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General F. G. Hassett, AC, CB, CBE, DSO, MVO, Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee.
MAN AT THE TOP

A short biography

of

GENERAL F. G. HASSETT,
AC, CB, CBE, DSO, MVO

Most of the material contained in this biography was gathered from official records, colleagues and associates of General Hassett. Little could be obtained from the General personally. He is a modest man and reluctant to talk of his achievements.

Lieutenant Colonel Allan S. Hinds

ON a cold June evening in 1934 a young man sat before the blazing fire at his home in the middle class Sydney suburb of Clovelly to read the afternoon newspaper. He had just turned 16 and already was in his sixth month as a junior clerk with the Department of Tramways. Australia was in the grip of the Great Depression. In the uncertainties of the time there were few opportunities for a youth at the threshold of his working life. Leafing through the news pages he felt bored with the monotony of office routine and disenchanted with the prospect of a clerical career. Yet there was nothing else he particularly wanted to do. He was about to put the paper aside when his eyes caught an advertisement which unaccountably held his attention. "Enter the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and become an officer in the Australian Army", the heading read. There was no military background to his immediate family.... A life in the Army had never occurred to him. But something must have stirred in his mind, because later that night he went to his older brother and asked: "What's Duntroon all about?"

Lieutenant Colonel Hinds joined the RAAF in 1944 and served for three years before taking his discharge to enter journalism. He was a news reporter and feature writer on provincial and metropolitan daily newspapers in Queensland, New South Wales and London, and was on the literary staff of the Courier Mail, Brisbane, when he joined Army Public Relations early in 1959. He served in Malaya 1960-62, Vietnam 1965-66 and 1968-69, and has filled Staff PR appointments in Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Canberra. He is currently PR Liaison Officer, Army Office, Canberra.
Today, that young man is General Francis George Hassett, AC, CB, CBE, DSO, MVO, the most decorated Australian soldier of modern times. He was a Lieutenant at 20, a Captain at 21, a Major at 22, and at 23 became the youngest Lieutenant Colonel in the Australian Army. Now at 57, he is to be Chief of Defence Force Staff — commander of all Australia’s Armed Services and only the second soldier to be promoted General in peacetime.

Francis George Hassett was born in Sydney on April 11, 1918, the second son of three children of a foreman in the NSW Railways Department. He attended school at Canterbury Primary and then Canterbury High. As a student he was not particularly interested in academic matters, preferring the challenges of the sports field to any scholarly aspirations. He left school in December 1933 with an Intermediate Certificate — a standard of education that almost ended his Army career before it began.

For Frank Hassett answered that advertisement in 1934 and later in the year faced a Selection Board chaired by the then Commandant of the Royal Military College, Brigadier Lavarack (later Lieutenant General Sir John Lavarack). It was from the Selection Board that
Hassett learned the minimum standard for entry to Duntroon was Leaving Certificate. Something of Hassett’s potential must have been apparent even then because Brigadier Lavarack agreed to accept him as a cadet providing he reached the required standard during his four years at the College.

Hassett revelled in the College environment. He had a natural aptitude for the complexities of tactics and the military arts. He shone at sport and rapidly developed a previously untapped talent for leadership. He won the middleweight and then light heavyweight boxing titles; excelled in athletics at 100 yards, 220 yards and the broad jump; and from his first year at Duntroon played wing three-quarter in the 1st Rugby XV. A fellow cadet, describing Hassett, said: “He was the quiet, soft-spoken type who never lost his cool. Yet he could be one of the boys, too. Frank was no bully, but there was never any doubt who was boss”. During the final year in 1938, Hassett’s resolution was rewarded by his appointment as one of four Cadet Under Officers. One of the responsibilities that went with the rank was to entertain visiting dignitaries.

In the Spring, the Army’s Inspector General, Major-General E. K. Squires, visited the College accompanied by Colonel S. F. Rowell (later Lieutenant General Sir Sydney Rowell). Frank Hassett was seated with Colonel Rowell at lunch. The two engaged in lengthy

A Pause in Training at RMC
Curtis, Hassett, MacKay (extreme right).
conversation and Rowell obviously was impressed. As the official party left the College soon after, Colonel Rowell, never a man to pay compliments lightly, made a prophetic comment to General Squires: "I believe I have just had lunch with a future Chief of the General Staff".

In December 1938, Hassett graduated ninth from a class of 15, and predictably perhaps, won the prizes for Infantry and Physical Training. He was also a close second in Tactics — a subject he then considered too speculative. He was now Lieutenant Hassett, Australian Army Staff Corps.

While a cadet, Hassett’s progress had been watched closely by the Director of Military Arts at Duntroon, Lieutenant Colonel H. C. H. Robertson (later Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson). Robertson was forming the Darwin Mobile Force in 1938 — a unit of 240 men which was to train and live in Australia’s far North. He hand-picked the staff and selected Hassett on graduation to command the Mortar Platoon. The year Hassett spent in Darwin was to be his last command of troops for 12 years. It was disappointing yet inevitable for a young Staff Corps graduate. Australia was about to enter World War 2.

Pre Second World War — Lt Hassett and sister Mavis as he leaves with the Darwin Mobile Force.
From the end of World War 1 the Australian Army had followed a pattern of appointing part-time Militia officers to command units and formations while the career officers out of Duntroon filled staff appointments. The system was incongruous and frustrating for the professional soldiers who considered they should at least share more equitably the opportunities for command. When war was declared in 1939, Hassett was one of three officers posted out of the Darwin Mobile Force to join 16th Infantry Brigade of the newly formed 6th Division, 2nd AIF. He became Adjutant of the 2/3rd Battalion and sailed with them to the Middle East on the first troop convoy out of Sydney on January 9, 1940.

The battalion was equipped and trained in Palestine and Egypt throughout 1940 and during the year Hassett was promoted Captain. He received his baptism of fire in the battle for Bardia on January 4-5, 1941, and two weeks later his battalion was preparing for the attack on Tobruk.

On the night of January 17, Hassett, with the Brigade Major (later Major General R. W. Knights), and a small protection party, crept out on the featureless desert towards the Italian positions to mark a starting
line for the Divisional attack. The Italian defenders had planted hundreds of mines and booby traps along their perimeter and negotiating a safe path through them at night was slow and hazardous. Nearing the enemy barbed wire defences, a booby trap was triggered by the leading scouts and Hassett was hit about the body and legs by flying shrapnel. He was mentioned in despatches and spent ten weeks in hospital recovering from wounds.

In October 1941, he was promoted Major and became Brigade Major of 18th Brigade, then located in Syria.

Early in 1942, the 18th Brigade returned to Woodside, South Australia, to re-equip for war in the Pacific against the Japanese. Hassett’s brilliance as a staff officer had preceded him and he was promoted Lieutenant Colonel. Still only 23, he was the youngest Lieutenant Colonel in the Army, and became a Grade One Staff Officer (GSO1) on Headquarters, 2nd Australian Corps, in Sydney and later at Esk, in South Queensland. He was to remain a staff officer until the end of the war.

In 1944, he made a determined effort to drop rank to return to his old battalion but at the highest level he was told that he would serve where it best suited the Army, and the plea was rejected.

When 2nd Corps joined the New Guinea campaign, Hassett was again mentioned in despatches and was awarded the OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire), for distinguished service during the Finschhafen campaign. He saw out the final months of the war as a GSO1 with 3rd Division on Bougainville.

With the coming of peace Hassett’s experience made him a logical choice as an instructor at the Australian Staff College, then located at Cabarlah, outside Toowoomba, Queensland. It was while stationed here that he met and married Hallie Roberts, the daughter of a Toowoomba doctor. Hassett stayed with the Staff College when it moved to Seymour, NSW, and then in 1947 to its present site at Queenscliff, Victoria.

In 1948 the Citizen Military Forces came into being with the raising of 2nd Division in Sydney. Hassett was appointed the original GSO1 to guide it through the formative stages. He remained there until 1951 when again the drums of war began to roll — this time in Korea.

In April 1951, a delighted Hassett was given command of 1st Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, at Ingleburn. He saw the
chance to fulfil a cherished dream — command of an infantry battalion in action. Fulfilment came sooner than he expected. Three months later he was in Korea as commanding officer of 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, at that time the only Australian battalion engaged in the war. The 14 months he led the unit in battle was to be the most satisfying of his career. He had the confidence and loyalty of his men; his judgement was respected throughout the 1st British Commonwealth Division; and he had his personal triumph in Operation Commando with the immediate award of the DSO (Distinguished Service Order).

In October 1951 the Chinese were firmly entrenched in rugged mountain country north of the 38th parallel. The aim of Operation Commando was to break the enemy hold on the territory and establish a new forward United Nations defence line. The 28th British Commonwealth Brigade was allotted the major task on the east-central sector, an assault on Hill 355 and Hill 317. As part of the Brigade, 3 RAR’s role was to first assist in the taking of Hill 355 and then to launch a battalion attack on Hill 317. Hassett’s operation order for the attack became a classic example of staff writing. It was well conceived, thoroughly planned and brilliantly executed.
Hill 317 was a dominating feature shaped like a pyramid. Its eastern face was so steep that it could be climbed only on hands and knees and with great difficulty. The western slopes, behind the enemy lines, offered easy access for enemy reinforcements and supplies. The ridges around the hill were ringed with trenches, machine gun nests and fighting pits. The approach to Hill 317 was across a wide, open valley to the eastern slopes. Three times previously U.N. troops had tried to assault the Hill in dawn attacks but each time they had been driven back by murderous cross-fire along the valley floor. Hassett’s plan was to cross the valley at night and position his troops on the enemy’s flank, in the foothills, ready to begin climbing at first light. He sent A Company to create a diversion on the left. B Company was to clear the lower slopes and D Company was to pass through and capture Hill 317 itself. C Company was to remain in reserve.

The attack began at 3.30 am on October 5, in semi-darkness and in a heavy mist that did not clear until mid morning. The soldiers slipped and slithered over the steep, broken and heavily timbered ground. It was exhausting and frightening as they engaged pockets of enemy unseen
under the blanket of mist. Once the mist cleared the fighting became more intense, much of it hand to hand, as the Australians grappled with both the enemy and the treacherous mountain. To the soldiers Hassett seemed to be everywhere, either in person or on the radio, giving encouragement, support and direction. At 4 pm the advance had slowed. Both B and D Companies had taken casualties and the men were physically exhausted. Hassett then made the decision that was to clinch the final victory. While A Company continued to divert enemy fire on the left, Hassett ordered the rested and relatively refreshed troops of C Company to pass through B and D Companies and take the hill-top. By 5 o’clock Hill 317 was in Australian hands.

During October 6 the Australians consolidated their position and prepared for a company attack on the remaining key feature held by the Chinese, the Hinge. Hassett directed this battle from a shell scrape high on the forward slope of Hill 317 as enemy mortars and artillery bombarded the hillside all day. His soldiers below were concerned for the safety of “The CO” in his exposed position. But when the battle was over that night and Hassett returned, dust-stained and weary-eyed, to the nearest company positions, his first remark to the young Lieutenant who met him was: “Hello there, what sort of day have you fellows had?” The five-day Operation Commando ended on October 8 with the Australian battalion being showered with praise. But perhaps the finest tribute came from Hassett, who said of his men, “their sheer guts is beyond belief”.

On returning to Australia in September 1952, Hassett spent almost a year as Chief Instructor at the School of Infantry, before becoming Director of Military Arts at Duntroon. He was appointed Marshal for the Royal Tour of Queen Elizabeth in 1954, responsible for co-ordination of all ceremonial activities, transport and communications. At a Friday investiture during the tour, Her Majesty presented Hassett with his DSO won in Korea. The following Monday he was summoned to the Royal Suite to receive the MVO (Member of the Royal Victorian Order) for personal services to Her Majesty during the tour.

