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President’s Column

It is with great pleasure that, as President of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies New South Wales (RUSI NSW), I write this column jointly with our National President, Paul Willee.

Next year, United Service will become the RUSIDSS-A national journal. This move is very welcome. RUSI NSW has previously been responsible for the producing the journal as state-based publication, albeit distributed to RUSIDSS-A members nationally. RUSI NSW, however, will still be responsible for producing the journal and leading its policy committee, which will be strengthened by a representative from each of the state and territory United Services Institutes (known within RUSIDSS-A as ‘constituent bodies’).

I would like to welcome the new editor designate of United Service, Colonel Joe Matthews (Ret’d), who will take over as editor on 1 January 2022. He has accepted the challenge of continuing the exceptionally high standards set for this journal by our outgoing editor Dr David Leece. David has edited this final 2021 edition. He has made an enormous contribution to RUSI NSW and RUSIDSS-A over the last two decades, a special highlight of which is the high quality of this journal accompanied by the international recognition it has earned, including being adopted now as our national journal. I now look forward to the future success of United Service as a national journal.

Professor Michael Hough, AM, RFD, ED
President, RUSI NSW

Let me introduce myself as your National President. I am a member of the Royal United Services Institute of Victoria. I practise as a barrister at the Victorian Bar and have a naval reserve diving and legal background, including as a Defence Force magistrate and judge advocate.

The Board of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies-Australia (RUSIDSS-A), which I chair, has agreed that United Service should become our national journal from the March 2022 issue. I thank the RUSI NSW Board for graciously providing its journal for this purpose, while at the same time agreeing to continue to produce it, at least for a transitional period. I also welcome Colonel Joe Matthews as the incoming editor of United Service.

This last RUSI NSW issue of United Service contains many interesting articles and I commend it to you.

Paul A. Willee, RFD, QC
National President, RUSIDSS-A

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AUKUS Security Partnership

On 16 September 2021, the Prime Ministers of Australia (A) and the United Kingdom (UK) and the President of the United States of America (US), announced an enhanced trilateral security partnership – AUKUS. The security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region have grown significantly. Capabilities are rapidly advancing and their reach expanding. The technological edge enjoyed by Australia and our partners is narrowing. AUKUS will build on the three nations’ longstanding bilateral ties, and will enable the partners to deepen cooperation on emerging security and defence capabilities.

Initial efforts under AUKUS will focus on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and undersea capabilities. Throughout the decade, Australia will acquire long-range strike capabilities. These include:

- Tomahawk Cruise Missiles for our Hobart-class destroyers, enabling them to strike land targets at greater distances, with better precision;
- Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missiles (Extended Range) to enable our F/A-18 A/B Hornets and, in future, our F-35A Lightning II, to hit targets at a range of 900km;
- Long-Range Anti-Ship Missiles (Extended Range) for the F/A-18F Super Hornet;
- collaboration with the United States to develop hypersonic missiles for our air assets;
- precision-strike guided missiles for our land forces, which are capable of destroying, neutralising and supressing diverse targets from over 400km; and
- $1 billion for a sovereign guided-weapons manufacturing enterprise.

These capabilities, coupled with the planned life-of-type extension of Australia's Collins-class submarine fleet, will enhance Australia's ability to deter and respond to potential security challenges.

The first major initiative under AUKUS is Australia’s proposed acquisition of at least eight nuclear-powered submarines. The government intends to build these submarines in Adelaide. Hence, it will no longer be proceeding with the Attack-class submarine programme.

Australia, the UK and the US have committed to a comprehensive programme of work over the next 18 months to examine the full suite of requirements that underpin nuclear stewardship, with a specific focus on safety, design, construction, operation, maintenance, disposal, regulation, training, environmental protection, installations and infrastructure, basing, workforce and force structure. The government has established a Nuclear-Powered Submarine Task Force led by VADM Jonathan Mead AO to facilitate Australia’s role in AUKUS.

Nuclear-powered submarines have superior characteristics of stealth, speed, manoeuvrability, survivability, and almost limitless endurance, when compared to conventional submarines. They can deploy unmanned underwater vehicles and can also carry more advanced and a greater number of weapons. These abilities allow nuclear-powered submarines to operate in contested areas with a lower risk of detection. These advantages mean that the transition to nuclear-powered submarines represents a substantial capability leap for the Royal Australian Navy. The Government is committed to maximising Australian industry participation in this programme.

