

defender

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● **Hawke and the failure
of Australian Governance**

this issue

● **Westpac
Express success**

● **Cosgrove and
Vietnam**

● **Defence
forces in PNG
and East Timor**

● **Special Forces
Operations**

● **Hazardous
Land Mines**



● **UK/Aust Defence efforts**

● **Joint Strike Fighter**

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OUR COVER

West Australian company Austal with its successful Westpac Express—the 101-metre, high-speed, Theatre Support Vessel—secured a three-year contract with the Military Sealift Command of the United States Military in January this year. For further information see Westpac Express—An Australian Success Story on page 10.

Photo courtesy Austal.

CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----|---|----|
| Editorial - A plaything for politicians | 3 | Major Furphy | 18 |
| Hawke and the failure of Australian governance | 4 | The consultant | 19 |
| Lurking hazards from land mines | 8 | Stretching the back of the envelope | 20 |
| Westpac Express—Australian success story | 10 | National Defence Efforts—comparing the UK and Australia | 21 |
| Joint strike fighter | 11 | Connection between GDP and Defence | 22 |
| Current comment | 12 | Australia's Defence after September 11 | 25 |
| Unmanned vehicles changing future conflict | 17 | Book Reviews | 27 |

The ADF — A Plaything for Politicians

The security of the Australian people and their national interests are the primary responsibilities of the prime minister, the government and the opposition. No member of parliament has any excuse to be ignorant of the role, functions and capacity of the ADF.

Yet a great many MPs have publicly claimed that duties with their department, involvement in extensive parliamentary functions or in the promotion of policy issues are so time consuming that they have no time to consider national security. Moreover, some note that there are no votes in defence so it is more important to be concerned with social issues.

The refusal of MPs to take the necessary time to be informed on national security is a direct negation of their oath of office. The lack of commitment to their primary duty has been given public exposure. Recently we witnessed MPs, from the most senior to the most junior, demonstrate a wilful ignorance of the nature, role and duties of the ADF. The parliament has failed to give informed debate to the deployment of the ADF. Indeed, there are so few members who have any real knowledge that an informed debate is probably impossible.

The recent overseas deployments of the ADF have been made as a whim of the executive government. The deployments have been used for domestic political gains with scant regard for strategic needs or policy.

The cavalier use of service personnel to intercept boat people and to act as police and jailers have made a mockery of their legal and military functions. The misinformation campaign, using 'information collected' by the military, to help win an election was one of the most discreditable acts in Australian political history.

Not content to deliberately lie and misuse information,

the government's 'committee of inquiry' was then used to threaten and intimidate service officers. The inquiry, however, revealed the steadfast honesty of ADF personnel.

The ADF has been used increasingly as a plaything in our international affairs. The government, in what can only be called total ignorance, boasted that Australia would commit an armoured brigade to support an American attack on Iraq. This was the most extreme, recent example of bandwagoning, tokenism and pretending.

First, we do not have such a brigade and we do not have the personnel or equipment to form one. Second, our tiny tank force is so out-of-date it would be suicidal to pit it against even Iraq.

The ADF had enormous difficulty deploying a small mixed arms force to Timor. We are entitled to know how the proposed brigade will be raised and sustained, and if it can survive in air-land battle in Iraq.

The more fundamental questions must be faced. In what way is an attack on Iraq in Australia's national interests? How can we maintain any credibility in the region if our leaders offer military forces we do not have and cannot raise? Finally what is the real capacity and sustainability of the ADF and what can it do effectively without overreach?

Honest answers to these questions reveal the stupidity of the proposals. Instead of allowing the executive government to treat the ADF as a plaything, all MPs must learn of the ADF's real capacity and the extent to which it can be sustained in overseas engagements. And it is vital for this nation that MPs take up the challenge of engagement in closer relations with our neighbours.

AUSTRALIA DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

The Australia Defence Association is a company (ABN 16 083 007 390) limited by guarantee and registered under the Corporations Law. It seeks to promote, foster and encourage the best form of defence for Australia.

The Association seeks the development and implementation of a deterrent national security policy directed at:

- ◆ a security strategy based on the protection of identifiable national interests, including the security of our region;
- ◆ the development of adequate forces-in-being capable of supporting that policy; and
- ◆ the development of an Australian manufacturing industry capable of sustaining defence force operations.

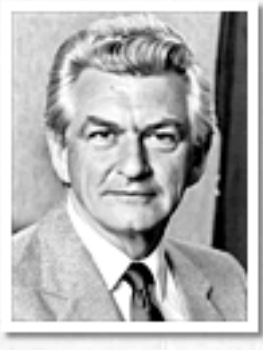
The Association seeks the support by subscription of all Australians. The Association has a number of local chapters throughout Australia. It publishes a quarterly journal, a monthly briefing and a site on the Internet's World Wide Web, as well as occasional papers. It makes regular submissions to the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, as well as to other parliamentary and external inquiries.

The Association corresponds and co-operates with a number of individuals and institutes in 12 allied and friendly nations in the Pacific Basin.

hawke

and the failure of Australian governance

Michael O'Connor



Writing in *The Australian* on 23 July, the former Prime Minister Bob Hawke commented that ‘the decision to commit Australian forces to war — to put at risk the lives of our fighting men and women — is the most profoundly important that a government can take.’ For much of the rest of the article, Hawke pursues the theme that Labor governments are better able to handle such profound issues than Coalition governments.

The sort of schoolyard one-upmanship offers an insight into one of the most profound (to use Hawke’s own description) failures of Australian governments. He asserts that Curtin’s Labor Government, which came to office just before the outbreak of the Pacific War was a better wartime government than was its predecessor under Robert Menzies. Possibly. What he ignores is that the defence program inherited by Curtin was the product of the first Menzies Government and even of the Lyons Government. Hawke is notably silent over the action of the Scullin Labor Government in abandoning the national service scheme that provided Australia’s field army, as he is over Curtin’s rush to demobilise after 1943 just as his External Affairs Minister, Evatt, was demanding a large say for Australia in the peace settlement.

This is not to argue that Coalition governments are any better. If, as they might claim, the Coalition parties invested in new equipment in the late 1950s and early 1960s after again abandoning national service, it is only

because the equipment inherited from the war was both obsolete and decrepit, as is much of that new equipment, too much of which remains in service 40 years later.

Hawke himself presided over the 1987 defence White Paper, which committed the government to ‘a need, over the life of the program, for an allocation of resources generally within the order of 2.6 per cent to 3.0 per cent of GDP’.¹ In the following year, the allocation was 2.1 per cent and has never exceeded 2.4 per cent since. To be realistic rather than fair, the White Paper went on to comment that ‘Annual allocations to Defence will of course continue to be subject to the normal reviews of our economic circumstances and other policy imperatives, as well as changes in our strategic outlook.’² This is, of course, a cop out that in retrospect simply invalidated the whole White Paper. Australia’s economic circumstances have never ruled out spending even 3.0 per cent of GDP while ‘policy imperatives’, so-called, is nothing more than a political weasel term that purports to explain ephemeral — and usually electorally driven — changes of mind. As for strategic circumstances, repeated official reviews have told us that Australia’s strategic position has become more uncertain since the end of the Cold War.

Then in 1996, the incoming Coalition government pledged that defence spending would not be cut. At least, that is the received wisdom from the shorthand writers of the media. In fact, the Coalition’s actual pledge was to

maintain the forward estimates of defence spending inherited from the outgoing Labor government of Paul Keating. By that time, defence spending was jogging along at 2.1 per cent of GDP but, significantly, those inherited forward estimates envisaged further cuts to 1.9 per cent of GDP. And, of course, that is precisely what happened. Indeed, by 1997–98, defence spending had fallen to a mere 6.7 per cent of total Federal spending from the pre-1987 White Paper figure of 9.0 per cent. Now it stands at 1.7 per cent of GDP and the 2000 White Paper envisages only the most marginal recovery.

That is the real meaning of ‘policy imperatives’.

Underlying all of this is the clear failure of successive governments over practically the whole of Australia’s history as a nation to provide adequately for national defence. Preparing to fight — if necessary — a war against Iraq in 2003 demands preparation beginning in 1993 at least and preferably in 1983, certainly not 2002. Unlike politics with its three-year electoral cycle, defence planning has a 15- to 20-year cycle to implement key decisions. Even those governments that, in the non-defence area, demonstrate a good understanding of long-term policy making are vulnerable to the ‘nervous Nellies’ of their party rooms, whose tenure of marginal seats focuses attention on the next election.

It is easy for Australian politicians to fulminate against Saddam Hussein, or more happily against each other, when they know full well that either they will not be held to account for their defence failures or that, like Hawke, they can blame someone else with impunity.

Coupled with the inability of governments to commit to long-range defence plans is the increasing tendency of politicians and their media groupies to see all decisions through the distorting spectacles of party interest. This was particularly evident in the fall-out from the ‘children overboard’ affair during and also since the last election campaign. Policy has become the property of the party rather than the community, so that any change for the better will be repudiated unless the party can claim credit for the change. Critics are judged by their actual or assumed loyalty to one party or another. The victory of the party rather than the public good has become the primary objective of politics. At a time when the fundamental ideological differences between the major parties have become barely perceptible, this has led to the current almost obscene preoccupation with image rather than reality. It reinforces the juvenile view that ‘politics is all about perception’.³

The ADF – A War Fighter or Useful Tool?

Increasingly in recent years, the ADF has been employed in non-military tasks such as law enforcement, civil aid and internal security where its use has been governed more by utilitarian principles and the lack of — or failure to use — more appropriate organisations. Examples include: the use of ADF resources for Coastwatch and

offshore law enforcement, despite a view extending back for at least 35 years that a dedicated coastguard service is required. In my view, there exists a fundamental incompatibility between the requirements of armed combat for national defence on the one hand and domestic law enforcement on the other. Attempts to suggest that border protection is a national defence rather than domestic law enforcement task are disingenuous and relate primarily to bureaucratic turf protection. The failure to establish a coastguard service with primary responsibility for domestic law enforcement has been a product of an unwillingness to invest in national organisations suitable to a sophisticated nation and the bureaucratic failure to surrender treasured departmental assets.

Aid to the civil power either in the traditional sense or in what is now called MACC (Military Assistance to the Civil Community) is a well-established and popular use of the ADF in emergencies. Normally these are related to disaster relief and, under the federal system, are dependent upon requests from the affected state authorities. However, the recent deployment of army engineer detachments to provide material aid to aboriginal communities, while popular and useful, is not a proper use of scarce ADF resources when the work could and should have been performed by ordinary civilian contractors. The use of troops in these circumstances tends to create the impression that the ADF is little more than a useful, on-call and responsive workforce, undifferentiated from any other in the community. Similar strictures could be applied to the use of the RAAF during the airline pilots strike some years ago.

The 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and the 2002 CHOGM conference saw the deployment of absolutely and relatively large numbers of military personnel in an internal security role. Many were employed as little more than unskilled security guards, although the use of some small specialist units may have been necessary or prudent. While the present government received parliamentary approval for legislation to control military personnel engaged on such operations, it did not effectively impose limits upon the circumstances in which the ADF could be used. The legislation codified what had long been understood to be the proper role of the ADF in domestic law enforcement but failed to define any limits upon the executive government’s use of the force for that purpose. Whether such large and expensive deployments were necessary, even for deterrence, or whether their use was more for public relations purposes is a question that has not seriously been asked, much less answered.

There exists in the ADF and, indeed, in the wider community a strong belief that the armed forces must not only be politically neutral but that they must be

seen to be so. That view derives not only from a strong constitutional tradition dating back to 17th century Britain but also to a recognition that in many countries around the world—including some near neighbours—politicised armed forces are antithetic to democracy. Therefore it is incumbent upon any government to ensure that its own political practices do not taint the armed forces in a way that would cause a loss of confidence in their primary loyalty to the national interest rather than some temporary political interest. This factor is as important as Hawke’s warning about decisions to commit Australian forces to war because they impinge upon the social and political stability of the nation.

The Defence Outcome

What can be said with confidence is that the only defence policy commitments by Australian governments that have been kept over the past quarter of a century are those that have involved capability reductions. Every White Paper funding commitment has been abandoned within a year or two but the 1991 Force Structure Review, which did provide for substantial cuts was implemented with enthusiasm.

Taking the 1987 White Paper with its average 2.8 per cent of GDP spending as a benchmark, defence spending over the 15-year period since has fallen short of the ideal by around \$57 billion in year-by-year dollar values. Translated into today’s dollars, this represents a shortfall in defence spending of almost \$140 billion. This represents money diverted to the so-called ‘political imperatives’ because the total outlays of the Federal government have barely changed over the period as a percentage of GDP. What happened over the period was that defence spending as a percentage of Federal outlays declined steadily, with but a very limited and patchy improvement since 1999.

At a time when Australia has forces in four significant overseas operations with a fifth (against Iraq) in prospect, what is more important than inputs to defence are the outputs that confer capability. The table below offers a comparison of the relative strengths of the ADF in 1987 and today.

