what topics people are encouraged to be discussed are included in a call for submissions on the Land Warfare Studies Centre website. If in doubt, please seek clarification via email to army.journal@defence.gov.au.

Unfortunately since the publication of the last edition of the Journal, we have cause to pause and remember the deaths of more members of the Army family on active service in Afghanistan: SPR James Thomas Martin, LCPL Stjepan Milosevic, PTE Robert Poate, PTE Nathanael Galagher, LCPL Mervyn McDonald and CPL Scott Smith. We also remember SPR Jordan Penpraze who was killed in a training accident at Holsworthy.
As the date of the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan approaches, it is timely to identify organisational issues the Army faced post Vietnam, via a series of interviews with former senior officers and soldiers to be published in forthcoming editions of the *Australian Army Journal*. The intent of the interviews is to learn from the past to inform the future as the Army transitions from operations in Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. The first of these interviews is with former Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling. The second interview is with Warrant Officer Kevin Woods. These are extracts of the interviews; the complete versions are located on the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis website at: http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/DARA

*Australian Army Journal (AAJ)*: Sir, thank you for your time today.

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** It’s my pleasure. Before we start I would like to preface if I may?

**AAJ:** Of course.

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** You only learn lessons if they change behaviour, otherwise they are observations, not lessons. Reasons for learning are useful when you find a reason for changing, or not changing, behaviour. If lessons are what cause you to change your behaviour, we should think of the reasons why we change our
behaviour and what leadership has done to encourage these changes. Not every observation will lead to a lesson. Some observations are not worthy of a change in behaviour. It may be a valid observation and something that you think is interesting but you need to ask, am I going to stop doing what I am doing?

If it makes you think about what you are doing then it is a valid observation. If this leads to change, then that’s a lesson. The Army needs to get its head around the fact that it’s not a lesson if you don’t change what you’re doing.

**AAJ:** In order to understand the environment post Vietnam, what was the situation the Army faced in the period post the withdrawal?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** We had an army of approximately 44,000 at the end of the Vietnam War. That army was only going to move one way, and that was down. There was a general understanding that this was the case. Firstly, I will address the question within the context of community attitudes. Some of my soldiers were spat on upon our return from Vietnam. We were not welcomed home or left with the view that the general public and the media believed what we had done in Vietnam was worthwhile and that they valued the soldiers. My first posting post Vietnam was to Army Headquarters and we were required to wear civilian clothes to work because people in uniform were being abused. That was the situation post Vietnam.

The Army did not have a clear understanding of its strategic purpose, its strategic mission, or how it could contribute to national security. I don’t think those questions were being seriously considered and discussed, noting I was a junior major at that time and didn’t have an insight into what was being done at the highest levels. Despite this I did not have any evidence, nor could my colleagues or contemporaries see any evidence, that strategic conversations were being held between government and senior military leadership. There was a feeling of drift.

I think the problem after the Vietnam War was the government didn’t know what it wanted the Army to do. It knew it didn’t want the Army to take off on any more adventures to exotic places, because the public reaction from the Vietnam War had made that kind of expedition very unpopular. So we retreated into the model of continental defence which culminated with the Dibb Review in 1986 and the subsequent White Paper. Bear in mind this is some 13 to 14 years after the end of the Vietnam War, so we had 13 or 14 years without any strategic guidance.

I think what is important today as we come to the end of our intensive phase of operations is that this strategic conversation needs to continue between government and the leadership of Defence, including, of course, the Chief of the Army. It is important that some kind of strategic vision is articulated, and that it describes the army that we want to have, why we require it and what it is for. It’s very important that those simple messages permeate society, not just the Army, but society at large.
The Australian people need to know why they’ve got an army and somebody needs to tell them. One of the things that I did when I took over as the Chief of the Army was go to the National Press Club and make an address live on television and say this is where I am taking the Army and this is why.

*AAJ:* How was this received?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** With horror.

*AAJ:* Was that horror from inside or outside the organisation?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** Both. The Defence Minister of the day issued a directive that no service chief would speak in public again without his written permission. There was a good deal of internal friction resulting from what I had said. This was because I was taking the Army in a different direction without going through the committee processes. What I said we needed to do was become an expeditionary army. Within six months, we mounted the first of the expeditions to East Timor, effectively ending the debate. I would have most likely been looking for a job had that not happened.

*AAJ:* Post Vietnam, how were the units structured? Did it focus on the jungle war the Army had fought in Vietnam?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** Doctrine, and where possible structures, were essentially constructed around the Division in Battle series of pamphlets. There was a pamphlet, ‘Counter Revolutionary Warfare’, which included operations in the jungle. The rest was about conventional operations, in all kinds of terrain. My recollection was that a lot of TEWTS were run in South Eastern Australia, where the jungle is a bit thin on the ground. Therefore I don’t believe the Army was intellectually overly focused on jungle warfare. When you think about the environment in which the Army had to live, train and develop, finding a clear direction was very difficult and I think it took more than 20 years to emerge from that post Vietnam hangover. We did not know what kind of war the country wanted us to fight. So it wasn’t a question of training for the last war, it was trying to find out what kind of war we were supposed to work towards.

*AAJ:* With that in mind, when we deployed to East Timor and there was uncertainty about the type of operation, was the Army equipped and prepared to undertake conventional warfare?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** I think so because we had—especially in the 3rd Brigade as the high readiness brigade at the time—guys working pretty hard on
basic fighting skills. I reinforced it at every opportunity by saying to the formation commanders and COs to make sure that the soldiers can shoot, can hit what they’re shooting at, know their drills, and have got the basics right, because if we have to fight, that’s what wins. A corps attack is a couple of hundred section attacks together. If your section and platoon commanders are doing their jobs, you’re going to win. That was the line that we took and we did everything that we could to prepare for the eventuality that we were actually going to war.

When I say well prepared for Timor, we were prepared personally and organisationally; however, we were not prepared materially. We didn’t have the weapons, the equipment, the resources or the logistics. We were bloody lucky that it only lasted six months at the intense rate. The shortfalls were a result of the strategic drift that ran from 1973 through until 1996-97. To address this, in 1998 when I raised the readiness of 1 Brigade it was a huge gamble as I didn’t know where the money was going to come from. I just raised the level of readiness and told the brigade to get on with it. Pull out whatever you need and make it happen. It was a gamble. A good gamble—as it paid off.

A couple of days before the first troops deployed to Timor, I visited the soldiers with the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition. The politicians were extremely nervous. They thought that we were going off to war. The Prime Minister took me aside in the plane and said to me, ‘Can we actually do this thing?’ I said to him, ‘The soldiers, they will do the job Prime Minister, but there may be some body bags coming home. That won’t stop them doing the job though.’

AAJ: What was the Prime Minister’s reaction to this comment?

Lieutenant General Hickling: He was a bit stunned; suddenly I had taken that body bag reality to him. I said to him, ‘There is one thing that you and the leaders of the opposition can do for us which is more valuable than anything else. Make sure that these kids don’t come home with the kind of welcome that I got when I came home from Vietnam.’ Beazley joined the conversation at that point. They looked at each other and said that they’d do that—and they did. They were very careful from that point, right through the Iraq deployment, through to Afghanistan, that if the opposition disagreed with policy, they did not include the soldiers. From that point they would highlight the good work of the soldiers, and then debate the policy issue.

We visited 3 RAR in Darwin; they were going over by the HMAS Jervis Bay, the catamaran that the Navy had leased. The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were grabbed by the CO and I went to talk to a platoon sitting on the grass. Just before we left I said to them, ‘I want this message passed around the battalion. A lot of old men are going to be watching you on television. These are men who fought at Kapyong, and Maryang San, and Coral and Balmoral. They won the
battle honours on your flag. Don't let them down.' Their eyes lit up and they got the message. I turned around and there was the Prime Minister who had been standing behind me listening to what I had to say. Later, on a flight down to Katherine, he said to me, 'I never realised what generals did.' I said, ‘That’s what they do, well, some of them anyway’. The Army captured Prime Minister Howard, he arrived in Townsville and they captured him. It was continually re-enforced; every time the Army did things well, as they do, it raised his opinion a little bit higher.

AAJ: How did Army ensure its people were intellectually prepared for the next war?

Lieutenant General Hickling: I believe the Army has an outstanding training system. It wasn't the question of preparing leadership but rather preparing leadership at every level. We have improved the system progressively, complicated it in some ways, simplified in others, but the system is still there. It is the system that is at the heart of the Army. This is a view that I had as the Training Commander. This view held when I was Land Commander and the Chief of Army; the Army lives in the school house, to use the old American phrase. The heart of the Army is in the training institutions. It is the quality of the work produced by the training institutions that leads to the quality of our officers and soldiers. It’s as simple as that. You can't skimp on that. To my mind—and I used to say it to infuriate my colleague, the Land Commander at the time—‘you and all of your people are expendable. What's not expendable in the organisation is Training Command’. The training establishments within Forces Command are the same deal. They are not expendable, everything else is expendable, but you need to maintain the capability to generate training and train soldiers, train leaders at all levels. Then you are going to have a successful army.

That's what happened after Vietnam; we got on and trained and educated our people and refined the system over the years. It doesn't look much now like it did then but the basic core, the golden thread of logic, as John Sanderson used to say, is still there. It's all about taking people off the street and turning them into soldiers and officers. It's about turning those soldiers into leaders and taking officers and turning them into senior commanders. This has to happen. My thesis was and still is people like brigade commanders, battalion commanders, brigade majors, divisional quartermasters, company commanders and section commanders need to be grown from the egg. You can't go into the street with a cheque book and buy one. You can't go into the street and see a fine looking lad and turn him into a battalion commander. You have to grow them, and if you are going to grow them you need a training system. That's why in my mind the last thing that has to be cut to save money or costs is the training system.

AAJ: Did Army as a learning organisation capture the important lessons from the Vietnam War and transfer these lessons to training?
Point Blank

Lieutenant General Hickling: No, I don’t think it did adequately. The Vietnam War actually changed behaviour in the Army. The behavioural change was on learning some hard lessons. For example we didn’t have a Centre for Army Lessons. The lessons we learnt were reflected in the doctrine. But those lessons didn’t necessarily drive the doctrine.

Now that may or may not be a good thing. For example, I think there are many lessons that should be learnt from Afghanistan and Iraq, but having said that we must be very careful that these lessons do not distort the Army’s culture and its ability to conduct fundamental warfighting. The extent to which those lessons are absorbed and change behaviour has to be determined by how the Army sees itself fighting the next war.

The most difficult form of warfare that you can undertake is to my mind the mid intensity style conflict which also has to take place within a population. That’s as hard as it gets. A professional army must be able to do the hardest operations. Army must push forward with a notion that we will be fighting complex wars in the future; whether regional or extra regional, it doesn’t matter. They are always going to occur in places where we’d much rather not be.

Hopefully we will never have to fight those wars in the south-east corner of Australia. We are going to have to fight those wars in complex terrain within some other population. The trend seems to suggest the next war will follow those of the last few years. It will probably be more difficult as we will probably be up against a more credible enemy. Therefore we need to aim at that benchmark. The people framing alternative guidance around peacekeeping or low-intensity conflict don’t know what they are talking about. They don’t understand just how difficult the type of warfare that I am describing is. So for that reason we need to push back and ask them if they appreciate what they are asking.

AAJ: As a peacetime army, how did Army promote or undertake training to maintain motivation for service in order to retain personnel?

Lieutenant General Hickling: The problem is training is dependent on resources. You can make the training as interesting and as sexy and as exciting as you like if you have unlimited resources. If you haven’t got limitless resources—and the Army will never have limitless resources—you have then got to become creative. Leaders at every level from section commander up have got to start thinking about ways that they can make their training interesting so they don’t have their diggers wandering around painting the rocks white. That is the challenge now and was the challenge post Vietnam. We tried to make the training as interesting as we could, with varied success, but essentially if the soldiers are enjoying what they are doing and are challenged by what they are doing, you are going to keep them. The kinds of people that join the Army don’t join for comfort. They join for a challenge. They join because
they want to see new things and want to do new things. So the challenge will become
a leadership challenge like most other things. That’s easy to say that but it’s harder
to do. Leaders are going to have to be encouraged and we are going to have to help
them think creatively about their training.

The second part is maintaining standards. That’s what you are paying your senior
NCOs for, your junior leadership in particular. Sergeants, company sergeant majors,
company and squadron commanders and commanding officers: they’re the ones
that have to insist on high standards all the time, and again, my experience is that
soldiers like that! They might talk about enjoying slackness, but slack soldiers are
not happy soldiers.

**AAJ:** In the wake of Vietnam there was an increase in female involvement in the
Army. Are there any lessons that may be learnt in increasing the participation of
women, especially with the recent removal of restrictions in combat roles?

**Lieutenant General Hickling:** We have certainly had our problems assimilating
females into the Army. There is no denying that and it’s the same with the other
services; maybe not the Air Force, but the Navy has definitely had the same sort of
problems. You get people serving together, young people serving together in close
proximity 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and there are going to be issues. For example,
when I was the Commandant of ADFA and people asked me what it was like being
the Commandant, I likened it to sitting on the top of a volcano waiting for the lava
enema. You know underneath that there are things going on, but it’s very hard to put
your finger on exactly what they are. When you’ve got all these kids, most of them
straight out of school, first time away from parental supervision, first time that they
have money in their jeans, their hormones are growing a lot faster than their ‘grey
matter’, so why are we surprised that there are issues and untidy things happening;
and why do we have all of this sucking of teeth and carrying on every time something
stupid happens. They’re young, they’re fit, they have access to alcohol and they don’t
have 24 hour supervision, so you’re going to have problems.

In regards to the introduction of women within combat roles, there have always
been women in the Army, but they have always been slightly separate. It wasn’t until
the late 1980s that this started to change, so it was well after Vietnam. Essentially
it becomes a leadership and management issue. You are never going to stop bad
things happening because we are talking about human beings. What you have
to do is minimise the occurrence, minimise the harm and deal with it properly.
That won’t change and the same problems are going to be popping up ten, twenty,
thirty years from now. If somebody says that they are going to eradicate this kind
of behaviour, forget it. We are talking about people with excesses of testosterone
and in some cases more testosterone than brains, therefore you are going to have
problems. As long as we maintain the combat fitness standard, that’s all we need to worry about.

The girls that can pass the test—and good on them—they will do the job well. They will do the job of the forward scout along with the rest of our soldiers. As long as we don’t drop the standard then they will do very well.

AAJ: Are there any other issues or lessons that the Army faced in the years post Vietnam that you foresee the modern day Army is able to learn from?

Lieutenant General Hickling: I think we have talked about the great lessons about post Vietnam and I think the great lesson was, collectively, Army’s leadership has got to have a vision on where the Army needs to be to serve the nation, and what the Army needs to look like as a result of that. I think A21 was the Army’s attempt to craft a strategic vision for itself. I actually conducted the restructuring of the Army trials and abolished A21, because it was not an army that had an expeditionary capability, which is what I believed we needed. What we can learn from this is we need to be very careful about being constrained by guidance which is—and you can only say this in hindsight and I am not criticising anybody here—manifestly incorrect or inadequate. Army can’t accept that guidance and it has to be challenged. For example, in the late 1990s the government was starting to talk about a much more outward looking global engagement. The government wanted to have diplomatic weight in the region and beyond and therefore it seemed to me that an army that looked like A21, which was essentially a continental focus, didn’t fit the kind of aspiration that the government clearly had. Therefore, we challenged that strategic guidance; the culmination was the deployment to East Timor.

In regards to the Defence of Australia, I can understand the notion that by confining the Army to the continental defence of Australia and letting the Air Force and the Navy worry about the blue water, more resources could be freed up for major equipment. This conveniently does away with any notion of expeditionary forces. There’s a couple of problems with a so-called ‘defence of Australia strategy’.

Firstly, it ignores the fact that every deployment away from the Army’s bases is an expedition—and there are plenty of places in this country that are remote from the major bases.

Secondly, the Army is not supporting the defence of Australia’s wider interests if it’s not capable of moving off the shore. Australia has lots of interests, locally and globally, and those interests are not served by only having a large proportion of your defence force anchored to the continent. That in turn raises potential threats elsewhere. My view is that the Army still has a place in the defence of Australia and its interests go beyond the continent of Australia. If the Army is incapable of operating beyond the continent of Australia then we are unnecessarily limiting the
extent to which Australia’s interests can be protected. The point is, do you really want to fight someone in your own backyard?

That’s my take on continental defence. It is an attractive proposition when times are hard, because we can say we are going to cut the Army and say we will divert money to capital equipment—which is much easier to produce than a fighting force that takes decades to develop, not months, weeks or years. This is complex, therefore it is easier for many academics to grasp the concepts of command of the sea or command of air space. It’s a much easier and less complex concept to get your skull around. So for those that are much more academically lazy, it’s a far more attractive proposition.

That’s my view.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL F J (FRANK) HICKLING, AO, CSC (RETD)

Lieutenant General Frank Hickling was commissioned into the Royal Australian Engineers on 14 June 1961. His regimental appointments have included troop, squadron and regimental level command tours of duty in both field and construction units, as well as an instructional appointment at the School of Military Engineering. His overseas tours of duty have included service in Papua New Guinea, Sabah, Malaysia and in South Vietnam.

Following attendance at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham (UK) and the Army Command and Staff College, Queenscliff, he served in Grade One and Grade Two staff appointments at the Department of Defence (Army Office). He commanded the 2nd/3rd Field Engineer Regiment and then served on the staff of Headquarters 1st Division, before attending the Joint Services Staff College in 1983.

Lieutenant General Hickling was a member of the Directing Staff of the Joint Services Staff College and was then appointed Director of Plans – Army at Army Office. In 1988 he attended the National Defence College of India, before being appointed to command 1st Brigade in 1989 and 1990. He assumed command of Northern Command in December 1990, an appointment he held until he was promoted to major general and appointed General Officer Commanding Training Command in July 1992. He was appointed Commandant, Australian Defence Force Academy in March 1995. He was the Land Commander Australia from May 1996 to June 1998. He was the Chief of Army from June 1998 to July 2000.

Since retiring from the Army, he has undertaken part-time work as a consultant and voluntary work on behalf of the community.
Australian Army Journal (AAJ): Warrant Officer Woods, thank you for taking the time to speak with us as part of the series of interviews we’re conducting with former senior officers and soldiers to learn from the past to inform the future as the Army transitions from operations in Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands.

In order to understand the environment post Vietnam, what was the situation Army faced in the period after the withdrawal?

Warrant Officer Woods: I was a young soldier just after the withdrawal from Vietnam. There was a mass exodus of the Nashos and other guys that didn’t want to play anymore due to the end of the war. So the Army was quite small. The size of each platoon in the battalion was about twenty men. It took a bit of time to get people back in. Units became a priority, including which units received new soldiers. Other than that, it was business as usual in the battalion. You still got up and did PT in the morning and you still did your training.

All of our corporals and some of the diggers had ribbons. The sergeants and the CSMs had ribbons—everyone except for us younger blokes. This wasn’t a daunting thing, but it made you think that they knew their stuff, which most of them did. They really passed on some good knowledge and skills to develop really good soldiers. But numbers wise it took many years to get us back up to strength, which in those days was a platoon of thirty.

AAJ: Did you find that there were limitations in finances and therefore limitations with what you could do for training?
Warrant Officer Woods: In the late ’70s—I would say from ’79 to late ’80—there were a lot of resource constraints. Our unit was told that we may become mechanised and undertook the trial in the late ’70s. However, when we finished the trial, due to money constraints the APCs were taken off us. One company maintained the skills and it wasn’t until a couple of years after that we became a mechanised unit. I remember in the ’80s, we could only drive five kilometres a week. There was no money for fuel or anything. It was once around the ring road at Holsworthy just to keep the APCs going. We did all of this training and became mechanised and all of a sudden they were saying that we couldn’t continue as there were no resources. There was no ability to drive to the range to fire the .50 Cal as there was no ammunition. It was hard.

From my experience we lost a lot of good guys who said ‘I’ve had enough of this’. To give you an example, we did a fourteen-day exercise in either ’79 or ’80 and were given three blank rounds for the whole exercise. As a corporal, I asked what we were supposed to do when we had used our three rounds, and was told that we were to run around yelling ‘bang bang’. I said to the officer, ‘You’re joking, aren’t you sir? We are grown ups.’ He said, ‘You have to go “bang bang”’. The machine gunner was meant to yell ‘machine gun, machine gun’. Those were the resource constraints and that went on for a while. It was just appalling. You join the Army to be a soldier and, particularly as an infantryman, you want to fire your weapon. You don’t want to be playing cowboys and indians at the back of your house as a ten-year-old going ‘bang bang bang, you’re dead’. That annoyed a lot of people. Back in those days, everyone longed for or would have killed for a Butterworth, Long Look, Pac Bond or Southern Star. They would have killed to go and do something different.

Resources were just really tight and there was no answer. Back in late ’70s and early ’80s, there was just nothing. It was just terrible, a terrible time to go through. As a corporal I got a bit disillusioned. The only thing that saved me was that they sent me on Long Look in 1980 and that motivated me again. It was an interesting comparison, going from an army where you get three blank rounds to working with the Brits who seemed to have all the resources. It was completely different. Maybe I was blinkered in my view, but they seemed to have it all. That really saved me as I came back refreshed from Long Look. But at the time the availability of resources in the Australian Army was terrible.

As a young sergeant I recall going to RMC to do a demonstration in 1981. While for obvious reasons they had more resources than we had in the battalion, they still only had one magazine. I thought, ‘You have to be kidding me, how are we supposed to train our future leaders if this is all the resources that are available?’

I may have been a bit spoilt in my first unit, 10 Independent Rifle Company, in 1974. The unit used to put companies through the BE Course, which took six weeks. The establishment had a huge amount of resources, including ammunition.
Warrant Officer Woods: Yes. I remember an exercise as a corporal in ’83 or ’84 where we had fresh rations, because rations packs were too expensive. I thought the CO was trying to save money. Despite this there were basically no fresh rations. We had a boiled egg for breakfast, and a pre-prepared roll with a piece of meat and some salad for lunch. The evening meal wasn't much better, that was just a stew. Yet you were still required to do all the physical work. We were completely drained at the end of that exercise.

We were operating in Darkes Forest down the bottom of Holsworthy, which is tiger country. It was all on foot as they took the carriers off us because we didn't have the money for fuel. That was our view at the junior level. We all thought it was the CO’s fault. But now that I have been exposed to higher levels of the Army I see it from a different perspective and believe the government of the day never gave us the money. A lot of people became frustrated and it took good leadership to keep people in the Army. I remember talking to the RSM course last year, as ex RSMs of the Army are placed on a panel session. We were asked, ‘What are the main challenges you believe we will face in the future?’ My response was, ‘How do you intend to keep your soldiers and corporals motivated when operations finish? That’s going to be your biggest challenge, because I saw it post Vietnam.’

AAJ: So why do you think people left post Vietnam?

Warrant Officer Woods: I can only comment on what the corporals said at the time. They said it was because there was no more war. Back in those days we were told that there would be no more deployments, so a lot of guys got out and went on to be successful in other areas. Some got disenchanted in the ’75-77 period when there were no more resources. The Army had gone from a period of operations where we had all the resources. Everything had been given to the Army on a silver platter, and when that goes away people get out. I must admit, they never really did anything to challenge anyone. This didn't kick in until the mid to late ’80s where I think one of the saving graces was sport. They placed a lot of emphasis on sport, both individual and collective. They need to start looking at this again. Look at the current training regime of a battalion—where is the Tuesday sports training and Thursday sport day? I think those activities kept a lot of people going.

In a peacetime Army, one of the few challenges you have is sport. I don't care if you play netball, it's still challenging. Look at touch football. It is supposed to be a non-contact sport yet it is one of the most injury-prone sports in the world. The Army needs to challenge our people to play sport and be aggressive and take knocks.
We also need to get away from the favouritism displayed in the ’70s and ’80s. We need to treat all people the same. When I was a battalion RSM, the CO said, ‘We are going to watch the rugby’. I told him that despite us both being rugby nuts, we needed to watch another sport. I said to him that we could come back and watch the last game of rugby, but we had people playing mixed netball, soccer, Aussie Rules, and people had gone to the rifle range because rifle shooting was a sport. In the end he agreed and we went to the other sports. I think you need to treat all sports equally. You can have a favourite, but as a CO or an RSM, you need to support them all. They’re all members of the battalion.

**AAJ:** In the years following the withdrawal did Army experience any internal cultural issues? Was there a divide between those that had and hadn’t served in Vietnam?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** I noticed that there was favouritism. If the platoon sergeant or CSM asked a question or asked for an opinion, they would ask the guy with ribbons. The guys without ribbons would never be asked. So there was always favouritism. This is important; just because you have ribbons, doesn’t mean you have all the answers. The man with no ribbons might give you an alternative view. Although they had operational experience and the Australians did very well in the jungle in Vietnam, what were they like in other terrain? The Army will face a similar situation as we transition from Afghanistan. The guys are very good in a desert environment, but how will they perform in the jungle?

I noticed the favouritism for about four or five years. When I was a platoon sergeant, within the company two of the sergeants had been nowhere and the third had been to Vietnam. This sergeant was still living in the jungle in 1984. However, if all the platoon sergeants were in the one location, the OC would always ask the sergeant who had been to Vietnam for his opinion.

**AAJ:** In the wake of Vietnam there was an increase in female involvement in Army. Are there any lessons that may be learnt in increasing the participation of women, especially with the recent removal of restrictions in combat roles?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** This is one of the ones that I can’t answer because as an infantryman I didn’t see a female in uniform until I became a sergeant in ’81 and was posted to 2 Training Group to teach for the Army Reserve. There were platoons of forty of them. It was a bit of a culture shock for me. The only thing that I would say here is that we need to treat women appropriately. I always used the example of a female brickie who can lay 250 bricks a day, yet a bloke can only lay 200 a day—which one do you employ if you can only employ one of them? It is the same in the Army. When I was the Academy Sergeant Major at ADFA, the best NCO that I had
was a female RAAF flight sergeant. She was tough, physically fit and she was good at her job. There are some girls out there that I would pit against some of the infantry.

**AAJ**: How did the Army ensure that its people were intellectually prepared for the next war?

**Warrant Officer Woods**: Though professional military education, from an officer’s to a corporal’s level, through their subject training. I have to say that our training in this area is probably second to none throughout the world. I have seen the training regime for the US and the UK. Our professional military education is outstanding, and this is one area we cannot afford to stuff around with.

We need to continue our training and lessons learnt. Incorporating lessons into our systems is something that we have done quite badly in the past. We need to do this to improve the training of people on IETs and subject courses; then the Army will have prepared its people for whatever the next war is going to be.

**AAJ**: Did the Army as a learning organisation capture the important lessons from Vietnam War and transfer these into training?

**Warrant Officer Woods**: The Army did not do this well. As an example, if you go back to the Vietnam War they had a lot of training on booby traps such as pungy sticks, and had booby trap lanes. There were lanes at SME, Canungra and Singleton. By the mid ’80s Army, in their wisdom, had decided there was no requirement to continue to train in this area because we now fight conventionally. Well guess what? Now we are looking out for IEDs, which is a form of booby trap. By not training the junior level to search for and identify these threats we had thrown away all the lessons.

**AAJ**: As a peacetime Army, how did Army promote or undertake training to maintain motivation for service in order to retain personnel? Did the Army place a greater emphasis on adventurous training, sport, overseas postings/attachments, regional engagement or other means?

**Warrant Officer Woods**: Activities like Long Look and company exchanges are critical. Towards the end of my career I spoke to the Chief of Army about options to change our focus by halving Long Look and creating a similar activity with the US Army and Marines. I favoured the Marines as I believe their training was a better fit. I believe it was lost in the ether. But back in the late ’70s and ’80s, soldiers would have killed for these types of deployments. People will say that it costs a lot of money, but you need to look at the benefits. As an example, up until 1980 the Army had spent a large amount of money on training me, yet I was thinking about getting out. Then they sent me to
the UK for three months where I learnt so much, as the UK had just returned from the Falklands. Long Look provided me the boost that I needed and I thought, 'Just wake up to yourself Woods and get on with it.' I think those things are really important.

**AAJ:** With that in mind, what are your thoughts on adventurous training?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** Adventurous training is a bit like sport; it is one of the few things where you can put fear into a soldier without actually hurting him. I think the system did the wrong thing by reducing the amount of adventurous training. For soldiers to be happy they need to be challenged. I swear by adventurous training—we used to do it at least once a year at the battalion, particularly when I was the CSM. It is not that hard logistically to organise two days repelling off the Sydney Harbour Bridge or a trip to Wee Jasper to repel down a cliff. It may be a bit harder in the north of Australia with all the mobile handbags in the rivers. Adventurous training is one of the few activities that you can do to challenge soldiers and to put fear into them. There is a perceived risk and it improves their confidence to attempt new challenges.

The Army also used to conduct boxing nights. When I was RSM of 3 Brigade, the only unit that still did it was 2 RAR. All of a sudden boxing appeared on the list of prohibited sports. This was despite boxing nights having a qualified referee, the best protective gear, and the unit RMO on site. Participants had also undertaken training. We did all we could to prevent someone getting hurt. Understandably, these activities have been thrown out as operations have taken priority. But when we are no longer on operations they are important.

**AAJ:** How did the Army provide support to the wounded, injured and ill post Vietnam? What was the policy for retaining wounded, injured and ill personnel? For how long did Army deal with both the physically and mentally wounded?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** Back then I don't think we provided much support to the mentally wounded. In fact, I don't think it existed. Now that I understand PTSD, I believe there were people who were showing the signs. However, it was a taboo thing, nobody spoke about it and the system failed to look at it. It wasn't until the late '80s to '90s that the Americans started to mention PTSD, probably as a result of the first Gulf War, and that the Army began to think that PTSD was not a weakness and people were not being weak.

I think we now put a lot more effort into the mental side. People returning from operations recognise that they aren’t shunned like the Vietnam guys were when they returned. This will help. I believe the US Army has tackled the problem in a good way. Several senior guys have said they are suffering from PTSD, which I believe has shown the more junior guys that it is fine to seek assistance.
In regards to the physically wounded, our QM at 5/7 RAR had one leg, because it had been blown off in Vietnam. For the first fifteen years of my service I was always coming across blokes like that. When I was a sergeant at 2 Training Group there was a sergeant instructor with a claw and the QM had one eye because his face had been blown apart in Vietnam. Despite this, the Army looked after them.

I know we continue to do similarly with our people that get hurt on operations, and that’s a good thing. That’s probably one of the really good things that Peter Leahy brought in from the Canadian experience. We also need to look after our people that get hurt when not on operations. If a member broke a leg, we don’t and shouldn’t have to wait for some doctor to make a decision on their future employment. If they want to get out because of the injury, then that’s fine, but if they don’t then they should be allowed to remain in the Army in some capacity. We need to look after our people if they get hurt on operations. Rehabilitate them and get them back into the system, or rehabilitate them and let them get out if that’s what they want to do.

**AAJ:** Are there any other issues the Army faced in the years post Vietnam that you foresee the modern day Army is able to learn from?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** Yes, do not cut training. Training from both an all and single corps perspective. They did that post Vietnam and we suffered. When I did my corporals course, Subject 1 in those days, it went for seven weeks. In the late ’70s and early ’80s to save money the course was reduced to approximately four weeks and they cut the leadership training. It was the same for the sergeants and warrant officers courses, and also officer training. Leadership training is always one of the first things cut from the courses.

Kapooka was another example; it was reduced to six weeks. Thankfully we convinced General Leahy that the course had to be extended back to thirteen weeks as we weren’t indoctrinating our people within six weeks—it just wasn’t happening. One of my big fears is that they will cut training to save money. It’s the wrong way to go.

Resources to training and individual and collective training are the two priorities. If I have to walk my platoon to the range, I don’t care—as long as there is a Land Rover to take the ammunition, then I am a happy man. But don’t say that I can’t go to the range.

**AAJ:** Upon reflection, what was your greatest contribution to Army?

**Warrant Officer Woods:** I’d like to think that I was pretty dedicated in everything that I did, to the job, to the people, both my subordinates and superiors. I tried to impose good leadership, which I think is one of our great strengths. When I became RSM of the Army a lot of people on subject courses, particularly the warrant officers,
would say that they hadn't been on operations, yet they were wearing a DFSM. I would say to them that I had ribbons from operations but this doesn't mean I am a good soldier. To me the medal that matters is the DFSM. This means I dedicated a large part of my life to this institution.

AAJ: So if you had your time again, what would you change?

Warrant Officer Woods: I wouldn't change much at all. I would change the ’70s and ’80s where we didn’t have ammunition, stores or money to train. I would place more emphasis on leadership training as this will be tested when we return to a barracks environment. In my farewell speech I said to those present that they are part of the best led organisation in the world. This is because of our leadership. We don't always get it right but generally we do. I believe that over the last ten years the first thing we always took out was leadership. Well that’s dumb.

AAJ: What’s your most fond memory from your 34 years of service? What’s the one thing that you look back at with the biggest smile?

Warrant Officer Woods: I’d have to say all of it. On a comical point, and it probably won’t go into the paper, sticking a blue tongue lizard into the platoon sergeant's sleeping bag at the end of an exercise. That’s one of my fondest memories. I enjoyed every moment of my life in the Army; it’s been challenging and that’s what the system is all about. If it’s not a challenge, then it’s not worthwhile. I love the people. I loved working with and for the people. So, I wouldn't change a thing. Actually I would: when we were doing the mechanised trials at Puckapunyal I was doing a gun piquet and it was minus four and the rain was pouring down… would I change that? Hell yeah, I would.

AAJ: Warrant Officer Woods, thank you for your time.

WARRANT OFFICER KEVIN WOODS

Warrant Officer Kevin Woods commenced recruit training in January 1974 and was allocated to the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. After completing initial employment training he was posted to the 10th Independent Rifle Company at the Jungle Training Centre in Canungra. In 1975 he was posted to the 5th 7th Battalion The Royal Australian Regiment where he served as a rifleman, section 2IC, section commander and sniper section commander in Sniper Platoon.
He was promoted to sergeant in 1981 and posted to the 2nd Training Group as an instructor. After serving two years he was posted back to the 5th 7th Battalion and served as a rifle platoon sergeant and the reconnaissance platoon sergeant.

In 1986 he was promoted to warrant officer class two and posted to the Land Warfare Centre Detachment Singleton as an instructor. He was then posted back to the 5th 7th Battalion and served for two years as a company sergeant major.

He was promoted to warrant officer class one in 1990 and posted to the Royal Military College – Duntroon and served as the Wing Sergeant Major, Field Training Wing. In 1992 he was posted to the School of Infantry as an instructor and then appointed the Regimental Sergeant Major of the School of Infantry.

Warrant Officer Woods was posted in 1994 as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 49th Battalion The Royal Queensland Regiment. After serving two years he was posted to the Land Warfare Centre as an instructor at Warrant Officer and Non Commissioned Officer Wing. In 1998 he was posted as the Regimental Sergeant Major of the 3rd Brigade, which also included the brigade deployment to East Timor.

In January 2000 Warrant Officer Woods took up appointment as the Regimental Sergeant Major Training Command Army. In January 2003 he took up the appointment of Academy Sergeant Major, Australian Defence Force Academy. Warrant Officer Woods was appointed Regimental Sergeant Major Army on 19 December 2003. Warrant Officer Woods retired from the regular Army on 29 February 2008.

Warrant Officer Woods is married to Denice and they have two children.
UNARMED COMBAT IN THE ADF

“THE NEXT EVOLUTION”

WARRANT OFFICER CLASS TWO EDDIE WALSH

ABSTRACT

As a Military Self Defence Instructor, I have noted over the last five years a variation in levels of enthusiasm towards this fundamental skill set. Commanders and Physical Training Instructors alike have demonstrated everything from willing acceptance to total indifference. This article aims to generate discussion at all rank levels as to the success or not of Military Self Defence within the Australian Defence Force, to look critically at what has been achieved and, most importantly, propose options for the development of this fighting system in the future to grow a strong balanced system that allows all soldiers to defend themselves. An effective system gives combat soldiers the necessary confidence and skill sets to close with and neutralise their opponent even when personal weapons have been removed from the equation.

The defining characteristic of a warrior is the willingness to close with the enemy. We do not win wars because we are better at hand-to-hand combat than the enemy, we do however win wars because of the things it takes to be a good hand-to-hand fighter. Confidence comes from competence. It is
not enough to simply tell soldiers to be aggressive; they must have a faith in their abilities built through hard and arduous training and know that they are going to win; so that when that weapon does malfunction three feet from the bad guy, they will instinctively attack.

SFC Matt Larsen

MAINTAINING THE INITIATIVE

One of the four principles of Military Self Defence (MSD) is to maintain the initiative when involved in close combat with the enemy. This article discusses the approach the ADF has taken to unarmed combat, where it has succeeded, and areas that need to be improved to enable us to maintain the combat mindset that was displayed when MSD was first introduced into the Australian Defence Force in 2007.

Unarmed combat in the Army has traditionally gone in cycles, rotating from strong endorsement through to aversion, influenced by such diverse factors as the personal experiences of the key leadership team, budgetary constraints, the Army’s commitments overseas and even society’s perception of ‘acceptable violence’. At present, the ADF is walking a middle ground by just ‘covering the basics’ or ‘ticking boxes’. It should be aiming to inculcate a complete fighting attitude that becomes second nature to all our soldiers regardless of an individual’s corps, role or rank. Recent overseas experience has demonstrated that the nature of modern warfare has actually increased a soldier’s need to acquire close quarter combat skills to operate effectively. US forces conducted surveys of returning soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan and have recorded over 900 cases of individuals engaging in hand to hand combat.¹

ONE MIND ANY WEAPON

As well as dealing with the bad weather conditions, the fighting around the eastern Afghan town of Gardez has in some cases been hand to hand. Maj Gen Richard Cody reported that some of his soldiers were involved in a knife fight which ended quickly when his soldiers ‘got in there and took it to them’.