Department of Defence
16 September 2021

AUKUS: its strategic and diplomatic implications

As outlined in Defence News (p. 3), Australia, Britain and America announced an enhanced trilateral security partnership, AUKUS, on 16 September 2021. AUKUS is not a new defence alliance. Rather, the three partners have agreed to deepen sharing of defence technology and increase associated collaborative research and development.

Initially, AUKUS will focus on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and undersea capabilities, and on Australia acquiring long-range strike capabilities. These initiatives are consistent with Australia’s strategic priorities (Defence 2020a: 33; Defence 2020b).

As the first major initiative under AUKUS, Australia intends to acquire eight nuclear-powered submarines and has cancelled its Attack-class submarine programme which was to have provided us with 12 conventionally-powered submarines. Prima facie, this decision is inconsistent with Australia’s enunciated strategic priorities on four grounds: our shortened strategic warning time (Defence 2020a: 14); the defence planning focus on our immediate region (Defence 2020: 21); our need to strengthen defence and diplomatic ties (Defence 2020a: 22, 33); and our need for greater strategic independence (i.e. less reliance on the United States). Let us consider each in more detail.

Strategic Warning Time

Current strategic guidance states: “Australia can no longer rely on a timely warning ahead of conflict occurring” (Defence 2020: 14). Hence, one could understand the contract to build sequentially 12 Attack-class submarines being cancelled if it were to be replaced by a contract to immediately acquire 12 equivalent conventionally-powered submarines ‘off-the-shelf’.

That, though, is not the plan and may not be a realistic option. Rather, according to Chief of Navy Vice Admiral Mike Noonan in evidence to Senate Estimates on 15...
October, the existing six Collins-class submarines (due to be retired beginning this decade) may need to undergo two life-of-type extensions (essentially, rebuilds) to maintain them in service into the 2050s – this to prevent a capability gap opening before they are progressively replaced by the proposed nuclear-powered submarines1.

So, instead of acquiring equivalent submarines earlier than originally planned, we will now acquire the Attack-class replacements a decade later than intended. While this is at odds with the reduced strategic warning time, there may not be a better option now that the French contracts have been cancelled.

**Australia’s Geostrategic Focus**

Although the French contracts were problematic, Navy advised Senate Estimates that the contracts were cancelled for unspecified strategic reasons, not for contract non-performance. The strategic reasons remain unclear.

Much commentary has assumed that nuclear-powered boats (SSNs) are superior to conventionally-powered boats (SSKs). Generally, SSNs2 are not stealthier, but are larger, faster, have larger crews and can operate submerged for several months. They are better-suited for operations in deep, open oceans. SSKs are smaller, slower, have smaller crews, and need to surface regularly to charge batteries, although newer battery technology has greatly extended their underwater time. They are better-suited for littoral operations (in shallower waters and confined spaces e.g. archipelagic areas).

Consistent with a geostrategic focus on our immediate region (Defence 2020: 21), it is understood that a key factor in the decision to acquire 12 SSKs as part of an Australian maritime defence strategy was to have a sovereign capability, independent of allies, to conduct surveillance of, and deny passage through, the key choke points of the Indonesian-Melanesian archipelago, such as the Makassar, Sunda and Lombok Straits. A second factor was the need to be able to fully maintain the 12 SSKs in Australia.

The decision now to acquire eight SSNs suggests it is intended to operate them much further from home in conjunction with the United States Indo-Pacific Fleet in northern Indo-Pacific waters, a second-order strategic priority (Defence 2020: 21-24). Possible tasks could include protection of maritime lines-of-communication and surveillance/denial of choke points in the First Island Chain. With the boats’ nuclear propulsion systems relying on maintenance in Britain or America (assuming that, by then, we still did not have a sovereign nuclear industry), their maintenance during a conflict could be problematic3.

Could SSNs be substituted for SSKs in sea denial of the immediate approaches to Australia? Yes, SSNs can be used for littoral operations, but eight boats only may be insufficient to constitute a credible deterrent.

**Regional Defence and Diplomatic Ties**

Current strategic guidance states that: “Defence will continue to invest in relationships, collaboration and partnerships across the Indo-Pacific and globally” (Defence 2020: 22); and “… build Australia’s partnerships and influence in the region” (Defence 2020: 33).

Australia cancelled the contracts with France to build the Attack-class boats and did so ineptly. France is not only a European power with its own independent nuclear deterrent, it also is an Indo-Pacific power. An intention of the contracts had been enhanced co-operation with the French in our region. Instead, the contract terminations have damaged relations with the French (and the European Union).

