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# ARMY JOURNAL

*A periodical review of military literature*

**No. 296, JANUARY 1974**

## **Contents**

Why the Cultural Revolution? <i>Lieutenant Colonel E. J. O'Donnell</i>	3
Much Ado About Nothing <i>Major R. Hennessy</i>	13
General Sir John Monash <i>Major Warren Perry</i>	22
Development of the Coastal Defences of Australia, 1840-50 <i>Major C. Winter</i>	40
Book Reviews <i>The Moscow Agreements and Strategic Arms Limitation</i> <i>The Australians in Nine Wars</i>	57
From The Past	62

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*(Army Public Relations)*

Fire Support Base 'Pamela' in South Vietnam in June 1971. This photograph, taken from a helicopter, depicts five 105-mm

# Why the CULTURAL REVOLUTION ?



*Lieutenant Colonel E. J. O'Donnell, MC  
Royal Australian Infantry*

**T**HE Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began in the latter half of 1965 although it did not become really apparent until the middle of 1966. It lasted until April 1969 when, at the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, complete victory was claimed for the thought of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. During the Cultural Revolution vast social upheaval occurred in China, important changes were made in the party hierarchy at all levels, and fundamental changes in the balance of power emerged. An attempt is made here to find the reasons for the Cultural Revolution. No attempt is made to trace the course of the revolution or to examine its results except where these developments give a clue to the origins of the revolution.

## **Importance of Mao Tse-tung**

The most important point to be grasped in looking for the *why* behind the Cultural Revolution is the central importance of Mao Tse-tung himself. The extent to which Mao was able to control the revolution or to terminate it is most obscure, but there is little doubt that it was he who unleashed it, whose writings provided the bulk of the rhetoric, and in whose name all the participants claimed to be acting.

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*Lieutenant Colonel O'Donnell, a previous contributor to Army Journal, graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1958. He served with 3RAR in Malaysia in 1963-65. During Confrontation he served in Sabah as GSO3 (Psyops) and in Sarawak as IO of 3RAR. In 1967-68 he was a company commander with 7RAR in South Vietnam and then returned to RMC Duntroon as an instructor. He attended the British Army Staff College in 1971-72 and on return to Australia was CO of 3 Trg Bn. Presently he is at the Infantry Centre, Singleton.*

The reasons which led Mao to initiate the Cultural Revolution are traceable and it can be seen that, with one important exception, they are consistent with Mao's lifelong theory and experience.

With the hasty termination of the campaign to 'let a hundred schools of thought contend; let a hundred flowers bloom' and the failure of the 1958 Great Leap Forward, Mao's star seemed to be on the wane. In April 1959 he was succeeded as Head of State by his designated successor Liu Shao-ch'i, although he retained his essential power base as Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. He may really have wished to step down to allow himself more time for theoretical work free from the ceremonial duties of Head of State, but there are some grounds for thinking that he had little choice, especially once the criticisms of his agricultural policy were published in the official communique of the Lu Shan Conference in August 1959. Mao was later reported on 4 January 1967 to have declared that he was forced to resign as Head of State by Liu Shao-ch'i and Teng Hsiao-p'ing and that for eight years he had been treated like 'one of their parents whose funeral was taking place'. The next few years after 1959 saw a gradual reversal of Mao's policies especially to allow greater economic growth. Certain incentives were allowed both to management and workers — a policy later to be termed 'economism', and the perennial conflict between 'red' and 'expert' was for a time resolved in favour of 'expert'. Liu Shao-ch'i in particular was identified with this more rational economic policy.

It was about this same time that Mao's conflict with Khrushchev came out into the open. Khrushchev was accused of the ultimate sin of revolutionary Communism, that is 'revisionism' or compromising with capitalism. The Minister for Defence, Marshal P'eng Te-huai supported Moscow's line at the Lu Shan Conference and criticized Mao's internal policies as well as his stand against the Soviet Union. For his outspokenness he was purged. However, it would seem that there were other Chinese leaders who felt that Mao was going too far in his intransigence towards the Soviet Union, at a time when China needed Russian armaments and technical aid. With Mao's increasing age and temporary political eclipse it appeared that China might be embarking on a new and less revolutionary course.

As Mao looked at the Chinese Communist Party from his semi-retirement he must have seen things which sorely tried his old revolutionary heart. Elitism and privilege were creeping back into the

bureaucracy. Such things as better housing, the use of official cars, and better educational opportunities for children might seem relatively harmless in themselves, but to Mao they represented a return to bourgeois class distinctions and a betrayal of the spirit of Yanan. Economic development was becoming more important than ideological commitment. China was in danger of following in the footsteps of Krushchev's Russia in taking a 'revisionist' line. This was the theme of Mao's warnings to the party in the early 1960s. It was echoed by Chou En-lai in an important speech to the National People's Congress in 1964, and it was a constant theme of Mao's propagandists during the Cultural Revolution. Mao was conscious that the new generation of students had no experience of making revolution, and that there was a need to train new revolutionaries to maintain the struggle between capitalism and socialism. 'Several decades won't do it; success requires anything from one to several centuries.'

With a certain amount of resistance to Mao's agricultural policies both among the peasants and the bureaucracy, especially after the initial failure of the commune system; with 'economism' rife in the industrial sector; with bourgeois and revisionist tendencies developing in the Party, there seemed to be only one other major power group



which had largely retained its ideological purity. That was the People's Liberation Army (PLA) now under Mao's old comrade-in arms Lin Piao. That Mao should have turned to the PLA in his hour of need is by no means surprising. He had founded the Red Army back in his days in Hunan, and he had created it as a political as much as a military instrument. Its recruitment was probably more

proletarian than that of the party bureaucracy. The PLA under Lin Piao was politically reliable, untainted by revisionism, highly regarded by the Chinese masses, and mostly loyal to Mao. It was also characteristic of Mao that he should stay close to the power which grows out of the gun barrel.

### **A Power Struggle?**

The idea that the Cultural Revolution was a mere power struggle has an element of truth but is basically mistaken. The evidence is clear that Mao was not involved in a Stalinist purge of his opponents, but rather aiming at the vindication of his ideology of permanent revolution. Those party leaders who opposed his view were demoted and disgraced, including of course the Head of State Liu Shao-ch'i, but other 'top party persons taking the capitalist road' who acknowledged the error of their ways and accepted Mao's philosophy were generally allowed to retain their positions. Chen Yi is an example of one who was criticized but not demoted. The element of truth lies in that Mao seems to have made sure that those who discomfited him after the failures of the 1958-59 period were the first to fall. He certainly made sure that those who followed a revisionist line were removed from the line of succession.

Mao's aim in launching the Cultural Revolution was to purify the party ideologically. This was necessary so that his uncompromising revolutionary theory would continue to dominate China during his lifetime and after. An examination of the literature of the Cultural Revolution shows an overwhelming emphasis on the need for the party to maintain its ideological purity, to refrain from the twin sins of revisionism and economism, and to maintain the class struggle on behalf of the proletariat. So cleverly was the campaign managed that no coherent opposition emerged. From the start, Mao's forces attacked a shadowy foe — 'top party persons taking the capitalist road'. Since it was not clear who was being attacked, there must have been great soul-searching at all levels of the bureaucracy. C. P. FitzGerald points out that those who had risen to positions of responsibility in the party must have found it bewildering to be criticized when they were only conscious that their dedication and hard work on behalf of the party and the State had been justly rewarded. If the opposition was not united it was none the less real, so that many in power were toppled before the aims of the revolution were achieved. The point is made again that the purging of elements of the party bureaucracy was a consequence rather than an aim of the Cultural Revolution.

### **Cultural Aspects**

The cultural aspects of the Cultural Revolution need to be mentioned. Mao, although a poet and creative thinker himself, has



always been suspicious of pure intellectualism. For him, intellectual effort must be harnessed in support of the continuing revolution, and especially on behalf of the masses. This partly explains his opposition to any sign of elitism within the bureaucracy. The part played in



Hungary by the Petofi Club, a writer's association, prior to the 1956 Revolution has served as a warning to Mao and his followers of the danger of groups of intellectuals. Editorials in party publications for several years before the Cultural Revolution stressed the need for writers and artists to keep before the minds of the masses the necessity for class struggle and the dangers of revisionism. When the Cultural Revolution broke out, its first manifestation was a criticism of a play by Wu Han, Deputy Mayor of Shanghai, entitled 'Hai Jui Dismissed From Office' which was seen to be a masked attack

on Mao's dismissal of P'eng Tehuai in 1959. The importance of writers and artists continued to be stressed throughout the revolution in such ways as the reform of Peking Opera, of drama and of literature.

From 1966 the person claiming most of the limelight on the cultural front was Mao's wife Chiang Ch'ing, the former actress whom he married in Yanan in 1938. Her indiscriminate condemnation of Western culture and her assertion that there was no place for traditional Chinese values in the new revolutionary society is seen by one observer as an 'obvious and depressing example of a rancorous and spiteful person enjoying her hour of triumph over the party authorities who have so long slighted her and frustrated her ambitions, and the distinguished performers of the traditional theatre whose success she envies'.

### Was Mao a Figurehead?

A problem which presents itself to Western observers is the thought that perhaps Mao was no more than a figurehead both in the planning

stage and during the Cultural Revolution. Some writers give greater emphasis to the parts played by Lin Piao and Chiang Ch'ing, while others see Ch'en Po-ta as a grey eminence. In 1965 Mao was 72 years old and supposedly in failing health. The fact that so much was made of his swim in the Yangtze suggests that it was felt necessary to show that he did not have one foot in the grave. During the mass rallies in T'ien An Men Square in 1966 Mao was present, but it was Lin Piao and Chou En-lai who made the speeches. In the absence of sufficient evidence to the contrary, and in view of subsequent events, it is preferable to believe that the Cultural Revolution was Mao's work. Undoubtedly it would not have been possible without the whole-hearted support of Lin Piao and probably Ch'en Po-ta. It is highly likely that Chiang Ch'ing took a leading role in the planning. But the whole concept of the Cultural Revolution bears the stamp of Mao himself, and without him there would have been no Cultural Revolution.

### **The Vietnam War**

An argument sometimes advanced to explain the Cultural Revolution is that it was an attempt to mobilize the whole of the Chinese population into a state of preparedness against an imminent United States attack. It came at a time when President Johnson was escalating the war in South Vietnam and bombing of North Vietnam. Some of the targets being struck daily were extremely close to the Chinese border. It is true that there are known to have been disagreements in the top echelons of the PLA about the best way to deal with this threat. Mao's opponents inclined to the view that China should end its dispute with the Soviet Union so as to be able to shelter under the Soviet nuclear umbrella. Mao and Lin Piao pinned their faith in a protracted people's war, which only confirmed the view of those party bureaucrats who felt that Mao's ideas, while suitable for the original revolution of 1949, were dangerously out of date in the nuclear age. Be that as it may, evidence is clear that the issue of the Vietnam War was merely incidental to the Cultural Revolution. In fact, by launching the Cultural Revolution at the time he did, and knowing the inevitable turmoil it would cause, Mao was demonstrating clearly his confidence that the Americans would not attack the mainland. It also goes to show that, despite problems with both the United States and the Soviet Union, Mao concentrated on the essential point, namely the ideological direction of the party.

## The Red Guards

The role of the Red Guards is important, not so much for showing why the Cultural Revolution was necessary, as for showing why it took the form it did. Mao's weakened position after 1958-59, and his dislike of revisionist trends within the party, made him doubtful whether his ideological reforms could be effected from within.

At the same time, as has already been noted, he was concerned by the lack of revolutionary experience within the new generation of young Chinese. How better to effect his reform of the party than by harnessing the enthusiasm and idealism of youth in the practical experience of making revolution against the 'monsters and demons' within the party? At one stroke he would be purifying the party and creating a whole new generation of politically-conscious Chinese. Hence the importance of statements like this which appeared in July 1965 on one of the first of the 'big-character' posters at Tsinghua University:

Chairman Mao has said: 'In the last analysis, all the truths of Marxism can be summed up in one sentence; to rebel is justified'. The current great proletarian cultural revolution is a great revolutionary rebellion. We will stage a great rebellion against whoever is revisionist and opposed to Mao Tse-tung's thought.

The Red Guards were high school students, mostly aged from 15-17 years, although they contained some university students. As FitzGerald notes, they formed a useful force for Mao because they were too young to be full members of the party; they were certainly outside the party hierarchy; and they could be claimed as true proletarians because they were outside the ranks of the privileged and the elite. At the same time their youth and inexperience combined with their lack of weapons meant that they could be controlled by the PLA.

When the Red Guards were formed and encouraged to travel to Peking and other parts of China to spread the Cultural Revolution, the schools and universities closed. (It ought to be noted, however, that higher research especially in technological fields was permitted to continue in certain institutions free from Red Guard harassment. These institutions were protected by the PLA probably by order of Chou En-lai.) Mao's men claimed that the education system was responsible for revisionism and therefore a new revolutionary education system needed to be built up. During the Cultural Revolution, and indeed since then, young people were urged to take the revolution to the masses in the country-side — the so-called 'work-study' programme stresses this. It is

not clear, however, whether the new education system in China was part of the original aim of the Cultural Revolution, or whether it was an effect — perhaps both are partly true.

### **Mao's Link with the Masses**

An aspect of the Cultural Revolution entirely in keeping with Mao's philosophy was his appeal to the masses in his struggle against the 'top party persons taking the capitalist road'. Mao's own origin, and his early work among the peasants have given him an almost mystic faith in the collective wisdom of the Chinese masses, especially the peasants. It is easy to see how this view would be rejected by party bureaucrats, especially those whose education had been on more scientific lines than Mao's. While he has had a very realistic appreciation of where the power lies, and in consequence has always stayed close to the PLA, none the less the mutual trust between Mao and the masses is in sharp distinction from the position of Russia's leaders or of some of Mao's opponents in China. In initiating the Cultural Revolution on as broad a basis of popular support as possible, Mao was acting in character.

### **The Thoughts of Chairman Mao**

The most significant departure from Mao's previous philosophy was the insistence throughout the Cultural Revolution on the utter



correctness of Mao's thought. Earlier in his career he was distinguished for the vigour of his protest against superstition, and he encouraged discussion. In 1944 he wrote, 'If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we

serve the people.' During the Hundred Flowers Campaign he wrote, 'Correct ideas, if pampered in hot houses without exposure to the elements or immunization against disease, will not win out against wrong ones'.

