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Australian Army Reservists supporting Operation Bushfire Assist 2019-20 worked with the Rotary Club of Corryong to remove and replace 31km of bushfire affected fencing in Corryong, Victoria. [Photo: Trooper Jonathan Goedhart, Department of Defence].
United Service
Journal of the Royal United Services Institute
for Defence and Security Studies
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Informing the defence and national security debate since 1947

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United Service is published quarterly. It seeks to inform the defence and national security debate in Australia and to bring an Australian perspective to that debate internationally. To this end, the journal publishes papers presented at meetings and seminars organised by the Institute. Contributed papers dealing with defence and national security issues or military history also will be published, together with relevant opinion pieces, letters to the editor, biographies, obituaries and book reviews. Before acceptance, contributions are refereed and edited.

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Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies
New South Wales
Promoting understanding of defence and national security since 1888

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President’s Column

Welcome to the March 2020 issue of United Service, a highly professional journal now in its 73rd year of continuous publication. This issue contains a review of the significant issues that have influenced global defence and security in 2019; incidents that occurred during the 1982 Falklands War where ethical decisions were made contrary to the Laws of Armed Conflict; and a summary of the three wars in Vietnam post the end of World War II. I am sure you will enjoy reading it.

Sadly, in early 2020, we lost our former President and Chief of the Naval Staff, Vice Admiral David Leach AC CBE LVO – see obituary p. 18. We also lost Brigadier Paul Blood AM, former Commander of the 5th Brigade, and Colonel John Haynes AM, the driving force behind the magnificent Boer War Memorial in Anzac Parade, Canberra.

In response to the bushfire crisis over the Christmas period, significant elements of the Australian Defence Force, as well as elements from the defence forces of a number of other countries, were utilised in Operation Bushfire Assist. For the first time since World War II, 2,499 Reservists were called out for full-time service, with another 501 Reservists being utilised using reserve training days.

RUSI NSW is continuing to reap the benefits of interfacing with members of the public and our members in our new permanent home in the Centenary Extension of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park South, Sydney. We open four days a week and with more volunteers, we aim to open five days a week. We host visits to our library by Probus Clubs, RSL Sub-Branches, Men’s Sheds and other community groups. This is raising our profile in promoting an understanding of Australia’s defence and national security.

We have continued our stimulating programme of lunch-time lectures on defence and security issues, and visits to defence establishments, such as HMAS Watson, which provided a unique opportunity for our members to see Navy’s premier maritime warfare training and simulation establishment.

With the generous support of the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society, we have continued to progressively scan our extensive collection of maps.

I am also pleased to report that a small but positive start has been taken to revitalise the Board of our national body, the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies—Australia. I strongly support this work – a strong national body can only assist the on-going work of the individual USIs across Australia.

Paul Irving
INSTITUTE NEWS

Australia Day Honours 2019
The Institute congratulates the following members who were recognised in the 2020 Australia Day Honours:

- **Appointed a Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia**
  - Dr David Ronald Leece PSM RFD ED Beecroft, NSW, for significant service to the environment and to defence and security studies.

- **Awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service**
  - Brigadier Peter James Connor AM NSW. For distinguished performance of duties in warlike operations as the Commander of Task Group Afghanistan while deployed on Operation HIGHROAD from November 2017 to September 2018.

Upcoming Events

- **March Lunchtime-Lecture**
  - Tuesday, 31 March 2020, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
  - The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
  - **Speaker:** Professor Tanya Monro
    - Chief Defence Scientist
  - **Subject:** “The relevance to Australia’s security of big Moon shots”

- **April Lunchtime-Lecture**
  - Tuesday, 28 April 2020, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
  - The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
  - **Speaker:** Mr Graham Dobell
    - Journalist and Fellow, Australian Strategic Policy Institute
  - **Subject:** “Australia’s pivot to the Pacific”

- **May Lunchtime-Lecture**
  - Tuesday, 26 May 2020, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
  - The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
  - **Speaker:** Dr Simon Longstaff AO
    - Executive Director, St James Ethics Centre
  - **Subject:** “Ethics in the Australian Defence Force”

Battlefield Tours

- **Kokoda Trail Treks with Charlie Lynn in 2020**
  - Adventure Kokoda, operated by Institute Member Charlie Lynn OAM, offers treks from the 6-day Kokoda Enduro Trek ($2695), the 8-day Kokoda Trail Trek ($2895), the 8-day Kokoda History Trek ($3795), to the 10-day Charlie’s Premium Kokoda Campaign Trek ($4595). Trek dates: The next available treks in 2020 – Trail 2-11 May, 11-20 June, 2-11 July; History 15-25 April; Premium 9-20 May, 4-15 June. Details and Bookings: kokodatreks.com

- **Borneo Tours with Lynette Silver in 2020**
  - Sandakan-Ranau Death March Trek, 16-27 August. The 12-day itinerary includes six days of walking along a 95km section of the track escorted by Institute historian Lynette Silver AM. Accommodation is good standard (no camping). Price: $3300 per person, twin share, plus airfares. Details: https://sandakandeathmarch.com/tours/challenge-highlights-challenge-tour/

  - **Sandakan Remembrance Day Tour: 5-14 November.** This 9-day tour, which takes in all POW sites in Sabah, includes a wildlife excursion along jungle rivers and sightseeing off the beaten track. Price: $3095 per person, twin share, plus airfares. For more information on both tours, contact Lynette (lynettesilver@gmail.com). Bookings: Katherine, Wahroonga Travel: 02 0489 1978.

BOOK REVIEW

**Sydney Grammar School and the South African Boer War, 1899-1902**

by Mathew Glozier

*Dr Matthew Glozier: Darlinghurst, NSW; 2018; 294 pp.; ISBN 9781326533700 (hardback); RRP $49.00*

Apart from general histories of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) and a handful of Australian unit histories, very little has been written about Australia’s contribution to that war. This is a pity as the many histories of Australian individuals, towns and institutions relating to both World Wars gives readers much better understanding of the experiences of citizens in those contexts. Now, Dr Matthew Glozier, history master of Sydney Grammar School, has produced a superb history of those ex-students of the school who served in the Boer War.

The roster of old boys who took part in the war includes Sir Harry Chauvel, Banjo Paterson, John Macquarie Antill, K. K. McKellar (the poet Dorothea McKellar’s brother), James Gordon Legge and his brothers, and James A. K. Mackay (first director-general of the Australian Army Reserve raised for home defence in World War I).

Milverton Ford (New South Wales Lancers) was one of the few prisoners of the Boers to escape Watervale prison, Pretoria, and make it back through hostile country to his unit. This was a feat also achieved by Winston Churchill at approximately the same time.

David Cumming McLeod was the first member of an Australian contingent to be killed in action – at Sunnyside on 1 January 1900. Harry Chauvel and H. C. M. Featherstonhaugh, eventually served in three wars. Maurice Hales completed two tours of duty. Hubert Murray later became a renowned administrator of Papua and New Guinea; whilst Herbert Cox Taylor went on to design the first Rising Sun badge.

This is not just a history of old boys, but covers briefly the war itself, its background and analyses why Sydney Grammar School should have supported the war. In particular, he looks at the role played by the headmaster, Albert Weigall, in encouraging students in the military arts.

Finally, he covers the movement to memorialise those who had lost their lives in the conflict leading to a Memorial Board being produced in 1903 which still exists today.

The book includes letters from old Sydneians as well as a selection of Banjo Paterson’s South African poetry. Also included are brief biographies of 150 old Sydneians who served; a basic index of personalities; timeline of major battles; a brief glossary; and 14 black-and-white photos.

For those readers who would like to know how a domestic institution, in this case a school, responded to a national emergency, this book fills a void.

David Deasey

*Available as a print-on-demand book from Lulu Press Inc, Raleigh, North Carolina.*
The People’s Liberation Army Navy

Although China’s recent naval modernisation has substantially improved China’s naval capabilities, I do not know whether anybody outside the Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) itself knows what process the Chinese use in deciding how big a navy it will have and what it should comprise. The conventional western approach is to attempt to chart a path to some future date, come up with projections based on guesses of what will be around then as problems and issues for the national security, and try to counter them as far as the budget will allow by building new capability. It is a messy process which has rarely worked well; we always seem to get too many ships of the wrong kind and not enough of anything really appropriate. In the parlance of my day, it was called ‘come as you are warfare’.

I do not believe the Chinese are any smarter than others attempting this calculation. One might suggest that, because we in the West have gained a lot of experience in guessing the future through continuous successive attempts to do so, we might even have a slight edge. Our governmental systems do not ascribe any infallibility to the political party elected to office or to the head of government, as those of China do. On the contrary, in our societies, decisions on military equipment are subjected to all kinds of critical appraisal and comment – some of which might be illuminating – which does not occur in China.

China does not need all the ships it is building to defend its coastline (against what threat?), so they either envisage blocking the seaward approaches to East Asia with serried ranks of frigates and corvettes as an attrition force against an enemy on the attack (the World War II Japanese had similar views) or they are planning on sending them off around the world to do mischief elsewhere.

Of the first supposition, this is a bit like the English defence against the Spanish Armada in 1588. It worked then because the Spanish had lost the strategic initiative by needing to pick up an invading army in Flanders before attacking Britain. The English also had better ships and better armament served by well-trained people, their supply lines were shorter and they had cut their teeth on fighting the Spaniards. Even so, it was a closer-run thing than we now believe. Of the second supposition, expeditionary warfare is a tough problem, which needs lots of practice and really good logistic support (which the Armada also lacked).

But if President-for-life Xi has taken ‘expert’ advice and come up with a naval order of battle which he and his colleagues believe will make China the leading world power by 2050, then that is what the minions will be working on. The problem is that the ships they are building now will be razor blades by the time 2050 rolls round. And if there is any sure-fire way of completely distorting a Defence budget, then building aircraft carriers is a competitive contender. Deng Xiaoping had the right idea – ‘Bide your time, hide your strength’. Build a small number of good ships, work hard on improving their capability incrementally while training lots of sailors in making them efficient, and then tool up to mass produce them when the time comes to do so.

Finally, I do not believe anybody in the PLA or the Politburo has any plans for fighting the United States. It is not a matter of whether USS Dogpatch can defeat PLAN Dongfang in an arm wrestle at sea. It is rather a question of how much nuclear punishment the nation and economy might have to absorb if push came to shove. Oh yes; and the number of people you can afford to lose in the exchange. If there is a massive increase in bunker building in China, then we have a real problem to confront.

Ian Pfennigwerth

BEQUESTS

Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies
New South Wales, Incorporated

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, New South Wales, Incorporated was established in 1888. It seeks to promote understanding of defence and national security. Membership is available to anyone interested.

To allow us to continue to provide services to members and the community into the future, you could assist greatly by remembering the Institute in your will. The Institute should be referred to as the “Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, New South Wales, Incorporated [ABN 80 724 654 162]”. Should you desire assistance with adding an appropriate codicil to your will, please contact the Institute’s office manager on (02) 8262 2922.

Dr Ian Pfennigwerth is a member of the United Service Editorial Advisory Committee and the Institute’s Special Interest Group on Strategy. Before he retired from the Royal Australian Navy as a captain, he had been Australia’s Defence Attaché in Beijing. These are his personal views.

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The 2019 Sir Hermann Black Lecture: the year in review

A paper based on a presentation to the Institute on 10 December 2019 by

Andrew Greene
Defence Correspondent, Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Mr Greene reviews several significant issues that have influenced global defence and security in 2019. They include Chinese interference in Australia, its influence in the South Pacific and Australia’s response to it; global implications of the unrest in Hong Kong; the impact of Trump’s unpredictability on global security; and the role played by defence policy during Australia’s federal election and since.