Promoted Colonel in 1955 he remained at Duntroon until 1958 when he became Military Secretary at Army Headquarters for two years.

In July 1960 the Emergency in Malaya officially ended with only a handful of Terrorists still operating in the northern Malay States from sanctuaries in Thailand. The 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade
had been committed to the conflict for five years and a strong leader was required to replace the popular British Commander, Brigadier John Mogg (now General Sir John Mogg, Deputy Supreme Commander of NATO). Hassett was chosen, and promoted Brigadier to take command in October 1960. As well as the men of the Brigade stationed in Perak, Hassett also commanded the North Malaya Military District which stretched from Kuala Lumpur north to the Thailand border — some 8,000 men. The colourful Mogg had moulded the British, Australian and New Zealand troops of the Brigade into a successful force of jungle fighters, usually operating in company or battalion strength. Hassett quickly saw that if the Brigade was to retain its peak of efficiency and morale, a wider role than the occasional skirmish with remaining Terrorists was required. Plans for a SEATO type involvement had been gathering dust since the Brigade entered the Emergency. Hassett began training his units in more conventional warfare and gradually increased the scope and tempo until the entire Brigade was exercising as a single force for the first time since Korea.

During 1961 Hassett supervised the move of the Brigade from Perak south to the coastal State of Malacca where the Brigade was to be concentrated in the recently completed Terendak Garrison. On leaving Perak, the Sultan presented Hassett with a Meritorious Service decoration. He was the only Australian so honoured during the Brigade’s involvement in the Emergency.

A year at the Imperial Defence College, London, in 1963 came next, followed by promotion to Major General and two years as Deputy Chief of the General Staff in Canberra. In 1966 he was awarded the CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire), for long and distinguished service to the Army, and returned to the United Kingdom, this time as head of the Australian Joint Services Staff and Extra Gentleman Usher to the Queen.

From 1968 to 1970 he was General Officer Commanding, Northern Command, with headquarters in Brisbane. While stationed in the sunny capital of Queensland he was able to relax frequently with his wife and family, to enjoy fishing and boating — now his main sporting interests.

Early in 1970 Hassett began his most significant contribution to the Service he had made his life — complete reorganization of the Army. There was a desperate need for modernization. The existing structure had been unchanged since Federation. The three principal areas concerned were Army Headquarters, the antiquated system of geographic
commands based on State boundaries, and a rationalization of the logistic services. Of the installations in each State some were controlled by the local commander and others by Army Headquarters. In the field of logistics alone it was sometimes necessary to go through seven different Army channels to obtain a single item. As Chairman of the Army Review Committee, Hassett spent twelve months producing a plan to rationalize command and control by introducing a functional system of Field Force, Training and Logistic Commands with an Army Headquarters superimposed to provide overall authority and policy direction. In evolving an acceptable plan the requirements of every branch of the Army had to be considered. Important additional benefits were the Army’s capability to more quickly mobilize in time of war and streamlining of the working relationships with the RAAF and the RAN. Hassett was awarded the CB (Companion of the Order of the Bath) during this planning year. In 1971 his reorganization concept was approved and he was appointed Vice Chief of the General Staff. For the next two years he supervised implementation of his proposals.

On November 20, 1973, Hassett reached the pinnacle of Army achievement when he was promoted Lieutenant General and appointed Chief of the General Staff. The distinction was rare in that he was the first Australian to become the nation’s top soldier in an Army structure of his own design. In the two years that he served as Chief of the General Staff he steered the newly-structured Army through a major reorientation of Defence thinking. To use his own often quoted words: “An independent and pressing task was for the Army to reinforce and broaden its high level of professional expertise gained over the past decade, by developing and testing doctrinal concepts against the problems of the defence of Australia, and the support of Australian interests and initiatives elsewhere.” This was an aspect of Australian defence which had, of necessity, been given a low priority in recent years.

When the first awards under Australia’s new honours system were announced in June 1975, Hassett received the AC (Companion of the Order of Australia), for “eminent service in duties of great responsibility”. But the ultimate in military reward for Hassett was still to come. Three days later it was officially announced that on November 24, 1975, he would be promoted General to fill Australia’s highest Service appointment — Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee — a title which is to be changed early in 1976 to Chief of Defence Force Staff.
Lieutenant General A. L. MacDonald, CB, OBE, Chief of the General Staff.
LIEUTENANT GENERAL A. L. MacDONALD, CB, OBE
Chief of the General Staff

Lieutenant General Arthur Leslie MacDonald, CB, OBE, was born in Rockhampton, Queensland, on 30 January 1919 and attended The Southport School, Queensland. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1939 and during World War II served in the Middle-East, New Guinea and the United Kingdom. After a series of staff postings in Australia in the early post war years, he was appointed to command the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, in Korea in March 1953. Two years later he became Director of Military Operations at Army Headquarters, an appointment which was followed in 1957 by duty with the SEATO Military Planning Office in Bangkok as the Senior Australian Planner. On his return to Australia in 1959, Lieutenant General MacDonald was appointed Commandant of the Jungle Training Centre at Canungra. In July 1960 he became Director of Staff Duties at Army Headquarters and, after attending the 1962 course at the Imperial Defence College in London, he was appointed Deputy Commander of the 1st Division. In January 1965 Lieutenant General MacDonald became the first Commander of the then newly created Papua and New Guinea Command. In April 1966 he was promoted to Major General and was Deputy Chief of the General Staff until August 1967 when he became the Adjutant-General. In January 1968 he was appointed to command the Australian Force in Vietnam. He returned to the appointment of Adjutant-General and Second Military Member of the Military Board in June 1969 on completion of his service in Vietnam. Lieutenant General MacDonald became General Officer Commanding Northern Command in March 1970. He was appointed Chief of Operations at Army Headquarters on 1 March 1973 and assumed the position of Vice Chief of the General Staff on 20 November 1973. He was awarded the OBE and was mentioned in dispatches in 1953 and in 1969 was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath in recognition of his services in Vietnam. His promotion to Lieutenant General and appointment as Chief of the General Staff became effective on 24 November 1975.
UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTES

United Service Institutes were originally founded in Australia in 1888 for the promotion and advancement of science and literature in the Services. There are United Service Institutes (USIs) in Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart, with branches at Albury, Geelong and Launceston. Reciprocity of membership exists between all the USIs.

A United Service Institute of Australia was formed on 1 January 1974. This has as its constituent members, the USIs of the States and the A.C.T., all of whom have as their aim "to further the study of strategy, national defence, international affairs and related matters".

All USIs (except that of the USI of the A.C.T. whose papers are available at the Bridges Library, R.M.C. Duntroon) have their own libraries and run monthly lectures, discussions and other activities.

Membership is available to any person in sympathy with the aims of the USI and who will make a positive contribution to it. Enquiries can be made to the Secretaries of USIs as follows:

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This article is reprinted from an address given to the USI in 1935 by the then Colonel Wynter. The clear, forceful ideas expressed in the article, although related to Australian defence in 1935, will be found of considerable interest to readers, especially by those with an interest in current defence problems.

Colonel D. H. Wynter, CMG, DSO, idc, psc

The subject matter of this lecture has been prepared mainly with reference to the reported comments of Field Marshal Lord Milne, ex-Chief of the Imperial General Staff, in a special press interview in October last. Lord Milne is of course an officer for whose views and experience we naturally have the very greatest respect. It is natural enough, however, that the outlook of British Officers on the subject of Australia’s defence should vary in some degree from our own. I make no apology therefore for initiating this discussion on the basis of the views which are attributed to him by the press. In this place we are entitled to examine the public statements of any officer, however distinguished, and to arrive at our own conclusions. It is only by an attitude of that kind in regard to our discussions that a United Service Institution can justify its existence.

Major General Henry Douglas Wynter CB, CMG, DSO, idc, psc, was born at Winton, Queensland in 1886. He was commissioned in the Wide Bay Infantry Regiment on 26 February 1907 and joined the PMF in 1911. In the first World War he was mentioned in dispatches five times and was awarded the DSO. After war service in Europe, he attended the Staff College, Camberley, in 1921 and 1922. Between 1925 and 1929 he was Director of Mobilization and a member of the War Railway Council. He attended the Imperial Defence College, London in 1930, and on his return to Australia he resumed the appointment of Director of Mobilization. He was Director of Military Training from 1935 to 1937, and Commandant and CI at the Command and Staff School, Sydney, 1938-9. During the second World War he was GOC N Comd 1939-40; GOC Australian Troops in England, 1940; GOC E Comd 1941. His final appointment was T/Lt Gen, Administration, AHQ Melbourne, 1942-44. He died on 7 February 1945.
In his interview Lord Milne expressed the orthodox view that in
our maritime Empire the main, indeed the only real means of defence
are naval forces supported by an adequately defended chain of bases.
He further went on to say — “There is no such thing to my mind as
Australian Defence pure and simple. It can only be part of a whole —
part of Imperial Defence.” On grounds of pure theory few, if any,
informed persons will be found to disagree with him. The practical
application of a theory or ideal system depends, however, upon the
practical possibilities of the case and the enunciation of a theory or
ideal system, especially by a distinguished expert, may be misleading
unless full weight be given to the attendant factors which affect its
application.

Effect of the Political Organisation of the Empire. The system
of defence visualised by Lord Milne pre-supposes a pukka system of
Imperial Defence based presumably upon Imperial co-operation. Past
experience and the de-centralised political organisation of the Empire
indicate that this ideal is attainable only in a very imperfect degree.
Each of the Governments of the politically independent units of the
Empire is responsible to its own people and parliament; each has its
own outlook upon Imperial affairs varying between strong sentimental
attachment, mild acquiescence and, in one case, an attitude of ill-
concealed hostility. Each country moreover is, in the ordinary course
of human nature, bound to think, to some extent at any rate, of its own
especial position in the scheme of defence and in this each is faced with
a different strategical problem.

For the implementation of the ideal system, a first condition is the
approval of these varied and divergent interests to the scheme itself
and to the equitable sharing of the cost. A second condition is the
maintenance of the obligations involved by that approval by each unit
of the Empire throughout its financial vicissitudes and under successive
governments of frequently changing political complexion. A third
condition is the establishment of an acceptable organ of central control
of the instrument of defence created by the scheme.

The prospects of the ideal system do not appear rosy. In fact one
might well ask: “Is there such a thing as Imperial Defence properly so
called?”

It would be a mistake to assume that there is no such thing just
as it is a mistake in the other direction to assume that the whole field
DEFENCE OF AUST. AND RELATION TO IMPERIAL DEFENCE

is covered by this intangible and somewhat nebulous thing we call Imperial Defence.

It may be rightly argued, however, that a system imperfect though it may be in its financial and other incidence is deserving of the support of all willing units of the Empire, provided that the scheme is effective for the purpose. The present system of Imperial Defence, if it may be so called, entails the acceptance of the major part of the financial burden by the mother country and places the control of the principal instrument entirely in the hands of her government. It may well be argued that the time has arrived for a change of attitude on the part of the Dominions in regard to increased participation in the responsibilities of Imperial Defence if only on the grounds of equity but it appears certain from what has been said, first that no scheme really equitable as between all the Dominions is within the bounds of possible attainment and, second, that each Dominion is bound to ask itself whether any scheme of Imperial Defence UNDER EXISTING CONDITIONS is likely to achieve the desired result for the Empire in general and for its own country in particular.

