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EDITORIAL

This edition of the *Australian Army Journal* appears at a critical juncture in the history of Australian Army. It is now nearly ten years since the first Australian Special Forces troops deployed to Afghanistan in 2001. Throughout much of the ensuing decade the Army has borne the brunt of the Australian Defence Force's commitment to the coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, which were undertaken in the aftermath of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

We are constantly reminded of the high price that this sustained commitment to the so-called 'long war' is exacting from the Army with the announcement of each battle death or wounding. Since the crisis in East Timor in 1999 the Australian Defence Force has been deployed on operations without respite. None of the operations that we have conducted since were envisaged by those developing strategic guidance in the 1990s.

This demonstrates the folly both of those who proclaimed the End of History in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and those who believe that the ADF force structure should be predicated on a single scenario. There has been no peace dividend. Indeed, the end of the bipolar world unleashed the fissiparous forces of globalisation, which have shaped the character of the wars we have been fighting throughout this century.

Today the Australian Defence Force, especially the Army, is engaged in the full spectrum of operations from peacekeeping to warfighting. Our troops are performing very well in all theatres from the Solomon Islands and Timor Leste through to Afghanistan, conducting operations that embrace the full spectrum of armed conflict.

Their success is the product of the intellectual and technological transformation of the Army over the course of the past decade. The strategic shock of the East Timor crisis exposed the serious deficiencies in our land forces. While our people performed superbly in 1999, it was clear that the Army required substantial enhancement to engage in the types of operations demanded by the Australian government in the complex security environment of the twenty-first century.

That process of modernisation continues. Much has been achieved in the past decade but there is more to be done. The Army has displayed great professionalism and flexibility in sustaining operations across the spectrum of conflict in diverse theatres, while simultaneously implementing a major re-equipment program and reforming its organisation. This has placed great demands on our people.

Throughout this period Army has benefitted from strong and visionary leadership. Since the then Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling presciently decided that Army needed to recover its capacity to project power and operate away from its bases, successive Chiefs of Army have restored Army's ability to survive and win on the contemporary battlefield. Likewise successive governments have provided the funding and strategic guidance to enable Army to maintain its core proficiency in combined arms warfighting as well as able to deploy forces for operations offshore.

Since July 2008, this has occurred under the able stewardship of Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie who, as Chief of Army, has implemented an ambitious reform agenda. He will be remembered for his overhaul of Army's functional commands under the rubric of the Adaptive Army. This involved one of the most significant internal reforms of the Army since the end of the Vietnam War. Moreover, Lieutenant General Gillespie sought to inculcate a more adaptive culture and mindset within Army in order to rapidly assimilate lessons from operations into our force generation processes.

As this edition goes to press Lieutenant General Gillespie enters civilian life after forty-three years of unstinting service to the nation. The *Australian Army Journal* wishes to record its gratitude and best wishes to him and his family, Carmel and Moira, on his retirement. He leaves the Army in excellent shape.

His successor Lieutenant General David Morrison takes command of an Army engaged in fighting the longest war in its history. Like all his predecessors since 2001 he will face the simultaneous challenges of supporting operations while implementing pervasive structural and cultural change. Army is in the early stages of a major re-equipment program and is moving to standardise its brigade structures. This latter measure is a vital reform that will significantly enhance Army's ability to generate ready, relevant land forces and sustain them on protracted, complex operations.

These important improvements must be achieved in the context of an increasingly tight fiscal climate. The development of the highly capable joint force of 2030 is only achievable within the framework of savings and investments prescribed under the Strategic Reform Program (SRP). As recent cuts to the capabilities of all three services in the United Kingdom demonstrate, military establishments are not immune to budgetary cuts even in the midst of a war.

The message to Army is that SRP provides us with an opportunity to master our destiny rather than having efficiency measures imposed on us. Managing the tension between sustaining current operations while investing in expensive capability improvements will be the most significant challenge the new Chief of Army faces over

the next three years. His success in this endeavour will shape the development of the Australian Army well into the next decade. Nor are pressures on the Commonwealth budget the only threats to Army's successful modernisation.

Already there are calls from some commentators to reduce the size and combat weight of the Army when operations in Afghanistan cease. The end of the war in Afghanistan, we are confidently assured, will end the era of Australian military involvement offshore. That appears to be wishful thinking. Even during the so-called 'long peace' that followed the Vietnam War, the Army was engaged in operations in Rhodesia, Namibia, the Middle East, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda and Bougainville. Moreover, the twenty-first century security challenges of climate change, food security and state failure are all present in our immediate region. All of these require balanced deployable joint forces capable of assisting allies and neighbours as well as defending Australia in its immediate land, sea and air approaches.

The recent edition of the journal *Security Challenges* published a selection of articles on the future of the Australian Army after Afghanistan. Some of the contributors queried the relevance of the Army to national security in the wake of Afghanistan.

In his inaugural message to the Army, Lieutenant General Morrison referred specifically to the diverse range of views as to the utility of land forces in this publication. He invited Army to respond to this intellectual challenge. Indeed, it is clear that there are still serious misconceptions as to the contribution that land forces can make in the full range of contingencies that may confront Australia in an era of uncertainty and heightened strategic competition in our region.

To some extent this is our own fault. Army needs to meet the intellectual challenge entailed in explaining its versatility to policy-makers. The *Australian Army Journal* must provide a forum for our soldiers and officers to engage in this debate. In particular we welcome responses to the views expressed in *Security Challenges*.

As the Army approaches the Force Structure Review of 2013 and the development of the next White Paper we will need to be rigorous in explaining the enduring relevance of land power to the defence of Australia and its regional and global interests. Over the past decade Army has developed a coherent narrative to describe the changing character of war. Ultimately, that narrative has been accepted by policy-makers who have authorised significant enhancements to the Army to enable it to deliver combined arms effects against credible opponents.

Our extant strategic guidance corroborates that requirement for robust, deployable land forces capable of operations from humanitarian support through to fighting credible state and non-state actors. This view has been endorsed repeatedly by the Australian government since the deployment of INTERFET. It is not contingent on the outcome of operations in Afghanistan. Rather, it is the only satisfactory response to the confluence of political complexity, globalisation and technological change that has manifested in an exponential increase in the lethality of individual weapons.

EDITORIAL

The lives of our soldiers depend on our maintaining public and political support for the development and introduction of capabilities that reflect these real world conditions.

This edition of the *Australian Army Journal* carries articles across a broad range of topics. We continue to focus on the war in Afghanistan. Of particular interest are the reflections of Colonel Peter Connolly on the operations of the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force in Uruzgan Province. This is a valuable contribution by an officer with recent experience of command in that theatre. Another perspective on counterinsurgency operations in a different part of the country is provided by a Canadian officer Major Mark Popov. We are especially delighted to publish the works of an officer from an allied army.

Major Ross Cable has written a challenging article that questions the effectiveness of the Australian Defence Force Academy. Since the so-called 'Skype scandal' at ADFA, many—including a former Chief of the Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy—have questioned the relevance of ADFA. This contribution was indeed written before that scandal became public. Nonetheless, it is a provocative contribution that we are sure will stimulate debate.

Readers may also note that for the second successive edition we are publishing an article by Colonel Rupert Hoskin. Due to human error by the editor of the *Journal* an incorrect version of this article was published in the Summer 2011 edition of the *Journal*. We have apologised to Colonel Hoskin for this serious error. In order to ensure that his valuable work reaches the widest possible audience we have decided to publish the version originally approved by the *Army Journal* Board in February. We commend it along with all the contents of this edition to our readers.

Finally, as is customary in this editorial, we pay tribute to our fellow soldiers who have paid the supreme sacrifice since the last edition of the *Journal*. We extend our respectful condolences and sympathy to the families of these men: Lieutenant Marcus Case, Sergeant Brett Wood, Sergeant Todd Langley, Lance Corporal Andrew Jones and Sapper Rowan Robinson. Lest we forget.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

COUNTERINSURGENCY IN URUZGAN 2009

COLONEL P J CONNOLLY

ABSTRACT

Success in counterinsurgency requires a careful balance between the ability to win the support of the people, and a finely honed close combat ability which can crush the enemy with precision whenever and wherever the opportunity arises. This article examines these issues from a commander's perspective with a focus on counterinsurgency operations in Uruzgan in the second half of 2009. In doing so it focuses on two primary areas in which MRTF-2 modified its operational techniques: dispersed operations and influence. This article is an extract from a more comprehensive Land Warfare Studies Centre Study Paper (No. 321). For the full context of the operations conducted, the additional techniques designed to support mental health and resilience, and a brief proposal for enhancements to mission specific training and whole of government coordination, please refer to the Study Paper.

... intelligence has to come from the population, but the population will not talk unless it feels safe, and it does not feel safe until the insurgent's power has been broken.

– David Galula 1964¹

The Second Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force (MRTF-2) deployed to Uruzgan, South Afghanistan, in May 2009 with the short-term aim of providing security for the Afghan National Elections, and the strategic goal of developing the capacity of the 4th Brigade of the Afghan National Army (ANA) to conduct counterinsurgency operations. The battle group formed at 1 RAR in Townsville during March 2009 with soldiers from across the 3rd Brigade, supported by specialists from across the Australian Defence Force. MRTF-2 entered Afghanistan in the middle of a very active ‘fighting season’ in the face of an evolving threat from the Taliban and had a strong impact on the progress of the counterinsurgency within the Uruzgan province. The approach was to dominate the threat while maximising influence on the people and the environment, with the objective of supporting and preparing the Afghan National Army to conduct the counterinsurgency independently. The success of MRTF-2 came as a result of the strength of character, resolve and initiative of all ranks.

BACKGROUND

ENVIRONMENT

A large portion of Uruzgan is *dasht* (desert) or steep mountains of rock. These areas contain little life except for the nomadic *Kuchi* tribespeople. A small portion of the terrain consists of valleys in which all the available water, crops and life exist—these are referred to as ‘green zones.’ The green zones are where the people live, and generally where the Taliban operate.

Green zones are extremely complex environments in which all land is privately owned and all structures are man-made. There are clay walls (which can be several feet thick) around most fields and around all dwellings. The Afghans live in compounded, high-walled residential complexes called *q’alas*. The flow of water to fields is controlled by a maze of deep and well crafted irrigation canals, many of which have walls on their banks, often supplied by large subterranean waterways known as *karez*. The tracks through the villages are designed to be negotiated on foot or on an animal (but not vehicle), with walls on either side of them, and generally cross the canals over very narrow and precarious foot bridges. Most communities grow three crops a year: typically poppy, wheat and corn. Each of these crops becomes high and dense as it matures, but the corn in particular can reach eight feet, creating a very dense close-country

Green zones are extremely complex environments in which all land is privately owned and all structures are man-made.

environment towards the end of summer. There are also dense orchards of almonds and apricots. The width of these valleys can range from merely half a kilometre to as much as ten kilometres. Maximum temperatures in summer can be above 45 degrees Celsius, while in winter minimums can be well below freezing. This is a challenging environment requiring largely dismounted operations.

STRUCTURE

The original structure for MRTF-2 was directed to reflect exactly that of MRTF-1, with a single operational mentoring and liaison team (or 'OMLT', which was named 'OMLT-C', based on C Company 1 RAR) to mentor the ANA's 2nd Kandak,² a single combat team (Combat Team Alpha, or CT-A, based on A Company 1 RAR), a combat engineer squadron (based on 16 Combat Engineer Squadron from 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment), a combat service support company, and a battle group headquarters. Immediately prior to deployment, government decided to increase the force structure of MRTF-2 for two reasons: firstly, to provide additional combat power for operations in support of the national election security tasks (to be known as CT-B); and secondly, to enable an increased mentor effect (to be known as OMLT-D). This represented an increase in personnel and capability of almost 50 per cent on top of the original MRTF structure.

By September, total strength sat at around 730, with a battle group headquarters, battle group enablers (including joint fires teams from 4th Field Regiment, mortars and snipers from 1 RAR), a diverse intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) group, and seven sub-units³ (two OMLTs, two combat teams, a combat engineer squadron, a protected mobility squadron and a combat service support company).⁴ See Figure 1. MRTF-2 handed over to Mentoring Task Force One (MTF-1, based on 6 RAR) in February 2010.⁵

OPERATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

MRTF-2 pursued four concurrent and interdependent lines of operation as part of a counterinsurgency-oriented mission:

- to **mentor** and build the capability of the 4th Afghan National Army (ANA) Brigade;
- to **secure** the people;
- to **influence** the population, the insurgency and the coalition; and
- to **develop** infrastructure and capacity within Afghan communities.

These lines described the different aspects of our mission that required resourcing, and provided a useful structure for weighing and adjusting the main effort against supporting efforts. The prioritisation and coordination of resources to achieve the commander's intent was achieved through a targeting process.

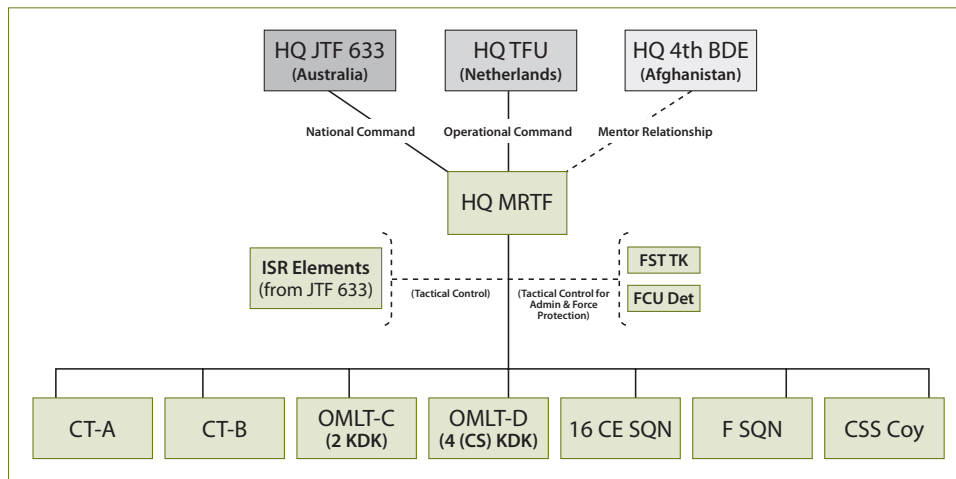


Figure 1. MRTF-2 Structure

The *mentor* line of operations was the main effort of the battle group. All other lines of operation complemented this output, working towards 4th ANA Brigade being capable of conducting independent counterinsurgency operations. The philosophy adopted by MRTF-2 drew heavily from the foundations established by MRTF-1 with the 2nd (Infantry) Kandak. Our two OMLTs, each consisting of approximately seventy mentors between the ranks of private and major, had the lead on this line. We offered respect for Afghan experience and culture, and reinforced ANA ownership of the operation and the terrain, while at the same time demanding tactical outcomes and professional development. We encouraged the development of patrol plans for normal framework operations from the bottom of the chain of command (company level), and involved the ANA Brigade and Kandak commanders heavily in the planning and execution of all deliberate operations. OMLT-C took over mentoring of the 2nd Kandak from MRTF-1 in seven different patrol base locations. On the arrival of OMLT-D, we commenced the mentoring of the 4th (Combat Support) Kandak, and became closely engaged with Headquarters 4th Brigade to pave the way for this mentoring role to be formalised. This involved CO MRTF developing a close personal relationship with Commander 4th Brigade, which assisted in building stronger links between the respective chains of command.

We offered respect for Afghan experience and culture, and reinforced ANA ownership of the operation and the terrain ...

The mission of building the capacity of the 4th Brigade has required Australian OMLTs and combat teams to conduct partnered combat operations with ANA Kandaks since MRTF-1 commenced the mission in October 2008. Due to the aggressiveness of the insurgency and the dispersal of the ANA, we conducted patrols and operations side by side in high-threat areas, seeking to raise Afghan skill levels and achieve an operational effect simultaneously. As part of these activities we learnt a considerable amount about the environment and the people from the ANA. This mentoring effect was achieved by small groups of Australian soldiers operating independently in partnership with Afghan patrols of squad to platoon size from small patrol bases.

The *secure* line of operations was a supporting effort to MRTF mentoring objectives. We consistently reinforced and partnered with elements of the 4th ANA Brigade to ensure certain tactical preconditions were met on the ground and in doing so reinforce Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) credibility and Afghanistan government legitimacy. Though this line was normally a supporting effort, it underpinned the strong partnering relationship between MRTF-2 and 4th Brigade, and became the main effort for key objectives, such as election security. ANA and MRTF elements regularly reinforced each other throughout the tour in groupings from section to combat team size. The generation of confidence and credibility through tactical success is key to establishing a capable new force in a combat environment, and by successfully partnering with the 4th Brigade MRTF reinforced these objectives.

The *influence* line of operations aimed to develop and maintain a positive perception in the minds of all relevant audiences⁶ in relation to the capabilities of the Afghanistan government, the ANSF and ISAF. By developing the trust of the population in the government and the counterinsurgency force, we sought to separate the insurgents from their support bases. This line of operations emphasised the great importance of actions by soldiers at the local level to influence and convince the people. It also placed importance on cultivating and maintaining strong and positive links with all coalition partners. This required a well-synchronised information operations capability. The intent was for information operations to drive the way we operated by manipulating the influence line across all other lines of operations. We adopted the philosophy that all of our actions (including manoeuvre, construction and key leader engagement) would influence perceptions.

The *develop* line of operations sought the provision of infrastructure, construction related skills and the empowerment of local communities with the aim of enhancing local national support for the Afghanistan government and the ANSF. This is a continuation of the solid framework established by Reconstruction Task Forces One to Four, and was achieved through the integration of MRTF efforts with the Netherlands Provincial Reconstruction Team, AusAID, Afghanistan government

agencies and local leadership. This line produced extremely complementary effects to those required by the *influence*, *mentor* and *secure* lines, and was significant to the achievement of Afghanistan government objectives as part of a holistic approach to counterinsurgency.

This article refers particularly to two major deliberate operations: the provision of security for the Afghan national elections in Operation CRAM GHAR, and the clearance of the Mirabad Valley in Operation BAZ PANJE. However, it is important to note that there were three other deliberate operations, and more importantly that the soldiers of MRTF and 4th ANA Brigade conducted ‘framework operations’ on a daily basis throughout the area of operations. These framework patrols involved mentors operating with small teams of Afghans at platoon and squad level, combat team elements working at section and platoon group level, and later on armoured elements operating at patrol level. Often these elements combined at the lowest level, invariably with the support of combat engineers, joint fires teams and medics. It is only through the daily acts of professionalism, dedication, risk and resolve of these soldiers that the battle group was able to achieve the lines of operation described above. Focus is given to these two particular deliberate operations below because they best illustrate our techniques and their modification. There was considerable employment of framework operations within these deliberate operations.

The *develop* line of operations sought the provision of infrastructure, construction related skills and the empowerment of local communities ...

ADAPTING WITH THE THREAT

MRTF-1 had experienced a new threat in the Baluchi Valley (see Figure 2) in the months preceding the arrival of MRTF-2: there had been a number of wounded in action due to low metal content pressure plate improvised explosive devices (PPIEDs) targeting vehicles and some rapidly emplaced remote control IEDs (RCIEDs) targeting dismounted mentoring patrols. The incidence of these attacks increased dramatically during MRTF-2’s first month on the ground. This was the height of the ‘fighting season’ and the period immediately preceding the Afghan national presidential elections. It was also a time where MRTF expanded its ‘sphere of influence’ through increasing the radius of mentored dismounted patrols and eventually increasing the amount of combat power and the partnered footprint with the ANA on the ground.

The first serious casualties were from the crew of an engineer ‘Bushmaster’ Protected Mobility Vehicle (PMV)⁷ that was destroyed while following its search

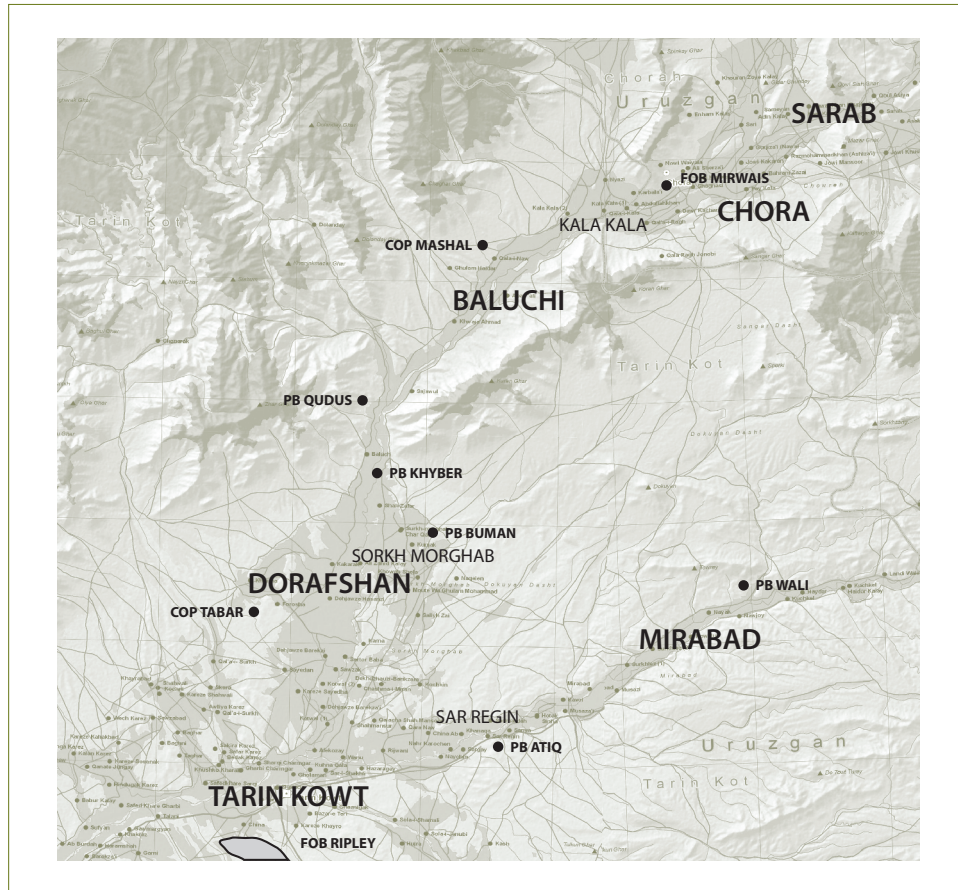


Figure 2. MRTF-2 and 2nd Kandak Area of Operations

team on 7 July, the first day of Operation TUFANI BABAR (MRTF-2's first deliberate operation). The section had been unable to detect the IED with the equipment available at the time. Less than two weeks later Private Ben Ranaudo was killed and Private Paul Warren was seriously wounded by a low metal content anti-personnel mine, which triggered a sizeable IED while they were participating in a dismounted combat team cordon and search on the western edge of Kala Kala. During the following month four more PMVs were lost to low metal content PPIEDs. It is extremely lucky there was no further loss of life and relatively minor wounds from a long stream of poorly employed or constructed RCIEDs used against dismounted patrols, several of which were part of complex attacks (supported by machine guns and rocket propelled grenades from different directions).

Such experiences early in the tour gave cause to review and to question existing techniques. It was critical at this early stage for the soldiers to see their commanders

from the CO down share the risk with them on patrol, and for those commanders to take the lessons learned from participating in platoon and OMLT patrols to generate plans, techniques and structures which addressed both the threat and the environment. It was also critical for the soldiers to believe in what they were doing and to be confident that they were using the best techniques and equipment. The sappers were the hardest hit—the sheer frustration caused by the difficulty of finding the threat combined with the high tempo demanded of them by the situation resulted in exhaustion. The vehicle crews were stretched by the heightened expectation of the threat. The soldiers conducting dismounted patrols from both the OMLT and the combat teams (largely infantry, artillery, engineers and medics) were frustrated by taking casualties from this unseen threat and often being unable to retaliate. However, all took it in their stride, maintaining strong battle discipline. This resilience was incredibly important to the achievement of the mission. Through this effort the battle group maintained dominance of the terrain, refusing to yield initiative to the Taliban, while demonstrating a commitment to the ANA, to the Afghanistan government and to protecting the Afghan people. The perception of our actions was a delicate matter as the national elections loomed in the near future, and the ‘optics’ could influence the confidence of both the ANSF and the local population.

Such experiences early in the tour gave cause to review and to question existing techniques.

Routine and critical reviews of tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) were conducted to enable an adaptive and agile response to changes in the enemy’s methods. The most useful technique to assist in surviving this threat and maintaining momentum was the encouragement of good ‘battle cunning’—to be as unpredictable as possible, and to be capable of rapid and aggressive close combat when required. It was important to not be a slave to prescriptive techniques such as those for obstacle crossing or searching vulnerable points, given the assumption that the enemy was always watching reactions, gauging distances and noting crossing points.

This need is always a challenge when soldiers are trained for and deployed to an unfamiliar environment with a new threat. It takes time for everyone to know the environment well enough to feel confident in adjusting the TTPs from the original template to what is required specific to the situation at that point in time and space. This makes the first weeks of a deployment a dangerous time, but a period of adjustment that everyone needs to pass through in order to be operationally effective. Anything that can be done to advance this level of awareness prior to deployment should be done, and it is not something that is achieved in a single mission rehearsal exercise. It calls for a long period of combined arms mission specific training, with an advanced application of simulation technology. The ADF is a long way from achieving this at present.

After the first two months the employment of armoured vehicles in overwatch was reduced to make them less predictable, at times keeping them in dead ground or planning on the use of other direct or indirect fire support (if required) for legs of specific missions. This was particularly important in the Baluchi Valley, where the Taliban had responded to years of Australian TTPs by placing IEDs on most of the favoured support by fire locations.

The techniques used to search for IEDs were amended throughout the deployment as the threat evolved and the battle group expanded into new areas. Insurgent IED TTPs were researched before deploying into new areas, and reviews of their evolving TTPs were conducted continually. If necessary, the combat engineers would amend their search techniques, and advise on amendments to mounted and dismounted patrol techniques to reduce the risk from IEDs. These modified techniques were coupled with the introduction of additional counter-IED equipment, obtained through rapid acquisition following submission of operational user requirements.

One of the greatest concerns as the elections approached was the enemy's plan to proliferate suicide bombers in populated areas—specifically to target polling centres. The best weapon against this threat is well trained and inquisitive Afghan soldiers. Unfortunately four members of 3rd Kandak were killed and three wounded to a suicide bomber in the Chora Bazaar two days before the elections, when they had their guard down. On the day, however, the ANA were extremely effective. The Taliban were evidently frustrated by their inability to get through the ANA cordons, and resorted to stand off attack with a large number of 107mm rockets being fired in the vicinity of several patrol bases and polling centres throughout the 2nd Kandak area of operations, to no effect. None of the reported suicide bombers in the area were employed and there were no ANSF or civilian casualties.

MRTF-2 experimented with methods of exerting a more persistent dismounted presence within the green zones in order to better protect and influence the local population, and to disrupt and isolate the Taliban. This method was not easy due to the characteristics of the local culture and rural terrain. It took form in the post-election period and was then used to considerable effect in the Mirabad Valley.

The final cycle of enemy activity was in response to the clearance and domination of the Mirabad Valley in Operation BAZ PANJE (see Figure 3 for the area of operations). Dismounted platoon groups (both Afghan and Australian) were inserted into key locations, where they would 'rent' or occupy a local *q'ala*, and were then sustained in location for up to two months. From these locations section and platoon minus

This need is always a challenge when soldiers are trained for and deployed to an unfamiliar environment with a new threat.

patrols were then able to dominate the terrain, significantly influence and know the locals, and create a substantial dilemma for the Taliban. The enemy were isolated from local support, forced to change their own methods of movement and resupply, and eventually resorted to standoff attack due to the unpredictable nature of movement of the multiple dismounted patrols. The most noteworthy metric was that through the use of these techniques, over fifty caches were discovered within a small area over two and a half months—including anti-armoured weapons, ammunition and large quantities of IED components. The enemy's preference for Command Wire Improvised Explosive Devices (CWIED) was generally defeated by patrol techniques (fifteen were discovered and disarmed over two and half months) and by the employment of combat engineers in small numbers (often just a pair behind the scouts and commander) on dismounted patrols. The enemy eventually resorted to standoff small arms attack, having lost a large share of their firepower and supplies for the winter months. Thus, on a local level, MRTF-2 seized the initiative by adapting with the threat in a valley which had formerly been regarded a safe haven, and established a persistent ANSF presence to maintain that effect. Such experience of success is essential for the ANSF to become a competent and credible force. Only by building on this experience will the Afghan Army become capable of independently conducting the counterinsurgency.

The enemy were isolated from local support, forced to change their own methods of movement and resupply, and eventually resorted to standoff attack ...

During the operation, Patrol Base Wali was constructed at Now Joy in accordance with Commander 4th Brigade's intent.⁸ It was designed to allow ANSF/Coalition forces to easily access the complex terrain without being seen from a distance, enabling our forces to more readily protect and influence the population and to dominate the enemy.

The MRTF-2 approach to mentoring was one of respect first, establishment of rapport second, and then patience in pursuing the outcome. MRTF-2 partnered successfully with 2nd Kandak for the election security operations in August and reinforced ANA primacy at both kandak and brigade level for that operation. OMLT-C developed a system to train and certify the ANA through a series of meaningful intermediary steps between what was at the time referred to as CM (capability milestone) 3 and CM 2.⁹ OMLT-D then supervised the commencement of 4th Kandak developing their specialist skills post the election, and supported their command of a successful brigade resupply convoy to Kandahar.¹⁰ Operation BAZ PANJE saw the integration of 2nd and 4th Kandak elements into Commander 4th Brigade's main effort in partnership with MRTF-2 to create a new area of operations for the recently trained 3rd Kandak.

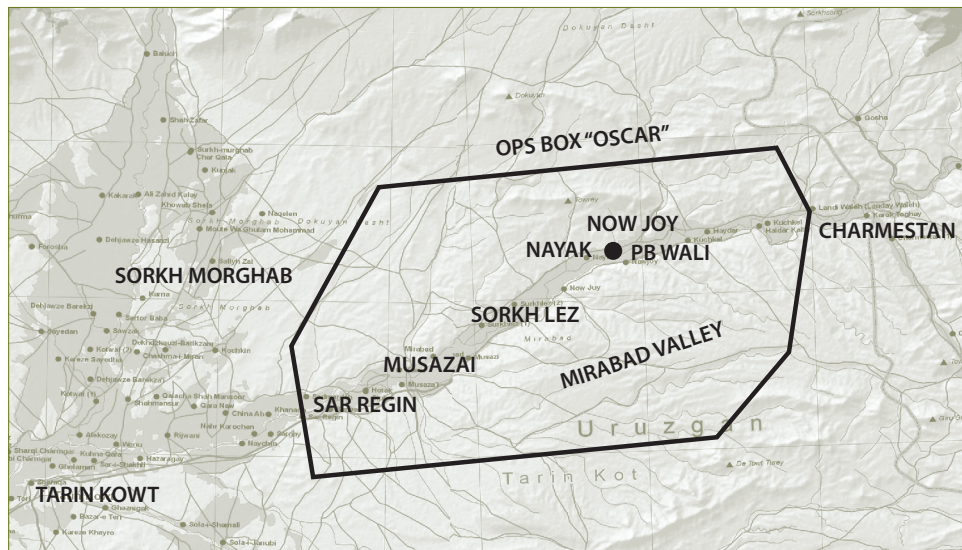


Figure 3. The Area of Operations for Operation BAZ PANJE (September–December 2009)

Two fundamental steps are required to advance the capability of the 4th Brigade to the level Australia seeks to deliver. The first of these is the consolidation of mentoring continuity throughout the brigade.¹¹ This was further enhanced by the subordination of all mentoring tasks across the province to one headquarters—the Mentoring Task Force (MTF). The second is the reorganisation of dispositions on the ground to enable a proper ‘Red-Yellow-Green Cycle’.¹² Currently the 4th Brigade is too dispersed to achieve any effective concentration of force, with its troops conducting combat operations on a daily basis and extremely limited opportunities to take leave.

The MRTF-2 approach to mentoring was one of respect first, establishment of rapport second, and then patience in pursuing the outcome.

OPERATIONAL TECHNIQUES

The battle group adopted a number of different methods of operation, both in search of the optimal approach to the counterinsurgency and in response to developments in the threat. These modifications to tactics, techniques and procedures were born of the desire to better understand, influence and protect the people, to dominate the enemy and deny them support, and to facilitate the ANA in persistently employing these methods. This section will focus on two primary areas of modification: dispersed

operations and influence. Systems and mechanisms were also developed to assist with the short- and long-term health of our soldiers (particularly mental health) and mentoring the ANA (particularly training and certification systems), along with proposals for enhancements to mission specific training and coordination of operational objectives with whole-of-government agencies. These topics are addressed in addition to those described below in the longer LWSC Study Paper No. 321.¹³

DISPERSED OPERATIONS

By establishing outposts in *q'alas* and saturating the area with unpredictable section and platoon group patrols, the section commander was empowered to operate within the platoon commander's sphere of influence, giving each a measure of autonomy. This enabled MRTF-2 to take the fight to an increasingly elusive and IED-dependent enemy, while also living amongst the people to gain their trust. While Australians have used the technique of dispersed operations in past counterinsurgencies, it was relatively new in South Afghanistan. Due to the level of the threat it had been normal to view the platoon group with its integral vehicles to be the smallest unit of action (with these not remaining in the green zone for any significant period of time). This has generally been the case for conventional and special forces.

When considering the conduct of dispersed operations in a high-threat battlespace like Afghanistan, it is important to keep in mind that such a technique can only succeed while the enemy is operating at a low level of concentration (which is currently the norm), and the level of threat must be actively monitored for change at all times.¹⁴ As with all operational techniques, the required level of force concentration is the judgement of the commander, and the threat needs to be assessed continually with a testing of assumptions. Furthermore, it would appear that it is only when the enemy is reduced to a level of threat that allows the counterinsurgent force to operate in smaller concentrations itself that the population is able to be influenced significantly by the counterinsurgent.

To lodge a platoon in the green zone for up to six weeks, enabling it to dominate a specified area with platoon minus and section patrols, ambushes and observation posts, a number of conditions was required to be set.

- First, the platoon commander needed cash. The green zone is a sea of man-made properties—there is nowhere you can adopt a platoon harbour. The answer is to 'rent' a *q'ala*. This funding line had to be applied for and approved by the national chain of command.

While Australians have used the technique of dispersed operations in past counterinsurgencies, it was relatively new in South Afghanistan.

- The second condition was logistics—water and food needed to be plentiful enough to allow them to stay. A large number of water purification kits were used as an emergency measure (noting the irrigation canals were not something soldiers particularly wanted to drink out of) and with money platoons could normally buy good local fruit and bread to supplement their diet.
- The third was the appropriate groupings to fight and win in close combat. Platoon groups took their joint fire teams, combat engineer sections and medic/combat first aiders with them dismounted in the green zone. Availability of offensive support from mortars or direct fire support from aviation (normally US attack or reconnaissance helicopters) or light armoured vehicles in overwatch was carefully coordinated, particularly in the early stages of the clearance before we became familiar with the environment.
- Fourth, communications were essential to ensure fire support, casualty evacuation and resupply. A system was developed using the joint fire team data systems to enable use of data communications. This was particularly useful (when it worked) to send patrol report details (including ‘atmospherics’ of the local population) up the chain of command.
- Finally, and perhaps most importantly, was access to mobility to insert, resupply and extract these groupings from the green zone. This led to the re-grouping of armoured assets.

Q'alas were selected for occupation by considering the following principles: providing presence and support to permissive areas, demonstrating persistence and resolve to non-permissive areas, interdicting insurgent lines of communication and supply, and disrupting the insurgent network. Targeting known insurgent safe houses and support nodes for occupation as platoon houses presented the advantage of disrupting insurgent freedom of action while demonstrating coalition force presence within a population zone. These counterinsurgency-oriented considerations had to be carefully balanced with the traditional principles of defence and offense.

The original concept was to regularly move between locations within the green zone every 48 hours or so. Unfortunately the effort of finding a location acceptable to the local population and then establishing supplies was in practice so extensive that platoon houses were secured for significantly longer periods. This involved some risk, but was mitigated by active and disciplined patrolling, and dedicated engagement with the local community to develop high levels of situational awareness and control. During Operation BAZ PANJE, this

Targeting known insurgent safe houses and support nodes for occupation as platoon houses presented the advantage of disrupting insurgent freedom ...

was proven to be a worthwhile approach, where the benefits outweighed (and mitigated) the risks.

However, as mentioned earlier, it is critical to continually scan the environment and update the commander's assessment on this balance.¹⁵ The experiences in South Afghanistan in 2006 and 2007 suggest that it was necessary to first disrupt the threat by using larger concentrations of coalition forces with greater manoeuvre and firepower, before then employing smaller, more dispersed forces and to introduce greater numbers of mentored indigenous elements. Such progress enables more open engagement and influence with the local population. The use of multiple 'satelliting' small team patrols denies the insurgent the ability to coordinate a complex attack and swarm an isolated element.

The ability to conduct the kind of dispersed operations described above rests heavily on the imagination, independence, toughness and resilience of soldiers. In particular, the high calibre of our junior commanders (both JNCOs and officers) enables directive control. Given latitude they positively thrive on the challenge of independence, and the opportunity to employ their battle cunning. This often means that by employing smaller groupings with a smaller, less recognisable footprint, better results are achieved in gaining the initiative by finding more caches or out-maneuvring the enemy. This has been the experience through several generations of the Australian Army, and soldiers from other nations quickly recognise this when they work closely with the Australians today.

It is also important to note the great importance of offensive support and other enablers in allowing such operations to take place. The battle group was allocated joint fire teams on a scale of one per platoon. This enabled each platoon to operate independently from its combat team headquarters and still ensure access to offensive support. Some issues were encountered with this manning as there was no redundancy when platoons were conducting independent operations or in the smaller OMLT locations. This also required careful planning when the platoon was conducting dispersed section operations. They were able to use the high volume of passing coalition air to great effect when required, along with the Dutch 155mm artillery (when in range and available) and the attack aviation capabilities of the US Task Force Wolfpack (who were always keen to assist).

It was of particular importance to be able to rely on the battle group's organic assets in an emergency or when other coalition assets were tasked elsewhere. These included two (three tube) sections of 81mm mortar (which changed to three sections of two

The ability to conduct the kind of dispersed operations described above rests heavily on the imagination, independence, toughness and resilience of soldiers.

tubes for greater flexibility) and four sniper pairs, as well as personnel trained to employ the .50 cal machine gun and 40mm automatic grenade launcher. Furthermore, MRTF-2 was well equipped with the Type I Light Armoured Vehicle with its 25mm cannon and extremely effective sensors. The mortars and light armoured vehicles proved their worth on election day when the Taliban conducted standoff attacks with 107mm rockets—in three different locations these two weapon systems engaged rocket points of origin to remove the threat. During quieter periods, preserving the employment of mortars (including bedding-in and illumination missions) only for situations of clear and present threat minimised negative effects on the population and reinforced the Taliban's fear of their reach, lethality and responsiveness.

Having snipers as an organic intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability who were also capable of surgical kills in the populated green zone was invaluable. They were employed extensively on patrols within the green zone to 'satellite' the supported patrol and remain offset from the main body to look for RC/CW IED 'trigger men'. Snipers were specifically employed for counter-IED operations, and to contribute a layer of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance for major deliberate operations, such as Operation BAZ PANJE. The snipers developed a close relationship with their Dutch counterparts, allowing them to form several combined quads. These were of great utility on deliberate operations as quads were more sustainable and afforded better force protection.

This range of organic assets gave the battle group a degree of flexibility, lethality and range that it could not have achieved by relying on external assets alone.

While experimenting with these dispersed operational techniques in the Baluchi Valley in August and September, many vehicles were not well employed when their dismounts were spending longer periods in the green zone. Furthermore, in the situations where they tried to contribute through provision of overwatch, it was becoming predictable to the Taliban, and a considerable number of vehicles were lost to IEDs in July and August as a consequence. Also, with the addition of an extra combat team and an extra OMLT to the order of battle, the armoured vehicle fleet had become close to 100, and needed to be managed carefully.

For these reasons, MRTF-2 re-grouped¹⁶ armoured crews and vehicles (both light armoured vehicle from 2nd Cavalry Regiment and Bushmaster from B SQN 3/4th Cavalry Regiment) into what was called 'F SQN' under Captain Craig Malcolm from B SQN, 3/4 Cavalry Regt.¹⁷ Patrols from this new sub-unit were tasked

Snipers were specifically employed for counter-IED operations, and to contribute a layer of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance ...

with mobility, screening, resupply and support by fire tasks. This resulted in far more efficient usage of vehicles, given that at this stage only a portion of MRTF needed to be lifted at any one time (F SQN was still able to lift up to two thirds of the battle group simultaneously if necessary). This was a different requirement to that during the pre-election period when mobile platoon groups had provided greater flexibility. The change allowed mounted operations to be independent of the dismounted elements simultaneously operating in the green zone. However, platoon groups could still be re-grouped with their original vehicles for roles such as battle group reserve, work site protection or convoy escort that required movement over longer distances.

Some of these 'modifications' are far from new, but are tried and proven techniques used by Australian soldiers in previous counterinsurgency campaigns conducted in complex environments. In particular, the conduct of dispersed operations to make the most of capabilities and commanders at section and platoon level were used when appropriate in Malaya, Vietnam, Somalia and Timor Leste. These modifications have better allowed the capture of the initiative in a 'war amongst the people' and enabled the success of the ANA in the counterinsurgency.

INFLUENCE

The influence line of operations called for a well-synchronised information operations capability with a multi-layered approach. The intent was for information operations to drive the way we operated by manipulating the influence line across all other lines of operations. We adopted the philosophy that all of our actions (including manoeuvre, construction and key leader engagement) would influence perceptions for many different audiences.

The aim was to ensure that we achieved a positive influence that contributed to the achievement of our objectives and mission, without developing unintended consequences. This was facilitated through the development of a system of human analysis so that we better understood who we were influencing, and the employment of a targeting system to allocate priorities to the generation of key effects (both 'soft' and 'kinetic').

The requirement to develop these influence techniques originated in an Afghanistan-focused ABCA (American, British, Canadian and Australian) exercise at Joint Mission Readiness Centre – Hohenfels (JMRC), for which a contingent drawn from 1 RAR and 3 Brigade deployed to Germany in September 2008.¹⁸

Within MRTF-2 Headquarters, information operations were run by an infantry SO2¹⁹ with previous operational experience in psychological operations (PSYOPS),

The aim was to ensure that we achieved a positive influence that contributed to the achievement of our objectives and mission ...

who coordinated the public affairs and PSYOPS elements which were attached from JTF 633. The information operations, with assistance from the S2, contributed to the targeting process for the generation of 'non-kinetic targets' such as leadership or powerbrokers to be engaged, or audiences to be specifically influenced. This then registered the influence effects amongst those of the other lines of operation in the commander's top priorities to compete for time and resources. Thus manoeuvre and other kinetic actions were considered in terms of their information operation (influence) effects, as well as their more direct tactical value.

Examples of this approach ranged from how a large *shura* was organised, messaged and run, through to impromptu 'chai sessions' with local villagers while soldiers were on patrol. The delivery of 'night letters' to population centres was occasionally employed to develop the perception amongst the population that the ANA and ISAF 'owned the night'. These letters would counter insurgent propaganda and spread messages concerning local government initiatives and progress. This technique required immediate follow-up the next morning to reinforce the themes delivered through the night letters and assess any changes to atmospherics.

All planning and coordination measures aside, the most important aspect of influence is to ensure that it is well understood by soldiers on the ground. When other nationalities talk about developing a 'counterinsurgency based mindset', Australian soldiers tend to have a more natural feel for what needs to be done. In 2008 the American instructors at JMRC commented on how good the (Australian and New Zealand) soldiers of the 'ANZAC battle group' were at switching from a hearts and minds focus to killing the enemy, and then switching back just as quickly to caring for the people. Australian soldiers continue to be the best means of information operations that the Army has. On reflection there are two different levels of information operations: the macro-level of messaging and coordination, where the ADF still needs to develop considerably to catch up with coalition partners; and the micro-level, where those on the ground tend to influence other people as individuals extremely well. This was seen time and again with mentors relating to the ANA, soldiers relating to the local population, and staff relating to coalition partners.

A fundamental component of influence was securing the support of other Coalition elements and convincing them of the need to pursue certain objectives. The battle group commenced the operation with the aim of every commander and staff member seeking out their equivalents in all applicable coalition elements

A fundamental component of influence was securing the support of other Coalition elements and convincing them of the need to pursue certain objectives.

and making a strong effort to get to know them and get on with them in the first month. These relationships were then closely maintained throughout the tour. This effort required additional staff capacity. The creation of an S5 position enabled the headquarters to engage and plan in far more detail, rather than have the S3 distracted by these needs when they should be focused on current operations.

The dividends of this policy were substantial: we enjoyed an extremely close relationship with Task Force Uruzgan (our Dutch formation headquarters) and forged close connections with 4th ANA Brigade. These two relationships were fundamental to MRTF-2's ability to make a significant contribution to the elections and the Mirabad clearance operation in accordance with Australia's national objectives. It goes without saying that influence through relationships is a critical enabler to success in a coalition environment.

MRTF-2 sought to achieve a far deeper level of understanding of the human dimension within the area of operations in order to achieve a greater influence over the counterinsurgency. This requirement started with questions posed to the S2²⁰ during the ABCA exercise in Germany in 2008: 'who really holds the power at the local level?', 'how do we isolate the insurgents from the population?', 'which buttons do we need to press to get the right result?' and 'what are the second and third order effects of those actions?' During this activity a targeting cycle, which included information operations, was developed for use in Afghanistan (and continued to develop throughout the deployment). The requirement for greater knowledge of the human dimension eventually led to the development in Afghanistan of a human dimension analysis working group which met daily under the S2, but the team lacked the dedicated intelligence capability to focus on the problem. Therefore a DSTO operational analysis team was requested from JTF 633 on deployment into theatre, and later, a DIO analyst was dedicated to the task. This team set about trying to create a database of human dimension information for MRTF, using Dutch and Australian patrol report data from the previous four years.

This initiative required the feeding of detailed information from the ground through patrol reports. This led to the production of the Human Atmospherics Card by PSYOPS Detachment.²¹ This laminated palm card had eight standard questions, each of which had three possible answers, to be completed by every patrol regardless of its size. These relatively simple responses resulted in a score that roughly indicated the population's support for ANA/MRTF presence, which would then be plotted by the intelligence analysts as red, yellow or green dots on a map to indicate levels of

The requirement for greater knowledge of the human dimension eventually led to the development in Afghanistan of a human dimension analysis working group ...

permissiveness ('atmospherics'). This system was used for the first time in Operation BAZ PANJE in the Mirabad Valley, which had not seen a persistent Coalition presence before, making it an excellent opportunity to test and adjust this approach. It was found that the analysis resulted in waves or concentrations of red and green alternating their way up the valley. This knowledge helped with decisions on where to put the patrol base and where to site platoon houses.

In addition to the more obvious contribution to influence made by major works of managed construction in the develop line of operations, there were two adjustments made by the combat engineers of MRTF-2 which significantly enhanced the influence of the coalition.

The engineers established programs to empower local communities to build small local works for themselves, and connected these back to the sponsorship of the Afghanistan government. 'Community mobilisation' was a concept developed by Recon Officer 16 CE SQN²² to fill the capability gap between the efforts of the Netherlands provincial reconstruction team and the MRTF-2 Works Team. It was designed to support the development of employment and micro-economies, facilitate skills transfer and invoke community pride by empowering local community leaders to shape their own development in non-permissive rural areas. This technique achieved excellent results on the influence line of operations, particularly in the southern Baluchi Valley and in the Mirabad Valley.

The Trade Training School²³ (TTS) trained local youth in various building trades, providing skilled labour for development. The local ministers for Rural Reconstruction and Development (MRRD) and Energy and Water (MEW)²⁴ are strong supporters of the school, attending graduation ceremonies and providing contracts to local firms who employed TTS graduates. The expansion of this progress to Chora in the second half of the tour, leaving locally trained instructors to continue work in Tarin Kowt, exemplifies the plan to further spread this effect as areas gradually become more permissive. Sorkh Morghab and the Mirabad Valley are future targets for exported TTS courses. This is an extremely important effect in the engagement of the local community to win their support in the counterinsurgency.

A number of techniques employed by MRTF-2 Headquarters²⁵ in the synchronisation of operations at battle group level were particularly beneficial from a commander's point of view. Having a separate S5 to devote time to planning future operations, but more importantly to influencing the coalition, while the S3 was free to focus on the current battle, was particularly useful in a coalition operation

The engineers established programs to empower local communities to build small local works for themselves ...

conducted in a high threat environment. Similarly, subordinating influence based effects under the SO2 Information Operations made it easier to coordinate and to synchronise the 'soft' effects.

The targeting cycle was developed throughout the tour with the aim of: prioritising resources and actions to achieve all effects in alignment with the commander's intent; linking lines of operation that were very different in nature; and ensuring the effects produced were indeed the ones of greatest importance, preferably without unintended consequences (particularly those with the potential to undermine the counterinsurgency). The targeting cycle started with a scoping group involving the S2, IO, S3 and S5, and various subordinate specialists under the supervision of the executive officer or battery commander. This group reviewed existing targets for changes in viability or priority, and sought new targets in accordance with the commander's priorities. Functional areas within the headquarters were then tasked to develop further detail on the higher priority and most achievable targets. They then reconvened after several days to grade these targets and produce a proposed target list that was presented to the CO in the targeting board. With the CO's approval and modifications to the required tasks, a fragmentary order was issued tasking subordinate elements, and planning cycles commenced for any major deliberate operations. Some targets generated by the targeting cycle were clearly unachievable by the battle group due to scope or time frame. These targets were passed to TF-U or Regional Command South for action and constantly monitored by the targeting cycle. Such synchronisation is particularly important to maintain direction in a counterinsurgency operation.

Members of the battle group were encouraged to continually review the conduct of activities and the utility of TTPs and standard operating procedures.

This system of coordination was supported by a system of review. None of the techniques described above were derived without mistakes being made (at all levels) and a system of 'trial and error' is always important for learning from mistakes and mishaps. Members of the battle group were encouraged to continually review the conduct of activities and the utility of TTPs and standard operating procedures. This feedback was generally channelled through the SNCOs to the RSM, who was responsible for collating lessons learnt, and updating and promulgating revised MRTF standard operating procedures. Battle group after action reviews were conducted after major operations by the XO and the S3.

Having the facility of a 'CO's TAC' group was fundamental to command in a dispersed high-threat area of operations with many small teams operating in comparative isolation. The TAC, as designed by CO MRTF-1, had sufficient

firepower, mobility and communications to enable the CO to command from the field. We added an engineer section and occasionally augmented the TAC with an infantry section. This was excellent for battlefield circulation—to visit OMLTs and platoons in isolated locations and participate in activities with them, and fully understand their challenges. Some minor augmentation on top of the crews, CO's Sig party and Battery Commander's party for the provision of a control function was required for deliberate operations. With lengthy deliberate operations, consideration does need to be given, however, to the balance between being well informed of your main effort and the conditions on the ground, and gradually becoming dislocated from your main headquarters (in particular 'high side' intelligence). Ten days was usually the maximum before links with the main headquarters became an issue, but this judgement depends on the situation. When not being employed by the commander, the TAC troop was capable of taking on other tasks, including that of reserve. This grouping was commanded by a cavalry troop commander.²⁶

OBSERVATIONS

In Afghanistan the green zones are where the population and the threat are concentrated. Within these areas the counterinsurgent must focus on protecting and influencing the population, while simultaneously isolating the threat from the population and reducing their freedom of action. This 'war amongst the people' calls for persistent and pervasive dismounted patrolling to dominate the green zone with our Afghan counterparts. This presence develops the confidence and capacity of the ANA, generates trust among the local population in their security forces and their government, and deprives the enemy of the initiative and their support base.

The forces conducting these operations must take calculated risks in order to succeed. In order to remove the enemy's freedom of action and bring them above the 'detection threshold', these operations require relatively small dismounted patrols to saturate the area, often moving large distances on foot in a single day and using difficult routes, to maintain the initiative and maximise their own protection. The size and composition of these patrols will vary depending on the current level of threat in that particular area, and the situation needs to be carefully monitored. If the enemy is manoeuvring in large groupings, they must be dealt with and reduced using concentration of force at the optimum time and place before dispersed operations can be viable.

Such patrols need to be supported by the full combined arms package in order to prevail and overmatch the enemy when they do rise above the detection threshold. This overmatch can often only be provided by offensive support or direct fire support from a distance. Given the constraints placed on offensive support at present, preference will be given to precision guided weapons to minimise collateral damage, but if these are

not available, normal indirect fire must be available. All Arms Call For Fire is therefore less likely to be used, but still needs to be available for the last line of force protection. The requirement to generate precision target locations for precision munitions drives an increased demand for Joint Fires Observers (JFO) at lower levels.

Force protection against an adaptive IED threat requires continual modification of techniques coupled with the introduction of new counter-IED technology through either rapid acquisition or purchase of commercial-off-the-shelf equipment in response to operational user requirements. The combination of a continual review of TTPs with adaptive procurement is critical in order to stay ahead of an evolving adversary.

These requirements for successful dispersed operations in a high threat environment rely heavily on the high calibre of our junior commanders and soldiers. Their flexibility, independence and toughness are the backbone of operational capability, particularly in dispersed operations.

Mentoring requires respect, rapport and patience. The generation of confidence and credibility through tactical success is key to establishing a capable new force in a combat environment, and successful partnering is fundamental to achieving these objectives. Development of Afghan Army capability will be more effective if there is a concentration of the ANA above sub-unit level, allowing the generation of a workable red-yellow-green cycle. This may require the handing over of smaller patrol bases to the ANP as they become better established. The achievement of sufficient capability to enable independent indigenous operations is best not considered on a timeline. Mentoring in a counterinsurgency requires a conditions-based approach, endurance and resolve.

Operations to influence the people and dominate the threat in the Afghan green zone generally cannot be conducted from vehicles, because of the canalisation of the terrain and the effects that need to be generated in the populated areas. However, the dismounted element requires the support of vehicles (or aviation, which is harder to attain) for insertion, resupply and extraction. This need is further increased by the extremes of heat in summer and cold in winter. At the same time, activities such as reconnaissance, convoy movement, reserve tasks and direct fire support from the *dasht*, continue to be heavily dependent on vehicles.

Without a detailed knowledge of the local population—including tribal allegiances and cultural complexities, and a sensitivity to dealing with them—a counterinsurgency force is more likely to turn the local population to the cause of the insurgent. It is therefore extremely important that the force focuses its influence and engagement through a well planned, properly resourced strategy which is informed by human

The forces conducting these operations must take calculated risks in order to succeed.

dimension analysis drawn from a reliable database, with regular input from all methods of collection, including patrols, human intelligence and signals intelligence.

The conduct of influence operations can be viewed on two levels—macro (organisational) and micro (personal). It is important that in the quest to solve the issues at the macro level, it's not forgotten how fundamentally important the micro level is to the achievement of influence, and that Australian soldiers are generally pretty good at it.

The prioritisation and synchronisation of resources to achieve specific effects on extremely different lines of operation can be achieved through a 'targeting' process that considers all resources and all effects (both soft and kinetic) required to meet the commander's intent at the same time. This is particularly helpful for the conduct of counterinsurgency.

