Editorial

As the new Director of the Australian Army Research Centre, I am pleased to bring to you the Autumn edition of the Australian Army Journal. This year marks the final stage in the establishment of the Australian Army Research Centre (AARC), which was proposed eighteen months ago by the Chief of Army to reinvigorate the way in which soldiers and officers expand their knowledge and pursue rigorous debate on the Profession of Arms. The role of the AARC is to conduct research and analysis, foster debate and advocate the value of the joint land force to the Australian Government, academia and the public. The AARC, which sits in the Future Land Warfare Branch of Army Headquarters, achieves this through a number of activities and publications, including the Army Research Scheme grant program, AARC Seminar Series, Occasional Paper Series and our blog - the Land Power Forum — which was re-launched to coincide with the Army’s Birthday on the first of March this year.

After a brief hiatus, we are pleased to re-commence the Australian Army Journal, which has been given a new direction by Chief of Army – to promote debate as a professional journal. All members of Army are encouraged to think, write and debate. See the calls for submissions at the back of this journal and send us an article.

This year, the Australian Army Journal is seventy years old, and remains the predominant forum for the Army community to debate issues concerning the Profession of Arms. The first edition, edited in 1948 by Lieutenant Colonel Eustace G Keogh, in whose honour we name an annual Visiting Chair, contained articles which were pertinent to a post war period of reconstitution. The foreword, written by the Chief of the General
Staff, Lieutenant General VAH Sturdee, CB, CBE, DSO, welcomes the reorganisation of regular and citizen forces following the long period of operations, and states that “Under the conditions of war as they exist today, and are likely to exist in the foreseeable future, ground forces will be required.” The articles, chosen by Keogh covered topics such as the principals of war, biological warfare, strategic intelligence, leadership, emerging technology, and training and education. They remain the subjects ground forces debate today.

It is in this spirit that we present this collection of articles which stimulate discussion around current issues in Army, and challenge us to consider how best to achieve Defence’s mission in the future. The opening article is an address delivered by Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC to the Royal United Services Institute in London last year, in which he discusses the challenges of operating in the ‘Indo-Pacific Century’. This strategic context is particularly relevant for understanding Army’s place in the Joint Force. Building from this speech, Major James Ellis-Smith responds to the Chief’s message to ‘ride the technological wave’ by proposing a Network operating model approach as a unique approach to force structure and doctrine.

Dr Albert Palazzo poses useful questions regarding Australia’s war in Afghanistan by examining the technique of securitisation employed by Australia and the United States. Continuing the Middle Eastern theme, Major Andrew Maher presents a thought-provoking case study of Iran’s employment of Unconventional Warfare through its use of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The new Director of the Australian Army History Unit, Mr Tim Gellel, offers a timely and reflective article on Australia’s rapid development of amphibious operations during the Second World War, and the lessons we can use for building our modern capability. Sociologist Dr Brad West proposes research into the identity and experiences of reservists to inform the shape of Army’s workforce, including the balancing of military and civilian careers. Brigadier Chris Smith provides readers with an examination of military concept writing and how it can affect our creative problem solving. Finally, Mr David Pfotenhauer explains how lessons from the United States concept of Operational Contract Support can be leveraged to overcome future contractor challenges for Army. We also include in this edition a number of book reviews including The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War Series edited by the late Jeffrey Grey whose memorial begins the Book Review section.
The Journal and other AARC publications will move online over the next year, broadening the level of Army's engagement with the community. This engagement will raise the level of professional debate on war and its challenges and enhance the professionalism, leadership and ethical awareness within Army. I look forward to this discourse and commend this edition of the Australian Army Journal to you.

Colonel Peter Connolly, DSC, CSC
Director Australian Army Research Centre
Preparing for the Indo-Pacific Century: Challenges for the Australian Army

Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, AO, DSC

This is a transcript of the speech presented to the Royal United Services Institute (United Kingdom), Whitehall, London on Friday 8 December 2017.

The Honourable Alexander Downer AC, High Commissioner for Australia; Doctor Karin von Hippel, Director-General, RUSI; Major General Ben Bathurst, GOC London District; Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Deputy DG & Research Director, RUSI; Our chair this afternoon, Doctor Peter Roberts, Director Military Sciences, RUSI; Distinguished guests; RUSI members; Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Afternoon.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the Royal United Services Institute today. The Institute is not only the oldest defence and security think tank in the world; it has built an enviable reputation as a centre of constructive policy influence. I value the opportunity to contribute.

This afternoon I will speak about the Australian Army and the challenges of the so called ‘Indo-Pacific Century’. For all nations, a degree of geographic determinism plays a role in shaping the lens through which national security interests are pursued. For the United Kingdom, even as you ‘leave’ Europe under Brexit, there is a realisation that Europe isn’t going anywhere. It will
continue to loom large, both in imagination and reality. The simple logic of geography ensures that Europe’s issues and challenges will remain of vital interest to the United Kingdom.

From Australia, the geographic view is markedly different: the term ‘Indo-Pacific’ usefully encompasses the key features of our geo-strategic setting. Our island continent lies at the fulcrum of the Indian and Pacific oceans and the Asian landmass those oceans border. The Indo-Pacific envelopes our immediate horizon across three cardinal points of the compass.

I invite you to consider the view if you could ride on a geostationary satellite above the red centre of our continent.

The hemisphere you see from high above Australia contains the most populous nation on Earth, the largest democratic nation on Earth and the nation with the largest Muslim majority population on Earth. Eight of the ten most populated sovereign states on the planet are Indo-Pacific nations. Over fifty percent of the world’s population lives here. It contains twelve member states of the G20. The three largest economies in the world are Indo-Pacific nations. Highlighting the inherent diversity of the region, it also encompasses ten of the world’s fourteen smallest economies, including some of the most climatically fragile. Linked to the volume of trade and economic activity, the busiest international sea lanes are in the region, and nine of the world’s ten busiest seaports; as well as most of the world’s megacities of today and tomorrow.

The region is also heavily militarised. Seven of the world’s ten largest standing militaries and five of the world’s declared nuclear nations are in the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific region matters to Australia because it is where we live. But an appreciation of the view outlined from our imaginary satellite suggests why the Indo-Pacific is globally important. Technical innovation in the cyber/digital and space domains is driving connectivity, with the potential to bring the region closer together or possibly splinter it into a thousand domains of perception, influence and action.

Australia’s recent Foreign Policy White paper, released a fortnight ago, describes a tough, exciting and competitive landscape within the Indo-Pacific. It outlines five tasks ahead of us to ensure a prosperous Australian future:

- Secure Australian interests in the region,
- Take up opportunities in the global economy,
Preparing for the Indo-Pacific Century: Challenges for the Australian Army

- Keep Australians safe, secure and free,
- Strengthen the international rules that make it all work; and
- Help our near neighbours and partners.

These tasks complement the extant direction of the 2016 Defence White Paper, which defines three equally weighted strategic defence interests for Australia:

- A secure, resilient Australia, with secure northern approaches and proximate sea lines of communication,
- A secure nearer region, encompassing maritime South East Asia and the South Pacific, and,
- A stable Indo-Pacific region and a rules-based global order.

Of course, regional geography on a small blue planet is neither exclusive nor deterministic. Europe matters to Australia as the Indo-Pacific matters to the UK. History, culture, trade and people all flow between our nations and regions. Perhaps most importantly, so do the ideas and norms that have created the modern world: ideas now under sustained revisionist pressure.

The United Kingdom and Australia face what our Foreign Policy White Paper describes as a ‘contested and competitive world’. The Australian Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, opened the Foreign Policy White Paper with the line: ‘Change, unprecedented in its scale and pace, is the tenor of our times’. Such lines quickly draw the attention of defence leaders and planners alike: both of whom typically have an innate preference for continuity and stability! Our nations, and their armed forces, see the same issues in this ‘contested and competitive world’: challenges to the existing global order, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, the spread of violent extremist organisations, the mass movement of people and the security impacts of climate change.

Accompanying this widespread perception of relentless change is an equally widespread sense of detrimental impact to the national security interests of western liberal democracies. The US Secretary of Defense, General James Mattis, articulated this in June when he stated that he saw: ‘...a more volatile security environment than any I have experienced during my four decades of military service’. In the Indo-Pacific, unilateral action in the South China Sea, and the proliferation and provocation by the DPRK, seriously
challenge a rules-based international order. As do events in the Ukraine, the Baltic States and the Crimea. Of perhaps greater concern is a willingness for action over dialogue in international dispute resolution and a growing critique of the liberal democratic model that has built our modern world.

Turning to the Australian Army in these uncertain times

On appointment as Chief of Army, I set four priorities to focus Army’s thinking, planning and action. These were, and remain:

- Support to ADF joint operations: this is why our Army exists;
- Assist our wounded, injured and ill: to rebuild capability and respect our people’s sacrifice;
- Modernise the force: to give our people the best opportunity to achieve their missions and come home safely; and
- Ongoing cultural reform and renewal: to ensure our Army reflects the highest expectations of the Nation we serve.

My priorities can be summarised as: people, readiness and modernisation. Unsurprisingly, these tend to be the common preoccupation of Army Chiefs world-wide. This year the Australian Army is in its 18th year of continuous operational activity; with commitments globally, regionally and at home. We have, and continue to serve alongside, the British Army in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in many other missions. The performance of our people, both Tommies and Diggers alike, on all these operations has been overwhelmingly impressive. We’ve learnt a lot and sought to reinvest that knowledge into building a better Army.

To that end, the Australian Army has recently completed Plan Beersheba, begun in 2011. The implementation of Plan Beersheba has redefined force generation ‘business as usual’ for our Army, through the following key outcomes:

- the standardisation of brigade structures to improve our ability to sustain operations;
- a force generation cycle that provides a framework to prioritise resources and training effort among combat brigades;
the improved integration of our regular and reserve personnel in a total workforce model, which better allows all soldiers to contribute to operational capability; and

• the formation of a specialist amphibious infantry battalion as a component of a developing ADF amphibious capability.

In combination, these changes have allowed us to field a better trained, ready and agile force focused at brigade group operations within a divisional joint force setting.

In terms of modernisation through materiel acquisition programs, three priority projects have my constant attention: building a land combat digital network, upgrading protected manoeuvre and the soldier combat ensemble. We are moving from an analogue Army to a digital-by-design force: secure, resilient and connected to joint and coalition partners. This is grindingly hard work. We’ve been at it for fifteen years and I think it will take another ten to create a ‘whole of force’ network effect: a quarter of a century — but an extraordinary step in capability. Protected manoeuvre, through replacement programs for reconnaissance and infantry fighting vehicles and upgrades to our armour, is the hard punch that only the Land Force can deliver. And the soldier combat ensemble greatly enhances the awareness, lethality and survivability of our people. Three iconic projects: but are they enough?

Working on our part of the tasks set by the Defence White Paper, and inferred by the Foreign Policy White Paper, in a very complex and dynamic region, I suggest the best capability we have remains our people. And I see three opportunities to assist them: Engagement, Adaptation and Teaming with Technology. I will address each of these in turn, but first some remarks about context.

Prime Minister Turnbull wrote in our Foreign Policy White Paper:

More than ever, Australia must be sovereign, not reliant. We must take responsibility for our own security and prosperity while recognising we are stronger when sharing the burden of leadership with trusted partners and friends.¹

What matters here is context. Things that work for other nations and armies, with different economic, demographic, industrial, geographic circumstance and political cultures will not necessarily work for Australia. We have a long
history of embracing the latest idea, trend or military concept from allies, partners and corporations, sometimes uncritically, without due consideration of its utility for our unique sovereign and strategic circumstance. An audience such as this may be familiar with many of these ideas. Amongst their number are the ‘Pentropic Division’ of the early 1960s, ‘The Revolution in Military Affairs’ of the 1980s, ‘Effects Based Operations’, ‘Network Centric Warfare’ and the wordy ‘Manoeuvre Operations in the Littoral Environment’. We have even flirted with Chinese concepts of: ‘Anti Access Area Denial’ or A2AD. Following on from the Prime Minister’s thoughts, we need, as a part of Australia’s joint force and operating within our ‘Whole of Government’ national security construct, an Australian Army that is ‘fit for purpose’ for our unique circumstances.

I speak of an Army not intellectually beholden to others, but rather benefiting from close collaboration and cooperation, on both ideas and actions, with allies and friends. Equally, an Army which will offer those allies and friends the benefits of insights to the challenges shared in the Indo-Pacific domain that are based on our thinking, experience and circumstances. A land force respected and understood by many, strengthened by our intellectual capacity, training, regional relationships and Australia’s industrial and wider economic capabilities; an Army that operates as a core component of a relatively small, but nonetheless technically sophisticated, Australian joint force; and within an Australian ‘Whole of Government’ approach - what the United Kingdom’s National Security and National Cyber Security Strategies have referred to as a ‘comprehensive approach’.

To be that Army, we need to continue to build on our efforts in Engagement, Adaptation and Teaming with Technology. Let me explain.

**Engagement**

Following the Defence White Paper’s lead, Army is focused on engagement with Australia’s allies, regional partners, friends and cohabitants of the Indo-Pacific. Australian Army international engagement is at record levels. The Australian Army is first and foremost a ‘people’ force. We have a well-recognised and frequently demonstrated ability to develop and sustain deep and enduring personal and institutional habitual relationships within our region and further abroad. Through engaging internationally, we enhance
capability, sustain Australia’s influence, generate security partnerships and build regional security resilience.

Engagement can help shape to avoid conflict through the development of shared understanding and resolve. If conflict arises it offers the opportunity to build upon familiar, established and habitual patterns of cooperation. Sun Tzu advises us to: ‘figure out how to do things so that you get the maximum effect and the least bloodshed.’ And, sadly, should the blood flow, through engagement we are stronger together.

Adaptation

It is a truism that victory in war goes to the side that most effectively adapts to the actual war being fought and then continues to adapt to the opportunities and challenges that war presents. Sometimes this happens before the first shot is fired. It is self-evident that we must try and position ourselves to win the first, and subsequent cycles of the adaption contest. Coming second is a lonely place. The Defence White Paper 2016 noted the capability edge that Australia has long held within our region is being progressively and consistently eroded in the face of regional economic growth and commensurate increases in spending on military acquisition and technology within the Indo-Pacific.

Can our ‘capability edge’ be retained through the development and maintenance of an ‘intellectual edge’? In 2016 our Army reviewed and commenced renewal of our entire approach to education, individual and collective training, doctrine development and publication. Last month I released an Army Professional Military Education (PME) Strategy to direct, resource and assess the work that remains in this vital aspect of capability. I have previously quoted the U.S. historian Williamson Murray to explain why I am serious about our intellectual edge. These words still ring true:

*War is neither a science nor a craft, but rather an incredibly complex endeavour which challenges men and women to the core of their souls. It is, to put it bluntly, not only the most physically demanding of all the professions, but also the most demanding intellectually and morally. The cost of slovenly thinking at every level of war can translate into the deaths of innumerable men and women, most of whom deserve better from their leaders.*
We simply cannot afford slovenly thinking. However, adaptation requires more than just smart people. It requires a permissive, supportive, culture of excellence and innovation. And in the ‘culture versus strategy war’, I’m an adherent to the view that culture eats strategy for breakfast, every time. I want to see an Australian Army culture evolve as one welcoming of adaptation and adaptive behaviour, as an institutional norm not a bumper sticker.

Of course, we achieve adaptive change in our systems, processes and organisations through evolution and innovation, and the interplay between them. Evolution sees gradual, incremental changes, building on improvements from what has gone before or currently exists. Innovation sees adaptation occur through embrace of radical step change. A recent online article on the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s blog succinctly explained the opportunity offered:

Why focus on innovation?....a small country trying to equip, deploy and sustain a small, high-tech defence force won’t derive either an operational advantage or an economic advantage from trying to do the same thing as everybody else, only cheaper. Innovation – in equipment, organisation and process – is the difference between being ordinary, vulnerable and irrelevant, on the one hand, and effective, strong and resilient, on the other.\(^2\)

I am intuitively attracted to innovation and remain deeply aware that continuous evolution must be normal. Together, the potential that both evolution and innovation present is where we need to be. My sense is most of our currently planned future investment would best be described as ‘evolutionary adaptation’, with only perhaps ten percent of our efforts focused on riskier innovation. Pushing towards twenty percent is probably where we need to be.

**Teaming with Technology**

Armies and defence forces are forever trying to enhance the power they can harness in pursuit of national interest. *Plan Beersheba* and an emphasis on networking are indicative examples. Historically, armies have sought power through size and mobilisation planning, innovative technology, training and education, formal alliances and coalitions of the willing, and more recently
through joint, combined and interagency operations; or typically through all of the above.

Despite these efforts, could the sheer scale of a future security challenge overwhelm our capacity to cope? Possibly, it’s happened before. Someday it’s almost guaranteed if we hold to the mindsets and modes of industrial age warfighting. For a small force, the Australian Army and ADF can never forget, but also never accept, Stalin’s famous aphorism: ‘quantity has a quality all of its own’. Our strategic policy is based on the view that the quantity of people is not necessarily decisive. And if quality is rising across our region we need to keep pursuing new, challenging opportunities. Today, in this regard, I refer to teaming with technology that disproportionately magnifies the scale and effect of our organisation, collective intellect, doctrine, training and education.

We know that digital technology is transforming some aspects of the character of warfare and the domains in which it may be conducted. Soon, perhaps sooner than we might be comfortable, the impact of hypersonic, autonomous robotic, quantum and artificial intelligence technologies will revolutionise the conduct of warfare. We can see the crest of a new wave of technology approaching: while distant, it’s big, gnarly, moving fast and its finer details are mostly hidden. The true nature, impact and timing of technological change is never accurately predicted, especially when it’s happening around you, and to you. What’s always apparent in hindsight is late adopters struggle to catch up. The scale of China’s commitment to artificial intelligence research is indicative of a nation determined not to be late to that party.

Australia has a well-educated population and a relatively capable and innovative science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) sector, for a nation our size. Indeed, we lead global research efforts in some niche areas. Importantly, we also have close collaborative relationships with a number of global STEM leaders, including the UK. The Australian Army will team with this next impending technological revolution because it makes sense and we must. We’re too small not too. We will work from the foundation assumption that technology works best when enabling or partnering human endeavour - but I expect that will be quickly challenged.
Both the UK and Australia are very aware that the ‘can do’ of technical capability will, and is now rapidly outpacing, the moral, ethical and legal considerations of ‘should do’. This will only accelerate, driven by those state and non-state actors alike who feel unconstrained by such notions or the laws of war. ISIS and the DPRK might be today’s exemplars, but it’s a congested field.

The concerns recently expressed by scientists, ethicists and advocates regarding the rise of ‘killer bots’ are very real and worth noting. I suspect a middle way is likely to emerge. We already see humans out of the loop to manage the split second requirements of ship and vehicle short-range active protective systems. The debate and its resolution are vital to our future but also a healthy reminder of a history, culture and political civilisation worth defending.

Conclusion

Australian strategic policy envisages an increasingly challenging world. That policy seeks to avoid conflict but prepares our Army, as a component of the Australian Defence Force, to fight our nation’s wars if necessary. Our people are the core capability through which the Australian Army will meet the challenges of the Indo-Pacific century. Key to our future success will be the considerable intellectual talent the Army possesses or can draw upon, to innovatively build and harness a powerful land force, combining our people and partners with the culture, strategy, concepts and technology to win. I have deliberately covered a lot of ground quickly today and would welcome any questions or comments you may have.

Thank you.

Endnotes

The Network Model: Options for a Future Australian Army

Major James Ellis-Smith

Abstract

In the lead up to the next Defence White Paper, this article proposes a ‘network’ operating model in response to the Chief of Army’s message to ride the wave of technological development to secure an innovative future for Army. The model is centred on an evolution of the Australian Army’s concept of manoeuvre, increasing the firepower and autonomy of small teams as the Army’s units of action. The model offers a potentially unique approach to force structure and doctrine: the use of partner force operations, unconventional warfare and a raiding strategy as a means for the Australian Army to replicate mass and contest conventional war and set the conditions for the integration of future technologies. This article argues that adoption of the network model might also offer Army a flexible force structure and doctrine that makes it better prepared for current threats and tasks. The article proposes potential strategies that Army might employ to achieve internal cultural change and generate political support, and finally outlines practical first steps that might be taken to begin the long process of organisational change.
Introduction

In a speech to the Royal United Services Institute in December 2017, the Chief of Army sent a clear message to the Australian Army: the Army must adapt, and adaptation must begin immediately.¹ The Chief identified the relative capability of the Australian Army compared to other forces in the region. “Our strategic policy is based on the view that the quantity of people is not necessarily decisive. And if quality is rising across our region we need to keep pursuing new, challenging opportunities.” The Chief was clear about the implications of failure, asking “… Could the sheer scale of a future security challenge overwhelm our capacity to cope? Possibly, it’s happened before. Someday it’s almost guaranteed if we hold to the mindsets and modes of industrial age warfighting.”

The Chief of Army has acknowledged the future challenges presented by technology. Addressing the Australian Defence Magazine Congress in February of 2018,² he described emerging technologies as a “… wave of technological development that will change the world…” to which the Army might choose to respond in a number of ways. “We can ignore it, pursuing ‘more of the same’ and risk being tossed around and left floundering in the wake. We can take a breath, dive under it and hope to come out on the other side, seeking time to assess which technologies we will acquire. Or we could start paddling now, riding the wave to secure an innovative and technological future.”

In the lead up to the next Defence White Paper, this article proposes a ‘Network’ operating model as a means to begin the process of ‘paddling’ toward a future Australian Army. The model is centred on an evolution of the Australian Army’s concept of manoeuvre, increasing the firepower and autonomy of small teams as the Army’s units of action in response to future challenges. The model offers a potentially unique approach to force structure and doctrine: the use of partner force operations, unconventional warfare and a raiding strategy not as a distraction from the ‘core’ role of Army in conventional war, but instead as a means for the Australian Army to replicate mass, genuinely contest conventional war, and set the conditions for the integration of future technologies. This article argues that adoption of the Network model might also offer Army a flexible force structure and doctrine that makes it better prepared for current threats and tasks. It proposes potential strategies that Army might employ to achieve internal cultural change and generate political support, and finally it outlines
practical first steps that might be taken to begin the long process of organisational change.

The Operating Environment

The evolution of weapons and technology is almost certain to impact fundamentally how the Australian Army can fight in the future. Stephen Biddle suggests that the evolution of weapon lethality has been ongoing since 1900; that by 1914 “exposed mass movement in the open had become suicidal”\(^3\) and that the evolution of weapon capabilities since that time has served to increase the range at which that exposure could occur. Exposure is as lethal as it has ever been, but Biddle highlights that “technology has reduced the net availability of useable shelter and increased lethality against opponents”.\(^4\) The particular challenge for modern forces may be the prevalence of capabilities to identify and track electronic signatures, making possible the exposure of troop concentrations despite the use of terrain and concealment to avoid decisive engagement.\(^5\) UK defence analysts suggest that in many circumstances it might take between eight and fifteen minutes for a capable adversary to use a combination of electronic and visual reconnaissance to identify and target large formations and headquarters nodes.\(^6\) Sophisticated surveillance and detection capabilities have increased the risk of exposure of forces due to the parallel development of more capable weapons.

Ballistic missile, air and other long range strike capabilities have undergone significant development and have implications for the ability of a force to mass safely anywhere in the battlespace. Colonel Chris Smith and Doctor Albert Palazzo describe the advance of precision weapons as creating a ‘no-mans-land’ of killing zones measured in hundreds or thousands of kilometres, where forces can only operate at the risk of high casualties.\(^7\) Firepower at the tactical level has increased with developments in tank, surveillance and self-propelled artillery. The 2014 conflict in Ukraine provides a case study of the evolution in weapon technology: small to medium unmanned aerial vehicles are now widespread, Russian tanks have become nearly impervious to portable anti-tank missiles, and indirect fires have become increasingly mobile and lethal.\(^8\) A Russian artillery attack in July 2014 destroyed two Ukrainian mechanised battalions in three minutes – the equivalent of between a quarter and a third of the ADF’s land combat capability.\(^9\) Conventional war will almost certainly be characterised by
surveillance and firepower that will mean an increasing number casualties arising from tactical misjudgements – and an increasing range of potential threats are likely to have access to these capabilities.

While the focus of this increase in capability has been the militaries of large states, the lethality of weapons available to non-state actors have also increased. ISIS militants in Mosul have used commercially procured quadcopters to guide vehicle borne improvised explosive devices on to vulnerable targets, providing a rudimentary precision weapon that has been particularly effective against Iraqi security forces. With the manipulation of commercial technologies and the dispersion of designs and plans through the internet, non-state groups can increasingly replicate the firepower of larger powers. As an example, Russian defence sources reported that on the night of 5 January 2018, Russian forces in Syria were attacked by a swarm of thirteen unmanned drones, customised to drop a payload of three dimensional printed munitions. While these weapons are in their early stages of development by non-state actors, it is almost inevitable that these threat groups will continue to refine their manufacture and use and increase the threat posed to land forces. The West collectively, has seen its dominance in surveillance and strike capabilities eroded by a range of threat groups.

The Network Model

The First World War served as a bloody lesson for major powers of the impact of developing weapons on manoeuvre and force disposition which began moves toward decentralisation and small unit tactics. Massed infantry offensives failed as defenders turned to the effective use of reserves and counter attacks to stall advances, prompting the decentralisation of control from the army level to the battalion and an emphasis on small team tactics to outflank defensive strong points. Trench warfare demonstrated the utility of concealment, mobility and concentration of force through the use of small unit probes to identify gaps in the line, and surprise attacks and infiltration by small units to limit the effectiveness of depth and reserves. Biddle suggests that this dispersion to avoid exposure was the last major evolution in manoeuvre tactics, and the advancement of technology since that time has served to “only increase the range over which exposure can be fatal”. Subsequent developments in weapon technology have been aligned with the use of smaller units and the decentralisation of command. In a modern
conflict, forces may be targeted with precision from hundreds or thousands of kilometres and cannot necessarily rely on the traditional protection afforded by cover and terrain. Survivability in modern war might therefore demand the use of decentralised units that fulfil tasks and operate at depths far beyond that understood by conventional forces operating today.

In a Network model, combat power would centre on the execution of aggressive disruption tactics by small teams, with doctrine remaining focussed on the coordination of multiple teams – the rapid concentration of what would now be described as battalion and brigade sized forces – to conduct limited operations at points of relative superiority. In the age of precision weaponry, Smith and Palazzo identified that it may be possible to “… infiltrate small parties of soldiers into and through the area covered by the enemy’s precision weapons. These troops, once across, would coalesce into larger bodies to attack and reduce the envelope, thereby making it easier and safer for the main force to follow.” The relative strength of the Australian army compared to other Western Armies could be the ability to concentrate, quickly and with minimal communication, conducting raids and ambushes against vulnerable points and then disappearing. The capacity of Western armies to adopt non-traditional methods and be successful has been demonstrated, at least in simulation. During the Millennium Challenge simulation held by the US in 2002, a US Marine general emulating a non-Western adversary was so successful against conventional US forces – using coded messages, motorbike couriers and swarming assault boats, simulated insurgents were able to sink sixteen US ships – that the exercise had to be reset. Use of the Millennium Challenge must be caveated with an acknowledgement that it is severely dated – and a more contemporary example is required – but the observation remains that in developing a response to a new, more contested operating environment, the Australian Army might benefit from observing the insurgent opposition of our most recent wars.