Unarmed combat in the Australian Army is collectively known as Close Quarter Self Defence (CQSD), which is broken into three disciplines:
1. Defensive tactics used by the Military Police to safely and successfully enforce Army rules, regulations and legislation. Defensive tactics are only used by Military Police when required for their day to day duties.
2. Military Self Defence (MSD), which was developed as an Army-wide system to allow a soldier to apply the appropriate and proportionate level of force to a situation, is aimed more towards the arrest and detention of an enemy rather than his destruction by the direct use of lethal force. The MSD course is conducted over five days. The trainee is introduced to basic techniques which are then reinforced by reflex training and scenarios that condition the trainee to apply proper techniques while under pressure. A qualified soldier (an exponent) who receives a recommendation and achieves non-commissioned officer rank can then attend the MSD Instructors course. This comprises two days of instructor development followed by assessment in giving lessons and the coordination and control of reflex and scenario training activities. As an instructor, the soldier will be required to requalify once every 12 months to maintain currency. The responsibility for this system currently resides with the Army School of Health coordinated by Physical Training Instructors (PTIs).

3. Close Quarter Fighting (CQF) encompasses a more offensive role that allows soldiers to physically control or apply skills—up to lethal force—in situations where the use of a primary weapon system has been negated by circumstances. The responsibility for this system currently sits with Special Forces Training Centre. This course is currently only available to Special Forces.

MAINTAIN A COMBAT MINDSET

In the outposts of Lashkar Gah, Helmand Province, battles have been known to result in hand-to-hand combat with the Taliban, so you need to know how to disarm, do take-downs and master counter moves to escape grips or holds.

former Royal Marine James Sullivan

Originally, MSD was intended to be available to the entire Army. Its implementation was coordinated by the Military Unarmed Combat (MUC) Cell, which had overseen development of the course and training standards. Development of core techniques evolved from interaction with subject matter experts and foreign CQSD styles. The Army Military Unarmed Combat Cell was established in November 2006, with COMD TC-A Directive 04/06 – Introduction of Military Self Defence Training Capability.
The establishment of the cell at ALTC and RMC-D was achieved in January 2007. Once the Physical Training Instructor and Supervisor capability was established the MUC cell was drawn down to a steady state, manned by one course manager and one training development officer. The MUC Cell officially ceased on 1 November 2008. In the two years since its inception it trained 1577 personnel as MSD exponents and 168 MSD instructors. The management of MSD was handed over to ALTC Development Group in January 2009. Up until early 2010, QCF was still available to any arms corps unit that identified a requirement to conduct the training; however, with a scarcity of qualified instructors and the nature of the course, it soon became the norm for commanders to choose to train their soldiers in MSD as a more viable alternative.

With the excellent work by the MUC Cell to produce enough instructors that the system could be self-supporting seemingly complete, ownership of the Trade Management Package was passed to the Army School of Health. The TMP had been under development by the MUC Cell and the PTIs assumed the role of subject matter experts for MSD. MSD exponent level training is also conducted at the School of Infantry and the Royal Military College – Duntroon. This system provides the opportunity to complete the exponent course but fails to provide a system that maintains skill levels. Once the five-day course is complete, the majority of soldiers will have little to no contact with any of the techniques again. For those that do, the time frame will usually be so great that their skill loss renders any attempt to employ MSD either incorrect or unsafe. This causes soldiers to lose confidence in the system.

A recent study conducted by Royal Military College – Duntroon revealed that 12 months on from graduation, 84 per cent of lieutenants had not been involved in MSD since their initial course. Anecdotal evidence, drawn from many soldiers, is encapsulated in statements such as ‘Oh MSD, that doesn’t work. It worked on the course but I couldn’t remember it later’. It is disappointing that not all commanders and PTIs have taken to this important task as expected.

The relevance of MSD in the modern high tech army has been questioned by some, with a common view being that there is little chance soldiers would have to engage in hand to hand combat on the modern battlespace. This judgment is based on a false understanding of the full range of combat benefits arising from competence in MSD. ATI 6-5/10 HQ FORCOM Policy on the conduct of MSD states, ‘In our current operating environment there are

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Unarmed combat skills are an essential building block to producing warfighting skills and the required confidence to execute these skills.

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is a justifiable need to re-focus training so as to rebuild the skills necessary to win in combat. Unarmed combat skills are an essential building block to producing warfighting skills and the required confidence to execute these skills.

When asked about the unarmed combat training he received during the Second World War, a former Royal Marine Commando stated, ‘The training gave us more and more self confidence which grew into a sense of physical power and superiority, I would have willingly tackled any man. I could face the possibility of a fight without a tremor of apprehension, a state of mind which is often half the battle’.²

Maintain Dominance

With the drawdown at the end of World War II Combatives training in the Army virtually ceased. The lack of a train-the-trainer program, virtually all of the training had been done by a very small amount of instructors..., and the lack of a follow on training plan other than continuing to practice the same limited number of techniques led to the slow death of any meaningful training. There was a Field Manual, however, actual training was reduced to initial entry training and was taught by drill sergeants with very little official training. Quality inevitably plummeted.

US Army Combatives History³

Is the ADF reaching a point with MSD similar to the US Army in the above example? It is time to re-evaluate the curriculum and determine how the training could be better delivered, so that as soldiers in the battlespace, we continue to operate at our peak by getting the best value from our limited training time. I have included four separate proposals that would contribute to the growth of the fighting arts within the ADF without the burden of a major restructure in training or time consuming introduction of new techniques or training methods.

Proposal 1. Close Quarter Fighting Training for MSD Instructors

LWD 7-7-21 CQSD Chapter 4.34 states, ‘MSD Instructors should be able to demonstrate all techniques correctly and instinctively and have greater knowledge than the level being taught’. The majority of junior non-commissioned officers who attend the MSD Instructor course will only have the exponents course to fall back on as a source of knowledge and in many cases the actual exponents course will be the last time that the member has employed the techniques. This situation does not allow the instructor to develop a deep level of knowledge with the techniques and in some
cases has led to incorrect drills being taught and unsafe practices slipping into the
conduct of training. It is up to individual units to organise and run MSD courses,
so the number of courses held throughout the Army will vary greatly, depending on
other training commitments, availability of instructors, facilities and equipment.

If CQF courses were available for MSD Instructors to attend, this would allow
the instructor to build a more complete understanding of the techniques available
and increase knowledge to a higher level than the MSD exponents. This would have
the dual benefit of producing higher quality instructors, who would be motivated
to see their units undertake regular continuation training, as well as providing more
opportunities for exponents to build experience, as MSD is a building block to higher level
techniques to which exponents can aspire. The other advantage of this method is that if the
individual instructor performed well he could go on to complete CQF Instructor qualifica-
tions, thus growing the pool of available instructors for a skill set that is often hard to
find when needed.

The term self defence tends to imply a reaction to another’s aggression which is
acceptable in the civilian environment but not always preferred when closing with
an enemy, killing or capturing him. For ease of training the system is broken into
four levels.

**Proposed system:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CQC Level</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level I</td>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level II</td>
<td>MSD Instructor</td>
<td>7 days</td>
<td>MSD + 2 days instructor development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>CQF</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>CQF Instructor</td>
<td>14 days</td>
<td>CQF + 4 days instructor development</td>
</tr>
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</table>
This system is titled Close Quarter Combat (CQC) as it encompasses both the self defence and fighting aspects in both MSD and CQF. The advantage of this proposed system is that all the course structures and training management packages are already in place. All four levels already exist within the ADF. There is no requirement to retrain or requalify anyone as all existing qualifications would continue to be recognised.

**PROPOSAL 2. INSTRUCTOR DEVELOPMENT TRAINING (IDT)**

IDT would consist of the remaining MSD and MSD Instructor training curriculum and qualified instructors would complete a series of short courses (2–3 days) that would develop the instructor’s knowledge and skills, and improve instruction techniques. Many of these IDT packages would be lifted straight from the CQF training management packages and then presented as a separate package. Some possible examples of IDT packages could include:

1. Bayonet fighting
2. Knife fighting/knife defence
3. Improvised weapons/weapons of opportunity
4. Weapon retention/weapon disarm
5. Ground fighting
6. Takedowns/throws
7. Striking techniques
8. Finishing (lethal) techniques
9. Extendable baton/stick fighting
10. Arrest and detention

Each of these packages would begin with the participants being assessed on the standard MSD techniques to demonstrate proficiency, and from there concentrate on a particular package to ensure a more in-depth understanding of the MSD techniques, applications and limitations. This would allow an instructor to develop a more rounded knowledge base and improved instructor skills. This 2–3 day modular approach would also be beneficial as soldiers could conduct suitable modules as part of pre-deployment training for particular theatres.

The other advantage to modularising training in this way is that it can reduce instances of fatigue-related injury. The short duration training focuses on a limited number of techniques being introduced, and the trainee gets better results throughout the training period by not being hindered by injury.

**PROPOSAL 3. OUTSOURCED TRAINING**

The ADF in recent years has partnered with civilian organisations like CUBIC to provide assets to the Combat Training Centre that greatly enhance training outcomes.
for soldiers involved in mission rehearsal exercises. Civilian contractors also conduct a large part of the medical training that occurs prior to a soldier’s arrival in the Middle East Area of Operations. Unarmed combat is an area where there is already a great deal of knowledge available in the civilian world. There are a number of field tested, effective close quarter combative systems that are currently used throughout Australia and the world by military and law enforcement agencies. The ADF could draw from their experience to develop a syllabus to suit Army’s needs, and then bring in subject matter experts to pass on their knowledge and specific skill sets when required.

Unarmed combat is an area where there is already a great deal of knowledge available in the civilian world.

PROPOSAL 4. A BELT SYSTEM

The US Marines have the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP, which uses a belt ranking system. There are five basic levels: tan, grey, green, brown and black. Each coloured belt level identifies the exponent’s level of physical skill and lethality. This program has character development, core values and leadership training built into the syllabus. Incorporating elements from proposals one and two, a simple ranking system could be introduced which ties in with the members rank and experience level.

OTHER FACTORS

Some other points that would aid in the development of unarmed combat into a more complete system are:

ARMY RESERVES

The only time Reservists receive MSD training is ‘just in time’ for a deployment where a requirement has been identified. It is inherently flawed to be giving a soldier a brand new skill set immediately prior to deployment. Unarmed combat training helps to instil courage and self confidence. With confidence in the system comes the understanding of controlled aggression and the ability to remain focused under duress. These types of courses are traditionally popular within the Reserves as they are not time or resource intensive. Many non-commissioned officers within the Reserves would also bring a different perspective to the standard level of instruction, often coming from civilian police or security backgrounds. This would be an ideal area to build a pool of instructors that could be employed to conduct both ARA and Reserve courses.
COMPETITION

A successful program must have a competitive aspect in order to motivate soldiers to train and that it must include ‘live’ sparing in order to be useful in growing a combative culture.

US Army Combatives History

The American Army Combatives system and MCMAP have both been successfully integrated into their respective training curriculums, and part of that success has been because of a well structured competition that allows soldiers to represent their company, battalion or brigade against other soldiers with similar experience levels. The system is great for building esprit-de-corps amongst the soldiers; it is highly regulated and controlled, with injuries minimised due to tight control by the highly trained referees. A major benefit of a competitive component to a system is that it allows the exponent to experience the speed and full paced impact of a ‘fight’. This competition would exclude the more dangerous techniques used in the system.

There are two basic mistakes often made in relation to military combative competition. The first is having no form of competition at all, usually because the techniques being considered are ‘too dangerous’ for use outside of the battlespace. Although there are many techniques that are too dangerous for live competition, there are many more benefits to be gained by competing even with a limited set of techniques.

The second mistake is that once a competition using the selected techniques has been instigated, training will then begin to focus on winning the competition rather than winning in combat. To avoid falling into this trap, it is better to have a graduated set of competition rules. This would ensure a safe set of techniques available to each level of competition, with no advantage gained by the fighter who masters a level but then finds himself unprepared for the next. Overall this will ensure that the combat focus is not lost. Example of competition structure:

**Basic level**
- Entry level soldiers (MSD exponent qualified).
- Start on knees, fight for submission or time limit (3 minutes).
- If time limit is reached, the win goes to the fighter with the best technique/aggression.
- No striking.
- DPCU/mouth guards.

**Secondary level**
- MSD exponent with 12 months or more experience.
- Start in standing 50/50 clinch, fight for submission or time limit (6 minutes).
- If time limit is reached, the win goes to fighter with the best technique/aggression.
- No striking.
- DPCU/mouth guards.

**Standard Level**
- MSD exponent (18 months experience), required to demonstrate ability to qualify.
- Start in standing, fight for submission or time limit (8 minutes).
- Points scored for each technique; for example, take down = 2 points, take down to mount = 3 points, etc.
- If time limit is reached, the win goes to the fighter with the highest score. If a draw, the fight will restart and go until the next point is scored or deducted.
- Kicks allowed/no strikes to head.
- DPCU/mouth guards/groin guard/8 ounce MMA gloves.

**Advanced level**
- MSD exponent (24 months experience), participated in five standard level fights, required to demonstrate ability to qualify.
- Start in standing, fight for submission or time limit (3 x 5 minute rounds), 1 minute break between rounds.
- Points scored for each technique; for example, take down = 2 points, take down to mount = 3 points, etc.
- If time limit is reached, the win goes to the fighter with highest score. If a draw, the fight will restart and go until the next point is scored or deducted.
- Kicks allowed/no strikes to back of head.
- Knee length shorts or bicycle tights/shin guard/head guard/mouth guards/groin guard/8 ounce MMA gloves.
- All fights at any level of competition will be supervised by an MSD Instructor or PTI who is properly trained and conversant with all the rules. At the standard and advanced levels there would be a referee and a score keeper. At the advanced level there would also be three judges. A comprehensive list of illegal techniques for each level would be available. Fighters would be matched according to experience level and weight class.
OVERSIGHT AT ALL LEVELS

Each Rifle Company should have a representative who is at the minimum rank of corporal and MSD Instructor qualified, who would be responsible for ensuring that regular training is conducted either personally or with the help of other instructors. Regular training could be one PT session a week being devoted to technique revision, or a scenario afternoon in which every member of the company has to participate.

At battalion level there would be a representative who is a sergeant/warrant officer class 2 who coordinates the company reps and acts as the senior instructor/course manager for any MSD courses that the unit conducts. This person would be the unit point of contact for all things MSD and would coordinate with other units and brigade.

At brigade level this position may be filled by the Warrant Officer Physical Training Instructor or a member of brigade headquarters and would be responsible for ensuring that numbers of both exponents and instructors are meeting designated quotas. They would coordinate instructor development classes and the planning and conduct of inter-unit competitions as required.

MUC CELL

Hand in hand with the structure mentioned above, for any system to grow it requires someone to push it in the right direction and ensure it doesn’t become ‘bare minimum training’. A cell of dedicated and motivated soldiers from across the Army who would travel and observe courses to ensure technique continuity and standards are maintained. They would promote the system and look for ways to integrate aspects into other units’ training and courses; for example, grappling and close range strikes into the Urban Operators Instructors Course. They would examine other techniques/styles to ensure that our system stays current and relevant.

CONCLUSION

The Army took some great leaps forward when the MSD course was introduced, and the ‘old school’ unarmed combat courses with their notoriously high injury rates became history. We must be careful not to stagnate or settle for a reactionary self-defence system that does not build confidence in our combat soldiers to engage aggressively in hand to hand combat. We do not need to complicate what we have

Although there are many techniques that are too dangerous for live competition, there are many more benefits to be gained …
with more techniques or complicated variations, but we need to grow our instructor proficiency base by giving them a greater understanding of what each technique can achieve, when to use it (when not to), how to combine a series of techniques and what to do when it does not work the way they planned. This will result in high calibre instructors who inspire confidence and encourage young soldiers to want to gain similar levels of knowledge and skills.

We want to make unarmed combat skills second nature and build a culture where an hour’s spare time in barracks is spent practicing locks and holds, not staring at the walls waiting for knock-off. We want an environment where our soldiers are not only being introduced to these skills for the first time as they prepare to deploy overseas, but are already proficient and confident so they can concentrate on other requirements. We want a complete system that gathers the best training techniques and methods available, a system that endows physical and mental toughness and encourages initiative and resourcefulness.

_We do not win wars because we are better at hand-to-hand combat than the enemy, we do however win wars because of the things it takes to be a good hand-to-hand fighter._

**ENDNOTES**

4 Ibid

**THE AUTHOR**

Warrant Officer Class Two Eddie James Walsh joined the Army in 1988 and he is currently posted to the Combat Training Centre – Live (CTC-L) where he is an Observer/Trainer. His other postings include 2/4 RAR; the School of Infantry; 4 RAR (Commando), where he was first introduced to Unarmed Combat; 1 RAR; 2 RAR; RMC-D; and 16 RWAR, where he gained his MSD Instructor qualification. Outside of the Army he trains in mixed martial arts and Krav Maga.
IS PARACHUTE CAPABILITY STILL RELEVANT TO MODERN EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS?¹

MAJOR PAUL SCANLAN

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the role a conventional parachute capability can have in modern expeditionary operations. It will argue that a conventional parachute capability is still viable and relevant in the Australian Defence Force, either as a single capability or in support of the amphibious capability, particularly in regard to the force required to undertake modern expeditionary operations.

In addition, this article will query the viability of the development of the Australian Defence Force amphibious capability in this economic climate. While the Australian perspectives for debate are limited, the arguments presented are designed to stimulate discussion and debate rather than provide an in-depth solution. Finally it will suggest that the Defence White Paper 2013 reconsider the decision to remove the conventional parachute capability.
Where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defense, as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds, might not, in many places, do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought to repel them?²

Benjamin Franklin, 1781

The introduction of a viable aerial platform from which to deploy fulfilled Benjamin Franklin’s prescient forecast of the potential application of parachuting from the sky. Since 1948, thirty of the thirty-seven combat operations involving conventionally employed parachute forces were successful in accomplishing their mission, with six unsuccessful and one partially attaining its objective.³ In October 2001, elements of the 75th Ranger Regiment parachuted into the Helmand Desert of Afghanistan, their objective to secure Forward Operating Base Rhino. In March 2003, the 173rd Airborne Brigade parachuted into Northern Iraq to seize an airfield and support US Special Operations Forces. In January 2012, members of the US Naval Special Warfare Development Group, using Military Free Fall, parachuted into Somalia to recover two hostages.⁴ This contemporary employment of parachute capability across the spectrum of conflict illustrates its continued relevance to modern expeditionary operations.

As a more dynamic and contested, less secure world emerges, there is a continued relevance for the vertical dimension of modern expeditionary operations.⁵ Parachuting currently offers a capability that cannot be replicated or superseded. While the large scale airborne assaults of the Arnhem model of the Second World War are unlikely in the future, a parachute capability still provides the ability to insert force or materiel in denied, austere or remote areas.⁶ As the examples highlighted demonstrate, it remains particularly relevant, especially when there is a requirement to improvise an expeditionary operation at short notice in difficult terrain with poor infrastructure, and still maintain an element of surprise.⁷ A parachute capability confers flexibility, adaptability and strategic reach. Significantly, in this economic climate, it provides a cost effective capability. Furthermore, when supporting or in conjunction with an amphibious capability, parachute capability exponentially increases the adversary’s uncertainty.⁸

This article argues that a conventional parachute capability is still relevant to modern expeditionary operations. As the Defence White Paper 2009 identified, ‘our expansive strategic geography requires an expeditionary orientation on the part of the Australian Defence Force at the operational level, underpinned by requisite force projection capabilities’.⁹ It uses Geoffrey Till’s criteria to outline the nature
of modern expeditionary operations and Thierry Gongora’s baseline and robust expeditionary capability models to demonstrate what a parachute capability can bring to operational plans. Contemporary case studies will illustrate the relevancy of the parachute capability. Key to this argument is the importance of preparedness and mobility in expeditionary operations, for as one senior US Army official has remarked, ‘you are not relevant unless you can get to the fight’.10

MODERN EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS AND PARACHUTE CAPABILITY

Modern expeditionary operations are those set in the post-Cold War period, after the end of the bipolar world, which saw the emergence of differing strategic and security paradigms.11 The defining characteristic of expeditionary operations is the projection of force into a foreign setting, often with limited aims and of short duration.12 They comprise the spectrum of military operations, from humanitarian assistance/disaster recovery, non-combatant evacuations, counterinsurgency and forcible entry in a unified land operation. The USMC defines them as ‘a military operation conducted by an armed force to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country’.13 The roles of the expeditionary force include seizure and control of key physical objectives such as Air Ports of Disembarkation (APOD), Sea Ports of Disembarkation (SPOD), resource areas and political centres, to establish and maintain order in an area beset by chaos and disorder and to provide physical relief and assistance in the event of a disaster.14 Expeditionary forces are often described by a collection of adjectives: rapidly deployable, light, flexible, joint and agile—all of which are perfectly applicable to parachute capabilities.15

The defining characteristic of expeditionary operations is the projection of force into a foreign setting, often with limited aims and of short duration.

Before examining the details of the utility of the parachute capability, it is important to firstly understand the meaning of ‘capability’. This is ‘the ability and capacity to perform a set of tasks designed to produce an effect’.16 The nature of the force that produces this effect is dependent on the conditions and standards that are applied to them. The benchmarks of this force are speed, agility, precision, ability to concentrate, mass coordinated joint fires and ability to disperse. Arguably, capability has no relevance unless it has the ability and capacity to perform its mission or task. Therefore the mission and perceived tasks require continual review to ensure capabilities are validated and increase the likelihood of success.17
A parachute capability facilitates the insertion of personnel or materiel (munitions, equipment, food and water) via aircraft using deceleration systems. This can range from small teams of specialists, such as Special Forces to larger, more conventional forces or materiel, in the form of logistical resupply or equipment. Furthermore, a conventional parachute capability often implies preparedness, as many militaries hold parachute capable elements as strategic assets. This is of particular utility to expeditionary operation with their emphasis on short notice deployments, where responsiveness is a significant consideration. In an environment of uncertainty and unpredictability, a parachute capability, more so conventional and with mass drop static-line and heavy drop equipment, provides options that other capabilities do not have.

**EXPEDITIONARY OPERATIONS AND THE UTILITY OF A PARACHUTE CAPABILITY**

The best contemporary definition of an expeditionary operation is provided by Geoffrey Till, a Professor of Maritime Studies in the Defence Studies Department of King's College London. His list of interconnected characteristics includes:

- operational
- distant
- self-contained
- limited in aim
- of short duration
- against varied opponents
- demanding and specialised
- fought in urbanised littorals, and
- highly politicised.

Because so many mixtures of these criteria may apply to particular cases, definitions may remain imprecise. Nevertheless, the above characteristics will be used to systematically assess the relevance of the parachute capability.

**OPERATIONAL**

Till uses expeditionary in this criteria specifically in relation to the operational level of war. In today’s environment it is more likely that such forces will be used to secure an APOD or SPOD, rather than as part of unified land operations. In the contemporary operating military environment the seizure of an APOD or SPOD can be especially challenging give the widespread use of surface-to-air missiles by both conventional and unconventional forces. However, this does not present a barrier that eliminates the use of a parachute capability. Surface-to-air missile threats can be neutralised by suppression of air defences, allowing parachute forces
to deploy almost anywhere, *en masse*, to achieve their mission. This is especially significant given the accessibility issues when considering the use of amphibious or rotary-wing capabilities.

In addition, the lack of a suitable airfield preventing a fixed-wing air-land option may necessitate delivery by parachute of troops in an airborne assault or an equipment airdrop. The parachuting into Northern Iraq by the 173rd Airborne Brigade to seize an airfield specifically demonstrates the conventional pursuit of such operational objectives. Alternatively, clandestine parachute forces, such as Special Forces, can achieve tactical through to strategic objectives through precision capabilities. Moreover, the use of a parachute capability in tandem with air-landing, rotary or amphibious forces provides support to more complex schemes of joint expeditionary manoeuvre through the tactical concept of simultaneity—confronting the enemy commander with a dilemma to complicate his or her defence.

Distant

‘Distant’ refers to the operational ability to move between engagements with an emphasis on the ability to deploy quickly to trouble spots in a region. A parachute capability, assisted by aerial refuelling, can deploy over significant distances, manoeuvring to bypass obstacles and terrain to insert and achieve strategic and operational objectives. While a tilt-rotor or even a rotary-wing capability can also partially achieve this, availability, range, carrying capacity and force protection of platforms can inhibit their use. The US Army maintains a brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division at 18 hours notice to move, for intervention anywhere in the world for this purpose. Once at their destination, parachute insertion provides a more efficient means of getting ‘an airborne division on the ground in 10 minutes’ rather than ‘a brigade air-landed in a day and a half’. This is due to the air-land option taking much longer due to the requirement to land individual aircraft, disembarkation time and tarmac management of aircraft on what may be a rudimentary airfield. This strategic mobility, together with an ability to deploy from secure locations, makes it difficult for an adversary to determine likely targets. This flexibility to project almost anywhere, together with aerial delivery platforms capable of inserting personnel or materiel in large numbers, is a worthwhile investment and very much relevant in the modern economic climate.
SELF-CONTAINED

An expeditionary force must be self-deployable and (hopefully) decisive. In regards to parachute capability this is crucial as ‘no force can truly be expeditionary if it cannot fight its way in or sustain itself in an austere environment.’ Logistically, parachute capability continues to advance in this regard. The introduction of C17 into the RAAF combined with the proven capabilities of the C130 in delivery of heavy drop platforms has increased the operational viability period of conventional parachute forces in the Australian context. The recognised efficacy of simultaneous personnel and heavy drop insertion from C130 aircraft and the large increase in capability afforded by the C17 (particularly in the delivery of large engineer plant to open a damaged airfield) was demonstrated by the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR) Airborne Combat Team in 2010. Since 2004, the use of GPS guided parachutes to conduct precision resupply provides a rapid, accurate and low cost sustainment option that does not rely on ground transport or extended exposure of fixed-wing or rotary-wing aircraft to dangerous landing zones. There is also potential for resupply of forces in contact that may be cut off or unable to be resupplied due to the nature of the terrain. The stand-off parachute capability enables the delivery of personnel and materiel outside an environment characterised by adversarial tactical air defence. This is of increasing relevance to modern expeditionary operations as it allows the development of a capability that is not just an emergency logistics resupply capability, but a method of insertion into multiple drop zones from a single platform. Furthermore, this method has a minimal personnel footprint and limited requirement for logistic support. This characteristic allows parachute capability to be sustained in an austere environment without host nation support.

LIMITED IN AIM AND OF SHORT DURATION

In this context, parachute capabilities are increasingly appropriate; in most cases they seek neither conquest nor occupation and are often designed for no more than 72 hours of independent operations. Given its targeted aim, a forced entry operation may not be critical to the overall success of an expeditionary operation. Usually it assumes reliance on follow-on forces. Nevertheless, the surprise and shock of a parachute deployment is very effective. Forces can assault multiple operational objectives, target key infrastructure or secure SPODs and APODs for follow-on forces. This is increasingly relevant in the modern environment where asymmetric forces can target ports and large airfields to deny access. This access
is critical, as expeditionary operations are often followed by long-term stabilisation operations. This is the role of a traditional conventional parachute capability, securing an SPOD or APOD so follow-on forces can then be used for the post expeditionary operational environment.

**AGAINST VARIED OPPONENTS AND FOUGHT IN URBANISED LITTORALS**

Expeditionary forces need to be prepared to operate in complex and challenging environments, where the adversary changes and avoids the strengths of any concentration of force by an opponent while seeking to exploit their vulnerabilities. In an expeditionary context, these forces can include terrorists, insurgents, paramilitary groups and near peer combat forces. Furthermore, modern expeditionary operations will focus less on the decisive battle and more on key operational level actions to separate adversaries from their sources of support, and neutralising those that contest the expedition.  

These varied opponents could also be capable of sabotaging an airfield or preventing a primary air-land option. In an expeditionary operation where failure is not an option, a force incapable of conducting parachute insertion would compromise mission success. A parachute capability is therefore extremely useful and appropriate in an urbanised littoral environment where a parachute force may provide options that amphibious forces do not possess. In regard to inland areas former US Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney remarked, ‘the remote inland location of the many areas of vital-national interest and the requirement for rapid strategic deployability can only be accomplished by aerial delivery.’

These criteria introduce limitations into parachute capability that requires consideration of risk. Modern capability often lacks organic transport, has limited organic fire support and requires a semi-permissive environment or air superiority to mitigate. Nevertheless, a multi-mission capable parachute capability would allow the expeditionary operation to meet changes in the situation. Included in this capability could be specialists, such as Special Forces, engineers, medical and logistical personnel, and larger, more conventional parachute forces.

**DEMANDING AND SPECIALISED**

Parachute capability is extremely relevant as it involves low or high level mass and/or precision insertions during periods of darkness to improve survivability, into
difficult terrain, and potentially against superior numbers. While this is mitigated by surprise, there are significant technological requirements to support a parachute capability ranging from insertion of personnel to equipment. These continue to be refined. For example, with the introduction of the T11 parachute, the percentile injury rate is expected to be less than 1 per cent.\(^3\)\(^6\) Alternatively, these demands also present the single greatest limitation of the parachute capability, their susceptibility to adverse meteorological conditions that can significantly influence mission success. This was demonstrated in Operation URGENT FURY, the US invasion of Grenada in 1983, when four members of the Naval Special Warfare Development Group died during a parachute insertion in extreme conditions off the coast of Grenada.\(^3\)\(^7\)

**HIGHLY POLITICISED**

Modern expeditionary operations require an ability to shape the political and strategic environment in the ‘pre-crisis’ phase of any impending conflict.\(^3\)\(^8\) This results in them being highly politicised, not only for the nation considering action, but also by the adversary in employing political and economic actions to disrupt strategic deployment options.\(^3\)\(^9\) Modern expeditionary operations also have ‘an executive, legislative and public expectation of success’.\(^4\)\(^0\) By virtue of their speed, mobility and sustained readiness, a parachute capability is extremely relevant. Implied within this, though, is the appropriate military and political will or agility of command to support the Ground Force Commander. Consequently, if there are requests for assistance, a parachute capability is the quickest means and, more importantly, ‘it’s getting there with the right sufficient capability to be able to be decisive quickly’.\(^4\)\(^1\)

Furthermore, in terms of politically sensitive, discrete expeditionary operations, personnel can conduct clandestine Military Free Fall outside detection and threat ranges in order to allow low signature insertion.\(^4\)\(^2\) This was most recently demonstrated during the recovery of the hostages in Somalia by the Naval Special Warfare Development Group described earlier. This requires the maintenance of a high state of readiness that allows a rapid reaction to a developing situation. Parachute capability is often maintained on this and a sustainable expeditionary force generation basis. An example is Operation JUST CAUSE, conducted prior to the US invasion of Panama. Due to their standing readiness, the 75th Ranger Regiment was able to conduct a rehearsal for the actual airborne assault.\(^4\)\(^3\) Today, this is their ‘national mission’, with each Ranger battalion conducting annual rehearsals with all participants.\(^4\)\(^4\)
An important addition to Till’s criteria is that a parachute capability provides a deterrent that can be used as an element of national power. At the strategic level, credible threats to use parachute capable forces can coerce a regime to accept certain political terms and potentially avoid large scale expeditionary operations. As a strategic reserve, they provide a situational dilemma for an adversary. This was demonstrated by the United States when they threatened the military regime of General Raoul Cedras with an airborne invasion if he did not stand down and allow Haiti to return to democratic rule. At the operational level, the very threat of a parachute force being employed can shape enemy dispositions in such a manner that it would enable the successful lodgement of an amphibious force. However, if the deterrent was to fail, the ability to deploy a parachute capability to a region quickly may be enough to secure the political and strategic goals and the operational objective.

**GONGORA’S EXPEDITIONARY MODELS**

The other conceptual foundation to support defining expeditionary operations is offered by Dr Thierry Gongora, a defence scientist attached to the air staff at Canadian National Defence Headquarters. He suggests two models are used to assess the requirements for expeditionary models, the baseline and the robust. In deciding which of the two to pursue, nations should first establish their requirement for expeditionary forces and then, based on their needs, choose between the two. Their decision should also consider resolution of broader issues relating to defence and foreign policy. The difference between the two models is that while the baseline is rigid in its assessment, the robust is slightly less so and discretion can be applied amongst the capability requirements. Whatever the decision, additional capability improves the opportunities for access to an area of operations, despite opposition and/or the absence of host nation support. Therefore, in evaluating the relevance of a parachute capability in modern expeditionary operations, all of the baseline criteria will be applied. In terms of the robust, the capability of forced entry will be applied, noting multi-mission capable and sustainment in an austere environment without host nation support has already been validated.

The baseline expeditionary model refers to the ability to respond quickly to foreign crisis through the ‘deployment (often over strategic distances) of a task
tailored force for an operation limited in time. Reflecting a considerable degree of overlap with Till’s criteria, elements of the baseline expeditionary model include:

- high readiness
- sustainable expeditionary force generation
- strategic mobility
- lean in-theatre support, and
- modular force packages

which are all present in a parachute capability.

Those not assessed earlier from the baseline model include deployable command and control, and interoperability with main coalition partners. A parachute capability fulfils command and control requirements at all levels. Due to the strategic and political demands of expeditionary operations, parachute capable forces maintain strategic communication capabilities. Conventional battalions and small Special Forces teams are all optimised for command and control in theatre to ensure political and military strategic objectives are achieved. Interoperability with main coalition partners is also strongly represented in the parachute capability, with routine doctrine and equipment exchanges occurring. This was recently demonstrated by the regular ‘wings exchange’ jumps conducted by 3 RAR and US Army airborne units during the TALISMAN SABRE exercise series. It was also demonstrated in Exercise EAGLES VOL when British and French parachute forces, tasked to develop a combined joint expeditionary force for contingency operations, conducted parachute insertions using each other’s aircraft and parachutes. Furthermore, the French maintain an airborne capability of 9000 personnel and conduct a minimum of six descents annually.

The robust model builds on the baseline by adding a series of expanded requirements that can be defined as the ability to respond quickly to crisis abroad through the deployment… of a military force with a broad range of capabilities and despite opposition… Forced entry is the most important parachute capability of relevance to modern expeditionary operations. In order to avoid adversarial anti-access and denial efforts, there is a requirement to maintain a forcible parachute entry capability. Parachute capability may be deployed for the purposes of:

- limited objective strikes and raids; limited attacks to seize key terrain and destroy enemy anti-access capabilities such as air and missile defences and anti-satellite and anti-ship missiles; achieving a coup de main; seizure of existing ports and airfields, or the establishment of expeditionary facilities that enable follow-on operations.

If forced entry is required as part of an expeditionary operation, parachute capability may be required to insert reconnaissance elements and/or forces to secure an initial lodgement, particularly if the condition of the APOD or SPOD cannot be determined. This pre-emptive action can also set up the ‘follow-on’ force
for success, as the deployment of a medium weight force would require more time and infrastructure to insert, whether it is by air or sea. 60

The parachute capability is increasingly relevant to modern expeditionary operations. Joint enablers are critical to supporting a successful parachute insertion, namely air superiority en route to and over the objective area. While parachute capability achieves tactically significant effects, it also highlights the limitations of the capability. Air superiority requires a significant contribution by tactical aircraft to provide protection and suppress adversarial air defences. Furthermore, if the objective was heavily defended, tactical aircraft would also be required to conduct suppression of enemy air defences before an insertion was to take place. Nevertheless, a parachute capability can significantly shape and set the conditions for a follow-on force action, 61 when a lack of organic air superiority for amphibious forces limits the type and location of possible operations. Battalions of the 75th Ranger Regiment demonstrated this during Operations URGENT FURY and JUST CAUSE when they conducted parachute assaults to seize the airfields of Torrijos/Tocumen and Point Salines to support the introduction of follow on forces. 62 The forced entry robust criterion assists the baseline criteria such as the sustainable expedition for generation and lean in-theatre support.

THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

The transfer of responsibility for securing APODs and SPODs from Forces Command to Special Operations Command (SOCOMD) is not a transfer of a parachute capability in the sense of expeditionary operations. The term ‘transfer of capability’ is misleading. SOCOMD offers a projection of power across the ocean by ‘rapid deployment forces’. However, while this is an accurate description of an important element of the expeditionary framework, it can imply that deploying forces to the area of operations is the whole mission. 63 But the ability to achieve an effect and return home (or reconstitute while forward deployed) is fundamental, as has been demonstrated by Till’s criteria. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between expeditionary operations and power projection—by itself power projection is not sufficient to warrant an expeditionary operation. 64 Each expeditionary operation will comprise a unique mix of these characteristics and in some cases not all will be in evidence. Consequently, to emphasise the relevance of a parachute capability, Gongora’s expeditionary model demonstrates its utility in modern expeditionary operations.
The subsequent effects of the decision to remove a conventional parachute capability were recently highlighted during wargaming at the Australian Command and Staff College. In a scenario that involved a services protected evacuation prior to conventional conflict, the only force element available to fulfil the responsibilities of a strategic reserve was the 2nd Commando Regiment. Considering extant operational commitments to Operation SLIPPER and Defence Aid to the Civil Power, planners were left with an option to either have a strategic reserve that was parachute capable and no force available to conduct forced entry seizure of an APOD or SPOD, or vice versa. Similar significant limitations were encountered during the 2012 Exercise POZIERES PROSPECT command post exercise, where the requirement to simultaneously seize an APOD and SPOD demonstrated concurrency limitations with tasking SOCOMD capability with conventional and unconventional tasks. This required an airmobile supplementation with the Ready Battalion Group which, in reality, would not be available in the primary operating environment due to distance, but can be achieved in the 2013 Exercise TALISMAN SABRE scenario as Northern Legais abuts the Australian mainland. Furthermore rotary-wing capability has limited range, endurance, asset complement and utility in achieving a rapid decisive effect need to secure an APOD or SPOD in an expeditionary context,\textsuperscript{65} and exacerbated when considering the limited Australian rotary-wing fleet. An airborne combat team or parachute battalion group fulfils this role more appropriately than any SOCOMD force, more so when you consider their primary role, and that of their enablers—artillery, engineers and medical—is to secure and hold (supported by a heavy drop of engineer stores and combat service support) a point of entry. Furthermore, they have the mass and the experience to do so, as opposed to what would essentially be an \textit{ad hoc} composite force. During the period 2009–10, 3 RAR regenerated the conventional parachute capability and was ‘operationally capable with theatre communications, medical, engineer and offensive support assets commensurate with its size and likely tasks’.\textsuperscript{66} In this environment, ‘we can do it in extremis’ is not a valid capability. As has been described earlier when referring to simultaneity, in our primary operating environment, that being South East Asia and the South West Pacific, if we cannot secure the APOD and SPOD simultaneously, we cannot conduct entry operations in an environment characterised more by threat than permissive.

\[\text{... it is important to distinguish between expeditionary operations and power projection—by itself power projection is not sufficient to warrant an expeditionary operation.}\]
In light of our recent budget cuts, it is important to highlight the cost of the jointness and resources required to develop an amphibious capability. We are studying the Marines, with sixty-five years of experience in amphibious warfare. Maintaining two Landing Helicopter Docks will require $320 million per year. These costs do not incorporate the additional cost of the RAAF and RAN assets required for air superiority and sea control in delivering this force, nor the additional Army costs to project a force that will be capable of forced entry. The Chief of the Royal Australian Air Force recently commented that the 5th Generation fighter can achieve air superiority and suppression of enemy air defences in a future conflict, and to do so for an amphibious force would require in excess of one hundred Joint Strike Fighters. If the JSF was only required to provide air superiority for the insertion of a parachute capability, using C130s and C17s, how many JSFs would be required then? If the force inserted has organic ground based air defence, and could secure an APOD or SPOD for follow-on forces, would this not be a more cost effective expeditionary capability, as opposed to the expensive and time intensive plan that sees the development of an amphibious force that cannot guarantee a point of entry in our littoral primary operating environment? The ability to insert a combined arms sub-unit or battle group by parachute, and/or followed on by a brigade where necessary can only be an advantage in our strategic capability.

Perhaps Army could consider this; a non-aligned parachute capability under command of Joint Deployable Force as a viable alternative to the development of the 2nd Battalion as a dedicated Amphibious Battalion Group. Plan BEERSHEBA is not suitable for the raising of a credible Entry from the Air and Sea Brigade force based on an amphibious capability and inclusive or otherwise of a parachute capability. The Defence White Paper 2009 called for the Army to provide a brigade for operations while simultaneously providing another battle group. Strategic policy would be met if the three multi-role brigades provide the former and the parachute battalion the latter.

CONCLUSION

The modern expeditionary force will continue to contend with a diverse operating environment. This will include political, economic, social and technological elements that will support an adversary’s will and ability to fight. A parachute capability is
relevant to modern expeditionary operations and complements an amphibious
capability, but as with all expeditionary operations, the capability is required to be
firmly linked to anticipated missions, tasks and associated threats. Specialising a
capability for modern expeditionary operations for only one environment restricts
the ‘ability and capacity to perform a set of tasks designed to produce an effect’ and
the ensuing influence that can be expected from developing courses of action
to achieve political and military strategic objectives.

Using the strategy of Till’s interconnected criteria and Gongora’s baseline and
robust models this article has examined the relevance of a conventional parachute
capability and argues that it is extremely relevant. A conventional parachute capa-
bility’s dual strengths of both a strategic mobility and forced entry capability in
rapidly deteriorating situations will continue to ensure its relevance to modern
expeditionary operations. As has been demonstrated in the case studies, this
relevance to modern expeditionary operations is not the solution alone, as success
is often determined by maintaining a balanced force that is able to contend with
most, if not all, contingencies.

In the contemporary Australian context, focusing on the development of an
expensive amphibious expeditionary capability and confining a parachute capability
to SOCOMD does not provide this. The Defence White Paper 2013 needs to ensure
decisions are not made on parochial grounds. It should reconsider what capabilities
are cost effective and prioritise them, within the current budget restrictions, to
achieve our strategic and operational objectives more efficiently.

Until technology enables individual or collective vertical envelopment through
alternative means, the most cost effective way to deliver personnel and materiel
over long distances in an inland or littoral environment, including SPOD or
APOD seizure, is with a parachute capability. In an environment of uncertainty
and economic restraint, we need to maximise capabilities that are useful and cost
effective and, above all well proven. The conventional parachute capability was; the
proposed amphibious capability is not.

ENDNOTES

1 The author would like to acknowledge the helpful comments, information and
advice from Dr Andrew Davies, Dr Peter Dean, Dr Michael Evans, Dr Russell
Parkin, Lieutenant Colonels Ben Pronk and Matt Stevens, and Major Giles
Cornelia.


3 J Rickard, ‘The Employment of Airborne (Parachute) Forces in Modern


12 Ibid. The ADF defines it as the ‘projection of power over extended lines of communications into a distant operational area to accomplish a specific mission’. Note the RAAF have a similar mission statement, although it differs in that they accomplish a specific objective.


16 Ibid, p. 69.


21 LWD3-0 – Developing Doctrine, Land Warfare Development Centre, Puckapunyal, 2008, p. 29.
22 Hodermarsky, The Characteristics of Expeditionary Forces, p. 3.
24 SV-22 Osprey (platform used by 75th Ranger Regiment in an airfield seizure operations).
29 As articulated by Cornelia: ‘The capacity for a sizeable contingency force element to be launched from strategic distances and landed by parachute on or near an objective (possibly an airfield denied by some expedient means) with its support weapons and immediate logistics delivered by aerial delivery platforms in the space of a few minutes is what makes conventional airborne forces a worthy investment. The option of employing both C-17 and C-130 type aircraft in a paratrooping role gives great flexibility and reach to an ADF conventional airborne force.’ Cornelia, ‘ADF Joint Entry Operations: why conventional airborne forces are fundamental’, pp. 38–39.
35 Cornelia, ‘ADF Joint Entry Operations: why conventional airborne forces are fundamental’, p. 38.
38 Ibid, p. 42.
Is Parachute Capability Still Relevant to Modern Expeditionary Operations?


41 Interview with General Erik K Shinseki, Frontline.

42 Field Manual 3-05.211 Special Forces Military Free-Fall Operations, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 2005, p 1-1.


44 Stevens, ‘Airfield Seizure: Rangers Lead the Way’.

45 Kazmierski, ‘US Army Power Projection in the 21st Century’, p. 120.


51 Ibid, pp. 6, 107.

52 Dean, ‘Introduction to Expeditionary Operations’.


54 Dean, ‘Introduction to Expeditionary Operations’.


64  *MCDP 3-0 Expeditionary Operations*, Department of the Navy, Washington, 1983, p. 33.
65  Stevens, ‘Airfield Seizure: Rangers Lead the Way’.
66  Cornelia, ‘ADF Joint Entry Operations: why conventional airborne forces are fundamental’, p. 33.
67  ‘Jointness’ is an expression coined by the US Services to describe cross-service cooperation in all stages of the military processes, from research, through procurement and into operations. It is aimed at satisfying the requirements for increasing efficiency and economising the security budget.
73  Cornelia, ‘ADF Joint Entry Operations: why conventional airborne forces are fundamental’, p. 42.

**THE AUTHOR**

Major Paul Scanlan is currently studying a Masters of Military Studies at the Australian Command and Staff College. These are his personal views.
CAPABILITY

TRAIN BETTER, FIGHT BEST

MAJOR BEN MCELLAN

ABSTRACT

The Australian Army is on the cusp of its most challenging period since the end of the Vietnam War. Following twelve years of unprecedented operational tempo, Army is steadily shifting towards a ‘peacetime army’. Its training focus has shifted from attaining expertise in counterinsurgency operations towards achieving mastery in combined arms warfare. It has entered a period of fiscal austerity. The future will not be easy. This article will argue that Army can readily, confidently and successfully confront its forthcoming challenges through the implementation of a training regimen that emulates the one which transformed the Reichswehr in the years following the First World War.

Arguably, our Army is on the cusp of its most challenging period since the end of the Vietnam War. A generation of officers and soldiers, whose service experience has been characterised by multiple operational deployments, will be forced to adjust to life in a ‘peacetime Army’. Many of Army’s combat veterans will have to accept that their operational experience gained during counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan does not automatically equate to expertise in the execution of conventional warfighting. Compounding these issues is the increasingly constrained financial constraints imposed on Army by a government and nation seeking to reap their ‘peace dividend’ following a decade of war. The 2012 Federal budget cuts, coupled with the ongoing demands of the Strategic
Reform Program, have already impinged on the raising, training and sustaining of Army. To many, these adversities will appear overwhelming. To some, these challenges will seem insurmountable.

Historical precedence of another military force triumphing over similar challenges offers our Army cause for hope. The rapid transformation of Germany’s army, the Reichswehr, from its vanquished post First World War state to become, arguably, the most potent military force in history, provides a pertinent case study for our Army in how it can overcome its immediate and future challenges. The radical conversion of the defeated, dejected and impoverished Reichswehr was engineered by the esteemed, resolute and irrepressible Generaloberst (Colonel General) Hans Von Seeckt. In spite of significant adversity, in the space of six years, Von Seeckt revamped the Reichswehr. Underpinning this revival was Von Seeckt’s development and implementation of a rigorous, inventive, cost-effective and transformative ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy.

This article will argue that Army can readily, confidently and successfully confront its forthcoming challenges through the implementation of a training regimen that emulates the one which transformed the Reichswehr in the years following the First World War. To validate this thesis, this article will describe the challenges confronting Von Seeckt when he assumed command of the Reichswehr in December 1919. Broad comparisons will be drawn between these constraints, and those confronting the Australian Army. Subsequently the inventive, cost-effective and highly successful training methods applied by Von Seeckt to transform the Reichswehr will be analysed. In addition, and by way of warning, the uninspired, self-limiting and ultimately disastrous approach to training adopted by the British army during the interwar years will be contrasted with that of Von Seeckt. Finally, this article will conclude by articulating the key lessons the Australian Army can draw from this apposite case study in confronting its forthcoming challenges.

THE CHALLENGES CONFRONTING VON SEECKT AND THE REICHSWEHR

Germany’s army emerged from the detritus of the First World War in a dejected state. In addition to its ignominious defeat and extraordinary loss in blood and treasure, it was debilitated by the exigencies of the Treaty of Versailles. To appreciate the severe challenges confronted and subsequently overcome by Generaloberst
Hans Von Seeckt, it is necessary to review the melancholy situation he inherited upon being appointed head of the postwar Reichswehr.8

The German army was in a wretched state at the conclusion of the First World War. According to the official German medical war history, the German military suffered over two million dead and four million wounded by war’s end.9 Germany’s well earned and hard won reputation as the leading army in Europe, which pioneered many contemporary operational concepts throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century under Von Moltke the Elder, was lost in the humiliation of its defeat.10

Compounding the Reichswehr’s miserable post First World War situation were the severe dictates imposed on it by the Treaty of Versailles. The architects of this peace treaty sought to emasculate the German nation and its military forces.11 Versailles further debilitated the Reichswehr through a series of mandates that constrained its role and professional ethos, force structure and equipment, and funding.

The Treaty of Versailles sought to reduce the German army to a constabulary function.12 In doing so, it aimed to eliminate its traditional warfighting role, ethos and professionalism. According to military theorist Michael Vianeuva, ‘the treaty practically eliminated the German imperial army, and its long list of restrictions left but a specter of the once massive force.’13 Article V of the Treaty prevented Germany from maintaining ‘an offensive military capability and the essential institutions of a modern, major power’.14 The German General Staff, the custodians of many of the revolutionary concepts conceived during the nineteenth century, was disbanded.15 The acclaimed Kriegsakademie (War College), the staple of German officer training and professionalism since 1810, whose graduates included Karl Von Clausewitz, Von Moltke the Elder, and Von Steimetz—all of whom assume prominent positions in the pantheon of strategic thinkers—was abolished.16

In keeping with its intent of emasculating the traditional warfighting role and ethos of the German Army, the Versailles Treaty imposed significant limitations on the Reichswehr’s force structure. The Treaty reduced the Reichswehr to a mere fraction of its post First World War strength. The number of officer positions within its 100,000-man force was capped at 4000.17 Conscription was banned.18 Moreover, Versailles prevented the army from acquiring, training with or employing tanks, armoured cars, aircraft and heavy artillery.19 Finally, restrictions were imposed on the manufacture of certain types of machine guns and rifles.20 These prohibitions on the Reichswehr's force structure sought to render any attempt to train for and attain professional mastery in its traditional warfighting role unachievable.
The onerous financial penalties imposed on Germany by Versailles impoverished the nation—and its military. The 2012 value of Germany’s reparations totalled US$442 billion.\textsuperscript{21} At the time, prominent economists such as John Maynard Keynes argued that such penalties were both excessive and counterproductive.\textsuperscript{22} The fact that it took until October 2010, almost 92 years following the end of the First World War, for Germany to make its final reparation payment validates Keynes’ initial assessment.\textsuperscript{23} The impact of these financial penalties on Germany’s fiscal position, and the amount of funding allocated to the raising, training and sustaining of the \textit{Reichswehr} was severe. Indeed, Germany’s dire fiscal situation and morose economic forecast critically threatened the \textit{Reichswehr’s} capacity to acquire leading equipment to train for and attain professional mastery in its traditional warfighting role. Enter \textit{Generaloberst} Hans Von Seeckt.

Von Seeckt had fought the majority of the First World War on the Eastern Front.\textsuperscript{24} Consequently, he witnessed the advantages of manoeuvre warfare over the static trench deadlock characteristic of the Western Front. His First World War experiences convinced him ‘that smaller armies, thoroughly trained in aspects of joint operations and combined arms tactics, could use technology to outmanoeuvre and decisively defeat mass armies’.\textsuperscript{25} Throughout the war, Von Seeckt achieved tactical and operational acclaim. He was perceived as a dynamic and irrepressible visionary who fervently believed that the only constraints on the human mind were self-imposed. From his appointment as the head of the \textit{Reichswehr} in December 1919, Von Seeckt resolved to transform the vanquished post World War I German army into a leading professional military force—no matter the constraints and/or challenges—via a dynamic, inventive and transformative training philosophy.

While the scale of adversity confronting Von Seeckt and his Army is difficult to comprehend, there are some broad parallels that can be drawn between the challenges he confronted and those facing the Australian Army. Firstly, comparisons can be made between the difficulties faced by Von Seeckt in transforming the post First World War \textit{Reichswehr} into a leading, professional warfighting army and the Australian Army’s contemporary challenge of reorientating from its focus on counterinsurgency operations to that of conventional warfighting. Secondly, broad parallels can be drawn between the severe fiscal constraints faced by Von Seeckt in reviving the \textit{Reichswehr} and those confronting the Australian Army in the foreseeable future. It is because of these broad parallels that the highly successful training philosophy employed by Von Seeckt to transform the \textit{Reichswehr} could serve as a viable antidote to the Australian Army’s forthcoming challenges.
VON SEECKT’S RESPONSE

Over a six-year period, Hans Von Seeckt transformed a defeated, dejected and impoverished 100,000-man military force into an ‘army of excellence’. The seemingly overwhelming challenges that he faced did not diminish his resolve to achieve his goal of re-establishing the prestige and superior capability of the German army. He achieved this by adapting Generalissimo Alexandre Suvarov’s eighteenth century aphorism, ‘train hard, fight easy’, into a training philosophy that sought to ‘train better, fight best’. To combat the Reichswehr’s herculean challenges, Von Seeckt implemented a rigorous, inventive, cost-effective and transformative approach to training. The key features of this approach included an unwavering focus on making the most of the time and limited material resources he had available for training, the reformation of the Reichswehr as a leader’s army and inculcating an organisational obsession for learning.

The cornerstone of Von Seeckt’s training philosophy was a determination to optimise the time and limited material resources with which he could train. It is a testament to his strength of character and leadership that he was preoccupied with making the most of what resources he did have available—as opposed to lamenting the absence of those that he lacked. By all accounts, Von Seeckt had cause to complain. His nation was on the verge of bankruptcy and civil war. Moreover, he was not allowed to acquire or train with the very equipment he needed to transform the Reichswehr into a leading exponent of combined arms warfare. Like Suvarov before him, Von Seeckt appreciated that his most precious resource, which the Allies could not deprive him of, was time. Indeed, Suvarov argued that ‘Money is dear; human life is still dearer; but time is the dearest [resource] of all’. Throughout his tenure as head of the Reichswehr, Von Seeckt implemented a number of highly successful techniques to ensure that time accorded to training was optimised.

Von Seeckt was conscious of the tendency within the Reichswehr to squander time available in the barracks environment for the conduct of demanding training. This resulted in an unacceptable waste of the one resource that the Allies could not deprive him of. Moreover, it contributed to a sense of boredom amongst the soldiers and junior leaders of the Reichswehr’s combat units. Von Seeckt understood the insidious influence that boredom had on an army. His response was to direct the conduct of up to two periods of physical training per day, forced marches to training
areas—which compensated for a lack of vehicles and fuel—and, most importantly, the conduct of ‘sand table’ (‘mud model’) exercises. 33

These ‘mud model’ exercises were conducted on a regular basis, from battalion to fire team level. 34 The only resource expended was time. Company level activities normally involved every member surrounding the ‘mud model’ and contributing to the wargaming of tactical scenarios. Every member of the company was represented on the ‘mud model’, along with scaled models of buildings and terrain. Each participant had a speaking role—even the privates. A United States Defense attaché observing the conduct of such training was astonished that all ranks were expected to show a capacity to understand and critique the tactical problem being wargamed. 35 He was amazed by the ‘understanding and capacity to rapidly appreciate a situation and react decisively’ evinced by all ranks within the Reichswehr companies who he observed conducting these ‘mud model’ activities. 36 Based on these observations, he warned US officials that the Reichswehr was rapidly re-emerging from the First World War as a highly capable and tactically adept military force. 37

Von Seeckt implemented various other measures to ensure that time and material resources accorded to the training of the Reichswehr were optimised. He demanded that field exercises were conducted in a manner that ensured that all ranks were tested. 38 He shunned the conduct of large-scale manoeuvres that resulted in soldiers standing ‘idle while their superior commanders grappled with the challenge of manoeuvring large units’. 39 His solution was to reduce the scale of major exercises to the point where all ranks were engaged. He would test commanders in large-scale manoeuvres via map and other simulation exercises. 40 Finally, he would personally verify that this key feature of his training philosophy was being applied by regularly visiting units conducting training. According to military historian James Corum, Von Seeckt’s top priority was visiting units and subunits undertaking training. He would allocate one third of his annual calendar for such visits. 41 These initiatives, combined with diligent oversight, yielded ‘cutting edge [and realistic] … peacetime training’ within the Reichswehr. 42

It was during the conduct of field exercises that Von Seeckt’s astute employment of time and other material resources was most evident. In order to derive the greatest learning from field manoeuvres, Von Seeckt insisted that they be stringently umpired. 43 He even produced his own rulebook for field umpiring, which enhanced the training realism achieved and insights into tactics and doctrine gained. 44 He did not allow the limited material resources accorded to him, nor the prohibition...
on tanks, aircraft and heavy artillery, stymie his ambition of transforming the Reichswehr into the world’s leading combined arms warfare exponent. In response to these constraints, he directed that simulation be employed to facilitate the same training outcome that would be achieved if tanks, aircraft and heavy artillery were available.

Consequently, Reichswehr formations and units employed innovative techniques to simulate these platforms. Vianueva notes that the ‘Germans employed “dummy tanks” that appeared as camouflaged canvasses over a steel framework’ mounted on small automobiles or bicycles when conducting combined arms training. Aircraft were simulated by umpires using coloured balloons. While the employment of such techniques may seem somewhat bizarre, if not contemptible, there is no disputing their effectiveness. The trail of destruction achieved by the Wehrmacht’s combined arms teams in Poland, France and Russia validate this assessment.

A pillar of Von Seeckt’s transformation of the Reichswehr was developing it as a ‘leader’s Army’, or Führerarmee. Due to the constraints imposed by Versailles on the limited number of officers within the Reichswehr, Von Seeckt had little choice but to craft a ‘leader’s army’ from its non-commissioned officers and privates. From the outset, Von Seeckt aimed to ensure that the Reichswehr’s ‘100,000 soldiers were to be leaders or capable of leadership.’ Von Seeckt maintained that ‘it is of fundamental significance that junior leaders are taught to be independent-thinking and acting men.’ He also regularly reminded his division, formation and unit commanders that ‘even the youngest leaders’ in their respective organisations needed to understand ‘the many-sided problems of the combined efforts of all arms.’ He achieved his ambition of a Führerarmee by demanding that training activities, of all types and scale, practice and test all ranks in fulfilling the role and appointment of their superior.

Von Seeckt’s emphasis on developing a Führerarmee accrued both immediate and longer-term dividends. From the outset, the Von Moltkean command principle of Auftragstaktik (Mission Command) was reinstated within the Reichswehr. By 1925, American observers of the Reichswehr remarked that even their most junior ranks possessed an ‘extraordinary alertness’ and a superior capacity to understand complex tactical problems. Some fifteen years later during the Second World War it was common for Wehrmacht privates to be rapidly promoted to first sergeants and sergeants promoted to the appointment of company and even battalion commander. A French writer alleged that Von Seeckt’s ‘leader’s army’ concept sought ‘to create a grand...
army in miniature.\textsuperscript{56} He was right. Von Seeckt’s investment in the leadership potential of every German soldier and officer generated a superb cadre force that enabled the rapid expansion of the \textit{Wehrmacht} prior to the commencement of the Second World War.\textsuperscript{57}

An obsession for learning was the second pillar underpinning Von Seeckt’s transformative training philosophy. Von Seeckt sought to establish a critical link between the training conducted by the \textit{Reichswehr}, the insights and lessons learned derived from this training, and the production of relevant and timely doctrine. Within one week of being appointed as the head of the German army, Von Seeckt directed the creation of fifty-seven committees, comprised of soldiers and officers from all corps, to study and improve the ‘tactics, regulations, equipment and doctrine’ of the \textit{Reichswehr}.\textsuperscript{58} According to Vianueva, by the ‘mid 1920s there were over 400 German officers working to analyse and compile information [or lessons learned] on World War I’ that could be incorporated into the \textit{Reichswehr’s} training and approach to warfighting.\textsuperscript{59} This investment reintroduced the concept of \textit{Bewegungskrieg}, the antecedent of manoeuvre warfare, into the \textit{Reichswehr}.\textsuperscript{60}

Imbuing an enthusiasm for both critical reflection and intellectual development were fundamental to Von Seeckt’s training philosophy. Soldiers and officers were actively encouraged to challenge and critique training techniques and doctrine. Vianueva contends that ‘debate was [constantly] encouraged and new ideas were welcomed’.\textsuperscript{61} Journals and forums were established to facilitate such discourse.\textsuperscript{62} Officers were expected to be avid students of history and strategy.\textsuperscript{63} Military historian Robert Citino notes that no army in the world to that point ‘had taken wargames, exercises and manoeuvres as seriously as the German Army’.\textsuperscript{64} Due to Von Seeckt’s drive to inculcate an obsession for learning within the \textit{Reichswehr’s} training philosophy, by 1921 ‘a solid outline of combined arms concepts and manoeuvre warfare’ had been crafted.\textsuperscript{65} These concepts served as the foundation of the devastating \textit{Blitzkrieg}, which cut a swathe of destruction through Poland, France and Russia during the initial years of the Second World War.

\textbf{REICHSWEHR AND BRITISH ARMY INTERWAR TRAINING PHILOSOPHIES JUXTAPOSED}

Contrasting Von Seeckt’s training philosophy with the detrimental approach adopted by the British army during the interwar years is instructive in identifying the implications of both approaches. The Australian Army can, and must, take heed
of the legacies of both methodologies. Unlike Germany, during the interwar years the British did not suffer under the severe dictates of Versailles. Moreover, they ended the First World War as the victor, not the vanquished. In short, its nation and army confronted a better set of circumstances than Von Seeckt did. Despite these advantages, the British army atrophied during the interwar years. A negative, lackadaisical and incoherent approach towards training was the underlying reason for this decline.

In contrast to the approach adopted by the Reichswehr, the British failed to take advantage of the time and resources available to them to train their army to a competent standard. British military historian David French notes that the British ‘failed to train [its army] … adequately’ during the interwar years. Fundamental to this failure was the defeatist attitude evinced by leaders within the British army concerning the impact of resource constraints and deprivation on their capacity to execute challenging, relevant and creative training. Instead of adopting Von Seeckt’s approach of making the most of the resources that were available, British army leaders focused on lamenting the resources that they lacked. The training delivered within the British army suffered because of it. Consequently, ‘troops taking part [in military exercises] became disheartened because of their lack of realism.’ French argues that the inability of the British army to exploit the time and resources accorded to them resulted in the degradation of its combat capability.

The British army’s approach to fostering leadership and initiative in their army was diametrically opposed to the approach implemented by Von Seeckt. In stark contrast to the Reichswehr’s Führerarmee, the British actively discouraged both qualities. In many cases, initiative was spurned as ‘heresy’. French notes that ‘the rank and file never thought for themselves and all including warrant officers and NCOs lacked initiative.’ A telling observation substantiating this assessment is provided elsewhere by David French when describing the manifold differences between British and German officer training. He notes that while Reichswehr officer cadets ‘learned everything an infantry battalion commander had to know in any kind of pre-combat or combat situation,’ British army officer cadets were barely taught platoon tactics.

While an obsession for knowledge was a pillar underpinning Von Seeckt’s transformative approach to training, the British were dismissive of organisational learning. Where it did occur, it was incoherent. Unlike the Reichswehr, British army
doctrine stagnated during the interwar years. French accuses them of adopting a ‘laissez-faire’ approach to deriving lessons learned and doctrine development.\(^{72}\) In contrast to the 57 committees and 400 officers that Von Seeckt devoted to doctrine and training development, the British appointed a single captain to the same task. Consequently, infantry tactics by 1940 had ‘advanced little from the standards of 1916’.\(^{73}\) When attempting to explain the British army’s string of comprehensive defeats during the initial years of the Second World War, acclaimed military historian Williamson Murray contends that:

the real cause of such a state of affairs lay in the failure of the army leadership to enunciate a clearly thought-out doctrine and then to institute a thorough training program to ensure its acceptance throughout the army.\(^{74}\)

Von Seeckt constantly sought to increase the physical and mental robustness of his soldiers in preparation for close combat. Indeed, he sought to make ‘the training standards of the Reichswehr the toughest in the world’.\(^{75}\) By contrast, the British ‘tended to wet nurse the men’.\(^{76}\) This approach was a derivative of the British army’s leadership pursuing a warfighting approach that eschewed close combat, sought to achieve tactical victories ‘quickly and cheaply’, relied on overwhelming artillery and air support and emphasised the ‘overriding importance of avoiding casualties’.\(^{77}\) This approach to training proved disastrous during the initial years of the Second World War. In 1933 this training philosophy provoked an exasperated former British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir George Milne, to plea ‘how are you going to succeed without causing losses?’\(^{78}\) In 1942, following venomous criticism from Churchill of the British army’s latest round of defeats, the Chief of the General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, admitted the following:

we are not anything like as tough as we were in the last war. There has been far too much luxury, safety first, red triangle, etc., in this country. Our one idea is to look after our comforts and avoid being hurt in any way.\(^{79}\)

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the divergent approaches pursued by Von Seeckt and the British was the sense of hopelessness exhibited by leaders within the British army towards the challenges and constraints that they confronted. It was noted earlier that the British did not suffer the punitive confinements of Versailles imposed on Von Seeckt. Yet the leadership within the British army chose to blame, rather than make the most of, circumstance. Common complaints included not being
able to ‘attract enough good quality volunteers’ and having insufficient resources to implement realistic field exercises. French lays the blame for this sense of hopelessness with the British army’s ‘interwar regular officer corps … [which contained only] a few men who took their profession seriously’.81

The verdict of history is clear on the legacy of the dichotomous training philosophies adopted by Von Seeckt and the British Army during the interwar years. In 1939, the successor of the Reichswehr, the Wehrmacht, cut a swathe through Poland in what has been described as ‘10 days that shook the world’.82 It ranks as one of the most successful military operations ever recorded. The Wehrmacht repeated, if not eclipsed, this lightning action in 1940 when they crushed the superior French army and routed the British Expeditionary Force. One year later, the Wehrmacht executed its extraordinary advance through Russia as part of Operation BARBAROSSA, defeating Soviet forces equal in size to the entire British and French armies in a combined arms maelstrom.83 The tactical brilliance of the Wehrmacht was an enduring feature of the war—in spite of Hitler’s ruinous political and strategic impetuousness.

The foundation of this brilliance was the transformation of the Reichswehr engineered by Generaloblast Hans Von Seeckt through his rigorous, inventive, cost-effective, transformative and highly successful ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy. By contrast, the performance of the British army during the war was lackluster. Admittedly, the British army’s proficiency at warfighting improved throughout the conflict. However, historian Timothy Place notes that this improvement ‘emerged despite, rather than because of, the[ir] training system’.84 Of course, Germany lost the Second World War. However, it did not lose to the superior tactical performance of other armies, least of all the British. According to French, it was a combination of blockades, air power and the 480 divisions of the massive Red Army that broke the combat power of the Wehrmacht—not the British Army’s thirteen divisions fighting under General Montgomery.85

History confirms the superiority of Von Seeckt’s ‘train better fight best’ training philosophy in transforming a defeated, dejected and impoverished 100,000-man military force into an ‘army of excellence’.86 It also provides warning against emulating the apathetic, and ultimately deleterious, approach exhibited by the British army. The question is: can we leverage Von Seeckt’s philosophy in empowering the Australian Army to confront its forthcoming challenges? Indeed, we can. We have already established the broad parallels in the adversities confronting Von Seeckt in December 1919 and those confronting the Australian Army in the
coming years. We know also from acclaimed historians such as Williamson Murray that ‘the past can suggest how to think about new contexts and different challenges.’

Therefore, it is towards identifying how Von Seeckt’s training philosophy can illuminate the Australian Army’s approach to confronting its future challenges that we now turn.

**LESSONS RELEVANT TO THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY**

The Australian Army can successfully confront its forthcoming challenges through the implementation of a ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy that emulates the one that transformed the Reichswehr in the years following the First World War. Like Von Seeckt’s approach, this methodology must incorporate an unwavering focus on making the most of the time and limited material resources available for training, determinedness towards enhancing the depth and breadth of leadership and initiative within Army and the relentless pursuit of learning, improvement and physical and mental robustness.

Without doubt, the Australian Army comprehends the vital role that an effective training philosophy plays in developing ‘an army of excellence’. Army’s capstone doctrine, Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) 1.0 states that ‘Land forces require high-quality personnel moulded by training … [to be] professional, innovative, [and] adaptive individuals’. Elsewhere it reminds the reader that ‘in order to win battles … [the Australian Army needs] knowledgeable, respected and capable commanders need to lead skilled and well-trained soldiers as part of combined arms teams’. Finally, LWD 1.0 mandates that ‘training their soldiers for war remains the most important task entrusted to Australian officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) when not deployed on operations’.

There is also ample evidence that the Australian Army has been seeking to promote the key characteristics of Von Seeckt’s highly successful training philosophy for some time. Army’s capstone doctrine for training, LWD 7-0, promotes numerous techniques that encourage time and material resource optimisation, the development of leadership and initiative, the pursuit of learning and the strengthening of our soldiers’ bodies and minds. Similarly, numerous corps specific doctrinal publications, some which are quite dated, endorse the key features of Von Seeckt’s approach. One of the better exemplars is the prescient 1984 Infantry Battalion Pamphlet, which offers the following counsel:
Today, as the lives of people become more civilised, more comfortable and more ordered, so does it become more than ever necessary to develop among soldiers, throughout their training, the qualities and spirit which will spur them, willingly, to make great efforts, endure hardship and face danger, when called upon to do so as soldiers. 93

and

If prepared with imagination … exercises can have a great effect in raising morale and creating interest in training as a whole among officers and men. With a little ingenuity, exercises can be devised which require only a very simple setting and which do not, at this stage, tax the machine too highly. 94

More recent than 1984, the 2006 ‘I’m an Australian soldier’ initiative emulates key features of Von Seeckt’s philosophy. Key amongst these is the initiative’s aspiration that ‘every soldier [is] an expert in close combat’, ‘every soldier [is] a leader’, ‘every soldier [is] physically tough’ and ‘every soldier [is] committed to continuous learning and self development’. 95 The Chief of Army expresses similar direction in the Adaptive Campaigning Design Rules. 96

It should come as no surprise that the intent of both documents is ‘developing our soldiers for the challenges of the future’. 97

While the Australian Army’s doctrine reflects the key features of Von Seeckt’s highly successful ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy, more can be done to emulate his innovative, transformative and cost-effective training techniques. Although Army has done well to enhance the realism of its large scale exercises through umpiring and encouraging debate through professional forums such as the Future Land Warfare Group blog, more must be done to emulate the pillars underpinning Von Seeckt’s training approach at the formation, unit, subunit, platoon and section levels.

Firstly, like Suvarov and Von Seeckt, leaders at all levels must recognise that their most important resource is time. It is not their perceived lack of ammunition, petroleum, helicopters, tanks or any other material resource. Shortfalls in material resources can be mitigated; time cannot. At the end of a training year, no one laments the lack of ammunition, fuel or rationing; however, almost everyone regrets that they did not have more time. Leaders cannot afford to be perfunctory about time. They must value and respect it. They must be diligent in preventing its wastage. As was identified by Von Seeckt, time is often wasted in the barracks environment and inevitably leads to the emergence of corrosive boredom. Aside from the conduct...
of ‘mud model’ exercises, and other techniques implemented by the Reichswehr, LWD 7-0 and corps specific doctrine are replete with options for optimising training in barracks. They merely need to be read and applied by motivated officers and non-commissioned officers.

Secondly, leaders at all levels must possess the ability and drive to implement highly effective training irrespective of the lack or plenty of material resources. This is particularly the case within unit, subunit, platoons and troop organisations. At no stage did Von Seeckt’s training philosophy rely on an abundance of material resources. On the contrary, a deprivation of material resources was a constant constraint for both he and the Reichswehr. While this challenge generated a sense of apathy and hopelessness within the British army during the interwar years, it failed to dampen Von Seeckt’s ambition of establishing the Reichswehr as the world’s leading exponent of combined arms warfare. Indeed, this constraint only encouraged Reichswehr leaders to develop more innovative, effective and ultimately transformative training techniques to compensate for their lack of material resources. It also yielded a level of maturity of thought concerning the essence of exceptional training that eludes the majority of military leaders. These techniques included the conduct of combined arms training with coloured balloons representing aircraft and simulating tanks with wood and hessian models resting on top of small vehicles or bicycles. While these methods may be contemptible to some, the verdict of history reveals that they proved highly successful for the Wehrmacht during the Second World War.

Thirdly, more can be done at the lower levels to develop the leadership of Army’s soldiers through a ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy. Officer/non-commissioned officer training, which is invariably the first component of a unit/subunit training program to be cut when time pressures impinge, is arguably the component of training that should be the last to be compromised. Such training has the added bonus of accruing positive second and third order effects as a unit’s leaders are empowered to deliver better training outcomes to their respective subordinates. Such training can often be conducted with minimal material resources. All that is required is time and effort towards developing that leadership case study, organising that visiting lecturer, preparing and executing that Tactical Exercise Without Troops, or conducting that ‘mud model’ activity. When contemplating this key feature of Von Seeckt’s approach, Army would do well to recall General Westmoreland’s post Vietnam War comment that ‘small in numbers and well trained, particularly... leaders at all levels must possess the ability and drive to implement highly effective training irrespective of the lack or plenty of material resources.'
in antiguerilla warfare, the Australian Army was much like the post-Versailles German army in which even men in the ranks might have been leaders in some less capable force’.

Finally, leaders within Army must do more to emulate Von Seeckt’s example of encouraging an obsession for learning and imbuing physical and mental robustness. The aspirations expressed in the ‘I’m an Australian Soldier’ campaign and Army doctrine concerning the attainment of these attributes is worthy. However, in the absence of these goals being implemented by leaders at unit, subunit, platoon/troop and section level, they quickly become hollow catch phrases affixed to squadron and battalion noticeboards. Many inventive, transformative and cost-effective techniques can be employed to realise these features of Von Seeckt’s training philosophy. ‘Mud model’ exercising is one. The study of military books, academic/military case studies and articles is another. The critical review of films provides a third option. The options are many. They are only constrained by the imagination and motivation of the leader designing the training.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that the Australian Army is well positioned to overcome its forthcoming challenges through applying the ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy implemented by Generaloblast Hans Von Seeckt. This philosophy transformed the Reichswehr from its post First World War doldrums into what was, arguably, the most adept fighting army that the world has ever witnessed.

This article analysed the key features of the innovative, cost-effective and transformational training philosophy that Von Seeckt leveraged to transform the Reichswehr from its post First World War wretchedness to its Second World War warfighting brilliance. It profiled how Von Seeckt optimised the time and limited material resources that he had available for training, reformed the Reichswehr as a leader’s army and inculcated an obsession for learning amongst his officers and soldiers as the pillars underpinning his training methodology. The superiority of Von Seeckt’s ‘train better, fight best’ philosophy was validated by contrasting it with the deleterious approach to training adopted by the British army prior to the Second World War. Finally, this article concluded by articulating the key lessons that leaders at all levels within the Australian Army can draw from Von Seeckt’s example when confronting adversity.
The Australian Army is on the cusp of its most challenging period since the end of the Vietnam War. Following twelve years of unprecedented operational tempo, Army is steadily shifting towards a ‘peacetime army’. Its training focus has reoriented from attaining expertise in stability and counterinsurgency operations towards achieving mastery in combined arms warfare. It has entered a period of fiscal austerity. The future will not be easy. Despite these challenges, Von Seeckt’s inspiring example in overcoming adversity empowers us to conquer our own.