Much of the equipment is old dating back in some cases⁴ to the early 1960s while other items acquired in the 1970s are also still in service. A number of items still on the acquisition list such as airborne early warning and control aircraft, new patrol boats, armed reconnaissance helicopters, the JORN over the horizon radar network

| Operational forces | 1987 | 2001 |
|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Regulars | 70,761 | 50,355 |
| Reserves (active) | 27,212 | 19,835 |
| All personnel | 97,973 | 70,190 |
| Destroyers | 3 | - |
| Frigates | 9 | 9 ⁽¹⁾ |
| Submarines | 6 | 6 |
| Amphibious ships | 1 | 3 ⁽²⁾ |
| Patrol boats | 20 | 15 |
| Support ships | 5 | 4 |
| Infantry battalions | 23 | 23 ⁽³⁾ |
| Tanks | 103 | 71 ⁽⁴⁾ |
| AIFVs | 40 | 111 |
| APCs | 725 | 582 |
| Artillery tubes | 195 | 385 ⁽⁵⁾ |
| Helicopters | 110 | 148 |
| Fighter aircraft | 62 | 69 |
| Strike aircraft | 22 | 36 ⁽⁶⁾ |
| LRMP aircraft | 20 | 19 |
| Transports | 57 | 50 |

Notes:

1. Five more under construction (one more has recently been commissioned).
2. Includes two ex-USN LSTs modernised and refurbished but with limited life
3. Most are Reserve units, many of which are nominal only.
4. Implicit in the 2000 White Paper is that these obsolete vehicles will be retired without replacement.
5. Some 250 are obsolete and have been withdrawn from service.
6. Includes 14 F-111G ex-USAF.

(nearly there), the upgrade of the armoured personnel carriers figured in the 1987 White Paper as commitments. These coupled with the cut of 28 per cent in personnel numbers, regular and reserve, are measures of where the 'saved' \$140 billion has gone. The 1987 White Paper committed the government to acquiring a total of 16 or 17 major surface combatants for the navy. The current target is 14 and the description 'major' is generous.

It might be argued that the end of the Cold War in 1989–90 allowed a 'peace dividend' except for the fact that Australia had already claimed its dividend by under-investing over virtually the whole of the post-World War II period. At a time (1986–87) when we spent 2.6 per cent of GDP, allies such as the United States (6.4 per cent), UK (4.7 per cent), France (4.0 per cent) and Germany (3.0 per cent) were spending more. Moreover, they were linked closely by the NATO alliance.

Successive Australian strategic reviews have pointed out that we live, post-Cold War, in a much more uncertain environment, surely a reason for boosting capability and readiness. The same period has seen an unprecedented increase in overseas operational deployments as short or no warning contingencies have forced commitments to the 1991 Gulf War (continuing), Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda, East Timor (continuing), Afghanistan (continuing), Bougainville (continuing) and The Solomons. Most of these have been necessarily small if only because the ADF has had so little to spare.

That has not prevented successive governments that made the commitments from dredging the maximum public-relations value from them. One of the disappointing aspects of Defence's publicity is that the 'spin' doctors keep talking about our 'substantial' military commitment to the war on terrorism and our 'considerable' success, 'valuable' contribution, a 'great' job, and so on. Experienced senior officers are put before journalists to describe the interception of a handful of tiny dhows in the Persian Gulf as some sort of substantial military achievement. These fulsome descriptions are so seriously unbalanced that those who approve them are either ignorant or wilfully misleading. What is worse is that there are signs that decision-makers have themselves become captives of the political propaganda.

If much of the flood of media releases and briefings has been mercifully ignored, it is only because the journalists and editors recognise them for the political flummery they are.

The straitjacket of bipartisanship

Australian politicians have frequently boasted that both sides have a bipartisan approach to defence policy and that bipartisanship is one of the strengths of Australian democracy. Political conflict on national security issues is pre-eminently over what might be termed the foreign policy dimension — should we or should we not commit forces to this or that conflict? Only very rarely is the debate carried out in the context of whether we are able

to commit forces and, if so, what forces. Would they represent anything other than a token or symbolic force?

Thus it was that our contribution to the 1991 Gulf War that engaged half a million or more troops on each side amounted to less than 1000, proportionately fewer than Bangladesh or Niger. For Somalia, a first-rate infantry battalion group that did an outstanding job of restoring order was withdrawn after 17 weeks because we could not sustain the effort, so that the stabilised region in which they operated reverted to anarchy. In Cambodia where our politicking had been intense, we provided a small signal regiment and, good for the public relations, the force commander. The commitments to Rwanda (a small medical unit with infantry support) and Bougainville (unarmed peace monitors) were token. Only in East Timor was our commitment truly significant but the maximum commitment was limited in time and certainly not large as a military operation by objective standards.

All these commitments won bipartisan support because they did not stretch the envelope of policy imperatives. They made us feel good, able to publish fulsome self-praise in our public relations and kept costs down.

The problem with bipartisanship is that, if it represents support for a policy of neglect, the nation's ability to back its international policies with the use or threat of use of force collapses. To take up Hawke's comment above about the profound importance of committing Australians to combat, the issue today about our ability or otherwise to do so owes much to the assumed policy imperatives of Hawke's time in government. But that issue is not debated.

It is possible then for various groups in the Australian community to debate ad nauseam whether we should contribute forces to an American-led assault on Iraq. The government is hyperbolic but vague while the opposition is cautious. The Left as always is hostile if the Americans are involved. But no one asks whether we can do anything of real military or political value. The debate is conducted in a vacuum at an intellectual level only, suggesting if nothing else an isolationism of spirit. To this sorry state has bipartisanship led the Australian nation.

References

- 1 *'The Defence of Australia.'* 1987. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra. 1987, para. 9.15.
- 2 *loc cit.*
- 3 For an important analysis of the impact of the 'children overboard' affair, see Professor Hugh Smith's article *A Certain Maritime Incident and Political — Military Relations in the May 2002 issue of Quadrant.*
- 4 *Notably the M113 armoured personnel carriers and the Caribou transport aircraft.*
- 5 *Especially the obsolete Leopard tanks.*

Photos courtesy of:

1. *The National Museum of Australia's Web site.* www.nma.gov.au
2. www.australianaustralia.com

LURKING HAZARDS

from

LAND MINES



N K Pant

In the first week of May, seven army personnel were killed and four injured in an accidental land mine blast at a firing range near Indo-Pakistan border in Rajasthan. Likewise in the first week of January, 18 people including 15 soldiers lost their lives while unloading mines on the Attari-Chabbal border near Amritsar. The majority of mishaps seem to have taken place either while transporting the mines or in the process of destroying the old, unused stockpile of mines. Obviously, there seems to be an element of mishandling wherein either the proper safety precautions have not been taken while completing the task in undue haste or the stockpile was old and of substandard quality, having defective fuses.

The resultant unexpected casualties in the wake of the massive troops build up on the Indo-Pakistan border have naturally rung alarm bells in the concerned quarters and, justifiably, in the public. In addition to putting unwanted spokes in the military's defensive measures on the border, the incidents have rightly attracted criticism from the state governments of Punjab and Rajasthan. According to Punjab's Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh, a large number of people have died or have been injured because of the land mines. He termed it callousness of the troops for not marking the minefields and demanded compensation from the Ministry of Defence for the civilian casualties in the accidental land mine blasts and the extensive destruction to the crops.

One of the dangerous fallouts from mobilisation of ground forces on our western borders in the aftermath of

the Pakistan-based terrorist attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001 was the inescapable military necessity of laying of land mines on the Indo-Pakistan borders by the troops. This was for the first time since 1971 Indo-Pakistan War that mine laying has been done in the western sector on such a large scale. But the hurried way in which the anti-tank and anti-personnel mines were laid in order to strengthen the defences and discarding the laid down procedures, ended up in causing avoidable casualties. It is believed more than two-hundred soldiers and civilians have been killed and maimed due to mine blasts in Punjab and Rajasthan alone. The ongoing insurgency puts the sordid tale in Jammu and Kashmir on a different plane as security forces as well as the terrorists use the land mines or the IEDs whose victims have unfortunately been mostly the local civilians who become inevitable and not coincidental casualties.

Land mines play a vital role during the conduct of military operations. A carefully mined tactical battlefield thwarts enemy advance and can cause damage to the hostile forces and armour by entrapping them. The strategic deployment of land mines can help effectively to protect military bases and key installations. Land mines are used to protect open flanks, deny routes and strategic positions, restrict the ability of opponents to manoeuvre and force enemy units to deploy in areas where they are most vulnerable.

But this small and cheap weapon of the anti-personnel mine has not only bled the Indian troops and civilians on their own turf without the outbreak of the hostilities but



An accidental land mine blast killed seven army personnel injured four at a firing range near Indo-Pakistan border in Rajasthan.

also caused extensive damage to crops in the fields located on the border. The farmers on the borders have not been able to work in their fields as land mines have been laid on them resulting in loss of crops and fodder worth crores (tens of millions) of rupees. Ironically, despite clearly identifiable military applications, the nature, design, and deployment of large numbers of mines have unnecessarily led to civilian casualties.

There are two basic kinds of land mines: anti-tank or vehicle and anti-personnel. In all, one can identify over 200 different types of land mines, manufactured in over 50 countries. Such mines range from a crude wooden box loaded with dynamite to sophisticated ‘magnet-sensitive’ mines that can be calibrated to explode under the weakest part of a vehicle. Mines are designed to be hand-buried, dropped from aircraft, or fired from a cannon-like ‘mine projector’, which can hurl mines up to 36 metres.

The Indian army uses anti-personnel mine AP NM M-14, a copy of US M14, which is pressure initiated, blast anti-personnel mine. It weighs 100 g, which includes 28 g of explosives in its lower portion. When pressure is applied to the top of the mine, a Belleville spring is inverted, snapping the striker into the detonator and setting off the mine. It has a safety clip that must be removed before employment. It is difficult to detect due to its plastic casing and low metal content.

Another type of mine in use in India is the M16A1 weighing 3.57 kg, also of US origin. It is a bounding fragmentation mine with a cast iron fragmentation sleeve inside a sheet steel outer casing. The mine can be activated either by pressure or tripwire. When the fuze functions, the cast iron sleeve is propelled into the air by a black powder charge. At the same time, two delay charges are ignited and they, in turn, ignite the main charge when the mine is approximately one metre in the air. The main charge expels cast-iron fragments in all directions.

Anti-tank mines, of course, are larger and have more powerful charges—up to 10 kg of explosives as compared to the few grams of explosive material found in most anti-personnel mines. An anti-tank mine can weigh up to 15 kg. It is the anti-personnel mine, however, that causes most harm to civilian population.

In the Indian army, land mines are usually laid by the troops belonging to the Corps of Engineers but the infantry units are also competent to do the job, which is a tedious and dangerous process. The laying and subsequent neutralisation of mines requires specialised peacetime training. But the frequent deployment of the army units in the recent years in anti-insurgency operations in Kashmir and the parts of the North East, seem to have affected this vital aspect of training.

The avoidable loss of military and civilian lives in land-mine blasts is certainly a distressing factor and affects morale. Though now nothing much can be done as mines have already been laid but the real problem will have to be confronted while the process of de-mining starts at the time of the troops withdrawal to their peacetime locations. Since this is going to prove to be a much more complicated operation, the soldiers engaged on the task will need proper supervision and ample time to accomplish the Herculean task.

N K Pant is a retired Wing Commander of the Indian Air Force and a prominent defence commentator.

It's a working principle of the Head Bureau that the very possibility of error must be ruled out of account.

- Franz Kafka

WESTPAC EXPRESS

an Australian industry success story



The success of the 101-metre, high-speed, theatre support vessel WestPac Express, has been clearly demonstrated by the United States Marines' laudatory comments regarding the vessel and its operation in Japan.

WestPac Express, built speculatively at Western Australia's Austal yard in 2001, was contracted under a three-year contract with the Military Sealift Command of the United States Military in January this year, following a successful proof-of-concept period.

The TSV 101 is a high-speed catamaran vessel with the following specifications: length overall 101 metres; length (immersed hull) 88.7 metres; beam (moulded) 26.65 metres; depth (moulded) 9.4 metres; hull draft (approximately) 4.2 metres; speed: 36 knots; endurance 1,250; nm at 35 knots average with 400 tonnes payload; payload: 970 passengers 152 HMMWVs or 12 AAVP and 20 LAVs.

WestPac Express, now based in Okinawa, Japan, enables the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) of the United States Marine Corps to rapidly transport a complete battalion of 950 marines together with up to 550 tonnes of vehicles and equipment, in one lift, with considerable strategic and cost advantages. Praising the vessel, Lt. General Gregson, Commander of the III MEF in Okinawa said: 'WestPac Express is a faster, better and cheaper way to deploy than any other we have had before. Not only has it lived up to our expectations, it has exceeded our expectations. The more we work with the vessel the more we find we can do with the vessel.'

