The United States and its allies, the South. The war ended in an and became a global conflict, with China supporting the North and 1948; to the war from 1950 to 1953, which started as a civil war the formation of two states, North Korea and South Korea, in occupation by the Soviet Union and the United States in 1945 and its occupation by Japan from 1910 to 1945; through its military observations on the experience.

He concludes with his operated, the functions it performed, some of the more significant describes the geostrategic context in which the task group November 2017 to September 2018, Brigadier Peter Connor, from 1912 to 1938. The fall of Singapore was a footnote. Popham whose career spanned the development of air power army from a 19 th century force in 1914 to arguably 'the most transformation of the French Army and the invention of modern warfare by Michel Goya – reviewed by David Leece

This book is about the conflicts in southern Africa which followed World War II and which have continued to a greater or lesser extent in different countries up to the present. This modern classic is one of the most compelling analyses of the history and psychology of armed conflict throughout the ages. It is more relevant than Clausewitz or Sun Tzu. Base nation: how U.S. military bases abroad harm America and the World by David Vine – reviewed by Marcus Fielding

This is a biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham whose career spanned the development of air power from 1912 to 1938. The fall of Singapore was a footnote.

“The man who took the rap”: Sir Robert Brooke-Popham and the fall of Singapore by Peter Dye – reviewed by Bob Treloar

This book assesses how the rise of Chinese sea power will affect U.S maritime strategy in Asia. It examines the PLA Navy's operational concepts, tactics and capabilities.
**United Service**

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

Informing the defence and national security debate since 1947

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Promoting national security awareness

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**National President’s Column**

The two issues most raised with me about the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) at the national level (RUSDSS-A) relate to the purpose of the RUSDSS-A as a national body and to the activities of the National Board.

RUSDSS-A is a company established by Australia’s independent state and territory united services institutes (its ‘constituent bodies’ or CBs) to promote understanding of Australia’s defence and national security, to foster co-operation among the CBs, and to represent the RUSI as a whole (a ‘one-stop-shop’) in dealings with the Commonwealth and other external persons and bodies.

Having no natural persons as members, RUSDSS-A relies on CB volunteers to act as Board members; to run the national office; and to maintain the national website (www.rusinsw.org.au). The website enables the public to learn about the CBs and their activities; and it can be used by CBs to manage their membership records and their events – some rely on it wholly; others only use it to provide a link to their independent websites. National office also is the conduit for submission of grant requests from the CBs to Defence; and it negotiates the licence for CB access to Defence facilities, including the provision of passes enabling CB staff to conduct CB activities on the Defence estate.

Rolls Royce sponsors our website. We currently have no other source of income. We no longer receive assistance from Defence with office administrative expenses, although individual CBs may be successful from time-to-time in attracting Defence grants for specific conferences and the like. The CBs have not contributed to the cost of running of the national office for more than 40 years.

Formerly, RUSDSS-A employed a company secretary and a support person. They were the main link to Defence, maintained the website and ran the office. With little income, however, the paid company secretary position was ended two years ago and the support manger role will cease shortly.

The National Board is now focused on the future of the company and how to raise revenue. Sponsorship is being sought, but, to be successful, there have to be activities or outcomes that sponsors believe are worth supporting. We are developing a national programme of CB activities. We also are in discussion with your CB councils about contributing financially to the running of the company.

Please don’t hesitate to contact the national office through the website if you are interested in assisting, either in the office or on the Board.

Anker Brodersen
Deputy National President
INSTITUTE NEWS

Upcoming Events

June Lunchtime-Lecture
Tuesday, 25 June 2019, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
Speaker: Mr Hervé Lemahieu
Director, Asia Power & Diplomacy Programme
Lowy Institute
Subject: “Power struggles in the Indo-Pacific region”

July Visit
Tuesday, 16 July 2019, at 11.30 am – 2 pm
Historic Aircraft Restoration Society Museum, Albion Park
Guide: Professor Michael Hough AM RFD ED
Aviation Historian and RUSI Board Member
Subject: “Our military aviation heritage”

July Lunchtime-Lecture
Tuesday, 30 July 2019, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
Speaker: Air Vice-Marshall Steven (Zed) Robertson DSC AM
Air Commander Australia
Subject: “Challenges of implementing a 5th generation air force”

131st Anniversary Luncheon
Friday, 23 August 2019, at 12.30 pm for 1.00 – 3.00pm
The Adam Room, Level 4, Castlereagh Boutique Hotel
169-171 Castlereagh Street, Sydney
Reservations are essential. Contact the office on (02) 8262 2922.

August Lunchtime-Lecture
Tuesday, 27 August 2019, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
Speaker: Captain David Tietzel RAN
Deputy Commodore Flotillas, and
Colonel Kim Gilfillan, Commander Landing Forces
Subject: “Australia’s amphibious operations capability and tactics”

September Lunchtime-Lecture
Tuesday, 24 September 2019, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
Speaker: Mr David Wroe
National Security Correspondent
The Sydney Morning Herald
Subject: “Review of Australia’s international relations”

October Lunchtime-Lecture
Tuesday, 29 October 2019, at 1.00 – 2.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney
Speaker: Mr Peter Jennings
Director, Australian Strategic Policy Institute
Subject: “Does Australia need a ‘Plan B’ for its defence policy?”

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, 29 October 2019, at 2.15 – 3.00 pm
The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park South, Sydney

Battlefield Tours
Sandakan-Ranau Death March Remembrance Day Trek, 3-14 November 2019: The 12-day itinerary includes six days of walking along a 95km section of the track escorted by Institute historian Lynette Silver AM (lynettesilver@gmail.com). Accommodation is good standard (no camping). Price: $3200 per person, twin share, plus airfares. Trek details: https://sandakandeadthmarch.com/tours/challenge-highlights-challenge-tour/
Bookings: Roz Martindale, North Shore Travel: 02 9418 2546; 0402 081 104.

Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey Memorial Fund
The Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey Memorial Fund was established in 1954 to perpetuate Sir Thomas’s memory. It provides awards for young Australian Defence Force leaders; and periodically partners with constituent bodies of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies–Australia to present the Blamey Oration.

Erratum
In the last issue, the paper by Bryce M. Fraser, ‘The extended war on the Eastern Front, 1918-1925: the Russian Intervention’, United Service 70 (1), 8 – 12 (March 2019), at p. 9 in the section on ‘Australians in the North Russian Relief Force’, there is an error. It correctly says that two Australians won the Victoria Cross, Corporal Arthur Percy Sullivan and Sergeant Samuel George Pearce. It further says incorrectly that Corporal Sullivan was killed-in-action. It was Sergeant Pearce who was killed-in-action, not Corporal Sullivan. Sullivan died in London in 1937. The author thanks Colonel Michael Miller RFD for drawing the error to his attention.
Islamic and white supremacist terrorism in our region

Since ‘9/11’ 2001, terrorism has challenged governments, security forces and the community, in no small part due to the advent of Islamic State, the Internet and ‘social media’.

Baghouz, Islamic State’s last territorial stronghold, fell to United States-backed Syrian Democratic Forces on 23 March 2019. While this marked the end of Islamic State’s caliphate in Iraq and Syria, its ability to inspire terrorism continues, not least in our region.

In Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday (21 April), bomb blasts across the country ripped through three Christian churches and five hotels – at least 257 people were killed and 500 injured. This well-co-ordinated series of attacks was carried out by two little-known Muslim organisations affiliated to Islamic State, in part as retaliation for the loss of the caliphate and possibly for the attack on mosques in Christchurch on 15 March (see below). If so, the latter would have been an afterthought, for the Sri Lankan attacks must have been long in the planning.

On Mindanao, where Moro Islamic separatists have been battling the Philippines government and its predecessors since 1899, previously warring groups united in 2017 at the instigation of Islamic State, which hoped to form a southeast Asian caliphate. These groups staged an uprising on 23 March 2017, seizing the ‘Muslim capital’, Marawi, and holding it against the Philippines armed forces until October. Australia, along with the United States, supported the Philippines with military advisers and ground-attack aircraft. While this attempt at establishing a caliphate failed, Moro discontent continues and Australian advisers are still working there under Operation Augury.

A Patani Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand has been ongoing since 1948 at varying intensity, accompanied occasionally by terrorist acts further afield. Historically, an ethnic separatist insurgency with few links to other Muslim insurgencies, recently, it has been taken over by hard-line jihadists, but links, if any, to Islamic State are unknown.

Islamic State links to Muslim fundamentalists in Indonesia are better established, but the security forces seem to have matters in hand. This is an evolving situation, though, and the political mood has tilted towards Muslim supremacism, despite Pancasila1, as Indonesian expert Ian Ingleby, indicates in the letter below.

Islamic terrorism is not our only challenge. White supremacist (neo-Nazi) terrorism, long in the shadows, emerged in Christchurch on 15 March 2019, when a 28-year-old Australian from Armidale, New South Wales, Brenton Harrison Tarrant, allegedly opened fire with an automatic rifle and a shotgun on congregations in two mosques (Al Noor Mosque; then the Linwood Islamic Centre) during Friday prayers. Fifty-one people were killed and 50 were wounded, two dying later.

Tarrant lived-streamed the first 15 minutes of his attack on Facebook Live. Indeed, despite the essential role of the Internet as a means of communication, we cannot be blind to its less attractive features. It has proven to be a powerful medium for the recruitment and radicalisation of disaffected people, a process difficult for the authorities to detect and to monitor. The Christchurch horror and previous instances where the Internet has been used to preach hatred and murder have created a prima facie case for more effective, timely detection and removal of this material from the Web and international prosecution of those who peddle it. That’s going to be hard to do, but let’s make a start, now.

David Leece and Ian Pfennigwerth

LETTER

Defence and political developments in Indonesia

Indonesia puzzles many Western observers. Certain recent changes seem encouraging; others less so.

In 1985, aware the main threat to its national security was in the South China Sea, Indonesia established defence radar units in the west. It did little more until its recent focus on the Natuna Sea and its establishment of an ‘eastern command’, as Dr David Leece noted in his excellent editorial in March [United Service 70 (1), 4, March 2019]. Although its 1994-2019 defence reform plan began slowly, TNI now has a tri-service capability, which was not possible until generational change in the senior leadership was effected. Transfer of the army’s ‘internal security’ and ‘business’ functions to the police also is encouraging.

Government responses to emerging radicalism, though, have been less encouraging, especially in counteracting the efforts of some to get rid of Pancasila1. It would be particularly disquieting if Pancasila were to be abolished. Even a change in the first precept from ‘a Supreme Being’ to ‘the Supreme Being’ could signal an end to the freedom that officials have to choose one of the six recognised religions, a freedom heretofore exercised by many senior military and civilian officials. A mandatory belief in a single religion might eliminate the safety valve that has made Indonesia theologically and politically moderate.

Ian Ingleby
Bayview NSW, 8 March 2019

1Pancasila is the five principles on which Indonesia and its unity have been built: belief in a Supreme Being; nationalism; humanitarianism; social justice; and consultative democracy. The first precept recognises six religions: Islam, Protestant Christianity, Roman Catholic Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Dr David Leece, editor of United Service, is chair of the Institute’s Special Interest Group on Strategy. Dr Ian Pfennigwerth, a naval historian, is a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee. These are their personal views.
The advent of the Trump Presidency, coupled with the rise of China, has put considerable strains on the ANZUS alliance between Australia and the United States. Herein, Dr Wilkins presents a methodology for assessing Australia’s putative bargaining power within the alliance, demonstrates how Australia’s position has been weakened overall by Trump and China, and proposes options for Australia going forward. He concludes that the ANZUS alliance relationship requires careful attention from policy-makers and analysts in the face of mounting challenges.

