ARMY JOURNAL

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COVER: ‘The Roll Call’, by Ellis Silas. At the Australian War Memorial. The artist was a private soldier who took part in the scene which he depicts; the muster of one of the battalions after the fighting at the Landing. It shows one of the two companies to which the 16th Battalion AIF was reduced after the first three weeks on Gallipoli.
ARMY JOURNAL

A periodical review of military literature

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Members of the 2/33rd Australian Infantry Battalion crossing the log bridge over the Brown River on the way from Nauro to Menari, Papua, October 1942.
Sappers—New Guinea Ahead?

Major A. H. Hodges
Royal Australian Engineers

FOR many years sapper officers complained about the lack of worthwhile engineering experience to follow up their professional training. And suddenly it came. They were in Wewak; they were in Borneo; they were in Thailand; they were in Iron Range; they are in Vietnam—in all places, involved in large scale engineering tasks. The grumbles now are that they are always away from home. Well, you cannot have it all your own way, sappers! Or can you?

With the proposed decrease of the Australian commitment in Vietnam and the possibility of further reductions in the not too distant future, the groans of sappers lamenting their inexperience will once again be heard in every engineer mess around Australia. However, for a privileged few, postings to the District Engineers Office RAE (DEO) at Popondetta in the Northern District of Papua yield the civil engineering experience they desire, with the bonus of being accompanied by families.

District Engineers Office RAE

In 1963 19 CRE (Works),1 a Communication Zone unit, moved to Popondetta and came under the technical control of the Public Works Department (PWD) of Papua-New Guinea. The unit was responsible for design and documentation of work, technical supervision, administration and managerial co-ordination and control. Thus, 19 CRE (Works) was fully responsible for the Administration works programme in the Northern District, yet still retained its responsibilities as a field force unit. This situation was not satisfactory, so in 1967 a new unit, the District Engineers Office, was raised to replace 19 CRE (Works). The unit is on a peace establishment and has no field force commitment as had its predecessor. It is a small unit of 4 officers and

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1 Major Hodges graduated from RMC in 1960 and was allotted to RAE. After attending the University of Melbourne and obtaining the degree of Bachelor of Civil Engineering, he was posted to 24 Construction Squadron (1963-64). He was with FARELF as OC 2 Field Troop, 11 Independent Field Squadron RE (1964-66) followed by an appointment as SORE 3 D Engrs AHQ (1966-68). His present appointment is OC District Engineers Office, RAE.
20 other ranks, heading a PWD district organization of 75 European and indigenous tradesmen and apprentices, and employing a casual labour force of about 300 daily. Its role is to provide training for officers and senior NCOs in engineering works.

The arrangement of placing an engineer unit under the technical control of PWD has worked to the mutual benefit of both the Army and the Papua-New Guinea Administration. It has also been a fairly economical proposition for the Army, as the Administration pays for the cost of maintenance of unit equipment and depreciation on vehicles.

Is the Training Worthwhile?

Army Training Instructions state that the ‘aim of civil attachments is generally to broaden the member’s knowledge and experience in the technical or specialist field in which the Army is not normally able to afford practical experience.’ The instruction specifically covers attachments to government departments for ‘experience...in large scale engineering projects.’

1 Now 19 CRE Comm Z.
In the years that 19 CRE (Works) and DEO have been in Popondetta, there have been large increases in expenditure and a number of interesting civil engineering works have been undertaken, covering such projects as the Popondetta water supply, wharf extensions and the Popondetta-Kokoda road, together with many others.

The road to Kokoda has been the major task and involved the supervision of five contracts:

- A 380-foot bridge over the Amboga River.
- A 400-foot bridge over the Kumusi River (about half a mile upstream from Wairope where the commander of the Japanese South Seas Force, Major-General Horii, was drowned during the Japanese withdrawal from the Owen Stanleys).
- Three road contracts.

Recently the final contract covering twenty miles of road from the Kumusi River bridge to Kokoda was completed. This $632,000 project involved the construction of 9 bridges, 7 box culverts of reinforced concrete and the laying of 7,000 feet of culvert pipe. The large number of drainage structures gives an indication of the problems...
involved with construction of this road in an area receiving up to 170 inches of rain per year.

The unit has a number of other responsibilities, embracing construction and supervision of government building projects, maintaining 300 miles of road, 8 airfields, and all Administration buildings. While these tasks have not the interest of major construction, they do provide useful training in programming continuing maintenance work.

In the near future, the unit will supervise construction of an $800,000 overseas wharf at Oro Bay, 30 miles from Popondetta, and 9 bridges between Popondetta and the wharf. Currently $94,000 is being spent with hired plant to upgrade the road to Oro Bay.

There are a number of benefits from working with PWD that do not generally result from works within the Army organization:

- A contract supervisor (usually an officer or warrant officer) on a project is given considerable financial delegation by the Administration and can authorize works variations up to $1,000 a time. In addition, the OC of the unit, who is the District Works Engineer, has a delegation of $2,000.

- A thorough estimate of costs is required in advance on each project and careful control must be kept throughout to ensure that over-expenditure does not occur. Thus, the best engineering solution to a problem embraces not only the physical but also the financial alternatives. This is not a general feature of engineer projects at unit level.

- The officers and NCOs can assess themselves against major contractors. The inevitable result is an increase in confidence in their own engineering ability and a broadening of their knowledge.

Is the training worthwhile? The role played by DEO fulfils to the letter the requirements of the Army Training Instructions. This success should perhaps be reinforced and this type of training expanded.

**Papua-New Guinea Five-Year Development Programme**

Whether there is room for expansion of our engineers in this type of work can best be seen by highlighting some of the pertinent points of the five-year development programme for Papua-New Guinea covering the period 1968-69 to 1972-73. This is an ambitious programme aimed at achieving the Commonwealth Government’s intention to help ‘...the
inhabitants of the Territory to become self-governing as soon as possible and to ensure that when this aim is reached the Territory will, to the greatest extent feasible, be able to stand on its own feet economically.\textsuperscript{2}

Transport difficulties represent one of the major constraints on this economic development. This is understandable when the topography and climate of the country are considered. A massive complex of ranges, separated in many cases by broad upland valleys, extends from one end of the country to the other for a distance of 1,500 miles and in several places reaches a height of 15,000 feet. This is one of the great mountain systems of the world and it effectively forms a complete divide between north and south flowing drainage. Heavy rainfall, together with a large area of steep slopes with rapid run-off, gives rise to many rivers with a large volume of flow. Generally speaking these rivers are navigable only in their lower reaches and then only by launches and canoes. The north-west monsoon and the south-east

\textsuperscript{2} Minister for External Territories, the Hon. C. E. Barnes, M.P., in the Australian House of Representatives 21 March 1968.
trades pass over large expanses of ocean before reaching the islands of the Territory and both are then heavily laden with moisture. This results in heavy rainfall where the average can vary from 40 inches per annum (in a rain shadow) to 250 inches per annum in differing areas.

Because of the difficult topography and destructive effects of heavy rainfall, population and productive areas are widely separated and transport is both difficult and expensive. Therefore, the five-year programme provides for a substantial increase in the proportion of funds allocated to works and services. Expenditure on roads and bridges is projected to be about 32 per cent of the total works programme and is planned to increase steadily over the next few years.

Construction Agencies

The two major construction agencies in the Territory are the Commonwealth Department of Works and the PWD. The Commonwealth Department of Works will be playing a proportionally smaller part in the works programme until ultimately their main responsibility will be in provision and maintenance of Commonwealth assets and providing specialist engineering services such as sewerage and water supply. This of course places the major responsibility for the works programme in the hands of PWD and the department must grow if the programme is to be met.

Professional and Semi-professional Recruitment

Despite the challenging advertisements appearing in the Press only small numbers of engineers and clerks of works are being attracted to the Territory. Unfortunately, recruitment is unlikely to show a rapid improvement and experienced PWD professional and semi-professional staff will probably continue to serve relatively short contract periods. Pioneering days are over and no longer are people prepared to put up with hardships such as inadequate housing. Until there is a marked improvement in this aspect, and perhaps further financial attractions, retention and recruitment difficulties seem likely to remain.

In view of the large increase of work to be undertaken by PWD, and the staffing difficulties, the District Engineers Office will continue to provide a valuable service, and the further expansion of the Army-Administration agreement would no doubt be welcomed.
Expansion

The scope for further large engineering works in the Northern District is limited and movement to another district will ultimately be necessary to ensure that the unit has the right kind of experience. Planning is now under way for the eventual move of the unit to another district, probably in the Highlands. Not only does the Highlands have a large population, but it is also one of the most potentially productive areas in the Territory. Therefore a large amount of the five-year programme is to be spent in developments there.

For decentralized control, PWD have grouped various districts together into regions. The Highlands West region comprises both Southern and Western Highlands and the Works Engineers in each district are controlled by a Regional Engineer at Mt Hagen.

With an eye to the future it would be convenient to move DEO to one of these districts, so that if expansion of the programme occurs another unit can be located in the adjoining district. A CRE and small staff could then control both district organizations and carry out the Regional Engineer's functions.

Further possibilities for experience are to place Army engineers in the design section of HQ PWD. At present most design is undertaken
at the head office or by consultants. The ideal would be for a number of Army engineers (at captain level) to serve in a district for a year and then to complete the posting with a year’s design work.

Yet another variation is to include Pacific Island sappers in the DEO establishment. A large increase is planned on expenditure on village roads, undertaken by the local people on a 50 per cent subsidy basis using, in most cases, hand labour. Unfortunately many of these people have had little experience on road construction and they need constant guidance. This type of rural development project provides an ideal opportunity for the Pacific Islander to work with his own people.

Conclusion

‘New Guinea Ahead’ is as yet a possibility for our sappers, but the five-year programme is a fact, and the need for engineers will continue. If the men can be made available the Army has an unequalled opportunity to participate fully in this development programme, and at the same time improve the professional status of the RAE.

MINISTER OPENS ‘SELF-HELP’ ROAD

The road was a great example of self-help, the Minister for External Territories, Mr C. E. Barnes, said when he officially opened the Jimi Valley Road from Tabibuga in the Jimi Valley to Banz in the Wahgi Valley, Western Highlands District, Papua and New Guinea, earlier this month. Total expenditure on the link was $81,000 from Rural Development Funds given by the Administration to the Jimi River Local Government Council. During the two years it took to build the road $6,000 was spent buying food for local people who worked on its construction. The Wahgi Local Government Council also provided financial assistance from its rural development funds . . . . After opening the road Mr Barnes went to Karap and Tabibuga. He spoke to gatherings at both places, saying the effort behind the construction of the road was a great example to other people in the Territory in the development of an area by self-help. He said the road had been made possible by co-operation between the Australian Government, the Administration and the people of the area, Mr Barnes emphasised that the most important aspect of the project had been the assistance from the local level. ‘Without this assistance’, he said, ‘the road possibly would not have been built for another 50 years’.

CAREER planning for officers in the Australian Armed Services is at present circumscribed; despite overseas exchange postings, attachments to industry and training at staff courses and specialist schools. On the other hand, defence management — and indeed national management — is falling more and more to men with little or no direct experience or first-hand knowledge of the armed services. There is an argument for cross-posting officers from the Defence Forces to departments of the Commonwealth Public Service as a normal part of career planning.