ENDNOTES

6 While this article will focus on the lessons that the leader at the tactical level can leverage from Von Seeckt’s example, it is important to note that both the Reichswehr and Wehrmacht failed to adequately reflect on the operational and strategic lessons of the First World War during the interwar years. This would prove calamitous during the Second World War. Megargee contends that many of these lessons ‘escaped the Germans completely’ and ‘would come back to haunt the Germans’ in the Second World War; Geoffrey P Megargee, ‘The German Army after the Great War: A Case Study in Selective Self-Deception’ in Peter Denis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), Victory or Defeat: Armies in the Aftermath of Conflict, Big Sky Publishing, pp. 111–12). Millett et al similarly contend that by 1942, the tactical brilliance of the Wehrmacht had been nullified by a stream of strategic and operational blunders: A R Millett, W Murray and K Watman, ‘The Effectiveness of Military Organizations’, International Security, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1986, p. 70.
It should be noted that Von Seeckt was also confronted by a civil war in Germany with the communists seeking to seize control in Bavaria, Berlin and other areas. James Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg*, University Press of Kansas, 1992, p. 25.


These concepts included: victory by annihilation (*Vernichtungschlacht*), mission command (*Auftragstaktik*), the modern staff system, the separation of the soldier from the state and the embryonic ideas of manoeuvre warfare (*Bewegenskrieg*).

Brown, *Reichswehr*, p. 3.

Ibid.


Brown, *Reichswehr*, p. 3.

Ibid., p. 2.


Ibid., p. 8.


Ibid.


Lang, ‘Why has Germany taken so long to pay off its WWI debt?’


Brown, *Reichswehr*, p. 3.

Bruce W Menning, ‘Train Hard, Fight Easy: The Legacy of A V Suvorov and His “Art of Victory”’, *Air and Space Power Journal*, November–December 1986. Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov (1729 or 1730 to 1800) was a Generalissimo of the Russian Empire. He is one of the few generals in history to never lose a battle. His book *The Science of Victory* is widely acclaimed as a masterpiece. He is also well known for several sayings, of which ‘train hard, fight easy’ is one. See also J Goodwin, *Lords of the Horizons*, Henry Holt and Company, 1998, p. 244.


Ibid., p. 34.

Menning, ‘Train Hard, Fight Easy’.

Ibid.

A series of iconic images illustrating the employment of ‘dummy tanks’ during combined arms training can be viewed in James Corum’s ‘The Roots of Blitzkrieg’, pp. 134, 135 and 188.
Train Better, Fight Best

67 Ibid., p. 173.
68 Ibid., p. 69.
69 Ibid., p. 58.
70 Ibid., p. 56.
71 Ibid., p. 58.
72 Ibid., p. 173.
74 Ibid., p. 2.
76 French, Raising Churchill’s Army, p. 56.
77 Ibid., p. 12.
78 Ibid., p. 12.
79 Ibid., pp. 1–2.
80 Ibid., p. 49.
81 Ibid., p. 3.
82 Citino, The Path to Blitzkrieg, p. 249.
84 Place, Military Training in the British Army, 1940–1944, p. 175.
85 French, Raising Churchill’s Army, p. 3.
86 Brown, Reichswehr, p. 1.
88 Brown, Reichswehr, p. 1.
89 Land Warfare Doctrine (LWD) 1.0, The Fundamentals of Land Warfare, Department of Defence, p. 27.
90 Ibid., para 1.28.
91 Ibid., para 1.1.
94 Ibid., para 1523.
96 Head Modernisation and Strategic Planning – Army, Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept, Department of Defence, 2009, pp. 63–64.
97 ‘I’m an Australian Soldier’.


100 ‘I’m an Australian Soldier’.

101 The Chief of Army has recently released his recommendations for film and literature.

In addition to this excellent list, commanders would do well to consider Peter Ford’s Fear Drive My Feet and Osmar White’s Green Armour as mandatory reading for those under their command. Both books previously featured on the Penguin Australian Military Classics List. Both profile the stoicism of Australian Army soldiers fighting the Japanese during the Pacific War of the Second World War. Other worthy titles include: Road to Mandalay – a must for any staff officer; Glendon Swarthout’s They Came to Cordura – a study in true leadership; and Cormac McArthy’s sobering description of the true nature of war in The Blood Meridian. Concerning film recommendations, movies such as 12 O’Clock High, The Caine Mutiny, Patton and Tunes of Glory provide apposite leadership case studies.

THE AUTHOR

Major Ben McLennan graduated from the Royal Military College – Duntroon in June 1999. He has served a variety of regimental appointments in the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR). He has undertaken training appointments at the School of Infantry and the Canadian Infantry School. He is an ADF trained French linguist. He has deployed on five occasions—all with 2 RAR. He is currently completing the Australian National University Masters Program at the Australian Command and Staff College. This article is not part of the Masters curriculum.
KNIFE, CAN OPENER OR SCREWDRIVER?

TRAINING AUSTRALIA’S LAND FORCE TO BE THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE OF THE FUTURE

ALLISON CASEY

ABSTRACT

This article explores what kind of ‘Swiss Army Knife’ Australia’s future land force should look like in relation to its foundation warfighting capability. This discussion is crucial amid ongoing debates about the ‘Army After Afghanistan’. In one respect, developing a niche specialisation in Army’s skill sets is appealing for the potential monetary, time and other resource-efficiency savings. Yet, given a future operating environment that is generally predicted to be complex, uncertain and varied along the entire spectrum of conflict, Army’s small size also requires soldiers that can undertake a broad range of tasks. Through a consideration of Army’s strategic planning, this article argues that a resilient land force must avoid this ‘capability-resource dilemma’ and be frank about what kind of capability tradeoffs it is prepared to make.
INTRODUCTION

What should Australia’s future land force look like as it scales down operations in Afghanistan? A range of competing ideas have been put forward about what’s being called the ‘Army After Afghanistan.’ For Ross Babbage, Australia must maintain a strategic edge out to 2030 in response to China’s modernising People’s Liberation Army, though it would mean that operations, activities and capabilities would be costly.1 Hugh White has questioned whether the Army of the future will be expeditionary or focus on the defence of Australia.2 Alan Dupont has cautioned that Army risks facing a ‘period of drift and misplaced spending’.3 At the heart of these views is a much needed discussion about what warfighting capabilities the future land force will need and what resources it will require. The problem is that we can’t predict the future. We don’t know what actual issues are going to emerge, or what events will occur that government will ask Army to respond to.

In other words, what kind of ‘Swiss Army Knife’ does Australia need? A ‘specialised’ approach would see the land force maintain proficiencies in a niche area. This might be likened to a single blade pocket knife that is superb at cutting rope, but is not purpose built for other functions. A ‘generalised’ approach would train soldiers to acquire a broad skill set so that they are prepared to undertake a diverse range of activities. To continue the metaphor, a deluxe model Swiss Army Knife might contain everything from multiple blades, a corkscrew, a can opener, a screwdriver, a nail file, tweezers, scissors and a toothpick.

This article examines Army’s options for developing foundation warfighting capabilities in a resource constrained environment, and at a time when its future operations are likely to be complex in nature. To do so it first considers how Army is stuck in a capability-resource dilemma. It then explores the extent that ‘specialised’ or ‘generalised’ approaches to training could help address it. The article’s final section is devoted to considering whether a combined approach would allow Army to experience ‘the best of both worlds’ and if so, what capability tradeoffs would be needed in doing so.

THE FUTURE LAND FORCE AND ITS CAPABILITY-RESOURCE DILEMMA

The future land force faces a dilemma from the prospect that it will have to operate in a more complicated security environment with severely restricted resources. The Defence budget announcement of May 2012 indicated that the Department will have $5.45 billion less throughout the Forward Estimates period. Although Defence Minister Stephen Smith has been adamant that the spending cuts will not detract from the Australian Defence Force’s (ADF) overseas operations,4 Army has perhaps
gotten the worst deal of the three services. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) has seen $709 million allocated to sustaining the Collins Class submarines during the forward estimates period, as well as $214 million to research the Future Submarine’s design. Joint Strike Fighter acquisition was only delayed and the project’s later stages deferred. Yet Army’s self-propelled howitzer acquisition (worth between $500 million and $1 billion) was cancelled in favour of a cheaper ($200 million) towed artillery option; some of its M1A1 Abrams tanks and some one hundred of its M113AS4 armoured personnel carriers were announced to be warehoused; and, along with the RAN, has had its gap year program cancelled too. The Department’s Strategic Reform Program—which hopes to generate $20 billion in internal savings over the 2009–19 timeframe to support Force 2030—has set Army on a path of internal reorganisation too.

At the same time, Australia will continue to face a multitude of challenges spread throughout the entire peace-conflict spectrum. The Defence White Paper 2009 broadly indicates what this might entail, whereby the ADF should contribute to global military contingencies relevant to Australia’s interests and in a manner proportionate to capacity. This is no revelation for Army. Its doctrinal publications recognise diversity in the future threat environment. The Army Modernisation Handbook underscores the importance of environmental scanning to ensure awareness of evolving challenges. The Army Objective Force 2030 predicts that ‘the enemy could range from a major power adversary to a collection of ad hoc and irregular forces.’ Army’s capstone document Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept points out that Australia’s future land power must be able to operate in a complex security environment that will be influenced by globalisation, US military primacy, intra-state conflict, population growth, resource competition, urbanisation, technological advances and the global economic crisis.

Army’s most senior figures reiterate this point. As Lieutenant General David Morrison explained in April this year, ‘future conflict will increasingly involve multiple, diverse actors and influences, all competing for the allegiances and behaviours of targeted populations.’ Elsewhere he reflected:

Army has got to be able to provide the government of the day with the broadest range of options to meet military contingencies—everything from contributing to humanitarian disaster relief operations through to fighting against a peer or near-peer adversary.
His predecessors have put forward much the same view. For Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie:

Precious resources must be utilised effectively and the Army must invest wisely in those future capabilities likely to provide the greatest utility across a broad range of scenarios.18

And, according to Lieutenant General Peter Leahy:

The Army after Afghanistan must continue to provide government with a wide range of defence and security options. Given a complex and volatile strategic environment which includes the rise of China, internal instability in many Asian states, uncertainty about the security implications of climate change, and food, water and energy shortages, it is not the time to adopt a narrow view of the Army’s future. The Army after Afghanistan must remain a balanced force, able to operate at short notice in joint and combined environments across a wide spectrum of defence and security contingencies.19

So while it is not news that non-conventional challenges have become more prominent in international security in a post-Cold War and even post-11 September 2001 world, it does mean that Army needs a capability spread to address them.

If, as the adage goes, the characteristics of war may change over time, even though its essential nature does not, then what is Army’s future foundation warfighting capability in a climate of fiscal uncertainty and reform? Foundation warfighting ‘is the core competency that the government demands of Army’20 and can be broadly described as the individual and force elements that form the basis of Army’s ability to conduct full spectrum operations.21 It is crucial that the issue receives greater attention. White, for example, has pointed out a need to better understand a defensive land force’s future requirements, arguing that ‘[t]oo little work has been done on what precisely that means for the nature and scale of capabilities needed in Army’.22 According to James Brown, ‘[t]here should be arguments and critical analysis [...] about what kind of fighting the Australian Army will need to do in the next decade’.23 Given Army’s capability-resource dilemma, would it be better to train soldiers to have a broad skill set or focus on niche areas? In other words, is Australia’s future land force a knife, can opener or screwdriver?

A SPECIALISED WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY

A specialised approach to Army’s foundation warfighting capability would see the future land force proficient in a narrow skill set as a means to conduct particular
Knife, Can Opener or Screwdriver?

activities. Characteristics of this approach can be seen in how Army has historically trained over time, such as the universal military training strategies employed early in the twentieth century. In 1909, Field Marshal Viscount Kitchener was invited to assess Army’s ‘adequacy’, after which he advocated the establishment of an 80,000 soldier-strong land force. Doing so was a precursor to the Defence Act 1909, which made training and service mandatory during peacetime. In 1911, a universal training strategy for Army applying to Australian males aged 18–60 was introduced, which lasted until 1929. Kitchener recommended in part that the land force be organised with an infantry focus of 84 battalions. Light horse troops were scaled to a supporting role, and General Edward Hutton’s field force brigades with integrated artillery were phased out.

Universal military training was credited as a way to generate land force preparedness and address contingencies relevant to Australia’s position within the British Empire. At the time, these were focused on traditional security challenges associated with great power politics. As the then Quartermaster General of the Australian forces Lieutenant Colonel James Gordon Legge put it in 1911, universal training strategies were geared to address external military threats:

- Nations apparently fight very often for but small excuses, but there are underlying reasons always that are not so apparent. The desire of larger territory, of increased trade, … even the barefaced desires of the strong to impose his will upon the weak; these and many others decide the rulers of a nation to undertake a war. […] That is why we want an army. We do not want war, and keeping an army fit for defense is the best preventive.

Similarly, Lord Kitchener stressed that Home Forces should ‘compel an enemy contemplating an invasion to make the attempt on such a scale as to be unable to evade our Naval Forces’. This view was also held in the United States. George Creel, prior to becoming chairman of the US Committee on Public Information during the Wilson Presidency, argued that universal training was critical for US preparedness against ‘armed invasion or unbearable aggression’.

Despite the utility of universal training strategy at the time, such an approach to foundation warfighting capability was not without its challenges. The accelerated expansion of Army saw a ‘continual turnover’ in personnel, whereby skills and experience were diluted to the detriment of the Australian Army Service Corps.

Given that Australia’s contemporary strategic interests are, in comparison, much broader in scope and encompass both conventional and non-conventional matters,
training to address a particular threat type is unlikely to be of much help today. The question is, then, whether a generalised approach to capability development would be any better.

**A GENERALISED WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY**

A generalised approach to Army’s foundation warfighting would see military personnel trained to professional mastery in a range of skill areas. Here, a land force that has a wide capability scope could be expected to be more resilient and adaptable in undertaking varied operational tasks. Elements of generalised warfighting are evident in how Army was positioned in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. As Major General John Caligari has argued, the post-Vietnam Army sought to have ‘in its response “golf bag” as many different types of “clubs” as it could’, so it could ‘cover the full spectrum of operations.’ With light, mechanised, parachute and motorised forces, as well as amphibious, jungle and airmobile operations, Major General Caligari has reflected that it meant Army had force elements that were ‘pretty close to being perfect for the designated mission.’

The problem of this approach, however, lies in having to maintain numerous niche capabilities at once. This has been difficult enough during times of peace, but an order of magnitude more challenging during times of crisis. Post-Vietnam, substantial resources were required to train soldiers to be as effective as they were diverse in capability. Army’s battalions were reduced, its skill base ‘hollowed out’ and counterinsurgency capabilities lost. For Lieutenant General Morrison, Army became ‘a force of single capabilities’ that was ‘too light’ and ‘too dependent on wheeled vehicles.’ With assumptions that there would be enough notice to mobilise and meet future contingencies, Army was pressed to respond to violence in Timor-Leste following its declaration of independence in 1999 and develop from ‘a light leg infantry towards a medium weight force.’

Given that Army faces serious fiscal uncertainty, it would probably not be wise for the future land force to maintain a very broad capability spread. That is, the problem of a generalised approach to training the future land force lies in the potential for Army to become a ‘jack of all trades but master of none’. After all, Army’s small size places a limit on how many niche capabilities it might practically be able to sustain at once. As US Defense Secretary Robert Gates remarked in 2010 when reflecting on the consequences of reduced US military spending cuts, it means that ‘a smaller military, no matter how superb, will be able to go to fewer places and be able to do...”
fewer things. With this in mind, government needs to ask some difficult questions about which ‘places’ and ‘things’ are the most important. Eyes will be on the Defence White Paper 2013 for some answers.

MANAGING ARMY’S CAPABILITY-RESOURCE DILEMMA THROUGH A BALANCED APPROACH

An examination of whether similarity or diversity would be best for the future land force’s foundation warfighting capability has indicated that Army will still be stuck in its dilemma no matter which of the two approaches is adopted. One would require a gamble as to whether a specific skill set is actually going to be required in practice, and the other incredibly expensive. A third option whereby Army balances its capability scope offers the greatest potential to maximise operational resilience while being conscious of resource constraints. The challenge, then, is to work out which skills and in what intensities are important. It may be easy to make a shopping list of desirable functions but it’s far harder to allocate them priorities.

A glance at some of Army’s major conceptual and practical initiatives suggests that it’s already well on the way to realising a balanced capability. The Army Training Continuum, for example, sets out a conceptual pathway for how the land force should build foundation warfighting skills. It depicts soldiers’ career-long training and education, as well as a process integrating individual, unit, sub-unit, brigade and formation level training from force generation to force preparation. The Army Training Continuum’s value lies in its ability to link individual and collective training mechanisms, which in turn allows Forces Command, as Army’s primary personnel manager, to respond to deployment needs with a required land force capability. Army’s Adaptive Campaigning envisages five ‘lines of operation’ that exist in all forms of conflict and include joint land combat, population protection, information actions, population support and indigenous capacity building. Here, Army’s success against operational uncertainty depends on its flexibility, agility, resilience, responsiveness and robustness. While these terms are widely used throughout Army’s conceptual publications—the notion of resilience, for instance, is given as ‘the capacity to sustain loss, damage and setbacks and still maintain essential levels of capability across core functions’—it is not entirely clear how they could translate into useful measurements, performance benchmarks, or otherwise apply in practice.
Other indications of Army’s efforts to realise a balanced force are evident within Plan BEERSHEBA. Announced in December 2011, the Plan takes its name from the Battle of Beersheba of October 1917 and during which the Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade charged Turkish defences as part of the British offensive northeast of the Sinai Peninsula in what is today southern Israel. Three components of Plan BEERSHEBA stand out in particular.

The first is Army’s restructuring of the 1st, 3rd and 7th brigades (currently organised with mechanised, light infantry and motorised focuses respectively) into three multi-role combat brigades that will consist of armour, artillery, communication, engineer, infantry and logistics force elements. Official policy statements argue that this will better position Army to train as it fights. It is also intended to simplify Army’s logistics and enable a force preparedness that is targeted to missions. However, this approach risks doing ‘less with less’, which was the charge levelled at the British government’s 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review in light of its army’s restructuring plan to develop five alike multi-role brigades. It is early days yet to tell whether the same implications necessarily hold for Australia’s land force. If anything, the Army is in an even more difficult position, since Lieutenant General Morrison has stated that it will, in fact, have ‘to do more with less’. If this is the case, then it further underlines the need to understand the implications of a reconfigured land force’s capability tradeoffs.

A second component encompassed by Plan BEERSHEBA is Total Force, which aims to develop an integrated Army workforce comprising Regular and Reserve Army personnel. At a broader level the term incorporates the other services, allies, contractors and government bodies too. Here, the balance of each party’s involvement within the Total Force depends on the nature of the tasks at hand. Regular Army personnel are to have prominence during an operation’s initial period. At later stages, Reserve personnel and others will have greater roles. This approach, according to Lieutenant General Morrison, will benefit both full-time and part-time soldiers. Reserve personnel can obtain greater experiences in training and exercises. As Senator the Hon. David Feeney, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence has explained, Reserve’s roles within Total Force are to be fourfold: to provide 1) specified warfighting capabilities, especially in humanitarian stabilisation operations in which they have excelled (Lieutenant General Morrison also argues that Reserves have been especially successful at conducting stabilisation activities in the Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste); 2) aid during humanitarian activities and domestic emergencies; 3) specialist individual capabilities; and 4) surge capabilities.
Plan SUAKIN further supports Reserves’ roles and capabilities within Total Force through an employment model that is being revised in line with the Strategic Reform Program. These efforts make sense. It certainly appears to offer a means for Army to make the most of its capability-resource dilemma. But it will come down to long term calculations as to whether the capability gained outweighs the overhead costs of reform—again, no easy feat to measure.

A third component within Plan BEERSHEBA is the role of a land force in a maritime context—in particular, in relation to Army’s development of an amphibious capability and acquisition of two Landing Helicopter Docks (LHDs). This, too, is to be balanced throughout Army. The 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2 RAR) has been designated to take the initial lead in developing amphibious capability. In turn, these skills are to be spread throughout and beyond 3 Brigade, within which 2 RAR sits. Here, Army’s interoperability within itself, as well as the other services, is going to be crucial. Lieutenant General Morrison has recognised this as far as emphasising joint activity is concerned, stating that ‘Australia needs its ADF more than it needs its Navy, its Army or its Air Force if it is to possess robust military options now and in the future.’

A problem, though, is that there is no clear indication just yet of how Army might proceed in doing this. As early as 1998, Michael Evans pointed out that Army had a diminishing ‘corporate knowledge’ of amphibious operations, sea based expeditionary warfare and the littoral environment, which has been overshadowed by its adherence to tenets of continental defence. Commander Robert Moyse has pointed out that Australia lacks a joint operational concept for an archipelagic region. Granted, Army has developed relevant concept documents such as Manoeuvre Operations in the Littoral Environment and Entry by Air and Sea. But while these may be useful for promoting an ADF amphibious capability, they have been criticised from a joint viewpoint for smacking of an expeditionary strategy. Lieutenant General Morrison’s answer thus far is that ‘we’re going to learn that as we go.’ If we’re lucky, this will occur ahead of time and in practice, and not on the day when the capability is suddenly needed. Given that Marines Corps personnel—the US’s specialists in conducting amphibious operations—are now being deployed to northern Australia as part of a new initiative in the Australia–US relationship, there is tremendous opportunity for Army to learn from the experts and do exactly this.

**CONCLUSION**

Army has the opportunity to decide right now what type of ‘Swiss Army Knife’ it’s going to be. Given its capability-resource dilemma, this would ideally be somewhere in between a basic pocket knife as one extreme and a deluxe model behemoth as another. All signs indicate that Army is set on a mission to develop a balanced force that can respond to future challenges as directed by government—even though the
road is fraught with difficulties. Army’s size means that it does not have the luxury of developing as diverse a capability set as it might like. Yet at the same time, it is in a position to realise a future land force that is as adaptable as it is resilient. If this doesn’t eventuate, then the alternative is bleak. It runs the risk of being caught out one day and having to open a can with a toothpick.

AUTHOR’S NOTE

Lieutenant Colonel Michael Scott, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Calhoun and Commander Rodney Cameron-Tucker provided valuable advice for earlier drafts of this article. However, the responsibility for its content remains my own.

ENDNOTES


7 ‘Budget 2012–13 Defence Budget Overview’


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15 Ibid., pp. 8–13.


20 Morrison, Speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.


33 Ibid., p. 3.

34 Ibid.


36 Morrison, Speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.


42 See *Adaptive Campaigning*, Chapter 5.

43 Ibid., p. 30.

44 Ibid.


51 Army Objective Force 2030 Primer, p. 12.


53 Lieutenant General David Morrison, Senior Officer Brief to Defence Graduate Development Program, 7 June 2012.


56 Morrison, Speech to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.


**THE AUTHOR**

Allison Casey is a Department of Defence employee through the 2012 Graduate Development Program. Her work placements have included the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis, Maritime Development in Capability Development Group, and Science International Relations in the Defence Science and Technology Organisation. She is also a PhD candidate with the School of Government at the University of Tasmania. Her thesis is entitled ‘Securing Transnational Oil in Southeast Asia: the Malacca Strait’s Energy Transit States’.
DECISION-MAKING

DECISION-MAKING AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL

CAPTAIN SCOTT HOLMES

ABSTRACT

This article has been written to address the poor application of planning processes by junior commanders. Decision-making is explored through the biological functions of the human brain to understand what occurs at the fundamental level of decision. This will demonstrate how junior commanders can harness this knowledge to improve their military decision-making. The article explains the importance of both analytical and instinctive processes that occur during decision-making, concluding that appropriate training methods build experience and improve the speed and accuracy of military decision-making. In achieving this outcome, the IMAP and CMAP remain relevant planning tools.

If I always appear prepared, it is because before entering an undertaking, I have meditated long and have foreseen what might occur. It is not genius where reveals to me suddenly and secretly what I should do in circumstances unexpected by others; it is thought and preparation.

Napoleon Bonaparte
INTRODUCTION

The Australian Army employs the military appreciation process (MAP) as its rational decision-making tool to support commanders at all levels make timely and appropriate decisions. At the tactical level of command, the MAP has three distinct variations that are applied dependent upon several variable factors. These factors are: the size of the staff (if any) available to the commander, the time in which a decision is required, and the size of force being manoeuvred. These three variations are the Staff MAP (SMAp), the individual MAP (IMAp) and the Combat MAP (CMAp). This article will focus on the relationship of the IMAp and CMAp which is generally the domain of commanders operating at Combat Team level or below.

The Australian Army’s Combat Training Centre (CTC) is responsible for evaluating the Army’s performance in collective training. As part of this function, CTC releases an annual training trends report that identifies both positive and negative trends in training performance observed across all training conducted by CTC for the previous 12-month period. CTC categorises collection in functional categories. One category is junior leadership. For the purposes of this article, junior command describes leaders at section and platoon/troop levels.

A common trend identified in all CTC trends reports from 2007 to 2011, and shaping as an inclusion in the 2012 trends report, is the poor planning performance of junior commanders. In particular, observations have identified that junior commanders are regularly noted as not using the doctrinal appreciation processes available, not conducting any formally observed planning, often combining orders development and planning into a single task, or employing limited planning in a group fashion but without observable process to the planning.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from these trends. The first hypothesis is that the doctrinal decision-making processes being employed are unsuitable and therefore are not used or are used poorly by junior commanders. The second is that junior commanders do not understand how to employ the doctrinal processes effectively and therefore elect not to use them. The third is that junior commanders are not given enough time to conduct formal planning. The third hypothesis has an impact upon junior commanders’ perceptions of the need to use a decision-making tool. While neither one of these hypotheses is necessarily accurate, they provide a starting point for exploring why the tools are not being employed.

This article will explore decision-making and the use of the MAP by junior commanders for tactical decision-making; it will test the three stated hypotheses and recommend practical outcomes to improve decision-making skills in Army’s junior leaders.
DECISION-MAKING

The MAP is employed as a process that allows a commander to identify relevant considerations to a problem and then balance these considerations against a range of potential actions that could achieve the commander’s intent. The outcome is that the commander makes a decision on what action he or she is going to undertake.

A person making a decision selects an action based on a range of variables and options available. The critical aspect to making a good decision resides in the appropriate balancing of the variables and options. How then does the human brain interpret, process and select from all the information available the critical criteria to make the best decision?

HOW THE BRAIN MAKES A DECISION

The human brain has developed a unique capability throughout its evolution that sets it apart from other primates and all other known living species: the ability to reason. This ability stems from the enlarging of the frontal cortex of the brain. It is this region of the brain that allows humans to manage rational thought as opposed to instinctive or emotional thought. A theory that long held sway, dating back to the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle at least, was that this cognitive or rational power of decision-making was the crucial difference between humanity and the rest of the fauna on earth. It was believed that humans made rational decisions because the human brain had learned to control or harness the emotional or instinctive brain. More recent study has found this to quite inaccurate. While the ability for rational thought appears unique to humans, the rational or cognitive brain does not harness or control the emotional brain but in fact works in tandem with it. This is true to the extent that the human brain is totally dependent on both the rational and emotional levels of the brains to function effectively. Humans with impairments that prevent either the emotional brain or the rational brain from proper function actually deny that person the ability to make effective decisions.

THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN

The emotional brain stores massive amounts of data that informs the body of its decisions through chemical processes. This is exhibited as instinctive impulses such as sweaty hands, fear and excitement. The emotional brain is the database of experiences that are stored and make humans adaptive, learning species. In this sense, failure or negative responses such as pain create the strongest learning
The brain uses dopamine levels to regulate between our positive and negative perceptions. Over time, repeated patterns of behaviour and response set norms and the brain learns to adapt the dopamine response to be appropriate to an experienced situation. An example of this may be seen when conducting repeated abseils. Most people are initially uncomfortable stepping off a cliff as the brain instinctively expects a fall and injury or death. However, repeat exposures often reduce instinctive fear as the brain learns that its expected outcome of a fall was not in fact accurate. This is the emotional brain’s way of learning and adapting to change.

THE RATIONAL BRAIN

The part of the human brain responsible for rational thought is a relatively recent evolutionary adaptation. This adaptation has allowed humans to make decisions based on reason, enabled through cognitive thought. The part of the brain that allows cognitive thought allows us to consider many variables and options against whatever criteria we choose to apply to determine the best outcome or decision. Unfortunately, the cognitive power of the brain is limited to approximately five to seven independent thoughts or functions. As such, our power of rational thought can only cope with a limited number of variables or options, after which it becomes overwhelmed.

THE BRAIN IN TANDEM

The two parts of the brain’s decision-making faculties work in tandem to produce effective decisions. Without both parts functioning properly, the human brain fails to make appropriate decisions and in some cases, can simply NOT make a decision at all. This is because the emotional brain does much more than just make fight-or-flight instinctive decisions. In fact, it is the power of the emotional brain that delivers most of the information we need to make a decision. The emotional brain acts as a database of stored experiences. These stored experiences allow the rational brain to contextualise the ‘so what’ of actions and reactions and to compare them against select criteria. This information is delivered by the emotional brain as a series of memories, impulses and epiphanies to the rational brain where cognitive thought allows processing of the information against the present situation and the criteria an individual applies to derive the best decision.

The way the human brain operates is important to understanding how junior commanders make decisions and knowing what shortfalls junior commanders’ may...
have in their ability to make appropriate decisions. Commanders with a large experience base can draw upon this to assist in making decisions. Commanders who lack experience need to compensate for their inexperience or risk making poor decisions. By the very nature of junior commanders being ‘junior’ one can expect that a large experience base is not necessarily available to assist the junior commander to make decisions. This makes a detailed appreciation of the operating environment prior to decision-making important as it will help build the knowledge base from which the emotional brain can draw. Through a detailed appreciation, the lack of experience can be in part mitigated by a junior commander.

**MILITARY DECISION-MAKING**

The Australian Army develops junior commanders to be capable of small team leadership and tactical decision-making. Lieutenant Colonel Chris Smith defines tactics as the *proven methods for achieving objectives within a campaign, regardless of the scale of the participating force or the command level involved*, concluding that tactics are a set of techniques and procedures applied to achieve operations and are not planned. Therefore, when making decisions at the tactical level, commanders analyse the situation to determine the most appropriate combination of tactical techniques and procedures to apply to achieve the desired outcome. It is assumed that through training junior commanders have developed a sound understanding of the tactics, techniques and procedures (TTP) applicable at sub-unit level and below. Therefore, the decision-making environment for the junior commander is the selection and application of the most appropriate TTP at the right time. What then are the critical considerations that a junior commander must balance to make a good combat decision?

**DETAILED DECISION-MAKING**

Detailed decision-making requires time. Making a detailed decision implies that the variables of a particular problem have been considered and balanced, and that the individual understands the effect change can have upon the variables and can apply judgement as change occurs.

The Australian Army’s doctrinal process of detailed individual analysis is through the IMAP. The IMAP considers the assigned mission, own forces, the area of operations and the broad threat in detail. It also compares a number of
potential courses of action open to the commander to allow the benefits and risks of different actions to be considered. The process is therefore relatively slow and not appropriate as a quick decision support tool at the point of contact. It is, however, an appropriate means to consider all the complex variables from which a detailed understanding of the operating environment can be gained.

QUICK DECISION-MAKING

When a junior commander needs to make a rapid tactical decision, such as at the point of contact, there is no time available for detailed analysis and reflection unless the commander is happy to hand the initiative and tempo to the enemy. At this point, the commander must rely upon his own experience in the three critical areas of combat decision-making:

- **Knowledge of own force.** By the time the force has entered combat, the junior commander must rely on existing knowledge and will have limited time to cover information gaps about force capabilities or the commander’s intent. Time taken to gather additional information will be at the expense of an expedient decision.

- **Knowledge of the enemy.** By the time the force has entered combat, the junior commander has either seen the potential for engagement with the enemy and understood the enemy’s actions in a wider context, or not. If not, the commander will likely become reactive while attempting to identify this knowledge gap.

- **Knowledge of terrain.** By the time the force has entered combat the junior commander will only be able to clearly focus on the immediate terrain. The impact of terrain, now part of the area of influence will be a peripheral issue unless it was already considered in detail. If not, it will take further time for analysis, again at the expense of an expedient decision.

These three critical criteria to combat decision-making are part of Australia’s military doctrine as the CMAP. The CMAP is the doctrinal means for making decisions under combat stress and refines a commander’s cognitive efforts to only critical information. As identified, the considerations the commander will review to make the decision must already be well known; the commander must understand the impact of each of the three elements to make the best decision. This is achieved in a detailed analysis prior to the point of contact. If the commander is lacking knowledge in any area, the pressure of combat stress is unlikely to allow a good decision to be made within an appropriate time.

The CMAP is the doctrinal means for making decisions under combat stress and refines a commander’s cognitive efforts to only critical information.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DETAILED AND QUICK DECISION-MAKING

Detailed decision-making should be distinct to quick decision-making only through the time taken to make a decision and not by the depth of analysis used to make a decision. However, for this to be the case, quick decisions (combat decisions) must be founded in a detailed analysis supported by the experience of the commander.\textsuperscript{41} If quick decisions are not based on a detailed analysis, the result would be hasty decisions and not necessarily good ones.\textsuperscript{42}

This is where an understanding of how the brain works to make a decision is important. The human brain will draw upon the database of knowledge it has stored. Some of that knowledge is experience and the more experience a commander has, arguably the better their decision-making should be.\textsuperscript{43} Much of the knowledge will be based on analysis the commander has conducted prior to reaching a decision point. This is particularly important for junior commanders who lack significant experience as they will rely more heavily on a detailed analysis.\textsuperscript{44} This knowledge will be stored and accessed when required by the emotional brain. The emotional brain will present this information to the cognitive brain where it is then rationalised and a decision is derived.\textsuperscript{45}

It is therefore apparent that good decisions require a combination of analysis and experience—not one or the other.\textsuperscript{46} The relationship then of the IMAP to the CMAP also becomes relatively self-evident. The CMAP used on its own, without foundations in a detailed analysis conducted through an IMAP, relies heavily on experience and may very well not lead to a good decision in an appropriate timeframe. The use of an IMAP to conduct detailed analysis at the point of contact, where speed of decision is required, is inappropriate and will not assist the junior commander to make a good decision either. In much the same way as the emotional and rational brain works at a fundamental level, the IMAP and CMAP must work in tandem to allow good decisions to be made through a balance of analysis and experience at the required speed of decision.\textsuperscript{47}

WHY IS THE MAP POORLY EMPLOYED BY JUNIOR COMMANDERS?

Evidence collected from the practical application of the IMAP and CMAP by junior commanders shows that the tools are not widely used.\textsuperscript{48} Earlier in this article I stated three possible reasons:

- The doctrinal tools are unsuitable and therefore not applied by junior commanders.
- Junior commanders do not know how to use the doctrinal tools appropriately and therefore do not apply them.
- Junior commanders are not provided sufficient time to conduct detailed analysis and planning and therefore do not apply them.
In the next section of this article, each of these hypotheses will be reviewed followed by recommendations and outcomes for improving the decision-making of junior leaders.

**DOCTRINAL TOOLS ARE UNSUITABLE**

There is conjecture about the types of decision-making tools that are useful to tactical commanders. An often heard retort from junior commanders is that the MAP is not suitable and that they are more easily able to make decisions using SMEAC. SMEAC is an acronym for the Australian Army’s sequence for the formulation of orders. Its five headings are: situation, mission, execution, administration and logistics, and command and control. SMEAC is a format for communicating the outcomes of planning and not a series of planning considerations. While experienced commanders may be able to quickly appreciate and then develop orders, they are separate functions. Thinking about the problem allows the solution to be developed and decided upon. SMEAC allows the decision to be communicated, including the practical requirements of execution such as coordinating instructions, specific tasks to force elements and a communication plan between force elements. SMEAC is a product of the decision, not a means to reach a decision.

Another popularly cited alternative is recognition primed decision (RPD) technique. This technique is based on the commander recognising the most appropriate course of action and deciding upon it instinctively. To do this, the premise is that the junior commander is a subject matter expert. This will not always be true by the very nature of the commander being junior. As such, RPD may be useful to some commanders but will achieve varied results depending upon the experience of the junior commander.

There is no substantial argument that supports the position of the MAP as unsuitable. It may not be optimal and there may be better alternatives but that is not the same as the MAP being unsuitable. In fact, the argument in support of the use of RPD actually reinforces the argument that an expert knowledge of the critical fact—own force and mission, the enemy/threat forces and the impact of terrain are fundamental to being an expert and making good decisions. If used correctly, the IMAP is a valid means for junior commanders to mitigate inexperience and still achieve expert knowledge through detailed analysis prior to combat decision-making through the CMAP.
POOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE TOOLS

It is difficult, without extensive research, to prove what level of knowledge junior commanders or their instructors across the Australian Army’s various training institutions have of the MAP and its utility. The evidence available from the observations collected at CTC shows that those junior leaders who do not demonstrate any use of the MAP at any stage of planning or decision-making often fail to explain why they did not use the tools available or the proponents of its unsuitability.

Despite not being able to accurately determine the level of knowledge junior commanders have of the MAP, what is known is that a poor knowledge of the MAP makes the tool cumbersome to use, which would logically reduce its uptake. This is because the steps of the MAP require a combination of professional experience and information ‘fact finding’ to establish useful outcomes. If the MAP is not understood to a level of instinctive application, it will require cognitive effort to apply. The brain has a limited capacity for cognitive thought, about seven separate thoughts simultaneously. This means that the process ends up using valuable thought capacity at the expense of the factors relevant to making a good decision. This is one reason why the process feels cumbersome. While application of the MAP will always assume some cognitive capacity, it should be less than the cognitive capacity required to add order to an individual’s thoughts if no deliberate process was applied. This makes the MAP efficient by comparison to the alternative of using nothing. A level of comfort and instinctive application will only be achieved if the process is practiced regularly and understood thoroughly by the junior commander.