The decision to pursue the acquisition of nuclear boats also unsettled other regional allies, the Malaysians and Indonesians in particular. Attempts have been made since to explain the decision to them, but Indonesia has not been mollified and wider diplomatic damage has resulted.

**Greater Strategic Independence**

The ANZUS Treaty remains the bedrock of our defence strategy (Defence 2016: 41). Over the last five years, however, there has been debate about the need for Australia to assert greater independence in strategic decision-making, especially in deciding whether or not to go to war whenever the United States does – this flexibility is afforded under the ANZUS Treaty. In part, this desire for greater independence has been triggered by the isolationist tendencies to re-emerge in America during the Trump presidency, coupled with the uncertainty engendered by America’s decision, made unilaterally, to withdraw from Afghanistan and the withdrawal’s chaotic execution in 2021.

If we were to build nuclear-powered submarines using United States technology, which were intended to deploy operationally primarily with the United States Indo-Pacific Fleet and for which major maintenance could be undertaken only in America, our ability to take strategic decisions independently of the United States could be severely constrained.

**Where to from Here?**

The AUKUS defence-technology partnership, with its initial focus on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and undersea capabilities, with Australia also acquiring long-range strike capabilities, is a welcome strategic step forward. It also signals to the world our allies’ confidence in Australia as a reliable strategic ally and technological partner.

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1Admiral Noonan did not state the basis for his belief that the Collins’ hulls could withstand two rebuilds.

2SSN is the United States Navy hull classification symbol for a nuclear-powered attack submarine – the SS denotes a submarine and the N denotes nuclear power. SSK is the symbol for a diesel-electric submarine specialised for anti-submarine duties – the K denotes a hunter-killer.

3Virginia-class SSNs employ a life-of-the-ship nuclear reactor fuelled by highly-enriched uranium (HEU) with a service-life of 33+ years, but in-service maintenance can become necessary, e.g. to repair damage. Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty considerations may constrain Australia’s development of a commercial HEU industry.
INSTITUTE PROCEEDINGS

The evolving role of the 2nd Division within Australia’s defence mobilisation strategic framework

A paper based on an online presentation to the Institute on 31 August 2021 by

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Commander 2nd Division, Australian Army
Vice-Patron, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies,
New South Wales

Given changed strategic circumstances, planning on a 10-year warning of a major conventional attack on Australia is no longer appropriate. Hence, 2nd Division, an Army Reserve formation, has evolved beyond maintaining an expansion base as a strategic reserve. Its role now is principally operational. It maintains foundation war-fighting skills; raises, trains and sustains a battle group to reinforce Army’s full-time ready brigade; commands, controls and contributes force elements to domestic operations [disaster relief and security support]; and contributes force elements for the ongoing defence of the nation’s maritime approaches. Reserve call-out powers are available, if needed.

Key words: 2nd Division; aid to the civil authorities; assistance to the civil community; Australian Army Reserve; Australian Defence Force; border protection; disaster relief; humanitarian assistance; strategic warning time; war-fighting.

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Institute in this dynamic, challenging period for the 2nd Division and Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves more generally. While I will focus primarily on Army reservists in this paper, I also acknowledge the work undertaken by Navy and Air Force reservists, many of whom who have worked alongside the 2nd Division over the past two years in domestic operations and without whom we would not have been able to succeed. I acknowledge also the achievements of my predecessor, Major General Kath Campbell, who commanded the Division with great vision and strong leadership. During her period of command, significant numbers of reservists deployed on domestic operations, particularly Operation Bush Fire Assist and Operation COVID-19 Assist, and the Reserves call-out legislation was used for the first time.

Since early 2020, 3688 2nd Division members have deployed on Operation Bush Fire Assist, 4371 and counting on Operation COVID-19 Assist, 172 on Operation Resolute (border protection) and 378 on Operation New South Wales Flood Assist. This is a rate of effort by the Division unseen previously in peacetime. The men and women of the 2nd Division continue to be ready to assist government respond to significant domestic crises across the nation, in addition to supporting off-shore operations and force modernisation during the unpredictable decade ahead.

The government’s 2020 Defence Strategic Update (Defence 2020a) and the Force Structure Plan (Defence 2020b) pose the contemporary challenges of Australia’s strategic environment, where major power competition has intensified. Defence’s strategic objectives have been cast by the Government as the deployment of military power: to shape Australia’s strategic environment; to deter actions against our interests; and, when required, to respond with credible military force (Defence 2020a: 24-25).