'It is one lift, one unit to the training area and because

it is such a shallow draft vessel, we are able to get into other training areas that we haven't accessed before around the region.'

Utilising WestPac Express has reduced the Marine's transportation time from fourteen days to just 24 hours, saving 250 airlifts and millions of dollars each year.

Deputy Chief of Staff for the II MEF, Colonel Michael J Godfrey said: 'We can use smaller ports, we can get our troops in and out and it is an advantage to the host nation as we do not encounter major commercial ports and airfields.'

'The day we broke the 10,000 marine transport mark, we'd moved 10,000 marines throughout the area of responsibility here for the II MEF. We have saved hundreds of training days and it has been an overwhelming success,' he said.

Austal's Managing Director, Mr Bob McKinnon said the venture has been more successful than anyone imagined. 'This contract has opened the door for Austal to take a leadership position in supplying vessels for the military market,' Mr McKinnon said.

'The US Military extensively tested our vessel and compared it to others, clearly demonstrating that WestPac Express is the preferred logistics solution for the III MEF's requirements.'

Austal are now developing a larger 125-metre, theatre logistics vessel, the TSV125, with the option of gas turbine or diesel propulsion to deliver service speeds up to 45 knots and with capacity for 1,700 troops plus vehicles and helicopters.



Joint Strike Fighter



The Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), increasingly designated the F-35, is a multi-role fighter optimised for the air-to-ground role, designed to affordably meet the needs of the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps and allies, with improved survivability, precision engagement capability, the mobility necessary for future joint operations and the reduced life-cycle costs associated with tomorrow's fiscal environment. JSF will benefit from many of the same technologies developed for F-22 and will capitalise on commonality and modularity to maximize affordability.

The JSF program will demonstrate two competing weapon system concepts for a tri-service family of aircraft to affordably meet these service needs:

USAF-multi-role aircraft (primarily air-to-ground) to replace F-16 and A-10 and to complement F-22. The Air Force JSF variant poses the smallest relative engineering challenge. The aircraft has no hover criteria to satisfy, and the characteristics and handling qualities associated with carrier operations do not come into play. As the biggest customer for the JSF, the service will not accept a multi-role F-16 fighter replacement that doesn't significantly improve on the original.

USN-multi-role, stealthy strike fighter to complement F/A-18E/F. Carrier operations account for most of the differences between the Navy version and the other JSF variants. The aircraft has larger wing and tail control surfaces to better manage low-speed approaches. The internal structure of the Navy variant is strengthened up to handle the loads associated with catapult launches and arrested landings. The aircraft has a carrier-suitable

tailhook. Its landing gear has a longer stroke and higher load capacity. The aircraft has almost twice the range of an F-18C on internal fuel. The design is also optimised for survivability.

USMC-multi-role short take off and vertical landing (STOVL) strike fighter to replace AV-8B and F/A-18A/C/D. The Marine variant distinguishes itself from the other variants with its short take off/vertical landing capability. UK-STOVL (supersonic) aircraft to replace the Sea Harrier. Britain's Royal Navy JSF will be very similar to the US Marine variant.

Key design goals of the JSF system include:

- **Survivability:** radio frequency/infrared signature reduction and on-board countermeasures to survive in the future battlefield — leveraging off F-22 air superiority mission support.
- **Lethality:** integration of on- and off-board sensors to enhance delivery of current and future precision weapons.
- **Supportability:** reduced logistics footprint and increased sortie generation rate to provide more combat power earlier in theatre.
- **Affordability:** focus on reducing cost of developing, procuring and owning JSF to provide adequate force structure.

JSF's integrated avionics and stealth are intended to allow it to penetrate surface-to-air missile defences to destroy targets, when enabled by the F-22's air dominance. The JSF is designed to complement a force structure that includes other stealthy and non-stealthy fighters, bombers, and reconnaissance/surveillance assets.

Extracted from: <http://www.fas.org/man/dod-101/sys/ac/jsf.htm>

Specifications

Function: Strike fighter

Contractor: Lockheed-Martin

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Engine: | Whitney F119-PW-100 (derivative from F-22 Raptor) | General Electric F120 |
| Thrust: | 22,500 lb | 24,000 lb |
| Internal fuel: | 15,000 lb | 16,000 lb |
| Payload | 13,000 lb | 17,000 lb |

Max t/o weight: approx 50,000 lb

Length: 45 ft

Wingspan: 36 ft

Height: 30 ft

Speed: supersonic

Combat radius: over 600 nautical miles

Crew: one

Inventory Objectives:

US Air Force: 2,036 aircraft; US Marine Corps: 642 aircraft;

UK Royal Navy: 60 aircraft; US Navy: 300 aircraft; RAAF: 50-100 aircraft

by **Australis**

Australis is a collective name for a number of individual contributors to *Defender*.

The Armoured Brigade Fiasco

In a joint press conference with the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) in Brussels last month, the prime minister formally offered an Australian armoured brigade for any US-led assault on Iraq. Earlier, the Defence Minister Senator Hill had raised the possibility of contributing an armoured brigade. While we have no problem with the theoretical concept of such an assault on Iraq or an Australian contribution, we wonder where the government has been hiding this armoured brigade. According to all the official and non-official sources we have been able to track, there is no such formation in the Australian Defence Force.

A brigade of any kind is, of course, a rather malleable organisation. It can be readily structured for any given task but an armoured brigade is one that is strong in main battle tanks, self-propelled artillery and anti-tank weapons. For operations in the open terrain typical of the Middle East, such an armoured formation is essential for combat operations, as distinct from supporting tasks in rear areas.

We assume that the prime minister and defence minister were confusing the Darwin-based 1st Brigade with an armoured brigade. Given their responsibility for national security, they should have known better. The Darwin brigade is a mechanised infantry brigade and a rather weak one at that. Its capability is limited to 'mechanised operations in mid-intensity conventional warfare and peace operations'. (*Our emphasis.*)

For operations in the Middle East environment, we would expect an armoured brigade to include at least one, preferably two, regiments of modern main battle tanks, a battalion of infantry in armoured vehicles, a self-propelled artillery regiment, combat engineers (also in armoured vehicles), armed reconnaissance helicopters as well as combat support (signals, intelligence, police etc.) and a logistic support unit.

1st Brigade nominally has one armoured regiment of Leopard AS1 main battle tanks, which have been in service for more than 25 years. They are obsolete compared with the Soviet T-72 tank of which the post-Gulf War Iraqi army has some 700. In fact, the 1st Australian Armoured Regiment has been reduced to two squadrons, one of which is manned by reservists.

The tanks themselves are said to be in indifferent condition due to their age and have not been modernised as intended because, as implied by the 2000 Defence White Paper, tanks are due to be phased out of the Australian Army.

1st Brigade does have a single mechanised infantry battalion (5/7 RAR) equipped with the 40-year old M113 armoured personnel carriers and a reconnaissance regiment. This latter, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, is equipped with the Australian Light Armoured Vehicle (ASLAV), wheeled, lightly armoured and gunned reconnaissance vehicles, some of which boast a 25 mm gun. ASLAVs cannot engage successfully in combat with main battle tanks.

The 8/12 medium artillery regiment has just two batteries, one each of 105 mm and 155 mm guns, which are provided with thin-skinned gun tractors only, ordinary trucks in fact. The engineer regiment is said to be in good shape but the reconnaissance helicopters are unarmed.

The likely scope of operations against Iraq would initially require the defeat in battle of the Iraqi Army presumably after an extensive and powerful air campaign. This would be the primary task of the heavy US armoured forces with the Australians, if committed, playing a supporting role only.

Despite its decisive defeat in 1991, Iraq can still field a substantial military force, albeit one that would be no match for the United States. A recent analysis of the Iraqi military has identified: 424,000 active troops; 1,900 tanks; 2,400 armoured personnel carriers; 1,900 towed artillery tubes; 300 combat aircraft; short-range rocket systems.

Of the 1,900 tanks, 700 are Soviet T-72s, now obsolete but more modern than Australia's Leopard Mk Is. Generally, Iraq's forces are considered to be short of spares and training while most of the equipment is obsolete. Morale is thought to be poor except perhaps in the Republican Guard.

The US forces could be expected to defeat this large but relatively primitive Iraqi army very quickly although Saddam Hussein has threatened to withdraw his troops into urban areas and fight a battle of attrition involving massive destruction and loss of civilian life. Whether this is anything more than propaganda and

whether his army's morale could withstand such a campaign is open to question. Certainly it would be a very effective political strategy and Saddam is first and foremost a politician.

Later in the campaign, we would expect an extended period of military occupation of Iraq with the probability of peace enforcement action against remnants of the Iraqi forces. The Australian force would be expected to play an important part for an extended period and be made responsible for security in a specific region of the country. The occupation force would also be required to defend Iraq against any external threat, especially from Iran which also has unfinished business with Iraq.

That then raises a further problem. Australia's small, under-strength, mechanised brigade cannot be replaced in any rotation program with a similar formation. Australia's two other, more or less, full-strength brigades, one of which is a mixed regular and reserve formation, are small light infantry formations typically based upon two rather than the normal three infantry battalions. Furthermore, one of those two brigades is fully committed to sustaining current operations in East Timor and elsewhere, sometimes as at present by pirating units from 1st Brigade. Thus, any commitment of the mechanised brigade to operations in Iraq would necessarily be limited in time because it could not be replaced.

We are not sure where the prime minister and defence minister acquired this idea of an armoured brigade. On television and after the event, the minister tried to dismiss questions by asserting that the terminology was unimportant. But it is not unimportant and both ministers should have known better. They should have avoided a term, which either misleads those who don't know better or makes fools of themselves to those who do. Our American allies — not to mention our own defence force — are among those who do know better and this performance does nothing for our standing as allies.

The CDF and Vietnam

When the new Chief of Defence Force addressed the Defence Media Watch Seminar at the National Press Club on 30 July last, he was asked in question time as a decorated Vietnam veteran to 'comment on your view of the nature of the war there and your involvement, and do you have any regrets about involvement — do you think Australia's involvement was wrong?'

Cosgrove's answer to this question was about the only aspect of his address and answers to questions that was reported in the media but even then the reports were so taken out of context as to give a misleading impression of historical revisionism and, clearly, to support the personal agendas of either the reporters or their editors.

What the CDF actually said in answer to the question was: 'It's so long after the event I think it's safe to say that on reflection I'd probably join the majority of Australians who thought in retrospect our involvement was not going to be successful. It was simply not going to work, and therefore with 20/20 hindsight we probably shouldn't have gone.'

'But you can with the full weight of history and analysis and outcomes available to you make that judgement so long after the event and, as I said, so long after the event I think anybody's entitled to have that view.'

'**At the time I'm very clear that the majority of Australians thought we should be there**, and it was only as a very widespread public reaction started to persuade the government of the day as it was, and the alternative government, that we shouldn't be there, that the mood changed.'

'The men and women who were there of course performed magnificently, and I think felt a little abandoned by such a sharp swing in the public opinion which was never really about them but was about the overall political reasons why we were there in the first place.'

'But I think that's just part of history and certainly at no stage did it decrease my commitment to serve because after all **in the end the military does the lawful bidding of the government and always will.**' (*Our emphasis.*)

There are many dimensions to the Vietnam story and the simplistic mind-set of those who aligned themselves on the 'dirty, unwinnable war' line simply does not confront those dimensions. The geo-strategic issues alone, properly considered, can easily justify the commitment even though the outcome might have been predictable. Delaying actions are a legitimate element of both strategic and tactical tasks, even though some sacrifice might be involved. Certainly, the democrats of such South-East Asian countries as Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore have no doubt of the value of the delaying action of Vietnam.

The military strategy might have been abysmal and the Western betrayal of the battling South in 1973–75 despicable, but that does not mean that the struggle was futile.

New Zealand Green Paper

During the recently completed New Zealand election campaign, a group of retired senior military officers and public servants published: *Choice or Chance? New Zealanders Thinking about Defence Policy*. This 25-page analysis of New Zealand's defence challenge offered an alternative view to the defence orthodoxy being offered by the Labour government and all but ignored by the other political parties.

The authors included former Chiefs of the Defence

Staff and permanent heads of the Defence and Foreign Affairs departments. As such, it is a most authoritative document, albeit one that limits itself to setting out a number of broad principles which, in the Australian context, would be virtually unarguable.

In New Zealand, though, all those basic principles are highly arguable, at least in the context of domestic politics. But New Zealanders are not even prepared to do that. The document was virtually ignored by all the parties although Prime Minister Helen Clark was brusquely dismissive of it as the work of some irrelevant old men. That one-liner represented virtually the only defence debate in the election campaign. Little wonder, then, that the main opposition party, the Nationals, saw its vote decline from a very ordinary 30 per cent in 1999 to 21 per cent.

Much of what has passed for the defence debate has centred around demands that the government restores the air combat capability in the RNZAF. Comprising two squadrons of A-4 Skyhawks, half acquired from Australia and deployed in Australia for fleet support, the Clark government simply disbanded them. Restoration in the short term is virtually impossible; the aircraft have been disposed of and the skilled personnel scattered.

