Army

Australian Army Journal

Serving the Nation

Army

Australian
Army
Journal

Serving the Nation

The Australian Army Journal Staff:

Editorial Director: Colonel Anthony Duus

Managing Editor: Lieutenant Colonel Katherine Old

Editorial Advisory Board:

Dr John Blaxland

Dr Rhys Crawley

Dr Peter Dean

Ms Katherine Mansted

Dr Andrew Phillips

Cover image: An Australian Army instructor from the 5th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, patrols with Ukrainian trainees during the field phase of the first rotation of Operation Kudu in the United Kingdom. (Source: Defence image gallery)

Contents

Foreword

Brigadier James A Davis, Director-General Future Land Warfare

The purpose of the military profession is to apply force for the ends of policy. Members of this profession possess specific knowledge to deliver on this purpose. This specific knowledge is not fixed. It changes with the character of war. The sources of the character of war are many, influenced by things like technology, law, politics and ethics. In one sense, the most recent changes in the character of war are already 'out there' in current conflicts in Ukraine or the Middle East, and are reflected in doctrine and in the minds of defence planners. While the particulars of the application of force in one conflict can inform, they do not prescribe the character of conflicts that follow. Nuclear conflict is a simple example to confirm this idea. As yet there is no prequel for a nuclear conflict. Any nuclear conflict will be true to the nature of war but will reflect a marked departure from the preceding character.

Nations that go to war or use the threat of force have some agency in its character. The accepted theory of war reminds us that the choice about how to apply force is "the first, the supreme, the most far reaching act of judgement" (Clausewitz, *On War*) that a statesman could make. But, like all choices in war, this application is subject to the enemy's will, friction, chance, and the trajectory of conflict to 'absolute war.' The National Defence Strategy, released in April this year, describes Australia's preferences for the application or threat of force for policy ends. It follows that our body of professional knowledge will conform to these choices and remain attuned

to the fixed nature of war. The Army both develops and preserves its body of knowledge in publications such as the Australian Army Journal. This issue of the Australian Army Journal signposts the new knowledge we might need in respect to technology, ways of fighting and geography.

Jason Kirkham's article *Upgrading the Army's Fires Lethality: How the Australian Army Can Harness the Firepower Advantages of the Fourth Industrial Revolution* describes the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on Army's indirect firepower and targeting capabilities. The article points to new areas of professional knowledge that Army will need related to how artificial intelligence applications learn, their limitations and strengths. In *No Other System Could Have Achieved the Result': The Australian Beach Groups, 1943–1945*, Dayton McCarthy highlights the swift transformation Army undertook, following the after-action report on Operation Postern, to establish Australian Beach Groups in late 1943 and early 1944. Littoral operations is another a body of knowledge that Army officers will need to hold.

In *Structuring for Train, Advise, and Assist Missions? The Australian Army's Past, Present, and Future* Andrew Richardson highlights the strategic value of trusted partnerships through train, advise and assist (TAA) activities. He explains Army's history of delivering TAA missions from the Vietnam era through to Operation Kudu. Richardson also draws on experiences of our allies and partners, such as the US and UK Security Force Assistance Brigades model, concluding with his own assessment that Australia's small professional force would not likely be able to follow suit. He does, however, suggest that Australia would benefit strategically from greater persistence in the region – relying on more regular regional TAA visits. There is an obvious interplay between these ideas and Andrew Maher's paper, *A Plan B: An Australian Support to Resistance Operating Concept.* Maher argues for the ADF to develop the capability and capacity to support regional neighbours in developing resistance capabilities to clearly demonstrate our country's ability to disrupt, impost cost on, or possibly deny an aggressor's ability to achieve their strategic aims.

Gregory MacCallion and Courtney Stewart discuss deterrence and its application in the context of the Army. These authors highlight limitations in the public discussion regarding the application of Australia's strategy of deterrence through denial. MacCallion and Stewart examine the contribution of land power, through the integrated force, to deliver deterrence objectives. Most Army officers and soldiers will support deterrence through the planning and execution of operations, exercises and activities. They should do so with an understanding of how deterrence might or might not function in theory and practice.

The specific knowledge of autonomous systems, littoral operations, the region and deterrence relate to the application of force. Army professionals will also require a working knowledge of the Army as an institution. This knowledge relates to how Army functions as a social system. Such knowledge will be needed to reduce Defence and veteran suicide and to respond to new training models or types of recruits as Australia's demographics and strategic circumstances change. Frain and Jans in *The Social Identity Foundations of Military Leadership* address how military leadership functions in this context and will be invaluable as Army strengthens the foundations of its social identity.

The Australian Army Journal is rightly a vanguard for new areas of professional knowledge before they are sanctioned in doctrine or concepts. Its strength is the breadth of contributors – in this edition academics, serving officers and hybrids. We are grateful for their insights and welcome yours as well.

Burying the Great Man: The Social Identity Foundations of Military Leadership

Andrew J Frain[1] and Nicholas Jans[2]

Group affiliation and identity are key themes in Anthony King's rich and extensive analysis of military cohesion and performance *The Combat Soldier*.[3] King argues that understanding operational performance depends crucially on understanding the nature of 'collectives'. He shows how longstanding practices in military doctrine and training aim to enhance group cohesion by shaping affiliation and identity, so that the execution of orders by soldiers will be increasingly willing, sophisticated and coordinated. King uses a sociological perspective to show how group processes are critical to military effectiveness. He begins by arguing that the platoon is analogous to indigenous communities as studied by Durkheim, in terms of its function in individual survival, morality and epistemology. He goes on to demonstrate how the behaviour of individual soldiers is shaped by their group memberships, and that we can make sense of the willingness of military personnel to expose themselves to great personal risk—potentially including the ultimate individual sacrifice—only by understanding that groups and societies (collectives) are more than simply the sum of the individuals within them.

Consistent with King's sociological approach, the aim of this article is to put the case for a collectivistic psychological perspective in understanding the powerful 'people factors' that are crucial to military effectiveness.

We explain how a genre of social psychological scholarship known as *the social identity approach* can bring new clarity to notoriously opaque military leadership processes.[4] We begin with an introduction to the social identity approach,[5] including its role as a refreshing antidote to the dominant individualistic versions of psychology. We then demonstrate how *social identities*, which at heart are a psychological sense of 'us', underpin established Australian military leadership practice. Drawing on the academic literature (including empirical studies conducted in American and European military institutions) and observations of the Australian military, we show how—whether they know it or not—Australian Defence Force (ADF) members tend to be habitual managers of social identities, empowered by institutionally entrenched support structures that build and sustain relevant military *organisational identities*. Finally, informed by recent reflections from mid-career members attending the Australian Command and Staff Course (ACSC), we show how a deeper appreciation of the social identity approach to leadership can enhance standard practice, particularly by curbing some common misperceptions of military leadership. Despite our Australian military research focus, the psychological principles covered herein are applicable to militaries the world over, and servicemen/women of any nation can use such knowledge to enhance their personal leadership capabilities and those of their teams.

The Social Identity Approach

The social identity approach derives its label from the central insight that self-definition will at times be determined by our social identities.[6] Our sense of ourselves as being a member of various in-groups (or, colloquially, 'tribes') not only allows us to understand our place in the world but is also a potential source of dignity and pride. Social identities include nations (e.g., 'we Australians'), political movements (e.g., 'we Republicans') and fandoms (e.g., 'we Manchester United supporters'). Our social identities also shape our perception of fellow in-group members so that we come to see them as cognitively equivalent to each other, including to ourselves. That perceived equivalence is the psychological backbone of critically important phenomena such as affinity, empathy, altruism and cooperation.[7] And social identities are also a psychological prerequisite for generally objectionable, but nonetheless powerfully influential, phenomena such as intergroup conflict and discrimination.[8]

Paradoxically, the social identity perspective continues to hold a minority position in psychological thinking. As a burgeoning science, psychology suffers greatly from theoretical disunity, with many of the most basic assumptions of the field still being contested.[9] Part of this disunity concerns the treatment of the collectivistic lens across different continents. Psychological research that emerged from Europe in the mid-20th century was comfortable with embedding group and societal processes into psychological theories, which is the intellectual ancestry of the social identity approach.[10] Building on the iconic work of Muzafer Sherif, Kurt Lewin and others, social identity theorists demonstrated that a psychological process of self-definition in terms of 'us' is core to the processes that allow groups of individuals to develop into societies, and societies to develop individuals. From this perspective, individual psychology remains incomplete without the input from some society or group context, where social identities allow that input to occur. In contrast, North American psychology is synchronised with the individualistic zeitgeist of the USA. It has thus tended to reject or ignore the society-to-individual link, focusing instead on the search for psychological insight into inherent individual desires, tendencies and capacities, as well as subjects' developmental and interpersonal histories.[11] The consequence has been two quite different psychologies. On one hand, European psychology has been comfortable in recognising humans as cultural animals who are defined by the groups and societies that they inhabit, whereas North American psychology is inclined to reify the individual independent of those elements, and in many respects pathologises the influences of one's social context. The North American psychology became dominant due to a complexity of factors, including the political.[12] Indeed, if readers were to open any introductory textbook on psychology, leadership or management and then turn to the content covering 'groups', they would read almost exclusively of social ills, such as groupthink, social loafing and the bystander effect. In the same vein, those textbooks usually include Stanley Milgram's Yale obedience experiments, and Philip Zimbardo's Stanford Prison study, which both tend to be interpreted as demonstrations of how social and group forces are a cause of great harm.[13]

An important consequence of this schism between collectivistic psychology and individualistic psychology, and the dominance of the North American voices propagating the latter, is the continued dominance of the *individualistic mythology of leadership.*[14] That mythology focuses exclusively

on the leadership potential of an individual, paying tokenistic attention to the context and people around that individual. The individualistic lens presumes that leadership is an enduring characteristic of certain people, an analytic tradition also strongly influenced by pre-scientific 'great man' leadership narratives.[15] The great man account of leadership proposes that 'leadership' is something that people possess to varying degrees, and that those who have this quality are predestined for great accomplishment. While such narratives continue to be influential, serious scholarship on leadership has long rejected the individualistic lens in favor of a relational understanding of leadership, with appropriate emphasis on the follower's role in generating leadership. Such scholarship gives appropriate weight to people's responses to leadership efforts, at the same time as examining the actions of people who try to 'lead'. This approach recognises that the beliefs of followers (e.g., which of one's peers are seen as trustworthy, fair and courageous) are central to leadership, rather than being a peripheral or second-order factor. Yet even then, most relational perspectives on leadership remain individualistic, in the sense that analysis is limited to interpersonal factors. Intergroup and intragroup interactions (by which encounters between people are given meaning by group and societal context) are generally neglected. The insights of European psychology— and in particular the social identity approach—act as a necessary counter to that notion of leadership individualism, by embedding the group and society into the essence of human psychology. For the social identity approach, self-definition in terms of 'we' or 'us' is as essential, valid, meaningful and motivating as our sense of ourselves as individuals (i.e., in terms of 'I').

The Social Identity Approach to Leadership

The social identity approach began as an attempt to better understand intergroup conflict and prejudice.[16] Over subsequent decades, however, social identity insights were used to shed light on phenomena such as group polarisation, crowd behaviour, health and wellbeing, personality, power and influence.[17] One result of this broad perspective on human behaviour is that the social identity approach has never lionised 'leadership', in the sense of the sliver of organisational life that is most conspicuous to organisational elites. Instead, the social identity approach truly accepts the message that leadership is best understood as being fundamentally about influence, wherever it occurs. Research into leadership should therefore start with the question: when and why will influence occur? The investigation that follows focuses on the relationship between an *influencer* and an *influencee*.

Moreover, those who ultimately decide whether influence occurs are the influencees; it is in their minds, after all, that an attitude, belief or behaviour is accepted or rejected. Thus the most fruitful pathway to understanding leadership is not so much to scrutinise those seen to be 'leaders' as to understand the psychology of those who follow them.

Militaries are among the best examples of the potency and utility of social identification. The subsumption of 'self' into military organisations is so powerful and profound that the requirement to lay down one's life in service of the mission is experienced as an almost unremarkable reality of military service. For many service personnel, the experience of being Australian Navy, Army or Air Force, or some subgroup within (e.g., submariner, gunner, pilot) embeds itself so deeply in one's sense of self that it is hard to imagine living in its absence. It is by looking in from the outside that the contours and effect of social identities across military organisations are most readily apparent. Nobel prize winner George Akerlof and Rachel Kranton use the extremity of the military example to make the reality of organisational identification clear to everyday readers:

> [T]he military makes investments to turn outsiders into insiders. Initiation rites, short haircuts, boot camp, uniforms, and oaths of office are among the obvious means of creating a common identity. The routine of the military academies also shows some of the tools used to inculcate military identity. Harsh training exercises and hazing, like the R-Day rituals at West Point, are just one way the Army puts its imprint on cadets.[18]

Social identities are integral to influence because we are predisposed to listen to those who we consider to be part of our in-groups.[19] We come to perceive our fellow in-group members as cognitively interchangeable with ourselves—for example, listening to their opinions can be akin to listening to our own trusted beliefs. But fellow in-group members are not all equally good presentations of our social identity, and if there is any ambiguity about how 'we' should act, talk or think, our first point of reference will be the person who best exemplifies what it means to be 'us'. As depicted in Figure 1, in these moments we are most influenced by those who typify what we are good at and what we stand for—said otherwise, those who are the best versions of us, *judged in terms of the behaviours and beliefs valued from the perspective of in-group members*. It is not unreasonable to call these most influential in-group members the 'leaders'.[20]

Figure 1. Social Identities Create Motivation for Consensus Seeking Among In-group Members

Self-definition in terms of 'I'

A focus on personal distinctiveness, without motivation toward consensus.

Self-definition in terms of 'us'

Influence pathway

Asymmetric influence

In-group members are motivated toward consensus building, with the most influential members being those embodying the meaning of 'us'.
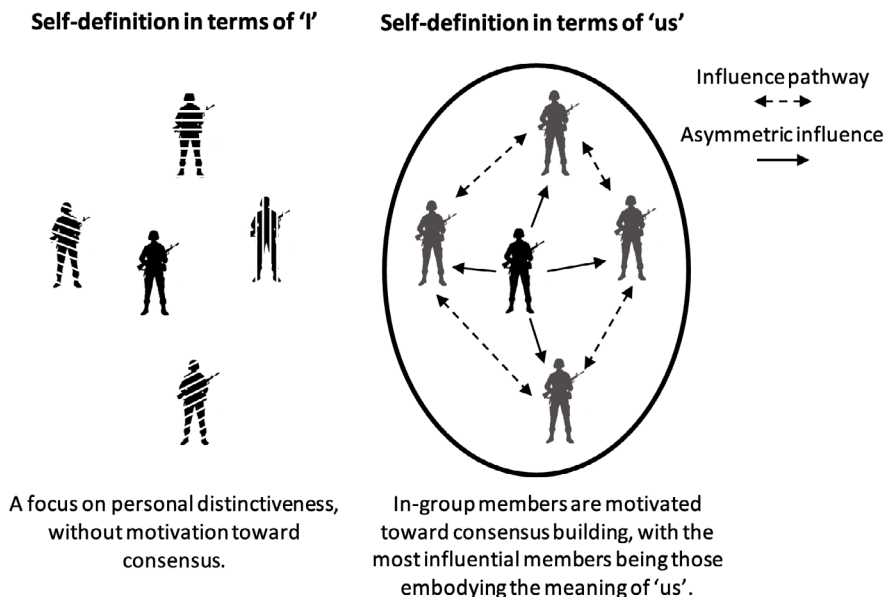
The social identity approach is an *a-normative* theory of leadership. Normative theories are those that presuppose particular social goals or policy positions. In contrast, the social identity approach is an unvarnished analysis of the cognitive mechanisms that fuel a particular type of influence, regardless of whether that influence renders help or harm to society. It applies as much to suicide bombers[21] as it does to charity workers,[22] and to the leaders of criminal gangs as much as to the leaders of emergency services brigades.[23] The presence of ethical norms within an in-group that are inconsistent with those of a broader society in no way diminishes the reality that those in-group ethics will be fundamental to who is seen to be the best of 'us'.

Empirical Support

Supporting evidence for the social identity approach to leadership includes laboratory experimentation, field experimentation, observational studies, and longitudinal research.[24] Many of the early studies that provide empirical support for the social identity approach to leadership were undertaken in military institutions. For example, one of the first studies to explicitly investigate the relationship between social identification and leadership in the military was the work of Boas Shamir and his

colleagues. In a sample across 50 field companies from the Israel Defense Forces, totalling upward of 900 staff and soldiers (including infantry, armoured and engineering), they found that commanders who emphasised unit collective identity had units with more cultural symbols (e.g., songs, jargon), and that units with stronger identity possessed greater discipline and vigour.[25] Other evidence of a similar nature, linking social identification with military performance, has been obtained from studies of Norwegian military academy cadets,[26] West Point cadets in the USA,[27] and US Army reservists.[28]

Taken together, this military research provides strong support for the social identity proposition that aspiring leaders should cultivate and manage social identities in order to drive team individual and collective motivation and performance.[29] It does not, however, directly support the more radical message that shared social identification is a key driver of influence among military members and therefore underpins military leadership itself. Fortunately, some recent studies have sought to provide direct evidence for the role of social identification in determining the presence or absence of military leadership. For example, a longitudinal study of 218 recruit commandos in the Royal Marines undertaken over a 25-week period made the provocative finding that those individuals who thought of themselves as leaders were indeed more likely to be viewed as leaders, but only by their commanders—that is, not by their peers. In contrast, those who thought of themselves as *followers* were more likely to be viewed by peers as leaders and to be 'embodying the commando spirit'.[30] In other words, focusing on one's role as a fellow group member—as a contributor and comrade—led to more leadership attribution *among those who they one day may lead*.

A second study tracked the sequence of events leading up to the replacement of the commander of a Dutch reconnaissance platoon deployed in Afghanistan.[31] Despite being seen as a 'rising star' by more senior officers, this officer was vehemently rejected as a leader by the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) under his command. In an investigation into the cause of that failure, a rich picture emerged of someone perceived to be a platoon 'outsider', despite his rank and on-paper membership. He was seen to be an inexperienced 'elite-boy' from the military academy, who fell short in embodying local group norms and standards and was not motivated to act in the interests of the platoon. This deficiency (in being seen to be one of 'us') resulted in the commander's inability to engender

necessary trust and respect from the NCOs, and ultimately impeded his ability to enact a vision for the platoon. Both studies lend support to a key implication of social identity theorising: perceived in-group membership will be a critical factor in military leadership.

The findings of these military studies are echoed by an impressive amount of research in the general community, including two recent meta-analyses. The first, in 2018, looked at 35 studies (over 6,000 participants) and found strong support for the key tenet that people respond more positively to the leadership efforts of those who embody a social identity ($r = 0.49$).[32] The same general finding was obtained in a 2021 meta-analysis involving 128 studies (over 30,000 participants, $r = 0.38$).[33]

Social Identity Principles in Australian Military Practice

In a number of previous publications, using language familiar to military personnel, the second author of this paper has often shone light on the connection between social identity principles and Australian military leadership. One of those noted the importance of *local social identity management*, specifically for tackling diversity and inclusion challenges in the ADF.[34] Another, the recent book *Leadership Secrets of the Australian Army*, puts numerous links between social identity processes and Army leadership practices on display for a wide audience.[35] The next few paragraphs briefly summarise some key points from those two sources, before turning to an examination of the critical enabling role that *established social identities* play in Australian military leadership processes.

Local Social Identity Management

A clear implication of the social identity analysis of leadership is that those seeking to shape behaviour should aim to understand and manage social identities. That process of deliberately shaping social identities has been given several labels, including 'identity entrepreneurship'[36] and 'identity leadership'.[37] Whatever the terminology, the basic message is that aspiring leaders should use language, create experiences and build structures that bolster desired in-groups, while simultaneously moulding themselves so that they present as an exemplary member of the in-group(s) they seek to influence. Those efforts can be simple, e.g., facilitating the various background and foreground activities that allow

the group to validly claim credit for and gain satisfaction from collective accomplishment, and spending time working with, rather than directing, the group. Of course, it will sometimes be implausible to present oneself as an exemplar in the eyes of in-group members, with visible attempts to do so often backfiring, fuelling a perception that one is an inauthentic outsider[38] and a potential threat to the standing of the in-group.[39] Under those circumstances, a better approach might be to identify and quietly support an in-group agent—someone viewed by in-group members as archetypally 'us'—who can be trusted to align the efforts of in-group members with organisational needs.[40]

In the context of a recent ADF-wide initiative to culturally embed inclusivity, local social identity management has been described as one of the 'old basics' of military leadership.[41] Recognising and using the basics of social identity management is critical if the ADF realistically expects positive cultural and behavioural change (as enunciated by senior members) to penetrate to lower levels and across disparate geographies. Historical examples are plentiful. With regard to becoming an exemplary in-group member, the fundamental elements that determine the inherent professional authority of junior Australian Army officers are physical fitness, basic military and professional team skills, and looking out for and after troop welfare where one can.[42] Beyond their practical usefulness, all three characteristics are highly visible indicators of the extent to which junior officers are embracing their professional obligations, and whether they are meeting—and ideally exceeding—the performance values of the in-group (there is more on this below). In terms of in-group prioritisation and affirming narratives, the case of renowned Australian World War I Commander Harold 'Pompey' Elliott is illustrative. Despite having a reputation as a disciplinarian, he generated respect and affection from his subordinates that bordered on reverence. This can be explained by his patent interest in the wellbeing of the 1,000-odd men in the 7th Battalion—his in-group—and his focus on creating a narrative to explain why it should be regarded as being on par with Cromwell's legendary Ironsides, thereby bolstering in-group standing. A more recent example—at the other end of the organisational pyramid—is former CDF Angus Houston's deft engineering of his senior team's physical proximity and experiences to fuel a sense of 'us'. Houston turned around what had been a dearth of collegiality at the most senior ADF levels in several structural ways, including scheduling short periods of intense shared activity for those senior team members (i.e., workplace

retreats spanning several days) and co-locating them in terms of their living environments. The collegiality turnaround was achieved remarkably quickly, entailing such a sense of equivalence among the senior leadership team that often thereafter 'one Service chief would be prepared to argue the projects of another Service even at the expense of his own'.[43]

Leadership Secrets of the Australian Army provides many other examples of skilful social identity management in the ADF. Perhaps the clearest example is the 'mission-team-me' (MTM) motto, which captures a prioritisation framework firmly instilled across Army.[44] This holds that a leader's main priority will always be the mission, after which comes the team, and only when those two sets of needs are met should leaders attend to their own needs (as in the tradition that 'officers eat last'). By serving as a ready reminder that a group leader's priorities are the goals and wellbeing of teams and the organisation, the MTM maxim prompts a routine practice of championing in-group values and interests, as well as of personally sacrificing for the sake of the in-group. A more subtle example is the social identity implications of the GOYA mantra. This was displayed by one Royal Australian Navy (RAN) warrant officer prominently in his office.[45] GOYA ('get off your arse') is a reminder to resist those factors that might trap aspiring leaders behind their desks, diligently toiling through inboxes and administration. Through GOYA, they are pushed to spend time in the broader workplace to listen to team members and, in many small ways, to share their experiences. GOYA is an effective low-key version of the axiom that one should 'lead from the front' and a reminder that the leadership process requires *connection*. The military's standard method of issuing commands and instructions—using a standard format, with the chance for questions in the final stages of the process, and, above all, delivered face to face—also helps in this respect. The presence of commanders among subordinates helps counter the potential psychological rift that rank can cause, and shows subordinates that superiors care for the in-group, understand the in-group, and are part of 'us'.

Leadership Culture

Clearly there are strong parallels between *individual* leadership practice within the ADF and the scientific insights of the social identity perspective. Not coincidentally, those individual leadership efforts also operate in line with organisational requirements and are aligned with one another. One of the great assets within the Australian military institution is its strong

'leadership culture', which is a professional environment where certain 'enabling' factors systematically operate in ways that make it easier for military members to get things done.[46] As well as the skills of aspiring leaders, leadership culture is founded on:

- followership—the willingness and ability of subordinates to collaborate and share in the leadership process where necessary
- intellectual capital—practices, procedures and ways of thinking that assist in decision-making, communication and action
- social capital—a common sense of professional identity and a common set of values, giving rise to shared understanding and cohesion across the institution.

Social identity processes play a key role in all three of these elements, with the creation of leadership culture sensibly thought of as an exercise in social identity management at an institutional level.

Both followership and social capital are driven by the presence of strong complementary organisational identities among members. As noted earlier, social identification encourages consensus and shared understanding. Within the ADF, this includes adherence to shared values and professional standards. A sense of common social identity is a strong motivator for individuals to commit to achieving in-group goals and to take the initiative, because in-group members routinely experience the achievements of the in-group as their own personal achievement. As already discussed, militaries promote organisational identification like few other types of institutions, with enormous effort and resources expended— in ways both obvious and subtle—on shared experiences and training, endorsed narratives, and official symbology and apparel (e.g., the Special Air Service's distinctive fawn/sandy beret). All of these measures help to fuel a sense of 'us' at both the whole-of-organisation and local levels. In this regard, the ADF has a number of advantages, not least that it can realistically promise a career for life, sometimes beginning in the mid to late teens—a career that is widely esteemed across Australian society and deeply connected with Australia's history and folklore. The ADF enjoys considerable public respect as a past and present defender of Australian society against international threats. Such is the strength of organisational identification that former ADF members often experience significant difficulty in adjusting to civilian life.[47]

The influence of social identification in shaping ADF intellectual capital manifests in *cultural content*, or in-group norms. Organisational identification assists in the automatic and smooth practice of certain procedures and ways of thinking. Distinctive ways of acting and thinking—e.g., making decisions based on the Military Appreciation Process, the 'situation, mission, execution, administration communication' protocol, and conducting after-action reviews to learn from experience—come to be embedded in the skill sets and professional habits of ADF members; they become internalised as part of what 'we' do. Cultural content also prescribes accepted authority figures and sources of expertise; our organisational identities prescribe who 'we' listen to. Contrary to the promoted misattribution that institutions are the arbiters of authority, the reality is that 'the determination of authority lies with the subordinate individual'.[48] Social identity insights mean that we can further refine this important message to say that the determinant of authority is the in-group that subordinate individuals identify with.[49] Said otherwise, acceptance of authority and expertise hinges on internalised group norms. Those group norms can only be expected to support 'top down' authority in the presence of an organisational identity that is sufficiently institutionally aligned.

A core element of military leadership culture is the concept of 'command'. Recent RAN leadership guidance captured this well, describing how 'Command is a term of cultural significance in the Navy. There is unquestionable dignity, honour and responsibility attached to the command of Australian officers and sailors'.[50] In short, respect for command authority is a core element of what it means to be 'we' military members. This is not to say that military culture results in unvaried compliance to orders on the part of subordinates. The storied history of command in operations clearly shows us that some orders will be followed enthusiastically, some grudgingly, and some not at all. Partly this is because military members apply informal criteria that determine for them what real 'command' looks like. Those informal criteria distinguish credible authority figures who deserve attention and regard at all times (i.e., whether delivering a formal order or not), in contrast to those who simply hold higher rank. Informal command criteria, or command stereotypes, have been described as part of the ADF's *knower code*, which is informed by appraisals of individuals' rank, organisational contributions, and tribal status. Sometimes that knower code (or 'do as I say because of who I am') can be exclusionary in deeply

problematic ways,[51] but the knower code nonetheless provides a template for members to model themselves on. This enables new commanders who fit that template to step into roles and be immediately accepted as influential authority figures. Swift commander acceptance is indispensable not only in combat, where a commander may be killed or injured and expressly replaced, but also in coping with high-tempo posting cycles in the ADF, which typically result in job tenure of not more than two or three years. It is through organisational identification that informal beliefs and expectations, adding essential richness and potency to military command, become shared and standardised.

The current process of embedding ADF intellectual capital from the very start of an individual's military career is a concerted investment in organisational effectiveness. It has long been routine practice for junior officer career development to begin with a strong element of intensive training aimed at mastery of basic professional military skills, with the stages of that training aligned with other rank increments. Thus the early months of army officer cadet training will include being brought to 'private level' in terms of soldierly skills (e.g., weapon handling, drill, field craft), before going on to be brought to 'corporal level', with the final preliminary stage focused on attaining the distinctive skills of the embryo infantry subaltern. Once commissioned, junior officers receive intensive training in their core function, so they join their first unit with a solid foundation of general and corps-specific skills.

The consistency of skills and understanding instilled across the ADF is itself a source of social identification, with shared expertise becoming an indicator that each individual has something important in common with others. In this way, intellectual capital exists both as an outcome of social identification and as fuel for social identification. Training not only gives the embryonic junior officer the professional basis for supervising and directing within their specialty; it also converts them into in-group members, from the perspective of both the outward observer and the officer themselves.

Summing up then, social identification processes are fundamental to ADF leadership culture. Members' organisational identities within the ADF are crucial to building followership, intellectual capital and social capital in teams at all levels. Those three ingredients in turn serve as the platform for the leadership practices of individuals. Their ability to lead will then

be heightened when actively tapping into the underlying social identity processes. This includes maintaining or strengthening their own in-group standing, or demonstrating achievements and establishing rituals that strengthen the nature of local organisational identification (achievements and rituals that range from team achievements and awards to distinctive sets of colours and designated barracks and mess areas). One further 'take-home message' is clear: acceptance of authority requires the maintenance of in-group norms that entail beliefs about legitimacy and expertise.[52] As a corollary, only when authority is wielded in a way that is consistent with normatively accepted in-group standards can followership, commitment or willing sacrifice be expected from military members. This assertion marries with the observation that '[while] formal authority invests [managers] with great potential power; leadership determines in large part how much of it they will realise'.[53]

Advancing Military Leadership

Although social identity processes are foundational to current military leadership practice in Australia on both individual and institutional fronts, the ADF's thinking about professional practice and leadership has developed largely independently of social identity research and theory. In fact, virtually all of the tradition, symbolism and narratives concerning military leadership in Australia (and in other countries) pre-date social identity publications on the topic. The question then is: if good leadership practices can be embedded throughout a military institution without consciously applying a social identity lens, is there a need to apply that lens at all? We have two main reasons for answering in the affirmative. First, despite their overall leadership strengths, militaries have pockets of poor practice, sometimes contributing to devastating fallout.[54] Second, given that leadership is arguably the primary professional competency within the officer corps, the military institution should routinely explore every possible avenue to improve this area of performance, even if it believes that it is already performing at a relatively high level. The social identity approach represents an opportunity to use our growing understanding of collective psychology to guide increasingly refined and reliable leadership practices.

At the organisational level, a social identity informed approach to leadership would entail shoring up the rituals, systems and messaging protocols that

shape beneficial organisational identities, while at the same time correcting or disrupting those organisational identities that have the potential to cause harm. At the individual level, it would mean developing servicemen and servicewomen who have both the awareness and the skill needed for shaping local social identities. The aim would be to improve the ability of those individuals to curate organisational identification by the use of shared experiences, behavioural expectations, and stories, all in a manner aligned to institutional initiatives.

Advancing military leadership using social identity insights will require appreciation by militaries that a significant part of their renowned strength in leadership is the inadvertent result of deeply embedded and long-established practices. A primary example of this is the aforementioned requirement for those being prepared for junior officership to begin their developmental process by learning and mastering the core competencies within their particular arena of professional practice. When successful, not only does the process enhance their capability in supervising and managing but it also establishes mannerisms and ways of working, and a familiar persona, that make junior officers recognisable to their soldiers as someone like 'us'. Understanding the social identity benefit of becoming expert in the skills practised by one's subordinates will almost certainly deepen and enhance those junior officers' understanding of the nuances of 'good leadership behaviour'.

The social identity understanding of military leadership can also be used to puncture pervasive leadership myths that often inhibit military members' practice of effective leadership. One such myth is that leadership potential is a stable characteristic in individuals, and that true leaders thus need spend little time on further improving their thinking about and performance of leadership or adapting it in markedly different circumstances. Based on robust and highly edifying discussions held with students on the ACSC, 2016 to 2022, we believe that the myth of inherent leadership capacity is particularly important to debunk.

Military Leadership beyond Individual Capacity

Reflecting on his career, retired Major General John Cantwell admitted frankly that 'I used to think that [leadership] was about *me*, rather than the people I was trying to lead' (original emphasis).[55] His observation neatly encapsulates the stark contrast between widespread beliefs about the

nature of leadership and the science of leadership. The individualistic mythology of leadership introduced earlier revolves around the notion that leadership is a characteristic of certain people. That mythology drives aspiring leaders like the young Cantwell to think that leadership is fundamentally about them, even though serious scholarship has long been pushing for the rejection of that leader-centric perspective.[56] The social identity approach is especially well suited for countering the individualist myth because it reveals precisely why aspiring leaders should attend closely to how they are perceived by the people they seek to influence, and how those same people perceive themselves and their place in the organisation. This is consistent with the oft-used adage that the least important word in leadership vernacular is 'I'.[57] This is not to say that an individual's characteristics are unimportant in leadership, but that such qualities and characteristics are important *only in the context of the perspectives of others*.

Those operating with an individualistic perspective on leadership will miss this, often with serious consequences. To begin with, that perspective can blinker us to personal achievements and personal self-development. A number of ACSC students reported such self-interest among peers and former superiors, going on to describe how those self-interested officers come to view colleagues and team members essentially as resources that exist only to be deployed in service of their personal ambition. Further, because others are 'mere resources' rather than respected colleagues, that aspiring leader will tend to attribute any encountered frictions, or resistance to their vision, to the shortcomings or mal-intent of their colleagues/teams. That resistance is then met with disdain and punitive responses, breeding conflict throughout the organisation. This article's second author has also observed in the Australian Army a syndrome where individualism in the language of leadership supports the prevalence of egocentric careerism, exactly along the lines described above.[58] Similar concerns have been raised about the US military.[59] Individualistic leaders can be expected to exhibit little motivation to consider their own limitations or to consider potential deficiencies in the existing leadership culture.

A commander who self-centeredly pursues aggrandisement and short-term success at the expense of long-term capability and the wellbeing of subordinates is displaying the very essence of narcissism. This is the threat in a nutshell. Organisations whose members believe that leadership

fundamentally emanates from certain individuals risk attracting narcissists, or entrenching narcissism throughout their ranks.[60] Although the social identity approach does not deny the value of conceptualising oneself as a leader or taking pride in oneself as such, it does make the strong— and nominally paradoxical—case that a narrowed emphasis on enhancing oneself as a leader can be a hindrance to the practice of leadership. In reality, the effectiveness of any individual or group seeking to lead will crucially depend on whether their conceptualisation of leadership emphasises the importance of understanding in-groups, shaping in-groups in ways that promote performance, and maintaining one's relationship with in-groups.[61]

While individualism can lead those with initial leadership confidence down a path of self-centeredness and indifference, those lacking in confidence may also be deterred from taking on leadership opportunities in the first place. If, for whatever reason, one has struggled to lead in the past, the individualist may attribute that to relatively stable characteristics of oneself, resulting in reduced confidence regarding one's leadership potential. The danger here occurs when aspiring leaders place emphasis on having certain kinds of abstract 'leadership qualities'. Any perception that one is not seen as 'charismatic' or 'inspiring', for instance, can instil the (mistaken) belief that one can never be influential and is 'lacking leadership material', which in turn will discourage one from pursuing opportunities to lead. This parallel effect of individualistic thinking—of writing oneself off as a leader—is more insidious than the relatively visible symptom of arrogant and abrasive, and consequently ineffective, leadership. In this way, militaries are robbed of ever seeing the true leadership potential of all of their members. This realisation should be particularly saddening in light of evidence that women and ethnic minorities face a stacked deck when given leadership opportunities.[62] It may well be the case that diverse military members have hostile and ultimately unsuccessful leadership experiences due to damagingly narrow ideas about what a leader looks like, only to internalise that experience as the absence of their own leadership potential.

Fortunately the social identity approach can serve as a treatment for the potential damage of individualistic thinking about leadership. Part of that treatment is the specific research findings that dismantle some of the specific intuitions that emerge from those traditional modes of thinking. For example, experimental evidence has provided a fresh perspective

on charisma, by showing that charisma, far from being an enduring characteristic of certain people with high leadership potential, can be generated by increasing one's in-group credentials.[63] Explaining this process has often given marked relief to ACSC students who had previously attributed their own difficult and demoralising leadership experiences to a degree of lacking 'the right stuff'. This is not to say that the actions or characteristics of a leader are unimportant; the social identity approach places substantial importance on what aspiring leaders do, and who they are. Leadership credibility is determined by meeting the particular standards and expectations of potential followers, not by qualities of the individual in their own right.

Looking Forward

Table 1 provides a summary of what we consider to be the key concepts and central messages herein. Perhaps the most important message that readers should take from this article is to understand that a) the social identity approach provides a coherent and precise account of the psychology of emergent group influence (a.k.a. 'leadership') in militaries, and b) social identity processes are the psychological root of military consensus about the way things should be done and which sources of authority are legitimate. This psychological perspective is supported by a vast body of empirical research, with an increasing number of studies being conducted in military settings. The role of social identities in leadership practice is also clearly apparent in the leadership actions of ADF members, as is its role within institutionalised Australian leadership enablers. The existing alignment is so strong that local social identity management could be reasonably described as 'common sense best practice'.[64] Yet limited appreciation of the insights of social identity scholarship means that ADF leadership is still hit-and-miss when it comes to utilisation of social identity processes. This article touched on two critical ongoing leadership failings: regular instances of self-absorbed/self-interested leadership, and self-defeating beliefs about the stability of personal leadership ability. As demonstrated, these limitations are underpinned by myths that are debunked by the social identity approach.

Instilling a thorough practical understanding of social identity processes within military organisations could occur through training, education, and tools for practice. Current efforts along those lines are regrettably

few. Mid-career ACSC students, whether from the ADF or among ACSC's international participants,[65] have often commented to the first author that they have never previously been exposed to perspectives on leadership that address the collective psychology of followers. Students have also commonly reported that exposure to social identity ideas gave them newfound insight into the patterns of influence, social power and intergroup relations that they have witnessed over their careers. One RAN officer, for example, recalled puzzlement when watching colleagues paint red paw prints on the companionway leading up to the bridge of the Anzac-class frigate they were serving on. At the time, that officer saw the activity as childish and unprofessional and couldn't understand why it was not only looked on favourably by their shipmates but was also endorsed by the ship's captain. It was only after studying the role of symbols in instilling a sense of identity, and the particular potency of social identities with unique features, that this officer came to understand the identity and morale building value of visually associating HMAS *Perth (III)* with the esteemed history of HMAS *Perth (I)*. The latter ship had seen extensive combat service during World War II, eventually to be lost during battle in the Pacific, and those red paw prints were a nod to the ship's cat of HMAS *Perth (I)*, which had once spilled and trodden red paint across the paint locker and left an incriminating trail. That officer's candid reflections indicate clearly how common sense best practice could be lost, and operational effectiveness compromised, by failing to understand the nature of social identity processes.

About the Authors

Dr Andrew Frain completed his PhD in social psychology at the Australian National University. His research interests centre on the social identity approach and science integrity, with particular interest in research translation. Andrew has worked in the Australian Department of Defence Directorate of People Intelligence and Research, and was the convenor of the Australian War College ACSC Leadership Theory module from 2016 to 2022. Andrew would typify one of Michael Billig's 'antiquarian psychologists', always drawn to the dustiest corner of the library.

Nick Jans's career began conventionally enough, with the Royal Military College (Duntroon) followed by regimental service in Vietnam. But after that it was distinctively unconventional, as he rotated between internal consultancy, research and policy roles, all guided by the longstanding principle that 'There is nothing as practical as a good theory'. After 25 years of regular service, he then spent nearly as long in the Reserves. In the meantime, after a few years at the University of Canberra, he moved to full-time consultancy. He was able to put his ideas on leadership into practice in his adopted hometown of Marysville after the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, for which he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia.

Acknowledgments

Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Andrew J Frain, The Australian National University, Canberra.

Email: Andrew.Frain@anu.edu.au.

Phone: +614 1280 3498.

Table 1. The social identity perspective on the psychology of leadership

	The Social Identity Approach	
Meta-theoretical Foundation	Collectives (e.g., societies, cultures, groups) are a reality, not shared illusions, and collectives are indispensable to what it means to be an individual	
Central Concepts	**Social identity**—Our sense of ourselves as being a member of an in-group (e.g., 'we Australians') **Organisational identity**—A social identity shaped by organisational membership (e.g., 'we Army')	
Implications for Leadership	Social identification fuels motivation to pursue collective goals Social identification fuels motivation to contribute ideas and to consider the ideas of fellow in-group members All else equal, those who best exemplify the in-group hold the most influence among in-group members In-group norms determine who members recognise as sources of expertise or as legitimate authorities	
Messages for Military Practice	**For Individuals**	**For Institutions**
	Bolster a local sense of 'us' through language, experiences and structures Personally embody what it means to be 'us' - Or - Leverage the influence of those who embody local organisational identities	Foster organisational identities that support mission success, and treat or disrupt those that don't Train individuals to be skilled identity entrepreneurs, able to shape and navigate local organisational identities

Endnotes

1   The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, Orcid ID: 0000-0001-9136-8457

2   The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, Orcid ID: 0000-0003-1314-6095

3   A King, The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-first Centuries (Oxford University Press, 2013).

4   Despite over forty years of subsequent intensive research activity, the ongoing dissensus among leadership theorists suggests that leadership remains 'one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth'; JM Burns, *Leadership* (Harper & Row, 1978), p. 4.

5   SA Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations* (Sage, 2004).

6   H Tajfel, 'Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour,' *Social Science Information* 13, no. 2 (1974), pp. 65-93; H Tajfel and JC Turner, 'An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict,' in *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. WG Austin and S Worchel (Chicago, USA: Nelson-Hall, 1979), pp. 7-24.

7   JC Turner, 'Social Categorization and the Self-Concept: A Social Cognitive Theory of Group Behavior,' in *Advances in Group Processes: Theory and Research*, ed. EJ Lawler (Greenwich, USA: JAI Press, 1985), pp. 77-122.

8   H Tajfel, 'Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice,' *Journal of Biosocial Science* 1, no. S1 (1969), pp. 173-91; H Tajfel, *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (London, UK: Academic Press, 1978).

9   AW Staats, *Psychology's Crisis of Disunity: Philosophy and Method for a Unified Science* (New York, USA: Praeger, 1983).

10   JC Turner and PJ Oakes, 'The Significance of the Social Identity Concept for Social Psychology with Reference to Individualism, Interactionism and Social Influence,' *British Journal of Social Psychology* 25, no. 3 (1986), pp. 237-52.

11   This continental pattern has not always been present, and there are many exceptions. For example, Sigmund Freud's individualistic psychoanalytic theory can be contrasted with Harry Stack Sullivan's psychiatry. For Sullivan, social psychology's role is to understand the reality that 'man is the human animal transformed by social experience into a human being'; M Billig, *Social Psychology and Intergroup Relations* (Academic Press, 1976), 96–102; See also HS Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Norton & Company 1939/1953), p. 31.

12   S Reicher, 'Politics of Crowd Psychology,' The Psychologist 4 (1991), pp. 487-91; S Reicher and SA Haslam, 'Why Not Everyone is a Torturer,' *BBC News*, accessed May 10, 2004.

13   JM Bartels, 'The Stanford Prison Experiment in Introductory Psychology Textbooks: A Content Analysis,' *Psychology Learning & Teaching* 14, no. 1 (2015), pp. 36-50; S Reicher and SA Haslam, 'Towards A "science of Movement": Identity, Authority and Influence in the Production of Social Stability and Social Change,' *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 1, no. 1 (2013), pp. 112-31.

14   G Gemmill and J Oakley, 'Leadership: an Alienating Social Myth?,' *Human Relations* 45, no. 2 (1992), pp. 113-129.

15   The naming convention for the perspective, great man, reflects the highly marginalised status of women in society during the late 19th and early 20th centuries; T Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History* (The Echo Library, 1840/2007).

16   Tajfel, Cognitive Aspects of Prejudice.

17   JC Turner and KJ Reynolds, 'The Story of Social Identity,'. In *Rediscovering Social Identity*, ed. T Postmes and NR Branscombe (Psychology Press, 2010), pp. 13–32.

18   GA Akerlof, and RE Kranton, 'Identity Economics: How Our Identities Shape our Work, Wages, and Well-being (Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 45.

19   JC Turner, 'Toward a Cognitive Definition of the Group,' in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, ed. H Tajfel (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 15–40; JC Turner, 'A Self-Categorization Theory,' in *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*, ed. JC Turner, MA Hogg, P Oakes, S Reicher and MS Wetherell (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1987), pp. 42–67.

20   JC Turner and SA Haslam, 'Social Identity, Organisations, and Leadership,' in Groups at Work: Theory and Research, ed. ME Turner (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 2001), pp. 25–65; SA Haslam, SA Reicher and MJ Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power, 2nd Edition* (Psychology Press, 2020).

21   D Al Raffie, 'Social Identity Theory for Investigating Islamic Extremism in the Diaspora,' *Journal of Strategic Security* 6, no. 4 (2013), pp. 67–91; SD Reicher and SA Haslam, 'Fueling Extremes,' *Scientific American Mind* 27, no. 3 (2016), pp. 34-39.