Key words: Australia; China; Hong Kong; United States; South Pacific; defence; national security; foreign policy.

It is a great honour to be invited to deliver the 2019 Sir Hermann Black Lecture. We meet at the end of another complicated and intriguing year for Australia in global strategic and military terms. Gone are the recent years of high operational tempo for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in the Middle East, replaced largely by the growing challenges presented by the continuing uncertainty over the future direction of the United States alliance, the rapid rise of the People’s Republic of China and the steady, gradual erosion of public trust in traditional societal institutions such as Parliament and the press.

Today, I would like to reflect on the past year and then offer some insights I have recently gleaned into what could occur in 2020 and beyond.

I will firstly examine the Chinese Communist Party’s various political interference activities both here in Australia, and across the region, and the responses to it.

Secondly, I will briefly offer some reflections on the still unfolding situation in Hong Kong, which is arguably the biggest geopolitical story of 2019. It is a situation which I observed first hand earlier this year and one I believe has implications for Australia and like-minded nations.

Thirdly, while China remains Australia’s largest economic power, the United States is still this country’s strongest ally, so I will examine the continuing uncertainty over the future of the American alliance under the presidency of Donald Trump.

And finally, 2019 was also a significant year in federal politics. Although Defence did not feature prominently in this year’s election campaign, I will also offer some thoughts on where future policy debates may lead, particularly in the difficult area of defence industry.

Chinese Interference in Australia and the Pacific

For all its failings over the last couple of decades, the Australian Parliament can at least claim the distinction, dubious or not, to be among the Western world’s powerhouses for the production of new national security laws. Preventative detention, travel bans, metadata, and secrecy orders over court cases – all slid seamlessly off the legislative assembly line, delivered out to the spies and police who asked for them.

No wonder then that recently one of several influential politicians who helped champion the powers and manoeuvred them towards passage admitted to some tetchiness that there is not a lot to show for it. “We want a scalp”’, the senior figure was heard to bemoan over the past couple of months.

Even allowing for the fact that the work of intelligence and counter-terrorism agencies is necessarily done in secrecy, recent events suggest that Canberra’s national security community is now well aware of the anxiety – and is hankering for a few “scalps” of its own.

Revelations last month that the Chinese Communist Party may have plotted to install an agent in Australia’s Parliament have starkly brought into focus the highly-charged atmosphere and pressure now facing the country’s intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Department of Home Affairs

Since 2017, the Home Affairs Department has brought together the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) and the Australian Border Force, with the aim of better co-ordinating national security work.

Across the super-charged mega-department, there is a renewed sense of muscularity among its various agencies for going after would-be foreign meddlers targeting Australia’s sovereignty.

Duncan Lewis, the recently retired ASIO director-general, gave an early glimpse of this new-found resolve when he revealed the domestic spy agency was battling “unprecedented levels” of foreign interference. His successor, Mike Burgess, the previous head of the Australian Signals Directorate, is tipped to be even more forward leaning and candid with public statements in his role as the country’s new spy chief. Already the ASIO boss, who is also the first director-general of security to boast his own official Twitter account, has taken the historic step of issuing a press release to confirm his intelligence organisation was taking “seriously” the latest allegations of Beijing’s nefarious activities.

Similarly, the new AFP commissioner, Reece Kershaw, is widely expected to revamp the expertise in his organisation, allowing officers to better replicate some of the counter-espionage work of their United States
colleagues at the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Senior AFP figures say it is unfair to blame them for a “lack of scalps” so far, pointing to a drastic lack of funding, reductions in staff and age-old problems with information sharing between agencies.

“Ultimately I think the next thing we’re going to be looking at is a prosecution,” predicts leading China analyst, Alex Joske, from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. “Foreign interference laws have been introduced, we have transparency schemes for people acting on behalf of foreign governments to register themselves on, but to date there haven’t been prosecutions of people carrying out foreign interference in Australia. Yet every day we’re getting more evidence that it is happening.”

When Prime Minister Scott Morrison was asked recently why authorities had not yet made a single arrest on foreign interference, he pointed to the case of Chinese businessman, Huang Xiangmo, who was this year effectively barred from re-entering Australia. Mr Morrison also claimed that, when he spoke to other world leaders, they yearned for “the integration that we have between our agencies” and “the legal frameworks” that have controversially passed Federal Parliament in recent years. The Prime Minister also stressed his Government was always prepared to give security agencies any further powers or resources they needed to do their job.

For those close to Australia’s foreign interference frontline, it is abundantly clear their job now firmly involves “delivering scalps”.

**Hybrid Warfare**

Away from Australian soil, the Chinese Communist Party, and to some extent other competitor nations such as Russia and Iran, continue to deploy what is known as hybrid warfare, or “grey-zone” tactics against the Western world.

As the former intelligence chief and now author, Allan Gyngell, put it last year: “[T]he order we have known for the past seventy years has ended. It’s not being challenged. It’s not changing. It’s over.”

While talk of a “rules-based” order still persists in Canberra’s political and military circles, privately it is widely acknowledged that the concept no longer exists. Many consider the South China Sea a lost cause, where Beijing now effectively controls the crucial trading waters, and attention is turning to other areas of concern.

In a significant speech this year, the Chief of the Defence Force, Angus Campbell, warned that western democracies such as Australia were being “exposed” to grey-zone tactics, at which authoritarian regimes such as China excel.

General Campbell highlighted political warfare methods such as cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns (fake news) which he noted were particularly effective against democracies that promote openness and transparency.

He observed adversaries who deploy these grey-zone operations are: “… frequently built on the reality or rhetoric of revolution and looking out to the ‘Other’ as enemy, their conception of war is markedly different”, Campbell said. “Typically, these states cluster at the other end of the spectrum: where the people serve the state – as does the law – and all the other elements and institutions of society and state.”

His speech came just several months after Australia’s National Parliament fell victim to this new hybrid warfare, when a “sophisticated foreign state actor” (I will let you speculate which one) was blamed for launching a crippling cyber-attack which infiltrated almost every parliamantarian’s IT systems and took authorities a considerable period to detect.

**The Pacific**

Arguably, in 2019, China’s greatest strategic successes have been in the Pacific, where years of foreign aid cuts and general diplomatic ambivalence has allowed Beijing to fully exploit the vulnerabilities of some of Australia’s poorest neighbours.

In 2019, President Xi Jingping has managed to steadily pick off several tiny Pacific nations who had, until now, steadfastly continued to diplomatically recognise the island of Taiwan.

At the same time Beijing’s controversial Belt-and-Road programme has continued to surge ahead in the Pacific, despite warnings of debt-trap diplomacy and the often white-elephant infrastructure projects it delivers. While there is evidence of some regional pushback towards the Chinese government expansionist programme, during 2019, the program managed to gain a foothold in Australia after the Victorian Premier’s decision to sign up, a move which angered the Morrison government.

Australia’s belated response to China’s rise in its own backyard has been the “Pacific Step Up”, derided by some as the “Pacific Catch Up”. It is a worthy pursuit, but one I fear may be summarised as “too little, too late”. The Federal Government’s stance on global action to tackle climate change also has caused some setbacks to efforts to more properly re-engage with neighbours who have been neglected for many years.

In 2020, there are likely to be some further measures announced to help with the “Pacific Step Up”. Defence is progressively replacing the ageing Pacific Patrol Boat fleet with new, more capable Guardian-class boats for 12 nations, and there is unconfirmed speculation that perhaps a squadron of C-27J Spartan airlifters could soon be tasked with regular aerial surveillance patrols in the Pacific. This innovative idea of pairing RAAF aircraft with new patrol boats gifted by the Commonwealth would be a strategic investment China could simply not match.

Another development to watch in the New Year will occur in the Philippines where an Australian defence company has joined with a United States private equity firm to compete for the lease of a former ship yard in the strategic port of Subic Bay. A rival bid has been launched by a Chinese state-owned consortium, so the stakes for the strategic location are high. This year China has already managed to build a dual-use military port in Cambodia.

Closer to home, there is still constant speculation that the United States would like to open a new port facility just outside Darwin which could eventually be “dual purposed” to allow American marines to land equipment in the Northern Territory, away from the existing Chinese-leased Port of Darwin.
Hong Kong

This week the most recent pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong marked its six-month milestone. Many had predicted the anti-government demonstrations that began in middle of the year would have gradually evaporated, or worse, be brutally crushed by authorities from mainland China. Instead, the student-led protests, which have their origins in the 2014 “Umbrella Movement”, have gone from strength to strength as this year has dragged on.

Hong Kong’s highly anticipated district council elections held in November delivered a stunning rebuke to the Beijing-backed administration of Carrie Lam, and re-invigorated the protest-weary pro-democracy supporters. Just this week protest organisers estimated that 800,000 residents turned out for a peaceful march in what was one of the largest mass rallies through Hong Kong’s streets in months.

On the day I arrived in Hong Kong in late October, the Extradition Bill was formally withdrawn from the city’s legislature, but any hope from Beijing that this retreat would satisfy demonstrators was quickly dashed. To the constant refrain of “Five demands, not one less”, anti-government activists have continued to take to the streets, often deploying more violent tactics, to insist on further democratic reforms in the Chinese-controlled territory.

The months of protests have severely hurt the former British colony’s economy and reputation, and helped to officially plunge it into recession, but the stunning results in the district council elections suggest that the constant smell of tear gas wafting through Hong Kong has not deterred supporters of democracy.

It is very difficult for anyone to predict where the political situation in Hong Kong will go from here. Hong Kong’s status as a “Special Administrative Region” of China is set to expire in 2047, and the impression now is that Beijing is prepared to embark on a long-waiting game before exerting further control.

So why is this all important? During my two weeks in Hong Kong, locals would constantly remark that what was happening in the city was of global significance. They pleaded for Australia and other nations to continue to focus on what was happening, and to warn that if the Chinese Government was so easily able to push Hong Kong around without international condemnation, others, such as Taiwan, would be next. There is little doubt that Hong Kong and Taiwan are for Xi Jinping “unfinished business”, but it remains to be seen when and how the now Chinese President-For-Life will act on the two troublesome islands.

The United States Alliance

Back in early 2016, I went to visit one of the most senior figures in the ADF, in his Canberra office. We were supposed to have a chat about what was currently occurring in the Australian military but, at the time, the dominant story around the globe was the increasingly bizarre presidential primaries for the Republican Party.

At the time, Donald Trump was considered somewhat of a laughing stock around the world, and nobody seriously thought he would get anywhere near clinching the Republican Party nomination, let alone winning the White House.

As I chatted with this senior ADF figure, I asked him what he made of the spectacle. In hindsight his reply was quite telling. “It’s a sideshow, but I am starting to get worried about how long it’s dragging on. The longer it goes on the more worried I get.” If it were not for Donald Trump’s spectacular victory, I would probably have forgotten the conversation.

Once the initial shock of the political result had settled, Australian politicians, and ADF commanders, set about assuring each other that, despite whatever pronouncements were made by the new administration about United States allies having to “pull their weight” or “paying their share”, Australia’s alliance would remain rock solid as it always had.

Following every spectacular public spat between President Trump and a world leader, or after particularly bizarre White House leaks, diplomatic and defence officials would publicly and privately insist to their international friends that military co-operation and alliances were continuing as they always had, despite the political bluster.