The Australian Army would in effect, seek to emulate the methodology of insurgents through the development of an inherently flexible force model. As a small force, the Australian Army would seek to invest more training and capability in small teams so that they are better positioned to exploit joint, information and interagency effects. Through this, Army would seek to empower small teams to independently achieve strategic effects within their operating area. Network doctrine would seek to emulate insurgent
and guerrilla practices by maximising the use of all components of power at the lowest level of the force. In parallel, the Network doctrine would also emphasise the capacity to ‘swarm’ teams to bring conventional force against vulnerable points. The Australian Army might perversely, seek to learn more from the Iranian military – who have formalised indirect doctrine to defend against Western firepower and then extended that doctrine into expeditionary war\(^\text{18}\) – than Western allies. Modelling from non-western methods makes sense. In trying to develop structures and methods to operate in a contested and lethal battlespace, who better to learn from than those forces that have learnt to operate under the envelope of Western firepower? The Network model would seek to emulate insurgent and non-western methods by increasing the value and availability of strategic effects to the lowest level of the force, while simultaneously emphasising the selective exposure and use of combat power.

It is important of course, to remain mindful of the limits of using insurgency as a basis for force structure and doctrine. While counterinsurgency has been challenging to Western armies, insurgencies themselves are rarely successful. Weaker insurgent forces have lost seventy percent of all conflicts over the last two hundred years, often at significant cost.\(^\text{19}\) Insurgents are also presented with a limited range of tactical options that might not suit the Army’s requirements. Insurgents often lack the capacity to hold ground and rely on concealment – either through terrain or the population – for survivability.\(^\text{20}\) The most obvious weakness of the Network model would be its apparent vulnerability to mass and persistence. The relative, or perceived vulnerability of Network teams compared to larger formed units must also be considered. The Network model must therefore optimise the inherent strengths of an insurgent-like method and offset the weaknesses.

Training, partnering and mentoring might provide the first mechanism for the Network force to offset the inherent weaknesses of indirect approaches. Mentoring, capacity building and advise-assist-accompany-enable tasks are likely to remain a core task for Army, both in the conduct of near region shaping and as a contribution to multinational coalitions. The Australian Army might seek to use capacity building as a major weapon in the conventional land battle, enabling a small, specialised Army to achieve a greater operational impact through the training of proxy forces. This methodology might be applied offensively, raising disruptive insurgencies in expeditionary operations, but could be equally applied in defence, reinforcing
Australia’s northern approaches through the training, development and support to neighbouring militaries. The geography of Australia’s near region, dominated by mountains and jungles, potentially lends itself to this strategy. VV Sveics, in analysing the resistance of small nations in the opening stages of the Second World War, observed that: “The only practical value of small nation armies lies in the experience their cadres brought to resistance movements. Elite units, extremely mobile and placed at crucial points of the rugged country could have specialised in quasi-military action, held out indefinitely, and encouraged the nation.”

It might be argued that this model would be a logical extension of the Australian Army’s dominant operational model of the past decade, enhanced and refined as a deliberate strategy to offset the challenge presented by an adversary seeking to use mass to overcome the smaller, more specialised force. Partner force operations, conducted as part of a deliberate Network doctrine, might represent an opportunity for a small army to mitigate some vulnerability against stronger opponents.

Partner force operations might offer an opportunity for a small army, but a model emphasising small team operations requires investment in combat capabilities to be effective. Given the size and experience of the Australian Army, the partner capacity building model most likely to be employed in the Network doctrine would be an ‘El Salvador’ model, based on US Special forces operations in El Salvador from 1979 to 1992. The El Salvador model used small teams of highly trained Special Forces personnel, trained in cultural integration and language skills which built trust with selected partner forces. While US efforts in El Salvador were successful, small and potentially isolated teams are vulnerable and must be provided with reasonable protection. The ambush on 4 October 2017, of a combined US-Nigerian partner force in Niger resulted in the death of four US servicemen and demonstrated the importance of air and strike capabilities to small team operations. Australian ‘advise and assist’ operations in Iraq during 2017 also demonstrated that integration between small teams, armour and strike capabilities are essential. Iraqi security forces clearing Mosul formed ‘micro combat teams’ that were highly effective but depended on the advantage provided by the precise use of armour and overhead armed ISR. Strike capabilities – certainly airborne strike, but also land based strike capabilities such as tanks and long range precision missiles – remain crucial for the protection and enhancement of small teams for the foreseeable future.
Complementary to combat capability, intelligence capabilities would remain critical in the Network partner force model. Partner force operations can incur moral and political risk, and the actions of partner forces must be continually monitored to assist in regulation. US forces in El Salvador struggled to continually monitor the activities of their partner force as a result of their relatively small footprint, and depended on open source and non-government agency reporting to maintain adequate situational awareness. Selecting the most effective and appropriate partner force also requires effective pre-emptive intelligence. Biddle, McDonald and Baker note that the most successful partner force operations are often constrained to small, subset elements of the partner force military, such as the US Special forces training of Philippine Special Forces to combat Abu Sayyaf. These authors further argue that intelligence collection before, during and after the conduct of partner force operations, “… required a large intelligence apparatus which could devote substantial resources to monitoring the US ally’s behaviour rather than simply finding insurgents”. A Network model would remain dependent on sustained investment in intelligence capabilities, but this investment – and investment in integrated strike capabilities – would ensure that the force would be able to adapt to all threat scenarios. A Network force might apply the same principles of operations, that is the integration of small ground teams, strike capabilities and intelligence, with or without a partner force.

The Network model would be primarily focussed on enabling partner force operations, but this core structure would be as well prepared as any, for conventional war, particularly if its key vulnerabilities were offset by technology. Protection for small teams would remain a challenge for the force. The US Marine Corps experimented with a small team construct similar to the Network model in the ‘Hunter Warrior’ experiment in 1997. The experiment demonstrated that hunter-warrior teams could be undetected and effective, but were vulnerable, particularly during insertion. The vulnerability of small teams was highlighted as the key deficiency of the construct, with one criticism suggesting that while small team operations were feasible in uninhabited rural areas, “… in a 300 square kilometre area with 100 villages, each having 100 young men with Kalashnikovs – and a few dogs – the hunters will soon become the hunted.” In the short term the Network model would demand that the land force retain integral capabilities, in particular armour, attack helicopters and armed airborne ISR platforms, to both exploit the opportunities identified by small teams and ensure
their protection. In the near future, capability development might focus on concepts for technology that enhance the protection of small teams. Small, land based unmanned systems providing integral firepower for teams could enhance their survivability in urban areas and provide early warning defences to positions in the field. Portable micro airborne drones could be used by a team to both increase their range and effect and provide early warning of threats. Future concepts of manned-unmanned teaming might offer radical opportunities for the Network construct into the future, with teams able to affect far greater operating areas through their connection with networks of land or air based autonomous systems. The focus on enhanced small team operations within the Network model would offer opportunities to build network integration and adaptability into the force at the most fundamental level.

Building a new Combat Framework

Building the network integration and adaptability required to enable the Network model would require adaptation of force structures and doctrine of how combat power is employed. The Network force structure would be based on the design of small teams, particularly focussed on increasing their autonomy and capability. ‘Core’ skills within this model would be based on enhancing the independent capability of the people who formed the Network teams (Figure 1). Close combat skills and unconventional warfare techniques – in essence, the means to achieve lethal effects without any external support – would form the basis of combat training within teams. Cultural intelligence and language proficiency – including techniques for the training and integration with partner forces – would form the other core skill set. The baseline skill focus for teams would be focussed on enabling their capacity to work with local populations and partner forces when deployed. Core combat skills would be designed to allow the team to achieve limited organic protection and also provide guaranteed ‘value’ in training and assistance to a partner force. With this base construct, teams would maintain the organic, skills-based capability that would then be enhanced by the first layer of capability integration.
The first layer of capability – the ‘integral’ layer – would seek to enhance the effective combat footprint of the team and its ability to influence the battlespace. The integral layer would be divided into four elements, each part designed to enable the team to achieve an organic effect, particularly when coordinated as an operation of multiple teams (Figure 2). Information warfare would form the first element, comprised of training and equipment to enable human Intelligence, counter intelligence, and the use of basic ground surveillance radars. Information warfare at the integral level might also include a more comprehensive understanding of interagency and joint effects and how they might be accessed at the tactical level. The focus of the information warfare element would be building integral, low technology information warfare capabilities that the team could apply in the widest range of operating environments.

Technical augmentation would form the second element, comprised of portable ground and airborne unmanned systems. The focus of the technical augmentation element would be enhancing the situational awareness and protection of the team at longer ranges. The third element would be firepower, comprised of the lethal capabilities organically available to the team. The focus of this element would be the provision of capabilities that enhanced the team’s lethality, including portable anti-armoured and air defence capability.

The fourth and final element would be manoeuvre, addressing the capacity of the team to operate flexibly and coordinate operations with flanking teams. This element would include organic mobility – most likely fast and
lightweight – but also communications and data sharing designed to connect the team to the next layer of capability. Multiple teams operating with integral capabilities might be particularly orientated toward partner assistance operations, but in a conventional war might also be capable of raids, ambushes and reconnaissance.

Figure 2. Network model ‘Integral’ capability

The second layer of capability – the ‘networked’ layer – would integrate the combat capabilities organic to the overall land force, designed to both protect and support the operation of the network of small teams (Figure 3). The networked layer would incorporate the elements of combat power that confer a significant advantage to the force but can operate only in limited windows – either as a result of limited endurance, or through the risk of counter attack. Armour would be employed in the networked layer, potentially massing in response to threats and opportunities once cued by teams and supported by organic breaching and mobility assets to assure their freedom of movement. Information warfare capabilities, including tactical Electronic Warfare and Electronic Attack teams, would be held at the networked layer. Traditional offensive support – including ground based artillery and armed airborne platforms – would also operate in the networked layer, as the integral strike capabilities of the land force. The key difference
in the Network model to current assumptions of land force integration might be the formation of combat teams, which would still occur at the networked layer, but potentially at shorter notice and for less time. The networked layer of land capability – or potentially multiple networks across multiple operating areas – would provide organic capability within a much larger field of joint effects.

**Figure 3.** Network model ‘Network’ Layer, integrating integral teams and land capability

The Joint Effects field would form the final component of the Network force structure (Figure 4). Joint effects would form the umbrella of long range and pervasive capabilities that might be available to the force. Airborne strike, long range precision missiles and offensive cyber effects would form the core of the Joint Effects field, which might overlay one or more networked combat elements. The Network model would depend on considering Joint Effects as a field, rather than a layer – in essence, reinforcing that all entities would exist within the field and would draw upon Joint Effects where required and available. The survivability and capability of entities within the operating environment – in particular small teams – would depend at least in part on the relative strength of the friendly Joint Effects field in comparison to that of the enemy. The Joint Effects field might be considered as a conceptual domain that must be considered in the same way that an entity might consider weather or terrain – a key element defining the operating constraints, threats and opportunities under which the entity operates.
Implementing the Network model – indeed, achieving any change on the scale envisaged by the Chief of Army – would be a challenge in change management for the Australian Army, which has previously demonstrated resistance to major structural reform. In the Australian Army publication *Force Design in the 1990s: Lessons for Contemporary Military Change Management*, Lieutenant Colonel Renee Kidson outlines the failed implementation of Army of the 21st Century/Restructuring the Army (A21/RTA) initiatives which had sought a similar level of transformational change as the Network model. Kidson outlines seven elements of successful change management, two of which – the creation of shared vision, and building internal (leadership) and external (political) support – were notable failures in the implementation of A21/RTA. A21/RTA was undermined by internal resistance, and service sub cultures defending their own equities.34 Arms corps sub cultures resisted A21/RTA as a perceived threat to established power structures, and A21/RTA was generally rejected by conventional forces, who perceived an increased role for Special Forces.35 Observed divisions within Army senior leadership over the merits of the reform contributed to a lack of sustained political sponsorship, which also
undermined its success. Kidson concludes that cultural capture – the ‘capture’ of an organisation by its own ideology and world view – was substantially responsible for Army’s resistance to reform and the ultimate failure of A21/RTA. Successful implementation of the Network model would depend on overcoming cultural capture to build Army and political support.

The distinction between the role of conventional and Special Forces is likely to be a key cultural challenge for many within Army, and efforts to define conventional force in the Network model would be necessary. It is certainly true that conventional forces within the Network model would be similar to contemporary Special Forces in both design and function, modelled from similar structures and general operating philosophies. It is possible that this would generate resentment from established advocates of either element, who might seek to preserve traditional distinctions between roles and functions. Subverting the conventional and Special Forces cultural norm might be achieved through historical perspective.

The definition of Special Forces is a construct of a particular concept of what is possible for ‘conventional’ troops in any given time. A conventional soldier in 1914 might have considered their equivalent of 1918 – subject to a higher standard of training and afforded significantly more autonomy as a result of the demands of tactical adaptation – as ‘special’. If the general trend of manoeuvre warfare adaptation over time has been the increased decentralisation of command, and increased firepower available to smaller forces, it would seem logical that many of the roles currently held by Special Forces within the Australian Army would become the norm. The subsequent role of Special Forces within the Network model is not addressed within this article, other than perhaps to suggest that future Special Forces might be increasingly inter-agency and sensitive in nature. Conventional forces in the Network model, by necessity, would still be contesting conventional war, but the concept of what conventional war is, and how it is fought, might evolve.

Subverting cultural norms of how ‘conventional’ war should look might be the best way to achieve cultural change. Cultural norms are deeply ingrained, and efforts to change force structure, training and doctrine must be careful to avoid being interpreted as an attack against the role and capacity of Army to contest conventional threats. Army has been unfairly accused of being influenced by a self-interested ‘Rum Corps’ in efforts to maintain conventional capability, as a misinterpretation of a well-intentioned belief throughout the organisation in the role of the Army in defending
the nation. Army personnel are invested in preserving what they see as necessary resources, but this investment potentially stifles new ideas, unless they carry the caveat of preserving Army’s capacity to fight conventional wars. The assumption that there is only one way to contest a conventional war presents a challenge to innovation – if there is only one accepted way to do something, doing it differently means not doing it at all. A new model for Army would therefore require a coherent vision of alternate methods by which conventional war can be – and has historically been – contested.

Raiding has been a traditional means by which a force can achieve military objectives, and a raiding doctrine might be highly suitable for the Australian Army. Archer Jones in *The Art of War in the Western World* describes armies as having historically employed either raiding strategies – temporary intrusions where the attacker uses relative advantage in mobility and weapons – or persisting strategies – occupation of territory, seeking conflict with principal hostile forces. As a small force, the Australian Army might be better suited to a general raiding strategy. Jones states that raiding is “… used to target political and logistic targets, concentrating against weaker forces, or using incursions as a means of compelling an enemy to fight” and that, “… raids provide a tactically and strategically offensive means for a weaker force to use against a stronger”. Raids can also complement a persisting strategy successfully, providing the potential for the Australian Army to specialise in a raiding doctrine while still working in parallel with coalition partners. The Roman general Fabius used complementary persisting and raiding strategies to defeat Hannibal during the second Punic War. Fabius maintained a fortified army while simultaneously raiding to deny Hannibal logistics, presenting Hannibal with the dilemma of balancing the dispersal of forces to combat raids and concentration of forces to fight the Roman field army. The use of a classical example over a more contemporary one is deliberate: establishing the lineage of raiding as a form of war. Establishing raiding as a legitimate means of contesting conventional war would potentially make an alternate force structure more palatable – the key message that would be reinforced internally would be that raiding is conventional. Army would still be fulfilling its obligations in defence but may even find that a raiding strategy would bring secondary benefits.

The Network Model might better prepare the force for the full spectrum of tasks currently demanded by Australia’s strategic objectives. Investment in the training, development and doctrinal application of high capacity small
teams would see a priority placed on increased standards of intelligence and aptitude amongst personnel. Army might seek additional incentives in order to become more competitive in recruiting these personnel, and investing more per capita in training, preparation and retention. As well as preparing the force to contest a capable modern threat, this investment might prepare the force for success in stabilisation, counterinsurgency and humanitarian missions. Smarter, more intensely trained and culturally aware forces would be more effective at integrating joint and ‘whole of government’ effects which are critical to success in these tasks. A culturally aware, integrated and smart land force might become the partner of choice and a critical enabler of government and agencies, with long term implications for how Army is viewed in strategic planning and defence policy. The Network model demands the development of a ‘smart’ Army that becomes a more effective tool of government policy.

The ‘smart’ Army could also become a world leader in training, advising and assisting local security forces – fulfilling a niche capability on behalf of a Western coalition. The US Army has taken the step of raising six Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs), recognising the specific force structure, training and experience required to conduct effective partner force development. The US Army will raise only six SFABs, compared to the thirty three conventional Brigade Combat Teams currently deployable. A specialised Australian force might make a greater proportional contribution to a coalition if it was focussed on partner force assistance, and, when combined with an increased investment in Intelligence capabilities, would position the Australian Army as a valued ‘exporter’ of niche skills to coalition partners. The focus of coalition interoperability should be on the alignment of communications and systems to allow the seamless integration of these niche capabilities, meaning that the exchange of military equipment and technology would remain a high priority. The requirement to develop sovereign – but interoperable – equipment and technology would offer opportunities for Australian industry.

The Network model would offer a clear framework of priorities for the development of a sovereign and innovative defence industry. The 2018 Defence Export Strategy outlines a vision for the development of an Australian defence industry in the top ten of global defence exporters. The core and integral layers of the Network model emphasise the development of skills and technologies to protect small teams and enhance their organic
capability; close combat, cultural awareness, intelligence and surveillance technology, tactical unmanned systems, and light armoured mobility. 

Prioritising these technologies and skills in the development of a sovereign defence industry might allow Australia to achieve the dual objectives of securing essential defence technologies, as well as pursuing a potential niche export market. The skills and technologies in the Network model might provide guidance for investment in the proposed Defence Industry Skilling and STEM Strategy, and serve as a driver for the export of Defence services emphasised in the Defence Export Strategy – including professional advisory services in languages, training and cultural intelligence. The skills and technologies in the Network model might provide guidance for investment in the proposed Defence Industry Skilling and STEM Strategy, and serve as a driver for the export of Defence services emphasised in the Defence Export Strategy – including professional advisory services in languages, training and cultural intelligence. The Australian defence industry – reflecting the development of combat doctrine and strategy – might become a small but highly valuable exporter of technology and skills.

**Next Steps**

The Australian Army will eventually be compelled to adapt to the new nature of war, and the only question is whether this adaptation will occur by choice, or by necessity. Colin Gray states that culture can “evolve or even change dramatically if exposed to traumatic shock”. Avoiding a traumatic shock demands early and consistent efforts to adapt the force from the lowest levels. The First World War provides a case study in adaptation: in *Men against Fire*, Michael Howard highlights that no doctrine or training was implemented to prepare the French army for the beginning of the war, meaning that “…when war came, French commanders at every level responded instinctively rather than in accordance with any systemic program of training”. In the “…tragically long time to solve the tactical problems that confronted them…” European armies suffered horrific casualties.

Military authorities of the period were not ignorant of the impacts of technological change but saw a greater risk in adopting new doctrines and culture if the army and nation lost a competitive edge to peers. Howard observed that as a result, “horrific casualties were seen not as an indication of military incompetence but a measure of national resolve, of fitness to rank as a great power”. Soldiers paid the price of this dominant culture; France fielded one and a half million soldiers in the beginning of 1914, and within six weeks of the outbreak of The First World War, one in four was a casualty, and a hundred and ten thousand were dead. The experience of armies at the turn of the twentieth century, and the consequences of their lack of
adaptation in the face of technological change, clearly illustrates what the Chief of Army has described as “…being tossed around and left floundering in the wake”.

The Australian Army could not, and should not, afford the cost of evolving under fire and might consider pre-emptive steps to generate cultural and doctrinal change. Training, simulation and exercises might provide a safe and low cost mechanism to test new concepts. The adoption of the Network model might be considered through a deliberate experimentation and simulation series, testing the proposed force structure and doctrine with both current and projected future weapons and capabilities. Major training activities in the near future could be used to test the concept, with selected units tasked to experiment with Network force structures and a general raiding strategy. Officer and non-commissioned officer training courses could be used as experimental laboratories and war-gaming forums that develop innovative ways to confront adversaries. Brigade level simulation and command post exercises might include serials designed with adversary force overmatch. Commanders would then be encouraged to adapt, aware that they are not expected to ‘win’. Through these incremental inclusions, the force might encourage staff at all levels to pursue unique and adaptive solutions to emerging threats – challenging, where appropriate, existing practices. Cultural and doctrinal change might look less like a revolution, and more like a large ship turning by degrees. Incremental changes or ‘degree turns’ might barely be noticed but might result in a different destination.

The Australian Army faces an evolution in the nature of war driven by technology and the rise of potential competitors. Forces competing in modern war are likely to fight under the envelope of highly capable surveillance, airborne and long range strike capabilities, and an increasing number of state and non-state actors will gain access to these capabilities. Evolving to meet this new threat environment will almost certainly demand that forces continue the historic trend toward dispersion and increased autonomy for small units, a transition that will be difficult in the face of well-established cultural and organisational norms of how conventional wars are fought. The Australian Army should consider challenging its current approach, and be open to the idea of adapting it to something wholly new and unique, to better respond to contemporary challenges and begin developing the Army of the future.
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Strategy and Securitisation: Conflict or Complement in Australian Operations in Afghanistan

Dr Albert Palazzo

Abstract

The aim of this article is to contribute to the understanding of how the war in Afghanistan has become Australia’s longest war despite its strategic irrelevance to Australia or lack of any significant cultural ties. It will do this by examining one small aspect of the war, the technique of securitisation which the United States and Australia employed in their own ways to advance their own goals.

Introduction

Afghanistan lies in what should be a part of the world that matters little to the United States and Australia. It has nothing the American and Australian people want or need. It is distant and inhabited by a society whose people lead a different way of life and hold different beliefs. There are no cultural ties of any significance. United States interest in Afghanistan should be minimal, as should its commitment of resources. For Australia, it is even more irrelevant. Yet, for more than fifteen years the United States, supported by Australia and other allies, has fought an expensive (measured in treasure
and lives) and destructive war across a patch of earth that, once al-Qaeda dispersed, should not matter to it.²

Yet, in the face of such irrelevance, Afghanistan has become Australia’s longest war. This requires some explanation, a situation not helped by the relative dearth of analysis and publication on the war from the Australia perspective.³ The aim of this article is to make a modest contribution to explaining how this came about. It will do this by examining one small aspect of the war, the technique of securitisation which the United States and Australia employed in their own ways to advance their own goals.

Securitisation is a way for an agent to legitimate the employment of force against another agent, usually through spoken means. It enables an agent to transform an issue from one of politics to one of security. For the lay person, it is a means to demonise an enemy. To evaluate the success or failure of the US-led coalition’s use of this technique, this article examines its enablement and coordination with strategy and policy. In doing so, it tests the potential of securitisation to serve as a military capability and determines whether it made an effective contribution to the attainment of Australia’s goals in Afghanistan or if it was a hindrance to that end.

Although not described in academic language until the work of the Copenhagen School in the 1980s, securitisation has a long history of utility in war.⁴ One of the first historians of war, Thucydides, would have recognised it. In his history of the Peloponnesian War he identifies the causes of all war as being “fear, honor and interest,” motivations among which securitisation would find a ready place, while Thucydides’s Melian Dialogue could serve as a case study in its application.⁵ The Athenians first established the Melians as an enemy, and since they were the enemy, Athens had the right to wage war upon them to advance its own ends. Victory achieved, the Athenians slew all Melian adult males, sold Melian women and children into slavery, and resettled Melian lands with their allies. Melian society ceased to exist. Thucydides would never have used the term ‘securitisation’ but its practice was a critical factor in allowing the Athenians to achieve their objectives.

If securitisation has had a long history in war, it is because it fits within its nature. Wars have certain fundamentals. One of the most important is that nations (and/or peoples) go to war in order to achieve a policy objective. Without this, war is merely violence without purpose. This idea comes straight from Carl von Clausewitz, who observed that war is not an
autonomous act but always an instrument of policy.\textsuperscript{6} Thus a critical step in deciding on war is for a state’s political leaders to define an objective, one that can only be achieved through the use of force or its threat. Once this is decided upon it is the job of the military to identify the means to be used to achieve it. Finding the balance between ends and means is the essence of strategy, which can be defined as, “the art of using military force against an intelligent foe[s] towards the attainment of policy objectives”.\textsuperscript{7} Strategists need to find the most effective coordination of means with the most efficient obtainment of ends. From this perspective, securitisation is one of the means that military organisations employ in order to achieve their objectives.

**Policy & Strategy – The View from Australia**

Despite having fought many wars, the Australian Government and its military leaders have limited experience in setting policy objectives and designing and implementing strategies to achieve them. Perhaps this is the fate of the junior partner in a coalition; it must accommodate itself to the objectives and strategy of the senior partner. In both World Wars, Australia was a minor player at the periphery of great struggles in which the centres of gravity lay elsewhere. In the post-Second World War era, Australia contributed small contingents to coalitions led by a great power. Setting aside the need to be seen to support the senior partner, in each of these cases Australia defaulted to the strategy set by the major power.\textsuperscript{8}

On 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda terrorists carried out the most costly attack ever directed against the US homeland. A few days later, Prime Minister John Howard invoked the ANZUS Treaty. In October 2001 Australia supported the United States invasion of Afghanistan in order to eliminate al-Qaeda and topple the Taliban Government who had provided the terrorist group with sanctuary. Within a few months Australia had committed troops to the fight. At this point in the conflict there was both policy and strategic clarity. The US cause was just. It had been attacked and was entitled to reply with force. There was no need for the United States to securitise a foe — the foe’s actions were sufficient to do this on their own. The United States and its allies sought to rid the world of the threat of global terrorism, a goal that resonated even more so in Canberra in the aftermath of the Bali Bombing of 12 October 2002.
But for most people living in Afghanistan, the reasons for the invasion and conquest of their country were less clear. Locals did not associate the Taliban with terrorists and a US psychological operations campaign did little to clarify the matter. Images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Centre did not resonate with people who had never seen a passenger plane or a skyscraper, or in many cases a television.⁹

Moreover, the Afghanistan War did not end after al-Qaeda’s rout and the Taliban’s overthrow. Instead, it has ground on interminably with no end in sight. After initial success, the United States seemingly forgot why it had invaded Afghanistan and its initial objectives became replaced with open-ended goals. The war became an end in itself without an achievable identified endpoint, and a distraction from what became the main effort in Iraq.

In December 2002, Australia withdrew its forces from Afghanistan, temporarily it would prove, when the United States shifted its attention to Iraq. It is Australia’s recommitment to Afghanistan in 2005 that warrants questioning from the perspective of policy and strategy. Within the bounds of its limited middle power nous, it is worth asking how well did the Australian Government fare as an operator of war policy and strategy? The short answer is not very well on either count. In fact, it is hard to discern any formal policy goal for Australia’s resumption of its ground presence in Afghanistan, other than to support the US relationship. It is even harder to identify a coherent strategy that the ADF’s deployed personnel brought to the fight.