Key words: Australia, China, Japan, United States, ANZUS alliance, Donald Trump.

The ANZUS Treaty of 1951 was initially aimed at the possibility of a resurgent and militaristic Japan. During the Cold War, its focus shifted to the threat posed by the Soviet Union and Communist China. For a decade following the Cold War it lacked focus until the ‘war on terror’ emerged early this century. Now, with the rise of China, it is refocusing again, and being revitalised in order to uphold the ‘rules-based order’, as operationalised under the new ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ strategy. In reality, this equates to renewed efforts at maintaining United States primacy in the region.

Against this background, Australia’s 2017 foreign policy white paper ‘doubled down’ on the United States alliance. It flagged an increased Australian contribution to, and integration with, the United States-alliance. This deepened reliance upon the United States has also been complemented by a new ‘special strategic partnership’ with Tokyo, with some commentators, such as Peter Jennings of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, even advocating for a formalisation of a military defence alliance with Japan. This enhanced bilateral security cooperation is further combined through the ‘Trilateral Strategic Dialogue’ between Australia, Japan and the United States, whilst the ‘Quad’ process seeks to bring India on board.

Notwithstanding such efforts, however, the United States alliance system itself is under duress from within and without. From within, President Donald Trump is sceptical of the value of alliances, balking at the cost of allies allegedly ‘free-riding’ upon United States security guarantees, and failing to meet their share of the allied ‘defence burden’. From without, the rise of China has created strategic dilemmas for Australia’s United States-alliance, even as it has yielded enormous economic benefits. The tension between Australia’s security and economic policies are increasingly generating a series of diplomatic quandaries for Canberra.

As a result, the Australian alliance with the United States is under renewed scrutiny and debate within Australia, where several informed critics have emerged in recent years, including former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, former Foreign Ministers Gareth Evans and Bob Carr, as well as eminent strategic analysts and historians such as Hugh White and James Curran, among the most prominent.

In the context of these developments, in my address to the Institute, I discussed the research I have undertaken into Australia’s bargaining power within the alliance on behalf of the project “US Allies: A Balance Sheet” for the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.

The Bargaining Ledger – Assets versus Liabilities

In order to gain analytical purchase upon Australia’s bargaining power within the alliance, a ledger, or balance-sheet, was drawn up, tallying bargaining assets and bargaining liabilities.

This was not intended to be a ‘cost/benefit’ analysis of value of the United States alliance to Australia, such as has been common practice in the Australian studies of ANZUS. Rather, it was designed to capture Canberra's strengths (assets) and weaknesses (liabilities) in intra-alliance bargaining with Washington. It was designed to
provide insights into Canberra’s ability to influence United States policies in any given ‘bargaining encounter’. The aim being to determine how Australia could defend and advance its national interests not only through the alliance, but also within it. It therefore emphasised why and how the United States values Australia, and how Canberra can exploit this. The resulting ledger, as a ‘first cut’ at tabulating the Australian bargaining portfolio, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Liabilities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Power asymmetry</td>
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<td>Military contribution</td>
<td>Path dependency – sunk costs</td>
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<td>Defence/economic collaboration</td>
<td>Complex economic interdependence with China</td>
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<td>Regional networking</td>
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<td>Convergent threat perceptions</td>
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<td>Ideological-domestic compatibility</td>
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By measuring a column of ‘assets’ against a column of ‘liabilities’, the resultant ‘equity’ can be approximated. Quantitatively this exercise, even partially, though, was a not deemed viable. The subject matter and the methodological dilemmas it raised, mandated that this be a qualitative exercise. The ‘standard’ (or ‘original’) ledger was founded upon what are widely regarded as durable assets/liabilities carefully nurtured over the long life span of the alliance.

Briefly explained, Australia can call upon a number of assets which are valued by United States interlocutors, and should positively influence its bargaining encounters with Washington.

**Assets**

**Loyalty.** Firstly, Australia’s track record of loyalty, having stood by the United States diplomatically and militarily throughout the Cold War and beyond (e.g. Korean War; Vietnam War; Afghanistan, Iraq, and the war on terror), demonstrates its loyalty and willingness to pay the blood price of alliance fraternity.

**Military contribution.** Secondly, its military contributions, past and present, are also a key asset. The Australian Defence Force operates a range of United States weapon platforms and it is a highly-interoperable and capable coalition partner for the United States.

**Defence/economic collaboration.** Thirdly, on this basis, Australia is a major customer for United States military hardware with expenditures on American military equipment estimated at $13 million AUD per day.6 This should provide influence with United States defence contractors who represent a powerful lobby on Capitol Hill.

**Regional networking.** Fourthly, Australia has been proactive in assisting the United States achieve its aim of networking its disparate hub-and-spoke system of bilateral alliances and various strategic partnerships. The Australia-Japan Special Strategic Partnership is emblematic of this, as are Canberra’s close engagement with South East Asian countries, where Washington can rely upon its ally as a favourable advocate.

**Ideological-domestic compatibility.** Fifthly, Canberra has typically held closely convergent perceptions of threat with Washington on all matters of security, during the Cold War and beyond, and this reassures the United States that Australia is an ally committed to supporting American national security interests. Lastly, a strong degree of ideological and domestic political compatibility has helped smooth intra-allied bargaining. Australia’s commitment to liberal democratic values and a bipartisan political support for the alliance has helped it avoid some of the recriminations and thorny difficulties evident in other United States alliance relationships.

**Liabilities**

**Power asymmetry.** On the liabilities side, firstly, Australia suffers from power asymmetry with its superpower ally. Not only will it be overawed by far greater United States power and capabilities, but it also is disadvantaged by the weak security guarantee and lack of alliance institutions inherent in ANZUS, leading to a consequent ‘fear of abandonment’ by the United States. This potentially reduces Australia to a supplicant position.

**Path dependency – sunk costs.** Secondly, Australia has embedded its defence and military postures so inseparably with the United States that it has limited its room for manoeuvre, especially in bargaining encounters. The investment Australia has made into its alliance relationship (sunk costs) virtually foreordain the adoption of a position favourable to the United States (path dependency). Indeed, its track record of obedience has made it difficult to say ‘no’ to Washington.

**Complex economic interdependence with China.** Lastly, the issue of so-called ‘complex economic interdependence’ with America’s rival – China – has complicated its ability to give unqualified support to United States initiatives that may be perceived as detrimental to Beijing. Australia fears that such support may endanger its economic security if China chooses to retaliate.

**Trump and the Regional Power Shift – Adjusting the ledger**

But with the advent of the Trump Admiration in 2016, coupled with the structural power shifts in the region, the standard ledger needs re-visiting and readjusting to take a changed political and strategic environment into account. The President’s ‘America First’ policies such as protectionism, withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and abrogation of the nuclear deal with Iran, have been harmful to Australian interests. Moreover, Trump also has castigated allies and called United States security guarantees into question. As a consequence, allies are now querying United States’ credibility as defence partner and its commitment to the liberal international order. This has led Professor Hugh White of the Australian National University to now

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envisage the future prospect of an ‘Asia without America’. China has been the beneficiary of the United States global retreat and the ending of the Obama ‘rebalance’ towards the Indo-Pacific. Concurrently, China’s power and influence keep rising, and are manifest in its significant military and territorial expansion, where it has taken an assertive stance in the South China Sea disputes, accompanied by the use of influence operations and sharp power tactics. The advent of President Trump and the rise of China, together equate to the ‘worst of both worlds’ for United States allies like Australia and Japan.

As a result of these political and structural trends, the original and long-standing ledger presented above needs adjusting. On the assets side, it would appear that notwithstanding Australian efforts to educate President Trump in the lineage of the alliance relationship, he takes the track record of loyalty into little account. This is extremely debilitating to the Australian position since this asset has been so strongly cultivated as a means of reducing liabilities, such as power asymmetry, in negotiations.

Secondly and thirdly, military and defence collaboration have been raised in profile. Trump is seemingly only interested in extracting material benefits from allies, and on this score Australia apparently meets the expectations of contributing sufficiently. Its enhanced defence budget (meeting the 2 per cent NATO benchmark of GDP spending), allows Canberra to dodge accusations of ‘free-riding’; and its significant investment in a new tranche of United States defence contracts is also viewed as good for United States business by Trump.

Fourthly, American strategic planners, outside of Trump, have been gratified by Australia’s boosted efforts to engage with its regional networking strategy; the Japan-Australia strategic partnership goes from strength to strength. Further, Canberra has greatly enhanced its engagement with South East Asia, and, with its new ‘step-up’ policy, with the South Pacific. The admission of United States forces to Darwin on a rotational basis is indicative of the greater emphasis that America and Australia place upon these nearby regions.

Fifthly, threat perceptions have started to diverge due to structural pressures caused by the rise of China. It is clear that Canberra is ambivalent about backing more confrontational American policies toward China, as outlined by Vice President Pence in a recent speech. Australian support for United States national security policies has thus become more equivocal.

Lastly, in terms of ideological and domestic compatibility, the alliance has taken a severe hit. It has not been possible to establish a personal rapport with such a fractious President, and one that seems to have turned his back upon most of the core shared values that animate the alliance relationship. Moreover, there is scant support for Trump among the Australian public, even if the alliance itself theoretically retains domestic approval.

On the liabilities side: firstly, power asymmetry remains a key problem with little prospect of resolution. The problem, however, is magnified under a President like Trump, since, heretofore, close Prime Minister-to-President relations have been so central to the functioning of the alliance, due to the lack of formalisation indicated above.

Secondly, the 2017 Australian Foreign Policy White Paper’s determination to increase military/defence integration with the United States ensures that Australia has further increased its dependence upon its ally (sunk costs), thus restricting further its freedom of action (path dependency). This heightens the risk of becoming ‘entrapped’ by the United States in a conflict not of Australia’s choosing – due to the likely demands that it will face from Washington, including the use of joint facilities located in Australia.

Lastly, the problem of a strategic-economic disconnect between Australia’s primary security partner (America) and its principal trading partner (China) show signs no signs of abating. Canberra’s willingness to support the United States unequivocally in the case of a clash with the People’s Republic of China, or to risk economic retaliation from the Middle Kingdom, weaken its position within the alliance as an absolutely reliable ally.

Conclusion

There are several implications from the foregoing analysis for Australia going forward. A number of paradoxes have emerged in alliance relations that confound easy solutions. In an uncertain strategic environment at a time of power shift, the need for the alliance protection for Australia has become greater than ever, even as America is losing its military dominance over the region. At the same time that Australia has deepened its commitment to the alliance, the current United States President has weakened its credibility and failed to reassure Canberra of its support. Thus, the costs of the alliance have risen even as its value has come into question.