The insistence on doctrinal orthodoxy seems to have been an essential element of the Cultural Revolution. Successive editions of the *Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung* tended to excise awkward contradic-

tions in his writings over the years, but still a picture could be built up of a gradual development in his philosophy. The publication of the little red book, containing the *Thoughts of Chairman Mao* marks a radical departure. The idea that these pithy little sayings, taken out of context from his writings, and without commentary or explanation, could possess universal validity is preposterous. Nevertheless this little book produced originally in 1964 for the PLA, became the chief weapon of the Red Guards throughout the Cultural Revolution, and became a sort of magic talisman. It seems strange that the thought of Mao should be so debased. A related aspect of the Cultural Revolution was the glorification of the person of Chairman Mao, and the ridiculous lengths to which adulation was carried tended to arouse the contempt of foreign observers. If Mao deliberately intended that a personality cult should develop around himself, or that his writings should be treated as gospel, he is likely to have achieved the opposite effect when his successors eventually take over. They will almost certainly be bound to repudiate certain aspects, both to consolidate their own positions, and to lead China along new paths as the world changes and new situations develop.

### Summary

In summary, then, the Cultural Revolution is seen as a struggle, initiated by Mao, to reform the Chinese Communist Party. It was a counter-attack by Mao, planned while he was under something of a cloud, against abuses which he saw starting to infect the bureaucracy. Principal among these were revisionism, or compromise with capitalism, and economism, a system which introduced bourgeois incentives into industry. To Mao, the party leadership seemed to be becoming soft and creeping back into the old bureaucratic vices of privilege and elitism. Only a thorough-going reform of ideological attitudes could change this, and the change would have to be effected from outside the party. Relying on the pledged support of the PLA, Mao mobilized the youth of the country through the Red Guard movement to carry out his revolution. In doing this, he was at the same time creating a new politically conscious revolutionary generation of young Chinese.

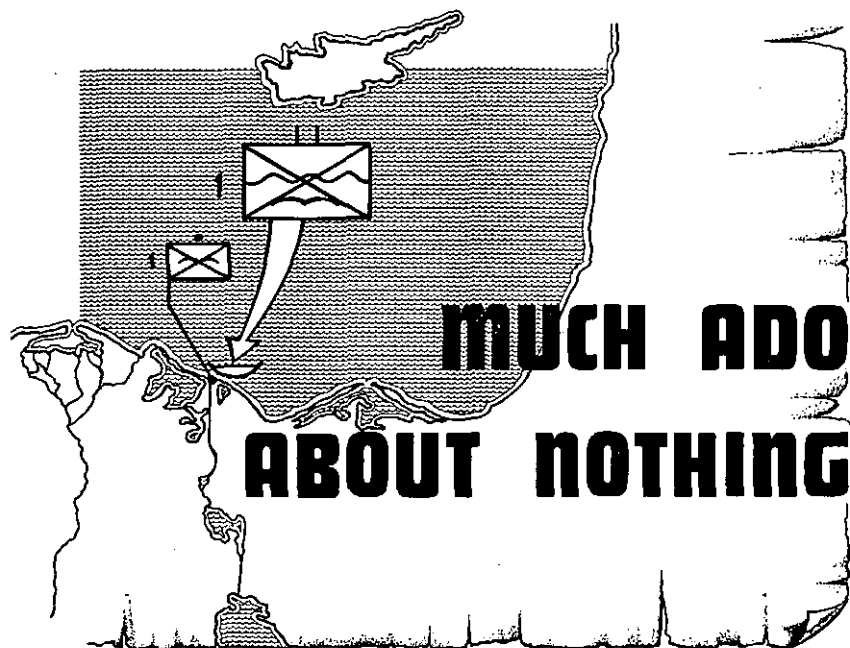
The Cultural Revolution was probably the last major active step by Mao to fix his place in history. On the whole the aims seem to have been met and Mao's theory of permanent revolution has been enshrined. Only time and future cultural revolutions will tell if Mao is ultimately

to succeed. For instance, it is doubtful if Mao really intended the PLA to end up with quite so much power, and it is said that PLA men are unhappy in their unaccustomed managerial roles. By and large, however, Mao seems to have achieved success in what was his last major revolutionary activity. When he dies he can join Marx and Lenin in whatever Valhalla is reserved for Communists who remain true to their faith. ☞

Manpower is wasted in armies and armies provide scope for 'Empire builders', but in Australia during the war of 1939-45 other institutions provided similar scope, and other institutions wasted manpower, yet were not submitted to the same degree of criticism as was the army, against which in this respect there was a prejudice that was both ancient and unrelenting.

It is illuminating to compare the general attitude to sport in Australia in the first half of this century with the general attitude to the army. Bright uniforms for the army were decried, but in sport they were demanded. Army ritual was considered by many a waste of time, but in sport similar ritual was considered proper, even essential. Leaders in sport attained a popularity never approached by army leaders. Even a degree of idleness among the soldiery was considered scandalous, whereas the success of a game was often gauged by the number of idle spectators whom it attracted.

—Gavin Long, *The Final Campaigns* (1963).



*Major R. Hennessy  
Royal Australian Infantry*

**T**HE Arab attack against Israel on 6 October 1973 riveted the attention of servicemen half a world away. Interest in the 'Yom Kippur War' became heightened when the involvement of Australian forces in a ceasefire arrangement became a possibility. Long disused maps were found, taken out and dusted. Staff officers were asked what they knew about the area.

Of course, for a generation now, we have been involved in operations elsewhere. The jungle and the Asian have been our environment, not the desert and the Arab. Of the Middle East we know very little.

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*After service with the British Army, Major Hennessy joined 1 RAR in 1964 as a platoon commander. In December 1964 he was posted to the Infantry Centre where he was Adjutant and later Instructor in Tactics. In December 1967 he was reposted to 1 RAR where he served as company second-in-command, Intelligence Officer and company commander. After service in South Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore he was appointed Senior Instructor, Field Wing at OCS Portsea in August 1970. He attended Staff College in 1972. His present appointment is SO2 Directorate of Training Policy, AHQ.*

So as to redress the balance, to add something to our knowledge, the following account of a Middle East war has been written. The subject is the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in 1956. My approach has been to describe, not analyse. That is left to the reader. The lessons are there. Seek, and ye shall find.

It was July 1956. I was a platoon commander in the 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment, which was spending an inordinate amount of energy in the mountains of Cyprus, in the futile pursuit of George Grivas, the leader of the EOKA guerillas. Our most recent operation was ending. Overnight we had surrounded a valley (where I had successfully resisted the pleas of my platoon to shoot dead a shadowy figure — who turned out to be a MFC from the mortar platoon). At first light the mortars engaged the valley. Then we swept forward. Nothing; as we had suspected.

As we returned downhill to the waiting trucks we were met by the battalion armourer, the most cheerful man in 1 Para. 'Hello Sir, have you heard the news? Laker has taken nine wickets and the Aussies are following on. And Nasser has grabbed the Canal'. Immediate uproar. Then as we raced back to camp, the endless questions; who got the other wicket, would it rain, what was the pitch doing? Later that day when the euphoria of England's great victory was subsiding we thought about Nasser and the Canal. Soon we were to think about little else.

We were first flown home to England in Shackletons (the most uncomfortable aeroplane the War Office could find), so that the RAF could practise their crews in parachute dropping techniques. Whatever the reason, we were all glad to get back to the UK for a few days. However, when flying by Shackleton one had to temper anticipation with patience — the platoon expected the aircraft to break down at Malta, and it did.

There were two main advantages in arriving late in England. First, the customs had got bored waiting for 10 Pl, so our illicit goods passed through without incident. Secondly, RAF crews had acquired a certain degree of expertise in parachute dropping in the interim period. They had needed to. The first stick that formed up to jump on return to the UK had been dropped well wide of any known DZ. The armourer had collided with some big trees and was more rueful now than cheerful. The IO, Pat B— had destroyed the vegetable garden of some irate Englishman who, in his dressing gown, had watched Pat oscillating like

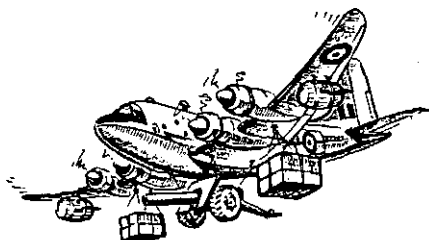


a pendulum under his canopy, which was trapped high above in trees, while his boots (Cold Wet Weather, left and right) cut swathes in the serried lines of beans and tomatoes. Yet such is the civilized nature of the English, that Pat was found by a search party having breakfast with his involuntary host.

Our training culminated in a massed drop by both 1 Para and 3 Para on the Salisbury Plain. It was a memorable sight from the doorway of an aircraft, as the echelons of Hastings and Valletas approached the DZ. Then, just as one felt confident in our war machine the lead aircraft, with the RV making parties on board, forgot to release its sticks. Later, as we looked up from the DZ to watch the heavy drop there was a sad reminder of how unprepared Britain was for war. The RAF had no aircraft with cargo decks. Instead, inspired by typically British genius for ad hoc solutions, guns and vehicles had been slung underneath the bellies of Hastings, which somehow had managed to fly and drop their loads safely. To one who was there, the sight of those lumbering transports pregnant with their external cargoes, was awesome evidence of how much man could temper the laws of gravity.

Back to Cyprus. The drive to reach limited war efficiency was intense. Eventually, the Parachute Brigade was launched back into anti-EOKA operations.

One day late in October, when we were operating in the Troodos mountains, my radio operator received a message that the company second-in-command, Bill B—, was visiting us with an important message. It had to be important, for any aspiring visitor to 10 Pl had a difficult climb ahead of him. Our remoteness was policy of course. The platoon rarely received visitors when on operations, and those that did arrive seldom came back.



While we waited for him I looked out over the pine-clad foothills below that rolled out to meet the burnt dun-brown bare plains. Behind them lay Morphou Bay reflecting in its deep blue the cloudless morning sky. Cyprus is a beautiful place. Eventually Bill arrived. We heard his party first, scrambling up the steep slope below. Silently we watched his panting figure emerge at the top. With satisfaction we noted his

sweat-black shirt. He wouldn't return to us either. I waited for him to speak; waited with all the disdain that the highlander has for the plainsman.

'We are going back to camp immediately. The Israelis have attacked Egypt in the Sinai'. Our reserve broke. With light-hearted whoops and cheers we packed our gear, fled down the hillsides and returned to their owners the *borrowed donkeys that we had acquired*. Then choked by the incessant dust that hung over the white roads we drove rapidly home.

'Damn it. According to the 1951 Tripartite Agreement we will have to fight the Israelis'. Don F—, C Coy Commander was adamant. Speculation was rife: Alexandria, Port Said, even Cairo was considered our destination. Then a rumour, vaguely heard and laughed off earlier, was anxiously repeated — 1 Para would 'go in' by sea. At last came a briefing — Egypt was the enemy, Port Said was the target, 1 Para would not drop!

Gloomily we got ready; desperately trying to ignore the happy taunts of 3 Para, as they prepared their heavy drop-loads on the other side of the triple Dannett wire that separated us (Claymores had not then been invented). In the still, violet-red evenings we watched the laden Canberras struggle off the runway near us, and slowly pull themselves away in a gradual spiral to the south, and Egypt.

One morning we drove away from our camp and headed for the port of Larnaca. On the way we passed the old RAF field at Tymbou and saw the long lines of French Nord Atlas aircraft waiting for their passengers. *If only they were ours*. Disgustedly I looked the other way.

At Larnaca there were sailors, landing craft and confusion. Eventually the company was embarked on an LST. We were an odd lot — Merchant Navy officers, a Chinese crew and hundreds of bemused parachutists, including the Deputy Brigade Commander (The Strongest Man in Europe). Bill B— and the Colour Sergeant were to follow up somewhere behind us in what was described as an ex cross-channel ferry. Anything was now possible.

Before long we sailed for Limassol, off which the fleet assembled, and then we headed south into the open sea. The scene was impressive. All around us landing craft and transports steamed in long grey lines.

Far outside, the low long silhouettes of warships dashed officiously about and overhead flew the uncomfortable Shackletons.

Leaning over a rail we watched the scene, and chatted with Jim S—, our company commander. Then a splash in the water below and an object darkly bobbed away astern. The desultory conversation continued. So did the splashes. We looked behind and saw a line of regularly spaced objects dancing away in the water. Too regular. 'Bob, get below and see what's happening.' I entered a cabin. 'What's 'appening Sir? Why we was just stowing our gas masks in that cupboard in the wall there, Sir.' Soldiers hate gas masks.

At last came the final briefing: airborne landings west and south of Port Said; a commando and tank amphibious assault to create a beach-head; then immediately we were to land, and with 2 Para, drive down the Canal road. Ultimate destination was Suez. All perfectly respectable. Our honour was satisfied.

On 5th November we followed 3 Para's operation while we made our final preparations. Early the next morning we watched the distant horizon as the assault went in, framed by the rising palls of black smoke from burning oil tanks, that seem to be a prerequisite for the traditional scene — Hollywood would have been delighted by the attention to detail. A red-headed ship's engineer officer stood near me. 'I have passed through Port Said a thousand times, it's never looked better', he murmured. We edged closer. Time to go to our stations below.

Then we anchored. *Anchored!* With a roar the Strongest Man in Europe came to life and made for the radio cabin. But nothing happened — the Navy was in charge. HMS *Tyne*, the Command Ship, was now directing movements. 'You know what happens when the police directs traffic — bloody chaos', someone explained. For hours we lay there, alternatively angry and incredulous.

The Longest Day passed.

Then we were moving again. Once more we braced ourselves, last minute exhortations to the over-laden soldiers and then down into the Stygian blackness below. 10 Platoon was to be first off the star-board side. In front of me reared the doors. Beside me was the leading vehicle. I peered into its cabin. There sat a rotund RASC major. 'I'm bloody Port Authority. Not needed here for ages but no one will bloody listen. Now look at me, in the first vehicle out.' Con-

vinced by now that the operation had been written by Lewis Carrol, I could only smile distractedly. It was then the footache started.

With a shudder we hit the beach. This was it. *St Michel Patron des Parachutists, protegez nous dans le combat.* 'Come on 10 Platoon.' But there was nowhere to go — the doors stayed closed. Somewhere up above muffled shouting and then hammering. The doors were stuck. When they opened, God only knows when, we walked ashore, owlishly blinking in the evening light.