Another factor in the preference for SMEAC over CMAP is that SMEAC is simpler to remember because its name is an acronym of its function, meaning that it takes no extra mental application to determine the steps within the process. By comparison, the MAP is one of several variants (SMAP, IMAP, CMAP), and the ‘what to do’ in each step requires further thought or a checklist to remember, especially under combat stress. Comparatively, the US Army’s METT-TC—Mission, Enemy, Terrain and Weather, Troops and Support Available, Time Available, and Civil Considerations—is an acronym for their equivalent tool to CMAP. This makes remembering the tool and the steps of the tool simpler than current IMAP and CMAP acronyms. In the Australian Army context this can be cut down further to METD (Mission, Enemy, Terrain and Decision) focusing the decision-maker to
the critical combat considerations. This ensures that the process is simple to apply especially under combat stress. SMEAC, which is generally well applied by junior commanders, should commence at ‘Decision,’ communicating the outcome of METD and adding appropriate detail to the plan once a course of action is decided.

Regardless of the decision process adopted by the Army, only an expert level of knowledge in the application of the process will make it fluent to the user. An expert level of knowledge will only be achieved through education and experience gained by practical exposure at an individual level. It is therefore a valid argument to suggest that the poor use of the MAP is at least in part relative to the poor understanding junior commanders have of the doctrinal tools.

LACK OF PLANNING TIME

An often cited reason for junior commanders failing to apply the MAP is the lack of planning time allocated to them. The use of the one-third planning rule, where a commander uses one third of the available planning time and allocates two thirds to subordinates, is often poorly adhered to. This means that those at the bottom end of the planning line—junior commanders—are often provided the least amount of time to plan. Ironically, junior commanders are often the least experienced planners and may actually need more time to plan effectively. However, lack of time is not an excuse for not using the MAP. The MAP is designed to be abbreviated by commanders depending upon the time available to plan. It is also designed to be started as a process upon the receipt of a warning order and not at the end of the planning by the superior commander or superior headquarters. As such, it is more likely that a poor level of understanding in how to apply the MAP is impeding the use of the tool, rather than a blanket assumption that junior commanders are never given enough time to plan.

The point of planning timelines brings into focus the critical relationship of the IMAP to the CMAP. Most examples of commanders not adhering to planning timelines occur when commanders are under tactical time pressure and not so much during the deliberate planning phase of an operation prior to commencement of tactical tasks. During the planning phase, commanders are generally afforded the time to conduct a detailed IMAP, if not of their specific mission and tasks, at least of the area of operations, the general threat forces and the terrain (both human and physical). Through the conduct of this deliberate planning, commanders build the knowledge base (expertise) that allows their subsequent decision cycles to become quicker. Therefore, receiving… it is more likely that a poor level of understanding in how to apply the MAP is impeding the use of the tool …
reduced planning time, while not ideal, still allows an abbreviated appreciation of the critical facts (own forces, threat and terrain) as they relate to the actual task and any situational change since the detailed appreciation was conducted. The outcome is that a detailed appreciation through an IMAP leads to faster decision-making through the CMAP.

**KEY OUTCOMES**

The key outcomes of this section are as follows:

- The MAP is a suitable decision support tool even if it is not considered optimal.
- Poor knowledge of the MAP is likely reducing its uptake in either the IMAP or CMAP form. This is due to the process being experienced as cumbersome and not instinctive by junior commanders. The result is that the process dominates the practical outcome, making it inefficient and of poor utility to a junior commander.
- Lack of planning time should only reduce the level of detail explored in the commander’s analysis; it should not be an excuse for not conducting analysis.

The result of these findings is that regardless of which decision support tool the Army chooses to invest in, only an expert level of application by junior commanders will allow them to optimise their decision-making.

**HOW CAN JUNIOR COMMANDERS’ DECISION-MAKING BE IMPROVED?**

Improving decision-making skills in junior commanders can be achieved through a balance of professional experience and practice in the application of decision support tools. Professional experience is required to provide greater context to the decisions a junior leader makes. Practice will increase the speed, comfort and technical proficiency of a junior commander using the MAP.65

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

A junior commander’s professional experience of tactics and tactical decision-making is largely achieved through practical exposure. Practical exposure is governed by the types of activities and the length of exposure time an individual experiences. Practical exposure can be achieved through both training and operational (combat) experiences. As operational service cannot be relied upon to provide a suitable experience avenue for all junior leaders (because it cannot be controlled to provide uniform experience and opportunity), only training will be explored as a suitable means for raising the overall standard of professional experience in junior commanders. As such, the next section will focus on creating opportunities
for junior commanders to gain experience through training, leaving operational opportunities as a supplement to an individual's professional experience.

**PRACTICE THROUGH TRAINING**

A fundamental aspect of learning at the individual level is that the brain learns best through error. Therefore, to maximise the learning of junior commanders it is important for the learning environment to be one that encourages mistakes. This is achieved by rewarding effort as opposed to rewarding results. While making mistakes is the best way for an individual to learn, this will not be suitable in all training environments, especially if poor decision-making by a junior commander leads to a loss of trust from subordinates, affecting the junior commander's ability to lead. Achieving balance between proficiency as a tactical decision-maker and empowering the junior commander as a leader will require consideration of training design and methods.

**REPETITION IN TRAINING**

Training at the individual level is a good means of improving the skills of junior leaders without the risk associated with making mistakes during collective training. It also allows for significantly higher levels of repetition as opposed to a collective training environment. In an individual training environment, a high level of experience can be gained in the use of the doctrinal decision support tools in a relatively short period of training time, which is then transferable to collective training. Three methods for achieving this are:

- Tactical exercises without troops (TEWTS)
- Quick decision exercises (QDE)
- Orders delivery.

In my professional experience I am yet to see these three individual training methods employed in a way that brings tactical decision-making and the use of the MAP together effectively. I believe this could be achieved by using the three methods together as a sequenced training process rather than using each in isolation or assigning greater priority to one over another. In de-linking the three training methods, the cause and effect of a junior commander's performance from deliberate planning through to execution is difficult to observe and therefore difficult for the junior commander to learn from. The outcome is that the tactics become subjective and the relative importance of each component of analysis is lost. The second point, the loss of what is important to the commander to make a decision, makes it...
hard to abbreviate the doctrinal decision-making process, as the junior commander is not experienced enough to know what to abbreviate.

Linking the three individual training methods is relatively simple. A common training scenario must exist across the three training methods and the training must replicate the way we actually plan and conduct operations:

- **Deliberate planning phase** – Junior commanders read into the TEWT scenario and conduct a deliberate IMAP on receipt of a warning order.
- **Issue back brief to senior commander and receive guidance and critique of analysis achieved through the IMAP (concept of operations back brief).**
- **Initial orders delivery** – Delivered by each junior commander in full, based on the IMAP each junior commander conducted during the TEWT.
- **Conduct an after action review of orders delivery, including peer critique, enabling learning from error and effort.**
- **Commence a series of QDE** – QDE are based on the deliberate planning and orders previously conducted, which allows the use of the CMAP by junior commanders in response to the tactical problems presented to them. This is specifically designed to allow each individual to see where their analysis and deliberate decision-making was poor, and to enforce consideration of the critical aspects of combat decision-making. A focus on the critical considerations of combat decision-making will be achieved through implementing significant time constraints in the QDE to apply pressure to the junior commander’s decision process. This will also sharpen the junior commander’s awareness of the aspects of their deliberate orders and rehearsals that were critical to execution.
- **Quick / radio orders** – As part of each QDE, each junior leader must rapidly develop radio orders or quick orders and convey their intent efficiently to their peers through delivery. An excellent way of judging this was demonstrated on the Combat Officers Advanced Course (COAC) where the selected commander issued quick orders while facing away from the other students and the battle map. Another student, selected at random, was required to draw a sketch of the commander’s tactical plan on a smart board (battle map overlaid onto the screen) while the orders were delivered. The outcome was obvious as to the detail, precision and speed of the orders that the commander delivered. Again, this style of pressure learning causes mistakes which actually improve learning outcomes and focus junior commanders on critical actions and considerations. With
practice, this builds the junior commander’s experience of critical considerations in combat decision-making, allowing them to abbreviate planning and analysis appropriate to the situation.

Conducting individual training in a fashion that links deliberate decision-making processes to quick decision-making processes and links the planning to the orders (execution) allows each individual commander to see the cause and effect of their actions.74 This leads to a greater level of understanding of how to make effective decisions and what information is critical to make good decisions.75 It can also be conducted repetitiously with few resources, allowing this training to be an efficient means of developing a junior commander’s tactical decision-making skills prior to collective training.

CONCLUSION

Observations of junior commanders during collective training have identified that they often plan poorly.76 A key element of this observation is that junior commanders often make little or poor use of the doctrinal tools designed to aid decision-making. This is a concern for the development of the next generation of middle-ranking and senior commanders who will have progressed through their junior command roles without learning how to plan effectively. Correcting this fault is a challenge that the Army must accept and act upon.

Improving the decision-making skills in junior commanders is achievable. Understanding how the brain makes decisions provides insight into the application of the MAP at an individual level. This understanding helps draw out the relationship between detailed and quick decision-making, creating relevance between the relationship of the IMAP and CMAP and highlighting the balance between experience and analysis.

The use of the MAP as the Australian Army’s decision support tool remains relevant. While it is accepted that it may not be optimal, the MAP supports mission command and allows consideration of the relevant factors required to make a tactical decision.77 Regardless of the decision process adopted by the Army, it is the ability of a junior commander to apply the process instinctively and with the least amount of cognitive effort devoted to the process as opposed to the outcome that is the decisive factor. The ability to make decisions more instinctively will only be gained through professional experience and training supported by an underpinning knowledge base.
As junior commanders often lack experience by the very nature of being junior, training junior commanders to compensate for this weakness through detailed analysis is critical to good decision-making. Repetition (practice) and training that encourages mistakes but equally allows cause and effect to be examined by the individual are key elements in addressing the current weakness. The use of TEWT, QDE and orders remain highly relevant training methods for achieving this outcome but should be developed to provide a sequenced training approach rather than piecemeal training approach as this better supports individual learning outcomes.

ENDNOTES

3. LWD 5-1-4, paras.1.8 and 1.29.
4. Ibid, para 1.29.
5. An Australian Combat Team is a task organised grouping based on the headquarters of a combat arms company or squadron. LWD 1 – The Fundamentals of land Warfare, Land Warfare Centre, 2008, para 4.17.
15. Lehrer, The Decisive Moment, p.43.
16 Ibid, pp. 39–47.
22 Lehrer, The Decisive Moment, p. 5; Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow, pp. 21, 24–25.
28 Storr, The Human Face of War, p. 148; Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow, p. 11.
32 Storr, The Human Face of War, p. 137.
34 Ibid, para 10.2.
35 Storr, The Human Face of War, p. 136.
38 LWD 5-1-4 – The Military Appreciation Process, paras 17.5–17.9.
40 Storr, The Human Face of War, p. 136.
41 Ibid, p. 147.
42 Kahneman, Thinking Fast and Slow, p. 12.
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51 Ibid, para 1.12.


56 LWD 5-1-4 – *The Military Appreciation Process*, paras 17.2–17.3.


59 Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, p. 35.


64 Ibid, para 1.39.

65 Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, p. 22.


69 LWD 7-0 – *Fundamentals of Education and Training*, para 2.11.

70 Ibid, para 3.11.


73 Combat Officers Advanced Course 02/2011, Tobruk Barracks, Puckapunyal.


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77 LWD 7-0 – Fundamentals of Education and Training, para 3.28.

The Author

Captain Scott Holmes is an Infantry Officer in the Australian Army. Captain Holmes graduated from the Royal Military College – Duntroon in 2004 and has served with the Second Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, The School of Infantry, Adelaide Universities Regiment, Headquarters 5th Brigade and the Combat Training Centre Live, where he is currently employed as training analyst. He has served operationally in Timor Leste on Operation ASTUTE in 2006 and in Afghanistan on Operation SLIPPER in 2009. He has a Bachelor of Professional Studies from the University of New England and a Masters of Emergency Management from Charles Sturt University.
UNDERSTANDING AND DEFEATING A COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEM

LIEUTENANT COLONEL IAN LANGFORD

ABSTRACT

Counter-nation networks pose a serious threat to national sovereignty. How nations cope with these complex adaptive systems within the global system represents one of the most serious challenges faced by nation-states. This article will discuss the elements that comprise a complex adaptive system and suggest a counter-system approach through which they can be defeated as part of a national security strategy. A systems-based approach is the only effective way to manage and defeat these counter-nation networks that continue to threaten national sovereignty in an environment where non-state actors are capable of rivalling nation-states in their ability to influence regional and global security.

All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree.

Albert Einstein

1
INTRODUCTION

The nature of war does not change, merely the character.\(^2\) So says Clausewitz in his classic work, *On War*. As any reader of this timeless work knows, Clausewitz’s spectrum of study is bounded at one end by ‘total war’—that is, a war of complete annihilation and utter destruction (where violence is the logic, rather than a method)—through to ‘war amongst the people’—where politics and violence by a dominant actor either inside or outside a declared state-sanctioned conflict determines the societal state in which the majority of people submit themselves.

Today’s *new security order\(^3\)* spans Clausewitz’s spectrum via a multitude of manifestations—conflict, war, terrorism, people smuggling, transnational crime and insurgency, to name but a few. All are connected via networks and systems constantly framing and reframing themselves as they seek to achieve an outcome whereby their prevailing existential paradigm becomes the dominant behaviour or condition. This is where victory or success is declared and a new order is imposed by the superior narrative.

How nations cope with ‘counter-nation networks’—that is, those *complex adaptive systems* within the global system that threaten national sovereignty—is a difficult question to ponder. How do nation-states, bounded by their Constitutions and an adherence to a ‘rule-of-law’, defeat counter-nation networks, who, by contrast, are free to constantly reframe themselves until they achieve the dominant narrative? This article will discuss the elements that comprise a complex adaptive system and suggest a counter-system approach through which they can be defeated as part of a national security strategy.

A complex adaptive system is a dynamic network of agents that act in parallel, constantly framing and reframing in reaction to the external environment.

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Understanding and Defeating a Complex Adaptive System

drug smugglers and organised crime. The ways in which these systems evolve is based on three common principles: order is emergent (as opposed to pre-determined), history is irreversible, and the future is unpredictable.4

**PRINCIPLE 1: ORDER IS EMERGENT**

Rather than being planned or controlled, a counter-nation complex adaptive system interacts in the world in order to form patterns, which informs its behaviour, constantly improving its efficiency over time to achieve its aims and objectives. An example of this is the current Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, which did not arise from a deliberate, pre-planned and articulated strategic plan; rather, it is generated out of a loosely unified religious order that has since adapted into its current form as a counter-nation network. Throughout the past ten years its order has resulted predominantly from the pressure applied against it by the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the Western-backed government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. This emergent, ordered pattern of behaviour has influenced it into a constantly amorphous structure, making it very difficult to target, let alone defeat.

**PRINCIPLE 2: HISTORY IS IRREVERSIBLE**

All counter-nation complex adaptive systems exist within their own evolutionary environment. They germinate from somewhere. They have a base narrative. As their environment has changed, so have they. While these systems have evolved, they nonetheless are required to constantly assess their past and present in order to inform their future. Examples of these systems include the Irish Republican Army’s transition from a predominantly militant organisation into a political (Sinn Fein) and criminal organisation. History roots it in Northern Ireland and the Catholic enclaves within that country. This is undeniable. It will not change.

In understanding these systems, it is imperative to acknowledge where these systems are conceptually rooted and how they evolve. This gives it a self-generated ‘learning loop’ from which it can exponentially increase its rate of emergence, as described in the first principle.

**PRINCIPLE 3: THE FUTURE IS UNPREDICTABLE**

As a complex adaptive system organises, it creates a multitude of competing, complimentary and counter-intuitive ‘alternatives’ from which it will derive its ‘future’. This allows the system to employ the maximum amount of variety and creativity in securing its destiny, whatever that may be. An optimal system exists
on the edge of ‘chaos’; it is here where its ability to choose alternative futures is optimised, informed by a knowledge network that is generating a vast array of possibilities and alternatives. An example of a counter-nation complex adaptive system at the edge of chaos is an improvised explosive device (IED) network such as those seen most recently in Iraq and Afghanistan. The evolution of this asymmetric, low cost, high-pay off capability is developed from an environment where the enemy network had to generate a capability against a counter-system that was conventionally superior in almost every way. As a result of an urgent need to apply this asymmetry to combat this threat, the IED networks (derived from counter-nation terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda) evolved at an ever increasing cycle that eventually generated a tempo superior to that of their adversary, resulting in a capability overmatch. Thus, in the wars of Afghanistan and Iraq, the IED became the insurgent weapon of choice, largely due to its rate of adaption and evolution in contrast to US and allied attempts to keep up with this network through increases in force protection.

An optimal system exists on the edge of ‘chaos’; it is here where its ability to choose alternative futures is optimised …

UNDERSTANDING COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF COUNTER-NATION NETWORKS

So how does one defeat a complex adaptive system? How does it have an impact on a nation’s ability to achieve a victory over a counter-nation network? Can a counter-nation network be permanently defeated? Or can one only learn to cope with it?

The first step in developing an approach to defeat a complex adaptive system such as a counter-nation network is to understand its traits and the behavioural elements of its constituent components in order to detect patterns that will form the base logic of an attack and defeat mechanism. Typical of these systems are the following traits: grouping, rule sets, network flow and competition.

GROUPING

As elements of the complex adaptive system operate in parallel, their pattern of learning and behaviour invariably begin to generate similarities that will eventually form together for a specificity, whether it is functional, temporal or physical. These elements become ‘grouped’ and, therefore, become more easily recognisable within the system.

In the context of a ‘counter-nation network’ there are many examples of this ‘grouping’ phenomenon within a complex adaptive system. The Taliban, Terik-e-
Taliban, the Haqqani Network, al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda (in the) Islamic Maghreb, and al-Qaeda (on the) Arabian Peninsula, all exhibit common patterns and are therefore ‘grouped’. As networks they share interdependencies such as lethal aid, technology transfer, ideological guidelines and common adversaries.

RULE SETS

‘Rule sets’ essentially define the behavioural limits that determine the pattern of the group. They set ‘benchmarks’ and limits on how groups apply themselves within their complex adaptive system. In the contemporary sense, rule sets are seen in many forms across counter-nation networks. Some of these rule sets include the limitations placed on targeting fellow Muslims by Islamic jihadists, the notion of ‘honour’ within customary and tribal systems that often define the rule set of their dominant narrative, and even the application of rules of engagement and laws of armed conflict by belligerent states within a declared conflict. The annual edicts of Mullah Omar to his followers, setting limits on targeting and civilian harassment is another example of the rule set that defines a network, in this case, the Taliban. Once rule sets are understood, then the complex adaptive system can in part be defined by its limitations and constraints.

NETWORK FLOW

All effective groups within a complex adaptive system possess the qualities and abilities to sense feedback and develop rapid ‘learning loops’. This flow of adaptation, learning and emergence is the essential energy required to maintain the homeostasis of the system. Without a consistent network flow, the system loses its learning loop and loses positive control over its adaptation and structure.

Network flow within a counter-nation network includes ideology, the production of an ‘own’ narrative (manifested through propaganda and other such materials), the organisation of a flattened leadership structure and multi-disciplined communications mechanisms, as well as the use of agents and operatives to inform the organisation of emergence and variance both inside and outside the network (this is an active, sensing, learning loop). The ‘Comintern’—the international communist movement that existed as a global communist network outside a single nation-state throughout the Cold War—is one
example of a counter-nation network’s network flow. Its network fed directly into all communist systems, effectively enabling communist governments to interact and adapt as the global environment changed.

COMPETITION

Competition, in a pure Darwinian sense, is an essential element of a complex adaptive system. This type of competition generally can be classed into two forms: constructive and destructive. Constructive competition is essentially an efficiency dividend. Through rapid evolution (encapsulated via the principles of a complex adaptive system as previously defined), the system becomes more efficient and increasingly effective at achieving its adaptation and goals. Destructive competition is where a system, denied an effective network flow, replicates the wrong adaptation traits, increasing its rate of entropy (more on this later) and descends over the edge of efficiency into irreversible chaos.

Within counter-nation networks, an example of constructive competition includes the efficiency of people trafficking networks’ ability to react to changes in border protection laws and systems that grant them the capacity to continue their movement of people. In essence, the people smuggling model constructively competes against border protection laws.

An example of destructive competition is the defeat of the Tamil Tigers by the Sri Lankan government when, as a result of a loss of network flow, the leadership falsely believed that their military capability had evolved to a point of supremacy. The subsequent Tamil attempt to bring their campaign to a final attritional strategic battle (phase three of Mao Tse-Tung’s people’s popular warfare model), in near total ignorance of the strategic overmatch that the Sri Lankan government possessed in terms of military hardware resulted in their ultimate destructive defeat.

COMPLEXITY-BASED TARGETING (HOW TO ATTACK AND DEFEAT A SYSTEM)

The first step in attacking and defeating a complex, adaptive, counter-nation system is to review the principles and traits as previously described and then proceed to ‘map’ the network. Figure 1 maps a counter-nation network: in this instance, a narcotics cartel and the Taliban have formed together to facilitate a mutually-
beneficial transactional outcome—opium provided by the Taliban to a Mexican cartel, in exchange for finance which in turn directly funds the Taliban lethal aid program (including the IED network) throughout central Asia.

Figure 1 maps the terrorism / narcotics network according to the traits evident as a complex adaptive system. At a macro-level, this analysis defines the narrative of the network, its aims, objectives and network linkages. It also gives insights into the ‘system within a system’, which in this case identifies the Taliban and the

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Grouping</td>
<td>Taliban/Global Criminal Patronage Networks (Mexican drug cartels in AFG) cooperate in narcotics production and facilitation</td>
<td>Similar elements of the system join together for a specific function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule Sets</td>
<td>Activities limited to transactional relationship, opium for money, ideology transfer completely outside the established rule set</td>
<td>Such sets determine the behaviour of groups</td>
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| Network Flow   | **Taliban**: Support the facilitation of narcotics production in order to generate facilitation of lethal aid and external knowledge transfer—previously ideologically opposed; however, their network flow has informed their decision-making and they have adjusted accordingly  
**Mexican drug cartel**: persistent pressure on traditional areas in South America has informed their network flow, which has adapted their system to adopt a more global perspective | Groups move throughout the system and are subject to feedback and interaction |
| Competition    | **Constructive**: Taliban and Mexican cartel gain a monopoly on narcotics production in order to deny competition from external agents, as well as improve their efficiencies by broadening their network  
**Destructive**: Mexican cartel influence strays into Taliban ideological domain resulting in irreconcilable conflict and divergence | Groups compete with each other as they interact. Competition can be either constructive or destructive |

Figure 1. Terrorism / Narcotics Network
Mexican cartels as two normally remote systems that, through common rule sets, network flow and competition, display true emergence by re-framing themselves as a terrorism/narcotics network.

By gaining an understanding of the traits of a counter-nation network such as this, the attacking adversary (in this instance, ISAF, INTERPOL, the Afghanistan government) can, as a result of mapping the network, begin to understand it. Notwithstanding this, mapping must be an iterative process, constantly renewed and refined as the network changes. This also acknowledges the previously mentioned principles of a complex adaptive network that thereby necessitates a need for a ‘near-constant’ review of its principles and traits.

An effective mapping process can then provide the basis for a more detailed network review, and the construction of a complex network targeting methodology. Emphasis can be further applied on the inter-relationships that exist between the network’s traits and its networks—this survey can occur with an up/down and left/right perspective in order to attain greater fidelity on the network. Targets (nodes) begin to appear, as well as networks (modes) that form the inter-dependencies across the entire system. Figure 2 illustrates this point using the previous Taliban/Mexican cartel network as a focal point of analysis.

Once the network targeting priorities become clear, the aim of the network adversary should now be to attempt to inject a non-linear complexity into the network in order to induce chaos and ‘entropy’ the network, cascading it to a point of termination and ultimate systemic destruction.

Network-based targeting offers a different perspective on the target system or systems by focusing on the interrelationship of elements within the larger system. One devotes particular attention to those properties and mechanisms that account for coherent behaviour in the system. Once this is understood, then the introduction of a successful non-linearity into the system (e.g. counter-narcotics law enforcement, international cooperation, counterinsurgent strategies to defeat the Taliban, improved border control, etc) can be applied with maximum effect.

Two points of concentration when looking to create non-linearity underpin successful network based targeting: complexity and entropy. Complexity is a measure of the degree to which a system contains large numbers of interacting entities with coherent behaviour. Complexity can be effectively measured from a value of zero to some maximum number. This effectively informs the adversary of the amount of complexity that exists in the network and indicates the level of probable counter-network actions required. Entropy, on the other hand, is a measure of the amount
<table>
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<th>Competition (Constructive/Destructive)</th>
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<td>Taliban</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Commonalities of beneficial interest</td>
<td>Price/transactional benefit dividend—Constructive</td>
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<td>Mexican cartel</td>
<td>Approach patterns</td>
<td>Chain of custody of narcotics, finance and lethal aid</td>
<td>Divergence as a result of a change in the transactional nature of the relationship—Destructive</td>
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<td>Opium producers</td>
<td>Agreed transactional processes</td>
<td>Global reach</td>
<td>Elimination of common enemies through joint capabilities (eg. Taliban conduct operations against rival narcotics network despite them not being a declared enemy IAW their jihadist principles)—Destructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External/ internal narcotics/ lethal aid movement facilitators</td>
<td>Access and control over broader societal issues</td>
<td>IED and narcotic production skills transfer mechanisms</td>
<td>Mexican cartel forms an alliance with a non-Pashtu group (Tajik, Hazaran)—Destructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money launderers/ international illegal financial systems</td>
<td>Restrictions on access beyond narcotics network</td>
<td>Control of street value of opium to maintain margins</td>
<td>Effective generation of a narcotic supply chain that guarantees supply and facilitation of both opium and lethal aid to both parties—Constructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lethal aid networks—IED manufacturers</td>
<td>Undermine common enemies</td>
<td>Use of corruption to render legal system non-effective</td>
<td>Taliban allow import of greater technology to increase rates of production—Constructive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology transfer facilitators</td>
<td>Free passage</td>
<td>Access to distributors</td>
<td>Mexican cartels broaden operations to include IED production—Constructive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warehouses</td>
<td>Access to leadership</td>
<td>Quality controllers</td>
<td>Taliban use cartels to attack Western interests—Constructive</td>
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Figure 2. Complex network based targeting - Terrorism / Narcotics Network
of work lost in a system due to destructive forces such as friction or interference. Knowledge of the type of friction and interference is the focal point of the application of a successful counter-network targeting strategy. It is designed ultimately to induce such entropy into the network that it ceases to properly function and is rendered a completely chaotic system, having lost all control. This sets in chain the seeds of the network’s own self-destruction. Irregular tactics such as counterinsurgency operations, psychological operations and targeted assistance are especially effective at inducing entropy into a system.

In the case of the Taliban/Mexican cartel network, an effective application of a counter-network attack can be derived by understanding and reviewing the principles and traits that form the network, and then by applying a targeting methodology that seeks to understand complexity and induce entropy. In this instance the attack and defeat mechanism would:
- Understand complexity by successfully identifying the different coherent groups in the system, including their contributions to the proper functioning of the entire network;
- Understand complexity by discovering the methods by which each group identifies and, therefore interacts with, other parts of the network;
- Define and analyse the basic rule set by which the system functions;
- Examine the direction, rate and alternative paths of network flows in addition to physical network components, information flows, knowledge flows, people flows, etc;
- Induce entropy by determining non-linearities such as choke points, failure thresholds and second order effects; and
- Induce entropy by determining methods for creating non-linearities internal to the network, pushing it into chaos and ultimate self-destruction.

CONCLUSION

Historically, targeting methodologies has reflected a mechanistic, linear, industrial-age approach, but complexity-based targeting uses a more holistic, systems-based approach. Importantly, it identifies each element and its functionality within a system. Complexity-based targeting unifies all methods of attack. It provides more useful, systemic knowledge of a target set and uses that knowledge to induce chaos and destruction through the introduction of non-linearities by transforming controlled behaviour into out-of-control chaos and confusion.

How to cope with ‘counter-nation networks’—that is, those complex adaptive systems within the global system that threaten national sovereignty—is a difficult question to ponder, least of all answer. One thing is certain, however: the discovery of the inter-connectedness within these complex adaptive systems and their supporting networks requires a thorough understanding of the principles and traits that underpin these adaptive networks and their complex systems. In the case of terrorism, transnational crime, people-smuggling and drug smuggling, any application of a successful strategy must be underpinned by a sound analysis of the target as well as through the use of a systemic approach in designing an effective attack and defeat mechanism. Gone are the days of attritional operational design; a systems approach is now a fundamental tenet of all successful military strategy.
ENDNOTES


5 Ibid.

THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Colonel Ian Langford is a graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, the USMC Command and Staff College, the USMC School of Advanced Warfighting, Southern Cross University and Deakin University. He has deployed as part of several ADF and coalition operations throughout his career to various countries. He has commanded at the platoon, company, regimental (acting), and task group level.
INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING IN COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTS

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MICK SAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL BEN PRONK

ABSTRACT

Today’s interconnected operating environment is presenting complex problems which are placing considerable stress and pressures on military decision-makers. The concepts within the emerging field of Complex Adaptive Systems science offer significant potential as a superior method for addressing these complex problems. Using an analysis of the applicability of CAS theory to contemporary military problems and research undertaken by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation, this article proposes a number of start-points for Army to prepare and train its leaders to account for the complex problems of today’s operating environment.

There is always a well-known solution to every human problem—neat, plausible, and wrong.¹

The challenge for the Army is to ensure that individual skills and team decision making processes are developed and adapted to maximise our ability to make effective complex decisions.²
Complexity in warfare is not new. However, contemporary warfighters find themselves in an operating environment connected like never before, to an extent where previously localised complexity can rapidly and powerfully affect events on the other side of the globe. Further, both the quantity of information available and the speed of its transfer are placing increasing stress on our natural human capacity to effectively deal with problems. Several studies have identified that the heuristics used to guide decisions in our much less complex evolutionary past are no longer adequate in the faster and more inter-connected contemporary environment.

This article will argue that the current paradigms of military thought are not optimal for the complex system that is today’s operating environment. In response to this shortfall, this article will propose that the field of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) science offers new ways for Army decision-makers to develop an understanding of, and respond to, complex problems. To achieve this, the article commences with a discussion of the history of CAS theory and the key concepts pertinent to today’s operating environment, followed by an assessment of their military relevance, highlighting the applicability of CAS theory to contemporary military problems. The final section of the article will propose a number of potential start points for the adoption of CAS thought within Army.

CAS THEORY AND TODAY’S OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Contemporary debate on today’s operating environment uses a myriad of terms such as Rittel and Webber’s ‘wicked problems’ or Paparone and Reid’s reference to ‘volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity’. While commentators have difficulty reaching consensus on exactly how to label the contemporary operating environment, few fail to note its complexity. While complexity in warfare is nothing new, ‘globalisation and the spread of information and communications technology have led to a greater interconnectivity and increased interdependence over much shorter time scales’. In other words, things are happening faster, and the activities of seemingly distant actors are now having a more rapid and often more significant impact. By means of example, it would have been inconceivable a generation ago that the release of *Innocence of Muslims* in the United States could have sparked protests around the world with such rapidity.

The Western world’s struggle to cope with complex problems has exacerbated the learning and predictive failures that have

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While commentators have difficulty reaching consensus on exactly how to label the contemporary operating environment, few fail to note its complexity.
always been present in both military and civilian organisations. In response, the Santa Fe Institute was established in 1984 and utilised the field of complex systems science, devoted to the study of CAS, to develop new methods for understanding and addressing complex problems. 8

In order to contextualise the military relevance of CAS thinking, it is necessary to examine some fundamental CAS concepts. In the broadest sense, CAS are living systems 9 consisting of multiple actors, or agents, which can ‘learn from experience’. 10 A system is said to be complex when its agents are all inter-related, think for themselves and act according to their own agendas; their union creates a whole that is distinct from the sum of its individual parts. A system's complexity is said to increase in line with the number, diversity and interaction of its constituent agents.

It is important to note that often it is the relationships between agents, rather than the actual agents themselves, that proves the critical factor. The characteristics of a CAS are therefore as ‘much a function of the quality of connections as the quality of individual members’. 11 For example, simply characterising an agent within the Afghanistan ‘CAS’ as ‘an insurgent’ might be missing the point; a more important consideration might be the nature of his relationships or interaction with other agents in the system, all of which have a significant impact on shaping his agenda.

None of this discussion is particularly profound; indeed many might argue that this is simply an overly scientific way of explaining phenomena that warfighting practitioners have long known. However, our continued inability to apply these lessons serves as indication that Western militaries still don’t ‘get it’. Therefore, using CAS theory as a lens to view complex problems may provide an alternative means of addressing the constituent problems.

CAS theory explains that, due to the network of interdependencies, the problem under consideration cannot be successfully treated by dividing it into sub-problems that can be handled separately. However, early attempts at addressing the drug problem in Afghanistan did just that; separate task groups dedicated their efforts to poppy eradication with unintended consequences for other elements fighting the insurgency.

The situation cannot be successfully addressed at only one scale, and due to the effect of external influences decision-makers cannot afford to focus only on events inside some arbitrary boundary. ‘Scales’ and ‘boundaries’ are CAS concepts related to the natural tendency to want to neatly frame any problem we are trying to address. However, complex problems don’t work in this manner as any action can have unintended consequences, often outside the boundary or scale of the CAS that we think we are dealing with. This idea is central to chaos theory’s famous ‘Butterfly Effect’, or the military concept of the ‘Strategic Corporal’ where the actions of one individual agent at the tactical scale can dramatically alter events at the more distant strategic and political scales.
Linear extrapolation of current conditions can lead to serious errors. In his seminal work *The Black Swan*, Nassim Nicholas Taleb illustrates this point by warning us to ‘learn from the turkey’. As Christmas approaches, the turkey receives more and more food, such that—through linear extrapolation—the turkey goes to sleep on Christmas Eve with high expectations for the next day. The shock that the turkey receives on the chopping block on Christmas morning is not dissimilar to the shock that military decision-makers often receive when their linear extrapolations come crashing down due to an unintended consequence.

Many, perhaps most, of the important aspects of the problem are hidden. Based solely on the situations perceived at the start of planning, there is a strong tendency to use military planning tools to predict the outcomes of an interaction with a CAS. However, this is futile if many of the important aspects of the problem are hidden, and that any interaction with the CAS will cause it to change unpredictably. Therefore the focus of planners should shift from solving problems through the construction of a rigid course of action based on predictions of the future to monitoring what is actually happening in order to react accordingly. A CAS must therefore be approached at a holistic level. Rather than attempting to over-simplify the complex, planners must embrace the fact that ‘messiness is key’. Rather than trying to examine agents individually, the network should be viewed as a unified whole. Thus, pattern recognition is critical to understanding CAS.

This concept is graphically represented in Figure 1.1 as an image mosaic, where thousands of tiny images (in a CAS sense, agents or components) make up the bigger picture of the Mona Lisa. The decision-maker needs to address the individual agents in order to influence the overall system, yet this is impossible to achieve without changing the construct of the system as a whole. Moreover, unlike an image mosaic, the agents within a CAS are not static, but constantly interacting. Thus, decision-makers are faced with the competing requirements to maintain sight of the overall pattern while simultaneously addressing its constituent nodes.

When considering a CAS in the real world, it is likely that boundaries will have to be drawn, however, (somewhat paradoxically) one must remain cognisant of the fact that actions outside these boundaries can have a profound effect on the system. A CAS does not require a central decision-making body to impose order onto the system, and indeed any attempt to ‘globally control the overall pattern’ is likely to ‘inhibit the local adaptation to challenges’ and result in the emergence of powerful informal hierarchies. The net result is that one cannot ‘order’ a CAS to change. To operate
optimally, a CAS therefore requires some kind of centralised decision-making body that can manage patterns and coordinate action, but not necessarily engage directly in the system.\textsuperscript{19}

This requires a commander and headquarters staff to remain at a level where they can keep their eyes on the ‘big picture’ (the Mona Lisa), while coordinating subordinate elements to interact with the tiny images to achieve a desired end-state. In real life, it is unlikely for the ‘big picture’ to end up looking exactly like the Mona Lisa, rather mission success might be considered achieved if the finished product looks somewhat like a seated lady.

The basic CAS concepts provide military practitioners an alternative viewpoint through which contemporary problems might better be understood. Given the unpredictability of outcomes within a CAS, it is almost certain that any intervention approach will require constant modification (by the headquarters responsible for the ‘big picture’) as the system interacts and adapts. Applied to today’s operating environment, CAS theory provides a lens through which military decision-makers might change focus from trying to know the world to making sense of the world.\textsuperscript{20}
WHAT THE MILITARY CAN LEARN FROM CAS THEORY

*The ability to adapt is probably most useful to any military organization and most characteristic of successful ones, for with it, it is possible to overcome both learning and predictive failures.*

Eliot Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes*

**Sense-making versus decision-making.** Civilian organisations have embraced elements of CAS science through complexity leadership theory. This theory states that for organisations to be effective within a CAS they must:

...shift the theoretical grounding of leadership away from a focus on individual leaders’ one-way interpersonal influence toward viewing organisational actors enacting leadership through dynamic, multidirectional interaction that fosters effective sense-making about emerging events.

Despite these developments in the civilian world, military models continue to pursue one-way interpersonal influence through a chain of command. By pursuing this method, military decision-makers fail to establish effective sense-making and the ability to adapt to emerging events.