What can Australia do to survive the challenges raised by Trump and the rise of China? Firstly, Australia needs to survive the four-year Trump abomination with the expectation (or hope) that foreign policy in the United States returns to ‘normality’ (and thus returns to closer conformity with the original ledger). In the meantime, maintaining stability in bilateral relations relies upon ‘bypassing Trump’ to concentrate upon interaction with...
the ‘deep state’ of American institutions that endorse the
alliance, such as the State Department, Defence Depart-
ment, military, and other influential actors in Washington.
Australia is faced with the daunting task of upholding
United States primacy in Asia, alongside other partners
such as Japan, even as the President undermines it.

Secondly, Australian policy-makers need to be
prepared for the contingency that the Trump approach
becomes the ‘new normal’ in the United States, either by
him winning a second term or by a ‘Trump 2.0’ claiming
victory in 2020. This scenario will require radically
rethinking our alliance policy settings, and effectively
place the original ledger with a revised one, as
intimated above. This will necessitate Australia getting
used to paying high defence costs for our own self-reliance,
or for our increased contribution to a diminished
ANZUS alliance.

Either way, Australia will need to think about
reforming ANZUS. This will potentially involve building a
stronger alliance infrastructure and formalisation of the
alliance so that it can be better insulated against
Presidential proclivities and allow the relationship to
proceed on a more stable platform into the future. As
always, the question of ANZUS will remain as much a
political debate as an purely analytical issue.

The Author: Dr Thomas S. Wilkins is a senior lecturer in
the Department of Government and International
Relations at the University of Sydney. He is also a Senior
Fellow (Non-Resident) at the Japan Institute for
International Affairs. He specialises in security and
strategic studies, with a particular emphasis on the Asia-
Pacific region. He wrote his Ph.D. thesis on coalition
warfare at the University of Birmingham and as an
exchange visitor at the School of Advanced International
Studies, Johns Hopkins University. He has published
widely in academic journals; and his book, Security in
Asia Pacific: the dynamics of alignment (Lynne Reiner
Publishers: Boulder, Colorado), was published in
February 2019. He is presently an associate editor for
the journal Pacific Affairs and area-editor for Japanese
Studies. [Photo of Dr Wilkins: University of Sydney]

BOOK REVIEW:

Base nation: how U.S. military bases abroad harm
America and the World

by David Vine


American military bases encircle the globe. As of
2015, the United States controlled approximately 800
bases on foreign soil – including four in Australia. United
States national security policy asserts that ‘forward
presence’ contributes directly to global peace and
security.

*Base Nation* does not describe the location and
function of the bases themselves, but examines the
social and economic impacts that the bases have on
the communities and countries where they are located.
It investigates the impact and costs of indigenous
population displacement, and labour market and
economic distortions, as well as environmental effects
across a wide range of locations.

Vine argues – as his sub-title suggests – that the
overseas bases raise geopolitical tensions and provoke
widespread antipathy towards the United States. He
further argues that they undermine American
democratic ideals, pushing the United States into
partnerships with dictators and perpetuating a system
of second-class citizenship in territories like Guam.

The examples Vine cites are well-researched and
compelling, but his findings and conclusions on the
impact and costs of the bases cannot be applied to
every situation. His conclusions, consequently, are
unbalanced and he fails to test them against the
counter argument that the bases actually do contribute
directly to global peace and security. Amusingly, in his
author’s notes, he admits that ‘no one is objective’, but
I suspect that trying to gauge the contribution of United
States bases to global peace and security would not
have been achievable. Nevertheless, his investigation
is revealing and, rather than an argument to close
or reduce the number of bases, it may stimulate efforts
for the negative consequences of the bases to be
reduced.

*Base Nation* includes 16 detailed maps, a number of
images and several tables. A comprehensive list of
notes complements a list of online resources, and there
is a detailed index.

Vine is the author of *Island of shame: the secret
history of the U.S. military base on Diego Garcia* and an
associate professor of anthropology at American
University in Washington, D.C. His writing has appeared
Guardian.*

The ubiquitous existence of United States bases
around the globe makes this topic worth considering in
itself and Vine has made a solid contribution to the
debate on the pros and cons of them as a means for
America to exercise national power. *Base Nation* is
recommended to those who have an interest in the
United States Department of Defence and its global
footprint, as well as to students of geopolitics more
broadly.

*Marcus Fielding*
From November 2017 to September 2018, I deployed to Kabul as Commander Task Group Afghanistan, a personally and professionally rewarding experience. In this time, there were glimpses of progress towards peace; a cautious optimism. This was a time of the implementation of the American South Asia Policy, an increase in Australia's commitment to the train-advise-assist (TAA) mission in support of two training institutions, and an increase in violence.

In this paper, I will look at the geo-political, threat and mission environment, the missions – Resolute Support and Freedom's Sentinel, Australia's commitment, the events of 2018, observations and thoughts for the future. I note that I left seven months ago, on the day a new American Commander of United States Forces-Afghanistan, General Scott Miller, took command of Resolute Support (NATO Train-Advise-Assist Mission) and Freedom's Sentinel (American Counter-Terrorism Mission).

The Strategic context

Afghanistan is a country of about 35 million people, made up of many ethnic and tribal groups, with the majority Pashtun, Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara. The diversity of these groups is significant as to the conduct of affairs in the country which is 99 per cent Muslim, the majority Sunni.

Afghanistan borders Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, China and Pakistan. It is a mountainous country of extremes, with plains to the north and southwest. In 2018, a visiting Afghan officer said that Australia as an island was very fortunate in that it had no countries directly on its borders – reflecting the impact of Afghanistan's neighbours and their influence on the internal politics, economy and conflict, and the impact of proxy wars being conducted in Afghanistan through history by state and non-state actors.

To provide a perspective – on 25 April 2018, in Kabul we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the battle of Villers Bretonneux and ANZAC Day with the Germans, Turks, English, New Zealanders, Danes and many other nations. Three days later in Kabul it marked 40 years of constant conflict – following the Saur Revolution and the coup d'état against the Afghan President in 1978. I suggest that this has a generational impact when the norm is fighting, friction and conflict.

Recent conflict in Afghanistan is complex, having moved from major conflict initially with the Russian invasion of 1979, civil war, Taliban rule and then the overthrow of the Taliban, and now as suggested by a senior British Officer who had deployed to Afghanistan on multiple occasions, rather than a country at war, it is a country with an insurgency with the vast majority of the population seeking to get on and live in a stable community. This suggests progress as does the wider spread of electricity, education, infrastructure and even national flags, but does not necessarily lead to reconciliation. Another lens is that of rather than a country at war, it is a country undergoing a narco-insurgency where the blend of criminals and fighters is blurred in the largest opium producer in the world. This also then feeds into what resolution will work.

The main threat groups are the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, ISIS Khorasan Province (ISIS-KP) and al-Qaeda. They each have different aims, methods, boundaries or lack of boundaries – there is not a uniform adversary.

In August 2017, President Trump announced the South Asia Strategy – a strategy that deployed 3500 additional troops to Afghanistan; and provided United States forces greater flexibility to attack the Taliban, the ISIS-KP, and other extremist groups. In addition, the strategy placed greater emphasis on efforts to build the capacity of Afghanistan’s security forces, supported with the deployment of a new advisor brigade – the Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB). The strategy also called for regional actors, particularly Pakistan, to increase pressure on the Taliban to enter a reconciliation process. This was a conditions-based strategy – not set to a finite withdrawal timetable.
Australia's Commitment

Since November 2001 Australia has deployed forces to Afghanistan. The current Australian commitment aligns to the Strategic Defence Objective from the 2016 Defence White Paper to “Contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia’s interests in a rules-based global order” (Defence 2016). Australia is working with the international community towards a secure and stable Afghanistan that is no longer a safe haven for international terrorism.

Operation Highroad

Operation Highroad is Australia’s military commitment in support of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF). This is through the capacity building that supports the NATO Resolve Support mission. This train-advise-assist (TAA) mission was established following the transition from the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) on 1 January 2015 – a transformation from over 100,000 troops engaged in combat operations to about 16,000 troops engaged in TAA. The purpose is to help the Afghan Security Forces and institutions develop the capacity to defend Afghanistan and protect its citizens in a sustainable manner. TAA is provided to security-related ministries, within the country’s institutions and among the senior ranks of the army and police. This involves operational planning, force generation processes, management and development of personnel, budgetary processes, logistical sustainment and civilian oversight.

Operation Resolve Support has about 16,000 personnel from 39 nations. Australia has about 300 troops deployed with the main contributing nations being America, Germany, Georgia, United Kingdom, Romania, Turkey and Italy. Australia is the eighth largest troop-contributing nation and the second largest non-NATO contributor.

Operation Freedom’s Sentinel is the United States Counter Terrorism mission in Afghanistan. It seeks to ensure that Afghanistan will never again be a haven for terrorist groups. It targets ISIS-KP and al-Qaeda as well as the Taliban. Commander U.S. Forces Afghanistan is lead for the NATO-led Operation Resolve Support and Operation Freedom’s Sentinel.

Task Group Afghanistan

The current TAA mission differs from the ISAF mission where Australia's commitment was centred on Uruzgan Province in southern Afghanistan. The ISAF commands transitioned to TAA commands supporting the regional Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) corps. The task group is made up of men and women from the Airforce, Navy, Defence Public Servants and predominantly Army – both full-time and part-time (reservists). Tasks include:

- supporting the Afghan National Army Officer Academy in Kabul where initial officer training is conducted;
- supporting the German-led Command and Staff Academy advisers;
- leading the Sergeant Majors Academy advisers;
- leading the Kabul Garrison Command Adviser Team, an Australian and Turkish team that supports an ANDSF headquarters responsible for the security of Kabul and developing a sustainable joint headquarters;
- TAA Command-Air – supporting the Afghan Air Force in operations, logistics, ground attack controllers, communicators, life-support maintenance and UH60 helicopter trainers;
- TAA Command-South – supporting the planning and conduct of contemporary counter insurgency operations;
- the Special Operations Advisory Group – providing TAA to the headquarters of General Command of Police Special Units in Kabul, including a small force protection element for advisers;
- embedding staff across roles in operations, plans (including support to election planning), security, coordination of the funding of the Afghan National Army trust fund, the Gender Adviser, adviser to senior civilian staff for the Counter IED+ Task Force and REDWING (a force protection system to counter IED), and military police;
- providing medical and dental staff at the Role 2 Hospital; and
- a headquarters to command the task group and provide personnel, operational, intelligence and logistic support to the task group.

Underpinning the task group is the Force Protection Company. While I was deployed, that was based on B, then C Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), and then D Company, 6th Battalion RAR. They are a sought-after resource – professional, confident, well-equipped (contemporary weapons, combat equipment, and the very-effective ‘Bushmaster’ protected mobility vehicles). They provide a clear standard and were the force protection of choice. They supported the advisers with an appropriate tone, presence and capacity to project themselves to escalate or de-escalate situations, gaining mutual respect with the advisers. They enable the mission.

2018 “Campaign”

I will cover some key events across late 2017 and 2018, providing an insight as to the evolving environment, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) involvement and considerations for the future of Afghanistan.

Winter. The winter was relatively mild which provided in the short-term an opportunity to continue to fight and in the medium-term limited water supply due to the lack of snow melting. This subsequently impacted on the sustainment of the rural population.