Army’s response to Defence (2020a, b) is contained in Army’s Contribution to Defence Strategy (Burr 2020). This articulates the Chief of Army’s vision, through the concepts of ‘accelerated warfare’ and ‘an Army in motion’, to support the ADF in confronting the challenges of the here and now, while concurrently preparing for the environment and new capabilities detailed in Defence (2020a, b).

Army’s capacity to prepare teams for the Joint Force³ comes from making use of the total workforce as ‘One Army’, i.e. full-time personnel, flexible-work personnel, part-time personnel, contingent work contractors, and Australian Public Service (APS) personnel. Army reservists, as part of the One Army, are central to all of Army’s planning vide the Army Objective Force.

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¹A version of this paper was first presented to the Defence Reserves Association 2021 Annual Conference on 14 August 2021.
²Email: david.thomae@defence.gov.au
³The Joint Force in this context refers to the ADF and, more specifically, to the joint forces deployed on operations from time to time by the ADF. ‘Joint’ infers a balanced grouping of Navy, Army and Air Force assets and personnel as needed by the specific operation.
This paper will focus on the role of the 2nd Division, an Army Reserve formation, in meeting Army's contribution to the Joint Force in the context of the defence mobilisation strategic framework.

Australia's Changed Strategic Mobilisation Context

There is a common public perception that mobilisation requires a significant increase in the ADF's workforce capacity to meet an external strategic threat. This is consistent with Australia's historical national response to World Wars I and II where the defence forces were significantly increased from a small standing force with the luxury of relatively long mobilisation lead times.

The 2020 Defence Strategic Update provides a stark contrast to our historic experience of national mobilisation. It refers to previous defence planning based on a 10-year strategic warning of a major conventional attack on Australia as no longer appropriate (Defence 2020a: 14). Instead, coercion, competition and grey-zone activities affecting Australia's interests are occurring now and this means that Australia can no longer rely on timely warning ahead of conflict occurring.

Given that strategic context, in contemporary ADF parlance 'strategic mobilisation' is defined as: "the act of generating additional capability and capacity beyond Defence's current scope and scale, by increasing the defence budget, redirecting workforce and reallocating or repurposing defence and other government, commercial or community resources to achieve government objectives". Accordingly, Reserve forces enable scaling of military power within the strategic mobilisation framework by drawing upon an otherwise part-time force. Individuals and force elements with baseline training can be made available for duty with, or in support of, regular units on operations. This was, and still is, a cost-effective model of scaling military capacity, rather than maintaining a large standing force. This fundamental logic has withstood the test of time.

The role of the Reserves, however, has evolved beyond maintaining an expansion base as a strategic reserve. Numerous reviews and white papers have advocated an operational focus for reserves. The critical need for reservists to sustain force rotations in East Timor from 2000 and subsequently in the Solomon Islands has demanded that reservists, as individuals and as 'capability bricks', are available to reinforce regular forces. This emphasis on reservists providing operational capability has seen them deployed on every operation the ADF has undertaken in the last 20 years.

2nd Division’s Force Generation Foci

War-fighting

The 2nd Division's focus in the immediate past has been to support the Army's force generation cycle by the raising, training and sustaining a Reinforcing Battle Group to support the full-time Ready Brigade, thereby maintaining the Division's foundation war-fighting skills at unit level for security operations. This has been an important role for the 2nd Division and has allowed it to modernise and build capacity in conventional war-fighting skills alongside the Army's combat brigades.

More recently, the emphasis of the 2nd Division in the force generation system has moved to the integration of reserve capability bricks of platoon and company size into units of the combat brigades, as well as having a battalion headquarters attain skills through the joint war-fighting exercise series. This approach provides opportunities for the Division to build the foundation war-fighting skills of its junior leaders and soldiers and to provide confidence in the capacity of reservists to integrate effectively with their full-time peers, as well as providing the opportunity for a battalion headquarters to be trained to plan and execute tactical operations.

Defence Force Assistance to the Civil Community

Crystallising lessons from the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements (Binskin et al. 2020), and the ADF's lived experience from late 2019 on Operation Bushfire Assist, following then on to Operation COVID-19 Assist, and amplified more recently by Operation Flood Assist in New South Wales, the Chief of Army has directed that the role of the 2nd Division pivot to having primary responsibility for Army's contribution to domestic disaster relief and domestic security support tasks.