22   MJ Platow, M Durante, N Williams, M Garrett, J Walshe, S Cincotta, G Lianos and A Barutchu, 'The Contribution of Sport Fan Social Identity to the Production of Prosocial Behavior,' *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 3, no. 2 (1999), p. 161.

23   N Jans, *Leadership Secrets of the Australian Army: Learn from the Best and Inspire Your Team for Great Results* (Allen & Unwin, 2018).

24   Haslam, Reicher and Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership*.

25   B Shamir, E Zakay, E Brainin and M Popper, 'Leadership and Social Identification in Military Units: Direct and Indirect Relationships,' *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2000), pp. 612-40; See also B Shamir, E Brainin, E Zakay, and M Popper, 'Perceived Combat Readiness as Collective Efficacy: Individual-and Group-level Analysis,' *Military Psychology* 12, no. 2 (2000), pp. 105-119.

26   RB Johansen, JC Laberg and M Martinussen, 'Military Identity as Predictor of Perceived Military Competence and Skills,' *Armed Forces & Society* 40, no. 3 (2014), pp. 521–543.

27   VC Franke, 'Duty, Honor, Country: The Social Identity of West Point Cadets,' *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 2 (2000), pp. 175–202.

28   J Griffith, 'Being a reserve soldier: A matter of social identity,' *Armed Forces & Society* 36, no. 1 (2009), pp. 38–64.

29   N Ellemers, D De Gilder and SA Haslam, 'Motivating Individuals and Groups at Work: A Social Identity Perspective on Leadership and Group Performance,' *Academy of Management Review* 29, no. 3 (2004), pp. 459–78.

30   K Peters and SA Haslam, 'I Follow, Therefore I Lead: A Longitudinal Study of Leader and Follower Identity and Leadership in the Marines,' *British Journal of Psychology* 109, no. 4 (2018), pp. 708–723.

31   MM Jansen and R Delahaij, 'Leadership Acceptance through the Lens of Social Identity Theory: A Case Study of Military Leadership in Afghanistan,' *Armed Forces & Society* 46, no. 4 (2020), pp. 657–76.

32   NB Barreto and MA Hogg, 'Evaluation of and Support for Group Prototypical Leaders: A Meta-analysis of Twenty Years of Empirical Research,' *Social Influence* 12 (2017), pp. 41–55.

33   NK Steffens, KA Munt, D van Knippenberg, MJ Platow and SA Haslam, 'Advancing the Social Identity Theory of Leadership: A Meta-analytic Review of Leader Group Prototypicality,' *Organizational Psychology Review* 11, no. 1 (2021), pp. 35-72.

34   N Jans, *New Values, Old Basics: How Leadership Shapes Support for Inclusion* (Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, 2014).

35   Jans, *Leadership Secrets*.

36   SA Haslam, T Postmes and N Ellemers, 'More Than a Metaphor: Organisational
      Identity Makes Organisational Life Possible,' *British Journal of Management* 14, no. 4 (2003),
      pp. 357–69.

37   NK Steffens, SA Haslam, SD Reicher, MJ Platow, K Fransen, J Yang, MK Ryan, J Jetten,
      K Peters and F Boen,' Leadership as Social Identity Management: Introducing the
      Identity Leadership Inventory (ILI) to Assess and Validate a Four-dimensional Model,'
      The Leadership Quarterly 25, no. 5 (2014), pp. 1001–1024.

38   NK Steffens, F Mols, SA Haslam, TG Okimoto, 'True to What We Stand for:
      Championing Collective Interests as a Path to Authentic Leadership,' *The Leadership
      Quarterly* 27, no. 5 (2016), pp. 726–744.

39   JM Marques, 'The Black Sheep Effect: Out-group Homogeneity in Social Comparison
      Settings,' in *Social Identity Theory: Constructive and Critical Advances*, ed. D Abrams
      and MA Hogg (Springer-Verlag, 1990), pp. 131–151.

40   While the use of in-group agents for the purposes of military leadership may at first
      glance seem Machiavellian, it is common practice. The Non-Commissioned Officer
      model is argued by Etzioni to be an institutionalised instantiation of that technique;
      A Etzioni, *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, Revised and Enlarged
      Edition* (The Free Press, 1975), p. 175.

41   Compare with E Gosling, 'The Role of the Officers' Mess in Inclusive Military Leader
      Social Identity Construction,' *Leadership* 18, no. 1 (2022), pp. 40–60.

42   Jans, New Values, 10; See also C Masters, Uncommon Soldier: Brave, Compassionate
      and Tough, the Making of Australia's Modern Digger (Allen & Unwin, 2012), p. 71.

43   Jans, New Values, 9; N Jans, S Mugford, J Cullens, J Frazer-Jans, *The Chiefs: A Study
      of Strategic Leadership*, (Australian Defence College, 2013), p. 13.

44   Jans, *Leadership Secrets*, p. 51.

45   Jans, *Leadership Secrets*, p. 93.

46   N Jans, *It's the Backswing, Stupid the Essence of Leadership Culture in Military
      Institutions* (Centre for Defence Leadership & Ethics, Australian Defence College, 2006).

47   M Kreminski, M Barry and M Platow, 'The Effects of the Incompatible "Soldier" Identity
      upon Depression in Former Australian Army Personnel,' *Journal of Military and Veterans
      Health* 26, no. 2 (2018), pp. 51–59.

48   CI Barnard, *The Functions of the Executive* (Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 167.

49   JC Turner, KJ Reynolds and E Subasic, '*Identity Confers Power: The New View
      of Leadership in Social Psychology*,' in *Public Leadership*, ed, P Hart and J Uhr
      (Canberra, AUS: ANU Press, 2008), pp. 57–72.

50   Sea Power Centre, *The Royal Australian Navy leadership ethic* (Australian Department
      of Defence, 2010), p. 57.

51   E Thomson, Battling with words: A study of language, diversity and social inclusion in
      the Australian Department of Defence (Australian Department of Defence, 2014).

52   JC Turner, 'Explaining the Nature of Power: A Three-Process Theory,' *European Journal
      of Social Psychology* 35, no. 1 (2005), pp. 1–22.

53   H Mintzberg, 'The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact, in *Leadership: Understanding the
      Dynamics of Power and Influence in Organizations*, ed. RP Vecchio (University of Notre
      Dame Press, 1975/1997), p. 43.

54   For example Inspector General of the Australian Defence Force, *Afghanistan Inquiry Report*
      (Australian Department of Defence, 2021).

55   J Cantwell, *Leadership in Action* (Melbourne University Press, 2015), p. 13.

56   CA Gibb, 'The Principles and Traits of Leadership,' *The Journal of Abnormal and Social
      Psychology* 42, no. 3 (1947), pp. 267–284; Burns, Leadership.

57   JE Adair, John Adair's 100 Greatest Ideas for Effective Leadership and Management (Capstone, 2002), p. 44.

58   N Jans, 'Shared Leadership and the Strategic Corporal Metaphor: Some Considerations,' in *The Strategic Corporal Revisited: Challenges for Combatants in 21st-century Warfare*, ed. D Lovell and DP Baker (Juta and Company, 2017), pp. 19–31.

59   DR Lindsay, DV Day and SM Halpin, 'Shared Leadership in the Military: Reality, Possibility, or Pipedream?,' *Military Psychology* 23, no. 5 (2011), pp. 528–549.

60   In line with this proposition, recent research has found that leadership theories, particularly those theories that are individualistic, disproportionately attract those who are more narcissistic; NK Steffens and SA Haslam, 'The Narcissistic Appeal of Leadership Theories,' *American Psychologist* 77, no. 2 (2022), pp. 234–248.

61   SA Haslam, AM Gaffney, MA Hogg, DE Rast III and NK Steffens, 'Reconciling Identity Leadership and Leader Identity: A Dual-Identity Framework,' *The Leadership Quarterly* 33, no, 4 (2022), pp. 1–15.

62   For examples AS Rosette, GJ Leonardelli and KW Phillips, 'The White Standard: Racial Bias in Leader Categorization,' *Journal of Applied Psychology* 93, no. 4 (2008), pp. 758–777; MK Ryan and SA Haslam, 'The Glass Cliff: Evidence That Women Are over-Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions,' *British Journal of Management* 16, no. 2 (2005), pp. 81–90; VE Schein, R Mueller, T Lituchy and J Liu, 'Think Manager—Think Male: A Global Phenomenon?,' *Journal of organizational behavior* 17, no. 1 (1996), pp. 33–41.

63   MJ Platow, D Van Knippenberg, SA Haslam, B Van Knippenberg and R Spears, 'A Special Gift We Bestow on You for Being Representative of Us: Considering Leader Charisma from a Self-Categorization Perspective,' *British Journal of Social Psychology* 45, no. 2 (2006), pp. 303–20.

64   Jans, *New Values*, p. 19.

65   Each year the international guest participants on the ACSC come from upward of 20 different overseas militaries, including representation from Western nations (e.g., Canada, Germany, USA), and non-Western nations (e.g., Korea, Pakistan, Sri Lanka).

Response to Article

Author of Response: Anne Goyne

Social identity theory explains how group identity, and its associated status, is internalised to become part of an individual's personal identity.[1] According to the theory, the stronger the sense of group identification the stronger the sense of belonging, and the stronger the sense of difference from outsiders.

1   J Turner and P Oakes, 'The Significance of the Social Identity Theory Concept for Social Psychology with Reference to Individualism, Interactionism and Social Influence', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 25, no. 3 (1986), pp. 237–252.

The terms in-group and out-group describe the bias that can evolve from this phenomenon, explaining why people behave more positively to members of their in-group and more negatively to 'others'. Social identity theory differs from self-categorisation theory in that the latter explains the different categories a person may ascribe to themselves, such as wife, mother, friend, whereas their social identity reflects their in-group membership, at least according to the theory. In 'The Social Identity Foundations of Military Leadership', the authors refer to a hybrid construct the *social identity approach*, an umbrella term used in research to investigate how group identification and self-categorisation can promote behaviour change.[2]

The most obvious example of social identity theory in action is military training. Military ab initio training develops a strong in-group social identity among new recruits. This sense of an in-group develops strong pro-social military virtues, such as in-group loyalty, obedience to authority, and self-sacrifice in the face of danger. Each service has its own ab initio training to instil a deep sense of service identity. By contrast, ab initio officer training is entirely separate from recruit training, intentionally segregating officers and enlisted personnel. Officers are encouraged to develop themselves intellectually, to question what is going on around them, to be curious and, in many ways, to maintain greater individuality. The segregation between officers and enlisted personnel has a long history and reflects the role played by commanders who sit in judgement over their followers.[3]

According to the authors, this sense of 'individualism' among officers is causing a serious problem in the ADF. They believe that many officers ascribe to the 'great man' theory of leadership—that is, that the only good leaders throughout history have been upper-class, heterosexual Anglo Saxon men. For decades, officer training in the ADF reinforced this view by focusing almost exclusively on the leadership of men like Napoleon, Churchill, Eisenhower and MacArthur, all exemplars of the 'great man' model. Perhaps to address complaints of bias, Australian Command and Staff College no longer includes the study of great leaders as part of its leadership program. This decision, while understandable, also prevents any chance of dispelling the myth.

---

2   M Stevens, T Rees, P Coffee, N Steffens, SA Haslam and R Polman, 'A Social Identity Approach to Understanding and Promoting Physical Activity', *Sports Medicine* 47, no. 10 (2017), pp. 1911–1918, doi: 10.1007/s40279-017-0720-4.

3   Almost identical to the Qadi in Islam, a system of social judgement dating back millennia.

Indeed, if the prevalence of the 'great man' theory (and all the poor leadership the authors refer to) is a true reflection of ADF leaders, we as an institution have a serious problem. Those who ascribe to this idea often harbour discriminatory views about women, social class, sexuality and race. The authors argue that the social identity approach could help overcome the problem of narcissistic, careerist, individualist leaders[4] by breaking down individualism and inculcating a greater sense of identification with followers and/or the institution.

When I first reviewed this paper, I had doubts about the value of social identity as a means of cultural change, largely because social identity was the obvious cause, but I have had a chance to reflect. The authors have raised a serious issue that sits at the heart of ADF culture: how we manufacture the social identity of the people who join. By design, officers have greater privilege and status in the ADF while enlisted personnel learn they belong to a different class and must pay deference to those with the King's Commission. This social demarcation reflects a typically British social class divide, which may no longer be appropriate in modern Australia. Moreover, if this approach is leading to maladapted thinking and behaviour about the *right* of some individuals to dominate others, it no longer reflects the ADF's own philosophy of leadership.

The social identity approach may provide a way forward, but accepting the premise of this paper without investigation would be a disservice to ADF officers generally. We need to understand if such a problem really exists, and whether the ADF needs to overhaul yet another cultural tradition— the class segregation of officers and enlisted personnel. This is a huge question, but perhaps the time has come to have this discussion.

About the Commentator

Anne Goyne is the senior research psychologist at the Centre for Defence Leadership and Ethics (CDLE), Australian Defence College. She has served for 42 years as a military psychologist, both in uniform and civilian roles. Anne has been joint editor on two books relating to military stress and performance and has published over 45 articles and reports. At CDLE, she is responsible for applied psychological research in leadership, ethics and human behaviour and is a frequent lecturer across Defence.

---

4   All words used in the paper—

Comments on Response to Article

Andrew J Frain and Nicholas Jans

We appreciate Anne Goyne's having taken the time to provide commentary on our paper. We are also grateful for her deep engagement as a reviewer. Her comments, along with the contributions of other reviewers, the *Australian Army Journal* editorial team and our own friends and family made a material difference to the clarity and accessibility of our arguments.

In her commentary Anne has zeroed in on our analysis of poor leadership performance and damaging leadership behaviours. Other readers may have the same focus, especially those who are similarly concerned about ensuring that the ADF performs to expectations and is not exposing ADF members to unjustifiable harm. Although we wholeheartedly endorse this line of analysis, we would again caution readers against playing into the widespread demonising of the psychology of groups and belonging. As we discuss in our paper, mainstream psychological perspectives too often fail to appreciate that social identity processes are just as important to excellence and high performance as they are in any substandard performance or catastrophe. Central to our message is that the great feats of the ADF, and militaries the world over, are only possible because of the generally effective management of the organisational identities that sustain those institutions. Further, if one seeks high levels of military effectiveness in the future, increasingly sophisticated cultivation and management of organisational identities will be required throughout the ADF.

We would clarify that we do not believe that ADF officers subscribe to the 'great man' approach to understanding leadership, as articulated by philosophers of early last century. Anne is correct, however, to highlight that we are concerned that military members of all ranks risk being led astray by an individualistic understanding of leadership. That individualistic lens has its origins in great man writing, but the modern incarnations have a different outward appearance (e.g. many personality trait and transformational leadership narratives). We do believe that leadership individualism distracts from the critical task of curating the organisational identities that are so crucial for military performance, and may also cause ADF members to be egocentric in their conduct.

Anne goes on to raise her own concerns about the longstanding and widely accepted divide between non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and commissioned personnel. We agree that this element of ADF structure will have significant implications for organisational identities within the military, and consequently the way that ADF members treat each other. The ADF, like many other militaries, maintains a strict intergroup status differential, based largely on the rationale that the NCO and commissioned ranks reflect distinct capabilities. Whether that structure can be sustained as an asset for the ADF will depend on a vast number of factors, and coming to a position on that question is beyond the scope of our analysis. What we can say with confidence, however, is that appreciating the social identity processes at play is vital. For example, is the added organisational partition important for generating strong local team identification?[1] Is it important to internalise different ways of working via distinct organisational identities (e.g. the way that 'we' NCOs act and think)? Is there a superordinate organisational identity that helps legitimise among members the low permeability between NCOs and commissioned ranks? These and many other questions, rooted in a social identity analysis, are ripe for investigation.

On that note, we would conclude by encouraging readers who wish to further understand the social identity approach to be wary of their choice of source. The social identity approach runs against the grain of mainstream psychology, and the ideas are frequently misrepresented in that literature.[2] The book *The New Psychology of Leadership*, listed as recommended reading in the current ADF leadership doctrine, would be one recommended starting point.[3]

---

1   There is evidence that more abstract organisational identities are harder to sustain. D van Knippenberg and ECM van Schie, 'Foci and Correlates of Organizational Identification', *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 73, no. 2 (2000), pp. 137–147; M Riketta and RV Dick, 'Foci of Attachment in Organizations: A Meta-analytic Comparison of the Strength and Correlates of Workgroup Versus Organizational Identification and Commitment', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* 67, no. 3 (2005), pp. 490–510.

2   C McGarty, 'Social Identity Theory Does Not Maintain That Identification Produces Bias, and Self-Categorization Theory Does Not Maintain That Salience Is Identification: Two Comments on Mummendey, Klink and Brown', *British Journal of Social Psychology* 40, no. 2 (2001), pp. 173–176; JC Turner and KJ Reynolds, 'The Social Identity Perspective in Intergroup Relations: Theories, Themes, and Controversies', in R Brown and S Gaertner (eds), *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes* (Blackwell, 2001), pp. 133–152.

3   SA Haslam, SA Reicher and MJ Platow, *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power*, 2nd Edition (Psychology Press, 2020).

Upgrading the Army's Fires Lethality: How the Australian Army Can Harness the Firepower Advantages of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Jason Kirkham

Introduction

Since 2011, the world has undergone a Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) which has heralded worldwide advances in artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and robotic technologies.[1] These disruptive technologies are gradually altering the character of warfare towards what AI entrepreneur Amir Husain describes as 'hyper war', where battles are waged entirely at machine speed.[2] The question of how 4IR technologies can advance indirect fires and targeting capabilities within the Australian Army is an important facet of this innovation. The incorporation of 4IR will have the greatest significance to two aspects of army capability. Firstly, autonomous weapons can supplement the Army's indirect firepower deficiencies as it readies itself for large-scale combat operations (LSCO). Secondly, AI can enhance the Army's targeting capabilities by providing improved situational awareness, kill-chain responsiveness, and strike integration. Harnessing the potential of these advancements will, however, require Australia to resist the temptation to view 4IR as a panacea for all of the military challenges it may face in the 21st century. It will also require significant effort by the Army to effectively integrate such technologies into its inventory, including the implementation of appropriate control measures.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section describes how 4IR technologies can help bridge the Army's artillery firepower deficiencies as it readies for LSCO. The second section describes the aspects of targeting that can be significantly enhanced through the integration of 4IR programs. The final section discusses the political, ethical and procedural challenges currently impeding the integration of 4IR technologies.

The Australian Army's Firepower Deficiency

As outlined in the 2023 Defence Strategic Review (DSR), the Australian Army once again faces a heightened probability of high-intensity conflict.[3] Should this risk be realised, it is likely that the Army will need to deliver greater concentrations of indirect fire than it can currently generate. Currently, the Army's organic indirect fire support capability is based on 36 towed howitzers and a smattering of 81 mm mortar platoons. In LSCO terms, this represents a modest firepower complement. For comparison, the 8th Australian Division coordinated approximately 70 howitzers of various types during the battle for Singapore in 1941.[4] Similarly, the most effective Australian brigades in the Pacific battles of World War II were supported by two artillery regiments, with a third in reserve.[5] Even a high-intensity counter-insurgency operation, the company defence at Long Tan, involved over 30 guns firing a total of 3,400 rounds in 24 hours.[6] A heavy reliance on close air support during the Army's more recent combat operations has diminished the perceived importance of artillery to the Australian Defence Force (ADF). However, should LSCO occur, the availability of air support will be uncertain, and the demand for the Army's limited indirect fire support will likely escalate. Compounding this limitation, it is likely that materiel support from Australia's allies would be slow to arrive should conflict occur concurrently in the Indo-Pacific region. This reality was borne out during World War II, when Australia struggled to receive required armaments due to the higher priority placed by its allies on the demands of the European theatre of operations.[7] Although the Ukraine conflict has revived Western arms production, the expansion of the West's military industrial output will still take several years to reach the volumes necessary to sustain LSCO.[8] Therefore, the stark disparity between the Army's current on-hand artillery and that which it has historically fielded during conflict represents a deficiency that will restrict Australia's capacity to conduct contemporary LSCO. To bridge this gap, the Army should seek to develop options for fire support augmentation that are feasible in the light of ongoing recruitment, retention, industrial and fiscal challenges.

Loitering Autonomous Weapons

To upscale its firepower quickly and efficiently, the Australian Army has the option to acquire lethal autonomous weapons (LAWs), commonly known as drones. The combination of expendability, affordability and availability of LAWs makes them a viable option to address deficiencies in the Army's artillery delivery systems and ammunition. For one thing, LAWs can be fielded rapidly and inexpensively, making them suitable for high battlefield attrition. For example, since 2022 the Australian company SYPAQ has been supplying Ukraine with 100 Corvo Precision Payload Delivery System drones per month, at a cost of US$3,500 per aircraft.[9] Another Australian Company, DefendTex, produces the D40 'low cost' loitering munition, which has a range of 20 kilometres and carries a 40 mm grenade warhead with enough yield to render a howitzer inoperable with a direct hit.[10]
The low cost of drones can be contrasted with the relatively high price of artillery ammunition. Specifically, the Army's Project LAND 17 Phase 1C.2 contract acquired a mere 2,504 rounds for US$148 million.[11] This averages approximately US$3,000 per round, which is roughly equivalent to the cost of one loitering drone. Further, to obtain near-precision accuracy, each artillery round requires a precision guidance kit that costs around US$20,000. While LAWs like the D40 carry a smaller explosive payload than artillery shells, their point target accuracy is far higher than the unguided effects achievable by conventional artillery munitions. Additionally, for heavily defended targets, LAWs can conduct saturation attacks where several drones simultaneously strike a target to overwhelm its defences, as demonstrated by Iran's drone strikes against Saudi Arabia's Patriot-defended Abqaiq oil refinery in 2019.[12]

Given the many advantages of LAWs, their integration into the Australian Army should focus on two key areas: firstly as a platoon-level fires supplement, and secondly to support deep shaping fires. To address the first usage, LAWs could provide manoeuvre forces with an additional precision fires asset that is low cost and readily available. For example, the D40 loitering drone could be carried by infantry and armoured personnel to strike targets that would normally only be within range of mortars or howitzers. This capability would reduce the demand for artillery and mortar fire, thereby improving artillery survivability and decreasing ammunition consumption. The United States Marine Corp's current experimentation with Switchblade loitering munitions at the platoon level speaks to the potential of this technology.[13] Furthermore, should the

Australian Army be committed to amphibious combat in the future, it will likely face significant logistical challenges in deploying heavy fire support assets like tanks and howitzers. To address this challenge, the integration of loitering munitions within manoeuvre teams would provide an immediate fire support option when howitzers, tanks and mortars are unavailable.

Loitering munitions have the potential to address Army's inability to conduct deep fires using its own artillery. The term deep fires refers to effects delivered 30 kilometres beyond the forward line of own troops. Due its limitations in howitzer range, the Army has not typically trained for deep shaping operations using its own artillery. Instead it has relied on the Royal Australian Air Force and the Royal Australian Navy. It is fair to assume, however, that on operations a conventional adversary would have the capacity to deny Australian air and naval forces the opportunity to shape the land battle. It is reasonable to predict that in this situation Army would be unable to support the close fight while simultaneously providing shaping and interdiction fires. Army's forthcoming acquisition of the high-mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) will give it the capacity to achieve some level of deep shaping; however, the capability is unlikely to fully address its tactical requirements. This is because the DSR has flagged that HIMARS will be primarily focused on strategic deterrence-by-denial tasks.[14] The result is a firepower gap at the divisional level. This gap is made more challenging by Australia's reliance on foreign manufacturers for artillery components. Acquisition of such equipment would inevitably become vulnerable to supply chain disruption if tensions were to escalate.[15]

The opportunity to use LAWs to achieve tactical deep shaping effects presents efficiencies to the Army as it allows the small fleet of howitzers to be concentrated on the tactical close fight, and HIMARS to be focused on strategic deterrence. Drones such as Israel's Harpy and Germany's HERO boast endurances spanning hours and ranges nearing 100 kilometres, making them an ideal deep shaping instrument within the decentralised littorals of the Pacific.[16] Azerbaijan's use of LAWs in 2020 to systematically destroy Armenia's air defence network within 48 hours offers a striking example of the deep shaping potential of LAWs.[17] Moreover, the ability to pre-program and evasively manoeuvre groups of LAWs enables large areas of the battlefield to be held at risk, aiding the divisional screen and covering force battles. Finally, swarms of small, inexpensive drones are more difficult to target than expensive air defence systems, making LAWs effective in contested airspaces.

Automated Artillery Systems

The development of automated artillery systems (such as Sweden's Archer and Germany's Remote Controlled Howitzer (RCH) artillery platforms) represents another important 4IR innovation.[18] These systems are distinguishable from their fully crewed counterparts in that they leverage robotisation and automation to undertake functions normally performed by humans, such as loading, laying and firing. Such systems offer several benefits to the Army, as has been clearly demonstrated in high counter-battery threat environments such as that which currently exists in Ukraine.[19] In such settings, artillery is at greatest risk when it is firing and then when it moves into hides.[20] Automated artillery lowers the casualty risk by reducing the number of personnel exposed to counter-battery fire. Added benefits include the fact that automated machines are unaffected by human limitations such as hunger, fatigue and loss of morale. Further, they can continue to function at times when human crews may be suppressed by enemy fire.[21] Given these characteristics, automated systems are well placed to complement a larger fleet of crewed platforms because they can deliberately draw out enemy counterfires and sensors without risking casualties among friendly troops.

While the promise of casualty mitigation holds considerable appeal, automated systems do have their limitations. For one, they are complex and therefore likely be more expensive than crewed weapons. Furthermore, while automated systems have the potential to lower the danger to gun crews, the risk would likely be redirected to the larger teams of maintainers that would be needed to support the weapons.[22] Reducing this risk would depend on the establishment of hides where maintenance and resupply could be conducted in relative security. Notwithstanding these caveats, the automated artillery technology is worth serious consideration as designs mature and reliability improves.

Targeting

While 4IR technology can improve fire support hardware, it can also greatly improve how militaries prioritise, locate and engage targets according to their military worth. This process, known as targeting,[23] is a joint function performed by teams of highly skilled multidisciplinary specialists using a variety of technical systems. The Army's recent formation of 10 Brigade

and its acquisition of a HIMARS-based long-range strike capability will see it become increasingly involved with targeting.[24] As the Army develops the skill set to conduct this function, it must also consider how 4IR technologies can help generate a competitive edge to its targeting capability. There are presently three primary areas where the Army could leverage 4IR technologies to enhance its support joint targeting: situational awareness, kill-chain responsiveness, and strike coordination.

Situational Awareness. One of the greatest challenges to personnel involved in the targeting cycle is to maintain the situational awareness necessary to detect targets. Historically this has been achieved through electronic, acoustic, seismic and visual detection methods, the fidelity of which is inevitably limited by range and meteorological conditions.[25] 4IR technologies have revolutionised wide-area surveillance by transcending traditional sensor limitations. For instance, the US has created AI-generated maps that instantaneously track environmental events, like bushfires and climate shifts, on a global scale.[26] Better still, the Ukrainian Armed Forces are spearheading the use of autonomous software that simultaneously fuses feeds from drones, social media and intelligence into a single multi-layered picture of the battlefield.[27] Additionally, within the next 12 months, the US will transition its ground moving target indicator capability from aircraft to AI-enabled satellites. This development will offer significant improvements in how ground forces are able to be spotted and tracked all over the world.[28] These examples demonstrate how 4IR technologies will transform battlefield situational awareness, greatly aiding decision superiority.[29]

The Army's ability to harness such technologies will require high levels of interoperability with the joint intelligence community. Based on realistic combat-oriented training, resilient liaison networks must be forged by the Army with the Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation and the Australian Signals Directorate. The Army will also need to effectively integrate semi-autonomous programming, machine learning and deep learning into its future battle management systems.

Kill-Chain Responsiveness. Another key challenge entailed in targeting is the time taken to progress from initial target detection through to a post-strike assessment, otherwise known as the kill chain.[30] Augmented intelligence programs can accelerate certain aspects of the kill chain to reduce the total closure time. For instance, the Tactical Intelligence Targeting Access Node program can allow tactical nodes to aggregate

vast quantities of raw data from secure and open-source media to identify targets for potential engagement from across a battlespace.[31] Once targets are found, other programs such as Watchbox can then process, exploit and disseminate (PED) targets to engagement decision-makers.[32] Following a strike, the process of battle damage assessment (BDA) can be expedited using change detection software that autonomously senses variations on the earth's surface, with convolutional neural networks then processing inputs from cyber, visual and electromagnetic sensors (such as satellites) to provide a summary of the effects delivered across wide areas.[33] Finally, machine learning programs can catalogue the effectiveness of different weapon combinations, as they are used during tactical engagements, to shape subsequent targeting priorities.[34] While these technologies are still in their infancy, Australia should be swift to seize upon their potential as they mature.

Strike Coordination. Finally, AI can greatly improve how the Army coordinates its long-range strikes with the joint force. This can be achieved using autonomous AI and machine-learning programs that digitally integrate numerous joint force firing systems into a single shared network to increase the number of potential kill-chain pathways. One such program is the Fires Synchronisation to Optimise Response in Multi-Domain Operations (FIRESTORM) in use by the US Army. The FIRESTORM program ingests data from numerous sensors and friendly units to rapidly produce strike recommendations to decision-makers.[35] During testing, FIRESTORM successfully ingested a sensor feed, conducted target recognition, updated the digital common operating picture, and produced a strike recommendation, all in 32 seconds.[36] Another US program, Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2), seeks to harness AI and machine learning to 'extract, consolidate and process only the relevant data and information' from a vast array of joint force sensors and information sources.[37] Programs such as these will become increasingly critical to the Army as it seeks to synchronise its newly acquired long-range strike systems with the ADF's joint missile fleet, which will soon include the Naval Strike Missile and Tomahawk.[38] This will ultimately enhance Army's ability to contribute to joint force kill chains, which in turn may reduce risk to the ADF's more vulnerable naval and air strike platforms.

Challenges to Adoption

Notwithstanding its inherent battlefield value, the integration of 4IR technologies into the Australian Army's fires capability will pose numerous challenges. These include integration of the technology within existing fires and targeting capabilities, implementation of appropriate control measures on autonomous weapons and kill chains, and the risk of overdependence. Given the likely difficulties in resolving these matters, 4IR technologies should not be regarded as a panacea for all of the military challenges that the Army may face in the 21st century. Rather, new technologies offer the potential to augment conventional fires and targeting capabilities.

Integration. The introduction of completely autonomous technologies into military applications is a recent phenomenon, making the risk–reward ratio yet to be determined. Because of this, an arms race is currently being waged between prominent military powers for superiority in 4IR-enabled weapons and software.[39] Global powers such as China and Russia favour fully autonomous systems.[40] Unbounded by human control, such systems have the potential to support the development of the most superior weapons. By contrast, the US and its Western allies generally favour semi-autonomous systems, where human control is retained over every engagement.[41] This preference is driven largely by concerns regarding the potential indiscriminate effects of automated weapon systems. While bound by such ethical concerns, many Western nations are nevertheless concerned that they may fall behind in the emerging global arms race. As a result, they remain reticent to join international weapons agreements that require a 'human in the loop'.[42] The climate of competition that exists around the acquisition and use of autonomous technologies will make it difficult for Australia to determine how far it should automate its own fires and targeting capabilities. Decisions will become even more challenging as newer and more potent 4IR-enabled applications are discovered. Ultimately Australia must balance its ethical obligations with the need to field a fighting advantage.

Control Measures. Divesting aspects of battlefield decision-making to an algorithm introduces the risk that an autonomous program might deviate from acceptable rules, such as the laws of armed conflict. This risk is particularly relevant to LAWs as they use machine learning to designate certain objects as threats.[43] It is particularly challenging to generate input control measures that can reliably ensure that a target is not misidentified. This is because the dynamic battlefield conditions in which LAWs must discern

valid targets are theoretically infinite.[44] The International Red Cross (ICRC) seeks to address this challenge by recommending that lawful autonomous engagements are confined to specific target types within defined collateral damage parameters.[45] While many Western nations agree with the ICRC's recommendations, no international consensus exists. It is reasonable to expect that this lack of general agreement will cause delays and complications in weapons design and subsequent adoption by Western nations. Indeed, war ethics theoretician Ross Bellaby highlights this problem as one of the fundamental challenges obstructing the adoption of autonomous weapons.[46]

In addition to the implementation of controls around battlefield decision-making, there is a need for control measures to be applied to automated targeting programs. For example, a key risk relates to the reliability of data on which automated targeting programs are based. Data is the ammunition of automated kill chains, and the quality of data the program ingests will determine how well it performs. In testing, machine-learning programs have been found to underperform in situations where intelligence data is scant and enemy misinformation designed to fool the algorithm is active.[47] This is why many Western nations maintain that meaningful human control over automated weapons is an essential control measure.[48] In any effort to introduce automated targeting, Australia will need the capacity to implement adequate control measures in circumstances in which the relevant technology is rapidly evolving and has not yet been fully tested and evaluated.

The Risk of Overdependence. The use of 4IR technologies will only deliver a battlefield advantage if it is presided over by human adaptability and judgement. To guard against overdependence on 4IR technologies, the Army must focus on building effective human–machine teams, not machine-centric teams.[49] Indeed, the Army must consider 4IR technologies as augmentations to a predominantly human-centric kill chain. To do otherwise is to invite disaster for several reasons. For example, potential adversaries, like China, employ systems destruction warfare (SDW) techniques designed to target cyber and information systems, making automated software a likely target.[50] The Army must therefore retain the capacity to fall back on rudimentary methods of targeting. Guarding against overdependence is also critical from a moral standpoint. Only humans can steward the moral dimension that enshrines the ethical conduct of war. An algorithm cannot fully account for the 'atmosphere of war', defined by Clausewitz as being characterised by 'danger, physical exertion, intelligence, and friction'.[51] Tim MacFarland, a leading academic on the ethics of autonomous weapons, rightly posits that 'trust' is an unfit substitute for 'control' in the application of autonomous weapons.[52]

Conclusion

The Army's indirect fires and targeting capabilities stand to greatly benefit from 4IR technologies. As it readies for LSCO, autonomous weapons such as loitering drones can be an inexpensive supplement to the Army's artillery deficiency. At the same time, the integration of LAWs will prove an important firepower supplement that will allow the Army's howitzers to concentrate on close combat, and its HIMARS to focus on strategic deterrence. Autonomous artillery is also more survivable than conventional systems when faced with counter-battery threats. In addition to hardware, 4IR technologies can greatly aid how the Army contributes to joint targeting. Augmented intelligence programs are transforming ground force situational awareness to significantly improve sensor fidelity and persistence. Automated kill-chain software can also expedite kill-chain responsiveness by accelerating processes such as PED and BDA. Finally, automated machine-learning programs can help the Army to better integrate its long-range precision fires into wider joint force kill chains. Integrating these advancements will, however, be challenged by the need for Australia to define an autonomous weapon strategy that aligns with its ethical standards. The Army will also be confronted by the need to enforce control measures that mitigate collateral damage risks. Finally, the Army will have to guard against overdependence on programs that are both vulnerable to SDW and not yet advanced enough to navigate the complexities of war. Regardless of the challenges ahead, the Australian Army's ability to deliver ranged lethality in a future high-intensity conflict will be heavily influenced by how well it can achieve a measured but timely adoption of 4IR-enabled technologies.

About the Author

Major Jason Kirkham is a Battery Commander serving in the 4th Regiment, Royal Australian Artillery. His major appointments include the roles of Instructor-in-Gunnery at the School of Artillery and of Brigade Fire Support Officer, and as a targeting officer in the HQ 1st Division Joint Fires and Effects Coordination Centre. He holds a Masters in War Studies through UNSW, and enjoys practising, reading about and writing about joint fires and the profession of arms.

Endnotes

1   TX Hammes, 'Technological Change and the Fourth Industrial Revolution', in George P
     Shultz et al. (eds), *Beyond Disruption: Technology's Challenge to Governance* (Stanford:
     Hoover Institution, 2008), p. 40; Jean-Marc Rickli, 'The Strategic Implications of Artificial
     Intelligence for International Security', in Al Naqvi and Mark Munoz (eds), *Handbook of
     AI and Robotic Process Automation* (London: Cambridge University Press, 2022), p. 46.

2   Amir Husain, 'AI Is Shaping the Future of War', *PRISM* 9, no. 3 (2021), p. 53.

3   Department of Defence, *Defence Strategic Review* (Canberra: Commonwealth of
     Australia, 2023), p. 17.

4   David Horner, *The Gunners: A History of Australian Artillery* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin,
     1995), p. 185.

5   Ibid., p. 406.

6   Ibid., p. 406.

7   Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Chapel Hill:
     University of North Carolina, 2005), p. 657.

8   Aditya Bhan, 'The Ukraine War's Impact on Western Arms Production', Observer
     Research Foundation, 27 December 2022, at: https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/
     the-ukraine-wars-impact-on-western-arms-production (accessed 28 March 2024).

9   Mia Jankowicz, 'Ukraine Is Fielding New $3,500 "Cardboard" Drones against Russia',
     Business Insider, at: https://www.businessinsider.com/ukraine-is-using-a-cheap-flat-
     pack-cardboard-drone-australia-2023-8 (accessed 1 January 2024).

10   Unmanned Systems-Air, DefendTex Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, at: https://www.
     defendtex.com/uav/ (accessed 07 Aug 2024)

11   Julian Kerr, 'Making the M777 More Lethal', *Australian Defence Magazine*, at:
     https://www.australiandefence.com.au/defence/land/making-the-m777-more-lethal
     (accessed 10 January 2024).

12   Frank Verrastro and Andrew Stanley, 'Attack on Saudi Oil Infrastructure: We May Have
     Dodged a Bullet, at Least for Now', Center for Strategic and International Studies,
     September 2019, at: https://www.csis.org/analysis/attack-saudi-oil-infrastructure-we-
     may-have-dodged-bullet-least-now (accessed 28 December 2023).

13   Sean Harper, 'Organic Precision Fires for Marine Infantry', U.S. Naval Institute,
     June 2022, at: https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2022/jhuarperne/organic-
     precision-fires-marine-infantry (accessed 30 March 2024).

14   Department of Defence, *Defence Strategic Review*, p. 19.

15   Ling Chen and Miles Evers, 'Wars without Gun Smoke', *International Security*, vol. 48
     (2023), 201.

16   Lisa Parks and Caren Kaplan, *Life in the Age of Drone Warfare* (North Carolina: Duke
     University Press, 2017), p. 270; Brennan Deveraux, 'Loitering Munitions Are the Future
     of Division Shaping Operations', Real Clear Defence, March 2023, at https://www.
     realcleardefense.com/2023/03/06/loitering_munitions_are_the_future_of_shaping_
     operations_885485.html (accessed 20 September 2023).

17   Zhirayr Amirkhanyan, 'A Failure to Innovate: The Second Nagorno-Karabakh War',
     Parameters 52 (2022), p. 122; Justin Bronk with Nick Reynolds and Jack Watling,
     The Russian Air War and Ukrainian Requirements for Air Defence (London: RUSI, 2022),
     pp. 4–5.

18   'The RCH 155 Is a Combination of Automated Artillery Firepower and Protected Wheeled Mobility', KMW+NEXTER Defense Systems (KNDS), at: https://www.knds. de/en/systems-products/wheeled-vehicles/artillery/rch-155 (accessed 26 March 2024); Robert Dougherty, 'Automated Artillery Achieves World First Fire-while-Moving Capability', *Defence Connect*, 26 September 2023, at: https://www.defenceconnect. com.au/land/12856-automated-artillery-achieves-world-first-fire-while-moving-capability (accessed 4 January 2024).

19   Sam Cranny-Evans, 'Russia's Artillery War in Ukraine: Challenges and Innovations', Royal United Services Institute, 9 August 2023, at: https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russias-artillery-war-ukraine-challenges-and-innovations (accessed 27 March 2024).

20   Mykhaylo Zabrodskyi, Jack Watling, Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Nick Reynolds, *Preliminary Lessons in Conventional Warfighting from Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Feb–Jul 2022* (London: RUSI, 2022), p. 39.

21   Kadir Alpaslan Demir, 'Killer Robots and Armed Forces Transformation for the Robotic Era', *Defence and Strategy* 21 (2021), p. 12.

22   Jack Watling, 'Automation Does Not Lead to Learner Land Forces', *War on the Rocks*, 7 February 2024, at: https://warontherocks.com/2024/02/automation-does-not-lead-to-leaner-land-forces (accessed 20 March 2024).

23   Department of the Army, *Army Targeting*, Field Manual 3-60 (Washington: Army Publishing Directorate, 2023), p. 1.

24   Albert Palazzo, *Resetting the Australian Army: Negotiating the 2023 Defence Strategic Review*, Australian Army Research Centre Occasional Paper No. 16 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), p. 10.

25   Alan Smith, *Do unto Others: Counter Bombardment in Australia's Military Campaigns* (Newport: Big Sky Publishing, 2011), chapter 21, paragraph 77.

26   Jeanne Chircop, 'AI Revolutionizes Mapping Updates and Accuracy', National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, at: https://www.nga.mil/news/AI_Revolutionizes_ Mapping_Updates_and_Accuracy.html (accessed 21 December 2023),

27   Olga Tokariuk, 'Ukraine's Secret Weapon—Artificial Intelligence', CEPA, 20 November 2023, at: https://cepa.org/article/ukraines-secret-weapon-artificial-intelligence (accessed 2 January 2024).

28   Courtney Albon, 'Spy Agency to Prototype Ground Moving-Target Tracking from Space', C4ISR Net, 19 April 2023, at: https://www.c4isrnet.com/battlefield-tech/space/2023/04/19/spy-agency-to-prototype-ground-moving-target-tracking-from-space (accessed 5 January 2024).

29   Roy Lindelauf, Herwin Meerveld and Marie Postma, 'Leveraging Decision Support in the Russo-Ukrainian War: The Role of Artificial Intelligence', *Atlantisch Perspectief* 47, no. 1 (2023), p. 38.

30   Jennifer Rooke, 'Shortening the Kill Chain with Artificial Intelligence', AutoNorms, 28 November 2021, at: https://www.autonorms.eu/shortening-the-kill-chain-with-artificial-intelligence (accessed 7 January 2024).

31   Doug Graham, 'Army Developing Faster, Improved Data "Kill Chain" for Lethal and Non-lethal Fires', U.S. Army website, 22 April 2023, at: https://www.army.mil/article/263145/ army_developing_faster_improved_data_kill_chain_for_lethal_and_non_lethal_fires (accessed 1 October 2023).

32   R Ridger, 'Winning the Counterland Battle by Enabling Sensor-to-Shooter Automation', Air Land Sea Application Center, 1 November 2021, at: https://www.alsa.mil/News/ Article/2822476/winning-the-counterland-battle-by-enabling-sensor-to-shooter-automation (accessed 1 December 2021).

33   Ioannis Kotaridis and Georgios Benekos, 'Integrating Earth Observation IMINT with OSINT Data to Create Added-Value Multisource Intelligence Information: A Case Study of the Ukraine–Russia War', *Security and Defence Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2023), p. 13; Michael O'Gara, 'AI and Integrated Fires', in SJ Tangredi and G Galdorisi (eds), *AI at War: How Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning Are Changing Naval Warfare* (Naval Institute Press, 2021), p. 225; Tyler Knight, 'Machine Learning to Detect Battle Damage Using Satellites', Defense Systems Information Analysis Center, October 2022 at: https://dsiac.org/technical-inquiries/notable/machine-learning-tools-to-detect-battle-damage-using-satellite-images (accessed 1 October 2023).

34   Rajesh Uppal, 'US Army Doctrine Thrust on Multi-domain Operations Employing AI to Counter A2AD', International Defense Security & Technology, 15 May 2023, at: https://idstch.com/military/army/us-army-doctrine-thrust-on-multi-domain-operations-employing-ai-to-counter-a2-ad (accessed 21 December 2023).

35   Graham, 'Army Developing Faster, Improved Data "Kill Chain" for Lethal and Non-lethal Fires'.

36   Uppal, 'US Army Doctrine Thrust on Multi-domain Operations Employing AI to Counter A2AD'.

37   Chip Downing, 'JADC2: Accelerating the OODA Loop with AI and Autonomy', RTI website, 29 August 2023, at: https://www.rti.com/blog/jadc2-the-ooda-loop#:~:text=JADC2%20capabilities%20will%20leverage%20Artificial,information%20from%20the%20sensing%20infrastructure (accessed 20 March 2024).

38   Nigel Pittaway, 'Strike Further and Harder—Australia's Precision Strike Capability', *Australian Defence Magazine* 31, no. 4 (2023), pp. 26–30.

39   Edward Moore Geist, 'It's Already Too Late to Stop the AI Arms Race—We Must Manage It Instead', *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 72, no. 5 (2016), p. 319.

40   Forrest Morgan et al., *Military Applications of Artificial Intelligence* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), p. 74

41   David Vergun, 'U.S. Endorses Responsible AI Measures for Global Militaries', U.S. Department of Defense website, at: https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3597093/us-endorses-responsible-ai-measures-for-global-militaries (accessed 10 January 2024).