The relationship between leadership and management in government has changed in recent years. There is a trend towards adopting general business management principles in the governing of nations. The United States has demonstrated how important such techniques are in the management of the affairs of a large and powerful nation. Robert McNamara, as Secretary of Defense, introduced methods into defence budgeting which cast out sentimentalism and replaced it with modern, objective accounting principles. ‘Cost-effectiveness’ became the catchcry in defence financial planning. The British Labour government undertook to review national defence policy with a view to cutting costs if possible. Resulting from this review, the defence budget has been curbed so that expenditure suits the national economy better, and formidable financial restraints have been imposed on the armed forces. In order to make the reduced available resources meet the demands of national defence, these demands have been reduced by major changes in basic policy. Commonwealth defence ties have been weakened, and

After graduating from the Royal Military College in 1956 Major Lennon attended the University of Queensland for a degree of Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering. Service with 17 Construction Squadron followed until 1962 when he was attached to the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority. Posted to 7 Field Squadron in 1963 he became, in 1964, an Interchange Officer with the 25th U.S. Infantry Division (Hawaii). In 1965 he was OC of 20 Field Park Squadron which was redesignated 20 Engineer Support Squadron. As OC of 1 Field Squadron he served with 1 ATF in Vietnam in 1966 after which he returned to 17 Construction Squadron as OC. In May 1967 he was appointed SORE 2 in the office of E in C, AHQ Canberra, a position he occupied until August last year when he left to attend Staff College, Camberley.
almost severed in some cases, and mutual defence contributions have
been reduced to embrace only those which offer concrete returns, or the
promise of prompt repayment in the event of war. Even in the domestic
sphere in the United Kingdom, nationalization has occurred. The govern-
ment called for amalgamation or disbanding of many regiments to
achieve more efficient administration and recruiting. This process is now
well advanced despite much resistance at all levels to such a violent
break with tradition.

In other departments in the governments of many countries the
evolution of management processes has been speeded up. National
government becomes more complex daily, and politicians and public
servants have come to rely more and more on scientific management
than on experience, industry and intuition alone. In addition to the
dramatic advances which have occurred in this century in engineering
and the applied sciences, there have been parallel strides in economics,
sociology and psychology, all contributing to the study of political
science. The expansion of knowledge in the world has led to prolifera-
tion of specialists — each specialist expert in some relatively narrow
field. Where many disciplines come together and many specialists work
towards a common goal, the overall direction and manipulation of
resources becomes a special study in itself. Government of a nation
embraces a wide range of arts and sciences — many of them complicated
— and should therefore be conducted in a well-ordered, logical and
objective fashion to maintain the proper balance of resources. As
bureaucracy assumes more responsibility and wields more power, its
leaders must generalize more in each of the separate activities which they
control, but specialize more in the function of management itself.
Naturally knowledge of the details of work done by subordinates is
valuable to any supervisor, but his prime tasks are manipulation and
co-ordination. The leader of today, at national level, requires much
more than the ability to lead by example or by dint of personal qualities.
A study of some famous leaders of recent history might reveal that
their secrets lay as much in manipulation of their fellows as in more
esoteric qualities.

In Australia, as in other countries, the bulk of the real work of
government is done by public servants. Parliamentary process estab-
lishes policy, and through government ministers makes major decisions
and directs the course of the nation. Politicians rely heavily on govern-
ment departments for all sorts of information — for briefings, for
feasibility studies, for special investigations, for recommendations, and
for the routine running of the administration. The public servants who
*man government departments do not conform to a standard mould*,
despite popular opinion. Backgrounds and levels of education and
experience are probably as diverse now as they ever have been. Public
servants range from those with sparse formal education, but much ex-
perience and innate ability, to those with high academic qualifications
but little or no applied experience. In many cases members of the
latter group have achieved university degrees, majoring in subjects which
appear to have little relevance to the business of governing a modern
country. For many years the British Civil Service drew its career officers
from the ranks of honours graduates in languages, classics, ancient
history, and similar subjects. The origin and level of the degree was
regarded as more important than its technical content or relevance. In
1968 the Fulton Committee, which was charged with studying and report-
ing on the civil service, pointed out the necessity for training of civil
servants. While recognizing the value of formal education at tertiary
level, the report emphasized the need for training civil servants in
procedural matters and in general management. At executive levels the
need was clearly established for training in those activities which are
known in the armed services as ‘staff work’. It was recommended that
there should be set up a training centre to fulfil functions similar to
some of those of armed services’ staff colleges. Its prime aim would be
to equip officers of the civil service to assume positions of increasing
responsibility and prepare them for promotion to higher executive posi-
tions. The extent to which the requirements of public service and armed
services coincide demands examination.

In the Australian Army, as in other services, officers of the rank
status of captain or major attend a staff college course at between the
ages of about 32 and 36. This course is intended ‘to fit officers for
Grade 2 staff appointments in all branches of the staff and to prepare
officers to assume, after experience, command and higher staff appoint-
ments’. Staff college courses generally embrace work of three types.
*First, there are military procedures — involving the use of special
conventions and aids to military staff work.* Examples of this type of
work are the preparation of written operation orders and the submission
of intelligence reports. The procedural rules are set out in manuals,
handbooks and standing orders which must be familiar to the staff
officer. The second type of work deals with specific and factual
military content of staff work — including such things as knowledge of
military organizations and roles, equipment characteristics and limita-
tions, and tactical principles. The last and probably most important aspect of staff college training lies in manipulating information and applying commonsense, imagination and management techniques to the identification and solving of problems and to decision making. The military appreciation formalizes this activity.

Though syndicate discussions are usually related to specific military problems and techniques, solutions are usually achieved by the application of commonsense and imagination. The three aspects are often inseparably interwoven, and experience in each contributes towards a higher overall excellence. The attribute of analytical problem solving is essential to good staff work, whereas the other requirements are rather more contingent. Rules and procedures are frequently changed and have to be re-learned; specialist information is rapidly superseded, and accurate and up-to-date information is sometimes obtainable only from experts. The ability to evaluate factors to lead to logical conclusions is never outdated and is always necessary in military staff work. This same attribute is essential to the successful executive in government or in industry. It is this universal requirement which allows the successful interchange of officers between services and between nations for staff college training. Public servants too, who attend military staff colleges, obtain useful and relevant training, as well as contributing to the courses. Proposals for establishing an Australian tri-service staff college recognize the importance of general staff training as distinct from specialization. Outside the armed services, the Administrative Staff College at Mount Eliza demonstrates well how the problems of industry, government and defence have common ground at high levels of management.

Services staff college training might be valuable in spheres other than defence. Army staff college graduates might be able to contribute to other government departments if posted to them. Many army officers have formal qualifications as good as or better than those of some public servants. On the other hand, few public servants have received staff training comparable with that provided in the armed services. The Commonwealth Public Service contains many officers who have achieved promotion by virtue of long experience. Despite popular opinion, promotion in the public service is not based on seniority alone. The system is much more competitive than the armed services, and there is provision for outstanding men to advance faster than seniority would otherwise permit. Officers may apply for promotion to vacant positions and their
applications are considered in the light of ability and qualifications, as well as experience. Consequently there is considerable movement from department to department, particularly amongst the more ambitious and better qualified. Inter-departmental movement generally enhances, rather than diminishes, an officer's chances for promotion — despite the wide diversity of responsibilities of different departments and the different statutes and rules which govern their activities. Public service leaders of the future, even more than today, will be men with broad experience within, and possibly outside, the public service. It is significant that one recommendation of the Fulton Committee in Britain was that attractive incentives should be offered to encourage two-way movement between civil service and industry. Three main benefits would accrue from increased mobility. Outside experience would broaden and improve individual civil servants. New recruits from industry would inject new methods and attitudes into government departments. And finally industry and government would develop a better appreciation of each other's strengths and weaknesses, and better co-operation would result.

This proposal carries with it some far-reaching implications, and presents some difficult problems — not the least of which is maintaining equitable salaries while still offering incentive to private enterprise to join the civil service. Despite the difficulties, the recommendation has been accepted in principle in Britain. At a higher level, the British Government has shown its preparedness to invite successful private businessmen to sit on committees which recommend government policy. The United States political system relies on the President placing selected men in influential positions in the administration. Many of these men have previously proven their ability in the private sector. To date there has been little two-way mobility in Australia between government and industry. There has been considerable loss to industry of high-level public servants, with no compensating return flow. This one-way movement is probably directly attributable to the disparity in conditions of service between public service and private enterprise. The inequality between armed services and public service conditions is not marked and perhaps service officers could fill certain public service positions to the benefit of all concerned.

The recent reorganization in the Department of Defence recognized the need to integrate all aspects of defence planning and emphasis has been placed on co-ordinating the requirements and views of all interested government departments, as well as those of the armed services. Defence
planning must be related to policies established by the Department of External Affairs. Appropriations from Treasury provide the wherewithal, and Department of Supply, Trade, and Public Works are all involved in implementing defence plans. In Department of Defence, military officers work side by side with public servants, often in positions which demand no recourse to specialist military or service knowledge. The success of this arrangement makes it conceivable that staff-trained military officers could do as well or better in other branches of the public service — particularly those associated with the armed services. In some departments officers would be able to exercise specialist knowledge and qualifications, in addition to their general staff training. For instance, engineers would be well suited to work in Public Works and Department of Supply. Some Signals officers would be well qualified to work in the Postmaster-General’s Department. Just as officers of specialist arms and services would contribute to specialist departments, so might officers of Armour, Artillery and Infantry offer much to such government departments as Treasury, Social Services and National Development.

It might be argued with some justification that service officers have a narrow spread of experience outside their immediate work, and respond with predictable inflexibility in certain situations. Cross-postings to the public service would provide one means of broadening the experience of army officers but the charge of inflexibility is rather more controversial. To a certain extent, years of military indoctrination, training and discipline must affect an officer’s objectivity. On the other hand, regimental postings demand the exercise of initiative, tact and resourcefulness, and imbue in young officers a desirable sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Individuals will exhibit different degrees of the two extremes. The Australian Army officer no more conforms to a standard pattern than does the public servant. Some public service departments would probably benefit as much from exposure to some of the military characteristics as army officers would gain from working in a totally new environment.

It might be claimed that the posting of soldiers to the public service would deny or slow down promotion of worthy civilians. Obviously there would need to be co-ordination with the Public Service Board to ensure that army officers were of superior calibre to civilian applicants for particular positions. The details of such a scheme would require some investigation, and provision would still be needed for civilians to appeal to the Public Service Board over appointments.
Departmental heads might object to accepting short term staff; but this problem already exists in the public service. There is at present the added disadvantage that the department has no idea how soon an employee will apply for, and win, a position elsewhere. Two or three year postings of army officers would probably be acceptable to both sides.

Major objections could be expected from the armed services themselves. Individual officers might be unhappy at the prospect of working in the public service, apparently a far cry from the service life to which they are accustomed. It might also be claimed that there is such a shortage of officers that they could not be spared for detaching to the public service. About the time most officers attend staff college, or soon after, they realize that their future careers must be very different from their earlier experience. In most corps of the Australian Army, there are few command jobs available beyond the rank of major. Even the majors’ commands are scarce and coveted appointments, and they must be shared among the up-and-coming young career officers. Consequently, many staff college graduates, having had their turn at command, can look forward to a future of one staff job after another, albeit punctuated by timely promotions. There will probably be breaks in the form of instructor’s postings, technical appointments and possibly liaison or overseas positions. Even many of these apparent exceptions are essentially staff work. Realization of this fact is seldom acceptable to an active and energetic man of 36. Although the prospect of a posting to the public service might at first appear even worse, sober reflection reveals fewer disadvantages than might at first seem apparent.