The Chain of Forts. In his interview Lord Milne suggested a chain of military and naval forts extending from Portsmouth to Singapore as the best means of strengthening the Imperial Defences. Such a chain of fortified bases is an essential part of Naval defence because it would ensure the strategic mobility of the fleet and its power to be maintained in naval operations from any one of them. It must be realised, however, that a fort in itself defends nothing but itself and the materials and resources contained within it. A fortified naval base such as Singapore cannot be regarded as a defence, for example, of the trade route through the Indian Ocean or of Australia, except in conjunction with a fleet based upon it. It is the presence of the fleet which is the vital element, the fort being an enabling factor. This is perhaps rather elementary but it is desirable to make the point clear.

The Royal Navy. In the examination of the problem of defence, the most important question is whether or not the naval forces of the Empire can be relied upon to ensure that no hostile forces shall be able to cross the seas and impose conquest or inflict serious damage upon the Empire or its principal components. In this regard the voices of Lords Jellicoe and Beatty, of Admiral Richmond and other senior naval officers have recently been raised in persistent chorus to exclaim that the fleet is not strong enough to perform its primary role of ensuring
essential imports into the United Kingdom in time of war. From the Australian point of view, the further question arises whether that fleet, said by its most senior officers to be inadequate to perform its primary role, is, at the same time, capable of despatching sufficient force to the Far East to attain naval supremacy in the Western Pacific and thus to deny to the enemy the use of those seas for offensive operations.

It is a reasonable assumption that, if an Eastern power of the first class thought fit to make an unacceptable demand, such for example, as the abrogation of the white Australia policy, she would be likely, more than at any other time, to make it when Great Britain is involved or threatened to become involved in a war in Europe. Under the circumstances, could it be expected that the British Government would authorise the despatch of the Fleet or a substantial part of it to the Far East? The answer, and in the circumstances a perfectly reasonable one, appears to have been given by Admiral Sir Richard Webb, formerly President of the Naval War College, who at a lecture at the Royal United Service Institution on 29 October 1930 (see RUSI Journal) said: “We are not only an Oceanic Power, in the widest sense, but also a European country with all Europe’s complicated troubles and responsibilities at our door; that being so, to imagine that we are going to uncover the heart of the Empire and send our fleet thousands of miles into the Pacific with only one base, Singapore, for our supplies and damaged ships is to write us down as something worse than fools. Anyway the British public would never tolerate it.” It seems reasonable to conclude that the potentialities of the case are such, to say the least, as to cause apprehension in our minds concerning the ability of the Naval Forces of the Empire, at their present strength, to ensure to us immunity from attack by a determined enemy.

The obvious answer would appear to be that the remedy lies in a substantial increase of the Naval Forces relative to the naval strength of other countries, and that it should be Australia’s duty to contribute in good measure to such an increase. A practical and complete bar to that idea consists, however, in the fact that, under the London Treaty of 1930, the Empire’s naval forces are limited to approximately their present proportions. No distinction, moreover; is made between the British and Dominion navies. They are limited as a whole. Any increased contribution by Australia to the Empire’s Naval Forces might be an equitable act, but it would not add one iota to the total Naval strength. It may be said that the London Naval Treaty is due
for review next year. It would be an optimist, however, who could at this juncture conclude that, if any agreement is reached, there will be any material modification of existing naval ratios. Economic and financial factors, moreover, are bound to have their effect, even if the restrictions upon strength are removed, in preventing any change in naval balance for many years to come apart from the fact that, if a race in armaments should ensue, the nations concerned will produce a Roland for an Oliver. Ships also take years to build.

Japan has already demanded "parity" in naval strength.

Great Britain, moreover, within the past few weeks has decided to increase her air forces threefold, making it clear beyond the shadow of doubt that her first concern is her own local security. It would be almost an impossible task for Great Britain to indulge in a naval armament race concurrently with a threefold expansion of her air force.

It is an inevitable if uncomforting conclusion that the capacity of the Naval Forces of the Empire to ensure the security of this country is at least open to doubt. However much, therefore, we may agree with the theoretical basis of Lord Milne's suggestions we are bound in common prudence to face the facts squarely and to explore such means, additional to the Imperial Naval Forces, as may be open to us to improve our national security. It would be scarcely reasonable that we should be expected to immolate ourselves upon the lofty Imperial altar which is suggested by the recent words of a British Admiral who said that even the loss of Australia during a war would not be vital and that, if the Empire Navy were successful in its main struggle, Great Britain could again re-conquer Australia at her leisure — a comforting conclusion to be sure but one which Australians at any rate cannot contemplate with the same impersonal detachment as that of the gallant Admiral.

**Self-reliance in Defence.** The conclusion, which is a fair one from the considerations discussed, that the ability of the Naval Forces of the Empire to encompass our security is open to grave doubt, does not warrant a deduction that the provisions for Imperial defence does not play a material if inadequate part in our security. That it still plays a material part is obvious if only by reason that, so long as we retain the necessary base or bases in our possession, the ultimate intervention of the British Fleet in the Western Pacific will always remain a potential factor. Since, however, bases are liable to capture or damage by air attack and since, in any case, the strength of any naval detach-
ment to the Far East must be subject to unforeseen eventualities, and since the hazards of naval warfare must never be left out of account, it follows that a greater degree of self-reliance in Australian defence is essential. This does not imply any real conflict of interest between local defence and Imperial defence. An improvement in our self-reliance would, on the contrary, assist the Empire Fleet to be kept concentrated at the decisive point wherever it may be, by relieving it of possible political pressure in a time of crisis, to detach strength from the main operations. Local security, too, is bound to be an important if not a ruling consideration in the minds of the Governments of the great democracies comprising the Empire. It cannot be gainsaid, for example, that the primary reason for the existence of the Royal Navy is the protection of Great Britain and its food supply and that the maritime defence of the Empire is an incidental if highly important function of that Navy.

I have already referred to Great Britain's decision to make a threefold increase in her air force. No one should deny the soundness of that decision but it is perfectly obvious that, even at the heart of the Empire local security takes the pride of place.

There is no escape from the conclusion that, with the development of Air power and the re-emergence of Germany, Great Britain is becoming more and more a European and less and less a world power. Who then can deny that Australia too, like England, must look first to her local security in which her self-reliance in defence will be the principal element. Charity, here, no less than in England, begins at home and it is futile for our naval friends to imagine that, in 1935, they are still living in the halcyon naval days of 1900.

It would probably be inexpedient strategically for the Dominions, with their more limited resources, to stress unduly their own local defence if that should lead to a serious weakening of an effective central system which would naturally be more economical and more effectual than separate individual efforts. This is probably true even though the Dominions can have no real say in the control of the central system. But it has been shown that the effectiveness of the existing central system, if it may be given such a name, is open to grave doubt; that increased contributions in ships would not add to the total strength of the internationally limited navy; and that increased self-reliance in defence is a definite aid to the application by the central system of the principle of concentration of superior force at the decisive
time and place. It may be said with truth, therefore, that in the circumstances of our time, a considerable degree of self-reliance in defence which in fact does not detract from but aids the central system, is the basis upon which any system of Imperial Defence must rest. It is probably for this reason that the Committee of Imperial Defence has stressed the point that each part of the Empire is primarily responsible for its own local defence. It remains to be considered how in Australia the required degree of local defence should be attained.

**Type of Probable Attack.** The first point to be considered in the decision as to how the required degree of self-reliance can be attained, is the type and degree of attack to which Australia may be subject. This may be dealt with under the following heads:

a. **Raid.** It is fashionable amongst many of the pundits who are wont to express their opinions on the subject to declaim from the security of a country which cannot materially suffer from the result, whatever it may be, that the most that Australia has to fear is minor raids by naval forces and the depredations of commerce destroyers. These pundits are mainly of the Blue Water school who, in a misplaced enthusiasm for their own arm, will not permit themselves to see any point which may detract from their fixed idea that the Navy is the be-all and end-all of defence. There are others, chiefly drawn from the ranks of Australian politicians of a certain complexion, who, to suit their particular political catcheries [sic] or their pacifist tendencies, seize upon this idea as an excuse for doing nothing whatever for Australian defence. The gentlemen of the Blue Water school and the proletarian defeatists establish at this point of agreement a strange unholy union.

The assumptions upon which the idea that minor raids only need be guarded against are, first that the British Fleet will arrive at Singapore in time and, second that it will find on arrival a properly equipped base not captured or seriously damaged by naval or air bombardment, and third that the British Fleet wins the naval battle if it does come out. It has been shown conclusively enough that in certain circumstances, which cannot on any conceivable ground be excluded from the problem and which should in fact be the principal elements taken into account in its solution, that there
are very grave doubts whether the British Fleet or any substantial part of it, will be despatched to Singapore at all. There is the further factor, amounting almost to a certainty, that if the British Fleet is ultimately sent to Singapore it will not, in the circumstances in question, be so sent until the situation on the other side of the world has been thoroughly liquidated. This delay in the despatch of the fleet, inevitably bound to be prolonged, will provide the enemy with the opportunity to capture or damage the Singapore base. In the face of these considerations it would surely be no-one but the most desperate of gamblers who would be satisfied with the conclusion that Australia is liable merely to raids of a more or less minor character.

I have heard it argued that, even if the Main Fleet did not come to Singapore such cruiser and light forces as the Admiralty would probably station at Singapore, aided perhaps by the Australian Squadron would be a deterrent against anything but raids.

First let us consider the geographical location of Singapore. It is eminently well placed for the defence of India and the trade route through the Indian Ocean but is some 3,000 miles west of the direct line of approach from Japan to Eastern Australia — as far approximately as the whole breadth of the Atlantic between Gibraltar and New York. The idea, moreover, that the naval forces stationed at Singapore in such circumstances, which would be very weak relative to Japan, could act as a real deterrent seems to me to be contrary to all modern naval experience. There is nothing so inferior as an inferior surface fleet. The great German Navy in 1914-18, powerful as it was, was forced to submit to the landing of the greatest overseas expeditions in history and to their reinforcement and maintenance for four years, under its very nose, impotent in every sphere save the banditry of submarines. It is far more likely that the situation of such inferior British naval forces as may be left in the Pacific pending the supposed ultimate arrival of the Main Fleet will be similar to that of Von Spee's Squadron in 1914 — hunted in every sea — or that they will be bottled up under the protection of fortress guns ultimately, quite possibly, to suffer the fate of the Russian
Squadron at Port Arthur or of the "Konigsberg" in an African creek.

b. Major Land and Air Attack. Since we must consider something more than raids it is necessary to discuss the possible extent and object of more extensive offensive operations. The political object of an enemy might vary between the enforcement of a demand or policy, territorial conquest or the placing of Australia and incidentally other countries in the Western Pacific under his economic dominion. In the present economic conditions of the world the latter would appear to be a political object highly to be prized by an enemy whose supreme need is markets for manufactured goods. A condition precedent to the permanent attainment of any of the objects stated would be the elimination of the possibility of the arrival in the Western Pacific of superior British Naval forces. The first step in the process would be the capture or destruction of Hong Kong and Singapore. This would open the way for that direct pressure which would be necessary for the enforcement of policy. So long as the principal Australian seaports still remained in our possession there would remain in the minds of the enemy the lurking potentiality of the eventual arrival of the British Fleet at them and of the commencement of operations, based upon those ports, of a step by step advance to the North with the object of re-establishing the British position in the Far East. The permanent attainment by the enemy of the political objects mentioned above, or any of them, might in the last resort depend upon the deprivation of the British Fleet of the use of the principal Australian ports as well as Hong Kong and Singapore.

Supposing that Singapore were captured by Japan a direct advance based on Australia towards Japan — gradual though it might have to be — would possibly be the only means of causing Japan to uncover Singapore and so of providing a reasonable possibility for its re-capture by forces operating from India.