Despite the assurances, distrust of the United States among Western allies has steadily increased since Donald Trump’s ascendancy. While the ANZUS alliance, to which Australia has paid a significant price in blood and treasure, remains rock solid, other relationships have been rattled. Nations such as Japan, South Korea and the Philippines have been forced to reassess long-standing arrangements and certainties, while organisations such as NATO have been forced to genuinely ponder their future.

For the first few years of the Trump presidency, there was a misguided view that the Trump era would soon be over, and some form of normality would soon return to United States foreign policy. Slowly, the realisation is dawning on governments and militaries around the world that this is unlikely, and that four more years of a Trump presidency needs to be prepared for, and all the uncertainty and unpredictability it brings.

As former prime minister, Kevin Rudd, argued in a speech in Canberra last month: “Australia must continue to consolidate its alliance with the United States. The alliance remains an enormous force multiplier for Australia at every level. It remains a critical factor impacting China’s long-term strategic perceptions of Australia. It creates greater respect in Beijing for Australia, not less, given that China continues to recognise the formidable capabilities of the United States armed forces and the closeness of the alliance relationship Canberra has with Washington.

I am not pessimistic about the future of the United States alliance, but I believe Australia must prepare for an increasingly challenging future. As the renowned defence analyst, Alan Dupont, observed on 10 December in The Australian:

“Anyone who doubts that the long peace in Asia has come to a precipitate end need only scan the latest news to see the confluence of geopolitical disturbances that has turned our once tranquil region into a combustible zone of conflict and strategic rivalry. Last

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1Australia, New Zealand, United States
2North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
month, South Korea and Japan scrambled fighters to intercept Russian and Chinese bombers intruding into their air defence identification zones. China rails against mooted United States missile deployments to the region and arms supplies to Taiwan, making clear that it will use force if necessary, to reunify Taiwan with the mainland. India and Pakistan are at loggerheads over disputed Kashmir, Hong Kong is in turmoil, North Korea has resumed ballistic missile testing and Beijing is tightening its control of the South China Sea by continuing to militarise artificial islands, heaving Vietnam and The Philippines and establishing what looks suspiciously like a new military base in Cambodia. East Timor may be next."

Federal Election, Defence Policy, Defence Industry

In April 2019, the Prime Minister fired the starter's gun on a five-week election campaign which he was widely tipped to lose. Most political insiders (from both sides), commentators, journalists and pollsters wrongly predicted the Coalition would fail to secure a third term under its third leader.

As is often the case during Australian elections, during the five-week campaign there was virtually no mention of defence or security policy, with the notable exception of a spectacular intervention by former prime minister, Paul Keating.

In an interview with the ABC after Federal Labor's campaign launch, Mr Keating stridently attacked the heads of Australia's intelligence agencies declaring "the n utter are in charge". According to Mr Keating, these organisations had "lost their strategic bearings" and he urged Opposition Leader Bill Shorten to "clean them out" if he won the May election.

He took particular aim at a former journalist, the one-time Fairfax Beijing correspondent, John Garnaut, who then became an adviser to Malcolm Turnbull and helped to write a classified report for ASIO on Chinese influence in Australia. Paul Keating said: "Once that Garnaut guy came back from China and Turnbull gave him the ticket to go and hop into the security agencies, they've all gone Berkow ever since. When you have got the ASIO chief knocking on MP's doors, you know something's wrong."

There's no doubt Paul Keating wanted to make a lasting impression on the campaign, but it is likely his comments produced the opposite outcome to what he was hoping. The attack on Australia's intelligence agencies drew an instant rebuke from the Prime Minister and prompted the Opposition Leader to quickly endorse them. "We've worked very well with the national security agencies – they know that, and we know that – and of course we will continue that", Bill Shorten said.

In my view, Mr Keating's comments and subsequent rebukes, also served the purpose of guaranteeing the survival of one of Canberra's most formidable figures, the secretary of the Home Affairs Department, Mike Pezzullo, no matter who won the election. Since his time as an advisor to former Labor Leader Kim Beazley, Mike Pezzullo has pushed for the establishment of a mega Home Affairs Department, but many current Labor MPs had been agitating for Bill Shorten to remove the former Kim Beazley staffer.

Apart from Mr Keating's intervention, there was virtually no debate or policy differences between the major parties on national security or defence during the campa ign. Labor, however, did suggest, if it won office, it would allow a "brief pause" to assess the progress on the massive Future Submarine Programme, a policy which the current government would be wise to embrace.

Over the past year, I and others have reported on the various difficulties and delays the French-run programme is experiencing, only to be met with furious denials by government. Finally, last month, we had the first hint of formal confirmation that the plan to design a new, highly complex, conventionally-powered fleet of 12 submarines may not be going as well as we had been told.

Appearing before Senate Estimates, Rear Admiral Gregory Sammut acknowledged the programme is now estimated to cost $225 billion to build and maintain. Construction on the first boat we were also told would not begin until a year later than expected in 2024. Conservatively, I estimate the programme is already running 18-months late, and we have not yet completed the preliminary designs.

In the year ahead expect defence industry policy to be a dominant theme, as local Australian companies grow louder in their dissatisfaction at how many dollars are heading overseas to the large primes. Already, the Australian Industry and Defence Network has called for an urgent review of the Australian Industry Capability programme. These concerns will only grow in 2020.

Conclusion

Perhaps not since the Battle of Midway have Australians felt genuinely threatened at home by a foreign power. Three generations of Australians, myself included, have enjoyed the peace and stability brought about by the old "rules-based" order. What is not certain is whether the fourth generation of Australians will be so lucky. I fear the fifth generation will almost certainly not be so fortunate.

The Author: Andrew Greene is a journalist who has been a defence correspondent for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) since 2015. Following graduation in Communications from the University of Canberra in 2005, he served as a federal political reporter for commercial television and radio before joining the ABC in a similar role in 2010. In 2012-2013, he served as a general reporter for the Prague Post in the Czech Republic, before returning to the ABC. As ABC defence correspondent, he has reported from Afghanistan, Iraq, the United States and Asia, as well as on assignments across Australia. He has participated in two international emerging leadership dialogues; and was awarded the Elizabeth O'Neill Journalism Award by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2018.

*Major defence industry contractors
During armed conflict, military personnel can be faced with situations where they have to make an ethical decision which at times may be contrary to the Laws of Armed Conflict. This is more poignant now with the current investigations into incidents involving Australian, United States and British armed forces in Afghanistan and Iraq and the British Army's involvement in Northern Ireland. This paper will look at two incidents that took place during the Falklands War in 1982 and whether or not the actions taken by the individuals concerned were ethical.

Ethics

Ethics is a system of moral principles, by which human actions and proposals may be judged good or bad or right or wrong\(^2\). An ethical decision is one where a person makes a difficult choice when faced with an ethical dilemma, a situation in which there is no clear right or wrong answer.

The Falklands War

The Falklands War was a 10-week war between Argentina and Britain over two British-Dependent Territories in the South Atlantic: the Falkland Islands, and its territorial dependency, the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands. It began on Friday, 2 April 1982, when Argentina invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands in an attempt to establish the sovereignty it had claimed over them.

On 5 April, the British government dispatched a naval task force to engage the Argentine Navy and Air Force before making an amphibious assault on the islands. The conflict lasted 74 days and ended with the Argentine surrender on 14 June 1982, returning the islands to British control.

Although the British casualties were significantly lower than the planners had anticipated for such a short conflict, they were still high: 255 personnel were killed, 775 were wounded and 115 taken prisoner. Additional Argentine losses included 9 ships, 25 helicopters and 100 aircraft\(^3\).

Incident A: Battle for Goose Green

The first incident, in which an unarmed Argentine prisoner-of-war (POW) was shot dead, took place in the hours following the Battle of Goose Green. Goose Green is located on a neck of land about 20km south of where the initial British amphibious landings took place at San Carlos Water.

The Battle for Goose Green took place on the night of 27/28 May 1982 between 450 members of the 2\(^{nd}\) Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (2 Para), which formed part of 3 Commando Brigade (3 Cdo Bde) and an Argentine force of over 1200 combat troops. The attack on Goose Green was mainly a political decision rather than a tactical one for, although Goose Green and the neighbouring settlement of Darwin were well defended by Argentine forces, they had been deemed of no strategic value for the British in the campaign to recapture the Falklands and initial plans for the land campaign had been for them to be bypassed.

The landings at San Carlos had slowed down due to the need to get sufficient troops and equipment ashore from the fleet of ships anchored in Falkland Sound. Since the initial landings, no offensive ground operations had been conducted, but the British endured significant losses and damage to ships in the area of the landing from Argentine air attacks.

Back in Britain, the British Joint Headquarters was coming under increasing pressure from the British Government for an early ground offensive. As a result of this pressure, the ground force commander, Brigadier Julian Thompson, was ordered to mount an attack on the Argentine forces at Goose Green and the nearby settlement of Darwin.

On 26 May, 2 Para moved south to attack Goose Green, arriving at Camilla Creek House in the early hours of 27 May 1982 between 450 members of the 2\(^{nd}\) Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (2 Para), which formed part of 3 Commando Brigade (3 Cdo Bde) and an Argentine force of over 1200 combat troops. The attack on Goose Green was mainly a political decision rather than a tactical one for, although Goose Green and the neighbouring settlement of Darwin were well defended by Argentine forces, they had been deemed of no strategic value for the British in the campaign to recapture the Falklands and initial plans for the land campaign had been for them to be bypassed.

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On 26 May, 2 Para moved south to attack Goose Green, arriving at Camilla Creek House in the early hours of 27 May. The following evening, C Company (C Coy) advanced to clear the way to the start line with B Coy taking the western side of the isthmus and A Coy covering...
the eastern side. D Coy followed behind to mop up any enemy stragglers.

At 0335h, the naval bombardment of the Argentine positions commenced as 2 Para, with bayonets fixed, crossed the start line. The terrain was open, rolling and treeless with grassy outcrops covered in gorse making camouflage and concealment extremely difficult. A Coy cleared Burnside House killing two Argentine soldiers and freeing some civilians who had been held captive. D Coy advanced through the centre coming across an enemy position comprising of six well dug-in trenches. The position was successfully assaulted, but the Paras lost three killed.

A Coy then assaulted Coronation Point, which was undefended, and then headed towards Darwin Hill as B Coy moved towards Bocca House. At Darwin Hill, A Coy met fierce resistance and was caught in the open as the advance slowed. As the assault began to falter, Lieutenant Colonel ‘H’ Jones, the commanding officer of 2 Para, sent a number of his men forward to the lip of the hill to try to gain the advantage. As they advanced over the hill, they came under heavy enemy fire resulting in the adjutant, Captain Dave Wood, A Coy second-in-command, Captain Chris Dent, and Corporal Hardman being killed.

Colonel Jones identified an enemy position and attempted to outflank it. As he charged up the hill, he was shot in the neck and died of his wounds sometime later. As a result of this action, Colonel Jones was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. A Coy broke through the Argentine defences as B Coy cleared Bocca House with one Para killed and 50 Argentine prisoners taken.

The next objective was the final assault on the School House and airfield at Goose Green. During the attack on the School House, a white flag was raised over the Argentine position. Assuming the Argentines wanted to surrender, Lieutenant Jim Barry moved forward with two non-commissioned officers to take the surrender. As they did, the Argentineans opened fire killing all three. Fourteen Paras attacked the School House shortly afterwards using M79s, white phosphorus grenades and light-machine-guns, the intense fire power breaking the enemy’s defence. The explosions from the attack on the School House set it on fire turning it into a cauldron of death and an unknown number of Argentine soldiers perished in the blaze.