If an army loses its capacity to kill, and to win the close fight, it will be unable to exert influence. 'Soft' capabilities to win the support of the people in a counterinsurgency environment (to influence, engage, develop and minimise collateral damage) rapidly become irrelevant in an environment such as Afghanistan if they are not underwritten by a tough and agile close combat capability. This requires an extremely flexible mindset amongst all soldiers, and the appropriate type of combat power at their disposal when they require it. This combat power needs to be precise and responsive.

The effect of this kind of combat on soldiers requires that they are better prepared both physically and mentally, that systems are developed to better monitor and care for them while deployed, and that they are given the opportunity to decompress with their team mates in a third country before returning home, where they need to be resourced to rebuild and rehabilitate.

Preparation for such a complex environment demands a significant period of combined arms mission specific training. The time and complexity of this training can be supported by an advanced application of simulation technology to link elements of a decentralised battle group. Participation in a whole-of-government effort requires a coordinated strategy encompassing all agencies for training, planning and conducting operations to achieve effects in the national interest.

CONCLUSION

MRTF-2 experienced a challenging and successful tour in Uruzgan. This was because of the quality of its people—they were tough, focused, resolute and adaptive. They offered an engaging and population-focused approach to counterinsurgency but always maintained the agility to switch rapidly to aggressive close combat. Through the review of procedures at all levels of the organisation, the battle group developed increasingly successful techniques. The best results were achieved when relatively small dismounted Afghan and Australian elements were fully enabled and empowered to operate amongst the people and dominate the enemy in the green

zone. This brought about the success and positive examples required to achieve the optimum mentoring effect. The Australian mentoring mission to build the capacity of the 4th Brigade to the point of independent counterinsurgency operations has shown very encouraging developments to date. However, it has a long way to go before it is complete. This will require considerable endurance, sacrifice and resolve from the Australian Defence Force along with understanding and support from the Australian people. It is important to acknowledge the significant achievements which have been made, and that despite the sacrifice, this is an end worth pursuing.

ENDNOTES

- 1 D Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare - Theory and Practice*, Praeger, Washington, 1964, p. 53.
- 2 *Kandak* is Afghan for 'battalion'.
- 3 Due to a range of manning caps directed for these different elements, no two sub-units within the battle group had the same structure. The original MRTF operational manning document required CT-A to have nine-man rifle and combat engineer sections, inclusive of vehicle crews. For this reason infantry, engineer and artillery soldiers were trained to crew their vehicles within this combat team. If they had been given an armoured corps crew, the section would have been too small (at seven) to do its job effectively on the ground. When CT-B was created it was capped at 120. Because there was some choice in this structure, the option was for two-man armoured corps vehicle crews and eight-man sections in the back—the minimum acceptable size for infantry and combat engineer sections. This avoided having to train more crews at the last minute. Due to its cap, CT-B only had two platoon groups, while CT-A had three. With the late decision by the National Security Committee of Cabinet to send a second OMLT (as MRTF-2 commenced deploying), there were very few options for creating one. The well structured and highly qualified 1 RAR rear details element became the basis for the headquarters of OMLT-D. There was then little option but for 3 BDE to form a composite rear details under 2 RAR. This was not a very satisfactory arrangement for the units involved, but the alternatives were equally problematic.
- 4 The commanders of these elements were: OC CT-A – Major David Trotter; OC CT-B – Major Damien Geary; OC OMLT-C – Major Brenton Russell; OC OMLT-D – Major Gordon Wing; OC 16 CE SQN – Major Scott Davidson; OC F SQN (Protected Mobility Squadron) – Captain Craig Malcolm; OC CSS COY – Captain Cameron Willett; Battery Commander – Major Peter Meakin; Mortar Sergeant – Sergeant Michael Phillips; and Sniper Supervisor (and ISR Coordinator) – Sergeant Brett Kipping.
- 5 The author handed over to his successor, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Hocking, as CO of both MRTF-2 and 1 RAR at the end of his posting tenure in Tarin Kowt on 12 December 2009.

- 6 The local population, the insurgents, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), the Afghanistan government, the coalition (International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)), and international and domestic (Australian) audiences.
- 7 Lance Corporal Tim Loch and Sapper Ivan Pavlovic of 3 CER. Both were returned to Australia for treatment, one via Germany.
- 8 Eight sites were reconnoitered to present options for Commander 4th Brigade prior to the operation. OC 16 CE SQN (Major Scott Davidson) and the S5 (Major Roger McMurray) participated in the recons and provided specialist advice, which was further enhanced by the detailed site recon conducted by the construction troop during the actual operation. The final choice to build north of the river on the edge of the green zone was made by Brigadier General Hamid. It was accessible to the local population, allowing them to provide information and relate to the ANA without being easily identified. This stood in contrast to most other patrol bases in the area of operations which were built on steep hills—easier to defend but isolated from the community, allowing patrols to be easily observed a long time before they entered the green zone, and therefore less capable of dominating the enemy.
- 9 Warrant Officer Class Two Mark Retallick (CSM OMLT-C) and Major Brenton Russell (OC OMLT-C) developed a four stage approach which included platoon and company collective capability and Kandak planning at all levels as pre-requisites to independent Kandak operations.
- 10 Operation TOR GHAR 15–19 November 2009 – 4th and 5th Kandak/OMLT-D resupply convoy to Kandahar.
- 11 The mentoring of headquarters 4th Brigade by the Australian Army commenced informally under MRTF-2, as directed by CJOPS. Major Gordon Wing, Captain Rob Newton, and Warrant Officer Class Two Adrian Hodges of OMLT-D were instrumental in establishing these connections.
- 12 The concept by which some soldiers can be on leave, some in training, and some conducting operations simultaneously.
- 13 Peter Connolly, *Counterinsurgency in Uruzgan 2009*, Study Paper No. 321, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, 2011, <<http://www.army.gov.au/lwsc/SP321.asp>>.
- 14 There were times back in 2006 when a sub-unit was considered the smallest viable unit of action in provinces like Kandahar because the enemy was prepared to swarm in much higher numbers and employ 'semi-conventional' tactics. This was particularly an issue for the Canadians in Kandahar and the British in Helmand around the time of Operation MEDUSA in August–December 2006.
- 15 In the summer of 2006, 3 PARA found that such an approach was not successful when faced with large concentrations of enemy in NowZad and Musa Qala in Helmand Province. These forces lacked the numbers and fire power to dominate the terrain and the threat, and to influence the population, because the enemy was able to concentrate in far greater numbers relatively quickly.

- 16 This decision was taken after consultation with the armoured corps officers and SNCOs.
- 17 With the assistance of experienced members of B SQN and 2 Cav Regt including Captain Rhys Ashton, Warrant Officer Class 2 Glenn Armstrong, Sergeant Haydn Penola, Sergeant Beau St Leone, Sergeant Ben Horton and Sergeant Heath Clayton.
- 18 Exercise COOPERATIVE SPIRIT in Hohenfels saw the principal staff of MRTF assembled for the first time, in an 'ANZAC battle group' consisting of a company of 1 RAR soldiers and a company from 2/1st RNZIR. This was an important test bed for counterinsurgency philosophy. ANZAC forces worked alongside Canadian, British and US forces, all of whom were destined to operate in Afghanistan. Sadly, the then CO of 2 RCR was killed in Afghanistan in early 2010. The new CO of the Welsh Guards (who assumed command after the ex) was killed in Helmand during MRTF-2's tour.
- 19 Major Julian Thirkill.
- 20 Major Nerolie MacDonald from Headquarters 3 Brigade.
- 21 The Human Atmospheric Card was designed by Warrant Officer Class Two Gary Hopper, who then operated for a long time in the Mirabad Valley as part of an 'information operations team' where he tested and adjusted his product.
- 22 Captain Rod Davis.
- 23 Under the stewardship of Lance Corporal 'Spike' Milligan, who first performed this role as part of RTF-3 in 2008. He drove the expansion of the TTS sphere of influence.
- 24 Engineers Hashim and Kabir.
- 25 The principal headquarters staff included: Battle Group XO – Major Anthony Swinsburg; S2 (Intelligence Officer) – Major Nerolie MacDonald; S3 (Operations Officer) – Major Brad Smith; S5 (Plans Officer) – Major Roger McMurray; Information Operations Officer – Major Julian Thirkill; and RSM – Warrant Officer Class One Darren Murch.
- 26 Lieutenant Andrew Hastie, who was extremely well supported by crew commanders Corporal Nick O'Halloran, Corporal John Wilson, Lance Corporal Chris Cohen and Corporal Dean Lee (Combat Engineer Section Commander).

THE AUTHOR

Colonel Peter Connolly trained at ADFA and RMC Duntroon between 1987 and 1990. His operational experience has included deployment to Somalia as a platoon commander in 1993, East Timor as a company commander in 2000, Afghanistan as J3/5 of Regional Command South Afghanistan in 2006, and as Commanding Officer Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force Two in 2009. Post command he became Director Force Structure Development in Strategic Policy Division. He is now posted to the Pentagon in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

THE IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL ENTRENCHMENT FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY OPERATIONS

NATHAN COULTIS

ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of culture in an insurgency and critically analyses the way that counterinsurgency operations address culture. Essentially, the article argues that Western counterinsurgency warfare generally assumes that the culture of a nation beset by an insurgency will adapt to population-centric approaches made by the counterinsurgent force. This assumption is the result of a fundamental mismatch between the theoretical/ideological underpinnings of counterinsurgency theory and a functional understanding of culture as an adaptive product of human psychology and neurobiology.

Shifts in the conceptual understanding of evolutionary psychology and neurobiology have set new paradigms for understanding precisely what comprises 'culture' and where it exists in a physical (as opposed to existential) sense. Paradoxically, the implication is that culture has an inertial tendency to resist external pressures for change, a phenomenon that is referred to in this article as 'cultural entrenchment'. Military counterinsurgency doctrine fails to account for cultural entrenchment, leading to misconceptions about the viability of current Western counterinsurgency practices in non-Western cultural settings, in particular, the expectation of measurable successes over politically expedient time frames.

INTRODUCTION

Counterinsurgency operations are among the most difficult and taxing endeavours that a modern conventional military force can undertake, particularly where that military is intervening in an internal conflict in a distant nation. Such campaigns often degenerate into a protracted low-level conflict that gradually saps the expeditionary counterinsurgent force of its support from the local population (in whose name it fights) and of political and public support on the domestic front. Ultimately, a favourable (to the counterinsurgent) resolution to such conflicts often requires deft political manoeuvre rather than military power.

One common truism is that a force cannot 'kill its way to victory' in an insurgency. An equally poignant observation is that the insurgents 'own the time', while the counterinsurgent is hostage to that inevitable countdown to the end of the campaign. The insurgent need not 'win'; he must simply avoid losing until the counterinsurgent's mandate expires.

Historically, Western powers have a poor record of success in resolving another nation's insurgency. Those resolutions that have been deemed 'successful' are, in fact, more often sub-optimal outcomes in which the criteria for 'success' are heavily qualified for political ends.

My attempts to understand this have led me to examine the much-neglected role of culture (or its misinterpretation or under-representation) in counterinsurgency theory. Among the contributing factors to the West's lack of success in counterinsurgency is the subconscious assumption that certain cultural values possessed by the quintessential Westerner could be transplanted into the society afflicted by the insurgency, and that the path to a better future would become self-evident if those aspects of the local culture unfavourable to this process could be re-engineered and supplanted by Western cultural values.

Simply put, counterinsurgency theory is infused with a subconscious Western cultural bias that assumes an almost 'IKEA-style' assembly of democratic institutions as a logical consequence when population-centric lines of operation aimed at 'social engineering' outcomes are successfully prosecuted. The flaw lies in the 'minds' premise

of the old 'hearts and minds' argument in which it is presumed that the mind will enlighten and follow the heart to a better post-conflict social organisation once the heart has been won through population-centric counterinsurgency strategies. Yet, in reality, any given society's 'heart' is more likely to be influenced by its culture which has proven more difficult to coopt than counterinsurgency theory allows.

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To be fair, few counterinsurgency practitioners hold such naive views about the predictability or inevitability of ‘contested nation-building’, particularly after protracted operations such as the ten-year counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. However, there is a conspicuous absence of underpinning theory to explain the significance of cultural influence on the ‘heart’ of a given society. This article explores the significance of culture and presents an argument for the concept of cultural entrenchment—the ability of a culture to resist external influences acting as an agent of dramatic change. Subsequent discussion focuses on the implications of this phenomenon for counterinsurgent warfare. The final section highlights some of the deficiencies in the theoretical/ideological framework of Western counterinsurgency strategy in the context of Afghanistan.

PART 1 — CULTURE

Much has been made of the need to understand and appreciate local culture when seeking to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the population during counterinsurgency operations. Kilcullen coined the term ‘conflict ethnography’ to describe the interpretation of the physical, human, informational and ideological settings in which such conflicts take place.¹ Underlying any study of ethnography is an understanding of the concept of culture *per se*.

The first part of this article explores the concept of culture from anthropological, psychological, neurological and evolutionary perspectives so as to establish a theoretical foundation for the concept of cultural entrenchment. While this section ostensibly departs from the military context, it is essential that the concept of cultural entrenchment is not simply asserted, but proven. Furthermore, this comprises a valuable foundational knowledge base for the budding ‘conflict ethnographer’.

I contend that culture is not simply an abstract conceptualisation of human social behaviour and belief, but rather, enjoys an actual *physical* existence. The medium in which culture ‘exists’ is the collective neurological structures within the brains of the constituents of a culture-group. Despite the distributed nature of this physical medium, adopting a non-existential understanding of culture allows the ethnographer to draw on the scientific principles underpinning cultural neuroscience to characterise and define some properties of culture as an observable phenomenon.

DEFINING CULTURE

Defining the concept of culture in a strict sense can be problematic as it crosses a variety of fields including anthropology, sociology, linguistics, psychology, archaeology, evolutionary biology and ecology. A broad review of the definitions of culture yields a number of common points. Culture consists of group behaviour patterns or

shared systems of belief and is distributed throughout the population. It is acquired by the individual from external influences, is socially transmitted between agents, and exerts a shaping pressure on individuals as they develop. Culture distinguishes in-groups and out-groups and is intrinsically linked to language. It is related to codes of meaning or shared understandings of symbology. Finally, and most importantly, the concept of culture is dualistic; that is, it can be understood in both individual and collective contexts.²

Towards the end of the twentieth century, many of the more metaphysical interpretations of culture that had emerged within the traditional social sciences began to yield to new integrated theories of culture that were based on evolutionary and psychological frameworks for understanding human behaviour. Such integrated models recognise a neurological basis for the human mind, and further, that the mechanisms of the human mind are a product of evolutionary processes that were specialised to solve adaptive problems (such as mate selection, language acquisition, social cooperation, etc). Within this framework, culture emerges as a collective output of those individual mental processes within the context of specific environmental influences, but also including 'information that is provided both intentionally and unintentionally by other human beings'.³

Most importantly, this integrated model of culture directly links a neurological framework for understanding human behaviour in the individual, with selective pressures (in an evolutionary sense) for understanding human behaviour in a collective cultural setting. This compels the definition of culture in two ways. Individually, culture refers to 'any kind of *information* that is acquired from members of one's [own] species through social learning that is capable of affecting an individual's behavior'.⁴ I refer to this as an individual's 'cultural agency'. Collectively, culture refers to 'groups of people who exist within a *shared context*, where they are exposed to similar institutions, engage in similar practices, and communicate with each other on a regular basis'.⁵ This is what I term a 'culture-group'.

The first definition emphasises culture as *information* that is acquired from the environment (the human social environment), while the second abstracts the concept of culture into a *taxonomic system* that allows an individual to be classified within collective groupings (which require further definition themselves). Thus a person can *belong* to a culture in a collective sense as well as *own* a culture as an individual agent.

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ENCULTURATION

Humans engage in cultural learning; *enculturation* is the process through which an individual acquires his/her cultural agency. People acquire this cultural information from other members of the group through social transmission. As a species, humans are unique in the level of fidelity that is achieved in transmitting cultural information from one individual to the next. The conservation of cultural information is such that it tends to accumulate in a population over time.⁶

Of course, this begs the question of where this cultural information originates. Early observers noted that humans exist in a world that is overlaid with cultural meaning. People do not just inhabit their physical worlds; they also exist in *cultural worlds* that have been constructed on a foundation of the cultural information that has accumulated over time.⁷ This information is acquired from others directly (by being taught) or indirectly (through observation) and is subsequently passed on to newer generations via the same mechanisms. In short, culture is built up over time and changes slightly with each passing generation.

This cultural information is neither so fluid as to be inconsistent, nor so rigid as to be static over long periods of time. A person born into a particular cultural world is continually learning, influencing and being influenced by the shared ideas that constitute that world. As a result of the total immersion in a cultural existence, the characteristics that people acquire through the enculturation process become more pronounced and ingrained with age.⁸

It is the high level of conservation or fidelity in the social transmission of culture between agents that allows collectivistic conceptualisations of culture. It is highly improbable that any one member of a particular culture-group will be exposed to or acquire all the informational elements of that culture-group, and it is even less likely that all members of that group will acquire all information elements of the proposed culture-group. But a sufficient number of members will acquire enough of the most important elements with sufficient fidelity to loosely define a collective culture-group based on the core of those cultural elements, thus allowing a collectivistic label for that culture.

CULTURAL NEUROSCIENCE

‘Since culture has a psychological dimension, one can also meaningfully talk of culture having a neurological dimension.’⁹ A case for understanding culture as rooted in neurological process allows access to some of the principles or ‘rules’

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applicable to neuroscience and their use to quantify some observable aspects relevant to the phenomenon of group culture in the collective social context. First, however, a case must be made for the linkage between neurology and enculturation:

Humans are cognitive agents ... they process incoming information depending on the knowledge they already have and the computing machinery they are endowed with, selectively retain some of that information in their memory, and selectively express some of that information to other agents.¹⁰

In essence, this describes how culture, as a system of shared meanings and understandings, derives from 'the product of current events in the public world interacting with mental structures [in the individual], which [were] the product of such interactions with the public world' prior to that.¹¹ Or, as Duque puts it:

The conceptual structures that inform people's acts have a physiological manifestation, a neural instantiation. Interpreting symbolic acts in the light of what neuroscience has unveiled about the cognitive function of the healthy brain should ultimately aid us in uncovering the neural expression of those structures. The reverse is also true: a better understanding of neural mechanisms has an important role in the interpretation of cultural meanings and practices.¹²

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Thus, the culture of the individual (which is stored as neurological content within that individual) is a product of the collective cultural output of the culture-group which, in turn, is generated by the expression of the neurological cultural content of all of the individuals who comprise the culture-group unit.

NEUROLOGICAL LINKS TO ENCULTURATION DURING DEVELOPMENT

There is evidence to suggest that neurological variation between culture-groups due to distinctly local processes of enculturation begins very early in life. For example, research has revealed that American and Japanese mothers chat to their babies in different ways. American mothers attempt to elicit 'happy vocals' from their babies more often than Japanese mothers, who are more likely to soothe a baby's 'unhappy vocals'.¹³ This indicates that 'even the cultural experiences of prelinguistic children differ in a variety of ways across cultures'.¹⁴

Such cultural experiences undoubtedly leave their mark during the neurological development of the baby's brain, and these findings imply that culture-based neurological variation between culture-groups begins to occur almost immediately after a child is born, and potentially even before.

NEUROPLASTICITY

Neurons are the cells of the nervous system that carry signals to the remaining parts of the body—organs, muscles, glands, other neurons, etc—to coordinate the processes of life in an organism. The brain, which is predominately comprised of neurons (100 billion or thereabouts), is essentially a central processing unit.

Research into neurology points to the fact that ‘When neurons fire at the same time repeatedly, chemical changes occur so that they tend to connect more strongly.’¹⁵ This neural connection pathway is strengthened and expanded each time it is used, increasing the likelihood that the same pathway will be used again. So, to a point, the process becomes self-reinforcing when exposed to the same stimulus time and again. Thus the brain is ‘malleable’ and able to dynamically adapt to new experiences and circumstances. This property is called *neuroplasticity*. With more exposure to a particular stimulus, the neurological processes related to that stimulus are ‘burned in’ so that the neurological responses become more autonomic. It is neuroplasticity that enables people to react to changes in the environment and to adapt to these in new ways.

THE PLASTICITY PARADOX

The depiction of the brain as plastic or malleable might imply that the brain can adapt to any new experience or external stimuli and is in a state of constant change. However, the *plasticity paradox* argues that it is the very mechanism of plasticity that gives rise to the long-term stability of neural systems within the brain.

Even though a pattern of behaviour may be repeated time and again, ‘the neuronal connections responsible are slightly different each time because of what we have done in the intervening time’.¹⁶ The same behaviour, performed at a different time, will use a slightly different neural pathway, so that the brain is constantly being altered by every encounter or interaction.¹⁷

The constant variation reinforces and strengthens the connections that comprise a particular neurological circuit because the repetition of the action actually increases the overall number of individual neural connections. Thus, the collective neural pathways resulting from that action are more numerous and more efficient in response. Hence, while the system is plastic, it also tends to reinforce itself once an initial connection pathway is made, and consequently (and paradoxically) it becomes more difficult to ‘burn in’ a new pathway once a particular circuit is consolidated—difficult, but not impossible.

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While it is possible for further neuroplastic change to occur, this process needs to overcome a physiological resistance to change that conserves the pre-existing neurologically adapted investment. The likely evolutionary reason for this tendency towards stability is that it provides the organism with the benefit of cognitive adaptability while conserving the effort invested in solving a problem once it has been solved effectively the first time. It is the neuro-physiological equivalent of the old adage ‘if it isn’t broken, don’t tamper with it’.

NEUROLOGICAL CULTURAL IMPRINTS

Culture has an enormous pervasive influence on an individual both during early development and throughout his or her life. Humans ‘do not just inhabit physical worlds; they also exist within cultural worlds that are constructed on a foundation of cultural information that has accumulated over time.’¹⁸ ‘People are born into particular cultural worlds, and they are continually learning, and being influenced by, the shared ideas that constitute those worlds.’¹⁹ The effect of this total immersion in culture is a *cultural imprint* on the individual’s neurological landscape.

This neurological cultural imprint is likely to be similar to the cultural imprints in the brains of other individuals born and raised in, or contemporaneously exposed to, that same culture-group. Those cultural traits that have already established themselves within the culture over time (and thus are imprinted in new members during enculturation) will benefit from enhanced selective fitness due to the accumulation of cultural information across generations and time and the high fidelity of cultural transmission overall.²⁰

It is important to note that when culture is imprinted in an individual, he or she will not bear exactly the same imprint as is found in another individual of the same culture. Rather, the first individual’s neurological cultural imprint is sufficiently similar in character to that of the other individual such that *on average* they share the same cultural traits at a holistic level. That is, the two individuals share more similarities in the expression of their cultural traits (by virtue of their individually unique neurological connections governing social behaviour) than they do differences. The holistic expression of the neuronal connections that formed during the enculturation process will yield similar social behavioural patterns and beliefs such that the collective expression of these imprints produces the phenomenon of the culture-group.

Thus, the case is made that culture (as a collective, population-level phenomenon) is fundamentally tethered to the neurological processes of the individuals

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who constitute that culture-group. This means that culture at the group level will, to some extent, be subject to the principles that govern neurobiology at the individual level. The cultural information retained within the individual is subject to neurological constraints that will influence the way that group-level culture behaves. The challenge for this view of ‘culture as a physical (albeit neurological) entity’ is to determine the precise extent of this effect and how far one can apply the principles of neurology to the phenomenon of group-culture.

CULTURAL ENTRENCHMENT

It is my belief that some aspects of neuroplasticity can be applied to the collectivistic interpretation of culture to broadly define some properties of the group-culture concept. Reconsidering the plasticity paradox, once a neuronal connection is formed, it then becomes self-reinforcing and, subsequently, the connection is more likely to be used and further reinforced when the trigger stimulus next occurs. While it is possible for alterations to occur, they need to overcome an inertial tendency that conserves the pre-existing neurologically adapted investment.

The enculturation process during development results in neuro-physiological changes in the brain (the cultural imprint) that are fundamentally influenced by the collective cultural setting in which the individual finds him or herself. This cultural imprint is reinforced by constant exposure to that group-culture throughout life. The brute fact of an *influencing* effect due to immersion in culture is a constant, although the specifics of the cultural expression will be variable and depend on the particulars of a given cultural setting. The influence of the cultural imprint, whatever flavour the particular culture, will be pervasive and fundamentally integrated or embedded into all other cognitive and psychological processes developed in the individual during his or her life.

Therefore, the implication is that the unifying traits that define ‘culture’ in the group sense are ingrained within the individual constituents of that culture-group and, by virtue of the plasticity paradox, these group-level cultural traits will have an inertial tendency to resist external pressures for change (at both the collective and individual level). This is the phenomenon I refer to as ‘cultural entrenchment’.

Cultural entrenchment is the propensity for a group-culture to resist the pressures of cultural change from an influence acting externally to that culture-group. ‘Within any culture there is much variability, with many, if not all, cultural meanings being constantly negotiated and contested.’²¹ Thus, cultural entrenchment is primarily a response to radical or sudden external challenges to a culture. Changes within a culture-group, by contrast, are more measured, are negotiated by the members of that culture-group, and occur as a natural matter of course.

Cultural entrenchment is the mechanism that underlies the phenomenon of culture shock; but, while culture shock may be overcome on an individual basis, a

population-wide adaptation will necessarily be a more difficult process, and the degree of difference between culture-groups will determine the degree of resistance due to cultural entrenchment. Thus, enforcing change to overcome cultural entrenchment within a brief period of time may be a traumatic process that could fracture a given culture-group, or trigger dramatic social upheaval. By contrast, a slower, less traumatic path to overcoming cultural entrenchment would require paced changes, possibly over a generational time frame.

This phenomenon explains the friction created when diametrically opposed cultures clash, particularly in circumstances of conflict, and especially in the modern globalised era of transnational terrorism which is functionally a conflict of religious and socio-cultural ideologies. The implications of this phenomenon within the specific context of counterinsurgency warfare form the basis for the next section.

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PART 2 — INSURGENCY

An insurgency is an armed uprising against a constituted government or political authority that holds power, by an opposing movement that seeks to create and exploit the circumstances of the conflict to usurp power. Such conflicts are politico-military struggles that are designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of the central power, while increasing the control of the insurgent group. The insurgent antagonists attempt to assert their political legitimacy through a process of coopting popular support away from the established government to undermine its authority while simultaneously building their own socio-political power-base. The ultimate aim is to reach a tipping point, a critical mass of popular political support or military supremacy that overwhelms the established authority so that it completely collapses and the insurgent movement can gain absolute control of the state (or contested geo-political area).²²

The US military's counterinsurgency field manual recognises one key aspect of an insurgency: that such conflicts are *protracted* politico-military struggles.²³ This emphasises the point that insurgencies are generally lengthy conflicts which develop over long periods of time before the insurgent strategy either reaches maturity or is abjectly defeated. Insurgencies will only gain traction in specific socio-political climates where a division exists that has so polarised the level of popular support between the protagonists in the struggle that it precludes any negotiated resolution. Thus, an insurgency must be viewed in terms that go beyond that of the military

tactics employed by the insurgents themselves (the warfighting aspect that most military commanders traditionally focus on) and encompass the social and political dimensions of the conflict.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN GUERRILLA WARFARE AND INSURGENCY

The terms 'guerrilla warfare' and 'insurgency' are sometimes used interchangeably. However, for the purpose of this article, it is important to distinguish between these terms, to emphasise the asymmetric nature of these conflicts and to acknowledge the criticality of support from the population to the longer term success of either the insurgent or counterinsurgent strategy.

Guerrilla warfare should be viewed predominantly as a military tactic. It is a mode of warfare in which small, irregular groups of combatants capitalise on the natural advantages of surprise and mobility to harass and exhaust a larger, conventional or regular force by conducting attacks such as ambushing, sabotage, assassination, bombings, etc. An insurgency is the socio-political context within which a guerrilla war takes place. The distinction is important because the use of guerrilla tactics is not reserved exclusively for an insurgency, nor does the context of an insurgency preclude the use of traditional conventional means of warfare between forces of equivalent military capability.

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THE METHODOLOGIES AND ORIGINS OF AN INSURGENCY

From inception to culmination, an insurgency will move through several distinct phases. Throughout the conflict it is possible for the insurgent movement to transition backwards and forward through various modes of opposition. Organisationally, such transitions are relatively smooth and range from underground political dissidence or terrorism to guerrilla warfare, or to open conflict employing fixed military formations. Because of this hydra-like ability of the insurgency to redefine itself, the climate of insurgency can become entrenched in the afflicted society, and the conflict may endure for a very long period of time as exemplified by the prolonged 'troubles' of Northern Ireland.

Mao Zedong outlined three broad phases of the insurgent's military strategy in his doctrine of protracted war. The first of these is the *strategic defence*, a period of latent insurgency during which the movement seeks to gain strength and support while degrading those same attributes in the enemy. This is followed by the *strategic stalemate* when the conflict reaches a state of operational equilibrium. Finally, the

strategic counteroffensive sees the insurgent achieve superior strength and commence a conventional military operation to overthrow the existing regime in a final push.²⁴

Socio-politically, an insurgency follows similar steps. Initially there will be some reason to justify the resort to an armed struggle. One of the most historically persistent triggers for insurgency is the presence, or perceived malign influence, of an external power, either overtly exercising political power or through control of a puppet regime. This was the case in Indo-China during the Vietminh uprising against the French in the 1950s.

A resistance movement then nucleates, usually around a cadre of intellectual ideologues and, during this stage, the tactics of terrorism are typically employed to propagate ideology, galvanise the population and create broad tacit approval for armed resistance. Needless to say, the insurgents must be calculated in their use of terrorism to avoid losing the sympathy of the population, and the underlying grievance that they are seeking to exploit must be sufficiently robust to justify such measures. From this stage the transition must be made to armed resistance through overt militant action. This is the classic phase of guerrilla warfare usually associated with an insurgency.²⁵

During this phase, the insurgents make full use of the tactics of irregular warfare to harass and degrade the opposing military forces. The guerrillas leverage every advantage available: the ability to initiate engagements on the terms of their choosing; the ability to provoke and incite reprisals misdirected at the civilian population; and the ability to blend into that same population and abandon their status as combatants as it suits the tactical situation. As Taber notes, if the cause is popular, the guerrilla's mere survival is itself a political victory.²⁶

In the final stages of a successful insurgency, the opposing forces begin to reach a stage of military parity and the conflict becomes more conventional in nature. The insurgent faction will seek to hold terrain and begin to manoeuvre in regular military formations to defeat the previously dominant opposition. This phase of the conflict is more akin to a civil war than a guerrilla campaign. Thus it is ironic, but unsurprising that, during this phase, the insurgent faction itself becomes vulnerable to the same weaknesses that crippled its opponents earlier in the campaign. However, the protraction of the conflict favours the insurgents, as they are not obliged to deliver any political outcomes, while the government is expected to continue to serve the people despite deteriorating conditions. Of course, the insurgents may be defeated militarily long before the campaign matures; however, provided they retain their popular support, they may revert to the tactics of guerrilla warfare.

This phase of the conflict is more akin to a civil war than a guerrilla campaign.

THE ROLE OF THE POPULATION IN INSURGENCY

The civilian population caught in the middle of the conflict is the most decisive factor in that conflict. The insurgency is fought to gain the support (or, at the very least, compliance) of the population. The support of the population is the insurgent movement's centre of gravity as a permissive civilian operating environment is what enables the insurgents to leverage the relative strengths they possess against the counterinsurgent force.

In insurgencies of a revolutionary nature, the population is undeniably the 'decisive terrain' that constitutes the key objective central to winning the conflict:

The guerrilla is primarily a propagandist, an agitator, a disseminator of the revolutionary idea, who uses the struggle itself—the actual physical conflict—as an instrument of agitation. His primary goal is to raise the level of revolutionary anticipation, and then of popular participation, to the crisis point at which the revolution becomes general throughout the country and the people in their masses carry out the final task—the destruction of the existing order and (often but not always) of the army that defends it.²⁷

In contemporary circumstances, where a distinct political ideology might not necessarily underpin the conflict, the insurgents need only offer a marginally better alternative to an unsatisfactory government. Thereafter, intimidation and a demonstrated local presence are sufficient to ensure the support of the local population. This theory of *competitive control* holds that, during irregular conflicts, 'the local armed actor that a given population perceives as most able to establish a normative system for resilient, full-spectrum control over violence, economic activity, and human security is most likely to prevail within that population.'²⁸

THE ACCIDENTAL GUERRILLA EFFECT

This discussion of the theory of classical insurgency has, so far, largely assumed that the conflict is wholly an internal affair. However, the regional destabilisation that results from a conflict in one nation often invites the involvement of other nations whose interests are adversely affected by the unrest. The intervention of a foreign power significantly complicates the character of the insurgency itself, often in favour of the insurgents who can graft an element of nationalism to their ideology or grievance. This was evident during the Ethiopian intervention in southern Somalia in 2006 that led to the rise of Al Shabaab. Thus, in the context of an insurgency in which an external or foreign agency is assisting an unpopular government against the insurgent movement, an *accidental guerrilla* effect may result. This effect predominates in circumstances where the insurgents have infiltrated remote or ungoverned regions and created alliances with local traditional communities.²⁹

From these havens, the insurgents begin to spread their influence and export the conflict into new areas. This prompts an obligatory intervention by the counter-insurgent force to disrupt and deny the insurgent safe haven. However, this intervention provokes a backlash by local non-insurgent groups who eventually fuse with the insurgent movement in order to defend their community from external influences. This alignment with the insurgency is not due to ideological reasons, as it may ostensibly appear, but occurs as a defensive response to the presence of a hostile foreign force that is poorly equipped to distinguish or separate the insurgents from the local communities.³⁰

Eventually, the counterinsurgents find themselves fighting these so-called accidental guerrillas—the same people they originally intervened to protect. At the same time, the ideologically motivated insurgent provocateurs withdraw into an enabling and supporting capacity to fuel this new front in the wider conflict.³¹

The intervention of a foreign power significantly complicates the character of the insurgency itself, often in favour of the insurgents ...

SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES ON INSURGENCY

The phenomenon of globalisation has seen the emergence of a pandemic super-culture dominated by Western influences in general and flavoured by American postmodern cultural values in particular. This global culture is disseminated by the mass media and driven by global economics. For the most part, this pan-societal culture is a heterogeneous, multi-cultural entity which local culture-groups access partially or superficially to supplement their more deeply held local cultural values. This interaction is also a two-way street, with local cultures integrating some of their more unique aspects into the overall mix.

In most parts of the world, this globalised culture has been (and continues to be) assimilated at a pace that falls within the tolerance thresholds of locally established cultures. That is, it is able to overcome the effects of cultural entrenchment without invoking a negative (or violent) cultural backlash by gradually eroding older, less relevant cultural aspects in a way that does not fundamentally challenge the key local culture-group's identity. Undeniably, there have been growth pains, although cultures that were already closely aligned with the West have suffered less than those more distant. However, the process as a whole has been generally characterised by adaptation and acceptance due to the other associated benefits of globalisation.

In places where the local culture is dramatically different (on some scales of measure, the polar opposite) to the Western-dominated culture of globalisation

however, the pace of change has been too fast for some traditional societies to accommodate. Put simply, the degree of difference has been too much to overcome. In such cases, the effects of cultural entrenchment are demonstrated in the form of a *cultural backlash*, particularly where liberal, modernised secular societies in the Western tradition have clashed with conservative, pre-industrial, isolationist religious societies with Middle Eastern traditions.

Kilcullen interprets the fourth wave of terrorism (the characteristic transnational takfiri terrorism of the post-11 September 2011 world) as a *global insurgency* that seeks not to oppose globalisation, but rather to coopt it to an opposing world view (*terrorism* is the tactic, whereas *insurgency* models the overarching strategy). 'Counterglobalisers' such as al-Qaeda are 'paradoxically among the most globalised and networked groups on the planet' and are highly adept at manipulating and exploiting the anti-globalisation sentiment of traditional societies.³² Unsurprisingly, the version of globalised culture that Islamic extremist groups such as al-Qaeda strive to impose has more in common with these societies than with the Western-influenced pan-societal culture that currently dominates.

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PART 3 – DISCUSSION OF CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN THE AFGHAN INSURGENCY

Having briefly reviewed the theory of insurgency and examined the contemporary social, political and cultural factors that influence such conflicts, it is now possible to appreciate the complex interaction of such variables in the battlespace of an ongoing insurgency. This section provides a deeper insight into the current conflict in Afghanistan by examining some of the socio-cultural facets of the Afghani people to show how the effects of cultural entrenchment predominantly favour the insurgent over the counterinsurgent.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is primarily mandated to reduce the capability and will of the insurgency in Afghanistan.³³ Although the current conflict is characterised by a multiplicity of factors interacting to destabilise the country and foster the ongoing violence, this section focuses primarily on the attributes and peculiarities of Pashtun culture as a decisive factor in the insurgency. Thus the following discussion treats the insurgency as predominately comprised of Pashtun Afghanis who form a coalition of insurgent groups which includes the Taliban but also encompasses other localised insurgent factions.³⁴

THE AFGHAN CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Pashtuns are the dominant ethnic tribal group in southern Afghanistan, the epicentre of the insurgency. As a people, they are spread between the nations of Pakistan and Afghanistan, notionally separated by the Durand line.

The Pashtuns are a tribal people with a *segmentary kinship* structure that sub-divides the tribes into sub-tribes, clans, sub-clans, village groups, extended families and individual family units. Within this nested social order an individual may have obligations on a number of levels to other members of the group so that ‘each group member must side with the closer against the more distant relative, and with locals against outsiders’; yet, between members, there also exists an agnatic (paternal) rivalry for position and prominence.³⁵

While the cohesion of tribalism in Afghanistan has eroded under the pressure of several decades of warfare, these underlying structures are still very strong, especially in terms of the individual’s concept of self-placement within society.³⁶ Furthermore, ‘social ideals about egalitarianism, mutual caring, sharing, reciprocity, collective responsibility, group solidarity, family, community, civility and democracy’ (in its tribal context) within Afghan culture are rooted in tribal principles.³⁷

The Pashtuns follow the honour code known as *Pashtunwali*, which is so deeply entrenched in their culture that it can even take precedence over their identification as Muslims. Although far more deeply nuanced than the simplification that follows, the central aspects of *Pashtunwali* are: *Tora* (courage), *Badal* (revenge), *Melmastia* (hospitality), *Nanawati* (honorable treatment of a defeated foe), *Jirga* (respect for the authority of the tribal assembly) and *Tarboorwali* (agnatic rivalry).³⁸

Another key feature of Pashtun culture is an emphasis on personal bonds between individuals and the importance of both the tribe and individual’s honour and public reputation in sealing these relationships.³⁹ These links, when established, assume an extraordinary importance in honouring personal commitments and loyalties and regulating social order in the tribal system.⁴⁰ The Pashtuns often value social affirmations of relationships over impersonal or material demonstrations of loyalty.⁴¹ However, such deep personal loyalties can cause contradictions and conflicts with their wider honour-bound obligations, meaning that ‘the Pashtun can go from brother to mortal enemy—in 60 seconds’ while his world view remains consistent with the code of *Pashtunwali*.⁴²

Within this nested social order an individual may have obligations on a number of levels to other members of the group ...

Even in light of this rather brief treatment of the Pashtun culture, the current counterinsurgency strategy raises a number of pertinent questions: which of those principles of *Pashtunwali* are incompatible (or poorly matched) with the concepts, principles and practices of counterinsurgency? Which of these concepts, principles and practices of counterinsurgency are poorly matched with those same features of *Pashtunwali*? Which principles of counterinsurgency and Pashtun culture naturally complement one another? Of those that do not, which principles of counterinsurgency and Pashtun culture can most easily accommodate the other? What are the risks and benefits of accommodation (including likely second-order, third-order effects and unanticipated outcomes)?

... ‘the Pashtun can go from brother to mortal enemy—in 60 seconds’ while his world view remains consistent with the code of *Pashtunwali*.

EFFECTS OF CULTURAL ENTRENCHMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Svet’s assessment of ISAF information operations (IO) in Afghanistan highlights some culturally based de-synchronisations between the intended effects of the population-centric counterinsurgency campaign and the actual outcomes.⁴³ The failure of ISAF-developed IO messages to resonate with local audiences is primarily due to the existence of cultural barriers. For example, an IO theme such as ‘freedom’ engenders connotations of ‘freedom from interference by the central Afghan government’ (rather than ideas of personal liberty) to the local Pashtun tribesman.⁴⁴ While an example of cultural misinterpretation is ostensibly not a case for cultural entrenchment, this particular example actually highlights a deeper cultural paradigm worth exploring.

ENTRENCHED DISTRUST OF THE CENTRAL STATE

The tribal system in Afghanistan sits in *balanced opposition* to the powers of the government and the Islamic religion. That is, the power of any one of these institutions was historically counterbalanced by the power held by the others.⁴⁵ However, the institutions of the central state also (historically) primarily served the interests of the people who controlled them, rather than promoting the welfare of the general population. Thus, Afghan society is marked by an ingrained tribal ethos that distrusts and resists central government power structures.⁴⁶ This entrenched cultural factor conflicts with one of the fundamental objectives of counterinsurgency, that of building or enhancing the legitimacy of the central government in order to secure its approval by the population.

It is clear that a deeply entrenched cultural trait such as this complicates the pursuit of counterinsurgency objectives, even where those approaches are based

on population-centric counterinsurgency initiatives. For the counterinsurgent, overcoming the population's negative perceptions of the government is a significant challenge, and one that is likely to take a very long time and a large investment of effort to accomplish. Ongoing accusations of corruption, justified or otherwise, will only further reinforce the negative bias, while insurgent IO easily capitalises on the entrenched sentiment to piggyback its own messages, further distancing the government from the people.

In this scenario, the inertial drag hindering the counterinsurgent is threefold. To ensure lasting success, the counterinsurgent must overcome the insurgent's IO message; address the underlying cause of the cultural bias (by capacity-building the government); then ultimately work to prevent such a bias from enculturating within the newer generations (through demonstrated and enduring outcomes that highlight the government's worth).

OVERCOMING A CULTURE ENTRENCHED WITH CONFLICT

The long years of conflict in Afghanistan have also heavily affected the cultural landscape of Pashtun society. As Kolenda observes, the traditional stratified Pashtun society has fragmented over the course of three decades of conflict, while the fabric of village and tribal life continues to unravel under the pressures of the ongoing insurgency, socio-economic upheavals, and conflicts within or between tribal groups.⁴⁷

Historically, local tribal affairs were governed by leaders and key members of influence who, over the generations, were usually drawn from within the same cluster of powerful families. However:

The long years of conflict in Afghanistan have also heavily affected the cultural landscape of Pashtun society.

After 30 years of conflict, an economy has developed in which money is exchanged for fighting. Violence has created the most viable path to social and economic mobility and political influence. Those who prove skilled and demonstrate leadership qualities can advance in the ranks, increase their local power, and grow wealthy. Many insurgent leaders are from traditionally poor families who would otherwise have remained outside the local governing structures. The rise of this violent, well-funded warrior middle class has attracted the poor while undermining traditional tribal aristocracy.⁴⁸

The attraction to violence as a way of life and the development of a fatalistic world view is an entrenched cultural trait that, on balance, favours the state of insurgency over peace. Thus, it ultimately favours the insurgent over the counterinsurgent. Young, poor, uneducated males primed in the cultural code of *Pashtunwali* and lacking exposure to a viable alternative vision of peaceful rural village life

are culturally vulnerable to cooption and radicalisation by the Taliban and other extremist groups.

The 'ecological' interpretation of culture as a societal adaptation to the environment provides some understanding of how the influence of drawn-out conflict, mixed with local honour-bound warrior traditions, in the absence of the moderating influence of a strong, but non-violent judicial system, creates an entrenched cultural trait that predisposes young males to adopt the ways of violence as a means to advance in society, especially where no competing viable alternative offers the same potential for social mobility. The counterinsurgent must strive, therefore, to overcome the contributing societal factors that preclude a peaceful middle class from developing, as well as contend, in the longer term, with the entrenched bias towards the path of violence as an easy escape from a disadvantaged rural life.

Of course, the insurgents also actively exacerbate the socio-cultural upheavals that reinforce the entrenchment of violent tendencies.⁴⁹ 'The collapse of social cohesion is the Taliban's most powerful enabler.'⁵⁰ The Taliban has actively targeted and killed many Pashtun tribal elders in a bid to destroy what tenuous continuity still exists linking back to the time prior to the pre-eminence of the Mullah in Pashtun society. While eliminating or sidelining these tribal elders, the Taliban is simultaneously engaging a disenfranchised youth, adapting pre-existing cultural and religious concepts to cultivate and recruit new members, then indoctrinating and further enculturating those members with extremist themes in madrassas and training camps. What Western observers perceive as an insidious cycle of exploitation, the average largely ignorant Pashtun youth *feels* is an intuitively right path to follow due to the cumulative effects of social, religious and cultural pressures.

'The collapse of social cohesion is the Taliban's most powerful enabler.'

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY STRATEGIES IN AFGHANISTAN

So far, this discussion has examined some of the effects of cultural entrenchment that favour the state of insurgency over peace and are thus specifically beneficial to the insurgent who flourishes in a state of protracted conflict. This section will analyse how some aspects of the current counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan necessarily require long-term cultural change and are thus inherently disadvantaged by entrenched local cultural characteristics.

Evidence points to the fact that educating and empowering women reduces the level of violence in a society.⁵¹ This is one laudable way to undermine the state of insurgency. Yet education for women fundamentally clashes with an entrenched religious dogma that has held sway over the culture for hundreds of years, and

achieving this outcome requires more than just building schools and creating a permissive security environment for girls' education to take place. Education for women needs to be culturally accepted as a societal norm before it reaches a critical point as an efficacious counterinsurgency strategy. Otherwise it is likely that the main effort and bulk of educational resources will be preferentially allocated to males, and it may well be many years before there is a surplus will or capacity to reach out to impoverished rural girls.

An honest, responsible, responsive and *present* government is vital in order to swing support away from the insurgency. Yet nepotism, what Westerners (and those who fail to benefit from it) consider an unpalatable and unacceptable corruption of the public responsibility of government, predominated as a centuries-old practice in the traditional, socially stratified tribal system where patronage relationships persisted as a natural order of affairs in circuits of power and among social elites.⁵² It is this same class of elites that the West now needs to govern Afghanistan. At the same time, even at the level of local governance, it is recognised that the contribution of foreign aid actually increases the level of endemic corruption and causes inter-tribal tension leading to a 'profitable stalemate' that, once again, benefits the insurgent.⁵³

One significant factor undermining security is the lack of economic opportunity for Afghani civilians. With much of the population impoverished, the Afghan government has no domestic revenue source and relies on external financial support, predominantly from the US. This situation is obviously unsustainable in the long term. Yet international investors are reluctant to invest in Afghanistan, partly due to the lack of security, but also partly because of Afghani culture itself, which is perceived as unwelcoming towards foreign economic advances.⁵⁴

Boetig argues that Afghanistan can ill afford to maintain the less wholesome aspects of its local culture, such as the repression of female rights and the tolerance of widespread child abuse, both physical and sexual. These aspects of Afghani culture are 'inconsistent with core values [that are] deeply cherished by the developed world'.⁵⁵ He notes that 'Afghanistan has neither the natural resources of an Iraq or a Saudi Arabia, nor the favourable culture of a Germany or Japan that allowed each of those countries to prosper after the Second World War'.⁵⁶ Thus, the current status quo is one in which any improvement to security is predicated on improvement in economic prosperity, which is in turn retarded by a local culture that does not appeal to foreign economic investment. To re-equilibrate this feedback system, Boetig sees Afghani culture as the locus that must give. Yet, even if he is right, cultural entrenchment

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stipulates that the necessary changes are unlikely to occur before the West withdraws its economic backing along with its security forces, leaving an Afghan government unable to fund its own security forces and provide basic services to its people.

These are but a few examples of counterinsurgency initiatives that are undermined by the flawed assumption that underlying cultural traits are sufficiently flexible to adapt to new paradigms in a politically expedient time frame.

CONCLUSION

The current ISAF counterinsurgency strategy relies heavily on its capacity to develop the local Afghan government and security forces so as to expedite a future withdrawal of international forces by governments under domestic political pressure to disengage from what is becoming an unpopular war.

This reality ignores the issue that the sort of Afghan government and security force that ISAF is morally bound to leave behind are unlikely to achieve the standards of competency required to do the job unassisted and the moral legitimacy required to gain the popular support essential to the long-term success of the strategy, in a time frame that is politically acceptable to the West.

This is fundamentally due to the effects of cultural entrenchment which ensure that the aspects of local culture that ISAF seeks to modify already favour the insurgency. Thus the criteria for successful counterinsurgency in Afghanistan demand the achievement of a degree of reshaping of Afghan culture and society such that it will repudiate any future influence by the Taliban or al-Qaeda. Yet the West's political impatience with the war in Afghanistan is a symptom of its underestimation of the time required to actually effect the socio-cultural changes necessary to meet the desired outcome.

Cultural entrenchment implies that changes over short periods of time favour cultural adaptations that are less demanding to the existing order than large or radical upheavals. Yet what the West seeks to impose on Afghani culture in the pursuit of its current counterinsurgency strategy is, by centuries-old local standards, a radical change within a very brief period of time.

In order to defeat the Taliban insurgency and create a stable Afghan state that is politically viable and secure in the long term, the counterinsurgency in Afghanistan must accustom itself to the idea that cultural change, of necessity, takes a much longer time to accomplish than the current population-centric initiatives can hope to effect in politically expedient time frames. Western counterinsurgency strategists and foreign policy shapers must acknowledge the need to commit to these lines of operation for the long term in order to achieve enduring effects from this approach. To do otherwise is to set the stage for another heavily qualified and politicised 'success' for Western counterinsurgency strategy in which the lasting outcomes in Afghanistan might ultimately prove to be prematurely judged.

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COUNTERINSURGENCY

COINS IN THE DUST

BATTLESPACE COMMANDING AND COUNTERINSURGENCY IN AFGHANISTAN

MAJOR MARK POPOV

ABSTRACT

In order to best synchronise operations in Kandahar Province in 2009–10, Canada implemented the Battlespace Commander concept, where one military commander, partnered with Afghan government elements, became responsible for all security, reconstruction, governance and development in each district. A number of critical lessons remained a constant thread throughout one combat team's deployment to Kandahar's Dand District. While operations in other theatres and future conflicts will present challenges that differ from those found in Afghanistan, these lessons form a framework of enduring principles, proven in operations, that future generations of soldiers will find useful in whatever conflict they may face.

Contemporary military forces, acting on behalf of recognised states, that seek to generate and then apply combat power to destroy their opponents through fires, manoeuvre and massed, synchronised high tempo effects,¹ are easy to find but hard to kill. While modern combat formations lack stealth, advertising their presence by virtue of their size and mass, they compensate through protection, firepower, manoeuvrability, tempo and battlespace fire

effects provided by a breadth of sophisticated, lethal combat systems. Non-state actors who simultaneously hide amongst² and intimidate a country's population, attacking through night letters,³ information campaigns and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) are, conversely, easier to kill⁴ but much, much harder to find. As the nature of the Afghan conflict has shifted from sustained incidences of hard, kinetic combat to its present, more insidious nature, the tactics, techniques and procedures used by Canada's soldiers to combat insurgents in Kandahar Province have also evolved.

B Squadron, The Royal Canadian Dragoons, an armoured reconnaissance squadron located on the southern flank of the Task Force 3-09 Battle Group area, was tasked to secure the population of Kandahar Province's Dand District from September 2009 to May 2010. Augmented with attachments and enablers from across Task Force Kandahar, to include whole-of-government partners from Canadian civilian police departments and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), it captured a number of key counterinsurgency lessons during its mission. This article is a distillation, compilation and explanation of eleven critical lessons—coins of knowledge and experience mined from Kandahar's dusty plains by soldier sweat, blood and effort that held true throughout the deployment.

BACKGROUND

It is a given in counterinsurgency theory that insurgencies are political power struggles⁵ in which insurgent movements seek to overthrow an existing government.⁶ In this struggle, the population's attitudes, perceptions and support are often the centre of gravity⁷ for both insurgents and government forces. In order to engage the population and influence it to support the legitimate government and not the insurgent, kinetic military action alone cannot succeed. While sometimes killing is necessary, recent history continues to prove that in a counterinsurgency one 'cannot kill or capture our way to victory'.⁸ Government forces, locked in 'a competition with the insurgent'⁹ for influence, must convince the population to deny insurgents the succor and support, both tacit and overt, that they need to live, operate, hide, manoeuvre and attack.¹⁰ This task is far more difficult than it appears; when planning operations, key terrain and vital ground are no longer defined solely by physical areas on the ground, but rather must take into account attitudes and actions taken by residents of an area to render the insurgent

One must take a page from the insurgent's playbook and influence the population by acting on multiple concurrent axes...

ineffective. In order to defeat the insurgent, the counterinsurgent force, whether indigenous or foreign, cannot disregard the population or act in isolation and expect to prevail. One must take a page from the insurgent's playbook and influence the population by acting on multiple concurrent axes, not just the purely military plane, to win. When planning counterinsurgency operations, *the people are the terrain*.

KANDAHAR SITUATION, FALL 2009

While the 'what'—influencing the population—is clear, the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan has proven that the 'how' to accomplish this task is more difficult. Successive Task Force Kandahar¹¹ rotations have made significant steps in positively influencing the population and denying insurgents freedom of action in southern Kandahar Province.¹² However, experience has shown that the spectrum of battlespace effects in Afghanistan can often be fragmented and cause friction at the tactical level as different elements with different mandates, different capabilities and different commanders operate in the same piece of terrain and seek to influence the same population. Much as fires and manoeuvre must be closely synchronised to achieve concentration of force, maximise economy of effort, husband scarce combat power and prevent fratricide, non-kinetic effects must also be similarly synchronised. The majority of Kandaharis care far less about command structures and the division of responsibilities between different units than they do about effects. To them, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) soldiers, no matter the unit or nationality, are a homogenous group of foreigners. The concept that within ISAF there are different groups responsible for different things and effects is inconceivable. In order to best focus on Kandahar's population and influence it to reject the insurgency, reconstruction, development, governance, security operations, raids, Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF)¹³ development and stability—which are all intertwined in the population's perception—must all be synchronised. In theory, this synchronisation is easy to achieve. In practice, the frictions of war, differences in organisational culture, national mandates, time, space, resources and the ever-present threat can all serve to make synchronisation immensely difficult.

ENABLING SYNCHRONISATION

In order to better synchronise the disparate and dispersed elements of its deployed units, Task Force Kandahar began implementing the Battlespace Commander (BSC) concept in southern Kandahar Province late in 2009, first in Panjwayi District, followed by Dand District. Much as the concept of one commander responsible for tactical effects in a single area of operations is part and parcel of kinetic operations

and a given in our military culture, the BSC concept extended this unity of command into a broader spectrum. It saw one sub-unit commander, appointed as the BSC, made responsible for synchronising and guiding all battlespace effects and activities in a specific district, including non-military stabilisation, governance, reconstruction and development efforts. This same BSC was also responsible for all interactions between ISAF elements and governmentally-appointed District Leaders, Afghan government officials and ANSF in the district. Government of Afghanistan Order 3501,¹⁴ issued on 16 September 2007, mandated the creation of Afghan National Army-led¹⁵ Operational Coordination Centres (OCC) across Afghanistan to coordinate the activities of disparate ANSF elements with each other and with ISAF, as identified in Figure 1 below.