But then the United States also did not have a good idea of what it wanted to accomplish in Afghanistan, nor did it have a well thought out plan for how it would achieve success. A United States Army publication rightly describes the strategic development process as disjointed and lacking in rational processes and coherence, driven by shifting mission justifications and objectives, and disconnected from any real discussion of the means needed to achieve them. In a sense the war was a management problem not a strategy one. The result was that what passed for strategy “consisted of unrealistic broad-brush goals with little basis in any rational or comprehensive analysis of the challenges posed by Afghanistan”.¹⁰ The announcement of an increase in troop levels by the United States President, Donald Trump, has demonstrated that little has changed in the United States approach to Afghanistan.¹¹
Numerous commentators have remarked upon Australia’s lack of a policy goal for the Afghanistan War. Tom Switzer wrote that our ‘war aims are incoherent, our exit strategy never explained, and our presence is exacerbating the problems we went in to solve’.\(^{12}\) Even soldiers are confused. On the Lowy Institute’s blog the anonymous ‘Soldier Z’ asked the key question with soldierly directness: “What is our policy?” - a query to which he was unable to provide an answer.\(^{13}\) The Australian Department of Defence’s home page for the Afghanistan Campaign does not provide any illumination, as it is silent on the war’s rationale and national goals.\(^{14}\)

Instead of providing a well-argued explanation for the longest war in the nation’s history, Government spokespeople simply repeat well worn mantras including that the ADF is getting on with the job, eliminating terrorist safe havens and supporting the alliance with the United States, as well as reiterating how proud they and the nation are of the Diggers.\(^{15}\) The Australian Army describes the war in terms that avoid mention of strategy by simply calling it a “test of our people and our capabilities.”\(^{16}\) But such words are not surprising because as, Amin Saikal writes, any discussion of Afghanistan is ‘muted’ and the government, the military and the media have all failed to have an open debate on the war.\(^{17}\)

**Securitisation as a Strategic Resource**

Military forces possess numerous and varied kinds of capabilities that commanders coordinate to animate their strategy. They span the gamut from the physical to the intellectual and include the application of violence (or its threat) as well as the conduct of non-kinetic operations such as information, psychological and cyber. Despite the differences in their nature, the target of all of them is the same — the mind. This is because, returning to Clausewitz, the goal of all war is to compel your adversary to accept your will.\(^{18}\) War is won and lost in the mind of the people.

If done well, securitisation can be a tool that political leaders employ to shape the psychological environment in order to make it easier to attain the sought policy goal. To employ a dated and perhaps crude term, securitisation is a form of propaganda. For military commanders, securitisation is a capability with which to target will; not only to weaken that of an adversary but also to buttress the support of the domestic audience on the home-front. War, however, is among the most complex of human
endeavours and is prone to the unpredictable effects of chance, friction and fog. The enemy is also a living entity that adapts to circumstances adding another of level of complexity and uncertainty. In such a constant state of flux it takes highly skilled and focused leaders to make sense of an operation, coordinate a host of capabilities effectively and guide the operation towards success. This is the challenge that those using securitisation in war face.

The failure of the United States to enunciate an achievable policy for Afghanistan (and that of Australia to state one at all – other than the support of the alliance) has meant that the war has been fought without a realistic goal. This oversight then compromised the formulation of an effective strategy. The result of these defects in the American approach to Afghanistan is an emphasis on the tactical level of war; that is the winning of battles and the killing of the enemy, the latter a task at which the United States and its allies have excelled.

How a focus on tactics contributes to the securing of an undefined policy goal remains unclear. One is reminded of the anecdote related by Colonel Harry G Summers between a US Colonel and his North Vietnamese opposite. The US officer made the claim that his side had not lost any battles during the entire Vietnam War. The reply by the North Vietnamese Colonel was telling: the accomplishment, while true, was irrelevant.  

Under these conditions, the use of securitisation in Afghanistan has not been an effective instrument of policy or strategy. Instead, it has proven an ill-suited one that has contributed to the war’s continuation rather than its conclusion. How did this come about? How did a war that began with limited goals, ones which were largely achieved with the destruction of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, expand into something quite different with ill-defined objectives? Thucydides’ identification of “fear, honor and interest” as the causes of war offer a useful starting point for providing an answer but can only be understood by examining the context in which the war took place.

The Afghanistan War cannot be separated from the image of two planes flying into the World Trade Centre towers in New York City, the sight of massive explosions followed by consuming fire and a towering plume of smoke that was repeatedly broadcast to a world-wide audience. To Americans this provided a rallying point not experienced since the attack on Pearl Harbor nearly seventy years earlier. Over the ensuing days, signs of
patriotic fervour were omnipresent: houses, lawns and cars bedecked with American flags and jingoistic slogans (‘these colours don’t run’) appeared seemingly instantly. The fear of further attacks, the need to preserve national honour by striking back, the desire to avenge the sacrifice of the fallen and the importance of protecting national interests, particularly the need to safeguard the American way of life, all provided a ready reason to go to war. In 2011, the images of young Americans celebrating the death of Osama bin-Laden outside the White House demonstrated that after a decade the feelings released by the destruction of the Twin Towers remained as powerful as ever.\textsuperscript{20}

These images also provided fertile ground for the employment of securitisation techniques. The then United States President, George W Bush, soon declared a ‘global war on terror,’ a slogan that could be linked to a wide range of actions, policies and targets. Terrorists were labelled evil-doers, while the United States identified some states as being part of an ‘axis of evil’. Defence analysts proposed the existence of a global jihad that sought to overturn the West’s dominance in the world order and the Western way of life.\textsuperscript{21} In retaliation, the first target was al-Qaeda, and by association the Taliban, followed by the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein. Yet in using this language, the United States embraced not limited war but open ended conflict, not specific goals but the conversion of others to a Western values system. It appeared that only by achieving this remaking of terrorist havens into a United States image would Americans again be safe.

This language had another distorting effect on the war. From a cultural/societal perspective, the United States had set out to wage a war of existence against people who would be forced to adopt the values of another society. For example, in Afghanistan the rights of women and the education of girls became major issues.\textsuperscript{22} However, such intentions would have imposed changes on a society that had not sought to implement change itself. An American General might say that he intends to restore ‘normal life’ to Afghanistan, but it might be a normalcy that is different from that which existed before the start of the war.\textsuperscript{23}

Yet, by contrast, the United States resourced its war of existence in Afghanistan as if it was a war of limited aims. It chose not to bring all its national strength to bear. Thus the securitisation of the Taliban as terrorists led to the logical step of remaking a state, but it also fostered a disconnect in the articulation of strategy because the US was not willing to mobilise the
resources necessary to achieve this goal. There has been little in US actions to suggest that this has changed.

Partner countries in the US-led coalition behaved in a similar way. Contributors minimised the forces they deployed as well as imposing restrictions through narrowly defined rules of engagement on what the troops can and cannot do.\textsuperscript{24} These rules are then ruthlessly enforced. They also remain classified.\textsuperscript{25} Australia too followed this practice throughout its Afghanistan commitment, a fact that has not escaped notice and comment by defence thinkers. For example, in 2009 Hugh White wrote that he expected the Government to do as little as possible in Afghanistan while still maintaining the commitment.\textsuperscript{26}

Securitisation also created another illogical conundrum for those waging the battle in Afghanistan. The Pashtun ethnic group, from which the Taliban are largely drawn, represents forty two percent of Afghanistan’s population. They are the country’s largest ethnic group.\textsuperscript{27} Pashtuns also live across the border with Pakistan where they are the second largest ethnic group. By associating a large part of Afghanistan’s population with terrorism through their membership of a particular ethnic group, securitisation has created complications for when a sustainable peace is established. Once the United States and the coalition leave Afghanistan — whenever that may be — the Pashtun will need to be accommodated, even if associated with terrorism. After all, they will still be in Afghanistan, unlike the United States and its partners.

It needs to be questioned whether securitisation is a valid or wise practice in conflicts of a counterinsurgency or civil war model. If the goal of war is to make a better peace, can peace accommodate an ostracised element of the larger society? This is not the place to answer this question, but it does suggest that securitisation may work more effectively in major wars where victors can dictate terms to the defeated.

Australian language never reached the same stridency as that emanating from the United States, but the government of John Howard and his successors were full supporters of a global effort to eliminate terrorism, wherever it might exist. For example, then Prime Minister Tony Abbott said on Afghanistan that ‘our mission in Afghanistan has been critical to our national security. We have worked to ensure Afghanistan does not again become a safe haven for terrorists and have worked with our allies to make
the world a safer place’. Although Australia did not employ the emotive language preferred by the United States, as a junior partner it is hard for Australia to escape association with this language.

While Australia did not take a lead in employing securitisation techniques within Afghanistan it still made wide use of these techniques, but with a significant difference. For the Australian Government the target audience of its securitisation efforts was almost exclusively the Australian public. At intervals throughout the war, particularly after the death of a soldier, government spokespeople made reassuring announcements regarding the progress of the campaign and the achievement of milestones while warning of future dangers. Expressions such as ‘we need to see the mission through,’ ‘Afghanistan was a safe haven for terrorists’ and being ‘happy’ with progress remain common.

There are several reasons for the attention paid to shaping the domestic audience. Long wars do need to be sustained, the population reassured that the cost is commensurate with the achievement and that a better peace will result. Particularly in a democracy the people need to be told that a war matters and that it is just. Yet the Australian government’s communication with its people appears to have had a particular, even provincial focus that does warrant some further explanation.

As noted before, the Australian government and the Australian Defence Force have rarely influenced the higher levels of war and have instead followed the lead of the great power. While this may seem natural for a lesser power, it does lead to a narrowing of focus. It would not be too much to say that the Australian Army of today is a tactical force whose expertise lies at the individual soldier through team level. The last time an Australian led a battalion–size operation in war was during the Vietnam War. This means that Australia’s military leaders, and their political masters, do not think much on the operational or strategic levels of war, nor does the public have any conception of such matters either. All that is left is to lionise the bravery, professional competency, temperament and general good-bloke/lass personality that Australian military personnel possess. This is a message that aligns fully with the national myth of the ANZAC.

The message consistently allowed out of Afghanistan was one of good works being done by good people to aid those in need. Because the image of the Digger is held in such high regard by the Australian public it
has been necessary to tightly control any message released. To open the mission to any degree of criticism would be tantamount to questioning the integrity and professionalism of the Digger, an act that would be the equivalent of breaking a social taboo. The result was that by standing behind the protective cloak of the Digger, government policy was safeguarded from criticism.

Conclusion

As this article has shown, securitisation has played a role in the conduct of the war in Afghanistan. This is only natural and right. After all, it would be remiss for a nation not to bring to bear all its capabilities to achieve its objective. War is too costly, destructive and important not to do so.

In war, or in its aftermath, it is also necessary to evaluate all capabilities employed in order to determine their effectiveness and to learn the lessons of their use so that mistakes can be fixed, and deficiencies corrected for the next time. In this short analysis certain ‘lessons’ come to mind, most importantly:

- In war, sound policy should guide everything. Without such a policy it will not be possible to bring the full power of one’s capabilities to bear, at least not coherently. If you never define what you want, then any outcome is a success.

- Second to policy is strategy. Strategy must align with policy so that force can be applied against an adversary in a manner that will bring success closer.

In Afghanistan, the use of securitisation techniques was largely doomed to failure because of an inability of the United States and its allies to articulate achievable policy and strategy. The way such actors employed securitisation was actually detrimental and contributed to shaping the campaign in a confused direction, in particular by creating a war of unlimited ambitions waged with limited means and demonising the very population with whom peace would eventually need to be made. As a consequence, securitisation as practiced by the United States and its allies probably contributed to more negative than positive outcomes across the war.
For Australia, there were additional negative consequences stemming from how it made use of securitisation techniques in the management of its part of the Afghanistan War. ‘Manage’ is the key word here, rather than the more appropriate ‘wage’ because ‘manage’ better describes how it was fought. The true outcomes for Australia’s securitisation efforts was to aid the American alliance and to assure the continued support of the Australian public, not the Afghanistan people. By directing securitisation at a domestic audience, the government was able to avoid providing the Australian public with a rationale for what it hoped to achieve in Afghanistan, even though the desire to be seen to support the US alliance was described by one commentator as an open secret in the corridors of Canberra.\(^{32}\)

There is, however, a second negative consequence in Australia’s use of securitisation that requires consideration, that is the exploitation of the ANZAC myth. By keeping the focus on the accomplishments of the Digger, the government was able to foster the legendary image of the Digger at the expense of what Australian military personnel actually did and achieved. The ANZAC spirit justifiably holds a special place in Australian military lore. Australia does possess fine service people who are capable of incredible acts of bravery, nobility and military skill. This is not because of some innate spirit that Australians alone possess, but rather it is the result of a life time of education and training in the military arts. The military personnel of other states (or even non-states) are often similarly capable. However, what has been absent throughout the Afghanistan War is critical analysis of Australia’s over-arching military performance. To use securitisation techniques to perpetuate myth is dehumanising of those whom it identifies. More worryingly, it is potentially dangerous to the success of the state in future wars. If the ADF is to learn from its experiences in Afghanistan, if is to inculcate those lessons so that it becomes an even better force, it needs to confront the truth of its war. Readiness for the future requires no less.
Endnotes

1. The views expressed here are those of the author alone and do not necessarily reflect those of any other agency.


3. This is beginning to change and hopefully the eventual completion of the war’s official history will generate interest and publication. On the official history project see, https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-history/official-histories/iraq-afghanistan-timor Another good example is the 2017 *War in the Sandpit Conference* that was sponsored by Military History and Heritage Victoria. Its proceedings can be viewed at http://www.mhhv.org.au/?p=5937.


18. Clausewitz, *On War*, p 75


32. White, Comment – Afghanistan

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The Middle Eastern advisory competition: The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force

Major Andrew Maher

‘Combat units drawn from the conventional brigades and divisions of the IRGC have been fighting on the front lines alongside Syrian and Iraqi militias and Lebanese Hezbollah since October 2015. The units appear to be deploying as cadres – bringing most of their officers… and plugging into Iraqi, Syrian, and Hezbollah militia groups that serve as their foot soldiers.’

Abstract

Western powers are not the only nations attempting to influence the balance of power in the Middle East through ‘train-advise-assist’ missions. After three years of support to the Iraqi military against the Islamic State, it is appropriate to question whether Australia’s strategic objectives have been fulfilled – and the answer is vague indeed. As Iraq moves into a stabilisation phase, we now seek to influence the future Iraqi military and political spheres toward a diplomatically-desirable stable state. Western governments are not, however, the only power vying for influence in Iraq. This article explores Iranian employment of sophisticated and mature Unconventional Warfare to achieve its strategic policy aims. Understanding how and why this form
of warfare is exercised by Iran is a necessity given Australia’s interests in supporting, mentoring and enabling partner forces in the Middle East, many of whom have conflicting or tangential interests to that of Iran.

Introduction

“Hezbollah and Hamas show that there is a ‘middle area’ in the range of military operations between irregular warfare and state conflict. These state-sponsored hybrid adversaries create qualitative challenges, despite their smaller size, because of their: Training, discipline, organisation, and command and control; standoff weapons (ATGMs, MANPADS); use of complex terrain and fighting among the people… They are not insurgencies. They are nationalistic, Islamist political parties that also have military capabilities. Their goal… is to obtain political power”.

In 2014, as the Islamic State (IS) threatened the outskirts of Baghdad, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) answered the call, embedding advisers at the tactical level, enabled with intelligence, surveillance and fires capabilities. The IRGC demonstrated a level of influence supporting the Iraqi Army, Police Forces and militias, that lies in stark contrast to that which Western forces has attained in the same theatre, supposedly for the same mission of defeating IS. Thus, the post-war political environment of Iraq is threatened by strong Shi’a dynamics across the Iraqi Security Forces that threatens a resurgence of Sunni (and Kurdish) political violence and perpetuation of civil war.

Iran’s perceived success encourages its continued pursuit of strategic objectives through Unconventional Warfare (UW) – ‘activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow an occupying power or government by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, and guerrilla force in a denied area.’ Iran primarily affects its UW objectives through the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), also known as the Pasradan (Guards in Farsi), delicately avoiding the employment of conventional military forces to constrain escalation. The IRGC pursues national interests via three facets: the shadowy Quds Force pursuing international interests; a military force that controls and exercises anti-access/area-denial (A2AD) weapons; and an informal domestic network and the Basij to exert control over the state.
This article explores the history of the IRGC Quds Force and considers the drivers behind Iranian unconventional approaches to attaining its strategic objectives in the Middle East region. It thus explores the strategic framing of Iran’s UW approach, in the context of exploiting regional dynamics.

Strategic Background – Politics by other means

*Iran has a three-layered asymmetric approach to deterrence. The first layer is strategic deterrence, to dissuade US action by threatening its military positions and allies in the region with missiles and terrorism. The second is an anti-access strategy, dissuading US military operations close to Iran’s borders through increasingly lethal anti-ship weapons. The third layer is a cost-imposing strategy, aiming to make a US invasion of Iran unfeasible.*

Robert Kaplan spoke of Iran’s power within the Middle East that leverages its inescapable geography at the intersection of empires and land-bridges, anchoring MacKinder’s Heartland of Eurasia. Iran cultivates this power by virtue of a ‘three-pronged strategy of proxy warfare, asymmetrical weapons and an appeal to the… downtrodden, particularly legions of young and frustrated males.’ This narrative has some merit for a Shi’a population that constitutes approximately fifteen percent of the global Muslim population and approximately fifty percent of the Middle Eastern Muslim population. Outside Iran, Azerbaijan and certain areas of Iraq, the dominant narrative is one of the Shi’a being a beleaguered minority, with Iran as their only protector.

The evolution of Iranian capability toward unconventional approaches originate with the establishment of the IRGC following the Revolution in 1979. The IRGC was created with due recognition of Iran’s enduring geopolitical landscape and domestic cultural influences, tracing their lineage from the Safavid Empire to a deep-seated mistrust of the West as a result of US and UK interference in Iranian (and Persian) politics. Post-Revolution, the baptism of fire served by the Iran-Iraq War; US displays of overwhelming conventional force during Operations Praying Mantis, Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom; and the impacts of globalisation, have all served to temper the IRGC’s unconventional strategy.
Iran’s development of asymmetric strategy gradually evolved within this context. In 1978-79, Syria and Iraq entered into negotiations aimed at unification\textsuperscript{13} that threatened encirclement of Iran with a regional power to the west, equipped and mentored by the Soviets, much like the client Afghan state on its eastern borders. Today, however, encirclement by the Soviets has been replaced by a “Salafi circle,”\textsuperscript{14} and a network of Middle Eastern bases housing approximately 35,000 American troops.\textsuperscript{15} Offsetting these Iranian fears are the strategic prizes of enduring levers of influence that might afford Iran regional hegemony. In this context, it is notable that military presence in Syria and Yemen, afford Iran an ability to ‘threaten three of seven major global maritime trade chokepoints – the Suez Canal, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Bab al Mandab Strait.’\textsuperscript{16}

The broader context for analysis of Iran’s UW approach is the Middle Eastern demographic context (youth bulge dynamics, youth unemployment, increasing sectarianism, etc.) that gives rise to the conditions within which UW can thrive. These conditions challenge the ability for rentier states to provide opportunities for their people and therefore govern effectively.\textsuperscript{17} ‘Between 1995 and 2025, the populations of Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Syria, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Yemen will have doubled.’\textsuperscript{18} It is notable that these locations are generally those that exhibit a Sunni/ Shi’a schism, within which Iran has strategic interests, and where Iran has already demonstrated a willingness to support proxies in support of its own national goals. The Arab Spring demonstrated to these governments the fragility of such dynamics, particularly in combination with unemployment and proliferating globalised communications systems. Furthermore, the concentration of oil in Shi’ite dominant areas inflames this dynamic.\textsuperscript{19} Hence, the Middle East will remain, until at least 2025, a ripe location for the use of unconventional tactics to foment instability.

**The Evolution of Iranian Military Capability.** In the traditional sense of military force, the Artesh (Army) seemingly holds the primary role for the security of the Iranian nation.\textsuperscript{20} Prior to the Revolution, the Artesh had been supported by the United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Iran.\textsuperscript{21} The Artesh was thus a compromised instrument of the nascent revolutionary state. The MAAG noted a broad range of systemic challenges within the Artesh and hence its ability to defend the state may have also been apparent to the new Iranian leadership. Thus, the existence of the IRGC must be viewed in this context of revolutionary leader - Ayatollah Khomeni – who needed to marginalise the Artesh, to develop an asymmetric
military capability to offset Western technological and materiel advantages, and to avoid an externally sponsored counter-coup d’état.

Khomeni thus needed the IRGC as a counter-weight, now estimated to be between 120,000 and 160,000 in strength drawn from across the joint services. Of this total, the Quds Force is estimated to be approximately several thousand elite soldiers in strength. The Air Force of the IRGC is believed to operate Iran’s three Shahab-3 intermediate-range ballistic missiles units and the IRGC Navy controls Iran’s coastal defense forces, including HY-2 Seersucker land-based anti-ship missile units deployed in sites along the Gulf coast. The IRGC is therefore an inherently joint service that transcends traditional segregation of domains.

Soon after the Revolution, the experience of the Iran-Iraq war hardened the new IRGC leadership, and indeed, Iranian leadership more broadly. This conflict yielded what might be understood as a ‘First World War’ moment, wherein the cost of conventional attritional warfare (estimates exceed half a million Iranians killed in action) shocked the young nation. It further yielded the recognition that Iran can never again tolerate a strong adversarial Iraq. Elsewhere, the indirect strategy of the US/Saudi-supported jihad against the Soviet domination of Afghanistan, was registering strategic success. Late in the war, Iranian forces, vastly outnumbered by Iraqi forces, experimented with unconventional means, including fomenting insurgency in Kurdish and Southern Iraq and commando and amphibious raids. This evolution in strategy indicates that the Iranian leadership consciously sought to avoid such excessive costs in pursuing national interests.

A visceral aversion to conventional warfare is evident in the public commentary of senior Iranian officials. Upon his appointment to the leadership of the IRGC in 2013, General Jafari divided ‘Iran’s military command-and-control into thirty one distinct units, each of which could function independently in the case others were hit or destroyed – a strategy termed “mosaic defense.” This concept uses “mosaic tiles” of localised irregular cells, operating amongst the people. The strategy exploits Iran’s strategic depth, enhances resilience within its command and control structure, mobilises popular resistance and empowers local leaders to exploit opportunities within their geographic region. Jafari also merged the Basij – which can mobilise hundreds of thousands of paramilitary forces – under the Guards command. Iran has also demonstrated that it can credibly enact this strategy:
The IRGC has been systematically equipping, organizing, and retraining its forces to fight decentralized partisan and guerrilla warfare. It has strengthened the anti-tank and anti-helicopter weaponry of IRGC battalions and stressed independent battalion-sized operations... some 2,500 Basij staged such an exercise (involving urban swarming) in the Western suburbs of Tehran in February 2007. Once again, Iran can draw on the lessons of the fighting in Iraq. It also, however, employed such tactics with great success against Iraqi forces during the Iran-Iraq War, and it has closely studied the lessons of urban and built-up area fighting in Somalia and Lebanon.31

The Iranian unconventional warfare strategy is borne from its military experience and the application of lessons observed from the successful application of asymmetric tactics in its near region. It is a unitary operational concept employable domestically and offshore, with common training aims for IRGC operatives. It is inherently scalable, operating similarly whether the threat is a conventional military invasion, or a regional insurrection.32

The Contemporary Iranian Strategic Context. Iranian state cohesion is a tripwire to Tehran’s interests due to a history of internal dissent, most recently demonstrated through the globalised connectivity of activists during the Green Revolution of 2009. From the commencement of the Islamic Revolution in 1979; Balouch, Turkmen and Kurd separatism created a clear requirement for the Basij to suppress separatism.33 It is reasonable to conclude that Iran has superimposed this paranoia onto its calculus for how other nations assess strategic policy.

The contemporary Salafist threat clearly unsettles the Iranian regime, being a demonstratable model of what a relatively small group of well-trained, and motivated individuals can accomplish. For a regime founded in revolution, such power poses an existential threat to the cohesion of the state and its interests. Iran may have also concluded that a conventional approach simply will not work in the sensitive Persian Gulf region. Such a conclusion is evidenced through Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait; the difficulty the US has had with using conventional military power against insurgents and terrorists; and Iran’s own long history of confrontation against the US – including the devastation wrought upon its Navy in 1988.34 Within such a construct, it seems logical that Iran sought to develop unconventional means to achieve its strategic ends.
Experimentation in Lebanon. In 1982, “Iran sent approximately 1,500 IRGC officers to Lebanon with Syrian permission to help build and direct a Shi’a militia proxy force to fight the Israelis, the origin of Lebanese Hizbollah.”35 Hizbollah and IRGC agents paid close attention to actual combat operations, sifting through lessons learned in order to strengthen subsequent attacks.36 By 1984, the IRGC was operating six training camps in the Bekaa Valley and was providing salaries, medical benefits, and free education for fighters and their families. Throughout this time, the IRGC’s focus remained on acting as a conduit to Hizbollah for Iranian arms, money, and advanced training in guerrilla and terrorist operations.37

The tipping point arrived when the 23 October 1983 bombing of the Marine Corps HQ killed 241 and led to the withdrawal of US peacekeeping forces from Lebanon. The following year, the 20 September 1984 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut led President Regan’s National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane to claim: ‘Iranian sponsorship of terrorism is (confirmed by) clear, solid evidence.’38 However, by this time, the strategic victory had been secured, with United States military forces withdrawn from the country and reluctant to reengage.

**Having splintered from the Amal Movement in the mid-1980s,** Hizbollah leaders issued a manifesto, referred to as the ‘Open Letter’ in 1985. In the manifesto they described their ideology in crystal clear terms: they were Islamic, strongly allied with Iran, and utterly determined to reject Lebanese politics… (but in the early 1990s) Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizbollah, made the fateful decision to change the group’s ideology in this regard. Hizbollah thereafter ran for seats in the Lebanese parliament and captured an influential sector of the government.39

Iran’s development of unconventional strategy can be seen through the lens of operational trial and error within the Lebanese Civil War from 1975-1990, that ultimately saw a terrorist organisation evolve into an effective political party.40 This party then secured a position within government exploiting its integration into the fabric of the local Lebanese society.41 This model is echoed in IRGC planning for conducting UW within other conflicts across the Middle East.

Enhancement of the model in Iraq. In February 1983, during the Iran-Iraq War, IRGC officers began organising and training Iraqi expatriates
and prisoners of war to become guerrillas that would eventually evolve into the Badr Organisation. This effort continued until the end of the war, reportedly raising over 6,000 personnel, and establishing a long-term asset for Iran. This asset was mobilised in February 1991, when up to “5,000 Badr operatives – under IRGC control and supervision – entered Iraq as SCIRI tried to commandeer the Shi’a uprising in the south following the end of Operation Desert Storm”. Lacking a mandate to remove Saddam from power, US forces were unable to intervene. Isolated from external support, Badr operatives were crushed in what was seen as a US betrayal.

The subsequent US invasion of Iraq in 2003 proved an opportunity for Iran to apply its lessons from this earlier employment of Badr guerrillas. The rising influence of Muqtada al-Sadr and the Mahdi Army were a facet of increasing influence that ultimately saw Nouri al-Maliki as the Iraqi Prime Minister in a ‘neutralisation’ of Iraq. “Iran’s primary partners in this mission were the large Iraqi nationalist Shia militia Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) and its more elite offshoots, Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and Kata’ib Hizbollah (typically referred to as ‘special groups’), which were more directly aligned with the IRGC and Iranian ideology.”

These Iranian proxies sought to limit US influence through tactical attrition – killing approximately 500 US military personnel – to undermine domestic popular opinion regarding the war. The Special Groups were supported in this mission via Quds Force advice, materiel support and training camps. The scale of this support ultimately led General David Petraeus, then Commander US forces in Iraq, in Sep 2007 to conclude:

_We have no question whatsoever about Iranian weapons being used to kill our soldiers, to kill Iraqi security forces and Iraqi civilians…The explosively formed projectiles…come from Iran. There’s no question about that._

Despite such statements, US military attempts to arrest Quds Force operatives in Iraq on January 20, 2007, led to the IRGC special-group proxy AAH raid at the US joint command centre in Karbala, killing five American soldiers, and serving as a deterrent against further operations to curb Iranian influence. This period coincided with the illumination of the A.Q. Khan nuclear proliferation network, and thereafter Iranian UW in the Middle East became entwined with the strategic debate surrounding the Iranian nuclear program.
Expansion into Syria. From 2011 to 2014, ‘traditional’ Iranian efforts through the Quds Force to mobilise proxy forces were employed. Syria is of enormous strategic importance to the leadership in Iran, a bridge that allows it to “keep Hizbollah’s thousands of rockets pointed at Israel.” This importance was evidenced by the rapidity with which Iran deployed IRGC advisers to Damascus (arriving in May 2011) and the mobilisation of Iraqi Shi’a militia forces. Due to the battlefield successes enjoyed by Daesh, Iran clearly identified a need to increase its advisory efforts to reverse this battlefield trend, particularly around the key terrain of Aleppo. This led to the decision to employ IRGC officers in leadership roles – not merely advising – in what might be better termed ‘partnering.’ The Iranian war effort in Syria in 2015 thus evolved to resemble the “train, advise, and assist (TAA) mission that the US and its allies have undertaken in many countries.”