The strategic relationship of Australia, its industrial and other resources and of those of its ports which are capable of being used as, or of being transformed into, first class naval bases, to the security of British interests in the Far East, is of the
highest importance and does not appear to be adequately realised in the counsels of Imperial Defence. It may well be that the enemy would consider a major attack upon Australia essential to the attainment of the military object of eliminating British sea power from the Western Pacific, even if he had no intention of remaining in permanent occupation of the country because, unless he were lucky enough to ensure submission with less effort, it would be on the attainment of the military object mentioned that he would have to rely for the secure enjoyment of his political objects. These considerations assuredly lead to the conclusion that our provision for local defence should contemplate the possibility of a major land and air attack.

c. Blockade. A third form of attack or pressure, and one which the Naval protagonists appear to regard as likely to be decisive, is blockade. In this Lord Milne apparently agrees with the naval view because he is reported as saying that the position could not have been better put than by Sir George Pearce when, so it is alleged, the latter said “If Australia’s markets were closed and her imports and exports stopped by enemy action, she would be forced to sue for peace without a single enemy soldier coming within sight of her shores. Against such attacks she has only one defence — an efficient and powerful Empire Navy.” It will be readily admitted that the best defence against blockade is superior naval forces. The question whether a superiority in naval forces can be concentrated at the place where they can prevent the blockade has already been discussed and is a vital factor in the case. The statement, however, implies a curious appreciation of Australia’s economic position, the conditions precedent to the establishment of an effective blockade and of the character and determination of Australia’s people and Government. Australia is self-supporting in all the necessities of life. It produces ample food and clothing for its people. A blockade would deprive the people of some luxuries and modern amenities of life. It would cause some difficulty in the industrial sphere by the necessity to make adjustments consequent upon reduction in the present scale use of the internal combustion engine. It would very effectively prevent us from paying our
overseas debts — a matter of as much, if not much more, concern to other people as to ourselves. But to suggest that a people thoroughly well and healthily clothed and fed and engaged in a struggle deemed vital to their national honour and existence, would meekly surrender because of the comparatively minor hardships imposed by a blockade, is to put a poor estimation upon their character and upon the determination of their government. It is an axiom amongst all students of economic pressure in war that the blockade is an exceedingly feeble and slow method of war against a country which is self-contained in essential supplies of food and clothing. Except against an insular and non-self-supporting country such as England the blockade weapon must rely for its success on the concurrent happening of military operations. Napoleon was not defeated until ten years after Trafalgar and then only on the field of battle. The blockade of Germany in the Great War was merely complementary to the defeat of the forces on land. It is only the deprivation by the enemy of the resources with which to carry on the fight that the blockade can be regarded as being of decisive importance in a struggle against a country whose food and clothing supplies are assured. How then can it be said that Australia, by blockade alone, would be forced to surrender without a single enemy soldier coming within sight of her shores, unless indeed cowardice and materialism have become our principal national characteristics. It were well that those who make pronouncements on this subject should take care to study it beforehand.

The feasibility of the application of a blockade against Australia is also a matter which needs more than passing notice. The trade routes via the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, which give access to our Southern ports, lie many thousands of miles away from the bases of any possible enemy. Since sporadic commerce raiding could not produce anything but a very partial result, it would be quite impossible for an enemy to blockade those ports effectively unless he secured advanced bases, from which to operate his ships, within convenient reach of the objectives. In view of the scattered location of our ports between Fremantle and Melbourne, two such advanced bases at least would be required — one in the East and one in the West.
It so happens that there are no places, except within Australian territory, which are so placed as to serve effectively as advanced bases for a blockade of our southern ports. In order therefore to establish his blockade, should he think such a proceeding worth while, it would be necessary for an enemy to take, hold and guard against land and air attack, at least two places within our territory to service as advanced bases. This would involve military operations on a considerable scale. It would seem therefore that, even if we accept the fantastic notions contained in the above quoted statement, a major land attack upon Australian territory is an essential preliminary to the establishment of an effective blockade by an enemy. Our land and air forces therefore, in the conditions under discussion, are an essential element in the prevention of the application of an effective blockade.

It seems therefore that a calm consideration of the factors of the case — those connected with the maintenance of our territorial security as well as the prevention of the application of a blockade — provide overwhelming arguments for preparation against major attack. The idea that we should think merely of minor raids, and that we should do it at the behest of people mainly located on the other side of the world, is to me completely incomprehensible.

**The Degree of Land and Air Attack.** It has been concluded in the foregoing discussion that our provision for local defence should contemplate the possibility of a major land and air attack and this is necessary both as regards defence of our territory and the countering of attempts to impose a blockade. It is now necessary to consider the possible degree of such an attack in order to determine the defensive arrangements which are demanded. This will be done under the following heads:

- Naval Bombardment of Ports;
- Air attack from carriers;
- Air attack from shore bases;
- Combined land and air attack.

a. **Naval Bombardment of Ports.** This is the form of attack which our Fixed Defences are designed to meet.
b. *Air Attack from Aircraft Carriers*. This form of attack implies an offensive on a limited scale both in form and in time. The number and offensive capacity of aircraft which can be borne by carriers are limited. The difficulties of taking off from and still more of landing upon the decks of the carrier restrict the numbers of aircraft which can be brought into effective action at one time. The carrier itself is a vulnerable object which must, during the process, steam in a particular direction relative to the wind. The aircraft borne by carriers moreover are designed primarily for fleet reconnaissance and operations directly related to those of the fleet. Attacks from aircraft carriers must necessarily be sporadic in nature since it is impossible to maintain the ships continuously at the place on the sea from which the attacks must be made. The consequence is that the results of air attack from carriers, though doubtlessly uncomfortable during the limited periods of their occurrence for the people subject to attack, are unlikely to have decisive results against a determined opponent. It is unlikely, moreover, that, if we possess an air force of even moderate dimensions, an enemy would expose his vulnerable aircraft carriers, which are highly valuable to the operations of his fleet, for such a period of time and in such a place as would expose them to destruction or serious damage by our aircraft. One bomb on the decks of the carrier might render it useless as a mobile air base. The conclusion is that we need not be unduly apprehensive of this form of attack. Consideration of the remaining elements of the problem will show that we need the means of defeating a much more serious degree of attack. This smaller matter will therefore be found to be covered by the greater.

c. *Air Attack from Shore Bases*. In order to apply this form of attack, an enemy must first effect a landing and then establish and guard his air base. Once the base is taken, aircraft transported in transports can be assembled with their necessary requirements in personnel, materiel and anti-aircraft guns and would then operate from a stable base. The aircraft borne in carriers would conceivably be used temporarily for the defensive operation of covering the landing. It will be readily seen that after the preliminary processes have been effected air attack
from a shore base would be a much more serious proposition than attack from carriers. An essential element in this form of attack, apart from the actual capture of the base, and the landing and organisation of Air Forces, is its continued protection from attack by land and air forces. For this military forces would be required on a scale conditioned by the probable extent of the military attack to which it would be liable. [Aircraft alone] could not defend the base against even a minor scale attack by land forces. It is impossible therefore to contemplate an attack from a shore base by aircraft unless, in conjunction with a combined operation by naval, land and air forces. The problem therefore resolves itself down to the consideration of the third element, viz: combined land and air attack.

d. **Combined Land and Air Attack.** It is not to be expected that an enemy, finding it necessary for his purpose to despatch a combined military and air expedition, would be content to rely entirely upon either the military part of his force by itself or the air part by itself to bring the offensive operations to a successful conclusion. It is at least open to doubt, moreover, whether under the conditions of an overseas operation an air offensive alone, unaccompanied by the immediate and personal exercise of force entailed by military occupation, could in fact succeed in the permanent imposition of the will of the conqueror upon the opponent. In similar fashion, though to a lesser degree, the operations of the military force would be dependent upon the co-operation of air forces. The enemy expedition would therefore need to be composed of land and air forces in due proportion and balance. The size of the expedition would be relative to his total forces available, to his commitments in other parts of the world and to the availability of shipping for the transportation of the force. It is this latter factor which imposes the principal limitation upon the strength of the expedition and which enables us to contemplate measures of defence against a strong power with considerably greater equanimity than if we were liable to simultaneous attack by all his forces. The capacity of the shipping likely to be available to any power for the transportation of troops can be calculated with tolerable accuracy. Such a calculation makes
it clear that the strength of the probable enemy expeditionary force sent in the first convoy while formidable enough, is not likely to be of such dimensions as to be beyond our capacity to provide forces to meet it on more than equal terms. Our problem then, in order to achieve the required degree of self-reliance in defence, is to provide forces of such a strength as to enable us to defeat the enemy forces sent in the initial convoy before his ships have time to return and bring another load. If that object be achieved with tolerable probability, it is unlikely that the enemy would venture upon the expedition at all and thus our forces would act as the best defence of all — an effective deterrent.

An important factor bearing upon this question is the efficiency of our inland transportation system upon which, as regards our military forces, we are dependent to effect a concentration at a selected point with due celerity. Another is the question whether the enemy landing would be attempted at a place within the area served by our transportation system. In view of the likelihood that an enemy would aim at a quick decision and also in view of the factors discussed concerning his probable military object, it would seem futile that the object of his main attack should be any place the loss of which would not profoundly affect our national life. While, therefore, minor landings at remote places cannot be left out of reckoning, sound strategy on the part of an enemy would appear to demand that his principal attack be made against one of our vital centres. This would automatically place it within the area served by our transportation system. Still another and highly important factor is that, while being of suitable strength in personnel, our forces must also be provided with the modern armament and equipment and the degree of training which are essential to their attainment of the power of offensive as well as defensive action.

It also becomes clear that while a landing within the area served by our transportation system is a problem for both the Army and the Air Force, the latter has in addition a special function in relation to enemy operations at distant parts. Its employment at distant points must however be based on security in the principal strategical areas achievable by land
forces. The two services therefore apart from their essentiality in relation to each other have special co-related functions.

The Determination of the Forces Required

a. Naval Forces — *The Royal Australian Navy*. It is obviously impossible for a country of the population and resources of Australia to provide a Navy which could hope to meet the Navy of a first class power on anything approaching equal terms. We are precluded, moreover, by international treaty from developing naval forces of our own additional to our proportion of the total strength allowed for the Naval Forces of the Empire. Even if we should wish to make a considerable increase in our naval forces that could only be done concurrently with a corresponding diminution of the forces directly at the disposal of Great Britain. To the extent that such an increase might diminish the security of Great Britain we might well expect the latter to object or, alternatively, to insist that all naval forces be unreservedly, by prior agreement, placed at the disposal of the Admiralty on the outbreak of war. As the Dominion Naval Forces form part of the one Imperial Fleet, the placing of our ships at the disposal of the Admiralty upon the outbreak of war would appear, in any case, to be a sensible act especially as our present naval forces, or such additions thereto as we could hope to provide, would be hopelessly inadequate to play any real part in the defence of Australia in the absence of the British Fleet on the other side of the world. If they were so disposed they could be expected to play a useful part in the course of events which would not be attainable by them if they were tied down to local defence.