There before us it seemed was the whole of the British Army. Sappers, signallers, drivers and pioneers busily going this way and that. Perhaps we would be in time for the CSE Show. Pushing through the throng we were greeted by a delighted Bill B— and the Colour Sergeant. 'Where the hell have you been? The war's nearly over.' I was given my first order in an invasion, 'Bob, take your platoon over there and brew-up.'



The rest of the operation was equally hazardous. We rushed busily about for the next few days: forming up to assault Egyptian positions, only to have a ceasefire intrude; dashing grimly out through the ceasefire lines to rescue non-existent Britons from an empty bombed prison; and clearing the dock areas of snipers, only to find in the warehouses bottles of gin (1 per officer) and tins of fruit (1 per soldier).

Egyptian resistance was negligible and their marksmanship appalling. Of far more danger were 'friendly forces'. One had to adjust to being fired at all night by the gentlemen who wore a beret that was definitely not red. Nor were we exposed to British small-arms fire only. 6 Royal Tank Regiment chose a position not 50 metres from the platoon location (a beach-house — rather more comfortable than a Shackleton, but alas no larger) to set fire to one of their ammunition trucks. Various types of 20-pounder shells exploded round our heads all day long.

At least it prevented us from venturing out onto the roads in our captured truck. That was much more dangerous. No one had been told which side of the road to drive on; with the result that those francophiles who wished to indulge our allies, drove on the right, and played 'chicken' with those conservatives who, believing British is best, kept to the left (when writing your operation order for the next invasion — remember to put in Coord Instr 'all vehicles are to drive on the LEFT side of the road'). The toothache got worse.

One day Kruschev started issuing threats of the most diabolic type; rockets would rain down on us unless we reformed. 1 Para immediately packed up and took the first aircraft-carrier back to Cyprus; not because of our well known fear of the Soviet IRBM but because it was thought that the ceasefire might collapse. If it did, then we had a job to do that needed aeroplanes and parachutes (ecstasy).

We embarked aboard the carrier for the sea dash. The Navy immediately displayed their finesse by separating officers from their men with studied skill. This at least gave the subalterns the chance to spend an evening in that delightful pastime of swapping stories of derring-do. Mine were already forming — rich in invention — and were bound to impress. It would have been perfect but for that damned tooth. In the event I could only hold my jaw, not daring to speak while my friends held the stage. Handfuls of aspirin washed down by liberal draughts of gin and tonic were my only consolation.

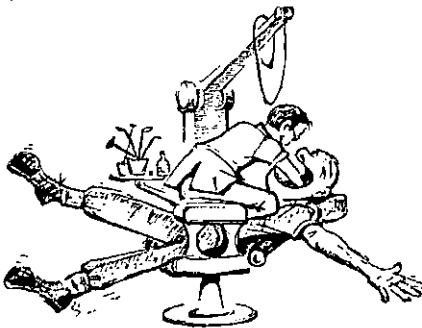
At last with invention exhausted, we went to bed. The carrier was rolling heavily in a big storm-tossed sea. Staggering along the shifting passageways I found my cabin. I crawled into bed and hoped for oblivion. It would not come. The pain grew worse. Beneath me was a locker door with a broken catch. At each roll the door would

creak open and, as the ship came back, the door would crash home with a noise like the crack of a rifle shot. In the next cabin Roger A— could be clearly heard being sick, very sick.

I could take the pain no longer. But where could I find aspirins? I staggered out of the cabin in search of relief, which was a vain hope — naval architects design labyrinths which no normal intelligence can fathom. After many turns to port and starboard, forward and abaft, aloft and below, I realized the truth. Somewhere in a rolling wind and sea-swept carrier in the middle of the night, half dressed, half drugged and half asleep I was fully lost.

Sometime next morning we were off Cyprus. The first ashore was to be the anti-tank platoon. They were to drive their jeeps and 106-mm guns quickly back to Nicosia to prepare for heavy drop lashing and loading. My Company Commander asked Gerald B— to take me to the BMH en route.

Seated next to Gerald, proud in his recently acquired brand new Egyptian Army jeep, we raced at breakneck speed with the other six jeeps of his platoon following. Very heady. Startled military police gave chase — what kind of a number plate was that? But we were too busy to worry about trivia, too fired with our sense of mission to be delayed by mere regulations. We shrugged off the questions and roared on towards our destiny.



At last the BMH. Into the dentist's waiting room. Mothers and children looked up. The Red Devil looked modestly down. The dentist appeared — he had been cued. Into his surgery, inspection, op immediate. 'Have th-th-this in-injection' he said. Then back to the waiting room for a few minutes, back among the adoring faces.

Time to go in. Into his big chair I sat. Into my big gaping mouth he clawed. Aah! I shouted, AHHHH!! I roared; nearly biting off his hand. 'Th-th-that's the problem: You are like all the other b-bl-bloody paratroopers, too b-bl-bloody fit' he complained. He gave me another injection.

Back again into the waiting room. The adoring faces had vanished — though the people were still there. They had heard my cries and felt betrayed. Mothers pointedly looked at their children and then at me. Scorn. There is no respect for a fallen idol. But they did not know I was just like all the other paratroopers; they did not know I was just too bloody fit. I stared into the inside of my beret; there was nowhere else to look.

So ended Operation MUSKETEER, the last imperial fling of Britain and France, for we never did jump into Egypt. It was as well — I had a feeling about my parachute . . . . ✂

#### A WORD IN FAVOUR OF MOUSTACHES

It is stated by a staff-surgeon that important physical advantages are attached to moustaches. He says that they shelter the lips and strengthen the teeth by resisting the influences of cold and heat. Hair, being a non-conductor, prevents the admission of the heat of the sun inwards, and also prevents its exit from the mouth and lips. By preserving an equal temperature about the skin, it protects the lips and the enamel of the teeth. Thus the teeth are rendered more serviceable for the biting of cartridges, and the use of the moustache is also a great saving of time at the soldier's toilette.

—*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July, 1847.



## General Sir John Monash

### A Glimpse at His Career and Methods of Command

*Major Warren Perry, RL*

#### I

**G**ENERAL Sir John Monash was a rarity in Australia's public life. He was a cultivated and articulate soldier whose great military reputation, acquired during the War of 1914-18, rested firmly on achievements made possible by training in Civil Engineering, Arts and Law. It was diversified training, gained at tertiary level, and unusual for a higher commander in his time; and he was able to apply it to high level purposes, both military and civil.

When Monash died in Melbourne on the 8 October 1931 he had not held a command appointment since his relinquishment of the command of the Australian Corps in Europe on the 30 November 1918.<sup>1</sup> The reason for this was that Australia's post-war field army, which came into being officially on the 1 May 1921, had no command appointments higher than that of divisional commander.

The five divisions and the two cavalry divisions which came into being could have been formed into two corps — one in command of a Militia general officer, say Monash, and one in command of a regular

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general officer. The cost would have been relatively negligible and the advantages gained in training higher commanders and their staffs would have been boundless. Instead, each of these seven divisions were made responsible direct to the Military Board and the only post-war military employment given to Monash was that of Honorary Colonel of the Melbourne University Regiment. This regiment had been raised in March 1910 under the command of Major S. F. McDonald and, contrary to popular belief, Monash had not previously served in it when he became its Honorary Colonel in February 1920.<sup>2</sup>

Since Monash's death in his 67th year, and now more than forty years ago, the ranks of his contemporaries who had been connected with him in various ways have thinned out very considerably. Today, therefore, he has become to many nothing more than a name. It may be said that everybody, at least in Australia, has heard of Monash, as they have heard of Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington. But if most people were pressed today for something more than superficial explanations of Monash's achievements their responses would be found to be most fragmentary and unsatisfying.

Because of his achievements in the War of 1914-18, Monash occupies a unique place in Australia's military history. Just as in literary history Goethe and Schiller are thought of together, so in Australia's military history Monash and Chauvel<sup>3</sup> are usually thought of together too, because they both attained the highest ranks and occupied the two most important operational commands open to Australian officers in the War of 1914-18. Monash was a Militia officer, like his great contemporary of Canada, General Sir Arthur Currie;<sup>4</sup> and Chauvel was an Australian regular officer. When war began in August 1914 Monash and Chauvel were colonels; during that war in 1914-18 each attained the rank of lieutenant-general; and in the post-war era, in November 1929,

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<sup>1</sup> General Monash regarded his appointment of Director General of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation in London in 1918-19 as a command appointment; General Birdwood regarded it as a staff appointment.

<sup>2</sup> When Monash was an undergraduate at the University of Melbourne in the 1880s he became a colour sergeant in that company of the 4th Battalion, Victorian Rifles which was located at that university.

<sup>3</sup> General Sir Henry George Chauvel, GCMG, KCB. Born 16 April 1865. GOC, Desert Mounted Corps, AIF from 2 August 1917 to 7 June 1919. Died 4 March 1945.

<sup>4</sup> General Sir Arthur William Currie, GCMG, KCB. Canadian Army. Born 5 December 1875. Died 30 November 1933.

each was promoted by the Scullin Government to the rank of general. They were the first Australian general officers to be promoted to this rank.<sup>5</sup>

In Monash's time Australia's Militia officers were not sent to the Staff Colleges at either Camberley or Quetta,<sup>6</sup> so when he achieved militia fame in the field some wondered how he could have done so well without having been a staff college graduate. But this deficiency in his military training was compensated for by his training at the University of Melbourne. There he graduated in three faculties and later became an honorary lecturer in the School of Engineering; and, in 1912, he became a member of the Council which is the university's governing body.

When the War of 1914-18 began Monash was an infantry brigade commander and in civil life, one of Australia's leading civil engineers. In addition to bridge building, he specialized in hydraulic, reinforced concrete and railway constructional work. The training and experience he had gained in these particular branches of engineering in civil practice were of the utmost value to him as a field commander in the War of 1914-18. It was pointed out in more recent times by Professor Morris Janowitz in speaking of 'the narrowing skill differential between military and civilian elites' in the US Army, that: 'The concentration of personnel with "purely" military occupational specialties has fallen from 93.2 per cent in the Civil War to 28.8 per cent in the post-Korean Army, and to even lower percentages in the Navy and Air Force.'<sup>7</sup>

But on the outbreak of war in August 1914 there was one important gap in Monash's military training — he had not previously served in any staff appointments. His military experience had been spent wholly in regimental and higher command appointments and so his training could be said to have been unbalanced. This was, however, the lot of most Militia officers, for staff appointments were usually reserved, although not exclusively, for permanent officers.

<sup>5</sup> See Perry, 'Australia's only other Generals'. *Sabretache*, vol. XI, No. 1, July 1969, pp. 29-31.

<sup>6</sup> There was one exception, Captain (later Major General) Edmund Alfred Drake-Brockman voluntarily attended a course at the Staff College at Quetta in April 1909 for a fortnight. See *Records of the Staff College, Quetta*, vol. 1, 1905-1914, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. The Free Press, New York. Paperback Edition 1964, p. 9.

## II

What was the nature and extent of Monash's command experience when war began in August 1914? This experience had begun, almost thirty years earlier, in April 1887 when he was commissioned in the Militia Garrison Artillery of the Colony of Victoria and posted to Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) J. R. Y. Goldstein's North Melbourne Battery for regimental duties. He remained in this battery for the next twenty-one years. In July 1895 the North Melbourne Battery became a unit of the newly raised Metropolitan Brigade of Militia Garrison Artillery in Melbourne. It was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) William Henry Hall<sup>8</sup> who was a schoolteacher in civil life. In September 1896 Monash was posted to command the battery vice Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) F. L. Outtrim; and in April 1897 — ten years after his first appointment to commissioned rank — he was promoted to the rank of major. Monash commanded the North Melbourne Battery for twelve years although during this time it underwent changes in designation and organization.

Then in March 1908 Monash was transferred to the Australian Intelligence Corps and posted to command that corps in the Military District of Victoria with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Almost two years later, in January 1910, Field Marshal Lord Kitchener inspected the troops in Victoria at camps of continuous training. On this occasion Monash played a leading but inconspicuous role, as an officer temporarily attached to the District Commandant's staff, where he assisted with the making of the necessary preparations for the Field Marshal's visit. For the greater part of Monash's service in the Australian Intelligence Corps, his commanding officer was Colonel the Hon J. W. McCay<sup>9</sup> who had been the Minister for Defence when the Military Board system was introduced into the Department of Defence in January 1905.

In May 1912 Brigadier General J. M. Gordon<sup>1</sup> became Australia's fourth Chief of the General Staff and it was during his occupancy of

<sup>8</sup> Perry, 'Colonel William Henry Hall: A Biographical Sketch of a Garrison Gunner Officer', *Sabretache*, vol. 14, No. 5, June 1972, pp. 121-39.

<sup>9</sup> Later Lieutenant General The Hon Sir James Whiteside McCay, KCMG, KBE, CB, VD, MA, LL.M. Lawyer and Militia Officer. Born 21 December 1864. Commander of the Australian Intelligence Corps from 6 December 1907 to 30 March 1913. Died 1 October 1930.

<sup>1</sup> Later Major General Joseph Maria Gordon, CB. Born 18 March 1856. Chief of the Australian General Staff from 11 May 1912 to 31 July 1914. Died 6 September 1929.

this post that the Australian Intelligence Corps was radically reorganized.<sup>2</sup> It was left to Monash to complete this reorganization because McCay was overseas on leave at the time. An outcome of the reorganization was that Monash was, in July 1913, promoted to the rank of colonel and appointed to command and form the 13th Infantry Brigade in Victoria.

In the following year Monash came under the notice of the Inspector-General of the British Overseas Forces, General Sir Ian Hamilton of the British Army, who had been invited by the Australian Government to inspect Australia's military forces during the latter half of the Training Year of 1913-14. Monash took his brigade into camp in the Lilydale area in February 1914 and while encamped there General Hamilton inspected the brigade and its training. General Hamilton was favourably impressed with what he saw of Monash and his brigade in this camp. This impression was advantageous to Monash in the following year, during the Gallipoli campaign, when Hamilton was, for most of the campaign, his commander-in-chief. In his *Gallipoli Diary* Hamilton referred to Monash in the following terms:

He is a very competent officer. I have a clear memory of him standing under a gum tree at Lilydale, near Melbourne, holding a conference after a manoeuvre, when it had been even hotter than it is here now. I was prepared for intelligent criticisms but I thought they would be so wrapped up in the cotton wool of politeness that no one would be very much impressed. On the contrary, he stated his opinions in the most direct, blunt telling way. The fact was noted in my report and now his conduct out here [Gallipoli] has been fully up to sample.