The opposition parties range from the bitterly anti-defence Greens and Alliance to the apparently indifferent conservative parties. One spokesman, himself a long-serving reserve soldier, told *Defender* that because New Zealand's population was about the same as Melbourne's, his country could afford only what Melbourne spent on defence. But New Zealand spends less than A\$300 per capita on defence compared with A\$680 per capita for Australians, suggesting that Melbourne's defence spending is considerably more than twice New Zealand's.

US Military's New Operational Goals

On 15 August 2002, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld gave the following advice to Congress. He noted that: 'new threats call for a new approach to defence and highlight the need to transform the nation's armed forces now. The historical insularity of the United States has given way to an era of new vulnerabilities.

'Current and future enemies will seek to strike the United States and US forces in novel and surprising ways,' the Secretary said. 'As a result, the United States faces a new imperative: it must both win the present war against terrorism and prepare now for future wars — wars notably different from those of the past century and even from the current conflict.

'America will inevitably be surprised again by new adversaries striking in unexpected ways. 'Surprise and uncertainty' define the Defence Department's challenge to defend the nation against 'the unknown,

the unseen and the unexpected', he said. Now is precisely the time to make changes. 'The attacks on 11 September 2002 lent urgency to this endeavour.' Prior to the terrorist attack, Rumsfeld noted, defence officials were fashioning a new approach to defence. That included a new defence strategy, replacing the two major theatre war construct, and revitalising the missile defence program free of the constraints of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Defence officials had also reorganised the department to focus on space capabilities and fashioned a new Unified Command Plan to enhance homeland defence and to speed up transformation. Defence officials had also adopted a new approach to strategic deterrence to increase security while reducing the number of strategic nuclear weapons.

Rumsfeld noted that the US military now has six operational goals:

- Protect the US homeland and defeat weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.
- Project and sustain power in distant anti-access and area-denial environments.
- Deny enemy sanctuary by developing capabilities for persistent surveillance, tracking and rapid engagement.
- Leverage information technologies and innovative, network-centric concepts to link joint forces.
- Protect information systems from attack.
- Maintain unhindered access to space and protect US space capabilities from enemy attack.

'These six goals represent the operational focus for our efforts to transform the US armed forces. Over the next decade, defence officials will transform some forces to serve as a vanguard and signal of the changes to come,' he continued.

Ground forces will be lighter and more lethal than today; they'll be highly mobile and capable of being inserted far from traditional ports and air bases; and they will be networked with long-range, precision-strike systems.

'Naval and amphibious forces will be able to operate close to an enemy's shores and project power deep inland. Air forces will be able to locate and track mobile enemy targets and strike rapidly at long ranges without warning', he added.

'The joint force will be networked in order to conduct highly complex and distributed operations over vast distances and in space.' Over the past decade, he said, the department invested too little in its people, equipment and infrastructure. The new approach defines and calls for balancing four risk areas:

- Force management risk — issues affecting the ability to recruit, retain, train and equip sufficient numbers of quality personnel and to sustain readiness of the force while it performs operational tasks.

- Operational risk — from factors shaping the ability to achieve military objectives in a near-term conflict or other contingency.
- Future challenges risk — from issues affecting the ability to invest in new capabilities and to develop new operational concepts needed to dissuade or defeat mid-to long-term military challenges.
- Institutional risk — factors affecting the ability to develop management practices, processes, standards and controls that use resources efficiently and promote the effective operation of defence.

Focusing on these four areas will help the DoD to set priorities and allocate resources, and to create a portfolio of capabilities that is balanced appropriately for the variety of challenges we face', Rumsfeld concluded.

Two Great Mistakes

The Australian government, on two important occasions, lost the opportunity to make vital contributions to the long-term development of fledgling states.

In Papua New Guinea the decision to have the pre-independence military force continue as a national army has been a failure. The Australian Army put a huge effort into recruiting a force drawn from the three major regions of PNG. The resulting composition of the Pacific Islands Regiment made for positive nation building.

The subsequent PNG Army has never enjoyed the pre-independence level of training and funding. The history of the PNG Army has not been a happy one and there are very few positive contributions to the nation that can be cited to justify its existence.

There has never been a military threat to PNG and provided Australia maintains its obligations the chance of a threat emerging is very slight. Yet, the PNG Army plays almost no significant role in national development.

The police have been long seen as a poor, inferior force compared to the Army. The rivalry between the two forces has a very long history and remains strong. The winding down of the Army should have been a key policy as PNG obtained independence. The saved resources would have made a huge impact on the capacity of the police to extend and maintain civil government. PNG does not need the deadly force held by its Army but it desperately needs a better trained, equipped and funded police force.

Australia's role in East Timor may have been less strong than that in PNG, however, the temptation to build a national Army for the sake of prestige and to harness members of the resistance movement has been too great.

East Timor's national security is in no doubt in the very long term. It has no need for an Army trained to use deadly force. Australia must press for the

conversion of this force into a national police service given to civil order and rural development.

East Timor's security, currently guaranteed by the UN, will in the near future depend upon Australia and Indonesia. In this context the resources being directed to building an army will be far better spent on a police force.

Trilateral Agreement and Co-ordination

An agreement between Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines on the exchange of information, and the establishment of communications, has been hailed as the beginning of a strong regional stand against terrorism.

The Philippine authorities have discovered links between Osama Bin Laden's organisations and the MILF and Abu Sayyaf. Using organisations disguised as charities Bin Laden has been able to channel funds and support to these groups. In addition, a number of members of the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah, which has been operating in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, were arrested in Manila only days before they were to begin a bombing campaign.

The Philippine authorities have found that the support given by US Special Forces has assisted in the suppression of terrorist and rebel groups in the southern Philippines. Operation Balikatan or 'shoulder to shoulder' has been running for six months in the southern Philippines, during which US and Philippine troops have enhanced combat and intelligence capabilities.

The main thrust of the training and operations has been to raise the effectiveness of civil, psychological and military operations. The local thrust of Philippine operations now, is aimed at the local level and includes better civil security, economic and community development. This has been supported by US funding of \$50 million to the southern Philippines, which has the five poorest provinces in the republic. In the Muslim community, which makes up 5 per cent of the 78 million Philippine population, a majority support the anti-terrorism initiatives.

One can be more hopeful that the campaign against insurgents and terrorists in the Philippines will be more successful as local expertise and regional cooperation give a new edge in the battle.

Inaction and neglect are always the worst offences, worse than mistakes of method.

Gen Erich Ludendorff
***My War Memories* Vol I p 341**

A Promise of Real Reform?

Despite being under heavy pressure to meet current operational commitments and plan for a range of possible contingencies in the Middle East, there are signs of real progress in the seemingly endless defence reform process.

Last month, the former Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General Des Mueller, circulated his own analysis of what was wrong with the higher defence organisation. To the fury of some and consternation of others, Mueller's rather swingeing internal memo was leaked to *The Bulletin* magazine.

Mueller accused the department of financial mismanagement and excessive bureaucratisation. Politicians, he believed, were too willing to interfere in operational matters although, oddly, he seemed more tolerant of this tendency, which had done great damage overseas and at home, the latter especially in the context of the 'children overboard' saga.

His own position as VCDF came under fire and others have commented that the VCDF had become not only seriously overworked but also removed from the mainstream of decision-making.

That has now changed. The VCDF has become, as he should always have been, a true chief of staff to the Chief of the Defence Force. The new incumbent, Vice Admiral Russ Shalders, will be responsible to the CDF for all aspects of military policy including personnel, which had been removed from his purview. This new arrangement will allow the VCDF to take control of the various branches of the military staff in a more traditional and effective way. It will also free the CDF to carry out his proper role of command of the force either through the Chiefs of Navy, Army and Air Force, and the Commander, Australian Theatre. This development is very similar to elements of the proposals put by the Australia Defence Association to the Secretary of the Department, Dr Alan Hawke, and the former Chief of Defence Force early in 2001. These proposals were subsequently published in the Spring 2001 issue of *Defender*.

Canberra insiders comment that the new batch of commanders represents the best group of military leaders 'in living memory'. There is little dissent from that view.

The Chiefs of Staff include, of course, General Peter Cosgrove as CDF, Vice Admiral Chris Ritchie as Chief of Navy, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy as Chief of Army and Air Marshal Angus Houston as Chief of Air Force. Not only are all of them distinguished commanders but, for the first time, all have held command or chief of staff posts in joint operational commands.

There is still much to be done. Senior officers suggest that some of Mueller's criticisms were not only

overstated but wrong, that processes that he condemned such as the 'balanced scorecard' system was a valuable and increasingly effective management tool for responsible commanders at all levels.

There is no doubt, however, that the conflict between traditional bureaucratic processes and more modern business-based management systems is impeding progress. Mueller was critical of the department's financial management but that is only a symptom of the problem. There is no particular magic about financial management. Thousands of Australians practise financial management in the private sector every day—as do most government departments—so the difficulty is cultural. As one senior minister told *Defender*, Defence is the only department in government that is not working properly.

Fortunately, the current minister, Senator Robert Hill, gives every indication not only of a substantial interest in his very demanding portfolio but also of the proper limits of his role as minister vis-à-vis the defence force. He is also reputed to be a prodigious worker.

Unlike some of his predecessors, Hill does not seem interested in playing soldiers. He understands that the government employs professionals to do a professional job for which politicians are not qualified. If, again unlike some of his predecessors and current colleagues, he can be persuaded that the Defence Force is not a business but a core function of government that cannot have a supplier-client relationship with government, the prospects for serious management reform will be enhanced.

There remains the core issue of the diarchy, the sharing of responsibility between the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary. This is a formal relationship that is fundamentally flawed. It can only work with goodwill on the part of both, or dominance on the part of one or the other. Effectiveness at that level should not depend upon personalities, the more so because there is a tendency to replicate the diarchy to lower levels of responsibility.

Ultimately, the justification for the diarchy lies in the belief articulated by a number of defence department heads that they are responsible for civilian control of the military. That is wrong. As an elected member of the parliament, the minister has that responsibility and it is one that cannot be shared and should not be delegated.

We must use time as a tool, not as a couch.

- John F. Kennedy

unmanned vehicles

will change future conflict

Malcolm Kennedy

Recent information on US Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) reveals that the reconnaissance vehicle and the combat vehicle are being successfully developed at a rapid rate.

The US forces used UAVs successfully in support of combat operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. The deployment of UAVs means that important reconnaissance operations can be conducted without sending manned aircraft into hostile airspace.

The US armed forces have all committed considerable resources to the development of UAVs in supplementing more traditional intelligence-gathering assets. The successful use of UAVs has led to significant revisions in US military doctrine, strategies, and tactics, especially so for future operations. The confidence gained in the use of UAVs and the innovative way in which they have been used as weapons platforms ensure a huge program of development. The US government has already provided over \$500 million for the development of more advanced types.

A key, and expanded, role of UAVs will be in the direction of tactical aircraft, AC-130 gunships, Multiple Launch Rocket Systems to quickly attack newly acquired targets. The objective is to develop a family of UAVs that will provide real-time target identification, direction for other weapons platforms or immediate attack by loitering armed UAVs.

The Predator has already successfully performed as an observation and target acquisition UAV for AC-130 Spectre gunships. Future developments under consideration are the control of Predators by an operator on the gunship. A range of smaller disposable UAVs will soon be tested while being controlled from AC-130s.

The steadily increasing range and loitering time of the new generation of UAVs holds a huge promise for reconnaissance, real-time intelligence, target acquisition and direction, and far greater payloads carried by armed UAVs.

Cost-effective surveillance, of the geo-strategic

space, for which the ADF is responsible, is becoming increasingly difficult to provide with our aging RAAF aircraft. Moreover, in any future operations in our region, UAVs have the potential to provide reconnaissance and target acquisition at very low risk to personnel and equipment. Australia has the capacity to design, manufacture and develop our own UAVs. It is important that ADI the ADF become expert in the field as quickly as possible.

The Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV)

On 11 July 2002 the X-45A UCAV was demonstrated at the Edwards Air Force Base, California. The X-45A is the first unmanned system designed from inception for combat missions. It is designed to demonstrate the technical feasibility, military utility and operational value of UCAVs for the destruction of air defences and strike missions.

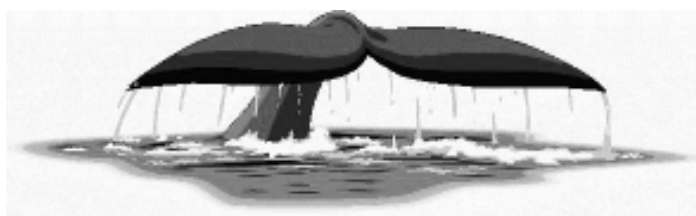
The objective of the X-45A program is to design, develop, and integrate the technologies, processes and systems required for an operational UCAV system. Essential areas of development include: command, control and communications systems; and the training systems for operators in targeting and weapons delivery.