The expanded employment of IRGC cadres, coupled with Russian air support, broke the siege of the Kuweires Airfield and prevented the capture of Aleppo by the rebels. The key difference between the success of this action in Syria and the other fronts held by the regime, was the presence of these IRGC cadres. Iran, in concert with Russia and Syria, likely adopted this strategy as “implanting IRGC command, staff, and cadre into such an amalgam of militias would give it a much greater semblance of cohesion and could even give it unity of command, assuming that the militias were prepared to accept the command of the IRGC officers.” This Iranian (and Russian) support was critical to the “rapid turnaround on the front and the Assad regime’s continued survival.”

Iran has expanded into the employment of a ‘double-proxy’ strategy, leveraging Hizbollah fighters to perform the role of advisors to “Iran’s ‘Shiite Foreign Legion,’ consisting of sectarian militias from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.” Rodger Shanahan of the Lowy Institute notes that: “It is plausible to think of the Hizbullah ‘group’ of organisations where each branch ultimately serves the interests of the IRGC but with close training and logistical support provided by the parent Lebanese Hizbullah or one of the more militarily competent Iraqi groups.” In a similar manner, Iranian support to the Badr Organisation has realised long-term dividends through IRGC Quds Force “covert paramilitary operations in Iraq during the 1980s and 1990s.”

Economy-of-force in Yemen. Most recently, Iran opened an economy-of-force effort in support of the al-Houthi in Yemen’s civil war. This effort
has to date remained relatively clandestine, lacking the martyrdom announcements of casualties as is characteristic of operations in Syria, despite forty-four IRGC and Hezbollah operatives having been killed or captured over the last two years. Most concerning about this theatre, however, is that the provision of advice has been in the form of enabling the employment of ballistic missiles, naval mines, suicide boats, and land-based anti-ship missiles.

It is fair to conclude, Iranian UW strategy has expanded over time, and enabled Iran to successfully support its Lebanese, Iraqi, Syrian and Yemeni allies, with a limited cost to the Iranian state in the event of failure. This model allows the IRGC “to weight its regional efforts by deploying relatively low numbers of its own troops to provide exponential increases in the combat capabilities of its proxies at critical moments.”

Lessons / Observations from Iran’s conduct of Unconventional Warfare

Advise. The Quds Force have provided advisory support to Hizbollah, the Assad regime, Iraqi Shi’a militias, al-Houthis and others. The most simple level of support is through the hosting of trainees at training camps within Iran, which over time, might be extended to locations within the target country. In the context of Iran’s pursuit of international prestige, Advising might also be seen as a strategic demonstration, and hence it is unsurprising that senior Iranian generals - including General Qassem Suleimani, the IRGC Quds Force commander – are publicly and prominently photographed advising Iraqi forces and militias.

The picturing of Suleimani with the son of Imad Mughniyeh, who was assassinated in 2008 when he was the Hizbollah military commander, is indicative of personal relationships the Quds Force establish with their proxies (or that they would like people to believe they have with their proxies) and the broader influence objectives pursued through Advisory support. Iran has at times constrained its forces to solely providing advice, as was reported with its deployment of “approximately 200 IRGC troops in Bosnia as of early 1996.” Provision of assistance can, and recently, has, extended to direct leadership of militia forces, as evidenced in Syria and Yemen.
In Syria, operational control of regime forces in southern Syria and around Aleppo was reported in 2014.

In recent years, the IRGC has demonstrated a willingness to expand beyond provision of advice to militias and guerrillas, into support for conventional units. IRGC cadres deployed to Syria have included Armoured, Artillery and Combat Engineer corps, due to the nature of the contest for Syrian cities and the expertise required by Syrian Regime forces. The IRGC has also demonstrated a willingness to use Hizbollah affiliates to advise local militias in Syria and Iraq, thus perpetuating its influence in an efficient manner.

**Assist.** The IRGC, through the Quds Force, has provided materiel to support their proxy forces. The most notable of which was the support to Lebanese Hizbollah prior to the war with Israel in 2006. This assistance expanded beyond Katushya rockets to advanced technologies such as the C-802 anti-ship cruise missile (ASCM) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). Such support was significant, in that a C-802 fired by Hizbollah successfully targeted an Israeli Navy Sa’ar-class missile patrol boat.64

The provision of assistance, particularly advanced weaponry, carries a significant risk to the sponsoring nation of ‘blowback’ evidenced by the U.S. provision of Stinger missiles to Afghan mujahideen during the 1980s. There is a risk that when ships such as the *Victoria* are intercepted, undeniable evidence of state-sponsorship is secured. This has seemingly been a risk Iran is willing to take in support of its proxies.

Assistance may also take the form of political advice and financial support that helps institutionalise the force into the fabric of their local society – as was seen with Hizbollah from the 1980s into a political party in Lebanon.65 This type of societal integration portends significant Western concerns with the future of Iraq’s *Hashd al-Sah’abi*, or Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF). Adoption of the Lebanese Hizbollah model – ‘entailing their transformation into political movements with military and social welfare wings, outside of state control but tolerated by the government’ – is of significant concern as Iran has been attempting to “apply the Hizbollah model in Iraq through its support for groups like Kata’ib Hizballah and Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq for more than a decade.”66

**Accompany.** Iran has been willing to accompany its proxies in the battlespace, particularly where significant interests are held, inclusive of
providing tactical leadership where required. This has been most notable in Iraq, and particularly those areas of Iraq with a large Shi’a demographic or cultural importance (such as Kabarla or Samarra). These risks are regularly accepted across the Quds Force, evidenced by Suleimani’s regular visits to the Iraqi capital, where he has been a “key player since even before the 2003 US invasion and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.” Even in the event of senior officer fatalities and strategic compromise, such risks have been accepted by the Iranian regime.

In Syria, Iran has accepted the imperative to accompany forces in the field and its commensurate risk. At least 187 casualties were reported among Iranian nationals in Syria during a 5 month period over 2015/2016, inclusive of a Major General equivalent. This same period aligned to the battlefield reversals near Aleppo that seemingly justify the increased risk borne by advisers through resultant battlefield successes. The lesson is one which Western forces are reluctant to adopt:

… to influence your insurgent proxy you need to be there on the ground with them, earn their respect, support them, and demonstrate your ability to improve their chances of success. You do not buy allegiances, you can only rent.

Adaptability. Informed by Advisors who have a strong relationship with proxy commanders, the IRGC employs the concept of ‘strategic optionality’ wherein multiple militias are supported simultaneously, sometimes by multiple advisors. In so doing, the IRGC develops a good understanding of the tactical challenges its proxy force faces, whilst concurrently developing trust and influence. Should this come to naught, an alternate partner is already being developed to assume the lead. From March 2004 onward “there was not one insurgency in Iraq, but at least six” demonstrating both the strategic optionality then being employed by Iran, and also the complexity of competing for influence in the Middle East.

Anthony Cordesman of CSIS notes that “the Quds troops are divided into specific groups or ‘corps’ for each country or area in which they operate. There are Directorates for Iraq; Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan; Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India; Turkey and the Arabian Peninsula; Asian countries of the former Soviet Union, Western nations (Europe and North America), and North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, and Morocco).” This regional specialisation allows the development of lifelong regionalised knowledge that
can be drawn upon for adapting to emergent challenges, and seemingly has yielded benefit for Quds Force deployments. This model also allows for the development of loyalty with proxy forces developed through years of engagement, advice and support.

The increased Iranian commitment in Syria in 2014 demonstrated characteristics of “selecting individuals from across Iran as part of training teams” seemingly applying an attributes-based model for deploying advisers.\textsuperscript{74} This willingness to screen for Advisors seemingly allows the IRGC to accept greater risk with their employment as tactical leadership for militia forces.\textsuperscript{75} Such a model represents an important consideration by the Iranians as the Australian Army develops its Indigenous Capacity Building doctrine.\textsuperscript{76}

**Assessment of Iranian Unconventional Warfare Strategy**

Regarding the proxy war in Syria, Emile Hokayem concludes that “Iran has proven considerably more committed, competent and coherent than its Gulf rivals; the expertise, experience and strategic patience it deployed in support of the Syrian regime to a great extent facilitated Assad’s recovery from serious setbacks in 2012.”\textsuperscript{77} The self-perpetuating manner in which Iran leverages aligned groups to subsequently pursue its strategic aims is seemingly the strongest benefit of its strategy.\textsuperscript{78}

A key factor in the success of Iran’s UW strategies has been the trust it elicits with proxy forces. When Iran accepts the shared risks of accompanying its proxy forces in the field, rapport is built, development of shared interests is possible, and misemployment of assisted materiel is mitigated. This was clearly seen in its willingness to accept risk in Aleppo late in 2015. This recognition is also evidenced by Iranian willingness to trust its Hizbollah proxies to partner with Arab militias in Syria and Iraq. Even where Iran shares religious heritage with its proxies, leverage is slowly gained. This is evidenced by efforts to infiltrate and usurp Iraqi Security Forces and Government architecture into a parallel force not entirely under the control of the Iraqi prime minister or the rule of law.\textsuperscript{79} To Western minds that think in terms of binary forces and three to four-year electoral cycles, such insidious fracturing over a long-term advance of influence represents a significant threat.
A pragmatic calculus can be seen within the al-Houthi insurgency in Yemen, perhaps mindful of the Houthi reticence to be cast as a proxy force. As early as 2010, it was reported that al-Houthi militants were being trained (directly or indirectly) by the IRGC in Lebanon and Iran. Hizbollah soon thereafter, reportedly had troops “actively engaged in combat in Yemen, with the al-Houthi rebels in the northern province of Saada along the Saudi border, and have… claimed that its personnel have shot down several Yemeni aircraft using Iranian-manufactured Misagh-1 MANPADS.” To conclude however, that Iran had destabilised Yemen into its current civil war is erroneous – it was highly unstable to begin with – and Iran’s ethnic-religious connection to the Houthis was somewhat tenuous. Hence, the issue of state willingness to support proxies needs to consider the domestic audiences of those proxies, if it is to be conducive to inciting rebellion.

Conclusion

Modern war in general, and this latest Mideast war in particular, is about armed political factions generating political influence and power through force and coercion.

Iran and its proxy forces demonstrate the Clausewitzian dictum of ‘politics by other means’ by harnessing the disaffected Shi’a community in Arab states and carefully calibrating its military actions with nuanced political objectives. During its period of experimentation in Lebanon, the costs of its unconventional warfare strategy were almost negligible to Iran. During these formative years, Iran witnessed success in its pursuit of developing strategic levers across the Middle East, before the U.S. adoption of the ‘axis of evil’ narrative and efforts to halt the Iranian nuclear program in the 2000s began to manifest in economic sanctions and constraints to its indirect strategy.

This article concludes that Iran is likely to continue to use unconventional means to affect national strategic outcomes, albeit with pragmatic constraints to avoid regional antagonism and military escalation. Iran pursues such aims with realistic expectations, evidenced through recognition that proxies such as the Assad regime, or the Houthis, can not generate enough combat power to achieve desirable ends on their own. Iran demonstrates, through the IRGC, a deliberate strategy and force-generation model, for the employment of advisers to influence proxies to further Iranian national interests.
Over the past decade, the ADF has been consistently tasked by the Australian Government to develop the capacity of partners in the greater Middle East region. This task immediately places Australia as a competitor with other actors vying for influence in the region, such as Iran. The Australian Defence Force can both learn from, and be cautioned by, the Iranian model of Unconventional Warfare as it continues to compete for influence in the Long Wars of the Middle East.

Endnotes


4. With the Iraqi seizure of Kirkuk in November 2017, “Iran’s adroit maneuvering outrivaled America’s diplomatic efforts and allowed Iran to score a triple victory: further distancing the PUK from its Kurdish rival the KDP; re-energizing PMF ascendancy in Iraq, and demonstrating an effective level of influence over Baghdad… Kirkuk’s loss is symbolic of America’s declining influence in Iraq… Iran’s ability to take the lead and have a prevailing influence on Iraqi moves is a watershed moment in the region, with implications all over the Middle East.” Dror Michman and Yael Mizrahi-Arnaud, 2017, *Dropping the ball in Kirkuk*, The Brookings Institute, Nov 3, at: https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/11/03/dropping-the-ball-in-kirkuk/, accessed 5 Nov 2017

6. “The events during the summer of 2014 and the fall of 1998 drive home the consistent theme that the Islamic Republic has not initiated conventional force beyond its borders unless faced with a perceived existential threat, at least since the end of the Iran-Iraq War.” J. Matthew McInnis, 2016, *Iran at war: Understanding why and how Tehran uses military force*, Dec, American Enterprise Institute, p 15


9. The land-bridges between the Caspian and Arabian Seas, the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, and the Black and Caspian Seas, have since antiquity controlled the flows of trade and empire across the Eurasia

10. Robert Kaplan, 2013, ‘*The revenge of geography: What the map tells us about coming conflicts and the battle against fate*’, p 281


12. “Operation Praying Mantis, was decisive. The Iranians lost two platforms, four smaller boats, one frigate, and at least 56 personnel during nine hours of fighting.” J. Matthew McInnis, 2016, *Iran at war: Understanding why and how Tehran uses military force*, Dec, American Enterprise Institute, p 28. This operation was conducted by the United States during the ‘Tanker War’ of 1988, when Iranian unconventional strategies threatened oil tanker passage through the Persian Gulf


14. This description emerged in the period 2001-2010 via Al Qaeda-inspired franchises in Iraq, Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Caucasus, that have now evolved or in some cases been replaced by Islamic State affiliates


17. Rentier states are those that trade on strategic commodity to provide for their people. They are thus dependent upon external variables to provide fund government services, such as high oil prices or favourable currency exchange rates


19. Discussed at: https://theintercept.com/2016/01/06/one-map-that-explains-the-dangerous-saudi-iranian-conflict/, accessed 16 Jan 2016. Middle Eastern rentier economies are further challenged by recent low oil prices that undermine the ability to use cash inducements to offset popular discontent

20. The founding of the IRGC in 1979, was influenced by the need for a counterbalance the *Artesh* – ‘whose commitment to the revolution was suspect due to its ties to the Shah’s regime and to the U.S. and British militaries.’ Michael Knights and Michael Eisenstadt, 2017, ‘Mini-Hizballahs, Revolutionary Guard Knock-offs, and the Future of Iran’s Militant Proxies in Iraq,’ *War on the Rocks*, May 9, at: https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/mini-hizballahs-revolutionary-guard-knock-offs-and-the-future-of-iran’s-militant-proxies-in-iraq/, accessed 10 May 2017. Thus, the nature of the revolutionary establishment of the Islamic Republic necessitated the establishment of the IRGC


22. Anthony Cordesman, ‘*Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces*’, 16 Aug 2007, p 3, quotes the IRGC strength at some 125,000 men. The estimates of 120,000 to 160,000 represent the full range of estimates publicly identified


25. Cordesman, 2007, p 6

26. “Iran’s leaders took two lessons from the Iran-Iraq War. The first was that Iran was surrounded by enemies, near and far… The other lesson drawn from the Iran-Iraq War was the futility of fighting a head-to-head confrontation.” Dexter Filkins, 2013, ‘The Shadow Commander,’ The New Yorker, 30 Sep

27. In this context, the view of Iranian leadership was likely influenced by “American and Arab courtship of and support for Saddam throughout the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War [that] cemented American-Iranian, Arab-Iranian and Sunni-Shi’a antagonisms.” Amin Saikal, 2014, Zone of Crisis: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq, IB Taurus and Co Ltd, New York, p 112. Such American and Arab support for Iraq might be plausibly expected in a future challenge to Iranian regional power

28. Quoting IRGC Commander Major General Jafari: “Given the enemy’s numerical or technological superiority, the IRGC would use asymmetrical warfare capabilities, such as those used by Hezbollah in its 2006 war with Israel in Lebanon.” Alireza Nader, 2013, ‘Profile: Revolutionary Guards Chief Gen Jafari’, 22 Jan

29. Alireza Nader, ‘How would Iran fight back?’, 1 Oct, 2012. “This doctrine realigned most IRGC divisions to the provinces and attached the Basij paramilitary organisations to them. It allows for a more decentralised IRGC structure that can better absorb a decapitating strike and invasion and then reconstitute an insurgent army to push the enemy out.” J. Matthew McInnis, 2016, Iran at war: Understanding why and how Tehran uses military force, Dec, American Enterprise Institute, p 39

31. Anthony Cordesman, 2007, ‘Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces’, 16 Aug, pp 5-6

32. “Aside from ideological motivations, the formation of Basij was also a response to perceived domestic and external threats. The rebellions in various parts of the country (Khuzestan, Kurdistan, and Torkaman Sahra), uncertainty about the ability of the regular military to deal with these threats, and, after the onset of the hostage crisis, the perceived threat from America, all acted as catalysts in the formation of Basej”. Kamran Taremi, 2014, ‘Iranian Strategic Culture: The Impact of Ayatollah Khomenini’s Interpretaton of Shiite Islam’, p 10

33. Demonstrative of this state paranoia is the RAND observation that: “Reflecting its original charter of defending the revolution, there are IRGC installations in all of Iran’s major cities, organised into quick-reaction groups that serve as a reserve against unrest”. Wehrey et al, 2009, ‘The Rise of the Pasdaran: Assessing the Domestic Roles of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps’, p 8


35. J Matthew McInnis, 2016, Iran at war: Understanding why and how Tehran uses military force, Dec, American Enterprise Institute, p 17


37. ARIS, 2013, pp 97-98

38. A Jafarzadeh, 2018, The Iran Threat: President Amadinejad and the coming nuclear crisis, p 67

39. ARIS, 2013, p 5
40. “Over the last fifteen years Hezbollah has evolved from an Iranian-influenced conspiratorial terrorist group rejecting participation in Lebanese politics, to a party with considerable autonomy and a talent for playing politics and winning elections. The Shi’i party is now part of the Lebanese government but simultaneously adopts an opposition demeanor, with a Janus-faced profile that infuriates detractors while seeming perfectly reasonable to its defenders and supporters.” Augustus Richard Norton, 2007. *Hezbollah*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, p 6

41. “Syria’s civil war and the Lebanon-Syria insecurity nexus complicate and inform every aspect of sectarian and factional competition in Lebanon in ways that neither the Lebanese nor their regional and international allies seem to have fully accounted for.” Aram Nerguizian, 2017, *The Lebanese Armed Forces, Hezbollah and the Race to Defeat ISIS*, Working Draft, Center for Security and International Studies, 31 Jul, p 8


43. McInnis, 2016, p 18

44. McInnis, 2016, p 19

45. “In the course of the campaign… 196 US personnel [were] killed and 861 injured [just] in EFP [Explosively-Formed Projectile] attacks.”, McInnis, 2016, p 20

46. Quoted within A Jafarzadeh, 2008, *The Iran Threat: President Amadinejad and the coming nuclear crisis*


50. “Beginning in early 2012, Iraqi Shi’a fighters started to trickle into Syria. Participating Iraqi groups include Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Kataib Hizb Allah, the Badr Organisation, Harakat Hizb Allah al-Nujaba, and Katib Sayyid al-Shuhada… Their training, tactics and weapons further point to how


58. It is notable that early IRGC and Hezbollah efforts seem to have been in training and equipping Houthi forces, perhaps demonstrating the perception of low strategic yield for Tehran. Recently, however, this calculus seems to have reversed with evidence of direct Iranian leadership of Houthi forces in the field. Joshua Koontz, 2017, ‘Iran’s Growing Casualty Count in Yemen,’ *War on the Rocks*, 1 Jun, at: https://warontherocks.com/2017/06/irans-growing-casualty-count-in-yemen/, accessed 3 Jun 2017
59. ‘Sa’ada-based IRGC advisers oversee the design, maintenance, and implementation of ballistic missile systems for Houthi missile brigades, according to debriefings with captured Houthi field commanders.’ Joshua Koontz, 2017, ‘Iran’s Growing Casualty Count in Yemen,’ War on the Rocks, 1 Jun, at: https://warontherocks.com/2017/06/irans-growing-casualty-count-in-yemen/, accessed 3 June 2017


62. J. Matthew McInnis, 2016, Iran at war: Understanding why and how Tehran uses military force, Dec, American Enterprise Institute, p 17

63. This conclusion is evidenced by a raid against the al-Alab command center, Saudi Arabia on March 21, 2017, in which an IRGC officer and 40 Houthis were killed and a further 12 Houthis were wounded. Paul Bucala and Frederick Kagan, 2016, Iran’s Evolving Way of War: How the IRGC Fights in Syria, AEI Critical Threats, Mar, at: www.criticalthreats.org, accessed 14 April 2017, p 13

64. Hizbollah’s employment of the C-802 missile system was also a lesson in Information Operations (IO). “Shortly after Nasrallah’s offices were bombed on July 14 [2006], Hizbollah released a recorded statement from Nasrallah… ‘You wanted an open war, and we are heading for an open war. We are ready for it.’ Nasrallah invited listeners to look to the sea, and with perfect theatrical timing an explosion on the horizon rocked the INS Hanit, an Israeli naval vessel that was hit by an Iranian-produced C-802 Noor guided missile.” Augustus Richard Norton, 2007, Hezbollah, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, p 136
65. “The Hizballah model refers to the techniques used by that group to garner influence and gain power in Lebanon. First, it used the credibility conferred by armed ‘resistance’ and social welfare activities to establish itself as the dominant actor in the Shiite community and to garner support among non-Shiite constituencies at home and abroad. Second, it used this popular support to gain a foothold in the political system through elections to ensure that the party’s interests could not be harmed by the state. And third, it used its access to and influence over critical ministries and state agencies to protect and advance the party’s interests, and those of its Iranian patron, while preserving the paramilitary and social welfare organisations that undergird its parallel shadow state.” Michael Knights and Michael Eisenstadt, 2017, ‘Mini-Hizballahs, Revolutionary Guard Knock-offs, and the Future of Iran’s Militant Proxies in Iraq,’ *War on the Rocks*, 9 May, at: https://warontherocks.com/2017/05/mini-hizballahs-revolutionary-guard-knock-offs-and-the-future-of-irans-militant-proxies-in-iraq/, accessed 10 May 2017


68. Brigadier General Hamid Taqavi was killed in December 2014: “Taqavi became a martyr while fulfilling his duty as a military adviser in the fight against Daesh (IS) revisionist terrorists, a glorious end to a long valuable service to advance the cause of (Iran’s 1979) Islamic revolution.” Reuters, 2014, ‘Iranian general killed by sniper bullet in embattled Iraqi city’, 28 Dec, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/12/28/us-mideast-crisis-iran-idUSKBN0K60F020141228, retrieved 14 Apr 15


71. “Strategic optionality is best described as the deliberate employment of multiple, parallel efforts to shape the environment and the behaviour of actors within it… Additionally, it comes with the intent of selectively switching support as a campaign unfolds: abandoning ineffective or counterproductive efforts in order to increase support for effective ones”. Jan Gleiman, 2014, ‘Unconventional warfare and strategic optionality,’ ASPI Strategist, 1 Oct, http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/unconventional-warfare-and-strategic-optionality/ retrieved 4 Oct 14

72. “On the Shi’a side were communitarian militias, Iranian proxies, and the Sadrists of the Mahdi Army, a movement of poor, pious Shi’a, engaged as much in social revolution as in sectarian warfare. On the Sunni side were jihadists like Zarqawi, secular Sunni nationalists, who rejected the transformation of Iraq into what they was as an Iranian satellite, and former regime elements… As well as the politically-motivated groups, criminal networks… Each group had its factions, and its factions-within-factions – I counted more than 150 separate militant groups at one point in 2007. And then there were the Kurds.” David Kilcullen, 2016, Blood Year: Islamic State and the Failures of the War on Terrorism, Black Inc Books, London, pp 27-28

73. Anthony Cordesman, 2007, ‘Iran’s Revolutionary Guards, the Al Quds Force, and other Intelligence and Paramilitary Forces’, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 16 Aug, p 9


75. Bucala and Kagan, 2016, p 19, “An officer-centric model for advisor support is evidenced by casualty figures between October 2015 and February 2016, of which, officers accounted for about 60 per cent of all Iranian casualties” pp 19-20

76. The Australian Army has not employed a ‘selection’ process for those personnel deployed to Advisor positions over the past decade, despite this consideration being a common observation within academic writing on the subject, see Tom Fram ed, 2017, The Long Road: Australia’s train, advise and assist missions, UNSW Press, Apr
77. Emile Hokayem, 2014, ‘Iran, the Gulf States and the Syrian Civil War’, Dec

78. “There are already indications that some more proficient Iraqi members of khat al-Hizbullah groups are being used in ‘assist and advise’ role in the same way that selected Lebanese Hizbullah members have been utilised for some years.” Rodger Shanahan, 2017, ‘Hizbullah as a regional brand: not all parties are equal,’ Australian Journal of International Affairs, Vol 71, No 2, Apr, p 213


“...the leader of the Badr Organisation, Hadi al-Amiri has gone from being a guerrilla fighting on behalf of Iran against his home country: Iraq; to notorious militia leader accused of running ‘death squads’; to parliament member in Baghdad.” Susannah George, 2014, ‘Breaking Badr,’ Foreign Policy, 6 Nov, at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/breaking-badr/, accessed 17 October 2017. Susannah George goes on to quote a 2009 U.S. Embassy cable released by WikiLeaks that Amiri may have been personally responsible for ordering the deaths of up to 2,000 Sunnis. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, head of the Popular Mobilisation Committee was formerly a commander in Kata’ib Hizbollah and associated with the IRGC. He was convicted to death in absentia by a court in Kuwait for involvement in the 1983 Kuwait bombings. The presence of such actors participating and manipulating Iraqi politics does not augur well for Western ideals of inclusive, representative government and the long-term stability of the Iraqi state

82. Jan Gleiman, 2014, *Iran’s war: from the ground up*, ASPI Strategist, 10 Nov
84. Rodger Shanahan, 2016, ‘First we take Aleppo, then we take Idlib,’ *The Interpreter*, 6 Dec, at: https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/first-we-take-aleppo-then-we-take-idlib, accessed 10 May 2017

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From Goodenough to Outstanding: Army’s mastery of amphibious operations between 1942-1945

Mr Tim Gellel

Abstract

Nearly three decades after conducting landings at Rabaul and Gallipoli, the Australian Army undertook its next amphibious operation. Over the next three years, Army mastered amphibious warfare, progressing from a rudimentary battalion-sized landing in October 1942 to a division-level amphibious assault in July 1945. The experience of the 2/12th Battalion – which participated in both of those landings – demonstrates how a shortfall in providing specialist amphibious training for infantry units was overcome through the creation of specialist supporting, joint, combat, combat-support and service units tailored for amphibious operations.

Army’s Second World War experience provides useful precedents as the modern Army rebuilds its amphibious capability. Army’s first amphibious operation in the Second World War occurred in October 1942 when the 2/12th Battalion landed on Goodenough Island and concluded with the same battalion landing as part of the 7th Division’s assault on Balikpapan in July 1945. Within that 33 month period, Army undertook more amphibious operations than in the rest of its 117-year history. This article examines the 2/12th Battalion’s preparation for, and conduct of, those two operations.
to demonstrate how Army managed that transition whilst simultaneously fighting a war.