New Adviser Teams. In late December 2017, the Sergeant Major Academy (SMA) team commenced advising at the SMA in western Kabul at the Marshal Fahim National Defence University and in January 2018 the Command and Staff Academy Team commenced supporting the German-led TAA team. Both tasks required astute application of engagement, resilience and energy and both teams formed strong and effective relationships with their NATO peers and Afghan colleagues.
Kabul Security. In late January 2018, ISIS-KP attacked the Save the Children compound in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province which was then followed by significant attacks in Kabul with an attack on the Intercontinental Hotel targeting foreign nationals, killing 43 people and, a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in central Kabul that killed over 100 people. This was concealed in an ambulance and detonated in the vicinity of the Jamhuriat hospital. Following this was a further ISIS-KP attack in western Kabul. This focused NATO and the ANDSF on the security of Kabul and the Kabul Garrison Command and its Australian Adviser Team.

Ceasefire. On the 28 February, the President of Afghanistan, at the Kabul Peace Conference, offered the Taliban peace talks without preconditions. Over the 15 to 17 June Eid Al Fitr holiday, the Afghan Government and the Taliban honoured an historic bilateral cease-fire. It marked the first cessation of fighting since 2001. Across many regions, Taliban entered population centres and celebrated Eid. This demonstrated a potential alternative to the ongoing conflict and sparked communication between provincial leaders and the Taliban. ISIS-KP did not accept the ceasefire. In August, the President offered a three-month cease fire until 20 November 2018 that was not accepted by the Taliban.

Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFABs). In February and March, surveillance and strike assets transitioned in support of United States Forces-Afghanistan – concurrent with the commencement of operations of the United States SFABs. These TAA units were staffed with volunteers who had prior combat experience in Afghanistan and with the enhanced assets became very successful in operating with the Afghan forces at an operational/tactical level.

ISIS-KP. Throughout late 2017 and 2018, ISIS-KP maintained a disruptive and deadly presence in northern Jowzjan Province and in Nangahar Province, mounting attacks in these areas and Kabul. They focused on the Afghan forces and Shia institutions, such as education centres, a wrestling club and a voter registration centre. Fighting between the Taliban and ISIS-KP increased. It resulted in 200 ISIS-KP fighters and family surrendering in Jowzjan Province and to the degrading of ISIS-KP elements in eastern Afghanistan.

Elections. Through 2018, we prepared for district and provincial elections to be held in October 2018. This involved planning, infrastructure development, election conduct and security. Military operations focused on achieving security to allow the population to register and then vote; and reflected the relative dominance of key stakeholders. This was shown in the Taliban attack on provincial capitals: in May on Farah; and subsequently in August in Ghazni over a five-day period. The Afghan forces successfully expelled the Taliban fighters but both sides incurred heavy losses. Afghan Special Forces responded initially and subsequent Afghan elements were supported by a SFAB.

NATO Commitment. At the July 2018 NATO summit in Brussels, NATO members and Resolute Support operational partners agreed to extend their financial support for the Afghan forces through to 2024 and many also increased their personnel commitment. This was consistent with the longer term aims of the South Asia policy. Australia committed UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter advisers to help develop critical Afghan Air Force capabilities.

Inherent Law. In 2018, Inherent Law was implemented. This sought to forcibly retire over 3600 older officers from the Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Defence. The aim was to make the Defence and Security Force structure contemporary and sustainable; promote greater transparency and accountability; and progress a new generation of better educated contemporary officers.

Observations

Command

The task group is geographically dislocated: in three sites in Kabul, and in Bagram and Kandahar. About half of the elements are under different command and control status, allocated to other elements of Resolute Support. The threat is constant but dynamic. Some adviser teams and the force protection company deploy as formed groups with the remainder as individuals, so there is a degree of ‘churn’. Movement in Kabul is by road or rotary-wing aircraft and to further locations by fixed-wing aircraft provided by American, British or New Zealand elements.

The Command ‘function’ has an internal aspect and strong external engagement with the Australian Ambassador and her staff and other nations. This engagement was supported by the policy adviser and the Defence Attaché.

This ‘context’ required constant identification and application of lessons – there is always room to question and improve what we do. I adopted the Army’s values of courage, initiative, respect and teamwork regardless of the service of the task group members. This reinforced my regimental sergeant major’s experience that many events occur on operations that are not expected, and we must be ready and resilient to respond. A tenet of my command was the motto of the 17th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force: Facta Proband (deeds prove) – in that we take positive action with an outcome against which we judge ourselves and are judged.

Doctrine

Australia’s commitment to advising and peacekeeping has been ongoing since 1962 in South Vietnam and well-refined doctrine has resulted. My father served in 1970 in the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam and in 2018 we were performing a like role. There is a constant to this role as evidenced in our near region in the Philippines through the ongoing Operation Augury.

Adviser

From observing and engaging with the Australian and NATO Advisers, the following skills seem necessary for success: creating a genuine rapport; a cultural understanding; and an ability to listen, develop trust and determine where true value can be added. While these appear straightforward, the key is in the professionalism of their implementation by the adviser teams.

The mission was not centred on resourcing – development and then sustainment was key; and shaping
towards a solution that would work in the future Afghan context was imperative – regardless of how we may approach it. A consideration was ‘adviser fatigue’, where some advisees had experienced a new adviser each year for up to 17 years. It was apparent where the adviser had achieved the sweet spot and could offer an alternative and skills. It was also apparent that it was a long game and that the impact they had was incremental and maybe realised by the next adviser. The success of our advisers is evidence of the strength of our training system as it equipped them with appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude to perform these roles.

Integration
Integration of individuals into the Task Group and the mission was relatively seamless. I found that people knew and did their job – their background, gender or service was irrelevant. They were accepted. I am a part-time (Army Reserve) officer, having had different experiences to many soldiers – this did not matter. It was not a differentiator. This was brought to bear for me on Christmas Day when an officer approached me and shook my hand and quietly admitted he was also an Army Reserve Officer! I was not sensitive to this and it did not matter with part-time members across many elements, including adviser teams and force protection. This also was evidenced in the successful application of the ‘force generation cycle’ with members of the Reserve Battle Group deploying with the elements of their partnered Combat Brigade.

I see my experience of the Task Group as a very positive reflection on the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Defence’s ‘total workforce model’. This provides for changing nature of service across seven categories (SERCATs.) The SERCAT of personnel did not define their performance and allows great agility in using our personnel to deliver capability when it is required. This reflects positively the ADF’s selection processes, individual and collective training as the majority of the Task Group had not deployed previously, yet applied themselves to, and achieved, our mission.

Commitment
In late 2018, following the assassination of the Kandahar Police Chief, General Raziq and the wounding of the American brigadier-general commanding TAAC-South, Australian Brigadier John Shanahan was ‘parachuted’ into the command, a week out from the elections. “I saw the Afghan people, the Afghan security forces and the soldiers of TAAC-S rise up against the Taliban, resilient among sadness and chaos, to execute peaceful elections in Uruzgan and Zabul on schedule and Kandahar only a week later,” he said. “Helping Afghanistan to develop as a country, helping it to avoid descending into chaos and brutality, developing the Afghan security forces to defend the country and its people – and these are wonderful people – has been hugely rewarding. To our Afghan partners, we have planned, trained and fought together. We call you our partners and we have learned so much from you militarily and as a nation.”

Future
The current politico-military situation in Afghanistan is well summarised in Asia Foundation (2018), Inspector-General (2019) and SIGAR (2019). Looking forward, the following issues are raised:
• the need to continue development of the Afghan Air Force through TAA Command-Air;
• the need to continue development of military leaders through the three academies that we support and the leadership structure refreshed through Inherent Law;
• resolution of the military stalemate is being progressed through a politically-negotiated settlement with the Taliban by Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, United States Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation – it must become part of a wider political diplomatic, economic, social and religious strategy; and
• a Presidential Election is to be conducted on 28 September 2019.

Conclusion
The Task Group is improving the capacity and sustainability of the security institutions of Afghanistan. This also upskills our service personnel through practice, develops relationships with our strategic partners, and demonstrates our ability as a capable, contemporary force. This aligns with the Chief of Army’s vision of ‘accelerated warfare’ as we operate against different threats, in a joint (i.e. tri-service) space with other partner nations, and have the agility to thrive in an accelerating environment.

The Author: Brigadier Peter J. Connor AM, is Director-General Reserves – Army. He enlisted in the Australian Army in 1985 and, following commissioning into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1988, saw regimental service in 4th Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, and 2nd/17th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment (2/17RNSWR), rising to command the battalion (2005-2006). He later served in a range of senior command and staff appointments, including as Commander, Combined Task Force 635 (CTF 635) – Rotation 12, in the Solomon Islands (2007); Commander, 9th Brigade, in 2014; Commander, 8th Brigade, from 2015 to 2016; and Commander, Task Group Afghanistan, from November 2017 to September 2018. He was appointed a Member in the Military Division of the Order of Australia in 2008 for his command and leadership of 2/17 RNSWR and CTF 635.

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As a member of the Royal United Services Institute for more than a decade, it is a privilege to have been invited to address you today.

My interest in Korea has its origin in the experiences of my father, Lieutenant Colonel A. T. (‘Bushy’) Pembroke, a long-time member of the Institute. He served in Korea as a rifle platoon commander in the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, and was awarded a Military Cross at the Battle of Maryang San on 6 October 1951. I wanted to understand the historic and geo-strategic context for the Korean War of 1950-53. My research took me through North Korea in 2016, from the Yalu River on the Manchurian border, to the demilitarised zone in the south; to Moscow, Beijing, Pyongyang, Washington D.C. and Cambridge; and to the invaluable resources of the Institute’s Ursula Davidson Library, among other sources. The book that resulted, *Korea – Where the American Century Began*, was published in Australia in February 2018 and in the United States in August that year.

The title of this address is the ‘Tragedy of Korea’. There are many aspects to that tragedy, but I am going to focus today on the first five years of the country’s division from 1945-1950. Kim Dae-jung, the mentor of the current South Korean leader and the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, once said that the division of Korea was ‘a brief anomaly in thirteen centuries of unified kingdom’.

**Japan 1910-45**

The narrative commences at the start of the 20th century. Following its successes in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, Japan moved to annex Korea and amalgamate it into the Japanese Empire. It prized Korea as a producer of raw materials and as a supplier of labour. From 1910 to 1945, Japan ran Korea as a police state and plundered its resources of people and raw materials. It was a dark period for the Korean people. The division of Korea into two states was not contemplated by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the United States wartime president. Roosevelt had embraced a postwar world order that included a vision of a free and independent Korea, to be preceded by a period of international trusteeship to prepare it for self-rule – a principle embodied in the Cairo Declaration in December 1943. Stalin concurred, subject to the period of trusteeship being as short as possible. On 2 August 1945, the Potsdam Conference confirmed that ‘the terms of the Cairo Declaration shall be carried out’.

Roosevelt’s successor, President Truman, was a different man, with a deep distrust of Soviet-Russia. He preferred to have a buffer state on the Korean peninsula. The division of Korea was not entirely without precedent. Imperial Russia and Japan had considered partitioning Korea in 1896 and again in 1903. In 1945, the determining consideration was Russia’s entry into the Pacific War.

Stalin had agreed at the Yalta Conference in February 1945 to enter the war against Japan within three months of the end of the war in Europe. The German surrender took place on 8 May 1945 and precisely three months later, on 8 August, Russia informed Japan of its hostile intentions. That night the Soviet army moved into Manchuria on a grand scale. Its manifest ability to occupy the whole of the Korean peninsula before American forces could arrive was a source of consternation in the Pentagon. Within days, the first elements of the Russian 25th Army had entered northeast Korea.