The battle continued for a few more hours until the Argentines finally surrendered. At the end of the battle, some 50 Argentine soldiers were dead and 1200 taken prisoner. 2 Para lost 18 killed; the majority were officers and senior non-commissioned officers, including half of the command team, and 64 were wounded.

**Corporal H Incident**

Following the battle, prisoners were used to clear the battlefield, during which the incident involving Corporal H took place. Corporal H was a combat medical technician (CMT) from the Para Clearing Troop of 16 Field Ambulance (16 Fd Amb) attached to 2 Para.

Next to the POW camp was a pile of Argentine ammunition. The proximity of the ammunition to the prisoners posed a threat to both the prisoners and those guarding them as it was suspected that the pile had been booby-trapped. While relocating the ammunition, one of the shells ignited. Four Argentine prisoners were caught in the explosion. One was killed outright, two were seriously injured, the fourth was engulfed in flames. It was obvious that he was still alive as his screams for help could be clearly heard by the soldiers in the vicinity. It was impossible to reach the burning soldier and the only humane thing that could be done for him in the eyes of the Paras was for him to be shot. Corporal H, without hesitation, raised his sub-machine-gun and fired a burst into the Argentine soldier who immediately fell to the ground silent.

The Incident was reported to higher command, although it was unclear who reported it. It was intended to charge Corporal H for what was seen as a war crime. However, no charges were ever laid as a statement was made by a senior Argentine officer who witnessed the incident. In the statement, the officer stated that all that was humanely possible had been done to try to save the unfortunate soldier and, when it became clear that nothing could be done to save him the only action left other than letting the soldier succumb to an agonising death was to shoot him.

**Incident B: Disaster at Bluff Cove**

The second incident took place in the Logistic Ship Landing (LSL) Sir Galahad at Bluff Cove. In this incident, a British soldier was shot dead by a fellow soldier.

On 8 June 1982, the LSL Sir Galahad lay ablaze and sinking in Fitzroy Inlet, close to Bluff Cove, 56 of her crew and embarked force were dead and 175 were terribly injured and burned. Sir Galahad and her sister ship, Sir Tristram, had been hit by air attack. Sir Tristram had been strafed by Argentine aircraft, resulting in the death of two of her crew-members. A 500-lb bomb penetrated the deck but failed to explode immediately, allowing the remaining crew to be evacuated. Following the later explosion, she was abandoned and grounded in shallow waters. The Sir Galahad did not sink as a result of the attack. She was towed out to sea by HMS Onyx and sunk as a war grave on 21 June 1982.

The incident was named the “Bluff Cove Disaster” by the media and was the heaviest single loss of life suffered.
by Britain during the Falklands War. In the post-Falklands euphoria, there was little enthusiasm for raking over an incident that had the potential to ignite bitter inter-service acrimony. The lessons from the incident were not widely promulgated and soon forgotten. It was generally written off as a calculated risk that did not pay-off; a misfortune of war.

This tragedy, though, was not simply an accident of war. This loss of life was the predictable consequence of a series of decisions, each based on single-service mindsets and contrary to the principles of amphibious warfare. The incident could have been a lot worse.

Following the securing of the beachhead at San Carlos by 3 Cdo Bde, by 5 June their war maintenance stores were ashore and their leading units were over half way to their objective – the Argentine Force Headquarters at Port Stanley. London, not confident that the three Royal Marine and two Parachute Regiment Battalions were sufficient to defeat the larger Argentine force, had ordered 5 Infantry Brigade (5 Inf Bde) to the Falklands. This was a non-amphibious formation based on a Guards Brigade of Welsh and Scots Guards bolstered by the 1/7 Gurkha Rifles.

5 Inf Bde was to be allocated the southern flank of the Island while 3 Cdo Bde took the north. Initially 3 Cdo Bde had five battalions while 5 Inf Bde had only three. 2 Para was passed from 3 Cdo Bde to 5 Inf Bde giving both Brigades four battalions. To command the two brigades, a skeleton divisional headquarters was formed, commanded by a Royal Marine, Major General Jeremy Moore, and staffed by a mix of Army and Royal Marines.

2 Para received information that Fitzroy Settlement and Bluff Cove had been temporarily abandoned by the Argentines, so they commandeered an RAF Chinook to seize the settlements. It was a vital advanced foothold, but had potential to be a bridge too far.

The Paras were now isolated and much closer to enemy forces than to friendly forces. No amount of fighting spirit could compensate for their lack of artillery and shortage of ammunition and food. They had only what they stood up in. If the remainder of 5 Inf Bde could be brought up to join them, it would consolidate and balance the lop-sided British advance.

Major General Moore ordered 5 Inf Bde to get itself forward to support the isolated Paras. Commodore Amphibious Warfare [now known as the Commander UK Task Group (COMUKTG)] assumed this would be a coastal hook and drew up contingency plans accordingly. 5 Inf Bde, however, decided to push the Welsh Guards forward overland. The distance was approximately 20 miles; the going proved very difficult; and after 12 hours they were called back. By the following morning, the Welsh Guards had straggled back to their start point, minus much of their equipment.

The British force was about to conduct a subsidiary amphibious operation, but neither of the in-theatre 2-star headquarters issued an initiating directive. This was the first and most important step causing this disaster. The initiating directive is the foundation of an amphibious operation and appoints the two key commanders – commander amphibious task force and commander landing force. As a result of no initiating directive, there was huge confusion. The amphibious ships, full of troops and equipment, would therefore have to move mostly at night.

The plan comprised moving the Scots Guards forward half way in HMS Intrepid, a landing platform dock. She would then disembark the troops on the last leg using her four landing craft utility (LCUs). After launching her landing craft, Intrepid would withdraw to the relative safety of San Carlos then repeat the operation with the Welsh Guards the following night using HMS Fearless.

The second step to disaster came about due to the events on the night of 5/6 June. Intrepid launched her four LCUs, containing 600 Scots Guards, somewhat short of the planned drop-off. As they headed east, HMS Cardiff was prowling the approaches to Port Pleasant looking for the nightly Argentine C-130 resupply flight. This was the only way the Argentines could resupply due to the Royal Navy closing the sea routes.

At the same time, 5 Inf Bde’s signals officer and a rebroadcast team were flying forward in a Gazelle helicopter looking for a site from which they could provide a radio rebroadcast communication post between Bluff Cove and San Carlos. Cardiff, the LCUs and the Gazelle were each unaware of the others’ presence as they were all under different commands.

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Cardiff detected an aircraft flying low along the coastline, the route that the C-130 was believed to be using. She destroyed it with a Sea Dart missile. It was the 5 Inf Bde rebroadcast team helicopter. The consequent inability to communicate with Bluff Cove further compounded the disaster.

A little later, Cardiff detected four surface contacts, about the size of patrol boats and prepared to engage. They were, in fact, Intrepid’s LCUs each carrying 150 men! Fortunately, she fired a star shell to illuminate them, rather than firing on radar data.

The 3rd step to disaster occurred the following night. Fearless repeated the operation with the Welsh Guards embarked, but there was one difference. She took only two landing craft, pre-loaded with Welsh Guards’ heavy equipment. Intrepid's landing craft, left behind the previous night, would come out to meet her from Bluff Cove, where they had been sheltering since delivering the Scots Guards the previous night. The remainder of the Welsh Guards were to travel in Intrepid's craft, but they never came. Consequently, only half the troops could be taken to Bluff Cove that night. The weather had worsened considerably during the night of 6 June and a shortage of LCUs meant it was only possible to send half the battalion of Welsh Guards, the balance returned to Goose Green in Fearless. A third night move was now necessary, increasing the chances of an Argentine attack. There was only one ship available for this, the LSL, Sir Galahad.

The task force headquarters deemed any further move by the assault ships as too risky and offered up two RFA, Sir Tristram and Sir Galahad. The Sir Tristram was committed to moving stores and ammunition and arrived at Fitzroy on 7 June. Sir Galahad embarked with the remaining Welsh Guards, 16 Fd Amb and smaller contingents of other units.

On 8 June, the third wave was to land at Bluff Cove. The landing is usually the most fraught phase of an amphibious operation and so it proved on this occasion. Galahad was ordered to go to Fitzroy, several hours’ march from Bluff Cove, as the anchorage at Bluff Cove was visible to enemy forward air controllers in the Stanley Hills and the beach was only accessible for short tidal windows.

The problem that 16 Fd Amb had with their disembarkation was that all the Fd Amb medical equipment had been loaded into the hold of the Galahad first followed by pallets of ammunition and the Welsh Guards mortar platoon. This meant that, once at Fitzroy, the equipment could not be off-loaded until the mortar platoon and ammunition had been off-loaded. The Galahad had arrived at Fitzroy at first light, but was still almost fully loaded when the air attacks came in at approximately 1300h.

Within minutes, 56 men were dead and many more injured. There was no panic among the personnel on board and the life boats and rafts were launched within seconds. Electrical power failed almost instantaneously after the ship was hit. It was impossible to fight any of the fires.

Lance Corporal B Incident

Lance Corporal B was a CMT in B Section 16 Fd Amb. After loading all the Fd Amb equipment into the hold of Sir Galahad, B Section was packed into the hold along with the Welsh Guard’s mortar platoon, who had two of the Fd Amb medics attached to them – Lance Corporal Ian ‘Scouse’ Farrell and Private Kenny Preston.

As half the hold was taken up by the Fd Amb equipment and crates of ammunition, with the Mortar Platoon taking up the remaining space, members of B Section tried to find a gap where they could throw their gear and catch some sleep before the disembarking at Fitzroy.

Lance Corporal B, Scouse and Kenny were good mates having served in 16 Fd Amb for the past three years. As it would be a few hours before reaching Fitzroy, those who wanted to grab a quick shower could have one. Lance Corporal B and the rest of B Section proceeded up the stairs to the cabins.

Several hours later, Lance Corporal B was on his way to the canteen when there was a loud whoosh followed by several more. The air suddenly turned black, filling with thick dark smoke and the sound of ammunition exploding. The force of one of these explosions threw Lance Corporal B up a flight of metal stairs landing in what felt like warm mush – this later turned out to be the remains of one of the crew.

Feeling through the dark, Lance Corporal B managed to find his way up to one of the decks and managed to get outside. The scene that greeted him was unimaginable. There were broken and burnt bodies everywhere, some were blackened from head to toe while others had limbs missing.

In a situation like this you would expect there to be panic, but the scene was amazingly calm. There were soldiers moving around the deck locating wounded and assessing if anything could be done for them. As the casualties were treated, they were off-loaded over the side of the Galahad into waiting landing craft and life boats and evacuated to the shore.

Lance Corporal B located a soldier beneath a pile of twisted burning metal that had a traumatic amputation of his left leg and part of the left side of his face was missing. Miraculously, he was still alive. With the aid of another soldier, Lane Corporal B worked to release the casualty. Due to the intense heat that had followed the initial explosions, there was very little bleeding. The casualty was loaded into a Neil Robertson stretcher and carefully lowered over the side.

Having a quick look around to see if there were any more casualties in the vicinity, Lance Corporal B began to climb over the rails. As he began to descend over the side he heard a familiar voice screaming his name and turned to see a burning figure standing in the doorway of the stairs leading down into the hold.