**Operation Drake - Goodenough**

On 22 October 1942, the 2/12th Battalion was tasked with clearing Goodenough Island, east of the New Guinea mainland, where a 350-strong Japanese Special Naval Landing Force (SNLF) had been marooned since mid-August.

The 2/12th Battalion was an experienced unit. It had withstood the German *Afrika Korps* and the Italian Army at Tobruk, and later defeated the Japanese at Milne Bay. But it had no experience with or specialist training in amphibious operations. The Battalion did not have time to prepare for the night landing, dubbed Operation Drake,

Operation Drake was a makeshift affair. The higher headquarters’ operations order was only released on 20 October. A joint Navy, Army and Air Force planning conference could not be held until the following afternoon when the destroyers HMAS *Arunta* and *Stuart* arrived at Milne Bay. The Battalion’s combined operation and embarkation order was issued just before midnight on 21 October. There was no time for embarkation or landing training.

A shortage of naval support meant that the two available destroyers had to double as both escorts and fast troop transports. Three local traders’ ketches were also pressed into military service. The only amphibious craft were three Japanese *Daihatsu* Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel (LCVP), recovered and repaired after the Japanese defeat at Milne Bay. These limitations shaped the landing force’s configuration. The 2/12th was stripped down to around 580 men, with a detachment from the 2/5th Field Ambulance. Neither vehicles nor heavy equipment could be taken: The Australians had no means to ship them, and Goodenough Island had no roads anyway.

The landing procedures were similarly makeshift. A 2/12th officer was assigned as an Embarkation Officer aboard each destroyer. The destroyers in turn each appointed “a Beach Lieutenant to supervise [the] landing craft at disembarkation points.” The 2/12th’s Headquarters Company was designated as the beach party, responsible for unloading the LCVP. That task was complicated because detailed landing tables had not been prepared owing to “the possibility of breakdown of [the] small vessels *en route*.的感觉
With no opportunity for a beach reconnaissance, the main beachhead at Mud Bay presented challenges. As little was known of the local bathymetry, the destroyers stood off in order to avoid reefs and shoals, while the troops transferred to the ketches and LCVP. Even the shallow-drafted Daihatsu could only come to within 150m of the beach, leaving the infantry to wade through shin-deep water in the darkness and heavy rain. The Australians did their best in the unrehearsed – and fortunately unopposed – night landing:

_Silence was to be one of its features as the soldiers trans-shipped to small vessels and went ashore ... There was some confusion on the beach as the companies sorted themselves out. Altogether the landing, planned as a standard amphibious operation on a small scale, did not go smoothly._

Once ashore, the 2/12th was largely on its own. The destroyers departed after discharging the troops and their cargo, rendering the 2/12th's support and supply line tenuous. Evacuation of any wounded requiring treatment beyond the Field Ambulance detachment’s capacity would be by ketch back to Milne Bay. Resupply was limited to such stores and supplies as had been landed.

Naval gunfire support was not provided. Even had the destroyers remained, the 2/12th had neither artillery observers nor any suitable maps. The battalion’s only fire support came from two 3-inch mortars, and such ammunition as could be carried into the island’s rugged interior. Although the US Army’s 8th Fighter Group covered the destroyers during daylight hours, the fighters were not capable of supporting the night landing. With no air liaison officers, the 2/12th’s air support requests had to be coordinated through the Milne Bay headquarters. The fragility of that system was soon demonstrated. When fighter support was expected for one attack, only Japanese aircraft appeared overhead, while a subsequent attack had to be delayed when the US fighters arrived 30 minutes late.

Mission success depended upon close coordination between the Battalion’s Main Body (which landed at Mud Bay on the peninsula’s southeast coast) and C Company (which landed on the southwest coast at Taleba Bay). The Main Body advanced westwards, hoping to drive the Japanese out of their inland defensive position and towards a blocking position established by C Company advancing from the east.
That scheme of manoeuvre proved flawed. Radio communications were unreliable, the Main Body's planned rate of advance proved unrealistic for a long column, carrying heavy loads, moving over unfamiliar and unforgiving terrain, in total darkness and torrential rain. With the main assault delayed, the planned pincer action became uncoordinated. C Company initially advanced as planned, but after taking heavy casualties, withdrew to the waiting ketches and retired to Mud Bay. Resorting to frontal attacks, the Battalion's main body advanced slowly over the next three days, only to find the Japanese had escaped from the island in darkness using two Daihatsu which had been delivered earlier by Japanese warships and concealed from Allied aircraft.

Operation Drake was a qualified success. It forced a Japanese withdrawal, albeit that the marooned force had been attempting that for two months but had not achieved its destruction. However, the Japanese escaped destruction because the 2/12th's planned pincer attack failed due to poor communications, ambitious planning, insufficient fire and air support, and tenuous logistics.

Building an Amphibious Army

The Army needed to address these problems if it was to use maneuver from the sea to circumvent Japanese defences in the South West Pacific. But the Army faced competing challenges in making amphibious ships and landing craft available for both operations and training. Compounding this, the Australian Army could not afford the luxury of either raising a separate, specialist marine force, or dedicating hard-pressed infantry battalions to amphibious warfare operations.

But, with the support of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), Army was able to develop a range of specialist units to support littoral operations. By the time the 2/12th undertook its next amphibious landing three years later, Army had embraced amphibious warfare, absorbed its doctrine and raised the specialist units needed for amphibious operations. But Army was unable to translate that effort into regular amphibious training for the 2/12th Battalion, or its sister battalions in the 7th Division.

The 2/12th Battalion returned to Australia from Papua in March 1943 in a much-depleted state. Following Operation Drake, heavy fighting at Buna and Sanananda and disease had thinned the battalion’s ranks. When it arrived in
Northern Queensland, the Battalion numbered only 476 men – well below its establishment strength of 745.\(^{16}\) Over the next ten weeks, malaria extracted a further toll forcing the medical evacuation of a further 131 officers and men.\(^{17}\)

Not only did the Battalion have to be rebuilt, it also had to be (belatedly) reorganized and properly trained for jungle warfare – there had been little opportunity for this when the 7th Division was rushed from the Middle East back to Australia in response to the Japanese threat in the Pacific. Mostly this involved training in infantry minor tactics as the Battalion took in reinforcements. In July, the 2/12th participated in an air landing exercise in anticipation of the next phase of operations in Papua New Guinea.\(^{18}\) There was no opportunity to undertake specialized amphibious training.

Deploying to New Guinea in August 1943, the 2/12th undertook a series of operations in the Finisterre Mountains, including being airlifted into the Ramu Valley. After arriving back in Australia in May 1944, the Battalion returned to taking in and training replacements. Although the Battalion’s numerical strength had been maintained over the course of its involvement in the New Guinea campaign, there was still a requirement to post out experienced officers and soldiers for rest, for training and promotion, and to provide instructors at Army schools.

That meant the 2/12th Battalion’s training remained focused on jungle fighting, infantry skills and minor unit tactics. Over the coming months, the 2/12th undertook only limited specialist training in amphibious operations before being committed to the final Allied amphibious operation of the war: The 1 July 1945 amphibious assault landing at Balikpapan, known by its operational name as OBOE II.

That did not mean the broader Army had ignored its amphibious capability development. Even before the 2/12th’s commitment to Operation Drake, the Army had already commenced making the doctrinal, organizational and equipment changes needed for sustained, large-scale amphibious operations.

As described above, Operation Drake was the model of improvisation. Planning – to the extent that it was conducted – drew upon British Combined Operations doctrine, with Arunta’s surgeon “who had had training in amphibious operations … placed in charge of the leading craft”\(^{19}\) And in the absence of specialist amphibious vessels, the landing relied upon RAN destroyers, impressed civilian luggers and captured Daihatsu.
In addressing that deficiency, the Army and RAN reached a doctrinal turning point. By 1943, Army formed its first Landing Craft Companies, equipped with British- and Australian-designed landing craft, as part of the Army’s three Engineer Water Transport Groups. Those companies supported both training in Australia and operations in New Guinea. At the same time, the RAN converted three obsolete Armed Merchant Cruisers HMA Ships *Westralia*, *Manoora* and *Kanimbla* into Landing Ships Infantry (LSI). But even these investments could not match the challenges the Army and RAN faced if they were to conduct sophisticated amphibious operations across the South West Pacific’s vast reaches.

The resultant reliance upon USN transport and amphibious shipping, and US Army assault craft compelled the Australian Army to adopt and adapt to US amphibious joint warfare doctrine over the more familiar British approach to Combined Warfare (the contemporary British term for Army-Navy-Air Force operations). Among the subtleties was a different approach to command and control. Under the British system, the army force commander commanded all army components after they had landed, whereas under the US system, the naval component commander retained command of the operation, including the landing forces, until such time as the army commander had established his headquarters ashore, and a handshake transfer had been conducted.

By early 1942, the Army, the RAN and their US counterparts, recognised the need to develop a combined, joint amphibious capability. In late 1942 the Joint Overseas Operational Training School (JOOTS) was established at Port Stephens to provide training and to develop doctrine for US-Australian amphibious operations. JOOTS’ first training course concluded on 25 September – a month before Operation Drake.

The need to prioritise operations in New Guinea, meant there was a significant limitation to the provision of specialist amphibious training to Army units. JOOTS supported the US Navy’s (USN) 7th Fleet Amphibious Task Force, which would embark elements of 15 different Allied divisions – including the Australian 7th and 9th Divisions – in 42 major combat landings in the 26 months from June 1943 to the Japanese surrender in August 1945. As it was not until April 1945 that the 7th Division was earmarked for a specific amphibious operation in Borneo, the 2/12th and its sister battalions did not have the opportunity to be trained at JOOTS.
That training shortfall was mitigated through the establishment of specialist teams of amphibious staff officers which ensured formations and units received training in and assistance with the unique staff work required for amphibious operations. On 31 March 1944, Army formed the 20-strong 1st Australian Combined Operations Section, to be responsible “for training staffs of formations and supervising and coordinating the amphibious training of a corps”. The Section was soon attached to Headquarters Australian I Corps to supervise and coordinate amphibious training. In the second half of July 1944, the 2/12th’s Commanding Officer (CO) travelled to Cairns to undertake amphibious warfare training coordinated by the 1st Combined Operations Section.

At the divisional level, the Military Landing Group (MLG) “was designed to supplement the normal staff of an infantry division when undergoing training and to provide trained personnel for specialised duties during an amphibious operation.” Commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel (the Principal Military Landing Officer), the MLG could assign a Military Landing Officer (Major) to each brigade. Their task was to prepare “the documents necessary to ensure that ships were loaded in accordance with the operation plan.” On 7 November 1944 the 1st MLG was assigned to the 7th Division.

The 2/12th Battalion’s amphibious training

It was not until October 1944 that the 2/12th Battalion’s amphibious warfare training increased. Together with the other 18th Brigade battalions (the 2/9th and 2/10th), the 2/12th sent officers to a “course of instruction for Embarkation Control Officers and Ship Adjutants.” Separately, the 2/12th’s CO presented a lecture and sand table demonstration on ‘Amphibious Landing’ to all 18th Brigade officers down to company level. Later that month, the Brigade’s battalion commanders together with either their adjutant or intelligence officer were attached to the 25th Brigade (also part of the 7th Division) for amphibious training at Trinity Beach, near Cairns. That training was conducted with assistance from US Navy and Army officers from the No.3 Amphibious Training Unit, as well as Army’s 1st Combined Operations Section.

In November, the 1st MLG provided embarkation training to the 18th Brigade, culminating in Exercise Octopus at Trinity Beach. Companies watched a training film about amphibious operations, and then practiced loading mainly...
Between 9 and 12 November, the 2/12th's companies embarked on one Landing Ship Infantry (LSI) and several Land Craft Infantry (LCI), before commencing landing practice on 13 November. Junior officers and non-commissioned officers were assigned as Boat Team Leaders to liaise with the ship's crew, and to coordinate landing craft embarkation and disembarkation. Exercise Octopus' landing plan called for the 2/10th and the 2/12th Battalions to be the left and right assault battalions respectively, with the 2/9th following as the Brigade Reserve. Eight Landing Craft Assault (LCA) carried the 2/12th's first wave of two companies ashore, with successive waves landing at ten-minute intervals. Exercise Octopus was followed by a divisional-level table-top amphibious operations exercise (Seagull) in March 1945.

For the 2/12th, that training was exceptional. From November, the Battalion resumed its focus on basic combat skills, and did not undertake any further specialist amphibious training. The closest they came was in February and March 1945 when the unit practiced using folding assault boats for an assault river crossing, albeit that the drill was carried out on dry land.

That experience contrasted with the Australian 9th Division's preparation. As the first Australian Division to specialise in amphibious operations, the 9th put two of its brigades through amphibious landing training at Trinity Beach in June and July 1943. It then participated in the landings at Lae and Finschhafen in 1943, before being earmarked for three of the OBOE landings in Borneo in 1945 (Tarakan, Brunei Bay and Balikpapan).

In mid-April 1945, the OBOE operations were modified, and the 7th Division was substituted for the Balikpapan landing. The 2/12th did not resume specialist amphibious training until seven months after Exercise Octopus concluded, and such opportunities as were available were mostly 'on-the-job' training.

In late May the 2/12th soldiers embarked on USN Landing Ship Tank (LST), which differed from the British- and Australian-designed landing ships and craft used in Exercise Octopus:

*The long voyages, mostly in crowded vessels, that preceded the assault somewhat reduced the fitness of the troops. The 18th Brigade, for example, was taken from Australia to Morotai in LSTs, a voyage of 19 days. The LSTs carried their normal complement of 500, which was too many for a voyage of a day or two, but far too many for a longish voyage. After less than a week ashore the*
troops embarked for Balikpapan and spent another five days on overcrowded and uncomfortable craft.\textsuperscript{42} 

Despite this discomfort, the long transit at least allowed the Australian infantry to acquaint themselves with these unfamiliar vessels. The landing craft they would use for the Balikpapan landing were also different from the LCA used on Exercise Octopus. For the Balikpapan landing, the 7th Division’s assault waves instead relied upon US Army Engineers’ Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT). Fifty-one LVT would support the 18th Brigade.\textsuperscript{43} Better known as \textit{Amtraks} (short for Amphibious Tractor), the LVT offered protection, firepower and mobility that other landing craft could not. Unlike LCVP, the tracked LVT could move inland, and proved superior to wheeled vehicles at transporting ammunition, stores and wounded across beaches.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, as the LVT moved inland, they left the beach clear for subsequent waves of landing craft. As this reduced beach congestion, it also reduced the interval before the next wave could be landed.

Arriving at Morotai on 8 June, the 7th Division’s battalions were introduced to the US Army Engineers’ LVT for “training in embarking, debarking and loading of stores.”\textsuperscript{45} On 21 and 22 June, the Australians embarked on their transports, and conducted boat drills on 23 June, followed by a Brigade-level landing rehearsal the following day.\textsuperscript{46} The 2/12th’s assault waves landed from their \textit{Amtraks}, and the following landing waves in LCVPs closed to within one mile of the beach.\textsuperscript{47} On the 25th, the assault companies were again put ashore, this time accompanied by their battalion headquarters, but again the training stopped short of a full rehearsal.\textsuperscript{48}

\textbf{Balikpapan – ‘Outstanding Achievement’}\textsuperscript{49}

In contrast to Operation Drake, planning for the divisional-sized Operation OBOE II, was deliberate and well-supported. The 7th Division Commander, Major General Milford, commenced planning on 26 April, and by the end of May had concluded that his Division would conduct an assault landing at Klandasan – Balikpapan’s most heavily defended beach.\textsuperscript{50}

\textbf{Pre-Landing Support}

That planning was informed by a substantial intelligence effort. Aerial photoreconnaissance provided 48,400 prints for planning and familiarisation
down to the unit level. These included backlit stereoscopic slides, stereo pairs, three-dimensional vertical photos, and both low- and high-obliques. From these, scale models at 1:1250 and 1:5000, were constructed and proved “invaluable for briefing all troops.” Army had attached Air Liaison Officers (ALO) to supporting Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) headquarters since the beginning of the war for the purpose of coordinating imagery intelligence requirements. But, as will be discussed later, by the time of the OBOE landings, the ALO’s role had expanded beyond just intelligence collection management.

The 2/12th’s CO, his Intelligence Officer and a small staff commenced unit-level planning on 22 May: “a few oblique air photos were studied, making the formation of a rather vague plan possible.” After arriving at Morotai in mid-June, the rifle companies were briefed on their role using the “two models and selected vertical and oblique aerial photos … with a view to demonstration of the type of terrain, foreshore obstacles etc.” As late as 1 July, aerial photos were air-dropped to the invasion convoy at sea to ensure the landing force received the most up-to-date information available.

Milford’s plan called for a two brigade-frontage, with a total of three battalions in the assault wave: From left to right these were the 18th Brigade’s 2/10th and 2/12th Battalions, and the 21st Brigade’s 2/27th Battalion. The 25th Brigade would remain afloat as the divisional reserve. Importantly, the 18th Brigade’s force laydown mirrored that used in Exercise Octopus eight months earlier.

Milford’s landing plan went against the USN’s advice and highlighted the different approach to command responsibilities between the Rear Admiral Noble as the (USN) commander afloat and Milford, as the army commander ashore. On 25 May, the leader of the USN planning team, “told Milford the more he looked at the divisional plan the less he liked it.” The choice of Klandasan beach exposed the fleet to the Japanese shore batteries, and necessitated “a ‘double dog-leg’ boat” in order to conform to the Balikpapan coastline’s ‘irregular bottom.’ Although marked with buoys before F-Day (the designated landing day), the choice of this approach would complicate the landing. Rear Admiral Noble, echoed those concerns to both Milford and the Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Morshead. “Morshead, however, ruled in Milford’s favour.”
Planning hit a further snag when differences emerged between the MLG’s preparations, and USN practice:

The production of a landing diagram at an early stage in the planning in compliance with the US Navy’s request, was not in accordance with the sequence of planning on which brigade planning had been based; this, therefore produced unexpected problems for brigades.61

These problems too were eventually overcome, allowing the final divisional, brigade and battalion landing plans to be issued. In addition to a detailed listing of the load for each landing craft, a table summarised the overall distribution of troops, stores and equipment into individual landing craft, and a landing diagram outlined each wave’s composition and timing.62 The 2/12th Battalion’s two assault companies would go ashore in twelve LVT launched directly from the LST that carried them from Morotai.63

The assault wave would be followed three minutes later by a second wave of 15 LVT carrying support weapons, an anti-tank gun, mortars and reserve ammunition.64 USN LCVP would transfer the third wave (battalion headquarters and the remaining two rifle companies) from their transport ships to the beach.65 Subsequent waves of Landing Craft Medium (LCM) and Landing Craft Tank (LCT) carrying vehicles and heavy equipment, followed by LST and Landing Ship Medium (LSM), would unload directly onto the beach.

The complicated landing approach was just one of many challenges to be overcome. In addition to the support provided by the MLG and the Combined Operations Section, a range of engineer, artillery and other Army, RAN and RAAF units, specially established and trained for amphibious operations, supported the 7th Division with this complex and unfamiliar operation.

Beachhead management was the responsibility of the 2nd Beach Group, a specialist formation comprised of both RAN and Army units. First established in December 1943, a Beach Group was designed to “organise the landing of troops, vehicles and stores, and to establish dumps in support of a division-sized amphibious landing.”66

At first it was thought the beach would not be much of a problem and could be controlled by a small naval party. But experience soon showed that a bottle-neck on the beach, broached landing craft or
bogged vehicles could prejudice the success of an entire assault. The Beach Groups, each consisting of about 2,000 men, were formed on an inter-Service basis and their area of responsibility included the whole beach, its approaches and the dump area just inland where stores unloaded from boats were stacked.\(^6\)

The 2nd Beach Group included a Headquarters, an Engineer Field Company, a Pioneer Battalion, two signals sections, Ordnance, workshops, medical units, and two RAN Beach Commandos.\(^6\) The 117-strong Beach Commandos each comprised a small headquarters with two officers (the Principal Beach Master and Deputy Beach Master), three beach parties, and a boat repair and recovery section.\(^6\) Landing with the first and second waves, the Beach Commandos conducted a quick reconnaissance of the area as they guided subsequent assault waves into shore, and provided communications between the Army units and the naval landing force.

The Beach Commandos faced a difficult task coordinating the Balikpapan landing. “Owing to a signalman’s error the first [landing] wave ... landed at 0855, five minutes early.”\(^7\) The 18th Brigade’s first wave “landed in a heap.”\(^7\) The 2/12th Battalion’s leading wave disembarked on the right half of ‘Able Red’ beach instead of ‘Able Yellow’ – almost one kilometre west of their intended target.\(^7\) The second wave now followed eight minutes behind rather than the planned three-minutes. “Great congestion resulted, stores were lost and difficulty experienced in moving LVTs off the beach to the [rendezvous] ... succeeding waves quickly overran the beaches and the recovery of stores was difficult.”\(^7\) Despite those challenges, the Beach Commandos guided 9,485 personnel, 582 vehicles and 993 tons of stores ashore by the end of F-Day.\(^7\)

The 7th Division’s after action report concluded that “the landing took place on a much smaller front than intended and, had the beach been strongly defended, this mistake might have proved costly.”\(^7\) The 2/27th Battalion was also landed on the wrong section, leading one platoon to mistakenly occupy a high point (dubbed “Ration”) inside the 2/12th’s area of responsibility.\(^7\) Although the 2/27th platoon moved when the mistake was realised, the 2/12th’s attack had slowed in the confusion. Nevertheless, by 1120hrs the 2/12th had:

…secured all objectives of phase 2 with the exception of north end of RATION. This feature was finally captured at 1204 hours.\(^7\)
By 1945, Army’s doctrine called for daylight landings to overcome the difficulties of avoiding offshore hazards, identifying the landing beach and advancing into the jungle in darkness. Importantly, that change also allowed for closer air and naval gunfire support (NGS) than was possible with night landings.

OBOE II received an unprecedented level of both. Pre-H-Hour air strikes from 28 May to 30 June alone totalled 2130 sorties, and saw 2900 tons of high explosive, incendiary, phosphorus and napalm bombs, and a further 1000 gallons of liquid napalm dropped. By F+8, a further 392 sorties by land-based aircraft added 490 tons of bombs and 14 190 gallons of napalm. Medium bombers also laid smoke over the beaches to cover the daylight landing.

To coordinate this support, the RAAF applied lessons learned from the May 1945 Tarakan landing (OBOE I), and deployed new, three-person Air Liaison Parties (ALP) to support each infantry battalion at Balikpapan: The 2/12th’s ALP landed with Battalion Headquarters in the third wave at H+8 minutes. Equipped with portable radios, the ALP were smaller and more agile than the larger twelve-strong Air Support Parties (ASP) used in that role at Tarakan. At Balikpapan, the ASP were attached to the Brigade Headquarters.

Divisional Headquarters was supported by an Air Support Section (one officer and 24 other ranks). They provided air-ground communications with Air Commodore Scherger’s Headquarters 1st Tactical Air Force, which was initially co-located with Headquarters 7th Division aboard the USN Attack Group Commander’s command ship USS Wasatch.

Although Scherger came ashore with Milford on F-Day, the transition of control from the USN Controller Support Aircraft (Afloat) to the Controller Support Aircraft (Ashore) did not take effect until 3 July. This was because of “an unavoidable delay in unloading air force communications equipment” and because the USN aircraft carriers provided a more flexible response than Allied operating from land bases located nearly 600km away. Despite those measures, coordination was not perfect: On F-Day, “the navy planes were briefed, but disregarded their instructions and bombed into the 2/10th Battalion area,” killing three Australians and wounding fourteen others.

In addition to these RAAF units ALO “specially trained as airborne observers flew in RAAF Liberators” over the landing area from F-Day. They “reported
activities of friendly and enemy ground forces, conducted ranging for NGS, and dropped messages, as well reporting back to the headquarters’ ship the locations of marker panels used to pinpoint friendly troops ashore.

Artillery units

NGS was similarly comprehensive. The “pre-landing bombardment and target preparation lasting 16 days, was the longest in this or probably any other modern war.” Between H-120 minutes and H-3 minutes, Allied light cruisers and destroyers fired 1320 6-inch and 4400 5-inch rounds, followed by specially modified LCI unleashing 4400 4.5-inch rockets in the seven-minute window from H-10 to H-3. Over the next six days, USN and RAN warships fired a further 11,158 rounds from 4.7-inch, 5-inch and 6-inch guns, and 114,000 rounds from 20mm and 40mm guns in support of the landing force.

That support was coordinated and directed by a specialist Army artillery unit – the Australian Naval Bombardment Group (ANBG). The 1st ANBG had been created in January 1943, and by late-1944 comprised two bombardment troops, each capable of supporting a division, with five Shore Fire Control Parties (SFCP).

As the 2/12th hit the beach, successive waves of landing craft delivered a steady accretion of firepower. The assault companies employed their LVTs’ .50- and .30-calibre machine guns until sufficient troops were landed to provide covering fire. The assault companies were also bolstered by flamethrower teams, while the second LVT wave (at H+3 minutes) brought additional firepower: Four 4.2-inch mortars provided support until the artillery’s 25-pounder field guns could be brought into action. A 6-pounder anti-tank gun was also available for use in a ‘sniping role’ against defensive positions. The first field troop was to be available by H+60 minutes, growing to a battery by H+90, two batteries by H+120 and an entire regiment by H+200. Over the next 22 days, the Australian artillery fired 61,501 rounds in support of the 7th Division.

Armour

Three Matilda tanks were landed at H+13 minutes, followed by two flamethrower Matildas (“Frogs”) and a tank-dozer ten minutes later. An armoured reconnaissance party and an engineer detachment landed with
the first wave to identify and clear a route forward for the tanks off the beach. That didn’t prevent the 2/12th’s supporting tanks from becoming bogged and therefore unavailable during the Battalion’s initial advance.102 Even after the tanks worked free from the mud, the infantry’s lack of familiarity with tank-infantry cooperation became apparent. ‘Frogs were used to good effect, [but the] lack of previous training with the co-operating infantry mitigated [sic] against their being used with maximum benefit.’103 The 7th Division Headquarters later concluded that:

...when tanks are to be employed with infantry, the tank units concerned should be allocated to the infantry formation at least one month prior to the action. Effective co-operation can be ensured only by personal contact and combined [arms] training.104

This was one of the most strident criticisms identified in the 7th Division’s After Action Report. Tellingly, there were no such criticisms of the Division’s preparation and training for amphibious operations.

**Engineers**

Engineer support was comprehensive, with tasks delineated and allocated to different specialist units. The 7th Division’s engineers had trained against “copies of Japanese underwater obstacles … erected on dry land and then off Trinity Beach.”105 But at Balikpapan, the USN took responsibility for the demolition of obstacles to the high water mark.106

Although Australian Landing Craft Companies were not employed at Balikpapan, specialist engineers were embarked aboard the RAN Landing Ships Infantry (LSI) that supported the 7th Division landing: HMA Ships Westralia, Manoora and Kanimbla. Each LSI had a permanently embarked ‘Docks Operating Personnel, Royal Australian Engineers’ unit, better known as an Army Landing Ship Detachment (LSD).107 A LSD comprised two officers and 65 other ranks, and was responsible for the embarkation, assault loading, and disembarkation of equipment, ammunition and stores and also for launching the ship’s landing craft.108 They also “maintained and repaired running gear, and they were trained as auxiliary ships’ gun crews, as fire and repair parties, and as stretcher bearers”109 Operation of the LSI’s landing craft remained a naval responsibility.110
Ashore, a total of nineteen specialist engineer and pioneer units supported the 7th Division’s nine infantry battalions. On the beach, four Royal Australian Engineer (RAE) Field Companies, two RAE Docks Operating and two Port Construction companies, as well as a Pioneer Battalion were tasked with developing the beach head, clearing beach exits for the assault waves’ advance, and establishing the base area. These units were additional to the 7th Division’s three RAE Field Companies, one Field Park Company and one Pioneer Battalion, which directly supported the infantry brigades.111 Their tasks included the clearance of mines, bombs, and obstacles – by the end of the operation the Australian engineers had defused 5000 mines, booby-traps and unexploded bombs, including daisy-chained 250kg aerial bombs employed by the Japanese as Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).112

Finally, the USN 111th Naval Construction Battalion (the ‘Seabees’) was tasked with building a jetty capable of unloading up to four LST simultaneously, while four RAAF Airfield Construction Squadrons restored the two Japanese airfields to support Allied air operations. This lavish allocation of troops to tasks meant that the engineers were not divided between competing priorities.