**Every complex problem is unique.** Even though two complex problems may look similar, ‘one can never be certain that the particulars of a problem do not override its commonalities with other problems already dealt with’. In this respect, it is important to guard against methodism, the ‘unthinking application of a sequence of actions we have once learned’. Given the high levels of uncertainty present when dealing with a complex problem, military planners often look to find similarities with a previously ‘solved’ problem and, adding a liberal dose of methodism convince themselves that the solution to that problem will also fit their current dilemma.

A recent article by the civilian company Icosystem details how the mental framework of military decision-makers responsible for allocating resources and prioritising needs is entirely defined by their previous experience of a growing budget and dramatically fewer constraints than today. As a result, the prevailing decision heuristics (the subconscious cognitive mechanisms by which humans make decisions) in use today are those which proved successful in a very different environment and under very different constraints. Worse, heuristics tend to focus a decision-maker’s attention on the ‘stuff’ that is easiest to comprehend; what’s ‘available’ at the time the decision...
needs to be made; the last thing he or she may have been working on; in other words, the ‘cognitively obvious’. 27

**Ordered, linear approaches are not adequate.** When viewed with an understanding of CAS theory, modern military thought is disturbingly linear. ADF doctrine prescribes ordered approaches to problem solving rather than adaptive ones. All too often military experts strive for a failsafe design that attempts to cater for every possible outcome through a series of linear cause-and-effect sequences (‘Actions On’ are a perfect example of this). 28 Unfortunately, the world does not tend to operate in a linear fashion. CAS theory embraces this nonlinearity by teaching decision-makers that linear extrapolation of current conditions can lead to serious errors.

In an attempt to simplify the complex, military planning methods seem intent on removing friction. In military planning, removal of friction allows for the problem to be demonstrably ‘solved’. Yet, as Alex Ryan of the US Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies notes, ‘friction is roughly those factors that differentiate between real war and war on paper’. 29 Thus, when applied in the real world, these neat ‘solutions’ commonly fail. Again, messiness is key and the decision-maker must have established effective sense-making to adapt to emerging events.

The linearity inherent in military thought can be viewed as existing in both the horizontal and vertical planes. Horizontal linearity manifests itself in a perennial attempt to predict the future. Many professionals seem to believe that uncertainty is a threat and its admission a sign of weakness. This results in employment of planning models too heavily reliant on predictability. 30 By accepting the central CAS tenet that prediction is impossible, planners can ‘give up 100% predictability and control’ 31 and instead focus on pattern recognition, thus allowing ‘the path forward to reveal itself’. 32

This has relevance in the application of operational decision-making processes. The US Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP), for example, can result in ‘myopic decision-making’ through the comparison of a single course of action against potentially factitious standards, thus fuelling low-risk, single-loop learning while “discouraging more frame-breaking innovations and change”. 33 Likewise, Lieutenant Colonel Chris Smith notes that application of the Australian Joint Military Appreciation Process (JMAP) can also display reductive characteristics. Smith argues the execution of the JMAP is ‘biased to favour convergent thinking, which follows a particular set of logical steps to arrive at one correct solution’. 34 Compounding these shortcomings, processes such as the MDMP, JMAP and Britain’s Six-Step Operational Estimate are all centred on analysis of a clearly-defined political or military-strategic end-state. If recent operations teach anything, it is that this end-state is unlikely to be clear, if provided at all. 35

Horizontal linearity is also apparent in the tendency for military planners to exhibit what CAS theorist Dietrich Dörner refers to as ‘ballistic behaviour’. 36 This could also be described as a ‘fire and forget’ attitude, and refers to an assumption that the conditions
in existence at the start of an interaction with a CAS will remain consistent throughout. However, as previously discussed, within a CAS every interaction alters the context in an unpredictable fashion, yet formal military planning still retains a ‘reliance on forecasting and… (a) clear understanding of cause-effect relationships’. 37

Vertical linearity refers to the belief that hierarchical military structures are an effective means of commanding and controlling a CAS. Ryan notes, ‘efforts to fully centralise military operations and to exert complete control by a single decision-maker are inconsistent with the intrinsically complex and distributed nature of war’. 38 Attempts to establish practical control over CAS are futile and the best that can be hoped for is to damp undesirable behaviours and reinforce desirable ones in order to sustain the system in an equilibrium band that is, if not acceptable, at least recognisable. 39 Therefore although military decision-makers will have the ability to remove some of the agents influencing the CAS, they cannot order a CAS to change.

**Understanding is central.** Dörner’s experiments use a series of *microworlds* involving decision-making in complex situations to indicate that most participants achieved early successes, but when confronted with unintended consequences their performance deteriorated. The end result for an overwhelming majority of participants (~90%) was catastrophic or chronic failure. 40 Dörner demonstrated that those participants who allowed themselves to develop a level of system understanding prior to acting were consistently more successful in dealing with complex problems. 41

A significant finding of Dörner’s experiments was that the strongest predictor of which players would be in the successful minority was their level of ambiguity tolerance. Critically, these players reflected on their actions and thinking and were therefore able to learn. Moreover, the detailed decision-making behaviours of the unsuccessful majority reproduced various cognitive traps. Examples include linear extrapolation of processes which are in fact not linear, oversteering in the presence of long delays between cause and effect, over-generalisation, and paying too much attention to immediate local problems instead of trying to see the ‘bigger’ picture. A very significant factor in poor performance was the well-documented *confirmation bias*, 42 which Dörner found was taken to the extreme of *perceptual defence* 43 by the poorly-performing majority.

As a result, when faced with a complex problem, decision-makers had poor situation understanding, were likely to treat symptoms rather than causal factors, were susceptible to methodism, 44 and violently oscillated between over-planning and major impulsive decisions. But the most significant failure was meta-cognitive: a lack of self-reflection and acceptance of responsibility. These behaviours amount
to an almost inescapable ‘logic of failure’ and provide valuable lessons for military decision-makers when confronted with complex problems.

A RESPONSE OPTION – THE ADAPTIVE STANCE

In Dörner’s experiments the successful minority demonstrated decision-making behaviours that were able to counter their evolutionary heritage of biases, heuristics and cognitive predispositions by adopting an adaptive approach. The Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) has attempted to operationalise and synthesise adaptation / CAS concepts, and Dörner’s work on decision-making. This work, in support of an Army Science and Technology Support Request, has led to the Adaptive Stance—an intellectual stance that creates a particular pattern of decision-making in complex situations.

Initial research has demonstrated that cultivating an Adaptive Stance offers a more effective methodological framework for managing, creating, shaping and interacting with complex systems and situations. At an individual level, the Adaptive Stance embodies the military ideals of initiative, flexibility, resilience, integrity, mental toughness, cool-headedness, and objectivity. It is also a stance that requires some autonomy as it would be difficult to practise in an organisation that demanded conformity and used prescriptive command. Such an organisation would be incapable of utilising the vast learning and adaptive potential of its members. As such, the Adaptive Stance is entirely compatible with, and arguably a necessary component of, Mission Command.

The Adaptive Stance is built within a framework of a number of key personal qualities:

Ambiguity tolerance. There are no simple solutions to complex problems, and attempts to remove ambiguity from a situation can be very dangerous. Every effort must therefore be made to resist the urge to over-simplify the complex. Again, one must accept that messiness and sense-making are key.

Self-reflection through ever-present consideration of the questions: ‘How would I know if I was wrong about this?’ and ‘How much would it matter?’ This characteristic encapsulates an ‘ingrained habit of thoughtful self-reflection about the effectiveness of one’s beliefs, actions and decisions’. It echoes the requirement to treat one’s own ideas dispassionately, helps to combat confirmation bias, and primes the practitioner to be constantly on the lookout for ‘Question Four’ moments.

Decriminalisation of being wrong, openness to learning and supporting others’ learning. If one accepts that it is virtually impossible to predict the outcomes of
an interaction with a CAS, and the process of adaptation entails elements of trial and error, then it becomes completely naïve to expect ‘fail-safe business plans with defined outcomes’. Toleration of failure is an ‘essential aspect of experimental understanding’ and as such, the Adaptive Stance demands the acceptance and acknowledgement of mistakes in order to facilitate learning and, ultimately, adaptation. Importantly, this should also extend to ‘near-misses’, which are too often hidden in fear of persecution. Instead, these should be thought of as ‘free experiments’, carrying ‘potentially valuable information about tolerances and robustness of procedures, and failure modes of…systems’.

The Adaptive Stance appreciates that it is much more important for personnel to be prepared to be wrong than to feel that they always have to be right (which would require them to either be risk-averse or in denial). This ensures an organisation is open to learning by making it permissible for personnel to acknowledge mistakes or being proven incorrect. This can be enhanced through an environment that supports learning, as initial research by DSTO has demonstrated that coaching in the Adaptive Stance has led to more effective decision-making.

These qualities and behaviours significantly increase the quantity and quality of learning by leveraging the opportunities inherent in every action and decision. Adopting the Adaptive Stance provides decision-makers with a mindset better suited to recognising the CAS in which they are operating. However, to fully embrace the potential offered by the Adaptive Stance, Army needs to undertake a mindset shift in the way it trains and prepares leaders.

DEVELOPING AN ADAPTIVE STANCE WITHIN ARMY

DEVELOPMENTS IN TRAINING

Schools train us never to admit that we do not know the answer, and most organisations reinforce the lesson by rewarding people who excel in advocating their views, not inquiring into complex issues... that very process blocks out any new understandings which might threaten us. The consequence is skilled incompetence.

The traditional paradigm for training perceives certain determinable linear cause-and-effect relationships—linking specific scripted activities with ‘required’ training objectives that must be met for a unit to be deemed deployable. The
synthesis of complex ideas and treating the mind as a pattern matching system (priming it with a deep and broad personal exploration of war and warfare) sit uneasily with competency-based learning models.

In order for a training regime to fully develop the decision-making of junior leaders to operate within a CAS, it must recognise and prepare for the inherent presence of ambiguity. Preparing junior leaders to operate effectively in such an environment will only be achieved through realistic training that employs a free-thinking opposing force, with real-world capabilities and strategies. Training must establish a framework that is based upon open, dynamic, emergent relationships that are too complex to be absolutely known. This will require leaders to adopt sense-making in tandem with adaptive decision-making rather than decision-making focused on over-simplifying the problem.

Current approaches to training reinforce the ordered, linear approaches to problem solving which are not adequate when faced with a complex situation. Individual courses and unit training should increase the number of scenarios where decision-makers are confronted by a complex situation where they are forced to make a large number of decisions in a stressed environment. In addition, war games, tactical decision games and free-play field exercises must constitute the bulk of the curriculum in courses and be enhanced through the ability to undertake training post H-hour so the decision-maker can reflect on their actions when faced with unintended consequences. Approaches that constantly challenge personnel—mentally and morally as well as physically—by taking them out of their ‘comfort zone’ will enhance the Adaptive Stance qualities of Army decision-makers.

The stressed training environment must tolerate failure. Army excels at winning the exercise battles that they design and run themselves, but rarely do these translate neatly into real life operations. More importantly, ‘winning’ in these scenarios may actually be counter-productive in the long term, serving to reinforce organisational confirmation bias concerning current practices. Instead, to develop an Adaptive Stance, Army must decriminalise failure in training by creating unfamiliar and complex environments that not only challenge an individual’s decision-making but encourage decision-makers to learn from failures to achieve success. This is where simulation comes to the fore.

The development of ‘cognitive gyms’ at training centres and within the Brigade Simulation Centres offers a controlled and reduced risk medium to enhance decision-making when faced with a complex problem. Just as a traditional gymnasium is
used regularly to develop physical conditioning, a cognitive gym would see decision-makers developing the ‘particular decision making behaviours (and) meta-cognitive tools’ that have been identified as being ‘more effective in complex environments’. These gyms would use real-time strategy gaming to expose personnel to complex problems. The Australian Army can leverage from the work of other nations; the US Army has developed the Adaptive Leadership Model, which enhances adaptability through a rapid decision-making process utilising an experiential learning model facilitated through scenario based learning. Further developments in the US Army include Advanced Situational Awareness Training to enhance decision-making skills in junior commanders.

The development of cognitive gyms would also remove some of the difficulties associated with replicating complex problems in the classroom. The success of these cognitive gyms would be enhanced by mentoring and coaching decision-makers to diminish biases and support the development of the personal qualities of the Adaptive Stance. Critical to success is ensuring staff at training institutions have the experience and capacity to enable a training framework that facilitates the Adaptive Stance.

DEVELOP EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

*Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.*

Aristotle

A critical enabler to developing an Adaptive Stance is equipping commanders with the tools to undertake self-reflection and avoid being channelled by biases. Renowned psychologist Dan Goleman’s theory—that a person can have first class training, an incisive mind, and an endless supply of good ideas, but still not make a great leader if they do not possess emotional intelligence—has utility in developing an Adaptive Stance. The Army spends an exceptional amount of time emphasising the importance of leader-to-follower relationships, teamwork, esprit de corps and organisational climate. However, it dedicates little time to facilitating the development of its leaders’ emotional intelligence.

Given that those who need the most help usually have blind spots, the diagnosis from multiple viewpoints provided by 360 degree feedback can serve as an excellent first step in developing emotional intelligence. As human beings and as leaders we need to understand how the complex network of our motives, values, desires, behaviours and principles drive and shape our decisions. Unlike the US Army, which has implemented the multi-source assessment and feedback (MSAF) program, the Australian Army has been slow to adopt feedback mechanisms outside the annual report. A US battalion commander demonstrates the utility of the MSAF program by stating:
as for the 360 degree survey, I must admit that at first I was sceptical … However, it was fantastic. I cannot recommend it highly enough. I found the survey extremely useful for me personally and also an extremely useful tool for my leadership.  

The Centre for Army Leadership has launched the MSAF program as a confidential and focused online assessment tool to promote self-awareness for individual leader development in today’s complex operational environment.

DEVELOPMENTS IN PLANNING METHODOLOGIES

Linearity in the current training framework has also had a profound impact on contemporary Professional Military Education (PME), doctrine and formal planning methodologies. CAS theory highlights the futility of this type of thinking, yet it appears to be predominant within PME. Chris Smith provides an alternative (Figure 1.2) to the existing convergent planning approach. This divergent approach espoused in the Australian Army’s capstone document *Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept* accepts that the single correct solution does not exist and decision-makers should aim for an acceptable ‘least worst’.

The Military Appreciation Process is burdened by linear procedures that do not reflect natural cognitive processes and therefore does not support adaptation or complex problem solving. Army officers Robert Calhoun and Brendan Hayward offer a solution that is based on a systemic (rather than analytic) approach, focusing on interactions and feedback mechanisms rather than concentrating on agents to develop insights on where to apply leverage within a security and stabilisation operation. Therefore, the art of applying the MAP is more important than the procedure itself. This reinforces the requirement for staff and mentors to possess the experience and capacity to enable a training framework that facilitates the Adaptive Stance.

Commanders can utilise the MAP for a CAS problem if they focus on the nonlinearity of feedback mechanisms, implying a requirement for the continuous monitoring of measures of effectiveness in order to adapt operations. Instead of problem-centric thinking, decision-makers need to be encouraged to consider appreciating the complex system holistically—seeking patterns and emergence; the art of sense-making rather than decision-making. Decision-makers can ‘demonstrate mastery of the arts of strategy and military planning by adapting frameworks and models to situations, not by forcing a situation to fit a model.’

As human beings and as leaders we need to understand how the complex network of our motives, values, desires, behaviours and principles drive and shape our decisions.
FOSTER A CULTURE OF DISPROVAL

This might ostensibly appear to be a hallmark of a negative mindset and will be difficult to foster without a shift in the current military mindset. However, as unintended consequences arise from important hidden aspects of the CAS, it is important to identify the earliest possible evidence to suggest a conjecture may be wrong. Studies conducted on ‘high reliability organisations’ support this concept, demonstrating that these organisations consistently display a ‘preoccupation with failure’.75 Such thinking also underpins the Adaptive Stance principle of adopting an openness to learning and, in particular, consideration of the question ‘How would I know if I was wrong about this?’

Organisational diversity within and outside the ADF offers a medium to foster a culture of disproval. Incorporation of participants from ‘an assortment of disciplines, professions and occupations’76 ensures ‘multiple realities’77 within a system, and can assist in overcoming groupthink. If needed, changes should be made to regular patterns of interaction to actively facilitate this, such as expanding attendance at planning groups, cross-function planning or increasing external-to-unit participation in exercises.

Although introduced agents may include other military or government personnel, consideration should also be given to increasing diversity of gender, race, religion and

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… potentially the most advantageous inclusion might be individuals representative of an enemy …

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Figure 1.2. Linear and Non-Linear Approaches to Military Problems.74
Individual Decision-Making in Complex Environments

educational background. Indeed, potentially the most advantageous inclusion might be individuals representative of an enemy—in the terrorist case, ‘middle-class, good lateral thinkers’ or, as knowledge management thinker Dave Snowden colourfully puts it, ‘people like me, who aren’t military, but who are devious bastards’. Such cross-cultural placements will only work if leaders create an environment where minority participants are ‘safe to float a different perspective and have it taken seriously’.

The Adaptive Stance requires a training environment which appreciates that it is much more important for decision-makers to admit error so as to be open to learning than to feel that they always have to be right. Army needs to foster an environment that supports the learning of others and avoids a scapegoat culture. Rupert Hoskin, in ‘Reflections on Command’, demonstrates the climate required to develop an Adaptive Stance:

If issues arise during a subordinate’s execution of a task, then the commander should ask himself where he failed: poor command climate, poorly expressed intent, insufficient attention to the backbrief, failure to allocate appropriate resources, or incorrect choice to employ mission command with an ill-suited subordinate. Only after doing so, should he then consider what went wrong at the lower level.

Develop Understanding

Given that CAS theory emphasises the requirement for continued understanding, organisations require a means of describing and sharing an internal model. The ultimate purpose of this model should not be seen as decision-making, but sense-making—the creation of shared meaning within the organisation. It therefore needs to reflect multiple perspectives and scales, and leverage the diversity of individuals’ views. Naturally, not all of these views are going to be in accord, and many of them may be contradictory. As such, the internal model is going to be messy, but every effort needs to be made to resist the temptation to over-simplify or over-generalise. Decision-makers need the kind of organisational intelligence that allows them to hold competing thoughts concurrently and remain sufficiently emotionally detached to identify patterns that emerge from the mess.

How then can the decision-maker develop their understanding? The most obvious method is through simple meetings. Regular cross-briefs with an appropriate range of agents within the organisation can be used to formally update the decision-maker so they have visibility of the thousands of tiny images (in a CAS sense, agents or components) that make up the organisation’s bigger picture. Critical to this approach is using a recorded format and employing non-rebuttal techniques to ensure that minority, or less powerfully presented, perspectives are not lost. While admittedly rudimentary, this technique would at least provide a start-point for facilitation of organisational adaptation, and could be incorporated at little cost into the standard
briefing schedule already in existence in most units. Existing corporate tools, such as **Mess Mapping**, may be appropriate vehicles to facilitate this approach.

More comprehensive techniques are also feasible. Social networking tools may provide an ideal method for decision-makers to maintain a big-picture view of the existing informal networks within a CAS. Sites such as Facebook or Twitter can be viewed as internal models of the various social in-groups, or CAS, that they represent—the inputs from the various agents within each thematic system are messy, but over time patterns emerge. The process of **trendspotting** by monitoring social network sites, already in wide use, essentially amounts to pattern recognition within the messy internal model of a target system. Likewise, augmented reality applications such as **Layar**, which overlays geospatial data and user-provided third-party information onto a mobile handset’s video view in real-time, could also be used as a conceptual template for internal model representation. This type of platform would be particularly appropriate in an operational setting and the impermanent nature of this format allows an image of the problem and solution to gradually and concurrently emerge, thereby facilitating the decision-maker’s overall understanding.

These proposed first steps should be seen as just that. They are certainly not presented as inviolable rules to be rigidly adhered to, nor are they suggested to guarantee success. Indeed, in many ways, where the process starts is immaterial; the critical point is that introduction of the Adaptive Stance should, in itself, be an adaptive process. The ultimate endstate is therefore a self-fulfilling prophesy: the Adaptive Stance should be implemented in a manner consistent with the Adaptive Stance.

**CONCLUSION**

This article has argued that current military models of decision-making are not optimised to tackle the complex problems of today’s operating environment. Linear, Newtonian approaches are still being used in an attempt to make sense of the decidedly nonlinear CAS into which troops are thrust. DSTO research into decision-making and CAS-based thought has led to the development of the Adaptive Stance to counter complex problems. However, realising the potential of this research demands a fundamental philosophical change within Army.

The CAS theory discussed in this article identifies that implementing such a change will not be easy. The same negative feedback that accounts for the resilience
of military organisations can also prevent them from rapidly embracing change, even that which promises significant system improvement. Fortunately, CAS theory also offers solutions. By acknowledging that change cannot be directly imposed onto a CAS and that self-organised, informal networks are constantly active, military decision-makers can seek to identify and manipulate the real levers of change within their organisations. By creating an environment that accepts the fact that messiness is key, military decision-making can stop trying to over-simplify the complex and instead concentrate on pattern recognition. Effort expended in the impossible task of trying to predict what is going to happen can be channelled into understanding, and providing the most appropriate response to what is actually happening.

In order to empower the individuals in an organisation to adopt this approach through the Adaptive Stance it is necessary for senior leaders to lead by example, ‘thus demonstrating that the organisation really does value adaptation and learning for tomorrow rather that the importance of achieving a perfect score for today’.86

ENDNOTES

2 Adaptive Campaigning: Future Land Operating Concept, Department of Defence, Canberra, p. 37.
9 Ibid., p. 71.
18 The image was created using Image Mosaic Generator Version 3, at <http://click7.org/image-mosaic-generator/?create>.
19 David Snowden, ‘Distributed Cognition’, oral presentation to the Special Air Service Regiment at Swanbourne Barracks, 8 July 2010.
27 Ibid.
35 The 2011 intervention into Libya serves as an excellent case in point.
40 Further information on Dörner’s experiments is detailed in Dörner, The Logic of Failure.
41 Ibid., p. 152.
42 Confirmation bias refers to the tendency to only look for information that supports one’s view of the world.
43 Perceptual defence refers to the tendency to deny or marginalise information that contradicts one’s view of the world and to find ways to shift blame or responsibility for bad news to others.
44 Methodism refers to excessive adherence to systematic procedure, or the tendency to persist with an approach that worked once in the past, even though it no longer does.
46 Ibid., p. 10.
48 Grisogono, Conceptual Framework for Adaptation, p. 36.
50 Grisogono, Conceptual Framework for Adaptation, p. 36.
Derived from British planning doctrine, this term refers to a point where the situation has changed to such an extent that original planning assumptions may no longer be valid. Joint Doctrine Publication 5-00, Campaign Planning, 2nd ed, Developments, Concepts and Doctrine Centre, Shrivenham, 2008, pp. 2–27.


The importance of an organisation using near-misses to provide valuable information regarding a system’s weaknesses is detailed in Karl Weick and Kathleen Sutcliffe, Managing the Unexpected – Assuring High Performance in an Age of Complexity, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2001.


This is not carte blanche and does not remove the requirement for thorough military planning. Rather, when undertaking the appreciation of a complex problem, a decision-maker should not expect to be right the first time.


Trent Scott, Enhancing the Future Strategic Corporal, School of Advanced Warfighting, United States Marine Corps, 2006, p. 8.


Scott, Enhancing the Future Strategic Corporal, p. 8.


Individual Decision-Making in Complex Environments


72 Ibid., p. 139.


75 Further information is detailed in Weick and Sutcliffe, *Managing the Unexpected*.


78 Snowden, interview with Lieutenant Colonel Pronk.

79 Grisogono, interview with Lieutenant Colonel Pronk.


THE AUTHORS

Lieutenant Colonel Mick Say is a Royal Australian Engineer Corps Officer who is currently posted to the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis. His regimental postings have been within the 1st Combat Engineer Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Say’s operational service includes deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. He holds a Bachelor of Science, Masters of Management Studies and Masters of Arts in Defence Studies.

Lieutenant Colonel Ben Pronk is a Royal Australian Infantry Corps officer who is currently posted to the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis. He has served in a number of regimental postings, including within the 2nd Battalion. His most recent staff posting was as Chief Instructor at the Royal Military College of Australia. Lieutenant Colonel Pronk’s operational service includes deployments to Timor Leste, Afghanistan and Iraq. He holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Arts in Defence Studies.
Planning

On the Preposterousness of ‘Population-Centricity’

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Floyd

Abstract

This article argues against the hasty adoption of conceptually questionable ‘doctrine’ inspired by the notion of ‘population-centric operations’, and instead proposes that military professionals may be better served by reviewing the validity of earlier doctrinal precepts, and applying them to contemporary and future mission sets. The article cautions against a conceptual fallacy wherein the Army is considering developing doctrine that envisages a military force conducting either Joint Land Combat (one of the five lines of operation described in Army’s Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept 2009, or ‘population-centric operations’. It offers an alternative proposition of two inter-lapping categories of conventional or intervention operations.

Introduction

It should go without saying that military planners at all levels—but particularly those at the operational level—must retain great clarity of understanding of the type of operations they undertake, and the essence of why they are undertaking them in terms of national interests. Yet the very nature of military operations—volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous—renders them elusive to a simple biology-like classification.
However, just as in biology where similar environments drive similarities in appearance between unrelated species through ‘convergent evolution’, so too can analysts and doctrine writers be fooled into misclassifying military operations into superficial groupings. This article refutes the validity of deeming an operation as either ‘enemy-centric’ or ‘population-centric’, as too simplistic and potentially misleading for both planners and operators. It offers an alternative—and arguably more orthodox—proposition of categorising operations as either inter-state (‘conventional’) conflict or intra-state (‘intervention’) conflict, noting that the latter may exist during and alongside the former, and the determining characteristic of these categories is the military force’s relationship to the host government.

As military professionals, we should be circumspect about the hasty adoption of conceptually questionable ‘doctrine’ inspired by the notion of ‘population-centric operations’, and instead we should consider reviewing the validity of earlier doctrinal precepts, and apply them to contemporary and future mission sets. This article cautions against what is regarded as a conceptual fallacy, wherein the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is considering developing doctrine that envisions a military force conducting either Joint Land Combat (one of the five lines of operation described in the Australian Army’s *Adaptive Campaigning—Future Land Operating Concept* (2009)¹), or ‘population-centric operations’.

**THE PROBLEM**

One of the real dangers of having a ‘long time between drinks’ in Australia’s doctrine writing is that the vernacular terms and shorthand descriptions used in debating military concepts and ideas start to take on a currency—and eventually an authority—that is untested, unwarranted and indeed misleading. A time-honoured example is the status given to *Blitzkrieg*, which in post-World War II decades attained legendary status as a fully developed operational concept adopted by the *Wehrmacht*. In actuality, most researchers now agree that the stunning successes attained by the Germans from 1939 to 1941 in Western Europe, North Africa and Russia were due almost solely to an overwhelming tactical-level superiority that prevailed *despite* major shortfalls in what we today know as operational design and planning.²

Today, we risk worshipping twin brazen idols defined by a mysterious quality of ‘centricity’, wherein we set ourselves a false dilemma and must choose—like a tempted Jedi—to describe the operation at hand as either ‘enemy-centric’ or ‘population-centric’. Of the former, we infer value—perhaps unconsciously—as a ‘real’ military force’s true purpose, while the latter ends up being a collective term for all other occasions where nefarious miscreants don’t have the decency to form
up in uniforms—or even one unchanging team—and attrite us from within a ‘population’.

This ‘population’, however, remains undescribed, metamorphic and unbounded by any agreed demographic taxonomy, and is thus unusable as a focus for designing, planning or conducting operations. Does it comprise just the ‘punters’? The peasants? Everyone in a given locale? Does it include the government? If so, to which levels? Does it include all the ‘strongmen’—negative and positive influencers—or just the meek, downtrodden and oppressed? If so, how do we determine who these ‘meek’ are? Do they stay ‘meek’ all the time? The answer to all these is alternately ‘who knows?’ or ‘it depends’.

When we as a warrior caste seem to have no hesitation in endlessly debating the military equivalent of angel numbers on pinheads, our mute acceptance of something so ill-defined as ‘population-centricity’ is bemusing.

‘Population-centric operations’ is unconvincing as a term that accurately describes the operations and actions it purports to portray in proposed publications; and, more importantly, this false doctrinal dilemma presents an insidious threat to our understanding of the true nature of conflict and our ability to determine, plan and conduct our future missions alongside our multi-agency partners.

In contrast, we can choose to renew the grasp of our doctrine’s ‘known knowns’, and to understand and apply terms and concepts to their fullest extent. In concert with a well-grounded analysis of the causes and pretexts of conflicts, we can arrive at an alternative suite of terminology; one that recognises the true focus of military operations across all forms of conflict, and even (if we dare to acknowledge the unmistakeable fundamental similarities) take inspiration from acknowledged extant domestic operational doctrine concepts and the terms ‘defence aid to the civil community’ and ‘defence aid to the civil authority’.3

**INTRA-STATE CONFLICT/DYSFUNCTION: ‘INTERVENTION’ OPERATIONS**

Like their foreign counterparts, the ADF and other Australian government agencies conduct intervention operations (military and civil) into foreign countries under a paradigm of intra-state conflict or dysfunction. They do so under two broad auspices described below, and both are prosecuted when and where the host state’s ongoing functionality and actions are in Australia’s direct or indirect sovereign interest:
• **Aiding the civil community**, when the scale, intensity and/or duration of a natural or anthropogenic (man-made) disaster or incident overwhelm a foreign state’s capacity, and Australia has intervened at the invitation of that state’s government.

• **Aiding the civil authority of a government**, in restoring or maintaining its sovereignty and state functionality (which can include curtailing transnational security threats therein, such as terrorism, piracy, crime and Weapons of Mass Destruction/Effect proliferation). This will ideally and generally occur at the invitation of the host government—though *in extremis*, and if of sufficient national interest, this may also involve autonomous conduct of tactical actions without the host government’s foreknowledge or permission, or may arise under international ‘responsibility to protect’ auspices.

Both these auspices can certainly overlap, and both are likely to arise in circumstances that the civil-military community characterise as ‘complex emergencies’—that is, where the foreign state’s society and state organs are failing and a humanitarian crisis is likely, imminent or ongoing.\(^4\) When described in this manner, the task similarities (even if not the legal or jurisdictional specifics) of non-domestic interventions with ADF domestic operations are clear, and provide an instructive comparison in thinking about civil-military roles and relationships in such missions.

While particular Australian State and Federal legislation exists, and the legal status of force elements may differ, in principle there is very little difference in terms of outcomes sought either domestically or non-domestically in intervention operations.

These apparent task similarities between what a military (and civil) intervention force may conduct in a foreign context, and what may be required *domestically* in support of its own government and security poses both hazards and opportunity to force planners. Australia’s sovereign defence was the original and remains the primary *raison d’être* for its armed forces: military and strategic planners have therefore long been justifiably leery about a ‘mission creep’ that would enshrine domestic employment of the military, except in the direst circumstances where responsiveness, scale, intensity or duration would overwhelm domestic civil agencies. An overreliance on this role might see the ADF transformed into an armed and salaried federal version of the SES.

However, by recognising the task similarities in domestic and non-domestic settings, ADF planners can in good faith design and execute dual function (dare...
we use Dwifungsi?) doctrine, organisation and training that is rightfully focused at non-domestic missions, but is equally adaptable to domestic settings.

**INTER-STATE CONFLICT: ‘CONVENTIONAL’ OPERATIONS**

Conversely, the ADF (supported by select Australian government agencies) conducts ‘conventional’ military operations against foreign state(s) under a paradigm of inter-state conflict—a proposition comfortably supported by multiple United Nations (UN) and international instruments. These operations are prosecuted when the sovereign interests of Australia and a foreign state conflict, and continue until the interests of at least one belligerent are met (although it should be acknowledged that a regional or UN peacekeeping mission may be raised to attain a compromise outcome). These interests may involve either exacting concessions from the enemy state's existing government, or the overthrow of that government and installation of a new state functionality that meets the victor’s interests.

Both eventualities involve such jeopardy, disruption or destruction of the losing state’s societal contract—that is, the government’s delivery of law and order, sovereign defence, administrative and social services, and infrastructure supporting the society’s common wealth in return for state government taxation—between its society and government’s organs that ongoing conflict is deemed untenable. These operations will also arise—if not at the beginning, then very likely by the end—during those same ‘complex emergencies’ circumstances that are encountered in intervention operations during intra-state conflict.

**THE UNAVOIDABLE EXISTENCE OF ‘POPULATIONS’ REGARDLESS OF OPERATION**

In both inter-state (conventional) and intra-state (intervention) conflict as they are described above, there exist two important commonalities:

- There is every likelihood of ADF and other Australian government agencies operating in populated areas, and
- Regardless of a foreign government’s own declaratory policies and interests, various elements of that state’s society and state organs (ethnic, community, governmental, economic, judicial, political) may hold interests contrary to Australia's, and may act aggressively to uphold their own.
The twin likelihoods of operating in a ‘complex emergency’ mission space and the need to counter hostile society and state actions effectively amount to what forces encounter during intra-state intervention operations. Therefore, we must anticipate conducting such operations in some form, in all mission spaces, regardless of whether the primary mission involves combating a conventional adversary or otherwise. Whenever and wherever people are present in the land and littoral domains, the notions of Population Support and Population Protection (as described within Adaptive Campaigning) arise, and link closely to the management of collateral damage. This is independent of whether operations are intervention (intra-state) or inter-state in basis; blatant ignorance of collateral damage in inter-state war will quickly result in previously acquiescent societal groups becoming aggressive, and state organs reacting strongly—and in turn precipitate intra-state conflict against perpetrating military forces and their partners.

In both inter-state (conventional) and intra-state (intervention) conflict as described above, ADF operations therefore do not centre around a ‘population’ but rather, on a state’s capacity (including willingness) to function and behave in a manner concordant with Australian sovereign national interest. Ultimately, this capacity derives from the coercive and persuasive power dynamics that exist inside the state and, in particular, how those dynamics influence the effectiveness of the state’s societal contract between its society and government.

**WARFARE’S ‘INTERGENERATIONAL’ COMPLEXITY**

As military planners, we must fully acknowledge the recent changes to conflict’s actors and environment since last century: the rise in power and pervasiveness of international organisations including non-government organisations and intergovernmental organisations; seismic changes to world power balance; ever-growing capacity for individual-level lethality; and globally potent and interconnected media and communications. However, these changes describe an accentuation of pre-existing phenomena, not step-changes from one generational milieu to another. Transnational groups are in no way new, nor are their fundamental effects or attributes. What is changing is their application of recent technology to dramatically increase individual lethality and reach, and the speed of transposition of ideas and actions.
As a result, there is significant risk in the use of 'First generation to Fourth generation warfare' terms, and the attendant minimalist and superficial depiction of the complexity of warfare throughout history, as a basis for rationalising distinguishing conflict forms between enemy-centric and population-centric. Terminology of this type inexplicably omits past warfare and conflict in its most complex forms. Such examples include the incredibly intricate allegiances and counter-allegiances during the Roman Civil War; the role of the East India Company in the British ascendancy in India; actions of non-state or supra-state chivalric orders such as the Teutonic Knights and the Knights Templar; mercenary forces such as those of Demetrius in the post-Alexandrian wars of the Diadochi; the corsairs and privateers in the Caribbean; and the Hessians in the US War of Independence. Moreover, the idea infers some sort of increasing sophistication in the base nature of conflict; as military professionals, we need to steer away from such lowest-common-denominator notions, and be inspired by more carefully-considered concepts.

CENTRALITY OF THE SOCIETY-STATE RELATIONSHIP

The ‘population’ is therefore too simplistic and amorphous to use as an operational focus. Moreover, population-centric operations focus on only one component (inadequately defined and thus non-targetable) of the full problem. It also does not explain the diversity of actions and interests that societal sectors, groups and individuals may adopt in inter-state (conventional) operations, as opposed to purely intra-state (intervention) operations. We need only to consider the combatant or irregular forces throughout history—even just last century alone—that have participated in conflict between a host state’s conventional forces and a foreign state’s conventional forces. Yugoslav partisans, the Viet Cong, French Maquis, Faisal’s soldiers of the Arab revolt, Iraqi Fedayeen and Afghan Mujahedeen all have demonstrated such diversity of actions and interests. Once again, these examples depict how the central element in both forms of conflict is the power relationships between the society and its own sovereign state government that are at the heart of the state-societal contract.

In an intervention operation, the ADF or its equivalent is by definition an interloper, and should never be more than in a supporting position to the host state. Moreover, as such we should not seek the direct ‘support of the population’—only indirectly, as an agent of the host state—but instead seek to develop and empower the web of societal linkages to and from the host government. In contrast to the precepts of population-centric operations, we must regard the society-state relationship as central to mission success, and not the population as an entity. Thus (acknowledging that more tangible, mission-specific centres of gravity may be apparent at lower levels) it can be argued that at the strategic level at least:
In intra-state (intervention) operations, the society-state relationship is the ‘friendly’ centre of gravity, which must be protected and/or rectified. In inter-state (conventional) operations, the society-state relationship is the ‘adversary’ centre of gravity, which must be defeated.

Leading from this recognition of the society-state relationship’s true centrality, it becomes clear that effective ‘hearts and minds’ campaigns can only be prosecuted directly by the host nation government, and only indirectly on their behalf by intervening forces. More importantly, the term ‘hearts and minds’ is simply a euphemism for prosecuting populist actions in support of development of an empowering relationship between the society and its own sovereign state government—but frequently missing the substance of development or governance that is more likely the solution to grievance. The term is frequently misused, hackneyed, and inferred to be a superficial ‘soda-fountain morale’ approach to counterinsurgency, and is therefore considered with strong suspicion by most non-government organisations and media commentators. Given its lack of definition and its external opprobrium, adopting ‘hearts and minds’ as a doctrinal term would appear to offer nothing and potentially leave the ADF open for cynicism and derisory critique.