Lance Corporal B swung back over the rail and attempted to reach the soldier who he believed to be either Scouse or Kenny but could not be sure as the soldier was engulfed in flames. Due to the intense heat, Lance Corporal B was unable to reach the burning figure. Looking down on the deck, Lance Corporal B caught the glimpse of metal beneath some debris and reached out to find a sub-machine-gun with a magazine in place. Picking up the weapon, Lance Corporal B removed the magazine (Continued on page 17)
Vietnam has experienced centuries of foreign interference and occupation, internal conflict and civil war. Its history is complex, intertwined with those of neighbouring countries – Laos, Cambodia, China and Mongolia. At this point in its history, the words of General Kiet ring true; the people of Vietnam have prevailed, the north and south are united and are no longer under external rule.

Vietnam’s independence is a direct result of the Indochina Wars of 1946-1975. The period can be divided into three:

- the 1st Indo-China War or ‘The French War’ (1946-1954);
- the 2nd Vietnam War or ‘The American War’ (1960-1973); and
- the 3rd Vietnam War (1975).

The Chinese occupied Vietnam for a thousand years until ejected in 938 AD. Then followed three unsuccessful invasions in the 13th century by the Mongol, Kublai Khan. In 1857, the French arrived in retaliation for the persecution of its Catholic missionaries and, by 1883, had conquered Cochinchina (much of Vietnam, Cambodia and later, Laos). Throughout that harsh French regime of nearly one hundred years, Vietnamese resistance simmered as nationalism intensified in the pursuit of change, eventually by violent revolution. Headed by Moscow-trained revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese Communism was born in 1925, but the French brutally suppressed any Viet armed resistance during the 1920s and 1930s.

In World War II, the Japanese occupied Vietnam from 1940 to the war’s end in 1945 but, upon the allied victory, a political hiatus was created. The Viet Minh (the military arm of the Vietnam Independence League) occupied Hanoi and, a few days later in September 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared an independent Vietnam. However, after British and Chinese troops arrived to take the Japanese surrender, France swiftly re-established its strict control. Armed resistance to this by the Viet Minh, commanded by Vo Nguyen Giap, saw the beginning of the 1st Indo-China War in November 1946.

**Map 1:** Indo-China: much of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

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The Viet Minh fought the French using mainly guerrilla tactics, initially avoiding any major conventional warfare confrontation. Then in 1953, the Viet Minh intensified its offensive against the French who retaliated by setting a trap in a valley town called Dien Bien Phu near the Laotian border, blocking a trade route and hoping to lure the Viet Minh into a major showdown. About 13,000 troops of the French Expeditionary Force (including the French Foreign Legion plus Moroccan and Algerian regiments) developed a string of forts in the valley. They strengthened their defences against any ground assault, erroneously believing that the Viet Minh would never be able to use artillery from the rugged mountains surrounding the valley fortifications. Over a
period of six months however, the Viet Minh hacked precipitous tracks through the rugged and inhospitable terrain to haul their artillery to dominant positions overlooking the French. Four divisions of about 51,000 Viet Minh troops surrounded the French base and, in a succession of mass human-wave assaults with artillery barrages, followed by a siege, then more overwhelming attacks, the Viet Minh were victorious in 1954.

As they were being overrun and annihilated, the French troops transmitted their last radio message from the Foreign Legion command post at Dien Bien Phu: “The enemy has overrun us. We’re blowing everything up – goodbye, our families. Adieu.” That battle, that defeat, brought an end to French rule.

Under the Geneva Peace Accords, the French pulled out of Indochina permanently and Vietnam was temporarily partitioned at the 17th parallel, with a plan for unification to be decided by vote in 1956. North of the 17th Parallel, Ho Chi Minh presided with General Vo Nguyen Giap as his military commander. To the south were mainly non-Communists, ruled by the newly appointed premier (later president) Ngo Dinh Diem.

**Lead up (1954-60) to the 2nd Vietnam War**

The election to decide if north and south were to be unified never occurred. The south argued that a free election was impossible under the conditions existing in the communist-held territory, while the north believed it could gain full control without an election because of the south’s internal religious and military turmoil. Consequently, the north in flagrant breach of the Geneva agreement, began a guerilla campaign in the south where the Viet Cong (or VC – the insurgent military arm of the South Vietnamese Communists), joined soon after by North Vietnamese Army (NVA) cadres, conducted a campaign of terror, particularly by assassination of government officials and murder within the villages. That infiltration into South Vietnam by the NVA began as early as 1959.

The United States of America (US) who, since 1950, had been supporting French Indo-China and then South Vietnam with substantial military and economic aid, introduced military advisers in 1955. US General Williams warned that the likely NVA military action would be conventional warfare with a Korean War-like invasion, so he erroneously advised the disbandment of South Vietnam’s light infantry divisions. Had these remained, the south would have been better organised to oppose the eventual insurgent-type penetration throughout their outlying regions and villages.

**The 2nd Vietnam War, ‘the American War’ (1960-73)**

In 1960, the Communist National Liberation Front (NLF) (the political arm of the VC) was formed in Hanoi to direct all operations in South Vietnam. The US increased its training advisers in response. By 1961, the situation had seriously deteriorated, so the US advisers were assigned to South Vietnamese field units to directly advise the combat commanders. By 1962, the number of US advisers and logistic support personnel had escalated to 11,000. That year was also when Australia’s military advisers were first deployed. Notwithstanding, within a few years, the NLF boasted dominance over much of the south where it gradually took control of regional areas.

In late 1963, there occurred within three weeks of each other, a *coup d’état* in South Vietnam with the assassination of President Diem and then, in the US, the assassination of President John Kennedy. Lyndon B. Johnson became the US president and was faced with the tough decision of whether to increase American involvement in Vietnam or to pull out while he still could. The deciding factor was the Tonkin Gulf incident of August 1964 when the destroyer USS *Maddox* (conducting signals intelligence or SIGINT operations) was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats allegedly in international waters.

This caused President Johnson to react dramatically with retaliatory air strikes into North Vietnam. The NVA attacked villages and military posts in the south, which in turn led to American combat units being deployed into South Vietnam in March 1965. Bombing raids on North Vietnam continued with Operation *Rolling Thunder* and by late 1965 there were over 300,000 American troops stationed south of the 17th Parallel.

**Contributing Nations**

When the US called for international assistance, it received both logistic and combat troops. From a total of
30 nations called the ‘Free World’ Forces, only six provided combat troops – the US, South Korea, Thailand, Philippines, Australia and New Zealand. The Australian contribution peaked at over 8000 troops in 1969 for a total of over 50,000 for the war’s duration. The maximum number of US troops in Vietnam at any one time was about 550,000 in mid 1968, while South Vietnamese troops numbered over 900,000.

The Americans and the South Vietnamese Army (the ARVN – Army of the Republic of Vietnam) operated throughout South Vietnam, while the Australian and New Zealand troops remained mainly in III Corps (see Map 3) to the south-east of Saigon with its task force base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy Province.

**The Enemy**

The VC referred to itself as a liberation army, aimed at overthrowing the South Vietnamese government and unifying north and south into one nation. Despite the general belief in America and Australia that it was a civil war in the south involving just the Viet Cong against the government and its forces, it was in fact both VC and North Vietnamese armies fighting there. Indeed, in effect, it was an invasion by NVA main force formations assisting regional and local VC units. Both Russia and China supported their Communist allies logistically and Russia also with military advisers.

Reinforcements and supplies for the NVA and VC combat troops mainly travelled from China and North Vietnam through the neutral neighbours, Cambodia and Laos, and then across the borders into South Vietnam. Known as the Ho Chi Minh trail, this was a network of routes with multiple entry points into South Vietnam; and was in parts like a multi-lane highway through the rugged mountains and elsewhere was just narrow jungle tracks.

**Strategies**

The enemy confronted by the Free World forces was initially quite different from that encountered in more conventional wars. This was an enemy fighting as insurgents who generally (but not always) avoided sustained confrontation with allied forces, preferring to be secreted away in its jungle and mountain hideaways and tunnel complexes, to then launch hit-and-run offensives at opportune times. The allied air superiority was a major reason for this. At times, however, the NVA/VC launched major offensives against the large towns and cities in the south. As the war progressed, the NVA became more involved in conventional warfare, particularly in I Corps where its lines of communication to North Vietnam were shorter. One attempt, the NVA’s ‘Easter Offensive’ of March 1972, was annihilated by US air strikes and bombing.

In the Australian experience, examples of major direct enemy confrontations occurred at Long Tan, Fire Support Bases Coral and Balmoral and in the village of Binh Ba.

In I Corps, the US Marines were involved in both counter-guerrilla operations and conventional warfare, where major battles sometimes occurred with tanks, infantry and artillery on both sides. Although the Americans had air supremacy there, the North Vietnamese air force did challenge US bombers over Hanoi.

By and large, American Generals Harkins’ and Westmoreland’s use of World War II firepower and aerial bombing, a strategy designed to combat the modern Soviet threat in open warfare, was inappropriate in Vietnam. Westmoreland rejected a counter-insurgency approach – he rejected the British experience from the Malayan emergency and did not seek French advice from the Indo-China War. Westmoreland emphasised ‘body count’ in ‘search-and-destroy’ operations and rejected both ‘pacification’ (by winning the hearts and minds of the people) and ‘Vietnamisation’ (building military self-reliance). Westmoreland’s successor, General Abrams, reversed this with considerable success in 1969.

When the enemy did commit their large-sized units to conventional battles they were usually orchestrated to achieve maximum political and public relations advantage by coinciding it with an outside event, such as a US presidential or congressional election.

By 1968, the South Vietnamese allies had reversed the tide and were winning most of the battles as the VC and NVA sustained huge casualties. On the other hand,
the north was far more adept at swaying public opinion, effectively using public relations as a principle of war.

The Battle of Khe Sanh

Of all the major battles, too many to detail here, one must be mentioned – the 1968 Battle of Khe Sanh and the associated Tet Offensive of January that year.

The American base of Khe Sanh was located in a valley surrounded by mountains near the Laotian border in I Corps, and was established to cut off NVA incursions from the Ho Chi Minh Trail. On 21 January 1968, the US Marine base was attacked with a massive artillery bombardment and a siege by superior NVA numbers. The media reported that it was an NVA attempt to replicate the decisive French defeat at Dien Bien Phu where the topography was eerily similar. Despite the battle continuing for several months, General Giap later denied this objective and said it was to draw American forces away from the populated areas so that the Tet Offensive could succeed.

The Tet Offensive of 1968

Indeed, on 31 January 1968, 10 days after the Battle of Khe Sanh had commenced, and, in fact, had diverted American attention and troops from other areas, the NVA and VC launched a co-ordinated wave of assaults on South Vietnam's major cities and provincial capitals throughout the length of the country.

The Tet Offensive was aimed at igniting a general uprising among the population and encouraging defections from the ARVN units in order to topple the South Vietnamese government. The South Vietnam population did not revolt, however, nor did any ARVN unit defect to the north. Instead, Tet was a military disaster for the north, which suffered huge losses, but, on the other hand, it was a public relations victory for them, having a dramatic, lasting and adverse effect upon US public opinion.

The enemy not only surprised the allies by launching these assaults on a Vietnamese national public holiday, but also demonstrated the vulnerability of the South Vietnamese, initially succeeding in breaching the defences of major cities like Saigon and Hue, before being repulsed. What impacted on the American public was watching on television in their lounge rooms, the fighting in city streets while, at the same time, being told by the press that Khe Sanh could be another Dien Bien Phu disaster.

Although the Americans successfully held the Khe Sanh base, inflicted massive casualties on the enemy and claimed a military victory, the combined effect of Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive alerted the American public to the sudden increase in casualties and the uncertainty of an allied victory, so that, for the first time, there was general public opinion against America's involvement in the war. The media battle was being lost. It was a turning point in the war, despite the Free World forces winning the battles.