But Monash was not regarded so favourably by the Melbourne press immediately after the camp. He was charged by this press with making excessive physical demands on his troops. It was said in *The Age* on the 18 February 1914 that:

Evidence is not wanting that the troops which were training last week at Lilydale were overworked. Since their return to town, many cases have been reported, though none officially, of youths who were unable to return at once to their civil occupations owing to fatigue and foot weariness. Several men on their arrival from Lilydale on Saturday fainted from exhaustion. Surely it is too great a price to pay for efficiency.

Monash was of course obliged to take some official notice of this press attack on his camp and so in a letter to the District Commandant of Victoria on the 18 February 1914 he said:

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<sup>2</sup> For the nature of this reorganization see *Military Order*, No. 665, dated 10 December 1912. The reorganization came into operation on 6 December 1912.

The bulk of the statements in that article, so far as they affect the 13th Infantry Brigade, are not correct, particularly as to fatigue of the troops. The Inspector General saw the whole of the troops on the march home on Friday afternoon, and complimented me upon their physique and condition after the day's work.

This matter was soon forgotten because of the pressure of other events which followed in quick succession and came to a climax a few months later with the outbreak of the War of 1914-18.

### III

With the outbreak of the War of 1914-18 the most spectacular part of Monash's military career began. It began as a staff officer at Army Headquarters then located at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne. Monash succeeded Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Tunbridge, on the 18 August 1914, as Deputy Chief Censor in the Department of the Chief of the General Staff who at that time was Colonel (later Lieutenant General) J. G. Legge. This was the only staff appointment that Monash ever held, at least officially. But in less than a month he vacated it for, on the 15 September 1914, he was seconded to the AIF and appointed to command and form its 4th Infantry Brigade. He was not granted the temporary rank of brigadier general until the following year at Gallipoli but it was then back-dated to the 15 September 1914.

Monash drew recruits for the units of the brigade from all parts of Australia. In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General Sir) J. H. Bruche,<sup>3</sup> dated 1 October 1914, about the brigade's personnel problems he said: 'The Minister has now definitely decided to concentrate the whole Brigade at Melbourne for 3 weeks training before embarkation.' Monash led his brigade on a farewell march through the City of Melbourne on Thursday 17 December 1914 and by Christmas 1914 he had sailed from Port Melbourne with the brigade. After disembarking in Egypt Monash and his brigade underwent severe training before taking part in the Gallipoli campaign. He landed the brigade there on Sunday evening 25 April 1915. He served throughout the campaign and was one of the last of the members of the AIF to leave the Gallipoli Peninsula in December 1915.

Monash's wartime career is the best known and best recorded part of his life for it has been dealt with in some detail by the late

<sup>3</sup> Perry, *Major General Sir Julius Bruche. Army Journal*, Canberra, No. 286, March 1973, pp. 55-56. See also Perry, 'Major General Sir Julius Bruche: A Centenary is a Time to Remember', *Sabretache*, vol. 15, No. 3, March 1973, pp. 84-9.

Dr C. E. W. Bean in *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*. In that work the military operations which Monash planned and conducted have been examined so it will not be necessary to deal with them again here.

It will suffice to say that in July 1916 Monash was appointed with the rank of major general to command the 3rd Australian Division — a new division which was then assembling in Southern Command in England for equipping and training. The late Colonel A. G. Butler, who was the Medical Historian of the AIF on the Western Front, said in discussing the medical services of the 3rd Australian Division that: 'The personality of its Commander, Major General Monash, dominated every department'; that 'with a genius for organizing he combined a no less remarkable flair for lucid exposition and for co-ordinating the work of his staff officers'; and that 'he saw his command as a machine whose several parts interlocked, and none was held to be undeserving of his attention'.<sup>4</sup> King George V inspected the division in September 1916 and in November 1916 Monash was ordered to move it to the Western Front in Europe for operational duty. Later Lieutenant General Sir W. N. Congreve, VC, a corps commander of the British Army, expressed the opinion that Monash was the best divisional commander he had met on the Western Front.

There is no infallible procedure for selecting higher commanders or for screening potential strategists or tacticians. Nor is there any one infallible plan for commanders to follow in order to attain their strategic and tactical objectives in military operations. The uncertain and the unknown reign supreme here as elsewhere as Monash knew from his own wartime experience. In June 1918 the fortunes of war worked in favour of Monash. After some brisk play in the 'power game' against him he succeeded General Birdwood of the Indian Army in command of the Australian Corps.<sup>5</sup> In this command Monash had to contend with critics and detractors in his rear as well as with the enemy on his front. Therefore, when he assumed command indicators stood out boldly to warn him that unless he produced substantial operational gains he would

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<sup>4</sup> *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 2, 1940, p. 164.

<sup>5</sup> General Monash commanded the Australian Corps from 1 June 1918 to 30 November 1918. Hostilities ceased on 11 November 1918.

quickly lose his command and his military reputation.<sup>6</sup> History shows that he lost neither.

Some of Monash's contemporaries would have preferred to have seen the Australian Government appoint White<sup>7</sup> instead of Monash to command the Australian Corps in succession to General Birdwood. But discussions to-day on the merits of White for the post are profitless. There is no scientific means of demonstrating now that White would have been better or worse in command of the Australian Corps than Monash. The simple explanation is that Monash performed with distinction the tasks that he was appointed to carry out in that command; and, as White never held the command, any discussion of his fitness for the post must forever remain hypothetical. However, in any discussion of this problem of Monash having been selected in preference to White for the command of the Australian Corps in June 1918, the fact should be noted that White behaved with great and unusual chivalry in the situation and he did nothing himself during the progress of the 'power game' to advance his own claims for the command.

As commander of the Australian Corps, Monash occupied the highest operational command available to an Australian officer on the Western Front. The only equivalent Australian command was the Desert Mounted Corps in the Middle East theatre which was already occupied by Chauvel. The fact should be noted, however, and without in any way belittling the achievements of Monash and his Australian Corps, that one corps, although in this instance a big corps of five divisions, made up a relatively small part of Field Marshal Lord Haig's command in Europe — Haig's British armies on the Western Front consisted, apart from GHQ troops, of five armies in June 1918.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> F. M. Cutlack, *War Letters of General Monash*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1934, pp. 248-9.

<sup>7</sup> Later General Sir (Cyril) Brudenell (Bingham) White, KCB, KCMG, KCVO, DSO, psc. Regular officer of the Australian Army. Born 23 September 1876. BGGs, A. & NZ Army Corps, AIF from 1 October 1915 to 31 May 1918. Killed on duty, as Chief of the General Staff, in an air crash at Canberra on 13 August 1940.

<sup>8</sup> By the Spring of 1918 in France the German Army had 193 divisions; and the Allies, at the end of February 1918, had 168 divisions of which 97 were French, 58 British, 10 Belgian, 1 American and 2 Portuguese. Numbers of divisions did not of course indicate actual fighting strengths. These figures are taken from pages 277-8 of Karl Tschuppik's *Ludendorff: Die Tragodie des Fachmanns*. Verlag Dr Hans Epstein, Wien u. Leipzig, 1931.

## IV

What kind of a commander was Monash? This is an important historical question today for the time has come to re-examine and to re-evaluate Monash's qualities as a soldier and his methods of command. Let the answer begin with a digression.

Soon after the outbreak of a war an urgent political requirement at the government level is usually some kind of dramatic, but not necessarily final, military success. This demand creates an atmosphere of intense urgency and anxiety in military situations where divergencies soon begin to appear between, on the one hand, experience gained in the last war and later peacetime exercises and theoretical study and, on the other hand, the realities of war in military operations in progress. To survive in situations of this kind higher commanders must make rapid adjustments to their approaches to tasks; they must forget much and learn much quickly or be supplanted. Lord Montgomery said: 'The lesson is: don't be too senior at the beginning of a war'.<sup>9</sup> Monash's experience during the Gallipoli campaign and his later performance during the re-organization and re-training of his brigade in Egypt early in 1916, before taking it to Europe for operational duty on the Western Front, demonstrated clearly that he had this capacity to benefit by experience and to learn and to re-learn with great rapidity.

Although Monash had outstanding qualities and qualifications, which later in the War of 1914-18 endowed him with the reputation of a great Australian commander, his way up the ladder of fame was arduous and often contested. He was misunderstood and even sometimes maligned by contemporary Australians who had unsophisticated conceptions of warfare which were of an 'heroic' character. These conceptions were, in many instances, emotional and shallow and they were expressed often by those whose vision did not rise above the regimental level in matters of warfare. Field Marshal Count von Moltke had proved conclusively, by his conduct of the military operations of the German armies in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, that these 'heroic' conceptions of warfare were to have, henceforth, a more limited role in the higher direction of military operations. Further technological developments by 1914 had confirmed the experience of von Moltke in 1870-71. Australia's casualties, for example, in the earlier stages of the

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<sup>9</sup> Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery, *The Path to Leadership*. Collins, London, 1961, p. 37.



Gallipoli campaign were heavier than they need have been because of this 'heroic' attitude in all ranks of the AIF to warfare. Officers stood up in full view of the enemy to make observations with their binoculars; and the Commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade, AIF, Brigadier General MacLaurin, was killed at a spot known to be dangerous by needlessly exposing himself there to the enemy, only two days after the first landing at Gallipoli. On this conduct Monash said:

Such unnecessary exposure not only does no possible good but seriously impairs morale. While it is true that, like everybody else, I have had many narrow escapes, such as, for example, passing a spot where a few minutes after a shrapnel burst, yet I have always insisted on all my people exercising reasonable caution... and in doing their observations and reconnaissances from covered places.<sup>1</sup>

Monash had no primitive notions about physical courage — he attached too much value to individual officers and soldiers to be indifferent to needless casualties. He was probably the first Australian higher commander to observe that many pre-1914 conceptions of how to direct and control military operations at higher levels were inadequate and outmoded. In conducting his own military operations in the War of 1914-18 he demonstrated a high regard for the principle of the division of labour and for a wider and more effective application of scientific method to the solution of operational problems. The Guards would have perplexed Monash as they did Lord Moran who said in *The Anatomy of Courage* that: 'I am sometimes puzzled why the Guards put so much faith in precision of movement, so little in precision of thought.' Monash reduced the probabilities of error by painstaking analyses of problems. He was also aware, it seems, that, outwardly at least, conformity was the way to success and that to innovate and to criticize openly, crudely and tactlessly was a quick way to military extinction.

An illustration, taken from the Western Front, will indicate clearly by contrast the kind of commander Monash was. He took part in the Battle of Messines in June 1917 as the Commander of the 3rd Australian Division. In fact it was his division's first major military operation. Brigadier General Rosenthal<sup>2</sup> commanded the 9th Infantry

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Cutlack (Editor), *War Letters of General Monash*. Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1934, pp.55-6.

<sup>2</sup> Later Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal, KCB, CMG, DSO, VD. Born 18 February 1875. GOC, 2nd Division, AIF from 22 May 1918 to 9 March 1919. Died 11 May 1954. See Perry, 'Major General Sir Charles Rosenthal: Soldier, Architect and Musician'. *The Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 40, No. 3, August 1969, pp. 101-60.

Brigade<sup>3</sup> of this division and Brigadier Geoffrey Drake-Brockman said of him, in his autobiography, entitled *The Turning Wheel*, that:

Soon after he went into the line near Messines with the 9th Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Rosenthal, a Sydney architect. He was a real fighting general, his pluck sometimes led him (wrongly of course, but how pleasingly) to undertake a company commander's job. I have seen him in No Man's Land at night directing a wiring party.

Although this kind of conduct probably made headline news at the time in Australian newspapers, and it was no doubt read avidly and it pleased the public, it was not conduct characteristic of Monash. To him it was 'not war', to use a well-worn phrase, and he did not regard it as a necessary part of his role, as a divisional commander, to behave in this way. How then could Monash, as a commander, be classified? This question can best be answered by first looking at the following comment by Professor Morris Janowitz: 'The history of the modern military establishment can be described as a struggle between heroic leaders who embody traditionalism and glory, and military "managers", who are concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war. This distinction is fundamental. The military manager reflects the scientific and pragmatic dimensions of war-making; he is the professional with effective links to civilian society. The heroic leader is a perpetuation of the warrior type, the mounted officer who embodies the martial spirit and the theme of personal valor.'<sup>4</sup> If Monash must bear one or other of these labels, for neatness in classification, then it would be preferable to label him as a 'military manager' and not as an 'heroic leader'. It is stressed, however, to avoid misunderstanding that Dr Bean has testified that Monash was not deficient in physical courage.

It was also said in the official history that 'he was fortunate in never having to carry unsupported the shock of a great reverse'.<sup>5</sup> There is of course no argument about his having been fortunate as any other commander would have been in such circumstances. But there is also in this statement it seems the implication that Monash might not have been robust enough to have withstood the adversities of defeat.<sup>6</sup> But

<sup>3</sup> General Rosenthal commanded the 9th Infantry Brigade, AIF, officially, from 25 August 1917 to the 21 May 1918. The actual date that he assumed command was probably earlier than the official date.

<sup>4</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*. The Free Press, New York, Paperback Edition 1964, p. 21 and see also p. 72.

<sup>5</sup> *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*, vol. 6, p. 1092.

<sup>6</sup> In his subsequent civil career, as Chairman of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, Monash displayed great fortitude on occasions when he was obliged to carry unsupported the 'shock' of great reverses.

what profit is there in examining a hypothetical situation? Monash cannot be judged, as a commander, in accordance with what might have been or should have been. He can only be judged by his performance in the field and this was widely regarded in his time as having been superb on the Western Front. Nobody has since advanced any valid evidence to warrant changing this assessment.

Monash studied the psychological aspects of command and in doing this he was ahead of his time. He served at a time when Psychology, as an academic subject for study, was in its infancy;<sup>7</sup> he commanded the Australian Corps at a time when the AIF had no psychology units on its order-of-battle as it did later, in the War of 1939-45. Lord Moran in *The Anatomy of Courage* pointed out that: 'In 1914, apart from William James' analysis of fear, there was no book in the English tongue on the psychology of the soldier. Men were not interested in the psychology of courage and fear.' Matters were made worse too in Monash's time, during the War of 1914-18, because army medical officers were unprepared for coping with the vast floods of psychiatric casualties which occurred during that war. These medical officers often covered their want of training and experience in this field with sententious pronouncements and sometimes their diagnoses deferred to divination.<sup>8</sup> Monash, on the other hand, tried to learn, empirically, how people — friends and foes alike — reacted to the stresses and strains of war, to adversity and danger and to triumph and disaster.