The UCAV is envisioned as an integral part of the force structure, augmenting the manned force on high-risk, high-priority missions such as air defence suppression. UCAVs will cost less than half the price of F-16.

The UCAV vision is an affordable weapon that increases tactical options through a revolutionary new air power. The weapon system will require minimal maintenance, could be stored for extended periods of time, and will be capable of dynamic operations in engaging multiple targets under minimum human control. A mix of these vehicles and replacement aircraft will give Australia the most options and force multipliers.



MAJOR FURPHY



Defending the Whales

It all started with a panicky phone call from the Navy's Director of Operations. He is only a lieutenant because the Navy's ships are not very busy these days while the senior officers are very busy trying to manage the organisation. So I was not disposed to give him much time but he did call me 'sir' so I listened with half an ear while I sorted through Barney's daily mail. Barney, as you will recall, is Air Marshal Barney Stoush, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

Anyway, Lieutenant what's-his-name wanted to see Barney as a matter of urgency. I couldn't quite work out why he wanted to see Barney. Under our latest reorganisation (at least I think it's the latest), Barney no longer has anything to do with Operations. He is what is called an 'Owner Support Executive', nothing to do with 'outputs' which is where Operations is parked. I think the VCDF is supposed to support the Owner by keeping the Output people from spending too much of the Owner's money on Outputs. I'm not sure, though, and the last time I got a briefing on it, the briefer was confused too.

But DOps (N) was insistent. 'Have you seen Departmental Environmental Instruction 99/2002?' he asked.

Well, I couldn't admit that I hadn't so I just agreed that it was on my desk. It probably was too, like the hundred or so other instructions that seem to come out weekly. Anyway, I promised to squeeze him in to see VCDF between his twenty-four committee meetings scheduled for today. We'll only get two of them completed, mind you, because they tend to go on a bit. No matter, though, the secretaries will write up the minutes later to show that they did happen.

DOps (N) turned out to be one of those very self-confident young men who had actually been to sea in a warship and talked the lingo enough to confuse we land-bound, semi-humans. I showed him into the inner sanctum and stayed to keep notes. At least, he was properly deferential to Barney but no less insistent on his problem.

'Sir', he said, 'this instruction is going to put an end to any anti-submarine operations by surface ships or submarines.'

Of course, this was none of Barney's business as I could have told him. But the old operator's ears pricked up and he asked for an explanation.

It appears that DEI99/2002 makes it a criminal offence for high-powered sonar to be used anywhere where whales might be feeding, breeding or resting. Since that is just about anywhere where submarines might be operating, I could see his point.

Barney thought we should call in the author of the instruction who seemed to be part of the Owner Support structure and therefore under Barney's wing—although I wouldn't bet on that.

He, for his part, insisted that his hands were tied. It was an Act of Parliament, he said, that created the offence. It was perhaps a weakness that it did not specify that the Act did not apply in wartime.

'Who's talking about wartime?' DOps (N) wanted to know. 'This means we can't even train if there's whales about.'

There was a long silence while we thought about that.

'There is the way out', the public servant suggested. 'All you have to do is send me an application for a permit to use the sonar. The form is available on the

Internet. I'll send it on as quickly as possible to the Department of Environment and Heritage and they'll consider it.'

'How long will that take?' DOps (N) wanted to know.

He shrugged. 'That depends on the circumstances. You will have to make out a case and I suggest the original application should be endorsed by you before it comes to me.'

Barney was getting a bit bored with all this and was trying to fob the young man off. He was too cunning for that and pointed out to Barney that the Instruction affected his beloved P-3C anti-submarine aircraft which, although they had long endurance, couldn't fly around forever waiting for a permit to drop a torpedo or even any sort of under-water signal.

'Perhaps', he suggested, 'we could just pretend that we hadn't identified any whales in the area and carry on normally.'

The PS was aghast. 'You can't do that, he almost screamed. "That would defeat the whole purpose of the Act and you could be held culpable for an attempt

to pervert the course of justice, not to mention the far more serious offence of upsetting a whale. As far as the Act is concerned, whales are assumed to be everywhere and you will have to prove that they are not. I'll just have to redraft and reissue the Instruction to make that clear.'

After a closer look at the fine print, I gave Barney the nod and he dismissed the PS who probably didn't work for him anyway.

'Sir', I said 'the answer's simple. The Instruction says we can upset the whales if there's a threat to human health or it's necessary to deal with an emergency involving a serious threat to human life or property. The last part covers war time. The first lets us off the hook because we can say that inability to train realistically creates stress in our sailors and that's a health problem under Departmental Health Instruction 2347/01.'

Barney beamed on me. 'Now I know why I keep you around here. He's always got the answer', he told a much relieved DOps (N).

The Consultant

A shepherd was herding his flock in a remote pasture when suddenly a brand new Jeep Cherokee advanced out of a dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray Ban sunglasses and a YSL tie leaned out of the window and asked our shepherd: 'If I can tell you exactly how many sheep you have in your flock, will you give me one?'

The shepherd looks at the yuppie, then at his peacefully grazing flock and calmly answers: 'Sure!'

The yuppie parks the car, whips out his notebook, connects it to a mobile phone, surfs to a NASA page on the Internet where he calls up a GPS satellite navigation system, scans the area, opens up a database and some 60 Excel spreadsheets with complex formulas. Finally he prints out a 150-page report on his hi-tech miniaturised printer, turns round to our shepherd and says: 'You have here exactly 1586 sheep!'

'This is correct, take one of the sheep', says the shepherd.

He watches the young man select an animal and bundle it in his Cherokee. Then he says: 'If I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me my animal back?'

'Okay, why not', answers the young man.

'You are a consultant', says the shepherd.

'This is correct,' says the yuppie, 'how did you guess that?'

'Easy', answers the shepherd. 'You turn up here, although nobody called. You want to be paid for the answer to a question I already knew the solution to. And you don't know shit about my business, because you took my dog.'



Can Australia afford the next generation air dominance fighter?

Russell Miles

The Defence Department is exploring an option to replace Australia's fleet of F-111 and F/A-18 combat aircraft sometime in the next decade. This will be the most costly defence project in Australia's history. The capital cost of replacing the current one hundred aircraft with a similar number of contemporary aircraft will be between sixty and eighty billion in today's dollars. While this is a staggering figure in any dimension it is instructive to look at few comparisons.

Firstly, the acquisition of the current F-111 and F/A-18 were major financial commitments in their own day. In the mid 60s, the F-111 was controversial because the initial cost of twenty-four aircraft doubled to over two hundred and fifty million dollars. One way of looking at this was that the cost was equivalent to the total annual defence budget of the day, although this expenditure was spread over a number of years. The F/A-18 acquisition in the early 80s cost over two and half billion dollars. This too was equivalent to the then annual defence budget. A simplistic comparison would be to say that the acquisition cost of the current fleet of combat aircraft was the equivalent of about two years of the defence budget. This ignores through-life costs, upgrades, operating, training and other expenses, which are far greater than acquisition costs. The current annual defence budget is eleven billion dollars. Thus, cost of replacement combat aircraft would be five to eight times the current defence budget; more than double the comparative share of the defence budget that it cost to acquire the F-111s and F/A-18s. Of course, the comparison also does not allow for the decline in the defence budget, as a proportion of gross domestic product and in real terms over the past few decades. In the 1960s the defence budget was the equivalent of 5 per cent of GDP, whereas now it is 1.7 per cent. If the decline in defence spending had not been as great, the cost of replacement aircraft as a share of the defence budget would be about the same as previous generations of combat aircraft. Another factor is the declining value of the Australia dollar, which has lost half its value against the US currency over the past two decades. An eight hundred million dollar F-22 would cost a mere four hundred million!

Of course this analyses assumes many things remain the same when they clearly have not. Technological

change has been great. Modern aircraft offer greater range, acceleration and manoeuvrability. More critically they have enhanced avionics, longer detection and standoff attack range. Of course, developments in capabilities are only relevant compared with mission objectives and air defence technologies. There is a strong argument that modern combat aircraft are more effective against current air defence technologies than earlier aircraft were against air defence of their day. However, this is a dynamic environment and may change over time.

That the next generation aircraft are massively expensive does not mean that they cannot be afforded within the current defence-funding regime. Air-combat capability could be given preference over other defence capabilities. For example, not acquiring air-warfare destroyers, not replacing tactical air transport, or reducing the army to a constabulary function. There is clearly no political commitment to increasing defence expenditure in the near future, and other major equipment programs have been frequently deferred. Requirement programs need to be made within the current funding regime, not some fanciful expectation.

Secondly, the number of aircraft acquired could be reduced. The new aircraft are far more capable than the ones they are replacing. The threat environment is different too. That the air force had operated about one hundred combat aircraft for the past fifty years is no reason why this needs to continue. The Americans operate over six hundred F-15s but current plans are to acquire less than four hundred F-22s. Other comparable air forces are also reducing their air combat fleets too; mainly related to the ending of the Cold War over a decade ago.

The acquisition of fewer aircraft would make the project more affordable, but not proportionately. There are infrastructure, higher-production costs, personal competencies and so on to factor in. Reducing the number of units by half would save about a third of the cost. Reducing the number of aircraft to twenty or thirty would result in costs greatly outweighing capabilities, particularly over the longer term. Too small a number and it may not be worth replacing the aircraft at all — the NZ air force option.

Australia could acquire less expensive aircraft. Late model F-15Ks and lighter European aircraft such as the

French Rafale fighters cost around \$200 million per aircraft. However, they offer marginal increase in capability over upgraded aircraft. Russian manufactured high-performance aircraft offered some improvements in capabilities but they have inferior avionics and high through-life costs. Australia could seek to extend the life of the current aircraft and upgrade their capability. But there are limits to such approaches. Australia already plans to maintain its aircraft longer than most comparable air forces. The F-111 air frames are almost forty years old and structural fatigue is already causing them to be periodically grounded and high-stress manoeuvres prohibited. There are technological risks of replacing the air-combat fleet with the latest aircraft available. Investing a very large share of the defence budget into new aircraft locks options in case of emergent technology. New aircraft will not come into service until 2010–15 and can be

expected to have a life of at least 25 years. This risks placing ‘all the technological eggs in one basket’. Acquiring less capable aircraft at reduced cost would allow other options to be pursued when circumstances permit. Replacing current combat aircraft sooner than planned would also save upgrade cost and higher maintenance cost. For example, the F-111s could be replaced with a squadron of Super Hornets in the attack/recon role costing \$400 million per aircraft. This would take at least five years. Then if the strategic situation in ten years necessitates, another squadron or two could be acquired to replace the F/A-18s in air defence role. Alternatively, uncrewed aircraft or missile technology may make air-combat aircraft redundant within twenty years time, so resources could be devoted to such technologies. These are the various options that the Defence Department will need to explore in making its decisions.

National defence efforts: comparing the UK and Australia

Comparing the defence efforts of different countries is never easy. Countries have different security demands, different social and political structures and vastly different wage rates. For example, the United States, a nation of some 280 million people and the world’s largest economy, has global interests and responsibilities that mandate a very large military establishment. By contrast, Indonesia with a population of some 200 million has, by its own policy, very limited external security interest and a wage structure that permits the employment of some 30 soldiers for the cost of one Australian. Nevertheless, some comparisons are valid. The UK, post-Cold War, has relatively focused security interests. In fact, in the maritime area, it could be argued that the demands on Australia’s maritime forces are greater in raw terms than are Britain’s. Moreover, Britain enjoys the advantage of membership in NATO, a geographically localised military alliance. Wage structures in Australia and the UK are directly comparable as is the structure of public finance. The main difference is in population size. Proportionately, coupling population with per capita GDP, Australia should be able comfortably to match Britain’s defence capability in a 1:3 ratio. After a period of post-Cold War draw down, Britain now spends 2.8 per cent of GDP on defence compared with a Cold War level of around five per cent. The table compares the outcomes achieved for that outlay, a proportional level that Australia ought to be able to achieve and what we have for our much smaller commitment of national resources.

* Source: data derived from <http://www.armedforces.co.uk/index.shtml>

| | UK * | prop=1 Australia(1) | Australia |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------|
| all personnel (2) | 278,800 | 92,933 | 67,000 |
| regular personnel | 207,000 | 69,266 | 51,000 |
| per cent officers | 14.9 | na | 23.1 |
| submarines (3) | 12 | 4 | 6 |
| aircraft carriers | 3 | 1 | - |
| destroyer/frigates | 32 | 11 | 10 (4) |
| amphibious ships | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| tankers | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| patrol vessels | 23 | 8 | 15 |
| minewarfare ships | 21 | 7 | 10 |
| regular infantry battalions | 39 | 13 | 5 |
| tanks | 762 | 254 | 71 |
| AFVs | 1836 | 612 | 150 |
| APCs | 1121 | 375 | 450 |
| medium guns - 155 mm | 31 | 10 | 35 |
| field guns - 105 mm | 155 | 52 | 105 |
| SP guns | 179 | 60 | - |
| AD launchers | 680 | 225 | 36 |
| MRLS - 227 mm | 63 | 21 | - |
| strike aircraft sqns | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| fighter aircraft sqns | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| LRMP sqns | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| tankers/transport sqn | 8 | 3 | 32 |
| AEW&C sqn | 2 | 1 | - |

Notes:

1. Adjusted in a ratio of 1:3 as a basis of comparison with Australia.
2. Includes only active reservists.
3. Excludes UK’s four ballistic missile submarines
4. Four more under construction.