In mid-1968, President Johnson lost his confidence in the military leadership and relieved Westmoreland of his command. Disillusioned by the sharp downturn of public opinion and increasing anti-war demonstrations, he announced he would not seek re-election.

The End of the 2nd Vietnam War

When, in 1969, newly-elected president, Richard Nixon, announced a proposed end to US involvement and the reduction of its fighting troops in 1970, Australia (Prime Minister Gorton) later followed suit by not replacing one of its home-coming infantry battalions in November 1970. Optimistically, this was on the basis of the success of Vietnamisation, i.e. training the South Vietnamese troops to be self-sufficient. In mid-1971, it was announced (by Prime Minister McMahon) that the bulk of Australian forces would withdraw by December leaving just the Australian Army Training Team, but they, too, were withdrawn by new Prime Minister Whitlam in December 1972 within two weeks of his government gaining power.

Peace negotiations between the US, North Vietnam and a reluctant South Vietnam led to the Paris Peace Accords being signed on 27 January 1973. Nixon called it a 'peace with honour'.

This ended the 2nd Vietnam War. Allied operations ceased and US combat troops departed within two months. Controversially, NVA units were permitted to remain in place. It was now for South Vietnam to protect itself against any future enemy action. Prisoners-of-war were released by both sides.

President Thieu had been most reluctant to sign the accord, but was assured by President Nixon and his negotiator, Henry Kissinger, of continued American support if North Vietnam breached the treaty. Kissinger promised a 'swift and brutal response' by the US if there were a major violation. Nixon also promised continued aid in the form of $1.6 billion, but it was an empty promise as Congress would not authorise the full amount. When President Ford took office in August 1974, he also promised assistance if required, but this too was reduced by Congress.

Within no time, north and south resumed fighting. As well, from 1973 to 1975, in the absence of US troops, the NVA made preparations for finishing the war, particularly by upgrading and utilising the Ho Chi Minh Trail to position both troops and equipment.

The 3rd Vietnam War (1975)

In December 1974, in direct breach of the Paris peace accords, the NVA conducted a test attack into part of South Vietnam to see if the US would intervene. President Ford and the US Congress said there would be no more support, stunning Thieu and delighting Le Duan in the north. With no US intervention, the north proceeded with its plans for a major invasion. It began on 10 March 1975 in the Central Highlands, the North having calculated that the 'liberation of the South' would be concluded within two years. In fact, it took less than two months. This was despite courageous efforts by some South Vietnamese units. As Australian Colonel Ted Serong said later, ‘South Vietnam simply ran out of
bullets'. The refugee exodus was massive and within weeks the south was in retreat. Towns and cities fell like a row of dominoes.

Saigon was surrounded by 20 April 1975 and fell 10 days later. Saigon was immediately renamed Ho Chi Minh City. The 3rd Vietnam War had ended. There had been neither intervention nor support by the US. There had been no peace and there was no honour.

Historians and the media have generally recorded that America lost the war, but that is not accurate. There was an agreement to stop the fighting and the allied departure was in compliance with those peace terms. At that stage, the military situation in South Vietnam was vastly improved from its dire straits of the early 1960s. Although three years after the treaty, there was a military victory by North Vietnam over the South, it is inaccurate to say that North Vietnam defeated America. The US may not have won the war, but it also did not lose it militarily.

Conclusion

Evacuation to Australia of South Vietnamese nationals who had worked for the Australian embassy and military headquarters in Saigon was attempted, but the Whitlam government disgracefully refused to approve the plan and inhumanly abandoned them, instead sending pacifying communiques to Hanoi. Conversely, America rescued 65,000 Vietnamese in that final month of April 1975.

Under the Marxist regime, there followed years of economic depression, famine, starvation, revenge, executions and brutal re-education camps, together with a desperate exodus of non-Communist Vietnamese ‘boat people’.

Today, Vietnam is a unified, independent and relatively economically-stable Communist nation. Any concern about Communism in Asia now focuses on the huge development, economically and militarily, of China. It is this power and its apparent policy of expansionism that causes most concern.

The Author: David Wilkins graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1963. An infantryman, he served with the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR), the Pacific Islands Regiment and 5RAR in Vietnam in 1969-70, first as the Adjutant and then as a rifle company commander. He later graduated from the Australian National University with BA, LLB (Hons) and transferred to the Army Legal Corps to be a Defence Force Magistrate and Judge Advocate for courts martial. He retired from the Australian Regular Army in 1986, practised as a barrister for 20 years and then as a tribunal member of the Veterans’ Review Board. Now retired, he was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to community history in the 2019 Queen’s Birthday Honours List.

APPENDIX

A Brief Summary of the Causes of the 2nd Vietnam War

As mentioned above, the underlying cause of the 2nd Vietnam (American) War was North Vietnam’s desire for an independent, unified Vietnam. But there were other factors, external to Vietnam, which contributed: the Cold War between the West and the Communist Block and the spread of Communism both heightened world tensions. The more immediate cause was the Tonkin Gulf Incident.

That World tension underpinned America’s involvement in Vietnam which in turn saw it draw 29 of its allies into the conflict. Incidents contributing to the tense atmosphere included: the arms race; the iron curtain; the Truman doctrine; the Berlin blockade and ‘the wall’; the Korean War; the Bay of Pigs fiasco; and the Cuban missile crisis. In response, both sides formed alliances: the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation; the Warsaw Pact; the Australia, New Zealand, United States Treaty; and the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation.

The spread of Communism in Asia was a critical factor. Key events in the lead up to the 2nd Vietnam War included: Mao Tse Tung’s defeat of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949; the Malayan Emergency of 1948-1960; China’s ‘liberation’ of Tibet in 1951; the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu in 1954; and North Vietnam’s invasion of South Vietnam commencing in 1959. This led the United States to propound the ‘domino theory’ – if the spread of Communism southwards was not halted in Vietnam, it could open the flood gates.

Conclusion

Although the circumstances surrounding these two incidents were different, both Corporal H and Lance Corporal B were faced with the dilemma of having to make an ethical decision. Were they right or were they wrong?

The Author: Major Andrew Brayshaw served for 24 years in the British Army where he saw service in the Falklands, Germany, Cyprus, Hong Kong, Persian Gulf, Yugoslavia, Gulf War in 1991 and Croatia. He joined the Australian Regular Army in 2001 where he has had a number of postings and is currently the Staff Officer Grade 2 Capstone Doctrine at the Army Knowledge Centre. In 2005, Andrew was awarded the C. F. Marks Award for outstanding service to the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps. [Photo of Major Brayshaw: Colonel J. M. Hutcheson, M.C.]
Vice-Admiral David Willoughby Leach, AC, CBE, LVO

Honorary Life Member and former President of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales, Vice-Admiral David Leach passed away in Sydney on 19 January 2020. He had served for 43 years in the Navy rising to become Chief of the Naval Staff (1982 – 1985) and, after retirement, continued to give significant public service to the Australian War Memorial and local government as well as the Institute.

Vice-Admiral David Willoughby Leach, AC, CBE, LVO, served as Chief of the Naval Staff from 1982 to 1985. He was born on 17 July 1928 in Perth, Western Australia and joined the Royal Australian Naval College in 1942, aged 13. During his time at the college, he was appointed Chief Cadet Captain and was awarded the King's Gold Medal for exemplary conduct.

In 1946-47, he served in ships of the British Pacific Fleet before completing his Sub-Lieutenant courses in the United Kingdom in 1948. Following return to Australia, he served in HMA Ships Australia (II), Murchison and Arunta (I), and, in 1960-61, after specialising in gunnery, he served in the Royal Australian Navy flagship, HMAS Melbourne (II), as the Fleet Gunnery Officer. As a Lieutenant, he played State Representative Rugby for Victoria.

Command appointments followed in HMAS Vendetta (II) (1964-66) with the Far East Strategic Reserve and as captain of HMAS Perth (II) during her second deployment to the Vietnam War in 1968-69. Perth was an efficient and effective ship providing swift and accurate fire on enemy positions from the gunline. On one occasion, Perth was the target of 30 rounds of counter battery fire from North Vietnamese gunners. Due to rapid ship handling, none of the incoming shells found their target. This deployment earned Perth a United States Meritorious Unit Citation, and David was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE).

Captain Leach served as Director of Naval Plans (1969-70) and was appointed a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order (LVO) for his services as Liaison Officer during the 1970 Royal visit to Australia. He was the Royal Australian Navy's representative in Britain (1971-74).

Promoted Commodore in 1975, he served in Navy Office as the Director of Naval Plans, Director General of Naval Operational Requirements (1975-76), Chief of Naval Matériel and Chief of Naval Personnel. In 1977, he completed the United Kingdom's Senior Staff Course at the Royal College of Defence Studies.

Following promotion to Rear Admiral, he was successively Assistant Chief of Naval Staff - Matériel (1978-79), Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet (1979-80), and Assistant Chief of Naval Staff - Personnel (1980-81). In 1981, he was made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for his service as Commander of the Australian Fleet.

On promotion to Vice Admiral in April 1982, he became Chief of Naval Staff. In 1984, he was promoted to Companion of the Order of Australia (AC), for services to the Navy particularly as Chief of Naval Staff. He retired in 1985.

After retirement, Vice Admiral Leach continued to render significant public service as a member of the Council of the Australian War Memorial and as a Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. He also served as an Alderman for eight years (1991 – 1999), including one year as Mayor (1995) of the Municipality of Woollahra. He was known for his good nature, hard work and fairness. He addressed shortcomings in corporate governance and made a lasting impression on Council staff.

After retirement, Admiral Leach also became a very active member of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales (RUSI NSW). He was President from 2001 to 2004 and sought to position RUSI NSW to contribute to the defence policy process in Australia, where there was a lack of independent ‘think-tank’ input, input that Royal United Services Institute provided in Britain. Under his leadership, RUSI NSW took significant steps. We made major submissions to government and to parliamentary inquiries on Australia’s maritime strategy, network-centric warfare, and rebuilding the Australian merchant navy. Subsequently, we have continued to research and make submissions to government where we have had the expertise. Our policy contributions, though, have been overshadowed by the contribution of two think tanks formed this century, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) and the Lowy Institute. They were formed to do a job that, as David saw it, we should have been doing all along.

Throughout his distinguished naval career and in later life, Admiral Leach gave great service to the nation. He exemplified Navy values in peace and war and made major contributions to the modern navy through his leadership at sea and ashore. Admiral Leach was the last former Chief of the Naval Staff to have served in the Navy during World War II.

Royal Australian Navy, Michael Flynn, David Leece and Paul Irving
Wellesley’s History is a one-volume narrative of Britain’s 1808-1814 war against Napoleon in Portugal and Spain (the Peninsular War). Stuart Reid, author of numerous military history publications, has compiled the book from selected memoranda and despatches written by Sir Arthur Wellesley (later Field Marshal, the Duke of Wellington) as the war progressed.

During the Napoleonic Wars in 1807, a French army under Marshal Junot, with the encouragement of Spain, had invaded Portugal. In 1808, when Spain abruptly switched from being an enemy to an ally of Britain, a British expeditionary force led by Wellesley was deployed to the Iberian Peninsula to support Portugal and Spain.