The knowledge gained in this way served Monash well for, according to Lord Moran, 'The art of command is the art of dealing with human nature'. F. M. Cutlack, who studied Monash at close quarters, as one of his staff officers and later as a war correspondent has recorded of Monash that 'No shrewder judge of men and things has ever lived.' In a letter, dated 3 April 1918, to an old friend and medical practitioner of Melbourne, Dr Felix Meyer, Monash said:

I am interested in your question whether there is any time to consider the 'psychology' of our environment. It is because we do not consider psychology enough that we are taking so long to win the war. Personally, I have always found it pays well closely to consider the psychology not only of the enemy, but also of my own troops, to study the factors which affect his actions and reactions, and how to employ these factors to our advantage, and also to study the methods of keeping up the morale and the fighting spirit of our own soldiers. Indeed it is psychology all along the line.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See Robert Thomson, *The Pelican History of Psychology*. Penguin Books, 1968. Chapter 8 — British Psychology 1870-1914.

<sup>8</sup> See also R. H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1958, pp. 9-13.

<sup>9</sup> *War Letters of General Monash*, p. 233.

Soon after the order, 'Cease fire', had been sounded on the Western Front in November 1918, Monash became the AIF's Director General of Repatriation and Demobilisation with headquarters in London. In commenting on this new posting he said his task 'presented an entirely new set of problems which it had fallen to the lot of no man, in previous recorded history, to grapple with and attempt to solve'. He regarded Demobilization as primarily a psychological problem which he described with considerable insight and clarity in the following terms:

Long training and the excruciating stress of war had created a common morale of very high quality — a 'fighting morale', which had turned the whole current of thought and individuality of every man into one single direction; the purpose of war to a victorious end was the paramount and dominating thought which filled the soul of every one. Instantly, upon the cessation of hostilities, this common outlook was violently extinguished, and from the point of view of moral tendencies, these great compact war organisations became resolved into an agglomeration of individuals, each with his own different outlook upon the future, each animated by different aims, ambitions, desires and tendencies. There was no longer any common purpose, any mutually binding force. To all who could appreciate these considerations, it was clear, from the outset, that the problems of demobilisation full as they were of difficulties and technical details, of adapting ends to means, and of the creation of complex and untried machinery, were really dominated by moral considerations — that, in fact, the problem of demobilisation was, first and foremost, a psychological one.<sup>1</sup>

The scene must now shift to another method by which Monash exercised powers of command. It was the *conference method*. I have already pointed out elsewhere that: 'Although Monash did not introduce the "conference system" into the Australian Corps he did develop it radically — he gave it a new role and he raised its importance as an instrument of command. To him the conference was never merely a meeting point for the issuing of orders to subordinate commanders.'<sup>2</sup> Major A. J. Smithers has expressed the matter somewhat differently in his book, *Sir John Monash*, by saying that: 'Monash saw himself not so much as the chief handing down the tablets of stone but as the man in overall charge of a great engineering project consulting with his most important sub-contractors.' Of course Monash was highly skilled through long experience in discharging functions of this nature. He was an experienced participant in conferences; he was a skilled chairman of meetings; he was a highly skilled negotiator; and he could conciliate and compromise when occasions demanded. It was these skills which enabled him to exploit the 'conference method' of exercising command

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *The Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-18*, vol. 2 — The Western Front, 1940, p. 792.

<sup>2</sup> 'Monash managed Warfare on a rational Basis.' A book review. *The Age*, 28 April 1973, p. 17.

more fully than perhaps at least most of his colleagues on the Western Front. Commanders less skilled than Monash would of course get less out of conferences and so they would tend to regard them with less favour and probably also with more fear.

For example, Field Marshal Lord Montgomery's opinion of the role of the conference in the exercising of power of command was different. He said in his *Memoirs*, in a chapter entitled 'My Doctrine of Command', that: 'A conference of subordinates to collect ideas is the resort of a weak commander'. This is the voice of a dictator who always has 'the answer' in his own pocket. Monash would not have agreed with Montgomery on the matter of conferences. Monash's attitude was that every person, officer or other rank, in a position to make a contribution or to cause obstruction should be consulted before a decision was made. But nobody has yet accused Monash, to my knowledge, of having been a 'weak commander'. A commander's attitude to problems and to situations is conditioned by his general education, his technical training and his practical experience. In the cases of Monash and Montgomery these three factors were widely different and so a comparative study of their methods and their scales of values would show wide variations because of these differences.

Monash, as a higher commander, did not see his role as being primarily one of enforcing discipline and of mechanically complying with orders from higher commands. He saw it rather as one of maintaining, within his own command, high levels of initiative and morale. Evidence indicates that at his conferences he attempted to make everybody somebody and, according to F. M. Cutlack, 'He would consult with any man within his reach, high or low, in order to perfect his own understanding'. An instance of Monash in action at a conference, which illustrates well what has just been said here, has been given by Brigadier Geoffrey Drake-Brockman in his autobiography entitled *The Turning Wheel*. He was discussing the preparations in Monash's 3rd Australian Division for the Battle of Messines in June 1917 and said:

I remember the conference he [Monash] called for the purpose of determining the general policy after the Brigades had made their reconnaissances. Around the table sat General Monash with his 'G' staff, the three Brigade commanders with their Engineer advisers. Monash, a man of medium build, with large nose, dark skin and eyes that penetrated . . . First the generals (i.e. the brigade commanders) gave their views. Then Monash asked the field company commanders for theirs. This was a new experience for me; on other similar occasions the Engineers opinion always came from the C.R.E. After he had heard the opinions of everybody, Monash laid down a policy. His analytical assessment impressed

all of us. He seemed to have the situation and the deposition [sic] of the troops, but also the configuration of the terrain, from the study of maps, better than any of us from our physical contact with our particular zones.<sup>3</sup>

This conference, as described by Brigadier Drake-Brockman, had some of the features of a university seminar for Monash's methods of conducting conferences provided two things, apart from others: first, they provided training for any relatively junior officers present; and second, they enabled any such junior officers present to feel that they were participating in decision-making and decision-making is an important element of command which demands clarity of thought about objectives and priorities.

This paper is already too long. But before bringing it to a close it will be profitable to comment on those critics who qualify their assessments of Monash as a strategist and tactician with ifs and buts and then summarily dismiss him as a 'good administrator'. This kind of assessment usually shows neither a precise grasp of the concept of Administration nor an understanding of its relationship to both Strategy and Tactics. A commander should be highly skilled in planning and conducting military operations and these tasks demand much more than strategical and tactical knowledge and skill. It may surprise some readers to be told that, ideally, the planning and conducting of military operations demands considerable knowledge of Administration. The surprise may be occasioned because of varying conceptions of the scope and content of Administration.

During my service, now long ago, there existed an irrational attitude towards Administration. This attitude was probably inherited from the British Army and it was based on either sheer ignorance or on knowledge and experience of a restricted and low level character. Before August 1914, and for some time afterwards, the British Army had a proportion of huntin', fishin' and shootin' types of officers who dreaded nothing more than sustained mental labour which they successfully damned for a long time by such names as 'paper war'.<sup>4</sup> It is probable that many officers of this type rarely used a pen for any purpose other than to sign their names and to write private letters. They were, in

<sup>3</sup> For a conference at the Admiralty in London, conducted in a way that the skill, knowledge and wisdom in the junior ranks found no scope for correcting any failings of the Admiral in the chair, see Lord Salter's *Memoirs of a Public Servant*. Faber and Faber, London, 1961, p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> For an elaboration of this point on 'paper' see Perry, 'Lieutenant General Henry Douglas Wynter: An Officer of the Australian Staff Corps'. *The Victorian Historical Magazine*, vol. 43, No. 2, May 1972, pp. 867-8.

short, neither educationally nor temperamentally fitted for the Army's work of administration at the higher levels. They tended, therefore, as a defensive measure not only to belittle its importance; they also failed to recognize, it seems, that it demanded knowledge and skill over and above that required for normal regimental duties. This attitude filtered out from the British Army to the Australian Army where it also seeped into the 'cultural' life of Australian officers who were serving before the War of 1939-45.

Administration is conducted at varying levels and at each higher level it increases in variety and complexity and demands wider knowledge and more complicated skills. There is a wide difference, for example, between the volume and complexity of administration conducted by, say, an Adjutant or Quartermaster of a unit and by senior military and civil staffs employed by, say, Mr Churchill during World War II.<sup>5</sup> I will for a moment use terms which, although still well known, have recently passed out of use — they are the 'G', 'A' and 'Q' Staffs. Where is a line to be drawn between the duties of the 'G' Staffs and those duties which are classified as administration and so are allotted to the 'A' and 'Q' staffs? Officers skilled in Strategy and Tactics express these skills in planning and conducting military operations. Now this planning and executing, on the part of the 'G' staff and their commanders involves such things, just to mention a few, as control, co-ordination, directing, forecasting and organizing. All these things, including planning itself, are aspects of Administration and they are discussed in Lieutenant Colonel L. Urwick's book entitled *The Elements of Administration* which was first published in London in 1943. In this book he pointed out that:

Administrative skill cannot be bought. There are no hints and tips and short cuts. It has to be paid for in the only currency which is sound in this market — hard study and harder thinking, mastery of intellectual principles reinforced by genuine reflection on actual problems, for which the individual has real responsibility.

I have analysed this concept of Administration at some length with the object of drawing attention to three things: first, that, in Monash's time in the Army, Administration had no status and it was one of the least respected, as well as one of the least understood functions

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<sup>5</sup> An absorbing book on Administration at Sir Winston Churchill's wartime level is Sir George Mallaby, *From my Level: Unwritten Minutes*. Hutchinson of London, 1965.

of command;<sup>6</sup> second, that because Administration is conducted at varying levels it meant one thing to, say, a regimental officer and an entirely different and much more complex thing to, say, the permanent head of a department of state; and third, that no commander could, in reality, plan and direct military operations with optimum efficiency if he were not himself a good administrator.

In his once widely read book, *Generals and Generalship*, the late Field Marshal Lord Wavell, in trying to define the essential qualifications of a higher commander, introduced a quotation from the works of Socrates which he considered went 'to the real root of the matter'. In analysing this quotation the Field Marshal said:

It begins with the matter of administration, which is the real crux of generalship, to my mind; and places tactics, the handling of troops in battle, at the end of his qualifications instead of at the beginning where most people place it.

If the above argument be accepted it will become obvious from a reading of the following estimate of Monash in the official history that, apart from a confused analysis of the concept of command, it reflects a rather low level conception of Administration and it showed in addition, no clear understanding of the dependence of tactical skill on administration if the object is successful military operations:

That Monash was in some respects an outstandingly capable commander, was well recognised in staff circles, but though a lucid thinker, a wonderful organiser, and accustomed to take endless pains, he had not the physical audacity that Australian troops were thought to require in their leaders, and it was for his ability in administration rather than tactical skill that he was then reputed.<sup>7</sup>

In an unpublished paper on 'Leadership in War' Monash expressed his own views on the role of the commander as an administrator in the following terms:

A Corps Commander, even during times of comparative inactivity so far as field operations are concerned, has, if he takes his work seriously, a pretty handful of anxieties and perplexities; for, even if he is so fortunate as to have an experienced Administrative Staff (as distinct from his Fighting Staff) the mere administration of his command involves an amount of supervision, a degree of personal handling of a multitude of troublesome and difficult questions, and a continuous pre-occupation with problems of improving efficiency and economizing man-power which are, to say the least, of formidable proportions. Upon these duties, which never abate, even during fighting periods, you must superimpose the rarer, but stupendously more important, task of attempting to plan and direct victorious operations against the enemy.

<sup>6</sup> The British official history of the War of 1914-18 paid scant regard to the administrative aspects of that war's military operations. See Lt-Col J. G. Elliott, *Administrative Aspect of Operations, Staff Duties and Training*. Sifton Praed & Co., London, 1939, pp.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, vol. 6, pp. 195-6.



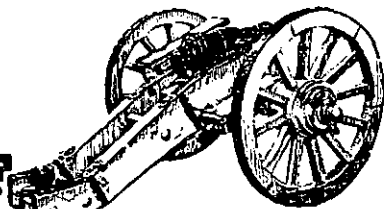
## V

The scientific analysis of Monash's methods of command for training purposes has hardly yet begun. Although it is a task beyond the limits of a paper of this kind, enough has been discussed here to indicate plainly that Monash emerged during the War of 1914-18 as a new type of higher commander who did not fit into any of the old moulds. His performance in that war demonstrated that his attitude to warfare and to the conduct of military operations was a rational one and one that did not, therefore, depend on hunches, intuition and brilliant flashes of insight at intermittent intervals. As a commander, Monash lifted men's vision to higher things, he raised men's performance to higher standards, and he built the personalities of his subordinate commanders beyond their normal limitations. ✂

## MONTHLY AWARD

The Board of Review has awarded the \$10 prize for the best original article in the October 1973 issue of the journal to Lieutenant Colonel W. W. Lennon for his contribution 'The Japanese Decision to Attack Pearl Harbour'.

# DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL DEFENCES OF AUSTRALIA, 1840-50



Major C. Winter  
Royal Australian Army Educational Corps

Defence is of much more importance than opulence.

—Adam Smith

Study of the army has never been integrated into the broader scope of English history in the nineteenth century.

—Albert Tucker

## PART I

### Introduction

COASTAL Defence has been defined as 'the means by which ports and anchorages are defended against seaward attack'.<sup>1</sup>

Part of Governor Phillip's instructions in establishing the penal settlement in 1788 was that he would provide protection 'as much as possible from any attacks or interruptions of the natives of the country as well as for the safety and preservation of the public stores'.<sup>2</sup> As

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neither engineer nor architect was included on Phillip's staff it would appear that attack of the settlement by a foreign power was not envisaged. This assumption is further supported by the extremely negative response which the British Government took to the repeated requests of subsequent governors for support and assistance in the development of coastal defences against the threat of attack by foreign powers.

The initial task of providing internal security for the settlement was undertaken by Lieutenant William Dawes, an officer of the Marines, who was appointed by Phillip as Artillery and Engineer Officer. However the distinction of erecting the first (European) defensive fortification in Australia fell not to an Englishman, but to the Frenchman, La Perouse. Dawes visited the encampment of La Perouse on 2 February 1788 and found it protected by a stockade with two small guns mounted within it as a defence against native attack.