These centres, working at provincial and district level, coordinate security efforts and act as a central source for information about incidents, events and upcoming plans. They are frequently co-located and partnered¹⁶ with ISAF elements. The OCC establishment in Kandahar province was predicated on the security situation, ANSF capacity and local Afghan government officials' political will. Prior to late 2009, the conditions for OCC-D establishment were not right; as soon as conditions evolved sufficiently, the BSCs in Panjwayi and Dand established district-level Operational Coordination Centres (OCC-D) to satisfy

The majority of Kandaharis care far less about command structures and the division of responsibilities between different units than they do about effects.



Figure 1. Afghan National Security Forces – Primary Organisations¹⁷

this Afghanistan government requirement. Each OCC-D was a partnered Afghan-Canadian synchronisation and information node which supported each BSC, their partnered ANSF elements and each district's appointed District Leader.

EVOLUTION AND ORGANISATION

Becoming a BSC sub-unit and establishing the Dand District Operational Coordination Centre was a significant challenge for B Squadron. Figure 2 depicts the squadron's general composition on its initial deployment, while Figure 3 shows its configuration as the Dand District Combat Team, an evolution which brought an approximately three-fold increase in personnel and a great deal more responsibility to the existing squadron command structure.

The additional responsibility and command challenge that the Dand Combat Team entailed was balanced by the significant capabilities that the Combat Team's attachments and enablers provided, coupled with the OCC-D's ability to interact and coordinate with local government officials and ANSF. The Construction Management Organisation (CMO) team focused on village-level or multiple-village projects such as building irrigation canals. It had excellent contacts with local labour organisers and the ability to monitor local attitudes and impressions during its interactions with local work teams. The Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) team was the Combat Team's overt, public and friendly face, manning a reception centre oriented to mitigate dissatisfaction over manoeuvre damage, land claims and other issues. It also had the ability to assess village needs, then initiate precisely targeted, quick, low-level projects to

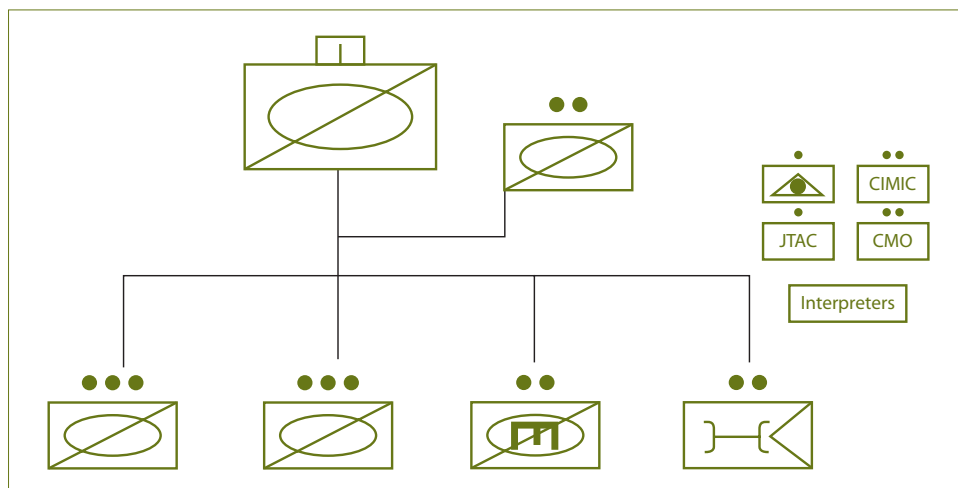


Figure 2. B Squadron, The Royal Canadian Dragoons, after deployment as the Task Force 3-09 Battle Group Reconnaissance Squadron as of September 2009.

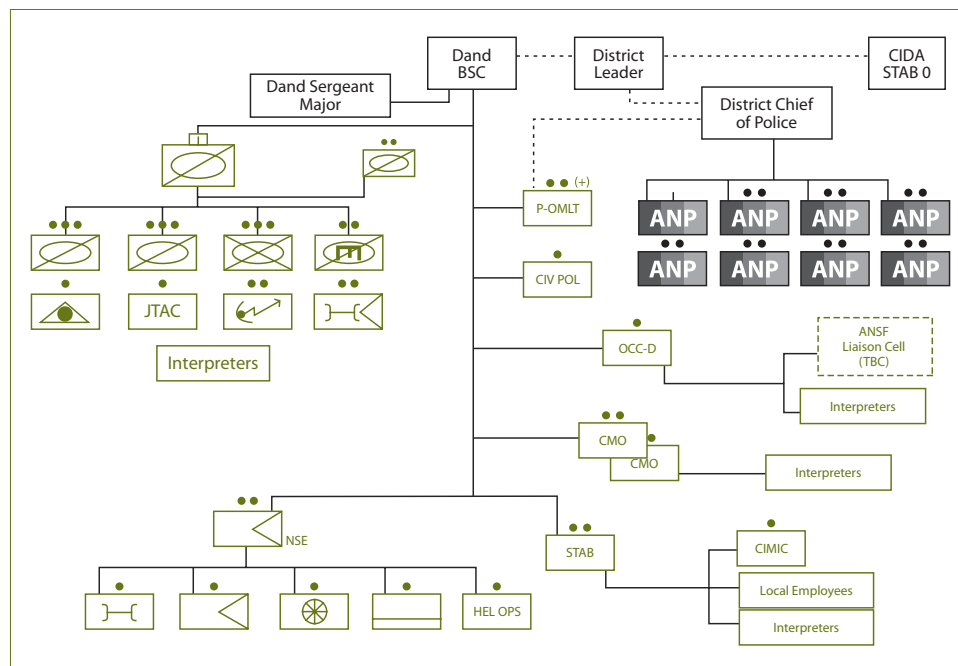


Figure 3. B Squadron, The Royal Canadian Dragoons, after augmentation and establishment as the Dand District Combat Team, December 2009. While the District Leader, Afghan National Police and CIDA Stabilisation Officer were not subordinate to the BSC, they are included with dotted lines reflecting their partnered status.

resolve minor grievances and provide limited employment. The Police Operational Mentor Liaison Team (P-OMLT) focused on training, mentoring and developing the individual and collective skills of the district's Afghan National Police (ANP) detachment, from basic weapons handling, to scene management, to first aid, to search techniques, to conducting basic investigations and interacting with the public as the professional face and primary constabulary apparatus of the Afghan government. The P-OMLT, which contained a civilian police officer from a Canadian municipal police force, also acted as the BSC's primary link to and liaison with the ANP command structure. P-OMLT facilitated partnered planning and operations and ensured a consistent approach and style of interaction between the ANP and the Combat Team. The Combat Team's civilian Stabilisation Officer and the

During the American counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam, Bernard Fall observed, 'If it works, it is obsolete.'

OCC-D(D) worked closely with the District Leader and his staff. They worked together to professionalise legitimate local government officials to contribute to ongoing stability, governance, reconstruction and development efforts, synchronising them with both ANP and ISAF security activities. This organisation ensured that every facet of counterinsurgency efforts in the district, from kinetic operations to construction projects, from village meetings to ANSF activities, was synchronised. Every Combat Team element knew what every other element was doing, which enabled the BSC to set priorities, resolve conflicting demands quickly, maintain flexibility and keep pressure on the insurgents through a full spectrum of synchronised effects.

LESSONS CAPTURED AND APPLIED

During the American counterinsurgency campaign in Vietnam, Bernard Fall observed, 'If it works, it is obsolete.'¹⁸ Adaptability is a necessity. In order to maintain the tactical initiative, confuse enemy observation, and avoid pattern-setting and complacency in planning and operations, the Combat Team captured lessons through after-action reviews, both Canadian-only and partnered with ANSF, throughout its tenure. Throughout its deployment, the Combat Team noted the following eleven consistent and critical principles which proved their worth through every operation, every evolution, every interaction and every change in situation. All of the events described below occurred in Kandahar Province's Dand district.

1. PARTNERING IS CRITICAL

Partnering with the ANSF is the most effective way to operate because of the effects it achieves, not just because it is ordered from higher.¹⁹ Partnering may sound like a theoretical construct that is impossible to execute in real life, but it actually is workable. Some ANSF elements may not perform the same way their ISAF counterparts do; sometimes they do not meet timings, may have different hygiene standards, may not plan operations in as much detail, and may have limited combat service support capability than their ISAF counterparts. Despite these differences, the effects of partnered operations outweighed the challenges they presented, had a much more significant effect on the population, and achieved far better results than unpartnered operations. ANSF personnel generally know and understand the population and its dynamics far better than their ISAF counterparts ever could, can often tell when they are being lied to, can use force when and where required, can avoid being browbeaten by village elders and can often tell if there are foreigners in a village. They are Muslims, are not as restricted as ISAF in searching compounds,²⁰ do not offend the locals by their presence in villages and compounds, and are, for the most part, extremely brave.

A reasonably-planned partnered operation actually leads to better effects on the ground than a perfectly planned and executed unpartnered one and keeps more

combat power intact to fight another day. In the fall of 2009, an ANSF element partnered with B Squadron conducted patrols in and around a contentious village. Partnered patrolling caused local insurgents significant consternation and positively influenced the population so well that the insurgent leadership panicked. An information source indicated that a local insurgent commander had harangued his fighters to immediately emplace IEDs in the road and on the tracks where the ANSF element had been patrolling. Despite protest from insurgents on the receiving end of the order, the local commander ordered his fighters to 'do something immediately'. That evening, IED emplacements brazenly attempted to position a number of devices on tracks under overwatch and were subsequently destroyed. The partnered nature of the operation overwhelmed the insurgents' command and control, which caused a local insurgent commander to panic and needlessly sacrifice his fighters.

Fully partnering and living with ANSF eases the transition to living amongst the population and may allow soldiers to live in close proximity to culturally significant locations. A close presence will often prevent insurgents from using mosques, shrines, schools or other emotive locations as meeting places, recruiting or messaging locations. Locals in villages where both ANSF and ISAF live together are less afraid to approach positions, and are more willing to offer information and discuss security concerns than in locations without a partnered presence. In one small village, a combined ISAF/ANSF position located next to a prominent local shrine is part and parcel of the village's makeup. Residents are extremely comfortable with both soldiers and police, and remark favourably on partnered patrolling, vehicle check points and the presence of a security force close to their shrine.

Fully partnering and
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2. THE WHOLE-OF-GOVERNMENT APPROACH – A WINNING COMBINATION

Whole-of-government partners, such as civilian police officers and Canadian International Development Agency Stabilisation Officers, offer capabilities that both counterbalance and complement those inherent in the military force:

- a. Non-military thinking and problem resolution styles that can frequently help the BSC resolve challenges in dealing with Afghan government officials.
- b. Expertise and credibility that soldiers often lack in the governance, reconstruction and development spectrums when dealing with local governments, non-governmental organisations, relief and aid organisations.
- c. Understanding of and access to operational and strategic-level government-sponsored programs and larger governmental development initiatives.

- d. The ability to mentor, shape, teach and develop the capacity of the ANSF and government bodies in ways that uniformed personnel cannot.
- e. A civilian face of leadership and guidance to represent the BSC at governance and development-oriented fora such as district development assemblies, administrative shuras, education shuras and in mentoring sessions with district and other Afghan officials.
- f. A less-threatening option than uniformed personnel in conducting meetings, liaison and interaction with locals, leaving the BSC room to broaden the approach to resolving challenges by introducing uniformed personnel into a situation as required. In Dand, the CIDA Stabilisation Officer worked, on a daily basis, very closely with Afghan district government staff to improve governance and accountability. This cooperative civilian-led approach tangibly demonstrated that despite a significant military presence, security, governance, reconstruction and development activities were and must continue to be conducted in accordance with directives from the legitimate Afghan government, not foreign military officers.
- g. Many civilian experts do not deploy on a six-month rotation cycle as Canadian military personnel deployed in forward locations do. In many cases, they represent long term commitment and organisational stability to locals and district staff. They often offer the BSC a vault of institutional memory that can be called upon to outline the history of current relationships and ongoing programs that a new BSC may be unaware of after taking responsibility for an area.

3. VALUE OF THE BATTLESPACE COMMANDER CONCEPT – UNITY OF COMMAND IS ESSENTIAL

Prior to the BSC concept's initiation, there were, in some areas, multiple sub-units operating in the same villages and interacting with the same villagers, but pursuing different mandates. At times, certain villages would be patrolled by multiple disparate Task Force Kandahar elements on the same day, while others were missed completely, lessening the effect of deterrent patrolling.²¹ Information

gathering was fragmented as different elements reported information through separate reporting chains, limiting lateral commander awareness. Patrols were unable to effectively address queries from locals about needs or grievances addressed in project proposals by other Task Force Kandahar units, drawing capability and credibility into question in the eyes of local leaders. This gap in understanding created

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difficulties in the aftermath of kinetic operations and during the course of normal patrolling, often confusing and infuriating village leaders when they attempted to ask questions or make complaints. Once the BSC concept was implemented, kinetic operations, patrolling, projects, messaging, meetings and ANSF interactions were all tightly synchronised and more effectively targeted. Soldiers and civilians on patrols, attending meetings and interacting with the population gathered information, which the Combat Team headquarters analysed, then acted upon quickly, using the full spectrum of battle and war-winning effects. One commander remained responsible and accountable for effects on the population across the spectrum from kinetic events to influence operations. The BSC concept makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

4. THE COMBAT TEAM IS THE BUILDING BLOCK

The breadth of skills and the dedicated command and control element that the doctrinal combat team²² brings is essential in conducting operations across a broad spectrum of situations. While influencing the population and supporting the government is critical, the provision of assistance, conducting meetings, targeting humanitarian assistance, establishing development projects and conducting negotiations with local leaders can only accomplish so much; in some instances, the only way to protect the population and maintain force protection is to kill or capture insurgents. As it is based upon an existing combat arms sub-unit, a combat team maintains its core skill of defeating the enemy through kinetic action, whether by closing with and destroying the enemy, or defeating it through firepower and the aggressive use of battlefield mobility. Combat teams also contain a headquarters that is well established and practiced in regrouping with attachments and enablers without requiring significant reorganisation. The counterinsurgency combat team must have additional skills and enablers over and above those found in the traditional combat team grouping in order to best achieve a mix of effects, as Figure 3 identifies. Throughout deployment, the author grouped the Dand District Combat Team's elements under two general classifications based on the effects they achieved:

a. Battle Winners. This category comprises most of the traditional combat team grouping of armour, infantry, engineers, artillery and, in the case of the Dand District Combat Team, armoured reconnaissance forces. The battle winners are exceptionally capable of destroying the enemy and achieving kinetic effects on the ground through fire and manoeuvre. A flexible, agile and responsive grouping, it has proven

Every plan must include and synchronise the actions of both the Battle Winners and War Winners...

effective in combat, offering a robust spectrum of effects within the span of control of a sub-unit headquarters. The Battle Winning side of the combat team is essential to providing the necessary security, conducting kinetic operations such as clearing villages, seizing key terrain or destroying insurgent elements, while remaining capable of supporting non-kinetic operations such as village surveys or humanitarian aid distribution. The Battle Winners ensure that the combat team is a hard target, is resistant to enemy action and is capable of rapidly applying force, up to and including lethal force, anywhere in the battlespace.

b. War Winners. This category comprises those elements that provide ‘softer’ effects in the battlespace and are focused on achieving longer-term changes by connecting with and influencing the population more than the traditional Battle Winners can. In the Afghan context, they are the enablers that develop ANSF capabilities, build stability and governance, and support reconstruction and development, which further serve to separate insurgents from the people through actions and positive effects that the insurgents cannot bring. The Dand District Combat Team’s War Winners included its CMO team, CIMIC elements, P-OMLT, the CIDA Stabilisation Officer and the OCC-D.

5. ALWAYS KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND USE THE FULL TEAM

Every plan must include and synchronise the actions of both the Battle Winners and War Winners and the effects they have on the population prior to, during and following any operation. For example, in preparation for a partnered ANP/ISAF cordon and search operation, battle procedure and preliminary moves saw the P-OMLT conduct a ten-day training program to bolster ANP capacity and prepare patrolmen to conduct building searches. Had this training not been synchronised with the operation, ANP soldiers would not have been properly prepared to conduct their mission. Their training was a success and the ANP successfully executed thorough, professional and effective searches throughout the initial operation and successive iterations in different villages. During the cordon and search, CIMIC operators followed immediately behind the partnered lead search teams to complete village surveys, gather critical local information from the population, carry out information operations messaging, locate key leaders to set the conditions for future meetings known as Key Leader Engagements, and identify potential quick impact projects to further influence and support the population.

After deliberate operations, follow up ANP/ISAF partnered patrols comprised of both Battle and War Winners maintained presence in and attention towards villages affected by the operation. In so doing, they were able to confirm information, gauge changing local attitudes, target non-kinetic effects, or aid and continue to positively influence the population. This technique was used successfully in several cordon and search operations; over the course of several months, it paid dividends in every

instance. Relations between ISAF/ANSF patrols, gauged by patrol interactions with village residents, improved and several key villages that had previously been overtly hostile and suspected of supporting insurgents took a neutral stance, opening the door for future ISAF/ANSF influence. Without the potential for kinetic operations and the overt physical security provided by the Battle Winners, the War Winners would be unable to act, while insurgents would have a free hand to intimidate the population and win undecided residents to their cause. However, the long-term tangible daily benefits that the War Winners provide make the insurgency unattractive and counter the insurgency's claims that the government cannot care for the population. To be most effective, BSCs must know and understand how all attachments and enablers operate, what they can achieve, plan for and ensure their employment in each and every operation.

6. LIVING AMONGST THE POPULATION MUST BE TAILORED – THERE IS NO BLANKET SOLUTION

The concept of living amongst the population, close to villages in small forward positions²³ rather than in massive fortified encampments in larger cities, is viable and has demonstrated excellent results. During a village security survey conducted in March 2010, one village leader, known as a Malik,²⁴ noted that 'for 2 years, ISAF sat in the Kandahar Airfield and only came here sometimes to fight and never talked to anyone. Now, we see you living here with us and it is better for everyone.'²⁵

Living amongst the population increases both the population's physical security and, more importantly, its perception of its own security, while denying insurgents a free hand to threaten or otherwise negatively influence the population. However, living amongst the population is a concept that must be applied differently in every different village, enclave

and community. It cannot be applied 'top down', forced upon locals, or implemented in a blanket or cookie cutter fashion. Much as the enemy has a vote in any tactical plan, the population has a vote when a military force attempts to live amongst it. The following examples outline some challenges, successes and ways forward found in living amongst the population:

a. Finding real power-brokers takes time and patience. Different elders, families or family clusters within a single village will have widely varying opinions of the counterinsurgents' efforts and may hold their opinions very closely, exposing them only after time. Showing early support or favour to the most outspoken or

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overtly welcoming of the villagers may isolate those who actually wield power and influence or represent the majority of the population. Quite often after a force enters a new village, a number of locals will quickly offer themselves up as village representatives, seeking to curry favour and ingratiate themselves as a means to discrediting or achieving vengeance against those who are their historic, family or tribal opponents, those who owe them money or are in contention in land claim or water access disputes. Moving too quickly to take up residence in or in close proximity to a village on the assurances of only one representative can, in the long term, work counter to the desired effects and actually isolate counterinsurgent forces from the villagers they seek to influence.

b. How to live amongst the population? It is different every time. The definition of 'living amongst the population' will vary from village to village. Some villages will feel comfortable and secure with soldiers occupying a compound, school or other facility in the village proper or a short distance away. Others will consider a close presence an affront and either ask the military force to leave or become silent, sullen, fearful and uncooperative. At worst, a military presence too close may make them uncomfortable or fearful enough to flee. Obviously villagers fleeing a location once a force arrives telegraphs friendly force movements to enemy observers, is counter to the strategy of connecting with the population, and gives the insurgents a ready grievance to exploit. In 2009, ISAF elements occupied a school on the outskirts of a village that was less than 200 metres from the nearest inhabited compound. The village's residents had little complaint. A similar position was established in the vicinity of two villages in a different area of the same district, using a series of abandoned compounds more than 800 metres from the nearest inhabited residence. When surveying villagers in an attempt to find a new location closer to either village, the residents of both villages indicated that they would be frightened of soldiers living closer to them and asked that the soldiers remain in their current location. Villagers insisted that they felt very safe with soldiers patrolling in and around the villages during the day and at night and living within sight of, but not too close to, their villages.

At worst, a military presence too close may make them uncomfortable or fearful enough to flee.

c. Finding balance – too many tasks, not enough people. There will always be more villages to secure than forces available to secure them. While it may not be possible to permanently place soldiers in every village, non-standard patrolling techniques can mitigate this factor for forces working to secure a large area with scarce personnel and resources. Leaguering vehicles in proximity to isolated villages for two to three days and conducting extended dismounted patrols into the villages

from leaguers has proven effective in improving the perception of security without intimidating residents or damaging property by driving armoured vehicles through their villages. As patrols revisited remote village clusters during successive operations, residents grew more at ease with continued soldier presence; in some cases, residents approached patrols and offered compounds or fields closer to the villages for patrols to use temporarily. By working with the existing village leadership, whether by seeking local advice or listening to Malik or village elders' recommendations, patrols can select locations that provide a security presence while avoiding offending or threatening the village's residents. This technique gives local residents some ownership of their own security and creates the perception that security is a cooperative effort between the people and the government, not something forced on the village by outsiders. More importantly, it respects traditional tribal and village governance structures, empowering village elders²⁶ and demonstrating that ISAF does not wish to destroy or change the traditional way of life, an allegation often made by insurgent groups seeking to discredit ISAF/ANSF efforts.

7. BATTLE PROCEDURE, WAR GAMES AND REHEARSALS ARE CRITICAL

Kinetic operations are never conducted without proper battle procedures, wargaming and rehearsals whenever possible and followed up by after action reviews.²⁷ Jirgas, shuras, tribal meetings and interactions with local officials must be planned and executed with the same rigour. Jirgas are the Afghan traditional ruling body, a council of adult males that comes to decision by consensus. Jirgas are only ever called by Afghan leaders; even if invited to observe or speak, foreigners are never part of a jirga in any decision-making capacity.²⁸ Shuras are a traditional Islamic means of community participation in decision-making, similar to a jirga, but less formalised and used for different functions.²⁹

Afghan tribal leaders, village elders and local officials,³⁰ accustomed to gaining power and influence through negotiation and building consensus through the shura and jirga system, are practiced manoeuvrists that will seek to exploit any and every opportunity to gain concessions, promise or favour in any interaction. Some of them believe that interactions with ISAF are a zero-sum game; for them to look powerful and competent, they must make others, usually ISAF, look bad. In order to counteract this tactic, those participating in shuras, meetings or other gatherings must rely on proven battle procedure and planning techniques. Principal interactors must conduct a thorough estimate of the situation to include history of the participants, their grievances, their relationships and history with

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other participants. After understanding the dynamic and the history of the attendees, the event must be wargamed, with all participants identifying lines of discussion, delegating discussion issues, reviewing critical messaging points, and exploring discussion tactics that participants may undertake or issues that they may attempt to manoeuvre the discussion towards. Exit strategies, conversational diversion and 'do not discuss' issues must be covered in a group, focused on 'if-then' action/reaction/counteraction comparisons. Without planning, rehearsing and wargaming, non-Afghan participants run the danger of losing credibility or committing to unsustainable courses of action. Examples of kinetic-type planning for non-kinetic operations achieving success are as follows:

a. Meetings are Tactical Events – Preparation is Key. In February 2010, heavy rains caused extensive flood damage to a number of fields and compounds. The Afghanistan government formally asked ISAF to support ANSF flood relief efforts, but requested that ISAF allow ANSF to plan and execute these efforts without providing assistance unless asked. The morning after the rainstorm, the District Leader demanded an immediate meeting with the BSC³¹ and the district Chief of Police. Despite the urgency of the situation, the BSC and his key staff paused and conducted a quick planning session. Based on historical interactions and knowledge, they assessed that the District Leader would attempt to castigate ISAF in front of the district staff and a collection of notable village elders for not supporting the population with flood relief or supplies.

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During the subsequent meeting, after the formalities and pleasantries of greeting, the BSC opened the discussion with a generous statement of support for ANSF efforts and a selection of facts and figures concerning ANSF aid efforts to date, coupled with a description of efforts taken by ISAF soldiers in the district to support the Afghan government in a second-tier fashion. The District Leader was forced to publicly acknowledge that, like the BSC, his own plans and personal feelings on assistance were subordinate to the Provincial Governor's orders and higher level plans, and that it was indeed excellent to see Afghan forces leading the efforts to provide for Afghan needs. The District Leader also acknowledged the assistance that the BSC's soldiers had provided the ANP in the aftermath of the flooding.³²

The BSC further leveraged the discussion to demonstrate the effectiveness of the newly-created OCC-D, which included providing him and the District Leader up-to-date and accurate information about district happenings and security. At the close of the nearly two-hour meeting, the District Leader had been unable to blame ISAF for the flood or inadequate assistance to the population in front of the elders

or district staff. The District Leader was also forced to acknowledge that working in partnership offered benefit to the district's people and to pledge further cooperation. Had the interaction not been carefully wargamed, the outcome could have been markedly different and the elders negatively influenced, which would have harmed future ISAF credibility in the district. In this instance, rigorous preparation, awareness of potential grievances, identification and manoeuvre to avoid inflammatory topics and sticking points allowed for a messaging victory.

b. Consider, then Wargame Mixed Courses of Action. A private security company owned and operated by the District Leader's brother had been notable throughout the district for conducting questionable business practices. The company was not properly registered with Afghan authorities and its members were frequently found to be in violation of Afghan law by not wearing uniforms or carrying proper identification cards while carrying arms. Locals and ISAF contractors frequently complained that this company's agents extorted money from road traffic at illegal vehicle checkpoints. As the District Leader was resistant to any suggestion of malfeasance by his brother, he was unwilling to permit the ANP to investigate the matter or take any actions to prevent questionable practices.

Experience from other Task Force Kandahar units in similar situations identified that attempting to resolve the situation by taking a hard line with the owner and threatening his business with closure or the loss of ISAF-sponsored project security contracts produced little success. The District Leader refused to support ISAF with any action other than platitudes such as 'all companies should obey the law' and 'my brother is the only one I can trust'; eventually the situation became a friction point hampering District Leader/ISAF cooperation. In order to resolve the situation, the BSC and his staff surveyed the collective knowledge, skills and experience of the Combat Team's leaders, particularly the CIDA Stabilisation Officer's invaluable historical knowledge of the situation throughout the past year. The BSC and staff collectively wargamed through several courses of action and determined that an indirect influence operation could achieve success where direct pressure, threats and a hard line had failed.

In the course of meetings and discussions both with the District Leader and the company's owner, the BSC and his staff conducted messaging emphasising the fact that the owner was a respected businessman in the community, who set the example for others to follow and who was relied upon by his brother, a fair and just District

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Leader, so would obviously seek to become properly registered. ISAF/ANP patrols quickly investigated allegations of extortion and reported their results in writing to the company's owner for resolution with the message that 'we are sure your company would never do this to the District Leader's people, because ISAF knows that the people respect you and you too are working to build security'. Any illegal weapons carriage by company agents resulted in immediate confiscation, with written receipts and a letter provided both to the District Leader and the owner identifying the circumstances of the confiscation. The campaign was successful—after a month of consistent messaging and measured, documented action, weapons confiscation events dropped to marginal levels. Extortion complaints dropped to zero and the company's owner sought proper accreditation after being influenced by his brother, the District Leader, to do so. Tactical actions to verify local grievances caused by the company's actions through patrolling and interaction, synchronised with influence actions using meetings as manoeuvre and messaging as fire, executed consistently over time, achieved success where other, more direct but single-spectrum short-term plans had failed.

8. TACTICAL PATIENCE – THE '48 HOUR RULE'

In conventional warfare, when conducting high-tempo, synchronised kinetic operations, pausing instead of taking quick and decisive action may be fatal. When dealing with Afghan village elders, tribal leaders and government officials, resisting the impulse to act quickly and pausing to let situations develop may in fact be the best course of action.³³ In many cases, Afghans expect and count on military leaders to try and take quick, decisive action to resolve frictions, conflicts or unpleasant situations as quickly as possible, whether on their own initiative or after being pushed by their superiors. They are well aware that problem solving and speed of response is part and parcel of Western military culture. Pausing may often turn the initiative in a negotiation or conflict between ISAF elements and Afghan officials back to ISAF's advantage, as the following examples demonstrate:

- a. On one occasion, in an attempt to manoeuvre the BSC into a hasty reaction and force him into a position of relational weakness, the District Leader one day refused to occupy his office at the District Centre. With great public show, stating that he was displeased with access control and security measures at the District Centre, the District Leader and his staff took up temporary residence in a nearby unoccupied medical office. He quickly passed word to provincial-level officials

...when conducting high-tempo, synchronised kinetic operations, pausing instead of taking quick and decisive action may be fatal.

that the BSC was preventing him from consulting with the district's residents and keeping him from occupying his own District Centre. Rather than moving quickly to appease the District Leader, offer entreaties to him to return to his office, or accommodate the District Leader by reducing the facility's partnered security posture—thus endangering his own and the facility's ANP soldiers—the BSC ordered that business proceed as usual and no special attention be paid. When questioned, the BSC assured his own staff and his higher headquarters, which was understandably anxious and being queried from its own higher headquarters, that the situation would be resolved within 48 hours. Within 24 hours, the District Leader's staff, ANP representatives and the local National Directorate of Security agent met and, with the assistance of the BSC's staff, spent several hours devising and reviewing an Afghan-led, collaborative security plan for the facility that was amenable to all participants, the District Chief of Police and the District Leader. Within 48 hours, the District Leader had approved the new security plan, returned quietly to his office and made no mention of his previous exodus. The tactical pause had achieved significant effect and tangibly demonstrated BSC resolve in the face of District Leader threats. The BSC's actions allowed the District Leader to save face by successfully negotiating a resolution to his grievances and demonstrated the BSC's support to, respect and consideration for the District Leader and his wishes. It was a tangible and public demonstration of the collective will for ISAF and Afghan government officials to cooperate, despite the often conflicting demands for both security and access to the population that partnered facilities create.³⁴

- b. In front of a collection of tribal elders, the District Leader remonstrated that 'Canadians did nothing for the people', then he refused to grant certain villagers any projects and loudly lambasted a member of the BSC's staff. Rather than rushing back to the District Leader with facts and figures to prove him wrong, or take umbrage at the allegations, the staff officer executed a tactical pause, politely concluded the meeting and ensured he had no further interaction with the District Leader for the remainder of the day. The next day, the District Leader cordially invited the same officer to sit with him, treated him to chai,³⁵ assured him that he was pleased with the number and type of ongoing projects and apologised profusely for his poor manners. Pausing and refusing to rise to provocation demonstrated that the BSC staff was not subordinate to the District Leader and paved the way for a more cooperative working relationship for the remainder of the rotation.

... refusing to rise to
provocation demonstrated
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subordinate to the District
Leader...

- c. During a shura with a group of village elders, the District Leader became agitated and indicated that Canadians had insulted him by searching his private security detail, which had attempted to gain entry to the District Centre in an improperly-marked vehicle earlier that day. He then went on to identify to the elders that Canadians ‘never paid damage claims,’ did not conduct operations with the ANP, never provided projects or employment to the district’s villagers and that working under such conditions was ‘offensive to his religion.’ He then explained that he was going to resign his position as District Leader and left his office. During the next several days, during which even the District Leader’s own staff were unable to reach him, the BSC and his staff continued operations as normal, neither making reference to the District Leader nor inquiring about him to his staff. The District Leader returned to his office with the excuse that the provincial governor had refused his resignation and returned quietly to work, subdued and cooperative. The BSC and his staff’s actions demonstrated that while the District Leader was an important man, governance and improving the lot of the people could and would continue without him. In this and several other interactions, tactical patience and a measured approach to provocation maintained the BSC’s freedom of action and prevented him from becoming subordinated to the District Leader’s whims in a reactionary posture.

9. LISTEN, DON’T TELL

When interacting with Afghans, particularly when attempting to institute change, listening often pays better dividends than talking. When conducting an influence operation to set the conditions for police recruiting and the establishment of new police stations in the district, the BSC met with a series of village leaders, elders and tribal leaders. During each and every interaction, he listened to what the Afghan people had to say, asking their opinion of security activities and soliciting their opinions on police checkpoints and patrols paid dividends. Counterinsurgency experts identify that ‘re-empowering the village councils of elders and restoring their community leadership is the only way’³⁶ to counter religious leaders and others who have been ‘radicalised by the Taliban.’ The local leaders were, in every instance, flattered to be asked their advice vice being ‘told by foreigners what was going to happen.’³⁷ Listening instead of telling made measureable gains in maintaining an atmosphere of trust and cooperation between local leaders and ISAF/ANSF elements and further served to support and legitimise traditional village governance and leadership.

Listening instead of telling made measureable gains in maintaining an atmosphere of trust and cooperation...

10. EVERY SOLDIER IS A MENTOR – LEARNING IS A TWO-WAY STREET

When occupying joint ISAF/ANSF tactical positions, conducting partnered patrolling or deliberate operations, every soldier acts as a mentor, whether intentionally or not. In partnered facilities, the Dand Combat Team's soldiers conducted daily garbage sweeps and took collective efforts to maintain cleanliness. After a time, the young, untrained ANP patrolmen who also occupied the facility were seen picking up garbage, disposing of it properly and keeping their own positions in better repair. During partnered vehicle checkpoints, ANP vehicle search teams working in conjunction with ISAF soldiers demonstrated a high level of consistency and attention to detail when searching vehicles. During security patrols, ANP patrolmen often took their lead on interactions with locals from their Canadian counterparts. Patrols which interacted frequently with locals during patrols were emulated. In many cases, the actions, attitudes and activities undertaken by Canadian soldiers were emulated by their partnered ANSF, demonstrating that in a partnering-focused atmosphere, every soldier, whether overtly or inadvertently, is a mentor and can significantly influence the attitude and performance of indigenous forces.

While ISAF soldiers often mentor their ANSF counterparts, influence and mentoring can often work both ways. During his tenure as the Dand District Combat Team commander, the author was fortunate enough to work closely with the District Chief of Police, a twenty-five year veteran of Afghan policing and survivor of multiple assassination attempts. Whether planning partnered operations, interacting with local leaders or conducting joint training, his local knowledge and advice was invaluable. During a partnered cordon and search operation in February 2010, villagers received word that a woman from the village being searched had died in Kandahar City and the village began preparing for a funeral. Based on the Chief's advice, the search was stopped³⁸ and the partnered force withdrew to a respectful distance to continue less-unobtrusive surveillance. The author had been unaware of the impact of the woman's death; continuing the search would have demonstrated disrespect, validating insurgent claims that ISAF and ANSF are disrespectful of traditional ways and Islam.

Personal liaison and relationship building between allies is critical to ensuring comprehension, synchronising actions and passing information.

11. PERSONAL INTERACTION IS CRITICAL

While digital communications make the transfer of large amounts of data simple, electronic means cannot transmit the intangibles of relationship, attitude, intent

and feeling. Further, flanking military units, particularly those from other nations, may not be able to connect digitally due to equipment constraints. Personal liaison and relationship building between allies is critical to ensuring comprehension, synchronising actions and passing information. Whether interacting with ANSF, governmental officials or flanking units, personal liaison always proved more effective and often faster than attempting to convey critical information, plan or synchronise operations by any electronic means.

CONCLUSION – CONSIDER ‘A’ WAR, NOT JUST ‘THIS’ WAR

Debate continues in offices, at mess tables, on hangar floors and in schools throughout Canada’s army on the relative merits of orienting training and efforts to focus on preparing for the present counterinsurgency war at the expense of mechanised, high-intensity unit and formation-level warfighting skills. Counterinsurgency, particularly as practiced in the limited scope of one of many Afghan districts, may not define future Army operations; however, failing to recognise, understand and apply lessons hard-won through recent experience would be short-sighted. While the 1990s have been described popularly as a ‘decade of darkness’, characterised by military deployments to support United Nations efforts in a number of failed states, 1990s-era Balkan experience taught valuable practical lessons concerning convoy escorts,³⁹ VIP security, military negotiation techniques, house clearing,⁴⁰ gathering human information and working with non-military partners that have been and continue to be successfully applied in Afghanistan. Similarly, lessons from Afghanistan should be identified, used, refined and then, when and where possible, applied, no matter the shape or nature of future conflicts. The blanket application of Afghan experience will not solve every new problem. However, understanding and applying lessons from the current conflict may help save soldiers’ lives and resolve future challenges.

Many of counterinsurgency’s lessons—involving interacting with and respecting local leaders, and influencing and providing security to the population—can be directly applied during domestic operations, where soldiers will have to influence and support their fellow Canadians. In future wars, even high intensity mechanised conflicts, there may be times when firepower and manoeuvre will not solve every problem, such as in the aftermath of a successful kinetic operation in an area where the local population has been unable to flee. A force that occupies terrain for any length of time will likely cause grievances amongst the local population, which will have to be resolved lest they provide subversive elements the opportunity to negatively motivate and influence the population. In a contiguous, linear battlespace with defined forward and rear areas, soldiers will likely have to secure their lines of communication, establish remote positions, influence a local population, contend with displaced persons or refugees, and work with allied forces of

varying capabilities. Units will have to maintain force protection through awareness, synchronised fires, manoeuvre, influence, information operations and myriad other effects across a broad spectrum. In future stability operations or counterinsurgency operations in countries other than Afghanistan, soldiers may need to accomplish tasks working in and through *ad hoc* organisations not found in any doctrine manual, in uncertain and potentially lethal situations. All of these challenges have been met in Afghanistan.

Despite the constant flux and evolution of operations in southern Kandahar Province in 2009–10, the eleven lessons identified above ran through B Squadron's Afghan deployment as a constant thread. While operations in other theatres and in future conflicts will present a host of tactical, enemy, environmental and human challenges that differ from those found in Afghanistan, these 'COINs in the Dust' form a framework of principles, proven in operations, that future generations of soldiers may well find useful in whatever conflict they may face.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Many Canadian doctrinal references, valid at the time of the experiences outlined in this article, support this assessment of the conventional threat and seek to guide actions in response that will defeat them:
B-GL-300-002/FP-000 - Land Force Tactical Doctrine, Vol. 2, Department of National Defence, Canada, 1997, p. 100.
B-GL-300-001/FP-000 - Conduct of Land Operations - Operational Level Doctrine for the Canadian Army (English), Department of National Defence, Canada, 1998, p. 153.
B-GL-300-007/FP-001 - Firepower, Department of National Defence, Canada, 1999, p. 132.
- 2 David Kilcullen, 'Counter-Insurgency Redux', *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 4, Winter 2006–07, p. 120.
- 3 Thomas Johnson, quoted in Olivia Ward, '“Model” District no Safe Haven', *The Toronto Star*, 1 January 2010, <<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/afghanmission/article/744846---model-district-no-safe-haven>> accessed 5 September 2010, offers analysis of 'night letters', a Taliban intimidation tactic, being used in Dand District. Night letters are written texts, often interspersed with Koranic verse, that exhort locals not to support the Afghan government or ISAF and may threaten reprisals. They are normally posted on significant buildings such as mosques, shrines or village leaders' residences and serve to demonstrate the Taliban's reach and ability to watch villages and maintain freedom of manoeuvre and action.
- 4 David Kilcullen, '“Twenty-Eight Articles”: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, Vol. 86, No. 3, May 2006, p. 104, <<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=mth&AN=21388378&site=ehost-live>>.

- 5 Dan Green, 'The Taliban's Political Program', *Armed Forces Journal*, 2009, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2009/11/4294842/>> accessed 5 September 2010.
- 6 Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, 'Learning About Counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, March–April 2007, p. 5.
- 7 As outlined in detail in Kalev Sepp, 'Best Practices in Counterinsurgency', *Military Review*, May–June 2005, p. 9, <<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/milreview/sepp.pdf>> accessed 25 July 2010.
- 8 General David H Petraeus, *COMISAF COIN Guidance 1 August 2010*, International Security Assistance Force, Headquarters, Kabul, 2010, p. 2.
- 9 Kilcullen, '“Twenty-Eight Articles”: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency', p. 103.
- 10 *Analyzing the Taliban Code of Conduct: Reinventing the Layeha, Understanding Afghan Culture* Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 6 August 2009, p. 10, offers the text and an analysis of the 2009 *Layeha*, or Taliban code of conduct. Guideline #59 states: 'The Mujahedeen must have a good relationship with all the tribal community and with the local people, so they are always welcome and are able to get help from the local people.' A note from Mullah Omar written on the back page directs fighters to 'Keep good relationships with your friends and the local people, and do not let the enemy divide/separate you.'
- 11 Task Force Kandahar 3-09 was comprised of a provincial reconstruction team, a battle group, a national support element, a task force headquarters and a host of smaller elements, many of which operated in the same terrain, but with different mandates.
- 12 The Army's collective experience, captured in Army lessons learned documents, demonstrated through changes to pre-deployment training at the Canadian Manoeuvre Training Centre, a reduction in violence in Task Force Kandahar-controlled areas and increases in freedom of movement/freedom of action in these same areas all support this statement.
- 13 CJ Radin, 'Afghan Security Forces Order of Battle (OOB)', Public Multimedia Incorporated, <<http://www.longwarjournal.org/oob/afghanistan/index.php>> accessed 28 August 2010, contains a comprehensive description of ANSF organisation, manning, training, budgets and development, current as of 15 April 2010. In common terms, ANSF generally refers to the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police, while smaller police elements such the Criminal Investigation Division, Afghan Border Police and Afghan National Civil Order Police also interact with ISAF elements. Not mentioned in the reference is the National Directorate of Security, an internal security and intelligence gathering body reporting to the Ministry of the Interior with wide powers of arrest and detention. National Directorate of Security methods have been called into question as indicated in Gil Shochat, 'Tories Alerted to Afghan Secret Police Legal "Risk"', Canadian Broadcasting Corporation News, <<http://www.cbc.ca/politics/story/2010/04/06/afghan-detainee-transfers.html>> accessed 7 September 2010.

- In the Dand district, one CID officer and one National Directorate of Security detachment were co-located with the ANP in the District Centre compound.
- 14 As indicated during a series of briefings from the commanding officer and key staff of the Kandahar Operational Coordination Centre – Provincial (OCC-P(K)) to Operational Coordination Centre – District (OCC-D) commanders, January 2010. At time of writing, the reference was not available from any open source or online repositories; this information was taken from the author's personal notes.
 - 15 Petty Officer Paul Dillard, 'Afghans Coordinate for Safe&Free Election', *The Enduring Ledger*, August 2009, <<http://waronterrornews.typepad.com/home/2009/08/afg-occs-take-shape-in-time-for-elections.html>> accessed 25 July 2010; 'Afghan Command Center in the Service of the People', <<http://www.sada-e-azadi.net/Joomla/index.php/en/afghanistan/north/907-afghan-command-center-in-the-service-of-the-people>> accessed 28 August 2010.
 - 16 'Building Goodwill in Gereshk – Part Two', Official blog for UK military operations in Afghanistan, Ministry of Defence, United Kingdom, <<http://www.blogs.mod.uk/afghanistan/2008/07/page/2/>> accessed 28 August 2010.
 - 17 Radin, 'Afghan Security Forces Order of Battle (OOB)', p. 3.
 - 18 French Indo-China war correspondent and counterinsurgency expert Bernard Fall, quoted in Kilcullen, 'Counter-Insurgency Redux', p. 124.
 - 19 General Stanley McChrystal, *ISAF Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance*, August 2009, Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force, Kabul, 2009, pp. 5, 7 – ISAF's counterinsurgency guidance during Task Force 3-09's deployment.
 - 20 Unless in an emergency or a situation of extreme tactical necessity, ISAF forces are generally prohibited from searching compounds without being partnered with ANSF elements. Local ANSF commanders, however, may conduct compound searches as they see fit.
 - 21 Kilcullen, '“Twenty-Eight Articles”: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency', p. 106, outlines that deterrent patrolling seeks to 'flood an area with numerous small patrols working together. Each is too small to be a worthwhile target.' The Dand District Combat Team used this tactic throughout its deployment to keep enemy observers off-balance and overwhelm enemy command and control by deploying multiple concurrent patrols, varying in tempo and avoiding patterns.
 - 22 *B-GL-321-006/FP-001 - Combat Team Operations (Interim)*, Directorate of Army Doctrine 4, Department of National Defence, Canada, 12 February 2004, p. 1.
 - 23 Thomas H Johnson and M Chris Mason, 'All Counterinsurgency is Local', *The Atlantic*, October 2008, <<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/10/all-counterinsurgency-is-local/6965/>> accessed 5 September 2010.
 - 24 In Kandahar province, village leaders are known as Maliks. They are often elected by the village population or appointed by a council of elders, and are normally trusted to speak on behalf of their villages in matters of security, development, agriculture,

employment, education and most other facets of village life. Normally, formalised interactions between ISAF/ANSF and villages are conducted either through the village Malik or a selection of elders, one of whom may be the Malik, or a relative or representative of the Malik. In several villages in southern Kandahar province, the actual Maliks reside in Kandahar city and trust the day to day supervision of village affairs to an assistant or proxy. In the instance noted here, the Malik was supportive of ISAF/ANSF efforts; despite frequent death threats from Taliban agents, he continued to reside in his village.

- 25 Results of a series of security shuras conducted in villages throughout the Dand District with a view to bolstering ANP recruiting and gauging local support for ANP expansion and further police station construction. The village leader's name and village are not provided for operation security reasons, both to protect soldiers currently serving overseas, but also the village leader and his family.
- 26 *Operational Pashtunwali – Understanding Afghan Culture*, Program for Culture and Conflict Studies, Department of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, 15 June 2009, p. 8.
- 27 This practice is reinforced at every level of Army leadership training and is part and parcel of Canada's current military culture.
- 28 *Afghanistan - Cultural Awareness*, Centre for Intercultural Learning, Ottawa, 3 July 2008, pp. 64–65, 71, 122.
- 29 Ibid., p. 71.
- 30 Often these are collectively known as Key Leaders. Interactions with them are known as Key Leader Engagements (KLE).
- 31 For operation security reasons names have been omitted; however, all accounts are factual, experienced personally by the author and the information provided taken from author's notes.
- 32 Rising flood waters had washed away a police checkpoint securing a bridge and the District Chief of Police had requested assistance. Dand District Combat Team soldiers secured the bridge and concurrently established a new police checkpoint to replace one that had been destroyed.
- 33 Kilcullen, '“Twenty-Eight Articles”: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency', p. 105, supports this principle through a distillation of lessons learned from other counterinsurgencies. Operations during Task Force 3-09's deployment validated it.
- 34 Ward, '“Model” District no Safe Haven'. The Dand District Centre was attacked by two suicide bombers in March 2009, which severely damaged the main building that is the seat of Afghan governance in the Dand District. On 30 December 2010, an improvised explosive device destroyed a Canadian vehicle less than 2000 metres from the District Centre, killing five people. Throughout 2009 and 2010, Dand District government and police officials were frequently threatened and targeted by attacks on several occasions.

- 35 *Operational Pashtunwali - Understanding Afghan Culture*, p. 4, identifies that drinking chai (tea) is an important element of Afghan Pashto culture and a mark of honour and respect.
- 36 Johnson and Mason, 'All Counterinsurgency is Local'.
- 37 This complaint was repeated frequently by many different elders and leaders during a series of security shuras throughout the district.
- 38 Eric Talmadge, 'As US Starts Afghan Surge, Dug-in Canadians Plan Exit', *San Francisco Examiner*, 6 February 2010, <<http://www.sfexaminer.com/world/83714922.html>> accessed 5 September 2010. The reporter, embedded with the combat team, describes the operation in greater detail.
- 39 'Convoy Operations', *Dispatches*, Vol. 1, Army Lessons Learned Centre, <<http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/ALLC-CLRA/Downloads/dispatches-eng.asp>>
- 40 Major JH Vance, 'Zero Template House Clearing Range', *The Bulletin*, No. 2, February 1996, Army Lessons Learned Centre, <<http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/allc-clra/Downloads/bulletin/TheBulletinVol2No2eng.pdf>> accessed 8 September 2010, describes the creation of a zero-template range for building clearing based on a United Nations scenario.

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DOCTRINE TRAINING ORGANISATION

REFINING THE MILITARY APPRECIATION PROCESS FOR ADAPTIVE CAMPAIGNING

CAPTAIN DAVID L WALKER

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the Military Appreciation Process (MAP) does not support adaptation or complex problem solving, which are fundamental requirements of contemporary operations. An alternative model is presented that would preserve most existing doctrine while facilitating a shift away from linearity and prescription in favour of concurrency and description.

How often people speak of art and science as though they were two entirely different things, with no interconnection. An artist is emotional, they think, and uses only his intuition... A scientist is cold, they think, and uses only his reason... That is all wrong. The true artist is quite rational as well as imaginative and knows what he is doing... The true scientist is quite imaginative as well as rational, and sometimes leaps to solutions where reason can follow only slowly.

Isaac Asimov

INTRODUCTION

WD 5-1-4 *The Military Appreciation Process* is the ADF's primary decision-making and planning doctrine. It provides a model for all military planning and decision-making at home and on operations, and it provides the concepts and theories through which officers and soldiers develop their understanding of problem solving in general.¹

This article argues that the MAP contains a number of critical flaws that significantly detract from its utility, and while these flaws could be largely circumvented when planning for conventional operations, they are a major barrier to planning in complex environments characterised by 'ill-structured problems'² and a 'continuous meeting engagement'.³ The article argues that the MAP is burdened by linear procedures that do not reflect natural cognitive processes and proposes an alternative model based on six (concurrently developed) components derived from the systems approach to problem solving. It is proposed that progress in planning should not be perceived as progression through pre-defined steps, but as the changing state of key attributes of planning models and the environment—attributes such as scope, uncertainty, accuracy, precision, risk, resources, criteria and objectives. While generic pre-defined steps will always be a fallacy, these key attributes are always real and must always form the basis of decision-making. In other words, our planning model should be descriptive, not prescriptive. By seeking to prescribe a sequence of activities, the MAP forfeits the ability to properly describe the problem and proposed solutions. This article attempts to represent the logical evolution of the MAP in accordance with *Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept 2009*, Army's capstone document, intended to guide the evolution of doctrine and other systems.⁴

In the solution proposed herein, readers may recognise some basic principles of design thinking, a methodology with relatively extensive military and civilian literature, and recently introduced into US Army doctrine. The design thinking movement inside and outside the military has significant momentum and Australian officers have argued convincingly for its inclusion into our doctrine.⁵ This article will argue that US doctrine is compromised by their attempt to synchronise design thinking (strictly non-linear) with their old linear planning model, and if we introduce design thinking into Australian doctrine, we must first develop a non-linear MAP that can handle design thinking or any other problem solving methodology that planners may choose to employ.

... if we introduce design thinking into Australian doctrine, we must first develop a non-linear MAP ...

Before proceeding, it is worth addressing one common objection to the arguments presented in this article. It is clear that many people have found the MAP to be a useful tool over the years and this in itself is evidence in support of its utility and suitability. It is true that the MAP does work at least moderately well as a tool for expedient decision-making under certain conditions. These are:

- Objectives are predefined and very simple;
- Much of the plan is provided by a superior headquarters in the form of specified tasks and control measures;
- There is a period of inactivity followed by a defined period of activity (an execution phase); and
- Flow of intelligence is primarily top down from a superior headquarters to its subordinates.

Training scenarios usually include all of these conditions, and current operations almost always include none. *Adaptive Campaigning* describes a future operating environment in which few or none of these conditions can be expected to exist. This article will demonstrate how the utility of the MAP is dependent on these conditions and propose a model that is not.

THE ERROR OF LINEARITY

While conducting the MAP, progress toward completion is judged by the step being performed: Mission Analysis, COA (Course of Action) Development, COA Analysis, or Decision and Execution. Within each of these steps, there are sub-steps and sub-sub-steps. It seems everything, no matter how trivial, must be done in sequence. In LWD 5-1-4, the word ‘step’ appears over ninety times in the table of contents alone.

Only intelligence preparation and monitoring of the battlespace (IPMB) is prescribed to occur constantly and concurrently. While this makes the model a little less bad, it also reinforces the fact that the other components of the model are not intended to occur concurrently or continuously. What’s more, the IPMB is also a procedure to be followed (it has twenty-two steps with a clearly intended sequence)⁶ and the criticisms of linearity that follow are equally applicable.

MAP apologists often respond to criticisms of its linearity by suggesting that the MAP is only linear for beginners, and more experienced operators can move at their leisure between its components. There is an element of truth in this but it is a very unsatisfactory defence for at least three reasons. Firstly and most importantly, any

... a far more robust model is available if we are willing to give up the sequential mindset.

marginal benefits to beginners come at a very high cost to the utility of the model. This article seeks to demonstrate that a far more robust model is available if we are willing to give up the sequential mindset. Secondly, teaching inexperienced decision-makers to aim for linearity is to teach them poorly. Thirdly, there is nothing preventing the use of additional checklists, procedures and *aide memoires* for expedience or as training wheels for beginners (most of which can be lifted straight out of the existing doctrine).

DECISION-MAKING IS A NATURAL PROCESS WITH NO DEFINABLE STEPS

It is quite simply impossible to define a chronological procedure that represents effective decision-making. The human brain is incapable of considering a problem one cognitive step at a time, and by trying to force such thinking, the MAP often becomes a barrier rather than a support to decision-making.

It is both impossible and highly undesirable to separate our analysis of the environment from our ideas about how we might achieve certain effects in that environment. Reconnaissance and analytical assets are scarce and it is only by reference to our likely COAs that we can decide which information to gather from the near infinite information that might otherwise be gathered. There is no COA development without COA analysis and evaluation, so all these things must occur concurrently whether we like it or not.

The simplicity of a model based on chronological steps is notoriously tempting, especially to large prescriptive organisations like armies. Academic support for this argument is abundant. From their extensive studies of the US Military Decision-Making Process, Schmitt and Klein draw the following conclusions:

... existing planning models...view planning as an orderly, sequential process. ... [They] do not do justice to the non-linear complexity of real planning, and in many cases actually inhibit and degrade planning.⁷

Friend and Hickling state:

The most orthodox progression might appear to be from shaping problems, through designing possibilities, to comparing their consequences and then on to a final choosing of actions. However, such a progression is likely to be neither straightforward nor realistic.⁸

Erroneous linear decision-making models seem likely the result of a simple category error. Cyclical decision models are a relatively obvious way to represent many decision-making processes, and the prevalence of such models is evidence enough of this. The category error occurs when one sets out to turn their cyclical model into a procedure with the same steps. The steps in a cyclical decision model are not temporal steps, they are steps of logic only, and therefore cannot

be extrapolated to a linear procedure. Procedures require steps in time, while cyclical decision models contain only steps of logic. The MAP appears to have been conceived in this way. In the doctrine, it is presented first as a cycle and then as a procedure with the same steps.