The stated mission of the 2nd Division to meet this new role is: "to generate land capabilities for the Joint Force and to command assigned contingency response forces in order to meet directed domestic operational requirements". The first part of that role, to generate land capabilities for the Joint Force, is not materially different from the previous role in that it provides for Army to direct the 2nd Division to generate specific land capabilities as it has already been doing. For example, the Civil-Military Co-operation function exclusively resides in the 2nd Division; as does the Emergency Support Force function in each of the states during the high-risk weather season. The capacity of the 2nd Division to support the ADF for domestic operations has long been proven with a consistent ability to meet the short-notice requirements for Defence Force

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*A 'capability brick' is a small team of defence personnel that can be added to other such teams to create a defence operational capability e.g. a sub-unit or a unit. An analogous term, often used interchangeably, is 'force element'.

*A 'battle group' is a force of unit strength, frequently an infantry battalion, reinforced by a unit's allocation of supporting arms and services under command as needed by the specific operation.
Assistant to the Civil Community from all the states and territories for natural disasters and more recently for the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities**

To be clear, the responsibility for domestic operations does not replace the requirement to develop foundation war-fighting skills in reserve soldiers. The opposite is true, because the 2nd Division’s span of responsibility for domestic operations is not limited to responding to natural disasters. The 2nd Division now has primary responsibility for Army’s capability in generating force elements to support any Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities during domestic security contingencies. This capability requires soldiers trained in the foundation skills of Army’s combat behaviours, which are the baseline skills for the development of foundation war-fighting in the Army. The 2nd Division incorporates Army’s combat behaviours in its preparedness for meeting its domestic response obligations, as well as building on its foundation war-fighting capability.

Recently, the Division exercised the response to a request for assistance for Defence Force Aid to the Civil Authorities in the town of Toowoomba, a major urban centre in Queensland. During the exercise, the 11th Brigade Domestic Incident Security Force partnered with the Queensland Police Service, and local and state government agencies. The Domestic Incident Security Force operated across a range of tasks, including vital asset protection, low-risk search of public buildings, establishing cordon for Queensland Police Service operations, and partnered armed patrolling. Our soldiers were equipped with Army’s current generation of weapons, body armour, night-vision sights and protected mobility. This highly-realistic training focused our soldiers and leaders on the importance of their combat behaviour skills and interoperability with state agencies. The continued development of this capacity will be a major part of Divisional preparedness going forward.

**Command and Control**

As to the Division’s responsibility to command assigned contingency-response forces, key lessons from the Royal Commission (Binskin et al. 2020) and Defence lessons have identified the need for the ADF to maintain enduring relationships with the state and territory emergency management framework, rather than developing *ad hoc* arrangements in response to a crisis.

The 2nd Division is uniquely placed within the ADF to provide the command and control architecture and force elements to meet short-notice domestic operational requirements across Australia. We are able to utilise the extant formation headquarters in each of the mainland states with additional reserve nodes in Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. The Division’s nation-wide dis-
police in Sydney shows – it is likely to require ongoing commitment of ADF resources.

Operation Bushfire Assist marked the first time the Commonwealth Government had ever used the call-out powers at s. 51f of the Defence Act 1903 (C’wealth) to bring reservists onto an operation. This is of profound importance. Reflecting on the definition for strategic mobilisation that I provided earlier, the use of the call-out powers provides the mechanism for scaling the ADF response to meet threats, domestic or otherwise.

The use of the callout powers has opened the aperture through which the Government and the ADF can develop the capacity for reserves to provide scalability for the full spectrum of operations, including the defence of Australia. Impressively, the lessons learned from the callout of reservists on Operation Bushfire Assist in early 2020, were implemented in the passing of legislation in December 2020, which provided greater flexibility in the conditions of service on which reservists could be called out and provided indemnities and protections in the carrying out of their duties.

Exercise Talisman Sabre

The collective training the 2nd Division did this year to demonstrate integration with the combat brigades was Exercise Talisman Sabre 21, conducted in July with more than 17,000 Australian Army, Navy and Air Force personnel, partnering with troops from the United States, and with smaller contingents from the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand. This high-end war-fighting exercise is conducted biennially and is designed to enhance interoperability between the ADF and our allies.