42   Tania Rabesandratana, 'Europe Moves to Compete in Global AI Arms Race', *Science* 260, no. 6388 (2018), p. 474

43   Paul Scharre, *Autonomous Weapons and Operational Risk: Ethical Autonomy Project* (Washington: Center for a New American Security, 2016), p. 2.0

44   Martin Hagström, 'Military Applications of Machine Learning and Autonomous Systems', in Vincent Boulanin (ed.), *The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Strategic Stability and Nuclear Risk: Volume I Euro-Atlantic Perspectives* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2019), p. 37.

45   Vincent Boulanin, Neil Davison, Netta Goussac and Moa Peldán Carlsson, *Limits on Autonomy in Weapon Systems* (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2020), p. 37.

46   Ross Bellaby, 'Can AI Weapons Make Ethical Decisions?', *Criminal Justice Ethics* 40 (2020), p. 92.

47   Peter Layton, *Fighting Artificial Intelligence Battles*, Joint Studies Paper Series No. 4 (Canberra: Centre for Defence Research, 2021), p. 14.

48   Angel Gomez de Agreda, 'Ethics of Autonomous Weapons Systems and Its Applicability to Any AI Systems', *Telecommunications Policy* 44 (2020), p. 9.

49   Alex Neads, David Galbreath and Theo Farrell, *From Tools to Teammates: Human-Machine Teaming and the Future of Command and Control in the Australian Army*, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 7 (Canberra: Australian Army Research Centre, 2021), p. 14.

50   Jeffrey Engstrom, *Chinese Confrontation and Systems Destruction Warfare* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), p. 13.

51   Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 122.

52   Tim McFarland, 'Reconciling Trust and Control in the Military Use of Artificial Intelligence', *International Journal of Law and Information Technology* 30 (2023), pp. 472–483.

Australian Deterrence: Land Power's Contribution to the Integrated Force

Gregory MacCallion and Courtney Stewart

Introduction

Australia is on the precipice of the most significant change in military strategic policy since the end of the Cold War. The 2023 Defence Strategic Review (DSR) recommended the Australian Defence Force (ADF) 'maximise the deterrence, denial, and response options for the Government' by evolving into an 'integrated force' that harnesses effects across all domains'.[1] The 2024 National Defence Strategy (NDS) advances this direction by identifying a strategy of denial approach designed to 'deter a potential adversary from taking actions that would be inimical to Australia's interests and regional stability'.[2] The effectiveness of Australia's deterrence and defence strategy hinges on clear and cohesive conceptualisation of deterrence principles. Yet, despite the centrality of deterrence by denial as an organising construct for defence strategy and policy, the DSR and NDS lack sufficient clarity around exactly who, where, when, why or how the ADF will harness military capability for deterrence to protect Australia's interests. For instance, in the public document, it is only implied that the People's Republic of China is the source of threatening regional instability against which the ADF must deter. These documents are also unclear about what specific threats should be deterred by denial. Further, the NDS does not clearly delineate how the ADF should prioritise its efforts. It simply identifies

the simultaneous requirements of achieving deterrence independently and collectively against a great power, as well as the expectation that the ADF will deliver collective integrated deterrence in concert with the United States (US) and Australia's regional partners.

This article examines the contribution of land power to achieving the integrated force effects needed to enhance Australia's capacity and capability to deliver deterrence objectives. To support the analysis, the article first establishes a baseline of theoretical deterrence concepts, including the principles of effective deterrence. This section seeks to 'build an appropriate language of deterrence' in order to support thoughtful debate on the topic across the ADF and within Army in particular.[3] The article then considers the relationship between denial and deterrence outcomes, and the core components of an effective deterrence strategy. To maximise the ADF's ability to operationalise a deterrence by denial strategy against the highest priority threats, key Australian Government strategic and policy guidance is then outlined. From here, the article proposes a framework to help the ADF identify the requirements for force design, force posture, and employment of land power assets to achieve an integrated deterrence posture within the Indo-Pacific region. Based on the analysis, the article argues for expanding the concept of campaign planning to connect peacetime general deterrence activities to immediate deterrence requirements. The article asserts that enhancing campaign planning would enable purposeful shaping activities across the competition continuum, which would strengthen conventional deterrence by denial in the Indo-Pacific region. Finally, the article presents an exemplar campaign scenario, informed by fieldwork interviews with deterrence and land power experts, outlining opportunities available to Army to enhance its contribution in achieving integrated deterrence in the national interest.

Core Concepts of Deterrence

Definitions and Types

To understand how the ADF (including Army) contributes to the strategic and operational demands of the integrated force, it is essential to baseline the principles of deterrence. '*Deterrence*' is the practice of discouraging an adversary from taking unwanted action by increasing its costs or denying its benefits. Deterrence is successful when it prevents unwanted behaviour from a potential aggressor dissatisfied with the status quo.

The objective of deterrence in military operations is to decisively influence the adversary's decision-making calculus to prevent hostile action against the deterring state's vital interests.[4] An adversary's deterrence calculus focuses on its perception of three primary elements: the *benefits*, the *costs* and risks, and the *consequences of restraint* (i.e., costs and benefits of not acting).[5] Deterrence succeeds when the potential aggressor, who might otherwise take an action, refrains from doing so based on their belief that the likelihood of achieving the desired outcome is too low, and the costs of acting are too high.[6] *Integrated deterrence* is a concept that captures the collective effort needed to develop and combine strengths to maximum effect, by working across warfighting domains, theatres, the spectrum of competition, and other instruments of national power, and with allies and key security partners.

Deterrence by punishment and by denial are the two most common approaches taken to influencing an adversary's decision calculus. *Deterrence by punishment* is about threatening severe consequences or penalties, or imposing other significant costs to dissuade the adversary from taking aggressive action.[7] *Deterrence by denial* aims to convince an adversary that they will not attain their military objective. It does so by promising a direct response on the battlefield when and where the unwanted act would occur, or by making it prohibitively difficult or costly.[8] When done effectively, deterrence by denial involves the purposeful use of overt threats of force to restrict the adversary's strategic options.[9]

There is a critical distinction in deterrence literature between two intersecting time periods that affect the employment of deterrence policies, strategies and activities. '*Immediate deterrence*' is characterised as a short-term, urgent attempt by a deterring state to prevent an imminent, undesirable action by instigating a well-defined and communicated commitment of force in a contested or crisis scenario.[10] By contrast, *general deterrence* refers to a more 'ongoing, persistent effort to prevent unwanted actions over the long-term and in non-crisis situations' by shaping the environment and influencing the behaviour and perception of military power.[11] In peacetime competition, general deterrence encapsulates the preparatory activities that specifically enable or facilitate the strategic and operational objectives of immediate deterrence. Collectively, these actions are focused on generating a 'diffuse deterrent effect deriving from one's capabilities and reputation which helps *shape* the international security environment' by influencing

the adversary's perception of the deterring state's credibility.[12] Thus, part of the goal of general deterrence is 'to reduce the need for immediate deterrence—to create deterrent and dissuasion effects that become so ingrained that hesitation to attack becomes habitual'.[13] Patrick M Morgan, best known for his pioneering work on general and immediate deterrence, further asserted, 'It is also used to avoid being coerced by threats—you look too tough to be pushed around.'[14]

Enhancing the Effectiveness and Success of Deterrence

To deter an adversary from a course of action requires the deterring state to have the demonstrable capacity to convincingly harness military power through three major pillars of effective deterrence: capability, credibility, and communication. Effectiveness of deterrence refers to 'the degree to which a deterrent threat is credible and successful in convincing a potential aggressor not to act'.[15] The first pillar, *capability*, requires that the deterring state has the necessary military strength and resources to influence behaviour and to deliver on the threat. The second, *credibility*, is derived from the adversary's perception of the deterring state's projected willingness to carry out threats. Credibility is underpinned by the state's capability to follow through on its commitment.[16] Lastly, *communication* is critical to ensuring the deterring state's intended message about the consequences of aggression is transmitted to the desired audience without ambiguity. Clear signals of commitment to defined interests, and expressions of resolve, shape the perceptions and calculations of potential aggressors. While not a core pillar, *comprehension* is nevertheless a foundational principle of deterrence. It entails the detailed understanding of the adversary's strengths, weaknesses, will, determination, motivations and intentions.[17] Deterrence is therefore not static and it requires continuous adjustment and adaptation to the adversary, and their perceived comprehension of the deterring state's capability and credibility.

The adversary's perception is a critical factor in the success or failure of deterrence efforts, and can be influenced through fine-tuning the application of the pillars of effective deterrence. One deterrence study by the RAND Corporation in 2021 identified three categories that influence the success of immediate deterrence—first, the *motivations* of the potential adversary (including its subjective perceptions of the risks, costs and benefits of aggression); second, the deterring state's *clarity of message* about what it aims to deter and what it will do if that commitment is challenged;

and lastly, the aggressor's belief that the defender has both the capability and the will—thus, the *credibility of message*—to fulfil its threats and commitments.[18] As author Richard K Betts observed, when a state 'does choose to apply deterrence and is willing to fight, the deterrent warning must be loud and clear, so the target cannot misread it. Deterrence should be ambiguous only if it is a bluff.'[19] The crux of any deterrence strategy lies in persuading adversaries to defend against defined threats through actions that are perceived as having credible intent, resolve and capability. While application of these factors inevitably varies depending on the specific case, context and strategy employed, they nevertheless help illuminate the elements of success.

Operationalising General Deterrence in Peacetime

The goal of general deterrence is to prevent conflict or unacceptable aggression from occurring in the first place. For a state to achieve this, it must have the capacity to shape the strategic operational environment. This involves shaping the peacetime environment through activities that influence perceptions of the deterring state's military power and how it integrates with allies and partners to achieve military effects. In the Australian context, shaping activities conducted by the ADF in pursuit of a general deterrence strategy should be calibrated so as to maximise any potential adversary's perception of the ADF's resolve, commitment, capability and credibility. By these means, Australia will be able to shape the cost–benefit calculation of its opponents. Setting the theatre by establishing the conditions for executing operations further contributes to achieving these aims by creating the conditions that enable joint and combined forces to fight if deterrence fails.

General deterrence occurs through intentional activities conducted by a state, across all warfighting domains, to gain competitive advantage and to strengthen its ability to conduct immediate deterrence and respond if deterrence fails. Broadly, militaries need the capabilities and capacities to underpin any deterrence approach. These may include the ability to carry out force projection operations (including the capability to decisively defeat regional aggression); kinetic and non-kinetic strike operations; active and passive defence operations; and strategic communications.[20] These military capabilities are enabled by the integration and interoperability of

the state's 'warfighting'[21] functions. To this end, integrated deterrence can be enhanced through peacetime shaping activities that prioritise gaining placement and access within a political domain or region, enabling a focused understanding of an adversary and their interests, and capability development to facilitate a range of integrated force options to deliver deterrence effects. In the next part, these three factors will be explored in more depth.

Placement and Access

Forward posture is a critical component of a deterrence by denial strategy. This is because evidence of sufficient forces forward is necessary to convince a potential adversary that the deterring state could credibly stave off—or roll back—an aggressive act or attack. By maintaining a denial posture using forward forces, the military expedites its ability to swiftly respond to crisis and to conduct denial operations. One study by Bryan Frederick et al. suggests that a military forward posture has greater deterrent effects when forces are deployed near to the ally or partner state that is the focus of defence. However, the more mobile the forces are, the less evidence exists that they will credibly deter, 'possibly because mobile forces represent a lesser degree of high-level or long-term … commitment'.[22] This research was based on evidence that 'heavy ground forces and air defence capabilities, especially when deployed in the general theatre of interest but not necessarily on the front lines of a potential conflict' are most likely to enhance deterrence without causing military escalation.[23] If not forward postured, forces must be able to rapidly project power in a contested environment to deny the ability of the adversary to achieve their objective.[24] While placement and access traditionally depend on force availability (creating time-distance challenges), no such dependency exists in the virtual domain. Indeed, the military's virtual presence can impose risk on an adversary in cyberspace at unprecedented speed and scale.[25]

The conduct of persistent engagement and sustained presence to achieve deterrence requires focus on building strong relationships with partners, increasing regional awareness and knowledge of allies and partners, enhancing their capacity or capability, and establishing access for operational aims. Presence can take the form of forward basing, forward deploying, or pre-positioning assets. It can also occur through other activities that demonstrate commitment, lend credibility to alliances

and partnerships, enhance regional stability, and provide a crisis response capability while promoting Australian influence and access in support of a deterrence by denial strategy.[26] Access and partnership activities further enable overflight of—and entry to—strategically significant geography within the region.

Focused Understanding

Effective employment of a deterrence strategy requires a deterring state to have a nuanced understanding of its potential adversaries, the operating environment, and its relations with both its friends and its opponents. This knowledge will inform integrated regional deterrence campaigns and operations. In order to tailor deterrence operations to various scenarios, the integrated force must have situational awareness of the context within which a potential adversary will operate. In this regard, intelligence assessments will inform decision-makers about whether deterrent messages are being received by the adversary and are having the intended impact. Such inputs will shape modifications to deterrence strategies. As such, the ability of the intelligence community to gauge the effectiveness of messaging and to facilitate influence operations will be invaluable to a military's efforts to achieve an adaptive deterrence posture.

Situational awareness requires the deterring state to achieve early detection of hostile activity. Timely identification of unacceptable adversarial behaviour is necessary if the deterring state is to deliver an immediate deterrence response that can deny the opponent a quick victory. After all, there is no prospect of deterrence without timely detection and attribution of the adversary's operations or preparations. Decision-makers therefore need to be informed by effective and efficient surveillance operations conducted across all domains. Achieving adequate situational awareness, however, is an enduring challenge. Efforts to detect hostilities can readily be stymied by adversaries skilled in the tactical use of information operations and warfare. Should there be evidence that the deterring state has failed to detect the onset of hostile activity, its failure will signal to the adversary that they can persist in operating undetected and undeterred. This will inevitably create incentives for it to continue its threatening or undesirable behaviour.

Capability Development

As the practice of deterrence grows in importance across Australia's near region, related strategies evolve and can impact deterrence dynamics. Factors that inform changes to strategy include the influence of emerging technologies on relationships among states, and the risk that such technologies may escalate tensions, generate first-strike incentives, and be perceived as challenging strategic stability.[27] Fielding innovative and advanced technologies can enhance battlefield advantage. However, technology on its own does not equate to capability or generate deterrence. Ultimately, while advances in technology can facilitate a greater range of military response options in a contested environment, capability developments must be informed by knowledge of the operational environment, as well as the adversary's capabilities and political ambitions. Further, capability decision-makers need to consider how technology can contribute to operational objectives in pursuit of deterrence missions. One such objective may be to generate an asymmetric advantage to war fighters in specific operational environments. Emerging technologies may also create opportunities for states to operationalise deterrence theory into practice, such as using artificial intelligence to enable detection and attribution of hostile operations.[28]

Defining the Task to Meet Today's Challenges

Australia's evolving deterrence strategy requires clarity and cohesion to effectively support national interests in pursuit of security objectives. In recent years, Defence has progressively introduced deterrence concepts into its strategic policy statements in order to support identified national priorities. In April 2023, the combination of a speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs the Hon. Penny Wong and the release of the DSR highlighted the need for military capabilities to deter Chinese aggression and to maintain a stable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region.[29] This direction was reinforced in the 2024 NDS. Based on analysis of official remarks and public documents, six strategic and policy drivers have emerged that will likely shape Australia's deterrence by denial strategy and set the trajectory for ADF operationalising activities.

1. Australia's national interests lie in a region operating by rules, standards and norms—where larger countries do not dominate or threaten smaller states' sovereignty, equality or independence—achieved through collective security that enable peace and prosperity.

2. China's military build-up, dominating behaviour, and assertive conduct in the South China Sea—including the militarisation of contested features, territorial ambitions, and dangerous encounters in the air and at sea—threatens the sovereignty of smaller regional states and undermines the Indo-Pacific rules-based order.[30]

3. Defence's adoption of a deterrence by denial strategy will require an adversary to perceive Australian military power as having the credibility, capability and commitment to deny the unwanted action.

4. Defence will need to generate the ability to harness a deterrence by denial strategy to independently deter military action against Australian forces or territory, which may include direct strike, threats to regional neighbours' sovereignty, or denying access to our trade and supply routes.[31]

5. To maximise the Australian Government's deterrence by denial options, the ADF will need to evolve into a genuine integrated force to harness effects across all domains; develop the capacity to engage in impactful projection; and be able to hold an adversary away from Australia's northern approaches and further from its domestic shores.

6. To effectively deter regional threats that challenge the strategic order, Australia will need to contribute to collective integrated defence and deterrence through activities and coalition operations in conjunction with the United States and other key partners to uphold a favourable regional strategic balance.

Australia faces the unprecedented challenge of deterring by denial a direct attack on its territory and forces, while simultaneously contributing to the prevention of great power territorial ambitions against it. These demands affect how Australia needs to make use of its integrated deterrence capabilities. The ADF does not currently have the type or number of forces required to independently meet a singular or simultaneous deterrence challenge.[32] Indeed, former Chief of the Defence Force General Angus J Campbell observed: 'enhanced defence capability alone is insufficient. As a relatively modestly sized military, credible deterrence can only be delivered in partnership with those with whom we share common cause.'[33]

The imperative therefore exists for the ADF to optimise and capitalise on every available advantage, effectively signalling Australia's steadfast commitment to upholding a favourable balance of power independently and collectively in the region. Therefore, each service of the ADF must have an advanced appreciation of its role and contribution to an integrated deterrence strategy driven by clear mission objectives.

Towards a Deterrence by Denial Campaign Framework

The 2024 NDS embraces a denial strategy as the cornerstone of defence planning and, with it, the ADF's transition to an integrated, focused force. This ambitious transformation requires the ADF to be positioned to safeguard Australia's security and contribute to the maintenance of regional peace, security and prosperity. This is to be achieved by deterring actions against Australia's interests, including any adversary's attempt to project power through our northern approaches. To guide the ADF's employment of military power to solve strategic problems in support of national objectives, the Department of Defence employs the concept of 'integrated campaigning'. This process occurs through the integration of capabilities—with allies, partners and the whole of government—to achieve better outcomes for all.[34] At the strategic and operational levels, the integrated campaigning framework identifies national objectives distilled into actions for the ADF, which are then coordinated with international partners as needed. This campaign approach is relatively static and largely internally focused. It does not drill down into specific deterrence by denial objectives that clarify the operational requirements that would be met by individual service roles across warfighting domains across the competition continuum. Instead, the concept simply highlights how domains can contribute to the campaign framework in an effort to maximise operational effects using an integrated force approach. The existing integrated campaigning framework should evolve to address the dynamic operational requirements necessary to conceptually translate deterrence by denial into practical application.

The development of a deterrence by denial campaign framework has the potential to enhance the ADF's efforts to analyse and assess how to achieve and continuously improve and calibrate its deterrence strategy and posture. If the objective of credible military forces is to dissuade aggression

by demonstrating capability and resolve, it necessitates a high degree of readiness that ensures forces are sized and prepared for warfighting that can prevent an action and prevail in conflict if deterrence fails. To this end, this article proposes an innovative denial campaigning framework modified and adapted from a concept developed for a US defence audience by Becca Wasser.[35] Organised thematically, this framework can inform Defence leaders, policymakers and planners to make better informed choices about the ADF's military capability and posture. By breaking down the concept of deterrence by denial, the framework assists planners and decision-makers to more clearly identify and prioritise essential capability and capacity requirements for the most critical operational scenarios expected to challenge Australia's deterrence priorities. A framework of this nature is needed if Australia is to achieve its deterrence by denial objectives in the Indo-Pacific region. Application of the framework requires clear responses to a series of questions addressing objectives, operational context, forces and capabilities, posture and projection, and necessary enabling shaping activities.

> **Deterrence by Denial Objective.** What is the military objective behind what Australia is trying to deny? What aggression or hostile action is the ADF seeking to militarily prevent?

> **Mission and Operations.** Which missions and operations must the ADF undertake to deter by denial the adversary aggression? Identify the potential warfighting missions to derive relevant force requirements.

> **Forces and Capabilities.** What forces and capabilities are required to undertake these missions and operations? What gaps could an ally or partner fill?

> **Posture and Projection.** Where should ADF forces and capabilities be placed at home and postured abroad to enable immediate deterrence mission objectives? Where is pre-positioned equipment or access required for the objective?

> **Shaping Activities.** What peacetime general deterrence activities are necessary to enhance the credibility of campaign operations? What capability, technology, placement or access gaps must be pursued? What actions would enable or enhance the synchronisation, integration, interoperability and delivery of joint or coalition effects for campaign missions?

The framework outlined here has several benefits. At the military operational level, it enables the ADF to more effectively consider the requirements and activities necessary to enhance general deterrence in peacetime competition while simultaneously strengthening immediate deterrence capacities. It highlights how the individual services can contribute to Australia's strategy of deterrence by denial. For the Australian Army, the framework helps inform broader discussion about the potential contribution of land power and the ADF to the achievement of a deterrence by denial strategy. It further enables refinement of campaign plans during the conduct of wargaming and exercises, and it supports an ongoing feedback loop to strengthen individual deterrence missions. It can also underpin the conduct of rigorous analysis to inform the prioritisation of military force development and innovation decisions that could be accelerated to address capability gaps.

Generating effective deterrence by denial demands that Australia's forces are precisely tailored to the specific threat, location and operational context, thus creating a connection between deterrence and warfighting capabilities. Specifically, it facilitates focused discussions on military deterrence requirements within Australia, with its allies and among partner nations to better align objectives and possible responses in the region. It enables more nuanced consideration of how specific allies or partner nations would contribute to deterrence objectives and missions. It promotes a collective understanding of warfighting capabilities and it highlights access and interoperability requirements, including the need for combined exercises and training in support of deterrence objectives. In doing so, it supports clarity in messaging at home and abroad, and enhances the credibility of Australia's resolve to protect its national interests against outside aggression and enhancing collective deterrence with allies and partners.

Figure 1 demonstrates use of the conceptual framework through a hypothetical scenario. It identifies a potential objective against which to frame the requirements of immediate deterrence while outlining the complementary shaping activities necessary to enhance general deterrence. While not exhaustive, the exemplar framework illustrates possible response options that would inform capability and capacity requirements to enhance the effectiveness of Australian deterrence.

Figure 1. Exemplar ADF campaign plan for deterrence by denial

Deterrence by denial objective

Deter an adversary from seizing a regional partner's or ally's sovereign territory.

Mission	Operations	Capabilities	Posture
(1) Hold at risk of denial an adversary's surface action groups en route to Australia's immediate region	• Air and sea interdiction • Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) • Sea denial via surface and undersea warfare • Missile defence of bases	• Fighter aircraft • Surface combatants • Uncrewed underwater vehicles, uncrewed submersible vehicles, submarines • Anti-ship cruise missiles, air defences, and ISR • Long-range ground-based tactical and operational fires • Integrated air and missile defence • Sea mines	• Persistent ISR in air, sea and undersea • Access for strike assets in air, surface and sub-surface • Access of ground forces with land-based anti-ship strike

Shaping activities	• Exercises that demonstrate and signal Australian, ally and partner:
	  ◦ forces capable of quickly responding to, defending or denying acts of aggression
	  ◦ continuous technological capability advancements
	  ◦ integrated core warfighting capability
	  ◦ clear statements of shared intent to respond to specific actions
	• Forward pre-positioning assets in critical locations to bolster the ADF's capability and commitment
	• Increase table-top exercises with key regional military partners to enhance alignment on deterrent responses on the need and means to respond
	• Engagements with the United States for delineating expected roles and force contributions to the mission
	• Greater fusion of intelligence sharing around the threat
	• ADF training, advising and security assistance around the mission operations		

Mission	Operations	Capabilities	Posture
(2) Support partner state ground forces in asserting sovereignty	• Close air support for partner country ground support • Sea denial • Coastal defence • ISR • Littoral combat	• Fighter aircraft • Unmanned aerial system for sensing and targeting • Uncrewed underwater vehicles and submarines outfitted with torpedoes • Sea mines • Anti-ship cruise missiles, air defences, and ISR • Watercraft • Ground-based sensors • Destroyers to bolster air defences	• Rapidly deployable ADF across air, sea and land assets in the region • Joint training in Australia and partner countries
Shaping activities	• Announced and unannounced coalition exercises demonstrating credible combat capabilities; and joint training in Australia and in partner country • Synchronising regional messaging on sovereignty and unacceptable military behaviour • Forward pre-positioning of materiel to bolster the ADF's capability and commitment, such as fuel and munitions • Agreements in place and tested to share intelligence and targeting information in advance of a conflict • More focused intelligence assessments on the adversary's perceptions of collective capability and credibility of commitment		

Deterrence Roles for Land Forces in the Indo-Pacific Region

Across the continuum of competition, land forces offer a critical contribution to the achievement of Australia's deterrence objectives at home and abroad. Army's unique capacities and capabilities achieve this in three critical ways (as seen in Figure 2). First, Army's persistent presence in the region, including its ongoing international engagement and training activities, helps shape perceptions around Australian intent and military capability. Importantly, these activities generate a context within which partner states can align themselves with Australia's deterrence objectives. Second, Army delivers credible capabilities that reinforce the integrated force. Last, Army produces a combat-credible force capable of deterring aggression and, should deterrence fail, demonstrably capable of defeating the adversary in combat.

Figure 2. Army roles for deterrence

Deterrence pillar	Army roles
Communication	International engagement and training for deterrence
Capability	Refining long-range fires, force protection and enablers
Credibility	Maintaining credible close-combat capability

Army's Contribution to General Deterrence

For the last decade, the Army has established a persistent presence across the Indo-Pacific region, seeking to gain preferred partner status among many nations. The Army's commitment to train, to exercise, and to conduct advise and assist missions in the region directly enhances Australia's deterrence objectives. It does this by enabling influence and access and by denying potential adversaries access to people, geography and information. Land forces operating beyond Australia's shores demonstrate a tangible message of national resolve, maintaining their presence for extended periods in support of the integrated force.[36]

The ADF's strong history of international involvement within the region has matured through numerous multilateral operations and routine defence cooperation activities. These activities have enabled Australia to achieve high levels of influence within the region to support its broader strategic objectives.[37] The Army has a key advantage over the other services when contributing to the ADF's general deterrence objectives in the Indo-Pacific. This is because armies are the most prominent of the three military services in many Indo-Pacific countries. Partnering with regional forces, the Australian Army has disproportionate opportunities to shape those countries' joint strategies and operational concepts, and to provide crucial coordination between partner and integrated forces in times of tension and conflict. Through its development of strong relationships with regional armies, including among their leadership, the Australian Army has routine opportunities to conduct trusted engagement on topics of strategic significance. Using these channels, Army serves as a credible conduit for communicating Australia's deterrence objectives, and enabling the alignment of interests and objectives between like-minded nations.

The conduct of security cooperation activities in the region helps to achieve Australia's deterrence by denial objectives by developing partners' capabilities, their capacities for self-defence and resilience, and their ability to contribute to coalition operations. Research shows that when a challenger views defence pacts as having such capability and credibility, the probability that a state will be the target of a militarised dispute is reduced. Further, members of defence pacts that engage in high levels of peacetime military coordination are less likely to be attacked in the first instance.[38] The creation of combat-credible combined force capabilities, however, demands ongoing commitment. It is not accomplished through sporadic exercises, exchanges, or key leader engagements. Instead it requires consistent, long-term investment in combined training, exercises and rehearsals conducted with allies and partners in the same manner in which the ADF trains internally.

Organising and training the Army to conduct operations in strategically significant geographic areas can send a strong signal of Australia's capability and commitment to support deterrence by denial operational objectives and to deter coercion These actions can contribute to lowering the risk of conflict, in combination with transparent communications of intent. Through training and other military engagements, the Army can enhance the conventional capabilities of allied and partner nations and help strengthen military and civilian resilience and capacity to respond to increasingly sophisticated grey zone activities by potential adversaries. Given these benefits, Army should consider enhancing its role and contribution to the Defence Cooperation Program and to Exercise Indo-Pacific Endeavour. The objectives of these activities include supporting Australia's strategic interests by developing close and enduring links with partners that enhance their capacity to protect their national sovereignty. These programs also provide an opportunity for the Army to work effectively with the ADF in its broader regional security efforts. In this context, Army's role should focus on enhancing ADF access to countries for operations and reinforcing the ADF's combat credibility through increased army-to-army training. In this way, Army has the opportunity to deepen relationships and enhance land forces' cooperation with strategically significant countries such as India, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore, and in the South-West Pacific. While the ADF as a whole should work towards common goals that directly enhance Australia's ability to achieve deterrence objectives,

the networks that exist within army senior leadership are particularly valuable. The Australian Army has well-established regional networks through which to further Australian objectives, particularly as they relate to our northern approaches. Furthermore, these relationships are arguably unique among Western nations and are therefore particularly valuable in Australia's efforts to achieve regional collective deterrence objectives with, for example, the United States. Army's efforts strongly complement ongoing engagement by the other services and by whole-of-government agencies.

Access for Capabilities, Preparedness and Projection

Australia's northern approaches are not part of Australian sovereign territory. This means the ADF cannot campaign in the region during a crisis without the assistance of regional partners. Strengthening and leveraging relationships with these countries is therefore particularly critical to Australia. During an interview, Charles Edel, formerly of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, observed that, while the Air Force and Navy have received new missions in the NDS and will be receiving substantial investment, the new mission for the Army is to be postured forward in the region in order to enable power projection to achieve deterrence by denial.[39] It is therefore vital that the Australian Army helps focus ADF international engagement efforts towards the achievement of explicit deterrence by denial objectives in order to secure access agreements for the ADF to sour immediate neighbours. An army that is able to field expeditionary capabilities with speed, precision and lethality sends a strong message of Australia's commitment to deter hostility within the region.

The Australian Army's strong relationships with regional militaries provide a unique contribution to the US alliance. The US military cannot replicate the social and cultural connections that the Australian Army has established within the Indo-Pacific.[40] The value of these connections has been underscored by former Chief of the Defence Force Angus J Campbell in several speeches.[41] As the ADF cannot deter great powers without US assistance, Australia needs to ensure that its international engagement activities are consistent with US engagement aims and that they reinforce shared deterrence objectives. While the ADF's interoperability with the US and regional partners are key contributions to the Alliance, it also has the potential to reinforce collective deterrence aims. The ADF needs to have a close conversation about how the alliance wants to shape the environment. There needs to be a more detailed articulation of the deterrence objectives

to enable a discussion of which tasks can then be job-shared and cost-shared for wider multilateral deterrence efforts.

The Australian Army can play a direct role in enabling partner states to respond to challenges to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ultimately, land power underwrites any defending state's national sovereignty and the protection of its territory. Therefore, consistent with national policy, Army can help encourage regional partners to stand up to coercion— as Ross Babbage terms it, 'hardening the region' to resist challenges to sovereignty.[42] Vital to this effort is the systematic communication of Australia's deterrence objectives in ways that are sensitive to regional interests and norms. These resiliency-building efforts contribute to deterrence by denial by raising the political and military barriers against coercion and undue influence.

Demonstrating Operational Reach

To operationalise deterrence by denial, Army needs the capability to deploy forward into the region. As the DSR noted, the ADF must focus on the development of anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities that are:

> designed to detect an adversary and prevent an advancing adversary from entering an operational area … [and] deny an adversary freedom of action to militarily coerce Australia and to operate against Australia without being held at risk.[43]

In addition to benefitting Australia, A2/AD capabilities can operate to the disadvantage of potential regional adversaries in their efforts to keep opposing forces at a distance using missiles, aircraft, and cyber and space capabilities. To deter conflict, General Charles A Flynn, commander of US Army Pacific, advocates for a coalition approach that 'takes time and space' away from adversaries, denying them key terrain by keeping a hard power presence physically forward.[44] His approach presumes that adversary capabilities are primarily designed to defeat air and maritime power and degrade, deny and disrupt space and cyber, not 'to find, fix and finish distributed, mobile, fixed, semi-fixed, reloadable, lethal and non-lethal land power'.[45] The Australian Army offers a valuable capability in this context given its routine presence in the region, operating with allies and partners and thereby extending options for diplomatic and military responses in times of crisis.

In cooperation with the integrated force, Army should focus on developing small exercises and deployments that are not publicly declared ahead of their conduct. While the idea of unannounced exercises might seem contrary to the notion of communicating credible capability, the ability of land forces to conceal and then reveal themselves can help to demonstrate capabilities and thereby generate doubt in an adversary's mind. Land forces need to demonstrate the ability to operate throughout the region with as little detection as possible. Operating with our coalition partners, military manoeuvres that place land forces in locations without prior warning have the potential to generate uncertainty and to challenge a potential adversary's assessments about levels of allied access and influence within the region. This approach will add credibility to Australia's posture of strategic denial.

Army's Contribution to Immediate Deterrence

Army as an Integrated Force Multiplier

Long-range precision strike capabilities will be a critical component of Australia's deterrence strategy. These capabilities enable a military to hold adversary assets at risk and signal the credibility of a nation's declared intent to respond to threats from afar. The Army's unique contribution to an integrated ADF multi-domain strike system, to include the development and fielding of the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS), and Precision Strike Missile (PrSM) will strengthen Australia's collective defence and deterrence efforts. These missile systems have the potential to be deployed in collaboration with allied or coalition partners, and thereby offer a level of interoperability that allows for shared operational responsibilities. To support the achievement of Australia's deterrence objectives, military planners will need to leverage a combination of strategic positioning, rapid mobility, pre-emptive deployment, and alliance and partner support to mitigate risk and maximise the effectiveness of land-based long-range precision missile systems.

A credible land-based strike capability is important but, as with all conventional capabilities, one capability is not a credible deterrent on its own.[46] For example, while HIMARS and ATACMS will be important force multipliers, these capabilities are not sufficiently threatening to be determinative in an adversary's decision-making calculus.[47] To have more influence, Army must address three critical challenges—range, mass and mobility.

Range. HIMARS's current 500 kilometre range does not make it a strategic game changer.[48] This is because it does not have sufficient reach to create operational dilemmas in regard to Australia's capacity to defend its northern approaches. Due to its limited range, the capability would need to be based outside of Australian sovereign territory to achieve its operational denial objectives. If forward deployed for the purpose of immediate deterrence, such positioning poses escalation and stability risks. Even as future iterations of PrSM and HIMARS missiles increase their range, it will create another important consideration with regard to the security dilemma. Australia will be restrained in the use of long-range fires from within its territory, as it could unintentionally invoke insecurity in neighbours. This is particularly an issue in Indonesia today, and possibly in Papua New Guinea in the future. Effective use of longer-ranged missiles will need to be premised on mutually agreed security assurances.

Mass. The ADF will not acquire enough HIMARS to generate operational dilemmas that would amount to credible denial capabilities for a significant force. The acquisition of HIMARS is projected to cost approximately AU$2.133 billion for 42 launchers and associated rockets.[49] It is considerably cheaper than comparable long-range strike capabilities such as surface combatants. HIMARS therefore has the potential to be more important for Defence objectives if deterrence were to fail in the region, but the capability's deterrence value will be limited by the numbers that the ADF plans to acquire and on basing locations.

Mobility. Army is yet to develop company-sized deployable, dispersible units that can operate HIMARS. In a deteriorating security climate, critical decisions need to be made about where HIMARS are to be located and when. If the Army is to develop company-sized deployable, dispersible units that can operate HIMARS, it will need organic targeting and firing capabilities that can deliver accurate strike effects at the time and place required. Without this, the Army may be developing a long-range fires capability that is ultimately 'firing blind'.[50]

Beyond its value as a military capability, the acquisition of PrSM by Australia poses diplomatic challenges that are yet to be fully addressed. On the global stage, long-range missiles are part of the US-China nuclear deterrence dynamic. Therefore, Australia needs to consider how incremental improvements to PrSM ranges may undermine states'

deterrence calculations by increasing escalation risks. A potential problem with PrSM is that it may be designated as a 'strategic non-nuclear weapon' and thereby have unintended effects on the nuclear stability between the US and China. If the ADF (including Army) intends to deploy longer-range missiles, it will need to have a close understanding of how Australian strike capability interacts with the broader global nuclear deterrence dynamics.[51] Defence will need to carefully consider how to ensure that the ADF's conventional deterrence activities do not unintentionally destabilise nuclear deterrence.

Army as an Integrated Force Enabler

Army has a lead role in massing military effect from within dispersed forces to achieve deterrent effects. For example, as identified in a 2022 RAND report, the US Army fulfils the role of information multiplier.[52] For Australia, the Army can play a lead role in delivering survivable capabilities in theatre that can coordinate the command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance to achieve joint effect.
In this regard, the DSR calls for the development of critical capabilities, one of which is an 'enhanced integrated targeting capability'.[53] One of the key features of land forces is that they can provide persistent target capture and maintenance for the integrated force.[54] While space- and air-based ISR are able to cover Australia's northern approaches, there is considerable advantage in having land-based ISR too. Specifically, Army has a history of conducting long-range reconnaissance missions using special forces capabilities. Such missions can also be conducted by smaller infantry deployments located within the region. As a point of caution, while expeditionary forces send a strong deterrence signal, insertion and maintenance of such a presence may be costly and force extraction could pose challenges should deterrence fail.[55]

Army has the potential to contribute more capability to the integrated force than the other services, and to do so more cheaply. For example, Army could develop a 'strike in a box' construct that sees the development of mobile vertical launch systems that can be transported into theatre on non-military surface ships such as container ships.[56] Capabilities that could be fitted within International Standards compliant intermodal shipping containers include missiles and uncrewed aerial systems. This approach would enable the delivery of 'containerised effects' in more places than is achievable by capabilities embedded in capital platforms, such as ships.

A containerisation approach to strike would require a significant change in current force structure and new appreciations of the role of each the services. For example, currently each service uses its own platforms to deliver strike capabilities (i.e. Air Warfare Destroyer, F-35, HIMARS). By contrast, containerisation of missiles would see each service responsible for moving strike capability through the relevant domain, it would no longer be the sole deliverer of the effect. This level of reform would require a cultural shift in organisational understanding about how individual services contribute to the integrated force.

Army's Contribution to Warfighting to Enable Deterrence by Denial

Australia's deterrence by denial strategy places a strong emphasis on credible combat forces that are forward deployed within Australia's northern approaches. It is therefore incumbent upon Army to develop land forces that are lighter, more deployable and more dispersed. Army has long sought to have an effective and deployable force that contributes to deterring threats against Australia's interests. The requirement to deploy, however, places significant pressure on the three-way trade-off between firepower, protection and mobility. In past decades, the ADF has operated in combat primarily against non-state actors, and this has been accompanied by an emphasis on larger land capabilities that prioritise protection. However, recent technological advancements in offensive technologies that counter heavy armour have called this emphasis into question.[57] The decision by government to reduce the number of infantry fighting vehicles suggests that Army should now focus less on heavy armour and more on littoral manoeuvre capabilities, which is reinforced by the decision to select lighter armoured land capability in the 'Redback'.[58] The generation of a lighter, more rapidly deployable Army, equipped for prompt and sustained ground combat, will be a key land force contribution to the ADF in its efforts to achieve deterrence by denial objectives.

Maintenance of Army's close-combat capability is a fundamental component of a credible Australian deterrence strategy. Deterrence by denial is enabled by combat-credible forces that are prepared to fight and win. This is because military power remains the clearest demonstration of a nation's capability to prevent—or prevail against—aggression if deterrence fails. To this end, effective deterrence by denial requires resilient, survivable combat-credible military forces tailored to the specific threats they may face, the geography in which they may be required to fight, and the operations they may be required to conduct. Thus, there is a clear nexus between deterrence and warfighting capabilities. Ultimately, effective combat-credible forces ensure that the right capabilities for deterrence by denial are available to convince the adversary that aggression will result in a fight that will not achieve their aims, and this will deter them from initiating aggression.

By creating a peacetime national security posture characterised by a scalable, responsive land combat capability within the Indo-Pacific region, the ADF can reinforce Australia's commitment and resolve to delivering collective defence in support of its allies and partners. Until HIMARS enters into service, the ADF's long-range strike capabilities will remain focused in the air and sea domains. While their value as deterrence capabilities is self-evident, should conflict occur, capable land forces will become overwhelmingly important. As Australian land power specialist Al Palazzo argues, the other domains 'remain supporting arms to the conduct of war against people who live on the land'.[59] As recent conflicts have highlighted, in close-combat situations land forces are needed to seize chokepoints, rapidly manoeuvre in the region, and operate in tandem with local partners.

In making decisions around how to posture land forces, a balance needs to be reached between the imperatives to reveal capability (to enhance deterrence credibility) and to conceal it (to survive and defend). Deterrence academic Glen Snyder argues that there are different calculations entailed in operational decisions concerning these two objectives.[60] Specifically, in a conventional deterrence by denial scenario, forces must be sized for—and prepared for—warfighting in order to demonstrate to an adversary that there is a greater cost in aggression than there is prospective gain. This means that forces need to be demonstrably ready to fight and win a conflict against a particular adversary in a particular location.[61] By contrast, in defence, the priority of military forces changes from assuring costs

against the opponent to minimising losses against itself. The dichotomy between deterrence and defence raises a so-called 'reveal and conceal' conundrum. The nature of this challenge is most often evident in air interceptions and sea interdictions. For example, by revealing to an aggressor state that the deterring state has air or naval forces in an area, the message of deterrence is enhanced. However, if a deterring state ultimately needs to fight an adversary, there is an imperative to conceal that capability, first to achieve strategic surprise and then to improve its survivability.

Logistics hubs are a critical element of Army's capacity to forward project combat or strike capabilities. Investment in logistics in a general deterrence phase reduces the strain on transportation systems in times of crisis. This is achieved by pre-positioning and forward positioning infrastructure, supplies, equipment, and sustainment resources that, in turn, enable forces to deploy rapidly and immediately conduct credible deterrence operations when the need arises. Such investment in the region offers the ADF a way to achieve general deterrence 'through the placement of multipurpose capabilities, which can be overt or concealed, and [that] enhance capability across the spectrum of conflict without the impediment of being explicitly threatening or escalatory'.[62] There are, however, complexities in forward basing logistics elements. Specifically, forward positioning requires basing agreements with host nations and may involve extensive financial and diplomatic investment to achieve alignment of security interests and to manage the perceptions of both domestic and external audiences. Decisions concerning the positioning of logistics hubs during a period of general deterrence must also take into account that, in times of crisis, those locations will inevitably come under pressure from an adversary. If the protection of contested logistics is not a priority effort, adversaries with advanced A2/AD capabilities will have the capacity to hinder the speed and endurance of any combat elements. In short, logistics contributes credibility to a nation's security posture by signalling commitment and capability in a general deterrence phase and is essential to a military's capacity to pursue its immediate deterrence objectives in times of crisis.

The capacity to protect Australian and forward bases is becoming increasingly important as Australia's friends and allies increasingly seek to capitalise on Australia's geography to deliver their own military strategic effects within the region. Another key area of focus for the Army should be to the provision of base defences to the broader integrated force. The DSR has called for 'an enhanced, all-domain, integrated air and missile defence capability', and land forces can make a key contribution by prioritising the task of base protection.[63] Bases are essential hubs for deployed forces providing fuel, ammunition, infrastructure and other supplies. Assets that use those bases, however, are particularly vulnerable when they are stationary. As the Australian Army has the lead for military logistics within the region, our land forces will inevitably play a major role in protecting those assets.

Conclusion

Australia's shift to a policy of strategic denial will require hard choices to be made by the national security and foreign policy communities about what Australia seeks to deter and what approach Australia will take to effectively protect its national interests. Deterrence by denial represents, in effect, the application of an intentional effort to defend a commitment. To implement and operationalise this approach, the Australian Government must assess what the ADF can deter, assess the capabilities and activities required, and develop further clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the single services to deliver integrated deterrence effects both independently and collectively. Deterrence demands close attention to how threats are designed, conveyed and, if necessary, implemented. The integrated force must continually pursue advantage across all domains during the competition continuum to achieve the necessary balance between deterrence and conflict preparation. A refined campaigning framework could help decision-makers more effectively identify and prioritise roles and responsibilities, financial and diplomatic investments, and critical shaping activities to operationalise deterrence. It can also add depth to Australia's ability to influence adversaries, collectively deter aggression, and prevail against opposition if deterrence efforts fail. In this regard, the Australian Army has a significant opportunity to contribute to the government's deterrence by denial strategy in ways other services cannot.

About the Authors

The views expressed in this article are the authors' and do not represent the Australian Government or OCRT Consulting.

Dr Gregory MacCallion is a Senior Managing Consultant for OCRT. He has a career that spans Australian academia and public service in the Department of Defence. Gregory contributed to Defence's first deterrence polices, the 2020 Force Structure Plan, and the 2022 ADF Theatre Operating Concept. In 2019 he published his book *National versus Human Security: Australian and Canadian Military Interventions*. Gregory has contributed to numerous book chapters and journal articles, and presented at international conferences on security theory, strategy, and foreign policy. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the Australian National University, and an MA in International Relations from the University of Queensland.

Ms Courtney Stewart is a Senior Managing Consultant at OCRT with over 20 years of national security experience in government, industry, and think tanks. She previously served as the US Department of Defense Policy Exchange Officer to the Australian Department of Defence. In the Pentagon she worked in the offices of Nuclear and Missile Defense, East Asia, and Nuclear Matters, and on the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review. In 2013 Courtney was the lead author and negotiator of the US–Republic of Korea Tailored Deterrence Strategy. In 2015 she earned a US Medal for Exceptional Civilian Service. She holds an MA in Science and Security from King's College London, and BAs in Political Science and History from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Endnotes

1   Australian Government, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), p. 19.

2   Department of Defence, *National Defence Strategy* 2024 (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2024), p. 22.