INTUITION IS AN INDISPENSIBLE TOOL FOR EVERYONE

Army doctrine and Army culture in general appears enamoured with a commonly held myth of intuition. This myth is that we use intuition occasionally to make quick decisions when we do not have time for carefully reasoned analysis of the situation. Intuition is therefore often pitched as the commander's unique prerogative. It is not uncommon for commanders to insist that they are responsible for the art of war and their staff responsible for the science; that they alone use their intuition and the staff crunch the numbers. This is a popular and almost romantic view of intuition, like some kind of magic reserve of the maestro. But it is not the case. Everyone uses their intuition all of the time. Our brains solve problems by repeatedly throwing up propositions and knocking them down. Coming up with those propositions is very dependent on intuition, no matter how junior or inexperienced. There is a great deal of evidence that the brain conducts much (if not most) information processing subconsciously; indeed 'our consciousness is just the tip of the iceberg'.⁹

For sure intuition is not a reliable master. We humans are subject to a gamut of natural biases that disguise themselves as intuitive knowledge. Many are cognitive shortcuts, relics of two million years of evolution that might once have been useful to less capable hominid ancestors living in a world void of technology. But the MAP seeks to manage these risks by setting routines that block intuition, and then supposing that one might call it up in the situations for which it is advised. The idea is that by placing our thoughts in a defined sequence, we can stop it from jumping to conclusions. So we avoid the risk of prematurely jumping to conclusions by actively blocking the inception of ideas that might be accepted as conclusive—like amputating the leg to avoid the possibility of trench foot. The well-studied tendency of people to 'situate the appreciation' (define the situation such that it suits their pre-conceived plan) is a real risk to planning and decision-making; but it should be managed by education and the provision of tools that mitigate it. Such tools would include checklists and procedures but they would always be applied at the discretion of the decision-maker and they would exist outside the core decision-making model.

Army doctrine and Army culture in general appears enamoured with a commonly held myth of intuition.

DELAYING COA DEVELOPMENT IS A WASTED OPPORTUNITY

The current rule of thumb is for COA development to begin after approximately 30 per cent of the available planning time has lapsed. By this time a thousand ideas have come and gone. The ideas that follow will be made in an environment perhaps better informed, but also polluted by biases that have built up during the planning process. Groupthink bias, sunk cost bias, and information bias to name a few, will increase their negative effect over time. Planning staff with great ideas will lose confidence if they get the impression those ideas are not what the commander (or the majority) is looking for.

Bad information increases over time as well as good. A fantastic idea forming intuitively in one's mind is quickly destroyed by weak and superficial evidence to the contrary, and as time goes by there is more weak and superficial evidence to kill those ideas. Of course it is usually better to be informed than not, but only where the information is reliable, valid and relevant. Dubious analytical models and historical analogies may also prevent the consideration of perfectly good COAs. Our first impressions may not be well informed and they are indeed subject to intuitive biases, but they are formed with a clarity of mind that is not redeemable. To routinely discourage COA development for the initial period of planning, or to make it the reserve of a few individuals, is to entirely miscomprehend the place of intuition in planning.

Of course it is usually better to be informed than not, but only where the information is reliable, valid and relevant.

ADAPTATION REQUIRES CONCURRENT PLANNING AND EXECUTION

One of the preconditions for productive use of the MAP is a period of inactivity followed by a period of activity. The MAP assumes conventional warfare scenarios whereby contact with the enemy will be made upon commencement of the operation, and the timing of that contact can be more-or-less calculated or set. This is, and has for many years been a false assumption, and it is now a very dangerous one.

Adaptive Campaigning states, 'Joint Land Combat is predicated on the effective application of the Adaptation Cycle' and assumes a 'continuous meeting engagement'¹⁰ during which forces must take action to unmask the enemy. This clearly requires a planning model that assumes constant and concurrent planning and execution. The MAP is not such a model and is therefore not an appropriate tool of adaptive campaigning.

Recent US doctrine comes to the same conclusion as *Adaptive Campaigning* with slightly different concepts. *The [US] Army Capstone Concept – Operational Adaptability* requires a force to 'develop the situation through action'.¹¹ FM 5-0 *The*

Operations Process 2010 introduces 'design' as a means of dealing with ill-structured problems. An ill-structured problem requires the problem solver to engage with the system in order to understand it.¹² Necessarily, 'Design, planning, and execution are interdependent and continuous activities'.¹³

Some may protest that the MAP handles adaptation. Just join the ends and it becomes a cycle, as it is occasionally presented in the doctrine. But this fails to recognise that adaptation must occur *during* the planning process, not in subsequent planning cycles, and a sufficient understanding of the problem is only achievable through action, hence there is no planning without action. Only a model that assumes planning and action to be concurrent can handle the kind of adaptation demanded by adaptive campaigning.

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

A common feature of all models is categorisation of some kind. Decision-making and planning models attempt to categorise the elements of a problem and its solution, and the following six categories are proposed here to be the most robust and useful:

- The environment – what exists, has existed, and will exist
- Objectives – how do we want to affect the environment
- Courses of action (COA) – consisting of designs, methods and plans
- COA analyses – how will COAs affect the environment
- COA evaluations – what value do we place on these outcomes
- Decisions and execution – communication of COAs to those that will realise them.

These six components are the planning models that we must over time make increasingly accurate, precise, specific and certain. These components are consistent with the systems approach that is best practice for complex problem solving and decision-making.¹⁴ It is acknowledged that the systems approach has evolved and diverged into a large variety of models and methods including 'soft systems methodology',¹⁵ which purports to be more suitable for social environments than the original systems approach. The six components model presented here reflect the basic foundations of all problem solving and can thereby accommodate input from a diverse range of models and methods that planners may see fit to employ from time to time, while also providing a common planning picture that is necessary for collaborative planning within and between organisations.

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Clearly this is only the skeleton of a useful decision-making model. Thankfully, most of the omitted detail is in fact exactly the same as our current MAP. This skeletal model is all that is needed to elucidate the most important changes to planning and decision-making being proposed here, which are primarily concerned with the *implementation*, rather than the *content* of the MAP.

Most importantly, all the components are concurrently and continuously developed. There is no beginning and no end to any component of this model. Steps are for procedures, not doctrine.

This model places 'objectives' where one might expect to see the Mission Analysis. This is an important departure from the MAP and it is discussed in detail shortly.

Note that 'evaluation' is considered to be a separate component. A systems approach requires a more strict definition of the word 'evaluate', which is to attribute value. It is a largely subjective activity that will determine the preferred COAs. LWD 5-1-4 uses it synonymously with 'analyse' or 'examine'. For example, 'The combined obstacle overlay is evaluated to identify corridors'. The word 'examine' would be more appropriate. It also describes as 'stakeholder evaluation' what most people would consider to be stakeholder analysis. Though not trivial, this is the least consequential departure from the MAP and the reader shall be spared any further discussion of it.

This alternative model supports continuous adaptation by assuming constant feedback between every element of the decision-making process from analysing the environment and defining objectives all the way to decision and execution. The aim is to describe the problem and solution set as clearly as possible at any given moment, and there is no right or wrong time to do anything; the state of the model will be the determining factor. Outcomes of decisions feed immediately into the planning model, thereby making adaptation an integral part of the planning process. This does not imply that decisions should be made with less consideration. It implies that a decision should be made when the model is sufficiently developed to warrant it, and such moments will arrive continually throughout the planning process.

COMPLEXITY IS A FUNCTION OF OBJECTIVES

When people talk about complexity these days, it is usually with respect to the 'complex environment'.¹⁶ While understanding the environment is of course vitally important, it is not the environment that makes our problems complex. Had General Montgomery been charged with bringing the North African tribes together under a single national government with functional democratic institutions, he would have certainly been engaged in what we would describe as complex warfare.¹⁷ So either we are just amusing ourselves with faddish terminology, or there is something other than the environment that determines the extent to which warfare is complex.

Complex problems, ill-structured problems and wicked problems (all largely synonymous) are roughly speaking problems where multiple objectives compete for resources, and the pursuit of one objective can affect others in ways that are extremely difficult or impossible to predict. This is where the environment matters. The environment is responsible for the unpredictable effects on objectives and of course some environments are easier to predict than others. But all natural systems are complex at some level of abstraction, so when we talk about a complex environment we must recognise that this is a relative condition determined by our objectives.

While conventional warfare is concerned primarily with physical effects on physical entities, complex warfare is additionally concerned with social effects on social entities.

Commanders must these days be military leaders, aid workers, economists, politicians, educators, and even social engineers. And with each additional objective there is an exponential increase in complexity.

What is more, while armies have evolved to destroy complex systems, today they are being asked to construct them. This is an important distinction. Not only are commanders being asked to achieve multiple objectives, they are being asked to design and build sustainable systems that will achieve multiple objectives well into the future; systems of infrastructure, political engagement, security and military institutions. This is perhaps why many have suggested that armies should learn to think like designers, and consequently the most significant change to the US Army's planning doctrine published last year is the introduction of design. Design has always been part of all planning but the MAP in its current form is a barrier to the design of anything other than relatively simple (and usually largely templated) manoeuvre operations.

Objectives are the cause of complexity and the impetus of all design, so they must be recognised as a central component of any robust planning model. Military leaders must be prepared to, in collaboration with other organisations, define objectives and continually test and adjust those objectives throughout an operation. It is difficult to overstate the significance of this requirement and the inadequacy of the MAP in dealing with it.

At first glance one might suggest that the Mission Analysis is the step at which objectives are determined, and therefore the MAP handles this requirement. But the Mission Analysis is not where objectives are *determined*, it is where they are *received*. There is a world of difference. Rather than supporting efforts to discover a suitable set

... when we talk about a complex environment we must recognise that this is a relative condition determined by our objectives.

of objectives, the Mission Analysis is configured to achieve almost the opposite. It actually seeks to prevent the decision-maker from considering objectives not specifically issued by superior command. The Mission Analysis assumes the existence of specified tasks and requires the decision-maker to define a centre of gravity from which targetable critical vulnerabilities can be identified; and all this eventually leads to a set of decisive events. But in complex warfare (including current operations) one can be certain that no centre of gravity will exist, and a procedure that requires one will do nothing but arbitrarily reduce the scope of the problem to a tiny fraction of its former self. Reducing scope through decisive events planning is a great way to conjure very simple problems out of very complex situations, but it is unfortunately also an act of self-delusion. It leads to simple solutions to the wrong problems. We must accept that there is no centre of gravity with which to magic away most of our problems, and trading off possible objectives according to available resources is a challenging task that never ends.

The Mission Analysis assumes the existence of specified tasks and requires the decision-maker to define a centre of gravity ...

PARALLEL AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Because the MAP considers decision and execution to occur only at the end of the procedure, the logical conclusion of the MAP is sequential planning by multiple levels of command. This is indeed what LWD 5-1-4 recommends.¹⁸

The MAP recommends a linear procedure that might once have been appropriate in a world where communicating between levels of command was more difficult and less relevant. The advance of information and communication technology provides an opportunity for collaborative planning that we cannot afford to squander.

Notwithstanding a warning order fired off almost immediately upon the start of planning, LWD 5-1-4 assumes that decision-making and information transfer will be concentrated in a single moment when decisions and other information will be formatted into orders and passed down. But orders (if they are produced at all) are the product of many decisions spread over the entire duration of planning, each of which should usually be communicated at the earliest opportunity. Even more importantly, the planning process of one headquarters produces a raft of information that is highly and immediately relevant to the planning and preparation of other headquarters (up, down, sideways, and even external). A set of orders should contain little that was not already known by those receiving them and often acts more as a legal document, officially charging subordinates with responsibility and command. The current doctrine encourages planners to hoard their information and decisions

until they have compiled a set of formal orders. This denies subordinates the opportunity to plan their own activities, and it denies them the opportunity to contribute to the planning and decision-making of their superior headquarters. Fragmentation orders may be used to intermittently pass information but they are not an assumed part of the MAP, they are always top down, and they do not provide the seamless transfer of information that is necessary and well within our capability.

While upward flow of information and counsel has always been important, it becomes increasingly important with increased complexity largely because the superior headquarters becomes decreasingly capable of understanding the environment without it. In conventional warfare the flow of information is primarily top down, but for highly complex operations the reverse is true.¹⁹ Current and likely future operations are too complex to get by without the upward flow of information that is only possible through parallel planning (multiple levels of command planning at the same time).

The alternative model naturally supports (but does not require) parallel planning and the upward flow of information. If we compared the planning models of one headquarters with those of a subordinate, we would find they consist of much the same information, with the higher headquarters being broader in scope and less specific. Information can pass at any moment up, down or sideways to enhance the various planning models, and action can be taken by any headquarters at any time within its authority.

LWD 5-1-4 considers parallel planning to be an anomaly. The doctrine mentions it only once as something to be done in extremis, when time is very short.²⁰ In reality there should rarely be a moment when planning is not being conducted in parallel by all levels of command. That is the inescapable corollary of continual adaptation.

The persistence of the linear planning mindset may be largely to blame for our desperately unevolved planning software. Training establishments seem determined to stop any progress on this front for fear that students may find it a little too easy to complete the planning process if they receive information in a useful format. Rather than embrace collaborative technology and increase the quantity, quality and frequency of information passing to student planners, training establishments make a genuine effort to avoid information passing to students in digital form. There seems to be very little effort to develop tools and techniques for effective collaboration between levels of command. Collaboration tools used within a planning cell are also primitive, with most work being produced in Microsoft PowerPoint®—the one application in the Office Suite that was not designed for productivity.

The alternative model naturally supports (but does not require) parallel planning and the upward flow of information.

DESIGN THINKING

The United States has addressed many of the issues described throughout this article by the introduction of design thinking, or simply 'design' as the US doctrine annoyingly calls it. The US implementation of design thinking is promising, but there are some good reasons not to copy it, which will be discussed in this final section.

The US implementation of design thinking is the product of a diverse range of influences.²¹ Their doctrine says: 'Design is a methodology for applying critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe complex, ill-structured problems and develop approaches to solve them.' Anyone that has studied systems thinking, community operations research, futurology, complex adaptive systems, or any number of social science research methods, will be familiar with much of what design thinking is offering. While a meaningful description of design thinking is beyond the scope of this article, it should be noted that design thinking requires the kind of non-linear thinking that has been described as necessary throughout this article. Design thinking is amorphous and all inclusive. It is 'a way of thinking more than it is a theory, process, or product'.²² It is 'a discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible'.²³ Though it is almost certainly not as revolutionary as its proponents would have you believe, let us assume for sake of argument that design thinking would make a useful contribution to Army doctrine.

While inclusion of design thinking in US doctrine marks significant progress towards non-linear planning, it is currently undermined by attempts to preserve the military decision-making process (MDMP), which is almost identical to our MAP. A certain degree of conservatism is undoubtedly necessary in order to protect good ideas from dubious ones well presented and to achieve a workable level of consistency; however, few would deny that armies tend to err significantly in favour of conservation over progress. This naturally generates bloated and occasionally contradictory doctrine as new ideas are adopted without the corresponding application of Ockham's razor. The US implementation of design thinking is a good example of this.

The preservation of existing procedures was a stated constraint during development of the new doctrine. It was assumed that: 'For design to be useful in the military domain, it must complement and interact with existing planning doctrine.'²⁴ Because the existing planning model (the MDMP) is distinctly linear, and design thinking is distinctly non-linear, the authors were forced from the outset

'For design to be useful in the military domain, it must complement and interact with existing planning doctrine.'

to develop doctrine that was separated from the planning process. They perceive such a boundary thus: 'if a subject or an issue is not concerned with understanding, it is a planning function, not a design product'.²⁵

This conceptual boundary is certain to be an outstanding source of confusion and meaningless debate for as long as it remains. It is the perfect mix of error and irrelevance. By the definition of complex adaptive systems, there is nothing that is not concerned with understanding, as slight changes to some fine detail can have large effects on the system. It is also absurd to suggest that planning is not concerned with understanding. This very messy separation is completely unnecessary but for the desire to preserve the linear MDMP. Design thinking is simply a methodology that may be applied to any aspect of planning at any time it is deemed appropriate. One of the few features of design thinking that is absolutely certain is its holistic nature, and this means no separation from anything.²⁶ Some planners may not formally use design thinking, but this does not mean they are concerned with different information; it simply means they are using a different method. A robust non-linear planning model will enable planners to use any method at any time without concerning themselves with the nonsensical question of whether it is planning or design. Design is an important part of all planning, and any planning model that does not support it should be jettisoned in favour of one that does.

It is easy to perceive a separation between the design of some end product and the planning for that product's realisation, but this divide is superficial when dealing with complex problems. Where a problem is regular and there is a common solution set, such as designing a largely standardised house in a known environment, it may be feasible to conduct design without concurrent development of the detailed plan. But even for an activity as predictable as construction, it is usually necessary to develop concurrently at least some of the fine details to prevent the design of elements that are impossible or unfeasible. Where the situation is relatively complex, designers cannot carry on designing the end product without constant consideration of how such a system may be developed (the detailed planning). There is no transition to detailed planning; there is simply an evolution of all aspects of planning, including design.

Furthermore, in complex operations, the end product is often less important than the means of achieving it. That is, the detailed planning is the design. This kind of operational design requires one to work backwards from the detailed planning, not the end product. 'Designers' begin with the very fine detail of how meetings will run, how procurement will be conducted, how negotiations will be managed, how

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means of achieving it.

the community will be engaged etc. The question then becomes, what end product fits these processes while at the same time providing some desirable outcome to the relevant stakeholders? A common answer to this question in Afghanistan, for example, is roads.²⁷

The final criticism of US design doctrine is concerned with its name. US doctrine refers to design thinking simply as 'design'. This is an unnecessary (and frankly quite galling) redefinition of a perfectly good English word. Design is not a method; it is a fundamental component of all planning and is something that all planners have always done. A design (noun) is a specification of some item, activity, or combination thereof that is intended to achieve objectives in a particular environment. Design (verb) is simply to create a design. At a time when armies need to maximise compatibility with foreign militaries and non-military organisations (particularly in the realm of planning and decision-making), the US Army has seen fit to redefine this vitally important word in a way that will make no sense to any person not familiar with US Army doctrine. It is difficult to imagine a reason for this etymological violation, other than an audacious attempt by design thinking theorists to achieve a monopoly on all design. One can only hope that if design thinking is included in Australian doctrine we can do so without weakening our lexicon.

CONCLUSION

This article has argued that Australia should develop a non-linear planning model based on six concurrently developed components. The model should be descriptive rather than prescriptive and it should recognise objectives as one of its core components, with the Mission Analysis relegated to a standard operating procedure to be used if and when appropriate.

Such a model will enable continual adaptation, collaborative planning, omnidirectional flow of information, constant decision-making, and genuine use of intuition. Being a descriptive model, it will not discriminate between the methodologies used to populate it, whether they are linear checklists, design thinking methodologies, analytics or pure intuition. This is a planning model that can handle complexity, while also lending itself when required to straightforward template driven activities. It is a model for Adaptive Campaigning.

ENDNOTES

- 1 LWD 5-1-4 *The Military Appreciation Process*, Department of Defence, Puckapunyal, 2009, p. 1-3.
- 2 FM 5-0 *The Operations Process*, Headquarters, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 2010, p. 2-4.

- 3 *Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept*, Head Modernisation and Strategic Planning – Army, Department of Defence, Canberra, September 2009, p. 44.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. i.
- 5 See Lieutenant Colonel Chris Smith, ‘Solving Twenty-First Century Problems with Cold War Metaphors: Reconciling the Army’s Future Land Operating Concept with Doctrine’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. VI, No.3, p. 97; and Lieutenant Colonel Trent Scott, ‘Adapt or Die: Operational Design and Adaptation’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. VI, No. 3, p. 107.
- 6 LWD 5–1–4, Ch. 4.
- 7 John Schmitt and Garry Klein, ‘A Recognition Planning Model’, Report by Klein Associates Inc., 1999.
- 8 John Friend and Allen Hickling, *Planning under Pressure: The Strategic Choice Approach*, 3rd ed., Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford, 2005.
- 9 Dr John-Dylan Haynes quoted in Kerri Smith, ‘Brain makes decisions before you even know it’, *Nature*, 11 April 2008, < <http://www.nature.com/news/2008/080411/full/news.2008.751.html>>.
- 10 *Adaptive Campaigning*, p. 44.
- 11 US Army Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-0, *The Army Capstone Concept, Operational Adaptability - Operating under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict 2016–2028*, Government Publishing Office, Washington, DC, December 2009, p. i.
- 12 FM 5-0, p. 2-4.
- 13 Colonel Stefan Banach and Dr Alex Ryan, ‘The Art of Design: A Design Methodology’, *Military Review*, March–April 2009.
- 14 This basic model is taken from A D Hall, *A Methodology for Systems Engineering*, Van Nostrand, 1962. The ‘systems approach’ encompasses a large variety of models and methods. This is considered to be the most foundational and thereby capable of accommodating other models and techniques that one might choose to apply from time to time.
- 15 Peter Checkland and Jim Scholes, ‘Soft Systems Methodology: A 30-Year Retrospective’, *Operational Research Society*, Vol. 51, 2000.
- 16 See *Complex Warfighting*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2004. Complexity is considered the result of complex environments (human, physical, and information). See also *Adaptive Campaigning*, which includes: ‘Operational uncertainty – Occurs as a consequence of enemies attempting to shelter below the discrimination threshold, the complexities of the battlespace, and increased lethality.’ The observations in these documents are important, but there is inadequate appreciation of how the complexity is driven by our objectives. One common method of reducing complexity is to convert objectives into criteria or targets, but one must appreciate the sacrifice that is being made in doing so.

- 17 In October 1942 General Montgomery led the Eighth Army (including the Australian 9th Division, led by Lieutenant General Leslie Morshead) to victory in the Second Battle of El Alamein (North Africa). This was the first large scale Allied land victory of the Second World War.
- 18 LWD 5-1-4, p. 1-5. Table 1-1 shows how LWD 5-1-4 intends for planning by each level of command to be conducted sequentially.
- 19 Major General Michael T Flynn, Captain Matt Pottinger and Paul D Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, Center for a New American Security, Washington DC, January 2010, p. 12.
- 20 LWD 5-1-4, p. 1-11.
- 21 The genesis of design thinking in the US Army is Israeli Brigadier General (Res) Shimon Naveh's theory of Systemic Operational Design, which has diverse intellectual roots in Soviet Operational Art, French philosophy, General System Theory and architecture. However, with the truncation of Systemic Operational Design to Design, the US Army's new design doctrine is often seen as just a military variant on the IDEO school of design thinking.
- 22 Banach and Ryan, 'The Art of Design: A Design Methodology'.
- 23 Tim Brown, 'Design Thinking', *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 86, No. 6, 2008.
- 24 Banach and Ryan, 'The Art of Design: A Design Methodology'.
- 25 *Art of Design: Student Text, Version 2.0*, US Army, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, March 2010.
- 26 In 'Design Thinking', Brown repeatedly stresses the importance of a holistic approach and the application of design thinking through all phases including implementation.
- 27 See David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One*, Scribe Publications, 2009. Kilcullen observes that contrary to the national trend, the security situation in the Kunar River valley region of Afghanistan significantly improved between 2006 and 2008. He attributes road building as a key component of this effort, noting that the 'road itself matters less than the construction process'.

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DOCTRINE TRAINING ORGANISATION

ARMY AVIATION 2030

ALIGNING THE ARMY AVIATION CAPABILITY WITH THE ARMY OBJECTIVE FORCE 2030

MAJOR KEITH WYLIE

ABSTRACT

In response to the 2009 Defence White Paper, the Australian Army is developing the Army Objective Force 2030 concept based on the 1st, 3rd and 7th manoeuvre brigades. This article examines the extant Army Aviation capability and identifies that due to its size and structure it is unable to effectively support this emerging force. This article argues that in order to fully embrace the Army Objective Force concept, radical change may be required within the Army Aviation capability and the development of multi-type aviation regiments directly supporting each manoeuvre brigade is the optimal means to provide this support.

In October 2010, for the very first time, elements of all three Army Aviation (AAvn) regiments, as well as the Army Aviation Training Centre, formed Battle Group Pegasus to support Townsville's 3rd Brigade as part of Exercise HAMEL 2010. During this exercise Battle Group Pegasus, which included 36 aircraft and over 750 officers and soldiers, conducted multiple battalion-level airmobile operations as well as aviation operations across the full spectrum of operations.¹ The support

that Battle Group Pegasus provided was a high-water mark for the AAvn capability and one of which it can justifiably be proud.

However, AAvn support to the exercise came at a heavy cost. Indeed, supporting this exercise required the complete commitment of the 16th Aviation Brigade and was effectively a one-shot weapon; is this sufficient or instead should the provision of battalion-sized, multi-aircraft type units to manoeuvre brigades become the norm? This article aims to explain why the extant AAvn force size and structure does not meet government-mandated force requirements and recommends an alternate AAvn force structure to support the Army Objective Force (AOF) 2030.

ARMY OBJECTIVE FORCE 2030 – THE FUTURE ARMY

The Australian government gives clear guidance to Defence planners on the capability that it must provide through Defence White Papers supplemented by classified Defence Planning Guidance. The Defence White Paper 2009 describes that the Army must be capable of supporting one brigade-sized group capable of deploying to engage in sustained combat operations, a separate battalion-sized group deployed to a separate area of operations, and a residual capability to support other tasking including support to Special Forces.² Of note, these requirements are not new, with the 2000 Defence White Paper including almost identical requirements.³

To support these requirements, recent initiatives such as the Hardened and Networked Army and the Enhanced Land Force advocated that the Army reduce its number of single capabilities and develop to an 'Army of Twos';⁴ with the current force structure the AAvn capability could largely comply with this requirement. However, with the release of recent government guidance, the Army has identified that the AOF must now be an 'Army of Threes' and that enabling forces, including AAvn, must be capable of supporting three Army task groups based upon the 1st, 3rd and 7th Brigades while simultaneously supporting Special Operations Command.⁵ Further, these manoeuvre brigades must be balanced and task organised to conduct both training and operations as carving forces from multiple manoeuvre brigades for operations, as currently occurs, is disruptive for training, unit cohesion and force preparation.⁶

The environment in which these 'like-brigades' must fight and win is described in the Army's *Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept*, which recognises the enduring nature of warfare as 'dynamic, unpredictable, difficult

... Army must be prepared to lead or complement whole-of-government support to these four supporting lines of operation.

to control and therefore chaotic.⁷ As such, it identifies five mutually supporting and interdependent lines of operation: Joint Land Combat, Population Support, Population Protection, Indigenous Capacity Building and Information Actions.⁸ While Joint Land Combat will have primacy for structure and training of the like-brigades, Army must be prepared to lead or complement whole-of-government support to these four supporting lines of operation.

AAVN SUPPORT TO AOF 2030 – THE AOF AAVN BATTLE GROUP

Once the requirement for three like-brigades has been identified, as has the need that these brigades be ‘balanced’, an implied requirement is that each of these brigades are supported by dedicated, organic AAvn forces. To sustain an ongoing brigade-sized deployment, all three brigades require integral ground, air and littoral mobility; as such, attached AAvn forces must support the full ‘readying’ training continuum of combat team, battle group and task group-level exercises, training and certification before deploying on operations. Indeed, relying upon these brigades learning how to employ AAvn manoeuvre during pre-deployment mission readiness training or exercises is clearly unsatisfactory, as is relying on the triennial formation training opportunities presented by the HAMEL and TALISMAN SABRE series of exercises. Therefore, it is apparent that an organic AAvn force must support each of the three like-brigades throughout their entire ‘readying-ready-reset’ operational deployment cycle;⁹ the extant AAvn capability is unable to be divided three ways to provide this support.

With respect to aircraft locations, the Army currently has all operational Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH) aircraft in Darwin, Black Hawk and Multi Role Helicopter (MRH) lift aircraft in Townsville and Sydney, and CH-47 Chinooks in Townsville. The extant AAvn force structure of homogenous regiments, while logistically preferable, is unsatisfactory and AAvn must re-balance its structure to form three multi-type, multi-role AAvn battle groups, co-located with their supported manoeuvre brigades. For the purpose of this article, these AAvn groups shall be named the AOF AAvn Battle Group. To conduct doctrinal brigade-level manoeuvre in support of Joint Land Combat, I argue that the following AAvn force elements are required within each AOF AAvn Battle Group:

a. One ARH Squadron. This squadron, in the structure currently used within the 1st Aviation Regiment, is the minimum force that could be deployed to an overseas operation and remain effective without relying on support from other ARH elements within Australia. While in the short term as few as six ARH aircraft may be capable of providing sufficient support to a manoeuvre brigade, for sustained deployments this would be insufficient as factors such as simultaneous escort, reconnaissance and attack operations, the requirement to support relief out of country leave, in-theatre deeper maintenance of aircraft, in-theatre continuation training requirements, and attrition would demand more aircraft.

b. One MRH Squadron. One squadron is the minimum force that could be deployed to an overseas operation for an extended period of time. Three MRH troops, with three online aircraft per troop, would provide a seated marching order lift capacity of approximately 110 personnel; this would be sufficient to support an infantry-based combat team airmobile operation.

c. One Medium Lift Helicopter / Light Utility Helicopter Squadron. As well as the manoeuvre brigades being balanced, subordinate battle groups must also be balanced, and to balance a standalone AAvn battle group, both CH-47 Medium Lift Helicopter (MLH) and Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) aircraft are required. Each MLH/LUH squadron should have two troops of CH-47 and two troops of LUH:

(1) MLH. The medium lift CH-47 capability is critical to all contemporary land manoeuvre. CH-47 is essential for large-scale direct action missions, operations in a high density altitude environment and supporting Artillery manoeuvre in an amphibious environment.¹⁰ Two troops are required to ensure that a troop of CH-47 is reliably available to the manoeuvre commander and to permit a concurrent airmobile operation of a second combat team should it be required. Finally, CH-47 are a key logistics enabler of the balanced AOF AAvn Battle Group through provision of an organic airborne forward arming and refuelling point and aircraft recovery capability.

(2) LUH. The argument for LUH has been generally accepted by Army, noting that personnel and funding constraints prevent their acquisition in the short to medium term. Indeed there are recurring requirements of all operations that are best addressed by an LUH capability including command and liaison, airborne command and control, combat support, combat service support and aero-medical evacuation.¹¹ Using MRH or MLH aircraft in these roles is inefficient and draws these few aircraft away from their core function. Further, operations across the four supporting lines of operation identify that for many missions the ARH/MRH/MLH platforms are unsuitable for a number of reasons, including aircraft availability, physical footprint, psychological footprint and political constraints.¹² For the same reasons as MLH, two LUH troops are required to ensure sustained LUH support for longer-duration deployments.

d. Technical Support Squadron. There is a requirement for each 'balanced' AOF AAvn Battle Group to have an organic technical support squadron to support operations. The fact that each battle group will now have four aircraft types makes the requirement for RAEME soldiers to be multi-type qualified essential; however, the means by which this should occur is beyond the scope of this article.

One squadron is the minimum force that could be deployed to an overseas operation for an extended period of time.

e. Logistic Support Squadron. For the same reasons as above, the AOF AAvn Battle Group cannot rely upon task group combat service support battalions or the 17th Combat Service Support Brigade for routine operations and must be supported by an organic logistic support squadron.

WHERE SHOULD THESE FORCES BE LOCATED?

While there are clear training, logistic and sustainment benefits to consolidating all AAvn forces in the one location (potentially Townsville or Oakey), this would significantly reduce the support provided to the manoeuvre brigades not co-located with this force. I argue that the 16th Aviation Brigade is different to the other two enabling brigades (6th and 17th Brigades) as helicopters are a key component of the combined arms team that must work beside, train and fight as a part of its supported brigade. Consolidating all AAvn forces in the one location would result in the AAvn capability becoming introspective at best and self-focused at worst; to support the land force one must become part of the land force, and the benefits of habitual relationships and training opportunities achieved through co-location would counter any training, cost or logistic benefits achieved through consolidation.

By conducting a first-principles analysis, it is clear that to provide enduring AAvn support to Army, both in-barracks and on operations, the current structure of homogenous regiments in Townsville, Holsworthy and Darwin is unsustainable. It is well established that to 'fight and win the land battle', organisations must train as they fight; in this case combat aviators must live and breathe combined aircraft operations and manoeuvre brigades must establish enduring, habitual relationships with co-located AOF AAvn Battle Groups throughout their entire readying-ready-reset operational deployment cycle.

Consolidating all AAvn forces in the one location would result in the AAvn capability becoming introspective at best and self-focused at worst ...

AOF AAVN SUPPORT TO SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The Defence White Paper provides clear guidance on the types of missions that Special Operations must be prepared to conduct in the future. AAvn support to Special Forces can be divided into two broad areas: conduct of counter-terrorism and hostage recovery operations in the 'black' role, and conduct of 'green' Special Forces support to the manoeuvre brigades. This support to the manoeuvre brigades includes strategic surveillance and reconnaissance, offensive action and strategic strike missions.¹³

AAVN SUPPORT TO COUNTER-TERRORISM

For the same reasons as explained previously, there is a clear requirement for the Special Forces to have dedicated, enduring AAvn support to enable the conduct of counter-terrorism operations. Further, experience of peer counter-terrorism agencies such as those in the United Kingdom and United States has shown that medium-sized helicopters are often unsuitable for these types of operations and that smaller, more easily deployable, more agile and lower signature helicopters are required.¹⁴ Further, this force needs to be supported by a small, low-profile fixed-wing capability (such as the B350 Super Kingair) to conduct low-signature deployment, airborne command and control (C2) and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, reconnaissance and electronic warfare (ISTAREW) tasks. This force, which should remain a regiment to ensure sufficient command oversight, need not be deployable to the field environment, nor would its headquarters need to act as a manoeuvre headquarters. This AAvn force should have the following elements:

Special Forces have a valuable role during support to brigade manoeuvre; particularly during the 'shaping' stage ...

- a. One squadron of LUH. This squadron of unmarked helicopters should be capable of supporting counter-terrorism tasking, conducting all aircrew individual and collective training as well as organic combat support and combat services support to the AAvn battle group.
- b. One troop of fixed-wing. This is the minimum force to support C2/ISTAREW as well as low-signature deployment and sustainment of Special Forces operations.
- c. Support squadron. A combined support squadron would be sufficient to provide maintenance and logistic support the aviation regiment.

AAVN SUPPORT TO 'GREEN' SPECIAL OPERATIONS

Special Forces have a valuable role during support to brigade manoeuvre; particularly during the 'shaping' stage of the doctrinal task group operation.¹⁵ However, unless the size of the AAvn capability grows significantly, it is unreasonable to provide permanent AAvn forces to Special Operations Command to sustain this capability. Indeed, for conduct of complex offensive action and deep strike missions, ARH, MRH and MLH aircraft would be required, and to fully satisfy this requirement a fourth AOF AAvn Battle Group would be needed. Lift assets, particularly MLH, are critical to supporting the manoeuvre brigades and to assign

them to a Special Operations Command-supporting AAvn unit would effectively remove them from Forces Command where they are sorely needed.

The lack of dedicated AAvn support to Special Forces 'green' operations can be mitigated by the fact that when these types of operations are conducted, they are largely an immediate precursor to manoeuvre brigade operations; indeed Special Forces will normally form the 'vanguard' of operations closely followed by conventional forces. Therefore, should the Special Forces require AAvn support for green operations, it is logical that the AOF AAvn Battle Group assigned or allocated to the deploying task group should provide that AAvn support to the Special Forces. Finally, this risk could be further mitigated by ensuring that the three AOF AAvn Battle Groups routinely support Special Operations Command training in these green Special Forces roles as part of their 'readying' cycle and that, at all times, there is an identified 'online' AOF AAvn Battle Group ready to support Special Forces green manoeuvre.

DEVELOPING THE 2030 AAVN AOF

From the above analysis, it is apparent that four AAvn units are required to support AOF 2030, three multi-role AOF AAvn Battle Groups, and one 'light' LUH/fixed-wing regiment supporting Special Operations Command counter-terrorism. It is also equally evident that the current and future AAvn net personnel and operating costs allocation is unable to support this enlarged force. In order to meet this future capability, Defence should declare to government that the extant AAvn capability cannot support AOF 2030 and re-configure the extant AAvn capability to best support AOF 2030 within existing funding, personnel and aircraft constraints. As a follow-on activity, Defence leadership must develop and promulgate an incremental growth path to appropriately support AOF 2030 for review, test, assessment and consideration by Army Headquarters, the Army Force Development Group and the Capability Development Group.

In order to effectively reconfigure the extant AAvn capability and develop an appropriate growth path, this article has not included 173rd Aviation Squadron within the 6th Aviation Regiment as an extant capability, as the future of this squadron is unclear. Further, if (when) Army confirms the requirement for an LUH capability, it should do so through robust analysis and doctrinal capability acquisition processes.¹⁶

Defence should declare to government that the extant AAvn capability cannot support AOF 2030 ...

A PROPOSED PATH TO THE 2030 AAVN AOF

Stage 1 – Reconfiguration of extant capability. Stage 1, shown at Figure 1 below, is a ‘cost-neutral’ reorganisation to achieve better support to AOF 2030. Key elements of this structure include:

- a. Dedicated support to the 1st and 3rd manoeuvre brigades. Of note, under current constraints the AAvn capability remains unable to provide dedicated support to the 7th Brigade.
- b. Despite AIR 9000 Phase 5C replacing the extant CH-47D aircraft with seven CH-47F aircraft, analysis has confirmed that this is too few aircraft to split the fleet due to training and deeper maintenance constraints. As such, until at least twelve CH-47F have been acquired, all CH-47F aircraft should remain within the 5th Aviation Regiment.
- c. Continued support to the Special Forces will be provided by the 6th Aviation Regiment with Black Hawk. As a result of this restructure, the 6th Aviation Regiment should focus solely on support to Special Operations Command and should be exempt from the Forces Command operational deployment cycle.

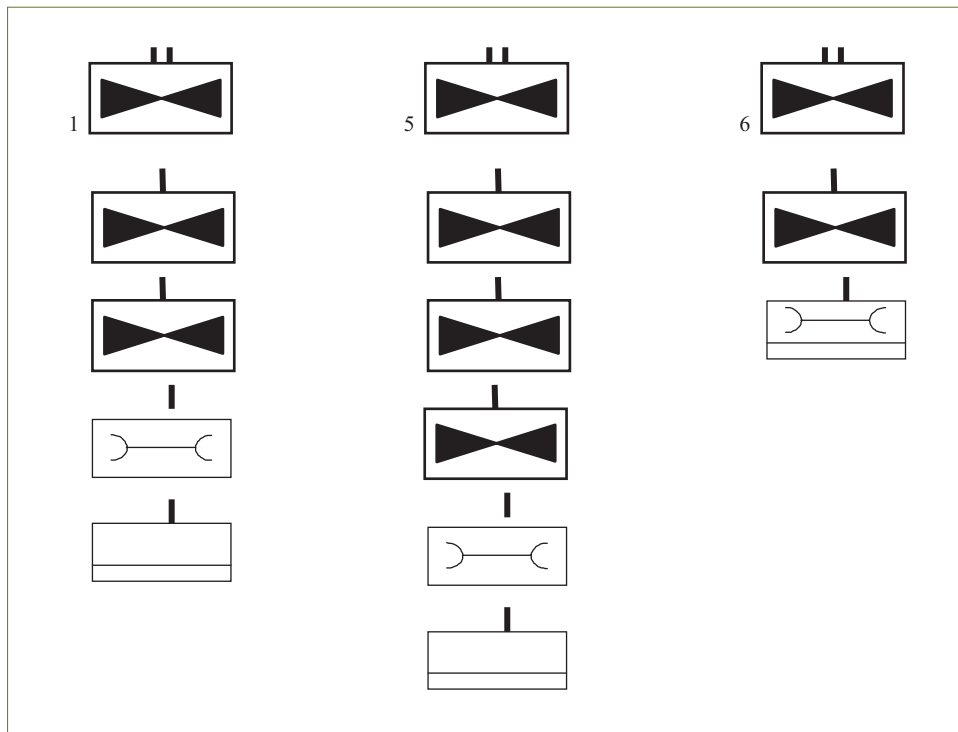


Figure 1. Structure 1 Extant Reorganisation

Stage 2 – Acquisition of LUH and additional CH-47F. In the short to medium term there will come an opportunity to acquire additional LUH as part of Project AIR 9000 Phase 7 Helicopter Aircrew Training System which will acquire LUH-type helicopters for *ab initio* rotary-wing flying training. Further, once the seven CH-47F are delivered under AIR 9000 Phase 5C, Defence will have the opportunity to have its extant CH-47D aircraft remanufactured to the CH-47F standard for a significantly reduced cost. Should these six CH-47Ds be remanufactured for a total fleet of thirteen CH-47Fs, this would provide sufficient aircraft to split the CH-47 fleet. Key elements of Stage 2 are:

- a. Raising a new regiment (for this article the 4th Aviation Regiment), based at Oakey or Amberley, to provide dedicated support to the 7th Brigade. This regiment would initially consist of one MRH squadron and one LUH troop.
- b. Acquisition of nine troops of LUH; two troops each assigned to 1st, 4th and 5th Aviation Regiments to provide organic combat support and combat service support to the AOF AAvn Battle Group and 171 Aviation Squadron re-roled to LUH with three troops.
- c. Splitting the CH-47F Chinook fleet between the 1st and 5th Aviation Regiment. This would be achievable with thirteen aircraft as each squadron would have two CH-47 troops (four aircraft), C Squadron within the 5th Aviation Regiment would retain the training troop (two aircraft), and three aircraft would remain in deeper maintenance at any given time.

In order to fully equip the identified AOF AAvn Battle Groups, an additional six CH-47Fs would need to be acquired ...

Structure 3 – Acquisition of fixed-wing and additional CH-47F and ARH aircraft. In order to fully equip the identified AOF AAvn Battle Groups, an additional six CH-47Fs would need to be acquired along with an additional squadron of ARHs. Further, additional fixed-wing aircraft would complement the 6th Aviation Regiment to ensure it is fully capable of supporting Special Operations Command to conduct counter-terrorism operations.

It is well acknowledged that achievement of the growth required for stages 2 and 3 are unlikely in the short to medium term due to personnel, aircraft, facilities and financial constraints; however, this does not take away from the fact that this AAvn capability is what the AOF 2030 requires. Indeed, the lack of lift support to the 1st and 7th Brigades, and the lack of ARH support to the 3rd and 7th Brigades, is currently directly affecting Army's capability to provide the capability espoused in its Defence White Paper.

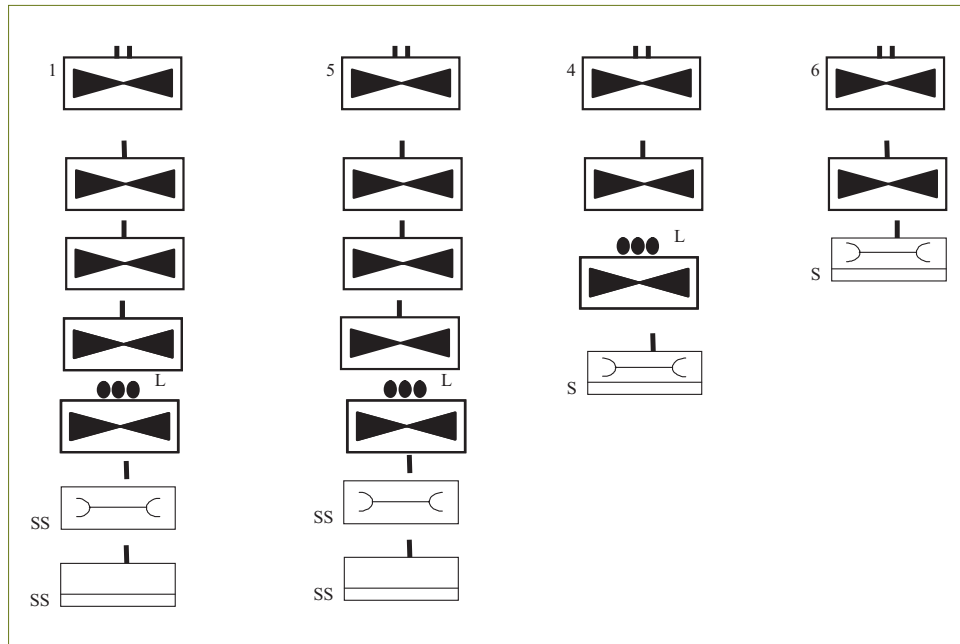


Figure 2. Structure 2 Additional CH-47F and LUH

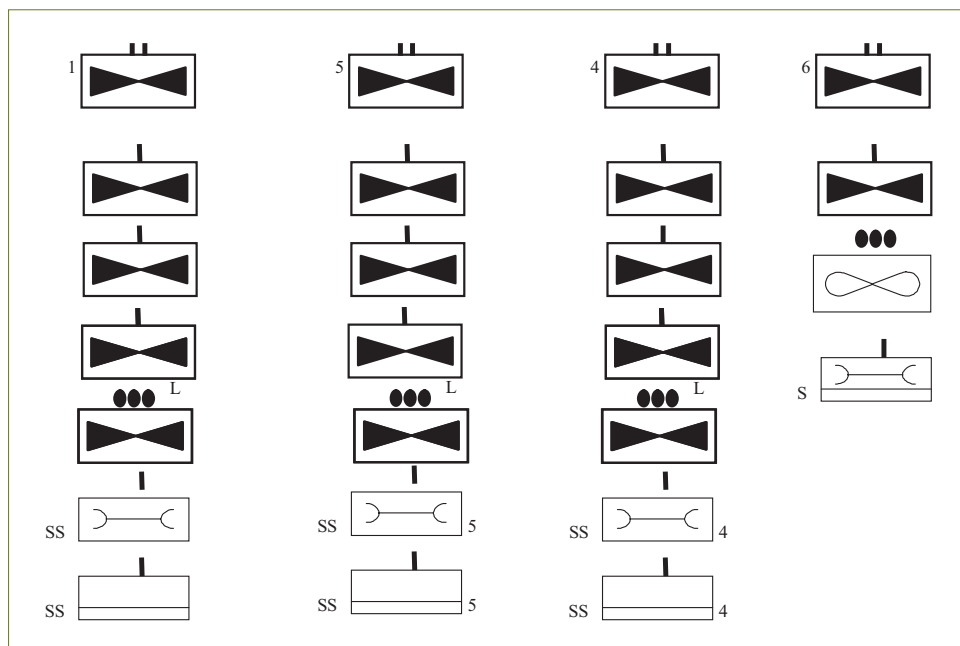


Figure 3. Structure 3 Additional CH-47F, ARH and FW

AAVN COMMAND AND CONTROL AND THE ROLE OF THE 16TH AVIATION BRIGADE

The final issue for consideration is the role of the 16th Aviation Brigade. Due to the requirement for better integration within Army, I argue that all AAvn units should become direct command units under the three manoeuvre brigades.¹⁷ Brigade commanders need quantity time commanding AAvn forces, and the 'quality time' provided to one brigade per year through the HAMEL / TALISMAN SABRE series of exercises is insufficient to generate a habitual, integral relationship. Aviation battle group commanders need to work alongside their infantry, armour, artillery and enabling unit peers to their formation headquarters in barracks, in training and on operations to generate the outcome required by Army.

With the development of the Aviation Branch within Forces Command, Headquarters 16th Aviation Brigade has become increasingly dislocated, with the roles more typically completed within the formation headquarters such as logistics, capability, airworthiness and introduction into service being completed by Aviation Branch. I argue that the tasks being completed by Headquarters 16th Aviation Brigade could be completed by Headquarters Forces Command, Headquarters Special Operations Command and the manoeuvre Brigade Headquarters. Headquarters 16th Aviation Brigade was raised on 2 April 2002 and has worked tirelessly to develop the AAvn capability to where it is today. However, the AAvn capability must continue to develop and graduate from a niche, protected capability to a peer manoeuvre capability working directly for its supported manoeuvre brigades.

... AAvn capability must continue to develop and graduate from a niche, protected capability to a peer manoeuvre capability ...

CONCLUSION

Development of the AOF 2030 is a bold, inspirational concept. However, it is also the result of government providing clear and unambiguous guidance that Army must develop three like-brigades to permit the enduring deployment of a task group. In order to support this capability, each brigade must in turn be supported by an organic AAvn unit. While the recommendations within this article are both radical and expensive, they are also necessary and the natural result of government clearly identifying what Army is to achieve and Army identifying how it will meet these emerging requirements.

To support AOF 2030, AAvn must firstly restructure itself to better support the 1st and 3rd Brigades and identify clearly to the Army and government that without additional personnel, materiel and funding it is unable to effectively support the 7th Brigade. Further, the AAvn capability must then clearly announce the capability gap between the support it can and must provide and develop a clear, incremental path to achieving this capability. Army and Defence decision makers must be fully aware of the total cost of the requirements introduced by the 2009 Defence White Paper. Finally, to fully support Special Operations Command and the three manoeuvre brigades, these formation headquarters must be assigned AAvn direct command units with the resulting disbandment of the 16th Aviation Brigade.

ENDNOTES

- 1 JBA Brown, 'Exercise HAMEL', AAAA *Fourays*, Spring, 2010, p. 38.
- 2 *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2009, p. 88.
- 3 *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Department of Defence, Canberra, December 2000, p. 80.
- 4 PF Leahy, Chief of Army Directive 14/05 – 'The Hardened and Networked Army', 16 December 2005, p. 2.
- 5 JG Caligari, 'Army Modernisation', Speech delivered at the Chief of Army's Exercise 2010, Brisbane, 15 November 2010, <<http://www.defence.gov.au/opEx/exercises/caex/speeches.cfm>>.
- 6 In the AOF 2030 context, a 'balanced force' has the correct ratio of various components including combat, command and control, combat support and combat service support, regular, reserve and civilians to enable the mission.
- 7 *Adaptive Campaigning – Army's Future Land Operating Concept*, Department of Defence, Canberra, September 2009, p. 4.
- 8 Ibid, p. 28.
- 9 The 'readying-ready-reset' cycle was cogently explained in JG Caligari's speech, 'Army Modernisation'.
- 10 Indeed, during Ship To Objective Manoeuvre and Manoeuvre Operations in the Littoral Environment, the CH-47 will be the only platform capable of transporting the new M777 155 mm guns and supporting materiel. An organic OS is an essential and uncontested element of the Combined Arms Team; AIR 9000 Phase 5C is delivering seven CH-47F aircraft with the only significant non-military off the shelf modification being the installation of a rotor brake to ensure these aircraft can support amphibious artillery manoeuvre.

- 11 This requirement for LUH was explained in the Australian Technical Staff Officer Course (now the Capability & Technology Management Program) study: C Dutton, Q Masson, M Hose and K Wylie, 'Final Report: Capability Requirements Definition Light Utility Helicopter', Team Project: Technology Management, 8 October 2007.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, p.61.
- 14 The UK 8 Flight, Army Air Corps operates unmarked LUH-type helicopters in support of domestic SAS counter-terrorism operations and the US Army 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment operates the MH-6 'Little Birds' to support counter-terrorism operations.
- 15 *Land Warfare Doctrine – 3.0: Operations*, Department of Defence, 19 September 2008, p.2-8.
- 16 *Defence Capability Development Manual*, Department of Defence, 2006, p. 16.
- 17 This should commence with the 1st Aviation Regiment being transferred to the 7th Brigade, the 5th Aviation Regiment being transferred to the 3rd Brigade, and the 6th Aviation Regiment being transferred to Special Operations Command.

THE AUTHOR

Major Keith Wylie was allocated to the Australian Army Aviation Corps in September 1999. After successful completion of Pilots' Course, Major Wylie served as a Black Hawk line pilot and troop commander within the 5th Aviation Regiment deploying to East Timor on Operations TANAGER and CITADEL. Major Wylie is a graduate of the Capability and Technology Management College and has filled Army Aviation capability positions in Headquarters 16th Aviation Brigade and the Defence Materiel Organisation. Major Wylie is currently serving as the Operations Officer of the 5th Aviation Regiment.

DOCTRINE TRAINING ORGANISATION

CAUSE FOR ENGAGEMENT

EXAMINING THE CASE FOR FOREIGN AREA OFFICERS IN ARMY

MAJOR CATE CARTER

ABSTRACT

There is currently a gap in foreign engagement that threatens to degrade the high level of cultural awareness now required by Army. Similarly, there are a number of programs existing in and available to Army that could be drawn upon to empower a new specialisation similar to the United States military Foreign Area Officer. This article examines the possibilities and advantages of such a stream and offers some proposals for starting a venture in this direction.

INTRODUCTION

A number of articles have appeared recently talking about ‘cultural awareness’ in Army, and that very phrase has found its way into Defence policy¹ without much more understanding than that *it* is needed, and that commanders are responsible for implementing *it*. While foreign affairs *per se* is not the Army’s responsibility, Army would benefit greatly from having its own cultural and political knowledge of where it was going before it got there. Army’s ability to develop its own organic

cultural experts may even lie within *existing* programs and personnel which just need to be refocused. Arguably, Army could commence a number of cultural awareness initiatives across different time frames, but one option is a career specialisation for middle to senior ranking officers designed to be most effective over a period of seven to ten years. This specialisation, called a 'Foreign Area Officer' (FAO) would enable Army to engage with its operational environment in a continuous and enriching way.

THE ENGAGEMENT GAP

SOME DEFINITIONS

Before proceeding, a definition of 'engagement' is required. It can risk sounding quite grand, when the term might just be referring to soldiers speaking the same language. Paul Keating wrote a book on engagement during an important period in foreign affairs, during which the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation was established. In this book, Keating describes the Australian people as '...slowly coming to terms with the implications of their place in the world.'² This interpretation removes any remaining thoughts of conquest or exploitation, and puts the emphasis on how we are *received*. The Army would do well to consider how it is *received* as well as how it *proceeds* when planning intervention operations.

There is an emerging Army framework for regional security that describes engagement in terms of improving understanding, developing relationships and influencing perceptions. This framework emphasises that engaging in peacetime activities precipitates stability by actually *relieving* the conditions that lead to conflict, particularly in fragile states.³ This strategy, adopted as a kind of foreign 'insurance policy', allows military forces great opportunity to act by themselves, at their own pace, and with some creativity. Somewhere between these two definitions—one of reception and one of cultivation—is probably where Army needs to pitch its engagement practice.

The scope of these activities is wide. Army understands that it plays a part in a larger government strategy, as part of foreign policy or capacity building in developing nations. This is probably the upper end of the engagement spectrum. The other end is probably down in the village where the soldier on patrol negotiates with a local chief to draw water from a well. This is *all* engagement, but the scope is linear and restricts us to a meaning of personal communication based on mutual benefit. There is more to it than this.

Understanding our operating environment involves immersing ourselves in it. This means we have to study its history, geography, politics and sociology. We have

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to analyse its patterns of success and failure, over time and from different points of view. This may mean stepping out of our environment for a while. Isolation, as has been argued in a previous edition of the *Australian Army Journal*,⁴ does nothing to assist cultural understanding. Integration and immersion, on the other hand, allow cultural knowledge to grow. This form of engagement requires us to ‘be’ in a cultural space, ‘act’ within it, and ‘observe’ what goes on around us. ‘Awareness’, as satirist Christian Lander reminds us, is unlikely to solve all the world’s problems, as much as going to different restaurants is unlikely to produce cultural diversity!⁵

IDENTIFYING THE GAP

If we take this layered approach to engagement, we now need to determine where the greatest need for engagement is and where an engagement gap exists. The answer to both these questions lies in the same area. The biggest *need* for engagement and the lack of engagement *mechanisms* is most evident at what Army calls the ‘key leadership level’. This is the level of national decision makers, controllers, commanders and chiefs, and it is invariably dealt with by the commander on the ground. This immediately presents two problems. First, it assumes that engagement strategies have not been applied early on in the planning process; and second, a ‘commander only’ approach takes the commander away from commanding the force, and restricts the distribution of cultural knowledge to the select few around him.