Despite the COVID-19 interruptions, the 2nd Division contributed almost 300 soldiers to the exercise, integrating with the 3rd Combat Brigade to successfully complete a range of war-fighting tasks. When I visited the exercise, I was impressed with how effectively our soldiers had integrated with the full-time units, particularly with the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. 2nd Division soldiers deployed with the same enhanced steyr rifles, Australian multi-cam uniforms, combat body armour and protected mobility as their regular counterparts. With their foundation war-fighting skills, they were able to integrate seamlessly and improve their skills with one of Army's high-readiness infantry battalions.

Operation Resolute

Transit Security Element: In addition to leading Australia’s domestic operations and training for foundation war-fighting, the Division continues to support the defence of Australia’s maritime approaches through Operation Resolute. So far this year, some 200 2nd Division personnel have deployed with the transit security element from Darwin in support of Maritime Border Command. These 2nd Division personnel are reservists who are prepared to leave their families and negotiate their absence with their civilian employers to undertake the six-month deployment. They undertake vital security tasks, often in dangerous circumstances and in very remote areas.

Regional Force Surveillance Group: The Regional Force Surveillance Group (RFSG), also part of the 2nd Division, is tasked to provide a remote-area, land and littoral surveillance and reconnaissance capability in Australia’s north and northwest. The RFSG consists of three regional force surveillance units: the Pilbara Regiment, the North-West Mobile Force (Norforce), and the 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment. These reservists conduct persistent (essentially continuous) surveillance tasks as a key Army contribution to Operation Resolute. The RFSG’s presence in the north provides physical eyes and ears on the ground in a strategically important region. Noteworthy, also, is their lead in developing and encouraging indigenous participation in the ADF.

The Future

In 2022, it is planned that the 2nd Division will transition from Forces Command to become a separate functional command charged with the responsibility for Army’s domestic response obligation and reporting directly to Army Headquarters. This is an important transformation for the Division as it matures in its responsibility for domestic operations. Augmentation of the headquarters’ full-time workforce has been carefully calibrated to achieve functional command status without duplication of back-of-house functions that have resided in Forces Command.

Initiatives are being undertaken in 13th Brigade in Western Australia to trial workplace reforms and establish new capabilities. They include the re-establishment of the 10th Light Horse as a regiment and the introduction into service of the Hawkeye Protected Mobility Vehicle-Light to that unit; and the development of a nascent littoral capability within the 16th Battalion, The Royal Western Australia Regiment. Such initiatives provide concrete examples of how Army seeks to foster innovation and enhance capability in a strategically-important region of Australia.

Work also is being undertaken as part of the future-ready workforce to include reservists in what have been traditionally full-time roles. An example is the creation of reservist positions within the aviation stream to harness a broad range of skills to build capability. Recognition of civilian qualifications to allow workforce flexibility has long been a desirable outcome for the employment of reservists. This is a key focus of Army to leverage its existing workforce in expanding capability, but also to provide alternative pathways to bring established civilian skills into Army. Partnerships with civilian employers, like the BHP mining company in Western Australia, to generate highly technical engineering skills is an example of where Army is looking to be more agile and responsive to workforce needs.
approaches to entry standards and training levels are part of the work being done to better leverage the avenues to recruit critical skills into Army.

Conclusion
I am grateful for the opportunity to share with you how the 2nd Division contributes to the Army and the ADF. The Division has demonstrated its inherent capacity to provide the command and control architecture for domestic operations and for its soldiers to meet short-notice contingency requirements. The Division, as it evolves into a functional command charged with the responsibility for Army's domestic response obligations, has an important and growing role within the strategic mobilisation framework.

The Division's success is firmly grounded in: its connection to the communities it draws on; the quality of the training that the Army training system provides; the equipment with which it continually modernises; and, most importantly, the people who commit to serving their nation.

Army's modernisation and reliance on the total workforce to achieve the government's strategic requirements means that the 2nd Division will continue to play an important role in defending the nation. As the newly appointed commander of the 2nd Division, I am proud of what the Division has achieved over the past 18 months. We will continue to support the Army and the ADF during these challenging times, while prepared for any future contingency.

OBITUARY

Max Willis 1935 – 2021

Institute member, Brigadier The Honourable M. F. Willis RFD ED CSI, politician, citizen soldier and lawyer, has died in Sydney aged 85 years.