The proper role, therefore, of the R.A.N. is co-operation in Imperial Defence and not local defence. It is extremely doubtful however whether public opinion would allow the R.A.N. to be placed at the disposal of the Admiralty, even though it be of little value for home defence, unless there exists provision for self-reliance in other directions of such a kind as to inspire a reasonable degree of public confidence. The inevitable conclusion is that, in the attainment of the necessary degree of self-reliance, an increase of our local naval forces cannot find any appropriate place. It is not contended for one moment that our
present contribution to the Imperial Naval Forces, which as already noted still plays an important if inadequate part in our security, should be diminished, but it is essential that the true place of our Navy in the scheme of things be properly appreciated, together with the fact that its allotment to its proper role will probably be dependent upon local security acquirable only by other means.

b. **Air Forces.** The characteristics of aircraft render them of especial importance in the attainment of self-reliance in our defence. Offensive operations against us from aircraft carriers, as already noted, would be practically ruled out if we possess an air force of even moderate dimensions. Aircraft also possess the capacity for long range reconnaissance to detect the approach of hostile convoys and to attack them both before and during a landing. It would be unsafe, however, to place complete reliance on the ability of aircraft to prevent a landing. An enemy would naturally make his approach beyond the range of reconnaissance aircraft and turn in at right angles towards his objectives making full use of the hours of darkness to cover his approach. After his convoys have been discovered the next step in the air plan would be to concentrate our offensive aircraft against the convoys. To combat this an enemy would use stratagem and would certainly not keep his ships in one body. The appearance of several small groups of ships at widely separated places off our coast would make the decision as to where to concentrate our aircraft difficult. Our aircraft would have to ascertain whether in fact the ships were hostile and then determine which was the main convoy or whether the main landing might not be made elsewhere while our air command was still in a state of uncertainty. The ability of aircraft actually to stop a landing when opposed by the aircraft and anti-aircraft guns of the convoy and, in the face of other possible intervening elements, such as adverse weather and fog, must also remain open to doubt, at any rate until clearly shown.

In any case any attempt to defend this country by aircraft alone would possibly necessitate the building up of an air force of such a size as to be beyond the capacity of the country to maintain. Then there is the question of having the eggs in one
basket. Nevertheless the power of aircraft to reconnoitre and attack at a distance and the function co-related to that of the army already mentioned, will be of the greatest importance to our system of defence. Aircraft, moreover, are essential to combat the air forces of the enemy after he has effected a landing and to perform essential functions for and in co-operation with the land forces.

c. Land Forces. In the last resort the principal factor in our local defence will be land forces. The size of the enemy expedition will necessarily be regulated mainly by the strength of the military forces he is likely to meet. If our land forces are negligible, his shipping problem is simplified and, by the use of shipping in full measure, the force despatched can be of such a size as to avoid the risk of defeat in detail. On the other hand, if our land forces are of sufficient strength, an enemy will be unable to send the expedition at all except at grave risk of defeat in detail, unless he can assemble for one expedition the full quantity of shipping demanded by the size of a force deemed necessary to hold out against us until subsequent trips shall bring reinforcements and so attain superiority for him. It is upon this question of the relation between the size of the force required and the quantity of shipping available that an enemy's problem will mainly turn, and a point is readily reached but not until our land and air forces are given substantial strength where the limitations of his shipping will force an enemy to abandon the idea of sending the expedition.

As has already been noted, the quantity of shipping likely to be available to an enemy for transportation of troops can be estimated with tolerable accuracy. From this the maximum strength of his initial force can be deduced. Our problem, therefore, resolves itself into the provision of land forces of such a strength as to have a reasonable chance, in conjunction with our air forces, of defeating the first expedition before the enemy's ships can return and bring a second load. It so happens that this, especially as our land forces are mainly militia, not unduly costly to maintain, is within our financial capacity. Our existing war organisation, which our present nucleus peace organisation is designed to provide, is a reasonable if perhaps barely sufficient provision for the purpose.
From this statement it should not be inferred that the existing nucleus organization could in fact expand satisfactorily into the approved war organisation, because quite definitely it could not, at any rate within the time likely to be available. The peace organisation, in order to be able to achieve that object, needs considerable additions to its personnel, armament and equipment, as well as a much higher degree of training especially for its leaders.

It may be of interest to say that the war organisation of Belgium which has a population of 8,000,000 is 18 divisions, 1 mechanised division and 2 cavalry divisions. I do not suggest that Australia requires an army organisation of that dimension but I mention it to show that if Australia is really determined about this question of self-defence there is no need for any suggestion that, with our population of nearly 7,000,000, that self-reliance is beyond our capacity. That suggestion is rather a favourite with those who do not wish to see anything but naval defence. It might have some force if we had a contiguous frontier with a strong enemy, though it in any case would be no excuse for complete defencelessness, but the difficulties which I have already referred to regarding shipping, etc., which are imposed upon an enemy making a distant overseas expedition should enable us to deter an enemy attack if we really get down to the job in a thorough and whole-hearted way.

Conclusions. The main conclusions from the above discussion are:

a. A really effective central system of Imperial Defence is not under present circumstances attainable.

b. The most pressing problem for Australia, at the present time, is the attainment of the maximum degree of self-reliance in defence; that in addition to the security afforded would also aid Imperial Defence.

c. The Royal Australian Navy is our contribution to Imperial Defence and should not be tied down to local defence in which role its inferiority in strength would render it innocuous. Its allotment to this role will probably depend upon public confidence attainable only by a reasonable degree of local security.
d. The principal means available to us for attaining greater local security are land and air forces.

e. Our land forces should be organised, equipped and trained on the basis of forcing an enemy to use his maximum available shipping and still be inferior in his first convoy to the force which can be concentrated against him; this is within our capacity to do without any severe financial strain.

f. Our air forces should be developed on the basis of the tasks required to be performed in reconnaissance and as a striking force and later in direct conjunction with the Army.

g. The development of our capacity to produce munitions locally both by the Munitions Supply Board and elsewhere is an essential element in the attainment of self-reliance.

If it is agreed that the points which I have made have any force in them I think also it will be concluded that the time is due when it is necessary to take up the question of self-reliance in defence in earnest. We cannot expect to achieve it at one blow. It must be a gradual, though not too gradual, process. What is essential to begin with is to get it established that self-reliance in defence of our national existence and territory is within our capacity, though at the cost of determination and effort. The next step is to ensure that it is realised that the attainment of that aim is a national duty. This is a matter for a political authority rather than the soldier as also is the question of the concentration of effort, which includes funds, for the purpose of attaining the object. It is obvious that concentration upon the essentials of self-reliance is necessary, if we are to get on towards the aim. It always is necessary except in the case, which never occurs, where a nation is able to make itself strong at every point at the same time. We are doomed to failure at every point if we attempt that. Our policy, i.e., the Defence Policy of Australia, should be to concentrate our main effort upon the aim of self-reliance in defence. When this has been achieved in sufficient measure we may conceivably be able to turn again to our naval forces which it is desirable to have strong but which it is most undesirable under present conditions to keep, as now, in the very front row of the stalls when that, in fact, by its absorption of funds hinders rather than helps the attainment of self-reliance in the task of defending our national existence and our territorial security.
NATIONAL MORALE
and NATIONAL SURVIVAL

Part 2 - WAYS & MEANS

Brigadier J. H. Thyer, CBE, DSO (RL)

It is vital to our survival that our national morale is built up. This will not be an easy task. We are in the main an affluent society, and affluence does not encourage personal sacrifice. There are, however, certain factors which, if activated, could well influence the minds of the people, both individually and collectively. These factors appear to be:

- A fervent belief in our democracy.
- Confidence and trust in our leaders.
- Youth, our potential strength.
- The spiritual influence of the church.
- National Service.
- Communication.

These factors are easily discernible in the rigid framework of a totalitarian state and can be observed as they operate now in South Vietnam.

Belief in our Democracy

The people of Australia must develop, cherish and proclaim a firm belief in our democracy.

'A soldier must believe that the cause for which he fights is worthy of the sacrifice he may be called upon to make.'

Part 1 of this article appeared in the November 1975 issue.
In Australia we may be called upon to defend our country at any
time and we must assume that the warning period will not exceed five
years. No longer will war be to us, the general public, an act of
farewelling troops as they embark for overseas, a departure which
previously was the beginning of an anxious period for some and business
as usual for the majority. The future defence of our continent will
demand that everyone is committed in some capacity and that success
will depend on the resolution, the tenacity, and the fortitude of all the
people. Our belief in our system of government must therefore be
absolute.

Our democracy is based on a written constitution which has
been framed by all the people and which remains subject to the will of
all the people. Under the constitution the will of the people is given
effect by State and Federal Parliaments. Those who represent the
people in the parliaments are bound to the philosophy ‘Government of
the people, for the people, and by the people’.

About half the people might lean towards the philosophy of free
enterprise, the other half might lean towards the philosophy of socialism.
Provided adult franchise and the freedom of all individual citizens to
exercise that franchise is not inhibited in the slightest degree, the two
philosophies, by trial and error, should ultimately guide our nation to a
condition of complete social justice and material satisfaction. In the
pursuit of perfection we must observe patience and tolerance in the
knowledge that no legislation of either political persuasion is irreversible.

In our democracy we enjoy a legal system evolved over many
centuries. In recent years certain enactments aim to ensure that complete
justice is available to all the people irrespective of position or means.
This aim must continually be pursued by both parties.

We have an arbitration system which aims at the establishment
of justice and harmony between employer and employee, so essential in
a free enterprise system if it is to endure and prosper.

At the present time there is an alarming degree of turbulence
threatening the authority and even the existence of the arbitration
system. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the vital necessity
to have this authority fully restored and strengthened.

If the authority of the arbitration court is destroyed anarchy
will prevail, national morale will fade, and our liberty will be threatened
by internal subversion.
There are many other government instrumentalities which guarantee to all our people the means of achieving a free, healthy, happy and intellectual life.

We are most fortunately blessed with the best that nature can provide, with a democratic way of life, with rich natural resources, and an abundance of living space.

It is most unfortunate that we take all these blessings for granted. It would be to our advantage to compare our good fortune with the grave misfortune that overtook the people of Czechoslovakia, once a happy and prosperous democracy, now a communist satellite.

Vachel Havel, one of the unfortunate majority which has no voice in authoritarian government, has taken his life in his hands and written a highly critical open letter to the Communist Party leader, Gustav Hasak, and which was published in the Australian Press this year, 1975. Two extracts are illuminating:

'After the recent upheavals in Czechoslovakia and the establishment of the present regime, our people seem to have lost any hope for the future, any belief in ever improving our present lot. A struggle for truth and the rule of law has become pointless. Nobody cares'.

and again,

'Furthermore, the ubiquitous and omnipotent secret police is still around. It penetrates every stratum of our society; not only the lower echelons but also the very top. Its monstrous net enmeshes everybody and everything. The threads might be invisible but the pattern is well known. Small wonder that people's activities largely centre on their attempts to avoid getting caught in the web.'

Our national morale will depend fundamentally on the degree in which we, the people, believe and accept the overwhelming advantages our democracy has over every known form of government, and the degree to which we are prepared to preserve it to ourselves and to our children. We could well lose our liberty in the same way the people of Czechoslovakia lost their liberty.

Leadership

True leadership is that which inspires confidence and trust. We need leaders most when we need courage. We need courage most at moments of crisis.

The two leaders who appealed most to me were Ben Chifley and John Monash. Both were trustworthy in the highest degree, both were
dedicated to the service of the nation. Without any ostentation, without any outstanding oratory, without descending to inducements or flattery, each in his own sphere — Chifley in politics, Monash in war and in industry — was a leader of the highest order.

If we have unqualified trust in our leaders our belief in our democracy will be strengthened and in turn our national morale will be raised.

Our trust must not be restricted to party lines. If there are three political parties it would be an ideal situation if we had complete trust in the leader of each party, irrespective of the party to which we gave support. We would then have a conviction that our democracy was progressing towards perfection and security.

Youth — The Keystone

The greatest potential for our security and for a sound national morale is residual in our youth. The youth of today will be called upon to bear the burden of that critical period which could be regarded as the twilight of the so-called foreseeable future. In other words before they are very much older.