Wellesley would go on to command the British forces in Iberia for seven years. From 1808 to 1811, the Iberian conflict was a stalemate while Britain defended Portugal, rebuilt the Portuguese army and integrated it with the British army. Then, in 1812, Napoleon depleted his forces in Spain to invade Russia. This gave the allies an opportunity to invade Spain with victories on the border at Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajoz followed by an advance to Salamanca and then Madrid. In 1813, Wellesley’s capture of Vittoria opened the road to the Pyrenees. The French were driven from the Pyrenees over winter 1813-14 and, while Wellesley was defeating Marshal Soult at the battle of Toulouse in April 1814, Napoleon was deposed in Paris and the war ended.

While he did not write a formal history of the war, at the end of 1808, 1809, 1810 and 1811, Wellesley wrote a memorandum to the British government, detailing the military and political operations of the year. He did not write similar memoranda in 1812, 1813 or 1814, but Reid has drawn on a selection of Wellesley’s despatches to the government to round out the story of the campaign.

Wellesley’s memoranda and despatches provide an overview of, and contemporaneous commentary on, the war as it unfolded. He describes the manoeuvres and battles he oversaw objectively and gives due credit to those of his subordinates who warranted it, occasionally criticising others who ‘let the side down’. Key battles (Vimiero, Oporto, Talavera, Fuentes d’Onoro, Cuidad Rodrigo, Badajoz and Vittoria) are illustrated by contemporary maps, but more maps are needed and it can be difficult to follow Wellesley’s text due to the inadequacy of the maps in this volume. In particular, a contemporary map to set the context at the strategic level is badly needed.

In reporting to the government on specific battles, Wellesley pitches his text at the grand tactical level describing how the action unfolded. At times, he also gives the reasons for key decisions he may have taken. He then goes on to ‘mention-in-despatches’ officers from lieutenant-general down to major, and occasionally captain, from the staff, infantry, artillery, engineers, and the cavalry, who performed acts of gallantry and distinguished service. He usually concludes the description of the battle with a tabulation of the British and Portuguese casualties and sometimes a brief mention of the French casualties including major weapons captured. I was particularly struck by the high casualties among the British general officers and colonels, many leading their men from the front. Sometimes, Wellesley will conclude a despatch at the military strategic (operational) level, foreshadowing manoeuvres he is contemplating.

While Stuart Reid has reproduced Wellesley’s annual summaries of operations from 1808 to 1811, for 1812 - 1814, Reid has reproduced Wellesley’s despatch to the government for each of five major battles during this period – the storm of Cuidad Rodrigo, January 1812; the storm of Badajoz, April 1812; the battle of Salamanca, July 1812; the battle of Vittoria, June 1813; and the battle of Toulouse, April 1814. Reid inserts a helpful linking paragraph before each despatch.

More than half the book is devoted to two appendices: a brief biography of each British officer mentioned in Wellington’s despatches; and an annotated order of battle of Wellington’s armies from 1808 to 1814. More serious researchers will find the book more than worthwhile for these two compilations.

The book contains 20 contemporary plates in colour; and, as previously mentioned, eight maps. These are inadequate and the serious reader also will need an external source of contemporary maps so as to gain a proper understanding of the text. Also, unfortunately, the copy editing is quite deficient in places – not what one would expect of a volume of this nature.

This book goes some way towards providing a history of the campaign from Wellesley’s perspective. Not only was he the overall British commander, he is still regarded by many military historians as Britain’s greatest general. This book, though, is not recommended for the general reader. It would appeal mainly to military historians of the Napoleonic era, but they may prefer to use Wellington’s original despatches of which we have a complete set in the Ursula Davidson Library.

David Leece
BOOK REVIEW:

Monash’s masterpiece: the battle of Le Hamel and the 93 minutes that changed the world

by Peter FitzSimons

Hachette Australia: Sydney; 2018; 414 pp.; ISBN 9780733640087 (paperback); RRP $35.00;
Ursula Davidson Library call number 572 FITZ 2018

By June 1918, the Allies had halted the German spring offensive in the Somme Valley some 20km east of the vital logistics centre of Amiens. The Germans, however, could still observe the city from the heights of Wolfsberg, which was protected by a salient in the new Western Front extending west some 2km around the fortified village of Le Hamel.

Monash’s Masterpiece describes the battle of Le Hamel on 4 July 1918, which was a meticulously planned, all-arms deliberate attack by the recently-formed Australian Corps. The attack had a limited objective – to eliminate the salient around Le Hamel and capture Wolfsberg. Beginning at first light, it was planned to take 90 minutes and, in the event, it secured its final objective in 93 minutes.

Peter FitzSimons, AM, is the author or joint author of some 35 military and other histories. A journalist, he writes in an informal manner in the present tense, constructing his story like a novel. This appeals to many readers, but offends some historians. Nevertheless, he is supported by an excellent team of researchers; and the 1000-odd endnotes, the bibliography and the 16 well-drawn maps, attest to the quality of the underpinning research.

Removing the Hamel/Wolfsberg salient was an obvious step for the Allies once the new Western Front had formed. The trick would be how to do it without excessive loss of life, at least on the Allied side. By this stage of the War, reinforcements from Australia had virtually dried up.

Enter Australia’s new corps commander, Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash. Monash was a citizen-soldier – a brilliant, innovative engineer, who had devoted his spare time to service in the pre-war militia. A brigade commander on Gallipoli in 1915, he commanded the 3rd Australian Division at Messines and Third Ypres in 1917 and on the Somme during the 1918 German spring offensive. He had developed a reputation for clarity of thought and attention to detail which was far superior to that of his contemporaries. Favoured by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and King George V, he was appointed to command the Australian Corps in May 1918.

Monash was keen for the Australian Corps to return to the offensive, so developed a plan to capture Hamel/Wolfsberg with minimal casualties. His idea was to employ tanks, artillery and aircraft to get the infantry onto the objective with minimal fighting, and then for the infantry to mop up and hold the ground gained. The keys would be secrecy, detailed planning and co-ordination, excellent logistics support (including by tanks and aircraft), inter-arms training, several rehearsals, and, finally, exhaustive planning conferences to tie up loose ends.

The battle itself involved 11 battalions of Australian infantry, four companies of American infantry, some 55 tanks of the Royal Tank Corps, several squadrons of the Australian Flying Corps and the Royal Air Force, and the massed artillery of the British Fourth Army. It did not all go to plan – some tanks got lost in the dark at key points (Pear Trench, Kidney Trench); enemy resistance at several points could only be overcome with great courage by the infantry; and a German counter-attack on Wolfsberg was partially successful before it was again repelled by a counter-counter-attack. Despite the setbacks, the overall achievement was remarkable and the staff-work would become the model on which the subsequent final 100-days offensive would be based.


FitzSimons, however, uses the additional space to detail the context, the lead up to the battle, the battle itself, the aftermath, and the later fate of some of the key players around whom he has built his story. In doing so, he interleaves discussion of the political machinations of generals, politicians and journalists, and activities from higher command right down to section level, at times on the German side as well, examining the battle as it evolved from the left flank of the assault across to the right flank and then back again. If you can afford the time, then reading FitzSimons’ book is well worth the effort.

There is, however, one disconcerting error. At p. 364, FitzSimons asserts that “… Bean is very positive about General Ivan Mackay, who presided over the slaughter at Fromelles”, but cites no literature to support the claim. Rather than Lieutenant-General Sir Iven Mackay, who rose to general rank in World War II, I suspect FitzSimons intended to refer to Major-General the Hon. J. W. McCoy, who commanded the 5th Australian Division during the battle of Fromelles on 19-20 July 1916. This blemish notwithstanding, I highly commend the book to all readers.

David Leece
BOOK REVIEW:

South Pacific air war. Volume 3, Coral Sea & aftermath, May-June 1942
by Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman
Avonmore Books: Kent Town, South Australia; 2019; 247 pp; ISBN 9780994588999 (softcover); RRP $46.95

The Battle of the Coral Sea, well-known to Australians, has been recounted by numerous historians. This book, however, differs from earlier volumes on the subject by providing a complete coverage of the air-sea battles in the South Pacific during the months of May and June 1942.

The authors are uniquely qualified to recount and assess this air and sea campaign. Raised in Port Moresby, Michael Claringbould is a globally-acknowledged expert on the New Guinea conflict and both Japanese and United States Army Air Force aviation of this period. Peter Ingman is an acclaimed author of military history specializing in the early part of the Pacific War. They have published two earlier volumes on the Air War in the South Pacific: The Fall of Rabaul (Avonmore Books, 2017), and The Struggle for Moresby (Avonmore Books, 2018).

The Battle of the Coral Sea was not a stand-alone event. The complete action involved land-based aviation, both Allied and Japanese, in the air campaigns over New Guinea and against the carrier forces. The authors have brought together the campaigns conducted before and during the carrier battle, discussing the objectives of these campaigns and their ultimate effect on the way the battle was fought by both sides. They have meticulously recorded the battles and skirmishes within the various campaigns and presented them in an easy-to-read style.

The objective of the campaign conducted by the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) was the capture of Port Moresby so as to sever the umbilical cord between the United States and Australia and starve Australia of the means of waging war against Japan. The Japanese campaign plans were supported by five separate naval groups. Their intermediate objectives were: the capture of Tulagai, capital of the British Solomon Islands; the bombing of airfields at Port Moresby and its ultimate possession; and the capture of Nauru and Ocean Island.

From the perspective of the United States Navy, the Battle of the Coral Sea provided an opportunity to destroy the Imperial Japanese Navy carrier force, while for the Japanese the intent was the to clear the path for their strategic goal, the isolation of Australia.

The book is a very well written and the authors have brought a sense of excitement and anticipation to the individual combat actions. They also convey the sense of frustration arising from missed opportunities by both sides and, in some cases, the ineffectiveness of particular combat systems, such as land-based aircraft attacks against the Japanese fleets. The deft use of break-out boxes listing the forces committed to these engagements enables the reader to maintain an overall understanding of the size, capability and advantage of each force at the time of each action.

The volume is a high-quality production with excellent colour plates and descriptions of the main aircraft types engaged in the battle, and a comprehensive set of black-and-white photographs taken at the time of the conflict. Contained within the appendices are lists of every Allied and Japanese aircraft lost during the period of the conflict. The losses are accompanied with explanations of how and why they occurred. Also included are listings of accumulative aircraft losses so that the reader may understand the progress and advantage achieved by each side over the course of the battles.

The authors have identified individual combatants on both sides of the conflict, as well as those who perished, and in doing so have personalised this history. For example, the book includes a dramatic account of the sinking of the Imperial Japanese Navy carrier Shoho from a Japanese perspective.

The Battle of the Coral Sea is generally viewed by historians as a tactical victory for the Japanese, but as a strategic victory for the Allies, as it denied the Japanese their objective of capturing Port Moresby. The authors’ proposition, however, is that the battle did not “deny” the Japanese the opportunity to capture Port Moresby. Rather, the Japanese made a major strategic error in not continuing their invasion campaign after they had sunk the USS Lexington and the American naval forces had withdrawn to Pearl Harbour to prepare for the coming battle at Midway. The Imperial Japanese Navy certainly still had the forces and resources to capture Port Moresby.

Coral Sea & Aftermath, May- June 1942 provides a comprehensive account of the carrier battles, the air battles over New Guinea and Northern Australia, and enemy surface and submarine action along the eastern coast of Australia, as well as air-sea rescues of downed Allied airmen and shipwrecked sailors. A compact and comprehensive account of the South Pacific air and sea war over the months of May and June in 1942, it will appeal to all readers who have even a passing interest in military history. A most enjoyable read.