Max Frederick Willis was born at Murwillumbah, New South Wales, in December 1935 and was educated at Murwillumbah High School and the University of Sydney from which he graduated as a Bachelor of Laws in 1957. From 1958 to 1971, he practised as a solicitor with Sersier, Willis and Browning at Miranda in southern Sydney.

A member of the Liberal Party, in 1970 he was appointed to a vacancy in the New South Wales Legislative Council. He was Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Council from 1977 to 1978 and Leader from 1978 to 1981. In 1991, he was elected President of the Council, but resigned the position in 1998 under controversial circumstances and retired from politics in 1999. For his parliamentary service, he was awarded the Centenary Medal in 2001.

Max had a parallel career as a citizen soldier, enlisting in the Sydney University Regiment in 1953, where he was later commissioned. He also saw regimental service as a rifle company commander in the 4th Battalion, The Royal New South Wales Regiment, before becoming Commanding Officer of the University of New South Wales Regiment (1972-75). During the Vietnam War, he visited Australian troops in Vietnam as a Citizen Military Forces observer. Later, he became a brigadier and was appointed successively as Commander 5th Brigade and then as Assistant Commander Training Command and Commandant of the Reserve Command and Staff College. His service concluded in 1986 having served 33 years in the Army Reserve. For his military service, he was awarded the Reserve Force Decoration (RFD), the Efficiency Decoration (ED), the National Medal and the Australian Defence Medal.

He was a member of the Institute for most of his adult life. He also developed a particular interest in Pacific affairs, an interest that led to him being awarded the Cross of the Solomon Islands (CSI) for most conspicuous and outstanding service to that nation. He married Wendy Patricia Booth in 1970 and they had four children. He died in August 2021, aged 85 years.

David Leece
Resilience in Australia’s maritime industry

A paper based on an online presentation to the Institute on 28 September 2021 by

Vice Admiral T. W. Barrett AO CSC RAN (Ret’d)
Former Chief of Navy and now Board Member of Maritime Industry Australia Limited

Australia’s economy and national security are heavily dependent on global maritime trade, but the maritime industry is characterised by globalisation, unfavourable trade practices, and the potential for supply-chain disruption. Australia’s heavy dependence on foreign-flagged merchant shipping poses strategic risks for Australia, including risks to items essential to resilience in crises. In contrast, major maritime nations – Norway, Britain, America and China – have well-planned and co-ordinated national shipping industries well-supported by government policy. Australia needs a cohesive government-led maritime strategy with aligned regulation and policy coupled with enduring oversight of the industry.

Key words: Australia; China; Norway; maritime industry; maritime trade; resilience; shipbuilding; strategic risk; United Kingdom; United States.

Trade Practices and their Impacts on the Maritime Industry

Let us first consider the fundamentals of contemporary trade practices and how the maritime industry is affected by those practices. The term ‘globalisation’ characterises how the maritime industry works today. It is for the good of the nation – about freer trade practices, about more goods for more people at less cost and in less time to market. It leads to prosperity and higher standards of living. All those are good goals. This current decade is driven by technology – everything from ship design to port infrastructure, freight management systems, tracking systems etc. Combine that with improved supply chain management, assurance of reduced inventory, lean management and such, and we achieve a just-in-time capability. In Australia, a lot of our manufacturing has moved offshore to low-cost labour areas, we have seen a dismantling of sovereign capability, and a higher shipping dependency. This introduces more points of supply chain disruption. All of this leads to greater reliance on an efficient maritime industry.

So, what do we mean by an efficient maritime industry, and what might it look like? There are several industry components to consider. The first, obviously, is ships. But, also, it is about: shipbuilding and a national repair capacity; the owners and the agencies that operate the ships; operating the fleet itself and the fleet’s domestic or international components; ports, their locations to market, the technology that they employ, and their status – whether they are free or open ports; the associated agencies – the financiers, the brokers, the insurance operators, and those who conduct maritime research and development; and appropriate government regulation and legislation.

There are two important terms to note here. One is the flag register of ships that belong to a certain country or is operated by that country. The other is cabotage, a way in which a nation can control domestic trading
activity by dictating which ships call at what ports under what flag.

Another important consideration is workforce: mariners, engineers, ship builders etc. Importantly, workforce is a demonstration of sustainability. Education systems need to be in place to allow you to continue to run a workforce at the right level to manage your industry. Critically, there should be a balance across all these components, and success requires alignment among them. There is a difference in application across maritime nations which will be covered later in this paper. If, however, you are successful in all of these areas (and you do that by a cohesive plan to integrate all elements effectively), then importantly, you are looking at driving a trading monopoly.