It is therefore the duty of the older generation to see that they are fully equipped mentally and physically for that task. On them will depend our security and our survival.

Youth today comes in for much criticism. Modern youth has more liberty, more money, and greater mobility, all contributing to an acceleration of character destroying activities which arouse criticism from elders; yet these same elders are victims of the same influences. What is needed is not carping criticism but understanding.

My experiences as a prisoner of war established in my mind that there is a basic goodness inherent in youth, a basic goodness which responds to informed and understanding leadership, and to a cause based on truth, justice, and equality of opportunity.

In Changi camp in 1942, I was segregated for individual treatment. Three young Tyneside Scotties were brought into the area by the Japanese for execution by firing squad. They had been found in Singapore in civilian clothes and were sentenced to death for trying to escape. As soldiers they had always been in trouble. Their regimental conduct sheets were a mass of red ink entries.

The sound of the machine gun bursts has thankfully faded from my memory; but the final regret expressed by one of the number to
his commanding officer a moment before he died has remained a treasured memory, 'I am sorry sir I was not a better soldier', spoken softly in his Scottish accent.

On a later occasion I sat at the bedside of an emaciated young 'Digger' who had been recaptured and brought back to Changi. I asked him why he had tried to escape, which under the circumstances was close to an impossibility. He told me that he had had no plan, only an irresistible impulse to get back to Australia so that he could fight on. Subsequently he was mercilessly executed by firing squad. His final request was to hold his chaplain's bible. He died nobly and strong in his loyalty to Australia.

When the top brass arrived ultimately at Mukden in Manchuria we were in poor shape and had no currency. A young 'Digger' whose father had been killed on Gallipoli told me in confidence that he could get us some. His three conditions were that his name should not be revealed, that no return was expected, and that it had to be equally divided between the individuals of the group. Later he risked his life to return to a Manchurian outside the camp some money he had borrowed.

Our young nursing sisters, many of whom were hardly out of their teens, were a tower of strength in the general hospitals during the bombing of Singapore. In addition to their duties they brought comfort to shell-shocked patients.

Their complete control during their evacuation, their help to mothers and children on evacuation ships, their subsequent stoicism while prisoners of the Japanese, have earned them the highest praise. The story of their long incarceration is an Australian Epic.

Youth has not deteriorated in any way. It is only that in this permissive society we do not bother to understand them. I firmly believe that youth generally welcomes paternal interest, listens to the voice of experience, and responds to mature and responsible leadership. If our youth are brought to realize that there may be troublesome times ahead and that we, the older ones, are genuinely concerned that they should be fitted to meet these trials mentally and physically, I am sure the response would be general and meaningful.

The problem of developing an awareness in youth is a national one and must be undertaken on the national level. We have Federal Ministeries to develop the Arts, the Media, Conservation, etc. It is
far more important that we should have a Youth Ministry. Totalitarian countries recognise the importance of fostering youth, so much more should a democratic nation.

What could the ministry do? For instance it could foster and develop youth clubs such as Young Labour Clubs, Young Liberal Clubs and Rural Youth. There are also youth camps, outward bound movements, and the like, to be encouraged and financed.

This appears to be a field in which the RSL could exercise a great influence, and what better memorial could there be than youth clubs, particularly for underprivileged children.

**Influence of the Church**

When further resistance to the Japanese threatened to involve directly the civil population on Singapore Island and we were compelled to surrender, the British and Australian troops were concentrated in the Changi fortress area at the Eastern end of the Island.

Morale had virtually collapsed and the men were in a most dispirited and unhappy condition. Fortunately the command structure remained intact although we were disarmed. This situation continued for six months, during which period it was possible to rekindle hope, restore self-respect, and raise morale to a high level.

In this restoration the church and religion played an effective role. It must not be thought that mass conversions took place; nothing of the sort. Those who were professed and practising Christians became more devout and practical; those who did not profess any belief showed respect to the church; gave practical help where required, and were deeply grateful for the ministrations of the chaplains.

Divine worship was regularly observed, chapels were built in which work all assisted, and a sound base was provided from which chaplains could operate with confidence and encouragement. Evidence of the fact that their work was effective is the deep respect for these men expressed in POW journals since our return. They were an uplifting influence.

The medical officers and their attendants were all magnificent. In the camp where the treatment of the prisoners was brutal and degrading and where the mortality rate was high, such as the Burma railway, the morale of the men was maintained by the dedication, initiative, and skill of the doctors. On numerous occasions they risked
their own lives to save a dying man. I have always felt there was a spiritual essence in their work.

My own belief derives from the explanation of Christ to the woman of Samaria: 'God is a Spirit, infinite and eternal, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' In this electronic age one should have no difficulty in visualising the Spirit of Truth pervading the universe. In this belief I have no hangups about 'Upstairs or Downstairs', no inhibitions arising from the concept of an anthropomorphic God.

I believe that our democracy has arisen in the Spirit of Truth nurtured by the church and can only survive in the Spirit of Truth. Probably 90 per cent of our people are outside the sacrament of the church and only 10 per cent are adherent and practising Christians; but the spiritual influence of the church is among all the people. The church must not be discouraged.

As I see it in the context of national morale, the role of the church must be continually and vigorously mindful to proclaim the Truth to ALL the people. Further, since a democracy such as ours is the most fertile soil where the church can flourish it should give full support to its security.

There is a tendency in the church in some areas to rigidly apply the mosaic law: 'Thou shalt not kill', and more particularly in relation to military activities. It might be argued that Moses promulgated the Ten Commandments to initiate the training of the Children of Israel for the invasion of Palestine.

Our national morale depends in large measure on the strength and vigour of the Church and the wholehearted support given by its members to the defence of the nation.

National Service

The might of the British Navy, by the protection it afforded, sustained a high morale in all the peoples of the Empire during the first decades of the century and particularly during the two World Wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45. This protection was not only positive but was seen to be positive by the peoples of Australia and New Zealand.

Inherent in our nature is a desire for protection and the assurance it gives. A defence capacity, both adequate and apparent, is an important factor in sustaining a national morale. Without that protection and the resultant national morale a crisis, whether created
externally by foreign intrusion or internally by subversion, will produce a dangerous panic.

A credible and recognizable defence will therefore do three things:

- It will discourage foreign intrusion into our territories.
- It will guarantee internal security.
- It will sustain a national morale in the event of either possibility separately or in combination.

Whatever then may be our total defence requirement, it is essential that an adequate proportion of the Army, ie the Reserve, must consist of citizen soldiers recruited from and residing with the civilian population.

If the required numbers could be recruited voluntarily it would be ideal. Experience, however, has shown, both in the 1930-39 period and now with the present policy of voluntary enlistments, that the forthcoming number of volunteers has been and continues to be totally inadequate, that their suitability for mobilization is generally in doubt, and that there is little prospect of the necessary short-term turnover. National Service can be the only satisfactory alternative.

Unfortunately the traumatic memories of the Vietnam involvement still linger. There appears still to be political mileage in the ‘Conscription’ issue. It is high time that those who lead the nation, either in office or in opposition, should examine this vital question with complete honesty and in the best interests of a free and democratic Australia.

National Service must be national in fact and include all male and female citizens of an appropriate age, eg 18 and 25 years. There must be adequate financial compensation to all required to serve. National Service would be for service within Australian territories only. In exceptional circumstances a limited number might be required for service in neighbouring territories, in which case the numbers would be found by volunteers with reasonable certainty.

In addition to regimental training both sexes would be organised and trained for Civil Defence, and would be on call during periods of emergency. The fact that it will require about two years after enactment to provide equipment, instructions, and accommodation before trainees can be called up emphasises the urgency for early decision.
An unbiased study of the history of National Service from its first introduction by a Labor Government in 1910 until the present time will reveal that it has been universally accepted by the people except on two occasions. During the 1914-18 War the people rejected the proposal to extend its application to service overseas. Time alone will permit the Vietnam commitment to be properly assessed.

I have been involved in, or with, National Service from the first day it was introduced in 1913, during peacetime and two World Wars, and later as an honorary Colonel having an Australia-wide supervisory responsibility, until the present time. I can say without any doubt, and without equivocation, that those who have been involved from time to time have appreciated the personal benefits it has bestowed and that while in operation it has raised our civil standards and has given the people a sense of enduring purpose.

A high national morale and a credible defence adequate for our survival demand that it should be reintroduced.

Those who resist its reintroduction would appear to be swayed by selfish personal motives. There may even be other resisters who respond to subversive pressures inimical to our survival.

Communication

In an affluent society it is difficult to instil belief in democracy and the fear that liberty and all its advantages might be lost. In totalitarian countries, this communication does not pose any problem. Dr Goebbels in Hitler's Third Reich demonstrated how effective indoctrination can be with such aids as brain-washing, labour camps, mass execution, and a strict censorship.

The question arises; 'Can a democracy achieve the same ends by democratic means'? We cannot say, but we can at least try. At present practically nothing is done and, worse, subversive influences are permitted to flourish.

It is well known that children up to the age of 16 are very susceptible to ideas and it should be mandatory for all primary schools to hold a daily ceremony of saluting the flag and reciting a short declaration of belief. There should also be a regular session in all classes, at least once a week, to teach Australian history and the great benefits of our system of government.

At the beginning of the 1914-18 and 1939-45 Wars a climate of awareness was engendered in which the people were fully prepared to
give their utmost for the welfare of the nation. By careful and intelligent propaganda a similar climate can be maintained continuously in peace time.

At present the attitude of the media to defence information and debate is conditioned by the profit motive. Lip service is given to support for defence, but it gets a very low priority.

In recent years two Defence Seminars were held by the United Service Institution in South Australia. The best experts were brought from Australian Universities at personal cost to members of the Institution. Although well briefed by the Institution the interest of the local Press was minimal and the Press releases brief and lacking in perception. The same reaction was given to a seminar conducted by the Institute of International Affairs in the Adelaide University.

The Federal Government has legislated to ensure that there is adequate Australian content in TV productions. Similar means should be invoked to ensure that adequate coverage is given in the media generally to keep the people continually and accurately informed on our strategic situation and to foster and stimulate public debate on our defence requirements. It is certain that communication will not come voluntarily. It will only come by pressure applied democratically.

The First World War was a near miss. It was only by a miracle that we survived the Second World War. On both occasions Australia was granted a buffer period of at least twelve months to make up vital deficiencies created by neglect and unjustifiable optimism. We no longer qualify for the buffer period. We luxuriate alone.
On 25 June 1950 the well equipped and well trained North Korean People's Army (NKPA) invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK). There could have been little doubt as to the outcome as although the ROK Army included eight divisions and a regiment estimated at 98,000 men in all, it could not compare with the NKPA establishment of approximately equal numbers. The basic difference lay in the purpose for which both forces were organized during the joint American-Soviet occupation of Korea following the Second World War. The ROK forces had been trained for frontier defence and internal security whilst the NKPA had been trained and equipped for offensive operations. The ROK units deployed along the border were routed and Seoul fell to the invaders on the third day.

The United Nations reacted quickly and on 27 June the Security Council denounced the NKPA attack as a breach of world peace and prompted by the United States, called upon member nations to aid the ROK. The President of the United States had anticipated UN intervention and had authorized his Commander-in-Chief Far East (C-in-CFE) General Douglas Macarthur to use American naval and air power to support the ROK Army.