Connections

GDP

Defence

Peter Lawrence

It is obvious that Australia's defence has been sadly neglected over recent decades. Very often that has been brought out by looking at the percentage of GDP going into it, either in relation to other government spending or in comparison with the spending in other countries.

That is a natural way to approach things if one is in the habit of looking at government activity and is only coming to defence issues with that as a toolkit. But it is of very little use in estimating just what sort of defence Australia is actually getting—how much bang for the buck. For that very reason, some people even deny that falling spending matters and make unquantifiable claims about how technological improvements are 'really' giving a very different defence result. So this essay will explore GDP percentage spending over history, and try to use those very different historical circumstances to bring out just what other features do or don't affect the defence results. In case anyone suggests that the comparisons are futile because (say) the world is very different since Napoleonic times, that is the whole point. By analysing what has remained the same and what has changed we will get a better perspective. And one thing the following quotations will bring out is how things looked to the writers in their own context, never mind how second hand their actual history may be. For instance, I shall be quoting Gibbon to see how things looked in the 18th century, not how the Roman Empire was.

Here's Gibbon, near the beginning of chapter 5 of: *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, writing about the late 18th century: 'It has been calculated by the ablest politicians, that no state, without being soon exhausted, can maintain above the hundredth part of its members in arms and idleness.' He goes on to examine how that can be disproportionately effective when organised as suitably large and properly trained units.

There are two things to notice here: that one per cent figure is in terms of tied up manpower, not a money measure of GDP, and it is assessing a sustained use, a regular standing army. Both are typical of that age, just

before the Napoleonic era when there had been few technological improvements of a sort that needed capital rather than technique and when manpower correlated well with economic activity in the comparatively undeveloped economies of the day. That is why there is no real contradiction with this quotation about the English Civil Wars of 1641–1651 (ish), from Buchan's *1934 Life of Cromwell* (near the beginning of Book II, Chapter I): 'Even in the later stages of the war the total number of soldiers in the field was scarcely one-fortieth of the population.' This shows us two things. To Buchan in 1934, this 2.5 per cent figure, which was actually high, looked low. And it seems to contradict Gibbon's one per cent maximum. The reason it does not is that even over a ten-year period there were interruptions and that that is not a standing-army figure; it falls nearer another ancient model of warfare, the tumultuary one. That is what the Romans meant when they said 'tumult among the Gauls', apud Gallos—not that the natives were restless but that the clans were gathering. The last instance of this, with the fiery cross going through the land, was in the early 19th Century when the Scots of Glengarry were called out and fought the southern invaders to a halt long enough for the regulars to come up, so that by their aggression the southerners gained not one inch of Canada.

That was no mere aside. It both shows us another model with much higher unsustainable surge proportions of resources committed, and it shows that money numbers aren't everything. Clan risings typically left one in five or six behind to mind the farms while the rest turned out, but the money cost was low — and the quality of the troops related to the link between their culture, their habits and expectations, and their tactics; read, training. Here is Nassau Senior describing the economic discrepancy in part of his early 19th Century work on wages: 'In the early stages of society, the rank and even the safety of the landed proprietor is principally determined by the number of his dependents. The best mode of increasing that number is to allow the land, which he does not occupy as

his own demesne, to be subdivided into small tenements, each cultivated by one family, and just sufficient for their support. Such tenants can, of course, pay little rent, but they are enabled by their abundant leisure, and forced by their absolute dependence, to swell the retinue, and aid the political influence, of their landlord in peace, and to follow his banner in public and private war. Cameron of Lochiel, whose rental did not exceed 500 pounds a year, carried with him into the rebellion of 1745, eight hundred men raised from his own tenantry. But in the progress of civilisation, as wealth becomes the principal means of distinction and influence, landowners prefer rent to dependents.' Or as Buchan put it in Book I, Chapter I of his life of Cromwell: 'The sixteenth century saw the breakdown of all the old relationships... and owners regarded their estates not as a nursery of men-at-arms but as a source of financial profit. A change that worked through earlier in England, of course.

Well, just what changes did happen in warfare after the 18th century? It is not a coincidence or an academic exercise to ask about just that point of time because that was the end of an era and the beginning of new ones with common features that last to this day — and may be ending with the Revolution in Military Affairs. Napoleon came on a scene in which tactics and weaponry had changed little in nearly two centuries. Things had come up against their constraints, and his genius was able to apply new techniques on top of these, but he did not actually displace them. The arms of war were the same, armies still marched on their stomachs, and so on. He just found new ways of working within those constraints, found them among the work of earlier theorists.

One change was to release the strict control of supply from organised lines, but not totally. (Interested readers may consult the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* about military supply and transport, valuable for a pre-1914 insight, which is available on the Internet though I was able to consult a physical copy.) Another was to change the basis of conscription and bring in mass armies raised by mass conscription. Earlier, conscription had been needed in order to get manpower for long periods of service so the larger proportion of service could be after proper training; with discipline it made sense to get recruits from outside the homeland, since patriotism was unnecessary and that did not diminish the tax base. But Napoleon made 'war feed on war', drawing down other areas' resources, and his mass armies had less training and so needed more motivation; he drew on France itself for men. That means that, even though Gibbon's one per cent still applied, it wasn't France's own economy pro rata to that one per cent except to the extent that French manpower was involved, and, with brief campaigns, in theory each class of recruits could be released in short order (that didn't work in his last days of rule).

Mass conscription brings problems of its own. It was imposed by mass billeting of troops, something that was

complained of by the rebellious Americans; under the name of dragooning it was a well-known technique. Draft evaders had nowhere to hide if their home village was occupied. But there was an economic cost. It is not often appreciated that French agricultural subsidies, which on the face of it appear pointlessly inefficient, were there to promote a peasant lifestyle; their output wasn't measured in profit or foodstuffs but in conscripts. It meant a shift in an entire way of life, one which is producing massive disruption now conscription there is ending (just as it did when it ended in Britain in the early 1960s). What this means is that it is hard to capture GDP numbers, and it is important to provide both financial and manpower numbers to get a true picture, and sometimes we have to estimate one from the other.

By the 1860s things had changed. Most Americans thought 'of course' the north was going to win their civil war from its combination of superior manpower and industrial strength. But there was no, 'of course', about it; the world had only just changed, and indeed if there had not been compromises delaying that war there was a serious chance the south would have won. The thing is, the northern manpower was not that superior and actually represented a coalition of north and west (now Midwest), which might have been split by more frequent defeats and so dealt with in detail. But industry was making a difference by then, particularly through mechanised transport. (Another change of that era was an increase in groups adopting guerrilla tactics; previously there had been insufficient strength available for their enemies to have garrisons in place to prevent insurrections going straight to armies in being, albeit untrained ones.) And, of course, more advanced economies and more sophisticated techniques of drawing on their resources, taxes etc., meant that Gibbon's one per cent limit on manpower and its implied limit on the underlying economy were increasing.

One thing that had not changed was the level of training needed for a rounded soldier, some two years of salting with real casualties in training; while it is possible to give more limited training for special aspects, such as skipping dealing with defeat or the way 1918 British soldiers were only trained for the trenches and not for the German breakthrough, all-round training has not yet moved on. That is what today's problem is with rapid recruitment in the face of emergency, or with putting reservists straight into the role of regulars. This is something I shall return to.

Most of today's Americans think that the USA is militarily strong because it is backed by a strong military-industrial complex, and that this will simply continue. The American military know that this is partly true but that it is not the whole story. They are aware of training needs that include time as well as money, of how the economic connection is recent, and that it might change with the Revolution in Military Affairs, and that that revolution, while coming, has not yet quite come. Let's

look at the connection as it was a quarter of a century ago, using 1975 figures in the *Book of Lists*: in 1st place Israel had 5.53 per cent of its population in the armed services, while 7th and 8th were North Korea and Portugal with 2.85 per cent and 2.55 per cent. Going back that far lets us use a little hindsight in seeing what figures like that mean — it lets us train our sight for looking at today.

The first thing is, there's a multiplier. There's a lot more GDP going in than that. The second is, countries like Israel and North Korea aren't getting their financial costs covered simply by their own economies — they were drawing resources from their respective Cold War sponsors. The third is that it takes a while for things to work through. Americans confidently expected a rapid collapse of North Korea after the fall of the USSR, but it didn't happen that way. There were two reasons: the fact that they didn't have anywhere else to go — defeat was disaster — and that these things do take time to work through. We can use the Portuguese case to see that; it was fighting at least three colonial wars at the time, drawing on the home country's manpower when once colonies supplied manpower to it (in the 1960s the Goa garrison was largely recruited in Mozambique). While Portugal had fought Angola to a standstill so it was no longer a drain (and didn't have any paramount guerrilla group in waiting), and Mozambique was the largest single drain, there was an anomaly in Guinea-Bissau that was the real breaker.

The Portuguese used a double-dip conscription, that brought back middle-aged, middle-class professionals like doctors and engineers to support the counter-insurgency effort, and it was more serious in the smallest colony, Guinea-Bissau. It was represented that the way the Portuguese put up with it showed an underlying level of popular support for the regime, but, in fact, it did not and built up a pressure in support of overthrowing it. Again, there was a time lag. The comparison with France shows that there is no problem with conscription if only most people have been through it and are not facing it. France has objections to ending it from people who have just served! But the main lesson here is that conscription was needed to get servicemen of the right calibre, where conscription in many other countries — in peacetime — was not so much to provide a standing army (as it had in the 18th Century, though it did still do that) as to provide a pool of adequately trained reservists.

To the here and now. There is a change across the board, which we have to brace ourselves for. Once the Revolution in Military Affairs really does arrive, it will no longer need such a long support tail to work and it won't need a huge economy behind that. Does that mean that present low-spending levels won't matter? Not at all, though it does mean it would be futile to invest in huge collections of obsolescent materiel now to make possible using fewer people later. And that has been our emphasis so far — to use capital and technology to stretch out other resources, particularly

manpower. Capital and technology will correlate less well with each other, just as they have already ceased to correlate well with manpower — but there is still a connection.

Spending levels would reflect comparative levels of defence, as between this country and others, as before, but we would lose any accumulated lead and have to rebuild it (something like this happened to British naval superiority a century ago). But it does mean that countries like Israel — which even as far back as the 1980s showed an American General in the Lebanon that it could have killed him with a drone — will no longer have an edge; inside a decade almost any country in the area, or even some groups, will be able to do that. The thing about mere technological advantages, as against capital ones, is that they can easily be superseded.

So Australian spending levels do have to be kept up, only the important issue is not just how much they should be but on what they should be spent. While spending forms a constraint on what we can achieve, spending alone does not achieve things — it can go astray. A simple increase in defence spending across the board, while it might revive quite a few things that are on the point of expiring, would as it were only go to fat and not muscle if it wasn't accompanied by the right exercise regime. So those are the things we have to decide — what the right exercises are. My personal gut feeling — totally without anything to back it up — is that 10 per cent financial increases across the board would be useful without risking waste, while even 30 per cent increases at regimental level would be useful that way. More would require detailed planning on how to use them before we made them.

Clearly manpower matters; in this day and age it is impractical to recruit outsiders, so it is important to have that large pool of trained reservists, ready to be upgraded to regulars at short notice even though they would always need some further training. Even if the training isn't produced by conscription, it will still cost money as well as time in itself and time taken from people's productive careers. But also the spending has to go on R&D, to get a locally supported technology base. You really can't buy it in, since the higher skill levels it itself needs preclude that working any quicker and cheaper than doing it yourself anyway (I've seen it in the computer area). Also, like stretching out manpower, it is possible to use capital in low technology ways to stretch out the available high technology, like using armoured cars in proper combination with tanks, though this again increases the load on skills and training since the resources have to be combined effectively in the field, which needs good junior officers and NCOs. Taken all together, this shows some places we should look for our shortfalls and some things we would like to achieve to redress them. Now, how do we achieve them?

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute has published this discussion paper to help stimulate public discussion on the issues for Australia's defence both against terrorism and in the wider context of national defence policy. The Institute is preparing a formal study for the defence minister and is seeking public comment on this discussion paper as part of that process. The Australia Defence Association encourages readers to acquire a copy of the discussion paper and send their comments to the Institute. The paper can be downloaded from the Institute's Web site at www.aspi.org.au ordered (no charge) from ASPI at Level 2, Arts House, 40 Macquarie St., Barton, ACT, Tel: 02 6270 5100.