**DIFFERENT LEVELS, DIFFERENT MODELS**

A direct, and arguably impractical, corollary of adopting the notions of population—and enemy-centricity as acceptable terminology is their impact on developing doctrine and subsequent effects on organisation and training. Along with its international peers, the Australian Army is currently grappling with how best to prepare and posture itself against the vicissitudes of a post-Afghanistan world in terms of its doctrine, organisation and training. What the Army currently terms as ‘foundation warfighting’ is readily recognised as fundamental to its baseline mission agility and versatility, wherein the command, control and coordination challenges of combat against a contemporary peer adversary is the primary benchmark. The complexities of multidimensional manoeuvre, and the coordination of all manner of joint fires and effects are foreseen in this contested operating paradigm: but in seeking to focus land force efforts at the tactical level, there is a temptation to characterise this battlespace as necessitating ‘enemy-centric’ operations only.
By not describing a prospective operating environment under a broader notion—such as the way inter-state (conventional) operations is proposed in this article—the Army runs a serious risk of oversimplifying its potential battlespace, and thereby the comprehensiveness of its force design and preparedness. No matter how distracting or consuming in time, resources or commander’s attention, the future battlespace will be cluttered with humanity; however, it will not be simply an amorphous population, but structured societies of varying degrees of functionality and governance.

That a military force operating in such a battlespace will have some relationship to that society-state construct is inescapable. However, as only one of the instruments of a warring state’s national power, the function played by the military force manifests differently at different levels of war. In the way that the ‘comprehensive approach’ is described well by DIME (diplomatic, information, military and economic) at the strategic level, and by the five lines of operation in Adaptive Campaigning at the operational (campaign) level, so we should be equally open to a tactical-level model that maintains the tenets of the higher-level models, but without direct transposition of terms.

Put another way, we don’t need to directly transpose the five lines of operation to the tactical level, because the notions don’t apply in the same way. Rather, the ubiquity of the society-state relationship necessitates a model for ADF tactics, techniques and procedures that views manoeuvre as intertwined with governance and development functions, to the same degree as it is with fires, sustainment, intelligence, protection, and command and control, with each afforded its consideration proportionate to its relevance to the mission.

CONCLUSION

There is deliberately little that is new in the conceptual fundamentals proposed here; but from these re-established and re-stated precepts, there is opportunity for the ADF to restore and build on its campaign design doctrinal platform, to ensure that we are thinking clearly and comprehensively about military operations along and across all forms of conflict. Coming out of what at this stage are inconclusive operations in Afghanistan is no reason to wish away a future similar conflict.

Moreover, we should not countenance a theoretical doctrinal approach that may encourage a consequent two-tier approach to organisation and training. The
challenges ahead will be daunting enough; the ADF and indeed Australia cannot afford to further constrain its future operational effectiveness through deficient doctrine and an attendant misguided view of its shared mission space.

ENDNOTES


5  The term ‘conventional’ is here used to describe conflicts that are between states, and for which the Laws of Armed Conflict and the Geneva Conventions were expressly crafted—that is, there are purpose-built conventions in place for such conflicts. Through application of the International Committee of the Red Cross’ Direct Participation in Hostilities construct and similar, less codified arrangements, we can apply the Laws of Armed Conflict to combatants that are not stated-based actors—but these are applications, as opposed to the circumstances for which those conventions were originally created.


THE AUTHOR

Lieutenant Colonel Nick Floyd is currently on the Directing Staff at the Australian Command and Staff College. Previously, he has served in appointments within Future Land Warfare Branch at Army Headquarters, including as Deputy Director Strategy – Army. In 2005–06, he was Coalition Plans Officer in Headquarters Multi-National Corps – Iraq, and as partner to the Chief Planner in the Iraqi Ground Forces Command. In 2009–10 he was the Chief of Army’s Visiting Fellow at the Lowy Institute for International Policy, prior to serving as the Chief of Reintegration in the Fires & Effects Cell, Headquarters Regional Command – South, Kandahar in 2010.
Planning

Fighting China

Airsea Battle and Australia

Justin Kelly

Abstract

This article examines the origins and implications for Australia of the US concept AirSea Battle. It argues that the US preparations for AirSea Battle will shape warfare in Australia’s region and will require a refocusing of the preparation of the ADF.

Introduction

In mid-2010, Washington-based think tank The Center of Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) published AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept, which prescribed an approach through which the United States should meet the challenges presented by the growing strength and assertiveness of China. Of itself this was not novel. In the decade following the end of the Cold War, China had begun to gel in many US minds as the next threat that would have to be faced. As a result the problem of dealing with 'Anti Access-Area Denial'—or A2AD—had, by the late 1990s, become the focus of US Army and Navy Title 10 war games and had been the trigger for the Marines’ Ship-to-Objective Manoeuvre, the Army’s Army After Next experimentation (that spawned the Future Combat System) and Navy ideas including littoral combat ships, arsenal ships and the conversion of fleet
ballistic missile submarines into Special Forces carriers among others. This thinking had been interrupted by the terrorist attacks of 2001 and the consequent campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. As effort is lifted off these campaigns, the bureaucratic trajectory of a decade earlier is simply being re-asserted.

The publication of an operational concept by a Washington think tank is not normally an earth shattering event. However, despite its basic lack of novelty, AirSea Battle reflected some of the thinking embedded in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review and served a number of institutional agendas; as a result it has proven to be remarkably influential. In October of 2010 the US Navy adopted the terminology and, underpinning ideas as doctrine, in 2011 a joint Navy–Air Force AirSea Battle Office was established in the Pentagon and the term increasingly appeared in speeches by senior officials. In January 2012, the Pentagon published the Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) which transforms the CSBA concept into force development leading vision by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. AirSea Battle is now officially how the United States intends to fight.

As mentioned above, the CSBA concept was specifically directed at countering the rise of China. Official publications and pronouncements since have not been so pointed and the idea of countering A2AD systems has been made a more generic idea. This is something of a smoke screen. In reality, only China presents both the capacity to develop and, for the United States, the potential need to overcome an A2AD system. It is both a nascent superpower and faces the United States over a sea-air gap that is the principal theatre in which the competition between A2AD and AirSea Battle will be played out. Although it is not inconceivable that other states or actors could develop modest A2AD capabilities, the reality is that US general military superiority over any but nascent superpowers is so great that no special preparations would be required.

AirSea Battle should therefore be seen as a conceptual operational approach to a specific strategic problem—the competition between the United States and China.
conventional’ as that for which we prepare. It is inevitable then that AirSea Battle provides the context for ADF concept and force development.

THE STRATEGIC NEED – AMERICA’S MARE NOSTRUM

The United States is a status quo power. Its role as the progenitor of the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund reflects the desire to establish and sustain a rules-based international order—albeit one in which it (mostly) makes the rules. This means it is essentially satisfied with the existing world order. To buttress its position it has established an array of relationships with states across the globe. Despite its commitment to organisations such as NATO, most of these relationships are bilateral and the United States has generally been cautious of multilateral arrangements both because of their inherent weaknesses and because they tend to reduce the advantages in decision making that result from the obvious disparities between the United States and any other single actor. The result of this is that, at least in the Western Pacific and Asia, the United States has a number of important bilateral security relationships ranging from alliances with South Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand, through growing links with Singapore, India, Indonesia and Vietnam, to the tacit-alliance but ‘ unofficial’ relationship with Taiwan.

These relationships provide the United States with influence in the Western Pacific and Asia and form the foundations of a system to contain the growth of Chinese diplomatic and military influence. For each of the junior partners, the US relationship offsets the power disparities between them and China, and offers a hedge against the Chinese tendency for unilateralism. From the point of view of the junior partners these relationships are, however, built on hope and confidence. Hope that the United States will be sufficiently engaged in the junior partner’s problem to be willing to exert itself and confidence that it will have sufficient military capacity to have the final say in the disposition of events. Hope springs eternal but AirSea Battle aims to underpin the confidence. To do this it seeks to:

- Defend US territory (such as Guam) and critical bases and facilities
- Defend key allies
- Protect US and friendly seaborne commerce
- Defeat Chinese military forces, and
- Interdict Chinese seaborne commerce.

… AirSea Battle can be seen as a twenty-first century operational response to a strategic problem that would have been familiar to Thucydides or the Roman senate …
Strategically then, AirSea Battle can be seen as a twenty-first century operational response to a strategic problem that would have been familiar to Thucydides or the Roman senate: how to maintain a web of clients that can prevent any outsider from intruding into your own sphere of influence.

THE STRATEGIC NEED – CHINA’S MARE NOSTRUM

China defines the extent of its territorial waters as including the island waters contiguous to its territorial land, Taiwan, and the various affiliated islands, including Senkaku Islands, the Pescadores, Pratas Islands, Paracel Islands and the Spratly archipelago. In essence, China claims maritime sovereignty over the majority of the East and the South China seas. However, all of these territorial claims are contested by one or more of Taiwan, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia or Brunei. All of these have occupied islands in one form or another and there are intermittent but increasingly regular clashes between fishermen and commercial and naval vessels. In the case of the South China Sea normal nationalist competition is further spurred by the belief that the area is rich in oil and gas deposits.

By claiming the South China Sea (East Sea to Vietnam, West Philippines Sea to the Philippines and Cham Sea to some South-East Asians) as territorial waters, China also places itself in direct confrontation with the United States, which claims that the shipping lanes passing through the area are international waters open to free navigation. As Chinese power has grown so has its readiness to assert what it believes are its rights. This has led to a number of clashes with the United States and littoral countries over the last decade. In July 2012, China established the new city of Sansha on an island of two square kilometres located 350 kilometres south-east of Hainan to administer a prefecture covering two million square kilometres and extending as far as Malaysian Sarawak—some 1800 kilometres from the Chinese mainland.

There is no foreseeable path to the resolution of these issues. China refuses to deal through regional bodies, preferring to deal bilaterally in order to maximise the impact of power disparities. A recent ASEAN foreign minister’s meeting concluded without producing a communiqué because the Cambodian Chair (Cambodia is closely aligned with China) refused to countenance mention of the issues surrounding the South China Sea. For exactly the same reason most of the other disputants refuse to deal except through regional bodies. International law tends to ratchet up tensions because failure to confront other disputants weakens a country’s legal claim.

China is increasingly prepared to act unilaterally and could be perceived as a regional bully. As well as the example of Sansha city, in July 2012 China’s Global Times editorialised that China should challenge Japan’s sovereignty further up the Senkaku–Ryuku island chain including sovereignty over Okinawa. Other examples
include Chinese willingness to apply economic levers to resolve territorial disputes with the Philippines and Japan. China generally places sovereignty and national interest over the desire for cooperation—the strong do what they will and the weak suffer what they must.

China’s determination to control its adjacent seas is not the result of whimsy. The flow of resources to, and products from, Chinese industry is both the source of its strength and the foundations of state legitimacy and stability. For China, interdiction of traffic through the South China Sea would threaten state survival. If the area generates the amounts of oil and gas that are expected, unilateral Chinese control would greatly reduce its reliance on energy flows through Hormuz and Malacca—places where the United States potentially has its foot on China’s throat.

Former US Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski once noted that ‘negotiation is submission unless the shadow of power falls across the table’. From the perspective of strategy, therefore, the United States has to be able to extend its power and influence into waters that China claims as its own. If it can’t, the various small regional powers, bereft of US support, will inevitably be forced to accommodate China’s demands with the result that the United States will be excluded from the West Pacific—this is arguably China’s proximate grand strategic objective. To prevent its exclusion, the United States must be able to offer reliable support to regional countries—but the ability to offer this support presents an existential threat to China. Ultimately, China is playing for higher stakes than the United States.

ANTI-ACCESS AREA DENIAL

In 1997 Jiang Zemin, Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party directed that the Chinese Navy ‘should focus on raising its offshore comprehensive combat capabilities within the first island chain, should increase nuclear and conventional deterrence and counterattack capabilities, and should gradually develop combat capabilities for distant ocean defence’. The ‘first island chain’ is generally thought to run from the Japanese main islands through the Ryukyus, Taiwan, the Philippines and Borneo, thus roughly bounding the East and South China seas.

In response to this direction, CSBA notes that ‘many of the capabilities the Chinese military is acquiring reflect a deliberate anti-access and area-denial (A2AD) operational approach that is specifically designed to keep the military forces of the United States and other potentially unfriendly powers from approaching close to

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**China is increasingly prepared to act unilaterally and could be perceived as a regional bully.**
Planning

Justin Kelly

China,\textsuperscript{10} which, from the Chinese perspective, would appear entirely reasonable. A2AD comprise:

- **Anti-access**: Those actions and capabilities, usually long-range, designed to prevent an opposing force from entering an operational area. In China’s case these include building close relationships and potentially bases in regional countries to support the establishment of a defensive perimeter akin to that established by the Japanese in the Second World War. Military capabilities include anti-shipping and land attack ballistic missiles, air- and submarine-launched cruise missiles, cyber, electronic and space warfare capabilities, and possibly terrorism. According to CSBA the aims of Chinese anti-access capabilities are:
  - Deny the United States operational sanctuary in space and exploit US reliance on space for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, command and control, communications, precision navigation, and precision timing
  - Threaten all US operating bases in the Western Pacific
  - Threaten major US Navy surface forces out to 1200+ nautical miles, to push aircraft carriers beyond the ranges of their strike, and surface warships beyond the range of their land-attack cruise missiles.\textsuperscript{11}

- **Area-denial**: Those actions and capabilities, usually of shorter range, designed not to keep an opposing force out, but to limit its freedom of action within the operational area. Military capabilities include shorter range aircraft, littoral antisubmarine warfare capabilities, land and sea mines, anti-shipping missiles, land manoeuvre forces and air and missile defence troops intended to:
  - Impede US submarine operations in the littorals including the deployment of advanced arrays of undersea sensors and potentially weapons in littoral waters and narrows
  - Contest US air operations over or near mainland China and adjacent allied territory through advanced integrated air defence systems with hardened, command and control networks.

CSBA anticipates that the Chinese would initiate hostilities with cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to destroy or disrupt US satellite constellation. Following this, salvos of ballistic and cruise missiles would be fired to destroy critical bases, carrier strike groups and logistics nodes prior to exploiting the resulting US weakness to establish air and maritime superiority.\textsuperscript{12} Setting these conditions might be intended to:

- Inflict so much damage to US military capabilities that the United States would choose to discontinue the fight
- Make the prospect of an eventual US victory appear too prolonged or costly, or
- Drive a major US ally out of the war.

The A2AD tag doesn’t reflect a new approach. Any state establishing an operational defensive posture would seek to resist the approach of enemy forces and
then limit their options for tactical and operational manoeuvre. Arguably, however, A2AD is useful because it highlights the differences between earlier conventional approaches and the anticipated future and, in particular, the prevalence of missiles technologies.

**THE OPERATIONAL RESPONSE – AIRSEA BATTLE**

Although the original CSBA concept outlined a generic campaign with seven lines-of-effort,\textsuperscript{13} at its heart is the need to achieve air, space, cyber and sea control. In both it and the JOAC, once control over some or all of these operational domains is established, other operations are conducted to reach a decision. This is encapsulated in the JOAC’s leading idea of ‘cross-domain synergy’, which describes the desire to combine actions across all the operational domains in order to achieve what we would consider combined arms effects. In this sense, AirSea Battle and the JOAC are simply descriptions of updated approaches to joint integration to achieve control over whatever domains are necessary for a specific subsequent operation.

The details of AirSea Battle are not important. At its core though is an important idea: the battle for air, space and sea control, and to a lesser extent control of cyberspace, is one now dominated by missiles and that this domination will become more complete in the future. As a result, the exchange of cruise, ballistic and other missiles lies at the heart of AirSea Battle. Missiles rely for their effectiveness on a functioning system to provide cueing, targeting and navigation, and any combat between missile arrays is therefore a battle to degrade the opposing system to the extent that it becomes a practical victim. The system includes space based surveillance, communications and navigation; command and control structures; launch platforms; the missiles themselves; logistic systems and bases to replenish and support launch platforms; and the industrial base that produces the missiles. All of these systems elements will potentially be the target of attacks.

It would be possible to view AirSea Battle as entirely symmetrical involving two sides exchanging cruise missiles in the same way that Napoleonic era infantry exchanged musket volleys. There is certainly some prospect of this but the aspiration of cross-domain synergy is to create opportunities to open assailable flanks. So like most examples of state versus state warfare there are opportunities to achieve surprise, but they will require creativity and innovation if they are to be seized.
QUESTIONS FOR AUSTRALIA

At the beginning of this article it was noted that AirSea Battle will provide the context within which Australian concept and force development will take place. The strategic competition that underpins the concept and the operational approach it describes are clearly primary drivers but it is not as clear where they are driving us. This section examines some of the questions that arise from reading AirSea Battle.

Does AirSea Battle make war between China and the United States inevitable? As described above AirSea Battle is a product of the strategic competition between a satisfied power (the United States) and a dissatisfied power (China). This strategic competition could escalate into open warfare but such an eventuality is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The reasons for this include:

- Even fighting with a home ground advantage, China is several decades away from any kind of military parity with the United States. Until that parity is achieved, conflict with the United States would lead to interdiction of Chinese trade in areas remote from the South China Sea and Western Pacific and the consequent rapid collapse of the Chinese ability to wage a protracted war.

- Our limited experience of conflict between nuclear powers suggests that every effort will be taken to limit it. This usually means that conflicts are conducted at the periphery and through proxies, the Cold War is a useful example. In reality, the Cold War was only cold in Europe. In East Asia, South East Asia, Africa and Central America it was hot, sustained and bloody. Even in extremis China and the United States are likely to be wary of shooting cruise and ballistic missiles at each other’s homelands.

- China might be able to get there in an indirect way. As the resident power, China has time to gradually exclude the United States from the region without coming into direct confrontation. In the Chinese board game Goh there is a saying that ‘the corners are golden, the edges silver, and the centre dross’. Applying Goh logic to control of the South China Sea suggests that China’s best way forward is to build influence with the other littoral states through trade, tourism and diplomacy. In the extreme, the subversion of regional states could seek to draw the United States into protracted stabilisation campaigns in order to exhaust its desire to remain engaged. Although China’s behaviour at the moment demonstrates a degree of impatience, as suggested above, the development of the AirSea Battle doctrine and capabilities that underpin the US pivot towards Asia encourages moderation.
Australia is committed to a long term security relationship with the United States. The rotation of Marines and other US forces through Darwin and the close cooperation between the two countries already contribute to the US implementation of the JOAC. Beyond this the question is: should we seek to supplement or complement the AirSea Battle? Supplementation would develop the capabilities to add to the missile exchange while a complementary approach would seek to develop capabilities in other areas.

The limiting factor in the missile exchange is not the availability of missile shooters but of the missiles themselves, and this ultimately rests on the depth of US stockpiles and the capacity of the US industrial base. Any contribution by Australia would rest on the same US foundation—we would be drawing missiles from the same sources and therefore, even when Force 2030 is fully mature, we would not be adding anything substantive to the effort. The array of high-end warfighting capabilities developed to participate in AirSea Battle would certainly enhance Australia’s military standing in the region but would also potentially lead to an unbalanced force prepared specifically for an unlikely situation—open conflict between the United States and China.

Under a complementary approach the force would be developed in a balanced way and prepared to participate in the range of operations that may arise within the grand strategic stability that the US capacity for AirSea Battle makes more likely. As in the Cold War, the underpinning strategic competition between nuclear armed great powers is more likely to be manifest in small wars at the periphery than in a central cataclysm at the heart. For the ADF, our next twenty years may not be too dissimilar from our last fifteen.

AirSea Battle is also a harbinger of the character of modern warfare and hints at some important drivers. Warfare between states in the missile age will probably diverge from our current notions. Cruise missiles, possibly given a target after launch from sources other than the launch platform, are expected to become cheaper, longer-range and faster. At the upper end of capability, examples of what is possible are provided by the US Prompt Global Strike initiative which aims to develop the capability to strike anywhere on the globe within an hour. Indicative capabilities include the X-51 Waverider hypersonic cruise missile with a projected speed in excess of Mach 7 (due in service in 2015) and the Advanced Hypersonic Weapon which in a test flight in November 2011 flew 3500 kilometres in under half an hour.14 Because such weapons are likely to remain more expensive and scarce than lower performance cruise missiles, they will most likely be aimed at only the most critical nodes, but a handful
of successful strikes by such weapons may greatly enhance the chances of success of swarming attacks employing very large numbers of more conventional missiles.

The advent of hypersonic and high supersonic cruise missiles create a new challenge for air defence systems both ashore and afloat. The response times and performance required of air-defence weapons able to counter Mach 7 missiles are extreme and preparations to counter penetrating conventional aircraft are likely to be increasingly nugatory. If Australia is to continue to prepare to counterattacks by another state, the nature of the preparations may need to be changed. Certainly, systems based on manned fighters are unlikely to form part of the solution that eventually emerges. Similarly, the ability to simply overwhelm or exhaust the launch systems of AEGIS cruisers and destroyers will become easier as the missiles become cheaper. Arguably a different and more integrated approach is required if we are to prepare for the next threat rather than the last.

**CONCLUSION**

At its inception this article was intended to provide a comprehensive debunking of AirSea Battle. However, on closer examination, the strategic competition that underpins it is real, important and accelerating. For any reader of history, the situation in the western Pacific has some parallels with that leading up to the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and many more with the early days of the Cold War. There are also strong resonances with the glory days of realpolitik in Europe in the nineteenth century. It is hard to argue with the proposition that AirSea Battle was produced in response to an emerging strategic need.

It is also hard to support the proposition that AirSea Battle is guilty of somehow creating its own strategic need—that it is both cause and effect. Chinese strategic assertiveness is fully understandable when viewed from China but it makes many other spectators uneasy. At least some of those spectators are turning to the United States to balance growing Chinese military and economic power. AirSea Battle is a response to this need—it did not create the need.

In his latest book *The China Choice*, Hugh White outlines the dangers presented by US–Chinese strategic competition and argues that they should cooperate to form a ‘Concert of Asia’. It is hard to see this proposition as anything other than a naive desire to escape reality. China is rising but remains a long way short of matching US military, economic or soft power. The benefits of the United States cutting itself loose from its allies and friends in the western Pacific—which would be a Chinese
precondition for such a concert—are not clear; what is in it for the United States or for its ‘former’ friends and allies? Equally, if China displays patience and plays a long game, as a resident power with good long term prospects, why should it trade away its future opportunities in exchange for a short term stability that is not in its interests? There is presently no basis for a redistribution of the balance of power and no foundation for a ‘win-win’ solution. At present Realism rules.

In any event, the balance of power system established by the Concert of Europe (which seems the most likely model for White’s proposal) arose to manage the strategic vacuum created by the defeat of Napoleon—which it did imperfectly. We are not dealing here with a vacuum. In any event, the concert didn’t prevent war, it merely shaped the context for the Crimean (1853–56), Austro–Prussian (1866) and Franco–Prussian (1870–71) wars and a variety of dynastic wars at the periphery as well as establishing the relationships that transformed the Franco–German war of 1914 into the Second World War.

The details of the AirSea Battle concept itself are not that important—all wars reflect their immediate strategic contexts and no forward-leaning concept is ever likely to pass into detailed war, campaign or operation planning. However, the view presented in the concept on the character of future wars between states is important and raises critical questions that need to be answered if Australian force development can claim to be rational. The ADF has a number of views of what ‘conventional’ warfare might look like; if we accept the view taken by AirSea Battle and the JOAC, most of them are wrong.

We do indeed live in interesting times.

ENDNOTES


3 ‘Today, it is incontestable that the only state with the long-term potential to pose a serious and sustained challenge to US influence and power projection in its region for the foreseeable future is China.’ van Tol, et al, *AirSea Battle: A Point-of-Departure Operational Concept*, p. 10.

4 Ibid.


8 Callick, ‘Awash on a Sea of Trouble’. This idea was reinforced on 15 August 2012 when a boatload of protesters from Hong Kong planted the Chinese flag on one of the Senkaku Islands and declared Chinese sovereignty over all the islands.
11 Ibid., p. 20.
12 ‘Initiation’ requires some clarification. It seems unlikely that China would attack the US ‘out of the blue’. More likely, China would resist US involvement in a dispute between some regional country and itself. Alternatively, echoing the lead-up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, ‘flexible deterrent options’ employed by US planners could ratchet up tensions to a level at which China is driven to act either by domestic or realpolitik pressures.
13 The AirSea Battle campaign has two stages. The initial stage, commencing with the outbreak of hostilities, comprises four distinct lines of operation: withstanding the initial attack and limiting damage to US and allied forces and bases; executing a blinding campaign against PLA battle networks; executing a suppression campaign against PLA long-range intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and strike systems; and seizing and sustaining the initiative in the air, sea, space and cyber domains. The follow-on second stage would comprise various operations designed to support US strategy by creating options to resolve a prolonged conventional conflict on favourable terms. These would include: executing a protracted campaign that includes sustaining and exploiting the initiative in various domains; conducting ‘distant blockade’ operations; sustaining operational logistics; and ramping up industrial production (especially precision-guided munitions).
14 The X-51 had an unsuccessful test flight in mid-August 2012 but the project is understood to be progressing satisfactorily.
15 The Hobart class AWD has a single 48-cell vertical launch system (VLS). The characteristics of the VLS preclude it from being replenished at sea. US Aegis cruisers have 120 VLS cells with similar restrictions. Despite the enormous power of these vessels they only need to be over-tasked once by swarms of cruise missiles.

**THE AUTHOR**

Justin Kelly is a retired Army officer who retains an interest in strategy and military concepts. He has published a number of articles in the *Australian Army Journal* and other professional journals.
The relationship between China and the United States is crucial to our region’s strategic stability and a central concern in Australian defence and security policy debates. In *A Contest for Supremacy*, Professor Aaron Friedberg provides a broad assessment of the Sino-US relationship, highlighting the growing risks for the United States as a result of China’s growing power, and sets out policy recommendations to strengthen US posture and influence in the Asia-Pacific. The book’s title neatly communicates its key message, that increasingly intense strategic rivalry is emerging between China and the United States, and that China’s rise poses a fundamental challenge to US primacy and national interests in Asia. Indeed, Friedberg warns that ‘if current trends continue, we are on track to lose our geopolitical contest with China’ (p. 6).

Friedberg assesses seven factors that shape the Sino-US relationship, arguing that the two most divisive factors—the narrowing power gap between the United States and China, and the differences in their political systems and values—are also likely to become the most decisive (pp. 37–38). He observes the sobering historical likelihood for changing power relativities to result in conflict between great powers, and convincingly argues that Sino-US strategic competition has deep roots that cannot simply be attributed to misperceptions or policy errors. The book acknowledges other more stabilising factors including economic interdependence, China’s integration into international institutions and nuclear deterrence, but judges that they can only constrain Sino-US rivalry rather than reverse it. For Friedberg, only the emergence of liberal democracy in China can lead to ‘stable and lasting peace’.

The second part of the book provides a concise overview of the relationship’s evolution from 1949 to 2010 and the emergence of a US policy consensus under
the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations—a combination of engagement and containment which Friedberg awkwardly labels as ‘congagement’. It then assesses Chinese strategic policy and intentions, outlining China’s cautious but steady approach to pursuing regional preponderance in Asia. This cogent assessment is supported by a useful appendix listing Chinese sources and authors.

The last chapters assess the changing balance of power and influence between the United States and China, including Friedberg’s perspective on Australia’s response to China’s rise (pp. 207–09), before setting out policy recommendations. Friedberg—a neo-conservative who served as Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs to Vice President Dick Cheney—critiques US policy for being too heavily weighted towards engagement. He is especially critical of what he perceives as a ‘Shanghai Coalition’ of American businessmen, politicians, officials and academics that is too eager to please China at the expense of US interests (pp. 197–99). Friedberg is not only sceptical about the policy prescriptions of liberals, but also ‘so-called realists’ who do not share his emphasis on promoting US values. The book concludes by advocating steps to strengthen US balancing against China, through its regional military posture, alliances and diplomacy.

A number of these steps have been taken by the Obama Administration over the last few years, as part of the US ‘pivot’ or ‘rebalancing’ to the Asia-Pacific that has become even more explicit since A Contest for Supremacy was written. These developments highlight both strengths and weaknesses of the book. Friedberg is convincing in his assessment of fundamental geopolitical divergences driving intensifying strategic competition between China and the United States. Many of his conclusions and recommendations about US strategy towards China are prudent, well supported by balanced analysis and being implemented by US policy-makers.

Yet recent developments also undermine Friedberg’s more excessive criticisms of US policy and the alleged ‘Shanghai Coalition’. His vehemence often seems to reflect frustration with debates during the 1990s rather than a balanced depiction of current US policy trends. Similarly, a number of specific judgements are questionable; for example, Friedberg’s depiction of US entry to the East Asia Summit as a concession to China (pp. 169–70) or his enthusiasm for a US-led ‘community of Asian democracies’ to promote liberty throughout the region (pp. 281–82).

Overall, I found A Contest for Supremacy to provide an excellent realpolitik assessment of the Sino–US relationship, while being less convincing in some of its arguments and policy advocacy. It should be read by anyone interested in Asia-Pacific strategic affairs, and Australian readers will find it particularly useful to compare with Hugh White’s ‘Power Shift’ essay from 2010.

Reviewed by Dr David Connery, Deputy Director (Strategy and Development)
National Security College, Australian National University

This is a book for the very serious student of war. As befits the title ‘research companion’, this volume of collected works on the topic of war by Professors Hall Gardner and Oleg Kobtzeff of the American University of Paris provides a detailed exposition of the causes of war through the theoretical lens of ‘polemology’. Those embarking on the journey through this book will find a number of fascinating—even at times dense—chapters covering this broad topic from dimensions as diverse as electoral politics, gender, geography, media, climate and religion. The chapters also cover various periods of history from the pre-agricultural, through the classical eras to the wars of the industrial era, and into modern times.

The editors—who author a number of chapters themselves—compile substantial essays by a number of noted American and European academics using the theory of polemology as a linking device. This theory rejects the ‘single cause’ theories of war such as Marxist class struggle or the structural (inbuilt) causes of war due to the condition of anarchy between states. Instead, polemology holds that war arises from the impact of interrelated causes including (among many) geostrategic, technical, biopolitical, legal and socio-cultural factors. Yet, unhelpfully, polemology (as presented here) is unable to provide predictive theory of war because the incidence of war depends upon the contextual conditions of a specific situation. Nor does this theory, as described, explain which factors might be more important because all, including the Gardner’s ideas of alienation (expanded in Chapter 1), seem to have equal weighting. Those with a greater need to find out more about polemology will need to look elsewhere; fortunately, some references are provided to start that journey.

One example of the style this book was written by the noted military historian Azar Gat. His chapter (Chapter 2 – ‘The Roots and Evolution of Conflict’) is a short
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Dr David Connery

explains his monumental work of 2006, *War in Human Civilization*. It’s not worth providing the reader with a summary of his summary here, but it is worth noting how Gat examines historical, biological, archaeological and anthropological disciplines to provide an insight into the reasons why states and their people have fought and still fight. His explanation sides with the Hobbesian view of life as being ‘poor, nasty, brutish and short’ over the view of pre-agricultural society as innocent in terms of war. Australia gets a mention to support Gat’s (and Hobbes’) view, where fighting between pre-agricultural Aboriginal tribes was described as highly prevalent and demonstrative of not only the frequency of war but also its relative viciousness—in terms of overall mortality—over the great industrialised conflicts of the twentieth century.

Gat is a strong proponent of the social and economic explanations of war; indeed, he promotes both over politics as the reasons for fighting in this chapter. Using these lenses, Gat argues that war is becoming less prominent among modern nation-states because the ways of earning money and finding individual fulfilment have changed. In today’s developed societies, peace is more profitable than war and young men need not leave their homelands to find sexual adventure. This, he claims, undermines two of the main reasons why democratic leaders chose to fight and people chose to follow. Added to these socio-economic imperatives are an increasing place for liberal values in developed societies and the concomitant rise of ‘lawfare’. For good measure, Gat also uses these latter reasons to explain why democracies find counterinsurgency difficult to prosecute.

Professional military readers—especially brave ones—will be interested in the chapter by François Géré, ‘The Future of Asymmetric Warfare’. Géré provides a very broad and comprehensive discussion of the nature of symmetry and asymmetry in warfare, especially various forms of asymmetry in stakes, information, investment and ethics. His bad news for professional soldiers is that the impact of asymmetry will only grow as new technologies—including cyber and robotic technologies—clash with ethics in democratic states and the undemocratic manipulation of tactics and information by their opponents.

Despite the increasing prevalence of this style of conflict, Géré maintains that armies need to prepare for high intensity conflict against other states. This question, which is largely one of priorities and focus, is one that the Australian Army faces today. Yet unfortunately, Géré will not provide today’s force planners with much of an insight as to why because this assertion—like many others in his essay—remains unsupported by substantial evidence. Also, his prescription to ‘plan for operations of stabilisation’ contains a kernel of contradiction because planning for these operations is necessary, but insufficient, to ensure forces are prepared for this type of operation. In a time of limited budgets, the forces of most Western nations will be forced to make hard choices between the ‘high-end’ platforms needed for
one style of conflict over the construction, medical, special operations and infantry assets needed to prevail in a long-term stabilisation operation.

Unfortunately, this criticism can also be made of Géré’s condemnation of doctrine as a key inhibiting force for Western armies when trying to counter insurgencies. In his view, doctrine (not otherwise specified or refined) leads these armies to be less flexible than irregular, opportunistic opponents. But it is unclear why doctrine—and not ethics, goals or different organisational structures—is such a decisive hindrance in this style of warfare.

Still, other elements of Géré’s argument are well worth engaging with. His critique of symmetry, for one, is valuable because it speaks to the dangers of groupthink within the military and their supporting organisations. Another is the focus on the pernicious influence of serious organised crime in today’s conflicts, which is another challenge that the Australian Army has yet to fully appreciate in a formal, doctrinal, sense.

In all, *The Ashgate Research Companion to War* commends itself, through the breadth of its treatment of the subject and the many debates it surfaces, to serious students of war. It is certainly a book to ‘dip into and out of’ as the needs of the researcher dictate.

Reviewed by Thomas Richardson, UNSW Canberra

Ashley Ekins and Ian McNeill’s *Fighting to the Finish* is the much-anticipated final volume of the *Official History of Australia’s Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts*, and the final volume to deal with Australia’s participation in the Vietnam War. The value of *Fighting to the Finish* for military professionals and historians lies in both the volume’s comprehensive treatment of Australian Army operations in Vietnam from mid-1968 to the final withdrawal in December 1972, and the willingness on the part of primary author, Ashley Ekins, to provide honest assessments of the controversies generated during the conflict. The result is a book that is not only an indispensable reference, but one which also provides an excellent insight into the operational problems faced by the Australian Army in Vietnam.

Australia’s participation in the Vietnam War is often described as a ‘platoon leaders’ war’, and this is reflected in a historiography dominated by veterans’ memoirs, battalion histories and accounts of individual battles (particularly Long Tan). The effect of this literary tradition is twofold: a preponderance of individual, or tactical, perspectives of combat and a skewed understanding of the reality of this war in which large stretches of operations and actions are obscured by a handful of ‘famous’ engagements. Long Tan may have been one of the great triumphs of Australian arms, but it was atypical of combat in Vietnam and is of less relevance to the modern Army than operations undertaken between 1968 and 1972.

In a narrative structured around the ebb and flow of these Australian operations in the field, Ekins largely keeps the tactical viewpoint but adds a much needed operational and strategic perspective. The events of 1968—the Tet Offensive, the appointment of General Creighton Abrams as commander of MACV, and the election of Richard Nixon—marked a fundamental shift in the course of the war, with the stage set for eventual American withdrawal. Nixon’s ‘Vietnamisation’ policy and Abrams’ ‘One War’
concept, in theory, represented significant changes in policy. Despite this apparent shift, Australian commanders continued to be torn between operations aimed at the destruction of communist ‘main force’ units (such as the ubiquitous D445 Battalion) in remote jungle base areas, and pacification operations conducted in and around Phuoc Tuy’s villages—much as they had been in 1966 and 1967. Even as Abrams was promoting the ‘one war’ concept, Lieutenant General Julian Ewell (the commander of II Field Force Vietnam, the corps headquarters to which 1ATF reported) was pressuring his Australian subordinates to increase their ‘body count’ totals.

This operational dilemma was not just a product of external pressure, however, and in examining it Ekins demonstrates a willingness to challenge some of the more pervasive myths of Australian involvement in Vietnam. Far from being united behind a common and effective counterinsurgency doctrine, Australian commanders had vastly different ideas as to the role of 1ATF and the tactical model to be followed. Thus we find Lieutenant Colonel Colin Khan, the commander of 5RAR during its second tour, lamenting that his unit had been ‘trained for totally the wrong war’, that pacification was ‘a waste of time’, and that the proper role of 1ATF was to hunt communist main force units in their remote jungle bases. But just months after Khan and 5RAR departed Vietnam, 8RAR’s CO, Lieutenant Colonel Keith O’Neill, was reaching the opposite conclusion—that operations in deep jungle resulted in bunker contacts that created excessive Australian casualties for little permanent gain, and that operations around villages were far more effective. Ekins does not overly emphasise this difference, but rather lets the arguments of the respective battalion commanders speak for themselves. Likewise, a rebuttal to the common argument that the Australians won a ‘tactical victory’ in Phuoc Tuy province in the conclusion is firm but far from overbearing.

_Fighting to the Finish_ also refuses to shy away from criticism of 1ATF where it is warranted. As is to be expected, considerable space is devoted to the Dat Do minefield—Brigadier Graham’s abortive effort to cordon off the Dat Do district from external infiltration from the east of Phuoc Tuy. This is well-tilled ground (notably in Greg Lockhart’s _The Minefield_), but where Lockhart assigns blame overwhelmingly to Graham, Ekins acknowledges that significant penetrations of the minefield were occurring while it was still under the partial protection of 1ATF in 1967. Ekins acknowledges that this does not absolve Graham of blame, but again shows the willingness of _Fighting to the Finish_ to challenge common tropes of Australian military history—in this case, that of valiant diggers being led astray by incompetent senior officers. Uncomfortable issues such as discipline inside Nui Dat (specifically the relationship between excessive drinking and ‘fragging’), friendly fire and the legacy of Agent Orange are also addressed in depth.