Major I. M. Wells, MIE Aust, graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1962. After serving in a variety of staff and regimental postings including AATTV (1966-67), OC District Engineers Office RAE in Papua New Guinea and OC 22 Construction Squadron, he attended the Pakistan Command and Staff College at Quetta in 1974. Major Wells' present posting is with the Directorate of Combat Development, Department of Defence (Army Office).
On 29 June the C-in-CFE flew to Korea to inspect the situation for himself. The ROK Army was in utter confusion with its supplies and equipment abandoned or lost as was its capacity for united action. He considered that the only chance of holding ground and regaining lost territory was to request approval to deploy US land forces to support the land operations as a grave danger existed of a further breakthrough by the NKPA which would endanger the very existence of the Republic. Approval was given on 30 June to move a US regimental combat team as the nucleus of a possible build-up of two divisions for an early counter offensive.

Macarthur deployed these forces piecemeal in an attempt to gain as much time as possible to allow deployment of other UN forces before the Republic was defeated. This was a bold decision in itself and contrary to the principle of concentration but Macarthur saw no other way of trading for the time required to build up a force large enough to provide for its security and undertake offensive action. This meagre US force committed piecemeal was finally able to establish a secure perimeter in the Pusan area.

During his visit to Korea Macarthur conceived a plan for his counter offensive against the NKPA. It was for an amphibious landing at Inchon, a west coast port near the South Korean capital, some 150 miles behind the North Korean lines. The favourable outcome of such a venture could not of course be guaranteed but the C-in-CFE was convinced that this type of attack was preferable to a frontal assault which, even if successful would incur heavy casualties.

The aim of this article is to review the concept of the Inchon landing and its heavy reliance on one major principle — surprise.

**OPERATION CHROMITE**

**Concept of Operation**

General Macarthur’s proposal was for a two division landing at Inchon by an amphibious force to be coupled with a breakout from the Pusan Perimeter which would:

- present the Communists with a two front war;
- cut the best North-South communication line in the country, thus cutting off the NKPA from its source of supplies;
- capture the second largest port in Korea; and
- strike a psychological and political blow at the Communists by capturing the South Korean capital of Seoul.
Whilst being ideally situated to achieve these objectives Inchon was the least desirable objective of all the west coast seaports due to serious limitations posed to the conduct of operations. Suitable tides for amphibious landings were limited to four dates, 15 September, 11 October, 2 and 3 November.

A late afternoon H hour was also a necessity as islands, reefs and shoals restricted the approach to the outer harbour and currents ranging from three to six knots multiplied the chances of confusion. Much of the inner harbour was a vast swamp at low water penetrated by a single dredged channel 12 to 13 feet deep. The duration of spring tides above the prescribed minimum depth averaged about three hours, and during this interval the maximum of troops and supplies had to be put ashore. Time, therefore, was critical as initial landing forces could not be reinforced or resupplied until the next high water period.

In addition to the obstacles of time and tide two islands, Wolmi-do and Sowolmi-do linked together by a causeway, were located between the inner and outer harbour having a commanding view of the approaches. Also as Inchon was a hilly promontory the beaches were merely narrow strips of urban waterfront protected by high sea walls.

Outline Plan

The C-in-C’s plan in brief was for a main landing on the beaches at Inchon in the late afternoon and in the remaining two or so hours of daylight secure the city of Inchon then without losing momentum drive some 16 miles inland to assault Korea’s largest airfield before crossing a tidal river to assault the country’s largest city. Concurrently the Eighth Army in the Pusan Perimeter was to break out and thrust northward to form a junction with the Inchon-Seoul drive. It was believed that this double barrelled offensive “would shatter North Korean resistance and put an end to the war”.

Of the dates available General Macarthur chose the first ie, 15-16 September primarily as it would have the following major advantages:

- relieve the strain upon his outnumbered troops in the Pusan Perimeter whilst they were still capable of holding;
- deny the enemy time to improve his defences which may make a later landing impossible;
- allow the South Koreans to harvest their October rice crop themselves if the area was liberated; and
- avoid a winter campaign.
Reaction to Plan

Opposition to the plan by his own and higher staffs was considerable as most felt that the risks were too great. It was generally felt that:

- two divisions were insufficient to guarantee the success of the operation;
- reinforcements could not be withdrawn from Pusan without jeopardizing security of the bridge-head;
- removing occupation forces from Japan was unwise and perhaps dangerous;
- the command was deficient in shipping for such an operation;
- the poor landing conditions at Inchon made an amphibious strike there a very risky proposition; and
- being in the typhoon season it was possible that the invasion fleet could be dispersed, or a landed force isolated from its support area by a typhoon.

The Joint Chiefs were also uncertain as to the feasibility of Macarthur’s plans and dispatched General Collins, Army Chief of Staff and Admiral Sherman, Chief of Naval Operations, to Tokyo to assess the criteria at first hand and to propose “certain alternative possibilities and places”. This they did on 23 August only 23 days before the proposed landing.

The navy liked neither the time nor the place of the landing and asserted that it would be “the peak of optimism to hope for strategic surprise at Inchon” and contended that tactical surprise was out of the question as Wolmi-do had to be neutralized before landings were made on the mainland. (These assertions were in direct conflict with Macarthur’s that he could achieve surprise at Inchon.) Admiral Sherman’s conclusion was that “if every possible geographic and naval handicap were listed — Inchon has ’em all”.

General Collins’ approach was to query the strategy as Inchon, he said, lay too far behind the battle lines. Even a successful landing would have no immediate effect on the NKPA, since the capture of Seoul did not guarantee a link up with the proposed thrust of the Eighth Army from Pusan and if the Inchon landing force were unable to take Seoul the security of both forces was in jeopardy. Also Macarthur’s proposal to withdraw a Marine brigade from the Pusan Beach-head in fact endangered an already difficult situation. General Collins then proposed
Kunsan as an alternative with few of Inchon’s obstacles and it was approximately 100 miles closer to Pusan.

**Macarthur’s Reaction**

In his reply Macarthur noted the objections of the Joint Chiefs and others to his plan but he countered that the natural obstacles and practical difficulties were more than balanced in the strategic scale by the psychological advantages of a bold stroke, for with 90 per cent of the NKPA forces fighting on the Pusan Perimeter a combined offensive from Inchon and Pusan would have the effect of ‘placing the enemy between the hammer and the anvil’. He added that “the very arguments you have made as to the impracticabilities involved will tend to ensure for me the element of surprise. For the enemy commander will reason that no one would be so brash as to make such an attempt”.

He assured the Joint Chiefs that Inchon would be an “impossible victory” which was something which he could not do at Kunsan which he saw as a flanking attack incapable of destroying neither the enemy’s lines of communication nor encircling his troops. He ended the conference with a single prophetic sentence:

“We shall land at Inchon and I will crush them.”

After receiving a somewhat reluctant “go ahead” from the Joint Chiefs, detailed planning for the operation was quickly and meticulously completed; however, it is recorded in comments by General Whitney, who had accompanied Macarthur on every amphibious landing since Leyte, that Macarthur had never portrayed so much last minute hesitancy. The success of the operation depended on a single element — surprise. Had its secret been well guarded or had the enemy learned of his plans? Could the obstacles of nature be overcome? Had not the Joint Chiefs or his own staff perhaps been correct in their analysis? Would not a more cautious course have been wiser? “No there was no doubt about the risk. It was a tremendous gamble.”

Macarthur by supreme self-confidence assured himself that he was correct and that there was no plausible alternative, so he confidently waited for the operation to be launched.

**Implementation**

After meticulous planning and preparations by both staff and units the Inchon landing was undertaken as planned on 15 September by X Corps formed especially for the operation and comprising 1st Marine
Division, 7th Infantry Division, 187th Regimental Combat Team and certain ROK units.

As predicted by Macarthur his daringly conceived plan took the enemy by complete surprise. The first wave of Marines landed in the early hours of the morning and by 0800 hours that morning had seized their first objective of Wolmi-do allowing the main landing against the Inchon peninsula to proceed. The landing was a complete success and by a series of lightning blows the defending troops were caught off balance and never allowed to concentrate their forces for co-ordinated counter attack. The Marines quickly exploited their initial success and by 22 September succeeded in achieving all their objectives when Seoul was captured.

The UN forces in Pusan broke out the next day and within ninety-six hours linked with X Corps thus closing the pincer and by doing so succeeded in trapping more than half of the NKPA with the remainder in full flight. On 30 September the allied troops reached the 38th Parallel; thus after almost three months of bitter rear guard action South Korea had been freed from almost complete Communist domination in 15 days.

The history of warfare has recorded few such brilliant operations. Macarthur had confidently “gambled with disaster to achieve an unprecedented victory”.

CONCLUSION

In retrospect it appears that Macarthur’s plan for Inchon was based on intuition rather than sound and calculated reasoning for from the outset he refused to consider another site or accept that there was a plausible alternative. In accepting Inchon he had from the outset made some far reaching assumptions on which to develop his plan. These were that:

- the harbour approaches would not be heavily guarded or mined;
- the difficulties of tide and terrain could be surmounted;
- the NKPA reserves near the port would be slender;
- the enemy’s morale would be quickly broken; and
- Japan stripped of its occupation troops would remain quiet and orderly.
The formulation of a concept against such odds is one thing but to steadfastly persevere with it as an aim virtually regardless of objective criticism in view of real threats to security showed Macarthur’s personality in that he was both extremely self-confident and sure that he was right, and egotistical in that he believed he could not be wrong. This is an extremely dangerous combination of personalities for whilst as was proved outstanding results could be achieved by relying solely on one principle of war, ie, surprise, it is more likely than not that such a personality will not be consistently correct and the penalty for an intuitive decision of such dimension is frightening.

In the instance of Inchon it was discovered later that the North Koreans had appreciated the danger of a landing from the western flank and had been trying to rush the construction of coastal fortifications and beach defences in the area. Therefore, if the operation had been delayed for another month, as it may well have been because of the situation around Pusan, to enable greater build-up overall of United Nations forces, it is possible that X Corps may have found a landing too difficult or too costly to be worth while.

Success had reaffirmed on this occasion Macarthur’s conviction that it was wise to adopt the bold course when the military situation appeared bleak.

Inchon had required more than sound planning — it had demanded daring and self-confidence. The great danger being however that a commander’s self-confidence and egotism could cloud his vision so that intuition rather than sound reasoning would dictate his aims. 

* * * * *
Colonel V. St.L. Green, OBE, BA (RL)

Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety.
—William Shakespeare

Introduction

Man has been scientifically defined as, "a creature making tools" but Professor Robert Brigelow in his book The Dawn Warriors (Atlantic Monthly Press, Boston, 1969) questions whether a better scientific definition would not be, "a creature causing wars". Certainly the whole of recorded history is full of wars, and the twentieth century, far from showing any diminution of warlike activity, has proved to date to be one of the bloodiest on record. Between 1900 and 1964 there have been recorded over 650 campaigns involving more than 1,000 battles of 1,000-plus casualty magnitude. British troops, from 1954 to 1971, have been involved in no less than 36 wars, of which one cynic has remarked that their only characteristic is that none was foreseen by the planning staff six months earlier.

Most people wish to live in peace and comfort and, the more thoughtful would add, in a country where liberty is preserved and national integrity maintained. This should not be an unreasonable demand, but the price of peace can often be high, and few countries of any significance have felt that they could dispense with armed forces. Nor are we any exception, lucky country though we may be. Our best

Colonel Green joined the 2/11 Aust Inf Bn in 1940. During the war he served in the Middle East and New Guinea and became a Company Commander. In 1949 he joined the then AAEC and after a succession of educational and staff appointments became Director of Army Education in 1956 and served in that appointment until retirement in 1965. Following a period of extensive overseas travel he was appointed Colonel Commandant of the RAAEC in 1968. When the JSSC commenced in 1970 Colonel Green was appointed its first librarian.