Shortage of officers might appear to be a sound objection to this scheme. While there are no excess officers available at present, indications are that the next decade, and even the next five years, will see a change. The effect of retirement of ex-wartime officers will be to restrict promotion to some ranks. Despite general expansion of the army and upgrading of positions, there is likely to be long delay in the promotion of many officers to lieutenant-colonel, exaggerated by early achievement of the rank of major. The present retirement scheme offers no incentive to officers to resign before their retiring ages, since this means forfeiting long-standing potential pension benefits. Some will be prepared to wait for promotion; others will choose to remain at the rank of major and retire at 44 in that rank rather than accept promotion to a further long wait as lieutenant-colonels. Yet another small minority group will cut their losses and resign early in the rank of
major, hoping to find new careers as civilians before they are too old to be acceptable to private enterprise. This course will probably prove attractive to those who have attained negotiable academic qualifications, such as university degrees.

There will probably evolve, of necessity, a system of accelerated promotion for outstanding officers to obviate stagnation for all officers at every rank. Allowing for all forms of wastage there will still be many staff-trained majors and lieutenant-colonels waiting for promotion which must come late at best. Often this slow promotion will not reflect inefficiency or lack of ability but rather absence of the exceptional qualities required for accelerated promotion. The imbalance in rank structure might be overcome by the introduction of a new retirement scheme similar to those of other English-speaking armies — providing pro-rata pensions after a certain number of years of service. With or without the introduction of such a system, controlled mobility of officers of critical age and rank would help to stabilize the situation. In its most restricted form the scheme could provide for temporary attachments to particular departments for specified periods. Such attachments should be regarded as acceptable, and indeed desirable or even necessary staff appointments for a well-planned career. In a more liberal application of the scheme, service officers would be free to apply for public service positions advertised in the Commonwealth Gazette, just as civilian public servants may do at present. Permanent transfer from army to public service might be simplified, allowing transportation of full pension and furlough benefits. The detailed formulation of a plan to implement these proposals would obviously reveal many problems — none of which would be insurmountable.

Traditionalists on both sides might regard this proposal as a retrograde step. If the Government of Australia is to keep pace with the changing world, many ties of tradition and sentimentalism will have to be cut to make way for new management methods. This can be achieved in the public service, in part, by obtaining input from many walks of life, and by employing talented men trained in administration and management. The armed services offer a source of such men. To some of these officers the public service offers more opportunity for development of their potential than do their parent services in peacetime. An exchange programme would lead towards the breaking down of inter-departmental rivalries and to the intermingling of ideas and attitudes which must ultimately contribute to producing leaders who can capably mould the future destiny of this country.
The Managing Director in Uniform

Major-General Sir John Bates, KBE, CB, MC

Introduction

GENTLEMEN, I want to spend rather longer in the introduction to my talk than is customary on these occasions. I do so because the background to my observations is an essential part of them. Were they to be taken out of context they would be either meaningless or dangerously heretical, and I have a deepset personal dislike of gibberish and of excessive heterodoxy.

But how has this lecture come about? I must confess that, when the original invitation came to me last February from Brigadier Peter Hutchins, I was far from enthusiastic. Although deeply conscious of the honour he had paid me, my inherent idleness and my fear, which may yet prove well-founded, that I had very little to contribute to this learned body, came to the fore. But he then produced a bait which, for me, is always irresistible. 'Party lines at these lectures,' he said, 'are out, and the slaughter of sacred cows is just what we hope to achieve.'

I have always rejoiced in playing a part in sacred cow hunting. Indeed, one of the press cuttings which I have acquired during recent years, and which gave me the greatest pride, was in The Times during February 1961 when I was appointed D.R.A. The Defence Correspondent, who was sacked the following month, no doubt for different reasons, wrote, inter alia: 'Brigadier Bates, who is unconventional in his approach and refreshingly disrespectful about some of the Army's sacred cows, is likely to fight hard for the development of non-nuclear weapons for the anti-aircraft and anti-tank roles'.

This lecture was given to members of the Royal Signals Institution and invited guests in London, England on 27 November 1969; subsequently published in the Journal of the Royal Signals Institution, and is republished in the Army Journal with permission. General Bates' reference to the British Army being the only one amongst the armies of the Commonwealth of insisting that a subordinate officer should see and initial his confidential report is incorrect. This practice has existed for many years in the AMF.—Editor.
I was at Bielefeld at the time. The G1 Signals produced a splendid cartoon illustrating these doubtful facets of my character. It now occupies pride of place in a small room on the ground floor of my home in Kent.

I chose as the enigmatic title for my talk ‘The Managing Director in Uniform’. I did not think it meant very much when I wrote it; I am convinced now that it means even less. But it provides a sort of multiple peg on which I can drape a whole lot of ill-fitting garments; and it also produces a sort of bridge, over which I hope you will accompany me, between the military life and the civil. In this connection, I am only too well aware that there are members of this audience much more experienced in industry than I. I must crave their indulgence; if any of the pictures which I draw from industry are misconstrued I hope they will correct them after the interval.

The Personal Setting

And so that is how it all started. But I must now, in execrable taste, spend a few moments talking about myself, giving, as it were, a ‘personal setting’, as a part of the introduction, in order to establish the foundation from which I shall launch my later comments.

I want to take you all the way back to 1944. In that year there was established, by the then War Office, the Guy Committee, to examine the future of technical training of officers in the light of the experiences of the war. A number of recommendations were made, the most important of which was that Woolwich and Sandhurst should be abolished and replaced by an Imperial Military College to which all budding officers, including some from the Commonwealth, should be sent for two years; a number should remain for a third year in order to graduate. Ultimately the College was to become tri-service.

I cannot pretend I knew much about this at the time, as I was then a brigade major of an infantry brigade in Italy. But I was already intrigued by the problem of officer education; indeed, on the way back from the Haifa Staff College to Italy in October, 1944, I had written a paper advocating that all officers, post-war, should attend in their mid-20s, a three to four-month course, similar to Haifa’s, as a part of their management development, and as a test for their fitness for promotion. I failed to send a copy to Warminster, and it has taken 24 years for the message to get through.
But back to Guy and his 1944 Report. It was received with considerable acclaim in the War Office, but the only part of it which was implemented was the abolition of Woolwich. The near disastrous result to your Corps and to mine, and to the Royal Engineers, is too well-known for me to spell out here. It took us nearly a decade to recover. The exercise was a fine example of the danger of rationalisation being based on the lowest common denominator rather than the highest.

The higher education of the services next hit the headlines in 1963 when the Public Accounts Committee commented most unfavourably on the costs of Dartmouth, Sandhurst and Cranwell compared to those of universities and technical colleges. This was followed by the Melville Committee of 1964 which found the whole problem of integration of service entry and of service education so difficult that they recommended that it should be handed over to a man of standing in the educational world. As a result, the Howard English Committee was established in 1966 against a background, nationally, of the Newsome and Robbins reports. After many meetings and visits two firm recommendations emerged:

- first, there should be established a Royal Defence College to serve the three services and to provide a series of curricula leading, for some, to art degrees;

- secondly, the existing colleges at Dartmouth, Manedon, Sandhurst, Shrivenham and Cranwell should be amalgamated and, to some extent, integrated into a Royal Defence Academy which should be run from an office in London.

So far so good. And the situation was even better when in February, 1967 the recommendation was unequivocally endorsed by the second highest body in the land, the Defence Council. No bosom swelled more proudly than mine in May, 1967 when I was appointed the first Director of the Royal Defence Academy. I believed that I was in at the start of a chapter of enormous significance in the history of the services. A chapter which would launch the services into the 1970s, abreast of the great tidal surge of higher education which was hitting commerce and industry and the other professions. I joined Whitehall, first in the old War Office and then in what used to be Scotland Yard, in July. I found that there had been established, subsequent to the decision of the Defence Council, a steering group of 22 members and three working parties, each divided into three working groups. In order that progress
should be made, it was implicit that unanimous agreement should be reached on all subjects throughout this small hierarchy. Despite this bureaucratic lodestone we did, initially, make some praiseworthy progress. Indeed, in the field of curricula I believe our work was praiseworthy in the extreme. Having obtained the agreement that the Royal Defence College should be established at Shrivenham, we proceeded to design an arts faculty to be integrated with the scientific facilities which already existed there at the Royal Military College of Science. Our plans envisaged three schools:

- applied science and weapon technology;
- political and strategic studies;
- economics and management studies.

Students, whether they came from the Navy or the Army or the Royal Air Force would undergo a foundation year in which they would have a foot in each of the three schools with the emphasis towards any particular one of them being in the direction of their choice. Thereafter, those who were selected to stay on to obtain degrees would specialise in one of the three schools.

We went further. We hired a firm of architects and they produced wonderfully exciting designs suggesting how best we could use Shrivenham’s lovely 780 acres to foster and to prosper this adventurous prospect for the 1970s. But our brief intellectual sortie into the elysian fields of higher education for the services were not to last for long. Two mountainous black clouds loomed over the horizon and quickly eliminated all of our lovely sun. The first was finance, and the second was emotion. I believe we could have overcome the financial problems, although the figures were formidable. When they were put into the context of defence expenditure as a whole they were not, in my view, unreasonable; this was a capital expenditure which was going to set the stage for the next three or four decades. The emotion was a very different matter. The inevitable consequence of planning a Royal Defence College was a diminution in the status of Dartmouth, of Sandhurst and of Cranwell. Indeed, it was essential if the plan was to be a rational one, that all the academic instruction currently carried out in those places should be transferred to the R.D.C. Admirals, generals and air marshals who had previously been giving at least some support to the project now found their eyes filling with tears. ‘Look at me,’
they would say; ‘look what Dartmouth, or Sandhurst or Cranwell, did for me. How can you possibly suggest that it should not play in the future the vital part which it has played for my service in the past? How can the educational and environmental needs of the young men of the other two services have anything really in common with the needs of the young men of mine?’

So that was the end of the R.D.C. And very shortly afterwards it was the end of my military career. I was in the Military Secretary’s Office one day towards the end of 1968, discussing these—to me—gloomy developments. He had just received a letter from the Thomson Organisation. In it a desire was expressed for a man to become the Personnel Director of Thomson Regional Newspapers. One month later I was hired, and for four glorious weeks during January of 1969, I found myself on the full pay roll, not only of the Queen, but also of Lord Roy Thomson.