At the same time there are some notes of caution. _Fighting to the Finish_ is part of a series and needs to be read as such. There is no detailed description of Phuoc
Tuy province, something that is present in the previous volumes, *To Long Tan* and *On the Offensive*. Tactical success is often measured on the basis of body count, ignoring both the potential political ramifications of communist activity and the losses of local South Vietnamese forces. This is in part understandable given that Ekin’s mandate is to write a history of Australian operations rather than a history of the war in Phuoc Tuy, but nonetheless this lack of context can be frustrating. It is also unfortunate that the volume’s long lead time has meant it has missed out on some relevant advances in scholarship, notably Ernie Chamberlain’s translations of some of the more recent (and balanced) Vietnamese works.

Overall, *Fighting to the Finish* is an important work that is a must for students of both the Vietnam War and Australian military history. The appendices, specifically Colonel D A Chinn’s summary of operations, are invaluable. But it is Ekin’s willingness to provide more than a simple narrative that forms the core strength of *Fighting to the Finish*. Perhaps the most important part of the volume is the final paragraph, in which Ekins notes the continued relevance of the Vietnam: ‘It continues to serve as a warning of the potential cost and outcomes of misconceived intervention … For Australia, the Vietnam War stands as a reminder that open-ended military commitments carry unforeseeable risks, even when based on perceived national self-interest and for espoused altruistic or humanitarian reasons.’

Reviewed by Augustine Meaher PhD (Melb), Director, Department of Political and Strategic Studies, Baltic Defence College

Australian inter-war foreign and defence policy is a topic that is at last receiving the attention it has long deserved. *Australia and Appeasement: Imperial Foreign Policy and the Origins of World War II* provides an excellent introduction to Australian foreign policy during the interwar period that complements the more specialised works that deal with specific issues of Australian foreign and defence policy.¹

*Australia and Appeasement* is the first generalist monograph to focus on Appeasement and Australia in forty years and is able to draw on sources not available at the time of EM Andrews’ groundbreaking *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises, 1935–1939*. Those familiar with Andrews’ research will find little new in Waters’ conclusions, but they will notice richer quotes and more supporting evidence than was available to Andrews four decades ago. They will also notice a more nuanced approach that gives Australia a greater role in the creation and implementation of Imperial foreign policy, although this is still debatable; the argument that Australia had its own foreign and defence policy—an Australian policy—created and followed for Australian reasons is one that is well made and one that ensures Waters will be consulted with Andrews by future historians.

*Australia and Appeasement* seeks to determine why Prime Minister RG Menzies remained attached to appeasement even after the outbreak of the European war in 1939; what had been Australian policy towards Europe since 1933; what was the Imperial appeasement policy; and what was Australia’s role in it? Waters provides detailed evidence that enables the readers to answer these questions, although some readers will find his conclusion, which he presents as judicial summation to a jury, frustrating.
Waters conclusively demonstrates that the Australian governing elite, with the notable exception of former Prime Minister Billy Hughes, supported appeasement throughout the 1930s. He should have added that the ALP Opposition was an even stronger supporter of appeasement and had actually opposed the implementation of sanctions against Fascist Italy over Abyssinia, which placed it at odds with all other labour parties in the British Empire. The role of the ALP, which admittedly was in Opposition for almost the entire inter-war period, deserved more attention; it was the ALP which chose not to implement the Statute of Westminster, a decision that greatly affected Australian foreign policy and how Australia saw the world. Furthermore, the UAP governments remembered the ALP’s victories over conscription in the Great War and were understandably wary of giving the ALP this issue again.

There is no question that appeasement was the policy of the British Empire and one that was endorsed by all Dominions. It is, however, questionable if Australia had a role in the creation of this policy or if Australian support simply reassured British policy-makers. Waters’ demonstrates that Australian policy-makers were deeply concerned with British reactions to the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakian crises and communicated their concerns repeatedly and forcefully. Waters’ contention that Australian concerns influenced British policy is less convincing; British foreign policy was dictated by British strategic concerns and Australian support, while comforting, was not necessary. Australia, by refusing to enact the Statute of Westminster, was committed to British foreign policy.

Waters’ monograph is highly readable and rich with quotes. It is highly detailed and provides an excellent foundation for someone who is unfamiliar with Australian governments of the inter-war period and Australia’s complex and evolving relationship with the United Kingdom, and to a much lesser extent the United States and Europe. There is little new in Australia and Appeasement; however, this is the first time the information is available in one place. It is an ideal work for undergraduates and will replace Andrews’ Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises, 1935–1939 as the most consulted work.

ENDNOTE

1 See for example, David Bird, JA Lyons – The ‘Tame Tasmanian’: Appeasement and Rearmament in Australia 1932–39; and Augustine Meaher, The Australian Road to Singapore: The Myth of British Betrayal.

Reviewed by Ryan D Griffiths, Lecturer, University of Sydney

Boaz Atzili’s new book, *Good Fences, Bad Neighbors: Border Fixity and International Conflict*, is an excellent study of the positive and negative consequences of an international norm emphasising territorial boundaries. Atzili argues that a norm against conquest and territorial aggression developed in the wake of the Second World War. On the one hand, this norm has been so successful that the seizure of territory has become a rare occurrence since 1945, and this constitutes a sea change from earlier periods when conquest was common. On the other hand, the norm has, paradoxically, helped perpetuate a large number of weak states where governmental institutions and services are sparse, where social cohesion is lacking, and where civil war is common. Thus, the book provides a theoretical explanation for why inter-state wars, particularly those over territory, have declined in number even as the number of intra-state wars has increased. It should be a valuable book for anyone interested in conflict and the types of conflict that the international community will face in the future.

Atzili spends a fair amount of time discussing the origins and significance of what he calls the norm of border fixity. By this he means a consensus, a prevailing view by most states and international actors that foreign conquest and territorial aggression should be prohibited. He traces the ideological origins of the norm to Woodrow Wilson at the end of the First World War, but, like a number of other scholars, he argues that the norm didn’t really begin to affect state behaviour until after the Second World War when a combination of ideological and material forces made the norm more persuasive, more accepted and more common. As a result, wars of conquest have become quite rare, and, when they do occur, they are internationally condemned.

Although such a norm has had undeniably positive effects in international life, it has also generated some unintended consequences. Here, Atzili brings in the
literature on state formation and political development to say that border fixity has a tendency to create weak states. He provides a detailed discussion of how war and territorial threats have historically driven states to centralise their power, rationalise their institutions and bureaucracy, and basically forge a stronger, more cohesive nation-state. Using case studies, Atzili describes how both Brandenburg-Prussia and Argentina developed in relation to external threats; he also shows how Poland-Lithuania failed to develop adequately, and was thus swallowed up by its neighbours. Like other scholars working on state formation, Atzili uses ideas related to natural selection; faced with a hostile environment states will either develop stronger political institutions and become a stronger state, or they will be conquered by other more developed states. The net result is a system of stronger states. Atzili then argues that the absence of these selective pressures in the post-1945 period have created ‘moral hazard’ problems, in which weak states can more or less limp along—their borders secured by international consensus—without developing strong political institutions. It is in weak and sometimes failed states such as these that ethnic conflict and civil war often arises, sometimes spilling over national boundaries, and regularly eliciting international aid and intervention. He describes these dynamics through case studies of Lebanon and the Congo.

In all this is a theoretically interesting, highly readable and engaging book. One might challenge Atzili’s choice of case studies, questioning whether it makes sense to compare Brandenburg-Prussia with the Congo. The author probably understates the importance of socio-political preconditions in the formation of these states, but his broad description is generally persuasive. He ably draws together several disparate literatures to tell a convincing story about the changing face of conflict since the Second World War.
The Australian Army History Series, edited by David Horner, has produced another notable work that will appeal to both the professional and public alike. This was with Karl James’ examination of the Second World War effort to defeat the Japanese forces on Bougainville in the Solomon Islands. Fought at the time under operational and political limitations, it appeared to take place in a military backwater with an unfortunate lack of newsworthy events to the outside world. But James’ account makes it a campaign of soldiering that does credit to the men and units involved and as such should be duly recognised by both Australians and Americans as contributing to the final victory against the Empire of Japan.

The First Army operated in a region so remote that even their own countrymen knew little about it: New Guinea, Papua, New Britain and the Solomon Islands were off the beaten path until the arrival of the Japanese made them a threat for Australia to the south. The American Marines who served there from 1942 through 1944 described it as a ‘Green Hell’. In 1944 and 1945, Australian forces were used to contain, pursue and defeat the Japanese who had been left by General Douglas MacArthur to wither on the vine. This was easier said than done, depending on where operations were conducted. On New Guinea the Japanese were defeated; on New Britain they were contained at Rabaul; while on Bougainville the effort was to accomplish all three goals while keeping costs in men and material low. This task was complicated by seemingly conflicting economic and political demands for using Australian forces to secure its mandated territories, of getting needed workers out of uniform and back into the economy at home, and actively participating in the continuing war against Japan to have a place at the peace table when the war was over.
This was the task that fell to II Corps under Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige and the men of his 3d Division, 11th and 23d Brigades. The author proceeds to discuss the subsequent operations in detail. This was examining the progression of the campaign in detail from Torokina and the outer islands, the Central Sector, the Northern Sector and the Southern Sector. The effort included continuing active operations, maintaining morale and discipline, while limiting costs from casualties and disease. The Australian cost between October 1944 and August 1945 was 516 dead, 1572 wounded; the Japanese lost 138 captured and an estimated 8789 killed. Included in the examination was the campaign’s political and economic impact. In the end the objective was secured, the population and resources recovered, prestige in the mandates left intact, and needed manpower was made available for the economic war effort. This was despite the pains of both military and political opponents having public disagreements over the course of events. Even the alliance with the Americans was called in to question as the major fighting moved to the Philippines, Central Pacific and Japan itself.

The author did an excellent job in balancing history and analysis and telling the story of Australia at war. Based on his dissertation excellent use was made of the official histories, memoirs, letters and Japanese sources. I read this as an American military historian and US Marine. United States naval, air and ground forces fought in these same locations and conditions previously. What I gained was a different view of the Southwest Pacific Theatre in terms of its impact on Australia, being more on the frontlines than North America. I was also impressed by the public and private effort to publish military history in a manner I have not seen before. The series produced uniform and handsome volumes, well illustrated with maps and photographs. The result is a model of its kind and is highly recommended for both professional and general readers.

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Chris Smith, Australian Army

*Conducting Counterinsurgency: Reconstruction Task Force 4 in Afghanistan* is the second book in the Australian Military History Series. The Army History Unit sponsors the series, which is written for ‘members of the Australian Army with a focus on issues and deployments that the Australian Army has participated in’. The series is intended to provide context to general doctrinal principles and is based on two important premises. The first is that Australian soldiers are keen to learn and often learn best from the experience of others. The second is that the modern operational environment dictates that some learning must be rapid and accomplished in what the Army calls ‘short and medium learning loops’.

*Conducting Counterinsurgency* uses the experiences of members of Reconstruction Task Force 4 (RTF4), which deployed to Afghanistan in 2008, as the basis to illustrate the counterinsurgency principles described in Australian Army doctrine. The authors’ aim is to assist members of the Australian Army come to terms with the complex concepts that underwrite the counterinsurgency principles.

The first two chapters of *Conducting Counterinsurgency* provide context while the remaining chapters seek to illustrate the ten counterinsurgency principles. Associated principles are grouped together under three chapter headings: ‘Insurgency is Political’, ‘Insurgency is not Primarily a Military Activity’ and ‘Insurgents Exist Among the People’. The final chapter asks: How does the RTF4 experience relate to the principles of counterinsurgency operations? The book is well illustrated and, as is the habit of Army History Unit publications, seeded with interesting technical asides describing the equipment, vehicles and weapons used by the soldiers of the Task Force.

The strength of the book is that it provides an excellent understanding of the character of the operations of RTF4. It provides great insight into the thoughts
and the actions of the officers and soldiers of the Task Force. It is, in essence, a distillation of the various oral histories provided by the members of the Task Force. The principles provide a convenient and coherent structure for the synthesis of the oral histories. To this extent the book works very well.

The other strength of the book is the manner with which it uses a very diverse range of anecdotes from oral histories to illustrate the counterinsurgency principles for a reconstruction task force in Afghanistan in 2008. The illustrations provide students of counterinsurgency a very good feel for the principles in practice at that place and at that time. The authors acknowledge though, that *Conducting Counterinsurgency* ‘does not provide “the last word” [on the application of the counterinsurgency principles], nor does it represent an ideal textbook application of those principles’. Importantly, the authors acknowledge that ‘further work involving a range of different units [in different contexts] would be required for a more ambitious task such as validating the principles’.

*Conducting Counterinsurgency* is not a critical evaluation of the counterinsurgency principles. The authors address the doctrinal counterinsurgency principles without questioning their validity or correctness. The principles are similar to those developed by US General David Petraeus and the team that produced the United States counterinsurgency doctrine published in 2006: FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*. They are in line with what might be described as the contemporary counterinsurgency orthodoxy within the English-speaking armies of the Western world, which is commonly referred to as COIN. This doctrine, and the principles on which it is based, have come in for considerable criticism in recent years.

The primary criticism of the contemporary counterinsurgency doctrine of Western English-speaking nations is that, rather than being a generalised and broadly applicable doctrine for countering insurgencies, the doctrine applies to very specific circumstances. Some contemporary critics have provided highly plausible arguments asserting that contemporary COIN theory and related doctrine are largely a recipe for winning the Iraq War.

For example, the Australian Army counterinsurgency principle of Host Nation Primacy assumes the existence of a very specific context for its relevance. The context for the principle’s relevance is the conduct of a war against an insurgent group in which the Australian policy objective is best achieved by using military force in support of the incumbent government of some other country. This assumption is quite specific and limits the utility of the doctrine to a very limited set of geopolitical circumstances.

Similarly, the principle of Reinforce the Rule of Law assumes that the policy objective requires either the maintenance or establishment of a rule of law in the host nation. It is highly plausible, for example, that a policy objective of denying international terrorists a safe-haven in Afghanistan does not necessarily require establishing the rule of law.
It is worthwhile referring back to the military theorist Carl von Clausewitz here. Clausewitz argued that:

Given the nature of the subject [war], we must remind ourselves that it is simply not possible to construct a model for the art of war that can serve as scaffolding on which the commander can rely for support at any time.

Conducting Counterinsurgency’s main flaw, therefore, is that it might serve to reinforce a very specific and limited paradigm for how military force might be applied to achieve the objectives of government policy in circumstances that resemble those encountered in Iraq. The danger is that some less-reflective or less-critical officers might see the principles as a template strategy for some future contingency that might resemble (perhaps only superficially) RTF4’s circumstances.

As a synthesis of the collection of oral histories from the Fourth Reconstruction Task Force, Conducting Counterinsurgency is a success. This synthesis of the oral histories is not an insignificant achievement. The book is, therefore, a good account of the nature of the operations of RTF4 and provides a good sense of the rationale for the various operations of the Task Force. However, the use of personal anecdotes as illustrations of principles is less successful. This work risks reinforcing highly flawed and contextually specific principles and lessons that if generally applied might prove to be irrelevant, dangerous and decisively flawed.

Conducting Counterinsurgency highlights the inherent risk in the Army’s short and medium learning loops. The risk is that good ideas that seem to have worked in one specific context might be rapidly circulated through the Army’s learning systems when the ideas themselves may not be generally applicable. If the lessons process is too uncritical and has no inbuilt scepticism, the same systems designed to rapidly transfer good ideas to the Army can just as rapidly transfer flawed ideas.
Most recent studies of China’s military focus on the modernisation programs of the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) Navy, Air Force and the Secondary Artillery Corp. *The Chinese Army Today*, now in its second and updated edition, is perhaps the most comprehensive single-volume overview of the PLA’s ground forces. Written by Dennis Blasko, a former US Army Attaché to China, this meticulously researched, well structured and highly informative volume presents a detailed and objective analysis of a modernising military still making the transition from the traditional emphasis on the people’s war to preparation for local war under conditions of informationisation.

By any measure and to various degrees, the PLA has made great strides in the past two decades, especially in four key areas: doctrine, recruitment, procurement and training. Using Chinese-language sources, the author carefully chronicles the major developments and milestones in each of these areas, assessing where progress has been made but at the same time noting the constraints and limitations that the Chinese military must overcome.

The PLA has long moved away from the Maoist people’s war doctrine. Blasko goes to great length in dissecting and discussing the Chinese concepts of active defence, deterrence, joint operations and how these inform the PLA’s orders of battle, training and procurement priorities. While traditional strategic culture continues to influence and provides the conceptual tenets of how the Chinese military will fight, technological advancement, modern warfare conditions, and where the PLA is most likely to be engaged dictate that new concepts must be developed to meet the overall military strategies and campaign needs. Joint operations have emerged as a priority area which is having an important impact on the PLAs force organisation, command
structure and real-situation training. While steady progress is clearly noticeable, it will take time for the PLA to fully embrace and integrate joint operations as an essential component of how it will conduct future military campaigns. This will not be easy, as the author points out, and will require constant and routine training of units to achieve the necessary level of proficiency in joint and combine military operations.

A new feature of this updated edition is the author’s attempt to compare the PLA with its peers, and in particular the US military. While the Chinese military is acquiring and developing the types of modern weapons systems such as anti-satellite capabilities, anti-ship and land-attack ballistic and cruise missiles, and stealth technologies, the manner in which these systems will be deployed and used and their geographic scope will be quite different given their different missions and experiences. On the later account, it is obvious that the PLA lacks real-world combat experiences since its brief encounter with Vietnam in 1979, while the US armed forces have been engaged in almost constant military operations from DESERT STORM in the early 1990s to the Afghan and Iraqi wars over the past decade. The PLA high command is fully aware of this deficiency and indeed is redressing this situation with enhanced training and participation in joint military exercises with foreign counterparts and dispatches of naval task forces in international anti-piracy operations to earn valuable experiences.

In many aspects The Chinese Army Today is a unique and welcome resource handbook, with detailed coverage of the PLA ground forces not found elsewhere. The author’s carefully constructed description and explanation of what the PLA is, how it is structured and different from other para-military and security apparatuses, and its personnel recruitment and retention systems clarify some of the confusions and offer insights into where its future direction lies. Of all the developments over the past two decades, two of the most important have been the restructuring of the PLA ground forces away from a largely infantry-based organisation to one that is increasingly more mechanised, mobile and with special units from anti-chemical warfare to communication and reconnaissance; and a reduction in the number of enlisted soldiers and the steady increases of the number and role for non-commissioned officers. While the former strengthens the PLA’s rapid reaction and power projection capabilities, the latter ensures professionalisation over time.

The author also touches on the PLA’s role in and relationship to Chinese society at large. Clearly, the Chinese military undertakes many functions other than combat, from disaster relief to domestic stability. The more important question of the still opaque civil-military relations in China remains how Beijing formulates and implements its national security and foreign policy, and where the PLA sits in the policy-making process. This is a critical question to ask, given the increasingly complex external environments China is facing today, from territorial disputes in the South China Sea, to its critical relationship with the United States, and the occasional discordance and mixed signals coming out from a rising power.
Book Review


Review by Colonel (Retd) Mike Lovell, AM, psc (US)

All of us have certain events and recollections that are ingrained into our memories. We can replay them as if they happened just yesterday. Many are memories of globally significant events, some of which we observed in real-time while others were so profound that we can remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when we found out about them. These memories are landmarks in our minds that have shaped the way we see the world and what we have chosen to do in our lives.

Almost anyone reading this review will share profound memories of al-Qaeda’s 11 September 2001 attacks on New York’s World Trade Center: vivid pictures of commercial airliners slamming into the twin towers and the dreadful aftermath. Less well known, probably because it wasn’t capture on live television, was the attack on the Pentagon that occurred less than an hour after the attack on the World Trade Center. At 0937 hours a fuel-laden American Airlines Boeing 757 flew into the Pentagon at a speed of 530 miles per hour, scoring a direct hit on the Headquarters of the Department of the US Army. It resulted in the death of 125 military personnel, civilian employees and contractors and several hundred wounded, not including the aircraft passengers who perished in the crash. Among the dead was Lieutenant General Timothy J Maude, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, who was the highest ranking officer killed in the attack. For the US Army and Washington DC community this attack was both personal and painful. It is burned into the memories of everyone in the US military and the broader Washington community.

*Then Came the Fire* is an anthology of sixty-one personal accounts and recollections by eyewitnesses, first respondents and survivors of that fateful day. These often heart-wrenching verbatim accounts were recorded in the days and months following the attack and provide a 360-degree view of the attack on the Pentagon, including
the evacuation, immediate rescue and subsequent recovery operations. The wide variety of witnesses, including then Major General Peter Chiarelli (later General, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army) who was inside the Pentagon during the attack, and members of Washington’s ‘Old Guard’ ceremonial unit who participated in the recovery operation, provide a rich picture of the event. Beyond the preface, Stephen Lofgren has not attempted to make any commentary or draw any conclusions—he lets the interviewees speak for themselves.

To assist readers who have not worked in the Pentagon to understand these accounts, Lofgren has provided some useful photos and schematics of the building plus a list of abbreviations. However, for those people who have not visited the Pentagon, it is difficult to understand the scale of this monolithic building and the impact the attack and subsequent fires had on the people inside it. The five-sided, five-storey, five-ring Pentagon is the world’s largest office building covering around 600,000 square metres and containing 28 kilometres of corridor. An average of 30,000 people work in this fortress-like building, which is surrounded by huge car parks and highways. The fact that so many people survived the attack is a testament to the design of the building, the response of emergency services, and the spontaneous leadership demonstrated by people at all levels of the organisation as well as Army contingency planning and procedures.

Crises by their very nature are confusing and beset by uncertainty. Data is often piecemeal and unreliable, requiring leaders to make difficult decisions under great pressure. As many of the early interviews note, the most pressing issue for senior leaders in the minutes following the impact was the potential for a second attack by a second aircraft, which subsequently crashed into a field in Pennsylvania as a result of the passengers fighting back against the hijackers. This uncertainty led to the evacuation of the entire building at a time when a few extra minutes may have saved more lives from the ensuing fires.

Three lessons stand out from the various accounts:

• The vital role that officers and non-commissioned officers play as leaders during emergencies. It is the most common observation volunteered in almost every interview/story: leaders took charge. They led their people out of the building, accounted for the people under their command, and took individual responsibility for the immediate rescue operation.

• The importance of having practiced standard operating procedures for responding to crises, especially in accounting for people, defining roles and responsibilities, and ensuring business/operational continuity.

• Senior leaders must trust their subordinates to manage a crisis as they see fit. If a senior leader is not in a position to solve an immediate problem, he/she should grant complete freedom of action to the leaders who can manage the situation.

Who should read this book:
Anyone who is interested in the importance of leadership under pressure.

Leaders who have emergency management and business continuity responsibilities.

Commanders and staff officers tasked with mass casualty incident contingency planning.

Australian Army personnel who are posted to the US, especially to the Washington DC area.

Anyone involved in the specification of nationally important buildings that may be a potential target for terrorist attack.

The main challenge for Australian readers is the extensive use of jargon, which could be quite frustrating for those who have not been immersed in the US military system. However, the list of abbreviations at the end of the book should make this more bearable.

Because the book is a compilation of interviews, it is very tempting to skip whole sections. However, Lofgren has carefully structured the book by collating the interviews of people with like roles and perspectives into informal sections. The book may have been a more useful reference had the editor used more formal sections focusing on these roles.

Lofgren has deliberately limited the scope of the book to record and recall the events surrounding the attack on the Pentagon. However, one can’t help but think about how much this attack influenced the strategic decision-making and behaviour of the US Army in the following decade. How much did it influence the US Army’s appetite for war, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan?
MILESTONES

IN MEMORIAM

ALAN BISHOP STRETTON
(1922–2012)

Alan Bishop Stretton (b. 1922 Elwood, Victoria) enlisted in the Australian Army in 1940 and was assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Division. In 1941 he was promoted to lance sergeant, before being discharged from the 2nd Cavalry Division in 1941 and accepted as a staff cadet at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. Following his studies he graduated in December 1943 as a lieutenant, and in July 1944 he joined the 2/9th Battalion, 7th Division. At this the 2/9th Battalion was rebuilding in Australia after taking 374 casualties at Buna from an initial strength of 700.

Following months of frustrating delay, Stretton and the 2/9th Battalion moved to Morotai in early 1945 in anticipation of the Oboe landing at Balikpapan. Stretton, came ashore in the first wave leading a reconnaissance party attached to the 2/12th Battalion. After rejoining his 13th Platoon, Stretton led his men in combat against stubborn Japanese defences around Balikpapan, including operations alongside flame tanks to clear bunker complexes. In the following days Stretton took part in a second landing at Penadjam, before leading small patrols harassing withdrawing Japanese rearguard forces. Stretton ended the Second World War as the 2/9th Battalion’s Intelligence Officer.

Following post-war duties overseeing Japanese disarmament, Stretton was posted to the Directorate of Military Intelligence at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, where amongst his other duties he became involved in the early Cold War intelligence world of informants and agents. In 1947 he was promoted to captain. While in Melbourne, Stretton indulged in his lifelong passion for sport and played two
seasons for St Kilda in the then Victorian Football League. In May 1949 he was promoted to major and posted to the War Office in London.

In late 1953 Major Stretton returned Australia and took command of a company in the 1st Battalion, Royal Australia Regiment and deployed to the Demilitarised Zone in Korea. While in Korea he was appointed Brigade Major of the 28th Britcom Infantry Brigade. Stretton's time in Korea ended in 1955. In 1960 he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and posted to the Army Staff College, Queenscliff, as an instructor. In April 1961 he took command of 2nd Battalion, Royal Australia Regiment, deploying to Malaya, before returning to Australia in August 1963.

In May 1966 Stretton was promoted to colonel and took up the position of Director Administrative Planning. In 1969 he became the Chief of Staff of Australian Force Vietnam in Saigon. For his service in Vietnam he was made a Commander of the British Empire, and received the Distinguished Service Order and the Bronze Star. In 1970 he returned to Australia and joined the Army Reorganisation Committee overseeing the shaping of the future land force. Promoted to brigadier in late 1970 and selected to attend the 1971 officer course at the Royal College of Defence Studies, London, Stretton travelled widely, and during the thirteen months he spent abroad he visited seventeen countries. In 1972, following an interview with Sir Arthur Tange, Stretton returned to intelligence, becoming the Deputy Director (Military) of the Joint Intelligence Organisation.

In July 1974 Stretton was promoted to major general and tasked with establishing the National Disasters Organisation; four months later the National Emergency Operations Centre was officially opened. The timing was fortuitous because just before midnight on Christmas Day 1974, Cyclone Tracy struck Darwin. Stretton arrived in Darwin on the next, assumed overall command, and laid the foundation for city’s reconstruction. For his tireless efforts in overseeing the evacuation of Darwin Stretton was made an Officer of the Order of Australia, and following this in 1975 he was named Australian of the Year, and Father of the Year. He made it clear, however, that he accepted the awards on behalf of the people of Darwin, rather than himself.

Stretton retired in 1978, being one of a few Australian generals to rise from the ranks. His career spanned the Second World War, Malaya and Vietnam, but it is for his time spent as the Director General of the Natural Disasters Organisation for which he is most remembered. Stretton was a man of many talents, and following his military career he practised law in Canberra for about 20 years, specialising in conveyancing and commercial law, and was a well known member of the city’s legal community. He published an engaging autobiography in 1978: *Soldier in a Storm*.

Major General Alan Bishop Stretton AO, CBE (retired) passed away at Batemans Bay in New South Wales on 26 October 2012, aged 90. He was farewelled with full military honours at the Royal Military College Chapel in Canberra on 2 November 2012. He is survived by daughters Virginia and April, and son Greg.
Major General Cedric Maudsley Ingram ‘Sandy’ Pearson AO, DSO, OBE, MC (1918–2012)

Major General Cedric Maudsley Ingram ‘Sandy’ Pearson AO, DSO, OBE, MC (24 August 1918 – 7 November 2012). Pearson was born in Sydney and educated at Newington College, where he acquired his distinctive nickname after an eponymous brand of pumice soap popularly known as ‘sand soap’. He entered RMC Duntroon in January 1937, the year in which the college relocated back to Canberra from its enforced move to Sydney during the worst of the Depression. Pearson excelled at rugby, winning a full colour in 1938 and playing at representative level for NSW. His class graduated early, in August 1940, because of the war and he was allocated to cavalry and appointed to the Army Service Corps Staff of the 2nd Division in Sydney.

After completion of the first ROBC at the new Armoured Fighting Vehicles School at Puckapunyal, Pearson was posted to the 13th Light Horse, then in the process of motorisation and subsequently designated the 13th Australian Armoured Regiment, with which he began working up on the newly developed Cruiser tank. In August he transferred to the 2nd AIF as part of the 1st Australian Armoured Division, which did not leave Australia. For this reason he transferred to the infantry and in September 1944 joined the 2/7th Battalion in operations on the northern coast of New Guinea. In action against entrenched Japanese positions on 20 April 1945 he personally called in mortar fire for his company after the mortar OP was wounded and while in full view of the enemy and under direct fire from the Japanese. He subsequently directed the attack onto the Japanese positions, again regularly exposing himself to enemy fire and leading attacks onto the objective. He was awarded the Military Cross for his ‘personal courage and actions in excess of his duty’.

Pearson was a student in the first post-war intake of the Staff College, at that stage still located at Cabarlah in Queensland. He was then transferred to the Australian Intelligence Corps and in July 1947 returned to the Staff College, now at Queenscliff in Port Phillip Bay, as an instructor with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Sent on short-term posting to Britain to refresh on armour, he was chief instructor of the Armoured School at Puckapunyal (and Director of the Armoured Corps) between 1951 and 1954; the small regular Army establishment of the early 1950s regularly ‘double-hatted’ officers in this way, as instructional and other staffs were small. During his period as Director RAC the Army acquired the Centurion tank, later to see active service in Vietnam.
The growing importance of the US connection was reflected in his posting to Washington as Intelligence Officer (G1) on the Australian Military Mission which also involved attendance at the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia. Returning to Australia in August 1956, he held a senior staff job at Army Headquarters (then still located in Melbourne) before appointment as CO, Corps of Staff Cadets at RMC Duntroon in late 1958. The Director of Military Art was Colonel (later General Sir) Frank Hassett. This was a fairly uneventful period in the college's history, and after language training and promotion to temporary colonel in early 1960, Pearson was sent to Jakarta as Services Attache in a period that was anything but routine. Sukarno's government was faltering, the Indonesian economy was in free fall, the Indonesian Communist Party was the world's largest and increasingly assertive in domestic politics, while in late 1962 Jakarta initiated an undeclared war against Malaysia—Confrontation—in which Australia would become involved. On return from Indonesia he took command of 1RAR, recently returned from service in Malaya/Malaysia. The battalion had to be reorganised from the Tropic establishment (consistent with the British and New Zealand battalions with which it had served overseas) and reconfigured along Pentropic lines, a wasteful experiment which the Army abandoned in the lead-up to deployment to Vietnam. He was awarded the OBE for his 'enthusiasm, tenacity of purpose and outstanding example' as a CO in the Queen's Birthday list for 1964.

With Confrontation intensifying, Pearson next served on the Joint Services Planning Group in Defence Headquarters before appointment as Director of Military Intelligence in November 1965. He held that post for a year and then went to Singapore as Commander, Australian Army Force, Far East Land Force, the ground component of the residual British defence of its Southeast Asian territories. The threat from Indonesia having resolved itself in late 1966, Pearson's next assignment was command of the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat in South Vietnam. Command of the Task Force was a one-year appointment, and during his tenure of command in 1968–69 the Australians returned from extensive out-of-province operations that had followed the Tet Offensive of early 1968 to engage more intensively in pacification operations and the building up of South Vietnamese forces. Pearson later commented that Vietnam was 'the first war we've gone into without a strategic or political aim', reflecting the views of many of the senior Australian commanders before and after his own time there. For his command in Phuoc Tuy he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

Promoted to major general and command of the 1st Division in Sydney on his return, he was quickly seconded to the Fox Committee of Inquiry into bastardisation at RMC. The Commandant, Major General CAE Fraser, took command of Australian Forces Vietnam (a move that had been scheduled earlier in 1969, before the college scandal broke) and was to have been replaced by the officer he in turn
relieved: Major General RA Hay. Because of his close involvement in the inquiry, during which he ‘acquired a close insight into the affairs of the college and has been party to discussions from which will stem recommendations for its future conduct’, it was decided instead to appoint Pearson as Commandant. Not only did he oversee the inquiry’s recommendations, his period as Commandant coincided with the introduction of tertiary degree studies as an integral part of the RMC curriculum, something that had been under consideration within the Army since at least 1944.

After three years as Commandant, Pearson’s final appointment was as Chief of Personnel, a position that included membership of the Military Board, the Army’s senior deliberative and policy-making body. Awarded the AO in mid-1975, he retired from the Army in August that year. In retirement he held a number of directorships, including executive director of the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW (whose council included the former Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly). He was active in ex-Service organisations for many years. His wife Marjorie, whom he married in February 1941, predeceased him by a few months. He is survived by family including eight grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.
Listed below is a select group of books recently or soon to be published that either contribute to the discussions initiated in the articles in the Australian Army Journal or on subjects that may be of interest in the near future. Some of these books may be reviewed in forthcoming editions of the Journal.


   Using historical case studies as evidence Kupchan contends that diplomacy is more crucial to gaining peace between adversaries than economic integration. He argues that regime type is not as important as its record of foreign policy behaviour, and that states which share similar social orders, ethnicities and religions, are more able to achieve a lasting and stable peace. In a world of conflicts, Kupchan offers timely insights into building peace.


   A compilation of papers covering historical periods from 1400 to the current day, *Imperial Crossroads* examines the longstanding geopolitical significance of the Persian Gulf and surrounding territories to successive powers, as well as examining the possible future of the region to emerging powers India and China. *Imperial Crossroads* presents a readable historical perspective on a contested region.


   A textbook, *Governance in Pacific Asia* presents a wide ranging perspective on the governance experiences of states in the Asia/Pacific region. Using a comparative approach Ferdinand explores areas encompassing historical geopolitics, social, cultural and economic development, and their effects.
TITLES TO NOTE


  A former SAS soldier, Paul Jordan recounts the events he encountered that shaped his life. Told from the perspective of the time he spent in an Indian gaol, and covering events from his childhood, military service and time as a security consultant, *The Easy Day was Yesterday* is a gritty as-it-was tale.


  Roger Owen examines the history, regional factors, and systems of governance that brought a crop of lifelong authoritarian leaders to power in the Middle East, and why they held power for so long. Against this he shows the internal forces that shaped resistance to lifelong rule, and would eventually lead to what has become known as the Arab Spring. He concludes with a discussion of the possible future for the region.


  An annual publication by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the 43rd Edition analyses the international developments that have taken place in 2011 in the areas of security and conflict, military spending and armaments, and non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.


  The Arab Spring began in 2011 and spread across the Middle East with dramatic speed, often accompanied by violence. *The Battle for the Arab Spring* provides an accessible analysis of how and why the events of the Arab Spring evolved and proliferated. Noueihed and Warren seek to explain the common threads that linked all the countries caught up in the Arab Spring, and how this will affect the future of the region.
NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The editors of the Australian Army Journal welcome submissions from any source. Two prime criteria for publication are an article’s standard of written English expression and its relevance to the Australian profession of arms. The journal will accept letters, feature articles, review essays, emails and contributions to the Point Blank and Insights sections. As a general guide on length, letters should not exceed 500 words; articles and review essays should be between 3000 and 6000 words and contributions to the Insights section should be no more than 1500 words. The Insights section provides authors with the opportunity to write brief, specific essays relating to their own experiences of service. Readers should note that articles written in service essay format are discouraged, since they are not generally suitable for publication.


PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR SUBMISSION INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

- Author’s full name
- Current posting, position or institutional affiliation
- Full mailing address
- Contact details including phone number(s) and email address(es)

PLEASE ALSO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING FIELDS IN YOUR SUBMISSION:

- 100-word article abstract
- 100-word author biography (please see the following biography guidelines)
- Acronym/abbreviations list

THE ARTICLE MUST BE PRESENTED IN THE FOLLOWING FORMAT/STYLE:

- Microsoft Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- 1.5 line spacing
- 12-point Times New Roman
- 2.5 cm margin on all sides
- Automatic word processed footnotes
NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- No ‘opcit’ footnote referencing
- Australian spelling (e.g., –ise not –ize)

GENERAL STYLE

All sources cited as evidence should be fully and accurately referenced in endnotes (not footnotes). Books cited should contain the author’s name, the title, the publisher, the place of publication, the year and the page reference. This issue of the journal contains examples of the appropriate style for referencing.

When using quotations, the punctuation, capitalisation and spelling of the source document should be followed. Single quotation marks should be used, with double quotation marks only for quotations within quotations. Quotations of thirty words or more should be indented as a separate block of text without quotation marks. Quotations should be cited in support of an argument, not as authoritative statements.

Numbers should be spelt out up to ninety-nine, except in the case of percentages, where arabic numerals should be used (and per cent should always be spelt out). All manuscripts should be paginated, and the use of abbreviations, acronyms and jargon kept to a minimum.

BIOGRAPHIES

Authors submitting articles for inclusion in the journal should also attach a current biography. This should be a brief, concise paragraph, whose length should not exceed eight lines. The biography is to include the contributor’s full name and title, a brief summary of current or previous service history (if applicable) and details of educational qualifications. Contributors outside the services should identify the institution they represent. Any other information considered relevant—for example, source documentation for those articles reprinted from another publication—should also be included.