This 30-page document lists in separate chapters 12 key issues to be considered as an Australian policy response to the events of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington. These cover a diverse range essentially dealing with the nature of terrorism, the strategic context, the effects on the world, our region and Australia itself. It considers the issue of border protection and the costs involved in responding.

In form, each chapter tends to raise a series of questions requiring answers without specifying the author's views on what those answers might be. To some extent, this is the purpose of the consultation although, no doubt, the authors have already developed some views, which they seek to test against a wider audience. Be that as it may, the questions challenge serious thought rather than instinctive and superficial reactions.

ADA made an early submission to a limited aspect of the study and a number of our views have already been incorporated. Essentially, though, we believe that terrorism:

- must be dealt with at home primarily as a criminal matter by law enforcement agencies;
- involves as the primary defensive measures intelligence agencies, law enforcement, public health and emergency services rather than the ADF;
- requires that the role of the ADF at home will be limited to small, highly specialised units not available to the lead agencies and deployed only in an emergency beyond the latter's capacity;
- suggests that the ADF's role be directed to responding to offshore challenges beyond the jurisdiction of our law enforcement agencies, whether these be sourced to terrorist organisations or state sponsors of those organisations;
- offers significant opportunities to bureaucratic aggrandisement which needs to be resisted in favour of effective action.

The first chapter considers whether the events of 11 September represent a radical change to the security environment or whether it was 'a terrible crime, but not an epoch changing event'. Events of the past 12 months

suggest the latter interpretation, especially given that current US external policy is directed more at dealing with the state sponsors rather than the terrorist groups themselves. Either way, as the study points out, there are risks to proper policy formulation in posing oversimplified either/or questions such as these.

The chapter implies a most important consideration for a country like Australia — and the US for that matter — that we must always be prepared for strategic surprise.

The second chapter considers the issue of the 'war on terror' and sets out to suggest some more subtle definitions of the term than have been seen in the popular discussion. The study suggests that the use of the term 'war' may, in fact, be misleading and unhelpful, that dealing with terrorism might more be an indefinite series of minor operations, most of which will be fought covertly rather than overtly.

The chapter raises serious questions about the difficulty of dealing with the state sponsors if only because the reconstruction of the rogue states will be both difficult and protracted. This chapter is one of the best and most challenging in the study.

Chapter three considers the issue of weapons of mass destruction and their possible use by terrorists. Much of the content is speculative and discussed in the context of a major WMD attack rather than actual cases, such as the Sarin gas attack in the Tokyo subway, which have been small and with a limited result. The study does suggest, however, that the risk is real. Ultimately though, protection against such attacks will depend upon good intelligence, sound emergency services and public health systems, and certainly the possibility of taking pre-emptive military action.

The United States which, of course, bore the brunt of 11 September will play—and currently is playing—the leading role in combating terrorism. Chapters four and five look at the American response to date and these chapters raise a number of questions about the dichotomy between playing to the political demands of the community and acting effectively and professionally in a most difficult task, much of which

must necessarily remain concealed.

Chapter four discusses briefly the possible invasion of Iraq suggesting correctly that this would constitute a radical change in America's strategic and foreign policies. This chapter could usefully have considered some of the practical and political obstacles to such an invasion, which, in our view, are quite profound.

Chapter five analyses some of the lessons from the conflict in Afghanistan and points to the value of some of the new technologies deployed, especially the unmanned air vehicles that cannot only generate real-time battlefield intelligence but deliver their own precision guided weapons. The chapter makes the important point though that much of the fighting has been done by factional allies rather than US and Western forces. There is an enthusiasm here for air power, which needs to be treated with caution. The error rate has been relatively high and its political fallout much higher. There has to be a trade-off between certainty in targeting and the desire to carry out operations quickly. The use of UAVs providing real-time tactical intelligence will reduce the risks.

Chapter six looks directly at conceptual issues of Australia's security, insisting properly at the outset that the assumed linkage between military defence on the one hand and border security on the other is fundamentally wrong.

The chapter also looks at the range of challenges that the ADF has had to face, while it has been supposedly preparing for a major war. This is not the important question that it may seem. A defence force capable of dealing with a range of smaller conflicts will manifestly be more experienced and therefore better able to deal with a major threat. That, however, depends upon its resourcing, its flexibility of mind and adaptability of structure.

The issue of 'homeland defence' is raised, noting that this has become a 'buzzword' of some significance. There is a danger here that buzzwords and media grabs begin to dominate proper policy making and conceal the reality that Australia has a substantial and sophisticated 'homeland defence' capability in its intelligence agencies, law enforcement, emergency services and public-health systems. If the politicised response to 11 September were to transfer responsibility for homeland defence to the ADF in an attempt to show that 'something is being done', or maybe as another grab for Federal power, it would cause serious damage to both the existing and effective organisations as well as the ADF.

Chapter seven looks at regional impacts of terrorism with perhaps a primary and understandable focus on Indonesia, which is battling its own terrorist threat just as it struggles to build proper democratic structures. The chapter notes that in the South-West Pacific, there is no problem of terrorism per se, but very real and destructive problems that should attract Australian interest and engagement much more than they do.

Chapter eight outlines some of the force structure choices that Australia needs to consider. It suggests that any changes should be relatively marginal to maximise what the study calls the ADF's flexibility but which refers more correctly to its adaptability to changing circumstances. In this context, flexibility is a quality of the mind, especially the mind of political leaders and military commanders.

The chapter makes the very powerful and important point that 'the Government needs to make sure that the forces we already have are in full operational order'. For too long, we have had modernisation programs delayed or new equipment fitted for rather than with their proper outfits of weapons and sensors in an effort to save money. For the short-warning conflicts, which are the modern norm, this is false economy at its most dangerous.

Again, the ASPI focus on high-technology air capabilities is apparent. While not denying their value and the need for investment in these areas, perhaps the ADF's biggest problem is the lack of combat personnel to fill the very small number of ground combat units. Their lack imposes substantial constraints on the sort of operations to which the force can be committed.

Chapters nine and ten look specifically at the threat of terrorism to Australia and are very well balanced, warning as they do against over-reaction. It suggests that 'counter-terrorism is a bureaucrats' paradise. It cuts across many boundaries between and within state and federal governments, allowing endless scope for 'co-ordination'...but no one is in charge."

Chapter 11 is especially important, taking up the issue of border protection and warning that border protection and counter-terrorism are separate rather than related issues, however much the public mind may consider otherwise. The chapter considers the issue of border protection and the misuse of ADF resources for the task. It is inclined to pass the task to private contractors but this would be a serious mistake. Border protection is pre-eminently a law-enforcement task and law enforcement should not be contracted out. It is a task for a properly resourced police agency, whether it be termed a coastguard or something else.

Chapter 12 leaves the most politically difficult question to last — paying for counter-terrorism. It says that defence spending is increasing. So it is in dollar terms but not as a measure of national effort — and the increased money is paying for less and less as costs of both equipment and personnel increase. This chapter does not confront this issue as forcefully as an 'independent' institute should.

In all, this is a most challenging and thoughtful study from a new institute. It deserves a wide public response before its final conclusions are put to government. And government should ensure that its response is driven by sound policy rather than political or bureaucratic interests.



That Magnificent 9th

Mark Johnston

reviewed by Michael O'Connor

The 9th Australian Infantry Division of the Second AIF was raised in 1940 and disbanded finally in 1946. It was and is perhaps the best known of the 12 Australian divisions that saw combat service in either or both World Wars. The 9th was particularly renowned for its defence of Tobruk in 1941, the Battle of El Alamein in 1942, the Lae, Finschafen, Sattelberg and Sio campaigns in New Guinea during 1943 and early 1944, and finally the Borneo campaigns at Tarakan and Brunei in May 1945.

Incidentally, the 7th Division veterans tend to feel that they missed out on much of the glory given to the 9th. After all, one of their brigades was at Tobruk and the 7th stopped the Japanese rush at Milne Bay and on the Kokoda Track. Then they won the race to Lae, chased the Japanese up the Ramu Valley to Madang and then went to Borneo at Balikpapan.

Regardless, the 9th certainly deserved its reputation and were generally credited with taking upon themselves the task of wearing down the Axis forces at El Alamein to allow the rather indifferent British armour some chance of survival. As Field Marshal Montgomery wrote: 'we could not have won the battle in 12 days without that magnificent 9th Australian Division'. His superior, Field Marshal Alexander told a divisional parade that 'There is one thought I shall cherish above all others — under my command fought the 9th Australian division.' Generals' hyperbole? Probably not. Field Marshal Rommel, the 9th's principal adversary in the Middle East, described the Australians in Tobruk as 'the best of soldiers, with their cold-blooded ability to carry out reconnaissance raids night after night'. The history does not record what the Japanese thought.

This book is an illustrated history drawn mainly from the Australian War Memorial's vast photographic collection with descriptions of the related action associated with each individual photograph. The technique makes for a valuable mix of operations, tactical situations and the significance of individual soldiers all in a very readable history. Appendices include casualty

lists by unit plus honours and awards as well as a good bibliography and index.

There is no little fascination in contemplating the individual soldiers, some of them like Morshead and Derrick famous others undistinguished who became casualties or who simply disappeared, no doubt thankfully, back into civilian life after doing their duty not just to Australia but to the free world. Two, not particularly notable, junior engineer officers are pictured enjoying a beer after El Alamein went on to carve out most distinguished civilian careers as Sir Frank Espie and Sir John Overall. The latter, incidentally, commanded the Army's parachute battalion later in the war.

Inevitably minor errors have crept in. A photograph of a bombardment group at Tarakan describes a 3.7 inch anti-aircraft gun as a 37mm gun but these are rare and, indeed, probably resulting from faulty proofreading.

Most noteworthy is the contrast between the raw and ill-equipped soldiers who defended Tobruk with the immensely experienced and well-equipped troops in Borneo four years later.

It is disappointing that the author allowed a personal disapproval of General Blamey, the Australian Commander-in-Chief to intrude into what was otherwise a valuable and objective commentary. Whatever Blamey's failings, he held the most senior positions in the Australian Army with the immense responsibilities from the beginning of the war to its close. There was perhaps no other general of any country with such a record. He also had to contend with some extraordinarily undisciplined subordinate generals.

Johnston, Mark. 'That Magnificent 9th.' 2002. Allen & Unwin, Sydney. 272 pp. Hardcover. \$49.95 rrp.

Defenders of Australia: The Third Australia Division

Albert Palazzo

reviewed by **Michael O'Connor**

The Third Australian Division was established as part of the First Australian Imperial Force in England in July 1916 under the then Major General John Monash. Monash, a veteran of Gallipoli and a keen student of the earlier Western Front campaigns, insisted that his mostly inexperienced troops be trained intensively before being committed to operations. So it was that the division did not go into action until November of that year. Initially they were sent to a quiet sector of the Front for familiarisation and soon learned that 'quiet' was a very relative term.

The book describes very well in text as well as with contemporary photographs the lives of the soldiers in the line and in rest areas where, for the most part, they were employed in labouring tasks.

Initially, the division was assigned with the New Zealand Division to the II Anzac Corps. It played an important part in the Messines and Passchendaele in mid to late 1917. In early 1918, all five Australian divisions were combined into the I Australian Corps, a much larger formation than the standard British two division-based corps. The payoff would come in mid-1918 when the Australian Corps, by then under the command of Monash, played a prominent and leading role in the destruction of the German Army. Before that, the Allied armies had to withstand the massive German offensive that nearly breached their lines in March and April 1918. The 3rd Division with the 4th not only stopped the German advance but began the process of pushing them back.

The great Allied offensive began on 8 August and the Australians played a leading role in pushing back the Germans to their main defensive positions in the Hindenburg Line and then breaching it. By October, though, the Australians were exhausted by the heavy casualties and lack of replacements. They were then withdrawn and never went back into action before the Armistice ended the fighting. The AIF was demobilised and the division effectively disbanded in May 1919, although it remained in the Army's Order-of-Battle.

Between the wars, 3rd Division was a Militia formation based in Victoria. With immense difficulty (described in this book) it survived the persistent defence cuts of the inter-war years so that by 1930, its posted strength had fallen to just 3,887 all ranks. Even with the expansion begun later in the decade, its strength by the end of April 1939 was just 9,589.

The establishment of the 2nd AIF left the 3rd Division

as a home defence Militia formation, which quickly lost many personnel to the AIF. Many more would have joined the AIF but for restrictions that were quickly imposed. In general, the Militia was not mobilised and then only for limited periods of full-time duty. At the outset of the Pacific War, the division was at little more than half its full establishment, even less in equipment and less still in modern equipment.

One of the division's most renowned units, the 39th Battalion, was detached from the division and sent to New Guinea where it famously bore the brunt of the Japanese thrust towards Port Moresby. Subsequently, it fought with the 7th Division in the Buna-Gona-Sananada campaign before being unaccountably and ungraciously disbanded.

