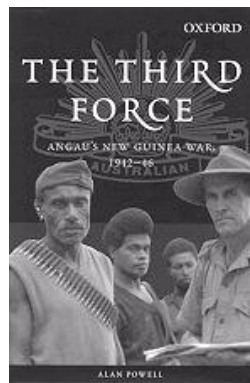


was a national triumph for Canada, a more auspicious coming of age than the mismanaged landings at Gallipoli had been for Australia'. It is almost as if he is implying that the mismanagement was the Australian's fault. Later again, Canadian participation in the '100 days' in 1918 is briefly mentioned but the Australians do not figure at all. In fact from this book you would hardly know that Australians fought on the Western Front. The vital contribution of Anzac troops to the Palestine and Syrian campaigns is also ignored.

The final two chapters covering the situation from the treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 onwards reflect research and thought outside traditional Anglo-centric historical patterns. Professor Strachan's theme of a truly global struggle allows him to give full rein to examining the problems of coalition warfare, especially those faced by the Central Powers, rather than the traditional concentration on Germany's worsening weakness and eventual disintegration. His discussion of the benefits enjoyed by the allies being a coalition of relative equals, at least in contrast to their opponents, is very well done. He notes that the number of allies kept growing throughout the war in both numbers and global spread, but that after Bulgaria, in September 1915, no country sided with the Central Powers.

Although it has faults, Professor Hew Strachan's *The First World War* is a book that will be sought after by generations of history students and general readers seeking a wide-ranging, well-written and generally well-argued summary of the complex international struggle that shaped the modern world. ♦

Hew Strachan, 'The First World War: A New Illustrated History', Simon & Schuster, Sydney, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 360pp, RRP \$49.95.



The Third Force: ANGAU's New Guinea War 1942–46

Alan Powell

Reviewed by Michael O'Connor

Arguably, the most ubiquitous and perhaps the most neglected unit of the Australian Army's World War II New

Guinea campaigns was the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU). The Army History Unit deserves commendation for sponsoring this latest, excellent volume in the Australian Army History Series, especially as at a time when the need for a modern civil affairs capability in the ADF is readily apparent.

Alan Powell is Emeritus Professor of History at the Northern Territory University. His other contributions to Australian military history have included the highly regarded *War by Stealth*, a study of Australians in the Allied Intelligence Bureau.

At the outbreak of the Pacific War, Australia administered two territories in New Guinea quite separately. Papua was an Australian territory, acquired from Britain in 1906 and maintained at absolutely minimal cost to the Australian taxpayer. The Territory of New Guinea had been captured from Germany in 1914 and was administered as a League of Nations Mandate. Thanks to large gold discoveries and an expatriate-controlled plantation industry, New Guinea was wealthier but was administered mainly in the interests of the expatriate community. The Papuan Administration was largely indifferent to the expatriate community and pursued a remarkably benevolent and paternalistic policy towards the Papuan community; in New Guinea, the reverse was generally the case.

History tells us that Australia and the Army in particular were quite unprepared for the Japanese challenge in Papua New Guinea. This was certainly true of the two civil administrations. In New Guinea—as with the small Rabaul garrison—a *saue qui peut* mentality prevailed. An excessively legalistic policy promptly disarmed the civil police and, in many cases, simply abandoned them.

In Papua, a clash between the civil administration and the Army led to the dismissal of the former and the establishment of martial law. Some of the field personnel of the Administration were told that they were out of a job; others were simply ignored.

For its part, the Army with no experience of military government had made no preparations for administering a population assumed to number some hundreds of thousands, many of them in enemy-controlled territory. Its most urgent task was to stem the Japanese advance in country largely beyond vehicular transport. For this, they needed labourers (carriers) to logistically support the trained troops and supplies that were slowly beginning to trickle in to Port Moresby.

The 8th Military District Commander was Major General Basil Morris, a regular gunner not very highly regarded by his peers. Morris did, however, try to make a silk purse from a very tatty sow's ear. Part of the manufacturing process was to establish ANGAU.

ANGAU's priority task was to recruit labourers to carry for the Army. Somewhat to its surprise, the Army found that the transport infrastructure of the New Guinea of 1942 was almost totally unfamiliar with the internal combustion or steam engine. Supply from, and evacuation to, bridgeheads, airheads and roadheads for the forces in contact with the enemy depended upon the

broad backs and stamina of thousands of ill-nourished, poorly clothed, usually unpaid and overworked Papuans and New Guineans. These were normally conscripted in a fairly ruthless process that ANGAU was only slowly able to ameliorate as the emergency diminished.