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chance of avoiding war while maintaining our integrity as a nation is to so structure our defences as to offer a credible deterrence to the would-be aggressor. To consider the extent to which this is possible it is first necessary to have some idea of the nature of deterrence, and the purpose of this article is to invite further discussion on this subject.

The Nature of Deterrence

The Dictionary of US Military Terms for Joint Usage defines deterrence as: “The prevention from action by fear of consequences. Deterrence is a state of mind brought about by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counter action”. This accords with the definition given in the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary as: “Preventing by fear”. And it is in this sense of the term that deterrence is recognized as one of the most widely employed means of preventing destructive action, not only in human society, but throughout the whole world of nature.

Unfortunately so much study of the theory of deterrence in relation to national security has been in terms of Superpower confrontations, that many of us have come to think of it only in a great power context, and to define it as: “The prevention from action by fear of ‘an equal or greater’ counter force”. This concept leads to the conclusion that no medium power could deter a major power, and hence, that the British and French efforts to build up deterrent forces are exercises in futility.

Much of the theorising on the place of deterrence in modern strategy, particularly among the nuclear armed powers, is still based on old fashioned concepts of relative powers expressed in numerical terms, whether of numbers of divisions, ships, missiles or nuclear warheads: as though a country with 2,000 missiles is necessarily twice as powerful as one with half that number. As Krushchev once remarked, the ability to kill your opponent once is really just as good as the ability to kill him six times over. And when it is accepted that a single bomber has a capacity for destruction greater than all the high explosive dropped by all the air forces during the Second World War; that three fifty-megaton bombs would be enough to wipe out the entire United Kingdom, and that, according to a Rand Corporation analysis, if 150 cities in the United States were each hit by a nuclear missile there would be 160,000,000 casualties; it becomes meaningless to assess relative strengths in mere numbers of weapons. Within the nuclear club,
country X may have the capacity to obliterate country Y many times over and may have the desire to do so, but if in the process there is a chance that a number of its own cities will be turned to radio-active dust, its leaders may well consider the game not worth the candle. As the US definition has it: “Deterrence is a state of mind”. The French, relying on their “capacity to tear a limb off the giant” strategy, are not as foolish as many of their critics would have us believe. It is worth noting, as Major General R. L. Clutterbuck wrote in an article in the 1972 edition of Brasseys Annual that: “Every kind of violence continues to occur excepting one — the extreme violence of nuclear war, for even the most militant leaders realize the craziness of that. This realization has generally deterred the nuclear powers from taking the risk of allowing even their conventional forces to tangle with each other. The only exception to this occurred on Russia’s eastern border with China, where the risk of escalation was small and, in particular, there was no risk of the USA being drawn in.

“In every other crisis, however — in Berlin, Vietnam, Cuba, the Middle East and the Mediterranean — the nuclear powers have been most careful not to shoot at each other even with rifles”.

Ian M. H. Smart, Assistant Director of the London-based Institute for Strategic Studies, speaking at the 10th Pugwash Symposium (June 26 to 29, 1970) addressed himself to the problem of small-power deterrence in relationship with the Superpowers. The question raised was whether a country with a relatively smaller force could exist in a relationship of mutual deterrence with the Superpowers, now that the level of forces of the two Superpowers is so very high. In answering the question Ian Smart pointed out that: “The important variable may be what is the prize between the two countries. In the event of all out war between the two Superpowers, the prize to the victor (if victory were possible) would essentially be world hegemony. On the other hand, the prize between a smaller power and a Superpower would be much less than that. Hence a Superpower would be likely to take correspondingly fewer risks and would be willing to sustain correspondingly less damage in a war with a smaller power. For this reason a smaller power may indeed be considered to be able to maintain a credible deterrent with respect to a Superpower”.

It is not within the scope of this article to discuss the question as to whether or not Australia should develop a nuclear capability. We may note in passing however, that, following India’s explosion of
a nuclear device and the announcement by Indonesia’s Foreign Minister
that his country expects to have a nuclear armament by the mid 1980s
the argument that an Australian move into the nuclear field would
encourage her neighbours to do likewise, is wearing a bit thin.

Non-nuclear Deterrence

It is probable that in the nuclear context the initiation of war
may be deterred by a much lower level of counter force than is gener-
ally acknowledged. The question now arises as to what extent non-
nuclear powers can hope to deter aggression against their territories by
superior powers, particularly those with a nuclear armament. The
quick answer, too often given, is that a small power with only a con-
ventional armament could not offer any credible deterrence to a nuclear
armed power, and so we find a certain opposition in countries like
Australia to anything approaching a realistic defence effort, on the
grounds that nothing we could do would be of any real use in the face
of a threat from a major power.

To conclude that a country like Australia could not offer any
real deterrence to a major power is, we argue, based on false reason-
ing arising from a lack of understanding of the nature of deterrence:
deterrence being confused with the “power to resist and defeat an
enemy”, whereas of course the two are by no means synonymous.
Some of the more idealistic argue against defence efforts on our part
on the simple premise that no power is going to want to attack us any-
way, while others hold that if ever we were threatened by a hostile
power, friendly powers would come to our aid. These latter assump-
tions may be proved valid, but it would be awfully risky to stake the
fate of the nation on such assumptions. In our quest for peace and
security we need more tangible forms of insurance against aggression,
and essentially we need a demonstrably effective defence capacity.

Geoffrey Blainey (Professor of Economic History, University of
Melbourne) in his book Causes of War points out that: “neutrality
like war and peace, depends on agreement. Sweden and Switzerland,
for instance, have remained neutral for more than a century and a half
not because they chose neutrality but because warring nations permitted
them to remain neutral”. Which raises the question as to why they
were so permitted. Many reasons can be given; diplomatic, economic,
geographic, etc. However, it is well worth noting that the leaders of
these countries have consistently relied on two very potent deterrents:
firstly, both countries are organized for total defence, and secondly,
both countries have insured minimal gains to an occupying power by their demolition programmes and plans for civil resistance.

Put very simply the deterrence offered by a small power to a major power is the assurance to that power that the cost of conquest will be disproportionate to the possible gains. There is of course the argument that the theory of deterrence depends too much on the assumption that national leaders make their decisions on the basis of pure rationality; however, it does not take a high degree of rationality to realize the danger of attacking even a small power if that power is organized for defence and its people are united in their determination to resist. To quote Professor Blainey again: “No wars are unintended or ‘accidental’. What is often unintended is the length and bloodiness of the war. Defeat too is unintended”.

The history of war would seem to indicate that there has been a general tendency in the past to underestimate the extraordinary difficulty even a major power has in overcoming and permanently subduing a small country where the will to resist is strong and where some preparation for defence had been made. In modern times we have seen a number of examples of this. The Russian war against Finland is a good example of the cost a small country can exact against a major attacker.

We could do more than take to heart the words of Vegetius: “No one has the courage to provoke or to do injury to that realm or people which he knows to be prepared and disposed to resist and requite.”

That voice from the Roman world sums up the meaning of deterrence.

The Nettle and the Flower

The nettle, danger, certainly exists throughout the world. Weapon systems proliferate and there is little doubt that the nuclear club will continue to acquire new members. Also let us not forget that the less developed nations can have a ‘poor man’s atomic bomb’ in the shape of chemical and bacterial weapons which can be cheaply produced and which are very lethal. And as the weapon systems become more powerful and accessible, so also do national tensions and rivalries increase with population pressures and world shortages of resources. Where then can we seek the flower, safety? Paradoxically perhaps the very progress of weapon technology may show the way.

As far back as 1872 Winwood Reade wrote the following lines: “It is not probable that war will ever absolutely cease until science
discovers some destroying force so simple in its administration, so horrible in its effects, that all art, all gallantry, will be at an end and battles will be massacres which the feelings of man will be unable to endure”.

In 1952 Winston Churchill in an address to the Congress of the United States was to say: “It is my belief that by accumulating deterrents of all kinds against aggression we shall in fact ward off the fearful catastrophe the fears of which darken the life and mar the progress of all the people of the globe”.

And again in 1953, addressing the House of Commons, Winston Churchill returned to the same theme: “The annihilating character of these agencies may bring an utterly unforeseeable security to mankind. It may be that when the advances of destructive weapons enables everyone to kill everybody else no one will want to kill anyone at all. At any rate it seems pretty safe to say that a war which begins by both sides suffering what they dread most — and that is undoubtedly the case now — is less likely to occur than one which dangles the lurid prizes of former days before ambitious eyes”.

Maybe the nations will learn at least to pursue their goals by other means than war. It well may be as William Blake had it, that:

“The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.”

Conclusion

We may be in a transitional stage, moving from an age old history of almost constant war, to a new era where great national wars are no longer possible, but in the meantime we live in a world where violence is rife and warlike activity flourishes. Such being the case it is our clear duty to so order our defences as to at least offer a reasonable degree of deterrence to any would-be foe. To do less is to offer encouragement to the aggressor, and thereby share the blame should war occur.

Let Winston Churchill’s advice to Britain in 1938, be heeded by us now: “To urge the preparation of defence is not to assert the imminence of war. On the contrary, if war were imminent preparations for defence would be too late. A country like ours, possessed of immense territory and wealth, whose defence has been neglected cannot avoid war by diluting on its horrors, or even by a continuous display of pacific qualities . . . only by the accumulation of deterrents against the aggressor.”
Anglesea Barracks, Hobart and Victoria Barracks, Sydney

The plans of Anglesea and Victoria Barracks, 1844 and 1845, have been copied by permission of the National Library from microfilms of the original plans held in the Public Record Office, London. The plans of the barracks as they are today have been included for reasons of comparison and readers' interest. All the plans were drawn by Mr. B. Parker of the Directorate of Accommodation and Works (Army).
1. Admin Offices, Gun Park, CMF Officers
2. Sots Area Messes
3. Meteorological Bureau
4. Commanders Married Quarters
5. Temporary Wireac Sleeping Quarters
6. Sots Sleeping Accommodation & Mess
7. Q Store & Officers Mess Store

ANGLESEA BARRACKS, HOBART - TODAY

Drawn: D. Parker (NLA 10-7-75)
CURRENT DEFENCE READINGS

Readers may find the following articles of interest. The journals in which the articles appear are available through the Defence Library Information Service at Campbell Park Library and Military District libraries.

The following articles are from *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), 17 October.

Timor: the waiting game, and Indonesia’s “special interest”. pp. 10-14.

Thailand ’75 (supplement: Thailand’s foreign relations with Australia and other Asian countries; also economy, etc.) 16 pages.

The following articles are from *Pacific Defence Reporter* (Sydney), October.


Defence in the next decade. (“Decision to base our Defence planning on the defence of continental Australia has placed our fighting Services in a completely new ‘ball game’”). pp. 14-16.


The following articles are from *New Times* (Moscow), 37/75, September.

Detente plus disarmament. pp. 4-5.


Portugal’s hour of trial. pp. 14-16.

The following articles are from *Aviation Week & Space Technology* (Washington), 18 August.

Egyptian Air Defence — Command strives to improve capabilities. pp. 18-20.

The following articles are from *Problems of Communism* (U.S. Information Agency, Washington), July-August.

North Vietnam since Ho. pp. 35-52.

Communist strategy in Laos. pp. 53-66.


The following articles are from *World Review* (Univ. of Queensland), July.

Timor, Indonesia and Australia (Sixth Heindorff Memorial Lecture — Peter Hastings). pp. 3-15.


Comrades in arms (Portugal) and Muttering in the ranks (Spain). *Newsweek* (Wash.), 20 October, pp. 8-9.


Thirty years of nuclear weaponry. (Author is Director of SIPRI). *New Scientist* (UK), 7 August, pp. 330-332.