The 3rd Division itself went to New Guinea early in 1943 where its brigades, the more employable formations in that environment, were shuffled about. The bulk of the division was flown into Wau and directed to move on Salamaua over extraordinarily rugged terrain. The division's task was to threaten Salamaua but not take it so as to divert Japanese attention from the forthcoming assault on Lae and the Markham Valley with their port and airfields potential. The book's description of this campaign is detailed and illustrates very well the difficulties of operating in that most forbidding environment, often described as the worst of World War II.

Brigades of the division were allotted to the 5th and 7th Division campaigns in the Ramu Valley and to Madang before all the brigades went on leave.

The next campaign was on Bougainville where from November 1944, the Australians attempted to whittle away the numerically superior Japanese and recover what was occupied Australian territory.

The author is bitterly critical of Blamey (again) for his policy of aggression against the Japanese, agreeing that they should have been contained and allowed to wither on the vine until the war's end. As well as domestic critics, he quotes soldiers who fought on Bougainville in support of his thesis but ignores the strategic and moral issues involved. In the chapter on the Salamaua campaign, he is loud in his praise for the exertions and devotion of the Papua New Guinean carriers without whom the army would have been in grave difficulty. Yet for Bougainville, he is critical of a policy designed to relieve Papua New Guineans who were legally as well as morally Australian subjects of a very oppressive Japanese occupation. The attitudes are common but they are contradictory. We see hangovers of these attitudes even today when Australians are strident in their assertion of various rights but all too often dismissive of the associated responsibilities. This is the weakest — and worst — part of what is otherwise a very good book.

The final chapters cover the post-war period until the final disbandment of the 3rd Division in 1991. In essence, the history of the period is one of government neglect, bureaucratic confusion and a struggle to sustain an operational reserve force without some form of

compulsion to sustain the numbers. By 1974 after the end of two periods of national service, the strength of the division's major combat units had fallen to 938 or just 18 per cent of authorised strength. Renamed a Field Force Group, the 3rd battled for personnel and a role in an Army increasingly confused about its own role. The axe finally descended with what will be seen as the infamous 1991 Force Structure Review that began the process of cutting the regular and reserve forces by 28 per cent—and counting.

In its 75-year history, the 3rd Division of the Australian Army never lost a battle — except the last at the hands of its own political and bureaucratic masters. Thus does Australia thank its faithful servants.

Palazzo, Albert. 'Defenders of Australia: The Third Australian Division.' 2002. Australian Military History Publications in association with the Australian Army History Unit, Sydney. 245 pp. Hardcover. \$45.00 rrp.

Operation East Timor: The New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor 1999–2001.

John Crawford and Glyn Harper

reviewed by David T Forbes

Not being familiar with the detail of military operations in East Timor, I approached this book with a degree of scepticism. After all, weren't the New Zealand Defence Forces puny? What difference could they make and wouldn't their contribution be nominal? A rather exaggerated foreword by the New Zealand Governor General did not inspire my confidence. The same was true of the 'Background' chapter, which glossed over differences in East Timorese society and made the dubious claim that the Portuguese treated the East Timorese as 'equals'. Fortunately I persevered and came away full of admiration for the role played by the NZDF and the way the authors documented it.

The NZDF contribution to Interfet and UNAMET was a full tri-service operation. This applies also to the pre-INTERFET stage, when UN personnel were evacuated from East Timor after the mayhem which followed the referendum result of 3 September 1999.

The RNZN contributed the frigate *Te Kaha*, the elderly frigate *Canterbury* and the supply ship *Endeavour*. The

Endeavour's role was truly critical. With HMAS *Westralia* still out of action as a result of the tragic fire in 1998, the RAN's only supply ship was HMAS *Success*. This was insufficient to transport the hundreds of tonnes of food, fuel, water and other supplies needed for the UN-sanctioned operations in East Timor. Fuel was in particularly short supply and poor planning by the ADF saw *Endeavour* embarking from Darwin to Dili with less fuel than she was capable of carrying.

HMNZS *Canterbury*, which had been reduced to a training role, was pressed back into combat service and together with *Te Kaha*, provided escort and protective services to supply vessels and onshore deployments. This was no mere formality: on one occasion the *Canterbury* placed herself between the *Success* and Indonesian naval vessels approaching in a threatening manner and on another warned Australian PC-3's of hostile approaching Indonesian aircraft.

Possessing no fighter capability, the RNZAF played an important transportation role with many sorties being flown by Hercules C 130 to Dili and Suai, disembarking troops for the initial securing of those areas and later flying in M113 APCs and large quantities of supplies. Air cover for New Zealand's land forces was provided by Australian F/A 18s.

As with most military operations, the ultimate objective was to secure the land. New Zealand's special forces played an important role from the first deployments of INTERFET. Later, a battalion-sized force was sustained in the area centred on Suai near the border with West Timor. Various officers and other ranks also played major roles in HQ, both through the INTERFET and UNAMET phases. Unfortunately the book failed for some time to make clear that the deployment to Suai was of a full battalion; initially I gained the impression that only a company-sized force had been deployed.

Tragically, four NZ soldiers lost their lives in East Timor, one shot in the head by militia or TNI elements who were never located. A number of soldiers also fell victim to malaria and dengue fever, but the NZ army fared far better than the Australians in this regard. One hopes the Australian Army is endeavouring to find out why.

I reserve a few criticisms. The first is the book's sometime uncritical and jingoistic nature. For example, it trumpeted Major General Cosgrove's policy of 'no backward step'. Yet when mention was made of the murder of the Dutch journalist Sander Thoenes, the retreat by Australian Forces on 21 September 1999 in the face of Thoenes' likely murderers, the notorious TNI battalion 745 (whose other slaughters are well documented)¹, was not mentioned. And this exemplifies the other great omission from this work. How the overall operation is proceeding appears incidentally so there is no sense of what units from where are performing what tasks. Suai is secure and Dili locked down, but how is the rest of the country? This is not to say the book should have been a history of the whole Interfet/UNAMET operation. But the New Zealand contribution could have been placed in

a more meaningful context.

My final criticism is that the book is rather soft on the amateurish performance of the NZ and Australian governments. The ample warnings given to the Australian government (see *Defender*, Autumn 1999) should have led to the whole disaster being averted in the first place. These warnings are not mentioned. And although some shortcomings in the Australian and New Zealand battle order are reported frankly, those responsible for it get off very lightly. Given the very considerable difficulties that were encountered by INTERFET and UNAMET, one shudders to think of the debacle that would occur if Australian and New Zealand forces were ever deployed against an enemy that could fight back.

This publication is well served by many high quality colour photographs, three appendices, appropriate footnotes and an index.

Crawford, John; Harper, Glyn. 'Operation East Timor: The New Zealand Defence Force in East Timor 1999-2001'. 2001. Reed Books. 232 pp. Soft cover.

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1 Birminham, John. 'Appeasing Jakarta, Australia's Complicity in the East Timor Tragedy.' 2001. Black Inc.

Sir James Whiteside McCay— A Turbulent Life

Christopher Wray

reviewed by Dr Malcolm Kennedy

'...no fear of the verdict of history...'

The author and Oxford have again produced an outstanding military history. The lessons of this book are profound and of not a little use today in military and civil life. Intellect, energy and hard work need a liberal dose of patronage and luck if public success is to be won.

Sir James McCay was an extremely complex man. A man moulded by a family who expected life to be hard. They were god-fearing people who demanded the best of their children. McCay became a fit, self-

disciplined and enthusiastic young man and took the ethos of his Scotch College education to Ormond College at the University of Melbourne, where aged twenty, he graduated in law and won the dux gold medal.

Sir John Monash, a year senior to McCay at Scotch, in many ways lived a broadly parallel life. They enjoyed the delights of growing up in rural Victoria before the turn of the century in households that gave emphasis to learning and achievement. The schooling at Scotch put a stamp on their established competitiveness and ambition to be successful.

McCay though the son of a Presbyterian minister was not overtly religious, however, 'he maintained a belief that hard work, application, and firmness of purpose would lead to success in life'. Indeed, in this outstanding analysis of the life of McCay sound explanations are given for his reasons for challenging the ideas and orders of his superiors. Self-assured and highly intelligent James McCay was often found difficult by others.

In 1914 McCay, who was then fifty years of age, had already had a successful career as a lawyer, parliamentarian, Minister for Defence in the new Commonwealth government, and was a highly respected officer in the militia. Given his keen mind and outstanding organisational skills he could have filled an extremely valuable administrative post in the AIF.

He took command of the 2nd Brigade, while the commanders of the 1st and 3rd Brigade were 35 and 45 years of age. Why did McCay take up the obvious tough course of active service? He never revealed his reasons, however, others saw in him the need to put his peacetime military training to use and to accept the self-imposed demands of duty by which he had always lived.

Wray provides one of the most readable accounts of the 1860 to 1930 period in this book. He has made McCay the focus of the story but provides an immensely rich account of the First World War from an Australian perspective. His scholarship is excellent and he includes recent research, which resolves many of the 'so-called' mysteries in the history of the 1AIF. This book is military history at its best. Wray provides the detailed contexts of events, decisions, actions and explanations have been examined with great care and the author has given his findings in highly enjoyable and readable prose.

McCay was a man of great personal courage, but his insistent demand that his troops be driven to the highest levels of training and fitness eventually tarnished his success with troops. Never popular for this, he carried without defence the criticism of several costly battle failures. This book puts these views to rights.

The challenge of McCay's life is still valid, as Wray notes he was '...representative of a generation of citizen soldiers who pursued military service with the same

vigour as they had their civilian calling, seeing their military duties as an important part of community service’.

Wray, Christopher. ‘Sir James Whiteside McCay—A Turbulent Life.’ 2002. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne. Hardback. 280pp. \$55.00.

The Real Bravo Two Zero— The Truth Behind Bravo Two Zero

Michael Asher

reviewed by Dr Malcolm Kennedy

One of the more admirable aspects of the Australian SAS has been their low-key approach to their skills, operations, failures and successes. Professor Horner’s recent revision of their history is a most readable account grounded in solid empirical material and written with a typical Australian disdain for ‘big headedness’.

The Australian SAS has many achievements to its credit. Indeed, news reports from Afghanistan have noted the particular skills of our SAS and their actions in saving a number of US troops from certain death. In Australia this was considered a normal response to an operational ‘stuff up’. It is this reviewer’s absolute hope that the British SAS disease never infects our SAS Regiment.

The mystique of the British SAS was maintained for many years and the little bits of information that leaked out about their operations left most ordinary soldiers in awe. Fortunately, in Australia, while our SAS were given respect and generally acknowledged as being superbly fit and multi-skilled, they were never seen as some form of Rambo or super soldier. They were, and are, seen as a select bunch of soldiers trained for special types of operations.

Contrasting with this understated approach is the unhappy state of the British SAS. This reviewer is confident that the majority of 20 and 22 SAS members are still highly trained and capable of daring without blabbing. Unfortunately, two ex-members of the SAS have joined a growing list of members who have not only broken their commitment to keeping details of operations secret, they have systematically exaggerated or lied.

Accounts of an SAS operation in Iraq, published in book form, have become huge bestsellers and have made the authors famous and rich. *Bravo Two Zero*, written under the alias Andy McNab and *The One That Got Away*, by aka Chris Ryan provide extensive details of the operation, the weapons, equipment and systems used by the SAS. The two books provide fairly similar accounts of the events in which the authors were involved. There are odd differences and unexplained discrepancies, but these might be passed off as small differences in observation and recall.

There is, however, a much more serious fault. Apart from the narrow narrative of the insertion, their discovery by a local farmer and the broad outline of their attempts to escape virtually everything else in both books is a fabrication. The patrol, for example, abandons standard SAS procedure in making a frontal attack on troops supported by armoured vehicles, rather than evading the contact. The half-dozen members of the patrol, we are told, inflict massive casualties and destroy numerous vehicles.

Michael Asher visited Iraq to track down the real story because he had serious concerns about the ‘Rambo’ successes against superior forces. His discovery of the truth is almost beyond belief. Apart from members of the patrol being faced with the tough conditions in Iraq—conditions one could expect the SAS to be physically and materially equipped to handle—the real suffering was hypothermia, the beatings given to those captured and death from being shot or exposure.

Asher argues that at this level the patrol members had a story of hardship, danger, and courage to tell. His trip to Iraq revealed that this has been lost in the creation of a fantasy built on plain error, ignorance and lies. Asher has proof to show that the reports of action given to, and apparently initially accepted by, the SAS command HQ staff, were almost completely false in every detail. The patrol did not see combat, it did not inflict large numbers of casualties on a number of Iraqi Army units, and to neatly cover up other embarrassing facts, all the leadership mistakes made were attributed to a member of the patrol who died of exposure. Asher has revealed a daring con job, however, he also raises important questions about how we should deal with military faction.

Asher, Michael. ‘The Real Bravo Two Zero—The Truth Behind Bravo Two Zero.’ 2002. Cassell & Co, London. 132pp. Paperback. \$29.95.

Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim.

George Santayana

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