3   Angus Campbell, 'General Angus J Campbell's Address to the 2023 ASPI Conference', 2023 ASPI Conference—Disruption and Deterrence, Canberra, 14 September 2023.

4   United States Department of Defense, *Deterrence Operations: Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0* (Government of the United States of America, December 2006).

5   Ibid.

6   John J Mearsheimer, *Conventional Deterrence* (Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 23–24.

7   Michael J Mazarr, 'Understanding Deterrence', in Frans Osinga and Tim Sweijs (eds), *NL ARMS Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies 2020: Deterrence in the 21st Century—Insights from Theory and Practice* (The Hague: TMC Asser Press, 2021), p. 2.

8   Glenn H Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense: Toward a Theory of National Security* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 14–15; Glenn H Snyder, 'Deterrence and Power', *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4, no. 2 (1960), pp. 163–78, at: https://doi.org/10.1177/002200276000400201; André Beaufre, *Deterrence and Strategy* (New York: FA Praeger, 1966), p. 23; John J Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (WW Norton & Company, 2001).

9   Lawrence Freedman, *Deterrence* (Cambridge UK; Malden MA: Polity Press, 2004), pp. 26, 37.

10 Ministry of Defence, *JDN 1/19, Deterrence: The Defence Contribution* (Government of the United Kingdom, n.d.), p. 26; Mazarr, 'Understanding Deterrence', p. 4.

11 Mazarr, 'Understanding Deterrence', p. 4; Colin S Gray, *Maintaining Effective Deterrence* (Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2003), p. 29.

12 This distinction is credited to Patrick M Morgan, Deterrence: A Conceptual Analysis (SAGE Publications, 1977), chapter 2; Gray, *Maintaining Effective Deterrence*.

13 Mazarr, 'Understanding Deterrence', p. 4.

14 Patrick M Morgan, *Deterrence Now*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 89 (Cambridge UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 80.

15 Michael J Mazarr et al., *Disrupting Deterrence: Examining the Effects of Technologies on Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), p. 15.

16 Freedman addresses the link of credibility as: 'The problem of credibility was whether or not the opponent believed the threats would be enforced'. Freedman, *Deterrence*, p. 36.

17 Ministry of Defence, *JDN 1/19, Deterrence*, pp. 8–10.

18 Michael J Mazarr, Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, Timothy R Heath and Derek Eaton, *What Deters and Why: The State of Deterrence in Korea and the Taiwan Strait* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2021), p. 7, at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3144.html.

19 Richard K Betts, 'The Lost Logic of Deterrence: What the Strategy That Won the Cold War Can—and Can't—Do Now', *Foreign Affairs* 92 (2013), p. 87.

20 Department of Defense, *Deterrence Operations: Joint Operating Concept Version 2.0*, p. 29.

21 We consider joint warfighting functions to include command and control, information, intelligence, fires, movement and manoeuvre, protection and sustainment.

22   Bryan Frederick, Stephen Watts, Matthew Lane, Abby Doll, Ashley L Rhoades and Meagan L Smith, *Understanding the Deterrent Impact of US Overseas Forces* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2020), p. xiv.

23   Ibid., pp. xiv–xvii.

24   Thazha Varkey Paul, *The Tradition of Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons* (Stanford University Press, 2020), p. 2.

25   James Cartwright, Justin M Conelli, Clementine G Starling and Julia Siegal, *Operationalizing Integrated Deterrence: Applying Joint Force Targeting across the Competition Continuum* (Atlantic Council, 2023), pp. 13–14.

26   Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations* (Government of the United States of America, October 2018), pp. I–IV; Andrew Carr and Stephan Frühling, *Forward Presence for Deterrence: Implications for the Australian Army*, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 15 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023).

27   Mazarr et al., *Disrupting Deterrence*.

28   Justin Lynch and Emma Morrison, *Deterrence through AI-Enabled Detection and Attribution*, The Kissinger Center Papers (Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, July 2023).

29   Penny Wong, 'Australian Interests in a Regional Balance of Power', speech, National Press Club, Canberra, 17 April 2023.

30   Ibid.

31   *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, pp. 37, 40, 49.

32   Through extensive interviews for this article, scholars questioned Australia's capability and capacity to self-reliantly deter China or any large state from taking any particular action. Instead, Australia must capitalise on its strengths and contributions through clear operationalised roles and responsibilities for collective deterrence campaigning.

33   Campbell, 'General Angus J Campbell's Address to the 2023 ASPI Conference'.

34   Nick Bosio, 'Integrated Campaigning—Part 1', Australian Army Research Centre, Land Power Forum, 22 March 2022, at: https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/integrated-campaigning-part-1.

35   The proposed campaigning approach is an adaptation of Becca Wasser, *Campaign of Denial: Strengthening Simultaneous Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific and Europe* (Center for a New American Security, 2023).

36   For a detailed examination of the role of 'trip-wire troops' see Carr and Frühling, *Forward Presence for Deterrence*.

37   Michael O'Keefe, *Australian Defence Force International Engagement and Re-Engagement with Fiji*, Australian Army Occasional Paper No. 18 (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023).

38   Brett Ashley Leeds, 'Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes', *American Journal of Political Science* 47, no. 3 (2003), pp. 427–439; Jesse C Johnson, Brett Ashley Leeds and Ahra Wu, 'Capability, Credibility, and Extended General Deterrence', *International Interactions* 41, no. 2 (2015), pp. 309–336.

39   Charles Edel, interview with the authors, 21 July 2023.

40   Ross Babbage, interview with the authors, 9 October 2023.

41   Brendan Nicholson, 'Skilled Diplomacy Is Vital to Australia's Defence, Says ADF Chief, *The Strategist*, 5 July 2023, at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/skilled-diplomacy-is-vital-to-australias-defence-says-adf-chief.

42   Babbage, interview.

43   *Defence Strategic Review*, p. 49.

44   David Vergun, 'General Highlights China's Military Advantages, Disadvantages', U.S. Department of Defense website, 11 October 2023, at: https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3553901/general-highlights-chinas-military-advantages-disadvantages (accessed 19 December 2023).

45   Ibid.

46   Rebecca Shrimpton, interview with the authors, 12 October 2023.

47   Albert Palazzo, 'Deterrence and Firepower: Land 8113 and the Australian Army's Future (Part 1, Strategic Effect)', Australian Army Research Centre, Land Power Forum, 16 July 2020, at: https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/deterrence-and-firepower-land-8113-and-australian-armys-future-part-1-strategic-effect.

48   Ibid.

49   Kym Bergmann, 'HIMARS Price Increase Doesn't Add Up', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, 22 August 2023, at: https://asiapacificdefencereporter.com/himars-triples-in-price-to-more-than-1-5-billion-for-no-apparent-reason.

50   Daniel Molesworth, 'Australian Army's Long-Range Strike Capability Could Be Firing Blind, *The Strategist*, 30 November 2023, at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/australian-armys-long-range-strike-capability-could-be-firing-blind.

51   Ben Zala, interview with the authors, 10 October 2023.

52   Jonathan P Wong et al., *New Directions for Projecting Land Power in the Indo-Pacific: Contexts, Constraints, and Concepts* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1672-1.html.

53   *Defence Strategic Review*.

54   Thomas X Hammes, inteview with the authors, 18 July 2023.

55   Hugh White, interview with the authors, 3 November 2023.

56   Hammes, inteview.

57   Marcus Hellyer, 'LAND 400: Is a Knight in Shining Armour Really What We Need?, *The Strategist*, 3 August 2018, at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/land-400-is-a-knight-in-shining-armour-really-what-we-need.

58   'Delivering Next Generation Infantry Fighting Vehicles for Australia', media release, Department of Defence, 27 July 2023, at: https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2023-07-27/delivering-next-generation-infantry-fighting-vehicles-australia; Alex Bristow and Marcus Schultz, 'Army Has a Critical Role in Defence Strategic Review's "Integrated Force"', *The Strategist*, 22 June 2023, at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/army-has-a-critical-role-in-defence-strategic-reviews-integrated-force.

59   Albert Palazzo, 'Deterrence and Firepower: Land 8113 and the Australian Army's Future (Part 2, Cultural Effect)', Australian Army Research Centre, Land Power Forum, 21 August 2020, p. 5, at: https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/deterrence-and-firepower-land-8113-and-australian-armys-future-part-2-cultural-effect.

60   Snyder, *Deterrence and Defense*, p. 5.

61   Wasser, *Campaign of Denial*, p. 6.

62   Kristen Gunness et al., *Anticipating Chinese Reactions to U.S. Posture Enhancements* (Santa Monica CA: RAND Corporation, 2022), at: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1581-1.html.

63   *Defence Strategic Review*.

A Plan B: An Australian Support to Resistance Operating Concept

Andrew Maher

The Defence Strategic Review (DSR) was a call for action, which bluntly stated that we have seen 'the return of major power strategic competition, the intensity of which should be seen as the defining feature of our region and time'.[1] Yet the DSR offers little insight into the nature of the competition that is being advanced by regimes such as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and others. Terms such as 'grey zone', 'irregular warfare' and 'proxy warfare' simply do not appear in the DSR, even though these are the conditions under which Western competitors are *choosing* to compete. Simply put, Australia's response is misaligned to the day-to-day threat.

A rising sense of international competition has escalated in recent years as Russia's security strategy has become increasingly belligerent. For well over a decade, the international community has, at some level, been in a state of confrontation with Russia. This situation reinforces the need for Australian policy options that directly respond to sub-threshold grey-zone activities. The ways in which Russia chose to compete—to punish Estonia in 2007, to block Georgia's drift towards the West in 2008, and to seize Crimea from Ukraine in 2014—have been termed grey-zone actions or 'hybrid warfare'. Since at least 2014, Eastern Europe has been adapting to these hybrid warfare threats. Facing the rising influence of autocratic governance regimes within our own Indo-Pacific region, it would be remiss of Australia to overlook the insights available from recent developments in Eastern Europe to inform us as to how countries in the Indo-Pacific might similarly adapt to hybrid approaches.

Examining the 'state of competition' globally might also help explain what it is that Australia is competing for. Given the CCP's drift towards autocracy, extrajudicial policing, and suppression of international criticism through tools such as economic coercion, we are competing to preserve our democratic values and independence. While this is true for Australia, it is important to recognise that the same situation applies to other countries and commercial businesses in our region, and that they might also be expected to resist attempts by autocratic regimes to erode their sovereignty and/or independent decision-making capacity. Few entities willingly become vassals. By recognising this alignment of interests, it may be possible to achieve unity of purpose in efforts to defeat or at least contain autocratic repression in an environment of strategic competition.

Last year, I wrote about the key lessons Eastern Europe has been learning in developing national resilience to grey-zone subversion and coercion employed by autocratic power.[2] Certain countries, such as the Baltics and Ukraine, have taken action to develop national resistance capabilities with the aim of deterring conflict or, if such deterrence fails, compelling an invader to withdraw from its occupied territories. In this context, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has learnt lessons in how to provide support to countries that have chosen to enhance their capacity for national resilience and resistance. Based on my analysis, I argued that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) should develop the capability and capacity to support likeminded nations in Australia's region who might seek to develop resistance capabilities. Such capabilities could provide a 'Plan B' method to help Australia achieve its strategy of deterrence by denial.[3]

In my previous analysis, I highlighted the geographic reality for Australia that almost all physical threats to our sovereign territory will first need to compromise the sovereignty of one or more of our northern neighbours. This realisation aids in developing a unity of purpose among likeminded countries in the Indo-Pacific to 'roll back' autocratic influence. Enhancing our neighbours' resilience (or, if they choose, supporting their ability to resist armed coercion) adds strategic depth to Australia's own defence. By signalling that Australia will disrupt, impose cost on, or possibly deny an aggressor's ability to achieve their strategic aims, the global rules-based order might be strengthened. Given its prohibitive cost, major power conflict in our region must be dissuaded.

This paper seeks to expand on Australia's articulated concept of deterrence by denial. It argues a strategic logic and an evidence-based approach to resistance strategy. In doing so, it identifies recommendations for an Australian concept of operations for support to resistance. Its purpose is to inform the development of an 'unconventional deterrence' option within the Indo-Pacific region. While military officers might be concerned that such a concept is being explained in an unclassified and open manner, this is done deliberately. After all, how can a concept deter if it is not communicated to a potential aggressor? How is their calculus impacted if they do not understand the breadth of disruption, the level of cost that they should expect to incur? Indeed, how is civil society—both Australian and international—to be mobilised to support a country subjected to aggression if the argument sits behind a risk-averse security classification?

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to inform national security stakeholders as to the utility of (what I term) an 'unconventional deterrence' option within the Indo-Pacific region. Accordingly, it aims to guide practitioners who may need to implement the concept, to educate policymakers as to the requirement for such a concept, and to 'crowdsource' support for the implementation of such a concept.

Background—What Needs to Be Understood about Resistance?

A security strategy of *resistance* can be defined as:

> a nation's organised, whole-of-society effort, encompassing the full range of activities from nonviolent to violent, led by a legally established government (potentially exiled/displaced or shadow) to re-establish independence and autonomy within its sovereign territory that has been wholly or partially occupied by a foreign power.[4]

The most important element of this definition is the words 'whole-of-society'. In reality, resistance is founded upon the achievement of whole-of-society national resilience, which is prepared in peacetime, preferably with likeminded partners. Resistance may include the development of violent and non-violent methods of resistance to be employed if conflict occurs.[5] So defined, resilience is the 'ability of a nation-state to preserve its societal cohesion when it is confronted by external and internal stresses caused by

socio-political change and/or violent disturbances'.[6] The continuity in such whole-of-society efforts has utility in the event of an aggressor's partial or complete violent occupation. It is this continuity that disrupts grey-zone activities. As an illustration, the digital resistance movement currently supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression is emblematic of this broadened perspective of defence.

By contrast to resistance, subversion is employed by autocratic regimes with an intention to weaken society, to expand fissures and exacerbate tensions. The resulting societal ruptures, in turn, disrupt a country's capacity to achieve a coordinated response to crisis. Specifically, a fragmented society will likely struggle to mobilise in response to aggression, or it might lack the political mandate or will to respond. It was this kind of fragmentation that characterised Ukraine's political environment when Russia seized Crimea in 2014. That situation can be contrasted with the stoic policy in Kyiv from February–March 2022 through to the present day.

Beyond events in Ukraine, the broader historical record offers several lessons to help educate policymakers and military commanders about the concept of resistance, what is needed to achieve it, and how it might constitute an effective strategy in response to external repression. These lessons will be examined in turn.

Resistance can deter aggression. During World War II, the Swiss had a pre-planned, mature concept of national defence. This concept included key variables of defence-in-depth, pre-prepared plans for demolition of mountainous lines of communication (holding at risk the key assets Hitler wished to seize), and a mobilised population. The Swiss strategy deterred Hitler from invasion in 1940 and again in 1943—the expected costs of an invasion were too great given concurrent Axis operational commitments.[7]

Non-violent resistance is historically more effective.[8] Perhaps counter-intuitively, non-violent, coordinated actions are a more effective means of denying an autocrat power than directed military operations. Non-violent does not mean not coercive—non-violence still imposes costs and asserts sovereignty.[9] These points are well demonstrated by the valiant non-violent resistance of the Danish population to Nazi occupying authorities during World War II. History is replete with similar examples of effective non-violent coercive responses to armed aggression. Indeed, non-violence has recently been shown to be approximately twice as

effective as the use of violent resistance.[10] Such effectiveness was well noted in the Kremlin following the string of 'Colour Revolutions' that followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall, and was amply demonstrated to international observers of the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. In addition to their direct role in resisting aggression, it is worth observing that non-violent resistance networks may deliver subsidiary benefits to military operations such as the conduct of personnel recovery, intelligence collection, and propaganda functions.

Resistance movements emerge organically.[11] During World War II, non-violent and violent resistance movements were rarely pre-planned and, when they were, they generally took time to mobilise.[12] Instead, resistance emerged at a grassroots level in response to perceived threats to socially prevalent values and ways of life. There are two implications from this fact. The first is that planning for national defence *needs to assume that elements of a local population will mobilise* with or without external support.[13] Further, these people will likely be amateurs, who will face a high probability of death, capture or other forms of neutralisation. The provision of government support to resistance efforts can better prepare civilians to participate in organised violence by exerting control over mobilisation dynamics and thereby reducing mortality rates. Failure to organise civilians who may otherwise participate in heroic but ultimately foolish violence carries a moral cost that may prove detrimental to an intervening nation's long-term strategic interests. An example of this is the rise of the Shi'a and Kurds in 1991 against Saddam Hussein, which resulted in their brutal repression when no aid was forthcoming.

Notably, *the resistance model exemplified by French resistance to the Nazi occupation of France is not representative of a pre-planned resistance effort.* In an atmosphere of widespread fear, repression and resentment, the Resistance emerged with limited external command and control. Indeed, it was never a unitary organisation. In its early stages, its capacity to undermine the Reich was limited largely to anti-Nazi propaganda efforts. It was not until it gained military and logistic support from elements of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) that the French resistance effort was able to organise violence against the Reich. While the French experience in World War II was unique to the circumstances of the occupation and the character of the French people themselves, there are nevertheless important lessons that can be drawn from this example. Notably, even when resistance movements emerge organically, they have

the potential to be leveraged by sympathetic states to impose costs on their political opponents.[14] In other words, regardless of its genesis, a resistance movement can be 'good enough' to support Western strategic objectives.

Clandestine networks are designed for a purpose. By comparison to general uprisings or guerrilla networks, sabotage networks have a higher requirement for operational security. For example, in France during World War II the SOE found that networks needed to be designed for their intended function and that the repurposing of networks carried the risk of counter-intelligence infiltration and reduced military effectiveness. Given that different arms of the Australian Government have varied roles and functions, the issue arises as to how best to support partners to develop resilience and (possibly) resistance capability, in ways that span Australian bureaucratic divides. Unity of purpose is essential, yet it will be difficult to achieve with a partner if we echo Australian policy approaches.

Historically, *most violence that occurs during irregular warfare campaigns is not directed toward enemy combatants*. Instead it involves the killing or intimidation of civilians, predominantly informants or collaborators within an occupied territory.[15] There are several implications that can be drawn from this fact. The first is that the existence of uncontrolled violence within a society risks the instigation of fratricide that may fuel civil insurgency beyond the control of the occupation forces. An astute occupation force (such as the Soviet Union in the early Cold War period) deliberately seeks to engineer violence among and within community groups directed toward the occupying power. A second implication is that there are *almost never situations of all resistance and no collaboration*, or of all collaboration and no resistance. Key factors that might mitigate the level of violence perpetrated against civilians include dissuading collaboration, polluting human intelligence networks operated by occupation forces, using less-than-lethal dissuasion tactics (such as legal post-war punishment frameworks and intimidatory propaganda), and developing subversive collaboration agents. Finally, the *disciplined employment of violence is essential*. An emphasis on sabotage and violence against occupation forces should be prioritised over the emotive desire to kill fellow countrymen who choose (or who are coerced) to collaborate.

The majority of the population are ambivalent to hostilities.[16] Most people need to be convinced that a military occupation is a sufficient threat to their immediate interests to accept the risks entailed in resistance—

these risks varying widely dependent on national context and histories. Policy and military planners must therefore expect that the level of support available from a population to counter an occupying force will be limited, regardless of international perceptions as to the threat posed by the oppressor. Planners should nevertheless seek to grow an environment in which local resistance to subjugation is more likely to emerge. Achieving this will require a sequence of interventions starting with support to the development of national resilience, followed by the generation of non-violent resistance capability (that engages broadly across society). Only *then* should consideration be given to the sponsorship of armed resistants who might hide amongst the population.

Non-violent methods can survive autocratic repression. Indeed, they routinely have. The growth of the Solidarity movement in Poland and underground printing presses in the Baltics during the Soviet occupation of the Cold War are indicative of the challenges autocratic nations face in suppressing narratives.[17] Beyond European examples, during the early years of the 20th century the African National Congress (ANC) engaged in non-violent resistance. This approach was necessitated by the *cordon sanitaire* formed around South Africa by Portuguese and Rhodesian counter-insurgency efforts in Angola, Rhodesia and Mozambique. It was not until the 1974 Carnation Revolution, with the accompanying collapse of Portuguese colonialism, that guerrilla training camps could be broadly established beyond South Africa's borders.[18] In other words, the ANC survived almost 70 years of repression before resorting to armed conflict (although it is unlikely it could have resorted to violence prior to 1974).

The growth in non-violent resistance movements has accelerated in the digital age.[19] Methods that capitalise on the ubiquitous reach of information technology proliferated and were refined through the Colour Revolutions, the Arab Spring, and more contemporary revolutions such as Hong Kong's 'Umbrella' protests against electoral reform in 2014 and related resistance efforts in 2019–20.[20] These examples demonstrate the capacity of civilian populations to achieve asymmetry against autocratic governance regimes. Further, internationalised resistance movements that engage diaspora communities have an ability to 'pivot' towards emerging resistance hotspots anywhere in the world and to provide them with symbiotic benefits. While powerful, these movements, however, are not immune from being effectively countered.[21]

Finally, **a non-violent intent does not preclude a resistance movement from the option to employ violence** (or to revert from violent to more passive measures). For example, the ANC pivoted from non-violent resistance to violent sabotage and guerrilla action following the 1976 Soweto students' uprising.[22] The counterinsurgency maxim of employing military to non-military activities at a ratio of 1:5 is relevant to decisions concerning how best to conduct insurgency. A robust non-violent resistance capability can enhance the efficacy of violence should it be employed. It follows that any national strategy that Australia may adopt to support likeminded nations' efforts to resist coercion should foster non-violent capabilities before providing assistance to violent methods.

Support to Resilience/Resistance Operating Concept

A concept of support to regional nations that enables them to resist the imposition of control from an autocratic actor upholds the global rules-based order and the democratic values that guide Australian policy. This approach supports the simplest of international rules: that war must be avoided between countries, and that aggression will be punished by the collective global community. It is a position that communities within Australia and its regional partners, whether uniformed or not, can rally around. This being a *support* concept, however, Australia will not be able to (and should not) dictate the level of violence or the breadth of destruction of infrastructure that a nation might be willing to endure in its own defence. These are matters of self-determination that rightfully exist within the polity of a supported nation. Therefore, *support for non-violent preparations is the most prudent means of assisting regional partners now*. Coincidentally, these preparations are also the essential foundation upon which any support to violent resistance would need to be built in the future.

A key benefit to Australia of supporting non-violent resistance is the relative ease of engaging with its neighbours around such a concept. Of particular relevance, the supported nation retains agency in regard to decisions concerning the degree to which it would be willing to conduct sabotage, guerrilla warfare or insurgency in response to an external threat. In a region characterised by a relatively recent history of colonialism and conquest, retaining such autonomy matters. Further, there are readily accessible resources to support nation-to-nation engagement on the

topic of non-violent resistance. For example, the topic is well covered in publications such as the World War II era Office of Strategic Services *Simple Sabotage Field Manual*. It, among other sources, provides a basis from which a supported nation might better understand how they could and should prepare.[23]

The strategic purpose of a support to resilience/resistance concept is fundamentally to dissuade and thus *avoid* conflict. Even though it is *proactive*, it nevertheless contributes to a deterrence by denial strategy which is inherently *defensive* in character. As a matter of strategy, the concept reinforces the global rules-based order in which aggression is illegal and human rights are protected. Indeed, it is strongly arguable that a moral 'right to resist' exists on the part of a partially or fully occupied nation which is being subjugated and denied its former democratic freedoms by an autocratic regime. When applied properly, the strategy is highly sensitive to the rights of assisted nations to make sovereign decisions about how best to resist aggression against them when it occurs, and it eschews the temptation of supporting governments to impose their own political objectives on assisted nations while they are at their most vulnerable. While acknowledging the right of national self-determination, the strategy is also cognisant that, in a globally interlinked economic environment, unnecessary damage and suffering should be prevented to minimise the adverse second- and third-order effects of conflict. Seen in this way, the concept of support to resilience and resistance remains firmly aligned with the azimuth set by the DSR. To sustain legitimacy domestically and among international audiences, the foundational concepts that underpin lawful resistance must, however, remain at the forefront of any related military strategy adopted by the ADF.

Countries are vulnerable to grey-zone coercion when they stand alone. After all, the autocratic playbook is to first isolate a target through the exertion of an asymmetry in power, to intimidate into submission. To counter this effort at intimidation, any deterrent support concept can (and should) be articulated at an unclassified level. The communication of active preparations to help countries to resist armed occupation, and to articulate that democracy reserves the right to resist a backsliding of universal human rights, aids in deterring such aggression in the first place.

The strategic premise of supporting resilience and resistance is one of security *with* Asia, as opposed to security *from* Asia (Defence of Australia doctrine) or security *in* Asia (Forward Defence doctrine). Its operational assumption is that, within the Indo-Pacific region, a primarily non-violent, indigenous-led and pre-prepared resistance movement has the best likelihood of survival against autocratic repression and is most likely to defeat efforts at territorial occupation. It is, however, also appropriate to acknowledge that any organically generated effort to resist aggressive encroachment on a nation's independence will need external support from likeminded countries.

A support to resistance concept is founded upon the tactical premise of cost imposition, the creation of doubt in the minds of the occupier's operational planners, and the generation of support to combined or joint force operations. In order to maintain legitimacy and to garner public support, costs must be imposed through the disciplined delivery of resistance effects that minimise harm to local populations. Accordingly, the central focus of any supported resistance strategy should involve sabotage (i.e., violence against things rather than people). Guerrilla activities, when supported, should be deliberate, directed and compartmentalised, and should be executed at range (i.e., with standoff). Such operations should also be conducted over geographically dispersed ranges in order to break up occupation forces and create doubt as to where the resistance will strike next. Further, targeting by resistance elements should aim to maximise economic, military, social and reputational costs to the oppressor, while minimising collateral effects on local populations. Importantly, violence must remain disciplined and consistently focused towards the strategic centre of gravity—support of the local population—regardless of whether this comes at the expense of operational tempo.

Without a strong base of local popular support for resistance movements, the provision of external support for these efforts risks the generation of guerrilla organisations that ultimately abuse the local population.[24] Importantly, the supporting nation risks losing its legitimacy if it comes to be seen as simply a puppet of external interests.[25] Therefore, support to resistance efforts should be limited to the achievement of effects which simply cannot be realised by the local population by themselves. Further, *any military capabilities that are designed to support national resistance should be simple, and innovation should be encouraged.* These approaches

help mitigate dependence on external support networks that might be disrupted by an occupier. They also ensure that any externally supported resistance effort remains anchored to the local political and economic situation within which it operates. Further, these measures constitute the most sustainable strategy for supporting an occupied nation in the event of prolonged hostilities.

While it is easy to fall back on World War II mental models of resistance movements, the international strategic environment is no longer limited by the influence of industrial era capabilities. Today, the concept of resistance is being shaped by the rapid rise of digital technology. This shift has been occurring 'in contact' in Ukraine, as civil society—at a global level—has mobilised to resist the Russian threat. Within three months of Russia's February 2022 escalation, the Ukrainian 'IT Army' had successfully drawn upon some 500,000 civilian cyber specialists world-wide to support digital resistance activities.[26] This capacity to spontaneously generate resources has shifted paradigms. For example, in World War II, resistance in the South Pacific was predicated on the Coastwatcher network of some 700 volunteers. By contrast, today every smartphone-equipped citizen has the potential to be part of an open-source intelligence network.[27] In the contemporary Ukraine example, this network has attempted to deter further Russian war crimes by using digital forensic tools (e.g., the platform #MoyaViyna) to document evidence of criminal activity that can support subsequent investigations.[28] More broadly, the Ukrainian cyber resistance movement has performed humanitarian tasks by, for example, supporting data collection to help prioritise and inform citizens of locations for aid distribution (i.e., the eDopomoga platform).[29] The Ukrainian experience not only shows the value of a digital resistance mindset but also suggests that 'quantity' (through civic mobilisation) has a certain 'quality' of its own. Such a mindset has been referred to by the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats as 'beehive mentality'.[30]

Organising Principles for Resilience/Resistance

The analysis above sets out the key considerations necessary for implementing a support to resistance concept. This section proposes an organising nomenclature for characterising the concepts most relevant to the concepts of resilience and resistance. Designating definitions in this way has several

purposes. First, it advances the theory of resistance by offering a 'ladder of escalation' for generating 'deterrence by denial' capabilities, including the identification of relevant considerations for different countries. Further, in the event of autocratic coercion, it helps inform resource requirements, supports inter-agency coordination efforts, and enhances the likelihood of successful strategic planning.

Resilience. Resilience can be understood as:

> a measure of the sustained ability of governance or a society to utilise resources and processes to respond to, withstand, and recover from natural or man-made shocks to its environmental norms and sustain systems of order.[31]

A country is resilient if it has robust capabilities and an ability to weather efforts at armed coercion while defending its territory. Preparations to protect local civilians from hostilities might include considerations such as civic defence (to provide emergency shelter), medical care, firefighting, and urban search and rescue. The primary focus of resilience efforts should be on whole-of-government and whole-of-society functions as opposed to military functions. Resilience defends national sovereignty (in 2021, Ukraine arguably met this categorisation, certainly in comparison with its preparations for national defence in 2014). A resilient country is unlikely to deter armed aggression solely through the threat of a prolonged insurgency, as there is unlikely to be sufficient national will and coordinated non-military activity to overwhelm the occupier. It may, however, be capable of deterrence through the combination of regular and irregular military and other capabilities.

Resistance. Resistance can be understood as 'a measure of an actors', groups', or populations' will and ability to withstand external pressure and influences and/or recover from the effects of those pressures or influences'.[32] A country is resistant to foreign occupation and violent coercion if it has resilient capacity, with an ability to wage violent and non-violent resistance over a prolonged period without reliance on the nation's internal armed forces (i.e., it can wage an insurgency). Resistance preparations are predominantly military in nature (i.e., the use of coercive force for political purposes).

A nation developing a resistance strategy needs the capacity to retain tight control over such pre-prepared networks. This includes the ability to coordinate violence from a government-in-exile if required, over a prolonged period of hostilities (e.g., Estonia, Switzerland and Finland likely meet this categorisation). A country capable of resistance should immediately be able to instigate offensive and defensive irregular and conventional warfare activities against a hostile state. It is likely, therefore, that such a country is able to deter aggression by denying an adversary the opportunity for partial or complete military occupation. By preparing prior to conflict, it maximises the likelihood of retaining its national sovereignty when it ultimately comes under threat.

Dissidence. The terminology of 'dissidence' is used to identify a 'latent' form of resistance, such as that which characterised Eastern Europe's struggle against the USSR's repression during the Cold War. Dissidence is defined as 'a state of mind involving discontent or disaffection with the regime'. [33] This state carries an ability to engage in non-violent resistance through patriotic fervour, national service, or forms of irregular warfare activity in response to the writ of the occupying regime to rule. It does not necessarily result in tangible or overt action. Stay-behind intelligence networks might be present. Characterised in this way, dissidence is inherently defensive in mindset. It is therefore unlikely to be capable of deterring armed aggression. Nevertheless, the existence of dissidence within a subjugated population is a predictor of potential for rapid social mobilisation (as was the case with the Eastern European Colour Revolutions at the end of the Cold War).

What Next?

Lessons continue to be learnt from the Russo-Ukraine war. Until two years ago, there existed only a theoretical understanding of how a resistance movement could survive autocratic repression in the digital age. Lessons from the Soviet repression of the Forest Brothers movement in the Baltics, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, Romanian anti-communist partisans, and the Polish Home Army following the end of World War II were forward cast.[34] Such lessons implied a role for ubiquitous technical surveillance, 'social credit scores' and commercially available telecommunications monitoring systems, among other contemporary tools. Russian repression of the

Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces has now tested these assumptions, and adjustment in light of their effectiveness will undoubtedly be necessary. Technical threats may require technical solutions, demanding that external nations provide resources to a subjugated population if modern resistance efforts are to survive.

Despite its growing prevalence on the battlefields of international competition, there is a significant educational gap regarding irregular warfare and the phenomenon of resistance across the ADF. With the recent raising of an ADF 'Special Warfare' capability, however, efforts to address this deficiency now have a point of focus. Over time, joint staffs will need to leverage Special Warfare officers and senior non-commissioned personnel to integrate resilience/resistance plans within joint force contingency planning. Without resourcing and prioritisation, however, it will take considerable time to generate a sufficient collective understanding of these concepts. Equally, however, preparations for resistance take time. The opportunity still exists to achieve the levels of education required. But closing the gap needs to become an ADF priority now.

Beyond education there must also be training. Staff officers must be trained in how to effectively coordinate regular and irregular armed forces; self-mobilising cyber actors and sensitive cyber warfare capabilities; and 'crowdsourced' intelligence and national technical means. Some of this training can be achieved by leveraging doctrine known as 'resistance operating concept'. Further, it is incumbent on ADF members to remain attuned to the relevance of Eastern European adaptations to the Russian threat. This appreciation can be achieved, in part, through routine wargaming, on promotion courses, and during major exercises. It is important that such opportunities incorporate aspects of the real-world complexity that underscores sovereign resilience and preparations for resistance.

In short, there is much to do if we are to meaningfully compete in a world of hybrid warfare and grey-zone activity.

Conclusion

As the DSR identifies, a 'business-as-usual approach is not appropriate'.[35] The world has changed from when the Defence of Australia mindset of defence *from* Asia sufficiently addressed national security concerns. Nor is the World War II (into early Cold War) mentality of Forward Defence—defence *in* Asia—appropriate to today's context. Instead, if Australia is to be a responsible middle power and secure its interests, it must become adept at generating security *with* Asia—of reinforcing democratic regimes, enhancing their resilience to grey-zone subversion and coercion and, if need be, supporting the development of resistance networks that can impose costs on an aggressor. By developing such capabilities with our northern neighbours, the ADF might deter aggression against our own sovereign interests by denying an adversary's ability to expand its influence against others within our strategic neighbourhood.

In this way, the development of resilience and resistance capabilities might achieve an 'unconventional deterrence' capability that complements Australia's existing conventional deterrence modernisation efforts. Australia might thus enhance its security, and that of likeminded partners, while mitigating the risk of crisis escalating into conflict. In short, the achievement of deterrence by denial constitutes a 'Plan B' for Australian national security strategy. The lessons of contemporary competition and conflict in Eastern Europe provide a firm basis upon which to generate a forward trajectory for Australia and its likeminded regional partners. The time to take action is now.

About the Author

Dr Andrew Maher is a Senior Lecturer at the University of New South Wales, Canberra. He has been a postgraduate lecturer on irregular warfare and special operations for over five years and has specialised on the analysis of proxy warfare. His forthcoming book *Riding Tigers: The Strategic Logic of Proxy Warfare* (2025) will explore the nature of strategic competition over the past 400 years. Dr Maher has also taught with Arizona State University, Joint Special Operations University and NATO Special Operations University, and through volunteer work at the Irregular Warfare Initiative. Dr Maher is a 20-year veteran of the Australian Defence Force, with extensive service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Endnotes

1   Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), p. 17, at: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/reviews-inquiries/defence-strategic-review.

2   Andrew Maher, 'Resistance Strategy: Lessons from the Russo-Ukraine conflict for Europe, Australia and the Indo-Pacific', *Australian Journal of Defence and Strategic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2023), at: https://www.defence.gov.au/research-innovation/research-publications/australian-journal-defence-and-strategic-studies-vol-5-number-1.

3   Andrew Maher, 'A "Plan B" for the ADF: Supporting Resistance as a Strategy', *The Strategist*, 21 July 2023, at: https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/a-plan-b-for-the-adf-supporting-resistance-as-a-strategy.

4   Otto Fiala (ed.), *Resistance Operating Concept* (Stockholm and Tampa, FL: Swedish Defence University and Joint Special Operations University, 2019). An alternative but similar definition is 'a form of contention or asymmetric conflict involving participants' limited or collective mobilisation of subversive and/or disruptive efforts against an authority or structure'. Jonathan B Cosgrove and Erin N Hahn, *Conceptual Typology of Resistance* (United States Army Special Operations Command and The John Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, February 2021).

5   Irregular Warfare Initiative, 'On Resistance' virtual panel discussion, 20 May 2022, at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pdsS1l1x9HI.

6   Tomas Jermalavičius and Merle Parmak, 'Societal Resilience: A Basis for Whole-of-Society Approach to National Security', in Kevin Stringer and Glennis Napier (eds), *Resistance Views: Essays on Unconventional Warfare and Small State Resistance, 2014* (Joint Special Operations University, 2018). Importantly, as Jermalavičius and Parmak note, resilience is a much better narrative for orchestrating broader government and non-government organisations that otherwise would be unlikely to be involved with national security.

7   Stephen P Halbrook, *The Swiss and the Nazis: How the Alpine Republic Survived in the Shadow of the Third Reich* (Philadelphia PA: Casemate, 2006).

8   Erica Chenoweth and Maria J Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 2011).

9   The Thai resistance in World War II is notable in this regard. John B Haseman, *The Thai Resistance Movement during the Second World War*, Special Report No. 17 (Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1978).

10 This finding by Chenoweth and Stephan must be tempered by recent autocratic adaptations to non-violent resistance methods following the Arab Spring uprisings. While it has historically been more effective, the evidence to suggest that it will continue to be more effective is unclear.

11 Halik Kochanski, *Resistance: The Underground War in Europe, 1939–45* (Allen Lane, 2022).

12 A notable exception was the British plan ORIENTAL, which sought to establish 'stay-behind' networks in Hong Kong, Indochina, Malaya and Burma, which was only adopted in a half-hearted manner in mid-1941. F Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle is Neutral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1949).

13 A confirmation of this finding lies in the armed resistance that emerged following the coup in Myanmar on 1 February 2021. Anthony Ware and Monique Skidmore, 'Post-Coup Myanmar's Political and Humanitarian Crises', in Anthony Ware and Monique Skidmore (eds), *After the Coup: Myanmar's Political and Humanitarian Crises* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2023).

14 Matthew Cobb, *The Resistance: The French Fight against the Nazis* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

15   Stathis N Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

16   David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport CT: Praeger Security International, [1964], 2006).

17   Dan Kaszeta, *The Forest Brotherhood: Baltic Resistance against the Nazis and Soviets* (London: Hurst, 2023).

18   William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (London: Zed Books, 1994).

19   Kristen Ryan et al., *Resistance and the Cyber Domain* (Fort Bragg: US Army Special Operations Command, 2019).

20   Stephen Vines, *Defying the Dragon: Hong Kong and the World's Largest Dictatorship* (London: Hurst, 2021).

21   Felip Daza Sierra, *Ukrainian Nonviolent Civil Resistance in the Face of War: Analysis of Trends, Impacts and Challenges of Nonviolent Action in Ukraine between February and June 2022* (Barcelona: International Catalan Institute for Peace, 2022); Hardy Merriman, Patrick Quirk and Ash Jain, *Fostering a Fourth Democratic Wave: A Playbook for Countering the Authoritarian Threat* (Atlantic Council and International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict, 2023).

22   Janet Cherry, *Umkhonto weSizwe* (Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2011), p. 60.

23   Strategic Services, *Simple Sabotage Field Manual*, Strategic Services Field Manual No. 3 (Washington D.C.: Office of Strategic Services (17 January 1944), at: https://www.cia.gov/static/5c875f3ec660e092cf893f60b4a288df/SimpleSabotage.pdf.

24   Jeremy M. Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

25   Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *The Role of External Support in Nonviolent Campaigns: Poisoned Chalice or Holy Grail?*, ICNC Monograph Series (International Centre on Nonviolence Conflict, 2021).

26   'The Digital Component of Ukraine's Resistance to Russian Aggression', Atlantic Council website, 17 May 2022, at: https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/event/the-digital-component-of-ukraines-resistance-to-russian-aggression (accessed 2 November 2023).

27   Alan Powell, *War by Stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau, 1942–1945* (Carlton South: Melbourne University Press, 1995); Strategeast, *Ukrainian Digital Resistance to Russian Aggression* (Washington DC: Strategeast, 2022), p. 5.

28   'The Digital Component of Ukraine's Resistance to Russian Aggression', Atlantic Council.

29   Strategeast, *Ukrainian Digital Resistance to Russian Aggression*, p. 9.

30   Jakub Kalenský and Roman Osadchuk, *How Ukraine Fights Russian Disinformation: Beehive vs Mammoth*, Hybrid CoE Research Report 11 (The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats, January 2024), p. 17.

31   Burrell and Collison, 'A Guide for Measuring Resiliency and Resistance', p. 3.

32   Ibid., p. 4.

33   Director of Central Intelligence, *Anti-Communist Resistance Potential in the Sino-Soviet Bloc*, National Intelligence Estimate 10-58 (4 March 1958), declassified 11 December 2013, p. 1. By contrast, resistance is 'dissidence translated into action' (p. 1).

34   Lindsay A O'Rouke, *Covert Regime Change: America's Secret Cold War* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2018); Andrei Miroiu, 'Early Cold War Counterinsurgency: The Romanian Campaign in Comparative Perspective (1944–1962)', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 26, no. 4 (2024), pp. 1–18, p. 1; Kaszeta, *The Forest Brotherhood*.

35   The broader context of this statement is 'The strategic risks we face require the implementation of a new approach to planning, force posture, force structure, capability development and acquisition … It is clear that a business-as-usual approach is not appropriate'. Department of Defence, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, p. 24.