Powell suggests that this labour conscription was unfair if only because the people of Papua New Guinea owed little or no loyalty to Australia. That may be but it can also be said that Australia owed an obligation of just treatment to the people of Papua New Guinea and that defeating the Japanese was the best way to achieve that objective. Indeed, this is the strongest argument for the late war operations in the northwest, New Britain and Bougainville, criticised by many as unnecessary and wasteful. Powell's discussion of the loyalty question is substantial and well balanced.

After the Japanese defeats in Papua, ANGAU steadily developed as a broad-based military government. Powell notes that the labour administration section always accounted for around half of ANGAU's total strength of 366 officers and 1660 other ranks, not including the 2700 strong police or the still larger indigenous labour force.

ANGAU was also responsible for such tasks as civil law enforcement, district administration, health services and coastal shipping. Many of the key personnel, especially in the District Services Branch, were former administration officials but, equally, many were drawn from volunteers sought from Army units.

The District Services personnel - the 'kiaps' - and their colleagues of the Royal Papuan Constabulary who best knew the country and its peoples were increasingly drawn into active military operations against the Japanese as advisers, scouts and guides. ANGAU was partly responsible for the administration of the alphabet soup of irregular units that operated in enemy-occupied territory. Indeed, many of the personnel were so interchangeable that some of my own superiors in post-war PNG freely admitted that they were never quite sure whom they worked for at any given time.

Powell describes a wide range of ANGAU operations as well as devoting two excellent chapters to ANGAU's people, one on the Australians and the other on the Papua New Guineans. He touches only briefly on the role of Colonel Alf Conlon's Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, an organisation that played the principal role in establishing the comparatively radical post-war national policy for Papua New Guinea as a single entity. This is a pity but it may well have been considered outside the scope of his study. Nonetheless, the job was done largely by the Army under the benevolent direction of the Commander-in-Chief, General Blamey, often in spite of the traditional political indifference to Papua New Guinea. From the Army's perspective, this study of ANGAU reinforces the not well-understood view that ending the fighting does not guarantee the peace.

Professor Powell has given us an excellent and balanced study of a unit that was as well known as any to those who served in New Guinea but the scope of whose operations

was seriously under-estimated, both at the time and since. ♦

Alan Powell, 'The Third Force: ANGAU's New Guinea War 1942-46', Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 292pp, \$55.00.

D-Day: The Greatest Invasion— A People's History

Dan Van Der Vat

Reviewed by Dr Malcolm Kennedy

In the early hours of 6 June 1944, the gunfire from 700 warships signalled the arrival of a force of 5,000 ships, 8,000 aircraft, 130,000 men and 20,000 vehicles off the coast of France. The invasion of Nazi occupied Europe had begun. Operation Overlord, which took years in the planning and creating, was at last launched across the beaches of Normandy. Even with the massive military force brought to bear the lodgement hung in the balance. At the end of the first twenty-four hours—the 'longest day'—the fate of Western Europe had been tipped towards freedom.

Only the application of massive military, economic and logistical force was able to wage war sufficiently powerful to destroy the vile Nazi regime and bring peace to Europe once more. The stakes were enormous. This was a key turning point in world history.

If the invasion failed an unacceptable consequence would have been a long and increasingly bloody campaign through Italy into Germany; and if the German eastern armies collapsed, there was the highly probable advance of Stalin's dictatorial regime into Western Europe. This would have meant the replacement of one murderous tyranny with another. A failure on D-Day would have probably added another year to the war. Dan Van Der Vat has produced a magnificent tribute to the men and women who filled the widest imaginable roles in the preparation and execution of the invasion of Europe. This book revitalises our knowledge and understanding of D-Day and prepares us for the sixtieth anniversary of the day that changed the fate of millions of people.

The author has produced a well-written text, a superb collection of black and white and colour photographs, clear maps, paintings, interviews, an index, bibliography, and web sites, which make this book a fitting tribute to those who died and those who survived D-Day. For our part, we can respect and celebrate their sacrifice by reading and learning from this account.

It was a drama in which the elements of nature, sea, wind and sky, almost conspired to harm the passage of the great armada as much as the fierce resistance of the well-prepared and skilled German troops, who crouched behind their heavy defences protected by numerous ingenious devices prepared to kill or wound the invaders. Van Der Vat has provided the reader with a feast of new material, maps, diagrams, small and novel stories, accounts of ideas and equipment, deceptions, tricks and training, all of which were brought to bear to make