This solution is also reductionist in that it omits the fact that decision makers, controllers, commanders and chiefs are products of their society and holders of office within that society. Where then is the study of that society? We lament that there is no more ‘Smith of the China Desk’; indeed ‘Smith’ had a career’s knowledge of people and patterns and rises and falls over time, which provided *perspective*. In the modern quest for generalists, we have lost the expert. ‘Smith’ is no longer an efficient solution, and consequently we are all instant experts, wading about in the proverbial Pierian spring.⁶

We need to bring back the expert; someone to be our authority. Someone who has studied the country from within and without. In a regional setting, this expert needs to know the head of state, the head of the army, and their anointed successors. This expert needs to know the difference between national, sub national and local issues; to be able to identify who holds the power and who holds the authority; and what the difference is between the official and unofficial networks. This expert needs to know who else is interested in the state, and who is investing. This expert needs to be fluent in one of the languages and understand most of the others. This expert needs to know where the last tsunami was and where the next epidemic will be, and above all to be able to identify what is normal and what is not. In

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addition to this, we need someone who can also understand air and sea points of entry, lines of communications and supply, and level of threat. We need the Foreign Area Officer.

It would be tempting here to claim that diplomatic staff already provide this role; however, three aspects of diplomatic practice prevent it from providing Army with specific knowledge. First, the need for diplomatic generalists results in a similar frequency of rotation of diplomatic staff through regional desks, making regional experts equally scarce. Second, the homogeneity of the consular environment limits a wider cultural or context specific understanding. Third, the level of diplomatic engagement is focused more on *state* and less on *local* governance, where Army may be asked to assist in humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Although Army may deploy in support of a wider whole-of-government mission, Army's information requirements will be tailored to the particular job it undertakes within the spectrum of joint operational contingencies.⁷

Finally, it is worth mentioning that 'the expert' may be needed for other areas that lie outside our cultural understanding. If we continue to engage with Indigenous communities within Australia, then we may need to cultivate people versed in Indigenous engagement. If we develop our interagency operations, we may need to cultivate 'interagency experts'.⁸ Neither of these discussions will be taken up in this article; however, consideration of them follows naturally from this subject.

CURRENT PRACTICE

OFFICIAL APPROACHES

There is currently no coordinated approach to building regional expertise across Army; however, managers of various capabilities within Army have contributed to maintaining 'cells' of regional specialists. For example, Manager Languages – Army maintains an independent database of Army linguists, and administers Language Study Tours for qualified and current intermediate and advanced level linguists.⁹ These tours enable a linguist to maintain regular contact with his language environment regardless of his current posting. The Directorate of Officer Career Management – Army manages diplomatic postings for Defence Attaché staff and postings to regional areas in the Defence Intelligence Organisation. While these are examples of *official* management of regionally related jobs, they are not planned for the long term or coordinated in any way, and are primarily driven by the individual officer.

There is currently no coordinated approach to building regional expertise across Army ...

UNOFFICIAL APPROACHES

In reality, an unofficial approach exists. This is multi layered. With a return of service obligation that specifies *how long* but not *where to* for long courses at the Defence Force School of Languages,¹⁰ officers who have invested time there may choose to seek out postings that use their language skills. These postings may be located in Australia or overseas, and may include operational tours on unilateral, coalition or United Nations deployments. Operational tours may themselves be the start of an individual's interest in a region. A military deployment may be followed by the pursuit of a position with the Defence Cooperation Program, or United Nations mission based in that country. A personal family connection with a foreign area may also inspire an officer to seek further knowledge and engagement with that country. In the case of reservists, a professional connection may be the source. In these last two cases, private study and engagement off duty may be practiced by the officer and may very well be unknown to Army.

In most of these examples of *unofficial* management of regional expertise, the individual becomes 'commonly known' as a regional specialist, and occasionally consulted. A dilemma soon develops: the officer must forego this narrow profile for a competitive career, or become so ensconced in successive foreign postings as to become invisible.

SUCCESS OF THESE APPROACHES

The data on personnel graduating from the School of Languages, deployed on operations, holding post graduate qualifications, and attending overseas staff college can certainly give Army a false sense of security in this field. Indeed these official and unofficial practices have somewhat hidden the engagement gap that is now emerging. What cannot be hidden, however, is the way in which the Australian Army is continuously embarrassed by the superior language skills and cultural awareness of other military forces operating in our neighbourhood and engaging with our neighbours. Fully aware of this, Army has actually exacerbated the problem by insisting that cultural awareness is a measurable qualification, and introduced rather superficial training as a precondition of deployment. An unfortunate consequence of this is that on occasion, supplementary staff have had to be deployed into theatre to bridge the gap.

THE UNITED STATES SYSTEM

After the Second World War, the United States realised that its new peacetime role would require the promotion of a new kind of cooperation among states, to achieve the political and economic reconstruction necessary to maintain international peace. Out of the Marshall Plan and an expanded expeditionary focus on the Pacific, the Foreign Area Officer program emerged.¹¹

The United States Department of Defense runs the FAO program, which it considers to be essential to the 'war fighting capabilities [that will] achieve success on the non-linear battlefields of the future'.¹² The program is run out of the proponent office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, with each department (service) developing their own group of FAOs in line with their departmental training regimes:

...the Military Departments shall deliberately develop a corps of FAOs, who shall be commissioned officers with a broad range of military skills and experiences; have knowledge of political-military affairs; have familiarity with the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of the countries and regions in which they are stationed; and have professional proficiency in one or more of the dominant languages in their regions of expertise.¹³

Army and Marine FAO programs are currently further developed than Navy and Air Force; however, the programs all differ slightly. Army and (only recently) Navy have a single-track approach to FAO career management (which means, the officer is streamed into an FAO career specialisation, and competes within that stream); while the Air Force and Marine Corps have a dual-track approach (in which the officer serves alternately between his primary career field and FAO assignments). Evaluation for the success of each stream is still immature, but the disadvantages of dual-track officers having less time available to devote to FAO training appears to be countered by the greater opportunities to remain current and competitive in their basic military designation.¹⁴

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considers to be essential ...

SELECTION

Selection to the FAO programs commonly require seven to ten years of commissioned service (with the exception of Marines, which requires only three), a compartmented security clearance, wide military experience within the primary career field or military occupation specialty, a high score at language aptitude testing, and an undergraduate degree with a grade point average typically sufficient for entry into a Masters degree.

TRAINING

Training for FAOs takes between three to five years and consists of a number of courses and postings taken in no prescribed order. These include a joint course; the three-day (Army-led) FAO orientation course, which provides the newly selected

FAO with an overview and understanding of the program; career field, and regional or country specific information. The course is conducted twice a year at different service training locations. The officer will undertake one year of full-time post graduate study in national security or international relations, with an emphasis on the target region. These courses are offered by a number of approved universities across the United States that have standing arrangements with the Department of Defense for mid-career courses. The longest module of the FAO curriculum can be language training. Depending on the level of language required, the candidate can spend from six to fifteen months in full-time language training. After the events of 11 September 2001, the Department of Defense conducted a complete overhaul of its language capability, resulting in a language roadmap released in 2005. This roadmap identified tracking of accession, separation and promotion of FAOs as one of its four main goals.¹⁵ In-country training from six to twelve months provides the candidate with immersion into the culture of the host and neighbouring country, exposure to the host's military units and schools, and familiarisation with United States embassy practice. One or more tours in an FAO role are then undertaken to complete the initial training towards full FAO designation.

In-country training from six to twelve months provides the candidate with immersion into the culture of the host and neighbouring country ...

Once an officer is deemed to have completed an advanced degree, completed the language proficiency test with a high score, achieved a high score of 'regional expertise', and has at least one tour in progress or completed, then he or she is awarded the FAO designation and listed as such.

FURTHER TRAINING

Professional development for FAOs is a current priority for the proponent office, and as such a skills sustainment course was approved in December 2008. The Joint Foreign Area Officer Skill Sustainment Pilot Program is an advanced education and skill sustainment initiative for FAOs from all services and provides online distance learning and in-residence courses. The goal of the program is to find innovative ways to provide foreign language and regional sustainment training for experienced FAOs to enable them to meet growing joint mission requirements. A number of seminars are also available, conducted both in the United States and in foreign areas of operation. These seminars are regionally based and focus on exchange of ideas from FAOs, academics and foreign policy experts operating in a specific area.

RESERVISTS

The United States FAO specialisation is also available to reservists. The Army and Marine Corps have dual-track reserve programs, while the Navy and Air Force programs are still in development. The Department of Defense believes that the Reserve Component FAOs are a key component to the success of the overall joint FAO program, and includes this as a priority despite the difficulty in managing and monitoring the personnel.

EMPLOYMENT

United States FAOs serve as defence attachés, security assistance officers, political-military planners in service headquarters, joint staff, combatant commands, or part of a defence agency. They also serve as arms control treaty inspectors and liaison officers to host nation or coalition allies, but the Defense Intelligence Agency remains the largest single user of FAOs in the department. All defence attaché billets require skills equivalent to an FAO and some level of proficiency in the principal language of the country of assignment.¹⁶ While promotion levels vary between the branches, retention rates of FAOs are higher than Service averages.

CRITIQUE OF THE US FAO SYSTEM

While the American system has been a good test case, it is not without criticism. The 2005 Language Roadmap stated that retention rates were lower among military personnel with language skills in some services, primarily due to *poor use of linguists*, and because of this, 'FAO jobs are viewed as career ending in some service officer communities'. In the subsequent list of desired outcomes, the document included: managing linguists and FAOs as 'critical strategic assets', establishing professional career paths for FAOs, and tracking and managing FAO personnel more effectively.¹⁷

At the same time there was some criticism that the European theatre was over billeted with FAO positions that were too 'cushy' and too similar to those of an attaché.¹⁸ This criticism also claimed that the FAO program placed too much focus on language and not enough on strategic studies:

... 'FAO jobs are viewed as career ending in some service officer communities.'

The Army needs to address strategic studies as a core skill. Language, while important, must be viewed as an enabler. The Army should enforce a broader assignment set and change its FAO personnel policy to overcome its Cold War bias and address new regional

priorities. The central question facing the FAO career field over the next few years is whether FAO can overcome its own Cold War paradigm to become a more effective instrument of national policy during the 21st Century.¹⁹

Deployed and prospective FAOs have mixed feelings about their positions, some of which echo the points above. Their blogs offer these observations:

‘I looked at it. Europe is hard to get. Everybody wants Europe.

‘A lot of the training is for a Masters Degree. They waive that requirement a lot now because they need FAOs in the embassies, not school. Even a lot of the language training is not being done all the way. My friend was Sub-Saharan Africa and was only sent to learn French instead of both French and Swahilli and was not sent to get a Masters...

‘If you make the jump to FAO, you often lose touch with the rest of the military.’²⁰

‘...ex-FAOs are in great demand by civilian companies doing business in their area of expertise.’²¹

‘As for training, if your service doesn’t give you enough—train yourself: read, travel, engage. You should spend time alone in the country (or countries) interacting with the people in their language.’²²

‘We dual track our FAOs specifically so that they remain viable and relevant Marine Corps officers. Something the Army is struggling with.’²³

‘I had to beg for 6 weeks of Russian refresher (last refresher class? 1990!). Now I’ve managed a 2+/2+ on the DLPT V, but after one month in Russia, I’ve found that this result means exactly squat. Funny, but I don’t find any salesmen here who want to talk about healthcare reform...’²⁴

‘I am one of the extremely lucky AF guys to actually get assigned to a country where they speak the language that I was trained/selected for. I really feel bad for the AF FAOs who get assigned to stateside postings where they do not get to hear ‘their language’ everyday.’²⁵

‘We met with the Consulate General there, who proceeded to tell us, strangely, that he would prefer working with a basic branch officer rather than an FAO because we carry too much of our own opinions/views on matters.’²⁶

There is no question that the United States system is not perfect. The FAO programs differ between the services and have developed and improved at different rates. They do, however, provide a starting point for an analysis of our own ability to provide such a program.

HOW WE CAN ADAPT THE SYSTEM FOR AUSTRALIA

PERSONNEL PROBLEMS

In 2008, there were 1770 designated FAOs across all four United States services. The United States Army held 1122 of those and for the United States military, this is still not sufficient for their needs.²⁷ These numbers represent 0.16 per cent of regular service numbers and 0.24 per cent of regular Army numbers. Translated to the Australian Defence Force, this is the equivalent of having 88 permanent FAOs, with the Army providing 66 of those. This is a big ask, particularly when the Army has agreed to hand back 450 uniformed positions to a civilian force as part of the Strategic Reform Program.

Most of these 450 positions are in organisations other than the Army. These positions are mutually beneficial, in that they give non Army organisations the skills and experience of an Army member, while giving the Army member depth in

These positions are mutually beneficial, in that they give non Army organisations the skills and experience of an Army member ...

his or her career, often with the added benefit of stability and predictability. For this reason they are often called 'respite postings' as they give the member a break from the high demands of a regimental or combat posting. Respite postings lengthen an Army officer's career. When these positions do not exist, the Army officer gets exhausted and leaves the force early. This does not leave much room for the FAO, single or dual track system. The answer may lie in turning staff positions, which already exist in headquarters, into FAO billets. Branches such as plans, intelligence and civil-military cooperation are examples. As long as they assist operations, they are useful.

United States Military FAOs are hybrid creatures. They are a combination of an Australian defence attaché, a defence intelligence desk officer, a linguist, a qualified civil-military cooperation officer, a joint planner, a United Nations military observer, a political or social scientist, a liaison officer, an international policy advisor and a foreign affairs representative. The answer to how we create an FAO may lie in this list. Army owns some of the positions in this list, and common FAO training for all of them may be the first step.

BORROWING THE GOOD BITS, REJECTING THE BAD

The US program is clearly not without problems, and individual experiences differ greatly. Some areas, however, are already tested and would survive transfer. These are as follows:

- A longer qualifying period before selection would suit an Australian model as it would ensure that Australian Army General Service Officers complete all basic courses for both regimental and specialised Corps employment.
- A high language aptitude test score means that Australian FAO candidates are able to study languages across all three language groups at the Australian Defence School of Languages, making the candidate more flexible to Service needs.
- A relevant undergraduate degree with a high grade point average will allow candidates quicker access to specific postgraduate courses around Australia.
- Current Defence institutions are already set up to provide the individual modules of FAO training (orientation, joint and languages).
- Professional development seminars can easily be facilitated due to the relatively close proximity of officer postings in Australia and the region.
- Using reserve officers as FAOs would suit the Australian model, particularly former regular members.
- The wide variety of employment opportunities is mirrored in the Australian system, to the extent that General Service Officers at major and lieutenant colonel rank are increasingly asked to perform some of these roles without any specialist training. Some aspects of the United States program are not as suitable to an Australian model. These are as follows:
 - The requirement for a compartmented security clearance is probably overestimated. Access to compartmented information is job specific, not role specific, and may be applicable to some FAO tasks more than others. The security clearance process in Defence is under resourced and in arrears and should not be used to reject an FAO candidate who will otherwise be immersed in open source information. By definition of the candidate's seniority, the officer will regardless possess an adequate security clearance to allow a sufficient level of access.
 - Spreading the training over three to five years is too long for the Australian officer career. We will lose the officer in the operational whirlwind and key promotion window. Short, intensive training, followed by five to six years service as an FAO will be of more benefit.
 - Completing courses in no specific order is not useful. Unless the training system builds upon itself in enhancing the officer's qualifications, the knowledge will be lost. The United States training system cultivates an FAO over a longer period of time, for proven greater retention rates and benefit. The question for an Australian model needs to be: how much time can we afford to invest before we reap?

Using reserve officers as FAOs would particularly suit the Australian model, particularly former regular members.

- Unlike the US model, financial remuneration is necessary for retention incentive. FAOs need a higher pay grade. This may not be as unachievable as it seems. If Army were to offer a first year major a pay grade jump of two grades,²⁸ the difference in salary over six years would still be less than paying Language Proficiency Allowance at the highest level each year for six years. The FAO would lose an allowance in favour of a salary rise which would better reflect the overall increase in skills.

A POSSIBLE MODEL

There are a number of options for creating FAO positions in Army. First, we could create a career stream along the lines of the Recognition of Professional Experience (RPE) program.²⁹ Second, we could create FAO billets in the Reserve Force only. Third, we could create billets in formation headquarters and post qualified officers into them (in the same way we post officers to 'Information Operations' positions). Fourth, we could create an FAO branch in Headquarters, Joint Operations Command, but have officers work out of various locations around Australia and overseas. Fifth, we could make them seconded positions in organisations other than Army. Sixth, we could request defence civilian positions be created within headquarters, and offer transition employment for separating Army officers.

The first RPE, with the addition of the fourth—being remotely posted to Joint Operations Command—would enable the officer to be removed from some of the pressures of the career posting cycle, while allowing him or her to live, study and work in proximity to a headquarters, university or organisation that supports that officer's region of expertise. Being managed centrally at Joint Operations Command allows quick movement to wherever a planning group is convening for the officer's special region, whether that group is in Australia or overseas. New cells and branches are being created all the time that need FAO support. A previous *Australian Army Journal* article proposed a Complex Warfare Branch;³⁰ the Task Force Headquarters in Timor Leste created a Key Leadership Engagement cell. What is important is that FAOs go where they can help plan and conduct operations.

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operations.

TRAINING

The training schedule could fit into two years. It would start with an orientation course conducted in Canberra so that speakers from the Australian Defence Force, Department of Defence and other departments and agencies can be close to give relevant

presentations. This would be followed by a joint operations course aimed at bringing all single service officers to a standard qualification, regardless of previous joint experience.³¹ This course could be expanded to include modules from other joint courses including Civil-Military Cooperation, Information Operations, and the United Nations Military Observers Course. In March, when university semesters begin, officers would return to the institution of their choice to undertake a Masters degree, which is generally a standard eighteen months' full-time study. The final six months would be spent at the Defence Force School of Languages (DFSL) undertaking a course at grade four (professional user – operations) or grade five (professional user – strategic). The advantage of the grade four operational course is that it involves a package of languages appropriate to the country, and could be designed to fit into a six month program; however, it may not provide the candidate with sufficient language skills for strategic engagement. The advantage of the grade five course is that it is designed for people involved in strategic engagement, but takes twelve months to complete.

... each opportunity adds to the officer's expertise and builds up a specific body of knowledge in one person.

EMPLOYMENT

The qualified FAO would then be posted to Joint Operations Command and work from an appropriate headquarters, Defence organisation or overseas posting location. Deployments would be treated as any other rotational staff officer position, with Joint Operations Command maintaining FAO billets in each deployed Task Force headquarters. The important aspect of the FAO employment is that each opportunity adds to the officer's expertise and builds up a specific body of knowledge in one person. The *person*, rather than the *position*, provides the continuity, and the person can be moved to where they are needed most.

CRITIQUE OF THE MODEL

The greatest weakness with this model is that it presents an addition to current regular Army manning caps and compensatory positions would have to be found. Ideally, an initial cohort of five officers would cover a sufficient variety of countries to add weight to operational planning, but the program could commence with just two. The training schedule provides no significant weaknesses, and can be strengthened further by subsequent training in languages in particular. The strength lies in the posting arrangement, which provides a permanent relationship between the officer and an organisation or research centre that specialises in his or her region of expertise; and enough flexibility to provide Army immediate access to the FAO.

SUMMARY

Army needs to be more engaged with the people in future areas of operation. To a certain extent it engages already, but only in an *ad hoc* way, which is a great drain on resources. By *formalising* the engagement process and using some lessons from the US system, Army can invest in a specialised program that becomes more efficient the longer it runs. The training assets needed to kick-start the program already exist, and post graduate study currently being pursued by individual officers can be harnessed by Army for its own needs. The program will assist the retention of officers at the critical rank level, and cultivate associations with external agencies and departments. The cost increase in salaries and university fees is offset by forfeiting the language allowance and delaying promotion. The main weakness is the additional positions it creates in an already overmanned Army.

CONCLUSION

Army can no longer afford to maintain superficial levels of knowledge about the places with which it continues to be involved. It needs to understand where it is going before it gets there. Our neighbours invest a considerable proportion of their defence budgets to this, and we need to as well. Whether in the irregularity of the current war, or the conventions of a future continental war, or as part of the ongoing stability of the region—we need the Foreign Area Officer now more than ever.

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- 6 Alexander Pope, 'An Essay on Criticism', 1709. In this often quoted poem, the Pierian Spring is the fountain of knowledge from which we can either taste, or drink our fill.
- 7 ADDP 3.0 – *Operations (Provisional)*, Chapter 1, Annex A.
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 - 12 United States Department of Defense Directive 7375.77, 28 April 2005, para 3.1.
 - 13 Ibid, para 3.3, 3.4.
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 - 16 Despite this requirement, between 2003 and 2008, more than 70 per cent of officers nominated to attend the Joint Military Attaché School arrived with no proficiency in the principal language of the country of their assignment.
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THE AUTHOR

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DOCTRINE TRAINING ORGANISATION

COMBAT FITNESS

ADAPT OR DIE

MAJOR JAMES DAVIS

ABSTRACT

Dissatisfied with its soldiers' physical readiness for combat, the US Army has recently conducted a sweeping review of its physical training program. To a degree, the rise of innovative fitness programs such as CrossFit influenced this review. This article contends that the theory and practice of physical training in the Australian Army requires review. The CrossFit strength and conditioning program offers an innovative prism through which to identify opportunities for improvement. Specifically the article compares the respective approaches of CrossFit and the Australian Army to 'combat fitness'. From this it identifies the divergences in the principles of each program, considers what Army might leverage from these differences and finally discusses the need for a compelling narrative that defines our approach to combat fitness, that is simple enough for soldiers to remember, apply and be passionate about.

'The human body is the chassis of every known weapon system.'

Colonel P B McCoy¹

I recently heard a sergeant say to a group of soldiers in 1st Brigade that when they run around the brigade and see the warrant officers and older officers walking for physical training they are looking at themselves in fifteen years. The walkers in turn are looking back at them and seeing themselves fifteen years ago doing what they did then and wondering how they got from there to where they are now. Is it unreasonable to believe that a cycle breaker may have emerged in parallel with the other societal and organisational changes of the past two decades and those soldiers do not have to be walking the tank track in 2025? The US Army is asking similar questions; Lieutenant General Mark Hertling, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command's deputy commanding General for Initial Military Training, recently reviewed US Army physical training and realised that the US Army's 'physical training programs were not that good and were not performing their intended purpose'.²

I do not think our Army is much different. This article contends that the theory and practice of physical training in the Australian Army requires review. The CrossFit strength and conditioning program offers an innovative prism through which to identify opportunities for improvement. Specifically the article compares the respective approaches of CrossFit and the Australian Army to 'combat fitness'. From this, it identifies the divergences in the principles of each program, considers what Army might leverage from these differences and finally discusses the need for a compelling narrative that defines our approach to combat fitness and that is simple enough for soldiers to remember, apply and be passionate about. It consciously avoids any attempts to 'sell' CrossFit to Army; the Canadian Military,³ United States Marine Corps,⁴ other law enforcement agencies,⁵ Olympians⁶ and Special Operations Units⁷ have accepted the efficacy, efficiency and safety of CrossFit for reasons that will not be enumerated here. CrossFit is simply the vehicle of comparison.

Understanding CrossFit or any fitness program requires a definition of fitness. The Australian Army defines 'combat fitness' as the

physical capacity to perform the physical demands of routine and mission specific duties effectively, and still have enough energy left over to handle any contingencies that may arise. This includes possessing high levels of the physical fitness parameters of strength, endurance and aerobic capacity, and the motor skill parameters of agility, balance and coordination.⁸

This definition leads thinking down one of two possible paths. In the first instance, one can accept war's violent, chaotic and unpredictable nature and as a

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corollary recognise that 'routine and mission specific duties' and 'possible contingences' (possible contingencies including lethal interpersonal violence) cannot be defined.⁹ Alternatively, one ignores the unpredictable nature of war and develops a laundry list of physical requirements for 'routine and mission specific tasks' by function, gender and age. The problem with the second prescriptive approach, used in Army's definition of combat fitness, is that it fosters the illusions that combat lets its participants choose the tasks they perform. It may lead to an illusion that combat will only place large upper body strength demands on Artillery soldiers, combat will never require tankers to cover ground quickly on foot, or that combat's demands diminish as we grow older. Clausewitz asserts that combat makes no such allowances because it is subject to immutable laws of chance and friction.¹⁰ Combat fitness by definition must acknowledge this truth. Alternatively, CrossFit posits that the physical demands of life, and by extension combat, are 'unknown and unknowable'.

'Unknown and unknowable' is a closer representation of the uncertainty of combat than 'routine and mission specific tasks'.

To physically prepare for the unknown and unknowable, CrossFit espouses a 'belief in fitness'; that is, a belief in 'a physical capacity which lends itself generally well to any endeavor'.¹¹ A program of 'constantly varied, high intensity functional movements' develops this physical capacity.¹² 'Constantly varied' translates as the use of a wide array of exercises from weight lifting, gymnastics and locomotion (running, rowing), in varying combinations and time intervals. CrossFit does not mandate specific exercise modes except to demand that all exercises are 'functional movements'. Functional movements are those elemental movements we are born with and biomechanically designed to perform. Functional movements generally demand the movement of 'large, loads long distances quickly'.¹³ These terms are relative to the human body—a clean and jerk is an example of 'a large load being moved a long distance quickly'; a bicep curl is not. The final tenet, 'high intensity', describes the requirement to perform a lot of work in a short time frame and focuses on adaptation in the first two metabolic pathways.¹⁴ Most CrossFit workouts compete against the clock to tap the inherent competitive nature of humans and compel athletes to push themselves beyond what they might normally like to do; as Glassman says, 'men will die for points'.¹⁵ I take it as self-evident that the reader will also recognise the psychological benefits of exposing a soldier to competitive and unpredictable situations on a daily basis.

To physically prepare for the unknown and unknowable, CrossFit espouses a 'belief in fitness'...

The principles of Army's combat fitness training methodology are: overload, specificity, individuality, recovery and reversibility. The principles 'overload,' 'recovery' and 'reversibility' correlate broadly between Army and CrossFit and so will not be the focus of the discussion.¹⁶ The programs diverge with regard to specificity and individuality. *Combat Fitness* states:

The principle of specificity revolves around the training effect being specific to the overall objective. The body adapts according to the type of overload imposed and the specific method training being delivered. Weight training performed exclusively induces specific strength adaptations with little or no increase in aerobic fitness. Aerobic fitness training, in contrast, elicits specific endurance training adaptations with essentially no improvement in strength.¹⁷

CrossFit's position is that 'combat requires an ability to perform well at all tasks, even unfamiliar tasks, tasks combined in infinitely varying combinations. In practice this encourages the athlete [soldier] to disinvest in any set notions of sets, rest periods, reps, exercises, order of exercises, routines and periodization.'¹⁸ This approach is diametrically opposed to Army's principle of specificity. Additionally, CrossFit focuses training in the first and second metabolic pathways because these adaptations translate generally well to the third metabolic pathway. The layman's translation of this is that Army says doing high intensity Olympic lifting will not improve a military athlete's running capacity;¹⁹ CrossFit says it does.²⁰

... individuality means that athletes perform varied functional movements with intensity or load scaled to their ability.

Consideration of the principle of 'individuality' reveals another divergence between Army and CrossFit. *Combat Fitness* describes 'individuality' as follows:

The focus for combat fitness training is on team performance; however, the team in its entirety is made up of individuals of different genetics, experience, lifestyles and tolerance to training intensities. The main aim of a preparatory combat fitness program is to identify shortfalls in the performance of individuals and prescribe training to enhance performance accordingly. The use of ability groups and personal training programs is essential to optimise performance improvements.²¹

To CrossFit, individuality means that athletes perform varied functional movements with intensity or load scaled to their ability. For example, every CrossFitter from seven years old to seventy years old will squat and perform Olympic lifts.²² CrossFit summarises this idea as, 'the needs of Olympic athletes and housewives differ by degree not kind'. On the surface, in accordance with the principle of

individuality, it seems reasonable for Australian Army units to conduct physical training differently as units have different demographics. However, it is my experience that the Australian Army is, informally at least, defining individuality to mean that people do the physical training they are comfortable with. We are not the only military to suffer from this malaise. Sergeant 1st Class Steven Lee, the senior trainer at the United States Army Physical Fitness School (USAPFS), comments ‘that the old FM [US Army Physical Training Doctrine] was a buffet. If you didn’t understand it, your diet became, “whatever I like, that’s what I’m going to do”.’²³ There must be a list of basic physical skills that military athletes should be able to perform. The Australian Army physical training doctrine is not clear on what they should be. Even if they were clear, an overemphasis on the training principle of individuality and the nature of the testing regime encourages divergence from doctrine in practice. Currently, whether it intends to or not, the Australian Army defines the *critical* components of an exercise program as running or walking, push-ups and sit-ups.²⁴ Similarly, Frank Palkoska, the USAPFS director, says that US Army physical training programs held to a flawed concept that ‘testing drove training ... units said, all we’ve got to do is do push-ups, sit-ups and run; and, the more we run, the better we’ll be.’²⁵ When doctrine is unclear on what is important then the assessed elements of physical training become the building block of the training program and crucial components are ignored.

To explore this idea without sinking into an exercise physiology swamp I will examine the squat as an example. The squat is a fundamental basic human movement,²⁶ which, in so much as it develops powerful hip extension, correlates very strongly to athletic performance.²⁷ Army, invoking or misusing the principle of ‘individuality’, allows individuals to not squat or to squat incorrectly, because they say they are too old, injured or cautious. CrossFit requires all its athletes to squat and modifies the load and number of repetitions by individual ability.²⁸ An analogy might be that all soldiers must be able to operate a F88 Austeyr competently but not all soldiers need to be able to group like an infantryman. The squat cannot be simply omitted, sidelined or diluted from a legitimate strength and conditioning program. In the CrossFit program squatting is taught, revised and practiced continually.²⁹ By comparison, my anecdotal observation is that a large proportion of Army’s combat soldiers have not been taught to squat correctly³⁰ nor are practiced in this skill repetitively—as they have done with drill, first aid or employment of their personal weapon. This lack of training focus on a major building block of athletic

This lack of training focus on a major building block of athletic performance seems odd given the importance of combat fitness...

performance seems odd given the importance of combat fitness and its links to combat performance as stated in *Combat Fitness*:

Successful performance in combat is the driving force behind all military training; physical training is no exception. A high level of physical condition not only permits the efficient execution of tasks over extended periods of time, but increases confidence, discipline and esprit de corps, while reducing susceptibility to injury and mental and physical stress.³¹

To align the practice with this ideal, the squat, as but one example of a building block of physical capacity, should receive the same amount of training attention as weapons proficiency and other soldier skills.

The lack of understanding of critical components of physical training could be because Army's physical training doctrine is not well known or understood in the force. *Combat Fitness* is a detailed and logical publication; unfortunately, its contents are not accessible to the individual soldier. I suspect this is because it is not particularly readable and has no dominant or easily understood narrative. To a sports scientist or physical training instructor the requirements of *Combat Fitness* are probably easily understood, but to a non-professional or soldier there is no clear and simple controlling idea that a soldier can use to guide their actions when conducting physical training. In contrast, CrossFit describes itself as a 'constantly varied high intensity functional movement' program. I concede that this is a little abstract without context; more useful is Greg Glassman's 'fitness in 100 words' that describes CrossFit's approach as:

Eat meat and vegetables, nuts and seeds, some fruit, little starch and no sugar. Keep intake to levels that will support exercise but not body fat. Practice and train major lifts: Deadlift, clean, squat, presses, Clean and Jerk, and snatch. Similarly, master the basics of gymnastics: pull-ups, dips, rope climb, push-ups, sit-ups, presses to handstand, pirouettes, flips, splits, and holds. Bike, run, swim, row, etc, hard and fast. Five or six days per week mix these elements in as many combinations and patterns as creativity all will allow. Routine is the enemy. Keep workouts short and intense. Regularly learn and play new sports.³²

Combat Fitness, as a 743-page pamphlet, is also physically less accessible to the modern soldier than CrossFit's 'doctrine'. CrossFit's doctrine is on the Internet in a variety of media such as videos, journal articles and iPod/iPhone files. The US Army has translated this idea to its revised physical training field manual by including videos showing how to execute every exercise in the training circular on the website of its Physical Training School. For mobile devices an 'Army Physical Readiness Training' iPhone app was created, which collates exercise details with photos, videos and example workout calendars for each of the physical readiness training phases.³³

Comparing CrossFit and the Army physical training methodology has identified the following possible avenues for improvement in Army physical training. First, align physical training doctrine to combat doctrine; in particular, discard the assumption that the physical requirements of combat can be known and quantified. Second, critically review the physical training principle of 'specificity'. The principle of specificity does not relate well to the demands of combat, and is declining in importance as a principle in *general* strength and conditioning programs. Third, elevate learning and testing of basic physical skills to the same footing as learning how to march and how to use a weapon. Finally, build physical training doctrine on a simple ideology that every soldier can understand and execute, and publish this doctrine and its supporting information on the Internet in digestible media and easily searchable formats.

The weapons systems and tactics used in combat have evolved over the last fifteen years. The methods by which the Australian Army develops the physical capacity of the humans at foundation of these weapons systems and tactics have not. Other militaries are recognising this and reviewing their physical training programs. CrossFit offers a progressive prism through which to review and improve the theory and practice of physical training of the Australian Army.

Comparing CrossFit and the Army physical training methodology has identified the following possible avenues for improvement in Army physical training.

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CULTURE

AN OPPORTUNITY NOT TO BE WASTED

WHAT ARMY SHOULD REQUIRE OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE ACADEMY

MAJOR ROSS CABLE

ABSTRACT

This article argues that the Australian Defence Force Academy, by virtue of its original charter, access to resources and duration of its officer training course, offers a unique and unrealised suite of opportunities yet to be fully realised and harnessed toward ADF capability. The author offers practical suggestions for implementing a number of ready, command-led measures for directing the academy toward this end, thereby increasing graduates' contributions to Defence capability across the complexity of contemporary operations, while attaining a world class reputation deserving of this maturing institution.

The demands of the Primary Operational Environment (POE) and lines of operation detailed in *Adaptive Campaigning* require a broad range of personal abilities as a component of Army's developing Foundation Warfighting preparation cycle.¹ These present a daunting prospect for Army learning due to their depth and breadth, as well as the duration required for development of individual abilities. The establishment of Headquarters Forces Command

(HQ FORCOMD) has aligned most of Army's resources toward this Foundation Warfighting imperative, yet the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) is largely shielded from the wider Army and even ADF priorities. Consequently, vast opportunities to develop around half the officer corps during their critical, formative first three years' service are wasted. Moreover, the learning environment, time and ready access to a variety of resources available during these three years of training are beyond the scope of what Army can achieve in virtually any other phase of the training cycle (including at the Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon). As such, this article details what Army (and, by extension, the ADF) should be demanding from this unique institution.

ADFA is not fully achieving its original intent and, despite the level of investment, is not contributing to ADF capability to the degree it could through simple measures. Despite the achievements of academic staff, and the continuance of the time-worn Academy Military Education and Training (AMET) and varying single service training programs, the essential 'missing element' pertaining to officer qualities and the formation of appropriate attitudes is virtually ignored on the path to graduation. There is little understanding of how investment in military activities such as drill, room inspections, the ADFA Production or voluntary sporting and extra-curricular activities links with (or detracts from) the generation of confident, competent, mentally robust, thinking officers for the ADF. Consequently, the result achieved by ADFA, in terms of individual graduate quality, is uneven, and for many midshipmen and officer cadets² the benefit of ADFA is little more than could be gained by attending the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in uniform. This need not be the case.

Many capable junior staff already *in command* at ADFA—having themselves recently experienced the demands of the POE—are poised to appropriately develop the many high-quality cadets who join the ADF with the intellectual capacity, ability and motivation to be trained.³ Additionally, by not allowing such officers to execute senior command intent, the institution in turn is not fulfilling a range of lofty *implicit and explicit* promises made in recruiting.⁴ This disappoints cadet expectations, which consequently affects motivation and, in turn, achievement of learning outcomes. The simple remedy is for the ADF to promote a common understanding of the purpose and prospects for ADFA and for this to be executed in a collegiate manner by ADFA staff through command focus, prioritisation and alignment of resources.

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AN ACADEMY FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

Simply put, ADFA exists to provide thinking junior officers toward ADF capability. Cadets are placed in the academy environment, undertake academic degrees, and complete various courses with the support of staff who shape and influence them toward this fundamentally attitudinal end. This ‘higher purpose’ is demonstrated in the initial conception of the academy.

ADFA was established in 1986 in partnership with UNSW, recognising efficiencies in delivery by centralising the degree programs of the three single service colleges. This was achieved through huge initial investment and ADFA continues to be maintained at considerable expense. Such expenditure demonstrates an enduring and implicit understanding at strategic levels of Defence toward the value of education of officers from an *ab initio* stage. The difference between education and training,⁵ and importance of education for officers is important to grasp—both militarily and academically—since it directly relates to future job performance.⁶

Inherent in ADFA’s original purpose was a desire to enhance Defence capability, by enhancing joint service networks, educating officers through an academic degree, and providing military training. It also placed officer qualities at its core;⁷ although it has been suggested that even at an early stage this original intent began to erode.⁸

The value of ADFA has been queried in numerous fora through its history.⁹ There are many reasons for ADFA’s continued existence: some are practical, such as the recruiting drawcard that a degree can offer;¹⁰ others are embedded, such as the academic degree or joint networking. However, ancillary or ‘automatic’ benefits should not distract the commandant and military staff from their main effort—contributing to the military capability of the ADF. Without achieving this, ADFA would never have been created.¹¹ Indeed, the institution’s survival has invariably stemmed from military benefits beyond those which could be gained by sponsorship of cadets at civilian universities. However, these benefits are poorly expressed in any available direction, and are extremely fragile, leaving them vulnerable to ‘railroading’ by other, seemingly more pressing concerns.

The developmental path of ADFA has been excessively hindered by ‘analysis paralysis’ and well-meaning higher direction. The most recent of which, the 2010 ADFA Review¹²—delivered at considerable expense—fell far short of being a blueprint to revitalise ADFA’s key role in Defence capability. Despite extensive staff advice, it failed to articulate a single central theme or a compelling vision for the academy into the future or to define the unique role of the academy, thereby championing its existence. The review delved into numerous points at a ‘tactical’ level, thereby perpetuating ‘churn’ at the academy rather than assisting the commandant to drive toward outcomes with a higher goal. Rather than establishing a framework for a fundamental and comprehensive rethink about how ADFA should deliver a niche

capability to the ADF, it simply perpetuated ‘review fatigue’. Instead of squarely facing the ubiquitous spectre of the Grey Review,¹³ additional constraints are imposed, when in reality a complete reassessment of ADFA’s progress and purpose as an institution is required. Rectifying this shortfall could realise the academy’s aspiration to stand alongside the better known academies both here and abroad.

ADFA is ultimately established to graduate cadets and is minimally staffed to do so. A small cadre of tri-service senior non-commissioned officers and military officers are appointed to command divisions of around forty-four cadets, with a secondary role as instructors.¹⁴ Their potential to influence junior officer attitudes and contribute to training is immense, but unrealised. In the course of the academic week, cadets spend two half-days undertaking AMET.¹⁵ In addition, each morning one further hour of military time is allocated before university study commences. Conceivably, if well utilised for the entire three-year period, this time could significantly contribute around 420 additional hours to military capability. Unfortunately, at present, around 3/5 of this time is allocated to drill and room inspections.¹⁶ Furthermore, there is little direction or understanding of what the other 2/5 of weekly time, typically allocated as ‘OC’s or DO’s [Divisional Officer] hours’, could or should be harnessed toward officer training. Additional windows of opportunity also arise randomly throughout the AMET program and during academic breaks which offer further, often lengthier, chances for military-oriented learning. How staff decide to utilise this time sends powerful messages to cadets about what is important for officers.

The developmental path of ADFA has been excessively hindered by ‘analysis paralysis’ and well-meaning higher direction.

Graduation is dependent upon cadets passing key milestones, namely their academic studies, the AMET program,¹⁷ and satisfactory performance while training with their parent service.¹⁸ These three essential pillars ignore a fourth, less tangible, yet vital component: possessing the officer qualities appropriate to a junior officer having spent three years’ service in a joint officer training establishment. But how might ADFA contribute to the nurturing of such qualities?

A clue to explaining this ‘missing element’ is provided by the academy’s charter: to provide a ‘tertiary education in a military environment’.¹⁹ The ability of academic staff to deliver degree qualifications is unquestioned, but precisely what does this ‘military environment’ consist of? This has never been certain,²⁰ and no clear definition is provided,²¹ yet scope for misinterpretation is wide.²² At a more junior level, ADFA staff interpret differently the purpose of their employment, and have little guidance or training in appropriate methods to conduct their duties. This leads to highly varied approaches in which conflict can easily arise between priorities.²³ Cadets too—mostly

fresh out of high school—can be easily confused by images proudly trumpeted by the academy.²⁴ The intense focus on sporting, inter-squadron competitive and extra-curricular activities, military uniforms aside, can render ADFA virtually indistinguishable from a boarding school or sports institute. The obvious alternative is to recast the environment portrayed at ADFA as unmistakably that of a military academy dedicated to the development of joint junior officers in the profession of arms. With it would come pride, morale, motivation and a reduced need for a rules-based system.

ADFA must get the ‘environmentals’ right for effective contextualised learning to occur. This is because all learning consists of knowledge, skills and attitudes.²⁵ Becoming an officer is not just about knowing ‘stuff’. It is more about having the right mental approach and bearing to command on operations.²⁶ This requires ‘soft skills’ (such as adaptability, ethical conduct and social intelligence) which cannot be delivered in discrete training lessons so much as developed within an appropriate environment,²⁷ since *shaping* and *influence* is required.²⁸ Moreover, the learning levels²⁹ to be attained by officer trainees, who may deploy shortly after commissioning, are of a high level. These cannot be achieved at the requisite level if the teaching method is not aligned. This is precisely why PowerPoint® falls short in officer training courses, and more ‘active’ teaching methods are required.³⁰ Finally, attitudes, once instilled, are far more durable and versatile than skills training and knowledge accumulation.³¹

By virtue of duration and its immersive environment, ADFA is uniquely placed to develop abilities and attain learning levels strongly required in the POE—abilities that are virtually unobtainable elsewhere. A recent training needs analysis into *Adaptive Campaigning* has indicated the need for some operational capabilities, such as cultural understanding, which take lengthy development times and attainment of learning levels that cannot be rapidly delivered in a brief course of training. Whether ADFA can deliver this requirement—effectively compensating for life experience foregone while ‘institutionalised’—is dependent upon how well ADFA achieves its higher-order military goals. The fact that such attitudinal goals are difficult to measure should not deter ADFA from the importance of this objective.

Cadets too—mostly fresh out of high school—can be easily confused by images proudly trumpeted by the academy.

WHY HASN'T THIS HAPPENED ALREADY?

Why such a focused military learning environment does not exist already is perplexing. A vision for the development of the ADF officer corps is pronounced at the highest levels,³² and its purpose has been directly enunciated at the academy.³³

Competencies for leaders within the POE are also explicitly stated in esteemed literature of foreign forces,³⁴ and ADFA itself accumulates benchmarks attained in recurrent, hugely expensive and largely ineffectual annual visits to overseas academies.

Some shortfalls in the current regimen are explicitly recognised by Commander Australian Defence College.³⁵ However, these shortfalls appear to have only emerged as a topic for discussion,³⁶ with scant evidence of any real action. Indeed, much of what is discussed in this article has been articulated before in great detail,³⁷ yet little progress has occurred. Perhaps a lack of precise guidance can explain the varied and frequently disruptive approaches taken by the various commandants of ADFA.³⁸ Similarly, such confusion, as discussed, can easily see staff at lower levels working at cross purposes—with some commanders above Divisional Officer (DO) level only measuring performance in terms of administrative prowess. With limited explicit direction as to their role, and brief staff induction focusing on skills training for drill and weapons lessons, DOs can mistake their role as being simple and indulge in the personal study opportunities available at ADFA, rather than maximising time shaping cadets. Cadets readily perceive the various deficiencies outlined above.

ADFA is at ‘arms length’ for all services, and the performance of graduates is difficult to attribute to acts and omissions at ADFA. This distance from the services can give the impression that ‘all is well’, when the presumed achievements of the academy occur haphazardly at best.³⁹ Very little external pressure is exerted upon ADFA to attain development goals at the cadet level. Army has no direct budgetary control over ADFA, nor does ADFA have a relationship with the integrated training delivery established with the formation of HQ FORCOMD. It follows that ADFA lacks ‘deliverables’. Consequently, developmental activities within DO’s hours, which could be highly relevant, instead become ‘study own room’ without detection—to say nothing for the contemporary relevance of the AMET program or ongoing effectiveness of activity series such as the Exercise Leadership Challenge.

The entire program at ADFA barely progresses cadets toward being members of an Adaptive Army—even though ADFA is uniquely placed to mentally prepare them for precisely that. Ready examples can be seen; for instance, how does an immersion in near-daily drill and inspections shape thinking, adaptive officers? Do the range of activities which occur outside academic classes support and reinforce adaptive thought processes—albeit in a military setting—or worse, undermine them? Is the

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program itself adapting toward the vast developmental needs of ‘a war’,⁴⁰ or is it simply a re-run of last year?

Of course, the proposed remediation of such issues from a strategic level could be, and is, currently rendered irrelevant by the internal culture of the academy—particularly amongst the staff. These cultural elements include role confusion (reinforced by staff structures) that fixates upon ‘crisis management’ (rather than preventative measures); rigorous attention to personnel administration and reporting but comparatively little on training delivery; overemphasising maximal cadet academic study time; resistance toward any activity *perceived* to be ‘too Army’; and unproductive bickering between tri-service staff (at all levels) over their role—largely reversing the synergies a joint environment could achieve.⁴¹ A particular threat for Army officer cadets is the common belief that ‘RMC will sort it out’, which, taken to its full extent, wastes three of four years of officer training and with it the unique ‘value add’ that ADFA could offer. Overall, there is a mistaken belief that cadets are ‘too junior’ to understand concepts relating to the POE; have an overreliance on ‘osmosis’ to attain officer qualities;⁴² and that there is complacency with ‘automatic’ features of the academy such as making ‘joint mates’.⁴³ Far more can be deliberately done to progress important objectives, such as ‘maturity’ or ‘jointness’ that are highly regarded for operational success.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, many junior staff are pleading to do more and cadets are burning to get more from their ADFA experience.⁴⁵

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The reality outlined above amounts to a pressing need for practical ADF level direction to ADFA that cuts down recurrent hindrances and excuses. Higher direction must translate into foundational attributes for all ADF officers so that staff can consistently shape at the point of influence with cadets.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Given the situation described above, what should be done to reinvigorate ADFA as a military academy? The key step is to clearly define the graduate attributes required. These must be firmly postured toward the POE, should include knowledge, skills and attitudes, and specify foundational competencies, even where practicalities and constraints preclude widespread ‘practice’ in areas such as leadership.⁴⁶ These attributes must be tri-service relevant, although a cogent argument could be made that the basic qualities for officers rest on the same foundation across the services. Such foundational qualities must then be imbued in future graduates, primarily through an appropriate

military environment and a range of synchronised activities. These activities must be supported by the bulk of available resources at the academy—even at a risk of downscaling some ‘traditional’ cadet activities of questionable developmental utility.⁴⁷ Finally, these activities must be prioritised for delivery by junior commanders and not be overridden by other programming issues simply because they are ‘measurable’.

In designing such ‘training interventions’ it may well be found they include current activities such as drill and inspections, but these should not be included solely because of preconceptions, habits, simplicity or ease of resourcing. As a corollary, if other, higher-resource activities are required, then the basis for justifying such expenditure (as a small addition to the enormous existing cost) will have been strongly formed already. Matching activities to priorities will have a strong signalling effect in itself. Cadets readily respond to actions staff take far more than what they say. Demonstrating a commitment to command-led development as a member of the profession of arms—rather than the present slavish devotion to the AMET program augmented by time-fillers during the morning—would vividly illustrate what is important as an officer and what is less so. A current example of this mismatch is the practice of ‘locking down’ the academy for successive drill practice weeks, but sending cadets on additional days or weeks of leave immediately after exams and during university breaks when quality training could be planned and delivered. Is rifle drill really more important than preparing for the POE?

The key link between future graduates and the institution are the DOs. Their crucial yet nuanced role (without providing an exhaustive list) involves a wide variety of priorities and emphases which must be supported by every facet of the academy.

Primarily, good staff employ a mentoring approach.⁴⁸ This bolsters morale and reinforces cadet motivation, and in so doing, gains them rapport and influence, which has utility both in terms of welfare and character shaping.⁴⁹ DOs understand that cadets are young and inexperienced members of the ADF and find the means to make tangible their future role and expectations as a junior officer. Good DOs *demonstrate leadership* in order to teach it, and *shape attitudes* toward sanctioned ADF behaviours that persist beyond ‘work hours’, although, under current manning and with a single duty officer, this is difficult to achieve directly. To shape behaviour, they promote an appropriate military environment, maintaining an ‘atmosphere’ within their command. They also plan activities using innovative, yet necessarily austere, training approaches that grant them an insight to cadet development and permit accurate assessment. Simultaneously, insightful DOs promote the start of, as the Chief of Army would have them do,⁵⁰ a lifetime of learning and the beginnings of professional mastery, reinforcing learning and the thought processes borne of

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academic study.⁵¹ For an insightful DO, the mantra is ‘first do no harm’, recognising the fragile path toward achieving the true purposes of education.⁵²

Good DOs are today striving toward these goals, often in the absence of higher direction and support, with little specialised training and resourcing which is *ad hoc* at best. Indeed, DOs are far from unencumbered in what should be considered their main effort.⁵³ Where their attempts at achieving higher commanders’ intent end in disappointment, a dual loss occurs in terms of staff morale and cadet learning outcomes.

Cadet university costs are paid for by Defence, for which individuals incur a return of service obligation. Additionally, a first year cadet takes home \$917.76 per fortnight (which now includes an additional, generous ‘trainee allowance’). This lavish salary is paid for them to *learn* in designated military timeslots and *develop* as military officers at all times within a military environment—not just to attend academic classes. Staff are there to shape them within this environment toward a military goal—not to ‘baby sit’. The confluence of these issues amounts to a need for better military training aligned toward military objectives.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES ARE OUT THERE?

The range of foundational qualities might, upon analysis, establish a range of aspirational goals which will form graduates with unique abilities that need not correspond with those of the single service college graduates. Indeed, ADFA’s value prospect as an institution must stem from what it can uniquely deliver. The foundational qualities determined will form a vision or ‘endstate’ for an ADFA graduate, one that includes more than a university degree and ‘passes’ in a range of skills and knowledge based assessments. These foundational qualities should not be the product of individual opinion but be determined through analysis at the most senior levels of Defence. The development goals handed to ADFA should be far more ambitious than those recurring annually at ADFA at present and should require genuine evidence of ‘target effect’ at the cadet level during delivery.

Without pre-empting the results of such an analysis, it would seem logical that a re-assessed list of qualities would include fundamentals such as better understanding of joint operations and joint service-appropriate leadership competencies.⁵⁴ It would also be prudent to expect that after three years’ training, an ADFA graduate would have a greater sophistication in their understanding of modern war.⁵⁵ They should begin their preparation for complex, austere and demanding environments⁵⁶ while working alongside allies in overseas operations.⁵⁷ All such

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objectives play to ADFA's strengths. From this point there are various schools of thought regarding the approach to take. Stevenson argues that developing a 'profession of arms' framework founded on character gives the best long-term result. In this vein, 'future proofing' can best be achieved by developing mental capacity through awareness of strategic issues.⁵⁸ Finally, if ADFA has any 'hidden objectives' like developing cadet maturity,⁵⁹ then the academy should be explicit about these goals so that contributions to life experience can be made with the attendant resources granted to do so, rather than simply leaving this aspect to chance.⁶⁰

To a great extent, what should be achieved at the academy is simply an expansion of what is already being accomplished, albeit in limited ways. Good DOs strongly mentor their divisions, and arrange guest speakers and other activities, harnessing the opportunities before them with the very limited resources at their disposal. They enhance the bland PowerPoint® lessons they are required to present and teach leadership by actually practicing it within their respective divisions. Through force of leadership, the DOs create an environment in which cadets form officer qualities applicable to all services.⁶¹ They also encourage cadets to expand their horizons through self-motivated activities such as professional reading. Additionally, cadets select relevant subjects and involve themselves in largely self-funded personal development activities such as adventure training and battlefield studies tours to exotic locations. In so doing, cadets are effectively taking responsibility for their own wider education and professional development in ways that the academy should require and redirect funding toward, noting the strong link between such activities and performance on operations.⁶²

If such activities were more widespread, DOs would have both a realistic opportunity to shape cadets and to assess individual character development. Of course, to simply repeat past successes, organisational learning needs to be appreciably improved. All cadets should benefit from successful activities and good individual initiatives must not disappear with the posting cycle. The DO-level efforts as described would be significantly more widespread and effective if they were received as higher direction and benefited from stronger higher level support. For example, ADFA could produce graduates with true joint understanding, rather than simply 'joint mates'. Reinstating joint base tours and introductory joint warfare courses are examples where such direction and support would have immediate effect.

In terms of preparing for the POE, Canberra is well placed at the centre of most other government agencies, all foreign embassies, military and intelligence organisations and other sources of expertise, such as academia. Learning levels can

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be deliberately addressed through use of ready resources such as the Australian War Memorial in place of dry military slideshows. Expert lecturers are on campus or nearby, a plethora of languages are available for study locally, and UNSW courses in politics and other social science disciplines can be selected by cadets to support knowledge required for operating amongst the ‘human terrain’ described in *Adaptive Campaigning*. Slightly further afield in Sydney, Defence resources could effortlessly support visits to ethnic communities, religious sites, museums, think tanks and major Defence bases. However, such opportunities within close grasp must be encouraged, endorsed and supported—this is presently not the case. The need for such perspectives is reflected in the Army’s comparatively miniscule history in domestic operations, and opportunities in this arena are vast.

So, what is the alternative to this? The status quo is what exists today. Often, cadets who fully participate in voluntary activities, or are the perceived ‘top’ cadets who are ‘rewarded’ with foreign academy visits, are those who are least in need. Moreover, it is quite possible for cadets to achieve minimum standards across their respective military and academic endeavour, confine themselves within their rooms before a PlayStation®, play no sport, read no military literature, avoid social interaction with their peers and the wider community, never visit the base of another service or visit places like Sydney, let alone exit their comfort zone in international destinations which will likely be the scene of their future careers.⁶³ The fact that such cadets have ‘passed the course’ carries with it no assurance that they possess the officer qualities to command Australian servicemen and women on operations.⁶⁴

A range of impediments have had and may continue to have a preventative effect on the achievement of outcomes advocated above. Paltry and misdirected annual funding of only \$120 per cadet is allocated for divisional level activities (frequently spent on ‘paintballing’). Contractual support

is limited. Staffing is adequate for the working day but not after hours when cadets ostensibly require increased influence—as if ‘learning to lead’ is an eight hour per day job! Staffing for lesson development, planning and change management is extremely limited. Increasing synergies with academic departments, as an example, consumes the limited discretionary time available to staff. However, the greatest impediment is the notion that even thinking about such issues is ‘too difficult’ when a great deal can be done with the correct mindset and directed effort. If mandated by command, this can be addressed immediately, with results soon becoming evident after implementation.