The proposal that Korea should be partitioned at the 38th parallel was an American initiative, to which Stalin subsequently acceded. On 10 August, after Truman had returned from Potsdam, and after two atomic bombs had been detonated – over Hiroshima (6 August) and Nagasaki (9 August) – two young colonels from the State Department were given half an hour for the task of determining where Korea should be partitioned and a map of ‘Asia and Adjacent Areas’ from a 1942 *National Geographic* magazine. Working late in the night, they...
selected the 38th parallel. President Truman confirmed their selection a few days later.

The Japanese occupation of the whole of Korea was soon succeeded by American and Russian military occupations of separate parts. All three occupations were repressive in one form or another.

**Military Government, 1945-48**

Following the Japanese surrender, the United States occupied southern Korea with military forces commanded by General John Hodge, who became the military governor. In due course, Hodge installed an ultra-right-wing nationalist, Syngman Rhee, to form a civilian government.

Patrick Shaw, head of the Australian diplomatic mission in Tokyo (later Sir Patrick Shaw, Australian Ambassador to the United States) reported in November 1947 that in Korea’s southern zone: “Real power is apparently in the hands of the ruthless police force which works at the direction of the G-2 Section of the American GHQ and Syngman Rhee. Korean prisons are now fuller of political prisoners than under Japanese rule. The torture and murder of the political enemies of the extreme Right is an apparently accepted and commonplace thing” (Lone and McCormack 1994: 101). Two outstanding nationalist leaders who were opponents of Rhee were both murdered.

By contrast in the north, the man who would become its civilian leader, Kim Il-sung, was a Korean nationalist and a Soviet loyalist, steeled by conflict and struggle. When he arrived in northern Korea in September 1945, he disembarked from a Russian ship and was greeted personally by General Chistiakov, the commander of the Soviet occupation army. In February 1946, Chistiakov installed Kim as head of the first centralised administration in northern Korea, the Interim People’s Committee. Stalin personally approved Kim’s appointment.

Under Kim’s leadership, and Chistiakov’s supervision, the people’s committee quickly set about nationalising banks and Japanese-owned industries; and publishing a reform plan that involved the confiscation and re-distribution of land, the forgiveness of debt and the lowering of taxes. Within a year, Kim was firmly in power in a society that was tightly controlled; and, like Syngman Rhee, he harboured a conviction to unify the country by whatever means necessary.

An aspect of the Russian occupation of the north which distinguished it from the American occupation of the south, was the presence with the Soviet army of a special political detachment. Its task was to organise political development within the occupation zone. In carrying out its objective, it was assisted by the mobilisation and return to northern Korea of large numbers of ethnic Koreans who had been forcibly resettled in the Soviet interior following Japan’s invasion of China in 1937. This pool of Soviet Koreans was a valuable human resource whose members were already Soviet citizens, usually committed communists, and generally spoke both Korean and Russian. Another factor that made the northern occupation easier was the departure of hundreds of thousands of potential opponents of Soviet rule who fled south – Christians, Japanese collaborators, landowners and other political and economic refugees.

**Two States 1948**

In October 1947, the United States decided to transfer responsibility for the Korean issue to the General Assembly of the United Nations. It blamed Soviet duplicity, but both were at fault. On 14 November, the General Assembly resolved to establish a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea to facilitate, expedite and observe the election of representatives to a national assembly, which would then convene and form a ‘National Government’ of Korea. Its object was ‘the attainment of the national independence of Korea’ and the ‘withdrawal of occupying forces’. It was a hopeless cause. The opportunity for a unified, independent Korea had already been lost.

The resolution was opposed by the Soviets and American support for it was not what it seemed. The United States wanted a separate southern state, supportive of Washington, which would act as a buffer against communist influence.

The Temporary Commission, chaired by Indian diplomat K. P. S. Menon, soon concluded that it could not achieve its mandate to facilitate a ‘national Korean government’. Menon was to later write in his autobiography:

“If the Koreans were tenacious of independence, they were equally tenacious of their unity. Nothing was more remarkable than the homogeneity of the Korean nation. They belonged to the same race, spoke the same language and were proud of the same traditions … until recently, the terms ‘North Korea’ and ‘South Korea’ were simply unknown. Providence meant Korea to be one. The North could not live without the South, nor could the South without the North … Korea was indivisible, whether one looked at the problem from an economic, political or historical point of view.” (Menon 1965: 254; Pembroke 2018: 44)

Menon reported to the Interim Committee of the General Assembly that “the formation of a separate government in south Korea will not facilitate the objectives of the (United Nations) resolution, namely the attainment of the national independence of Korea and the withdrawal of occupying troops” (Pembroke 2018: 45). This was correct, but it was not what Washington wanted to hear. It ignored Menon’s considered opinion and the near unanimous concerns of his colleagues. Its self-interested object was to keep alive supervised elections in the south, even though national elections for the whole of Korea were not feasible.

On 26 February 1948, the Interim Committee of the United Nations ordered the Commission to implement the programme for the supervision and observation of elections ‘in such parts of Korea as are accessible to the Commission’. All knew that this meant only southern Korea. On 11 March, the members of the Commission
voted on whether they would comply with the directive. Despite sustained United States pressure, the Australian and Canadian representatives voted against implementation. Their principled stance was based on the contention that an election that only took place in the south would not advance the cause of Korean unification and would be boycotted by all but the extreme right. America denounced the Australian and Canadian representatives for ‘general appeasement of Soviet Russia’. The Australians and Canadians were in a minority on the Committee and the chair, K. P. S. Menon, felt obliged to accept the Interim Committee’s directive.

With the election strongly opposed by most Koreans, except Syngman Rhee and his immediate supporters, a North-South Political Leaders Coalition Conference was held in April attended by hundreds of delegates from both the north and the south. Its joint declaration called for the formation of a united government and the withdrawal of all foreign troops; rejected dictatorship and monopoly capitalism; and opposed separate elections – “separate elections in South Korea, if held, cannot express in any way the will of our nation, and will be regarded as a fraud” (Pembroke 2018: 46).

The United States would not be deterred. It proceeded with separate elections in the south on 10 May. The poll was accompanied by a campaign of violence and intimidation that saw 589 people killed. A significant proportion of the nationalist right, as well as those on the left, boycotted the election. Candidates loyal to Rhee won 190 of the 198 seats contested. None of the Commission members regarded the outcome as having established a Korean national parliament and Australia advised the United States that it was ‘far from satisfied’ with the election. The British Consul-General in Seoul expressed similar reservations, as did the Foreign Office in Whitehall. Hodge complained of ‘pettifogging obstruction where it was least expected, the British Empire’ (Pembroke 2018: 48). Eventually, on 25 June, the Commission (with Australia absent) declared the election ‘a valid expression of the free will of the electorate in those parts of Korea which were accessible to the Commission’ (Pembroke 2018: 47).

The Republic of Korea was established in the south on 15 August 1947, with Rhee as its president. Shortly after, on 9 September, a parallel state, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, quietly came into existence in the north with Kim as its president. The formation of the DPRK involved significantly less discord, but lacked the imprimatur of the United Nations.

The sad outcome was that, three years after military partition, the United States, with Soviet concurrence, had succeeded in dividing the nation into two rival republics. The 38th parallel became an international border. Before 1945, a Korean war was inconceivable. After 1945, it was inevitable, as both Kim Il-sung and Syngman Rhee were intent on unification by force.

By 1948, a state of incipient warfare existed with skirmishing along the border. In May 1949, the south initiated a battle at Kaesong that lasted four days. In late June, the north initiated heavy fighting on the Ongjin peninsula. In August, northern border-guards drove a small southern force off a hill north of the border; and the south sent naval patrol boats up the Taedong River, sinking four small North Korean ships. Each side wished to provoke an ‘unprovoked’ assault on the other so as to ensure the support of its great-power patron in an ensuing war. In 1950, Kim moved first, but only after Stalin relented, following forty-eight pleading telegrams from Kim seeking assistance.

The Northern Invasion

The North Korean army, equipped with formidable Soviet T34 tanks and supported by Russian military advisors who had extensive combat experience, invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950. The South Korean army was no match for the Soviet tanks and the invasion would have been rapidly successful had it not been for a prompt United Nations Security Council resolution authorising the use of collective force and the hasty despatch of American troops from Japan.

The Security Council resolution of 25 June 1950 called on North Korea to withdraw its armed forces to the 38th parallel. A second resolution on 27 June recommended that assistance be given to South Korea to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area. The United Nations authority for the use of collective military force was, in short, to ‘repel’ and ‘restore’.

The North Korean army quickly occupied the whole of South Korea except for an area around the southern port of Pusan, which became known as the ‘Pusan pocket’. The American commander, General Douglas MacArthur, responded by executing a bold left-flank envelopment involving an amphibious assault at Inchon, south-west of Seoul and not far below the 38th parallel. With its rear now threatened, the northern army withdrew back to the 38th parallel.

United States Counter-Invasion

Three months after it commenced, the North Korean invasion of South Korea was repulsed and the mandate of the United Nations Security Council achieved. The war should have ended. But hardliners in Washington and Seoul were not prepared to accept the status quo ante. On 13 July, Syngman Rhee declared that the invasion of the south had obliterated the 38th parallel and that no peace could be maintained in Korea as long as the division at the 38th parallel remained. In Washington, the National Security Council advised against crossing the 38th parallel, but the Joint Chiefs and others perceived a strategic opportunity which could be used to diminish the size of the world-wide communist bloc. Enthusiasts for cold-war belligerence demanded that American-led forces invade North Korea. They lost sight of the limitations implicit in the moral principle of repelling aggression.

What swung the balance in favour of invading North Korea was the outstanding success of MacArthur’s audacious amphibious assault at Inchon. It resulted in a dangerous hubris. On 27 September, the Joint Chiefs,
with Truman’s approval, but without authority from the United Nations, ordered MacArthur to destroy the North Korean forces. He was authorised to advance north of the 38th parallel as far as the Yalu River (the border with China). MacArthur needed no encouragement. On 30 September, forces under MacArthur’s command, crossed the 38th parallel and in the ensuing weeks drove the North Korean army north to the Yalu River. China, with an army already on the Yalu River, then fulfilled its threat to the United States and entered the war.

China Enters the War

There had been numerous diplomatic warnings from China that it would enter the war if United States-led troops crossed the 38th parallel into North Korea. Washington neither understood nor respected the Chinese leadership and was unwilling to give the cautionary statements from Beijing the credibility they deserved. It ignored the warnings and thought that China was engaging in a poker game. Its attitude combined arrogance, condescension and naïvety.

On 2 October around midnight, the Indian ambassador to Beijing, K. M. Panikkar, who was the principal conduit to the West, was summoned to a meeting with Zhou Enlai. When he returned home in the early hours of the morning, he wrote in his diary:

“So America has knowingly elected for war, with Britain following. It is indeed a tragic decision for the Americans and British are well aware that a military settlement of the Korean issue will be resisted by the Chinese and that armies now concentrated on the Yalu River will intervene decisively in the fight. Probably that is what the Americans, at least some of them, want. They probably feel that this is an opportunity to have a showdown with China. In any case, MacArthur’s dream has come true. I only hope that it does not turn out to be a nightmare.” (Panikkar 1955: 111; Pembroke 2018: 82-83).