The first fortification constructed by Dawes was a small earthen redoubt, which was constructed around the flagstaff near the northern end of what is now Macquarie Place and contained two iron six-pounder guns commanding Sydney Cove. In July 1788 Dawes was instructed by Phillip to construct another redoubt on the eastern side of Sydney Cove. It was completed in November and eight cannon from the *Sirius* were transferred to it. In 1791 another fortification was constructed by Dawes on the western side of the Cove which later was named Dawes Point. In the same year a redoubt was constructed at Parramatta where troops had been stationed since November 1788.

In the early 1790s the New South Wales Corps replaced the Marines and during their time in the Colony, Governor Hunter increased the defences of Sydney Cove by the construction of a battery on Bennelong Point and by having a few guns mounted on Garden Island. Governor King, sensitive to the danger by attack from the Spanish settlements in South America, in retaliation for the activities of privateers acting out of Sydney, had a battery erected in 1801 on George's Head. In 1804 the problem of internal security came to a head when the Irish convicts rebelled at Castle Hill, as a result of which King ordered the building of Fort Phillip (now at the south-west end of Harbour Bridge).

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<sup>1</sup> *Military Engineering*, vol. II, December 1937, chapter 9, sect. 72, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Records of Australia, Series 1 (HRA 1)*, vol. 1, p. 11.

In 1809 Governor Macquarie arrived in Australia with the 73rd Regiment to replace the New South Wales Corps. Fort Macquarie, designed by Francis Greenway, was completed in 1821 on Bennelong Point. Macquarie planned to erect a large defensive work in the Fort Phillip area with Dawes Point as an extension from it, but this plan was stopped by Bigge after reading Major Taylor's (of the 48th Regiment) report on the Sydney defences. This report recommended the construction of a battery on South Head at the entrance to Port Jackson, but it is not known if this recommendation was ever implemented.

Until 1826 the constant cry from the British Government calling for retrenchment, and the widespread assumption that 'Britannia rules the waves', even the far-away ones which washed the extensive coastline of Australia, caused the question of defence to recede, with the result that defences of the Colony were neglected and allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. The armaments of all forts, apart from Dawes Point and Fort Macquarie, were returned to store.<sup>3</sup>

Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Darling took up his appointment as Governor of New South Wales in December 1825. In a despatch dated 9 May 1826 to the Colonial Office, he wrote:

It has not yet been in my power to make a report respecting the defenceless state of the Colony. I shall write on the subject by an early opportunity as I am satisfied Government will not allow so valuable a possession to remain any longer unprotected. A single frigate could in a very short time destroy the Town [of Sydney] without the possibility at present of preventing it.<sup>4</sup>

The Governor's confidence that the British Government would make adequate and early provision for the security of the Colony of New South Wales appeared misplaced, as both he and subsequent governors found it necessary to make stronger and more urgent appeals to the Home Government for the erection of coastal defences against attack from an enemy, which fortunately for the Colony and indeed for the Home Government, did not eventuate. Nevertheless, it is submitted that the threat of external attack was a continuing reality which the remoteness of New South Wales from Britain did nothing to diminish.

At first sight it is slightly puzzling that such a discrepancy should exist between the appreciations made in Sydney and in London of the threat from external attack. London was repeatedly warned, particularly in the official despatches from Governors Darling, Bourke and

<sup>3</sup> A return of Ordnance dated 23 October 1827 is shown in Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> HRA 1, vol. XII, p. 294.

Gipps, and requested by them for ordnance, engineer officers and finance for the construction of fortifications. The Imperial Government, with vast colonial responsibilities, some of them much closer, more productive and more populous than New South Wales, at first treated the requests for assistance in developing the less than minimal, and by any standards totally inadequate, defences, with snubs and specific refusals. This concern in New South Wales for the security of the Colony was reflected in the comment in the newspapers and among the responsible colonists, and what largely gave rise to this concern were the activities of the French, the Americans and the Spanish in the Pacific. These activities ranged from buccaneering and privateering to forcible colonization, but always they fell short of any direct challenge to British authority in Australia.

In the *Sydney Gazette* of 13 August 1814, before Napoleon's final eclipse, there is a report of a French force of three or four frigates which had been sent from France for the purpose of establishing a depot which was thought to be for the purpose of providing a sanctuary for privateers. It was reported that these frigates were captured or dispersed.

The American privateer, *Essex*, which had 'long annoyed our trade in the South Seas', had had a place of refuge in the Marquesas, but according to the *Sydney Gazette* of 25 August 1814, it had been captured by the British frigate, *Phoebe*, on 28 March 1814.

The *Sydney Gazette* of 13 January 1827, quoting the *London Star* of 22 August 1826, reported the arrival of the French frigate, *La Thetis*, and the corvette, *L'Esperance*, at Brest on 23 June 1826 after their round-the-world voyage which lasted nearly twenty-eight months. On this voyage the French ships had stayed in Sydney from June to September 1825 for repairs and revictualling.

One of the most relevant references supporting the claim that the enemies, or potential enemies, of Britain provided a threat to the security of Australia, is contained in the lengthy editorial of the *Sydney Gazette* of 24 August 1827 wherein the editor commented unfavourably on the activities of the Americans and French in the Society and Sandwich Islands. In the editorial these activities are related to the security of Australia and indicated certain assumptions which must be accepted as representative of the thinking of informed people in the Colony. The

demands of successive governors for defence assistance from England were a reflection of these assumptions, a predominant one being that Australia was 'destined to hold the imperial sway' in the south-west Pacific region. The editor went on to say that the Americans and French would have made efforts much earlier to establish settlements in the area and even on the mainland of Australia itself, if they had not been pre-occupied with more pressing domestic concerns; British rule in Australia was clearly established and any attempt by any other power to establish itself in this region must be viewed with a concern for Australia's security.

The unquestioned adherence to the British flag is worthy of remark. Throughout this period the deference to the direction, advice and views of the Home Government was almost unchallenged in spite of strong republican views of which J. D. Lang was a notable exponent. In some ways this deference was all the more remarkable in view of the 'tyranny of distance' which is always an important component of any discussion about the historical development of Australia. This deference is again surprising when one considers the extremely bad relations which frequently arose between the governors and the colonists. Governors of the period, notably Darling, Bourke and Gipps, were administrators of considerable ability, with experience derived from service in other parts of the Empire. Nevertheless, bad relations often developed between them and leading citizens and even with other members of the administration. When a big political row developed in Sydney in the late 1830s over the proposal by the Home Government to vest the lands belonging to the Ordnance Department in the persons of the Ordnance officers, much of the criticism and angry demonstration which arose did little to affect the general feeling of dependence on the Mother Country. From an examination of contemporary records one may conclude, by hindsight admittedly, that there was little chance that Australia, in her colonial days, would follow the example of the American colonies.

Several examples can be given of attempts by both the Americans and the French to establish colonial settlements in the island groups of the Pacific. The French probably presented the biggest threat to the security of the British settlements in Australasia in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. When it became impracticable for the French to establish themselves on the Australian mainland, they turned their

attention to New Zealand, and here their colonial ambition was again thwarted by the British.<sup>5-6</sup>

### Security

The strength and disposition of the Army in Australia in the late 1830s was directly related to the need for internal security — a need which had existed since the arrival of the convicts with the First Fleet in 1788. Only occasionally did the question of external security arise, and indeed it was not until late in the 1840s, but more particularly in the 1850s, that the question was considered seriously, and only then under the impact of events in far-off Europe, and the discovery of gold.

A colonial legislature could easily be accused of having a restricted outlook, but it could hardly be blamed for emphasizing local interests to Westminster, where the Napoleonic Wars were an expensive memory, domestic and foreign policies of over-riding importance, and Australia, while a large but very expensive gaol, was several months distance away. The Secretary of State for War and the Colonies could well afford to be paternal, even when irritated by demands from importunate colonies, which appeared to accept little responsibility for internal, and even less for external security.

In the early part of the nineteenth century the travelling time between Europe and Australia varied between about eight and twelve months. The relations between Britain and other European powers had a distinct bearing on the security of the colonies in Australia, as indeed did the happenings in other British colonies. These facts and the obvious unwillingness of the Colonial Office to meet the defence demands of the colonies in Australia give the impression, only partly correct, that the colonists in Australia received very low priority treatment from the Imperial Government. There are, however, other circumstances to consider, and an examination of the problems of the British colonies in Australia must take into account the overall colonial policy of the British Government. In the decade 1840-50 this policy was consistent and the Imperial administration of the colonies dealt with problems which arose in a particular colony in the light of happenings and experiences of its dealings with problems in other British colonies. For

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<sup>5</sup> *Sydney Herald*, 2 October 1840.

<sup>6</sup> *The Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. VII, Part II, pp. 75-6.

example in New South Wales, 'The broad features of the constitutional settlement of 1842 were practically dictated by Canadian experience'.<sup>7</sup>

### The Problem

In his despatch dated 21 February 1827, Governor Darling wrote to the Colonial Office proposing that the military defence of the Colony 'should be placed under the view of His Majesty's Government in as complete a form as possible...' and that 'competent officers of the Royal Engineers' be sent to examine the problem and make recommendations for its solution. Darling continued:

The first object appears to be the immediate protection of the Town of Sydney, which from its present defenceless state would be exposed to the insult of even a single ship, should war break out.

The next is the general defence of the Colony, should it be considered expedient to construct works with this view. The first is very important, the Town and Harbour being totally destitute of every military defence; and any attempt from without, which could not be immediately checked, would probably encourage the prisoners in Sydney, who are necessarily numerous, to take advantage of any confusion, which might be occasioned at the moment. (This reference to internal security could also reflect a sensitivity on Darling's part resulting from the Sudds/Thompson affair of the previous year.)

Should the officers, who may be sent out, be authorised to construct works, I would suggest their bringing with them more competent workmen, more particularly to act as overseers, and a supply of such stores and implements, as would be required in the performance of the work to be undertaken.<sup>8</sup>



Darling's appreciation of the problems of defending Sydney Town and Port Jackson, tactically, is very sound, but he realized that the solution to these problems required technical expertise which, like ordnance, was not available locally and would have to be transported from overseas. As will be seen later this problem of providing adequate and effective defence against the threat of unexpected and unprovoked attack from Britain's enemies, or even from privateers, was to arise also in the other Australian colonies.

It is of interest to note in passing that in reply to a letter from Darling dated 9 May 1826<sup>9</sup> in which an urgent request was made for

<sup>7</sup> *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, vol. VII, Part I, p. 272.

<sup>8</sup> *HRA* 1 XIII, p. 119.

<sup>9</sup> *HRA* 1 XII, p. 294.



'a competent engineer', Darling was informed that his request could not be met, on the grounds that no engineer officer was available for posting to New South Wales. Rather naively a copy of Lord Fitzroy Somerset's letter<sup>10</sup> to Under-secretary Horton containing a strength return of engineer officers, was sent to Darling, whose reaction may be surmised when he learnt from the strength return that no less than 17 of the 222 officers, of the Corps of Royal Engineers in the British Army of that time, were then unemployed. The return was dated 18 July 1825, and was endorsed with the remark that such a number of unemployed officers was quite normal as they provided reliefs for foreign stations.

One can only guess at the reasons for the repeated refusal of the Home Government to supply one engineer officer in face of repeated requests from Darling in 1827 and 1828, particularly when no less than 17 were unemployed in England. Two possible and very obvious reasons suggest themselves: the Home Government's pre-occupation with keeping costs, especially those connected with Australia, to the minimum; the unlikelihood of war erupting at that stage and therefore the lack of necessity for Australia needing defences against surprise attacks from the sea. A further reason could well be that the Home Government underestimated the threat to internal security from a possible uprising of the convicts. At this time the Colonial Government seemed particularly sensitive to this possibility.

Despite repeated requests for an officer of the Corps of Royal Engineers the Colony of New South Wales was made to do without one until Captain George Barney arrived in Sydney in December 1835. His arrival, however, resulted from a request for a civil engineer by Governor Bourke, who in his despatch dated 8 July 1834 to Stanley, explained that

Those duties [of a civil engineer] are, however, of a very different description from the services required of a surveyor, and demand a much more varied knowledge and extensive course of instruction. The principal works, upon which the skill of a professed civil engineer would require to be exercised in the colony, are the construction of a large circular wharf [Circular Quay] round the head and the Eastern margin of Sydney Cove... the completion of a break-water at New Castle; the formation of boat harbours along the coast; and possibly the supply of water to Sydney...<sup>11</sup>

In his reply to this the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Aberdeen, in his despatch to Governor Bourke dated 13 February 1835 wrote:

<sup>10</sup> *HRA I XII*, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> *HRA I, XVII*, p. 475.

The appointment of a civil engineer, whom you consider requisite to superintend the construction of the numerous public works in the Colony, will, it is conceived, be rendered unnecessary by the arrangement, which, as you are already aware, is in contemplation for stationing in New South Wales a Branch of the Ordnance Department to take charge of and superintend the buildings belonging to the *Military and Convict Departments*.<sup>12</sup>

This compromise was effected by the authority issued in a long Treasury minute dated 13 March 1835 in which

My Lords [of the Treasury] Concur . . . in [the] opinion that it will be sufficient in the first instance to station one officer of the Royal Engineers in each colony [of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land] . . . My Lords request that no time may be lost in despatching the several officers, furnished with the requisite instructions for taking immediate charge of the Military and Convict Buildings and Stores, and conducting the business relating thereto according to the Ordnance System and regulations.<sup>13</sup>

Captain George Barney, an experienced and capable engineer officer, took up his duties in New South Wales on 1 January 1836. In September 1836 he reported that the defences of Sydney were 'in a very dilapidated state'.<sup>14</sup> Confirmation of this report surprisingly came from the Navy some time later. Captain Bethune of *HMS Conway* when visiting Sydney and Hobart was sufficiently moved by the sight of the inadequate defences of these two ports to write to Rear Admiral Maitland who passed the report to the Board of the Admiralty.<sup>15</sup>

In reply to the representation made to the Board of the Admiralty, the Master General and Board of Ordnance acknowledged the lack of fortifications at Sydney and Hobart, but pointed out that they had 'not yet received the plans and estimates for the defence of the harbour of Hobart Town and the River Tamar, called for on the 3rd August last . . .'<sup>16</sup> They also acknowledged that nothing had been done about the defences of Sydney since Ordnance became responsible for them [in 1836].