By the end of the first day, the 7th Division had secured its first phase objectives, and command passed from Rear Admiral Noble to Milford’s headquarters ashore.113 Although the operations around Balikpapan continued until the 15 August Japanese surrender, the OBOE II landing had been successful. In his 25 July message to all ranks, Milford described it as an ‘outstanding achievement.’114 More than 60 years would pass before the Australian Army undertook its next operational amphibious landing – of similar strategic importance, but less tactically complex – when elements of the International Stabilisation Force secured East Timor’s Comorro airfield on 28 May 2006 as part of Operation Astute.115
Conclusion

There was an order of magnitude difference in both the complexity and scale of Operation Drake and OBOE II. The former was a hasty, unopposed battalion-sized amphibious landing at night, the latter a deliberate, daylight divisional amphibious assault against well-prepared defences. While the modern Army’s future amphibious operations are more likely to resemble Operation Drake’s scale and intensity than OBOE II’s, the approach to investing in the development of specialist supporting joint units remains relevant.

In the period between these two very different operations, Army had settled on US Joint amphibious doctrine in place of the British Combined Operations approach and had established specialist units to overcome the challenges posed by amphibious operations. Even with those advantages, 2/12th Battalion faced many challenges in preparing for the Balikpapan landing. Apart from Operation Drake, the 2/12th Battalion did not have experience with amphibious operations and was not earmarked for any specific landing until April 1945. Second, a combination of factors meant the Battalion received only limited training in amphibious operations. Aside from the table-top exercise Operation Seagull in March, and the late-June 1945 OBOE II rehearsal, the 2/12th only participated in only one amphibious exercise (Octopus), more than half a year earlier. A third challenge were the frictions resulting from differing US and Australian commanders’ sense of where the threshold for their respective planning responsibilities lay, as well as the last-minute changes to the landing plan to accommodate differences between the USN and Australian Army processes. Fourth, the 2/12th was landed at the wrong location and five minutes earlier than planned. Despite these challenges, once ashore the 2/12th and its sister battalions quickly re-orientated themselves and secured their assigned objectives more or less on schedule.

The availability of specialist supporting units helped overcome the infantry's inexperience with amphibious operations. First was the attachment from November 1944 of the specialist MLG staff to both the Divisional and Brigade headquarters to provide specialist advice and training. Second was the allocation of a Beach Group, including the RAN Beach Commandos to manage the tricky sea-land threshold. Third was the assignment of sufficient specialist engineer assets to the range of tasks required: clearing the underwater obstacles, loading and operating assault craft, developing,
clearing and maintaining the beachhead, supporting the advance inland, restoring and improving Balikpapan’s port facilities, and repairing and operating the airfields. Fourth was the allocation of specialist artillery and air liaison units to coordinate naval gunfire and air support. A further factor was the smooth transition of command and control from the naval amphibious commander to the Army landing force commander, and with it the progressive transition of control of air support. It was these investments that allowed the Australian Army to master amphibious operations by 1945, even when it did not have the opportunity to provide specialist amphibious training for infantry battalions.

Endnotes

1. The Army had conducted a smaller landing operation one month earlier, when a company from the 2/10th Battalion landed on nearby Normanby Island to kill or capture survivors from the Japanese destroyer Yayoi that had been sunk nearby. But this was not an action conducted against an enemy land combat force. McCarthy, Dudley, 1959, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series One, Army, Volume V, South-West Pacific – First Year*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, p 346

2. AWM52 Item No. 1/5/25/4 War Diary of the 11th Australian Division General Staff Branch – Milne Force, October – December 1942, Milne Force Operation Instruction, No 12, 20 Oct 1942


4. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/9 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, October – December 1942, Appendix C, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order No1, 21 Oct 42 and AWM54 963/22/2 [Transport - Sea (Allied) - Small Ship Coys and Small Ship Log Books:] AMF Formation of the Marine Section Milne Bay - Raising of Japanese barges and operations on Goodenough Island – 1944

5. AWM52 Item No. 8/3/12/9, *op cit*, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order No1, 21 Oct 1942

6. AWM52, Item No 8/3/12/9, 1942
7. AWM52 Item No 1/5/25/4 War Diary of the 11th Australian Division General Staff Branch – Milne Force, October – December 1942, Milne Force Operation Order No 1, dated 20 Oct 1942
8. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/9, *op cit*, Appendix C, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order No 1, 21 Oct 1942
10. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/9, *op cit*, entry for 22 Oct, p 4
11. McCarthy, D, *op cit*, p 347
15. McCarthy, D, *op cit*, p 346
16. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/10 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, January – July 1943, Entry for 8 Mar 1943, Folio 25
17. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/10 *op cit*, Remarks for 31 May 1943, Folio 28
18. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/10, Folio 63.

23. Dean, *op. cit*, p 65

24. AWM52 1/11/2/1 War Diary of the 1st Australian Combined Operations Section, May – June 1944, entry for 1 May 1944


26. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/17 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, May – August 1944, entries for 16 Jul and 1 Aug 1944


28. Australian Military Forces, p 7

29. AWM52 1/11/5/2 War Diary of the 1st Military Landing Group, September 1944 – September 1945, entries for 7 Nov 1944

30. AWM52 Item No 8/2/18/57, War Diary of the 18th Infantry Brigade, October 1944, entry for 19 Oct 1944

31. AWM52 Item No 8/2/18/57, entry for 15 Oct 1944

32. AWM52 Item No 8/2/18/57, Appendix J (Folio 65), 18th Australian Infantry Brigade Amphibious Training Instruction No 1, dated 23 October 1944, and Appendix F (Folio 52), Movement of 18 Australian Infantry Brigade Group Training Cadres to Trinity Beach

33. AWM52 Item No 8/2/18/57, Folio 58

34. AWM52 1/11/5/2, *op cit*, entries for 9-13 Nov 1944

35. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/19 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, November 1944, entries for 7-8 Nov 1944

36. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/19, Appendix 9, Duties of Boat Team Leader

37. AWM52 Item No 8/2/18/57, *op cit*, Appendix L, Exercise Octopus, dated 30 Oct 1944

38. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/19 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, November 1944, 2/12th Australian Infantry Battalion Operation order No 1 dated 8 November 1944, p. II, and Wave Diagram, Folio 40

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39. AWM52 1/5/14/64 War Diary of the 7th Australian Division General Staff Branch, March 1945, Part 1, *passim*

40. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/22 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalions, February – March 1945, Appendices 9, 20, Folios 46, 47, 91


43. Long, 1963, p 513

44. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84 War Diary of the 7th Australian Division General Staff Branch, September 1945, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 Sep 1945, p 31

45. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalions, July 1945, Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’


47. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/24, *op cit*, entry for 24 Jun 1942

48. For example, the battalions did not practice calling in naval gunfire support. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 *op cit*, Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’ and AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/24 *op cit*, entry for 25 Jun 1942

49. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/75 War Diary of the 7th Australian Division General Staff Branch, June - July 1945, Part 1, Message to All Ranks, Folio 97

50. Long, G *op. cit*, pp 504-505


52. AWM52 Item No. 8/3/12/25, *op. cit.*., Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’

53. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25

54. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25
55. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25
Power Studies Centre, Canberra, p 137
57. Long, *op cit*, p 506
58. Morison, *op cit*, p 273
59. Morison, *op cit* p 273
60. Long, *op cit*, p 506
61. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operations, OBOE Two,
p 27
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72. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 September 1945, Appendix I, 18th Brigade Operations From 1 July to 14 August 1945, p 1

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75. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/75, *op cit*, entry for 1 Jul 1945

76. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, July 1945, Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’

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82. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/19 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, November 1944, 2/12th Aust Infantry Battalion Operation order No 1 dated 8 November 1944, p. II, and Wave Diagram, Folio 48

83. Waters, *op cit*, pp 47, 94

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87. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, pp 22, 24


93. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, July 1945, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order ‘OBOE Two’


96. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, July 1945, Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’ and 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order ‘OBOE Two’, p 5

97. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25 War Diary of the 2/12th Battalion, July 1945, Operational Report ‘OBOE Two’ and 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order ‘OBOE Two’, p 12, and AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, op cit, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 Sep 1945, p 34
98. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 Sep 1945, p 34 and AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25, *op cit*, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order ‘OBOE Two’, p 9 and Appendix C

99. AWM52 Item 8/3/12/25, p 9

100. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operations, OBOE Two, p 22

101. AWM52 Item No 8/3/12/25, *op cit*, 2/12 Aust Inf Bn Operation Order ‘OBOE Two’, Appendix C

102. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 Sep 1945, Appendix I, 18th Brigade Operations From 1 July to 14 August 1945, p 2

103. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 September 1945, p. 33

104. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 September 1945, p. 34

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107. Swan, WN, 1953, *Spearheads of Invasion*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p 9. These were the forerunners of the more recent Ship’s Army Detachment


110. Swan, *op cit*, p 12

111. Long, *op cit*, Appendix 6

112. Also AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, *op cit*, Report on Operation OBOE Two, dated 28 Sep 1945, Appendix E, 7th Division Operation Order, p 23

113. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/84, Appendix E, 7th Division Operation Order, p 8

114. AWM52 Item No 1/5/14/75, *op cit*, Message to All Ranks, Folio 97

**The Author**

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The Future of Reserves: In Search of a Social Research Agenda for Implementing the Total Workforce Model

Dr Brad West

Abstract

A clear objective of the Australian Defence Force Total Workforce Model is to address cultural barriers that exist between permanent and reserve units in the Australian Army and to facilitate the combining of military and civilian careers. This article highlights ways in which social research into the distinctive military identity and service experience of reservists can facilitate this strategic direction. By drawing on existing international research on reservists the article provides the contours of a research agenda in the area. The article highlights the strategic value of the proposed research by pointing to the potential of unintended consequences of the Total Workforce Model in relation to recruitment, retention and professional stigma. The importance of research into employers’ attitudes towards reservist service is stressed as a way to more broadly comprehend civil-military relations and to inform policies around veteran employability.
Introduction

Building on research previously published in this journal that has pointed to the need for greater comprehension of the motivations for service amongst reservists and taking a lead from the funding of a Future Reserves Research Program in the United Kingdom, in this article I attempt to outline a possible social research agenda on reservists around the implementation of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Total Workforce Model (TWM). It is not the purpose of this article to go into a comprehensive overview of the TWM as this task has previously been undertaken. However, it is widely agreed that the essential aim of the strategy is to build Defence workforce capability by providing permanent or regular members of the ADF with greater flexibility to their service and reservists with more opportunities to serve. The general rationale is the belief that by moving away from the binary distinction between regulars and reservists the TWM will at once enhance retention rates in Defence while also addressing the need to attract recruits with different skill sets from traditional military personnel, ones that relate to the new era of post-heroic warfare. If taken to its full extent the essential philosophy of the TWM is to disestablish the very notion of reservists, with ADF personnel simply being considered in relation to their current full-time or part-time service status.

The TWM from one perspective is nothing particularly revolutionary as it reflects broader shifts in civilian employment management practice orientated to flexibility and in some ways is only a variant of restructuring strategies in Western defence forces over several decades. The strategy on the surface also does not seem to be overly disruptive as it is widely evidenced that reservists express a desire to contribute more substantially and attain greater recognition within Defence. The article does not dispute this finding but highlights the dangers in assuming that this necessarily equates to reservists having similar motivations and orientations to their service. As outlined below, without a research program in the area to appreciate the distinctive nature of reservist service and the ways reserves are seen by other Defence personnel and by those in the civilian community more broadly, there is a danger that the TWM could have unintended negative consequences on the recruitment, retention, cohesion and civil-military relations. In particular, I argue the need for Australian research into the intrinsic motivations for reservist service, the difficulty reservists face in simultaneously maintaining civilian and military identities, including how
reservist service is understood by family members and employers, and the extent and nature of perceptions of reservists by others in the armed forces.

**Reservists, volunteer ethos and institutional orientations**

One of the foundational studies in the area of military reserves was the 1990 report “The Sociology of the Army Reserves” by the leading American military sociologist Charles Moskos. Moskos highlighted the need for reservists to be considered “more than just an organisational variation of active components”. While there has been some significant social research undertaken in the area of reserves since Moskos’ original engagement, social research of the military remains overwhelmingly focussed on regular personnel despite the increased operational deployment of reserves. As such, there continues to be a general lack of comprehension of the distinctive identities between reservists and regulars.

An important starting point for a research agenda on Australian reservists is to expand upon existing pilot and small scale qualitative studies on their motivations for enlistment. A consistent finding in international studies on reservists is that generally they are motivated by a strong volunteer ethos, something that conflicts with perceptions of many within the military’s hierarchy who arguably tend to view reservist service in a transactional way that focuses on the benefits of remuneration and professional development. Further research is required to empirically document the extent and distribution of this characteristic of reservists, as a strong volunteer ethos amongst reservists has the potential to be eroded by the TWM with consequences for recruitment and retention.

Moskos’ famous distinction between institutional versus occupational motivations and forms of military organisation is useful to think about in this regard. Using this typology we can comprehend that a strong volunteer orientation amongst reservists aligns them with institutional motivations such as duty and honour. In contrast the permanent regulars can be understood in relation to occupational factors with them interpreting their service in relation to a career and professionalism. In reality both reservists and regulars identify with a combination of both institutional and occupational factors. By the TWM framing all service in
occupational ways, however, for example through an emphasis on career advancement and individual benefits related to service, there is a danger that the basis or rationale for reservist service will be undermined.

The point of the proposed research is not to test whether or not reservists have purely altruistic motives in relation to their service but to identify how they differ from regulars around which social research has tended to focus. For example Bury in his study of U.S. Army logistics units found that cohesion amongst reserve units tended to be more based on interpersonal rather than professional bonds, from which with several operational implications flow. Indeed part of the traditional institutional character of Australian reservists is acknowledged within the TWM itself with the development of a civilian skills database for reservists, an initiative that in part was a response to a tendency amongst various reservists to have a clear distinction between their civilian and military occupational roles. Research into the extent of such divisions and the motivations to separate military and civilian roles would be a significant line of inquiry in better comprehending the reservists’ motivations for enlistment and factors surrounding retention.

Research on the nature and extent of a volunteer ethos and institutional factors related to reservist service not only involve investigations into attitudes of Defence personnel themselves but also their family members as their own sacrifices need to be accounted for in regards to recruitment and retention. For example, we know from previous research that time away from the home and the burden of caring responsibilities being shifted to other members of the family are significant factors contributing to attrition amongst reservists. However, much less is known about how family members such as spouses think about the sacrifices they endure and whether this aligns or differs from the institutional and occupational factors that reservists themselves cite in regard to their service. As will be explored later in the article, a similar research frame needs to account for employer allowances.
Conflict between reservists and regular military personnel

In blurring the line between regulars and reservists the TWM will likely have implications for the relations between reservist and regular military personnel. As a variety of scholars both in Australia and in other Western nations have observed, regulars often strongly define themselves in opposition to the reservist mode of serving.\(^14\) As Crompvoets\(^15\) argues from her in-depth interviews with Australian reservists as part of an examination of the future support service needs of reservist veterans, the individual viewpoint of regulars about reservists is reinforced by the ADF that “creates an environment that systematically and structurally marginalises reserves” through systems of entitlements that are designed to privilege regulars as well as overtly through practices of discrimination and bullying of reservists. While the ADF as part of the implementation of the TWM is restructuring many of these administration and support systems that contribute to the marginalisation of reservists, the traditional cultural identification of being a regular and seeing this in contrast to that of a reservist member is likely to be more difficult to overcome.

Simply moving away from a notion of reservist to several categories of full-time and part-time military personnel in the TWM, is unlikely to address singlehandedly the stigma associated with those who overwhelmingly serve in the military part-time. Certainly, it is true that the way that reservists are labelled significantly contributes to their cultural and institutional identity. As Shulz has highlighted, discourses about reservists has tended to distinguish them from regulars and reinforce the idea that reservists are ‘second stringers’ to real military personnel.\(^16\) However, as Lomsky-Feder et al. have highlighted it is the identity ambiguity of moving constantly between civilian and military lives that is at the heart of regulars treating reservists with ambivalence and suspicion.\(^17\) As such this basis of professional conflict and assigning of stigma can simply be transferred to the TWM with the division being between part-time and full-time members of the armed forces. This is particularly likely if the TWM becomes perceived as resulting in the demise of organisational resourcing and disruption to widely accepted benefit arrangements and remuneration systems.

Central to preventing the possibility of such professional conflict is research on how to best manage regulars and reservists to allow for optimal
capability, possibly studying how different interactional factors either result in a reinforcing or breaking down of the stereotypes and stigma associated with reservists. In making these points I note that currently there is a great level of diversity in relation to the reserves/regulars relationship across the services. It is the Army that I am primarily accounting for in this instance as it accounts for the vast majority of Australian reserves. It is also the service that has a traditionally low level of transfer between regulars and active reserves, an ongoing issue that has failed to be adequately addressed by having regulars automatically designated as members of the standby reserves upon discharge.\textsuperscript{18} Research into the experience of those who do transition from being regulars to active reserves will provide significant insight into the contrasting military cultures. It can also possibly provide new significant comprehension of transition. Currently we know little about how veterans who maintain connections with the armed forces through the active reserves differ psychologically in relation to their resilience for handling the difficulties involved in military-civilian transition.

**Employer and civilian attitudes towards military service**

The objectives of the TWM not only rely on administrative and cultural change within the ADF but also rest on civilian employers and workplaces to have a positive recognition of defence service. This relates both to the sanctioning of leave for those simultaneously undertaking both civilian and defence employment but also for defence service to be valued sufficiently by civilian employers that Defence personnel are able to prosper in the civilian employment sector. Despite veteran employability being an established problem and recently being a prominent political one reflected in the establishment of the Prime Minister Veteran Employment Program, I am not aware of any systematic research into civilian employers and their dispositions in recognising defence service. Similarly, we know little about how individuals manage their dual citizen and soldier identities in different workplaces or whether such identities will become more fluid and contingent as the TWM allows for more and more individuals to experience new balances between defence and civilian work.\textsuperscript{19}

At the broadest level there is a significant need for a quantitative survey into how members of the general public view men and women differently
as a consequence of military service and combat exposure, testing levels of stigma and symbolic capital that relate to popular narratives about military service. A recent study of United States veterans returning from Iraq suggested that while there is a stigma associated with veterans who had been deployed, this does not necessarily result in discrimination, challenging the idea that the perception of stigma by employers is responsible for the struggles of veterans in the job market. With Australian civil-military relations vastly different to the United States there would be great value in replicating this study domestically.

There is a significant need though to also undertake research more directly on employer attitudes towards the military. Existing studies of veteran employment prospects have been largely longitudinal and quantitative focusing on the effects of the mass mobilisation related to particular wars or the salary penalty veterans endure when moving from the military to the civilian employment. We know little though about how this differs across sectors of the economy and in turn how veteran employability relates to broader economic shifts, for example in relation to the rise of the creative industries and service sector. As well as informing civil-military relations strategy broadly, research in this area could also examine the effectiveness of Defence initiatives such as Boss Lift in bringing about a change in attitudes amongst employers.

Beyond a focus on attitudes towards ADF service, research in relation to employability should also examine the actual differences in work cultures across military and civilian roles. This would examine the process by which contemporary military training and socialisation influences how a person acts and presents themselves to others in civilian contexts. Studies, for example, could examine the difficulty in moving between the military and civilian employment, accounting for the vastly different forms of authority, gender make-up and expressions of individuality in these different contexts. In recognising the embodied influence of military service we can also look at positive cases and the strategies that reservists have used in frequently transitioning between civilian and military environments. This data can help to inform personal development planning that aids military personnel to navigate between military and civilian employment settings.
Concluding Remarks

In this article I have attempted to emphasise the need for independent social research to be undertaken around cultural factors that are crucial to the successful implementation of the TWM, proving several brief outlines of research that should be pursued. As the ADF advances with implementing the TWM it will be increasingly difficult from within Defence to discuss issues in ways that look to differentiate between regular and reservist issues. However, as I have outlined above, examining the nature of these different military cultures and how they are affected by the TWM is of critical importance to the issue of human performance in the military. Australian universities have recently initiated significant research engagement with the defence sector, however, thus far this has largely focussed on research as it relates to technology. As I have attempted to demonstrate in this article, social research is also significant in strengthening the nation’s security and defence capabilities, with the study of the diversity of cultures within the ADF and appreciating the complexity and critical importance of civil military relations as they relate to the TWM arguably the most significant issues to be addressed.

Endnotes

1. A version of this article was presented in a panel session of reservists and research at the 2017 Generations of War conference hosted by the University of South Australia. The panel was sponsored by the South Australian Branch of the Defence Reserves Association and chaired by Dr Pamela Schulz OAM who also originally encouraged me to develop a research agenda focussing on Defence Reserves. The article is indebted also to the insight provided by the other panel members: Major General Neil Wilson AM RFD (rtd), Brigadier Dr Robert Atkinson AM RFD (rtd), Brigadier Michael Burgess AM ADC, Major Dr Kate Ames, Captain Dr Sharon Mascall-Dare


17. Lomsky-Feder et al, 2008


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On Future Thinking and Innovation: How Military Concept Writing can unwittingly suppress Innovation

Brigadier Chris Smith

Abstract

This article examines military concept writing in terms of explorative and intentional concepts and contends that militaries ought to be circumspect about writing the latter because of their disposition to suppress innovation. The article contends that intentional concepts might be useful for relatively simple problems for which the means and knowledge to solve a problem are already available to an armed force but they are inadequate for the complex problem of future force development because they inexorably and needlessly limit the space within which to explore solutions and innovate. The article’s specific purpose is to dissuade the Army’s senior leaders from sponsoring comprehensive future operating concepts and encourage its members to proffer new ideas by writing limited-scope explorative concepts.

Introduction

The main purpose of military concept writing is innovation. The desire for armed forces to innovate is to seek an advantage over an adversary in some potential future war or during a war. Military concepts may also
serve some other bureaucratic functions; nonetheless, the primary utility of military concepts is causing armed forces to change for the better. The subject of this article is the potential for some military concepts to do quite the opposite and suppress innovation.

A concept is something conceived in the mind. The term means an abstract idea and sometimes, a plan or intention. Likewise, military concepts take two general forms, an abstract form exploring ideas (explorative concepts) and an intentional or seminal form describing or prescribing intended ways of waging war (intentional concepts). This article contends that militaries ought to be circumspect about writing the latter because their seminal and closed form, coupled with their tendency to rely on predictions of the future, might suppress ideas and therefore suppress innovation.

The article contends that intentional concepts might be useful for relatively simple problems for which the means and knowledge to solve a problem are already available to an armed force but they are inadequate for the complex problem of future force development because they inexorably and needlessly limit the space within which to explore solutions and innovate. The article’s specific purpose is to dissuade the Army’s senior leaders from sponsoring comprehensive future operating concepts and encourage its members to proffer new ideas by writing limited-scope explorative concepts.

The article begins by outlining the differences between intentional and explorative concepts before investigating the consequences of intentional concepts’ reliance on visions of future warfare and how this feature of intentional concepts stifles innovation. The article then explores how explorative concepts overcome this weakness and promote innovation. The article concludes by suggesting ways armed forces can avoid the intentional-concept trap. It recommends a modernisation approach which seeks advantage over potential adversaries by encouraging a contest of ideas, aggregating the resultant innovations and opportunistically seeing where they might lead rather than trying to prescribe a comprehensive blueprint for waging warfare in the future.
Intentional Concepts and Explorative Concepts

Intentional concepts are normally seminal and prescribe the way a whole force or subsystem thereof ought to function or ought to become. Examples of intentional concepts are future-force operating concepts such as the Australian Defence Force’s Future Joint Operating Concept, the United States Army’s Operating Concept: Win in a complex World, the British Army’s Joint Capability Note 1/17, Future Force Concept, the Australian Army’s Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept and its now superseded Objective Force 2030. Intentional concepts also include warfighting-function concepts such as a concept for future manoeuvre, a concept for air and missile defence or a concept for information operations. They constitute an intention for how to wage war and they might prescribe the desirable characteristics and desirable mechanisms of an entire force or a sub-function/element thereof. They deal with their subject thoroughly and they are singular in the sense that senior officials confer authority on them and there are no similarly authorised alternatives. They are similar in nature to doctrine, just in draft form.

Explorative concepts on the other hand explore potential solutions to discrete problems or tender original ideas and conjecture. They are not normally comprehensive; the organisation and the author do not intend for the work to be seminal; explorative concepts have a limited scope and co-exist with other alternative ideas and solutions for the same or similar problems. Explorative concepts are not bound by a single theme or subject. They derive from ideas and a desire to solve problems. An example of an explorative concept is Justin Kelly and Mike Brennan’s Distributed Manoeuvre: 21st Century Offensive Tactics, which explores potential new tactics in light of the 2006 Israel/Hezbollah War. Another example might be a concept to overcome an air and missile defence network, tendering for example a novel way to mitigate the system’s sensors. Another might explore how the depletion of oil reserves in the future might affect weapons and warfare, proffering a system of logistics that is not reliant on internal combustion engines.

Both types of concepts are creations of the imagination and are future-oriented. After all, comprehensive concepts which are authoritative, and which are not about the future are, by definition, a doctrine. The important difference between the two concept types is one is closed the other is
open. Intentional concepts provide an authoritative and comprehensive prescription or intention. They achieve their aim in a single document and are normally accompanied by a plan for their implementation. Even if the organisation tests the prescriptions in an intentional concept, the experimentation can only ever lead to disproving the concept, causing the authors to go back to the drawing board to come up with another, or illuminating flaws within the concept leading to its refinement. In other words, it bounds the scope of thinking, ideas and solutions. Similarly, any subordinate or associated concepts, such as a logistics concept, must also be limited by the scope of the master document. Intentional concepts are therefore closed; they constrain thinking and ideas to the scope of the document and the limits of the authors’ imaginations.

In contrast, explorative concepts conjecture, investigate and solve. They are limited in scope, focussing on a particular idea or a particular problem. They achieve their aim indirectly and over time by inviting other authors to challenge the assumptions behind the ideas, encouraging disconfirming evidence and stimulating alternatives. Anyone may author an explorative concept; they need not originate at the direction of a senior official. They begin with the question, ‘what if’, and build on a body of knowledge that has many contributors. They are open-ended; but they are not without end. In the manner water works to shape a stone, or in the manner a group of ants manages to get a portion of leaf to their nest by pulling in different directions, the influence of many related, unrelated and contradictory conceptual documents exploits an idea, solves a problem and become manifest.

The Problem with Intentional Concepts: Visions of the Future

Armed forces ought to prepare for warfare in the future and they ought to seek to create advantages over potential adversaries; this is the purpose of concept writing after all. But they also ought to recognise the future is irreducibly uncertain. No amount of imagination or creativity can reveal the context for a future war any better than a random guess. We may understand the general features of the future because certain properties of the universe, human kind and war are inviolable and because we know the starting conditions – we know what warfare is like now. Nonetheless, the particulars of future wars and warfare are unknowable.
Despite this self-evident truth, concepts such as the Australian Defence Force’s *Future Joint Operating Concept* and the Army’s *Future Land Warfare Report* (the intended basis for conceptual work), make quite specific predictions about the context for warfare many years into the future. For example, despite recognising the dangers of future prediction, the Australian Army *Future Land Warfare Report* does the very thing it warns against.