United States Eighth Army Rout

China entered the conflict in force, with great bravery and using exceptional infantry tactics. The United States Eighth Army was forced to retreat. It was the longest retreat in American military history. Some historians have described it as the ‘most disgraceful’, the ‘most infamous’ and ‘one of the worst military disasters in history’. In reality, it was a rout. President Harry S. Truman declared a state of emergency. Legitimate questions about the wisdom, morality and legality of taking offensive action north of the 38th parallel were lost beneath a wave of moral righteousness and misplaced confidence. Doubters were sidelined, sceptics labelled as appeasers and allies were either ‘with us or against us’ (Pembroke 2018: xvi). Washington wrapped itself in an armour of certitude. Robert O’Neill, the respected Australian military historian, and author of the official history of Australia in the Korean War, questioned the ‘wisdom and morality’ of crossing the 38th parallel, which he said ‘tended to be submerged in general condemnation of North Korea as an aggressor’ (Pembroke 2018: 80-81).

Outcome

A massive bombing campaign of North Korea ensued and the battle line ultimately settled around the 38th parallel. The widespread use of napalm and conventional explosives flattened, burned and destroyed North Korea and instilled in its people a level of distrust and resentment that has shaped the country’s continuing hostility towards the United States. More bombs were dropped than in the whole of the Pacific theatre during World War II. In the re-built streets of Pyongyang, the legacy of bombing is bitterness. Civilian casualties are estimated to have been approximately 2-3 million people.

Conclusion

You can draw your own conclusion but I will end on this note. The best-selling writer, Simon Winchester, the author of Pacific – the Ocean of the Future, has speculated wistfully that the world might have been a safer place “if the Soviets had been given free rein [in 1945] to invade all of Korea, and be done with it”. In that event, there would have been no Korean war, “merely a Leninist satrapy in the Far East that, most probably, would have withered and died, as did other Soviet satellite states”. (Winchester 2015: 156; Pembroke 2018: 219, 220)

The Author:
The Honourable Justice Michael A. Pembroke, a judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales since 2010, is an historian, naturalist and the author of three books. His second book, Arthur Phillip – Sailor, Mercenary, Governor, Spy (Pembroke 2013), was short-listed for the Prime Minister's Literary Awards and was runner-up in the National Maritime Museum history award. His third book, Korea (Pembroke 2018), was short-listed for the New South Wales Premier’s History Awards and the Queensland Literary Awards. He was educated at the Universities of Sydney and Cambridge where he studied history, French and government intending to become a diplomat, but instead turned to the law. He is the son and the father of army officers and has lived and travelled extensively throughout the world. In 2017, he was appointed as a Director's Visitor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey. [Photo of Justice Pembroke: Colonel J. M. Hutcheson MC]

References

CONTRIBUTED ESSAY

Some myths relating to the promotion to field marshal of Sir Thomas Blamey in 1950

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General Sir Thomas Blamey who, during World War II, had been commander-in-chief of the Australian Military Forces and, concurrently, commander of the Allied Land Forces in the South-West Pacific Area, was recalled from retirement in 1950 and promoted to field marshal. Recent research in the Australian archives has revealed that the accepted story surrounding his promotion contained several myths, including that the British War Office resisted the promotion.

Field Marshal Sir Thomas Blamey has remained a controversial figure in death as in life. This is particularly so in relation to the award of his field marshal’s baton in 1950. Even today, there are those who, in discussing the current campaign to promote Sir John Monash posthumously to field marshal (e.g. Fischer 2014), will quip with a degree of seriousness: Well, take it away from that… Blamey and give it to Monash. As Australia’s only native-born field marshal, though, and the only person promoted to that rank in recognition of his service in the Australian Military Forces, it is only natural that his promotion is used as the precedent and the reference point for the promotion to field marshal of future candidates.

A level of myth and legend has crept into discussions about Blamey’s promotion, especially that the British War office resisted the promotion, possibly on grounds of Blamey’s Australian nationality and his retired status. In truth, the British War Office had not even been consulted. Whilst in some ways these are minor errors, nevertheless they are significant when field marshal promotions are again in the news. While these errors can be traced back to statements by Blamey’s official biographer, John Hetherington, whose two biographies of Blamey stand as landmarks (Hetherington 1954; 1973), he made only a passing reference to the issue in a single paragraph. By reference to the official Australian archives of the time, now publicly available, in this essay I shall seek to dispel these myths.

Background to the Myths

In defence of Hetherington, the files relating to the promotion were still classified and closed to the public in 1954 and 1973. Hetherington had to rely, as official biographer, on posing questions to Defence Department bureaucrats who would then provide answers without providing names or background details.

This would have posed two problems for the historian. Without access to the primary material, an historian has no sense of the context of the documents and must rely on the bureaucrat not only to be accurate but to also convey an understanding of the implications of what is contained in the file. A minor error here can become magnified in the final product.

The second problem is that the historian has to take the bare material and give it substance as part of an overall story. To do this, historians generalise, extrapolate, create assumptions or deductions from the bland facts – in other words ‘join the dots’. This, of course, requires an historian to have not only the context but an understanding of the background to the context. It is here that a series of minor errors or misconceptions crept into the Blamey biography.

In dealing with the difficulties in promoting a retired officer in poor health to the rank of field marshal, Hetherington begins by discussing the decision by the Australian prime minister, Robert Menzies, newly in office, to ask the Governor-General to approach His Majesty the King to promote Blamey to field marshal. The background to this decision was the determination of the prime minister to ensure that senior soldiers were rewarded for their wartime services as he felt that the nation had been somewhat remiss after World War I in this matter. The Labour government of the wartime years had refused knighthoods to a significant proportion of what is contained in the file. A minor error here can become magnified in the final product.

Until 1983, files were closed for at least 50 years from the point of accession by the National Archives. There are National Archives Offices in each state and the Australian War Memorial is a separate branch office of the National Archives. In 1983, the time-frame was reduced in general to 30 years and, since 2010, it has been reduced to 20 years. Some records are still restricted for longer and some may have material still regarded as current redacted from the files. In addition, while released, all files have to be inspected to ensure that they do not contain sensitive material; thus, a file may be listed but marked ‘not yet assessed’ and thus not be available publically (NAA MT 1131/1, A274/1/57 and NAA MT 1131/1, A274/2/3 (1952-1954)).
number of senior officers in the period 1941–1949, yet it had not inserted any other decorations in lieu. Despite suggestions during and at the end of the war that Blamey be promoted to field marshal, this too had been refused by the government. Menzies set out to rectify these omissions, at least in part.

What Hetherington did not cover, perhaps due to lack of access to the files, was a discussion in Canberra prior to the approach to the King. Here it was pointed out to the prime minister that, constitutionally, Australia could appoint its own field marshals. Menzies, however, was adamant that, for reasons of prestige, the award should be seen as equally prestigious as one to a British officer – therefore, he wanted the King to sign off on it.

With the files classified, Hetherington was allowed to pose questions to departmental officials. He was presumably told that there had been difficulties with Great Britain that seemed to relate to his nationality and retired status and that when Menzies countered with the example of Jan Christian Smuts, the objections had focused on his retired status. What he was unaware of, was that field marshal rank is a Royal appointment in the gift of the sovereign or, in Australia’s case, made by the Governor-General on the advice of the prime minister or parliament. The only Defence Department/War Office involvement would be which posting he would fill on promotion and therefore what list he should be placed on.

Hetherington writes as follows: “The British reply, obviously drafted by the War Office, was not helpful; it said, in effect, that to make a Dominion soldier field marshal would be against policy” (Hetherington 1973: 393). Hetherington went on to describe how Menzies had fired back the example of Jan Christian Smuts, the South African promoted in 1941 from the retired list, which then led to: “London answered that question by producing a new argument: Blamey was ineligible because he was no longer on the army active list” (Hetherington 1973: 393-4).

All of which has passed into the received version of the events such that some later commentators have waxed lyrical about how the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir William Slim, was opposed to colonials receiving the accolade (Crocker 2011: 333; and sundry popular websites).

The Evidence of the Historic Record

None of the above is correct. Hetherington was poorly served by whoever answered his queries on this aspect of Blamey’s career. The files in the National Archives of Australia (NAA) show that the British War Office, in fact, had no comment on the matter nor should it have had. The correspondence was between the Australian governor-general and the Palace. The objection came from Sir Alan Lascelles (‘Tommy’ Lascelles for those devotees of the miniseries The Crown). In his position as private secretary to His Majesty the King, he was querying the matter before advising His Majesty about signing off on the promotion. The Imperial Conference of 1926 and the later Statute of Westminster 1931 meant that it was Australia’s decision, not a decision for the British government or War Office.

This had been made clear in the 1935-36 period when there had been a public campaign to promote Sir Harry Chauvel to field marshal. When the Palace was contacted, it responded by indicating that that such recommendations were the right of Australia, not of the Palace. The initial response from the Palace in 1950 referred to “promoting a retired officer that would create undesirable precedents in Britain and the Empire”. It was Australian officials who put the interpretation on it as being anti-colonial. It is clear that this is far from the truth. Lascelles cleared that matter up in following correspondence indicating that it was the retired status of the officer which was in question. For someone as punctilious as Lascelles, it seems an odd concern as, between 1918 and 1941, four British officers were promoted to field marshal in retirement (five if Smuts is counted). It seems that he may have been concerned to head off pressure to promote certain retired officers in the United Kingdom. Lascelles went so far as to suggest that the issue might be resolved with the award of the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB) rather than a field marshal’s baton, as he could not conceive of how to get around the retirement issue. In any event, the issue of being a colonial was never in question.

It also should be noted that it was not until the issue had been resolved that the Chief of the Australian General Staff, Lieutenant-General Sir Sydney Rowell, was informed of what was about to happen and then only because his technical advice was required as to what list

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*Note the file on his queries is marked ‘not yet assessed’ by the NAA and is not available to researchers.
*Report of the Inter-Imperial Relations Committee of the Imperial Conference 1926: “It is the right of the Government of each Dominion to advise the Crown on all matters relating to its own affairs. Consequently, it would not be in accordance with constitutional practice for advice to be tendered to His Majesty by His Majesty’s Government … [on a Dominion matter] against the views of the Government of that Dominion” (NAA: A4640/32). Also, Statue of Westminster Adoption Act 1942 (NAA: A1559, 1942/56) refers. This did not stop either the British government or War Office attempting to manipulate Australia in the interests of ‘Imperial’ defence post World War II.
*Melbourne Herald 3 December 1936 (NAA: B1535, 878/1/144).
*Cable, Lascelles to Governor General Sir William McKell, 9 March 1950, NAA: A663, 0156/1/80.
*Cable, Lascelles to Governor General Sir William McKell, 10 May 1950, NAA: A5954,1508/8.
*Ibid.
*Nor had his predecessor, Lieutenant-General Sir Vernon Sturdee, been consulted.
Blamey should be placed on, on promotion. Even then his advice was overruled by the prime minister and by the secretary of the Department of Defence, Sir Frederick Shedden. In a memorandum to the defence minister dated 9 March 1950\(^{19}\). Shedden noted in paragraph 9 that, due to the confidential nature of the move (Blamey’s promotion), the legal issues had not been discussed with the army at that point. Shedden further noted that when the King had accepted Australian field marshal rank in 1938, the military was not consulted at all.