By an inspectional report and plans dated 1st September 1836, [Barney's report] it appears they were in a very dilapidated state when transferred to this Department; the Master General and Board are compelled to admit the correctness of the report enclosed in your letter, regarding the defenceless state of the harbours in question against shipping; but, with the military force stationed in these colonies and a British population generally, the Master General and Board hope to be depended upon against a foreign enemy, they do not apprehend any serious danger, although it is desirable that some assistance should be

<sup>12</sup> *HRA I XVII*, p. 658.

<sup>13</sup> *HRA I XVII*, p. 706.

<sup>14</sup> *HRA I*, vol. XX, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> Documents in the Colonial Office files, (C.O.) 201/290/R321/F35 and 36.

<sup>16</sup> *HRA I*, vol. XX, p. 115.

afforded to the colonists in securing their commerce and property from desultory attacks, such as Captain Bethune describes as feasible.

The Master General and Board have therefore called upon the Commanding Royal Engineer for a report with plans and estimates of what he considers necessary for the protection of the principal sea ports of New South Wales against desultory attacks from foreign cruisers.<sup>17</sup>

A copy of this correspondence was sent by the Colonial Office to Governor Gipps who in his reply dated 31 August 1839 stated that

representations of a similar nature [to Captain Bethune's] have been addressed to me by several of the most respectable inhabitants of Sydney; also that the subject has been mentioned in the debates of the Legislative Council. In answer to these representations, I have replied nearly in the terms of Mr Byham's letter of the 5th April, 1839,<sup>17a</sup> that, looking at the Military Force stationed in the Colony, and relying on the good disposition of the inhabitants, I should not fear even in our present state the result of any conflict to which there is a probability of our being exposed; at the same time I must take the liberty of saying that I cannot imagine why the guns are not sent out, which have been asked for and promised several years ago, especially as facilities now exist for sending them free of cost on board either of Convict or Emigrant ships, which may not exist a few years hence.<sup>18</sup>

The guns referred to in Gipps' despatch were sixteen 24-pounders ordered by the Board of Ordnance for the batteries (Fort Macquarie and Dawes Point) at the entrance to Sydney Cove on Barney's recommendation of September 1836. In a letter dated 19 February 1839, Major General Sir Maurice O'Connell, the Commander of Troops in New South Wales, wrote to the Horse Guards to inform the Commander-in-Chief that the order for these guns had not been executed. He requested their delivery as soon as possible because the existing defences were totally inadequate, particularly in view of the increasing wealth and importance of Syd-



<sup>17</sup> *HRA I*, vol. XX, p. 115-6.

<sup>17a</sup> *HRA I*, vol. XX, p. 115-6.

<sup>18</sup> *HRA I*, vol XX, p. 305.

ney. It was indicated that a detachment of the Royal Artillery would also be needed to man the guns. 'In the event of an unexpected war a single frigate could put the town under contribution and destroy the whole of the shipping in the harbour.'<sup>19</sup> It is notable that no mention was made here of any threat to internal security.

A minute from the Board of Ordnance dated 30 September 1839 informed the Colonial Office that the guns were shipped from Woolwich on 17 August 1839. It was regretted that a company of artillery was not available to accompany the guns for service in New South Wales.

A thoughtful minute commenting on O'Connell's letter, written probably by Sir James Stephen, who was at the time Under-secretary for the Colonies, is contained in the correspondence and is worth quoting. He writes:

This letter [of O'Connell] raises one of those large military questions to which the defective state of the Army and of the Finances of the Kingdom furnish the real answer, however unsatisfactory that answer may be. It is rather for the Cabinet collectively than for any single Department to adjust the balance between the opposite evils of leaving the distant provinces of the Empire undefended and of creating a new and permanent charge on the Treasury. It is plain from Sir M. O'Connell's letter that guns alone without a corps of Artillery men would be useless, and without increasing the Army there are no such men to be had. Will you lay this before Lord Normanby [Secretary for War and the Colonies] in order that his lordship may consider in what terms the answer should be prepared.

### **American Warships**

The possibility of 'desultory attacks from foreign cruisers', believed remote by the Home Government, and also to some extent by Gipps and O'Connell, was reinforced in December 1839 when two American warships entered Port Jackson at sunset, anchored beside a British naval vessel and their presence remained unknown until the following day. The ships were part of an American expedition under Commander Wilkes exploring the Pacific and the Antarctic. The ships had called at Sydney to pick up supplies and because it was sunset and the Commander had charts of the harbour, he decided to enter the harbour without going through the usual formalities or waiting to take on a pilot. The dramatic appearance of these American warships awakened all the old fears of surprise attacks and provided the Governor with a stronger, but no more effective, argument in his attempts to solicit more defence aid from London.

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<sup>19</sup> Documents in the War Office files, WO1/431/R894/F411.

## The Wider Scene

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century the international scene was a troubled one and Britain and France were deeply implicated.

The Near East crisis which had brought Britain and France to the verge of war had receded temporarily by 1841, but relations between these two countries had been severely strained especially while Palmerston was Foreign Secretary. In the same period the internal troubles in Canada, the boundary dispute between Canada and the United States, and the Caroline affair, aggravated the troubled relationships between Britain and France, and between Britain and the United States. Because these international crises were regularly, if belatedly, reported and discussed in the Sydney newspapers, the colonists were acutely aware of the presence in the Pacific of French and American warships and of the threat they presented to the security of the Australian colonies in the event of a war involving Britain.

That O'Connell, the military commander in Australia, was also very keenly aware of his responsibilities for the defence of Australia in the event of a war involving Britain is apparent from the despatches he sent to the Commander-in-Chief in relation to the long-awaited ordnance and detachments of artillery.<sup>20</sup>

## The French in Tahiti

French activity in Tahiti exemplified French colonial ambition and reflected in the Pacific area Anglo-French rivalry. The French wished to establish themselves in Tahiti, but English Protestant missionaries as well as British colonial interests in Australia presented some formidable obstacles to French colonial ambitions in this area. When two French Catholic missionary priests were, after due warning, deported from Tahiti on the order of Queen Pomare in December 1836, the French Government reacted very sharply. The French frigate *Venus*, under the command of Commodore Du Petit Thouars, arrived in Tahiti in August 1838. The Commodore ordered Queen Pomare to write a letter of apology to King Louis Phillipe for the grave insult to the French nation caused by the deportation of the French missionaries. In addition the Queen was ordered to pay an indemnity of \$2,000 and raise the French flag and give it a 21-gun salute. 'I declare to your

<sup>20</sup> WO1/431/R894/F411 (19/2/39) see Appendix B, and

WO1/431/R894/F377 (15/2/42) see page 55, footnote 33.

Majesty, that if they do not subscribe to give the reparation asked for, within the limited time, I will see myself in the obligation to declare war and to commence hostilities immediately against all the places of your Majesty's dominions . . . and [these] will last to the time when France will have obtained satisfaction.<sup>21</sup> A written apology was given by the Queen; the fine was paid; the French flag was raised. At this point a Gilbertian touch was introduced when the Queen was informed that there was insufficient gunpowder with which to fire the salute. After discussion with the French, Du Petit Thouars agreed to supply the Queen with some of his gunpowder. This solution overcame the Queen's embarrassment and satisfied Gallic pride.

The *Sydney Gazette* in its issue of 29 November 1838 gave an account of these events, sympathetic to the Tahitians and commented that 'that unwarranted aggression on a defenceless people leaves an indelible stain on the honour of France'.

The British Consul at Tahiti, who acted as mediator between the Queen and Du Petit Thouars, in a despatch dated 9 November 1838 made a full report to Palmerston and enclosed copies of the correspondence between the Queen and the French Commander and also a desperate appeal for protection from Queen Pomare to Queen Victoria.<sup>22</sup>

Also enclosed with the above correspondence was a copy of a law enacted by the Tahitian Legislative Body by which the Protestant Faith was made the official religion of Tahiti.

This request by Tahiti for British protection was refused by the British Government on the grounds that British commitments in the south-west Pacific region were already so great that 'It would be dangerous and impolitic to contract similar obligations towards the inhabitants of Tahiti'.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to note that in June 1839 the French Government applied to Britain for permission to establish a consular agent in Sydney. There was already one in Mauritius and another in Calcutta.

The *Sydney Gazette* of 17 September 1839 reported on the visit to Tahiti of the French ship, *L'Artemise*, commanded by Captain La Place who demanded Queen Pomare to change the Tahitian law

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<sup>21</sup> C.O. 201/290 R321 F308.

<sup>22</sup> C.O. 201/290 R321 F301 *et seq.*

<sup>23</sup> C.O. 201/290 R321 F303.

forbidding the teaching of the Catholic religion and the building of Catholic chapels.

Woodward states that it was the Anglo-French rivalry over the occupation of New Zealand that was partly responsible for the strength of French feeling about Tahiti.<sup>24</sup>

Again on 9 November 1839 the Frenchman, La Place, received adverse comment from the *Sydney Gazette* of that date. The *Gazette* claimed that he had re-enacted in the Sandwich Islands 'the same manly game' the French played at Tahiti, 'the exacting of money from the defenceless and enforcing popery even at the cannon's mouth'.

It is notable that just over one hundred and thirty years later French activity in this same region is causing concern and alarm to Australia and neighbouring countries.

### Clarification

In the 'forties the energies of the Army were largely absorbed by the fighting in New Zealand, but due largely to the aggressive activities of the French in the south-west Pacific and to the surprise visit of the American warships to Sydney described above, the colonies continued to apply pressure to the Home Government for assistance to rebuild and extend the coastal defences.

In reply to a request from the Master General and Board of Ordnance 'requiring plans and estimates for putting the principal seaports of this country in a state of defence against desultory attacks from foreign cruisers', Major Barney in a letter dated 14 September 1839, to the Inspector-General of Fortifications, requested the services of two more engineer officers, and the vote of £5,000 'for the construction of batteries and permanent blockhouses, immediately necessary to the defence of the ports of Sydney, New Castle, Wollongong, Port Macquarie and Port Phillip'.<sup>25</sup>

While approval was given for the appointment of one additional engineer officer,<sup>26</sup> whom the Master General and Board of Ordnance were unable to supply at that time, permission to proceed with the works of defence was firmly refused.<sup>27</sup> However, before these decisions were communicated to the colonial administration, Governor Gipps

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<sup>24</sup> L. Woodward, 'The Age of Reform', p. 242, footnote 1.

<sup>25</sup> *HRA I*, vol XX, p. 599.

<sup>26</sup> and <sup>27</sup> *HRA I*, vol XX, p. 600.

had made available to Major Barney a work force of 140 convicts<sup>28</sup> who were immediately put to work on the preparation of the sites at Bradley's Head and the island of Pinchgut for the installation of the guns received in April 1839, on the assumption of the 'daily expected receipt of authority from England'.<sup>29</sup> Governor Gipps in his despatch of 21 October 1840 to Lord Russell pointed out '... the anxiety which exists in Sydney for the execution of some works of defence...' and '... alarm, which would be created, if the Works... just commenced... be abandoned'. He continued that he is

well aware of the strictness with which officers of Engineers are forbidden to undertake any work without the express authority of the Master General and Board; I am also well aware that, as Governor of New South Wales, I have no authority to direct any expenditure of public money to be made upon Works of defence; but nevertheless so intimately am I convinced of the disadvantage which would arise from the stoppage of these works, that I feel it would be in me a dereliction of public duty, if I were to hesitate to take upon myself the whole responsibility of continuing them, including of course the pecuniary liability to which I shall be exposed, if the expenditure be disallowed; and I beg leave to report to Your Lordship that I have made an intimation to this effect to Major Barney. The whole outlay, which will be required before an answer can be received from Your Lordship or the Board of Ordnance will not exceed £300.<sup>30</sup>

Russell's reply dated 21 June 1841 informed Gipps that

His Majesty's Government have sanctioned its [£300] admission in the accounts of your Government, but at the same time I have to request that you will in future abstain from incurring any similar expense except under circumstances of very extraordinary emergency.<sup>31</sup>

It is significant that the struggle to acquire coastal defences is continued in a letter dated 15 February 1842, from O'Connell to the Commander-in-Chief who is informed

that four batteries, now in the course of erection or repair for the protection of this Harbour and Town of Sydney, are approaching to completion, and are almost in a state of readiness to receive the guns destined for them.

In addition to these four batteries there are four other works in contemplation. In laying this report before Lord Hill,<sup>32</sup> I request you will bring under His Lordship's notice the necessity of now sending a detachment of Artillery to this Command, for, although I have directed that the 28th Regt. now in garrison in Sydney, shall be instructed in the battery and Great Gun Exercises by Lieutenant Colonel Barney, CRE, who has taken a great deal of pains in teaching them, I still question much whether their fire would be very effective in case of necessity.

<sup>28</sup> *HRA I*, vol XXI, p. 52.

<sup>29</sup> *HRA I*, vol XXI, p. 53.

<sup>30</sup> *HRA I*, vol XXI, p. 52-3.

<sup>31</sup> *HRA I*, vol XXI, p. 405.

<sup>32</sup> The Commander-in-Chief.

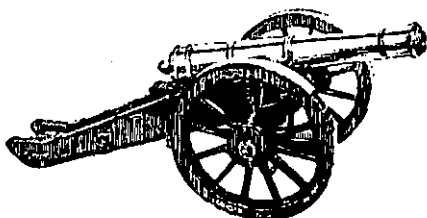


There is moreover no naval force on this station, and, as there is both an American and a French Squadron in the South Seas, we might in case of war with either of those powers anticipate an attempt on their part to levy contributions in Port Jackson.

I have no doubt that, even now, we could give them a sufficiently warm reception to prevent their doing us much injury; but, as manning the batteries from the Line, even were the men efficient gunners, would materially weaken the only regiment I have in garrison, I hope His Lordship will not fail to urge on the Master General of the Ordnance the necessity of embarking a detachment of Artillery for this Command with as little delay as possible.