It counsels:

> Such an examination, however, necessarily avoids any attempt to predict the future. Given the almost infinite variability of human interaction, such prediction is unlikely to be helpful in designing forces for future conflict.³

But in the very next sentence the report predicts:

> …the changing character of war clearly suggest that land forces will [emphasis added] continue to play the decisive role in the security of modern states against both regular and irregular adversaries.⁴

It also predicts; for example:

> For the Army, operating in high density urban terrain will [emphasis added] no longer be a discretionary activity.⁵

> [T]he force will become increasingly enmeshed with external enabling capabilities and require much greater use of civilian infrastructure in the conduct of operations.⁶

To be fair, these are rather minor and cherry-picked examples; nonetheless, accepting even these simple statements as inevitabilities rather than possibilities could have decisive implications for the design of a force. Yet making these sorts of assertions is almost unavoidable for authors given the task of drafting intentional concepts. Intentional concepts, by definition, are a plan or intention; therefore, they must have a specific context. Given the future character of the intention, the context for the concept must exist in the future. Intentional concepts must therefore rely on an authoritative vision of future warfare.

*Adaptive Campaigning* exemplifies this approach. It first outlines its vision of future warfare before prescribing its response.⁷
The [concept] consists of two parts. Part 1 … reviews global and regional trends and projects these trends into the future to forecast the broad characteristics and security implications of the future global security environment … [It] concludes by reviewing contemporary trends in warfare, combining these with the global and regional trends, to extrapolate the characteristics of the future operating environment … Part 2 … articulates the Army's concept for dealing with the anticipated future operating environment.8

This observation is not a criticism of the concept itself. It was largely a description of emergent features already present in warfare at the time of its writing, and its response largely constitutes restatements of unchanging continuities of war and quite reasonable assessments of the possibilities of existing and emerging technologies. Nonetheless, as will be discussed later in this article, Adaptive Campaigning’s focus on contemporary circumstances is symptomatic of another inherent problem of intentional concepts.

There is an undoubted attraction to the apparent prudence of imagining and describing the future context and then imagining and designing a proposed response to the imagined context as Adaptive Campaigning aimed to do. It makes, for example, the business of justifying materiel acquisition quite simple. One need only compare the imagined future force to the contemporary force-in-being, highlight the differences between them (referred to as gaps in the modernisation jargon) and come up with a to-do-list or shopping list to mitigate the differences in the intervening years.

This approach to modernising armed forces seems rigorous and prudent. It looks ahead to the long-term, and so it appears to be ‘strategic’ as opposed to reactive, short-term or ad-hoc – terms which are often pejorative in the world of force design. It begins with the end in mind and works backwards to determine the work needed to produce the imagined force. It aims, quite wisely, to do the work before a future war happens rather than be caught on the hop. The approach provides a sense of certainty. It is unsurprisingly like the orthodoxies of contemporary military operations planning and project management; but modernising armed forces is not quite the same as planning future operations and concluding projects efficiently.

The apparent rigour and prudence of this method are founded on shaky ground because the basis of the analysis is a figment of the imaginations of
those describing the future vision. It places undue confidence in something irreducibly uncertain. While it is prudent to think about how emerging technologies and events might affect the future, it is a gamble to bet resources and money on a single reading of the tarot cards (particularly one which is often negotiated and agreed to by a committee!). This approach belongs in the predictable and relatively static worlds of engineers and project managers. It does not fit a dynamic and uncertain world.

Every new tactic, structural change, materiel acquisition and piece of doctrine is intended to give an armed force the greatest possible advantage over its next foe, but each is fraught. Something in the environment may change unexpectedly at any moment causing the changes to prove to be irrelevant or wrong. There can be no guarantee any change to doctrine, tactics, organisation or materiel will contribute to an armed force’s advantage over its adversary. The emergence of the dreadnought at the end of the 19th century is an example of an emergent change which caused many previous innovations to be immediately obsolete. Consequently, armed forces ought to be wary of committing too strongly to a particular flavour of modernisation based on an apparent trend, and they ought to be ready at any moment to cut their losses, abandon projects made obsolete by a dynamic world, adapt anew to the emergence of new features in warfare, and not lament too much that someone in the organisation did not anticipate the impossibly unpredictable emergence before it happened.

The implication of the importance of exigency and contingency is that no single concept can solve all military problems because it is impossible to imagine all future adversaries, their intentions and the political context and exigencies for a potential war. Operational templates are a very poor substitute for strategy. Consequently, without specific plausible contexts, intentional concepts are inevitably exercises in banality and sophistry. They tend to be gross and unnecessary elaborations of widely accepted and timeless principles and features of war. Either this or the effort to say something novel or profound results in barely comprehensible nonsense.

Take for example the banality of the following statements from Australian Army and ADF comprehensive concepts:

… in 2030, national power may be expressed violently, or in non-violent ways, or as a combination of both.
… new technologies and emerging operational approaches will offer innovative force design options.

Army force development will need to devise flexible structures and approaches that can generate mass and resilience in the land environment.

… our enemies will often attempt to apply tactical pressure in order to achieve direct strategic advantage.

… a credible warfighting capability is necessary to make deterrence effective.

People are central to gaining, developing and exploiting knowledge.

And take for example the near incomprehensibility of these statements:

… the joint force must know the pattern of an operation. It must know the critical points at which the adversary’s cohesiveness is vulnerable, and how these might be manipulated, disrupted, degraded, or destroyed with the maximum economy of effort.

Information collection is fundamental to competitive knowledge advantage.

The ability to project military power creatively, in ways that deny the possibility of coherent action to the adversary, will remain fundamental.

The nature of the Australian joint force means that it must work to prosecute actions without recourse to mass, while practicing economy of effort and maximising the resilience of assigned units.

Precision will continue to substitute for mass; and operational calculus will continue to turn upon the application of force in a way that defeats the coherence of the adversary’s effort.

Future analysis and the drafting of associated intentional concepts are not just the fields of banality and nonsense; they are likely to be bias-rich fields too. The future has not happened yet, so opinions and assumptions about it are not subject to the normal expectations for evidence and often impossible to either prove or disprove. Consequently, future visions of warfare are always at risk of defining the future as the author or authors (or committee
for that matter) would want it to be. Future air, land and sea concepts, for example, rarely paint a picture of the future in which the air, land or maritime force is less relevant. They rarely forecast a more peaceful or more stable world.

If the concept is to be employed as the basis for a case for government expenditure on new materiel and more resources, then the future vision is likely to have a strong bias favouring the particular materiel the organisation seeks to acquire. The absence of evidence about the future means alternative visions of the future are impossible to weight. Any assertion about the future is as plausible as another as long as it accords with the laws of physics and the continuities in the nature of war. There is, therefore, a fine line between a vision and a delusion.

Whether the vision of the future is biased or not, concepts based on authoritative visions of the future are reactive. They describe a response to a fixed predicted circumstance rather than contributing to creating a new circumstance. In other words, the author imagines a circumstance and responds to it rather than seeking to create a new circumstance and have others respond to it. This point is critical because it goes to the subject of agency to alter the future. The future-vision-based approach does not account for the ability of people to change the course of history by their own actions and innovations.

The future is not autonomous; we determine the future by our actions now. Recognising one’s agency allows one to recognise the agency of others, and so we begin to appreciate the future is dynamic, highlighting the serious limitations of deterministic visions of the future and static and reactive concepts. If two adversaries are seeking advantage over each other with a view to a potential future war, then force modernisation might progress along the lines of action/response in a continuous cycle akin to a duel. Intentional concepts, like some battle plans, may be redundant before the ink is dry.

Some people might suggest that the solution to these flaws in intentional concepts is to experiment with the concept once it is completed, but the experimentation is inevitably limited to the scope of the ideas in the document, serving merely to refine the concept rather than result in better alternatives, or to cause the authors to go back to the drawing board and start a new intentional concept from scratch. Experimenting with the ideas within a concept cannot result in a change to the context within which it
fits or the ends for which it is written. Alternative futures and alternative concepts lose out.

The expression of the purpose of the Australian Army’s last intentional concept, *Adaptive Campaigning*, is an example of this phenomenon. It states:

The purpose of *Adaptive Campaigning* – the *Future Land Operating Concept* … is to provide conceptual, doctrinal and force modernisation direction to Army, to ensure it remains postured to meet the demands of future operating environments.\(^9\)

Implicit in this statement is the idea that by simply following the direction set by the concept, the Army will be postured to meet the demands of future operating environments. In the next paragraph the concept states:

Additionally, *Adaptive Campaigning* forms the philosophical framework for change and provides development guidance for the Army of the future. This is to ensure that the Army is ready for the demands of operating in a future complex security environment. *Adaptive Campaigning* provides a common lexicon and model for planners to analyse future challenges.\(^10\)

Implicit in this statement is that change ought to occur within the limitations of the ‘framework’ of the concept – again, to be ready for the demands of operating in a future environment. The last sentence asserts that the common lexicon expressed within the concept and the bounds of the concept form the prism through which force designers and others should now view future warfare. The authors’ assumption is that the framework they have set is sufficient to understand future warfare and make any changes to the force necessary to be ready for some future war. What then for outlier ideas which are inconsistent with the model? Alternative ideas are likely to lose out, particularly if the concept becomes the basis for the case to a government to acquire new materiel and resources, or to make structural or cultural changes to the organisation. The danger, therefore, is intentional concepts can easily become a dogma, particularly those with a strong organisational mandate or authority.

Alternative ideas which challenge authoritative intentional concepts work against the materiel, resource and change rationales that derive from
the concept. Consequently, leaders may ignore, or at worst suppress, contrary ideas and debate to preserve the rationale lest the government or others question the basis for an important acquisition or for more resources. The intentional concept therefore becomes a bureaucratic trump card – ‘well it does not matter what your evidence indicates because the concept says ….’ This ignorance or suppression might be unwitting and occur even if the contrary idea proves an acquisition or resource expenditure to be unnecessary. It is the modernisation equivalent of the age-old military problem of fighting the plan rather than the enemy. In other words, once locked in, an intentional concept, particularly if it has strong institutional authority, is difficult to challenge and is therefore likely to become dogma.

One might argue, for example, the strength of the idea of the centrality of the civilian population and the importance of gaining its support in war and warfare in *Adaptive Campaigning*, is an example of an intentional concept becoming a dogma. The United States Army’s counterinsurgency doctrine of the last decade is another example. These perspectives on waging war became the narrow frame through which many military professionals came to see the world of warfare, making the practitioners blind, potentially wilfully, to possibilities outside of those frames thereby closing off a world of alternative ideas, theories and innovations. In fact, some authors go as far as to suggest the United States counterinsurgency doctrine of the last decade became a template for warfare in lieu of strategy. So strong was the dogma in the United States, many within the United States Army who expressed doubts about the counterinsurgency doctrine were marginalised.

*Adaptive Campaigning* and United States counterinsurgency doctrine were both important and relevant when they were written. Despite their flaws, they were still of enormous value to armies wrestling with how to deal with contemporary problems of warfare. Nonetheless, they may be harmful in the long-term because they did not accept they may be incomplete or may have flaws, nor did they acknowledge that a single concept or doctrine for warfare is unlikely to be appropriate for every circumstance. Concepts and doctrine are not a substitute for strategy.
Explorative Concepts: Embracing Ambiguity, Uncertainty and Agency

Open-ended limited-scope concepts, in contrast to intentional concepts, account for the future’s plasticity and the agency of the authors writing them because appropriate responses to future’s uncertainty and plasticity are those that let go of certainty. As author and journalist Tony Schwartz implores, ‘The opposite [of letting go of certainty] isn’t uncertainty. It’s openness, curiosity and a willingness to embrace paradox.’ Exploratory or open-ended concepts are inherently curious because they begin with conjecture or the kernel of an idea. Whereas the genesis of intentional concepts is the desire to simply have a concept about warfare or a subset of warfare, such as manoeuvre or fires, the genesis of explorative concepts is ideas and a desire to solve problems. The former concepts begin with direction – ‘write a concept for future warfare’ or ‘write a concept for information operations.’ The latter begin with a question, an idea or a problem – ‘what if we converted all our armoured vehicles to remote control?’ or ‘how do you break into a city without presenting a concentrated target for enemy precision strike?’ Ideas and a desire to solve problems rather than prescribe something mean explorative concepts are more likely to result in innovation than intentional ones.

Explorative concepts are not dependent on predictions of the future. They contribute to the aggregation of many ideas and innovations causing emergent properties to manifest in a force thereby improving it. Answering questions like ‘what if we converted all our armoured vehicles to remote control?’ do not require one to predict the future to discover the answer, and in discovering the answer know whether the result is worthwhile exploiting.

Explorative concepts aim to create unforeseen opportunities beyond the imaginations of authors of singular visions and intentional concepts (and the leaders and committees who sponsor them). These emergent properties create or alter the future rather than respond to it. Like random mutations in an animal species, the organisation becomes fitter for its environment by incorporating each advantageous mutation rapidly throughout the organisation. The resultant emergent properties, like any emergences in complex systems, are unpredictable. In other words, explorative concepts account for agency of the individual in altering the future and they account for the advantages of serendipity.
Rather than begin with a clear end or goal in mind, one begins with a question expecting that in the attempt to answer it, something valuable will emerge. An example of this process was the Reichswehr’s invention of a system of fighting labelled *Blitzkrieg*. The leaders of the Reichswehr ‘did not deliberately set out to create a new way of fighting;’ they did not imagine *Blitzkrieg* in the early 1920s. There was no intentional concept for a new way of warfare.\(^{16}\) In fact, the Germans “aimed to build upon the operational, and particularly the tactical lessons of 1914-1918 in a coherent and effective fashion.”\(^{17}\)

The Reichswehr began with a specific problem, which it felt required immediate resolution. Germany’s relatively limited resources and workforce meant it was essential for it to win a future war quickly lest its enemies have time to bring to bear a preponderance of resources and workforce like in the previous war.\(^{18}\) The Germans began with a problem: how to restore mobility to a stabilised front or prevent a front from stabilising so that victory might come quickly, and they began with the conjecture that mobility would be essential.

In fact, *Blitzkrieg* emerged from an almost backward-looking approach. It began with a comprehensive study of the last war, which was characterised by a relatively static continuous line of trenches running through France and Belgium on one front and a far more mobile type of warfare in the open spaces of the east.\(^{19}\) The Reichswehr put many minds to the problem; fifty-seven separate committees in fact.\(^{20}\) Its officers made conjecture, trialled new ideas and, on occasion, erred. Its officers recognised advantageous developments and transferred them rapidly throughout the army before conjecturing, trialling and erring again (a process very similar to the scientific method).\(^{21}\) From the aggregation of these modifications emerged, arguably, a novel way of warfare that appeared revolutionary to those unacquainted with the process, causing an American pundit to coin the label *Blitzkrieg*.\(^{22}\)

*Blitzkrieg* did not emerge from a revolution per se, nor did it emerge from a comprehensive vision of future warfare or some profound first principles analysis; it emerged from an evolutionary process of ad-hoc integration of incremental innovations to the existing organisation.\(^{23}\) The Reichswehr’s process did not accord with the grossly simplistic and linear ‘concept-led/capability-based’ slogan for example. Concept and capability emerged in tandem.
Scholars Barry Watts and Williamson Murray observe that innovations of the *Blitzkrieg* kind:

rarely reach fruition over short periods of time. They require military organisations to weave together many disparate elements within a complex tangle of interactions created by the personalities, strivings, values, past experiences, history, visions, and cultures of the individuals and institutions involved. The process of such innovation in peacetime appears to be highly nonlinear.\(^{24}\)

Importantly, Watts and Murray go on to point out:

> What this observation means is that innovation displays the extreme sensitivity to current and initial conditions that gives rise to the loss of long-term predictability: the most minute differences in initial or current conditions can, over time, give rise to completely different outcomes and can spell the difference between successful innovation and failure.\(^ {25}\)

So not only does major innovation take a long time, the result of the most important innovations is a function of circumstances in the present and it is unpredictable. Innovation proceeds on a course beyond the control of a central body or a central ‘strategy’.\(^ {26}\)

It is important to remember that *Blitzkrieg* also became something of a dogma. The solution to the problem Germany faced in its immediate context fared poorly when applied outside of that context in the vast expanses of the east.\(^ {27}\) A single concept or doctrine is unable to deal with all circumstances and an incremental approach to modernisation that aggregates innovations can result in dogma just as readily as an approach based on an intentional concept if the organisation is not careful to remember concepts and doctrine are not a substitute for strategy.

This factor notwithstanding, existing technologies, emerging technologies, emergent features of contemporary warfare, contemporary political exigencies and reflection on warfare in the past were central to German innovation rather than a prediction of future warfare and an attendant comprehensive future concept. In fact, historians Williamson Murray and McGregor Knox and their counterparts have shown military innovation rarely (if ever) occurs by imagining a future context and responding to it.\(^ {28}\) Innovation derives primarily from solving problems and exploiting ideas to
improve the fitness of the present-day force. It is “unavoidably nonlinear, contingent, and infected with serendipity.”

Innovations also tend to occur when the need is greatest. Necessity is the mother of invention after all. The United States Army’s development of the air-land battle doctrine, which was influential for at least two decades, was in large measure a response to the revelations of the Yom Kippur War and the pressing need to deal with the immediate and pressing possibility of Soviet invasion of Western Europe. American carrier warfare innovations derived from solving the problem of how to wage war against Japan across the vastness of the Pacific Ocean. United States’ interwar amphibious warfare developments had a similar need and began by reflecting first on the failed British Gallipoli campaign. Vague and general problems like responding to some general future ‘operating environment’ lack necessity and are unlikely to induce innovation.

Notwithstanding the points so far, there is value in imagining different futures as a catalyst for novel ideas. Imagining the world with one or two altered features for example, can stimulate creativity. This was the advice given by Australian science fiction writer John Birmingham to an Army symposium at the Australian Command and Staff College in 2010. To illustrate his point, Birmingham asked the audience to imagine the world without oil and then to imagine waging war in a world without oil. The audience proffered several novel ideas in response to the challenge, some of which might have utility whether the world runs out of oil or not. The exercise was a catalyst for ideas. This type of future thinking sits firmly inside the explorative conceptual approach, not the intentional approach. It begins with a question - what if the world ran out of oil? – ends with conjecture and novel ideas that contribute to a broader body of knowledge. It makes no attempt at prediction.

Even Watts and Murray point to the importance of developing visions of the future:

Military institutions not only need to make the initial intellectual investments to develop visions of future war, but they must continue agonizing over such visions to discern how those wars might differ from previous conflicts due to changes in military technology, weaponry, national purposes, and the international security environment.
Nonetheless, Watts and Murray are not talking about comprehensive visions like a seminal future warfare report or comprehensive future operating concept; they are referring to something more akin to Birmingham’s thought experiment; changing variables and asking, ‘so what?’ They point to the importance of contingent circumstances like national purpose. They are encouraging us to explore and debate the potentials of emerging features of warfare and politics, not to derive an answer. They caution us to treat the future as a dynamic and ambiguous thing, warning against clear and comprehensive predictions:

As both *Blitzkrieg* and interwar carrier aviation attest, any vision of future war is almost certain to be vague and incomplete rather than detailed and precise, much less predictive in any scientific sense.\(^{34}\)

**Conclusion**

The often heard laments by Australian Army officers that the Army is not future-focussed and that it is too caught up in the present to give the future sufficient attention are probably misguided. Unfortunately, this possibly misguided identification of the problem means staff effort is potentially diverted into future forecasting and writing intentional concepts rather than asking questions, solving problems and exploiting ideas through explorative conceptual papers.

Discomfort with uncertainty and ambiguity is human.\(^ {35}\) It is particularly understandable in large government organisations because embracing uncertainty and ambiguity is bureaucratically messy and inefficient. It involves missteps and dead ends. It is difficult to apportion money to open-ended questions and research and hold someone to account for efficient and prudent spending. When research and problem-solving efforts come to a dead end, result in a misstep, or an emergent idea or innovation causes the organisation to change direction midway through a major project, people will tend to exclaim, ‘how did we let this happen?’ or ‘why can’t we ever just stay the course?’ Ambiguity and uncertainty also cause many people to feel uncomfortable and others to declare that their leaders lack a clear-eyed vision of the future. These people do so potentially without realising that their desire for their leaders to eliminate uncertainty and ambiguity might stifle the very innovation and debate that is so important to modernisation.
There is likely to always be a desire to predict the future and prescribe the type of future force needed to deal with it to give force designers and capability acquirers unambiguous parameters for their work. They will desire a comprehensive ‘aiming mark’; yet, the continuous and dynamic nature of force modernisation makes the idea of a defined and static ‘aiming mark’ incongruous. There is no need for a comprehensive concept of future warfare to recognise the need to adapt the workforce for the introduction of a new capability for example. Likewise, there is no need for a comprehensive concept of future warfare to recognise the need for a design parameter which ensures digital connectivity between all future materiel acquisitions. Intentional concepts are not necessarily helpful in identifying these sorts of needs and probably just reiterate a need well after someone has already recognised it and begun to deal with it.

An explicit modernisation approach which seeks advantage simply by aggregating innovations and opportunistically seeing where they might lead rather than one which begins with a specific result in mind might overcome these tendencies. The recent spiral acquisition development in the Australian Department of Defence, the Defence Entrepreneurs annual gathering to pitch ideas to senior officials, the creation of the Australian Army Research Centre and the Army Research Scheme, Army innovation days, and the Australian Army’s decision to write more limited-scope explorative concept papers are important recent steps in the right direction.

But, they are not yet widely understood by many members of the Army. Many would still like to see a comprehensive future concept and a clear implementation plan for how to bring it to fruition. Others will question the value of open-ended research and open-ended explorative concepts which are unconstrained or unguided by a governing concept or central direction. Explorative concepts, like fishing, might take many casts and lots of wasted bait before a worthy fish is netted. Casts which fail to provide a fish are seemingly wasteful. Yet not to cast is to deny oneself the opportunity to catch a fish at all; and to cast only within one pond as defined by an intentional concept is to arbitrarily limit the number and types of fish available.

The place for intentional concepts is at the end of exploration, not at the beginning. Their purpose is to transfer knowledge and understanding. In this sense, the intentional concept is the solution or prescription to which that exploration has led. Another name for it is doctrine.
Endnotes


10. *Adaptive Campaigning*, p 3


17. Murray, 1996, p 44


22. Murray, 2000, p 84

23. Murray, 2000, pp 84-85


25. Watts and Murray, p 375

26. Murray, ‘Comparative Approaches,’ p 85


29. Watts and Murray, ‘Military Innovation in Peacetime,’ p 381


32. See Allan R Millett, ‘The development of amphibious warfare between the wars: The American, British, and Japanese Experiences,’ in Murray and Millett, *Innovation in the Interwar Period*

33. Watts and Murray, ‘Military Innovation in Peacetime,’ in Murray and Millett, p 406

34. Watts and Murray, p 406


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Operational Contract Support (OCS): Conceptual and Doctrinal considerations for the Australian Army in Future Landward Operations

Mr David Pfotenhauer

Abstract

Operational contracting is a common yet contentious component of military operations. The Australian Army recognises the role of contractors and has, to a degree, incorporated contractor services into its operational cycle. Although contractors are positioned to provide flexibility, responsiveness and cost-effectiveness to military operations, problems persist. The core conundrum is whether the use of contractors becomes either an expression of commercial capability or commercial dependency. Parallel to this problem, is how best to manage, integrate and sustain contractor support throughout the operational cycle. To explore this further, this article will examine the concept of Operational Contract Support (OCS), a United States (US) developed capability platform, leveraged to overcome past contractor challenges, which integrates, manages and supports contractor usage throughout all levels and phases of a military operation. Examining contractor roles in the Australian Army aligns with higher-order government intent, enunciated primarily in the 2016 White Paper on Defence. The White Paper called for a deeper military relationship with the US and recognised
contractors as contributory elements for an organisationally robust and agile ADF. For Army, this means that a closer relationship with the US military necessitates a careful appreciation of how the US employs contractors, now and in the future. Crucially, by examining OCS, Army can use lessons learned from the US in its own future planning for how, where and when contractors are best operationally employed.

*Without being commercially capable, Army risks a sub-optimal performance on operations –*

Brigadier David Saul, Australian Army Journal, 2007

**Introduction**

Commercial contracting for military operations is not a new practice for the ADF. The large mobilisations of the First World War witnessed Australia making use of civilian-crewed merchant ships to transport supplies and soldiers. More recently, the private sector provided operational support to ADF (and AFP) deployments in East Timor, the Solomon Islands, the Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. To this end, the ADF has mirrored the choice taken by many other militaries to outsource Defence functions in areas such as logistics (air and sea transport, rotary wing support), base maintenance, laundry services, fleet management and medical services. These instances of commercial support to operations have drawn comment and analysis, but they have not generated such polarised debate as US contracting practices have. Primarily, this is because Australia has approached the issue of privatising Defence functions very cautiously, and with good reason, given the past contractor challenges experienced by the US. Although Australia has awarded quite a few contracts for hardware procurement and outsourced many non-core Defence functions to the private sector, very little in the way of replacing soldiers with contractors on the battlefield has occurred. Core Defence functions are therefore only carried out by organic force capabilities.

While this balance between core and non-core is essential, the ADF is not just a blunt military instrument. Its core function remains the defence of Australia from armed attack, yet second and third order tasks span an increasingly growing spectrum. The growing spectrum of mission types – from Humanitarian Assistance to Disaster Relief - engenders more complex
logistic requirements which in turn exert pressure on organic capacities to sustain the larger logistic footprint. Coupled with the broader mission parameters is the planned growth of the ADF workforce to about 62,400 over the next decade. More people require more support be it before, during, or in the transition from military operations to civilian administration. Underpinning these organisational growth spurts is the external strategic environment facing Australia and its attendant impact on how the ADF is best structured, positioned, equipped and trained. It is at this juncture that current operational contracting in Defence has assisted the ADF in meeting its multiple hybrid tasks. Australia’s defence relationship with the private sector is thus balanced between the need for maintaining economically efficient (and reliable) partnerships in a time of strategic complexity and preserving the delicate legal and organisational equilibrium of how, when and where contractors should be employed.

So, where does Army fit into this organisational picture and what model can Army consider for future operational contract support? This question will be addressed as follows: firstly, the article will examine the joint Operational Contractor Support (OCS) model now employed by the US. It will describe the conceptual history of OCS and its current institutional and organisational status in the US Department of Defense (DoD). Secondly, and drawing on this analysis, the article will distil the challenges of OCS, and how the identification of these challenges may augment Army’s future considerations for employing contractors during operations. The discussion of OCS as it relates to Army will be driven by two crucial determinants. The first is whether OCS may create commercial dependency instead of commercial capability within Army. The second is concerned with what operational value Army could derive from OCS.

**Conceptual Heritage of Operational Contract Support**

From a global perspective, various OCS models are currently being utilised by numerous militaries during deployed operations. These include the US, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK). The European Union (EU) has also explored the concept of employing civilians to augment and sustain its deployed military forces. The employment of civilians external to the civilian military workforce to support military operations, which is the key conceptual
demarcation of OCS, is neither a new phenomenon nor is it revolutionary in terms of how warfare has been prosecuted.