Likewise, it would appear that the promotion of Birdwood to field marshal in 1925 was not discussed with the army prior to the announcement. Subsequent to the announcement and, in uncharted waters, faced with a need to justify the promotion of an officer who was an honorary general in the Australian Army, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel, then chief of the General Staff, held a promotion board in October 1925 to make a formal recommendation for Birdwood’s promotion to field marshal. This then appeared in the Commonwealth Gazette\(^{14}\).

Rowell believed that Blamey could be promoted from the retired list and remain on that list. Whether the second part technically was possible is open to discussion, but it was not what the prime minister wanted\(^{15}\). Menzies wanted Blamey as a fully-fledged field marshal in the British tradition. Menzies noted in his letter of 23 May 1950 to the Governor-General: “In view of the really outstanding services of General Blamey, the Australian government desires that the promotion recommended should be made”\(^{16}\).

Blamey was restored to the active list with a great deal of manoeuvring and his promotion was announced in the King’s Birthday Honours list for 1950 (8 June 1950). He was placed on the active list of the Citizen Military Forces\(^{17}\). It was not until December 1950 that all the paperwork was in place.

The other issue to be overcome was that of finances. Lascelles pointed out that the majority of field marshals, whilst on the active list, were not actually assigned to the army prior to the announcement. Subsequent to the announcement and, in uncharted waters, faced with a need to justify the promotion of an officer who was an honorary general in the Australian Army, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel, then chief of the General Staff, held a promotion board in October 1925 to make a formal recommendation for Birdwood’s promotion to field marshal. This then appeared in the Commonwealth Gazette\(^{14}\).

The author believes that, by the King giving assent to the promotion, it would make Blamey a British field marshal too – was it expected that the Palace would pick up the bill estimated at between £1600 – £1800 per annum? The Palace was assured that the position was to be purely honorific with no charge on the public purse either in Britain or Australia\(^{18}\). The irony here, of course, is that the Australian Cabinet in August 1950 voted Blamey a £3000 per annum gratuity for life from 8 June 1950\(^{21}\). The precedent for return to the active list when overage and in retirement is that of General Sir John Monash who was returned to the active list to act as Australian ambassador or representative to the opening of the city of New Delhi as India’s capital in 1931. He was exactly the same age (66) as Blamey on his return to the active list.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, an entirely different picture of this promotion emerges from the historic record to that which is the current accepted version. Hetherington is not to blame for the discrepancies as he had no vision of the relevant files and the information provided to him on request was so spartan that it was easy to see how Hetherington developed his interpretation. It, however, does provide a cautionary tale about the need to be aware of the context behind events and how errors can pass into folklore.

**The Author:** Lieutenant Colonel David Deasey OAM RDF (Ret’d) is a military historian with a particular interest in the 2nd Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) and the Great War in the Middle East Theatre (1915-1919). A former high-school teacher of modern history, he also was a citizen soldier who saw regimental service in the Royal New South Wales Regiment and later commanded the University of New South Wales Regiment. [Photo of Colonel Deasey: the author]

**References**


(Continued next page)
BOOK REVIEW

**War**
by Gwynne Dyer

*Periscope: Reading, UK; 2017; 488 pp.; ISBN 9781902932415; RRP $29.99 (softcover)*

This modern classic, by journalist and military historian Gwynne Dyer, is a most compelling analysis of the history and psychology of armed conflict through the ages. Why do humans fight wars? Is it even possible to tame the impulse? Is this ‘lethal custom’ innate, or culturally determined? How might we change? War is essential reading on the way to considering these eternal questions.

War was first published in 1985 following a 1983 seven-part Canadian television miniseries produced by Dyer. A second edition, titled *War: The Lethal Custom*, was published in 2006. This book is a third edition which has been revised and updated from the second.

Dyer traces the growth of organised warfare from the earliest days of humankind, as well as the psychology of individual soldiers, to the workings of whole armies. Using analogies with other animal species, he seeks insights into the social and biological aspects of organised violence. He argues that war, as an act of mass violence, has remained unchanged. The only real change has been in the technological means of waging war. He suggests that the international system, whereby each polity is responsible for its own defence, encourages war to settle disputes about status and influence.

Dyer argues that use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons would threaten the existence of life on earth. Noting the expansion of the ‘nuclear weapon club’ to include India and Pakistan, Dyer queries whether they will come to adopt the logic of mutually assured destruction that came to define the nuclear-weapon relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. At a time when North Korea has recently joined the nuclear weapon club, and Iran continues to work towards that goal, it is certainly worth reconsidering the strategic calculus of nuclear weapons. He makes the point that, even though the Cold War has ended, the United States and Russia still maintain very large nuclear arsenals and the number of weapons around the world is slowly growing.

This edition, coming 15 years after ‘9/11’, includes a chapter titled ‘Guerillas and Terrorism’. It focuses on war in the greater Middle East since 9/11. His analysis of the motives and fighting is insightful, but I was surprised he did not address the Sunni-Shia divide/contest which has fuelled a good amount of the killing. Dyer concludes that the al-Qaeda/Islamic State groups are merely revolutionary movements and, while they have enjoyed some successes, they will ultimately be defeated. He implores the reader to maintain perspective on the threat and consequences of nuclear war versus international terrorism.

Dyer is silent on women serving in the military, a recent and significant break from the historical norm. The psychology and social science behind this shift would be worth exploring.

While there can never be one definitive volume on a topic as vast and varied as ‘war’, Dyer has done a very good job of writing a book about the custom of war, placing it within the historical and cultural contexts wherein it resides. Writing in clear, intelligent and eminently accessible prose, he does not submit to resignation or false optimism; but it is clear that Dyer is a pacifist and hopes that somehow humanity can figure out a way to eradicate war.

The book includes several black-and-white images, footnotes for each chapter and an index, but no bibliography. Annoyingly, there are some passages concerning geo-political developments that have not been updated since the second edition and are factually incorrect. And curiously, the ‘Acknowledgements’ are from the second edition. Progressively revising and updating a book over 30 years clearly is a challenging process.

This is a large book, brimming with critical thinking and analysis, not all of which will be absorbed on first reading. But it is well worth the effort, being one of the best books currently available on the subject – and immeasurably more relevant than Clausewitz or Sun Tzu. Not only readers and researchers of military topics should read War – historians, sociologists, and those who wonder why society is the way it is today, should take the time to read what Dyer has to say.

*Marcus Fielding*

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**Some myths relating to the promotion to field marshal of Sir Thomas Blamey…**

*(Continued from previous page)*


The three most relevant National Archives of Australia files and their locations are:

- A663, 0156/1/180, Promotion of General Sir Thomas Blamey to the rank of Field Marshal (Canberra).
- A5954, 1508/8, Promotion of General Sir Thomas Blamey to the rank of Field Marshal (Canberra).
- MP742/1, B/5/4043, Sir Thomas Blamey – Promotion to Field Marshal (Melbourne).
BOOK REVIEW:

**Flesh and steel during the Great War: the transformation of the French army and the invention of modern warfare**

by Michel Goya


*Flesh and Steel* describes the transformation of the French army from a 19th century force in 1914 to arguably ‘the most modern in the world’ by 1918. This transformation involved a high-tempo process of bottom-up tactical and technological innovation in response to battlefield experience and enemy innovation, coupled with adaptive doctrine refinement and teaching from the top down. The book challenges the assertion of British historian, John Terraine, that the British army won the final offensive of the ‘Hundred Days’ single-handedly.

*Flesh and Steel* was originally published as *La chair et l'acier: l'invention de la guerre moderne, 1914-1918* (‘Flesh and steel: the invention of modern warfare, 1914-1918’) by Éditions Tallandier, Paris, in 2004. Tallandier reissued it in 2014 as *L'invention de la guerre moderne: du pantalon rouge au char d'assaut, 1871-1918* (‘The invention of modern warfare: from red trousers to tanks, 1871-1918’). This first English edition was translated from the French by Andrew Uffindell, a leading British military historian and accomplished translator of French works.

The author, Dr Michel Goya, served in the French army from 1983 to 2009 and reached the rank of colonel. At the Institut de Recherche Stratégique de L'École Militaire, he led the study of new forms of war and the development of French military doctrine in the wars following ‘9/11’. He has published on the war in Iraq and experience of front-line combat, as well as critiques of France’s strategy in the national press. He undertook the research for this book while reading for his PhD in history.

The book contains a very useful foreword by eminent military historian Sir Hew Strachan, which places the book in its context and compares it with similar works. It also has three helpful appendices; extensive notes and references; and an index.

*Flesh and Steel* begins by discussing the development of various schools of military thought in France from the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to 1914, thereby setting the context for what is to follow. Goya then describes the flaws in the learning process at the outbreak of the war. A series of chapters follow that look at the fate of various arms (infantry, heavy artillery, cavalry etc.) in the early stages of the war, how weaknesses were revealed in the weapons systems available, the tactics employed, and the command and control arrangements. We then learn how the ‘pressure of the front’ led to tactical innovation and micro-transformation at the front, before filtering back to General Headquarters. This led to the issue of new army-wide doctrine which was assimilated into the army through training.

Concurrently, new technologies were being developed and emerged rapidly onto the battlefield, the most notable of which being aircraft and tanks. It took time to evolve, evaluate and adopt tactics which optimised their utilisation.

For me, the most interesting chapter was the final one which describes how ‘the Grand Army of 1918’ emerged so rapidly from the failure of the Second Battle of the Aisne and General Lavelle’s grand offensive of April-May 1917, followed by ‘mutinies’ in the French army in June. Further grand offensives were put on hold while morale was rebuilt under the leadership of General Pétain through a series very successful limited offensives, such as the Battle of Malaizone in October which cost the Germans 50,000 men to French losses of 12,000.

Next, to absorb the expected German offensive, a new system of defence-in-depth was implemented, coupled with a re-organisation of logistics behind the front to enable rapid re-deployments, especially of artillery. During the German 1918 spring offensive, despite initial tactical reversals, it was strategically successful.

Finally, the offensive weapon was forged, based on manoeuvre, mastery of the ‘deep battle’, ‘shock troops’ and combined arms – the co-ordinated use of ‘new’ infantry, machine-guns, tanks and aircraft supported by overwhelming artillery. This honed weapon proved very effective in the final 100 days offensive which opened on 8 August 1918 with the Battle of Montdidier – the ‘model battle’.

The rapid learning, adaptation and transition which the French army undertook in the period 1914-18 is a process that most armies face when they enter a new war and some armies handle it better than others as the 2017 Army History Conference case studies reveal – one case study citing the 2004 French edition of this book.

*Flesh and Steel* may not appeal to the general reader. It is really for aficionados of military strategy, grand tactics and tactics; and for students of rapid learning and adaptation during war. It should be essential reading for army officers and its omission from the 2019 Australian Army Reading List is an oversight which the Army Research Centre should rectify in the next list.

David Leece

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Ever heard of Sir Robert Brook-Popham – or more correctly, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, GCVO, KCB, CMG, DSO, AFC? If the answer is yes, it very likely associates him with the fall of Singapore. And yet, the life and achievements of this man were remarkable and reflect the development of air power from before World War I and the evolution of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) and the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Brooke-Popham joined the army in 1897 as a gentlemen cadet at Sandhurst. After graduation, he was attracted to aviation, gaining a pilot's licence. His early service included Army Staff College and membership of the Air Battalion, later established as the RFC. During this period, he was an early advocate of the potential of air power, including control of the air, and was ridiculed by many for his postulations. His paper was reported favourably at a Royal United Services Institute (London) lecture in 1912. Brooke-Popham was instrumental in "general fathering of aeronautical design and the proper standards of safety for safety".