I should say that for V.D. Land and N.S. Wales, nearly 2 companies would be required.<sup>33</sup>

This letter was passed from the Horse Guards to the Board of Ordnance and the Colonial Office and the ensuing correspondence was forwarded to Gipps under cover of Lord Stanley's<sup>34</sup> despatch dated 25 October 1842. Referring to the despatch of his predecessor [Lord John Russell] dated 21 April 1840 'in which you were informed that Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to undertake the works of defence proposed by the Commanding



Royal Engineer, I have to request that you will furnish me with a full explanation of the circumstances, under which the erection of these works were subsequently sanctioned by you'.<sup>35</sup>

Over the following months a lengthy correspondence between the relevant government departments took place. Finally in a letter dated 29 September 1843 the Board of Ordnance forwarded a copy of a report dated 22 April 1843 from the Commanding Royal Engineer in New South Wales explaining the circumstances under which the construction of defence works had continued without the sanction of the Home Government.

Barney had been succeeded as Commanding Royal Engineer in January 1843 by Lieutenant Colonel Gordon who submitted the report mentioned in the previous paragraph. In it he reported that the authorized works alluded to were firstly Bradley's Head, an open battery nearly completed, having six 24-pounders mounted on it, and

<sup>33</sup> WO1/431 R894 F377.

<sup>34</sup> Viscount Stanley was Secretary for War and Colonies in Peel's second Ministry formed in September 1841.

<sup>35</sup> *HRA I*, vol XXII, p. 327.

secondly the island of Pinchgut in the course of preparation for being armed with ten 24-pounders. The guns were on the spot but had no carriages. These preparations for the defence of the harbour of Sydney were commenced in the December quarter 1839 and suspended in the December quarter 1842. Barney in his reports to headquarters dated 10 and 25 October 1840 had given his reasons for having undertaken the works. The reasons appeared to be mostly to ease the public mind at that period aggravated with a fear of a rupture with America. Secondly, that the transportation of convicts to New South Wales having ceased, it was desired to take advantage of the services of the prisoners placed by the Governor at the disposal of the Commanding Royal Engineer for the purpose of making preparations for the defence of Sydney Harbour. It thus appeared that Barney had the approval, if not the express command of the Governor, for having undertaken these works.

The Governor and the General Officer Commanding authorized the expenditure of £300 and this sum was subsequently voted in the Annual Colonial Estimates of 1840-41. These works were executed almost entirely by convict labour at a book cost of £377-12-1. The excess of £77-12-1 over the authorized amount of £300 was explained in the progress report for the half year ending 30 September 1842:

The excess upon the amount of £300, authorized by BO 18 June 1841 has arisen in consequence of the delay in the receipt of the authority of the annual estimate 1842-3, received 12 October 1842 — Stockades have been erected at Pinchgut and Bradley's Head, and the removal of them previous to any knowledge of the view of the Master General and Board on the subject of the defences would have led to greater expense than the excess now shown.<sup>38</sup>

A departmental minute appended to the above and dated 3 October 1843 commented that

It now appears that the principal works consist of two batteries which the late CRE had constructed for the defence of the Harbour and town of Sydney at a time when the public mind was ill at ease in consequence of an apprehension of hostilities between this Country and America. The expense seems to have been materially circumscribed through the application of convict labour lent for the occasion. I'd suppose that it is out of the question to entertain the original application on this [head] and that the papers might be put by.

As the expense had been 'materially circumscribed' no awkward questions would be asked and the matter could safely be allowed to lapse.

<sup>38</sup> WO1/431 R894/F821.

# BOOK REVIEWS



THE MOSCOW AGREEMENTS AND STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION, by Hedley Bull. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 15, A.N.U. Press, Canberra, 1973. 50 pp. \$1.95.

*Reviewed by Dr Hugh Smith, Lecturer in Government, RMC Duntroon.*

**H**EDLEY Bull, Professor of International Relations at the Australian National University, sets out to provide an authoritative analysis of the two Soviet-American agreements on strategic arms limitation signed in Moscow on 26 May 1962. In little more than thirty pages he explains the principal terms of the agreements, assesses their contribution to the goal of arms control and ponders their impact on international politics. Under this last heading he considers the political and strategic balance between Russia and America, the position of China and American alliances in Europe and the Pacific. Throughout, the point is stressed that the two agreements are part of a continuing Soviet-American dialogue on strategic arms limitation and that the SALT must themselves be seen in the broader context of international politics. At this time no judgement can be final, no prediction certain, but Professor Bull's paper serves as an ideal introduction for anyone seeking a general understanding of the current debate on strategic arms control. The text of both agreements, together with agreed interpretations, common understandings and unilateral statements, is conveniently reprinted at the end of the paper.

Like most legal documents the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems and the Interim Agreement on Certain Measures with respect to the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Weapons are more complex than is popularly believed to be the case. Both need careful examination. The ABM Treaty, as Professor Bull indicates, is remarkably stringent in the limitations it imposes but leaves unregulated certain kinds of ABM activity such as modernization, development and testing. The usual diversionary effect of arms control measures can thus be expected to appear as the two countries concentrate increasingly on activities that are permitted. A similar result may also follow from the Interim Agreement on offensive missiles: the five-year limits on construction of ICBM launchers, Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles and submarines may in fact encourage further development and deployment of multiple warheads, more accurate guidance systems, cruise missiles and so on. On the other hand, one of the reasons for limiting ABM in the first place was to reduce the need for these technological advances on the part of both superpowers.

Many criticisms have been levelled against the agreements. They do, for example, preclude the use of ABM either to preserve a country's second-strike capability or to protect populations in the event of war actually occurring. Continued dependence on the threat of mutual nuclear devastation, which the agreements to some extent enshrine, gives rise to criticism on both moral and strategic grounds. Some moralists take exception to threats against human life on such a massive scale; some strategists believe that the risk of accidental or irrational war is dangerously underestimated. More specific criticisms of the agreements have been that they concede superiority to the USSR (which they do in terms of numbers of ICBM launchers and nuclear missile submarines) and that the self-denying ordinance on ABM encourages Chinese nuclear development while undermining the credibility of American guarantees to her allies including, of course, Australia.

The paper outlines succinctly the various positions adopted by supporters and opponents of the agreements. Professor Bull himself believes that the benefits outweigh the acknowledged disadvantages. But the temporary nature of the arrangements is a constant theme. For the moment a measure of political and legal backing has been granted to a pause in one area of Soviet-American arms competition. It is a pause significant not so much for the precise restrictions imposed but for the

superpowers' ability to agree on issues vital to their security. The agreements, Professor Bull concludes, represent a culmination of the bipolar era in international politics. No one can be sure of what will follow next. ✂

THE AUSTRALIANS IN NINE WARS — Waikato to Long Tan, by Peter Firkins. Robert Hale and Co., London 1972.

*Reviewed by G. M. Brown, Canberra.*

A major difficulty confronting authors of works about national contributions to larger multinational operations is that of maintaining balance between their intention to highlight the national effort and the need to give a fair and valid account of the whole. The first comment which should be made on Peter Firkins' book is that there is every indication that he has failed to surmount this difficulty.

*The Australians in Nine Wars* does not really live up to its title, as there is but a perfunctory attempt to cover the Maori and Boer wars, the crying need for an adequate history of this period notwithstanding. A really serious flaw in the work is its lack of adequate documentation. If one can judge from the liberality with which quotations and assertions attributed to all sorts of people are strewn about the text, the author has done a great deal of painstaking research into his topic. But in far too many cases there is no proper indication of the source of a statement, so that it becomes impossible to track them down, either to verify them or to use them for one's own purposes. Nor is this a mere pettifogging academic criticism. With a work of this nature, it is quite easy to form the impression, however unjustified that may be, that it is little more than a gloss on the appropriate sections of specialist studies in the areas covered. Full documentation, not just a brief bibliographical note, is needed to dispel this impression. In failing to provide adequate footnoting, the author does himself an injustice and greatly reduces the value of his work. It is appropriate to add that he also makes a reviewer's task much more onerous.

Another unfortunate failing is the quality of the mapwork. In general, the maps may as well not be there, for all the light they throw on the text. Moreover, one of the better maps — that illustrating the battle of El Alamein — bears a striking, though incomplete, resemblance to a map appearing at page 163 of Michael Carver's *El Alamein* — a work not mentioned in the bibliography. Most of the other maps would be more useful if they included such things as a scale (the map of the Tobruk defences lacks one) or indications of where Australian, Allied and enemy units were and where they went (more maps do include these indications, but that of the 1918 campaign in Palestine and Syria, for instance, does not.) Considering the importance of maps to a narrative military history, the poor quality of the maps in this book is a major defect.

Perhaps the most important overall weakness in *The Australians in Nine Wars*, however, is what may be termed the author's lamentably uncritical approach to his subject. This is not to say that he will not criticize: his attacks on various members of the 'Union of British Generals' are quite strong. But his criticisms seem to be highly predictable and based not so much on analysis of the campaign as on his obvious dislike of the 'Union' and his desire to bring the Australian contribution out in the best possible light. On occasion, this desire plays him false, leading him into apparent distortions of the truth. Discussing the Kokoda Trail, for example, he says that 53 Bn 'faltered in its first action' and gave ground which put the rest of the Australian position in jeopardy. What he does not add, despite the fact that it appears in the Australian Official History, is that the Brigade commander, Potts, deemed 53 Bn 'below standard required for action' and had to pull it back from the front. Skipping over such cases is no tribute to the Australian soldier: far better to have castigated the military hierarchy for sending forward a unit in such condition to be a menace to everyone else. Exception should also be taken to the author's attempt, at the end of the book, to use his history as a vehicle for his politics. However right or wrong they may be, they have no place being expounded in a historical work. The spirit of objectivity is clearly absent in some parts of this book, and when one compares the scathing attacks launched against British commanders with the studied leniency afforded Blamey, one finds it hard to avoid the feeling that the author is a little prone to hero-worship of Australia's military leaders.

This book does have its good points, though. The author has a gift for lucid descriptive writing, and anyone who has ever had to plow through page upon turgid page of dry-as-dust official reporting will find *The Australians in Nine Wars* a breath of fresh air. The excellence of the descriptive technique, but for the author's 'sense of mission', would almost compensate for the poor maps by rendering them superfluous. A further plus is the series of pen-portraits of Australian commanders, a part of the work where the author's evident partisanship is an asset and not a liability. Add to these a keen sense of history and clearly good military judgment, and we have the makings of a good general history for popular use, if still not for the specialist reader. It is a pity Firkins spoilt this book: as it stands, it is a story of unrealized potential. ✂

# ***From The Past***

## PARRAMATTA POLICE OFFICE

Before the Police Magistrate, G. Elliott Esq J.P., Dr Anderson, and Messrs Suttor and Blaxland.

Mary Ann Martin, mess-woman of the 58th Regiment, appeared *on summons*, to answer a charge of retailing liquors without having had a licence for so doing.

Mr G. R. Nichols appeared for the defence.

Mr G. Barker, junior, resided with his father in George-street: Knew Mrs Martin, and on 9th of November went to her house, at the mess-kitchen of the 58th, and received some money from her that was due to his father. She gave him a glass of beer, and whilst he was drinking it, a black cook and two waiters came in and asked him to give them something as he had received the money: he said he had no objection to do so, and some ale and ginger beer was brought in and drunk: he was to pay for it, but could not say positively whether he had done so or not: defendant never asked him to pay for it, but cannot say whether he did or not: he intended to do so: one of the waiters drew the ale, which was standing in the kitchen.

Cross-examined by Mr Nichols: Mrs Martin has always been in the habit of given me a glass of ale whenever I called there: but he had never paid for it.

John Brown Armstrong. Was lately in the service of Mrs Martin, and recollected Mr Barker treating him to a glass of ale: he had treated him once or twice before: the last time was about three weeks ago, and then two glasses were drunk before he had his: Mrs Martin had been paying Mr Barker an account, and he treated the servants: could not say whether Mr Barker paid for it. Had seen Mrs Martin sell rum to the servants, and had had some himself occasionally: had seen soldiers buy rum, but could not say whether he had seen civilians. There had been £8 out of his wages stopped for drink: had heard it said that she sold rum, but could not say whether she did or not.

Cross-examined by Mr Nichols: Had lived about nine months with Mrs Martin, but did not know whether she sold or not. Had never



heard the officers ordering ale or rum for the soldiers: had had a dispute with defendant about his wages, but never said he could be revenged on her. Knew Byrnes the constable, and went with him one day to the Barracks: Mrs Martin had said she would not pay his wages, and he had taken Byrnes with him to hear what was said: Mrs Martin was not at home, so Byrnes was left at the gate whilst witness went into the guard-room: whilst there witness took two shillings from his pocket and asked the soldiers to get some rum so he could treat them: he borrowed the two shillings from a friend: it was Mr Loveridge lent it him: Byrnes did not know that witness got the money, nor did he know that witness was going up to get the rum: it was not a plan made up with Loveridge and Byrnes, as neither of them knew anything about it: witness went for his wages, and not to get rum, or for any other purpose: would swear positively that Byrnes did not give him the money on that day, nor had he given him money at any time for that or any other purpose.

Re-examined: would swear positively that he did not get the money from Byrnes: he got some money from him some time back: the day he went with Byrnes, the latter gave him two shillings on Mr Loveridge's account.

Two other witnesses were examined, but the Bench without calling on Mr Nichols for the defence, dismissed the case but hoped it would be a warning to the defendant, who, there was no doubt, had been selling in a small way.

John Brown Armstrong, a man of colour, was brought before the Court, charged with gross prevarication whilst giving evidence in the above case, and was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment in Parramatta Gaol.

—*Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1844.

### A FEMALE FOLLOWER OF THE FRENCH ARMY

A *cantiniere*, the wife of a sutler of one of the regiments, rode past us. My attention was attracted by her dress. She wore on her head a sailor's old straw hat, beneath which was seen the lace border of a white cap. A blue jacket, fitting tightly to her form, and a petticoat

of some kind of red woollen stuff, completed her costume. There was a sort of coquettish smartness in everything about this woman, even down to the little cask of brandy, painted in tri-coloured stripes, which was slung across her shoulder. Mr. R— observed to me that these *cantinières* are invaluable in the army. They are for the most part the wives of sub-officers. When her husband's battalion is in garrison, *cantiniere* officiates as a laundress: when the battalion is on the march, she puts on her costume and marches along with it. In the event of a charge she stations herself behind the second platoon; if a square is formed she takes her place in the centre, and, during the action, she goes from one wounded man to another, tendering assistance, and distributing glasses of wine or brandy. In Africa, where the French troops have suffered so severely, these women have rendered signal service to humanity, and have frequently performed acts of extraordinary courage. There is not an officer or private who does not respect the *cantiniere* of the battalion.—*Count St. Marie's Algeria in 1845.*

—*Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 1847.