What is certain is that an appropriate environment and deliberate, consistent staff action is essential in shaping the values and attitudes of officers in training. Many

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opportunities exist, junior staff are poised to act and cadets, by and large, are keen to learn. Army should provide the impetus to prompt clear guidance, command emphasis and real developmental benefits to cadets currently at the academy.

CONCLUSION

Opportunities missed for officer development at ADFA are extensive. This wastage not only minimises potential Defence capability but undermines the fundamental purpose for which ADFA exists—producing quality joint junior officers. Without taking the final step toward ‘value adding’ to the entirety of the cadet body, the ongoing investment in ADFA is rightfully subject to continued questioning. The alternative to this prospect is clear and the path to remediation is simple—yet ADFA must be prompted to do so. Army should provide leadership in this respect and must demand from ADFA goals that are far more ambitious and comprehensive than those currently achieved. Such a command-led approach must address genuine need—not sponsor another cosmetic, ill-advised, yet highly disruptive re-organisation which chiefly delivers another blow to staff and cadet morale. Rather, it must flow from the foundational requirements for all officers in the POE—an environment that is now well understood across Defence. These requirements must be cast in terms that can be actioned at the DO level, being backed by unambiguous direction, support, training and resources to do so. It is also important that ADFA’s path must be set from the highest levels of Defence—engendering consistency—not devised by one person or subject to the whim of successive staff postings.

The idea forwarded in this article is not provided as an alternative to that which is articulated at present—there is currently no collegiate staff approach. If these ideas are rejected, then a coherent alternative still needs to be formulated. At present, the status quo is certainly not good enough.⁶⁵ In many ways, suggestions made here are the minimum—whereas far more can be done to achieve excellence both as an academy, and in producing officers for the POE.⁶⁶ However, if the base requirements cannot be achieved, ADFA cannot be considered to provide additional capability for the ADF and serious consideration should be given to its closure.

Many of the improvements required add little or nothing to the immense bill already paid to keep ADFA. They do, however, require some redirection of priorities, and with it, the mindset that some staff are imbued with upon arrival. Academy graduates are performing well on operations.⁶⁷ ADFA, as an institution, must ensure that this is more than simply a result of good recruiting of quality people. ADFA needs to ‘value add’ to the experience of the majority—not just the most ‘willing’ or ‘top’ cadets. At a time when Foundation Warfighting requirements present such pressing demands on our people and our training system, Army should be demanding more from this unique institution—as should the other services.

ENDNOTES

- 1 *Adaptive Campaigning – Future Land Operating Concept*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2009.
- 2 The term ‘cadet’ will henceforth be used throughout this article.
- 3 Contrary to many ‘Gen Y’ discussions, officer cadets have volunteered for service having grown up in an age of persistent conflict and were recruited and selected against Army standards that have barely changed over the course of decades.
- 4 ‘Officer Qualities’, ADFA website, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adfa/training/officer_qualities.html> accessed 29 March 2011.
- 5 Lieutenant Colonel P Anderson, ‘Foundations for Teaching: A Philosophy for the Marine Corps University’, *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 1999, p. 73; Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, ‘Post-Modern Challenges for Modern Warriors’, *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. V, No. 2, 2008, p. 188.
- 6 *Ibid*, p. 189.
- 7 E J Stevenson, ‘Educating the Community’s “Cream”: Common Military Training at the Australian Defence Force Academy’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 120, September /October 1996, p. 12.
- 8 *Ibid*.
- 9 Examples include: Major General PJ Day, ‘What Price Officer Education’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 120, September /October 1996 pp. 3–8; Commodore B Kafer, response to Letter to the Editor, *Army: The Soldiers’ Newspaper*, 5 August 2010, p. 22.
- 10 *Ibid*; Commodore B L Adams, ‘Reflections on Officer Education’, *RUSI Journal*, 3 November 1999.
- 11 J Kerin, ‘ADFA Faces Chop’, *The Australian Financial Review*, 4 April 2008, p. 15.
- 12 Report of the Review of Australian Defence Force Academy Military Organisation and Culture, October 2009 – July 2010, Part 1: Summary and Recommendations, <<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/ADFA/comweb.asp?page=42105&Title=Publications>>.
- 13 B Grey, Report of the Review into Policies and Practices to Deal with Sexual Harassment and Sexual Offences at the Australian Defence Force Academy, Defence Equity Organisation, June 1998.
- 14 This arrangement substantially differs from RMC Duntroon, although there are detriments and benefits to this arrangement; see Captain C R Smith, ‘The Fundamentals of Junior Officer Training’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 152, January/February 2002, p. 32.
- 15 Although, one could argue that little within the AMET program, or in the teaching methods, actually meets the definition of ‘education’ provided above.
- 16 This is not to argue there is no place for drill and inspections; many traditional aspects of officer training have a deeper purpose, as recounted by C M Mullaney, *The Unforgiving Minute: A Soldier’s Education*, Penguin, New York, 2009, pp. 24, 36, 320.

However, this article argues that all activities should be prioritised in accordance with the (as yet undefined) goals of the academy.

- 17 AMET consists of subjects such as military law, drill, PT and well as leadership ‘training’ and exercises.
- 18 Although aspects of each of these areas could be usefully critiqued, only tangential attention will only be drawn to some aspects of the AMET program.
- 19 Public documents stating this mission (in a consistent fashion) are difficult to find online. A Defence intranet reference is at: <<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/ADFA/comweb.asp?page=42077&Title=ADFA's%20Vision>>. See a paraphrased mission in Kafer, response to Letter to the Editor.
- 20 Stevenson, ‘Educating the Community’s “Cream”’, p. 11.
- 21 A description, which substantially refers to discipline, uniforms, parades, saluting and dining-in nights, is provided at: <<http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/ADFA/comweb.asp?page=42077&Title=ADFA's%20Vision>>.
- 22 Adams, ‘Reflections on Officer Education’, p. 21.
- 23 For example, conducting squadron level officer training in place of doing routine drill practice.
- 24 *The Academy: The Official Newsletter of the Australian Defence Force Academy*, Semester 2, 2010, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adfa/docs/news_events/ADFA_NewsletterDec2010.pdf>.
- 25 For a discussion of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, see B A Salmoni and P Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter: Principles and Applications*, Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia, 2008, p. 240.
- 26 This is supported by Rear Admiral J Goldrick, ‘Thoughts on Professional Military Education’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 181, March/April 2010, p. 7.
- 27 Smith, ‘The Fundamentals of Junior Officer Training’, p. 28.
- 28 Salmoni and Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, pp. 244–45.
- 29 Ibid, pp. 242–43.
- 30 Captain A W Hastie, ‘PowerPoint Does Not Become Us: In Search of a New Teaching Method in Junior Officer Education’, *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 181, March/April 2010, pp. 37–40; Anderson, ‘Foundations for Teaching’, p. 74.
- 31 Stevenson, ‘Educating the Community’s “Cream”’, p. 14.
- 32 Lieutenant General D Hurley, General Sir John Hackett Memorial Lecture, Weston Creek, 1 November 2010, <http://www.defence.gov.au/adf/docs/cdf_conf2010/CDFConf_101201_SirHackettMemorialLecture.pdf>.
- 33 Lieutenant General K Gillespie, Chief of Army Address to ADFA Army Dining In Night, 12 August 2010, <http://www.army.gov.au/docs/100817-CA_Speech_to_ADFA_Army_Dining-In_Night_12_Aug_10.pdf>.
- 34 Kiszely, ‘Post-Modern Challenges’, pp. 180–81, 184, 188; Salmoni and Holmes-Eber, *Operational Culture for the Warfighter*, pp. 247–48; Admiral J Stavridis and

- Captain M Hagerott, 'The Heart of an Officer: Joint, Interagency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2, Spring 2009.
- 35 ADFA's immediate higher headquarters.
- 36 Rear Admiral J Goldrick, 'Chairman's Comments' and 'Thoughts on Professional Military Education', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 181, March/April 2010, pp. 3, 9.
- 37 Stevenson, 'Educating the Community's "Cream"'.
 38 Ibid, p. 12; Adams, 'Reflections on Officer Education', pp. 19–20.
- 39 Gillespie, 'Chief of Army Address to ADFA'.
 40 Ibid, pp. 7–8.
- 41 Adams, 'Reflections on Officer Education', pp. 19–20.
- 42 Lieutenant B Dobson, 'Joint Professional Military Education in the ADF: A Junior Naval Officer's Perspective', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 181, March/April 2010, p. 35.
- 43 Goldrick, 'Thoughts on Professional Military Education', p. 8.
- 44 Kafer, response to Letter to the Editor; Colonel C Field, 'Joint Education Comes of Age: Officers Close Books on 25 Years of Study', *Defence Magazine*, Department of Defence, No. 1, 2011, p. 39.
- 45 Dobson, 'Joint Professional Military Education in the ADF', p. 36.
- 46 For example, leadership competencies previously applied in the academy context are listed in EJ Stevenson, 'Learning to Lead: A Contextual Model for Educating and Training Leaders', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 129, March/April 1998, p. 36.
- 47 Examples include individual activities found within the inter-squadron competition such as swimming and athletics carnivals (that are indistinguishable from high school activities).
- 48 Smith, 'The Fundamentals of Junior Officer Training', p. 30; Anderson, 'Foundations for Teaching', p. 76.
- 49 Smith, 'The Fundamentals of Junior Officer Training', p. 32.
- 50 Gillespie, 'Chief of Army Address to ADFA', p. 8.
- 51 'The Army Learning Environment', *Vanguard*, Issue 5, October 2009, <http://www.army.gov.au/lwsc/Docs/Vanguard_005.pdf>.
- 52 Kiszely, 'Post-Modern Challenges', p. 189.
- 53 The burden of DOs' administrative work is highlighted in both the Grey Review and the 2010 Review.
- 54 Despite the existence of ADF doctrine, there is a risk of farcical debates about different types of leadership required by ADFA graduates proceeding to different job titles. For example, see Adams, 'Reflections on Officer Education', p. 19.
- 55 General R Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World*, Allen Lane, 2005, p. 288; Adams, 'Reflections on Officer Education', p. 18.

- 56 Rear Admiral J Goldrick, quoted in Field, 'Joint Education Comes of Age'.
- 57 Air Chief Marshall A Houston, quoted in 'CDF's Last Review', *Army: The Soldiers' Newspaper*, 17 March 2011.
- 58 Colonel MD Wyly, 'Why Lieutenants Should Study Strategy', *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 1988, pp. 42–43.
- 59 Kafer, response to Letter to the Editor.
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- 61 Stevenson, 'Educating the Community's "Cream"', p. 14.
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- 63 Houston, 'CDF's Last Review'.
- 64 Adams, 'Reflections on Officer Education', p. 19.
- 65 Lieutenant General K Gillespie, CA Speech to ASPI, 27 August 2008, <http://www.army.gov.au/docs/Chief_Of_Army_Speech.pdf> p. 8.
- 66 Anderson, 'Foundations for Teaching'; Smith, 'The Fundamentals of Junior Officer Training'.
- 67 Field, 'Joint Education Comes of Age'; Houston, 'CDF's Last Review'.

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CULTURE

WHY AB INITIO?

THE IMPORTANCE OF AB INITIO RECRUITING IN THE AUSTRALIAN REGULAR ARMY

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ABSTRACT

Army recruits have traditionally entered the ARA straight from school with no previous military experience, a method known as *ab initio* entry. More recently, other avenues of entry including re-enlistment, reserve transfer, and overseas transfer have increasingly been used to augment *ab initio* entry. There are disadvantages in an overemphasis on non-*ab initio* avenues of entry, which, in our continued desire to fill vacancies and achieve recruiting targets, are often overlooked. This article outlines the reasons and benefits for *ab initio* recruiting over other avenues, and raises some of the potential risks in recruiting non-*ab initio* personnel.

INTRODUCTION

For generations the Australian Regular Army (ARA) has recruited young men and women directly into its ranks from the wider Australian population. In most cases, new recruits have entered the ARA straight from school with no previous military experience, a method of entry usually referred to as *ab initio*. More recently, other avenues of entry including re-enlistment, transfer from the reserve, and overseas transfer have increasingly been used to augment *ab initio* entry.

The trend of increased recruiting through non-*ab initio* avenues commenced in earnest from the mid-2000s when Army was experiencing relatively high separation rates.¹ These separation rates, combined with an ever increasing demand for personnel, started to create some large deficiencies in most categories, especially in junior leadership roles. Deficiencies were further compounded by decisions to increase the size of Army in the late 2000s through the Hardened and Networked Army (HNA) and Enhanced Land Force (ELF) programs which necessitated the use of alternative recruiting avenues directly into the ranks required to fill the immediate deficiencies.²

By the end of FY08/09 Army was recruiting over 1000 per year personnel through non-*ab initio* avenues compared with less than 700 per year prior to FY07/08.³ For officers, non-*ab initio* entry has accounted for over one-third of all new entrants since FY03/04 and for Other Ranks (ORs) this figure is over 20 per cent. Noting the apparent success of these alternate avenues, the potential for non-*ab initio* recruits to fill long-term vacancies became evident during the commencement of HNA/ELF and resulted in formal campaigns such as Project Boomerang.⁴ However, the near love-affair with non-*ab initio* recruiting largely ignored the risks and potential for long-term damage to Army and its workforce structures if these avenues were to become embedded in recruiting processes.

This article will highlight the continued importance of *ab initio* recruiting in maintaining sustainable workforce structures in Army. Following short sections on the *ab initio* concept, recent recruiting results and benefits of non-*ab initio* recruiting, the first main section of this article will outline the reasons for *ab initio* recruiting, while the second main section will discuss the disadvantages of over-reliance on non-*ab initio* avenues of entry. In reality, there is a balance between recruiting through various avenues, and the final section of this article will discuss this balance.

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GENERAL AB INITIO CONCEPT

Ab initio recruiting in Army is broadly defined as the recruiting of personnel with no previous military experience into the base training rank, normally private (recruit) or staff/officer cadet (S/OCDT).⁵ Over time, separation rates, time-in-rank requirements and promotion rates will distribute personnel throughout the rank structure of any given category such that there is a balance of junior personnel, junior leadership and senior leadership. The broad concept of *ab initio* recruiting, therefore, is to populate Army capabilities from the bottom-up in terms of its rank distribution.

The ultimate goal of the *ab initio* concept is to satisfy the capability requirements of Army by filling the establishment at all rank levels with personnel of the appropriate level of training for their respective roles, tasks and responsibilities. To achieve this, the bulk of recruiting continues to be directed through the *ab initio* avenue to allow entry at the most junior point and to progressively train individuals for the specific category and capability requirements of Army at the point in their career where their skills are required. This ensures the establishment is filled with suitably qualified personnel of the appropriate rank and cohort without the risk of over-qualified or under-qualified personnel at various ranks.

RECRUITING RESULTS

Recruiting requirements have varied since FY03/04 in response to initiatives such as ELF, HNA, and Defence White Paper guidance. Although growth requirements have been specified and *ab initio* targets increased accordingly, there has been less scrutiny on non-*ab initio* achievement. In context, historical recruiting underachievement, persistent vacancies and a resulting inability to spend all personnel-related funding has resulted in considerable flexibility in accepting additional personnel through non-*ab initio* avenues.⁶

Table 1 shows the changes in the numbers of recruits entering Army through each avenue since FY03/04. The data shows an increase in non-*ab initio* achievement in both OR and officer recruitment, although the increase is greater in OR achievement. Significantly, the proportion of non-*ab initio* recruits has increased from an average of 21.5 per cent over the period FY03/04 to FY 06/07 to 25.1 per cent in FY 08/09, and the actual number increased 61.3 per cent from an average of 648 to a figure of 1046 over the same period.⁷

In contrast to *ab initio* recruiting achievement where almost all recruiting is into the base rank; over 30 per cent of non-*ab initio* recruiting into OR has been directly into corporal or above, and almost 60 per cent of officer non-*ab initio* recruiting is into captain or above.

Table 2 shows the total breakdown of recruiting into the ARA between July 2003 and June 2010 for these rank groups. Recruiting above the base rank is not, of itself, an issue for concern if the placement of these non-*ab initio* entrants into a deficient rank or cohort has been consistently achieved. However, when placement is not into a deficient rank or cohort there are risks which will be detailed later.

...historical recruiting underachievement, persistent vacancies and a resulting inability to spend all personnel-related funding has resulted in considerable flexibility...

Table 1. Recruiting Achievement by Avenue of Entry for FY03/04 to FY 09/10.

	Financial Year							Total	%
	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10		
OR									
ab initio	2014	1954	2040	2176	2732	2753	2615	16284	79.9%
non-ab initio	497	494	444	508	697	833	631	4104	20.1%
Total	2511	2448	2484	2684	3429	3586	3246	20388	100.0%
Officer									
ab initio	318	297	324	346	363	375	378	2401	66.2%
non-ab initio	184	163	150	154	230	213	132	1226	33.8%
Total	502	460	474	500	593	588	510	3627	100.0%
Total									
ab initio	2332	2251	2364	2522	3095	3128	2993	18685	
	(77.4%)	(77.4%)	(79.9%)	(79.2%)	(77.0%)	(74.9%)	(79.7%)		77.8%
non-ab initio	681	657	594	662	927	1046	763	5330	22.2%
	(22.6%)	(22.6%)	(20.1%)	(20.8%)	(23.0%)	(25.1%)	(20.3%)		
Grand Total	3013	2908	2958	3184	4022	4174	3756	24015	100.0%

Source: PMKey5 (recruiting avenue cleaned by DWMFA)

Table 2. Aggregate Recruiting Achievement by Avenues of Entry and Rank (July 2003 – June 2010).

	PTE	LCPL to WO1	Total	SCDT/ LT	CAPT to COL	Total
Ab initio	16270 (99.9%)	14 (0.1%)	16284 (100%)	2361 (98.3%)	40 (1.7%)	2401 (100%)
Non-ab initio	2869 (69.9%)	1235 (30.1%)	4104 (100%)	492 (40.1%)	734 (59.9%)	1226 (100%)
Total	19139 (93.9%)	1249 (6.1%)	20388 (100%)	2853 (78.7%)	774 (21.3%)	3627 (100%)

Source: PMKeyS (recruiting avenue cleaned by DWMFA)

THE BENEFITS OF NON-AB INITIO RECRUITING

The benefits of non-*ab initio* recruiting are largely intuitive and will not be discussed in great length; however, a broad summary is useful. Contemporary observation will identify that acceptance of non-*ab initio* entrants appears to make great sense with benefits including the recruiting of individuals who are already trained, already motivated for service, and fully aware of the employment conditions. These three factors may lead to a conclusion that non-*ab initio* avenues should have a greater weight of priority for recruiting than *ab initio* avenues.

In light of the benefits, this article does not propose or suggest non-*ab initio* recruiting avenues should not be pursued as a valid method of recruiting, but challenges whether recruiting plans should be developed which specifically rely on the achievement of non-*ab initio* targets. Where non-*ab initio* entry is into a rank, cohort and category specifically required by Army, and not necessarily into the rank and cohort they might expect, it can represent significant training resource savings for Army and potentially close any personnel deficiencies. There are, however, risks in over-reliance on non-*ab initio* avenues of entry which can comprise the recruiting method and make achievement unreliable and inconsistent in areas where *ab initio* recruiting avenues are more robust.

REASONS FOR AB INITIO RECRUITING

Although most personnel involved in the Army workforce system would tacitly acknowledge primacy of *ab initio* recruiting over other avenues of entry, the reasons why this is the case are rarely articulated. The main reason to maintain the

primacy of *ab initio* entry, and the reason which will be referred to several more times throughout this article, remains the maintenance of sustainable category rank structures. There are several other reasons to maintain the dominance of *ab initio* recruiting which warrant mention.

STABILITY OF WORKFORCE SUPPLY

Although it is only for a relatively short period of four or six years, *ab initio* recruiting allows Army to maintain a stable workforce without significant external influence due to the Initial Minimum Period of Service (IMPS) and Return of Service Obligation (ROSO) provisions.⁸

Because personnel are trained by Army, and enter as unskilled or partially unskilled labour, the process of training and skilling maintains the numbers required by Army at various levels by virtue of the career continuum of each category.⁹ The interaction between the IMPS/ROSO provisions and the training continuum allows Army to maintain a degree of control and stability in the shape of its workforce.

...when all personnel enter the workforce system at the same point they become subject to the same influences on separation decisions...

RECRUIT TARGET STABILITY

It has been observed that when all personnel enter the workforce system at the same point (ie. private and staff cadet) they become subject to the same influences on separation decisions at the same time. This consistency of behaviour allows predictability in separation rates over the long term and therefore results in relatively stable and consistent recruiting targets and workforce planning.

REDUCED VULNERABILITY TO LABOUR MARKETS

Ab initio recruiting of unskilled labour, and associated training and service obligation periods, reduces the vulnerability of the Army workforce to short-term external labour market influences. Army is protected to some extent from a sudden but short-term high demand for a particular skill in the external labour market because personnel cannot be immediately responsive to these external demands due to obligation periods (such as ROSO and IMPS), a psychological contract with Army, and medium-term career ambitions and other constraints. Personnel with fewer constraints, such as many non-*ab initio* entrants, are able to respond faster to changes in the labour market, which could be to the detriment of Army in both attracting and retaining non-*ab initio* personnel.

REDUCED COMPETITION FOR SKILLED LABOUR

Although there are significant costs associated with developing a skilled labour force, the alternative of attempting to directly recruit a skilled labour force may also be prohibitively expensive and difficult to achieve. Non-*ab initio* recruiting of skilled labour requires Army to enter into direct competition with the national market (and in some cases an international market), which for some skills will either require remuneration above current Army pay scales or the ability to change remuneration faster than is currently able to be undertaken by Defence. By recruiting and training its own labour force, Army avoids some aspects surrounding competition for skilled labour.

Ab initio recruiting produces relatively consistent cohort sizes leading to consistent workforce attributes...

TRAINING MANAGEMENT CONSISTENCY

Steady *ab initio* entry allows long-term planning of training requirements and resources. Variation in *ab initio* entry resulting from over-reliance on other avenues will result in instability in training management, including the inconsistent cancellation and scheduling of courses. An ability to plan training requirements derived from consistent *ab initio* targets based on medium-term workforce requirements results in the optimisation of resources and reduction in waste.

CAREER PLANNING AND STRENGTH MANAGEMENT

Ab initio recruiting produces relatively consistent cohort sizes leading to consistent workforce attributes such as training requirements, posting and promotion opportunities. This consistency also reduces the need to use other workforce mechanisms, including non-*ab initio* entry, to smooth-out cohorts where there is variation in cohort size. The extent to which career planning and strength management needs to be intensively managed can therefore be controlled and reduced through consistent *ab initio* achievement.

REDUCED VARIATION

Ab initio recruiting and associated consistent targets minimises the undesirable characteristic of variation in the workforce system. Variation affects attributes within the workforce system including recruiting targets, the posting cycle, promotion opportunity, career progression courses and training requirements. To a lesser extent it also creates workforce cost variations (varying numbers at different pay grades). Most significantly, variation creates inconsistencies in the application of workforce policy

such that the business rules applied to a certain cohort in a certain year may not be appropriate in the following year, leading to system inequities. Therefore, reducing any variation remains a central aim of Army's workforce planners.

RISKS AND DISADVANTAGES OF NON-*AB INITIO* ENTRY

Many of the risks and disadvantages with non-*ab initio* avenues of entry are not immediately obvious and may vary between categories.¹⁰ Risks may include obscuration of inherently poor structures, increased vulnerability to the external labour market, inconsistencies in the application of policy, unstable recruiting targets and workforce strength variation. This section will outline the key strategic workforce disadvantages in recruiting personnel through non-*ab initio* avenues.¹¹ Ultimately, disadvantages are exhibited through reactive application of workforce policy rather than effective long-term planning.

UNSTABLE RECRUITING SOURCE

Paramount in discussion about the risks associated with non-*ab initio* avenues is to highlight the unreliability in the numbers which can be recruited through this avenue. This should not be surprising as the availability of skilled recruits in the Australian (and overseas) labour market are affected by the employment environment in the labour market. As such, the number of skilled personnel that can be attracted to Army is completely dependent on the demand for their skills in society, which can vary significantly on an annual basis depending on the sector.

POTENTIALLY EXHAUSTIBLE POOL

The available pool of personnel who could potentially be recruited through non-*ab initio* avenues is exhaustible and partially driven, ironically, by separation rates. A higher separation rate in particular categories increases the likelihood that there may be a potential non-*ab initio* source of personnel available to re-enlist. High separation rates will increase the demand for

personnel regardless of source and as such there is something of a feedback loop between high separation rates and the demand for non-*ab initio* personnel.¹² However, if a category is required to increase strength in times of low separation rates, there is unlikely to be a sufficient pool of personnel willing to re-enlist and reliance on these avenues may create personnel deficiencies.

A higher separation rate in particular categories increases the likelihood that there may be a potential non-*ab initio* source of personnel available to re-enlist.

REDUCTION IN CATEGORY OPTIONS FOR *AB INITIO* RECRUITS

Some categories are likely to be more attractive than others for non-*ab initio* entry. The temptation will exist to increase non-*ab initio* recruiting into these attractive categories (in the absence of business rules defining what is appropriate for each category) because it is easy to achieve the target. However, a removal of a large number of *ab initio* targets may prove to be a disincentive for general *ab initio* entry because there are fewer diverse employment opportunities in Army. This may affect overall recruiting success and result in a small number of categories acting as proxy-feeder for the remainder of Army.¹³

OBSCURATION OF POOR STRUCTURES

Perhaps the greatest risk of a reliance on other avenues of entry is the obscuration of poor structures in some categories which can, if the supply of personnel through these avenues changes, result in a risk to capability. Non-*ab initio* entry which plugs gaps at various ranks, particularly into junior and senior non-commissioned officer ranks, can make a category appear sound, healthy and sustainable when in reality it is being maintained by an unstable or temporary source of labour. If this source of recruiting dries up due to external influences, particularly in highly-skilled categories, then gaps can rapidly open up in the category resulting in a descent toward critical status.

UNCERTAINTY IN WORKFORCE BEHAVIOUR

The separation rates of *ab initio* entry are monitored and relatively well understood.¹⁴ Personnel enlisted through other avenues are far less homogeneous in their behaviour and their career decision points are unknown. This means categories which rely on non-*ab initio* entry will experience far less predictability in workforce behaviour. Unpredictability can be exhibited through unexpected instability in the separation rates which can result in detrimental workforce shocks permeating through the workforce system. In aggregate, this instability results in recruiting targets needing to be adjusted more frequently, which intensifies management requirements and creates variation in the workforce system.

DISRUPTIONS TO WORKFORCE SYSTEMS

When an individual leaves Army, the workforce system replaces that individual with a new recruit and/or promotes a more junior member into the vacant position; in other words, the workforce system adapts to the separation. Hence, when an individual enters Army at a rank or cohort higher than private or captain it is likely the position would already have been filled, or planned to be filled in the next posting and promotion cycle. Therefore, the acceptance of a non-*ab initio* above the rank of private or captain will

deny or delay the promotion or posting of somebody else. The only exception to this generalisation is where there are long-term vacancies which cannot be filled through promotion and where there is already a reliance on lateral entry, in which case a return to discussion on the obscuration of inherently poor structures is relevant.

TRAINING AND SKILLS ASSURANCE

Ab initio recruiting permits training standardisation to the requirements of the category. Other avenues, including re-enlistment, cannot provide this standardisation without an increased need for trade testing and gap training. Additionally, a career management decision is required to determine the emphasis to be placed on individuals recruited through different avenues of entry. Emphasis is likely to be placed on a skilled re-enlistment; however, a comparison of the competency between a previously trained re-enlistment and a yet-to-be-trained *ab initio* will not necessarily conclude the re-enlistment is the best candidate for the future requirements of Army.

Ab initio recruiting permits training standardisation to the requirements of the category.

FINDING THE BALANCE – CATEGORY SUSTAINABILITY

In order to highlight the importance of *ab initio* recruiting, this article has been somewhat biased and focused on presenting the reasons for *ab initio* while arguing against overemphasis on other avenues of entry. In some cases, however, there is a strong justification for other entry avenues of entry and it is a reality, despite the risks presented, that there is a balance between avenues. The requirement for this balance can occur through several reasons including:

- recruiting deficiencies,
- unexpectedly high separations resulting in vacancies at particular ranks,
- a structure which cannot be supported through *ab initio* recruiting, or
- growth requirements.

Category structures are typically built from the lowest rank upwards using *ab initio* recruiting as the input. This allows the numbers of personnel required at each rank to conform to the capability requirements of the Corps, including the employment specifications and workforce attributes such as career progression and proficiencies. However, this is not exclusively the case in all categories. A category may require a larger number at a particular rank, for capability reasons, than the structure can support. Changing the structure to develop a larger base just to grow the rank that provides capability may be wasteful. Although Force Modernisation Reviews and Employment Category Reviews aim to address these rank requirements

in the medium-term; in the short-term there may be no alternative other than to rely on non-*ab initio* entry to ensure capability requirements are met.

In theory, it is feasible to develop a category structure which is sustainable through a combination of *ab initio* and lateral entry. For this to be workable there must also be tacit acknowledgement that the rank ratios of senior to junior ranked personnel will be high, which may be appropriate for some categories. But in so doing, Army becomes vulnerable to the external environment and reliant on the ability of the external workforce to provide skilled labour at the right rank and cohort. Provided this risk is accepted, non-*ab initio* remains a valid avenue.

In practice, there are no categories in Army that have succeeded in balancing a structure which allows entry from a variety of methods and into a variety of ranks. Categories in Army where the rank ratio of senior to junior personnel is high and which rely on non-*ab initio* entry to fill vacancies are over-represented in Army's Serious Category list.¹⁵ The dominant characteristic of these serious categories is a structure not supportable through *ab initio* recruiting and a resulting over-reliance on other avenues.

...there are no categories in Army that have succeeded in balancing a structure which allows entry from a variety of methods...

CONCLUSION

The practicalities of recruiting and category structures have demonstrated that where *ab initio* recruiting is not the main avenue of entry, the category structure and ultimately capability can be compromised. However, this does not negate the legitimate need for non-*ab initio* recruiting in some instances. Specifically, non-*ab initio* avenues of entry are useful in filling vacancies occurring as a result of *ab initio* recruiting underachievement or unexpected separations. Regardless, there have been no successful attempts in Army in reconciling a poor category structure with non-*ab initio* recruiting.

Ab initio recruiting has several often overlooked advantages in managing the structures in Army. The relative consistency of *ab initio* recruiting allows a stable flow of personnel which extends through to other career management considerations such as stable posting cycles, promotion opportunities, training requirements and consistent application of workforce policy. IMPS and ROSO provisions associated with *ab initio* recruiting, along with the recruiting of unskilled labour, also assists Army in reducing its vulnerability to external competition for skilled labour and fluctuation in the national labour market.

Risks associated in increasing non-*ab initio* targets at the expense of *ab initio* targets are generally oriented around increasing uncertainty and instability in workforce behaviour and a reactive application of workforce policy. Separation rates and the general workforce system of training, posting and promotion can be detrimentally affected through inadvertently recruiting too many personnel through non-*ab initio* avenues and poor placement into rank and cohort. Perhaps the most significant effect of non-*ab initio* recruiting is the obscuration of poor category structures in Army for which, by the time a poor structure becomes apparent, prevention of the category reaching a critical or serious status may be difficult.

In many categories, a balance is necessary and practical; however, structures should not be developed that specifically rely on the continued and stable recruiting of personnel through non-*ab initio* avenues. A reliance on non-*ab initio* avenues of entry and any attempt to embed reliance exposes Army to far more risk outside its control or ability to mitigate than it prevents. Those categories to which recruiting through non-*ab initio* avenues may be suitable need to be sufficiently robust in their structure such that any variation caused through non-*ab initio* recruiting underachievement can be mitigated without causing unnecessary workforce management issues within the category.

ENDNOTES

- 1 In 2005 the ARA separation rates were around 12.7 per cent for the duration of the year; this was the highest since mid-2001. Source: PMKeyS data analysed by DWMFA-A.
- 2 'The Enhanced Land Force: Implementation Plan', Edition 3.0, October 2009, <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/armyweb/sites/chkDoc.asp?S=15808&D=142894&URL=docs/ELF_Impl_Plan_Ed_3_0.doc> accessed 24 August 2010; CA Directive 14/05, 'The Hardened and Networked Army', December 2005, <http://intranet.defence.gov.au/armyweb/sites/ca/docs/ca%20directive%2014_05%20-%20the%20hardened%20and%20networked%20army.pdf> accessed 24 August 2010.
- 3 A reduction back to 763 in FY09/10 was primarily a result of personnel funding constraints on recruiting.
- 4 Project Boomerang website, <<http://www.army.gov.au/boomerang/>> accessed on 24 August 2010.
- 5 *The Macquarie Dictionary*, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1999, p. 4, defines *ab initio* as 'from the beginning'. In some cases, particularly in the case of the recruiting of specialist personnel, *ab initio* recruiting can occur into higher ranks.
- 6 It is only a relatively recent development since FY09/10 that recruiting achievement for non-*ab initio* entry has been closely monitored against a target.
- 7 Figures may vary slightly against the Defence Annual Report due to back-dated and/or corrected transactions in PMKeyS.

- 8 IMPS and ROSO provisions rarely extend to non-*ab initio* entrants unless there is a significant training period. Fixed periods of service is often used; however, the duration is typically much shorter than IMPS or ROSO.
- 9 The lapse of a 'hook' after completion of an initial training and obligation period means the Army relies on residual retention encouraged by particular initiatives (promotion, salary, DHOAS, FAS etc); nevertheless, the initial workforce is guaranteed.
- 10 Highly skilled categories will suffer from over-reliance on other avenues of entry in a different way to less skilled categories. Likewise, the rank and cohort into which personnel from other avenues of entry are placed can have perverse effects on the promotion and posting opportunities available for other members of a category.
- 11 There are many other disadvantages not mentioned in this section which occur at the category and Corps level where career managers and career advisors are better placed to identify in detail.
- 12 Further confounding the availability of personnel through re-enlistment is the reason for initial separation. If the reason for separation was the external environment, then Army would need to attract these individuals back. This may make the non-*ab initio* supply unreliable and inconsistent in a way to which potential *ab initio* recruits are less susceptible.
- 13 A similar argument exists for trade transfers. An overemphasis on trade transfers results in reduced opportunities for *ab initio* recruits to enter these categories, which, if the category was all an individual wished to do in Army, would result in a lost recruiting opportunity.
- 14 Analysis of Propensity to Leave figures clearly identify career decision points. In the past, retention initiatives such as the Army Expansion and Rank Retention Bonus have been designed to have the maximum impact at these career decision points. The effectiveness of initiatives to retain or separate non-*ab initio* entrants is unknown because their career decision points are less well understood or identifiable, and may not exist in an aggregated sense.
- 15 Of the eleven Serious Categories in Army, recruiting is reliant on *ab initio* entry into seven, of which four (ECN 412, 421, 408 and 294) have been identified as structurally unsound in 'The Army Plan' and therefore relies on non-*ab initio* entry to fill gaps. The four categories which are not reliant on *ab initio* (ECN 003, 254, 255 and 401) entry remain partially reliant on *ab initio* entry and partially reliant on feeder-trades. The remaining three categories relying on *ab initio* entry (ECN 154, 665 and 663) are listed as serious for non-structural reasons.

THE AUTHOR

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CULTURE

REFLECTIONS ON COMMAND

COLONEL RUPERT HOSKIN

ABSTRACT

I was privileged to spend the last two years commanding the 3rd Combat Engineer Regiment, and I loved every minute of it. Apart from the enjoyment of being a brigade soldier again, and the pleasure of regimental life, the exercise of command is an intellectually engaging pursuit. There was rarely much complexity in the decision-making, but with a wide sphere of influence, responsibility for a large number of people, and the need to nurture every aspect of the regiment for the long term, it was a thought provoking time. Having experienced this personal journey, I thought it may be of interest to share some of my thoughts and observations, primarily addressed to future unit commanders.¹ This article firstly proposes that a fundamental command role is to uphold the psychological contract between Army and its people, and suggests what such a contract might say if it was actually put in writing. The remainder of the article is a series of discrete observations about the practice of command. My aim is to assist others, perhaps giving them a head start on the journey, and setting them up for their own new and further insights.

CUSTODIAN OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT

The psychological contract between the Army and its people is not written down anywhere, but it is deeply felt and it profoundly affects morale and commitment. I believe it has the following ten fundamental tenets:

1. The Army will train you well, pay you well, give you lots of benefits, maintain your health and fitness, and generally look after you and your family in every possible way. In return we will work you hard, take you away for long periods, force you to move around the country, and possibly one day order you to go out and kill or be killed in combat.
2. The Army exists to serve the interests of the Australian people, as expressed by the elected government of the day. War and the employment of military force are dreadful events, and should be avoided wherever possible. However, due to human nature, there will always be a need for good people to have force available to uphold justice, peaceful security and national interests.
3. The decision to employ force is strictly not a military one. In an imperfect world of difficult decisions and strategic uncertainty, the process of democracy is the best available. Military leaders will provide frank and fearless advice, but the decision to employ force is made by government. Soldiers have to accept this. Our decision to keep serving contains an implicit commitment to do whatever is asked, without any discretion to opt out of a specific operation. Mistakes will inevitably be made, but military force will not knowingly be employed in an ill-considered or ethically unsound manner.²

No matter what the rights and wrongs of a particular campaign are perceived to be, the soldiers are doing their rightful duty and will be supported regardless.³

4. The chain of command exists to accomplish the Army's missions. This is the enduring first priority. The term 'people first' is over-simplistic: you can't truly put 'people first' and exist to fight wars. People are the means to an end, albeit the most important means and highly valued. The chain of command will make hard-headed decisions to get the job done, while also exerting itself to look after people in a selfless manner. This is why we have Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Welcome Home Parades, memorial services and all the rest: these events pay homage to the fact that Service people place their individual needs behind those of their country, their mission and their mates.
5. If you become a casualty in the line of duty, then you have made a sacrifice on behalf of every Australian. If you are injured then you will get the best medical treatment and the Army will try to keep you in uniform for as long as practicable. The reality is that your career prospects may change and eventually it may be impractical for you to keep serving.⁴ If this happens then you will be given every possible support to transition to a new career, plus sufficient monetary compensation to make up for any disabilities and loss of Army potential. If you are killed

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in action then your death will be mourned by the Australian government, the ADF and the wider population, your accomplishments will be recognised; and your family will be supported, including financial compensation for the loss of your future income.

6. In this day and age, conflict is localised and often occurs far from home. Most of society gets on with its comfortable and prosperous existence, unaffected by war, relying on a small military force to uphold security and bear the brunt of doing so. This fact is recognised and appreciated. Combat forces people to make decisions and take actions that are inconceivable in normal life. The normal imperfections and mistakes of human existence occur in war, but with much more significant consequences. Soldiers are Teddy Roosevelt's 'Men in the Arena',⁵ and few non-combatants are entitled to sit in judgement of what they did and how they did it.⁶
7. The Army is not a cut-throat, competitive organisation where you only advance by undermining others. There is an equitable and transparent system. If you work hard, uphold your values, have faith and let the system do its part, then the right things will happen. Not everyone gets to be a general or serve overseas, but such is life. Grace and realism are the keys to happiness; success is a false god.
8. You do not need to fight for your rights or conditions of service. That is the role of the chain of command and other advocates. Stay out of it, have confidence in those that represent you, and don't tarnish the Army's reputation by being seen as self-serving.⁷
9. Effectively, the people of Australia entrust military personnel with a license to kill. This is not enacted until and unless we are deployed and given Rules of Engagement. Such responsibility is not given lightly, and is predicated on assumptions about our decision-making, self-discipline and humanity. This is why such high behavioural standards are demanded of us in peacetime. We are set apart from societal norms in many ways, and rightly so.
10. Army life is fun and adventurous. Our job includes travel, camaraderie, personal challenge, exposure to other cultures and exhilarating experiences. A lot of what we do does not look like 'work'. This is part of the deal. While the chain of command does need to manage risk and corporate responsibilities, the enjoyment and flair must be maintained.

This psychological contract results in Army careers that fit into a narrow envelope of ethical, practical and spiritual balances. It can be highly rewarding and generates profound commitment. The ten tenets are perhaps idealistic, and we have all

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experienced breaches of contract (generally by the principal), yet they are very real. A profound and spiritual role of commanders is to uphold this contract on behalf of all their people. Not easy, and generally these are the issues you will need to fight for. In the words of a previous formation commander, ‘commanders need to spend a lot of time overturning the [expletive deleted] decisions of staff officers’. Expect to spend some time on this and be challenged by hard decisions. Also, your people will need you to provide leadership and understanding—keep the psychological contract in mind when you write your Anzac Day address, plus every other time something difficult happens and you need to speak to the unit and help them make sense of it. This is leadership at its most profound, and will be highly influential on unit morale.

INSIGHTS FROM THE JOURNEY OF COMMAND

PHILOSOPHISING

It has become the norm for COs to write their own command philosophy. This is a good thing. It promotes reflection by the CO-elect in the lead-up to assuming command, then provides a useful point of reference for him and his team throughout his time in command. It is a highly individual document, and should be personally handcrafted. It can seem a little vain, but the reality is that the unit commander’s personal values and approach do quickly influence the whole unit. It is therefore appropriate and useful to promulgate it in written form. I found it helpful when faced with difficult decisions: my own command philosophy provided the values-based context and I sometimes just needed to remind myself of that baseline. Similarly, it helps with Mission Command; often people would seek guidance on things, and I could point them towards my command philosophy rather than answer the question directly. After a while they were better able to act independently with confidence. On some occasions people used my own command philosophy to convince me of a particular course of action. Fair enough, and that’s a good example of management upwards.

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MISSION COMMAND

The most rewarding leadership experience is seeing subordinates achieve wonderful things on their own initiative, feeling pleasantly surprised by the methods employed, happily watching events unfold knowing that you set the conditions for

success, yet with a light touch and in a way that your subordinates largely feel they have done it on their own. We don't always achieve this, despite espousing Mission Command. Why is this? I think it is because of a lack of self-discipline and investment by commanders. All too often, people claim to be Mission Commanders in the belief that staying out of the subordinates' way is a virtue in its own right. This is simplistic and lazy. What tends to happen is that the subordinate gets poor initial guidance ('I'm busy and it will do him good to work it out for himself, and I can assess him better this way'), then cracks on manfully until things stray from the commander's (belatedly considered) intent. By then it's too late for a light touch and the commander re-injects himself to get things back on track, employing tight control and leaving all parties disgruntled. It is all very well to let people learn from their mistakes, but in reality it is wasteful to make a habit of this: while one leader executes his flawed plan, his subordinates are learning bad lessons, getting frustrated and expending scarce resources. Better to let the lesson be learned 'virtually', via the back brief process, then reinforce success via execution of a good plan. I think that the respective roles of commander and subordinate commander in good Mission Command can be visualised as illustrated in Figure 1.

The key features of this approach are as follows:

- Creation of a sound 'command climate', in which people know each other well at a personal level, trust each other, and have a confident sense of how each other would react to unforeseen events. This takes time and effort. Examples include social interaction, training to shared doctrine, lessons learned sessions, debriefs and a forgiving approach to well-intentioned mistakes. It is helpful to

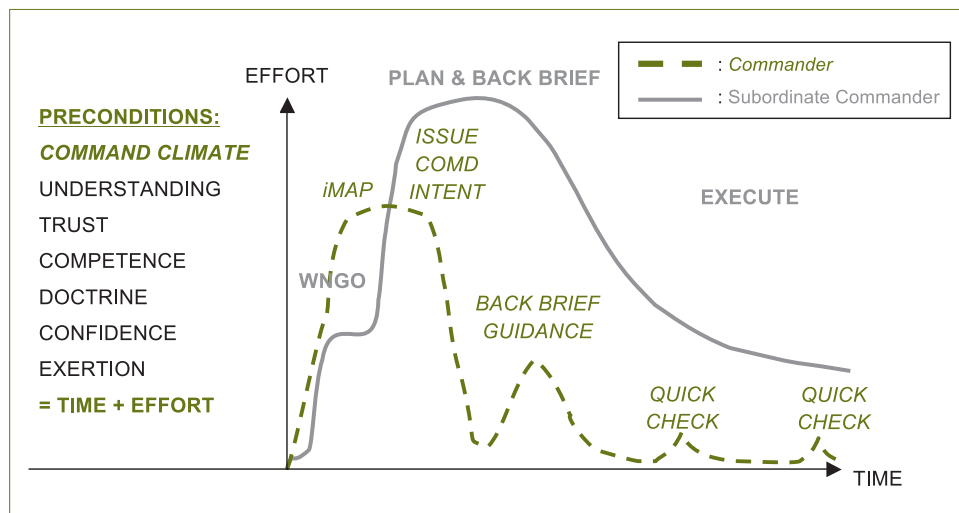


Figure 1.

use Mission Command effectiveness as the base criteria for counselling, whether positive or negative. For example, ‘That was a great initiative and I am glad you got on with it while I was away, this is why I am happy to employ Mission Command with you,’ or ‘What you just did was outside my intent, as clearly expressed to you in the Orders Group and further discussed in the back brief. I am finding it hard to work with you using Mission Command because you keep doing things like this. I will therefore tighten the reins until we can regenerate the right command climate. If that doesn’t happen then I will sack you.’

- Early investment by the commander in direction setting. Take the time to think through the problem, allocate the right resources then express his intent well. A written commander’s intent works superbly. This is surprisingly rare. Our culture seems to accept that busy commanders can shoot from the hip—a false time economy and an abrogation of responsibility.
- A good back brief by the subordinate commander. This provides essential clarity, the opportunity to adjust resource allocations, and most importantly a strong sense of confidence. If the subordinate commander’s plan is seriously flawed, then this is the time for the commander to decide whether to allow him to go ahead anyway and learn valuable lessons, or tease out the plan and allow the same lessons to be learned in discussion to develop a better plan for execution. It is easy to leave a subordinate alone to get on with it once he has provided a good back brief. A quick series of ‘what-if’ discussions during the back brief would also deeply reinforce the Mission Command environment.
- Occasional visits from the commander. The first visit provides an azimuth check and an opportunity for the higher headquarters to troubleshoot in support of the team. All going well, the second visit should simply be an opportunity to recognise success, and the third visit to confirm the end game and provide a warning order for the next task.
- Self-assessment by the commander. If issues arise during a subordinate’s execution of a task, then the commander should ask *himself* where he failed: poor command climate, poorly expressed intent, insufficient attention to the back brief, failure to allocate appropriate resources, or incorrect choice to employ Mission Command with an ill-suited subordinate? Only after doing so, should he then consider what went wrong at the lower level.

Mission Command is *not* a condition of service. It is an enjoyable and highly effective leadership approach, but it requires hard work and in particular an early investment of time by the commander.

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MAKING THE HARD CALLS

One striking feature of command is the sheer volume of decisions needing to be made, often with a time imperative. As noted above, few of these are particularly complex. The trick is to siphon off those decisions that need further attention, and otherwise power ahead. 'Best is the enemy of good enough' in many cases, and most things arrive on the commander's desk after passing through a chain of well-informed and diligent subject matter experts. A few thoughts follow on dealing with the difficult ones:

- The 'muscle memory' of twenty years' service provides great intuition. Make the leap of faith in your own judgement, and be confident that the chain of command will back your decisions. Our system has many checks and balances, so fear of the occasional mistake shouldn't slow you down.
- Trust your 'Spidey-Sense'. As a CO your situational awareness becomes well developed, and often it takes very little to trigger your sense of disquiet. Follow your instincts, and ask a few probing questions if something doesn't seem right. Often a light tap on the tiller will save real problems later.
- The truth sets you free. Making tough decisions, being candid and being direct are all command responsibilities. Such actions continually reinforce your position and the confidence of your team. Integrity is built slowly. Conversely, a part of something important dies forever with every weak decision or mealy-mouthed explanation.
- Statement of Reasons. If an outcome is likely to be controversial or goes against others' recommendations, then simply providing a rationale with your decision is very effective. A lot of effort spent on redress action is wasted and could be avoided. If you have the habit of providing a Statement of Reasons with your decisions then people appreciate your effort, respect your candour and generally accept the outcome. Often it is a good mentoring experience for junior leaders too, helping them understand issues they had missed. Command comes at a time of life when you have been through several maturation cycles, and are likely to be pretty comfortable in your own skin. Your independent judgement and confidence have steadied, and you may well find that most of your subordinate officers are not yet at the same point. Your mentoring role is therefore important, and you have a lot to offer.
- Benign neglect. If an issue is vexed and the way ahead unclear, yet resolution is not urgent, then often the wisest approach is to stay defilade and await further developments. People sometimes push you for decisions that really don't need to be made.

One striking feature of command is the sheer volume of decisions needing to be made, often with a time imperative.

- Don't get too close to your own position. If you are consulting with your staff about something, then don't give away your own inclination too early in the decision process. You may stifle a necessary debate, or simply gain ill-founded positive reinforcement from your staff. Make them work, and force them to plant their own flags. This is a much more rigorous approach to decision-making. Also you sometimes need people to work things out for themselves, especially tough decisions. Of course, you may also save yourself from being seen to be wrong, if the free-flowing debate actually sways you from your initial and private assessment.
- 'Nothing in war is ever as good or as bad as the first reports of excited men would have it.' You will sometimes be presented with tales of woe and imminent disaster by your OCs and other key staff. Keep your powder dry. Often the initial prognosis is exaggerated, and the crisis never eventuates. The experience gap between a CO and his (generally) young majors is sometimes quite poignant. That said, I suspect that formation commanders may occasionally feel the same way about their unit commanders.
- Commanders must command, followers must follow. Make your decision and expect people to salute the flag and get on with it. A lot of people are rather precious about this. I found this quite striking when our formation was under pressure in a complex (exercise) environment.⁸ Commanders tend to grow up making hard decisions among competing priorities, accepting risk, mitigating it as much as possible, then moving forward. The ability to do this well is a defining characteristic. I believe this is a growth area for all of us, and a good mentoring focus for COs with their officers. I think that in general the Defence environment is a lot less hard-headed than it should be, based on the perspective I gained from working several times in private industry.
- None of us is perfect: you will make mistakes and fail occasionally to show enough strength of character. If you have a shocker then dust yourself off, be honest with yourself and others, then get back on the horse. Your humanity will reassure others.

'Nothing in war is ever as good or as bad as the first reports of excited men would have it.'

THE UNFORGIVING MINUTE

How to get Rudyard Kipling's 'sixty seconds' worth of distance run' from every minute?⁹ Somehow all that automation and labour-saving equipment has only added to our workload, and most of us are over-stretched all the time. In the case of ADF units, the demands of operational tempo and corporate governance are

nearing extreme levels. Arguably, time management is one of the great challenges of our era. A good leader needs to focus hard on key activities yet spread his influence widely, and to manage diligently yet lead strategically. He needs to be accessible to his people but also to remain objective and interconnected with the external environment. The best leaders achieve a balanced existence, including cultural interests beyond work, happy family relationships and friendships, and time to themselves for rest and reflection. People respect a leader who manages his time well, and who projects an aura of calmness and ease. I found time management to be a particularly strong pre-occupation while in command, both personally and as a leadership issue. There are some good books about this, but the key points are as follows:

People respect a leader who manages his time well, and who projects an aura of calmness and ease.

1. Be self-disciplined and own your own time.
2. Be as systematic as possible.
3. Ruthlessly distinguish between 'urgent' and 'important'.
4. Jealously guard the time you need for strategic planning and direction-setting.
5. Allocate plenty of time to visiting unit activities and mentoring your people.
6. Look after yourself and your own family.
7. Fill the gaps with the remainder, accepting that you can't do everything.¹⁰

This is tough to achieve. I am certain that if I did nothing but sit at my desk for two years, I would have been fully occupied responding to emails and administrative paperwork. This would not be a good approach for the CO of a Combat Support unit in a high readiness formation. Email is a killer, but has to be managed somehow. The following time management protocols proved useful:

- No meetings or phone calls before 0900 or after 1600, thereby leaving people alone at the most productive (or family-oriented) times of day.
- Only check emails and do admin three times a day at specified periods, and don't assume people will have read emails outside these timeframes—use the phone if something urgent arises. Switch off distracting email alerts, send cc: emails to a separate (rarely-checked) folder and get on with real work.
- Develop a robust battle rhythm with your team. In barracks, base everyone's time management around MS Outlook, with shared calendars and a strong culture of diarising your own activities and respecting the plans of others.
- Email discipline: write emails that clearly specify actions and responsibilities, do not use 'cc:' unnecessarily; use 'bcc:' only for genuine privacy reasons; get off the email and on the phone if a topic becomes controversial; empty your inbox daily.

- Get written work done early or late in the day, when you are at your most productive and creative best, then allocate useable chunks of time to getting out and about, conducting battle procedure or planning ahead.
- Programming time for family activities is good leadership (e.g. taking kids to school occasionally, lunch with partner, personal admin—all clearly visible in your shared diary).
- Avoid and disguise after-hours work wherever possible (e.g. don't send emails on a Sunday, save them as drafts to send on Monday): it's subtle but this has a strong effect on work/life culture.
- Operational contingencies or urgent personnel welfare issues over-rule all the above.

These proved worthy targets, hard to achieve, but immensely helpful at wresting back control of time and well worth continual striving. If all else fails (and it often does), then pick One Big Thing to achieve with your day, and run with that.

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THE POLITICS OF INFLUENCE

A CO should be active in influencing the environment in which his unit operates. This is a significant aspect of a commander's role, and a valuable service to the people he leads. This responsibility includes operational planning, organising training, career management, resource allocation, capability development and welfare. In addition to all his internal responsibilities, a CO should allocate a fair bit of time to knowing and influencing the wider environment. One confronting experience as a CO is to be unable to solve problems, especially when your subordinates look to you for exactly that purpose. The ability to wield influence therefore becomes very important. My observations on this were as follows:

- Meet the market. In military terms, this means 'ensure you understand and act in accordance with higher intent'. To an entrepreneur it means 'work out what the market wants then give it to them'. You may be ahead of the market's own understanding of what it needs, in which case you must lead them to it. This is true entrepreneurship, and very lucrative. Similarly, for a military officer, it is being a good change agent, innovator and upward-manager. Couch your recommendations in terms that draw this linkage: senior leaders appreciate advice from someone who has obviously taken the trouble to understand their pre-occupations. It is hard for someone to refuse you if you trace an irrefutable logic path between their own guidance and your proposal.
- Market well. Being right is not enough. To be convincing, you need to market your ideas. This is achieved by being personally credible and providing actionable

advice in the right timeframe. Invest time and effort into being seen as a trustworthy individual and building goodwill capital. Phrase your recommendations carefully, and harness whatever consensus you already have in order to go the extra step. Sometimes planting a seed then leaving it alone for a while gives people time to get used to a confronting proposition. Look for an early victory to create faith and willing, then work your way to the more controversial issues.