Bob Treloar
BOOK REVIEW:

*Savage continent: Europe in the aftermath of World War II*

by Keith Lowe


*Savage Continent* is a deeply harrowing account of Europe as a continent reeling from the impacts and consequences of World War II. In a moving, measured and provocative narrative, Lowe describes a place given over to mourning, hate, violence and despair. The Germans forced far-reaching changes on occupied countries from which it would take years to recover. The Allies were underprepared for the scale of humanitarian actions that would be required when places were liberated. Animosities suppressed during the war and created during the war erupted in vengeful violence. The scale and complexity of the issues and challenges are difficult to comprehend.

Lowe focuses on the years immediately following Germany’s surrender in May 1945, roughly down to the imposition of Stalinist tyranny on Eastern Europe and before the implementation of the Marshall Plan. The book is in four parts: the legacy of war, which assesses the physical destruction, displacement, famine, chaos and moral decay; vengeance, which examines several cases of violence; ethnic cleansing, which examines several case-studies of forced emigration; and civil war, which examines some of the numerous conflicts that existed both during and after the war.

The defeat of Nazi Germany was cause for gratitude and even elation, but achieving that defeat left virtually all of Europe so devastated that “it is difficult to convey … the scale of the wreckage caused by the Second World War”, wreckage not merely physical but psychological and moral as well.

The war tore a huge hole in the demographics of the Continent, so that there were far more women than men, and a million orphans in both Germany and Poland. The sense of loss was both personal and communal. Just as the continent’s towns and cities had been replaced by a landscape of crumbling ruins, so too had families and communities been replaced by a series of gaping holes.

People were degraded to the point where their sole concern was their next meal, for which young and old were prepared to do anything amid a more pervasive moral collapse. The journalist Alan Moorehead, in Naples immediately after its liberation, witnessed “the whole list of sordid human vices” and wrote: “What we were witnessing in fact was the moral collapse of a people”.

The violence continued long after peace had been declared. Hidden behind the big conflict between the Allies and the Axis were “dozens of other, more local wars, which had different flavours and different motivations in each country and each region. In some cases, they were conflicts over class or other political differences. In other cases … they were conflicts over race or nationalism.”

Men used to extreme violence were hard to ‘switch off’. A British officer watched a Red Army soldier stab an old German man to steal his watch and chain. After he handed the Russian over to Soviet commanders, they glanced at the evidence. “You say this man killed a German?” They smiled, before kissing the culprit, pinning a red star on his tunic and sending him off.

Violence and vengeance figure prominently in Lowe’s account, much of it directed at Germans and those who collaborated with them. Liberated concentration and slave labour camp inmates tore their guards to pieces, sometimes with the connivance of Allied soldiers. German civilians were also routinely abused by newly liberated populations, often before they were forcibly expelled to remove a minority presence the Nazis had exploited to justify invasion.

Germans as victims recur many times. Lowe mostly avoids the fashionably relativist approach in which Germans are as much sinned against as sinning. Lowe rightly points to the rigours of the mass expulsions which ethnic Germans and other minorities underwent. But he does not dwell on the complicity of many of these ethnic Germans in the occupying regimes which their metropolitan fellow countrymen established to realise a collective racial fantasy that was not just of Hitler’s devising.

Lowe includes one brief chapter on Hope early in the book to counter-balance the overwhelming negatives. There were many good news stories – for example, in the efforts of organisations such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the demise of several dictatorships.

Keith Lowe is an authority on the Second World War and author of the critically acclaimed *Inferno: The Devastation of Hamburg, 1943* (Viking: London; 2007). He has spoken often on television and radio, both in Britain and the United States.

*Savage Continent* contains 29 black and white photographs, 12 good quality maps, a significant list of sources, notes and a comprehensive index. It is a *Sunday Times* top ten bestseller and was awarded the Hessell-Tiltman History Prize. I highly recommend it to all those who have an interest in war and society.

*Marcus Fielding*
Naval Party (NP) 8901, some 50 Royal Marines, was garrisoning Stanley, the Falkland Islands capital, when Argentina invaded on 2 April 1982. This book tells the story of the defence of Stanley by NP 8901 and the role its members subsequently played in Britain's recapture of the Falklands in May-June 1982.

The book is written in the first person, being the memoir of the primary author, Major Mike Norman, who commanded NP 8901 during the invasion and later commanded J (Juliet) Company, 42 Commando, during the recapture of the Falklands. He had been serving in the Royal Marines for 20 years prior to the invasion and would continue serving for another 10 years before retiring in 1992. His co-author, Michael Jones, is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a member of the British Commission for Military History, and the author of 12 books on military history. The combination of participant and historian ensures a well-written, factual account.

Many authoritative books have been published on the Falklands War, including a two-volume official history and several memoirs. Why another now 37 years after the event? Well, the focus here is primarily on the lead up to the invasion and the invasion itself – only a third of the book is devoted to the Islands' recapture, whereas that has been the focus of most previous books. Secondly, no unit history of NP 8901 has been published before and this book goes some way towards filling this gap. Thirdly, official archives relevant to the matters described have recently been released and this book draws on them, enhancing the accuracy of the account.

The history of British, French, Spanish and Argentine interest in the Falkland Islands (Las Malvinas in Spanish) from 1690 on, including occupation by the British from 1765, is recounted concisely. In the decade leading up to the 1982 invasion, British foreign policy failed to deter Argentine aggression. Despite Argentina's desire to take over Las Malvinas, and despite Argentine provocations to test Britain's will, Britain displayed neither the capability nor intent to defend the Islands.

When the Argentine invasion came, Britain was caught unprepared. Before first light on 2 April 1982, Argentine special forces landed by small boat south of Stanley and outflanked the defences. They destroyed an unoccupied barracks and then advanced from the west on Government House which was stoutly defended largely by headquarters and logistics personnel. Meantime, Norman had deployed his Marine troop to deny an expected amphibious landing in the east, but had to rapidly redeploy these troops to the town and Government House in response to the Argentine special forces action. Once the Argentine amphibious landing had occurred and a battalion plus in armoured tracked amphibians had advanced into Stanley, the Governor, as commander-in-chief, ordered a cease fire to protect the town. The battle for Stanley had lasted 3.5 hours. The Argentines had lost five killed and 15 wounded, plus several prisoners. Due to excellent battlecraft, there were no Marine casualties.

Following the Argentine takeover, Argentina sent the Governor and Naval Party 8901 back to England. Britain decided to mount its own invasion and recapture the Falklands. Most of NP 8901 volunteered to take part in this campaign and Mike Norman was appointed commander of J Company, 42 Commando (an infantry battalion), with his NP 8901 troop (rifle platoon) forming 10 Troop of J Company. During the campaign, they landed at Port San Carlos on 21 May, supported 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, at Goose Green, re-joined 42 Commando at Mt Kent and participated in the attack on Mt Harriet on 11-12 June, before leading the British advance into Stanley on 14 June after the Argentine collapse.

The book includes a foreword by Major General Julian Thompson who as a brigadier had commanded 3 Commando Brigade during the recapture of the Falklands; a nominal role of the naval party; a timeline; a glossary; a bibliography of both primary and secondary sources; and an index. There are five reasonable maps, but three additional tactical maps detailing respectively the situations at Port San Carlos, Darwin-Goose Green, and Mt Kent, Mt Harriet, Mt Longdon-Tumbledown would have aided comprehension. Scholars also will be disappointed that there are no endnotes.

At the time of the Argentine invasion, press propaganda in Argentina, repeated by British tabloids, misrepresented the brave resistance offered by NP 8901, especially its defence of Government House. In doing so, it traduced the reputation of the Royal Marines involved. This book seeks to correct the record and does so splendidly. Major Norman also is disappointed that none of his men received a bravery award, despite their gallantry defending Stanley. He presents a fair case for that to be reconsidered.

I commend the book to those interested in gaining a more complete understanding of the Falklands campaign and to those who wish to gain a better understanding of leadership and courage in war at the tactical level. For others seeking a ‘boys' own adventure’, this book will not disappoint.

David Leece
The Future of War is a history of predictions about the character of war and the reduced likelihood of war. The short version of Freedman’s conclusion is that these predictions have almost always been wrong. He demonstrates that the reality of war often contradicts expectations, less because of some fantastic technical or engineering dimension, but more because of some human, political, or moral threshold that we had never imagined would be crossed. For example, in 1912, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a short story about a war fought from underwater submersibles that included the sinking of passenger ships. It was dismissed by the British admirals of the day, not on the basis of technical feasibility, but because sinking civilian ships was not something that any civilised nation would do.

In writing The Future of War Freedman challenges contemporary practitioners to not focus excessively on future technology or to ignore the socio-political drivers of the conflict. He does not make his only predictions about future war but he does question the utility of characterising future wars using ‘sexy’ terms such as ‘multi-dimensional’, ‘hybrid threats’, ‘non-linear sub-version’, etc. He notes that the paradigms war, peace and criminal activity are becoming increasingly blurred.

The Future of War is divided into three parts (although it is not obvious why) and 25 chapters that address a variety of themes. His last chapter is playfully titled “The Future of the Future of War”. Freedman’s research is extensive and his analysis focuses on professional and amateur assessments of the direction and character of war over the past two centuries. The book examines how militaries and societies have anticipated the potential for armed conflict as well as how new technologies and changes to the global order have been considered (or have failed to be considered) among the various influences on ‘future conflicts’ of each age.

While many of the book’s case studies relate to premonitions of 20th century generals, political leaders, spies and nuclear strategists, Freedman also highlights the predictive value of fictional authors from Arthur Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells to P. W. Singer and August Cole. Freedman suggests that the fundamental purpose of many claims about the future of war have less to do with prediction and more to do with exerting influence.

Just as Freedman highlights those who have shown clairvoyance in predicting the nature of future wars, Freedman criticises those who have argued that war is a dying anachronism – such as the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Angell – whose book claiming that the ‘economic futility of war would ensure it never occurred again’, was released only a few months before the initial salvos of World War I. Unsurprisingly, Freedman, having dedicated his life to studying wars, does not expect the phenomenon to disappear from the list of characteristics of the human condition.

All the while, Freedman uses his half-century of experience at the forefront of national security debates to highlight the logical flows from imperial conflicts to modern challenges such as terrorism, offensive cyber capabilities and even violent criminality. At the same time, Freedman argues against what he sees as the tendency for national leaders, militaries and industry to look toward the next technological ‘silver bullet’. As such he argues against what he considers as a general tendency for futurists and military/strategic practitioners to focus on technological changes and their impact on war, without due consideration to the social factors influencing conflict – what he describes as a general inclination toward focusing on the changing character of war, while ignoring its enduring nature.

The Future of War demonstrates the importance of innovation and underwrites why constant learning, discussion and a body of predictive writing about future security challenges is critical to success in the face of unknown threats – particularly those malign actors yet to present themselves. As Freedman states, ‘history is made by people who do not know what is going to happen next’.

Sir Lawrence Freedman is Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King’s College, London. He was the official historian of the Falklands Campaign, and a member of the official inquiry into Britain and the 2003 Iraq War (‘the Chilcot Inquiry’). He has written extensively on nuclear strategy and the Cold War, and comments regularly on contemporary security issues. His most recent book, Strategy: a History (Oxford University Press, 2013), was a Financial Times and Economist book of the year.

The Future of War includes extensive notes, a comprehensive bibliography and a detailed index. The book is filled with fascinating insights from one of the most brilliant military and strategic historians of his generation and is recommended to students of military history as well as contemporary practitioners of the profession of arms.

Marcus Fielding