'No Other System Could Have Achieved the Result': The Australian Beach Groups, 1943–1945

Dayton McCarthy

The process of getting men and vehicles ashore during an assault landing and maintaining them at their full fighting efficiency is complicated by the very nature of the operation … it is no exaggeration to say that once a beach head has been secured, the success of the operation will depend very largely on the early establishment and smooth running of an efficient beach organisation.[1]

Introduction and Context

By 1943, the American and Australian forces had gained the initiative against the Japanese in New Guinea, and General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) went on the offensive. In broad terms, he wished to leapfrog along the northern coast of New Guinea, capturing footholds from which to launch subsequent air and amphibious attacks on increasingly isolated Japanese positions. These subordinate operations were part of the larger one—Operation Cartwheel—whose goal was to isolate and reduce the pivotal Japanese garrison on Rabaul. One such subordinate attack was Operation Postern in September 1943. It combined an amphibious landing near Lae with a flanking

parachute drop and air landing at Nadzab. While it achieved its objective, the amphibious landing conducted by the 9th Australian Division generated many lessons relating to logistics and management of an amphibious beachhead. The planned scheme of manoeuvre, wherein the Australians would be carried and landed by American vessels, was influenced by the general lack of amphibious ships and landing craft available to the SWPA at that time. However, several of these lessons pertained to the compressed training and preparation time that had been available before the landing. For example, there had been limited opportunity to train with the 2nd Engineering Special Brigade (2 ESB) (the specialist United States Army amphibious force that provided the smaller landing craft in the ship-to-shore connector role) as well as the troops allocated the tasks of onshore stevedoring and beach management.[2] There were other key issues identified during and after Operation Postern. Foremost was the gross miscalculation of logistics requirements within the beachhead and a general lack of experience in amphibious logistical planning.[3] This resulted in the diversion of fighting battalions from operational tasks to the beachhead, where they acted as labour to unload stores and equipment from the landed craft. Further, poor layout and management of the beachhead and beach maintenance area (BMA) resulted in crowded, unprotected and misplaced stores.[4]

The BMA was a linchpin in any amphibious operation. This was the term given to the beaches developed for landing and the logistical area immediately inland of the shore. Here beach groups established stores dumps, workshops, and transit areas to maintain the formations and units in the forward area and to maintain a steady flow of traffic through the beaches. Operation Postern highlighted the need for clear and unified responsibility for the beachhead. For that landing, the 9th Australian Division with some attached units (most notably elements of 2 ESB) was responsible for the beachhead and later the BMA, all the while trying to push inland and fight to its objective. The integration of 2 ESB into 9th Division's command structure did not result from a desire to keep a key logistic element 'in house' but was instead born of a misunderstanding about the role of a divisional headquarters in such landing operations. As a result, responsibilities (and therefore command authorities) were not well understood or specified by the divisional headquarters, resulting in mismanagement at the beachhead. For example, 2 ESB would be responsible for aspects such as beach signage, organisation of the beach,

control of landings, unloading of craft and handling of labour—including attached Australian pioneers assigned to this task. The divisional deputy assistant quartermaster-general (DAQMG) was responsible for the design of the 'key plan' (the planned layout of the BMA) but also had ongoing supply responsibilities once the division was ashore. The divisional chief Royal Engineers (CRE—senior engineer planner) was responsible for beach exits, which were a fundamental part of the key plan, but the ESB would actually do the engineering work with Australian plant operators attached.[5] It was a less than ideal situation leading one post-landing analysis to observe that 'beach organisation and unloading must be under control of one officer who should not be concerned with other administrative functions'.[6]

Many of the issues with beachhead management had been already identified in the amphibious training *prior* to Postern. These too may be grouped into matters of command and control, sufficiency of troops to task, planning considerations around the layout of a BMA, and general familiarity with the demands and nuances of amphibious operations. For example, one report on the exercises conducted by the 6th Australian Division in August 1943 noted 'poor organisation of labour', 'slow discharge of stores and personnel', 'absence of flank protection on the actual beach', 'absence of any markings on beach to indicate areas searched and cleared of mines' and 'congestion on the beach'.[7] Likewise, the 9th Division, in a pre-Postern training report, recorded that it needed more time to operate with 2 ESB. It noted that the 'pioneer battalion complete has not functioned in conjunction with [2 ESB] Shore Battalion' and that Australian engineers 'have not participated in construction of Maintenance Area' and 'have not trained with this unit [2 ESB]—always dets replaced by other units. Hence liaison by essential personalities not made'.[8] After the landing, the 9th Division identified that the current system—essentially grafting several attached Australian and US units onto the division—was no longer fit for purpose. In response, it recommended:

> [A] Beach Group … should be so formed that it contains units of all the services and should … provide local protection from within its own resources. Shortly after D-Day it should be responsible for all reception and holding in the beach maintenance area, for forward distribution as far as the divisional rear dump area and for evacuation to and from the beach and beach maintenance area.[9]

Importantly the beach group did not remove the fighting division's need to undertake logistical planning or conduct the normal logistical replenishments of its units once ashore. Instead, the beach group was an interface to help a landed force transition from sea to land:

> The interposition of a beach organisation into the normal system of maintenance in the field should not create any special difficulties. The only difference between a landing operation and land warfare is that Beach Group commander has been given an organisation with which to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the smooth delivery of the force and its requirements from ships and craft to suitably prepared transit areas and dumps.[10]

Thus exercises and operations conducted in 1943 illustrated that the Australian Army was deficient in certain logistics and command and control functions, hindering it from becoming a fit-for-purpose amphibious organisation. One such deficiency was the management of the beachhead during the landing and initial breakout stages, along with conduct of all aspects of logistics to, from and through the beachhead and beach maintenance area, linking the fighting formations ashore with their seaborne support. In response—and absorbing the British experience from the North Africa and Sicily landings—the Australian Army created the 1st and 2nd Australian Beach Groups in late 1943 and early 1944. These units would be instrumental in 1945 when the 7th and 9th Australian Divisions conducted three large-scale amphibious landings in Borneo as part of the Oboe operations.[11]

The Response—Organisation, Training and Doctrine of the Australian Beach Groups

The Army's response to the recommendations of the Operation Postern after-action report was swift. The exact timeline of events between the report's submission and the decision to raise a beach group is unclear; to date the author has not been able to find an executive document ordering the beach groups' formation. Indeed, it is entirely possible that the decision to create a beach group was made before or concurrent with Operation Postern. By tracking unit movements into the Cairns-Atherton Tablelands area, where non-deployed Australian forces were training,

one may determine that a decision to raise the 1st Australian Beach Group was made in late September 1943.[12] Throughout October, Land Headquarters informed those units that had been identified for inclusion in the beach group.[13] With a concentration date set for 17 November 1943, the compressed time frame meant that the majority of units selected were already located nearby in the Atherton Tablelands.[14]

The 1st Australian Beach Group coalesced from 15 November 1943, when the various component units concentrated at Deadman's Gully just north of Cairns.[15] The group was originally placed under command of the 6th Australian Division (indeed, some early correspondence referred to it as the 'Beach Group, 6th Australian Division'). Its first training instruction was released the next day, 16 November, by the inaugural chief instructor, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred Lionel Rose. Rose had been attached from Headquarters, I Australian Corps to the 6th Division since 6 October, charged with 'the formation of [the] Beach Group and [its] training … at Cairns'.[16] He was a good choice: he had previously been a staff officer at the Directorate of Military Operations and Plans at Land Headquarters, an instructor at the First Australian Army Combined Training School and a liaison officer to the US 2 ESB.[17] Rose was also ably assisted by several officers who had been instructors at the recently disestablished Amphibious Training Centre at Toorbul Point in Queensland. In February 1944, these specialists would form the 1st Australian Military Landing Group, the expert body of amphibious staff planners who would augment divisional and brigade headquarters during the planning and execution of amphibious operations.[18] Rose would later move back to corps headquarters, assisting in overall amphibious training and doctrine development. In 1945 he would observe the actions of the beach groups during the three Oboe landings and pen the after-action reviews to refine the structures and procedures further.

Australia decided to base the new beach group organisation on the British model—but with certain differences and adaptations.[19] Indeed, the term 'beach group' itself was British in origin. Australia would maintain the Royal Navy/Royal Australian Navy (RAN) Beach Commando organisation that was attached for landings. The RAN Beach Commando marked the landing beach, coordinated the beaching and turnaround of craft with the senior naval officer afloat, and conducted recovery and salvage of damaged landing craft.[20] During Operation Postern this function was shared between US Navy and 2 ESB personnel.[21] Australian planners determined to allocate

one beach group per division, not one per brigade as the British had done. Landings in Europe were planned to be multi-divisional in nature, landing on wide open beaches with easy exits. By contrast, in the SWPA, the Australians considered an amphibious landing beyond divisional size unlikely. Accordingly, there was no need for the beach groups to work with each other or come under an umbrella command. Likewise, the terrain of the SWPA was one of small and narrow beaches hemmed in by dense jungle with few, if any, usable tracks for vehicular traffic. This would influence the types of units allocated to the beach group. Differences in beach terrain in the SWPA placed far greater emphasis on engineers with heavy plant to make exits and roads into the jungle and on transport units for negotiating restricted tracks that were likely to be soft surfaces. By contrast to the European theatre, where dump areas were ordinarily located some miles from the beach, under jungle conditions dump areas were often no more than 800 metres inland.

The nature of the SWPA operating environment highlighted the importance of the key plan selecting the best terrain at the beachhead in which to place the various dumps, workshops, vehicle parks and so on. Port operating companies—which were part and parcel of the British model— were deemed unsuitable for the predicted operating environment with few developed ports. They were, however, kept at corps level and could be allocated to the beach group if required. Two other terrain influences in the SWPA modified the Australian model. Many amphibious landings in the SWPA had been 'wet-shod'—that is, the landing craft had not been able to beach due to shore gradients and other oceanographic features. As a result, many vehicles 'drowned' when disembarking. This necessitated the addition of a salvage unit. Likewise, in the SWPA tropical diseases had often taken more of a toll than enemy action, so the Australian model included a malaria control unit capable of spraying large areas with insecticides.[22]

It is fascinating to observe the ongoing tension between the British and American models and doctrine within the Australian Army at that time. For example, the amphibious command and staff courses run by I Australian Corps used a combination of US and British texts. Those studied included British combined operations pamphlets such as *Beach Organisation and Maintenance* and the US *FM 31-5 Landing Operations on Hostile Shores* and *FTP 167 Landing Operations Doctrine, US Navy*.[23] One may observe that the conduct of amphibious operations themselves,

with the almost complete reliance on US Navy ships and US Army landing craft commanded by the US 7th Amphibious Force (which also assumed carriage of amphibious training), steadily infused the American methods and doctrine into Australian training and operations. However, the British influence (Australia relied almost wholly on British-issued manuals and doctrine until 1941) remained strong.[24] Use of British nomenclature ('combined operations') continued and it remained the case that several key staff officers at corps headquarters were British or had been exposed to British amphibious schooling. For example, the general staff officer (GSO) 1 (Combined Operations) at I Australian Corps was Lieutenant Colonel TK Walker, Royal Marines.[25] In the structure and doctrine of the beach group, the British model held almost total sway. Indeed, the Australians had specifically rejected the US engineer boat and shore regiments as a basis for a potential beach organisation after Operation Postern. The after-action report noted that the landing beaches in the operational area required an organisation that focused solely on the 'shore' aspects of a landing. This included the need for organic signals, supply, transport (with vehicles) and engineers (with plant) that could work independently without calling on divisional resources.[26]

Initially the 1st Australian Beach Group comprised a pioneer battalion, a field engineer company, a heavy equipment platoon, an Army beach signals section, an anti-aircraft battery, a field ambulance, a field workshop, a beach ordnance detachment, a provost section and the RAN Beach Commando. The first 20-day training program was comprehensive. It was immersive and began with classroom theory, progressing to model and 'dry-shod' exercises before culminating in the practical—and most challenging—aspects of amphibious operations such as embarkation, landing and setting up a BMA. Although the group initially had access to only a limited number of small landing craft, they were incorporated constantly into all aspects of practical training. This meant there was some commonality—amphibious doctrine and general responsibilities—mixed with role-specific training. The pioneers focused on handling stores and beach defence; the field company (with the heavy equipment section attached) trained for road-making through the jungle with and without mechanical equipment, preparing beach exits, demolishing sandbars and mine clearance and gap marking; the ordnance detachment practised the creation and camouflage of stores dumps; and the field ambulance prepared for setting up a beach dressing station and the evacuation of

wounded soldiers seawards.[27] The Cairns surrounds admirably replicated the jungle, swamp and beach terrain that would subsequently be encountered in the SWPA.[28]

On 29 December 1943, the group expanded with the addition of a general transport company, a RAN Beach Signals Section, a supply depot platoon, and malaria control and salvage units.[29] At this point its first commanding officer, Colonel Harold Redvers Langford OBE MC, also marched in, marking the point at which the group headquarters became a genuine command element rather than just a training one. This change would be later reflected in I Australian Corps routine orders, which officially designated it 'Headquarters, 1st Australian Beach Group'.[30] From 1 January 1944, the beach group came under command of I Australian Corps, which was a far more fitting command arrangement reflecting the fact that the beach group would be in support of, but not part of, any landed divisional force.

Table 1. Units and responsibilities within an Australian beach group

| Unit Type	Role
Beach Group Headquarters	Conformation of key plan, BMA reconnaissance, linking up with brigade and divisional HQs, overseeing beach and construction of BMA
RAN Beach Commando	Marking of beach, control of inwards and seawards movement of craft to and from the beach
Beach Signals Section (RAN)	Communications between naval authorities ashore and those afloat
Beach Signal Section (Army)	Internal beach group communications, communications with landed units and headquarters, providing communications between units and headquarters afloat during assault
Pioneer Battalion	Assisting Royal Australian Engineers units in engineering tasks, provision of beach companies for stevedoring, close-in defence of BMA, guarding prisoner-of-war cage, building latrines
Royal Australian Engineers Beach Group Company (+)	Clearance of obstacles and mines, disposal of unexploded ordnance, marking of gaps, creation of dump areas, creation of lateral and inland roads, laying of mesh on beach for heavy vehicles, creation of beach exits, creation of water supply, construction of beach lighting

Unit Type	Role
Supply Depot Platoon	Receiving and accounting for all forces supplies and bulk water coming ashore and within BMA dumps; providing stock states to HQ 9th Division
Bulk Issue Petrol Oil Depot (BIPOD)	Establishment of BIPOD as per key plan; handling and issue of all petrol, oil and lubricants; providing stock states to higher command formation
General Transport Company	Transporting stores to dumps within the BMA
Australian Army Medical Corps Beach Company	Establishment of field ambulance and beach dressing station, beach surgical team and casualty embarkation officer (back-loading of casualties from shore to ship)
Malaria Control Unit	Malarial control measures within the BMA
Ordnance Beach Detachment	Establishment and management of forward ammunition depot, replenishing units as required, sending ammunition state to higher command formation
Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Detachment	Establishment of beach workshop for first-line repairs and vehicle recovery section for 'drowned' vehicles
Beach Group Provost	Signposting, traffic management within and from the beachhead, straggler control, policing beaches to prevent looting
Salvage Unit	Collecting salvaged equipment from beaches and within BMA for either reissue to ordnance or evacuation seaward

Note: It is notable that by the time the beach groups were employed in 1945, the Allies had complete air superiority and so there was no requirement for an organic anti-aircraft battery to defend the beachhead.

Initially the basic composition of the group headquarters was very lean. Its commanding officer was a colonel; this rank was usually reserved for staff appointments rather than command ones, but such a rank was necessary considering many of the group's subordinate units were commanded by lieutenant colonels. The other officers comprised a staff captain (responsible for the administrative and logistical functions within the group), a major DAQMG (responsible for amendments to the key plan and oversight of the BMA); a lieutenant intelligence officer (siting of the BMA based on intelligence products); and a lieutenant GSO3 (responsible for the current operations functions). Within the other ranks, the headquarters

had one draughtsman, six to seven clerks, one intelligence dutyman, six batmen, two cooks and three general duties staff. Later this headquarters would increase in establishment based on identified gaps in capability. For example, significantly more general duties soldiers were added along with two staff captains, assisted by staff learners, who were appointed to provide a dedicated officer for each of the 'A' and 'Q' functions.[31] Attached to the group was the RAN Beach Commando of about 18 officers and 113 other ranks, which comprised a principal beachmaster, a deputy principal beachmaster, three beach parties, a boat repair and recovery team, and a naval signals section. In total, when all subordinate units of a beach group came together, including the standing headquarters and the RAN Beach Commando, the basic organisation was just over 1,800 men. This figure waxed and waned depending on unit strengths and ad hoc attachments to the beach group for specific tasks. For example, at the Tarakan landing (Oboe 1), the 2nd Australian Beach Group comprised 1,989 men and 247 vehicles of all types.[32]

Figure 1. Units, with personnel strengths and associated vehicles, for the 2nd Australian Beach Group for Operation Oboe 1, May 1945
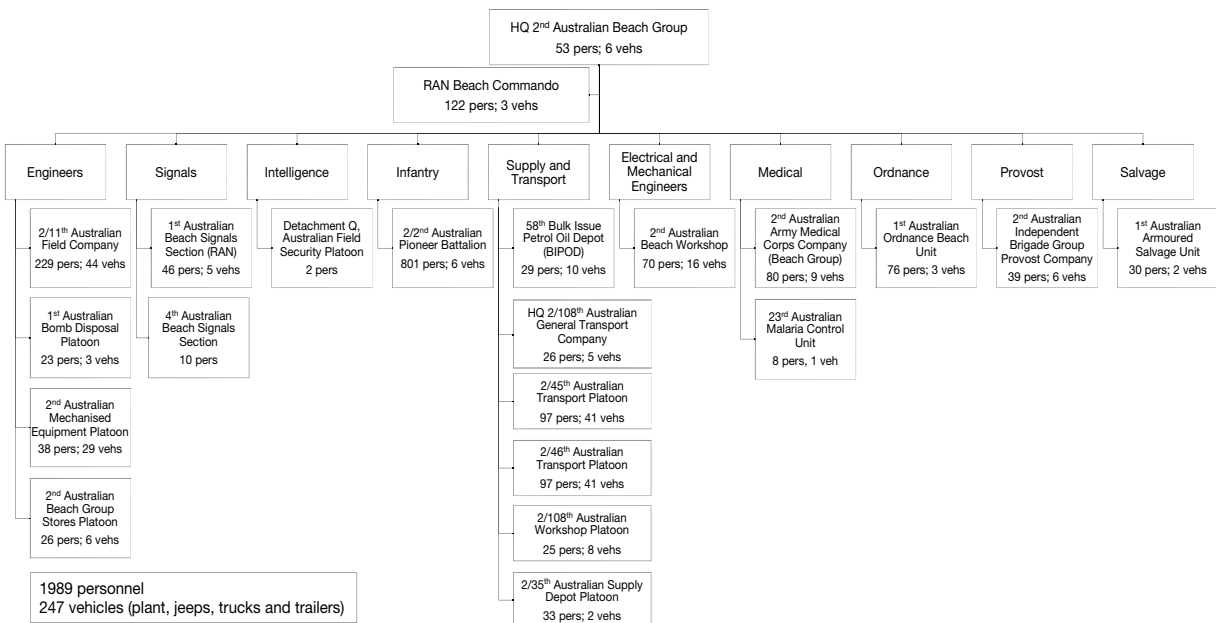
Source: AWM 52, 1/11/4/7, *2nd Australian Beach Group, April 1945*, 'Appendix A Part II, OBOE One. Composition of 2 Aust Beach Group Under Comd 26 Aust Inf Bde.'

There is little evidence that a specific type of officer was selected to be a beach group commanding officer. However, the high quality of command and operational experience among appointees would suggest that the importance of the beach group to an amphibious operation's success was well understood by the chain of command when selecting candidates. The only commonality was that all had been commanding officers as lieutenant colonels. Two had been wounded in action and three were decorated for performance during this previous command.[33] Two were older than average for officers at that stage of the war. Indeed, decisions of medical boards caused the 1st Australian Beach Group to cycle through its first two commanding officers (Langford aged 49 and Colonel William John Wain DSO aged 45) within eight months. Colonel Clement James Cummings OBE assumed command on 28 August 1944 and remained in command throughout the rest of the war.[34] The 2nd Australian Beach Group enjoyed far greater command continuity; its inaugural commanding officer, Colonel Charles Ralph Hodgson, remained with the group throughout, leading it at both Tarakan and Balikpapan. For the latter operation, Hodgson was awarded the DSO for 'excellence and flexibility of his planning … organisation, leadership and energy'.[35] The other key staff officers on the beach groups' headquarters, the DAQMGs, had more homogenous backgrounds. Prior to his appointment as the DAQMG in the 1st Australian Beach Group, Major John Ebsworth Gannon, had been a 'Q' staff captain on the corps headquarters. Likewise, his equivalent in the 2nd Australian Beach Group, Major Keith Charles Collins, had completed staff courses prior to being posted to Headquarters I Australian Corps as a 'staff learner'.[36]

The training program of the beach group expanded with the addition of new subordinate units in late December 1943. In addition to Beach Training Group Instruction No 1 and 'applicable combined operations pamphlets as they become available', training was guided by I Australian Corps Training Instruction No 2—*Combined Operations, Beach Organisation and Maintenance* of December 1943.[37] Indeed this latter instruction became the foundational document that guided the training, development and deployment of the beach group from that point forward.[38] Throughout 1944, the 1st Australian Beach Group conducted a series of exercises in support of various formations. This allowed a constant finessing of skills in the development of the key plan and the BMA. It also gradually progressed amphibious knowledge among the 7th and 9th Divisions, which the groups

supported. When the Landing Ship Infantry (LSI—a troop carrier) HMAS *Kanimbla* became available, the group studied ship's routine, lowering of craft and embarkation of troops.[39] Likewise, when a Landing Ship Tank (LST—the large workhorse of the amphibious fleet, capable of beaching) was allocated for training, the group practised 'tactical and economical loading … and the method employed and times required in unloading stores and vehicles'.[40] Reviewing such training, it is apparent that the lessons learned from and before Postern were woven constantly into the group's training throughout 1944. The training stressed unity of command and clear delineation of responsibility for creation and management of the beach area; inclusion of units of sufficient strength and *capability* to undertake all the identified functions necessary for a beachhead; deep familiarisation with working with, in and around ships and other craft, and finally constant practice in designing a key plan and then actually creating a beach maintenance area on the tropical north Queensland beaches. The guiding principle that underpinned training and organisation was that the beach group was to establish a BMA:

> to receive and handle all stores, vehicles and equipment required by the fighting troops and have them available for issue on demand. The BMA fulfils the functions of an ordinary Base Sub-Area and of re-filling points in the field from the time of an assault landing to the time when the normal system of replenishment in the field is operating through captured ports.[41]

Throughout 1944, the 1st and 2nd Australian Beach Groups participated in no fewer than five major brigade-level amphibious exercises wherein landing craft were used and full BMAs designed and constructed. In each of these exercises, personnel, stores and vehicles were unloaded so a genuine understanding of work rates and troops to task could be gained and improved upon. Such exercises also finessed the beach groups' understanding of the priority of landing. A comparison of the landing tables of these exercises with those of the three Oboe landings is illuminating, showing that training informed operational practice. The first elements to land—either in the initial wave or not long after—were the RAN Beach Commandos and the beach control companies. Next were elements of the RAN and Army beach signals section. With these elements landed and operational, a command-and-control structure was present on the beach

to coordinate landings. Within 10 to 20 minutes, elements of the medical section landed to establish a dressing station, while parties of engineers with dozers and mesh sleds began preparing the beach for the arrival and passage of heavy vehicles. At this time the reconnaissance party from the beach group headquarters landed. Its role was to determine the suitability of the first key plan and whether any modifications needed to be made once the true state of the terrain was understood. From that point forward, the beach group would build up, with the pioneers landing in time to unload the stores that came in the later post-assault waves.

Comprehensive training supported the overall infusion of amphibious competency in I Australian Corps generally. Staff from the 1st Australian Beach Group, with key amphibious experts at corps headquarters, assisted in the creation of the 2nd Australian Beach Group, which was raised in March 1944. In supporting a 10-day command and staff course, 1st Australian Beach Group established a full beach maintenance area so that students, equipped with the key plan, could understand the importance of selecting firm ground, the space required for a BMA to support a division, and what a BMA looked like up to H + eight hours after a landing. The group also instructed the students on the mechanics of landing, including the method of control by beach group headquarters, the method of RAN and Army control of the beaches, the system of traffic control, the movement of stores from craft to dumps, and the types and capabilities of mechanical equipment needed to create a BMA on narrow beaches surrounded by dense jungle.[42]
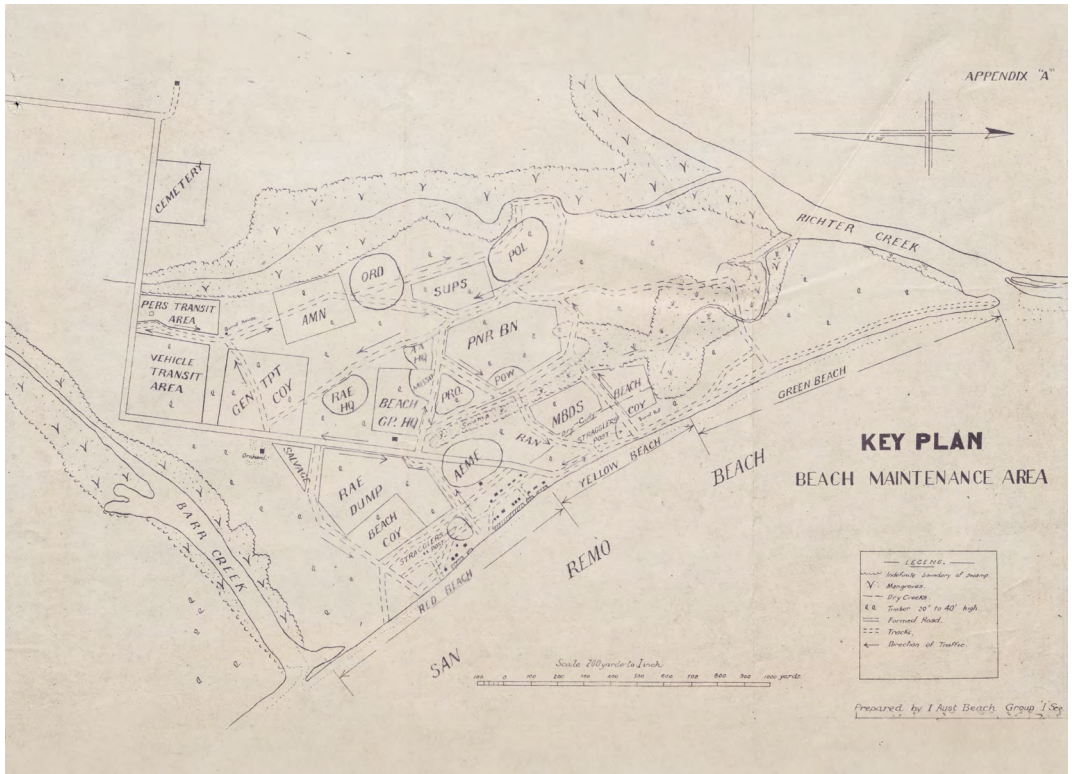
Figure 2. Key plan in support of the command and staff course. An initial key plan set out the proposed layout of a BMA. A second key plan was released after landing and included changes resulting from on-the-ground reconnaissance that confirmed the suitability or otherwise of terrain. (Source: AWM 52, 1/11/2/2, *1st Combined Operations Section, July 1944, Amphibious Training*)

Operation Oboe—the Organisation is Proven

It is not the intention of this article to detail the rationale or overall operational specifics of the three Oboe landings conducted by the 7th and 9th Divisions of I Australian Corps during May to July 1945. These matters have been debated before and have been covered elsewhere.[43] For the purposes here, a brief outline is sufficient. The landings took place at three locations on the island of Borneo. Each assault staged from Morotai and was heavily supported by US Navy ships and US Army landing craft. The Allies had air superiority and the Japanese defenders were fixed on the island—noting that MacArthur had already captured the Philippines, dislocating Borneo from the Japanese home islands.

Oboe 1 was the landing on Tarakan, a small island off the north-east coast of Borneo, by the oversized 26th Australian Infantry Brigade Group (a formation of the 9th Division) on 1 May 1945. The 2nd Australian Beach Group was allocated to this landing; since this was essentially a divisional (–) landing, it was appropriate and consistent with doctrine for the entire beach group to be used. For the duration of the operation, the beach group was placed under command of the brigade. The salient feature of this landing was that the objective beach was small, narrow and muddy, with a high tide to low tide differential of 250 metres and a tidal range of 3 metres depth. At low tide, this created a long and soft mud flat, whereas at high tide there was effectively no beach, other than a strip of black mud upon which to establish a beachhead. For the purposes of the assault landing, this area was divided into 'Red', 'Yellow' and 'Green' beaches. On 'P' Day, 'H' Hour was set at 0815. The lead battalions landed at 0816. Elements of the RAN Beach Commando were with the initial assault conducting wave control from a boat on the flanks.[44] Three beach control parties (one for each beach) comprising a beach company commander, a RAN beachmaster, two beach control officers and two RAN assistant beachmasters (with a signals section) landed with the first waves of infantry to control landings from the shore.[45] These elements were ashore by 0820.[46] The advance headquarters of the 2nd Australian Beach Group was ashore at 0920. One may discern the importance and the role of this advance party by its composition: the DAQMG, the intelligence officer and the 'Q' staff captain. This group immediately checked to see whether the reality of the ground would be suitable for the first key plan, which had been designed previously

based on intelligence products alone. Once on the ground, this group would have to make major adjustments to the first key plan because of the extremely limited amount of usable ground that was available until the Japanese were pushed further inland.[47] The commanding officer of the group landed at 0930 and the main headquarters was established by 1100. By 1700, most of the group was ashore and discharging its duties.[48]

The group's activities were complicated by the narrow, muddy shore, the inability to move heavy vehicles off the beach, and the falling tide that beached the heavier vessels just offshore. Several of these vessels remained stranded until the spring tide came in 12 days later. Nonetheless the group unloaded 1,500 tonnes of stores on P-Day and a further 1,200 tonnes on P+1. Lieutenant Colonel Rose, previously the first chief instructor of the 1st Australian Beach Group, was attached to the landing party as an observer on behalf of the 1st Australian Combined Operations Section within I Australian Corps. He later reported that 'as this is the first operation in which an Australian Beach Group was committed, its activities have been watched with interest'.[49] A no-nonsense man who seldom minced words, Rose dryly recorded that the beach parties 'did excellent work' and their 'early beach (mud) reconnaissance, beach marking (day and night) was also well done'. He observed that the pioneers 'worked like Trojans' and 'all dump stocks [were] carefully sorted and stacked. Ammunition, rations, water, petrol, oil, and lubricants [were issued] on P Day'. Rose recommended that the provost element be increased by two sections as they were 'overworked and totally inadequate in strength'. Overall, he assessed:

> Serious congestion has been avoided so far by good organisation. BMA cramped by tactical situation and will not be easy till a traffic circuit is obtained through Tarakan … the doctrine is sound and faithfully carried out. In the worst conditions probably of any theatre, no other system could have achieved the result obtained.[50]

Worthy of note also was that the group's organic pioneer battalion was required to act in the close defence role on the night of 1–2 May clearing Japanese remnants within 1 kilometre of the beach.

Figure 3. Troops landing at Tarakan after the initial assault waves. The image shows the LST berthed alongside pontoon bridges. In the foreground the narrow, muddy shoreline is covered in debris caused by the pre-landing bombardment. The RAN assistant beachmaster (white cap and beard) directs troops across the beachhead. (Source: AWM 090882)

The two subsequent landings, Oboe 6 in Brunei in June and Oboe 2 at Balikpapan in July, were successful. In Oboe 6, the 1st Australian Beach Group, supporting the 9th Australian Division (–), landed in good order, on time, and began operations according to the schedule and doctrine. The first key plan needed little adjustment and a BMA was constructed quickly, accompanied by the efficient unloading of stores.[51] The engineers' heavy plant (graders and mobile cranes in particular) proved their worth. The commanding officer, Colonel CJ Cummings, later wrote that the group's plan for, and action during, the landing:

> was based wholly on the training the Group had received and was in accordance with the principle set out in I Australian Corps pamphlet Beach Organisation and Maintenance. It is considered … those principles … to be correct.[52]

Cummings was also sure that his soldiers knew they had done well. In an order of the day, he passed on that the operation's naval commander, Rear Admiral Royal, US Navy, had visited the beach area and 'stated that it was the neatest job he had ever seen as far as control and clearance of the beaches and stacking at dumps was concerned'.[53]

The landing at Balikpapan—Oboe 2—was conducted by the 7th Australian Division and supported by the 2nd Australian Beach Group, which had withdrawn from Tarakan in late May. This would be the first and last time an Australian beach group worked in concert with a full divisional landing. Again, the landing area was divided into three beaches—'Red', 'Yellow' and 'Green'. F-Day was set for 1 July 1945; H-Hour was 0900. As per doctrine, beach control teams went in with the first waves. The next elements of the 2nd Australian Beach Group, including its commander, Colonel Hodgson, and the RAN beachmaster, Lieutenant Commander Morris, had landed in the fifth wave, setting up advanced headquarters on 'Green' Beach at 0935 and 'Yellow' Beach at 0945.[54] The beach group's medical company set up soon thereafter and treated its first casualty at 1005.[55] The beach itself was superior to the mangroves and mud that Hodgson and Morris had experienced at Tarakan. The firm beach and lack of dense mangroves meant that vehicles were not bogged and could exit efficiently off the sand. The BMA was reconnoitred and signposted within two hours of the landing depots. Unit areas were established in accordance with the first key plan and were receiving stores by the evening of 2 July. In the initial stages, the small amphibious trucks known as DUKWs brought 3-inch and 4.2-inch mortar and 25-pounder ammunition directly from the ships to the weapons, while other ammunition was shipped to beach dumps operated by the 2/1st Ordnance Beach Detachment. These dumps remained in use longer than anticipated because the dump area allocated on the first key plan was found to be boggy and thus unsuitable.
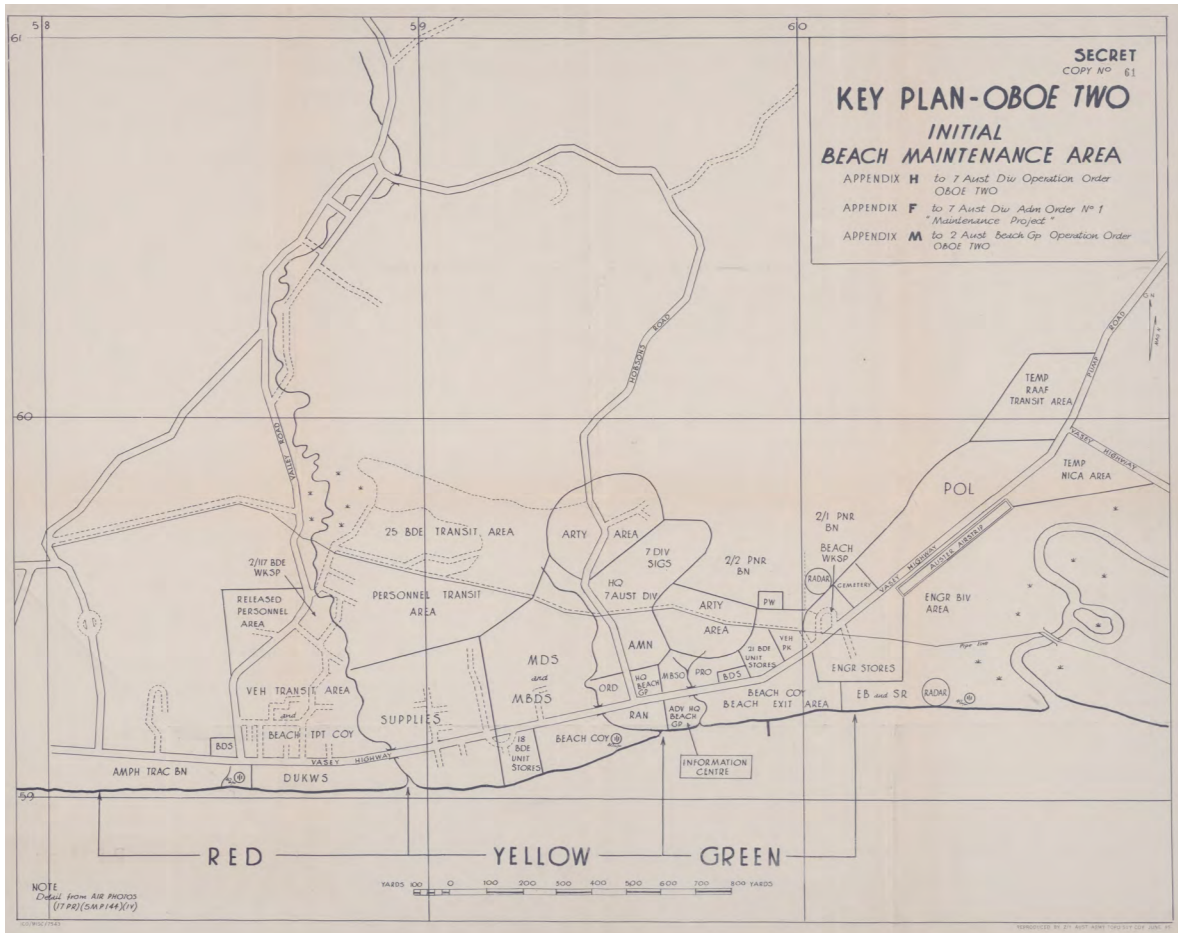
**Figure 4. The first key plan for Oboe 2, created before the landing.
(Source: AWM 52, 1/5/14/74, *7th Australian Division General Staff
Branch, June 1945 Operations Orders, Oboe Two*, 'Appendix H to
7th Australian Division Operations Order for Oboe Two')**

The versatility and utility of the beach group was demonstrated in other ways. Elements of the 23rd Australian Malaria Control Unit landed on 'F' Day and began work almost immediately spraying the entire BMA with pyrethrum. Later this effort was augmented by DDT spraying to the point at which the unit was able to record a steady decline in both the adult and larval mosquito populations.[56] The beachmaster, Morris, ordered construction of two pontoon jetties on 'Green' Beach, using sections of pontoons that had been towed ashore by landing craft. This would create a U' shaped jetty facility intended to handle four LST simultaneously. On 'F' Day he also ordered construction of a smaller pontoon causeway on 'Green' Beach. This allowed the first Landing Craft Mechanised (LCM) to land and unload at 1510. The larger project would take two days to complete, assisted by the famous 'Seabees' of the US 111th Naval Construction Battalion. When the U-shaped facility was operational on 3 July, it could only handle two rather than the planned four LSTs at a time, and it required LCMs to buttress the pontoons to stop them moving unduly in the swell. Nevertheless, it greatly sped up unloading of LSTs, for which the average unloading time was about seven hours. Despite this temporal success, the jetty could only be considered a stopgap measure; one report noted that it had been planned that 10,000 tons of supplies and all the vehicles would be unloaded in the first 48 hours. Instead, only 2,000 tons and half the vehicles had been unloaded in this time.[57] Due to the rapid collapse of the Japanese defences, this deficiency did not cause undue concern. Nevertheless, the beach group understood that an alternative beaching/docking arrangement was required and began scouting for alternative areas around Balikpapan. The group found a suitable location further into Balikpapan harbour and helped construct the landing area for the LSTs.[58] This allowed for a greatly expanded BMA that was also able to utilise port facilities. The 2/3rd Australian Docks Operating Company, who were corps troops, were attached to the 2nd Australian Beach Group for this phase of the operation.[59]
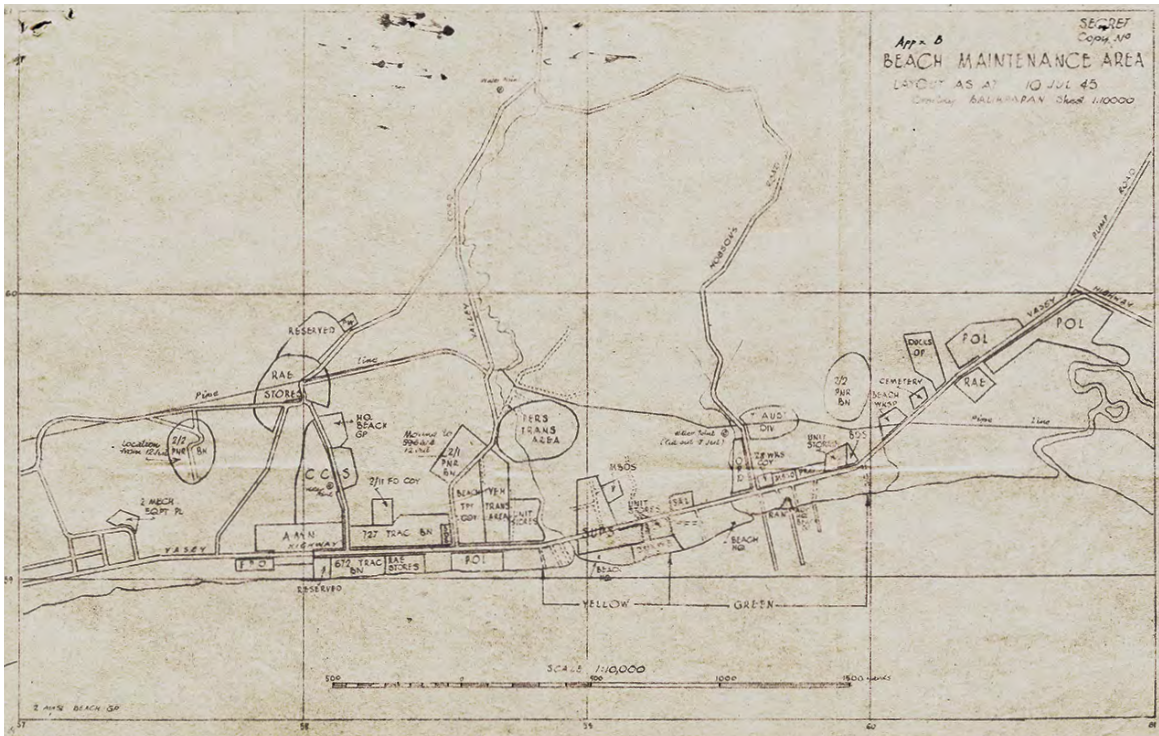
Figure 5. The key plan of the BMA as of 10 July 1945 showing similarities and differences to the first key plan. Part of the beachhead proved unsuitable for certain functions once on-the-ground reconnaissance was conducted. (Source: AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*)

It is salient to note that after the conduct of all three Oboe landings, with beach groups involved in each, a conference was convened on 29 July 1945 to examine any proposed improvements to the beach group's organisation or employment. No change in the method of the beach group's employment was contemplated. The conference therefore reiterated that a beach group should be organised so that it could:

a. develop a BMA for a division

b. handle 900 tons of deadweight stores during the first 24 hours of an operation and an average of 1,500 tons per day thereafter

c. hand over all responsibility to a base sub area from two to four weeks after the initial landing.

With the exception of adding some extra staff to the group headquarters, increasing the size of the provost detachment (as noted previously by Rose) and ensuring certain divisional attachments were assigned to the beach group for the conduct of the landing, no major organisational changes were recommended.[60] It was observed that an entity akin to the US Navy construction battalions would be useful but unlikely to be raised by Australia; therefore the US unit should be attached to the beach group for any subsequent operation. Ultimately these deliberations were moot. There would be no further amphibious operations in the war and thus no further need for the beach groups. On 21 October, the headquarters of 2nd Australian Beach Group was ordered to disband immediately, and its remaining subordinate units were placed under command of the 7th Division.[61] The 1st Australian Beach Group, still in Brunei Bay, received its orders on 21 November and was disbanded on 25 November 1945.[62] The short-lived but immensely successful Australian beach groups were no more.

Conclusion—'To Cope with Any Given Task'

The beach groups were an excellent example of adaptation in war, identifying a deficiency and a resulting need, then crafting a solution in turn. The hard work of adaptation was mainly done by the British. Despite being under US command and beholden to the US for ships and craft, the Australians were nevertheless able to leverage their deep interconnectedness with the British. Australia took the beach group model, finessed it for tropical service and then used it to great effect. It was a fit-for-purpose and a fit-for-environment organisation that enabled division-sized amphibious operations to be conducted within jungle-hemmed shorelines. It acted as the interface between the sea and the land, facilitating the transfer of the landed force and its sustainment from its transport and support afloat through the beachhead into the objective area. In modern parlance, the beach group linked the land and maritime *domains*, enabling *cross-domain mobility*. It was an organisation that could communicate with US forces but also incorporate British best practice, highlighting *interoperability*. By integrating RAN commandos, and coordinating ship-to-shore and shore-to-ship movement to support operations and sustainment, the beach groups were enabling *cross-domain effects*.[63] Importantly—and in stark contrast to Operation Postern—there were clear lines of responsibility within a unified command and control structure, which itself is a prerequisite for successful amphibious operations.

As the Australian Army reconfigures as a littoral manoeuvre force, is there an enduring need for some organisation akin to the beach groups? The problem of sustainment in amphibious and deployed operations is well known. But the proliferation of long-range precision munitions, enabled by ubiquitous multi-domain surveillance and reconnaissance, would suggest that large beachheads with contiguous dumps are now a critical vulnerability. In response, dispersed operations and dispersed logistics have been put forward as a possible solution. While this briefs well, such a concept largely makes the sustainment afloat (i.e. ships conducting sea-basing) the new target instead of the beachhead. Other than caching, there remains a requirement to supply troops ashore and to evacuate them rearwards when needed. Certainly there is—presently anyway—no thought of conducting divisional landings à la 1945. Even if a battlegroup-sized unit is the largest organisation to be deployed and sustained, and a large beachhead and maintenance area is not required, a logistics challenge remains. Innovative use of technology may assist in some way, but it will not entirely remove the sustainment problem inherent in this type of operation. One thing is for certain: by determining that its raison d'être is littoral manoeuvre, the Australian Army must pay greater attention to deployed logistics and rebalance itself accordingly.[64]

Ultimately 'littoral' means more than just 'amphibious'. Nevertheless, given that the ADF's nascent littoral manoeuvre concept is underpinned by the acquisition of Land 8710 landing craft and interoperability with the Australian Amphibious Force, sea–land domain interaction would seem to remain the primary one to develop. Within the primary area of military interest, there are far fewer virgin beaches and thick jungle shorelines than in 1945. Instead there will be urban-littoral areas of varying size and composition. This terrain change would certainly affect any manoeuvre and support plans and force compositions as a result. Seizing or securing an operational port may be easier than establishing a forward logistics node requiring over-the-beach sustainment. If so, the modern equivalent of the port operating companies may have some utility. The air domain will play a part in both manoeuvre and sustainment. Indeed, it is not beyond the realms of possibility to have air liaison officers, landing zone markers and controllers and other specific air-centric (rotary or fixed wing) enablers within a 'littoral support group'. It remains to be seen whether the integration of space and cyber capabilities would be necessary (or possible) in such a group.

Whatever its makeup and the nomenclature chosen, and despite the very different operating environment to that of 1945, there would seem to be an enduring need for an organisation that can enable a combat force to move between domains and can then sustain it in the future operating environment. Perhaps as the Australian Army grapples with the definition, requirements and realities of littoral manoeuvre in a contested environment, it may be instructive to look back on the guiding principles behind the Australian beach groups 80 years ago. 'The Australian Beach Group', said one precis, 'must be regarded as a trained and organised nucleus which is well able to absorb and employ increments which may be considered necessary to cope with any given task'.[65] The challenge now is to define the *task* so this nucleus can be 'trained and organised'.

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Dayton McCarthy is currently the Staff Officer Grade 1 Special Projects in the G5 Cell, Headquarters 2nd (Australian) Division. He served in the Australian Regular Army from 2005 to 2013 in a number of regimental, training and staff appointments. Transferring to the Army Reserves in 2014, he was the Commanding Officer of the 9th Battalion, Royal Queensland Regiment from 2021 to 2022. A defence analyst in his civilian career, LTCOL McCarthy is the author of several books and numerous conference papers, articles and book reviews. He has a Doctor of Philosophy and a Graduate Diploma in Science (Operations Research and Systems) from the University of New South Wales.

Endnotes

1   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*, Chapter One' dated 12 December 1943.

2   Within 2 ESB were several engineer boat and shore regiments. These comprised a boat battalion (small craft) and a shore battalion (beach management and stevedoring).

3   David Dexter, *Volume VI—The New Guinea Offensives, Australia in the War of 1939– 1945, Series One—Army* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1961), pp. 281, 332–335.