- Be positive. Assume the best of people, reinforce the good in them and work around their limitations. This approach verges on the naïve, and you will occasionally be caught out, but in my experience it works as a self-fulfilling prophesy.
- Leave no room for doubt or plausible deniability. People are generally a lot less direct and clear in their advice than they think they are, or should be. State your position clearly, including a specific recommendation. Look people in the eye when you do it and put your advice in writing if you need to add weight (and traceability). If you are firm in your views yet face resistance, then respectfully make it clear that you do not agree with the decision. Decision-makers have to manage competing priorities, one of which will be you, but don't make it artificially easy for them. This is a surprisingly powerful way to wield an iron fist in a velvet glove, as long as you use it with discretion and wisdom. If things go astray later, then saying 'I told you so' is generally toxic and of little help to anyone. A significant look, a raised eyebrow and nobly refraining from saying it is actually far more influential.
- Don't take 'no' for an answer. Sometimes you just need to be capricious and insist on getting your way. I am talking about dealing with people outside your own organisation, in circumstances where authority relationships are ill-defined. You are a CO, your position carries a lot of weight, and Army people are hard-wired to obey you. When you invoke this you have effectively relieved others of their accountability, so they will generally salute the flag and give you what you want without fuss. Now it's on your shoulders and it had better work out well, which is all you wanted in the first place.
- Be a trusted specialist adviser, not a single issue zealot (SIZ). How to know the difference? You are a SIZ if your advice takes into account only what you know, and you believe it is the decision-maker's job to consider other factors. Another good indication of SIZ status is that you go to briefings and provide big updates on small topics. A trusted adviser will provide good advice within

Sometimes planting a seed then leaving it alone for a while gives people time to get used to a confronting proposition.

his lane, but will also do his best to understand the competing priorities faced by the decision-maker, and make reference to these in his recommendations. Commanders deeply appreciate advisers who 'get' this.

- One in the eye is worth two in the ear. PowerPoint® is much-maligned, but if used well it remains a very powerful way to express complex ideas convincingly. A good written brief is convincing, but may not have the access and impact needed for results. Much better to adopt a two-pronged approach, using a verbal brief as well. The converse is also true: a verbal brief has little enduring effect, no matter how well-received. Convince in person, and then document a tangible outcome. For example, provide a written brief with space for the approval authority to handwrite a few comments then sign, and get it done on the spot. Better still if you get the decision-maker's staff on side beforehand. It is generally easy to get time in senior leaders' diaries, especially if you treat their personal staff with respect and establish a good relationship early.
- Timing is everything. No senior leader likes to be seen to change their mind. If you sense that something critical is heading in the wrong direction, then work out when the decision will be made and exert yourself to shape it before the commander plants his flag. The leverage of counter-arguments increases dramatically when face becomes an issue. Another issue of timing is careful selection of when you become decisively engaged on something: if your initial advances meet resistance then often it is best to quickly pop smoke, regroup and find a new axis of advance for later. Sometimes sending a subordinate recon party forward is better still, leaving you uncommitted and able to shift your axis or retreat.
- Sometimes it is better to lose graciously. You won't win every time, and certainly you should pick your targets and *generally* only fight the battles you can win. However, you will inevitably lose one occasionally. If you take it well, and react wisely, then you will plant a seed of gratitude and (possibly) debt that will bear fruit later, potentially on a more important issue. Enough said.

The leverage of counter-arguments increases dramatically when face becomes an issue.

THE BOSS

It is surprising how little a CO sees of his formation commander, much less than an OC sees of his CO for example. COs have a lot of autonomy and formation commanders are extremely busy people. As a general rule, your formation commander will expect you to get on with business and be responsible for your own decisions, and will be grateful to be left in peace most of the time. Some

good advice provided by a former brigade commander is to batch process—if you haven't spoken with your boss for a while (say, two weeks) then gather up a list of things to catch up on, and arrange a time at his convenience for a telephone chat. You will soon work out what he wants and needs to know about or be consulted on, and how. It is also good for the command climate to keep in occasional contact like this. It is best to avoid badgering him by email (especially unnecessary cc:), and if you want an issue resolved then prepare a short written brief. It will be appreciated if you make a point of always acknowledging directives, and provide feedback as appropriate (e.g. 'we will achieve this by ...', 'the impact on my unit will be ...', 'this is unachievable because ...').

Just like you, your boss can't fix everything for his formation. Recognise the limits of his power and don't pressure him on things he can't change. Being 'balanced and flexible' is a realistic posture in many instances. Expressing your frustration upwards won't help, other than as self-indulgent venting, and showing your frustration to subordinates makes the situation worse for them.

Command at all levels is sometimes lonely, perhaps more so at formation level than in the regimental environment. Therefore, don't be afraid to provide positive feedback upwards when warranted. We tend to shy away from this, for fear of being seen as currying favour, but the boss has got his heart in the job as much as you have, and when something goes well it is good to celebrate it. That said, your boss doesn't need to know how clever you are; most of your own initiatives and successes should stay within the unit.

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in the regimental environment.

THE RSM

You and the RSM really command the regiment together. It looks as if you do it, but really it is a partnership. Provided that the RSM is good, this is reassuring to the soldiers—they know that their way of thinking and their interests are represented. Your RSM is a discreet sounding board for you, a frank and fearless adviser, and a technical expert in things you have long forgotten or never knew. He is also a good companion for you, and certainly the closest and most important relationship you will form as a CO. You will have a grasp of the big picture and a long term, strategic way of thinking, while he will ensure you remain connected with the human beings that make it all happen. The RSM also allows you to remain officer-like and dignified when shouting and gesticulating are needed.

YOUR OWN HEADQUARTERS

Your unit headquarters represents you and is a direct reflection of your professionalism and attitude. It is easy for a headquarters to create a bad impression, which extends to you personally as the CO. It looks very bad if you are prepared to tolerate poor standards close to you. Ensure your headquarters is beyond reproach in its field craft, battle rhythm and personal standards in barracks. First impressions are important in creating faith and confidence in your more tangible outputs. For example, think about the impression you want to make when holding Orders Groups and meetings, and make your staff work hard to achieve it. Headquarters culture has a strong impact, especially when your unit is widely dispersed with many tasks and limited communications. It is easy for a headquarters to become a controlling and fault-correcting entity, but much better to be demonstrably there to assist the sub-units. Take every opportunity to troubleshoot, and bite down hard on any martinets in your team. It is gratifying to see how well the headquarters team responds when they know you take their performance personally.

Your unit headquarters represents you and is a direct reflection of your professionalism and attitude.

YOUR SUB-UNIT COMMANDERS

Your exercise of command continues through to squadron/company, troop/platoon and section level. Sometimes it pays to remind yourself of this and take specific steps to reinforce it. You may find that between your own headquarters staff and your interactions with other headquarters, your sub-unit commanders can be left a little on the outer. They are the key leaders and should be prominent as such. For the most part, leaving them to get on with things is appreciated by all parties, but try to build a sense of command camaraderie. The mentoring role of a CO for his OCs is one of the most important and rewarding aspects of command. Over my time in command I had five lions and a lioness as my squadron commanders, and they operated really well autonomously. Every so often though it was great to have a commanders' lunch or similar, without others around. Getting them plus their sergeants major together to form a commander's forum occasionally is a great way to make big decisions, as well as reinforcing the command team.

HYBRID VIGOUR¹¹

The Army is a fairly broad church these days. It contains people of diverse backgrounds, and with a variety of personal motivations. We now have lots of lateral transfers, reservists on full-time service, officers commissioned from the ranks,

re-enlistees back from civilian life, the number and seniority of women is increasing, and more women are appearing in traditionally male-dominated areas of the Service. I see this as providing useful diversity, and if anything we need more of it. The Army could do with more people of non-Anglo Saxon origin, more linguists, more individuals with a previous career, greater freedom to transfer in and out of uniform, and an officer corps with greater appreciation for artistic and cultural pursuits. If we were all stereotypical red-blooded Alpha-male Duntroon graduates, then we would be taking a narrow world view—not a good thing for adaptive campaigning on interagency operations. We need to appreciate diversity and embrace different perspectives, recognising that they will add value to our own.

PILOT'S ADVICE, CAPTAIN'S ORDERS¹²

Commanding Officers are provided with advice from many quarters, and it is not always correct or consistent. We need to be robust in maintaining independent judgement. This point is not always well understood. For example, it is easy to be seduced by legal *advice* in the mistaken belief that it is *direction*, and therefore definitive and inviolable. This is not the case. Bear in mind that the legal profession spends much of its time second-guessing its own 'judgements' through the appeals system. Legal advice is only based on a narrow field of view compared with the array of competing priorities faced by a commander. Listen to the advice, then make your own *decision*, and instruct the legal adviser to find a way to codify and protect your chosen course of action. The better lawyers get this and will be only too happy to help—you are the decision-maker and they are but one of the 'consultants' there to help you.

Legal advice is only based on a narrow field of view compared with the array of competing priorities faced by a commander.

Other 'consultants' out there include medical staff, psychologists/psychiatrists, logisticians, military police, padres, OH&S advisers, military risk managers, security specialists and practitioners of the Technical Regulatory Framework. The same principle applies—listen to the advice, treat the adviser with respect, make your own judgement, then require the specialist to use his expertise in support of *your* plan.

COMMAND DILIGENCE

Commanding Officers have a broad range of responsibilities, many of which can be considered corporate governance. It often feels as if the governance requirements are oppressive, outweighing and stymieing core business. Two thoughts on this:

1. Most governance requirements are actually about maintenance of combat power, analogous to the mindset required in theatre for a long campaign. The

phrase ‘tactics are for amateurs, logistics is for professionals’ expresses this. We have a lot of equipment, many people, and are the custodians of valuable taxpayer-funded resources. I dislike the term ‘corporate governance’, and use ‘command diligence’ instead as it better captures the true nature of the responsibility.

2. Notwithstanding this, the Army’s approach to corporate governance is not great, and needlessly increases the burden on commanders. Firstly, it is unrealistic to have some of the key responsibilities carried as extra-regimental roles for people with busy day jobs. In particular, OH&S should be a full-time role. For example, any large construction organisation will have at least one full-time safety officer. The OH&S statistics for civilian industries analogous to Defence are extraordinarily good, but we lag several orders of magnitude behind.¹³ You don’t change a culture, implement systems and supervise safety properly if it is not a full-time job. There is certainly scope to have one or two individuals per unit fully employed on key governance tasks—they could either be civilian staff or perhaps senior warrant officers (as long as they stay out of the RSM’s lane). Secondly, we have an abundance of disparate oversight agencies, each of which is entitled to conduct unit audits. The outcome is a constant stream of different audits, each of which requires preparation, in-brief, hosting, out-brief and follow-up. Far better for Army to centrally manage one bumper audit session per unit each year, then leave units to get on with it.

TIME SPENT ON TRAINING IS OFTEN WASTED

Regardless of the Strategic Reform Program, our training time and resources are precious, and good training builds people’s confidence in their leaders. A talk-crawl-walk-run approach is best, yet we often seem to be learning in the field, leaping far ahead of people’s understanding. Far better to educate people, practise and rehearse at a small scale, and only then attempt the real thing. We have all been trained in a great diversity of skills, and are therefore rusty at most of them. Start a training activity with classroom revision, followed by some sort of simulation (e.g. a war game or Rehearsal of Concept Drill using a mud model, or computer-based simulation, or simply working through it on a whiteboard), then conduct a small-scale rehearsal at slow tempo with instructors present, then finally do it for real. The results will be far better than business-as-usual, and will make considerably better use of scarce resources. Close training areas are a valuable asset for this.

Regardless of the Strategic
Reform Program,
our training time and
resources are precious ...

BAD THINGS HAPPEN IN GOOD BATTALIONS

I don't know who said this first, but I often had reason to think of it. When something goes wrong, don't take it personally or feel a need to manage it in-house in order to guard your reputation. Problems are a fact of life, and our responses say more about us than the problems themselves. The quick assessment is an excellent tool for this. There is considerable strategic sensitivity to any incident that may harm Army's reputation. Accept this, and just call things as you see them. The CO's comments on a quick assessment will make their way to high places via the Army Incident Management System. Decisive, well-considered and ethical action will be respected, even if the need arises from an embarrassing atrocity.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Command is a wonderful life experience. Those who get this chance are very lucky. I know many fine officers who were at least as deserving yet did not get the opportunity. I often reflected on this, and sought to do well in their honour, as well as for the normal reasons.

It would be good to bottle the experience, then open the lid occasionally for the rest of my life and have a sniff. I sought to achieve this by maintaining a daily journal, and this has become a prized possession. Command is a philosophical journey, with many lessons learned and humbling experiences, as well as all the glamorous bits and the fun. Getting it down on paper is cathartic in the short term and fascinating in review.

As one of my peers said, command is pretty easy because you inherit a mantle of respect and authority, and (nearly) everyone in the unit just wants to help you succeed. It is humbling and confronting to see just how much respect is placed in the institution of a CO. With our feet of clay, it is hard to be everything that is expected of us, but we must try. The concept of love could be defined as 'caring deeply about someone, being fascinated by what they do, wanting to help them grow, accepting them as worthy despite their faults, and wanting to do everything possible for them without demanding reciprocation.' That is also a good definition of the mindset a CO should have towards his people, *en masse*. If a CO has strong principles, understands higher intent, is mission-focused, knows his trade and loves his people, then he will do well. I am deeply grateful to have had this opportunity, and I will always remember the magnificent people I was privileged to serve as their Commanding Officer.

ENDNOTES

- 1 I use the term ‘my thoughts’ somewhat loosely, including a few that germinated from seeds planted by others. These include Brigadier (Major General) Mick Krause (commanders’ role to remedy ill-considered staff decisions at superior headquarters, no need to advertise your own wonderfulness), Brigadier (Major General) Steve Day (interaction with formation commander), Brigadier Bill Grice (Retd) (truth sets you free, not getting too close to your own position, benign neglect), Brigadier Stuart Smith (remaining balanced and flexible), and Lieutenant Colonel Tim Bayliss (98 per cent of unit working hard to help the CO look good and succeed). I am also very grateful to the various peers, members of 3 CER and my family that reviewed drafts of this article and helped refine it.
- 2 I imagine that this tenet has given rise to much soul-searching in recent years among those of an independent-minded disposition. Australia’s strategic circumstances tend to bind us to decision-making by powerful allies.
- 3 Happily for modern soldiers, this is a particularly strong feature of Australian political and societal culture.
- 4 I assess that the ADF is still grappling with this as we adapt to current operations with ongoing casualties. Well-meaning pledges to provide wounded soldiers with a job for as long as they want one are not helpful to those individuals’ best interests or the Army’s needs.
- 5 As described by Teddy Roosevelt at the Sorbonne in Paris, 23 April 1910. The most famous excerpt of this speech is:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.
- 6 This is very topical at the time of writing. Soldiers need to operate within a legal framework and be accountable for their decisions. There is nothing wrong with this, and we should embrace it as the core of our legitimacy. It is vital to ensure that such accountability works from a realistic baseline though, informed by the pressures and risks inherent in combat operations. Mistakes will happen, war is a terrible business, and second-guessing the men we send to fight for us is not a trivial undertaking.

- 7 We are currently very well paid for what we do, and well looked after in many other ways. We are at the upper limit of what society should be asked to provide for us, at the sacrifice of its other needs.
- 8 This was well expressed by Brigadier Stuart Smith in a communiqué to all 3 BDE warrant officers and officers:

Area for Improvement: Remember the Bigger Picture
Maintaining a high tempo sometimes involves risk-taking. It's human nature to think within our lane of responsibility. Many of us have a tendency to provide command advice and make command demands based on what we see in our lane, as opposed to thinking about the Task Group as an entity. We must avoid this habit if we wish to be adept at complex war fighting along several lines of operation. If your specialist advice or requests are noted but not actioned, do not be thin-skinned or lower your morale. Understand that commanders will make assessments and judge risks differently. Stay focussed on the overall mission.
[Exercise HAMEL, 18 October 2010]
- 9 This is a reference to the poem 'If' by Rudyard Kipling—a wonderfully inspiring template for personal success.
- 10 I realised this a bit late. A lot of things can simply be ignored. If you assess something as nugatory and discard it, then generally you never hear anything more about it. If your input is important to someone then they will come back to you. This feels discourteous, but the reality is that email allows a bombardment of correspondence far in excess of previous norms. It has become unrealistic to respond to everything, especially given other priorities.
- 11 Heterosis, or 'hybrid vigor' or 'outbreeding enhancement', is the increased function of any biological quality in a hybrid offspring. It is the occurrence of a genetically superior offspring from mixing the genes of its parents.
- 12 A nautical expression referring to the employment of locally expert pilots to aid navigation: no matter what the pilot says, the ship's captain always maintains command of the ship and responsibility for safe passage.
- 13 For example, the contractor Baulderstone-Hornibrook building the new facilities for 7 RAR at Edinburgh had completed 2.2 million man-hours of work at the time of writing, with only one Lost Time Injury. This is an excellent result, but by no means unusual in the construction industry. Army work has some necessarily dangerous aspects, but we can do a lot better.

THE AUTHOR

Colonel Rupert Hoskin is currently deployed to Afghanistan, serving in the Operations Division of HQ ISAF. His previous postings include 3 CER, HQ 3 Bde, 21 Construction Squadron, ADFA, Army HQ, Infrastructure Division, and as the Defence Adviser to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. He deployed to Timor Leste with the 3 RAR Bn Gp as an engineer squadron commander and to Bosnia as an engineer operations officer. His non-military experiences include working for UNHCR in Niger, for Woodside on the North West Shelf, and on the Jubilee Line Extension Project in London. Colonel Hoskin has tertiary qualifications in engineering, business administration and defence studies, and he is a French linguist.

REVIEW ESSAY

LINKING STRATEGY AND TACTICS

John R Ballard, *From Storm to Freedom - America's Long War with Iraq*, US Naval Institute, Annapolis, 2011, ISBN 9781591140184, 352 pp, RRP US\$37.95.

Dale Andrade, *Surging South of Baghdad - The Third Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq 2007–2008*, US Army Center of Military History, Washington DC, 2010, ISBN 9781780390253, 429 pp, RRP US\$39.95.

Seth WB Folsom, *In the Gray Area - A Marine Advisor Team at War*, US Naval Institute, Annapolis, 2010, ISBN 9781591142814, 256 pp, RRP US\$34.95.

Reviewed by Jim Molan

Most Australians, even those that watch the news, have a mental picture of wars and conflict that is shaped more by Hollywood and our iconic battles than today's realities. This leads to a reasonable expectation that wars are still declared, battles fought, and victory or defeat occurs. Such an attitude reflects how the experience of modern war in Australia is limited to very few Australians, mostly in the military and some in the national security function of government. Even our Vietnam veterans have a perception that sometimes confuses as much as clarifies, especially in regard to our major ally, the United States.

In complete contrast, Admiral Mike Mullen, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, talks about 'persistent conflict', a term that most Americans would probably

understand. The United States has been at war with Iraq as a single discontinuous conflict in various campaigns for two decades. Several million Americans have served in that long war, many have died. The cost is high, and there are many stories to be told. Those who get their literary intake through a Kindle reader will be aware that there are more books on the war in Iraq than any one reader who has anything approaching a life, could download, read and digest.

By any measure, the Iraq war has been long and contentious, but that is even more reason why it should be studied. In mid 2011 with the final pullout of US troops from Iraq only six months away and levels of violence at historic lows, it may be now possible to put this long war into some initial perspective. Three books have just been published that try to provide that perspective, covering the long term, and two of the three major functions of modern conflict: the warfighting and the training of a local force. The other function not covered discretely is probably civil affairs.

John R Ballard is the typical American writer on military affairs, a Marine officer, a combat veteran and a scholar. His book, *From Storm to Freedom – America's Long War with Iraq*, published by the Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland in 2010, gives the long and detailed perspective.

Dale Andrade is a Senior Historian at the US Army Center of Military History, an institution which provides 'an awareness of history' to the US Army. His ongoing task is to write the official history of Army combat operations in Vietnam 1969 to 1973. He has now taken the time to write *Surging South of Baghdad – The 3rd Infantry Division and Task Force Marne in Iraq 2007–2008*, published in 2010.

Lieutenant Colonel Seth W B Folsom is a serving soldier who first fought in Iraq in 2003 and wrote about it in an acclaimed book titled *The Highway War*. He returned to Iraq in 2008 as the team leader of a Military Transition Team (advisers/mentors/trainers) with an Iraqi battalion and has now written *In the Gray Area – A Marine Advisor Team at War*, published by the USMC Naval Institute Press Annapolis, Maryland in 2010.

From Storm to Freedom is the book that everyone with an interest in or responsibility for military affairs should read. Of these three books it should be read first. It is, however, a challenging read as it concentrates on the strategic interactions between the United States and Iraq and the key matching operational decisions, rather than where most of us are more comfortable—at the soldiers' level. As such, it covers a lot of ground. It is the most comprehensive volume on the US war with Iraq that I have seen, looking at the war from the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait until 2010.

However, because it looks at such a broad canvas, it may tend to revert to broad generalisations that are just not true. In covering the years that General George Casey was commander (2004–2006), Ballard says that the 'Casey Strategy' (based

on building Iraqi security forces) was built on two misconceptions: that the Iraqi police were professional; and that the Iraq army was demobilised but available for recall. Because of these misconceptions, Ballard contends, Casey's strategy failed and led to the need for a surge.

From personal experience, this was patently not the case. At the time the strategy was being formulated, Casey knew perfectly well that the police were a disaster and the army did not exist. We saw that manifest every day. Regardless of the success or failure of his strategy, these two 'misconceptions' were not the basis. With insufficient troops to ideally establish security first and then to build Iraqi security forces, Casey had little choice but to try to do both together. It was less than successful and the early attempts at quickly devolving security to new Iraqi units had to be reversed. Until this had failed, the Bush Administration was not prepared to consider deploying significantly more troops. Once it had failed, more troops became a possibility.

It may be unfair to go from a particular case to the general in assessing this book, but if nothing else it should remind us to remain sceptical as we read history, especially history of recent events. I did enjoy the book; it is written in a crisp style, and it is the first that I have read covering the entirety of this conflict.

The next book on my list looks at the consequence of Casey's insufficient troops, the surge. None of us should forget that by its nature, the now common military technique of 'surging' is in some sense an admission of failure. We surge because we misappreciated either the number of troops that were initially needed, or the nature of the conflict.

Surging South of Baghdad is a tactical level history of the troops that were sent to Iraq for the surge, and deployed to the south of Baghdad. It is well set in a strategic and operational context, and it is written from firsthand experience because Andrade accompanied the 3rd Division to Iraq as their historian. In its style and unrelenting detail, it reminds me of the two 'On Point' publications from Leavenworth's Combat Studies Institute. This is a more comfortable read for we tactically oriented Australians, telling the detail of the large scale tactical operations in the southern Baghdad Belt. Counterinsurgency requires the full range of operations that a military is capable of, and the 3rd Division provided them all. The surge troops were experienced, well equipped and highly motivated, and so were tremendously effective. In the second year of the war, we lusted after another formation such as this. Had this level of effort been applied earlier in the conflict, one can only dream of the result. Andrade's book deserves a good read. I am sure it will form a large part of the future official history.

Lieutenant Colonel Folsom's book *In the Gray Area – A Marine Advisor Team at War* brings us to the lowest tactical level with his fine description of advising the Iraqi army in 2008. This was after the surge had its effect, and the Iraqi army was

taking over responsibility for the security of its own country. Yet the Iraqis were hardly more ready for that responsibility than they were in 2005 and 2006 when Casey tried to push them into the maelstrom that was central Baghdad. It should not take the repetitive failures of the Libyan rebels to remind us that it takes a long time to form an army of even basic competence, and it is something that we should never take for granted as military budgets across the world are slashed. Folsom is the kind of person that can work across cultures, not easily because nothing is easy and little is even understandable. But he can only do this because he has years of solid military experience behind him. As someone who has spent many years working intimately with foreign militaries, I could identify with much of this book and thoroughly enjoyed it. It stands well beside the young Bing West's 1972 classic account of Marine advisers in Vietnam titled *The Village*. Our mentors in Uruzgan province will strongly identify, and we now wait for their books.

Three books, three very different views of the same war, but with much in common. The underlying theme of each book is the misalignment of strategy and tactics, manifest in inadequate resources allocated to conflicts. But it was ever thus. I strongly recommend these books because I strongly recommend study of the Iraq war. For soldiers it is a bonus to their daily lives. For the commentariat and the security studies industry, it is essential, because many of them fail to realise, except in their rhetoric, the criticality of the link between strategy and tactics.

REVIEW ESSAY

TWO PAEANS TO PROFESSIONALISM

Peter J Dean, *The Architect of Victory: The military career of Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Horton Berryman*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2011, ISBN 9780521766852, 406 pp, RRP AU\$59.95

Allan Converse, *Armies of Empire: the 9th Australian and 50th British Divisions in Battle, 1939–1945*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2011, ISBN 9780521194808, 368 pp, RRP AU\$59.95

Reviewed by Captain Dayton McCarthy

The shadow and influence of our pre-eminent military historian, CEW Bean, has loomed over Australian military history and historiography since his seminal official histories appeared over sixty years ago. Bean's meticulous efforts at recording the experiences and exploits of the AIF, as well as his Herculean endeavours in establishing the Australian War Memorial, ensure him a rightful place in our esteem. However, Bean's style was to elevate individual Australian soldiers as the foci of his histories. In doing so, he was the foremost propagator of the 'cult of the digger' and one of the most pervasive, and certainly incorrect, myths of Australian military history—that of the 'natural' Australian soldier. His desire to record the war from the point of view of the average soldier for the nascent Australian democracy was noble, but this has had a long-term negative effect on how our military history has been studied, conclusions drawn, and how other aspects of military effectiveness have been downplayed or ignored. Under lesser and unfortunately more numerous historians, this elevation of the individual 'natural'

soldier has taken root and accounts for the large amount of dross that is published as Australian military history every year.

The problem with the natural soldier thesis, besides its lack of perspective and patent falsehood, is that it creates a forced dichotomy. If a soldier is a 'natural' and that soldier fails in battle, it must be because of something other than the soldier himself—after all, he *is* a natural soldier. Hence we are led to the second major thread in much Australian military historiography—the shifting of blame to others, be it duplicitous allies, incompetent officers or other influences. The pervasive nature of the 'cult of the digger' and the natural soldier myth is still with the Army today; it is manifest in such adages as 'there are no bad soldiers, only bad leaders'. This may be true, but the role of the universal military principles of training, discipline, leadership, staff work and planning, doctrine and organisation are surer reasons for armies' successes and failures than any supposedly innate qualities of its soldiers.

These two books, released as part of the ongoing excellent Australian Army History Series, published by Cambridge University Press, examine, through their own subjects, these universal military principles and their application in the Second World War. In doing so, both books undermine the 'natural soldier' school of historiography; instead they extol the virtues of military professionalism. Based on theses (Converse a MA; Dean, a PhD), both are successful in illustrating these principles through detailed research and the plundering of primary source material. Dean's biography of Berryman, who was described by Lieutenant General Sir John Lavarack as 'the best combination of fighting leader, staff officer and administrator', is an overdue recognition of one of Australia's pre-eminent professional officers who planned some of the most complex and successful operations in the latter stages of the war. The biography highlights the requirement for detailed planning across combined arms, and thus the importance of intelligent and dedicated staff officers such as Berryman. Converse's book, in many ways, is the more ambitious of the two. He examines the vexed concept of morale (and thence effectiveness) through the study and comparison of two broadly similar divisions of the British Commonwealth armies—the 9th Division of the 2nd AIF and the 50th (Northumbrian) Division. His aim is to show that effectiveness was determined less by any supposed national characteristics, and more by what he called 'basic military realities common to all armies'. He also notes that plain old fashioned luck is never far from a division's fortunes.

For Dean, his task was relatively simple and was a matter of chronicling Berryman's military career and illustrating his role in many of the signal Australian military operations in the Second World War. Berryman entered the Royal Military College in the 1913 intake. He excelled as a staff cadet, and when war broke out, his graduation was brought forward by two years. Having performed well in technical subjects such as science and mathematics, he opted to graduate into the artillery. He served in a number of roles, both as a field commander and then as a staff officer in

an infantry brigade headquarters on the Western Front. He relished his command time, but it was his staff experience that was crucial to his professional development. He was exposed to the advances made in combined arms tactics, and as an artilleryman he was especially aware of the important role in coordinated artillery protection for advancing infantry. As Dean notes, 'high quality staff work was exceptionally important in helping to secure victory in 1918. Without the improved operational plans and logistics being produced by (the staff), the changes in tactics and doctrine that had occurred in 1917–18 could not have been implemented.'

Like most, if not all permanent officers, he suffered from lack of career progression in the straitened interwar years, but he was fortunate in being selected for a number of overseas postings, including the Royal Artillery College at Woolwich, the Staff College at Camberley and a period as a staff officer at the Australian High Commission in London. This kept his mind honed on matters military as well as giving him valuable contacts among the officers of the empire's armies. On the outbreak of war, he, like all professional officers, was deeply insulted by the decision to give commands in the 2nd AIF to militia officers. However, his good reputation secured him the principal staff officer's position in the newly raised 6th Division.

His time in the 6th Division illustrates the complex nature of the staff corps/militia rivalry, as well as some insights into Berryman's character. Berryman got on well with and respected the divisional commander and militia officer, Mackay, and one of the brigade commanders, militia officer 'Tubby' Allen. He loathed the artillery commander, Herring, who was a militia officer but also clashed frequently with his fellow staff corps officer, Vasey. He got on well with Robertson, who was another permanent officer, but actively suspected the militia officer, Savige, of undermining staff corps officers at every opportunity. He developed a reputation among some as a difficult colleague; others were not so circumspect, and the epithet 'Berry the Bastard' arose. But he was able to generally see through one's background and judge officers on their professional competence more than anything else.

Berryman, above all, sought a prolonged command of his own but this dream constantly eluded him. He enjoyed an all too short stint as an independent, composite force commander in the Syrian campaign in 1941. From here, he began a series of rapid promotions into various staff positions, with just one other brief command appointment, that of commander of II Corps, for two months in early 1944. He held down a number of high level staff appointments simultaneously, such was the trust that Blamey, and others, had in his ability. By the war's end, he was Blamey's principal staff officer and planner, controlling multiple operations throughout the South West Pacific Area, which meant working closely with American staffs also. This was sometimes a frustrating experience, the culmination of which was Macarthur's sidelining of Australian forces after late 1944. Despite longing for a command, Berryman was the consummate professional and threw

himself into his staff work wholeheartedly. He understood his job as a planner and staff officer; referring to planning the amphibious OBOE operations, he pithily noted his role was to 'get the necessary men, trained, equipped and maintained, with all the supplies and stores required, ready at the right place and at the right time to meet the enemy with the greatest possible chance of success'.

Dean generally treats Blamey well and illustrates that he was a man who understood the nature and his role as a true strategic commander. Macarthur and the Curtin Government, which all but ceded control of Australia's military to the American general, do not appear in such a good light. Blamey's patronage undoubtedly assisted Berryman throughout his career, but when he was seeking the prize job of CGS immediately postwar, he was passed over by the Chifley Government, which did not want a 'Blamey man' in the job. He saw out the rest of his military career as GOC Eastern Command.

Rightly, Dean has called Berryman the 'architect of victory'. In 1948, Berryman had been awarded the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, the citation from which illustrated the 'tools' by which he crafted such victories: 'General Berryman's administrative skill, broad professional knowledge, keen perception...his energy, initiative and resourcefulness...made a remarkable contribution to the successful conclusion of Allied operations in the South West Pacific Area'. A professional officer in name, outlook and performance, Berryman's work at the highest levels of operational planning has been justly chronicled in Dean's book.

Converse's *Armies of Empire* is also about the components of military professionalism, but few of the major characters in the 9th Australian (especially) or 50th Northumbrian Divisions were career professional soldiers. The 9th was a 2nd AIF division raised for service specifically overseas, led mainly by former militia officers, augmented by some regulars in key staff and administrative positions, with the rank and file comprising men who joined off the street. The 50th was originally a part-time Territorial Army (TA) division that had suffered the inevitable decline during the postwar years but which had swollen with the introduction of limited conscription in April 1939. Its rank and file thus comprised TA volunteers from its recruiting area as well as new conscriptees. In contrast to the 2nd AIF, the British Army had an aversion to TA commanding officers and, where possible, sought to replace them with regular officers drawn from those TA battalions' regular sister battalions. Nonetheless, many of the officers and NCOs of the 50th comprised prewar TA cadres as well as rapidly trained and promoted leaders after the 1939 expansion.

These two divisions were not chosen for comparison at random. Besides both being Commonwealth divisions sharing the same language and essentially the same doctrine and structure, the 9th and 50th were both non-regular divisions which took on regular and professional traits as the war progressed. Symbolically, both divisions fought at the first and second battles of El Alamein, during which time,

according to Converse, they peaked in terms of effectiveness and morale. Therefore using morale (which was built upon and influenced by the ‘basic military realities’ described earlier) as his narrative vehicle, Converse tracks the fortunes of these two divisions throughout the war. He takes us from the divisions’ raising where he examines class background, education, physical and mental health of the raw soldier material through to initial training where the role and influence of strong leadership and discipline were often key determinants of future battlefield success. From here, the divisions’ performances are followed up to El Alamein and beyond. For the 9th, this meant the 1943 Huon Peninsula campaign in New Guinea and the controversial OBOE operations in and around Borneo in 1945. For the 50th, it fought in the Sicilian and Italian campaigns in 1943, before landing at D-Day, fighting its way through the *bocage* and finally driving into the Netherlands as part of Operation MARKET-GARDEN. These final campaigns, for both the 9th and the 50th, are characterised as ‘pressing on’, conducted with gritted teeth and in a workmanlike manner.

Converse digs behind the concept of ‘morale’ and while arguing that it is a force in and of itself, he is at pains to stress that morale cannot simply win a battle by itself. If this was the case, he argues, the 50th and the 9th could not have performed as well as they did during their post-Alamein/post-peak periods when pointers indicated steep declines in morale. Herein stands the true value of his work. He aims to demystify battlefield success but he is in no way ‘deconstructing’ it in a postmodern sense. He pays due respect to morale and recognises that it is often the special spark that can motivate a unit. But without the fundamental building blocks such as leadership, training, discipline, sound doctrine and personnel practices, no unit—Australian or British—can succeed. Moreover, he notes that a unit cannot maintain peak morale indefinitely, regardless of best efforts and best practice, and that ‘armies must aim for the ideal of morale but be prepared to accept less’; what they must ensure, however, is that the morale balance ‘be sufficient to withstand attrition and accomplish the mission’.

In this regard, Converse provides the reader with some hard realities. Overall, the 9th comes out of his analysis—and the war—in better shape. But there were reasons for this. For example, by the end of the second battle of El Alamein, the 50th has already lost as many men (it had fought its way out of France and Belgium to Dunkirk and been severely mauled in some opening battles of the North African campaign) as the 9th would lose in the entire war. Before the war was over, the 50th would lose many more again. These losses had to be replaced; reinforcements had to come from somewhere. The regionally-based regimental system was pushed to breaking point as the British Army endeavoured to replenish units with men from the same region. Depending on the severity of losses to be replaced and the size of the regional pool from which to draw replacements, often the replacements had to come from outside the division’s local area. Even if replacements were successfully drawn from the same region, they had to be equipped, trained and integrated into the units. Replacement

leaders also had to be selected and trained. This all took time. It took even longer for the new organisation to coalesce into a team, to regenerate esprit de corps and relearn institutional knowledge. Therefore the 50th had to repeat this process more times and to a greater extent than the 9th. By and large, the 50th did this successfully, but with each iteration of the replacement/regeneration cycle, the overall quality of the division decreased, never to reach the standards achieved previously.

Refreshingly, as part of this examination of the constituent parts of military professionalism, he looks at two elements generally overlooked in most histories—discipline and non-battle casualties, including mental strain cases. Converse is quite pointed here and, through records of courts martial and other disciplinary hearings, noted that ill-discipline was a problem that the 9th Division struggled with throughout its existence. In a large way, Converse argues that ‘larrikin culture’ demonstrated by the 1st AIF and then perpetrated (and generally tolerated) by the 2nd AIF, had much to answer for. The leaders of the 9th realised this after a number of discipline problems experienced during Tobruk and tightened discipline as a result. Still, it was a problem never truly solved; one battalion alone, the 2/23rd, held thirty-four courts martial for desertion after the second battle of El Alamein.

Converse also delves into psychological casualties. Despite records being somewhat piecemeal, he was able to record that around 10 per cent of casualties were psychological. Both divisions came to understand the importance of early identification and early treatment of such cases as a means of prolonging the overall operational stamina of a unit, before it had to be removed from the line and rested, or alternatively, before it slumped into combat-ineffectiveness. He also records other historical indicators of ill-discipline such as self-inflicted wounds and incidents of venereal disease, and how increased incidents mirrored the inverse decrease in morale.

Therefore, leadership—in terms of tactical acumen demonstrated, battlefield example and the means by which officers set the tone, standards and vision for a unit—comes under special scrutiny. Here Lieutenant General Morshead, commander of the 9th during Tobruk and El Alamein, and the division’s officers generally, receive special praise. Morshead was tactically adept, his First World War experience especially equipping him to fight the set-piece battles of Tobruk and Alamein very well. Most importantly, he was a firm believer in training and discipline, and this, above all else, probably set the 9th Division on its path to military fame. Converse certainly believes so; his conclusions drawn on this matter are worth quoting in detail:

Much of the credit for the 9th Division’s success really belongs to the officers, from Morshead down. This explanation...is inconsistent with the Digger Myth and unpalatable to many Australians. Morshead and most of his commanders did not fit the democratic Australian image. Their leadership style was often authoritarian, emphasising discipline... and thorough preparation...the Australian was not a ‘natural’ soldier; like the British,

the Australians needed discipline, good tactics and hard training to be at their best... Morshead was a volunteer, like his men, but his values and attitudes were those of a regular soldier. These prevailed and made the 9th Division what it was.

The effect of 'institutional forgetting', that is the loss of lessons learned from the previous war, is also covered. Some of this is put down to the neglect of all things military during the interwar years, some of it due to an infatuated misunderstanding of German *blitzkrieg* tactics. One of the great lessons forgotten, which was the cause of some severe tactical reverses early in the North African campaign, was the failure to support and reinforce any breakthrough against the inevitable German counterattack. A relearning of the 'bite and hold' tactics from the previous war remedied this, along with a greater British understanding of combined arms warfare, which had its renaissance post-El Alamein. Professional mastery which results in victories is always good for morale!

At the end of each chapter, Converse provides a comparative 'scorecard' of the actions fought by both divisions. Contained in each is the tactical action, its outcome (successful/mixed/unsuccessful), its wider operational effect and the quantitative analysis of casualties (including prisoners of war) sustained and inflicted. This simple but telling data both supports and is supported by his thesis that effectiveness is ultimately a function of those 'basic military realities'. By demystifying morale and supplying numerical data, Converse has sought to quantify and qualify battlefield performance. This may be an anathema to some. In relation to the 9th and 50th Divisions, ultimately, Converse concludes, 'both came out ahead in the arithmetic of attrition, and they usually accomplished their missions'. The divisions did so because they applied, as much as possible, those constant, professional military values.

Both books display the uniformly excellent production values of this Cambridge University Press series, and both are well illustrated, referenced and indexed. They strike a balance between general 'readability' and the inclusion of military minutiae for serious students of the subject matter. There are a few faults, the least of which is that both books' maps, although professionally produced, lack conventional military symbology, which makes deciphering them more difficult. The price of these books is also a concern and may dissuade many prospective readers. At \$59.95, they are not cheap, but serious students of Australian military history—and by definition this should include all military readers of the *Australian Army Journal*—are well advised to save their pennies to invest in the Australian Army History Series rather than some of the more popular but markedly inferior, commercial history works on bookstore shelves.

REVIEW ESSAY

TRIPLE SUCCESS FROM ARMY HISTORY UNIT

Phillip Bradley, *Wau 1942-1943*, Australian Army Campaign Series No 6, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2010, 216 pp, RRP AU\$19.99

Jean Bou, *Australia's Palestine Campaign*, Australian Army Campaign Series No 7, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2010, 180 pp, RRP AU\$19.99

Roger Lee, *The Battle of Fromelles 1916*, Australian Army Campaign Series No 8, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2010, 256 pp, RRP AU\$19.99

Reviewed by Ian van der Waag

The Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) has set the yardstick by which contemporary, official military history programs, internationally, may be evaluated. Not only has the AAHU launched a major series of high-quality, referenced, historical works but has, since 2004, complemented these with the Australian Army Campaign Series, which is designed to promote the study of military history within the Army. Targeting a younger audience, spanning the ages of 17 and 30 years, this series includes an impressive amount of visual information, ranging from specially-commissioned, full-colour maps and artwork to vignettes and a plethora of good photographs. The focus of the Campaign Series is on the future generation of Army leaders, and the publications necessarily focus on leadership and command, strategy and tactics, and lessons learned. They are, in many ways, as indeed one contributor to the series notes, a modern and very impressive reincarnation of the military primer (Bou, p. 7).

Moreover, with the war in Afghanistan and Iraq now one of the longest in the history of the Australian Army, it is well to reflect upon previous foreign commitments and draw from this experience to improve performance. The Australian armed forces have enjoyed an enviable success rate extending over a period of more than a century and, for this reason too, books on the history of the Australian Army enjoy topical relevance. In this review, the three recent additions to the Campaign Series are discussed briefly. They reflect on three foreign deployments, two during the First World War and one during the Second. All three explore battles and campaigns that are less well known.

Chronologically the first of these is Jean Bou's *Australia's Palestine Campaign*. An understudied portion of Australia's Great War, this campaign was fought over three years and was Australia's second largest campaign away from the Western Front, which, with Gallipoli, tends to dominate Australian memory of the Great War. The Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), created in 1916, included Australians in the Light Horse, the Imperial Camel Corps and the Australian Flying Corps. Australia provided the bulk of the cavalry and Australians fought in every major engagement of the campaign. Over the following months, the EEF drove the Ottoman army out of the Sinai and then, from early 1917, from Palestine and Syria. Sweeping cavalry operations, operational movement and tactical mobility, and the relatively low casualty rates (574 killed in action and another 288 dying of their wounds), seemed to contrast sharply with conditions on the Western Front. However, as Bou argues, this is an oversimplification for a campaign that revealed all of the developments of modern warfare, including the use of all-arms, creeping artillery fire and chemical weapons. Sensibly, the discussion takes the reader chronologically from the Sinai in early 1916, to Gaza, Beersheba and Jerusalem in 1917, and then through the Jordan Valley to the Megiddo battles of 1918. Based on meticulous research, the text is detailed and the book well-structured.

The next treats the battle of Fromelles (1916), a feint during the Somme campaign. But, perhaps the first thing to do is to congratulate Roger Lee, who has produced this sterling volume and served in an advisory capacity with respect to the rest of the Campaigns Series. The battle commenced on the evening of 19 July 1916 and within 24 hours the 5th Australian Division had suffered 5533 casualties, including 1700 killed. This has remained 'the bloodiest twenty-four hours in the history of the Australian Army', yet as Lee notes, despite the losses, Fromelles remained 'almost unknown outside the pages of the Australian *Official History*' (Lee, p. 7). Lee first sets out the essential features of the war. The strategic setting and the deadlock on the Western Front is discussed in chapter one and two, while the opposing forces are compared in chapter three. This arranging of the furniture is an essential prelude to the three chapters that follow. The planning for the battle is covered in chapter four. The attack itself is discussed in chapter five, while the failure of the attack—due to

hasty planning, inferior intelligence, poor communication, inadequate logistics, lack of security of own forces, and questionable leadership—is discussed in chapter six. A solid conclusion ends this coherent, carefully-structured and well-informed study. Lee has provided a fresh understanding of a battle that is not without controversy and only ended for some in 2010 with the re-internment of 250 Australian and British troops in the new cemetery at Fromelles.

Phillip Bradley's *Wau, 1942–1943* reflects the greater attention given in the Campaign Series to battles and especially those perhaps less well known. The battles around Wau and Salamaua contrasted sharply to operations at Fromelles and in Palestine, for these were a series of commando operations fought in the jungles of New Guinea to keep an advancing Japanese army at bay. Having reinforced their positions at Salamaua, the Japanese moved to capture Wau and the airfield there. A single company of Australian infantry denied them their objective for a critical 36-hour period, allowing Australian reinforcements time to move forward, defend Wau and turn the tide in the battle. At the heart of this book is a remarkable human story. Here we have a 'history from below', for Bradley, able to focus on a narrower front, necessarily gives attention to the courage and daring of the lower ranks and reveals how resolute, gritty, field leadership led to tactical success against significant odds. *Wau* is profusely illustrated. The maps, artwork and photographs are magnificent. However, it does lack something in terms of structure. The approach is strongly chronological, which is fine, but surprisingly there is no introduction (providing for at least some historiographical setting) and no conclusion. This is a pity, for it takes away from an otherwise great book, something approaching a pastiche of Australian military life.

Although these three books mark three very different campaigns, a number of narratives permeate all three publications. There is also a certain amount of myth busting, which is both expected and necessary. Firstly, there is the identity of the digger and the role he played in these far-flung campaigns. Lee challenges the notion of a separate Australian identity, asserting that while colonial troops acquired an enviable war record, they formed very much part of the early twentieth century British World with its complex, layered identities. Bou goes further to dispel myths regarding the supremacy of colonial troops and the campaign-winning roles accorded to Australian troopers, in particular in Palestine. 'There is,' he concludes correctly, 'no one element in the British victory in Palestine that can be pointed to as the "war winner"' (Bou, p. 149) Victory is of course a complex business. It demands good leadership and command, adequate material resources, and well-trained and resilient troops, who, as a campaign progresses, gain experience and battle-hardiness. The battles around Wau, in particular, illustrate the need for strong leadership and determined command.

Evaluating success or failure is equally complex. Unsurprisingly, recrimination and the apportionment of blame for the defeat at Fromelles commenced immediately.

Typical of most explanations for military disaster, the first to be blamed were the generals and the senior commanders; ‘Dicky’ Haking, in particular, supposedly committed inexcusable errors in judgement. Establishing such causality is of course deceptively attractive, as is the popular image of ‘chateaux generals’ sipping champagne with French courtesans while their troops were wasted in a succession of ill-considered, futile offensives (Lee, pp.8, 103). Roger Lee reassesses the notion of the bungling British general and concludes that the leadership has to be considered in the strategic and tactical contexts of the day. He challenges readers to ‘look beyond the standard explanations that it was the fault of incompetent or obsessed British commanders and understand that war is a dangerous, bloody business in which soldier—sometimes lots of soldiers—die’ (Lee, p. 12). The general officers, like their troops, grew as the war progressed and, adapting to the new type of warfare manifested on the Western Front, came to realise that offensives with limited objectives could indeed find success. As Bou noted, the Palestine campaign had also been conducted in ‘fits and starts’. Allenby is not without his critics. But here too was a learning curve, and steady improvement and the growing size of the EEF led to a remarkable victory in 1918.

In sum, these works are original and significant and, although aimed at the junior leader, they are a welcome addition to the bookshelves of any military historian. The entire Campaign Series opens a range of questions on contemporary deployments. These include the debate on participation in foreign wars, the development, design and preparation of appropriate, modern, armed forces and their use as foreign policy instruments in far-off theatres, on military planning and, as the new cemetery at Fromelles illustrates, on the interface between foreign campaigning and domestic politics.

THE AUTHOR

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REVIEW ESSAY

Robert Lowry, *The Last Knight: A biography of General Sir Phillip Bennett AC, KBE, DSO*, Big Sky Publishing, Sydney, 2011, ISBN 9780980814040, 416 pp, RRP AU\$34.99

Reviewed by Nick Jans

Every decade since Federation has thrown up a distinctive challenge for the Australian military institution. The main challenges in the first half of the twentieth century concerned the mobilisation of the services for conventional warfare operations overseas, and in the last decade or so the ADF again finds itself engaged in significant deployment commitments far from our shores. But the chief challenge for the Australian military institution for most of its history has been to maintain its integrity in the face of limited resources and a nebulous threat.

One of the most instructive case studies of this professional juggling act was played out during the long trough between exit from Vietnam in the early 1970s and intervention in East Timor in 1999. The remarkable thing about that East Timor operation was just how well the Australian force and its leaders performed after nigh on a quarter of a century without serious 'match practice'. Shrewd observers must have wondered how it was the institution had managed to preserve its skill, spirit and professionalism in those flat years.

Bob Lowry's biography of General Sir Phillip Bennett sheds some light on the mechanics of how it was done. Bennett was Commander of the 1st Division in the late 1970s, then Assistant CDF and Chief of the General Staff and, finally, from 1984 to 1987, Chief of the Defence Force. In these capacities, he and his senior colleagues oversaw the conduct of collective training, the organisation of the Army and the ADF, the development of doctrine, and a strategic shift of significant proportions, and laid the foundation for the maintenance of professionalism and performance that so impressed the nation in 1999.

The book's title ostensibly refers to the fact that Bennett was the last Australian military officer to be knighted before the imperial honours system was dismantled in the mid-1980s. But there is a more subtle connotation. Bennett's career began

in what we can now see as the close of an era, during which military leadership was a simpler process and the causes for which Australians went to war were less equivocal. As his career progressed, he and his contemporaries were required to adapt the institution for a more complex and murkier professional and strategic world, a world that did not fit so comfortably with the straightforward professional identity of ‘warrior-knight’ to which they would have aspired on commissioning.

Lowry’s account takes us through Bennett’s early career years, conventional enough as they were in the context of that era (participation in the occupation forces in Japan, combat service in Korea and battalion command in Vietnam). We get a clear picture of what he did in each appointment that enhanced his opportunity for advancement to each new level; and this is useful enough, at least for the layman. But the book’s chief value is its account of Bennett as bureaucratic warrior at the strategic levels of the military institution, valuable because it details activities and issues—demanding political manoeuvring as opposed to force manoeuvring—that are not the usual stuff of military history books.

The most important area of activity for a senior military leadership team is to initiate and direct the reshaping of strategy. But performance in this respect probably carries the least weight and for how a chief will be judged. It is usually years before a valid evaluation of any high-level strategic decision is possible, and by then a host of other potential explanations will be available to account for its consequences (actual or supposed). In the meantime, most people will already have judged that chief by the decisions he made on a multitude of more visible but less weighty issues, especially in terms of how he advanced the interests of his ‘tribe’.

What makes such an evaluation even more difficult is that getting things done at the senior levels requires determination and skill in both ‘big-P’ and ‘small-p’ politics. In particular (according to former CDF Admiral Chris Barrie), a senior officer who takes an other-than-cautious approach to strategy formulation is near-certain to confront opposition. Because bold thinking often runs counter to the short-term interests of one or more of the services (even his own) or of the public service, a chief needs to be tough enough to ignore any risks in terms of his reputation, and skilled enough to manoeuvre politically in the face of such opposition. Clearly, Bennett was not found wanting in either respect.

Bennett took over in an era when the ADF was in the middle of the long hiatus between Nui Dat and Dili, during which Australia’s offshore military commitments were very minor indeed. With the impending end of the Cold War (for those who could read the tea leaves), the rationale for large conventionally-equipped and conventionally-trained military forces was increasingly being questioned. This was complicated by the difficult economic times, as Australia, like most Western nations, struggled with the low economic growth and high inflation woes of the post-Keynesian era, with a future that would be defined by the unpredictable

interaction of technological, social and political factors. Budgets were tight and, in the face of the inconvenient question as to 'threat', it was often difficult to mount a compelling case even for the maintenance of existing military expenditure, let alone the acquisition of increasingly complex and expensive capability. Governments and senior civil servants tended to look sceptically at traditional military arguments for the acquisition of such items; and, in the cases where they yielded (if reluctantly), they expected a *quid pro quo* in the form of reduced expenditure somewhere else.

The main challenge for services leaders in that era was to reshape and consolidate an institution that was geared for the 'modern' era of conventional warfare into what has been called the 'post-modern' military: a military force that could be called upon to deploy anytime, anywhere, in any strength, and on any task, while simultaneously maintaining itself by training and exercises, with continual attention to economies large and petty. This main challenge was complicated by some comparatively minor but nonetheless significant other challenges in the form of often-strained relationships with public service counterparts, public indifference and often hostility, and patchy performance on the part of ministers.

Bennett determined that tribal stovepipes needed to be broken down so that the ADF could become a force capable of joint operations in a range of circumstances and a viable and vibrant institution even in circumstances of perpetual frugality and budgetary uncertainty. As might be imagined, his views were not readily welcomed in the three services and in the wider department, so much of his time was spent in political manoeuvring with his uniformed and public service counterparts. Lowry gives the reader just the right amount of detail to show how this was done—enough to see and to learn from the lessons, but not too much as to cause our eyes to glaze over. For example, one of the most significant organisational changes that Bennett initiated was the transfer of battlefield helicopter capability from the RAAF to the Army. Lowry begins by giving us a potted history of the issue, including the complicated political machinations that accompanied a series of studies that directly or indirectly related to the issue. Then he tells us about the way that Bennett successfully organised a series of reviews and senior committee meetings in order to get the outcome he wanted. (The issue of whether this was the right outcome in the long term is essentially irrelevant; the instructive aspect of the story is *how* it was done.)

Bennett comes across as a competent bureaucratic warrior, tough enough to shrug off parochial criticism of his decisions and skilled enough to steer through complex or controversial policy. Among the many qualities that he brought to his strategic posts were doggedness, attention to detail, a very strong work ethic and broad professional experience (at least in terms of conventional military activities). And he continued to project a strong persona as a 'warrior chief', an image that was important in dealings with the rank and file, allies, government and the public.

Lowry reveals that, while service officers often found Bennett to be a cool, no-nonsense and not always approachable character, he was readily able to establish rapport with sailors, soldiers and airmen/women on the many visits that he made to units throughout the Army and the ADF during his watch. From the perspective of a mid-level regimental officer, I first encountered Bennett as a somewhat aloof divisional commander; but later in my life, when both of us had retired from full-time service, I knew him as a charming and affable golfing companion. Lowry doesn't tell us very much about Bennett's personality, but in essence he doesn't need to. Bennett's character is important only in terms of how it affected his professional behaviour; and being aloof to upstart young majors was probably the kind of person he needed to be at that time.

Lowry's account shows that Bennett had most of the attributes needed for the job but, like all of his uniformed counterparts, he had to learn bureaucratic politics on the run. And if his performance in this respect was sometimes clumsy, he was in good company. These were skills that did not sit well with the foundation development experiences of the military profession of that era. Bennett came from the old school, so his acquisition of such skills was all the more commendable.

Bennett's natural leadership style is illustrated in an anecdote told to me by a former colleague (it's not in Lowry's book) about Bennett's direction to his staff at the 1st Division. 'Gentlemen,' he told them, 'you have all been well prepared professionally for this job. And the same is true of the COs of the units in the division. They will all be trying to do the best they can. To help you support them, you have my authority to say "yes" to any request for support, without further reference to me. But you do not have my authority to say "no".' One can imagine how much the staff were inspired by such an approach.

Bennett and his senior colleagues brought about substantial change to the organisation and approach of the ADF to joint warfare, with equal attention to ensuring that officer development kept pace with these organisational and doctrinal changes. And if all this was not absorbing enough, the senior leadership team was also required to ensure that that appropriate relationships were forged with important allies. The main targets here were the United States, which needed reassurance of Australia's military reliability, and Indonesia, where the political relationship was somewhat tenuous following military hostilities and strained relationships over the previous three decades.