This egotistical, personal saga which has been my introduction to this talk will, you will be delighted to hear, very shortly end. But there is one final plank which I must nail into the platform if I am to establish the foundation on which I hope to base my subsequent comments: it is a brief description of the task of the Personnel Director of Thomson Regional Newspapers. This is not difficult to do because the parallels between his tasks and those of the Military Secretary in the Army are very close indeed. T.R.N. consists of 14 publishing centres spread between Inverness, Edinburgh, Belfast, Cardiff and Hemel Hempstead. In each a number of newspapers are published and at each something between 300 and 1,000 or so are employed. At the managerial level, which is all levels at and above that of supervisor, the records are centralised in London. The task of the Personnel Director is to ensure that these records are accurate; to make arrangements for the proper completion of annual confidential reports; to see that each individual manager receives the necessary training in order to enable him, not only to perform his current job, but to qualify for promotion to a higher one, and to issue instructions for posting him when such an action is necessary in the interests of both himself and of the Company; and to run a form of selection procedure and to plan promotions for known and unknown commitments some years ahead. And so you will see that the parallels are indeed close, and that there should be some merit in comparing the manner in which they are performed in industry with the methods in use in the army.
Industry’s View of the Services

What is industry’s view of the services? It is almost an impertinence to express an opinion after so short an experience. Nevertheless, I am convinced from the treatment that I personally have received and have observed during the past nine months, that industry views the services as a whole, but not necessarily its individuals, as remarkably efficient organisations. They have tremendous admiration for the man-management of the services. They believe that the staff colleges are the epitome of good instruction. They believe our training systems and our training as a whole is first-class. They have great faith in our selection systems; and they believe that our organisation, or rather that our approach to organisation and to administration is something which they would dearly like to imitate. Indeed, the highest praise that a manager can give to a subordinate when he has completed a project is to say to him, ‘Well done, my boy. It went like a military operation’.

Nevertheless, they have their qualifications. They believe, with some justice, that these praiseworthy achievements of the services result from a lavish employment of money and manpower which is quite beyond their resources; they believe — again with much justice — that the existence of the Manual of Military Law and of the Queen’s Regulations and the absence of trade unions and of industrial relations creates a formidable gap between the situation which the services face and that with which they have to deal.

There are other influences at work. Because of the realisation that the man-management side of business has been neglected, there has grown up a vast new industry within industry called the personnel function. There has been established a whole hierarchy of individuals who endeavour to produce for line managers, the commanders of industry, the sort of sense of responsibility towards the men who work for them which is inherent in the development of an officer in the services. Moreover, from across the Atlantic there has streamed a mass of new ideas in which technology has tried to optimise the information available to managers on which they can make their decisions. A whole new language has developed concerning management and concerning the methods by which it pursues its purposes. This is particularly true in the field of personnel management. We do not have confidential reports, we have annual appraisals; we have job descriptions, job analyses, job specifications, personnel specifications, training analyses, training specifications and finally, we hope, job satisfaction; we evaluate our training; we
try to quantify everything, and we regard 'subjective' as one of the dirtiest words in the English language; and on top of it all we have a jungle of complicated instructions imposed on us by the training board of the industry concerned, aiming to achieve for that industry exactly what the vast training machine of the D.A.T. achieves for the army.

But it isn't all specious — not by a long chalk. In many areas industry is now ahead of the services in this very field of personnel management in which the services have always prided themselves. Industry's decision-making processes, for example, are very much sharper, very much more acute and very much less inhibited by the hierarchy which affects major military decisions. Industry is much more ready to delegate authority in important matters, particularly when money is concerned. Although I have the highest regard for the professionalism of the services these days, the professionalism of managers, certainly of those managers who succeed, is even higher. Their dedication, their involvement, is terrific; and their desire to increase their knowledge to improve their chances of promotion is something which would be regarded as almost odd in the services. Mankind thrives on competition: competition between signal regiments is an excellent thing; but competition in industry is of an entirely different order; if the competition is such that if you lose you go out of business, you are bound to try very hard indeed and to use all your abilities in order to achieve success. Indeed this difference in the dimension of the competition may be one of the most significant of the differences between industry and the services. In my view it is much in the interest of the services that steps should be taken to increase their competition. It was this, I think, which was at the back of my mind when I selected the title of the talk, 'The Managing Director in Uniform'. I wanted to translate some of the motivation behind successful managers into the officer corps of the army; I wanted to see the commander of the future as the managing director in uniform, equipped with all the technology and expertise, drive, knowledge and responsibility which are essential to his civilian counterpart in industry today if he is to succeed.

**The Field for Survey**

I would like now to draw some comparisons between industry and the services, in certain philosophical and performance fields, in which the objectives are not too dissimilar. The fields I have chosen, expressed primarily in military terms, are as follows:
Attitudes to Tradition

Industry believes, with some justice, that the services spend much more time looking backwards than forwards. They respect, and indeed they envy, some of the finer traditions on which the services continue to shape their behaviour. But they believe, and so do I, that the excessive emotion with which the services view their traditions, the utter despair which sometimes greets the changes which technological and other developments make inevitable, as symbolic of a continuing and powerful Blimp-like influence in the corridors of military power. We, the military men, have a wonderful ability to delude ourselves. We point with pride — and I have frequently done it myself — to our transformation in three decades from horses to guided weapons; but we close up like a clam when any mention is made of amalgamation of regiments, let alone integration of the services. We forget, unless we are in the Royal Artillery or the Royal Signals or the Royal Engineers, how transferable are men's loyalties; and we forget that infantrymen of other nations — at Corregidor, or the Gothic line, in Stalingrad and in Korea — have managed to fight extremely well against fearful odds and without the benefit of closely shared geographical backgrounds cemented by a multiplicity of quaint customs and exotic eccentricities of dress.

Attitudes to Education

Our devotion to tradition is sometimes reflected in our attitude to education. I remember one general, when I was discussing with him the abortive R.D.C. concept, commenting, 'You're wasting your time; this education is all nonsense; what we want is instant platoon commanders who can lead their men against the fuzzy-wuzzies in the Radfan or the natives in Indonesia. Look at me, I have never opened a book since I left school.' More recently, a leading admiral expressed the view that not only was leadership totally lacking amongst those who were at universities, but that any officer who was sent there would rapidly lose any potential for leadership which he had previously possessed.
We choose, in this matter of further education, totally to ignore the vital statistics of the contemporary world. In the days when only 6% of an age group graduated, a great deal of the leadership element of the nation was excluded. But today, with the figure at 16%, the proportion is very much less. Should we be content to earn a reputation as a profession which includes, as the majority of our potential leaders, those too stupid or too idle to be accepted by industry as potential managers? We do not even stick to our own parameters; I think that you will find today, despite the advertisements to the contrary, that more than half of the cadets at Sandhurst have less than the stipulated two A levels; the back door is wider than the front.

At the best, we pay lip service to the need for intelligence in our leaders despite the ever-growing educational level of those they command. Officers still take pride in announcing to the world at large that they are only simple soldiers, thereby ensuring, when they retire, that their further employment is regarded as an act of charity. Those whom we send to universities continue to be regarded, even by some COs who are young enough to know better, as queers and pariahs. On the last occasion that I was privy to the career planning of the army, I noted that ex-Sandhurst officers who went to universities were doomed to remain a year behind their contemporaries until their middle-30s; a year behind in their age eligibility for the Staff College, and a year behind in their consideration for promotion to lieutenant-colonel; and all this has resulted from the unbelievably archaic view that it is vital for them to have three continuous years of counting socks, inspecting feet, doing orderly officer and performing as the junior member of the regimental audit board before they can be considered for advancement.

Compare this attitude with that of industry. I am now responsible for recruiting some 40 to 50 graduates a year for my organisation. A complex and expensive machinery exists to ensure that we get what we need. And once they have joined us we watch them like hawks; their managers report to me on their progress every quarter, we arrange special training and development programmes for them, they submit to me a monthly report on what they have been doing, and if at the end of two years they fail to have their feet firmly on the promotion ladder, pretty drastic action in one direction or another is inevitable. Graduates today are an expensive necessity for both industry and the services; but industry at least endeavours to get its money's worth.
The Reporting and Selection Systems

Whereas I believe that the attitude of the services towards educational and intellectual attainments is archaic and potentially disastrous — and some of you will be murmuring *sotto voce* 'sour grapes' and 'ivory tower unreality' — I would not be nearly so critical of the Army's reporting and selection systems. Indeed, there have been many occasions during recent months when I have yearned for the services of the A.G. and M.S. branches.

The key document, both in the army and in industry, is the confidential report or the annual appraisal form. The army has had decades of experience of it, industry only a few years. The army is smugly complacent with their methods; industry is still groping for the right answers, and knows it.

I said earlier that 'subjective' is a dirty word in personnel management. The experts seek desperately to eradicate subjective judgment from the decision making processes. Much is made now of a technique known as 'Management by Objectives', whereby every possible aspect of the manager's task is quantified in terms of numerical targets. There is much to be said for it; annual appraisal becomes a comparatively simple affair — a direct comparison between quantified achievements and quantified targets. Of course, the system has its limitations; but I believe the army could go some way in this direction, to its advantage. I believe a platoon commander could be given specific targets in terms of the annual achievements of his platoon and of its individuals; and so could a commanding officer. One essential of the process is that the targets should be agreed by both reporter and reportee; maybe this would present difficulties, but they should not be insuperable.

Everyone knows that eventually one reaches a stage in the reporting on subordinates where subjective judgment is essential. Promotion potential is obviously one such area; and one pays one's senior officers and managers to have the sort of insight to ensure that these assessments are rarely wrong. But if, as is now the case in my firm, the recommendations follow a section devoted to the objective analysis of performance, the possibility of error and the influence of emotion are materially reduced.

I sat on selection boards at the Ministry of Defence for six continuous years. I could not hazard a guess as to how many confidential reports I listened to during the process. On the whole they were good,
particularly after the Boards had applied their weighting and balancing factors; but I am sure that they would be much better if they would depart from the practice, pursued by the British Army alone amongst the three services, and alone amongst the armies of the Commonwealth, of demanding that the officer should see everything that his first superior reporting officer writes, and initial the report accordingly. Much more rewarding, in my view, would be the adoption of the practice of most modern firms in this country and in America: the annual appraisal interview in which the senior manager and the subordinate dispassionately discuss together the performance and the promise of the latter. This would be a remarkably salutary exercise for both the lieutenant-colonel and the second lieutenant; and don’t tell me that it happens at present because I know that it doesn’t.

Inter-service Relations

Mergers between great companies are all the rage today in Britain and Europe and the U.S.A. The reasons are obvious: diversification, a spreading of the risks, a reduction in management overheads, an opportunity for the dynamic, thrusting leadership which is the essence of successful industry today — these are some of them. It is not a very long haul from industrial mergers to service integration. But I doubt if history will record that the services have been as successful in this side of their business as has industry. Indeed it may well be recorded that because the services have steadfastly refused to hang together, they have hung separately.

Feelings wax very strong in this matter and I know that I am treading on tender ground. But one of the phenomena of the 50s and the 60s to me has been that, whereas at working level, at the level of 3rd Division and 38 Group, and at the JSSC, and even, for the most part, in operations, co-operation and understanding and mutual respect and admiration between the three services has been of a high order. Once the battlefield has been transferred to Whitehall almost total distrust and a high degree of chicanery have predominated. Blue Water was cancelled because the Air Ministry claimed that TSR2 could do its job; then the carriers went for a burton for a similar reason; then TSR2’s were abandoned in favour of FIII’s; and then the FIII’s were discarded. We have witnessed a game of unwilling striptease as a result of which all three services have been left naked and, I hope, a little ashamed.