4   Rhys Crawley and Peter Dean, 'Amphibious Warfare: Training and Logistics, 1942–45' in Peter J Dean (ed), *Australia 1944–45. Victory in the Pacific* (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 262–225; Rhys Crawley 'Supplies over the Shore: Logistics and Australian Littoral Operations', *Australian Army Journal* XIX, no. 2, pp. 73–76.

5   AWM 52, 1/5/20/36, *9th Australian Division General Staff Branch, August 1943*, 'Notes on Conference held at Joint Planning HQ 14 Aug 43' dated 14 August 1943.

6   AWM 52, 1/1/1, *Land Headquarters, Directorate of Staff Duties, December 1943, Part 1*, 'Seventh Amphibious Force, Report on Operation POSTERN' dated 30 September 1943.

7   AWM 52, 1/5/12, *6th Australian Division General Staff Branch, September 1943*, 'Notes on 6 Aust Div Amphibious Training, Period 16 to 28 Aug 43' dated 2 September 1943.

8   AWM 52, 1/5/20/36, *9th Australian Division General Staff Branch, August 1943*, 'Reasons for ESB Participating in Training' dated 2 August 1943.

9   AWM 52, 1/5/20/44, *9th Australian Division General Staff Branch, 1943–1944 Operations*, '9 Aust Div Report on Operations, 2 Oct–15 Jan 44', 'Section II—Lessons General' no date.

10   AWM 52, 1/11/2/2, *1 Australian Combined Operations Section, July 1944, Amphibious Training*, 'Amphibious Training I Aust Corps, Command and Staff Course: 20 Jul–30 Jul 44. Precis No 7—*Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' no date.

11   For more information on the three amphibious landings conducted by I Australian Corps (Oboe 1 at Tarakan, Oboe 6 at Brunei Bay and Oboe 2 at Balikpapan) see Dayton McCarthy, *The OBOE Landings, 1945*, Australian Army Campaign Series 32 (Newport: Big Sky Publishing, 2022).

12   AWM 52, 1/1/1/27, *Land Headquarters, Directorate of Staff Duties, October 1943*, 'Location Statement—LHQ Units as at 30 Sep 43' dated 6 October 1943. Unit serial number 45278 referred to the 2nd Australian Beach Signals Section.

13   For example, see AWM 52, 1/2/1/15, *Advanced Headquarters, Australian Military Forces General Staff Branch, October 1943*, 'Message Landops to Landforces SD1389 and SD 1390' dated 27 October 1943.

14   AWM 52, 1/5/12, *6th Australian Division General Staff Branch, October 1943*, War Diary entry for 18 October 1943. Notable exceptions were 228th LAA Battery, which travelled from Western Australia, and 2/12th Field Ambulance, which was moved from New South Wales.

15   AWM 52, 1/11/3/1, *1st Australian Beach Group, October–December 1943*, War Diary entry for 16 November 1942 and '6th Australian Division Training Instruction Number 21' dated 16 November 1943.

16   AWM 52, 1/5/12, *6th Australian Division General Staff Branch, October 1943*, War Diary entry for 6 October 1943 and 'Amphibious Training 6 Aust Div' dated 3 October 1943.

17   Australian Archives B883, NX34700, Service Record of Alfred Lionel Rose.

18   AWM 52, 1/11/5/1, *1st Australian Military Landing Group, November 1943–August 1944*, War Diary entries for 1 November 1943 and 1 February 1944,

19   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' dated 12 December 1943. This document notes that the 'staff organisation, the beach group organisation and the methods to be used are based on those now in force in the Middle East'.

20   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' dated 12 December 1943.

21   AWM 52, 1/5/20/36, *9th Australian Division General Staff Branch, August 1943*, 'Notes on Conference Held at Joint Planning HQ, 14 August 1945'.

22   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' dated 12 December 1943.

23   AWM 52, 1/11/2/2, *1 Australian Combined Operations Section, July 1944, Amphibious Training*, 'Amphibious Training—I Aust Corps, Command and Staff Courses: 20 Jul–30 Jul 44. Inspection of a Prepared Beach Maintenance Area and Beach Group Equipment' no date.

24   Adrian Threlfall, *The Development of Australian Army Jungle Warfare Doctrine and Training, 1941–1945*, PhD thesis (Victoria University, 2008), p. 29.

25   AWM 52, 1/4/1, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, November 1943*, War Diary entry for 2 November 1943.

26   AWM 52, 1/5/20/44, *9th Australian Division General Staff Branch, 1943–1944 Operations*, '9 Aust Div Report on Operations, 2 Oct–15 Jan 44', 'Section II—Lessons General' no date.

27   AWM 52, 1/11/3/1, *1st Australian Beach Group, October–December 1943*, 'Beach Group Training Instruction No 1—Outline Training Programme of Sub-units—19 Nov–10 Dec' dated 16 November 1943.

28   AWM 52, 5/21/15, *2/3rd Australian Railway Construction Company, May–December 1943*, War Diary entry for 31 December 1943.

29   AWM 52, 1/11/3/1, *1st Australian Beach Group, October–December 1943*, 'I Australian Corps Training Instruction No 5' dated 29 December 1943.

30   AWM 52, 1/11/3/2, *1st Australian Beach Group, January 1944*, 'Routine Orders, No 1–3' dated 18 January 1944.

31   See AWM 52, 1/11/3/2, *1st Australian Beach Group, January 1944*, 'Field Return of Other Ranks' dated 1 January 1944 and 'Field Return of Officers' dated 1 January 1944; AWM 52, 1/11/3/16, *1st Australian Beach Group, June 1945*, 'Field Return of Officers' dated 16 June 1945.

32   See AWM 52, 8/2/26/42, *26th Australian Infantry Brigade—April 1945, Planning Reports, Part 2 of 2*, 'Summary of Forces and Stores to be Loaded—OBOE One', 14 April 1945.

33   Australian Archives B883, QX53209, Service Record of Harold Redvers Langford; WX1576, Service Record of William John Wain; QX6011, Service Record of Clement James Cummings; NX70837, Service Record of Charles Ralph Hodgson.

34   AWM 52, 1/11/3/9, *1st Australian Beach Group August–September 1944*, War Diary entry for 28 August 1944.

35   Australian Archives B883, NX70837, Service Record of Charles Ralph Hodgson.

36   Australian Archives B883. VX69275, Service Record of Keith Charles Collins; NX 3101, Service Record of John Ebsworth Gannon.

37   AWM 52, 1/11/3/1, *1st Australian Beach Group, October–December 1943*, 'I Australian Corps Training Instruction No 5' dated 29 December 1943.

38   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' dated 12 December 1943.

39   AWM 52, 1/11/3/3, *1st Australian Beach Group, February 1944, Part 1*, '1 Aust Beach Gp Trg Instruction No 11' dated 18 February 1944.

40   AWM 52, 1/11/3/3, *1st Australian Beach Group, February 1944, Part 1*, '1 Aust Beach Gp Trg Instruction No 12' dated 25 February 1944.

41   AWM 52, 1/4/1/43, *I Australian Corps General Staff Branch, December 1943*, 'I Aust Corps Training Instruction No 2. *Combined Operations. Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' dated 12 December 1943.

42   AWM 52, 1/11/2/2, *1 Australian Combined Operations Section, July 1944, Amphibious Training*, 'Amphibious Training—I Aust Corps, Command and Staff Courses: 20 Jul–30 Jul 44. Inspection of a Prepared Beach Maintenance Area and Beach Group Equipment' no date.

43   See McCarthy, *The OBOE Landings*; Peter Stanley, *Tarakan: An Australian Tragedy* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1997); several chapters in Dean (ed), *Australia 1944–45. Victory in the Pacific*.

44   AWM 52, 1/11/4/8, *2nd Australian Beach Group, May 1945*, War Diary entry for 1 May 1945.

45   AWM 52, 1/11/4/7, *2nd Australian Beach Group, April 1945*, 'Appendix H to 2 Aust Beach Gp OO 1 of 19 Apr 45—2 Aust Beach Gp Landing Tables—OBOE 1'.

46   AWM 52, 1/11/2/5 *1st Australian Combined Operations Section, June–September 1945*, 'Report on Beach Organisation in Operation Oboe One (Tarakan)' dated 23 June 1945.

47   AWM 52, 1/11/2/5, *1st Australian Combined Operations Section, June–September 1945*, 'Operations OBOE 1, 2 and 6. Summarised Report on Beach Organisation' dated 6 August 1945.

48   AWM 52, 1/11/4/8, *2nd Australian Beach Group, May 1945*, War Diary entry for 1 May 1945.

49   AWM 52, 1/11/2/5 *1st Australian Combined Operations Section, June–September 1945*, 'Report on Beach Organisation in Operation Oboe One (Tarakan)' dated 23 June 1945.

50   AWM 52, 1/11/2/4, *1st Australian Combined Operations Section, September 1944–May 1945*, 'Operation Oboe One. Observer's Interim Notes to 1400 P Plus 3 by LTCOL A.L Rose (GSO 1, 1st Australian Combined Operations Section)' dated 5 May 1945.

51   AWM 52, 1/11/3/16, *1st Australian Beach Group, June 1945*, War Diary entry for 10 June 1945.

52   AWM 52, 1/11/3/16, *1st Australian Beach Group, June 1945*, 'Report on Beach Organisation Labuan Island Operation OBOE 6 by Colonel C.J Cummings DSO OBE Commanding 1st Australian Beach Group' no date.

53   AWM 52, 1/11/3/16, *1st Australian Beach Group, June 1945*, 'To all Officers, ORs and Ratings 1 Aust Beach Group by Colonel CJ Cummings' dated 14 June 1945.

54   AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*, War Diary entry for 1 July 1945.

55   AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*, 'Medical Report—Operation OBOE Two' dated 25 July 1945.

56   AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*, 'Appendix E to Medical Report—Operation OBOE Two' dated 25 July 1945.

57   AWM 52, 1/5/14/84 *7th Australian Division General Staff Branch, September 1945, Report on Operations, OBOE Two*, 'Appendix P to 7 Aust Div Operational Report OBOE Two' dated 28 September 1945.

58   Ross A Mallett, *Australian Army Logistics, 1943–1945*, PhD thesis (University of New South Wales (ADFA), 2007), pp. 365–366.

59   AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*.

60   AWM 52, 1/11/2/5, *1st Australian Combined Operations Section, June–September 1945*, 'Beach Organisation and Maintenance. Review of Existing Australian Organisation' dated 29 July 1945. It did, however, recommend that the RAN commando be reduced in size, after observations collated from the three Oboe landings indicated that it was in fact over strength.

61   AWM 52, 1/11/4/11, *2nd Australian Beach Group, July–October 1945*, War Diary entry for 21 October 1945.

62   AWM 52, 1/11/3/19, *1st Australian Beach Group, September–November 1945*, War Diary entry for 21 and 25 November 1945.

63   For expansion on these concepts—described as 'tenets'—see Matthew Scott, 'Tenets for Littoral Operations', *Australian Army Journal* XIX, no. 2, pp. 33–38.

64   Crawley, 'Supplies over the Shore', p. 81.

65   AWM 52, 1/11/2/2, *1 Australian Combined Operations Section, July 1944, Amphibious Training*, 'Amphibious Training I Aust Corps, Command and Staff Course: 20 Jul– 30 Jul 44. Precis No 7—*Beach Organisation and Maintenance*' no date.

Structuring for Train, Advise and Assist Missions? The Australian Army's Past, Present and Future

Andrew Richardson

*Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs
do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you
are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very
odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as,
perhaps, you think it is.*[1]

TE Lawrence, August 1917

Introduction[2]

The public release of the Defence Strategic Review (DSR) in April 2023
and National Defence Strategy (NDS) in April 2024 directed the Australian
Defence Organisation (ADO) to focus on the Indo-Pacific region as its
primary operating environment. The DSR provided clear direction to the
Australian Army that it must be 'transformed and optimised for littoral
manoeuvre operations by sea, land and air from Australia'.[3] However,
beyond worst-case scenarios, the DSR endorses activities that support
the maintenance of strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific—encouraging
greater Defence prioritisation of regional defence partnerships (including

further investment in bilateral, minilateral and multilateral opportunities)[4] and cooperative engagements, including (but not limited to) the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) and activities that broadly fall under the umbrella of train, advise and assist (TAA) missions. The military value of TAA activities to trainer forces is manifold, with recent Western experience (in the Middle East and in support of Ukraine) generating an outsized impact through the employment of niche training support by small teams. In counterinsurgency experience, for example, Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds argue, 'partner force capacity building' has become 'a favoured policy option to achieve military objectives', not least because it offloads risk to partner forces.[5] For trainee forces, the opportunity to improve military/combat effectiveness can lead to the achievement of military and/or political objectives, generate a self-sustaining capability, and facilitate enduring relationships with the mentor force. For the Australian Army, TAA activities help meet national policy objectives by strengthening host skill sets, building trust in the Army and the wider Australian Defence Force (ADF) as a responsible and reliable partner, and establishing respectful and trusting partnerships that reflect well on Australia and establish Army as a partner of choice for the trainee force.

The Australian Army has a long history of participating in and delivering TAA missions. From its earliest incarnation contributing to British-led efforts as part of 'Dunsterforce' in the last year of World War I,[6] and with 204 Mission ('Tulip Force')[7] in World War II, the Australian Army and its antecedents have delivered multiple TAA efforts to upskill host forces. They have done so with comparative success in Vietnam, during peacebuilding missions in Uganda, then more recently in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines. Currently, Army contributes training teams to Operation Kudu to instruct Ukrainian troops in their war against Russian aggression. Unlike the recent establishment of special security force assistance brigades (SFABs) by both the United States and the United Kingdom, the Australian Army's rich train and assist experience has never been generated from formed units *specifically designed* to deliver such practical support. Rather, the Army's practice has drawn trainers and advisers from among the broader Army population— either picking elements of a sub-unit or drawing specialist skill sets from across the organisation—to deliver a mentoring or training capability. Army's extant Land Warfare Doctrine, 'Security Force Capacity Building' (2018), omits any organisational-level discussion of structure, preferring instead to focus on the composition of the teams physically deploying—the larger

issue is left unresolved. In exploring this subject, the key questions for the Australian Army are: should this approach change into the future; *can* it change, in light of consistently challenging recruitment and retention rates; or should Army maintain its traditional (and successful) approach? A brief survey of Army's historical TAA experience will assist in providing both relevant observations and context to inform future approaches.

The Australian Army's Historical Experience

The Australian Army has a rich catalogue of historical and recent TAA practice from which to draw appropriate observations around mission effectiveness. The force-level missions outlined below are sufficient to discern recurring themes, and have been selected as a broad sample representative of different geographic, political, strategic and temporal contexts. Given this breadth, the discussion precludes further consideration of the World War I and World War II examples previously noted, as well as instances of unit-level training provided by individual Army units such as 8/9 RAR in Papua New Guinea over 1990–1992, the numerous DCP activities that the Army has contributed to since 1963,[8] and the knowledge transfer instruction provided by Australian battalion groups to Timorese border police in 2003 under UN imprimatur.

Vietnam, 1962–1972

The Australian Army Training Team—Vietnam (AATTV) is arguably the best-known example of Army's TAA missions. It established a template for how Army approached the delivery of mentoring and advising by later training teams, and cultivated an impressive reputation. The AATTV—known colloquially as 'the Team'—operated within the training and advisory program under the auspices of the US Military Assistance Command Vietnam. Like their US counterparts, members of the Team were attached to South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) battalions and units, Montagnards,[9] Territorial Forces (Regional and Popular Forces) and mobile strike units in a train and advise capacity, coordinated with the CIA and US Special Forces.[10] Owing to its experience in jungle operations during the Malayan Emergency and its consequent training focus on counterinsurgency in jungle environments, the Australian Army already possessed the requisite operational expertise for a South Vietnam mission.

In May 1962 the Australian Defence Minister, Athol Townley, announced that Army would contribute up to 30 military instructors to 'assist in the training of the ground forces in Vietnam'.[11] The inclusion of 'Training' in the team's title was supposed to emphasise that they were 'not to be involved in operational tasks',[12] though as the war progressed, this distinction was less discernible. From the earliest, the AATTV was clearly identified as Australian inside the US-based advisory structure. This demarcation was important to both the US and Australia to separate national participation and satisfy political optics, while also contributing to a 'forward defence' strategy.[13] The first commander of the Team, Colonel Francis 'Ted' Serong, arrived in Saigon on 31 July 1962, with the remaining 30 Army personnel following days later.[14] AATTV members were specially selected, with up to two-thirds of personnel in early rotations possessing Malayan experience. These small early deployments concentrated in Saigon before dispersing according to need, whether singly, in pairs, or occasionally in groups of as many as 10 personnel. They deployed across multiple provinces to train and advise South Vietnamese forces in village defence, jungle warfare techniques and basic engineering and signals skills. Rank selection for the AATTV was unique in the history of Australian Army training teams, with most members being either officers or warrant officers.[15] The seniority and expertise of deployed personnel throughout the country averted the need for complex logistic support and allowed teams to draw upon the same supply chains that sustained the US's own adviser network.[16]

Throughout the decade-long commitment, the Australian TAA focus was usually directed at or below battalion level. Individual skills, small-unit tactics, night operations, and patrolling were emphasised.[17] The recent Malayan counterinsurgency operations made Australian training lessons among the most valuable to the Vietnamese. The Team's early mentoring effectiveness, however, was limited by strict national constraints. Specifically, for the first two years, the AATTV were directed not to become involved in operations,[18] even as their US counterparts accompanied their trainees into combat. Initially, Team members were prohibited from even accompanying ARVN battalions as observers outside the wire, but this restriction was overturned six months into the deployment. Once permitted, such activities led to contact with Viet Cong forces, and at times these activities thrust AATTV members into an unauthorised battlefield leadership role for Vietnamese troops when their own leaders faltered.[19] In June 1964 the AATTV was finally granted permission to accompany Vietnamese units into

combat to observe how well training was employed under fire, understand the Viet Cong's approach to war, and appreciate the problems faced by Vietnamese soldiers.[20] This change was accompanied by an increase in adviser numbers to 80, and authority to assist Vietnamese paramilitary and special forces—which remained that way until 1970 (see Table 1).[21] It was almost inevitable that operational advising would lead to Australian casualties; on 6 July 1964 (one month after relaxation of restrictions) WO2 Kevin Conway was killed alongside a US adviser in a Viet Cong attack on the Nam Dong special forces camp, the AATTV's first battle fatality.[22]

Table 1. AATTV strength by year, 1962–1972[23]

Year	Size
From August 1962	61
1963	61
From September 1964	73
From June 1965	112
1966	90*
1967	90*
November 1968	100
1969	100
August 1970	227^
From November 1970	217
From March 1972	68
Withdrawn December 1972	
TOTAL	**989[24]**

* Authorised strength of 100 personnel from January 1965 (15 officers, 85 warrant officers).

^ 31 officers, 118 warrant officers and 78 corporals.[25] This was the peak of authorised AATTV manning.

AATTV strength grew in 1965 in line with the US's increasing adviser commitment, but still represented a tiny percentage of the overall US-led adviser effort. Similarly, while the deployment of the 1st Battalion the Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) to Bien Hoa province in 1965 and the 1st Australian Task Force to Phuoc Tuy in mid-1966 represented the majority of Australia's military effort, the AATTV remained a valuable and unique assignment. The AATTV's geographical dispersion caused friction within Australian Task Force Command, which sought to concentrate Australian capability into one province, against AATTV wishes to preserve the independence of their mission and broader footprint. The Team's place within the US advisory structure allowed it to establish enduring relationships inside the Vietnamese I Corps, special forces, territorial forces, training centres and provinces, while its geographical spread provided the Australian Government with an independent assessment of the conduct of the war across the length and breadth of the country.[26] A compromise saw a small number (10 to 15 training team personnel) posted to Phuoc Tuy for advisory tasks (mid-1966 to mid-1970[27]), while also permitting the AATTV to retain its previous countrywide focus.

By late 1970, a substantial increase in the AATTV's strength (to over 200 personnel) was indicative of the renewed importance of TAA within the Australian Government's Vietnam security contribution. Such strength facilitated the establishment of Mobile Advisory and Training Teams (MATTs) in Phuoc Tuy province.[28] The MATTs presaged a trend away from operational advising for ARVN and special forces, to instead focus on training territorial forces.[29] The AATTV supervised the first course at the new Jungle Warfare Training Centre (JWTC) in Nui Dat, modelled on the Australian facility at Canungra, with an intention to establish and impart specialist jungle warfare training knowledge prior to what was now an inevitable Australian withdrawal. Lack of sufficient numbers of interpreters—a frequent complaint across the entire TAA effort—constrained the effectiveness of instruction at the JWTC.

Figure 1. AATTV instructor Warrant Officer Class 1 Ned Larsson leads Vietnamese students through a wire perimeter to illustrate night operation techniques, Dong Tam, South Vietnam, November 1971. Photographer: Philip Errington. (Source: AWM PJE/71/0554/VN)

The US's decisions concerning its own in-country force strength and troop withdrawal informed Australia's posture (including that of the AATTV). Indeed, in its broad outline, Australia's entire TAA practice conformed with US structures and fluctuated according to their patterns; when US advisors withdrew from Vietnamese special forces activities, the AATTV did as well. For its final year of operations, the Team was concentrated in Phuoc Tuy province. From February 1972 the AATTV mentored at JWTC or was employed in MATTs training territorial forces, with a final task to assist a US program training Cambodian troops. This activity was delivered prior to the final departure of Australian troops on 18 December 1972.[30]

Over 10 years of deployments to South Vietnam, the AATTV deployed 989 advisers, of whom 33 were killed and 122 wounded in action, with four Victoria Crosses awarded. The Team largely maintained its independence from other Australian forces in-country with an operational area beyond Phuoc Tuy's borders, thanks to its role within the US advising framework. The Team set a template for Australian TAA practice that was adopted in part and whole by later missions: it comprised specially selected personnel; it delivered predominantly tactical-level training at or below battalion level; and it focused on counterinsurgency and jungle-specific programs. In I Corps areas where the Team focused much of its effort, the ARVN 'had attained a level of confidence where advice, certainly at unit and sub-unit level, was no longer necessary', though the complexity of combined operations increased as the war continued.[31] The AATTV mostly achieved its goal to generate indigenous capability rather than directly suppress enemy activity. Yet, despite its impressive resume, for a multitude of reasons and due to developments beyond its control, the AATTV, like its US counterparts, was unable to develop the South Vietnamese Army sufficiently to endure North Vietnamese operations after Western withdrawal. Political decisions taken in Washington, Canberra and elsewhere ultimately dictated the outcome of national effort, irrespective of the expertise invested on the ground. The South Vietnam experience thereby demonstrated that efforts to mentor host forces can find success at a local level, yet be undermined by the impact of higher strategic failures. It would not be the last time that the Army's TAA delivery would be so affected.

Iraq, 2004–2008[32]

The absence of substantial adviser missions that followed the Australian Army's Vietnam experience reflected the long period of peace between 1972 and the emergency that developed in East Timor in 1999. Aside from the deployment of 20 personnel over 1982–1984 with the Commonwealth Military Training Team—Uganda to train officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of the Uganda National Liberation Army,[33] the Australian Army's first substantial post-Vietnam force-level adviser mission commenced in 2004 during the reconstruction phase in Iraq. The decision of the Coalition Provisional Authority—established under Operation Catalyst—to disband the Iraqi Army and rebuild it from scratch required the support of US coalition partners to succeed. Aside from the posting of two warrant officers to Kirkush to support training from late 2003, the Australian Army Training Team—Iraq (AATTI) was the first Australian-formed body to deploy to Iraq with a training mandate. Initially known as the 'Iraqi Army Training Team', it was renamed the AATTI in honour of the AATTV, and thus affirmed an important historical connection.

While ostensibly deployed to train and advise the post Saddam Hussein regime Iraqi Army, the first 44-strong rotation of the AATTI (AATTI (1)), which arrived in-country in May 2004, lacked clarity on the mission's objective or indicators for success—aside from a directive to train Iraqi troops and, in doing so, build Australia's alliance with the US.[34] The demobilisation of 375,000 Iraqi military trained personnel, followed by their equally rapid reconstitution, provided an unstable backdrop against which to achieve the restructure and retraining of Iraqi forces into a credible force for domestic security. The fact that the first rotation deployed without organic force protection exacerbated the difficulties it faced. Having identified the need to establish trust in order to connect with trainees, the AATTI (1) prioritised its development of cultural awareness around local religious practices and ethnic sensitivities. Different work ethics between trainers and trainees (including for religious observance) required patience and perseverance to find a median that was mutually acceptable. As with the AATTV's experience, the risk to locals and Australians from threat forces was ever present; an insurgent attack at Al Kasik in June 2004 killed at least 10 trainees and wounded dozens of others.

For training teams in Iraq, force protection considerations became a barrier between Australian trainers and Iraqi trainees that was not part of the AATTV experience. The first two Iraqi training teams lived on the same base as the Iraqis they trained. Ongoing securing concerns meant that later training teams were accommodated at separate camps.[35] The separate living quarters of Australians and Iraqis added further complexity to what was already a challenging training experience. For example, daily variations to the travel route and timings that were implemented to avoid insurgent attacks limited the time available to build relationships and to deliver adviser training. As with the AATTV, the AATTI was aware of the tension between the benefits of conducting training within the base and the risk (and potential benefit) of accompanying their trainees on operations. While the security environment varied between AATTI rotations, at no stage were Australians authorised or encouraged to conduct combat operations with their Iraqi trainees, or to assume command of Iraqi formations, as the AATTV did.[36]

Ultimately AATTI training was centred around a simple broadly defined mission: to train and mentor Iraqi Army elements to increase their capacity to operate independently and effectively, and thereby allow for a transition to Iraqi security responsibility. However, the rotations differed slightly in focus. As AATTI (1) and AATTI (2) deployed to Iraq in the early stages of the establishment of the new Iraqi Army, they took responsibility for providing 'Kapooka-style' basic training to two Iraqi brigades—one brigade each.[37] In January 2005 the third AATTI rotation deployed to Taji in northern Baghdad to provide specialist logistic training in support of the nascent Iraqi Army's logistics capability.

Figure 2. Members of Australian Army Training Team—Iraq Rotation 9 supervise Iraqi recruit live-fire training, 13 April 2008. (Source: Defence image gallery)

The change in focus from AATTI (2) (brigade and battalion training) to AATTI (3) (specialist logistics training) for a one-off rotation signalled that Australia was not considering a sustained training presence in Iraq.[38] With the deployment of the Al Muthanna Task Group (AMTG) in 2005,[39] subsequent AATTI rotations deployed as part of the broader battle group and had dual missions to assist the Al Muthanna based Iraqi Army brigade to achieve a standard suitable to take responsibility for Iraqi security, while simultaneously providing a secure environment in which the Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group could operate. In addition to mentoring an Iraqi Army brigade, AATTI (4) and (5) also assisted with the sourcing of equipment, the development of doctrine and facilities, and the delivery of training and mentoring—a focus on 'training the trainers' to inculcate self-sufficiency.[40] From AATTI (6), teams transitioned from broader brigade and battalion training to providing basic infantry training at Tallil, counterinsurgency training for US and Iraqi forces at Taji, and infantry battalion training provided by two warrant officers at Kirkush. This focus of effort continued through AATTI (7) to (9).

Table 2. AATTI rotations, May 2004 to June 2008

Rotation	Task	Deployment period	Location(s)	Size
AATTI (1)*	Brigade and battalion training	May–October 2004	Tal'Afar, Al Kasik	44
AATTI (2)	Brigade and battalion training	September 2004 – February 2005	Al Kasik	51
AATTI (3)	Logistics training	January–August 2005	Taji	54
AATTI (4)	Brigade and battalion training	May–October 2005	Al Muthanna	71
AATTI (5)	Brigade and battalion training	October 2005 – June 2006	Al Muthanna	72
AATTI (6)	Infantry and counter-insurgency (COIN) training	May–December 2006	Tallil, Taji, Kirkush, An Nasiriyah	33
AATTI (7)	Infantry and COIN training	November 2006 – June 2007	Tallil, Taji, Kirkush, An Nasiriyah	34
AATTI (8)	Brigade, battalion and logistics training	June–December 2007	Tallil, Taji, Kirkush, An Nasiriyah, Taji	84
AATTI (9)	Infantry, logistics, officer and COIN training	September 2007 – June 2008	Tallil, Taji, Kirkush, An Nasiriyah	42
TOTAL				**485**

* LAV Tp (-) arrived for force protection several months into rotation.

Beyond AATTI (9), successive rotations were formed and deployed on an ad hoc basis. During the latter rotations, specialist training was expanded to reintroduce logistics. While logistics offered some continuity in focus, the deployments nevertheless lacked consistency in their structure, and formal handovers were not always conducted between rotations as part of a sustained training continuum. Instead each training team operated, in effect, as a separate entity deployed to conduct a discrete mission.[41] The separation between rotations, and their geographical dispersion across Iraq, necessarily impacted training continuity to some degree.

One recurring challenge for Army was to secure adequate linguistic skills to support the AATTI missions. The Iraq training teams generally reported that there were insufficient competent linguists for the task. While local interpreters were employed, not all possessed the appropriate technical language to impart the specific nuance of military lessons, and those who worked with coalition forces risked their own and their families' safety. Some Australians underwent beginner language training prior to deployment, but this sporadic instruction rarely suited the demands of military interpretation. The lack of sufficient numbers of translators was a complaint made across all nine training team rotations. This situation reflects similar observations drawn from Army's long history of TAA experience.

Despite the litany of challenges faced, over four years the AATTI delivered training, advice and assistance to the Iraqi Army across basic infantry, officer, command, headquarters functions, logistics, transport and counterinsurgency training, with a focus on 'train-the-trainer' activities to generate self-sufficiency. Facing insufficient numbers of interpreters, ongoing security risks and discontinuity between deployments, some 485 Australian advisors nevertheless provided training to over 33,000 Iraqi military personnel over four years. In pure numberical terms, small groups of trainers delivered an outsized training effect and demonstrated the impact that a modest TAA contribution can make to a larger deployment. In doing so, they achieved the broader coalition objective of supporting an indigenous force to become competent enough to take responsibility for its own security, while concurrently meeting the Australian national objective of maintaining its standing with US allies. As with Vietnam, however, the subsequent failure of the Iraqi Army to withstand offensives by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) from June 2014 raised questions about its military effectiveness and led to the loss of approximately of 40 per cent of Iraqi territory at ISIS's peak, before US-led support wrested back control of the country. While the AATTI upheld the AATTV's reputation for professionalism and tactical-level specialisation, ultimately its legacy was undermined by higher political and strategic decisions, Iraq's own political and cultural environment, and Iraqi combat performance against ISIS.

Operations Slipper and Highroad, Afghanistan[42]

Arguably the best known TAA mission in recent memory was that provided under the auspices of Army's contribution to the US-led coalition war in Afghanistan. The mentoring components were separated into two distinct periods: 2008–2014 (Operation Slipper) and 2014–2020 (Operation Highroad).[43] Combined, the sustained series of advise and assist tasks in Afghanistan generated the largest Australian TAA commitment since the Vietnam War in terms of number of rotations and number of personnel.

The initial Australian military commitment to the international stability effort in Afghanistan was restricted to special forces operations and engineer-led reconstruction efforts.[44] By 2008, however, the inability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to provide for the country's long-term stability, combined with endemic low levels of training and professionalism, led to additional Australian commitments to the conflict. Specifically, in February 2008 the Australian Government announced the deployment of an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team (OMLT) to Uruzgan Province, with Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force One (MRTF-1) deploying in October that year. From this initial commitment, Army's mentoring and advising operations grew to include training in squad-level infantry tactics, weapons handling, corps-level headquarters operations and national logistics management. At the same time, mentoring was provided to Afghan partner units by the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) in Kabul and Kandahar as part of the 205 Corps Coalition Advisory Team (205 CAT) to improve staff operations planning and administration; mentor Kabul's Afghan National Army Officer Academy; and provide training for artillery and logistics.[45]

From 2006 to late 2010, Australia's contribution to Uruzgan was shared with the Netherlands under the auspices of Task Force Uruzgan. The Australian contribution varied significantly, but at its peak involved 1,500 personnel (not all for mentoring), and the Netherlands deployed a 1,600-person force.[46] Between September 2006 and October 2008, four successive rotations of RTFs constructed schools, government buildings, medical facilities, commercial buildings and patrol bases, but their reach was always limited by the high-risk security situation and the varying levels of force protection available. The size and structure of ADF mentoring task forces in Uruzgan was modified over time in light of changes in mission, responsibility, geographic dispersion, and personnel caps. After October

2008, MRTF-1 was deployed to develop the ANSF's skills to take over security roles performed by coalition forces.[47] To fulfil this task, an OMLT was deployed to partner with an Afghan National Army (ANA) battalion (Kandak).[48] The intent was for security responsibility to progressively transition to Afghan control as ANA capability developed, with the final objective being an ANA able to provide security and sustain its own training continuum, allowing Australian and coalition forces to withdraw.

Figure 3. Australian and Afghan National Army soldiers patrol together through Chora in Southern Afghanistan. Operational mentoring and liaison teams assisted the development of the 4th Afghan National Army Brigade. (Source: Defence image gallery)

Mentors were specifically tasked to enhance tactical, administrative and logistics capabilities to mature ANSF capacity to a point where it could both sustain operations and maintain influence over the local population. To this end, and in line with International Security Assistance Force practice, Australian mentors were forward-deployed to cohabit with ANSF personnel in patrol bases. Australian mentors provided assistance on subjects crossing the whole gamut of military planning and operations including reconnaissance, weapons handling, combat first aid, logistics, intelligence and personnel administration. Owing to the high rates of

illiteracy and unfamiliarity with structured learning environments among ANA personnel, instruction was typically provided in practical contexts using a 'learn-by-doing' methodology.[49] The task force conducted numerous partnered operations with 2nd Kandak of the 4th ANA Brigade. OMLT personnel lived within ANA forward-operating bases and patrol bases, and frequently conducted joint patrols beyond established and secure perimeters with ANA elements, using lethal force in line with standard rules of engagement. Conditions in these forward bases were often austere, with few opportunities to return to larger bases for rest and refit, and mentors often had little access to fresh rations, climate-controlled accommodation, and welfare services.

Due to their small-packet distribution across the area of operations, OMLT personnel accompanied ANA soldiers on patrol at significant risk to themselves. As in Vietnam and Iraq, insurgent activity placed Australian mentors in harm's way,[50] often despite the efforts of dedicated force protection elements (combat teams). These combat teams were tasked to protect the mentors and reconstruction work sites, to establish security and to provide sufficiently permissive environments for the conduct of advisory work. Force protection for mentors and advisors in Uruzgan remained a contentious issue throughout the duration of Operation Slipper. Personnel caps, injury, sickness and fatigue could force mentors to rely on the partner force for their own physical safety. Over 2011–2012 a series of so-called 'green-on-blue' attacks caused the deaths of six ADF members, leading to the implementation of an adviser overwatch (guardian angel) system comprising specialist armed personnel to provide local force protection to counteract 'insider' attacks on Australian and allied troops.[51] Guardian angels had to strike a fine balance between being present and being visible, because their very presence reflected coalition distrust of Afghan troops. Pre-deployment cultural training and brief language instruction was conducted to foster understanding of Afghanistan and its people and to avoid, where possible, alienating partner forces or local nationals through inappropriate action.[52] Sensitivities nevertheless remained among some ANA troops.

Throughout 2009 and 2010 the ADF's focus in Uruzgan shifted decisively in favour of mentoring operations that would develop the capacity of indigenous Afghan forces to assume coalition security functions.[53] This path followed a similar trajectory to efforts in both Vietnam and Iraq,

where greater training priority was emphasised prior to the handover of security responsibility and withdrawal. MRTF-2 (which would ultimately comprise two OMLTs and two combat teams) was deployed in June 2009. The withdrawal of Dutch forces in 2010 complicated the Australian mentoring posture—Australians mentored more and more elements of 4 ANA Brigade and adopted additional responsibilities in the province. Through its mentoring task forces (MTF became the new nomenclature from the third rotation[54]) Army maintained a permanent presence across ANA patrol bases in Uruzgan while also developing and employing a mobile mentoring capacity that allowed mentors to be reinserted into formations that had reached an independent operations capability milestone.[55]

Over time, Australian mentors progressed from leading and planning joint patrols to merely 'shadowing' ANSF operations from a distance, positioning themselves to ensure that the Afghans did not 'fail' or miss opportunities to hinder insurgent activities.[56] Accompanying this development was an understanding that mentors had to accept an 'Afghan standard' of competence, acknowledging that the ANSF could not be made into a Western-style force. The success of TAA missions in Afghanistan was mixed; although the international presence in Afghanistan was only ever temporary, there was a disinclination among some ANSF personnel to enhance their skills and abilities and to take responsibility for national security while coalition elements remained. Though motivated and professional Afghan personnel served, negotiation or persuasion was sometimes required to ensure elements patrolled their sectors, held courses, attended training and conducted anti-insurgent operations.

The ADF mentored ANA formations in Uruzgan until November 2012 when, in line with international and Australian Government security transition policies, responsibility for security was transferred to the ANA's 4th Brigade. With all four of the brigade's infantry Kandaks declared capable of conducting independent operations without international assistance, Australian mentors withdrew from ANA patrol bases and ceased conducting joint patrols and operations. MTF-5 was withdrawn to Australia and replaced by a smaller Advisory Task Force (ATF-1). As operations were now largely conducted within secure areas without the need for embedded force protection elements, deployment of the ATFs was accompanied by a 250-person reduction in the size of Australia's military commitment.

Table 3. Mentoring task force rotations, Afghanistan, October 2008 to December 2013

Rotation	Task	Deployment period	Location(s)	Size
MRTF-1	Battalion mentoring*^	October 2008 – June 2009	Uruzgan	440
MRTF-2	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	June 2009 – February 2010	Uruzgan	730
MTF-1	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	February 2010 – October 2010	Uruzgan	734
MTF-2	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	October 2010 – June 2011	Uruzgan	866
MTF-3	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	June 2011 – January 2012	Uruzgan	724
MTF-4	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	January 2012 – June 2012	Uruzgan	690
MTF-5	Brigade and battalion mentoring*^	June 2012 – November 2012	Uruzgan	680
ATF-1	Brigade advisors*	November 2012 – June 2013	Tarin Kowt	430
ATF-2	Brigade advisors*	June 2013 – December 2013	Tarin Kowt	318

* Inside the wire

^ Outside the wire

The area of operations of the two ATF rotations was limited to Headquarters 4 Brigade and its two Combat Support Kandaks, which were located wholly within Multi National Base—Tarin Kowt, or 'inside the wire'. Alongside the ATF, Australia also maintained a quick reaction force element comprising motorised infantry (in Bushmasters) with supporting Australian Light Armoured Vehicles to assist Afghan forces if required.[57]

While the bulk of the ADF's TAA mission in Afghanistan was carried out by MTF and then ATF rotations, mentoring was also conducted by special operations forces from 2009 onwards. From July 2009, SOTG members became engaged in the formal mentoring of Afghan partner forces. The catalyst for this role was a newly introduced International Security Assistance Force policy which provided that all subsequent SOTG patrols had to comprise one-third ANSF personnel.[58] The quasi-official Provincial Police Reserve Company (later rebadged as the Provincial Response Company, or PRC) was selected to be the SOTG's ANSF partner force. In July 2012 the SOTG also began mentoring and partnering a unit of the Afghan National Directorate of Security—the 'Wakunish'. SOTG 'stay behind teams' conducted a full suite of training courses in secure areas within Tarin Kowt as well as conducting mentoring when the task force deployed on operations.[59] Training was predominantly centred on infantry skills and special forces operations but other capabilities were also covered such as combat engineering, explosive ordnance disposal, operations planning, and intelligence. Over a period of four and a half years, 11 SOTG rotations contributed to the formal training and mentoring of ANSF partner forces. By December 2013 the PRC and Wakunish were deemed capable of conducting independent, evidence-based operations that targeted insurgent leadership and safe havens.[60] While judged competent at the time, the Afghan forces had been mentored in the conduct of Western-style special operations that were supported by a preponderance of enablers such as airlift; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); and close air support. The rapid deterioration in Afghanistan security post transition demonstrated to the world that withdrawal of these coalition assets significantly compromised Afghanistan's ability to effectively target the insurgency by itself.

In December 2013, ATF-2 and remaining SOTG elements were withdrawn from Tarin Kowt, marking the complete extraction of Australian personnel from Afghanistan. The overarching observation from the Afghanistan experience was that TAA efforts must lead to self-sufficiency after transition—for both the trainers and the host forces.[61] As with practice in both Vietnam and Iraq, Australian mentoring in Afghanistan was always undertaken within a coalition context, with capability milestones, force size, manning, equipment levels and training requirements usually set by (or in accordance with) US-led TAA organisations and according to US security transition timelines. The Australian Army's ability to influence

the professional standard and capacity of the wider ANSF was further limited by the small number of its personnel (a maximum commitment of 1,550) and the wide geographic disposition of its units. The exercise of strategic influence and mentoring was not possible, even as small teams of advisors deployed to Kandahar or Kabul for specific duties (e.g. 'train-the-trainer' instruction at the Afghan National Army Officer Academy). In total, Australian mentoring operations involved over 10,000 deployed ADF members over a 12-year period across 40 distinct task force/team rotations. This represented a commitment approximately 10 times the total number of Australian advisors who deployed to Vietnam. Operations Slipper and Highroad were, and remain, the largest TAA campaign ever undertaken by the Australian Army.

Recent Operation: Kudu

Following Russia's violent and illegal invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, NATO and Western governments supported the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) through donations of military equipment and munitions, through funding packages, and through the establishment of economic sanctions against the Russian Government and Russian companies and key figures. The Australian Government contributed equipment (including Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicles) and ammunition (105 mm artillery rounds). It also committed military training and funding under Operation Kudu—the name for ADF assistance to Ukraine.[62] Commencing in January 2023, a company group (minus) from the Australian Army's 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (5 RAR), provided training and assistance to the AFU under the UK-led Operation Interflex, led by the British Army's 11th Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB). This program forms part of a larger multinational training support effort involving Ireland, New Zealand, Canada, Lithuania, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland.

Operation Interflex delivers basic combat training to 10,000 new and existing AFU personnel in partnership with allies through the Battle Casualty Replacement program. Its purpose is to support the Ukrainian military 'to accelerate their deployment, rebuild their forces, and scale-up their resistance'.[63] The ADF's training contribution to this effort is clearly defined by operational constraints and restrictions directed by the Australian Government, including a prohibition on ADF personnel entering Ukrainian

territory, and bounded training contributions. As with prior ADF TAA experience, Operation Kudu is delivered under the umbrella of a broader coalition-led training mission in which a larger partner provides facilities, infrastructure, security and logistics.

Prior to deployment, the first contingent of 70 Australian Army personnel refreshed their own skills on Ukrainian weapons and reviewed their instruction processes to prepare them to deliver a complex infantry-focused training package in a contracted time frame.[64] The contingent structure was composed of four section-sized training teams (and one demonstration squad to exhibit the lesson during a walk-through[65]) from Support Company, 5 RAR, with contributions from 1st Combat Signal Regiment (1 CSR) and 1st Combat Services Support Battalion (1 CSSB). Mission control is provided by Operation Kudu's overarching headquarters—a UK Training Delivery Unit under Operation Interflex Headquarters. Each of the 2023 Australian Training Team[66] rotations instructed 200-strong AFU intakes on basic infantry courses over two packages of 35 days each conducted at Salisbury Plain Training Area and Camp Knook in Wiltshire, England.[67]

Figure 4. Soldiers from 5 RAR deliver trench warfare lessons to Ukrainian trainees during the first rotation of Operation Kudu in the United Kingdom, 10 February 2023. The interpreter is in blue on the right, demonstrating how critical that capability is to delivering military instruction. (Source: Defence image gallery)

From the second rotation, the ADF infantry team was augmented by combat engineers who, in the words of the second rotation commander, enhanced 'the mobility, counter-mobility and survivability … outcomes to better meet the need of Ukrainian soldiers for the conflict they were stepping into'.[68] Two lead instructors and two demonstration soldiers walked the AFU trainees through every training serial to illustrate the correct method. Within this training structure, Australian instructors imparted basic skills on everything from the laws of armed conflict and basic individual soldier skills, to combat casualty care and instruction on complex urban operations.[69] In doing so, they relied heavily on up to 20 interpreters. Unlike previous Australian TAA missions, Operation Kudu provides instruction in an entirely permissive environment outside the theatre of combat.[70]

Table 4. 5 RAR-led rotations to Operation Kudu, 2023[71]

Rotation	Dates	Elements	Total personnel	Core tasks
1	4 January – 18 April 2024	Support Coy 5 RAR, personnel from 1 Health Bn, 1 CSSB, HQ 1 Bde, HQ FORCOMD	73	Basic infantry course including weapons training; infantry minor tactics; counter-explosive awareness; tactical combat casualty care; rural section and platoon operations; defensive (trench) section and platoon operations; urban section operations; marksmanship training 25–200 m; close quarter shooting / combat behaviours; fire-team live fire manoeuvre; section live fire defence; command training squad—platoon comd.
2	28 March – 31 June 2023	D Coy 5 RAR, personnel from 7 RAR, 1 CSR, 1 CSSB, 8/12 REGT, 1 CER	70	As above
3	17 June – 20 September 2023	B Coy 5 RAR, personnel from 7 RAR, 1 CSR, 1 CSSB, 8/12 REGT, 1 CER	70	As above
4	4 September – 15 December 2023	C Coy 5 RAR, personnel from 1 CER, 1 Health Bn	70	As above

The Ukrainian trainees for Rotation 1 were, according to one instructor, older than anticipated, with ages estimated between mid-40s and late 60s.[72] While the training was reportedly 'very intense',[73] it was also extremely well received by AFU trainees fortified by their strong collective morale.[74] The tempo of the training—packing intensive instruction into just over a month—was also demanding on Australian trainers, not least because of the sobering realisation that AFU recruits returning to the front line rely for survival on the skills taught to them by Australian instructors. As one 5 RAR Company Officer Commanding observed, 'live fire is important to achieve battle inoculation—to prepare people for when they're actually in a fight'.[75] This observation is as true for AFU trainees as it was for ARVN troops 60 years earlier, and for Iraqi and Afghan military forces in more recent times.