The senior teams of the 1980s did not have unequivocal success in tackling their huge reform agenda. For example, the three services were slow to shake off their conservative and somewhat parochial approach to professional military education and career structures; and relationships between the military and the public service had to wait for another decade before they were effectively addressed. However, a strategic leadership team can only do so much during its watch. It must address what

it sees as the priorities, and risk neglecting less pressing matters. It is a judgement-call, but overall, the skill and effort of Bennett and his peers in steering the institution into a new era is clearly one of the major reasons for the strong performance record of the contemporary Australian military institution.

From that perspective, this book deserves close consideration from any officer who wants to contribute effectively beyond mid-career or understand what goes on within the Defence bureaucracy. It will no doubt be closely read by those attending the courses at Weston Creek.

In that sense alone, Bob Lowry has done his former profession a considerable service.

THE AUTHOR

Nick Jans is a visiting fellow at the Centre for Defence Leadership & Ethics at the Australian Defence College. His 2003 study, 'Once Were Warriors', deals with senior leadership culture in the Australian Defence Organisation. (This was the source of the quote from ex-CDF Chris Barrie.) He is currently working on a study that examines the leadership issues and processes at the highest levels of the ADF.

BOOK REVIEW

David Horner, *Australia and the 'New World Order': From peacekeeping to peace-enforcement, 1988–1991*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, ISBN 9780521765879, 696 pp, RRP AU\$150.00

Reviewed by Kim Beazley

David Horner has a clear-eyed view of the task of an official historian. In his preface to this volume, *Australia and the New World Order: From peacekeeping to peace-enforcement: 1988–1991*, he argues, 'an official history is a record of a government's activities'. It is not military history, diplomatic history, political history or social history in the strictest sense, though its material is invaluable to the other genres. In covering the actions of governments (in this volume, apart from longer perspectives, exclusively the Hawke Government) his analysis is directed at three levels: strategic – largely government decision-making processes, operational – execution by the ADF and agencies of government decisions, and tactical – what service and civilian operatives did in the field.

Horner feels an added burden of responsibility because many of the missions he covers—the peacekeepers in Namibia in 1989–1990, the clearance divers for the tanker war phase of the Iran–Iraq war and observers of its conclusion in 1987–1990, and de-mining experts in Pakistan and Afghanistan 1989–1993—will never have their substantial, sometimes heroic, achievements assessed in any other writing. Their contributions deserve a place in Australia's voluminous military history. The diplomatic and political skills as well as their military capacities that they brought to complex tasks are worthy of study. The acts of moral courage as well as physical courage frequently demanded of them are overshadowed by the record of massive combat operations in earlier Australian engagements. Even in the case of the much more comprehensively covered Kuwait war, the Australian sailors, clearance divers, medical teams, logistic elements, air transport operatives, intelligence personnel, attached personnel to headquarters and combat elements of allied forces, risk obscurity because our commitment, though tangible, was peripheral to the main effort. They are therefore obscured in mainstream

histories. Taking up nearly half the book, as the Kuwait War does, that is not a problem here.

One of the many strengths of this excellent work from the perspective of Australians engaged in the profession of arms is the detail and complexity with which Horner handles the actions of the personnel involved in each engagement. He does not permit their trivialisation and ensures the big picture is drawn out of their seemingly thankless small tasks. For example, the sixty servicemen who served in the long-forgotten UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group monitoring the conclusion of the Iran-Iraq War, unarmed in a dangerous and uncooperative environment, 'filled a mission of presence. While they remained, hostilities were unlikely to resume'.

Since the time period covered in this book, 1988–1991, Australian military personnel of all three services have been continuously engaged abroad in peace-keeping, peace-enforcement, maritime interception and war. Sometimes they have been covered by UN mandate. Sometimes they are there as a result of alliance commitments. Occasionally they have been engaged in response to emergency situations in which Australia had the capacity to act irrespective of broader international cover. It is a surprising outcome of a quiet period of fifteen years after the Australian withdrawal from Vietnam when the focus of Australian defence planning shifted to the self-reliant defence of Australia as our primary military task. As Horner describes, the change emanated from a government whose members, when in opposition, opposed the Vietnam War and were wary of commitments other than in the direct defence of the continent's approaches.

That caution, moreover, was broadly shared in Australian politics as evidenced by its first official articulation in the Fraser Government's 1976 Defence White Paper. It was reiterated in the Hawke Government's 1987 White Paper, *Defence of Australia*, and a comprehensive military strategy of broad operational and force structure was attached to it. The Hawke Government White Paper anticipated the possibility of involvements outside Australia's nevertheless generously described area of direct strategic interest (it covered 10 per cent of the earth's surface, a broader area of strategic concern at 25 per cent). Nevertheless, those of us who had responsibility for drafting the document did not expect it to be tested so soon and so comprehensively.

The expression 'new world order', as Horner points out, was first coined by then Soviet Premier Gorbachev in a speech to the United Nations in December 1988. The phrase was used too by Bob Hawke before it became indelibly associated with US President George H W Bush in an address to the US Congress on 16 January 1991 as the air attacks in the Kuwait War began: 'We have before us the opportunity to forge ... a new world order, a world where the rule of law, not the law of the jungle, governs the conduct of nations.'

The new order reflected a perceived global common interest in becoming the central dynamic of international politics, replacing the bloc alignments of the Cold War. For a brief period of time the founding purposes of the United Nations, commonly agreed principles underpinning collective security, seemed likely at last to flourish. Alliance politics, if not subsumed by UN directions, appeared likely, plausibly, to be moderated through that framework. The missions in this book represented a sharp increase in Australian involvement in UN peacekeeping operations. They also represented a more systematic effort internationally to define the intellectual underpinnings of the notion of peacekeeping to encompass a variety of activities, from observation of the actions of willing partners to a conflict resolution through to armed enforcement against recalcitrants.

Horner is a very good military historian and analyst of higher defence organisation. His reputation will be further enhanced by this book. He has not hitherto been identified with political history. This task obliged him to delve into the arcane world of ALP politics. Throughout he deftly handled the dynamics of ALP factional politics. He comprehends the subtle variations in the perspectives of individual Australian Labor politicians. These include not only the main players in leadership and ministerial positions but also their sometimes more humbly placed antagonists. Horner has to be sensitive to the implications of power struggles between some politicians who might otherwise be in agreement on the basic direction of policy. He works very carefully through the record looking for the relevance of differing philosophies in determining policy outcomes.

After the 1987 White Paper was published, the government found itself rapidly obliged to clarify its understanding of the character of its commitment to the American alliance. This was the consequence of calls from allies to engage Australia in the handling of the 'tanker war' component of the war between Iran and Iraq. Despite opposition within its ranks and in the broader community, the government tilted toward the United States in Operation SANDGLASS, the commitment (not taken up) of clearance divers to western organised defence of the Persian Gulf's sea lanes. Less controversially, the government demonstrated at much the same time its more readily agreed commitment to UN activities. They did this in supporting UNTAG, the supervision of Namibian independence, then the largest overseas deployment of Australian forces since the Vietnam War.

The Kuwait War, ironically, produced the use of the Royal Australian Navy in precisely the conditions identified in the Defence White Paper for using a force structure developed for the defence of Australia further afield. The White Paper had identified the possibility of the commitment of Australian frigates to an American carrier battlegroup. Nevertheless, despite UN approval of this engagement, it induced most internal disputation in the ALP of all the missions Horner analyses. Hawke's rationale focused heavily on the need to support a UN-endorsed act of

collective security. Others in the party discerned an alliance motivation behind the government's decision. This strengthened the resolve of some while alarming others. The government segued between alliance obligations and strengthening the UN's hand as it developed its rationale for 'out of area deployments'. Each step it took to engage in the missions described in this book created precedents on which decisions for future commitments would build, even as the 'new world order' passed out of fashion as a concept. The result was a sea-change in Australian foreign and national security policy.

I have only two quibbles with Horner's analysis. On page 305, he suggests it was the Hawke Government that decided not to include an aircraft carrier in the RAN's force structure. In fact, the Fraser Government took the decision when the United Kingdom asked to be able to hang on to the HMS *Invincible* in the aftermath of the Falklands War. The other is that in discussing UNTAG, it might have been useful to have included more on the Hawke Government's efforts to pressure an end to apartheid in South Africa. This involved major Australian initiatives on sanctions and diplomacy, including the creation of an 'eminent persons group'. Namibia was seen in part as an element of dismantling the apartheid system, albeit at its periphery. These are quibbles. This is an essential book in a library on Australian national security policy.

BOOK REVIEW

Colin S Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice*, Oxford University Press, 2010, ISBN 9780199579662, 308 pp, RRP AU\$95.95

Reviewed by Antulio J Echevarria II, US Army War College

The purpose of this book, as its author states, is to propose a general theory of strategy. Scholars and military professionals may well ask why another book on strategic theory is necessary or even desirable, given the already vast number and range of works on strategy, both as theory and as practice. The bookshelves of most educators and researchers already contain several essential works on strategy, among which are: *The Makers of Modern Strategy* (Princeton 1986), which covers the principal thinkers who have contributed to modern strategic thought; *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (Yale 1991), which offers a number of important historical case studies; *The Makers of Nuclear Strategy* (New York 1991), which does for nuclear strategy what *Makers of Modern Strategy* does for general military strategy; *The Making of Modern Strategy* (Cambridge 1994), which covers the processes by which strategy is developed as opposed to treating those who thought about it; *Masters of War: Classical Strategic Thought* (London 1992, 1996, and 2001), which provides a comparative analysis of the main ideas of history's classical strategists; and *Modern Strategy* (Oxford 1999), which lays out the basic concepts that modern strategic thinking employs. Added to these are the many timeless works written by luminaries such as Thucydides, Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Liddell Hart, Thomas Schelling and Bernard Brodie, among others, as well as a host of competent textbooks on the topic. So why does the field need yet another book on strategy?

This is an especially pertinent question, because, as the author acknowledges, 'There is but a single theory of strategy' (p. 15). If that is true, and many scholars would agree that it is, then one would expect that, cumulatively, the above sources ought to have addressed the theory adequately by now. In fact, they have. Colin Gray has also already laid out the theory quite well in his earlier work, *Modern Strategy* (1999). The theory has not changed in essence, though there are always new details or nuances to consider.

The answer as to why this book is necessary (and desirable) is, simply, because so much has been written on strategy. In any field as broad as the study of strategy it is occasionally necessary to reassess how what is known stacks up against what is thought to be known (which may well be scattered throughout a vast sea of literature), or what needs to be known. *Strategy Bridge* does this. In fact, it is in many ways a capstone document in military doctrine; it is a work that synthesises a diverse range of contributions to the study of strategy, and in the process situates them within the larger framework of the discipline. *Strategy Bridge* not only lays out the general theory of strategy—as the bridge between ‘politics and action’ (p. 15)—it also examines the parts and features of strategy, both individually and as elements in a coherent whole. It does not propose a revolution in the way strategy is understood, so it is not Copernican in nature. However, it does put a number of propositions and scholarly contributions under the microscope, so to speak, so it is far more than a textbook, though it certainly can and should be used for instructional purposes. In terms of its rigor, *Strategy Bridge* is every bit as scientific as Clausewitz’s *On War*, but much more accessible.

Readers will find the book soundly organised in three parts: (I) Theory, (II) Practice and (III) Context and Purpose. The chapters in Part I discuss the definition of the theory, the role of theory, and how the particulars of strategic theory may change over time, but its core remains the same. The chapters in Part II deal with the problems usually encountered with putting strategy into practice, and how it is crucial to remember that the chief effect to be sought with strategy is the modification of an adversary’s behaviour. The chapter in the final part addresses how the general theory of strategy has been, in a phrase, present at its own creation throughout history. The particulars are as important as the core, even if they have not altered it. Nor is it likely that will future circumstances will do so either. Last but certainly not least, *Strategy Bridge* also offers four appendices, each of which offers ample grist for seminar discussions.

Its synthetic nature and analytical rigor make Colin Gray’s *Strategy Bridge* a necessary, and welcome, addition to any educator’s already vast library of works on strategy.

BOOK REVIEW

Rodric Braithwaite, *Afgantsy: the Russians in Afghanistan 1979–89*, Profile Books, London, 2011, ISBN 9781846680540, 448 pp, RRP AU\$46.95

Reviewed by Brigadier Richard Iron, British Army

On 15 February 1989, General Gromov, the commander of the 40th Army, in his BTR command vehicle and carrying his Army's banner, was the last man in the 40th Army to cross the Termez bridge back into the Soviet Union; thus ending the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan that had lasted a little over nine years. *Afgantsy* is the story of that occupation through the viewpoints of the politicians who made the decisions and the soldiers, officials and aid workers who did their best to implement them.

It is a story that has not been told in the English language before, and as Rory Stewart says on the front cover, it 'finally dispels many of the Cold War myths'. It really had nothing to do with communist expansionism, or of gaining a warm water port in the Indian Ocean—both commonly-held beliefs in the West, or at least in the Western press. Although driven by Cold War fears (as concerned for their southern border as the United States was with Cuba) and mistaken ideology (believing in the power of a proletariat that didn't exist), the Moscow Politburo agonised over the decision to intervene in Afghanistan. One of the strongest sections in *Afgantsy*, perhaps *the* strongest section, is Rodric Braithwaite's description of the period from 1 April to 12 December 1979 when the fateful decision was made to send in the troops. It is perhaps best captured by three extracts:

Their decisions were bedevilled by ignorance, ideological prejudice, muddled thinking, inadequate intelligence, divided counsel, and the sheer pressure of events.

Step by step, with great reluctance, strongly suspecting that it would be a mistake, the Russians slithered towards a military intervention because they could not think of a better alternative.

The Russians had foreseen all the disadvantages of forceful intervention—bloody involvement in a ferocious civil war, a huge expenditure of blood and treasure, and international pariahdom.

In the end the Russians felt forced to intervene because of the ineptitude of the new Afghan communist government under Prime Minister Hafizullah Amin. Amin had assumed power through a coup within the Afghan communist government, and it is most likely the Soviet authorities had no clue was happening, despite the very heavy presence of advisers throughout Afghanistan. The new Afghan regime was faced with a counter-revolution, strongest in the rural areas, rebelling against its heavy-handedness, and urgently requested assistance from Moscow.

What is little understood in the West is that for about a hundred years before the Soviet invasion Afghanistan was ruled by monarchs, presidents and prime ministers who were, by and large, modernisers. As Braithwaite explains, in his first chapter on the history of Afghanistan ('Paradise Lost'), from the rule of King Abdur Rahman Khan in 1880 to the communist regime in 1979, attempts were made to increase literacy, encourage economic development, and enhance women's rights. Yet this had little if any impact in the countryside, which by the 1970s was still

a land of devout and simple Muslims, where disputes between individuals, or families, or clans and tribes, were still settled in the old violent way, where women were still subject to the absolute authority of their menfolk, where the writ of the government in Kabul barely ran, and where the idea of national rather than family or local loyalty was barely formed.

Thus developed one of the key fault lines in Afghan politics: a fissure perhaps even more important than ethnicity—a fault line between urban intellectual modernisers and rural religious conservatives—between Kabul and the countryside. Even the Afghan communists, the PDPA, split into two movements—the Khalq (rural) and Parcham (urban intellectuals). It was internecine fighting between these two groups that was at least partly responsible for the eventual Soviet military intervention. As Braithwaite points out, 'the Afghan communists made the fatal mistake of underestimating the power of Islam and its hold on the people'.

What Braithwaite does not explore is why rural conservatism should inevitably have proved more powerful than urban modernisation in Afghanistan. After all, other Muslim Central Asian states had modernised over the course of the twentieth century, as part of the Soviet Union. He could perhaps have examined how, before 1979, power was exercised in the rural areas, how local and provincial government was organised, and their relationships with the Kabul government. This approach is so much a part of our understanding of the Afghan problem today that its absence from the book is rather surprising.

When the Politburo made the decision to intervene, it understood Amin was a major part of the problem, and they would have to set up a new, more effective Afghan leader. So the initial operation on 27 December 1979 was against the Taj Bel palace on the outskirts of Kabul, Amin's headquarters. In another very strong section in the book, Braithwaite explains in detail the planning and execution of this operation: his most detailed coverage of an individual military operation. The Soviets appeared to accede to Amin's request for help by sending in a small number of military units, one of which was tasked with assisting Afghan forces protect the Taj Bel palace. In a wonderful example of *maskirovka*, reminiscent of the 1973 Suez crossing, they inured the Afghan defenders to military preparations for the attack by making such preparations appear to be normal behaviour over a number of days, such as manoeuvring vehicles at night, use of flares, and starting up their engines. They invited their Afghan colleagues to a vodka, cognac and caviar party, and persuaded them to show them the internal layout of the palace. So when the operation was finally launched, the Afghans were completely surprised, to the extent that during the confusion of the night attack, Amin told his adjutant to ask the Soviets for help. Amin was killed, and the Soviets installed Babrak Kamal as the new leader they could trust.

The 40th Army formed for the Afghanistan operation was a conscript army. Braithwaite examines the army in some depth: how it was created and a sympathetic look at what life was like for the ordinary soldier in Afghanistan. Conscripts were sent for the whole of their two years' service (less training time), so tour lengths were considerably longer than even contemporary US practice, let alone the six-month standard for British and Australian soldiers. Braithwaite cites evidence that the individual Soviet soldier was generally better at counterinsurgency in Afghanistan than his modern Western counterpart; he suggests it is because so many came from Central Asian republics and also because the majority were from poor farming stock (the richer and more influential were able to avoid military service in Afghanistan). As a result the soldiers in Afghanistan were more attuned to operations among a rural population. This may be true, but another contributor surely must be that they generally spent much longer there than the majority of Western soldiers, even if on their third tour.

The Soviet Army at the time was rife with *dedovshchina*, the 'grandfather system'. A conscript in his final six months' service was known as a 'grandfather' (*ded*). Bullying of new recruits by grandfathers was rife—this was an insidious worm inside the Soviet Army that did much damage to its morale and operational effectiveness, as well as mentally scar many soldiers who remained psychologically damaged long after the war. It was also one of the main issues raised by soldiers' mothers—the first such representational group in the Soviet Union, which later became a fully fledged peace movement. Sometimes we take our own military systems for granted, especially that of the professional NCO system; *dedovshchina* is an example of what can happen without it.

It is fashionable today to talk of the comprehensive approach (as it was yesterday of network centric operations and revolutions in military affairs), reflecting an age-old truth that military power alone is unlikely to achieve success. The Soviet operation in Afghanistan was no different, and a very large number of Soviet civilian advisers and aid workers supported the operation in Afghanistan. Considerable sums of money were spent on civil development. A major part of the aid effort was ideologically driven by party workers, Komsomol (the communist youth movement) and trade union advisers. These often proved as useless and self-defeating as some of the ideologically driven decisions made by Paul Bremer's Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in 2003–04. But an equally large proportion of Soviet aid went into making the basic administration work, including training about 80,000 Afghans in the Soviet Union, both military and civilian. Frequently in Afghanistan today the most effective administrators, soldiers, doctors and engineers were trained by the Russians in this period.

Both Osama bin Laden and General Sir David Richards, Britain's Chief of Defence Staff, have one thing in common: they have both claimed that the Afghan war was responsible for the downfall the Soviet Union, and that the mujahedeen were directly or indirectly the cause of the end of the Soviet empire and the Cold War. Braithwaite argues convincingly that this is not the case; compared with the Soviet Union's other commitments, the war did not really have a significant economic or military impact. Certainly the war reinforced the lack of confidence of the Soviet people in their government, but that lack of confidence was driven more by wider economic factors, the humiliating spectacle of the rotating gerontocracy in the 1980s (Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko), the revelation of incompetence and deceit over Chernobyl, and the uncertainties of Gorbachev's reforms. The Soviet Union 'was collapsing without the contribution of the war in Afghanistan'.

Anyone who served in Iraq when David Petraeus replaced Bill Casey, or in Afghanistan when Stanley McChrystal replaced David McKiernan, knows instantly the impact a commander's ideas and personality have on an entire theatre. Braithwaite here perhaps betrays his diplomatic rather than military pedigree in that he shows no recognition of the importance of command. The 40th Army had seven commanders in its time in Afghanistan, whom Braithwaite lists but then ignores throughout the book, except for General Gromov, the final army commander who brought his army back across the bridge. There is no analysis here of the commander's background, his thinking, or his views on the campaign. They are all treated as identically faceless, akin to the caricature of Western Front chateau generals, with no understanding of or influence over the conduct of the war. This may indeed have been true (although I suspect it isn't) but if so it represents a gross failure on the part of Russian senior officers, which itself needs to be explained.

Similarly there is no examination of the 40th Army's doctrine or how it developed through the war. Russian officers today claim their counterinsurgency doctrine developed considerably through the war, and that they still have much to teach Western armies. The only evidence here has to be induced from the anecdotes used to illustrate the soldiers' experiences of war.

Sir Rodric Braithwaite is a former chairman of the UK's Joint Intelligence Committee. It is therefore disappointing that his coverage of Soviet intelligence is so thin—just two pages. The Interior Ministry's intelligence role seems primarily to have been to support the KhAD (the Afghan intelligence agency); the KGB's role seems to have been more typical of a civilian intelligence agency. Braithwaite writes of the usual intelligence problems: language training, lack of trust in indigenous forces, too few people, and inter-service rivalry. But he doesn't cover how military intelligence agencies worked and were organised, how they achieved continuity, or how well they provided their commanders with an understanding of the nature of the threat they faced. Nor does he mention any sources of intelligence other than HUMINT: how did they use aerial photography, satellite imagery and electronic warfare? How good were they at building intelligence capacity within the Afghan security forces?

Although there are clear and intended echoes with the current NATO operation in Afghanistan, including the lack of understanding of what we were letting ourselves in for (except replace the dogma of Marxism with the dogma of democracy), this is done without a heavy hand, and for the most part Braithwaite resists the temptation to lecture the current crop of political and military leaders.

This is unashamedly a Russian tale, told from a Russian perspective, albeit as interpreted by a British diplomat. Of the 180 entries in the bibliography, only one is by a modern Afghan. Even the sections on Afghans and Afghanistan are seen through Russian eyes. So *Afgantsy* doesn't pretend to be an impartial history of the Afghan–Soviet War; it is the story of the Russians in Afghanistan.

Afgantsy is not a military analysis of the war, and some professional soldiers may find it disappointing as a result. In some respects it is oddly hollow—very strong on the top level politics in Moscow, excellent at the lowest level in describing the life and tribulations of the Russian soldier, but missing the middle levels of strategy and operational art. Nevertheless, it is an essential and compelling read for anyone interested in the Russians or in the war in Afghanistan. The *military* analysis of the war, including Russian and Afghan perspectives, will have to wait for another book.

BOOK REVIEW

Charles Townshend, *When God Made Hell: The British Invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914–1921*, Faber and Faber Ltd, London, 2010, 9780571237197, 320 pp, RRP AU\$55.00

Reviewed by David Goynes, Strategic Policy Division, Department of Defence

The British campaign in Mesopotamia in the First World War, climaxing with the siege and surrender of the British Imperial force at Kut, is generally held to be the nadir of generalship and the military art. The British commander at Kut, Major General Charles Townshend (coincidentally no relation of the author) is used in Norman Dixon's *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* as an object lesson in military blundering and ego mania. The real story as told in this book is more complex and tragic.

When God Made Hell is an interesting admixture of military and political history, with the military side dominating until the end of the war. The political side then becomes paramount as the former Turkish provinces of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul are merged into a new nation, Iraq, under a British mandate. This was not the object that Britain sent forces to Mesopotamia to achieve, indeed right to the end the British (more accurately Imperial) leadership could not settle on one objective, but allowed events to not just shape, but create policy.

In part this followed naturally from a confused command structure. At various stages the cast of actors vying to set policy included the British War Cabinet and its sub-committees; the British government in India, given most of the troops came from India and that the British role in the Persian Gulf by tradition was managed from India; the India Office, the London-based British department of state responsible for India; the British military administration in Cairo, which thought it best understood the Middle East, especially the Arab 'mind'; the British military commanders on the ground in Mesopotamia; and the British political administration in Mesopotamia, initially largely drawn from those members of the Indian Political Service with long experience in the Persian Gulf. This confusion was exacerbated by the fact that the ultimate decision-makers in London in the War Cabinet could only devote limited

attention to the Mesopotamia theatre when confronted with appalling choices elsewhere, particularly initially at Gallipoli and throughout the war in the main and critical theatre on the Western Front.

No clear objective for Mesopotamia policy was ever set definitively or maintained. What had initially been intended to be a limited commitment to protect British interests in the Gulf and the Persian oilfields, through initial success was drawn into an advance into Mesopotamia. What the limits of this advance was to be were never fully defined, with Baghdad acting as a lure for yet further advances. This is a case study in the classic symptoms of 'victory disease'.

This book makes clear the overriding importance of logistics. The debilitating climate, alternatively too hot or too wet; the paucity of local infrastructure; the inadequate logistic resources committed to the theatre; and an considerable dose of sloppy, even incompetent, management of what was available, meant that the initial successes were achieved barely and at the end of a parlous and increasingly lengthy line of communications. What this meant particularly for the unfortunate casualties, who always exceeded optimistic planning estimates, is graphically described in the book.

This campaign is a proof of Clausewitz's concept of the 'culminating point'. Initial victories led the British commanders and policy-makers onwards towards Baghdad, until the point where although Townshend won the battle at Ctesiphon, virtually at the gates of Baghdad, he had run out of troops and logistic support and was burdened with large numbers of casualties at the end of a long, tenuous line of communications. Poor tactical direction by subordinate formation commanders had ruined this last chance. None of this should have been a great surprise, as the British force, basically the 6th Indian Division, was always recognised as too weak for the task at hand, but it was all that was available and all that could be supported so far forward.

Townshend recognised his victory at Ctesiphon was pyrrhic and retreated to Kut, where he was besieged by the Turks. Many promises were made to relieve his force in the limited time available before he was starved into surrender. Indeed, more troops (23,000) were lost in failed relief attempts than were under siege at Kut (13,000). However, available forces and logistics, especially when combined with poor operational leadership, could not make true these promises and Townshend was forced to surrender. The surrender led to a continuing nightmare for the captured troops, particularly the Indian forces and the camp followers. Separated from their officers, they were marched into the north of Mesopotamia to suffer in the careless brutality of Turkish captivity, a fate as much due to exiguous Turkish resources as any active cruelty.

In the classic way, following this failure, the British massively reinforced, including all the logistic infrastructure (ships, rail, trucks etc) missing earlier. With these resources and the highly competent military leadership of General Stanley Maude, the British Imperial forces were able to advance and take Baghdad and eventually Mosul by the end of active operations.

This led then to the question of how best to govern Mesopotamia. Here fractures opened between the approach of the military, who wanted a short-term military occupation for the purposes of the wider war, and the political service, largely military officers, who wanted Mesopotamia incorporated into the British Empire. In the end, the US President Woodrow Wilson acted as a *deus ex machina* with his Fourteen Points to force the British government along a third path it had never considered or wanted, that of consulting the will of the local people, or at least appearing to. It was impossible to reconcile earlier contradictory British promises to France and the Sherif of Mecca; attempts to conciliate local ‘notables’; the practical need to govern three former Ottoman provinces; and never clearly defined British Imperial aims. The interplay of these factors is well described by Townshend. It is a period of colourful and historic characters, including Winston Churchill, T E Lawrence, Gertrude Bell, Percy Cox, A T Wilson, the Hashemite princes Feisal and Abdullah, and the Arabian prince Ibn Saud. These all tried to influence events, normally in different directions, and modern Iraq and many of its problems are the result. It is a fascinating case study of how the lack of a clear, agreed aim consistently pursued rarely leads to good outcomes. David Fromkin’s magisterial *A Peace to End All Peace*¹ is a useful supplement to Charles Townshend’s book to put the Mesopotamian scene in its wider Middle East context.

In all, this is probably the best single book available on the Mesopotamian Campaign. It avoids the finger-pointing of earlier, less balanced books such as Russell Braddon’s *The Siege*,² although there is plenty of blame to go around. Much of this blame originates with the failure to decide on what was the aim of the Mesopotamian campaign, and then to resource it appropriately. If it was a sideshow, an ‘economy of force’ operation, then it should have been limited to securing Basra. If it was a wider one to take Baghdad and inflict a heavy blow on the Ottoman Empire, then it was never resourced sufficiently to do this until after the failure at Kut. Then it probably drew in resources that could have been more profitably used on more important fronts of the war. The sad reality is that this choice was never made. The ones who suffered for this were the regimental officers and men and the camp followers, especially if they were wounded, or surrendered at Kut. Success is rarely the result of unclear aims and strategy, and inadequate resources—a lesson that could still be learned by governments today.

ENDNOTES

- 1 David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*, Holt Paperbacks, 2001.
- 2 Russell Braddon, *The Siege*, Viking Adult, 1970.

BOOK REVIEW

Susan L Carruthers, *The Media at War*, Second Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, ISBN 9780230244573, 329 pp, RRP AU\$49.85

Reviewed by Cynthia Banham

Susan Carruthers wrote the first edition of *The Media at War* in 2000—before 11 September 2001, the war on terrorism, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and before the advent of ‘new media.’ Yet if one thing is clear from reading the updated version of her book, published eleven years later, it is that when it comes to the reporting of war, little if anything has changed.

Today’s soldiers might write ‘mil-blogs’ and snap digital photos on the battlefield; terrorists might connect with each other over the web; and Internet-based news sites and ‘citizen journalists’ might interpret the story of the day according to their own perspectives or agendas and disseminate that view to the world. But the essentials—like state censorship and propaganda in wartime, or journalists cooperatively running with the government line in order to protect elite sources or avoid being branded unpatriotic by their readers or viewers—remain unchanged. *The Media at War* is a thought-provoking book, full of deep insights into the complexities that help explain what is going on in the world of war reporting, and why we get the news we get. Its truths might be unpalatable for some journalists, politicians and members of the militaries and public alike. But Carruthers dismantles myths and challenges assumptions to come up with some deeper structural explanations that, I believe, hit home.

Carruthers’ book is divided into themes. The first chapter deals with ‘mobilisation’, and looks at the role media plays in marshalling popular energies for war and framing the political issues at stake. To my mind, this was the most insightful chapter, and the lessons she draws go far beyond explaining the behaviour of media during wartime, to media coverage of politics more generally. In assessing in particular the largely uncritical media coverage in the United States of war policy in the 1991 Gulf War and the 2003 Iraq War, she concludes that this appears ‘less an anomalous breach of journalistic procedure than the predictable outcome of a set of professional norms more concerned with following the policy-making flow

than disrupting it'. Carruthers' basic point is that journalists have an embedded tendency to ignore those beyond the inner policy-making world; they privilege elite sources—with entirely foreseeable results for media coverage.

The next chapter deals with opinion management by political leaders in the first two World Wars. Chapter three deals with the role television played in the trajectory of the Vietnam War, and the consequences that the perceptions about that role—which did not always reflect reality—had for the tight controls governments placed on media in subsequent wars.

Chapter four considers, with scepticism, the 'CNN effect'. This is the assumption that rolling 24-hour coverage of distant wars provokes emotional reactions and instant, sometimes ill thought-out, policy responses. Carruthers sees parallels with the 'Al Jazeera effect' and the 'YouTube effect' today. As policy-makers did over the CNN effect twenty years ago, so with new media today do they continue to 'greet each new technological development as a harbinger of their own diminished authority, with power trickling from executive hands into the grip of impassioned but ill-informed masses'. It's an ill-founded fear, as Carruthers argues.

Chapter five deals with 'wars on terror' and again demonstrates how battles for 'hearts and minds' are nothing new. The proliferation of the Internet has not altered the fact that information played a central role in counterinsurgency wars of past decades as it still does today.

The final chapter deals with 'war in the digital age', and Carruthers considers the new challenges posed for militaries and governments by soldiers having the capacity, thanks to digital technology, to act as 'alternative chroniclers of combat'. If I had one disappointment with this book, it was that I would have liked more analysis from Carruthers on this modern phenomenon. Is mil-blogging good for soldier morale? Is it good for democracy because it gives an alternative take on the conduct of a particular war? Can it be damaging to the military when soldiers write negative takes on a war? Should they thus be censored? What is the more compelling policy objective of these conflicting outcomes? Carruthers addresses these questions, but a bit too fleetingly.

The larger objective of Carruthers' book, the author writes, is to 'stimulate reflection on how media operate at distinct moments in the life-cycle of wars of different durations and degrees of intensity: variously serving as midwife, mythologizer and memorialist'. I think Carruthers achieves this very skilfully.

Among her conclusions, these are the ones that gave me most pause for thought. Despite what politicians and militaries might tell you, and despite changes in media technology, state power over the media does not look set to wither away. And publics, despite what they might tell themselves, are often 'intolerant of dissent, disdainful of protest and reluctant to contemplate how our wars appear to those on the other side—or those who refuse to take sides'. When it comes to war, is anybody really interested in the truth? It's an interesting question to ponder.

BOOK REVIEW

Augustine Meaher IV, *The Road to Singapore: The Myth of British Betrayal*, Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010, ISBN 9781921509957, 243 pp, RRP AU\$39.95

Reviewed by John Connor

Sometimes it takes an outsider to provide a clear-eyed interpretation of a controversial event in a nation's history. In this book, Augustine Meaher IV—who, as his name suggests, is a larger-than-life military historian from Mobile, Alabama in America's Deep South—provides a compelling analysis of why Australia was so unprepared to defend itself at the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Meaher skewers the myth that the British betrayed Australia at the fall of Singapore; instead he places the blame on a comprehensive failure by the combined Australian political, military and industrial leadership to prepare adequately in the 1930s for a war with Japan.

According to Meaher, this failure came in two parts. The first was that Australians mistakenly saw the Singapore Strategy (the plan that, in the event of war in the Pacific, a British fleet would sail to a naval base at Singapore and do battle with the Imperial Japanese Navy) not as one component of a wider defence scheme, but as being an entire defence strategy in itself, 'so absolving Australia of its responsibilities for local defence'.

The second was the inability of what Meaher describes as 'the Australian elite' to recognise the Japanese threat and take appropriate action. There was no consensus at the political level: the conservative United Australia Party government did attempt some rearmament policies, but were cautious in the face of a strongly isolationist and pacifist Labor Party opposition. When Billy Hughes, the former wartime leader, published *Australia and War To-Day* warning of war with Japan in 1935, Prime Minister Joe Lyons sacked him from Cabinet. The three service chiefs, facing funding cuts due to the Depression, fought each other to protect their budget and were unable to provide coherent strategic advice to their minister. As the *Melbourne Herald* commented in 1934, the only thing the Army and RAN agreed on was 'their

dislike of the air force'. Only 10 per cent of senior Australian industrialists had served in the military (despite the Great War having occurred two decades previously). With few exceptions, these businessmen took no interest in defence issues.

Meaher is rightly critical of Australian decision-making in this period. As he puts it, in the 1930s, 'Australia refused to grow up'. Its political leaders expected Britain to spend large amounts to complete the Singapore naval base, while refusing to make any financial contribution to the project themselves. Australian Army officers were sceptical of the Singapore Strategy and stressed the possibility of a Japanese invasion, but, as Meaher suggests, this was purely to protect their budget. If they truly believed an invasion was possible, they should have reorganised the Army (whose structure was based on the First World War AIF) to enable it to fight independently of British logistical support.

Meaher being the outsider also brings the disadvantage of lacking certain detailed and contextual knowledge. The weakest part of the book is the conclusion, when the author puts forward his argument of what Australia should have done in the interwar period to prepare for war. One of Meaher's proposals is sound: the reintroduction of compulsory military training, though politically controversial, would have improved the Army's readiness. The remainder, though, do not take sufficient account of the limitations Australia faced in this period. Meaher argues that the transport infrastructure in northern Australia should have been improved. The small size of the Australian population and economy meant, however, that large construction projects could not be built without foreign investment. During the Depression this source of funding was severely limited. In the same way, Meaher's call for Australia to order Hurricane and Spitfires from the United Kingdom in the mid-1930s ignores Britain's natural unwillingness in this period to divert aircraft production away from their own rearmament. These criticisms should not overshadow the real value of this book. By painting an unflattering portrait of Australian strategic thinking in this period, Meaher provides a clearer understanding of the past and expresses concern about current defence debates. He concludes: 'If the attitude "She'll be right" continues to dominate public and political thinking about defence, Australia runs the risk of being unprepared for any future war.'

BOOK REVIEW

Peter Thompson, *Anzac Fury: The Bloody Battle of Crete 1941*, William Heinemann, Sydney, 2010, ISBN 9781741669206, 506 pp, RRP \$49.95

Reviewed by Eleanor Hancock, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales@ADFA

The battle of Crete remains contested in historical studies of the Second World War. Was the German decision to wrest the island off the Allies a mistake? Was the German victory a pyrrhic victory as many have claimed? Did mistakes by the Allied defenders lose the battle? Crete is the subject of this new popular history. Recent years have seen an expansion of academic and popular history on Australians at war which responds to, and in turn feeds, the growing public appetite for such histories. Popular history can simply reinforce existing stereotypes and preconceptions or it can at times successfully convey academic interpretations accessibly to a wider audience, and can be of value for this popularisation.

Anzac Fury belongs to the first category of popular military history. It retells the story of Australian forces in the 1941 campaigns in Middle East, Greece and Crete during the Second World War in a general narrative account which is interwoven with the personal experiences of three men and one nurse in these campaigns. The book is easy to read, dramatic and vivid. It draws on survivors' diaries and memoirs as well as interviews with some veterans of the campaign and some recent secondary studies.

It presents, however, a 'Boy's Own Paper' view of Australian participation in the Second World War, full of the usual clichés of Anzac heroism, dishonest British political manoeuvring at the expense of Australia and New Zealand, mistakes by senior British officers, Italian blunders and German ruthlessness. It perpetuates the 'myth' of Anzac. In an interview given after the publication of the book, Thompson emphasised the Gallipoli parallel, arguing that the decision to fight in Greece was a mistake. He described the Greek campaign as 'a total disaster, we lost good men, and we fought brilliantly alongside with the Greek partisans and some of the army, but you need to ask the question, "Why were we there?"'

The book does not take all recent research on the war in the Western desert or the Mediterranean into consideration. For example, it includes an account of the battle of Bardia without using the recent definitive account by Stockings.

As a result, it casts no new light whatsoever on any of the controversies or still unanswered questions about the Allied involvement in Greece or the fighting in Crete. It is also monolingual in its research, relying on translated Greek and German works. It cannot therefore clarify any of the remaining debates and differences of interpretation nor does it contain an original contribution to our understanding of the course or outcome of the fighting.

BOOK REVIEW

Damien Finlayson, *Crumps and Camouflets: Australian Tunnelling Companies on the Western Front*, Big Sky Publishing, Newport, 2010, ISBN 9780980658255, 480 pp, RRP AU\$34.99

Reviewed by Michael Molkentin

In Australia during the two decades following the Great War, publication of ‘unit’ or ‘regimental’ histories was prolific. Typically written by battalion associations or ex-unit members possessing a literary flair, the genre was encouraged by funding from the Australian National Defence League and the Australian War Memorial, and unfettered public access to the Australian Imperial Force’s official records. The result was a broad and at times thoroughly researched body of unit-level histories of the war, but one that was by no means complete. Many units missed out—among them, the three Australian Tunnelling Companies.

In *Crumps and Camouflets*, Damien Finlayson is the first to attempt to redress this gap in the AIF’s historiography. Finlayson writes very much within the unit history genre. He begins with the formation of the Australian Mining Corps in early 1916 and then follows the unit to the Western Front. There, because it didn’t conform to British organisation, the Corps split into three separate companies and a support unit dubbed ‘Alphabet Company’. These units remained under AIF administration but for much of the war operated in British army corps. Finlayson therefore departs from the familiar AIF narrative. Much of the book is set in sectors not mentioned in the battle honours of Australian divisions such as Arras, Loos, Nieuport and Cambrai.

A flaw inherent in many unit histories is their narrow focus. Their authors often get mired in tactical level detail while neglecting the wider operational and strategic setting. Finlayson avoids this trap, however, by weaving an elaborate setting around the Australian tunnelling companies. He spends a lengthy first chapter, for example, explaining the place tunnelling had in the war and how it developed from an *ad hoc* remedy to stalemate in 1914 to a specialist offensive and defensive tactic by the time the AIF deployed to the Western Front in May 1916. Finlayson’s understanding of

the war on the Western Front is extensive, reaching well beyond the galleries and dugouts of his primary subject.

According to the endnotes, the British and Australian official histories and the tunnelling companies' operational records informed the backbone of Finlayson's narrative. He uses private records and memoirs to effectively illustrate personal experience and weave the stories of a handful of 'characters' into the narrative.

Rather than write an impressionistic narrative that uses specific examples to illustrate broader principles, Finlayson chronicles the story down to the minutiae. He details each movement, leadership change and the majority of the casualties. This makes for comprehensive history but it does at times weigh the narrative down and make for some occasionally tedious reading.

In an era when publishers seem to invest a bare minimum in production, Big Sky Publishing (in association with the Army History Unit) is to be commended for this book's robust binding and attractive presentation. Some fifty maps and diagrams will help Australian readers around those unfamiliar sectors and complicated underground mine systems. There are also over 100 photographs embedded in the text—many donated to the author by families of tunnellers. Appendices list the Australian Tunnelling Companies' Roll of Honour, honours and awards, and award citations.

Those wanting a short introduction or an impressionistic account of Australia's role in the underground war on the Western Front should hire *Beneath Hill 60* on DVD or read Will Davies' comparatively lightweight companion volume. Serious students of the AIF should read *Crumps and Camouflets*. It not only comprehensively tells the story of a neglected part of the AIF, but it introduces Australian readers to important campaigns and sectors more familiar to our Canadian and British colleagues.

MILESTONES

IN MEMORIAM

BRIGADIER PHILLIP JAMIESON GREVILLE, CBE
(1925-2011)

Phillip Greville was born in Queenscliff, the son of Staff Sergeant (later Colonel) SJ Greville, OBE of the Australian Signals Corps. After schooling in Victoria, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory—a consequence of the posting cycle even then—he graduated from one of the wartime courses at RMC Duntroon in December 1944 (although through illness he was not commissioned until January 1945). He served in New Guinea at the war's end, with the 2/8th Field Company RAE and with several engineer works units building infrastructure variously for soldiers awaiting repatriation to Australia, Japanese prisoners of war awaiting processing back to Japan, and to support the re-establishment of the 8th Military District with its postwar responsibilities for the defence of the Australian territories of Papua New Guinea.

He returned to Australia in February 1946 and enrolled at the University of Sydney to complete his engineering degree. Like many returned soldiers at the time, he was older than some of the undergraduates alongside him and suffered from repeated bouts of malaria. The courses were overcrowded and the facilities strained as a result, but he completed the program successfully and was posted as SORE2 to the staff of the Chief Engineer of Eastern Command, Colonel RR McNicoll. In late 1951 he was posted to 1RAR in command of the assault pioneer platoon; cross-posting of junior officers from other corps was necessitated by the decision to boost the Australian commitment to the Korean War to two infantry battalions in a regular army that possessed just three (although a fourth was formed in May 1952 to support the deployment overseas). Most of his soldiers were in fact drawn from 7 Field Squadron, located at the School of Military Engineering.

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Korea had become a static and positional war by the time 1RAR arrived, and the pioneers were employed strengthening bunkers and fighting pits, clearing areas of unexploded ordnance and maintaining the minefields that were part of the company and battalion defences. While engaged in work on a minefield in August 1952, Greville and one of his soldiers were captured by the Chinese. As a captain he was the most senior Australian prisoner of the war, and spent a year in the Chinese camps during which he was interrogated vigorously and subjected to the usual round of attempted indoctrination. During his captivity he was interrogated by the rogue journalist and traitor, Wilfred Burchett, and in 1974 was a principal witness against Burchett during the libel action brought by the latter against Senator Jack Kane. Greville was never in any doubt as to Burchett's allegiance and motivations, and dealt with the issues thrown up by the case in his later writings and especially in the lengthy chapter on the POW experience in volume 2 of RJ O'Neill's official history, *Australia in the Korean War 1950–53*, published in 1986.

Repatriated in September 1953, he held a variety of increasingly senior engineer postings over the next twenty years. In July 1955 he was appointed engineer instructor at RMC Duntroon with additional responsibility for works, and in this capacity oversaw the first major postwar expansion of facilities including the building of Anzac Block, the Military Instruction Wing and the swimming pool. He attended the Staff College, Camberley in 1959 followed by the Long Transportation course in the United Kingdom; on his return to Australia at the end of 1961 he assumed the post of Director of Transportation in Army Headquarters, a position he held until the middle of 1965. In this capacity he developed policies and procedures for the maintenance of forces ashore that would be the basis of Army practice in both Borneo and Vietnam. Senior staff jobs followed in Eastern Command, culminating in his appointment as Commander of the 1st Australian Logistic Support Group (1ALSG) in Vietnam in which he presided over the wind-down and disposal or return of the large logistics support and maintenance organisation that had gradually been built up in Vung Tau.

Greville's fiercest battles were fought as Director Transport (Army) and Director-General, Movements and Transport (Defence) between 1973–74. The creation of a separate transportation corps within the Army—drawn from capabilities formerly possessed by the RAE and the Royal Australian Army Service Corps (which was abolished)—and the decision to create a separate Logistics Command, to be based in Melbourne, posed significant problems because of the ways in which they were implemented. In particular, Greville argued strenuously against the decision to locate logistics and movement planning staff away from Army Headquarters in Canberra, and foresaw significant longer-term problems for the Army's capacity to maintain a force at a distance through the downgrading of maritime and terminal operating capabilities and the passing of responsibility for army small ships to the Royal Australian Navy. Many of his arguments were to be vindicated, in time.

His final appointment was as commander of the 4th Military District with headquarters in Adelaide. He retired from the Army in 1980, and embarked on a second and equally vigorous career as a consultant, author and commentator. He was defence correspondent for the *Adelaide Advertiser*, wrote regularly for *Pacific Defence Reporter* and, for a number of years, acted as research officer for Senator Don Jessop (South Australia). His long-standing interest in POW affairs reflected his involvement in attempts to have the allegations about Burchett's behaviour during the Korean War addressed directly by the government. In 2002 he published the fourth volume of the RAE corps history, *Paving the Way*, which covered the decades of his own professional involvement between 1945–72 and which offers an immensely detailed and authoritative study of Army engineering issues and their impact on the wider Army in a period of more-or-less constant overseas engagement.

Forthright in his views, possessed of a sharp intellect and a dry sense of humour, he was a noted cricketer and footballer (AFL) in his youth and maintained these interests alongside a passion for history and writing in his retirement. He died after a period of ill-health at Southport, Queensland on 10 March 2011.

(Dr) Jeffrey Grey

Professor of History, ADFA*

* Brigadier Greville was Professor Grey's maternal uncle.

TITLES TO NOTE

Listed below are a select group of books recently or soon to be published that either contribute to the discussions initiated in the articles in the *Australian Army Journal* or on subjects that may be of interest in the near future. Some of these books may be reviewed in forthcoming editions of the *Journal*.

- David Horner, *Australia's Military History for Dummies*, John Wiley & Sons, 2010, ISBN 9781742169835, 384 pp, RRP AU\$45.00.

War has had an enormous effect on the way Australians perceive themselves—as a nation and as a culture. The term ‘Anzac’ evokes images of youthful courage and sacrifice; places like Gallipoli, Beersheeba, Kokoda and Long Tan add layers of maturity to these images. But Australia’s military history is more than sepia images and far-flung battlefields, heroic sacrifice and national pride; it is about the importance of the building of a professional defence force that can not just ensure the security of its nation, but represent its values both at home and abroad. As the 100th anniversary of the First World War approaches—and particularly the anniversary of the landing of the 1st Australian Division at Gallipoli Peninsula—David Horner’s *Australia's Military History for Dummies* is an important first step in understanding the growth in maturity and professionalism of the Australian military.

As official historian and professor of Australian defence history at the Australian National University, Professor Horner is well versed and deeply embedded in his subject matter. While the title’s *For Dummies* may seem to make light of the complexity of Australian military history, Horner’s writing never does. Wars, campaigns and battles are presented as clearly and simply as possible, but never simplistically. Although this book may be targeted at a civilian audience, it also offers the professional soldier deeper insights on the role the military has played in shaping and forming Australian society.

- Wain Fimeri, *Charles Bean's Great War*, Madmen Entertainment, 2010, ISBN 9322225088948, 75 mins.

Charles Bean is obviously famous in Australian military circles for his official histories, and for his role in the vision of the Australian War Memorial. A

TITLES TO NOTE

dramatised documentary, while not groundbreaking in its depiction of Bean, it does add some interesting context. By dramatising his experiences as a journalist both at Cairo and Gallipoli, the filmmakers are attempting to parallel his personal development from journalist to historian with the wider recognition of a unique Australian identity. At times this is overdone. But by interspersing a roundtable discussion by various well-known and well-respected military historians, the filmmakers add a much needed balance to the narrative. Juxtaposing Bean's journalistic search for the truth about the Australian soldier with the historians' search for what made Bean important is the most interesting part. As Professor Jeff Grey of the Australian Defence Force Academy reminds us, 'none of this is particular to Bean, and none of this is particular to the Australian experience'. In this, the title is particularly apt—the Great War was most important to the Australian identity because of the small stories it encapsulated. Charles Bean had the opportunity to weave these stories into a much larger Australian narrative.

- Robyn Kienzle, *The Architect of Kokoda*, Hachette Australia, 2011, ISBN 9780733627637, 338pp, RRP AU\$35.00.
- Peter Ewer, *Storm over Kokoda*, Murdoch Books, 2011, ISBN 978174660950, 256pp, RRP AU\$29.95.

Australian soldiers' actions in New Guinea have been the subject of growing interest, especially given the growing popularity of treks along the Kokoda Track among all age groups. Although an important contribution to Australian operations in the Second World War, only recently have more diverse aspects of the New Guinea campaigns been published. These two books add to this growing literature. Robyn Kienzle's account of her father-in-law, Bert Kienzle's life is interesting, not just for the light it sheds on the conditions the soldiers and the Papuan carriers endured, but also for the innovative approaches developed to overcome the difficulties of supply in such inhospitable terrain. In the second book, *Storm over Kokoda*, Peter Ewer explores the role of Australian pilots and crews of 75 Squadron. By drawing on eyewitness accounts and combat reports, Ewer presents a compelling view of air fighting six months before land campaigns began.

- Emily O Goldman, *Power in Uncertain Times: Strategy in the Fog of Peace*, Stanford University Press, 2011, ISBN 9780804774338, 272pp, RRP US\$25.95.

The current global security situation is not just uncertain; it is complex and chaotic. As China and potentially India increasingly assert their interests in the Asia Pacific region, North Korea and Iran continue their nuclear posture, and violent extremism spreads, predicting future strategic direction has become a

puzzle for most nations. But even in this environment, military strategists and defence planners must still allocate resources and make strategic choices that will benefit the interests of their countries. In this book, Professor Emily Goldman argues that world is currently at a moment of ‘strategic pause’. Through the use of historical and contemporary case studies—Russian and British policy between the Crimean War and the First World War, British and US policy between the First and Second World Wars and the US response to the new and more ‘muscular’ shaping in Afghanistan and Iraq—Goldman argues that this pause presents an opportunity. This book provides some interesting insights on the importance of periods of strategic uncertainty in great power strategic rivalry—although dangerous, they can offer states the opportunity to exploit and shape the dynamics of competition and perpetuate their power.

- Mark Clodfelter, *Beneficial Bombing: The Progressive Foundations of American Air Power, 1917-1945*, University of Nebraska Press, 2011, 392pp, ISBN 9780803233980, RRP US\$40.00.

In this book, Mark Clodfelter links the development of air power with the economically, politically and socially idealistic progressive reform era in the United States. He outlines how the carnage witnessed by US Army Air Service officers in the First World War, particularly during trench warfare, led to a belief that war itself could be reformed. Progressive ideas of efficiency and economy, with the heavy bomber as the solution, held that strategic and precision bombing would limit the bloodshed in war, ultimately making land warfare obsolete. Drawing on archival material and sources that have only recently become available, Clodfelter argues that this belief remains a core tenet of US air power strategy, despite evidence to the contrary.

- Toshi Yoshihara and James R Holmes, *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenges to the U.S. Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press, 2010, 304pp, ISBN 9781591143901, RRP US\$36.95.

Toshi Yoshihara and James R Holmes's book is an important addition to the growing literature on China's growing military capabilities and strategies. While the authors' conclusion that China will increasingly rely on a maritime strategy in its desire to exert influence in its region is not new, their use of Chinese-language sources adds contextual material to the already intense debate in regional security circles. These sources—speeches, interviews, comments and popular journalism, all open-source—may have their limitations in terms of eliciting China's grand strategy, but they nevertheless offer a unique vision into the strategic mood and the debates being held inside China itself.

TITLES TO NOTE

- Ben Simpfendorfer, *The New Silk Road*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, ISBN 9780230284852, 202 pp, RRP AU\$39.95.

The New Silk Road was originally written in 2009, shortly after the global financial crisis. Since then, China has overtaken Japan as the world's second largest economy and is tipped by some to overtake the United States within the next twenty years. While many analyses of China's engagement in the region have focused on its motivations in resource-rich Africa, economist Ben Simpfendorfer explores a more ancient, commodities-led link—the Silk Road. By focusing on both the growing economies and the increasingly cross-cultural atmosphere of two cities at either end of this trade corridor, Dubai on the Arabian Peninsula and Yiwu in China, Simpfendorfer warns the West that it must become more deeply involved in the region if it wants to remain relevant. Much of the turmoil in the Middle East has its origins in the lack of economic growth, and as recent surveys have shown many people throughout the Arab nations are now looking to China rather than the West for their future economic, political and social models.

- Rodger Shanahan, *The Shi'a of Lebanon: Clans, Parties and Clerics*, IB Tauris, 2011, ISBN 9781848858145, 208 pp, RRP AU\$37.00.

Tension and conflict between the two Muslim sects—Shi'a and Sunni—affects stability throughout some of the most fragile nations in the Middle East. The path to political realisation for the majority of Shi'a in Lebanon has already had an important ripple effect on the politics and religion of the nations that surround it. In this book Rodger Shanahan, a colonel in the Australian Army, presents a detailed examination of the origins and development of the Shi'a in Lebanon, concluding that the current political landscape mirrors the clan-based society going back centuries. Although first published in 2005, this paperback reprint offers greater insights on why Hizballah has retained broad support even while implicated in the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and other acts of extremism. Through an exploration of the effect of deep familial loyalty and clientalism, as well as the influence of clerical jurisprudence that has influenced the structure of Shi'ite political organisation, Colonel Shanahan explores both the movement towards political independence manifested in the development of both Hizballah and the sectarian Amal, and its necessary dependence on other powerful nations—for Hizballah, on Iran; and for Amal, on Syria. Given the continuing popular revolutions in the region, this book is timely. Lebanon's so-called Cedar Revolution may have offered an opportunity for Shi'ite political realisation, but whether this will be fulfilled remains to be seen.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

Each manuscript should be submitted through the *Australian Army Journal* Submission Form at <http://www.army.gov.au/lwsc/Australian_Army_Journal.asp>.

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- 2.5 cm margin on all sides
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- Australian spelling (e.g., -ise not -ize)

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GENERAL STYLE

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

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

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

BIOGRAPHIES

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