Power and money are two of the more evil driving forces of mankind. I believe that both — or rather the pursuit of both — have
had a part in this, to me, sorry tale of unachievement. But the power side has been illusory. We still have a Board of Admiralty, an Army Board and Air Board — and the need to present a front of perpetrating their apparent supremacy has been at the root of many of our troubles — but their decision-making powers have been drastically emasculated. We have a single defence vote but it is largely the sum of the three service votes reached after bitter cut-throat bargaining. And superimposed over it all — a new fourth element, not an integration of the earlier three — we have the monolithic, all-powerful, Civil Service oriented central core of the Ministry of Defence.

The power has passed from our hands whilst we have been struggling tearfully to resist the erosion of our traditions made inevitable by technological and political developments.

Of course I am exaggerating; but sacred cows take an awful lot of killing. Let me tell you one story to show that I am not all that far from the truth. Just before I left the Ministry of Defence, a very high level seminar was convened by the Ministry, at Oxford, to discuss the background to defence planning and to the equipment programmes which stemmed from it. The whole future shape and size and armament of the three services were to be discussed and dissected and debated by a number of eminent gentlemen from various walks of life. At the last moment, and as a courtesy to my position as Director of the Royal Defence Academy, I was sent a notice of the meeting together with a list of Ministry attendants. Included amongst them was not a single uniformed member of the services. We were regarded as a pawn to be moved about the national chessboard entirely at the whim of civil servants.

**Attitudes to Whitehall**

A part of this process of opting out of the control of our own affairs is due to the traditional attitude of men of the services to Whitehall. I think most people, with some justice, have regarded the various stints they have endured at the ‘War Box’ or ‘The Mad House’ or ‘The Good Old MOD’ as periods of gross interference with the pleasurable development of their careers. At least it has always been fashionable to say so; and an attitude of mind has been created in which the victim finds it natural to regard his London posting as a sort of prison sentence.

This attitude is regarded as normal and creditable. But it is not very sensible. Members of a fighting profession should welcome the
opportunity to practise their profession of fighting; and the battles of Whitehall have a much more profound effect on the future of the profession than do the battles of the Radfan. Of course they have to be fought with the tongue and with the pen — weapons with which the opposition is highly trained. If the representatives of the services in Whitehall are inadequately equipped and trained with these weapons, if they have been brought up to believe that intellectual attainments are a quite unnecessary part of their equipment (‘I haven’t opened a book since I left school’), not only will the battles be lost, but many of them will never even be fought.

Of course most soldiers would prefer Salisbury Plain to the Thames Embankment. But if only they would look at the latter as the ‘Place of Opportunity’, the epitome of challenge, a move in the right psychological direction would have been achieved.

It is a thousand pities that in this erosion of military power at the centre, the level of decision making has constantly risen. Time was when a grade II staff officer in the War Office was a man of real significance and power. Nowadays, few decisions are made below three-star level, and it is the cars of the holders of these posts and of higher ones which are to be seen each night at 7 or 8 p.m. outside the massive portals. The currency has been totally debased and platoons are commanded from Downing Street.

Responsibilities

The whole field of levels of responsibility in the services needs drastic review. Particularly in the level of financial responsibility there is a need for a fundamentally fresh look. It is in this field, in my view, that a serviceman entering industry finds himself most at sea.

As usual, we delude ourselves regarding our financial responsibilities. At the annual meeting of the Institute of Personnel Management at Harrogate, last month, I heard one of the Service Directors of Training start his presentation by saying, ‘I am responsible for an annual expenditure on training of a sum which runs into nine figures’. To personnel managers who have had to argue with their Boards about every fiver this may have sounded impressive; but I expect that most of them knew that the statement was really rather bogus.

It is rather like the commander of a Thunderbird regiment who has about £50m worth of equipment on his charge and a power of write-off of about £10.
We do not have financial responsibility in the proper sense. We play a minimal part in the budgeting process which is a vital element of the life of the civilian manager at any level. And we pay only lip-service to the need to comply with budgets and to devise machinery and checks to do so.

But in industry this is an area in which current developments are having spectacular results. Computerisation, management services, and the organisation of the staff are vital elements in the exercise.

I do not know if it is practical to return to the system whereby a commanding officer really was responsible for the financial running of his regiment; but I am sure that any development in this field would be advantageous for him, for his regiment, and for the Exchequer. I think I would have been a much better Commandant at Shrivenham, and a much better Personnel Director of Thomson Regional Newspapers, if I had had a greater personal involvement in the annual expenditure of the million pounds or so in which that establishment indulges.

Strategic Planning

There is one other area of responsibility in which the services compare unfavourably with industry. Middle and higher management today is much concerned with long range or strategic planning. I would not say that they are particularly good at it, but at least the process develops an attitude of mind which results in forward-looking management. Because of the dead hand of politicians and of the Treasury, military forward planning is the task of very few. I would dearly like to see a much greater number of people involved. We have think-boxes at Camberley and Latimer and Belgrave Square in which the tremendous potential is practically untapped. Maybe if we could find a method of involving them, we would be better prepared to cope with unexpected crises such as the Belfast riots and the Libyan revolution.

Conclusions

That completes my slightly corny covey of cows, sacred and profane:

- an excessive adherence to tradition even when it is outmoded;
- a mid-20th Century outlook on education instead of keeping abreast with the tidal surge which is embracing every other profession;
• a placid complacency about the admittedly good reporting and selection systems;
• an ostrich in the sand attitude to service integration;
• a failure properly to stride the ‘Corridors of Power’ because we have allowed our power to be eroded;
• a debasing of the currency by raising the level of decision-making and responsibility too high;
• a lack of involvement in long range planning.
What a formidable list!

I recorded this lecture at home over a couple of weekends. When I first played it back I was horrified: it sounded like the rumbles and the rantings of a thoroughly disgruntled, disillusioned and disappointed customer.

But it is not meant to be. If that is the impression it has made on you it is particularly important that you should pay special attention to this, the final section of my talk.

The more I see of industry the more impressed I am with very many things in the services. Man management, training and communication in the widest sense are all admirable. Our techniques of teaching are superb; I have seen senior lecturers at business management schools who would not last a day at Blandford. And the lines of communication between senior commanders and their soldiers are very much better than those between the majority of chairmen and their shop floors.

The services are tremendously lucky; there is none of the ‘we’ and ‘they’ which dominates so much of industrial life. It seems to be universally accepted that this conflict is inevitable. (It is no longer allowed to be called ‘strife’, even though Barbara Castle’s White Paper is in the dustbin). You are lucky to have so many things almost irrevocably laid down for you: Queen’s Regulations and the Manual of Military Law I have already quoted; but I doubt if you realise the value of having Pay and Allowance Regulations. The only real industrial secret which I have met so far is the salary of the other guy. There is more jockeying for position, more tears and more ill-feeling about this subject than any other I have up to now encountered.

Obviously in my presentation, like a journalist composing a story, I have picked out the high spots and the headlines. A catalogue of
service virtues would serve no useful purpose. Our cardinal sin, I believe, as it has always been, is to live too much in the past. The efficiency of an Army is the sum of the efficiency of its units; and the efficiency of a unit is very much the reflexion of the efficiency of its C.O. Because of this, and because we have lived from crisis to crisis in post-war years — Malaya, Korea, Mau-Mau, Cyprus, Egypt, the Radfan and Indonesia — we have paid overmuch attention to the views of C.O.s which tend to be concerned largely with instant efficiency. Long range planning has suffered accordingly.

I see in industry a growth in great strides of the science of management in both its physical and behavioural aspects. The burden of my plea is that the services should not complacently ignore them. Let the commanders of the future have the responsibilities which their abilities deserve, and equip them with all the skills and techniques which will optimise the results for the benefit of themselves, their units and the taxpayer.

May I finish with one final message. It is to those of you who are still serving. If, when you retire, you decide to enter industry, do not underestimate your potential worth; do not regard yourselves, or allow the agencies which you employ, to treat you as an object for charity. But for Heaven's sake be prepared to adjust yourselves; you may have much to contribute, but if you try to stuff your ideas down the throats of your employers with arrogance and condescension you will surely fail, and rightly so.

MONTHLY AWARD

The Board of Review has awarded the $10 prize for the best original article published in the July 1970 issue of the journal to Brigadier E. Logan for his contribution 'Establishment of a Task Force at Townsville'.

Generalship and the Importance of Military History

Lance Corporal M. G. Smith

IT was only quite recently, and merely by chance, I happened to notice a Chinese proverb on the bottom of one of those daily calendar booklets. As all good proverbs do, this one made me stop and think, for it answered a question on which I had for no short time been pondering. There, in small type at the bottom of the page, read the words 'a thousand soldiers are easily got, but a single General is hard to find'.

Spurred on by curiosity I decided to examine this wise old Chinese proverb and test its strength against an historical analysis. Only after some considerable reading did I fully appreciate the magnitude of the proverb. It appeared to me that great Generals make great armies and weak Generals make weak armies, and that they, more than anyone else, decide the fate of their victories and defeats.

Once convinced of the ability and competence of the Generals that my research uncovered, I was faced with an even bigger problem. How to judge what made that particular General great and how to assess that General's decisions in the heat of battle or when faced with a seemingly hopeless position? This was the crux of the matter. Fortunately, Field Marshal Montgomery rescued me when I read, 'I wanted to know the essential problem which confronted the General at a certain moment in the battle, what were the factors that influenced his decision — and why?' Pursuing just these lines I uncovered a continual theme that persisted throughout the sagas of all the great Captains — the importance of military history staggered my wildest expectations.

Forgetting for an instant the personality of the leaders, the most over-riding factor contributing to their greatness was the profound

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knowledge they possessed of tactics, strategy and logistics and the means by which these were employed.

It is not often easy to make decisions, and those of a General are never easy. By necessity the decisions they make will be 'black' or 'white'. But it is only the great General who realizes that the true answers are of that murky ‘grey’ colour which must be bleached or blackened to suit the situation.

The knowledge of warfare — the pressing importance of military history — must be thoroughly ingrained if a leader is to appreciate properly the problems by which he is faced. A General may learn new lessons every day, but his trade remains unchanged, and history testifies that leadership is a trade not easily learnt. Charles Napier is reported to have once said to a young officer, ‘A man cannot learn his profession without constant study to prepare especially for the higher ranks. When in a post of responsibility, he has no time to read; and if he comes to such a post with an empty skull, it is then too late to fill it’. These are words well spoken and certainly helpful for those ever likely to command a position of authority.

This is not to say that all budding field officers should surround themselves in a library of military text books. No one can read and digest every detail of every little melee from the Hittites to the war in Vietnam. As Francis Bacon has so aptly put it, ‘Some books are to be Tasted, others to be Swallowed and some few to be Chewed and Digested.’ The process of selection is the hardest part of all. A General must not only know the development of warfare through the ages, but specific knowledge of significant events as well. This is what Montgomery means when he says, ‘It is my belief that good Generals are made, rather than born; no officer will reach the highest rank without prolonged study;’ and what Liddell Hart is driving at when he says, ‘the professional soldier, with rare exceptions, is an amateur in this knowledge of his craft. His study of military history is neither sufficiently extensive or intensive.’

It is tempting indeed to try and disprove such assertions as these. After all, it would make life a lot easier if we could do without the

5 B. H. Liddell Hart, Thoughts on War, London, 1944.
burden of study. One often wonders whether the ends justify the means, and whether time spent in study will reap ripe harvests. At the other extreme, it would be foolish to assert that all well-read military historians would make good Generals. It would be ludicrous to expect every university professor of military thought to lead an army into battle, even though he may have more intimate knowledge of past commanders than, say, his military counterpart.