The ADF contribution to Operation **Kudu** has provided a useful forum for reciprocal information exchange, with relevant lessons being fed back into Australian force preparation cycles. For example, as many Ukrainians are now accustomed to snowy combat conditions, one Australian platoon commander revealed that the AFU '[taught] us the best way to survive and to conceal our movement in snow'.[76] Further, training the AFU revealed shortfalls in close combat and extended range shooting skills among some Australian instructors, thus generating an impetus for improvements within the ADF combat training continuum.[77] At the time of writing, Operation **Kudu** is still underway, so deeper analysis of the total mission arc is unavailable. However, this operation diverges from experiences in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan as it does not provide in-country TAA to a host force as part of a coalition exit strategy. Instead it contributes to a broader international effort to support Ukraine conducted in a stable and secure training environment.

The above sections have outlined a history of Australian practical TAA experience, showing that such efforts have historically involved tactical-level instruction in small to very small numbers proportionate to the training audience. TAA missions have frequently comprised ad hoc teams assembled at short notice, or small packets of personnel contributing as part of a larger multinational effort. While the Australian Army has made ad hoc methods work over a long period, the question arises as to whether there is benefit in the ADF generating a standing TAA capability. In making such an assessment, it is appropriate to consider the contemporary approaches taken to TAA by two of Australia's closest partners: the US and the UK.

Security Force Assistance Brigades: a US and UK Preference

In contrast to the Australian Army experience, the US and British armies have recently generated standing TAA capabilities through the establishment of SFABs for the specific purpose of providing training specialisation to allies and partner forces. While mentoring has remained a part of military practice for as long as professional militaries have existed, acknowledging the complex political, cultural and social influences that affect mission success has led both countries to assess that a structured capacity is warranted. Their capacity to restructure specifically to generate such a capability speaks to the options available to militaries that can call upon greater 'mass' than Australia.

In the US, an SFAB is a purpose-built and resourced military structure with the mission to provide TAA capabilities to allied and partnered forces.[78] Pioneered by the US and advocated forcefully by General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the United States, SFABs are dedicated to preparing and supporting small groups to conduct distributed mentoring programs.[79] SFABs are built around the 'head and shoulders' of a brigade combat team and based on its officer and senior NCO cadre, with each member individually selected for their experience before undergoing eight weeks of training and vetting prior to acceptance into the 800-strong brigade. In its original concept, it was intended that SFAB personnel would have served at least one operational tour and be on their second appointment at rank—the first being a command appointment.[80] The SFAB's contribution to the order of battle arises from its emphasis on military-to-military mentoring tasks, thereby releasing conventional forces to focus on their core tasks. Further, SFABs become the centre of residual institutional memory for missions of this type. The US has six SFABs (one per combatant command), including one National Guard formation.

Table 5. United States SFABs, by command

Formation	US headquarters	Command	Region
SFAC	Fort Liberty, North Carolina	Security Force Assistance Command	–
1 SFAB	Fort Moore, Georgia	SOUTHCOM	Central America, South America, Caribbean
2 SFAB	Fort Liberty, North Carolina	AFRICOM	Africa (minus Egypt)
3 SFAB	Fort Cavazos, Texas	CENTCOM	Middle East, Central Asia, part South Asia
4 SFAB	Fort Carson, Colorado	EUCOM	Europe, Caucuses, Russia, Greenland
5 SFAB	Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington	INDOPACOM	Indo-Pacific (north, south and archipelagic Asia, India, Australia, New Zealand, Antarctica)
54 SFAB	National Guard	–	Continental USA

Because US SFABs are oriented to operate in particular geographic regions, they bring targeted expertise and persistence in effort. The benefits of maintaining such organic TAA capacity are clear: with a workforce designed to be 'entirely comfortable' with joint, interagency, inter-government and/ or multinational partner efforts,[81] such a structured capability provides combatant commanders an extra line of effort able to engage with, and influence, the host/trainee nation. They are the repository of knowledge on engagement with host government, non-government and other security stakeholders, and they provide a further source if information to inform national security policy. The continuity of their embedded relationships across the entire training spectrum can also meet (and strengthen) bilateral security objectives. Persistence in presence also contributes to deterrence.[82] The wealth of specialist institutional expertise provided by the SFABs cannot currently be replicated by the Australian Army.

In 2017 the British Army established what it called Special Purpose Infantry Battalions (SPIBs) designed to 'conduct Defence engagement and capacity building, providing training, assistance, advice and mentoring to our partners'.[83] These elements are folded into the Army Special Operations Brigade to provide specialised skills mentoring to partner forces in complex and challenging security environments, and can 'be authorised to operate at higher risks beyond the remit of conventional forces'.[84] The Ranger Regiment is the home of four special operations battalions, in which (similar to the US SFAB model) specific SPIBs are allotted respective regional specialisations.

Table 6. UK Ranger Regiment special operations battalion alignments[85]

Battalion	Regional alignment	Deployments
1 Ranger	West Africa	Tunisia*, Ghana*, Cameroon, Nigeria, The Gambia
2 Ranger	East Africa	Somalia, Mozambique, Tunisia*, Kenya, Egypt, Ethiopia
3 Ranger	Europe	Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia, Albania, Poland, Western Balkans
4 Ranger	Middle East	Lebanon*, Jordan, Oman, USA
JCTTAT^	Global	Tri-service, counterterrorism: Bangladesh, Maldives, Tunisia*, Kuwait, Lebanon*, Ghana*, Kenya*, Indonesia, Mozambique*, Saudi Arabia

* Indicates dual/multiple alignment
^ Joint Counter Terrorist Training and Advisory Team

The UK Ministry of Defence also established a conventional TAA capacity in late 2021 in which the 11th Infantry Brigade was redesignated the 11th SFAB. As part of the British Army's 1st Division, and headquartered in Aldershot, the 11th SFAB—comprising four regular battalions and one reserve battalion[86]—delivers tactical-level TAA to 'improve the ability of partner nations to manage their security challenges', which, in extremis, can 'enable partner nation armies to be integrated effectively into UK and NATO forces'.[87] The 11th SFAB also deploys a global team to provide international TAA where required. The UK's desire to use its SFAB to increase international

interoperability with its own armed forces is a clear statement on coalition-building by military means, while simultaneously increasing British influence. Presently this brigade leads the multinational Operation Interflex mission under which Australian (and other international) advisors deliver combat training packages to Ukrainian recruits.

A Question of Strength

Given the US and UK decisions to generate a standing TAA capability, could or should the Australian Army follow suit?[88] For the Australian Army to adopt a similar approach would require two significant changes to the way it has traditionally approached TAA taskings. Firstly, an institutional reorientation would be required so that TAA is viewed as a standalone mission in its own right—that is, as a 'role', rather than a 'task'. As the historical examples illustrate, Army's practice has instead been to 'dual-hat' existing troops to deliver mentoring tasks. A second, and more challenging, barrier is the size of Army's total force.

The Australian Army cannot call upon the same mass to establish a dedicated unit as can its US and UK allies. Indeed, aside from mass mobilisation during the two world wars, and a short boost from the national service scheme, the Australian Army has always been modest in size with a force structure intended to maximise the value of a comparatively small number of troops. However, while size has militated against Army generating a TAA capability in the past, in the 2020 DSR the Australian Government signalled its intent to increase the size of the future force. In recognition of the rapid changes to the strategic environment, the Australian Government agreed, in March 2022, to increase the size of the ADF by 30 per cent by 2040.[89] If this target can be realised, the increase in recruitment that will accompany expansion offers the potential for Army to raise a TAA formation at unit or even battalion size.

There have been recent efforts to rationalise a discrete TAA formation within the Australian Army. Specifically, Major General Chris Field recently advocated that the Australian Army adopt a security force assistance battalion (SFABn) drawn from the Army Reserve 'to preserve Regular Army combat power' and contribute to the DSR's demand for presence in the region.[90] His argument proposes that an SFABn comprising approximately 265 experienced officers and NCOs, across '30 multifunctional teams',

could be a pathway for reserve and transitioning personnel to remain in service, while also meeting the DSR's aims for greater regional engagement.[91] The entire unit would be drawn, comprised, trained and resourced by the Australian Army Reserve. As Field argued, an SFAB-like model could support retention in the Australian Army if it provided an opportunity to retain operationally experienced officers and senior NCOs who might otherwise leave Army service. While the unit's footprint and the duration and location of any SFAB-like deployments would be key factors in personnel decisions to continue serving, Field's model is theoretically sound. If Army were determined to join the US and UK in configuring for future TAA missions, it would have the potential to provide a modest structured capability. So *could* the Australian Army adopt such a model in the contemporary environment?

Meeting the DSR's expansion targets is proving to be a difficult task for the ADO, particularly in its efforts to generate sufficient personnel to deliver the range of directed tasks. As with a number of Western militaries, the ADF is facing what the DSR refers to as 'significant workforce challenges' with a combination of low unemployment and a competitive job market inhibiting recruitment rates.[92] As of 1 January 2024, for example, the ADF as a whole was 4,308 people below authorised strength, or almost 9 per cent, while the Army's size was almost 10 per cent below authorised strength—the worst figures of the three services (see Table 7).[93] The Australian Army has been particularly affected and has seen consistent failure to meet recruitment targets. Meanwhile, elevated separation numbers contribute to a growing deficit in the overall strength of the force.

Table 7. ADF strength as at 1 January 2024[94]

Service	Authorised	Actual	Under	Percentage
Army	31,127	28,236	-2,891	-9.2%
Navy	15,958	15,077	-881	-5.5%
Air Force	15,650	15,114	-536	-3.4%
TOTAL	**62,735**	**58,427**	**-4,308**	**-6.8%**

The former Chief of the Defence Force, General Angus Campbell, has explained that such personnel deficits place 'stress [upon] the entire organisation in terms of being able to train and recruit, to conduct activity, to sustain our people, support their families, and continue our tempo of activity, both internationally and domestically'.[95] Within this constrained workforce environment, the Australian Army must concurrently transform into a force optimised for littoral manoeuvre. Driven by the DSR's directive to grow regional defence partnerships, it must simultaneously remain ready to contribute to whole-of-government and ADF-led regional relationship and capacity-building missions.[96]

The ADF's current inability to meet recruiting targets would make it extremely difficult for Army to raise and staff a standing TAA formation. If the US model were to be applied, experienced personnel with either deployed experience or time in rank would represent the most appropriate cohort to generate the best training outcomes for partner forces. Such an outcome may be possible if some cannibalisation of the current workforce is permitted to fill a TAA force structure, but Army has competing priorities. Raising the new 10th Brigade in Adelaide[97] is already a DSR-directed priority, and on a much larger scale.

A Model for Future Use?

As historical practice and the ADF's ongoing recruiting challenges combine to make an SFAB solution unlikely, there is another approach that might serve to inform future options. Over 2017–2019 the Australian Army provided bespoke training teams to undertake tactical training under a bilateral framework. In terms of its political framing, duration and size, the Operation Augury—Philippines deployment was a TAA mission entirely unlike those conducted in Vietnam and Iraq. In light of the DSR's direction for the ADF to deepen regional engagement, and the NDS's dictate to focus 'Defence's international engagement efforts on enhancing interoperability and collective deterrence',[98] Army's Operation Augury experience may provide a template for future training missions, without the need to establish a dedicated SFAB-like unit.

To assist in determining its relevance to the current analysis, it is helpful to first outline the context within which Operation Augury—Philippines took place. On 23 May 2017, Islamist insurgents affiliated with ISIS took control of the Philippines city of Marawi. For five months the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) engaged the insurgents in close urban combat to regain control of the city. In September that year, facilitated by the DCP[99] that was already in place in the country, the Australian Government offered support to the Philippines in the form of mobile training teams (MTTs) to provide training in a range of specialities to strengthen the AFP's urban combat capability. The Australian Army dispatched a team to Manila to showcase Australian skills and demonstrate the range of training on offer— to essentially 'sell the business' of what the ADF could provide the AFP with regard to counterterrorism and urban operations training.[100] The Philippines Government accepted. Despite the battle for Marawi formally concluding on 23 October 2017, the ADF's Operation Augury—Philippines commenced with the deployment of MTTs two days later to advise and assist the AFP in developing its counterterrorism and counter violent extremism capabilities.

The mission objective of Operation Augury—Philippines was to establish and grow a Filipino training base with a modified training continuum capable of generating of a self-sustaining urban operations capability.[101] This mission was achieved through four lines of effort: land, maritime, air and special operations.[102] Instruction in skills related to the conduct of urban warfare included counterterrorism, engineering, airborne intelligence (uncrewed aerial systems (UAS)), electronic warfare, maritime and psychological operations. Army provided the land MTT, with selected personnel deploying as small elements factored around 'capability bricks' such as infantry platoons, joint fires teams or engineer teams.[103]

Figure 5. Personnel from 2 RAR mentor soldiers from the Armed Forces of the Philippines on weapon-handling drills in Pagadian, Philippines, 27 July 2017. Small Australian teams deploying to deliver focused training packages, as occurred during Operation Augury— Philippines, may be a viable future TAA option. (Source: Defence image gallery)

Each land MTT ranged from 25 to 45 personnel and included infantry, combat engineers, joint fires teams and medics, who conducted training programs that lasted between 21 and 45 days. Each training iteration usually involved the delivery of seven courses: urban close combat; urban search and breach; sniper / counter sniper; joint fires and airspace deconfliction; tactical communications, command and control in the urban environment; and combat trauma management. Army's MTT mission was limited to training and did not include direct participation or assistance in AFP combat operations.[104] There was a degree of flexibility built into the instructional method depending on the training audience; one engineer MTT member recalled that the rank and corps of the various Filipino teams undertaking Australian training altered the emphasis of the training package.[105] The learning that occurred was reciprocal, with the ADF benefiting from the Filipino experience in countering complex urban terrorist tactics. The training environment also improved military-to-military links,

helped develop interoperability between the two countries' forces through shared values,[106] and enhanced regional cooperation in counterterrorism activities. The enhanced skills imparted through the training packages was valued by the AFP[107] and also improved the quality of Australian Army instruction. Indeed, one land MTT officer reflected that Army's TAA in the Philippines was 'sort of like foreign aid: we're investing in ourselves [by] doing it, you know?'.[108]

Table 8. Land/advisor MTTs/Train the Trainers (TTT)s under Joint Task Force 629, October 2017 to June 2018[109]

No.	Date	Type	Command/region
1	Mid-October – early November 2017	Land MTT^	Southern Luzon Command
2	Early November – December 2017	Land MTT^	Southern Luzon Command
3	Early November – December 2017	Land TTT^	Southern Luzon Command
4	November – December 2017	Land MTT/TTT*	Northern Luzon Command
5	January/February 2018	Advisor MTT/TTT*	Northern Luzon Command
6	February 2018	Land MTT/TTT^	Eastern Mindanao Command
7	March 2018	Advisor MTT^	Southern Luzon Command
8	March 2018	Advisor MTT/TTT^	Central Command
9	Late April/May 2018	Land MTT/TTT/Advisor^	Eastern Mindanao Command
10	Late April/May 2018	Advisor MTT^	Northern Luzon Command
11	Late May/June 2018	Advisor MTT^	Central Command

^ Training provided to the Philippines Army

* Training provided to the Philippines Marine Corps

In total, Joint Task Force (JTF) 629 personnel trained over 10,600 AFP members in urban combat, air coordination in urban operations, maritime security and joint operations. Army trainers constituted the vast majority of deployed MTT personnel and delivered the overwhelming bulk of the training.[110] Army's land training efforts, particularly, established useful networks and deep connections into the country and region. The Australian TAA mission also saw manifest improvements in Filipino urban operations capability (including sniper and counter-sniper skills, combat shooting, and joint fire missions), all achieved through short-duration deployments of small teams. Operation Augury was different from other TAA missions by virtue of its foundation and leverage from within an extant DCP, its bilateral (rather than multinational) nature, its joint design, and its streamlined command and control arrangements. As such, the mission was not affected by the inevitable political sensitivities and frictions that occur when operations are conducted with an overarching multinational headquarters (as in Iraq and Afghanistan) with associated command chains stretching back to Australia. Notwithstanding some of the peculiarities of the Operation Augury experience, the fly-in/fly-out nature of small discrete training teams could become a suitable model for the future, limiting the impost on units to generate a standing TAA capability. One JTF 629 commander reflected on the benefits of the Philippines example, noting that it '[allowed] us to get quickly onto the ground, impose[d] very little on our hosts and then provide[d] training that [was] tailored to the operational need and threat on the ground [which was] something that [was] extremely powerful and we should continue to develop'.[111] The improvement in Filipino capacity, warm AFP reception of the Australian training packages, and trusted and authentic relationships that developed[112] led Lieutenant General Greg Bilton, Australia's Chief of Joint Operations at the time, to reflect that the Operation Augury—Philippines approach 'has become a model for how we [Australia] approach partnered activities'.[113]

Conclusion

Mentoring can be an extremely challenging task for a professional soldier to undertake. Such advising is often delivered in harsh climates, in uncertain or unstable security environments, with nebulous political objectives, while accommodating (and surmounting) the myriad issues generated by linguistic, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Lieutenant Colonel Shane Gabriel, the MRTF-1 commander, reflected on these challenges through training the ANA, observing that the work can be 'difficult, frustrating and involves considerable risk—but that is the mission'.[114] In South Vietnam, even at peak size in 1970, the number of AATTV personnel represented only a minute proportion of the more than 42,000 Australian Army troops who ultimately served in the theatre, and their achievements and reputation far outweighed the diminutive size of their aggregate strength. The Marawi insurgency and subsequent Operation Augury—Philippines mission demonstrated that even in an archipelagic environment, the land domain remains critical to projecting, establishing and maintaining regional influence.

This article's survey of Army's historical deployments demonstrates the outsized influence and operational effect that a clearly defined and even modestly resourced TAA mission can achieve. Such missions validate the utility of deploying well-trained, specially selected and culturally aware personnel to deliver effective training packages to develop host nation capacity and ultimately to support Army's partners to achieve self-reliance. Provided it is well led and supported (including with sufficient interpreters), a modest TAA contribution can realise a disproportionate benefit to military and government-to-government relationships. The empowerment that such mentoring and advisory work generates, via relationships based on trust, is the most enduring observation to take forward from Australia's long history of TAA missions, irrespective of whether the capability is structured or ad hoc.[115]

The question remains whether a future Australian Army should restructure for TAA missions. In the contemporary environment, and even exploring a Reserve-only model, it is difficult to see how Army can find the additional people it would need to staff an SFAB without risking hollowing out existing units by stripping personnel from them. Land power already represents value for money when juxtaposed against the boutique platforms procured

for the air and maritime domains. So 'dual-hatting' existing units to deliver TAA missions improves the cost–benefit justification for land power even further. When the Australian Government directed a land force component to support the training of Ukrainian troops, Army could send a training team with comparatively little preparation to deliver focused and effective combat training. Modest-sized militaries must frequently make do, but in the Australian Army's experience, that has never meant delivering outcomes to a lesser standard. It has historically been a key strength of Army's individual and collective training system that it enables the organisation to do TAA missions 'off the line of march', leveraging extant establishments.[116] This is a fortunate situation, as the ongoing challenges of limited force size, constrained resourcing and depressed national recruitment figures mean that Army's current approach to generating TAA capacity is likely to remain unchanged for the foreseeable future.[117] Based on history, that is perhaps no bad outcome.

Army's combat brigades have developed deep partnerships with regional militaries, while government-to-government relationships have established and grown effective DCPs. The connections to a number of Australia's regional neighbours are therefore already present and in alignment with DSR direction. One option may be to leverage this strong base to generate more regular, or a greater tempo of, regional TAA visits to further cement Army's presence and enhance Australia's reputation. Defence, and Army, should not forget that such enduring relationships in the Pacific and the wider region, via mature DCPs, already utilise MTTs deployed through Joint Operations Command. This is a 'business-as-usual' practice that builds enduring capacity, and maximising the existing policy and relationship framework could be the foundation for any increased regional TAA emphasis. Noting caveats around Army's mass, a second option appropriate for the future Australian Army may be to reprise the Operation Augury—Philippines model. It meets the 2024 NDS injunction to focus 'Defence's international engagement efforts on enhancing interoperability and collective deterrence'.[118] It has the added benefit of delivering TAA capability using existing units as Army has always done. By deploying small numbers of troops for discrete periods, it reduces manning impacts on units and delivers training packages that meet the requirements of the host force. In both scenarios, Army generates a persistent presence, continues to build trust, improves interoperability, and demonstrates its contribution to fulfilling the Australian Government's objectives of a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

About the Author

Dr Andrew Richardson is the Senior Academic Research Officer at the Australian Army Research Centre (AARC). He was awarded a PhD from the University of Tasmania in 2005, and contributed entries to *The Companion to Tasmanian History* (2005) during his postgraduate years. Between 2007 and 2018 Andrew was an historian at the Australian Army History Unit, Department of Defence. In 2018 he was seconded to the Official History Project at the Australian War Memorial, where he co-authored the (forthcoming) volume on Australian peacekeeping operations in East Timor 2000–2012 with Dr William Westerman. In May 2022 Andrew joined the AARC, where he has undertaken research and academic content review to support the work of Army's Future Land Warfare Branch. Outside of research in the AARC, Andrew maintains an interest in the Great War to explore the lessons it continues to hold for modern military practitioners.

Endnotes

1   TE Lawrence, 'Twenty-Seven Articles', *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917.

2   This article is derived from research undertaken for the Australian Army's Future Land Warfare branch in 2022–23. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance provided by the following people in the research and drafting of this article: Lieutenant Colonel James Bryant, Dr John Nash, Dr Jordan Beavis and Ms Hannah-Woodford-Smith (Australian Army Research Centre); Dr Steven Bullard, Colonel Andrew Mayfield, Ms Nicole Townsend and Garth O'Connell (Australian War Memorial); Colonel Ben McLennan (Commander, Combat Training Centre), Lieutenant Colonel Luke Carroll (Oral Historian, Australian Army History Unit), Brigadier Nerolie McDonald (Director General Pacific and Timor-Leste, Pacific Division); and the Classified Archival Records Review Directorate. Note on sources: the use of specific sections of Protected-classification documents has been cleared by the document originator for reproduction in this article. Those documents are identified in the endnote references and retain their extant classification.

3   Australian Government, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), p. 58.

4   Specifically, the DSR directs Defence to refocus engagement efforts in the region to ensure 'Australia effectively engages in bilateral, minilateral and multilateral opportunities to support mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific'. Australian Government, *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, p. 46.

5   Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds, *War by Others' Means: Delivering Effective Partner Force Capacity Building*, Whitehall Paper 97 (Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2020), p. 1. Richard Iron made the same argument in 2017, noting that force-size constraints required the use of 'indigenous partner capacity' to generate enough mass to fight, using the British Army counterinsurgency in Iraqi as the example. See Richard Iron, 'Train, Advise, Assist: A British Perspective', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), p. 99.

6   'Dunsterforce' was a British-led multinational force to Persia (Iran), Russia, and Armenia around the Caspian Sea to stabilise the Caucasus front, protect access to British India from Ottoman forces, secure the oil fields at Baku, and unify and train an effective fighting force from various anti-Bolshevik and anti-Turkish groups. Named after its commander, Major General Lionel Dunsterville, it involved 47 Australians in a British-led multinational training force between January and September 1918. See LC Dunsterville, *The Adventures of Dunsterforce* (London: Edward Arnold, 1920); Alan Stewart, *Persian Expedition: The Australians in Dunsterforce, 1918* (Loftus, NSW: Australian Military History Publications, 2006); Tom Frame, 'The Long Road to Peace and Prosperity', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), pp. 7–10.

7   'Tulip Force', or Mission 204, was a joint British and Australian commando force to infiltrate China from Burma to train Chinese Nationalist Army guerrillas against Imperial Japanese forces. It comprised 47 Australians in a British-led training force over 1940–41. See William Noonan, *Lost Legion: Mission 204 and the Reluctant Dragon* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987).

8   Research for this article identified Australian Army contributions to Defence cooperation programs in Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Fiji, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Tonga, the Solomon Islands, Western Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Cook Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. This list illustrates the breadth of the Army's historical (and contemporary) engagement with regional neighbours and partners.

9   Used to describe any of the hill-dwelling indigenous tribes/people of the central highlands of Vietnam.

10   Ian McNeill, *To Long Tan: The Australian Army and the Vietnam War, 1950–1966* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 1993), p. 411.

11   Ian McNeill, *The Team: Australian Army Advisers in Vietnam 1962–1972* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1984), p. 5; McNeill, To Long Tan, p. 38.

12   McNeill, *The Team*, p. 14.

13   McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 38.

14   The AATTV's first commanding officer, COL Ted Serong, was considered ideally suited to establish the team due to his broad experience as the commandant of the Jungle Training Centre in Canungra, and in serving a two-year posting with the Burmese Army, where he gained insight into the 'types of problems which beset Vietnam'. McNeill, *The Team*, p. 6.

15   McNeill, *The Team*.

16   The AATTV received US logistic support on a per capita repayment basis. See McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 203.

17   McNeill, *The Team*, p. 481. The AATTV specialised in tactics training, specifically introducing Australian approaches to company and platoon harbours, field manoeuvres, shooting and sneaker galleries, and ammunition conservation (ibid., pp. 23–24).

18   John Hartley, 'The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam', in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), *The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1962–1972: The 2002 Chief of Army's Military History Conference* (Canberra: Army History Unit, 2002), p. 242.

19   One such example occurred in Donga Da in late March 1964 when Australian observers rallied faltering Ranger troops, drew Viet Cong fire and led a sweep to clear the ground. See McNeill, *The Team*, p. 26.

20   Ibid., p. 24.

21   Hartley argues that in the early years of team deployments, numbers were 'invariably' around 10 per cent under strength until 1968. 'The inability of the posting system to meet the full strength', he claimed, 'was a constant source of embarrassment to various commanders as the Americans were forced to find the shortfall'. Hartley, 'The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam', p. 244.

22   McNeill, *The Team*, pp. 80–82.

23   Figures drawn from McNeill, *The Team*, p. 91; and 'Australian Army Training Team Vietnam', Australian War Memorial website, at: https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U53430 (accessed 29 March 2023). Neither source aligns with the other.

24   Figure cited in 'Nominal Roll', 'Australian Army Training Team (AATTV)', AWM: PR83/147.

25   McNeill, *The Team*, p. 92.

26   On the success of communicating lessons in advising relationships, John Hartley noted that 'confidence and rapport had to be established with a Vietnamese counterpart' and that 'much depended on the personality and experience of both parties'. Hartley, 'The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam', p. 243.

27   At the beginning of 1967, for example, 11 AATTV members served in Phuoc Tuy, which grew to 18 by March. See Ian McNeill and Ashley Ekins, *On the Offensive: The Australian Army in the Vietnam War, January 1967—June 1968* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 2003), p. 45.

28   They were six strong, composed of two warrant officers and four corporals—with the latter selected on their maturity, ability and temperament.

29   For the change in the AATTV's emphasis, expansion and focus on delivering MATTs, see Ashley Ekins with Ian McNeill, *Fighting to the Finish: The Australian Army and the Vietnam War, 1968–1975* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, 2012), pp. 506–511.

30   See Terry Smith, *Training the Bodes: Australian Army Advisors Training Cambodian Infantry Battalions: A Postscript to the Vietnam War* (Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2011).

31   Hartley, 'The Australian Army Training Team Vietnam', p. 245.

32   The author thanks Colonel Stephen Tulley (AATTI (4)) for unclassified insights into his rotation's TAA experience, and Ms Nicole Townsend, Research Assistant on the Official History of Australian Operations in Iraq 2003–11 at the Australian War Memorial, for assistance in checking open-source material related to the Iraq training teams. At the time of writing, the Iraq official history volume is still in preparation.

33   See Matthew Glozier, 'The only show in town': Commonwealth Military Training Team—Uganda, 1982–84', in Peter Londey, Rhys Crawley and David Horner, *The Long Search for Peace: Observer Missions and Beyond, 1947–2006*, Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post–Cold War Operations, Volume 1 (Cambridge University Press, 2020), pp. 690–713; Patrick Cullinan, 'The Commonwealth Military Training Team Uganda', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), pp. 39–55.

34   This lack of clarity was considered analogous to 'building an aircraft mid-flight'. Shannon Joyce, 'From Out of the Shadow', Contact 6 (2005), p. 40.

35   The first two training team rotations lived on the same base, initially at Tal'Afar and then at Al Kasik. From the third rotation onwards, teams were accommodated at Camp Smitty, then, following the transition to operational overwatch, Camp Terendak. John Blaxland, 'Near and Far: Operations, 1999–2006', in David Horner and Jean Bou (eds), *Duty First: A History of the Royal Australian Regiment* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2008), p. 335.

36   The Australian Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) Rotation VII noted that their deployment was 'to support the Government of Iraq win *their* fight against IS … The mission, while including the provision of precision kinetic effects, did not involve Australian "boots on the ground" in direct action or combat operations'. See 'Advise, Assist and Enable in Iraq', *The Cove*, 11 September 2018, at: https://cove.army.gov.au/article/advise-assist-and-enable-iraq (accessed 29 May 2024).

37   Before commencing training of the brigade's new recruits, AATTI (1) provided five weeks of leadership training to the NCOs and officers of the brigade at Tal'Afar, while AATTI (2) conducted a staggered four-week officer and NCO integration course, followed by an eight-week battalion recruit training course. See Joyce, 'From Out of the Shadow', pp. 41, 43.

38   Mark O'Neill argues that the AATTI approach was 'an example of failing to design the BPC [building partner capacity] continuum for the end state', with instruction 'delivered in a manner that satisfied Australian force protection concerns'. Mark O'Neill, 'Advise Harder: Reflecting on Capacity Building', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), p. 179.

39   While AATTI (4) was established as part of the AMTG in 2005, the first three training teams had no link to the AMTG.

40   Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Visit to Australian Defence Forces Deployed to Support the Rehabilitation of Iraq: Report of the Delegation 22 to 28 October 2005* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2006), Chapter 5, p. 29. See also Corporal Leighton Haywood-Smith, 'Building on Past Missions', in 'Building Partner Capacity: Perspectives from Iraq', *The Cove*, 7 December 2019, at: https://cove.army.gov.au/article/building-partner-capacity-perspectives-iraq (accessed 28 May 2024).

41   There were formal handovers between several training teams, but not all (e.g., AATTI (2) to (3), and (3) to (4)). Corporate knowledge was therefore not always imparted to successive rotations, and some teams had to start effectively from scratch.

42   The author acknowledges the assistance of Dr Steven Bullard and Colonel Andrew Mayfield of the Official History of Australian Operations in Afghanistan, 2010–14, Official History Project, Australian War Memorial, in checking the use of open-source material. Additional open-source information was examined by Dr Jordan Beavis, a previous research assistant on the Official History of Australian Operations in Afghanistan, 2005–10. At the time of writing, the Afghanistan volumes of the official history remain in preparation and production.

43   From 2005, the Special Operations Task Group undertook some informal mentoring of Afghan personnel attached to their operations, though this was on an ad hoc basis.

44   During the first deployment to Afghanistan, in 2001–2002, the SASR element was based out of Kuwait, and in early 2002, 1 Squadron left a single troop in Kuwait. They engaged in ad hoc training of Kuwaiti special forces in counterterrorism. This was unconnected to operations in Afghanistan; Kuwait was leveraging off the experience of the SASR while they were based in-country. See 'Aussie Commandos Limber up in Kuwait', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 2003, at: https://www.smh.com.au/world/middle-east/aussie-commandos-limber-up-in-kuwait-20030318-gdgg31.html (accessed 29 May 2024).

45   Between May 2010 and October 2015, the 205 CAT rotations provided Afghan headquarters personnel with sustained mentorship and advice on corps-level operations, personnel administration, logistics, and planning, and encompassed the provinces of Kandahar, Zabul and Uruzgan. From October 2013 to October 2020, Australian mentoring teams also deployed to the Afghan National Army Officer Academy (ANAOA) at Kabul (Qargha) in a UK-led 'train-the-trainer' mission. Then, from April 2010, the Australian Army deployed an artillery training team to Kabul to assist in the development of the ANA's artillery branch as part of the Training Team—Kabul / Artillery Training Advisory Team. While initially providing hands-on instruction, as more ANA instructors became available, the mission's focus became 'training the trainers'. In total, five rotations were deployed over three years. Between July 2012 and July 2014, the Australian Army deployed four Logistics Training Advisory Team—Kabul (LTAT) rotations to Kabul, each comprising 10 advisors. LTAT members were engaged in the mentoring of ANA logistics personnel in national logistics management and the operation of supply and equipment depots.

46   The Reconstruction Task Forces, the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Forces, and Mentoring Task Force One would all be deployed under this command.

47   MRTF-1 comprised an OMLT, a force protection combat team, engineering elements, and other enablers such as intelligence and logistics for its eight-month deployment.

48   OMLTs were a NATO-designed advise, train and assist sub-units already in use throughout Afghanistan by other Coalition forces. OMLTs mentored and advised Kandak personnel during both training and operations, and assisted in their professional development and skills across a broad spectrum of areas such as 'logistics and personnel management, force protection planning and coordinating combined operations'. Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 February 2008, p. 694.

49   For further discussion on Australian mentoring operations in Afghanistan, see Peter Connolly, *Counterinsurgency in Uruzgan* (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2011).

50   One such incident occurred on 4 January 2009 when two Australian mentors accompanied an 18-strong ANA patrol. When the patrol was ambushed, the ANA soldiers reportedly responded with poor combat discipline, showed little initiative and offered minimal resistance, with only the example of sustained opposition set by the two Australians preventing the patrol from being overrun by insurgents. Chris Masters, *Uncommon Soldier* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2012), pp. 185–187.

51   On 29 August 2012, one 'insider' attack by an Afghan military member killed three Australian soldiers at a base in the Baluchi Valley.

52   Mark O'Neill's experience was somewhat different: he noted that cultural training provided for his Afghan deployment emphasised scenarios around limiting green-on-blue attacks rather than genuine cultural understanding founded on language and customs. 'The training', O'Neill observed, 'had the potential to create attitudes, expectations and even prejudices among the future advisors which were the antithesis of those required in an effective indigenous security force capacity advisory team'. See O'Neill, 'Advise Harder', p. 177.

53   On 9 February 2008, Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon, announced the new emphasis on training Afghan forces. Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 9 February 2008, p. 694. Fitzgibbon argued 'it was critical that the Afghan troops be given the training they needed to hold these areas' captured by international troops but lost to the Taliban when Afghan forces took over'. See Brendan Nicholson, 'Australians to Join Afghans in Battle', *The Age*, 20 February 2008, at: https://www.theage.com.au/national/australians-to-join-afghans-in-battle-20080220-ge6qxy.html (accessed 29 May 2024).

54   An evolution in the name from 'MRTF', with the reduction of the engineering component (hence removal of 'R').

55   Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe, 'Mentoring Task Force Four (MTF-Four) in Uruzgan Province: An Interview with Lt. Col. Kahlil Fegan', *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses* 4, no. 11 (2012), p. 14.

56   Ibid.

57   Department of Defence, 'Transition Milestone in Uruzgan Province', media release, 26 March 2013.

58   This ratio would rise in subsequent years. See Chris Masters, *No Front Line: Australia's Special Forces at War in Afghanistan* (Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2017), p. 284.

59   Ibid., p. 387.

60   Ibid., pp. 312, 328.

61   For further broad considerations, see US Government, *Why the Afghan Security Forces Collapsed* (Washington DC: Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, 2023).

62   The RAAF also deployed an RAAF E-7A Wedgetail aircraft to Germany 'in support of multinational efforts to protect a vital gateway of international humanitarian and military assistance to Ukraine'. Commonwealth of Australia, *Official Committee Hansard: Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee*, 14 February 2024, p. 8, statement by General Angus Campbell.

63   'The King Visits Ukrainian Military Recruits Undertaking Training in the UK', 22 February 2023, royal.uk, at: https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2023-02-22/the-king-visits-ukrainian-military-recruits-undertaking-training-in (accessed 29 May 2024).

64   'Interview with Training Team Members—OP Kudu', *The Cove*, 20 February 2024, LCPL Daniel Henry, section second-in-command, Rotation 1, at: https://cove.army.gov.au/article/interview-training-team-members-op-kudu (accessed 30 April 2024).

65   'Interview with Training Team Members—OP Kudu', LCPL Daniel Henry,
      section second-in-command, Rotation 1.

66   The ADF contribution has also been referred to as the Security Assistance Group—
      Ukraine (SAG-U).

67   These were organised into three 60-person platoons comprising four 15-person
      sections, with the remaining 20 personnel comprising Ukrainian national support
      elements and company, platoon and section commanders. Ukrainian section
      commanders accompanied their trainees through the Australian course.

68   'Interview with Training Team Members—OP Kudu', Major Sam Hand, OC Rotation 2.

69   The compacted training continuum spans the theoretical and the practical. Prior to
      deployment, Australian instructors familiarise themselves with Ukrainian small arms so
      as to mentor Ukraine's trainees. They also advise on grenades, mines, equipment care,
      night-fighting equipment, explosive ordnance recognition, counter-explosives, trench
      defence and assault, UAS threat, range work, hardening techniques, and all parts of
      individual soldier skills including attack, defence, communications, patrolling, ambush
      and sentry activities.

70   The British Army provided ground transport to the base's location, while the benign
      security environment has associated effects on force protection requirements.

71   Details of rotations provided by 5 RAR.

72   'Interview with Training Team Members—OP Kudu', CPL Jasper Berry-Smith, SDC,
      5 RAR, Rotation 1. For Rotation 2, ages ranged from 18 to 52. See 'Interview with
      Training Team Members—OP Kudu', LCPL Bailey Swift, section second-in-command,
      5 RAR, Rotation 2. The presence of older age groups in these cohorts is explained
      by the age range of the initial call-up of fighting-age men in the first year of the war.
      By January 2023 the mobilisation of the remainder of Ukrainian society was underway.

73   Unnamed Ukrainian graduating recruit, Rotation 1, quoted in 'Operation KUDU
      graduates first Ukrainian troops', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, 28 February 2023, at:
      https://asiapacificdefencereporter.com/operation-kudu-graduates-first-ukrainian-troops
      (accessed 30 April 2024).

74   Report on Australian instruction to Ukrainian trainees, British Army Defence Organisation
      Project Team, c. August 2023, sighted by author. The quality of the instruction meant
      that some AFU trainees were able to competently run groups through a section attack
      scenario after only 35 days of training.

75   Attributed to Major Gregory Sargeant, OC D Coy, 5 RAR. See Mike Hughes, 'Aussies
      Deliver Live-Fire Training to Ukrainian Recruits', *Contact*, 10 March 2023, at: https://
      www.contactairlandandsea.com/2023/03/10/live-fire-training-vital-for-ukrainian-recruits.

76   One 5 RAR trainer observed that 'with all of us being from Darwin, this isn't exactly
      the climate we're accustomed to soldiering in—and the environmental shift has meant
      performing demonstrations and giving lessons has proven challenging'. See Captain
      Annie Richardson, 'Weather Tests Troops on Operation Kudu', Department of Defence
      website, 29 March 2023, at: https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2023-03-
      29/weather-tests-troops-operation-kudu (accessed 29 May 2024).

77   'Interview with Training Team Members—OP Kudu', Major Sam Hand, OC Rotation 2.

78   'Security Force Assistance Brigade', United States Army Human Resources Command
      website, 9 November 2023, at: https://www.hrc.army.mil/content/Latest%20News
      (accessed 29 May 2024).

79   In the US Army's own description, 'strengthens [US] allies and partners capacities
      and capabilities while supporting America's security objectives and the combatant
      commanders' warfighting needs'. 'Security Force Assistance Brigades', US Army
      website, at: https://www.army.mil/sfab (accessed 1 May 2024).

80   In this fashion, a Captain in an SFAB will have commanded a company in his or her specialisation in their immediately preceding posting. Gina Cavallaro, 'It's All about the Mission: Inside the New First Security Force Assistance Brigade', *Army*, February 2018, p. 28. See also James Templin, 'Advising Lethality: What the SFAB Brings to the Fight', *Infantry Magazine*, Winter 2020–21, pp. 37–39.

81   United States Army Training Pamphlet (ATP) 3-96.1, *Security Force Assistance Brigade* (Headquarters Department of the Army, September 2020), pp. vii, 1-1, 1-7, at: https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1020673 (accessed 29 May 2024).

82   John Pelham IV, *Combat Multiplier: Examining the Security Force Assistance Brigade's Role in Future Army Strategic Deterrence*, Land Warfare Paper 141 (The Association of the United States Army, 2021), p. 5.

83   UK Parliament, House of Commons Hansard, vol. 618, 15 December 2016, Sir Michael Fallon, Secretary of State for Defence, 'Strategic Defence and Security Review: Army', at: https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-12-15/debates/16121559000011/StrategicDefenceAndSecurityReviewArmy (accessed 20 May 2024).

84   'The Army Special Operations Brigade', Ministry of Defence (UK) website, at: https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/formations-divisions-brigades/field-army-troops/army-special-operations-brigade/#:~:text=The%20Army%20Special%20Operations%20Brigade%20role%20is%20to%20operate%20in,deliver%20operational%20insights%20and%20effects (accessed 20 May 2024).

85   'The Ranger Regiment', 'Our Deployments', Ministry of Defence (UK) website, at: https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/ranger-regiment (accessed 20 May 2024). Information provided by Major Luke Turrell (UK), Executive Officer, Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict.

86   In 2024, the battalions were 1st Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment; 3rd Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Scotland; 1st Battalion, Irish Guards; 3rd Battalion, The Rifles; and 4th Battalion, Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment.

87   '11th Security Force Assistance Brigade', Ministry of Defence (UK) website, at: https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/formations-divisions-brigades/1st-united-kingdom-division/11th-security-force-assistance-brigade (accessed 1 May 2024).

88   John Blaxland has noted that since 2006, several of the Australian Army's core behaviours 'speak directly' to the TAA function. John Blaxland, 'Army Reform and Assistance Missions', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), p. 282.

89   'Defence Workforce to Grow above 100,000', media release, Department of Defence website, 10 March 2022.

90   Chris Field, 'Australian Army: Security Force Assistance Battalion (SFABn)', Australian Army Research Centre, Land Power Forum, 8 August 2023, at: https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/library/land-power-forum/australian-army-security-force-assistance-battalion-sfabn (accessed 20 May 2024).

91   Ibid. Specifically, Field proposes that an Australian SFABn include a headquarters element of 25 personnel, and 30 teams across four streams—manoeuvre, artillery, engineer and logistics.

92   Department of Defence, *Defence Annual Report, 2022–23* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2023), p. 10; *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, pp. 20, 87.

93   Commonwealth of Australia, *Official Committee Hansard: Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee*, 14 February 2024, p. 7, General Angus Campbell. The ADF's total strength as at 1 January 2024 was 58,427, while the authorised strength for the ADF for 2023–24 was 62,735 (ibid., p. 33).

94   Figures drawn from ibid., p. 33, Lieutenant General Natasha Fox.

95   Ibid., p. 33, General Angus Campbell.

96   *National Defence: Defence Strategic Review*, p. 46.

97   'Adapting Army to Australia's Strategic Circumstances', media release, Department of Defence website, 28 September 2023, at: https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2023-09-28/adapting-army-australias-strategic-circumstances (accessed 3 May 2024).

98   Department of Defence, *National Defence Strategy 2024* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2024), p. 21.

99   A defence cooperation program is a government-to-government agreement that provides the architecture to grow bilateral relations, improve defence links, support local capacity-building, and increase formal exchanges and activities. See 'Defence Pacific Engagement', Department of Defence website, at: https://www.defence.gov.au/defence-activities/programs-initiatives/pacific-engagement (accessed 29 May 2024).

100   The ADF produced brochures and well-edited video clips to exhibit to the AFP what was possible. The first joint task force commanding officer recalled that it was an offer to enhance Philippine capability and an opportunity for the ADF to learn from the AFP's experience in combat. Interview, B McLennan, 5 June 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], pp. 6–8. While commanders used 'Joint Task Group' in reporting the mission's activities, 'Joint Task Force' is adopted in this article, except when citing Report names in the references below.

101   The joint task force achieved this by training a large body of forces in order to identify potential trainers, employed a 'train-the-trainers' philosophy, then provided an advisory capacity to the Filipino-led training program.

