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OPINION

LETTERS

Russian annexation of Crimea

Professor Graeme Gill's paper on the Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 (*United Service* **65** (2), 9 – 12, 2014) was both instructive and insightful. In my opinion, a compelling reason Russia will not give up Crimea is because too much Russian blood has been spilt defending the land.

Crimea was part of the Ottoman Empire from the 15th to the 18th centuries. When the Russians took possession in 1783, it was the first time land had been lost by the Ottoman Empire. The 1853-1856 Crimean War between Russia and the Ottomans, with France, England and Sardinia also opposing Russia, ended in a truce. Russia lost thousands of men, women and children, particularly during the defence of Sevastopol which was under siege for a year. Russia also lost territory but retained Crimea. During World War II, many bloody battles were fought in Crimea with Sevastopol again under siege from October 1941 to July 1942.

Apart from Sevastopol being Russia's only warm water port, Balaklava was the nuclear submarine base during the Cold War. It is now a most interesting museum and has strong sentimental attachment for Russians.

Don Faithfull

Arcadia, 18 August 2014