Peter Ustinov once made the cutting remark, 'As for being a General, well, at the age of four with paper hats and wooden swords we're all Generals. Only some of us never grow out of it.' Perhaps it would be more correct to say 'only the few grow into it', for to be a General one must not only possess the knowledge that study provides but the personality and imagination that only experience and the 'school of hard knocks' can teach.

Imagination is an important concept in itself. Time and again campaigns have been won and the enemy thwarted by the application of this principle. History testifies, in no mean way, to the effectiveness of this quality. Alexander the Great, for example, possessing only the knowledge learnt by experience as a young warrior of eighteen, was able to command an empire of some two million square miles. He inherited a well-trained army from his father, Philip, and moulded it into a fighting force that could fight in any type of country and against any enemy. An equally skilful application of this principle is seen in the work of Gonzola de Cordoba of Spain. By 1500 he had reformed his armies by using the arquebusiers as his key to success. A weapon by which he had himself been defeated only five years earlier now became standard warfare for three-quarters of the Sixteenth Century: a memorable piece of innovation not to be forgotten by students of military history.

The adaptability of a leader to command must also be considered as part of this imaginative process. Only by mentally picturing the situation both before and when committed to a command, can a true captain achieve the best results. Thus Skobelev, of Russia, has been judged one of the most able commanders of his day, when in 1877 he stated that 'in Asia he is the master who seizes the people pitilessly by the throat.'

The necessity to marry imagination with knowledge cannot be doubted, and it is the union of these two that comprise the essential

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7 Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, op. cit., p. 450.
qualities of the great General. After all, was it not Guderian who stole the thoughts of Liddell Hart and Fuller and developed a blitzkrieg strategy that almost crippled Britain in 1940? And is it not the Generals, trained in European countries, who today lead their native peoples through revolution to self government?

The importance of military history on good generalship is not only to be found in books. It would be exceedingly narrow-minded to assume that a number of printed pages bound together and given a title will make great captains. However, it is a starting point, and T. E. Lawrence expressed it quite admirably when he said, 'So please, if you see me that way and agree with me, do use me as a text to preach for more study of books and history, a greater seriousness in military art. With 2,000 years of examples behind us, we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well.' But mere reading of these '2,000 years of fighting' may be fruitless in itself. Knowledge of what has happened in the past is useless unless the historian can learn how to tackle a situation in the future. It is precisely this point that Wavell makes when he states, ‘To learn that Napoleon in 1796 with 20,000 men beat ... 30,000 by something called “economy of force” or “operating on interior lines” is a mere waste of time. If you can understand how a young, unknown man inspired a half-starved, ragged, rather Bolshe crowd; how he filled their bellies; how he out-marched, out-witted, out-bluffed, and defeated men who had studied war all their lives and waged it according to the text books of the time, you will have learnt something worth knowing.”

This, then, is the real challenge facing the General: not only to seek the knowledge that military history provides, but more importantly to have the wisdom in applying the knowledge he has learnt. It is along these exact lines that Montgomery pursued when he confessed, ‘My object was, and always has been, to study the past intelligently, in order to seek guidance for the present and the future.’

This is a point that should not be dismissed lightly. Too often do young officers graduate from their academies not fully aware of the importance of military history. Many claim that we are now in the nuclear age, an age too advanced and quite different from that illustrated

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10 Field Marshal Montgomery of Alamein, op. cit., p. 20.
in our history books. On asking a cadet would he consider graduating into infantry, I was dismayed when he replied, 'It's far too ancient a corps to be seriously considered.' Jacob Burckhardt was right when he pointed out that the real use of history is 'not to make men clever for next time; it is to make them wise forever.' In this light all matters of military importance must be considered seriously, and cannot be dismissed by dubbing them as 'ancient'.

As one brilliant Twentieth Century captain — himself a thinker and reformer — has so wisely stated, 'Weapons, equipment, conditions, have all changed, but the mind of the leader remains.' Thus we can accept as strategically sound the writings of a Fourth Century B.C. Chinaman when he says, 'The highest form of Generalship is to baulk the enemy's forces; the next in order is to attack the enemy's army in the field; the worst policy of all is to besiege walled cities.' And all this in a world of mechanical robots, rockets that shoot for the moon, and atomic bombs capable of destroying the world. The point is hammered home even more convincingly when one reads the straightforward comments of one of Australia's most gallant and erudite soldiers, General Sir Thomas Blamey:

"The efficiency of an army is governed by the degree of education and capacity of its officers."

If nothing else, this simple statement should act as an incentive for all those aspiring to the higher ranks in future years. Its wisdom is unquestionable as the career of this man can readily testify.

The importance of military history lies much deeper than knowledge and learning. It implies some sort of metaphysical link between man, history and the present world of problems. As Alexander Pope has written:

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is man.  
"Essay on Man."

A deep study in military history, therefore, not only acquaints the surveyor with problems of the past but provides courage and advice for decisions of today and those of tomorrow. It breeds confidence and

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11 Conversation of a cadet with author on 4.2.70.  
13 Liddell Hart, op. cit., p. 122.  
develops strong character. It enables the commander to qualify his decisions with that much-quoted Shakespearian line

This above all — to thine own self be true, *Hamlet* Act I Sc. 3 for it provides the wisdom that all decisions should be based upon.

Abraham Lincoln once confessed, 'Character is like a tree and reputation like its shadow.' As we gloss through the pages of military history, we find this to be very true. The reputation of all great commanders provides an insight into each of their characters, for to divorce one from the other would be exceedingly difficult.

However, a deep insight into the importance of military history is not an end in itself. The application of this knowledge is the real test of the commander's ability. This is what Mao Tsetung dwells on when he writes: 'All military laws and military theories which are in the nature of principles are the experience of past wars summed up by people in former days or in our own times. We should seriously study these lessons, paid for in blood, which are a heritage of past wars.' He continues: 'We should put these conclusions to the test of our own experience, assimilating what is useful, rejecting what is useless, and adding what is specifically our own. The latter is very important, for otherwise we cannot direct a war. Reading is learning, but applying it is also learning, and the more important kind of learning at that.'

This word 'experience' must not be dismissed easily. Generals are indeed made and not born, and it is the experience they acquire during their training that will reflect in their generalship. After all, Marlborough served as an infantry colonel under Turenne (1674-75) before he transformed Britain's army to be one of the foremost armies in Europe: while Wellington defeated Napoleon after nine years of learning and application in India: and Adolf Hitler served as a corporal before he led the Third Reich to conquer almost all of Europe. Even Giap has sometimes boasted that 'the only Military Academy that he attended was that of the bush.' And so the list goes on.

Experience then, is an essential for good Generalship. Not only must the commander know what to do, but he must have the confidence that only much practice can bring. To him apply those three words of advice that Bismarck gave to youth — work! work! work! It is hard to

16 Abraham Lincoln, 'Lincoln's Own Stories' in J. B. Foreman (ed.). op. cit., p. 274.
17 Mao Tsetung in Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, op. cit., P. 19.
come by this experience so essentially needed. Opportunities may not always present themselves, and high-ranking officers may spend years of dormant exile in the art of Generalship. Perhaps this is what Liddell Hart meant when he wrote, "There is a certain type of officer who prides himself as being a "practical soldier" who is apt to assert that study is of little value as a preparation for war compared with experience. Such a man tends to confuse "experience" with the number of years he has spent in drawing his pay, and the "field" of war with the routine duties of barracks or the artificial conditions of the training ground. He conveniently forgets that not 10% of his working hours during an average year in time of peace is spent in field training."¹⁰

Indeed, when it’s all said and done, there are but few Generals who are fortunate to have had the experience that their position demands. Only the most privileged ever see a great variety of active service postings, and many potentially brilliant young field officers may be transferred to staff positions well before they are fully able to appreciate the intimate art of leadership. The Generals who come to the fore under such circumstances are, therefore, those who have mastered the art of compromise. To remain indolent would be to abuse their authority: these commanders must diligently apply themselves to study. They must acquire the knowledge that experience has foregone by an intensive study of military history. The great captain must appraise and re-appraise how he would solve the same problems that history has recorded, for as Mao Tsetung concluded, "complacency is the enemy of study."²⁰

Even so, study is not an end in itself. Whilst it provides a blue print for arriving at competent decisions, it does not fully answer the complex question of leadership. Whilst it is true that ‘leaders are made and not born’, there are a large number who will just never be ‘made’ — no matter how studious they may be. Leadership is the dual art of understanding and application. A captain must firstly understand his men. He must know their limits of endurance and the strength of their convictions. He must understand the intricate business of warfare and guide his men to fulfil their allotted tasks. Most important, he must understand himself. He must know what he is doing, and why he is doing it. He must strengthen his own loyalties, and relentlessly

²⁰ Mao Tsetung, Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-Tung. Peking, 1966, p. 310.
pursue the causes in which he believes. Setting the example is not always easy, but the respect a leader demands will only come from the confidence and faith that his men have in him. Secondly, once the captain understands he must apply what he knows. The principles for which he is fighting, or defending, must always remain paramount. (He must always remain the Dreyfus of the Third French Republic). He must apply them to his very existence and instil them in his men. He must give to his troops the inspiration and enthusiasm that he himself conveys, and he must consolidate this morale so that in times of adversity it will not falter, and fail him.

These are the intrinsic and indefinable characteristics of a leader; the testing power that testifies just how great a General he really is. After all, there are leaders and there are leaders. All through society men come to the fore in command of small bodies of men and women and guide these organizations throughout their presidency. Political parties, religious bodies, social welfare societies and sporting clubs provide but a few examples. Some leaders are better than others. The most successful improve the image of their group and financially better future prospects. Others often remain stagnant or rest on the laurels of their predecessors, thus handicapping the improvement of their organization.

Captaincy is basically the same. Of course, the team may be a little larger, and the rules a little bloodier, but the good General must still lead his army and must always strive for victory. It is by no means an easy task, and history has left out a spattering of examples of great military leaders. A few — Alexander, Scipio, Hannibal, Wellington, de Saxe, Frederick, von Moltke, Cordoba, Monash, Guderian, Rommel, Montgomery, Wavell, Zhukov and Giap — make an impressive list, but constitute only a small fraction of those commanders who have held the status of Generalship.

Dr O'Neill, in his book General Giap. Politician and Strategist, has illustrated this very point. He shows how difficult it was for this politician-turned-soldier to continually bolster the morale of his men, and the lies and exaggerations Giap was forced to make in labelling the enemy as ‘imperialists and foreign exploiters’.

These developments in politics in the Twentieth Century have changed the very nature of warfare. The world lives in the grip of a ‘Cold War’, where all nations pursue their power struggle. Weapons

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21 The Dreyfus Affair — any history of modern France.
have become more lethal, manpower has been replaced by technical innovation, and everywhere people talk in terms of pressing this button or that button and ponder over who will press it first.

Meanwhile, armies, navies and air forces are maintained. Specialist groups are being trained for specialist tasks, and war, more than ever before, is guided by scientific know how. Border clashes in Asia, Africa and South America provide some relief for the big powers. Armies are committed to intervene in places that provide buffer zones between the centres of Communism and Capitalism. All around the cries for 'peace' and 'love' are heard against the backdrop of a mine explosion in Vietnam or the death of a hungry child in Biafra. University students everywhere raise their arms, continue to preach nihilism and throw 'rotten eggs' at the military. In such times as these, the captains must not only draw on their knowledge of the past, but must apply themselves more than ever before to the problem of command. These are the men of whom our grandchildren will probably never read. They are Generals without a battle to fight — but a war to win — and their capabilities as leaders must be every inch as good as the few great commanders who cover our history books and inspire young officers to rise to the rank of Supreme Commander.