He was Trenchard's staff officer during World War I and served in France with responsibilities for the administrative and logistic support for the RFC. During his tenure, the RFC grew from four squadrons and 860 personnel to 23 squadrons and 6506 personnel in 1916. His leadership helped create the complex, sophisticated and highly effective logistics system that sustained the RFC and RAF during World War I.

Following World War I, Brooke-Popham established the RAF Staff College and the Imperial Staff College; he commanded "the fighting area" – later known as Fighter Command; was Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Iraq Command, when Iraq was a British mandate following World War I; AOC for the Defence of Great Britain from 1933 – 1935 and was the first senior officer to appreciate the value of scientists when others were still refusing to admit them to their headquarters. Following an appointment as Inspector General of the RAF, Brooke-Popham retired and was appointed Governor of Kenya.

He was returned to active duty at the declaration of World War II with responsibility for the establishment of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) in Canada and South Africa. The EATS became the backbone for the supply of aircrew to Bomber Command.

At age 62, Brooke-Popham had a remarkable and very distinguished career, but he is mainly remembered for his appointment as Commander-in-Chief Far East in October 1940, responsible for defence matters for Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong and Burma. He was replaced in November 1941 with "an Army Officer with more recent experience" and a much younger man. Noting that the demands of office had taken a toll on him, his removal from command was assisted by members of the colonial administration who resisted his requirement to place the colonies on a war footing. They considered that the continued supply of tin and rubber to Great Britain was more important than preparing for war.

Brooke-Popham's directive was to convince the Japanese that the defences of Singapore and Hong Kong were too strong to challenge; make preparations for war; and to build strategic alliances. The unfortunate capture of Cabinet War Papers by the Germans who passed them to the Japanese undermined his efforts with regard to dissuading Japanese aggression. Effective preparation for war was made almost impossible by the ructions within the colonial administration, compounded by Brook-Popham's control being limited to land and air forces, and did not include naval forces or the civil service. The directive was flawed in that the defence of Singapore was badly undermined by a failure of Churchill to provide the necessary forces. However, Brooke-Popham was successful in building strong alliances between the United States, Holland and Australia.

To quote the Times newspaper in February 1942: "Soft troops, unenterprising commanders, outwitted strategists, an incompetent administration, an apathetic native population – these are not signs of a gallant army betrayed only by bad luck; they sound uncomfortably like the dissolution of an empire".

This is a remarkable story. It is well told by Peter Dye and is a good read. Although Dye is acknowledged as a professional disciple of Brooke-Popham, he provides a balanced and objective biography.

Peter Dye is a graduate of the Imperial College and Birmingham University. He served in the RAF for more that 35 years and was awarded the Order of the British Empire for his support of British Forces in the First Gulf War, retiring as an air vice-marshal. He was appointed director-general of the RAF Museum in 2008, retiring after six years in post to concentrate on lecturing, research, and writing on airpower topics. He is an honorary research fellow at the University of Birmingham.

I recommend this book to those with an interest in the strategic development and organisation of airpower and to those who would like to consider another aspect of the story of the fall of the "impregnable fortress".

Bob Treloar
BOOK REVIEW:

“Total onslaught: war and revolution in southern Africa since 1945”

by Paul Moorcraft


This book is about the conflicts in southern Africa which followed World War II and which have continued to a greater or lesser extent in different countries up to the present. I found it daunting initially, as I could not see how the author could draw a thread between the range of wars in southern Africa that were fought over a 70-year period – from 1945 to 2015, but this perception changed as I delved further into the book.

As a war correspondent in southern Africa from the 1960s to the end of apartheid, Moorcraft came to the view that ‘... generally, Africa was full of great people but .... Appalling governance has emasculated the Continent’ (p. xi). The ruling white National Party in South Africa insisted that a ‘total onslaught’ was being waged against the white dominated republic. The core of the struggles was centred on Afrikaner resistance to black rule. He says that ‘The whites, however, like their black successors, were history’s slow learners’ (p. xiii). He offers this study to provide contemporary lessons for all who decide to use force to resolve political challenges. Moorcraft’s conclusion is simple and profound: ‘except for disaster relief under UN [United Nations] auspices, ... the more the West intervenes the worse things become... that should become the new total strategy for Africa’ (p. 435).

Moorcraft, now director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis, London, is a published author of both non-fiction and fiction books, including some six military history and concept books plus some seven works on crime and mathematics. His qualifications to write this book are undoubted. Not only did he serve in the region as a war correspondent for some 40 years, he also has been an instructor at the Royal Military College Sandhurst and the United Kingdom Joint Services Command and Staff College, he has worked for the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence and has been a visiting professor at Cardiff University.

The book is in four parts and is well-structured with photos and maps well-positioned. Part 1 covers the rise of South Africa to become the dominant power on the continent. Part II covers the colonial wars in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Rhodesia as the inhabitants fought for independence; Part III covers the civil wars and conflicts of the post-colonial period; and Part IV covers the end of white rule in South Africa.

Post-1945, the survival of the white buffer colonies was vital to South Africa’s defence strategy until the early 1970s. Cuba and Russia were involved in supporting Angola – with engagements costly to both sides. Namibia, previously a German colony and, after the Great War, a South African mandated territory, was in a unique position as the final unresolved legacy of the Armistice in 1918. The Author explains why Namibia ‘became South Africa’s very own Vietnam’. Mozambique was a Portuguese colony brutally run from Portugal. Its independence was followed by the inheritance of power by a single nationalist movement, but the country fell into anarchy despite efforts by South Africa to prevent this.

The Rhodesian war saw the collapse of white power and diminished the defence perimeter so valued by South Africa. The war in Rhodesia lasted 14 years and would have been lost by the white Rhodesians had London not intervened. Moorcraft refers to the Rhodesian armed forces’ ‘tactical brilliance and strategic ineptitude’.

Part III covers the period after the ‘friendly (white) buffers’ became South Africa’s deadly enemies. In this, President Mugabe of Zimbabwe (ex-Rhodesia) was central. During this period, South Africa tried to destabilise her neighbours, having failed to stabilise colonial rule. There were major battles in Angola, Namibia, Mozambique and Rhodesia between 1976 and 1992.

Part IV details the way in which white rule in South Africa eventually ended. That story is relatively well known, being centred around the life of, and adulation for, Nelson Mandela.

Moorcraft concludes that, since 1960, there have been 240 African heads of state, but less than twenty ‘were good leaders’ (p. 435); the majority were corrupt, incompetent and often had to be removed with force.

An Appendix outlines the complex South African security system during President Botha’s dominance (1978 to 1989). Its role was basically to quell internal dissent and support neighbouring nations as buffers. The South African army comprised two mechanised divisions and a parachute brigade and its equipment included 250 centurion tanks, 1600 armoured combat vehicles, 1500 infantry combat vehicles, 1500 armoured personnel carriers and over 200 field and medium artillery pieces. The air force had 338 combat aircraft and 14 armed helicopters.

The book contains 22 maps, a list of abbreviations, a glossary, a timeline, endnotes, a bibliography and an index.

Total Onslaught should be essential reading for anyone who wants to understand southern Africa from the end of World War II to the present and what the future may hold for this rich and troubled continent.

Ken Broadhead
Yoshihara and Holmes bring to this assessment of how the rise of Chinese seapower will affect United States maritime strategy in Asia a considerable reputation for scholarship in the field. There are 44 pages of notes in the book with many references to original Chinese works – which are not the easiest of texts to follow or translate. Their selection of Western texts is also comprehensive.

The book starts with an introductory chapter titled ‘China’s Dream’ followed by a refresher course in naval strategy. All the familiar names from staff college are there – Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, Mahan, Corbett, Liddell Hart and a host of more recent scholars. Yoshihara and Holmes are ‘true believers’ in Alfred Thayer Mahan and his theories, and they take his view that there are three planks to maritime power and hence national wellbeing – commerce, ships (both commercial and naval) and bases. They then make the connection with the trajectory of China’s ‘move to the sea’ since the latter years of the 20th Century. The authors demonstrate that China has become a major entity in world trade in a remarkably short time. Its merchant fleet is everywhere the seas can take it, and the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has grown exponentially from a coastal protection force to one with aspirations to be a blue water navy. The Chinese have established first-class facilities in China itself as well as bases in ports remote from China to support the PLAN.

Yoshihara and Holmes then examine and explain why there has been so much Chinese emphasis recently on the naval element of the Mahanian triangle. The growth of its international trade has overturned traditional Chinese views of their country as a continental power. The importance of their ports and the shipping that uses them have tilted the national concentration towards the sea and the protection of these assets and the contiguous oceans. As well, the Chinese seem to have become convinced that foreign powers – especially the United States and its allies – have (or may develop) the intention of blockading China’s access to the sea.

To date, there is no evidence of any such intention; rather the United States and its allies have upheld the freedom of Chinese shipping to move across the world’s oceans. However, this has not lessened the concern of the Chinese maritime strategy establishment about the ‘First Island Barrier’, which extends from the Kamchatka Peninsula, Korea, Japan, the Senkaku Islands, Taiwan, the rocks and shoals of the South China Sea and the Philippines all the way to Malaysia. Chinese strategists apparently believe that these are all likely sources of interference with their shipping which must be at least neutralised or even captured. To keep the ‘enemy’ further at bay, the ‘Second Island Barrier’ – Japan-Guam-New Guinea – must also be subjected to Chinese coercion short of occupation.

Accordingly, the Chinese have invested enormously in developing the capability of achieving these goals. Four chapters catalogue Chinese advances in shipbuilding, aircraft design and construction, armaments, information technology and command and control. The outcome, say the authors, will be a United States Navy and its allies either destroyed by Chinese combined land-based, naval and air power or forced to relinquish control of the sea to escape this fate.

We heard something similar during the Cold War about the Soviet Union, so these projections should be regarded with caution. The PLAN has made great strides in its presence and war-fighting material capabilities, but whether the PLA is capable of bringing all its potential resources to bear in co-ordinated attacks on an ‘enemy’ force, is another matter. Red Star might have presented a more balanced consideration of what the PLAN can now, and may in the future, reasonably field at sea and with what chances of success. The authors, though, do make the point that conjecture about the rise of the PLAN must take account of potential developments in the international, political, technological and financial fields into the future, which are most unlikely to be linear.

The penultimate chapter reviews United States maritime strategy in Asia after World War II, illustrating the waxing and waning of political interest and the switches between a constabulary role for the United States Navy and preparations for fighting wars, issues Australians have also recognised in the alliance. Australia rates just a few mentions, with the authors noting that the Chinese are likely attempt to dissuade us from supporting United States action to ‘contain’ Chinese ambitions, which has already happened.

I would recommend Red Star over the Pacific to both experts and the general public as a useful insight into the remarkable shift in attitudes towards the sea and the maritime dimension in Chinese strategic, military and commercial thinking. It might also prompt Australians to consider the critical importance of the sea to our own nation, and how we can defend our own maritime interests.

Ian Pfennigwerth