The US has, since 2008, led this trend to develop a stable and reliable platform which supports operational sustainment via a large contractible, commercially orientated civilian workforce. The need for a dependable and cohesive contracted civilian workforce has emerged out of battlespace, security and legal realities which have confronted the US military in recent times. The most prominent and widely discussed of these realities is the fraud, wastage and mismanagement of contracts during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Another key challenge emerged within the combat and operational sphere. For the uniformed forces, coalition partners and various governmental agencies making use of contractors in support of combat operations, the lack of integration and coordination with both broader strategic objectives and lower-level tactical milestones greatly affected unity of effort, morale, and challenged the security of deployed military and civilian/military units. It further undermined the legitimacy of missions and hampered the transition from military to civilian administration. These realities drove the need to explore how an integrated, coordinated strategy of OCS could be implemented across all arms of service.

In 2010, The US DoD produced a Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for OCS. This document defined OCS as, “The ability to orchestrate and synchronize the provision of integrated contract support and management of contractor personnel providing that support in a designated operational area”. The two pivotal aspects of OCS, Contract Support Integration (CSI) and Contractor Management (CM), were discussed in depth and seen as critical enabling components for seamless and synchronised OCS employment to uniformed forces. The CONOPS for contractor support was driven by important assumptions relating to the future of contractor usage by the DoD, other governmental departments, and US multinational partners. Important core assumptions included the following:

1. Contractors will continue to be a decisive component of the Total Force.

2. Commercial support to contingency operations will remain a feasible and cost-effective option.
3. Effective and proficient management of OCS will continue to be a strategic priority.

4. The employment of US military forces will continue as part of the ongoing commitment to coalition forces. There is recognition that these coalition partners will require significant joint force-provided contract support.

5. The support and management processes provided to contractors will be deployable.

These core assumptions formed the bedrock for positioning integration and coordination as paramount features to the success of OCS as a reliable, sustainable and responsive platform for the US DoD. The primary purpose of the CONOPS paper was to present a clear vision and pathway of OCS in the US DoD until 2016. This vision would then cascade into the US DoD’s capability development system which assess OCS against the following factors: doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leader development and education, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF). The CONOPS for OCS described contractor support as, “a powerful force multiplier that can provide services that are not viable for execution by military forces or are performed more effectively or efficiently by contract solutions”. OCS, as described in the CONOPS was structured to be applicable across all four of the command echelons within the US DoD. These command echelons were drawn from the identified levels of war (LOW); strategic, operational and tactical. In addition to placing OCS as a key component to US force sustainment in all LOW, the CONOPS positioned OCS as a response to various key federal sources of strategic guidance. This linked OCS with higher-order government intent relating to how the US DoD sustains and supports its deployed forces. Important sources guiding the development of CONOPS for OCS included,

1. The 2006 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR);

2. The 2008 National Defence Strategy; and

3. The 2009 Capstone Concept of Joint Operations (CCJO).
The level of integration and coordination described in the CONOPS for OCS is illustrative of key realities relating to how the US utilises contractors as part of its Total Force concept. These realities can be unpacked (not exhaustively) as the following,

1. Contractor support (irrespective of scale, scope or service-type) is now an expected component of the force sustainment for the US across all arms of service and between various governmental departments and multinational partners.

2. Uncoordinated and poorly planned integration of contractors is a strategic, operational and tactical liability. Sustainable Command and Control (C1), based on coordination and integration of OCS, is a force multiplier.

3. Contractor support needs to be planned for throughout the various operational planning and execution phases. This ensures that unity of effort is not eroded, fraud and wastage are minimised and the appropriate legal mechanisms are addressed regarding the role and purpose of civilians in an operational area.

4. OCS is considered to be a critical capability to the success of all US operations, be they unilateral or multilateral in nature. By virtue of its important role, OCS requires robust institutional integration within the US DoD in order for this capability to render its intended effective, responsive and efficient use in the future.

5. The CONOPS for OCS is a blueprint depicting full contractor integration in US joint operations. As a blueprint, it sets out the organisational concept of OCS as an appropriately robust, integrated, comprehensive and resourced support platform for all future US joint operations.

In 2013, the US DoD released Operational Contract Support Joint Concept which enlarged on the strategic need for a joint approach to OCS throughout all arms of service. In 2014, Joint Publication 4-10, Operational Contractor Support was released and can be regarded as the culmination of current OCS thinking in the US DoD. This document describes doctrine for the planning, execution and management of OCS in all phases related to US joint operations. In essence JP 4-10 is a document solely concerned with joint-arms operational sustainment. This focus feeds into the unofficial motto of, "You cannot spell sustainment without OCS". JP 4-10 characterises
its approach to OCS as functional and programmatic. The functional aspect denotes linking services with particular capability requirements of the mission, and the programmatic approach is a reference to the need for Joint Force Commanders (JFC) to, “fully consider cost, performance, schedule and contract oversight requirements as well as many other contract-support related matters (e.g., risk of contractor failure to perform, civil- military impact, operations security)”. As a doctrinal document, JP 4-10 incorporates the entirety of the CONOPS for OCS and expands on various themes presented and discussed in the CONOPS. JP 4-10 therefore describes OCS as, “the process of planning for and obtaining supplies, services and construction from commercial sources in support of joint operations”. This definition has its heritage in the Operational Contract Support Joint Concept which aligned OCS with the overriding joint nature of US military operations. Additionally, JP 4-10 distributes OCS into three (not two as the CONOPS had originally) functional areas: contract integration support, contracting support and contractor management.

Critically, JP 4-10 divides the force protection (FP) of contractors between, “the contractor and the United States Government”. It goes on to state that FP responsibility for contractors in permissive environments may only receive partial support from the Geographical Combat Commander (GCC) and the Joint Force Commander (JFC). In this low-level threat environment, contractors are largely responsible for planning, managing and executing their own FP. In hostile environments, JP 4-10 acknowledges the operational and tactical difficulties experienced by the JFC in supplying adequate FP to contractors.

JP 4-10 primarily stresses the jointness of OCS as a key enabler for effective contractor usage. The principle of jointness is reinforced by a Joint Lessons Learned Information System (JLLIS) platform for all arms of service. The role of JLLIS is to aggregate and store a system of record from all arms of service utilising OCS. The Joint Lessons Learned Program, (JLLP) which facilitates the JLLIS, is further responsible for coordinating input from the various arms of service on issues of OCS and possible solutions that have been suggested to mitigate these challenges. The envisaged goal of JLLP therefore is to distil lessons learned of OCS from a joint capability perspective and channel these lessons into future doctrine and Tactics, Training and Procedures (TTPs) across all arms of service.
In sum, JP 4-10 sets out in comprehensive detail current OCS practice in the US DoD. The overarching focus on jointness is structured to be the turnkey solution for efficient and effective management of contractors. As per figure 1, JP 4-10 attempts to aggregate approximately 11 years of lessons learned from OCS into a cohesive, systematic organisational construct which is responsive to the fluid operational demands experienced by US Forces. Its twin characteristics of being programmatic and functional seek to ameliorate challenges brought about by contractors in or near the battlefield. These characteristics also aim to link capacities of OCS with constantly evolving requirements expressed by the various arms of service. Yet, as with many evolving platforms, issues abound.

The following section will therefore pinpoint key challenges of OCS identified as being the most applicable for Army's consideration of future contractor management and utilisation as per its operational requirements. These
challenges will be divided into two categories. The first is conceptual, which will describe issues related to the OCS system which organises, integrates and manages contractors. The second category is best expressed as a structural challenge. Each category and its associated challenges will be channelled into a ‘so what?’ question for Army. In this format, OCS can be examined against the Army’s future operational needs as determined by its known external environment.

**OCS Challenges**

JP 4-10 notes that, “There are few areas more uncertain than planning for use of commercially provided services in support of joint operations”. When one considers the size of the US armed forces, the complexity of its tasks which span a broad spectrum of missions, and the long tail of support functions needed to sustain a technologically networked organisation, this observation cannot easily be dismissed. The past challenges of contractor usage in operations are testimony to the enormous organisational and policy difficulties inherent in employing civilians on or near battlefields. Despite this, the CONOPS for OCS and JP 4-10 represent an important step forward in the attempt to seamlessly link contractor support with changing operational needs. This is because these documents illustrate a clear codification, which has previously not been attempted, of how, when, where and to what extent operational contracting is integrated, planned for and managed, especially in the realm of joint operations. The codification also allows for a systematic identification of challenges related to OCS in general. In effect, the codification of OCS into a cohesive policy document such as JP 4-10 creates a nodal point for future thinking of how contractor employment for joint military operations is best implemented.

**Conceptual Challenges**

**Challenge 1: OCS is not a one-size fits all concept.** As JP 4-10 observes, different planning cycles will apply in respect of systems support contracts (such as new weapon systems/platforms), theatre support contracts (logistics, security, medical, administrative) and external contract support (interpreters). Conceivably, these three categories of contract support may all be active within an area of operation, albeit at different times and depending on the overall footprint of the mission and its objectives.
Planning, managing and integrating the outcomes of these various contract types places a burden on the operational cycle and may further dislodge, due to a lack of adequate resources, unity of effort.

**Outcome for Army**

Under this challenge, Army’s Adaptive Campaigning- Future Land Operating Concept (AC- FLOC) could steer the course of how joint OCS may provide added operational flexibility and responsiveness to deployed Army elements. The AC-FLOC observes that, “The Land Force will be optimised for joint operations, operating in a joint environment, and relying on joint enabling capabilities for full effect. The Land Force is also required to be trained, equipped and resourced for effective interaction with Coalition partners and commercial contractors where applicable”.

As a capstone document, AC-FLOC illustrates clear performance-based requirements for Army in a joint environment and outlines a common framework for how these requirements should be met. This cohesive framework forms a stable conceptual starting point for a deeper examination of contractor roles, particularly in supporting AC-FLOC five lines of operations. Given the overriding characteristic of ‘Jointry’ in the AC-FLOC, JP 4-10 can provide meaningful conceptual input for Army relating to the complexity of harnessing OCS to support joint operations. For example, joint forces may require various types of contractor support which may be utilised at different phases of the operation. JP 4-10 recommends that, “Key to success in the contractor management challenge is…to establish clear, enforceable, and well understood theatre entrance, accountability, FP and general contractor personnel management policies and procedures early in the planning stages for a [joint] military operation”.

Other key inputs available for Army can be found in the US Army’s Training, Tactics and Procedures publication for OCS. ATTP 4-10 characterises OCS as “commercial augmentation” to existing organic capabilities. Crucially, ATTP 4-10 applies OCS in its intended joint model and provides recommendation to its commanders and their subordinates on how best to plan for, manage and sustain contracts during operations. A key capability enunciated by the US Army for OCS was the maintenance of effective deployable management cells to oversee and assist commander with contract support during the full operational cycle. For Army, this capability has already been recommended by the ASPI report on contractors in 2005, and later by Brigadier David Saul in his 2008 article for the Army Journal.
entitled, “Hardened, Networked…and commercially capable: Army and contractor support on operations”. Deployable contract management remains, as noted by Brigadier Saul, a critical enabler for effective contract management.

**Challenge 2:** In terms of joint force operations, OCS does not display a deep doctrinal history in relation to organically derived forms of joint force support. Essentially, the relationship between OCS and the concept of joint operations is very new. As with any new organisational relationship in the military, growing pains relating to the establishment of synchronicity between what is required and how those requirements are met can be challenging. JP 4-10 recognises this key challenge by noting that joint planning underpinned by comprehensive OCS is a significant departure from historical experience. For hierarchical clarity, and as it relates to the Australian Army, the identified challenges of OCS support to joint operations as per JP 4-10 are listed as follows,

- **First Order challenge:** A lack of adequate preparatory and continuation training modules for OCS as it relates to joint force support.
- **Second Order challenge:** A dissonance between the rapid evolution of techniques for OCS and capturing these developments in doctrine.
- **Third Order challenge:** Partial integration of planned OCS footprint into intelligence preparation prior to a joint deployment.
- **Fourth Order challenge:** Underdeveloped/immature systems of information collection relating to OCS activities in the area of operations.

**Outcome for Army**

The joint approach is a pivotal concept for Army, as AC-FLOC illustrates, and underscores what OCS is now structured for. Joint operations are by their very nature complex and attaching OCS to deployed units, even elements which form part of modular forces, can be challenging in terms of management and integration. A key challenge identified by JP 4-10 was the general lack of adequate training for uniformed personnel in how best to navigate contract planning, management and integration in joint environments. For Army, and taking note of these challenges listed by JP 4-10, it is imperative that OCS training models be understood within the broader concept of joint force support. The availability (and applicability) of modules for educating personnel on the joint nature of OCS is reliant on
continuous training and assessment for educators tasked with teaching
contactor management. Not only must educational modules be available
to prospective personnel tasked with managing and integrating OCS,
they must also be housed in systems that are appropriately responsive to
changing techniques for OCS. The responsiveness of learning systems is
dependent on, inter alia, the ability for change/development to be translated
in a consistent, clear and efficient manner as it pertains to doctrinal or TTP
updates. A dissonance between evolving OCS practices and updates to
document and TTPs may pose significant challenges to the management of
OCS. Crucially it could erode the synchronicity needed between OCS and
military force structures. This dislocation will impact the ability of OCS to
function as an important force multiplier for Army.

Integrating OCS into pre-deployment intelligence planning makes practical
sense, particularly if the operational environment is deemed hostile.
Integrating OCS at the initial planning stage of joint operations may better
manage risk to the contracted workforce by selecting and linking resources
needed to protect it as part of overall FP. This is dependent nonetheless on
the commander’s objectives, the resources available to fulfil the objectives
and the nature of threats in or near the area of operations. Naturally though,
enlarging the intelligence planning process to incorporate selected elements
of OCS carries with it operational security risks.

Challenge 3: Using contractors in relatively benign or hostile
operational environments carries attendant operational risks
that must be planned for and managed by the relevant command
structures and contracting organisations. At the core of this challenge
is the impact contracting exerts on the military principle of command.
Therefore, a common question posed when assessing the nature of
contracted support is, “What operational value will the commander gain
from contractors providing services in support of mission objectives?”.
In terms of JP 4-10, it makes the following observation; “In all operations,
contracted support is a joint force multiplier to some degree. When properly
planned [and resourced] OCS can provide… enhanced operational flexibility
and rapid increases in support force capabilities”. Crucially this result must
be predicated on a mature and robust contractor support system which
interacts well with its designated, and appropriately conditioned, military
counter-parts. It is within this sphere of interaction that the twin issues of
command and operational value should be determined for Army.
Structural Challenges

The structural challenge is no less crucial than the conceptual problems mentioned when determining the viability of larger contractor footprints in operations. A larger, more integrated contractor capability will necessitate a degree of structural change in a defence organisation. Structural change in large organisations such as Defence does not happen quickly and the transition period can generate substantial obstacles in respect of getting the job done in a manner consistent with its organisational values, beliefs and responsibilities. Of key concern is the issue of commercial dependability superseding organic capability. Importantly, this concern is determined by the scope of a military’s defence tasks assigned by government, the existing organic capabilities available for forces to execute these tasks, and the resources (defence budget) needed to sustain organic capabilities. In short, ends, ways and means will ultimately inform how the concern of commercial dependency with respect to commercial capability is addressed at a national strategic level.

Challenge 4: Could the use of contractors become an expression of commercial dependency? At the heart of this question is the scale and scope of contractor support that is required and the way it is planned for and delivered. This is determined by several considerations. First and foremost, and drawing from government higher-order intent, to what extent are contractors allied with defence tasks? Secondly, what functions are they expected to perform and are these mission-critical functions? Thirdly, are contractors the most suitable agents for the tasks given to them? Finally, most militaries of developed states are either fully networked or rely heavily on technology to gain combat supremacy over their adversaries. Large portions of this technology are developed by defence industry. Often there is a large contractor footprint (not necessarily in an area of operations) needed to assist uniformed forces apply, maintain and adjust the technology to the needs of the particular arm of service. JP 4-10 does not explicitly deal with this issue; however, JP 4-10 is illustrative of the deep structural and now dependent relationship between contractors and US forces. In this vein, JP 4-10 has a clear genealogy that reaches back to the following statement made in 2003 by Lieutenant General David Mckieman, Commander of the Third Army. He said, “A lot of what we have done in terms of reducing the size of active and reserve component force structure means there is a
greater reliance on contractors. And there’s a lot of technology that requires contractor support.”

Army recognises that a greater reliance on technology, and the constantly evolving need for assessing the appropriateness of existing technological platforms requires a larger contract support base. Maintaining or developing appropriate organic levels of technological expertise that can keep pace with Defence industry development is not a cost-effective approach. As the 2016 White Paper counselled, establishing a closer relationship with the Defence industry, and inviting industry to earlier planning stages for capability requirements, enhances the collaborative approach for sharing responsibilities in managing strategic risk.

Outcome for Army
For Army, the concern of whether a larger contractor footprint may lead towards greater commercial dependency depends on the intended nature of contract support and its scope and scale in relation to mission parameters. As to the nature of contract support, higher-order direction is clear on the issue that contractors are components of an agile, responsive and resilient Army. Moreover, contractors are allied to Army tasks as force multipliers when the need arises. Key direction comes from,

- The 2016 Defence White Paper which listed contractors as a component for a more agile Defence Force. Additionally, the White Paper enunciated a higher-order intent from government for the ADF to deepen its existing close security relationship with the US and continue its current trajectory of pursuing interoperability and military integration with US forces. Conceivably, these aspects of the 2016 White Paper indicate that the size of contractor footprints in operations may grow across all arms of service. Army, with an expected growth of 8.6% may therefore see more contractors supporting Army in a variety of sustainment roles.

- The April 2014 Army Modernisation Update refers to contractors being part of Australia’s ‘Total Force’ concept. Closely aligned with Australia’s concept of ‘Total Force’ is the US concept of ‘Total Force’ which has incorporated contractors within its definition since as early as 2006. The concept similarity indicates structural similarities with the US in positioning contractors as important sustainment elements of landward forces.
• **Adaptive Campaigning: Army’s Future Land Operating Concept (AC-AFLOC)** refers to Australia’s land force requiring the training and equipment for, “effective interaction with Coalition partners and commercial contractors where applicable”.33

• **Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Power (2014)** noted that the Army is “not employed in isolation…Warfighting demands optimal force integration or ‘joint interdependence’…This is further enhanced by cooperation between the joint team and other government agencies such as police, diplomatic staff, legal representatives, private sector and non-government organisations”.34

The scale and scope of contractor support to Army will be determined, among others, by the mission requirements and operational realities; Intrinsic to this, is the requirement for Army to determine if ‘On occurrence support’ (OOC) or ‘Prearranged support’ (PAS) best suits the realities and complexities of joint force sustainment. From the US perspective, OCS is planned for and visible throughout the joint operational cycle. The US recognises that its coalition partners may need significant contractor derived support. Determining this once the joint operation has commenced places unnecessary stress on managing force requirements for contractor services. For Army, PAS represents a comprehensive format for planning, integrating and managing contractors and has been recommended to the ADF as the optimal form of OCS.35 Capabilities and policy direction to support this model are present in Joint Land Command (JLC). As a prearranged package, OCS could bolster the structural need for agility and responsiveness in Army by integrating contractor support during planning phases of the operation. This would mitigate possible coordination problems between uniformed and contractor personnel once the operation commences. A strong argument can be made that in the complex and fluid environment of joint operations unity of effort is paramount, and coordination problems are ideally addressed prior to deployment and not during the operation.

It is fair to argue, however, that Army’s size (including its planned growth of 8.6%) and, its doctrinal recognition of deploying with OCS supported coalition partners such as the US may delay the organisational need for developing comprehensive, and fully integrated PAS policies for contractors in joint operations. Instead, Army could examine the possible niche roles contractors could perform in dispersed operations. With the
ever-growing size of operational environments and the attendant decrease in military footprints deployed to these areas, logistics becomes a complex undertaking. For the time being, national strategic guidance directs that contractors be part of the Total Force and that they play important roles in allowing the provision of contract support for defence functions. For Army, this translates into operational contract support being comprehensive enough to align with the commander’s intent, and at the same time, display flexibility in relation to fluid battlespace requirements. This is not, by any means, a commercially dependent relationship.

Recommendations for further research

As joint operations are now a key characteristic of ADF doctrine, further research for joint, integrated OCS models will enable the ADF to examine in depth, and within the confines of its own warfighting doctrine requirements, what best practices are available for OCS employment. With this in mind, the following research avenues are proposed:

- Identify the organisational requirements for PAS and whether significant structural evolution/ and or change in the ADF would be required to house it as a new joint, integrated capability platform.

- As operational environments can never be fully predicted, what future options can be developed to provide force protection to contractors during joint operations without reducing the weight of the commander’s front-line combat force?

Conclusion

For the ADF, and Army in particular, understanding the deep structural relationship between the US DoD and its attendant OCS platform is an important conceptual requirement. This requirement was best expressed under the rubric of joint operations and what impact OCS has on coordinating the known complexity of joint all-arms operations. With all land operations for Australia being inherently joint in nature, and the fluidity of operational requirements exerting added strain on supporting functions, a more detailed understanding of OCS is valuable to future guidance on how best to utilise contractor support. At a national security level, this requirement is reinforced
through the high-order direction given by the 2016 White Paper on Defence. The planned deeper levels of interoperability and military engagement with the US DoD necessitate a thorough appreciation of how the US plans to sustain its forces during coalition operations via a large, commercially contracted work force. To illustrate this, the paper examined the comprehensive OCS concept, codified in JP 4-10, and distilled its essential characteristics. Of key importance to this process was identifying the challenges JP 4-10 creates in joint operations (despite its detailed organisational construct) and what input Army can use for its future OCS development.

Endnotes

1. The research for this article was funded in part by the Australian Army Research Scheme


5. A key contract is for the replacement of the Collins Class Submarines with 12 future submarines announced in the 2016 Defence White Paper at a cost of approximately $50 billion

6. Operation PACIFIC ASSIST 2015 is emblematic of various second and third order tasks performed by the ADF


11. Civilian/military units have been extensively used by the US government in its operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) were the most commonly employed hybrid unit in Iraq and experienced widespread deployment by the Coalition Provisional Authority. PRTs were primarily lead by the Department of State but were comprised of a mix of civilian and military specialists. PRTs represented the US DoD’s prioritisation of stabilisation and reconstruction operations as core strategic missions in the Iraqi theatre


31. Defence White Paper 2016, Chpt 1 para 1.27


The Author

David Pfotenhauer is a PhD candidate at the University of New South Wales. His dissertation examines the decline of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) since 1994, and whether pragmatic strategic defence outsourcing is a possible policy remedy for the malaise in capability currently experienced by the SANDF. David’s military career as a Project Officer at the Future SA Army Strategy afforded him the unique opportunity to be part of critical strategy and doctrine development processes. David was involved in key research trips to formulate various SA Army Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development strategic guidelines which included temporary assigned duties to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa and in Gaborone, Botswana at the Southern African Development Community headquarters.
In Memoriam – Professor Jeffrey Grey

Professor Peter Dennis and Dr Roger Lee

Jeffrey Grey, who died in his sleep from a heart attack on 26 July 2016, was an amazing man. Son of a general, he had a lifelong interest in the Australian Army and absolutely no interest in formally joining it. He used to remark that he was ‘of’ the Army, frequently ‘with’ the Army but never ‘in’ the Army. Fortunately for Army, he did not have to be in it to make a major contribution to its development and evolution. One of Jeffrey’s major frustrations was that he felt Army did training very well and education extremely badly. Given his character, Jeffrey enthusiastically set about trying to change this. Through more than just his teaching contribution – he was an academic first at RMC, and then at ADFA – Jeffrey tried to change the culture of Army to appreciate the value of professional military education as an ongoing, essential contributor to a modern, professional force. He did this by unashamedly lobbying senior officers, writing articles critical of the failings (as he saw them) of Army’s educational regime and by engaging at as many levels as possible within Army to press his arguments. One of his key arguments was that, by comparison with the US Army and US Marine Corps, the Australian Army did not exploit its long history, both of peace and war, to help prepare its current members for the job they had to face.

The main beneficiary of his tireless enthusiasm and energy was the Australian Army History Unit (AAHU). Jeffrey had established an early connection with the then Colonel Peter Leahy who, as Director Army Research and Analysis, asked Jeffrey and Professor Peter Dennis (also at ADFA and Jeffrey’s mentor and close friend) to assist with the planning and
delivery of an international conference examining amphibious warfare. This became the relationship that defined Jeffrey’s connection to the Army. The History Unit came into being in 1998 and promptly took responsibility for the history conference idea – beginning (until recently) an annual event that has arguably contributed more understanding about the Australian Army, its origins, culture, combat experience, flexibility and likely future shape and construction than any other single initiative. Jeffrey (and Peter Dennis) worked with the History Unit on every one of these conferences: Jeffrey’s unsurpassed knowledge of who, anywhere in the academic world, was working on what, enabled the conference organisers to identify and sign up as speakers the most current, most credible and (a key consideration) most persuasive speakers on any challenging military topic. It has been remarked that, of all his attributes, the end of our access to Jeffrey’s contact list will probably be the biggest loss to Army!

The relationship between Jeffrey and the History Unit did not end with the once a year conference contact. Although ADFA, not AAHU, paid his salary, the average onlooker could rightly have been confused about that. Jeffrey spent much of his time on military history projects being pursued by the Unit. He sat on the Military Historical Advisory Committee, chaired by DCA. Until his acidic comments became too unrestrained, he was a long-time member of the Army History Research Grants scheme: his opinions on the (poor) applications of some of his fellow academics for research assistance were as entertaining as they were unreportable. Jeffrey worked closely with the Unit and its flourishing publishing scheme to encourage the publication of the theses from the best and brightest young PhD students at ADFA and elsewhere, thus ensuring their widespread availability. There was, however, much more to the relationship than just these formal connections. Jeffrey was always happy to help when the Unit was stumped by a request for some obscure information or when a senior officer wanted a speech written on some area in which Jeffrey was the recognised expert. He was always happy to comment on articles or similar product destined for public consumption. He even attended the Unit Christmas party on a regular basis where his fierce demeanour (an amusing façade) routinely intimidated the Unit’s younger staff – until they wised up to his game!

It would be a mistake to paint Jeffrey’s relationship with the Army solely through the AAHU connection. He had many other links – he even had a paid part time position with the Land Warfare Centre at one stage (perhaps
the closest he ever went to being ‘in’ the Army). He edited the Australian Army Journal on a few occasions and sat on its Board for many years. While he rarely mentioned it, it was known he was consulted on a wide range of subjects by senior members in Army Headquarters. Through his many years’ teaching, he was a friend and confidant of many soldiers, including many who made it to command positions. He was in demand as a speaker at unit and formation gatherings and as part of the ongoing, informal education of junior officers.

However, it was through his writing that Jeffrey had the greatest impact. The author of over thirty works, including his highly regarded and commercially successful book, *A Military History of Australia*, he was directly involved in – and in one instance was the instigator of - two of the more ambitious military history projects in Australian publishing history. In 2001, as part of the national centenary of federation commemorations, a major publishing project resulted in a six volume series, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence*. Jeffrey wrote volume one in the series – *The Australian Army* – and was closely involved in the production of the series itself. More recently, recognising that the Defence Organisation, including Army, was not well prepared to respond to likely popular demands for some recognition of the centenary of the Great War, Jeffrey approached the then Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, with a proposition. With Army’s support, Jeffrey undertook to organise and produce a centenary history of the Great War as Army’s acknowledgement of the centenary. CA accepted and in late 2014 the first of the five volume set appeared. Jeffrey’s own contribution, on the war with the Ottoman Empire, appeared in 2016. He selected the authors, undertook the series editing and generally supervised all the volumes through to completion personally. This series epitomised everything about Jeffrey and his relationship with the Army. The support he received from Army was sufficient but not generous. Jeffrey did much to make the series both authoritative and qualitative, but this was done at great personal cost in time and emotion. He did it simply because he believed the Army was a national institution with an admirable history, great public credibility and a reputation for professionalism second to none.

It was his greatest desire to help Army maintain this record and the Army History Unit became a major beneficiary of this commitment. It seems impossible the void caused by his death can ever be filled.