The study of military history is thus a tedious task, but one that all Generals must relentlessly pursue. The application of their knowledge will single out the Field Marshals from the Generals, and put in supreme command of the Services those men who have worked hard and possess the experience necessary for such a task. In this light, at least, I imagine it is perfectly true that 'a thousand soldiers are easily got, but a single General is hard to find.'

Visual impressions gained during actual combat are more vivid than those gained beforehand by mature reflection. But they give us only the outward appearance of things, which, as we know, rarely corresponds to their essence. We therefore run the risk of sacrificing mature reflection for first impression. The natural timidity of humans, which sees only one side to everything, makes this first impression incline towards fear and exaggerated caution. Therefore we must fortify ourselves against this impression and have blind faith in the results of our own earlier reflections, in order to strengthen ourselves against the weakening impressions of the moment.

These difficulties, therefore, demand confidence and firmness of conviction. That is why the study of military history is so important, for it makes us see things as they are and as they function. The principles which we can learn from theoretical instruction are only suited to facilitate this study and to call our attention to the most important elements in the history of war.

—General Carl von Clausewitz, Principles of War.
The Cultural Revolution in China

Staff Sergeant B. I. Payne
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The masses have a potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism.
—Extracted from 'Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung'.

The Cultural Revolution only achieved the dismissal of a small minority of office-holders, and although it provided great publicity for the ideals of revolution, the effects were temporary.

Introduction

This article is a study of the Chinese Cultural Revolution in so far as it can be related to future attitudes likely to be adopted by China and to gain an appreciation of the reasons for these attitudes. Emphasis is given to the reasons why events occurred and what can be learnt from the effects of these events, rather than the description of events.

Background

An understanding of the nature of Chinese society is essential to evaluate the events that took place during the Cultural Revolution. The application of knowledge based on western experiences to judgment of events in China will result in incorrect conclusions, unless allowances are made for the different historical development of the Chinese nation.

In a society where most people are illiterate, mass rallies and displays replace our more familiar television coverage of press conferences.

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Seen in this light, a rally of 100,000 people in China immediately ceases to have the same significance as a comparative physical event in Australia — despite the headlines of our evening newspapers. It is interesting to speculate if the Chinese hierarchy gives the same reciprocal consideration to publicity about moratoriums in Australia.

In China, rallies are used as a means of official government communication and should not be regarded as a spontaneous outburst of public indignation (or used as evidence of a potential threat to world peace). No aspect of life in China today is completely independent of politics. There is no opportunity for individual spontaneity that is not (at least in principle) within the parameters of government policy.

China has 80 per cent of the population in country areas and is still largely an agriculturally based economy. The failure of ‘The Great Leap Forward’ was mainly due to the effect of unprecedented natural calamities on rural development. This provides evidence of the reliance of the country on the regularity of the output of the rural peasants. The partial failure, and the actual decision to end the Cultural Revolution, is related to this historical fact.

The early attempts to spread communism on the European pattern of a politically inspired industrial proletariat causing unrest in the cities, foundered between 1927 and 1930. The party had no choice but to concentrate on rural areas. Mao used the rural peasants as the main force for social revolution. Current propaganda still indicates an emphasis towards country areas (intellectuals are sent out to ‘learn from the peasants’).

The programme which the Chinese Communist Party adopted soon after its founding called for a two-stage revolution in accordance with Lenin’s classical thesis for colonial and semi-colonial countries. The first stage would complete the ‘bourgeois-democratic’ revolution with a united front of the progressive bourgeois, the working class and the peasantry led by the Communist Party. It would end foreign imperialist aggression and win complete independence.

The programme in rural China aimed at abolishing the rule by landlords and the dividing up of land ownership between the peasants. This was largely achieved by 1949 and has been made more effective in following years. The programme in urban China, calling for the complete nationalization of the property of native ‘reactionary capitalists’ (held to be collaborators of foreign imperialism), had been only partly
achieved up until the time of the Cultural Revolution, and there is evidence that some previous factory owners were receiving regular financial recompense from the government for loss of assets. In the early stages these payments would have allayed opposition and retained expertise.

The demands of the people (prompted by the government?) removed the last of these payments during the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was thus intended to complete the first stage of the programme. Then the second stage — that of building socialism — could commence. It is now under way. If the Cultural Revolution was only partially successful, the first stage is only partially completed. If the foundation for the second stage is not 100 per cent secure, then the second stage (building socialism) may not achieve 100 per cent success. That is, China may not be 100 per cent communist in the future.

**Importance of Mao in Chinese Politics**

Most houses in China have a picture of Mao and some of his quotations in a prominent position for everyone to see. The achievement of the pre-eminence of Mao in the hierarchy is a result of deliberate planning. He was the central figure in all internal struggles as well as external disputes with the USSR. He was the best known and least accessible leader of his time (well promoted, but not over-exposed). After Stalin's death, Peking promoted Mao as the sole source of communist theory and ideology. Unlike any Russian leader, he was for a whole generation the continuous and practically undisputed leader of a revolution.

The reasons for the recent promotion of the cult of Mao are summed up by a middle-of-the-road journalist:

This is not merely an example of the manifestation of power or the hero-worship of a single figure considered typical of totalitarian systems. In China the cult of Mao is also looked on as a means of helping revolutionary theory to win through. However much Mao the man is praised and glorified, in the next breath the same verbosity is employed to encourage the reading of his works — in other words the people are led from hero-worship to theory. The great importance of fusing man and idea seems to lie in the urgent need to overcome traditional Chinese conceptions of society and its functions, as these were handed down and anchored in the social, moral and political teaching of Confucious for two and a half millenia.¹

This summary indicates that progress along the road to socialism involves overcoming hazards that originated inside China, as well as contending with those of the outside world (colonialism, neo-colonialism etc.). The importance of this innate internal hazard will be reviewed near the end of this article.

Commentary on the cult of Mao has been supplied to the journalist Edgar Snow by Mao himself:

Some people blame the Chinese people for falling, to some extent, into the cult of personality. There may be some grounds for thinking this. But isn’t one entitled to believe that Mr Krushchev was dismissed because he had no cult of personality at all?²

If Chinese Communism is a religion, then its bible is the works of Mao. A good Chinese, a good communist, must read Mao every day. He is continually told that he can find in Mao the solutions to his simple everyday problems. There is a good deal of truth in this advice, in that much of the works of Mao outline basic problem solving techniques (at the level a Chinese peasant can understand and use). Despite the promotion of ‘Chairman Mao’ it is the ‘Thought of Mao’ rather than Mao himself that is stressed.

Psychological Background

It is difficult to find reasons for having a Cultural Revolution that have not been explicitly given out with the blessings of Mao. Some conclusions have been drawn by foreign teachers and journalists who have lived for several years in China, or who have visited the country. They have referred to the ‘Yenan Complex’ of the Chinese.

The leaders of the early revolutionary movement spent ten years under very harsh conditions at Yenan after completing the Long March. It has been suggested that during this time the Communist Chinese were cut off from the rest of the world by self-erected walls, and as a result developed a poverty complex. Many Chinese show a preference for wearing tattered and patched boiler suits when better clothes are available at prices they can afford. During these ten years material reward was impossible and current ideology emphasizes that the western system is dangerous and compromising because it is based on materialism.

Mao still shows a preference for boiler suits. It is too much of a simplification to say that Mao was a peasant and therefore thinks like a

² Extracted from The Three Banners of China, by Marc Riboud (New York 1966).
peasant (and wears the appropriate apparel). In fact, he was born relatively well off compared to most peasants of his time. He had his own room in his parents’ house. The house and the room is now part of the regular tourist itinerary for visitors to China.

The Long March has probably shown Mao the importance of using the army as the centre of the revolution, and that a soldier must be a worker mingling with the people. Correct ideological outlook is part of the entrance qualifications in the Chinese Army. The Peoples Liberation Army was reformed by Lin Piao in a Maoist direction and was used as a testing ground for Mao’s book of thoughts for three years before the books (and the army) were distributed among the population. The ‘Learn from the Army’ campaign marks the opening phase of the Cultural Revolution.

Left wing writers emphasize that Mao’s ideas were spread by contagious example. Right wing writers conjure up a scene of uniformed indoctrinated propagandists spreading the views of Mao and reporting on ‘deviationists’. The truth probably lies somewhere in between (exactly where usually indicates one’s bias on Chinese affairs). There is, however, no doubt that the army was a ‘captive audience’ for three years, and played a vital part in transporting the people involved in the Cultural Revolution.

Aims of Mao in the Cultural Revolution

If the reasons for having a Cultural Revolution can be accepted at face value as offered by the Chinese, there is a flood of information to justify the need for the upheaval. A typical quotation from an official government source (read Mao) is: ‘A new élite, reared by the socialist system itself, took advantage of the domestic and international situation to fasten its hold upon the leadership levels in every sphere of life and work, including the party itself’.

Many writers have said that Mao was worried because the people of China were following the same path of development as the USSR, and that the warlords of the past were merely being replaced by a new party élite — the cult of the expert.

In a developing, but supposedly classless society, it is difficult to avoid the creation of a class of people consisting of educationists, technicians, administrators and party officials having a higher standard of living than the people they are supposed to educate and administer. It is probably impossible to raise the standard of living of everyone in the
country at the same time, especially when that country contains over seven hundred million people. The communist party (read Mao) appears to have settled on the solution of sending the ‘experts’ out to the rural communes and factories to work among the peasants for specific periods during the year.

Guides accompanying visitors to China comment on this situation wherever possible. They maintain that China is aware of the loss of production due to the disruption of normal ‘expert’ activities, but that China considers the changes in attitude of the participants worth the cost and effort involved. China is probably equally aware of the reciprocal benefits of using these experts (usually students) to spread approved ideology in the rice paddies and in factories. Before going on to consider the importance of students in the Cultural Revolution, some of the officially published aims of the revolution are summarized as:

- A style of work which applies national policy in terms of local conditions thoroughly studied.
- A mass line technique of work which secures the mutual education of leaders and led, and which maintains the maximum participation of the majority of the population in decision making at the local level.
- Active, positive leadership by the party’s cadres in every aspect of social progress.
- The creation of a system of national government which both maximizes local initiative and enterprise, and also maximizes direct exposure to the ideology that provides the framework of effort.
- A decentralized economic system bringing the benefits of modern technology into the village in the form of industries created and run by the village itself.
- Preparation for the defence of China, in the absence of modern military equipment, by a nation in arms.

The above summary cannot be regarded as propaganda just for the sake of propaganda. There is a considerable amount of emphasis on practical application of logical thinking to solve local problems. The book of thoughts by Mao is essentially a collection of bits of advice to leaders of groups showing them how to adjust their ways of thinking and acting to get results — a bowl of rice in everybody’s oven.
The Intellectuals

The publicity given to the Cultural Revolution in western news media emphasized the activities of the Red Guard movement. Generally speaking, the impression was given that thousands of school children rampaged over the land and through the streets in massive groups to decide the fate of the nation. Unless the reasons for using young people are seen in relation to their place in Chinese society, a distorted view of the Cultural Revolution will result.