102   The RAAF sponsored training in airspace control and targeting, while the maritime contribution involved training by the RAN to Philippine Navy sailors and crews, and bilateral maritime security patrols in the Sulu and Celebes seas.

103   Report, 'Post Operation Report Joint Task Group 629', Commander JTG 629, Manila, 3 February 2018 [PROTECTED—SENSITIVE: CABINET], p. 14.

104   Luke Holloway, 'Training Teams as a Force of Choice', in Craig Stockings and Peter Dennis (eds), *An Army of Influence: Eighty Years of Regional Engagement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 321–342. As the conflict had officially ended, the Australian Government was spared from making a determination about Australian combat participation as authorised in Vietnam and Afghanistan.

105   The second-in-command of one land MTT, Captain Callum Muntz, recalled that flexibility was a key principle: 'You could be teaching engineer instructors from their [military engineering] school, from the Urban Search and Breach package for example, and that would be different to how you taught infantry soldiers, which we did once, not even engineers. Same for the medical package, we taught some of them, just basic infantry soldiers, basic skills.' Interview, C Muntz, 6 June 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 8.

106   The first commanding officer of JTG 629 noted that the early infantry and special forces troops mentored in the early tranches were veterans of Marawi and brought those contemporary experiences to the ADF trainers, 'enabling a transfer in knowledge to Australian Army and Special Operations Command mentors on the reality of intense urban close combat against a well led, disciplined, trained and equipped terrorist threat'. Report, 'Post Operation Report Joint Task Group 629' [PROTECTED—SENSITIVE: CABINET], pp. 1, 7. Another member of an engineer MTT recalled some reticence about what to expect: 'We didn't know what level of training the [Filipino] engineers had. We didn't know what level of English they spoke. We didn't know whether if they would be receptive to us, being as they've just come back from combat, and they've got more experience in actual combat than us.' Interview, Corporal L Keiler, 4 June 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 5.

107 Despite the AFP's greater combat experience, one Australian officer observed that there were 'some techniques and some equipment and demolitions' the AFP could have used 'to better accomplish' the urban engineer mission—'they're saying that, had you been here before Marawi came up then they could have finished the battle or the war much faster'. Interview, R Manahan, 26 November 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 7.

108 Interview, C Muntz, 6 June 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 28.

109 Brief, 'Joint Task Group 629—Operation Augury (Philippines) Assessment of Mission and Operational Objectives Period October 2017—Jun 2018', compiled by Commander Joint Task Group 629—LTCOL Judd Finger, 20 April 2018 [PROTECTED], p. 4.

110 Signal, 'Chief of the Defence Force Order of the Day: Transitioning of Operation Augury-Philippines', 9 December 2019.

111 Interview, G Ware, 26 November 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 24.

112 Lieutenant Colonel Gavin Ware, a JTF 629 commander, confirmed the importance of mutual respect in building the bilateral relationship. Ware observed that the AFP placed great 'expression of value' in the relationship, supported by an Australian emphasis on 'making those that they're training with feel valued and respected and they feel like it's a real give-and-take relationship—well, not so transactional but a bond'. Interview, G Ware, 26 November 2018, Australian Army History Unit [PROTECTED], p. 9.

113 'Chief of Joint Operations Hails Success of Operation Augury-Philippines', media release, Department of Defence website, 2 December 2019, at: https://www.defence. gov.au/news-events/releases/2019-12-02/chief-joint-operations-hails-success-operation-augury-philippines (accessed 2 May 2024).

114 Report, 'Post Operation Report—7 RAR Battle Group (Mentor and Reconstruction Task Force—One), 16 OCT 08 – 15 JUN 09', Commanding Officer 7 RAR BG (MRTF-1), 1 July 2009 [PROTECTED], p. 9.

115 The trust component was reiterated by the SOTG during mentoring operations with Iraqi partner forces. In a review of SOTG VII's deployment, one officer observed: 'You cannot surge trust. The SOTG approach developed immense trust with our Iraqi partners. Mutual respect and shared experience did provide us with a superior level of access, influence and understanding, despite not being engaged with them in close combat.' 'Advise, Assist and Enable in Iraq', *The Cove*.

116 John Blaxland's explanation for the Australian Army's intrinsic suitability to deliver TAA functions is linked to the Army's 2006 articulation of its core behaviours. Among these, mental preparation, continuous self-development and learning, initiative, teamwork and compassion are all fundamental traits required for successful adviser work. Soldiers 'imbued with the essence of the core behaviours', Blaxland asserts, 'may in fact be quite good at TAA-SFA [security force adviser] functions, even when they are not formally trained for them'. Blaxland, 'Army Reform and Assistance Missions', p. 282.

117 This path was considered the most appropriate in a recent (2017) examination of Australian TAA practice, balanced against the realisation that the ADF did not have the people or resources necessary to 'to pursue highly specialised approaches to security force assistance while meeting other government directions regarding national security'. That metric has not demonstrably altered in the intervening period. See Brett Chaloner and Mark O'Neill, 'Postscript', in Tom Frame (ed.), *The Long Road: Australia's Train, Advise and Assist Missions* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2017), p. 358. Chaloner and O'Neill also propose five practical policy suggestions for future Army TAA missions that deserve review.

118 *National Defence Strategy 2024*, p. 21.

Commentary

Author of Commentary: Daniel Cassidy

Dr Richardson asks the questions: 'Should the current Australian Army approach to train, advise, assist (TAA) missions change into the future? Can it change, in light of consistently challenging recruitment and retention rates? Or should Army maintain its traditional (and successful) approach?' These questions are prefaced by:

> the DSR endorses activities that support the maintenance of strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific—encouraging greater Defence prioritisation of regional defence partnerships (including further investment in bilateral, minilateral and multilateral opportunities) and cooperative engagements, including (but not limited to) the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) and activities that broadly fall under the umbrella of train, advise and assist missions.

To answer the questions raised, Dr Richardson reviews the experiences of TAA missions from Vietnam through to Afghanistan and more recently Operations Kudu and Augury. He looks to the US and UK security force assistance brigades to provide inspiration for possible use in future Army organisational composition discussions, before ultimately dismissing these as unachievable.

While a review of experience gained through the conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan as significant TAA missions does provide valuable insight to the Australian Army's understanding of TAA, the article could do more to present the current geopolitical environment with contextually relevant examples. This is not to say the lessons inherent are irrelevant; within the Indo-Pacific, issues such as language barriers, cultural misunderstanding and illiteracy are still common and should be understood when planning international engagements of any kind, including TAA.

Alternative examples can be found in the Exercises Coral Warrior and Sapper series of 'TAA-like' activities, comprising small specialist teams deployed to conduct discrete short-term training activities that are relevant and targeted to the host nation. Participants are drawn from within Army's establishment without significant impact on primary tasking. The success of these exercises is enabled in part by the DCP embeds, who engage

in daily dialogue with the host nation to ensure effective planning for targeted training with local knowledge of cultural, personnel and logistical implications. As mentioned by Dr Richardson, Operation Augury is another example of DCP-supported TAA missions.

While the article focuses on Army's contribution to the region, further analysis of the benefits of an integrated approach across all domains could identify opportunities to enhance or leverage current programs. In discrete circumstances it can be argued that success can only be achieved through the use of long-term embedded and trusted advisors to host nations. The term 'island time' is synonymous with Pacific nations; likewise the depth of a relationship can also be measured in time. TAA missions are temporary in nature and do not in themselves provide a persistent effect. To ensure the effectiveness of temporary TAA missions, they must be supported by a more permanent mission or program. Not only do DCP embeds assist the deploying force elements; they also represent the continuity that ensures lessons are embedded over time, for example, by assisting partner countries to develop policies and procedures that provide governance frameworks for subsequent activities and by monitoring and reinforcing the training provided by the short-term missions.

Dr Richardson's question 'Should the current Australian Army approach to TAA change?' is relevant and deserves to be explored in more detail, especially given the ADF's important role in developing strategic partnerships. However, the discussion could be more broadly considered in the context of an integrated approach utilising existing and new programs, agencies and resources to inform internal Army decision making. Perhaps thinking in terms of train, advise and assist has narrowed the discussion. More broadly the question could be: how can the Army contribute to national efforts to improve defence cooperation with our close neighbours while also strengthening partner nations' military power?

About the Commentator

Squadron Leader Daniel Cassidy is a Personnel Capability Officer currently working as the DCP Human Resources Embed to the Republic of Fiji Military Forces. He has held various positions within RAAF Air Command, most recently with the Air Warfare Centre. In 2019 he deployed on Operation Highroad as an advisor to the Afghanistan air force.

Mastering the Art of Command: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and Victory in the Pacific (Naval Institute Press, 2022, ISBN 9781682475959, 430 pp)

Book review

Author: Trent Hone

Reviewed by: Jordan Beavis

In *Mastering the Art of Command,* noted US naval historian Trent Hone investigates the leadership of Admiral Chester W Nimitz as Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC) and Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA) during the Second World War. Both as a personality and as a fleet commander, Nimitz has already been the topic of significant study by Pacific War and naval historians, and depicted on the big screen by Henry Fonda (*Midway*, 1976) and Woody Harrelson (*Midway*, 2019). Hone, however, re-examines previously well-trodden ground to demonstrate how Nimitz's leadership fostered the creation of a staff and organisation that 'blunted Imperial Japanese offensives, seized the initiative in the Pacific, and rapidly brought war to the shores of Japan'.[1] He concludes that Nimitz's accomplishments as CINCPAC and CINCPOA suggest how, in a top-down way, military organisations can 'adapt, reorient, and reconfigure themselves to achieve greater effectiveness'.[2]

Mastering the Art of Command comprises an introduction, a conclusion, and 10 chapters informally separated into three main sections. Following a comprehensive introduction (which prepares the ground for Hone's study and introduces the reader to key aspects of organisational theory against which Nimitz's leadership is assessed) the first three chapters examine the period December 1941 to June 1942. After being selected for the role of CINCPAC by US President Franklin D Roosevelt and Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Nimitz worked to restore the morale and confidence of the Pacific Fleet staff, many of whom were in a state of shock following the Pearl Harbor attack and successive defeats on land.[3] Leading through personal example, he aimed to inspire confidence and aggression in his subordinates' plans. Nimitz emphasised that offensive operations were necessary to counterbalance the Imperial Japanese Navy, then ascendant throughout the Pacific. In these first, pressing months, he also began to lay the foundations for a staff, administrative and command organisation that would ensure 'a consistent approach to capturing lessons, identifying improvements, and disseminating new doctrines', thereby enhancing the Pacific Fleet's combat strength.[4]

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 explore the period July 1942 to October 1943, as the Allies secured the initiative in the Pacific following the Battle of Midway and the seesaw operations at Guadalcanal. Hone examines this high-tempo, high-stress period of command as Nimitz pushed his subordinates to accept reasonable risk through uncompromising joint operations, replacing commanders such as Vice Admiral Robert L Ghormley as Commander, South Pacific, and Rear Admiral Robert Alfred Theobald as Commander of the North Pacific Force (TF 8) when they failed to live up to his expectations.[5] In this period, Nimitz emphasised decentralised and unified command approaches wherein 'each of his subordinate commands would have a single officer in charge who would command all forces allocated to him, regardless of their nationality or service branch'. This philosophy came to fruition in mid-1942, corresponding with the gradual emergence of Allied superiority in materiel.[6] Nimitz continued to modify his command and administrative structures throughout this period as his staff and subordinates introduced new tactics, planning procedures, doctrine, and shipboard organisational structures (the Combat Information Centre) in light of hard-won experience.[7]

Hone's final four chapters follow the course of the Central Pacific offensive from November 1943 to August 1945. By 1945, Nimitz and his staff had developed efficient operational planning processes which allowed them to develop and implement plans at a speed that defied the natural inertia generated by the overwhelming mass of Allied forces in the Pacific Area. Through leaps and bounds, and with an ever-more complicated logistics tail and manpower difficulties, Nimitz's forces rapidly pushed through the Pacific to the very shores of Japan, isolating enemy strongpoints where possible and taking ground where necessary. As their operations became more cooperative, such as in the liberation of the Philippines, Hone compares Nimitz's command structures to MacArthur's, indicating a difference of inter-service cooperation philosophy between the two commanders. While Nimitz pushed his subordinates to establish joint commands at the lowest possible level to encourage inter-service cooperation, joint command in MacArthur's headquarters existed only in his personage.[8] Yet as the potential invasion of Japan loomed in late 1945, and with neither Nimitz nor MacArthur willing to subordinate themselves to the other for the operation, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) adopted MacArthur's centralised command system, discarding Nimitz's 'integrated approach to joint command' and effectively making the JCS the General Headquarters for the Pacific Theatre.[9] Indeed, the supposed 'joint' planning between MacArthur and Nimitz in preparation for the invasion was fraught, as the two commanders failed to find common ground or subordinate their egos for the successful conduct of military operations. Such a command structure also meant delays in calls for inter-service support. In 1944 Admiral Raymond Spruance, as the Fifth Fleet commander, had exercised control over land-based aircraft and issued orders to them for support as required; by July 1945 Admiral 'Bull' Halsey had to request supporting strikes from land-based air commands through Nimitz and the Air Force commander, which, Hone notes, resulted in a 'lengthy series of messages before any action was taken'.[10]

On the whole, Hone has crafted a well-researched and incisive analysis of Nimitz's abilities and practices as a leader and commander. This reviewer suspected a tendency for the author's depiction of Nimitz to border on hagiography, with comparatively little space allocated to missteps or the perspectives of those outside of the Fleet Admiral's admittedly long list of admirers. There are hints that not all of Nimitz's subordinates agreed with his leadership style or command decisions—particularly in relation to Halsey

at the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and in naval operations in support of MacArthur's invasion of Leyte.[11] Few, if any, individuals, especially military commanders operating in such high-stress and high-tempo environments, are universally beloved, and recognition of any such counter-perspectives (or even an acknowledgement that such perspectives were looked for but not identified) would have given the book a greater sense of balance.

In *Mastering the Art of Command*, Hone has crafted a well-researched and incisive analysis of Nimitz's leadership methods. Hone is clear in his central thesis: Nimitz's Pacific War career offers many lessons to modern military leaders in organisational management and leadership, especially for those considering substantial, integrated, geographically decentralised operations in a theatre such as the Pacific. Despite the naval focus of the book, many leaders within Army or Defence more broadly will find much to learn from Nimitz's Second World War command experience, particularly in relation to influencing, energising and encouraging the best out of their team in high-pressure environments.

About the Reviewer

Dr Jordan Beavis is an Academic Research Officer at the Australian Army Research Centre, having formerly worked as a Researcher for the Australian War Memorial's Official History of Australian Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. His research focuses on the militaries of the British Empire/Commonwealth in the interwar period (1919–1939), international engagement, professional military education, and mobilisation.

Endnotes

1   Trent Hone, *Mastering the Art of Command: Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and Victory in the Pacific* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2022), p. 4.

2   Ibid., p. 354.

3   Ibid., pp. 29–30.

4   Ibid., p. 57.

5   Ibid., pp. 131, 158–160.

6   Ibid., p. 77.

7   Ibid., pp. 161–162.

8   Ibid., pp. 324–325.

9   Ibid., p. 322.

10   Ibid., p. 339.

11   Ibid., pp. 286, 288–289.

Best Possible Outcome: Business Decision-Making and Crisis Planning (Wiley, 2023, ISBN 97813942033201, xxiv+186 pp)

Book Review

Author: Garth Callender

Reviewed by: Darren Cronshaw

Uncertainties and crises are a feature of contemporary global politics and business. In the face of conflict, extreme weather and natural disasters, cybercrime, pandemics, migration, and economic and supply chain instability, in what ways can leaders best lead through risk and chaos with agility and good decisions, while maintaining resilience for themselves and their teams? Drawing on his 25 years of service in the Australian Army, Lieutenant Colonel Garth Callender seeks to answer such questions and more in *Best Possible Outcome*.

Callender is a known figure for many in the Australian Army, having served as a cavalry officer in Iraq and in weapons intelligence teams in Afghanistan. His first book, *After the Blast,* described his recovery from an insurgent bomb attack in Baghdad in 2004, as the first serious Australian casualty of the war in Iraq. In *Best Possible Outcomes* he draws on both his Army career and his experience navigating governance and crises in his civilian

work. In this regard, he has spearheaded veterans' employment campaigns and contributed to boards, including chairing The Bravery Trust. Part of Callender's motivation is to demonstrate that military members have skills relevant to the leadership and decision-making needs of civilian organisations. Thus he advocates for veterans to find and make worthwhile contributions within these professional spheres and writes about the military experiences and principles that any leader can draw on.

In effect, Callender's book is a field guide for optimal decision-making and planning, drawing on and illustrated by Australian Army principles but applied to broader business contexts. It is structured around achieving the 'best possible outcome' (BPO) from the application of three conceptual pillars: the optimal mindset, the right team, and the BPO process.

Firstly, Callender underscores the importance of maintaining an optimal mindset in situations of crisis and ambiguity. He says that this is a characteristic epitomised by 'the emergence of someone who comes into the room, cuts through the noise, aligns everyone's thinking and starts stepping through a solution to the problem'.[1] People with such optimal mindsets lead, acknowledge the risks, apply ethical decision-making, focus and align the team, instinctively drive innovation, and control the narrative with clear and strong communication. These attributes are critical in life-and-death matters, for example when dealing with the risk of threats of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). An optimal mindset is equally necessary outside of the military context, for instance when dealing with ethical decision-making in the midst of morally ambiguous dilemmas. Helpfully, in his excellent Chapter 2 on ethics, Callender underlines that making the 'right' decision does not always mean following the 'rules'. To illustrate this point, he uses the example of dilemmas concerning whether to fire warning shots at suspected vehicular-borne IEDs.

Secondly, Callender asserts that analysis is important for building professional teams. The cognitively diverse contributions of all team members should be welcomed, secrets should not be kept and information not withheld, and an understanding of the supervisor's role needs to be maintained across the team. In the latter respect, Callender contends that business has a lot to learn from the military about succession planning. Mission plans should also be developed and stress-tested, and strategies put in place to support team members in the event of trauma. Callender

maintains that we can train to react in predictable ways, but we all process events differently. For instance, a third of us may process a traumatic event quickly and move on, a third may take time to work through the incident before moving on, and a further third may struggle to process the event and will need long-term support. In Chapter 11, Callender discusses the importance of resilient teams and provides a scenario wherein a potentially morally injurious event occurs. His conclusion that good leaders acknowledge that different team members process events differently—and therefore need different levels of support—is well reasoned and the chapter should be required reading within any team-based environment.

Callender contends that we can learn from an enemy. In Chapter 10, 'Stay Ahead of the Competition', he shows how commanders and teams can respect and learn from the organisational structure, recruitment, agility, resilience, minimum possible training and growth of a threat force, such as the Taliban in Afghanistan. In emphasising his point, Callender asserts:

> The IED threat from across Iraq and Afghanistan provides a myriad of examples of how an agile and adaptable enemy can outmanoeuvre a large, complex organisation, often with deadly consequences.[2]

Callender's third pillar of optimal decision-making is the BPO process. BPO begins with preparing for uncertainty and conducting quick decision-making. This conceptual approach follows the framework outlined by United States Air Force pilot Colonel John R Boyd during the Korean war. This concept is known as the 'observe, orient, decide and act' loop (the OODA loop). Responding to crises effectively involves getting the right people in the room, holding frequent short meetings, and together identifying most-likely and worst-case scenarios. From this analysis, appropriate responses are developed that are then wargamed, actioned and later reviewed. Callender maintains:

> In war zones, as in boardrooms, there is a simple truth: leaders must make clear, considered and timely decisions that cut through the ambiguity and chaos to best protect their organisation, people and stakeholders.[3]

Best Possible Outcome is an excellent and clearly written resource on clear thinking and agile leadership. It would be especially interesting reading for a military leader who is transitioning into civilian work, to remind them of the diverse and transferable leadership skillsets they have developed

during their career. Military personnel are likely to be fully familiar with the principles of military decision-making that Callender outlines at a basic level for the broader audience. Yet both military and civilian readers will appreciate Callender's insights as a reflective practitioner who is able to discuss lessons from his army background and apply them beyond military contexts. There are important lessons here for leaders across all spheres of professional practice in their efforts to tackle the wicked problems of today.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are those of the author, are unclassified and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Australian Army, the Department of Defence or the Australian Government.

About the Reviewer

Chaplain Darren Cronshaw has served as a Chaplain at Army School of Transport, Puckapunyal; 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka; and Defence Force School of Signals. He is also adjunct as Professor of Practical and Intercultural Theology with the Australian College of Ministries (Sydney College of Divinity).

Endnotes

1   Garth Callender, *Best Possible Outcome: Business Decision-Making and Crisis Planning* (Wiley, 2023).
2   Ibid., p. 102.
3   Ibid., p. xxi.

How to Fight a War (Hurst Publishers, 2023, ISBN 9781787389304, 272 pp)

Book Review

Author: Mike Martin

Reviewed by: Tony Duus

Mike Martin is a former British Army officer with extensive experience in Afghanistan, and he is currently a Senior Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. In *How to Fight a War*, his fourth book, Martin has written a 'reference guide for the Commander in Chief of a nation's military', as he believes that 'our leaders must have the strategic, operational, and tactical skills to prosecute wars successfully'.[1] In actuality, Martin has developed a book that should be on every initial reading list for Defence personnel—uniformed personnel, public servants, elected officials and advisers should all have this book as they enter and begin to navigate the complex world of Defence.

The book is broken into three easily digestible parts. It offers an elegant introduction to what Defence personnel need to do and know in the event of a conflict. It begins with the fundamentals—having a strategy and the intelligence to support it, building a logistics system, generating and sustaining morale in your force and, lastly, training that force to be ready. The book then turns to the development of the tangible capabilities required to dominate the five domains, focusing principally on the land domain and how the air, maritime, space, information and cyber domains influence and support it. Martin then illustrates how a war can be fought with nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

Throughout the book Martin, as a former army officer, stresses the importance of the land domain, arguing consistently that it is the primary domain and that the other domains exist to support land forces. Martin's view may be controversial to many, so it is worth quoting his perspective in full:

> No matter what anyone tells you—and there will be plenty of sailors, airmen and (especially) evangelists for new technology that will try to convince you otherwise—the land domain is pre-eminent, because wars are won or lost only on land. The primacy of the land domain is straightforward to convey. People live on land, and war is a human phenomenon driven by the most powerful of emotions. The reality of trying to influence them is that throughout history wars have always been decided by your troops taking control of someone else's village, town or city and, bearing a sword, musket or rifle, imposing your order. The other domains … exist to support the land domain and your land forces. You cannot win a war without them. Nor could you win a war by relying only on the other domains.[2]

Despite this rightful prominence of the land domain in Martin's text, he is quick to note that success requires joint and mutually supportive effect across all domains—no domain should be neglected at the expense of any other. Indeed, as Martin argues, time after time promises of new technology (and the accompanying evangelists) proclaim the end to primacy of the land domain, but they are quickly proven wrong. His example is very pertinent. In November 2021 the then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Boris Johnson, introduced an *Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* by stating that the UK had to 'recognise that the old concepts of fighting big tank battles on European land mass are over and there are other, better things we should be investing in'.[3] UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace explained that the review would deliver armed forces that were 'fit for tomorrow's battles' by switching from 'traditional warfighting' to 'technological warfighting'.[4] Three months later, Russia invaded Ukraine with a largely armoured and mechanised force, reminding the highly technologised Western militaries that such conventional forces were definitively not obsolete.[5]

The third part of the book pulls it all together, emphasising how all the domains work together to generate a military's freedom to manoeuvre. Again, Martin focuses upon the land domain and how the different land capabilities work together, based upon the building blocks of the combined arms team—infantry, armour and artillery. This includes in close-combat

scenarios. In this regard, Martin notes that an absolute necessity for the combined arms team to be successful is the ability and willingness to engage in close combat. Given what has been seen thus far in both Ukraine and Gaza, the ability to conduct combined arms manoeuvre and utilise the five domains remains paramount. Ukrainian infantry, supported by artillery, armour and engineers, are clearing Russian trenches with rifles and grenades.[6] Israeli infantry and combat engineers are clearing buildings and tunnels in Gaza the same way—face to face with small arms, grenades and rockets.[7] Despite all the support that can be rendered by the air, sea, information and cyber domains, at the heart of combined arms manoeuvre is the requirement for all land domain assets to operate as a combined arms team. After artillery, loitering munitions, attack aviation and armour have done all they can, it will still be up to the infantry and combat engineers to enter an enemy's entrenched positions and, in a very small space, either kill them or force their surrender or retreat.

The book's final part is very short, but nevertheless thought-provoking. It considers how wars end and where the future of war may lie. To end a war is difficult, and the question is how a victor can end a war without imposing conditions that will inevitably provoke a further conflict in 50 or 100 years hence.

As already noted, Martin's *How to Fight a War* should be an essential addition to the initial reading list for all persons associated with the Defence enterprise—whether they are military personnel, public servants, politicians or their advisors. My recommendation here, however, is carefully worded. The reality is that, for those who have prior experience in the topics covered, or who have benefited from the ADF's professional military education system, little new is revealed. Martin has nevertheless provided a well-crafted exploration of how wars are fought and, in so doing, baselines the knowledge required for Defence personnel to contribute to the defence of their nation. As such, the book's value should not be underestimated.

About the Reviewer

Colonel Anthony Duus is an Armoured Corps officer and has served in a variety of regimental and staff appointments. He is currently the Director of the Australian Army Research Centre and leads an eclectic group of skilled public servants, committed reservists and talented contractors.

Endnotes

1   Mike Martin, *How to Fight a War* (London: Hurst, 2023), p. 3.

2   Ibid., p. 95

3   Anda Maciuca, 'Flashback: To When Boris Told an Army Captain There Would Be No More Armed Conflict in Europe', *The London Economic*, 25 February 2022, at: https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/boris-johnson-tobias-ellwood-uk-tanks-russia-313661.

4   Kevin Rawlinson, 'Rivals Have Surged Ahead of UK's Armed Forces, Ben Wallace Warns', *The Guardian*, 15 September 2020, at: https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/sep/14/rivals-have-surged-ahead-of-uks-armed-forces-ben-wallace-warns.

5   See, for example, Rob Lee, 'The Tank Is Not Obsolete, and Other Observations about the Future of Combat', *War on the Rocks*, 6 September 2022, at: https://warontherocks.com/2022/09/the-tank-is-not-obsolete-and-other-observations-about-the-future-of-combat (accessed 3 April 2024).

6   Stephen Biddle, 'Back in the Trenches: Why New Technology Hasn't Revolutionized Warfare in Ukraine', *Foreign Affairs*, 10 August 2023, at: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/back-trenches-technology-warfare.

7   Jason Burke, '"The destruction is massive … It's a disaster area": Israeli Soldiers Speak about Fighting in Gaza', *The Guardian*, 8 February 2024, at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/08/israeli-soldiers-idf-gaza-fighting-disaster-area.

Seven Myths of Military History (Hackett Publishing Company, 2022, ISBN 9781647920432, 185 pp)

Book Review

Author: (edited) John D Hosler

Reviewed by: John Nash

Military historians and theorists are often confronted by frustrating historical myths. Sometimes these are quite specific (e.g. a battle, historical figure, or piece of equipment), whereas sometimes they are historical constructs or historical arguments that have gained a life of their own and that come to bedevil the wider scholarship of war and military studies. The collection of chapters in John D Hosler's *Seven Myths of Military History* is concerned with dispelling the latter. This is a worthy endeavour because, as the editor of the collection highlights at the very start, these long-enduring military myths affect not only popular imagination but also the thought processes of 'military professionals, heads of state, and even paramilitary/ irregular leaders'.[1] In Australia, many national military myths have already been tackled in two volumes edited by Professor Craig Stockings: *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History* and *Anzac's Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History*. In Hosler's collection, the focus is on big myths of military history, covering subjects foundational to all militaries.

The book's seven chapters explore seven myths in different topics and epochs. The first chapter is written by Professor Andrew Hold and is concerned with the question of whether religion is actually the cause of most wars in history. An interesting question, it is perhaps the least relevant to military practitioners as it goes to the heart of the nature and cause of war at a societal and political level. The main takeaway from the chapter is that it is usually very difficult to separate the causes of a war into nice neat categories: there are generally multiple causes and motivations for war. War being a human endeavour, this observation may not come as a surprise to readers. It is nevertheless an important point, for it is all too easy to reduce the cause of a conflict into one simple explanation, be it power, fear, influence or, indeed, religion.

The second chapter, written by Everett L Wheeler, attempts to take down the myth of a so-called 'Western way of war'. This construct was popularised by the classics scholar Victor Davis Hanson in his 1989 work *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*.[2] Undoubtedly a fallacy and unsupportable, this myth carries little weight in contemporary military scholarship. Indeed, it is questionable whether it ever held sway outside of a select group of ideologically motivated scholars and theorists. Wheeler's take-down of the myth is quite simplistic and relies on weak constructs bordering on straw men, such as the idea of an 'Achilles-Odysseus debate' in contemporary strategic culture; this is a niche concept and one this scholar (despite a classics and strategic studies background) had not encountered previously.[3] Wheeler's reading of the play *The Persians* as simple Western chauvinism/orientalism is an outdated and overly simplistic analysis of the text and falls into the same polemical style as that of the 'Western way of war' proponents he takes to task.[4] Indeed, in the same way as those theorists that he criticises, the author ignores entirely naval warfare, taking instead a land-centric view of war in history. Unfortunately this chapter only proves to make the Western way of war myth seem stronger and more influential than it is, while simultaneously oversimplifying other aspects of modern war and strategic theory.

While it might not sound terribly relevant, Chapter 3's examination of the myth of feudalism and the feudal knight has much to recommend itself to the modern military practitioner. Firstly, it explores why such myths can be so hard to dispel—often because there are kernels of truth in some of them, making them useful constructs to explain complex ideas more simply.

Secondly, it explores the privileging of battle in the historiography of warfare over the feudal period and how commanders of the time were not aimless amateurs but were instead far more considerate of logistics and other considerations outside of battle. It pairs well with the chapter that follows, on the myth of discrete and definable military revolutions. The author argues that most military revolutions in history have been overblown in their importance, and that the non-military aspects that have contributed to a state's success in history have often been overlooked.

Chapter 5 reviews the always passionate debate around strategic air power, with the author, John Curatola, arguing that the concept has never quite lived up to the hype. As he says, air power doctrine was always ahead of what could actually be achieved, and it was only with the advent of prolific precision-guided munitions in the 1990s that 'technology had finally caught up with doctrine'.[5] Most importantly, Curatola highlights the critical fact that war is a human endeavour, and that the failings of strategic bombing campaigns are often attributable to the simple but oft overlooked fact that 'Strategic bombing campaigns fell victim to innumerable factors of the inherently illogical, inconsistent, and specious nature of humans'.[6] Such a technologically focused call has been made time and time again throughout history, but bears highlighting again and again.

Asymmetry and asymmetric warfare are the subject of the sixth chapter, authored by Professor William Kautt of the US Army Command and General Staff College—specifically, the myth that it represents a recent and new way of waging war in what is popularly known as fourth-generation warfare (4GW), or 'nontrinitarian warfare'.[7] Most egregiously, this myth is based on a poor reading of history and a crediting of this 'new' era of warfare as the brainchild of Mao Zedong during the Chinese Civil War (1927–1949). Suffice to say there are numerous other instances of such irregular warfare, from the Jewish revolt against the Romans in the 1st century CE through to conflicts in North America in the 18th century, where colonial militias adopted and adapted Native American styles of irregular warfare to their own ends. However, to demonstrate his point, Kautt focuses on the Irish Revolution (1913–1923), which he considers to be the real exemplar of this style of warfare in the 20th century, pre-dating and influencing the Maoist example.[8] As the author points out, to analyse this type of warfare only through the lens of Maoist theory ensures that contemporary US doctrine is based solely on a skewed historical example.

This observation leads in well to the final chapter, on the issue of technological determinism. Rob Johnson's chapter complements Chapter 4 on military revolutions, most of which are explained as being instigated by some new technology. This is not to say that technology does not change war; it obviously does. Rather, it highlights that technology is only one aspect of war, which remains fundamentally a human affair. This chapter is a salutary reminder that the promise of technology does not always (or often) pan out as expected by its creators and users.

As critiqued within this book, the mythologising of the past matters. As the editor and multiple authors highlight, modern military decision-makers (be they military officers or politicians and policymakers) look to the past and to historical examples in order to inform their decisions. If this information is skewed, inaccurate or just plain wrong, it can have a detrimental effect on these decisions. Military history can provide a rich source of data, but it is only useful if it is interpreted and used properly. This volume, mostly, tackles some egregious military history myths well. It should prove useful to specialists and generalists alike.

About the Reviewer

Dr John Nash is an Academic Research Officer at the Australian Army Research Centre and a Reserve Naval Officer. Prior to this he was a Researcher for the Australian War Memorial's Official History of Australian Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. His research focuses on littoral warfare, sea power, maritime and naval history, and strategic studies.

Endnotes

1   John D Hosler (ed.), *Seven Myths of Military History* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2022), p. xi.

2   Victor Davis Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece*, 2nd edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009 [1989]).

3   Everett L Wheeler, 'The Western Way of War: Battle, Imperialism, and Ethnocentrism', in John D Hosler (ed.), *Seven Myths of Military History* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2022), p. 39.

4   Wheeler states that the play is nothing more than triumphalist pre-Greek propaganda that sneers at the 'barbarians' of the Persian Empire. Space precludes an extended analysis of why this is only one way of reading the text. Two brief points highlight why it is an oversimplistic reading. In the first case, the play is a tragedy, meant to evoke strong feelings, including sympathy and *pathos*, towards the characters. The Greek tragic theatre was an important venue for moralistic debate, not really for fist-pumping nationalism. Secondly, it is worth noting that there is not a single Greek character in the entire play. It is hard to imagine how it could be glorifying the Greeks very much when no Greek appears in the play itself. For more analysis, see John Nash, *Rulers of the Sea: Sea Power and Maritime Strategy in Ancient Greece, 550–321 BCE* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2023), pp. 61–63.

5   John Curatola, 'Strategic Air Power: An Elegant Idea Fallen Short', in John D Hosler (ed.), *Seven Myths of Military History* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2022), p. 125.

6   Ibid., pp. 128–129.

7   William Kautt, 'New Asymmetric Warfare: Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed', in John D Hosler (ed.), *Seven Myths of Military History* (Hackett Publishing Company, 2022), pp. 141–142.

8   Ibid., pp. 143–148.

Reluctant Partner: The Complete Story of the French Participation in the Dardanelles Expedition of 1915 (Helion, Warwick, 2019, ISBN 9781911628927, 238 pp)

Book Review

Author: George H Cassar

Reviewed by: Chris Roberts

Over a century after the last British troops were withdrawn from Gallipoli, volumes are still being written about a campaign that has been likened to a Greek tragedy. Within the historiography of the English-speaking peoples, the focus inevitably has been almost entirely on the British and Anzac contribution. Yet the French contribution, some 79,000 men in two divisions and support units (drafts inclusive), barely receive a mention. When they do, it is largely associated with the disastrous naval assault on 18 March 1915, and the feint attack at Kum Kale during the Allied landings on 25 April. George H Cassar, a Canadian historian, admirably rectifies this omission in *Reluctant Partner*, which is a revised and expanded version of his 1971 *The French and the Dardanelles: A Study in Failure in the Conduct of War*.

This is not a military history per se; only four of the book's 13 chapters are devoted to the French naval and military operations at the Dardanelles. The remaining chapters detail the political maneuverings, obfuscation, distrust, duplicity, postwar aims, and attempts to salvage careers among the British and French, and to a lesser extent the postwar desires of the Russians. These are the great strengths of the book, and it is well worth the price of purchasing it.

There is little doubt that the impasse on the Western Front, and its accompanying slaughter, saw political leaders on both sides of the English Channel casting about for alternative fronts on which to wage the war. Based on sound research in archival records, Cassar clearly shows that dubious political motivations drove both the British and the French politicians to embark on the Gallipoli campaign, rather than sound military reasons underpinned by pragmatic assessments of its likely success. Indeed, both the British and French naval and military commanders expressed grave reservations about its chances of success but were overridden by their political masters, who were grasping at straws. The French, racked by internal political rivalries, were driven by self-interested factions. While Churchill's desire to salvage a flagging political career was the driving force that committed the British, it was largely a French desire to maintain influence in Syria, a distrust of the British, and a commitment to positioning themselves to exercise postwar aims in carving up of the Ottoman Empire that led them to half-heartedly join their ally. None of the major players in this drama emerge with their credibility intact. One feels some sympathy for General Sir Ian Hamilton, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, who was given an impossible task with inadequate resources, and told there was to be no turning back.

Discussion about the French naval and military commitment during the fighting is limited to four chapters. The first addresses the 18 March naval attack and its consequences. The second covers the diversion at Kum Kale (25–27 April) and the first and second battles of Krithia. The third relates to the period of subsequent stagnation and the Third Battle of Krithia, while the fourth recounts the French attacks against the Haricot and Quadrilateral redoubts in late June. These events are not covered in great detail, but in reality there is little to tell other than to recount the failed assaults, which were quickly snuffed out with great slaughter at the three battles of Krithia. A minor success eventually crowned French gallantry in the June fighting.

One rather curious episode at Kum Kale encapsulates the farcical nature of the whole enterprise.

While on the surface good relations existed between Hamilton and the several French generals who commanded the *Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient* at various times, again rivalries, mistrust and frustration simmered below the surface. Tensions between allies will always exist, but Cassar demonstrates how political (and to a lesser extent military) confusion, executed through poorly conceived decisions to achieve imprecise aspirations, wasted thousands of lives and scarce resources in the name of political pride and national interest.

Cassar then discusses the consequences of the failures at Helles in June, and at Suvla and Anzac in August. Muddled thinking sought to resolve the imbroglio without losing face, eventually culminating in the French decision to commit an Anglo-French force (without British consultation) to Salonika. While the intention to assist Serbia was genuine in some quarters, the practical chances of it being successful were ignored. Political duplicity, military intrigue, and *l'affaire Sarrail* were greater drivers of that commitment than sound consideration and commonsense. As Cassar remarks:

> The French appeared oblivious to the fact that in improvising the conduct of the Balkans campaign, they were repeating the same mistake as the British had committed in the Dardanelles.

Hence, both nations stumbled into another campaign that simply took resources away from the principal theatre of war for no gain whatsoever.

Cassar has an engaging style that reads easily. It is evident that his strength as an historian lies in the political realm, rather than in the military. His knowledge of land operations on the peninsula seems not to take account of more recent scholarship. He perpetuates, for example, the myth that the Anzacs landed in the wrong place, while 18-pounder field guns are described as 'heavy' artillery. Regarding wider French operations, Cassar repeats the outdated argument that the initiative and foundation for success at the First Battle of the Marne was due to General Joseph Gallieni, without acknowledging Joffre's shifting of forces to form the Sixth Army, which enabled Gallieni to exploit the opportunity at the Oise. Nonetheless, these are minor quibbles, for it is the political dimensions of this book that make such a valuable contribution to the historiography of the Dardanelles fiasco.

While tensions will exist in coalition warfare, Cassar has ably demonstrated the consequences of poor alliance relationships through the prism of the ill-fated Dardanelles campaign. It is a work that also provides a fascinating window into the minds and actions of desperate politicians and secretive military commanders confronting a national crisis. In that regard, it has contemporary resonance with recent forays into the Middle East and reminds us of the oft-repeated maxim that 'those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it'. *Reluctant Partner* is a fascinating study of how *not* to embark on military campaigns at the strategic level, and a testament to the fact that inadequately resourced and improvised campaigns, lacking clear objectives, are almost certain to end in failure. There are ample lessons here for today's politicians and senior commanders—it is hoped that they may consider them.

About the Reviewer

Chris Roberts graduated from the Royal Military College (Duntroon) in 1967 and saw operational service in South Vietnam with 3 SAS Squadron. More senior appointments included Commanding Officer The SAS Regiment, Commander Special Forces, Director General Corporate Planning—Army, and Commander Northern Command. Retiring in 1999, he then spent seven years in executive appointments with the Multiplex Group. He is the author of *Chinese Strategy and the Spratley Islands Dispute* and the seminal and highly acclaimed *The Landing at Anzac, 1915*, and is co-author of *Anzacs on the Western Front* and *The Artillery at Anzac*.

Call for Submissions

The Australian Army Journal

The *Australian Army Journal (AAJ)* focuses on the presentation of contested and evidence-based research and analysis. The Australian Army Research Centre (AARC) is looking for well written, scholarly AAJ submissions on topics related to Army, with a particular focus on the priority research topics identified in the Army Futures Research Framework. These topics include:

State of the Australian Army Profession. The analysis of the past, present and future state of the profession of arms in an Integrated Force including how Army needs to adapt to the enduring and changing character of war.

Mobilisation. The challenges and risks associated with Army's approach to accelerated preparedness.

Littoral Manoeuvre. Operations and manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific including the protection of key trade routes and maritime approaches.

Quantum. The most promising applications of quantum technologies in the fields of quantum sensing, computing and communications.

Autonomy and Counter Autonomy. The challenges, barriers and solutions to scaling Defence's adoption of Robotics and Autonomous Systems.

The AARC welcomes submissions from professionals of all ranks and experience, academics, industry and think-tanks. Articles should comprise structured arguments that lead to logical conclusions or recommendations that can help posture Army for future land warfare challenges in the short, medium and long term. The AARC is particularly interested in AAJ submissions that:

- **deliver** analysis based on tactical or operational level experience
- provide a perspective on issues that challenge orthodox views
- place the lessons of historical experience in a contemporary context.

Process

Authors work with the AARC's editorial team in a process of iterative review. Initially, submissions are assessed for their suitability by the AARC Editorial Director and/or Managing Editor, with selected articles then subjected to a double-blind review by an academic and a subject matter expert. Articles deemed appropriate for further consideration are presented to the AAJ Editorial Advisory Board for consideration. The Director General, Future Land Warfare is the ultimate publication authority for all AAJ content.

Please note that the AARC cannot accept articles which have been published elsewhere or are currently under consideration for publication with another journal.

Word length (including endnotes)

Journal articles can be between 4,000–6,000 words in length.

Book reviews should be between 800–1000 words.

Author biography

A 100-word (approx.) biography should be included with a summary of your educational history and professional experience.

Deadline

The AARC accepts AAJ submissions throughout the year with the submission deadlines for each Edition published on the AARC website (https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/about-us/contribute)

Formatting and Style

Guidance on formatting and style is available in the Submission Guidelines for AARC Publications (AARC publications - advice for contributors | Australian Army Research Centre (AARC)).

Please make you submission using the AARC's Contribute page (https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/about-us/contribute/contribute-article-paper-or-publication).

Call for Submissions

The Australian Army Occasional Paper Series

Are you studying towards a postgraduate degree or doctorate and writing a substantive research paper? If you have written an original manuscript on a priority topic identified in the Army Futures Research Framework, the Australian Army Research Centre (AARC) may be interested in publishing your work as an AARC Occasional Paper (https://researchcentre. army.gov.au/library/occasional-papers). Priority topics include:

State of the Australian Army Profession. The analysis of the past, present and future state of the profession of arms in an Integrated Force including how Army needs to adapt to the enduring and changing character of war.

Mobilisation. The challenges and risks associated with Army's approach to accelerated preparedness.

Littoral Manoeuvre. Operations and manoeuvres in the Indo-Pacific including the protection of key trade routes and maritime approaches.

Quantum. The most promising applications of quantum technologies in the fields of quantum sensing, computing and communications.

Autonomy and Counter Autonomy. The challenges, barriers and solutions to scaling Defence's adoption of Robotics and Autonomous Systems.

The AARC welcomes submissions from professionals of all ranks and experience, academics, industry and think-tanks. Papers should comprise structured arguments that lead to logical conclusions or recommendations that can help posture Army for future land warfare challenges in the short, medium and long term. The AARC is particularly interested in papers that:

- **deliver** analysis based on tactical or operational level experience
- provide a perspective on issues that challenge orthodox views
- place the lessons of historical experience in a contemporary context.

Process

Authors work with the AARC's editorial team in a process of iterative review. Initially, submissions are assessed for suitability by the AARC Editorial Director and/or Managing Editor, with selected manuscripts subjected to review by an academic and a subject matter expert. The Director General, Future Land Warfare is the ultimate publication authority for all AARC Occasional Papers.

Please note that the AARC cannot accept articles that have been published elsewhere or are currently under consideration for publication in other formats.

Word length (including endnotes)

Occasional Paper submissions can be up to 20,000+ words in length.

Author biography

A 100-word (approx.) biography should be included with a summary of your educational history and professional experience.

Paper abstract

A paper abstract should be included. The purpose of the abstract is to summarise the major aspects of a paper. A good abstract will also encourage a reader to read the entire piece. For this reason it should be an engagingly written piece of prose between 200 and 500 words that is not simply a rewrite of the introduction in shorter form.

Deadline

The AARC accepts Occasional Paper submissions throughout the year.

Formatting and Style

Guidance on formatting and style is available in the Submission Guidelines for AARC Publications (AARC publications - advice for contributors | Australian Army Research Centre (AARC)).

Please make you submission using the AARC's Contribute page (https://researchcentre.army.gov.au/about-us/contribute/contribute-article-paper-or-publication).