Half of the population of China is under eighteen years of age. Half of seven hundred million people. The school children largely make up the literate part of the community. One writer has described this situation by saying: ‘The majority of these children are of peasant stock and in some respects their mental age is no more than thirteen or fourteen. As children of this age, they need to be taught everything about life in a community’. This explains why to western readers much Chinese ideology appears to be for the simple-minded. For example, Mao advises people to concentrate on getting a boat before concentrating on crossing a river. It is the message in the parable, not the parable itself that counts.

The Chinese authorities use the word ‘intellectual’ to describe students with a secondary or tertiary education. These intellectuals are capable of forming opinions and influencing others. In the absence of a reasonable standard of literacy, the intellectuals are the one vital means of the government being able to communicate to the peasants. This fact removes any cynicism from an interpretation of the observation that intellectuals are sent to work with the peasants solely for the good of the intellectuals (maintained by Chinese guides) as set out earlier in this article.

The government gives a great deal of attention to the intellectuals. By controlling this group the government may hope to control the whole country. It will be shown later that the intellectuals did not control the Cultural Revolution — they merely carried it out. The government did not want a repetition of 1957 when intellectuals were given some freedom of expression to attack institutions outside the party control, and the reverse occurred. The announcement that led to this short-lived movement is referred to as ‘The speech of the one hundred flowers’.

Marc Riboud, *The Three Banners of China*.
The only news media and radio programmes available in China are produced by the government. It provides the material needed for discussion group leaders and propagandists. Village news-reading is estimated to reach 50-70 peasants per local announcer. For local announcer read Red Guard, intellectual, communist or government sponsored Chinese town crier. National issues are followed up by discussion in local papers as far as the local area can be involved. Discussions are held at places of work, during meal breaks, in after hours leisure time and even when machines break down. For the Chinese citizen, political activity and propaganda begin in the kindergarten, accompany him throughout his life and only stop in old age. It has been pointed out that the current group of intellectuals is the first generation to reach maturity in a completely conditioned political environment. It has also been said that their need for rejuvenation was a reason for having a Cultural Revolution in lieu of a Cultural Festival.

There is one other reason for the use of students. The Chinese have a precedent. The present day leaders were themselves students when they led the masses of peasants to establish communist rule in China. The people over forty years of age had faced the warlords in the same manner as the intellectuals were facing the entrenched party bureaucrats. The armbands worn by the Red Guards were copied from those worn by the communists in the days of Yenan.

The Revolution

The Great Leap Forward was abandoned after it had led to the economic collapse of 1959. The situation deteriorated still further after the Russians withdrew their extensive technical assistance programme in 1960. The long term plans for rapid industrialization were replaced by short term plans that emphasized intensive political motivation and a return to an agriculturally based economy.

The Cultural Revolution was launched in the early part of 1966. It is important to realize that similar campaigns had been organized previously. This time the scope of the campaign was much larger. It was intended to involve every one of the inhabitants of China.

Previous demonstrations had given the political cadres experience in handling large numbers at meetings. Mass demonstrations always took place in perfect order, as a result of many rehearsals. The leaders of each team carried a piece of paper in their hands with the slogans for their team to call out. Factories, offices and universities sent a certain number of ‘volunteers’, depending on the importance of the
occasion. Some western observers have commented on the loss of production as a result of constant practising for displays for the benefit of foreign visitors and internal publicity.

The rivalries, brawls and public pleading for restraint that took place gave a totally unreal impression of the situation. When handling crowds of up to 500,000 people, co-operation of the masses is essential for the preservation of life. All transport for the revolution was organized by the army. A senior teacher accompanied each group of Red Guards. Groups were brought in from the provinces for meetings and then taken back a week or two later. For the rural students, it must have seemed a once-in-a-lifetime chance to get a trip to the big cities.

The atmosphere in Peking was described by travellers as resembling that of a carnival. Most western news media placed emphasis on unconfirmed reports (usually by Japanese correspondents) of riots and deaths. In Peking, only two incidents occurred involving bloodshed (no deaths) due to the Red Guards. The first occurred at Radio Peking headquarters and the second at the Peking University Press building.

The government newspapers led the attacks on established practices and it is worth noting that the pacesetter was the daily journal put out by the army (under the control of Chou En-lai and the wife of Mao). The discussions of Red Guards resulted in attitudes that have often been evident in other countries (including Australia). As a result, street names were changed, students were made to have haircuts and senior intellectuals were paraded through the streets and often publicly denounced. The devastating effect of these denouncements can be gauged by noting that one senior party official began a public confession of his revisionist attitudes by saying in effect, 'Comrades for the one hundred-and-sixty-first time I am appearing before you to etc. etc.'

There is evidence to show that the Red Guard movement was guided by vested interests, particularly after June 1966 when the revolution switched from attacking plays and films to criticism of people in positions of power. The Red Guards were initially subordinate to the party apparatus. In June 1966 Mao made it clear that the relationship was one of liaison. In August 1966 the movement had Liu and Teng removed from the Central Committee of the Party. Gradually the revolution spread from the Central Committee and the streets of the cities (predominantly Peking) to the rural areas. No doubt this occurred as the students were returned to their home provinces.
That is, the revolution was transported in army vehicles. It did not spread contagiously or spontaneously.

In the provinces the cadres formed their own Red Guard groups, either out of enthusiasm for the revolution or to take the initiative from imported enthusiasm that may have affected their vested interests. Rivalry between Red Guard movements sometimes ended in pitched battles and the army was called in to settle the issue. It is worth noting that all of the military units involved were allied closely with Mao’s wife.

Large scale battles (involving over 1,000 people) occurred in Mongolia and Tibet as the new movement eliminated to a large extent the practices of minority racial groups. Monasteries were closed and the monks were sent back to do manual labour at their own native villages. The Catholic Cathedral in Shanghai had the gothic spires removed and was converted to a fruit warehouse.

By 1967 it became clear that the political élite of the party were not prepared to stand down and let the new mass movement take their places. The Red Guards had alienated large sections of urban workers, partly due to them having had bonus payment schemes removed. The trade unions were not willing to let the new movement take over the leadership of industrial workers. Groups within the army discussed the dismissal of senior army officers. The movement had become an attempt to seize China for Maoism and to establish a commune style government on the basis of wholesale suppression of the existing organization.

Until 1967 the existing structure had maintained a degree of solidarity in the face of the changing political situation. In the western world we would regard this as a cabinet reshuffle, whereas the Chinese viewed this as a major political crisis. The move to eradicate the local administration caused a great deal of chaos and civil strife. It became clear that the agricultural basis of the country was being threatened. Until 1967 Chou En-lai had prohibited the revolution from interfering with the economy of the country. Now that the economy was threatened, Mao ordered Lin Piao to use the army to stop the Cultural Revolution throughout China.

**Effects of the Revolution**

The Cultural Revolution emphasized the class struggle, the mass line, rural and army culture. The word culture is used in the Chinese
sense, in that it is connected with motivation or redness. Redness means doing the right thing, for the right reasons, because you think and feel the right way. The future of the Cultural Revolution is bound up with the educational system as a means of political instruction.

Chinese experiments in education are designed to close the gap between peasant and intellectual. The educational reforms are intended to help the whole country advance in literacy at the same rate. Maoists believe that the group of students most likely to succeed are the children of the peasants rather than those of more educated parents. The effect has been a general increase in the number of lower qualified students in the professional areas, and the rate of development of China may have been hampered to some extent by this change.

The struggle to alter the arts and give every play or film a political bias that is favourable to the government is still going on. Mao has said that the arts are not only a powerful weapon in winning the revolution, but also a breeding ground for forces of reaction. People in other countries have had similar misgivings about the arts and particularly about arts students. The instructions of Mao are explicit:

The places of emperors, princes, generals, monks, concubines, good and evil spirits are to be taken by the leaders of socialist reality. The themes of the modern Chinese operas are to be taken from the history of the revolutionary struggle and are to reflect the conflict between the old and the new ideologies in our society.

These words were contained in an official commentary dealing with questions arising from the transformation of the classical opera, which, it said, 'has no longer to serve the demands of aesthetic pleasure but the requirements of political indoctrination.'

As a result the Chinese do not tolerate middle characters. Characters have to be either heroes or villians. To some extent this attitude typifies the Chinese relationship with other countries. It certainly typifies the attitude of a great many people of other countries towards the Chinese.

By using the philosophy of 'for or against' it is easy to see how Mao can command a great deal of support from the Chinese people by frequent appeals to attend to the defence of the country against foreign imperialists (wholly bad) and to assist revolutionaries (wholly good) in South-East Asian countries. Whether this attitude can be maintained as China raises its literacy standards (and presumably its ability to look for the grey between the black and white) remains to be seen.
A careful study of books and articles on the Cultural Revolution shows that a complete and lasting Maoist victory is unlikely. The policies of the Red Guards clash with many different groups of Chinese. The skilled urban workers have not been prepared to stand down and let the Red Guards own their organizations. The rural peasants who make side profits on their own small areas of land have fought pitched battles with enthusiastic Red Guards in the provinces. Groups of students sent to the country (for life) have been alienated by the movement. However, it should be borne in mind that this study is necessarily a review of short term results. Long term results may indicate an opposite result.

There is a characteristic of the Chinese that will probably outlast the efforts of the Red Guards. It is the ability of 700 million people to absorb potential disasters and national political campaigns alike, and still remain basically unaltered. This attitude is summed up as follows:

Obviously, the average Chinese looks on the official version as comfortable protective armour, put on so that he can ward off external influences and quietly follow his own inclinations with as little disturbance as possible... the Communist cadres have no real hold on the masses. They blow a note on the trumpet and the right sound comes out. But any deep seated effect, which is what really concerns the leadership, is lacking. Hundreds of millions of Chinese are like a rubber wall. They make no resistance and comply with the party's directives obediently, but without fanatical enthusiasm... The only thing that matters to him is whether he has enough rice in his bowl this winter and whether he can buy himself a new pair of trousers next year.\(^4\)

Evidence of renewed campaigns to persuade the rural peasants to accept the party line is as abundant in 1970 as it was in 1960. The aims of Mao foundered mainly on the attitudes of the rural peasants. It was their lack of enthusiasm and sometimes violent resistance, that led to chaos in the food producing areas.

Thus, the Cultural Revolution foundered on the need to provide sufficient food to feed 700 million people, every day of every year. Mao has said that 'whoever wins the peasants will win China'. It is clear that the communist system of rule has been able to feed the peasants even in bad years (with the help of Australian wheat). Presumably, as long as the peasants are fed, they will accept the political system (read Mao) who feeds them.

**Conclusions**

The Cultural Revolution has emphasized the vulnerability of China due to its dependence on maintaining a high level of agricultural produc-

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\(^4\) Hamm, *Revolutionary China in Transition*. 
tion. The development and deployment of hydrogen bombs cannot, in the short term, overcome this innate weakness.

In the long term China may be able to produce a surplus of food as a result of applied technology. The efforts of the Chinese Government to control the actions and thoughts of 700 million people will also have to depend, to an increasing extent, on applied technology rather than repeats of the Cultural Revolution. The first indication that this stage is being reached may be a cessation of wheat imports from Australia. It may also be reflected in a change away from boiler suits.

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