There are some geostrategic effects on maritime trade. Historically, the concept of ‘global commons’ has been considered as the basis for trade. It is where international law prevails on the high seas. It implies principles like the freedom of navigation and a freedom to use trade routes. There are, however, important choke points that lie within the areas where Australia and its major trading partners operate.

Other considerations are the disruptors to maritime trade. Disruptors can be as simple as an accident. A recent example is the blocking of the Suez Canal for over a week by the Taiwan-owned ship, Ever Given. According to data from Lloyd’s List, the effect of closing the canal led to a loss of approximately US$9.6 billion in trade per day (Russon 2021). The second disruptor relates to choke points and trade routes – territorial disputes and ownership claims can have a major impact when countries seek to change the freedom of passage through straits. A third issue is piracy, which is still prevalent in certain parts of the world, particularly in Somalia, Southeast Asia and around west Africa.

The consequence of these geostrategic effects is the need to re-route major trading lines causing cost increases, including insurance and fuel costs. While these factors are not new, they challenge the ‘lean trading concept’ and test resilience; they introduce the notion that disruption is as detrimental as destruction when seeking to influence maritime trade.

Australia’s Trading Environment

Let us now consider Australia’s trading position to see how our maritime industry has to adapt to national needs. Our top 10 two-way trading partners are China, United States, Japan, South Korea, United Kingdom, Singapore, New Zealand, India, Germany and Malaysia. We export mainly to Asian markets, with China being our largest export market. Australia is the 22nd-ranked export market globally, while China is ranked the first. Our top exports are minerals, fuels, rural and manufactured goods. In the import market, the top five includes China, United States, Japan, Germany and Thailand, with predominance again around the Asia-Pacific area. Australia is rated 23rd as an import market. China again is ahead as the 2nd-ranked import market globally. Of particular note is our dependency on China.

Of all the items traded, there are critical items for our national resilience – goods that affect productivity or our economic survival, e.g. fuel. About 98 per cent of our fuel is imported, 90 per cent from Singapore. The International Energy Agency agreement demands that developed nations hold about 90 days’ capacity in their fuel stocks (IEA 2018). In 2015, it was alleged in open reporting at the time that Australia only had 12 day’s supply of diesel. The government’s response, under a fuel security programme, was to consider strategic holdings in the United States and using ships at sea to carry it. Given that most of the oil tankers that service Australia are foreign-flagged, adopting this course would involve strategic risks. Similar issues arise with our strategic holdings of pharmaceuticals and agricultural products.

The Maritime Industry of Major Maritime Nations

Before examining the current state of Australia’s maritime industry and its effect on our national resilience, let us consider how four major maritime nations balance their maritime industry components.

Norway

Norway is a long-standing maritime trading nation with a small land area (340,000km²) and population (5.4 million). The land is inhospitable but resource-rich. It has the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund (mainly from offshore oil), a strong fishing industry and a strong domestic coastal trade. Norway is an innovative nation, now pursuing autonomous e-ships to deliver trade on coastal routes between fjords. It has adapted to the changing market, particularly where fuel is concerned. Consequently, within Norway, shipping is considered as an industry in itself. In 2014, shipping accounted for 6.7 per cent of Norway’s gross domestic product (GDP) (OECD 2017) – so, shipping is not just an enabler.

All elements of the industry are aligned under a government strategic plan supported by legislation. Called the maritime cluster, it includes shipping agencies, ship owners, the merchant fleet, ports, and related government regulation. The Norwegian fleet at one stage was the third largest globally. It has over 1700 vessels in two flagged arrangements. Norway is the 19th-largest shipbuilding economy globally and has military and commercial joint ventures. Over 110,000 people are employed in the industry. There is significant correlation between the operating fleet and shipbuilding capacity. This results in a successfully integrated maritime industry likely to be resilient in the face of future industry disruption or a crisis.

United Kingdom

Britain has an economy long supported by maritime
trade, and a maritime industry supported in legislation. There is an enduring relationship between the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy. This was demonstrated during the Falklands War in 1982, during which the harmonisation of the merchant marine and the Royal Navy was evident when the ships taken up from trade (STUFT) comprised over 40 commercial vessels – liners, roll on – roll off ships, container and cargo ships, freighters, tankers, support vessels and tugs – all British-flagged. Britain then had over a 1000 suitable ocean-going ships able to be requisitioned under the relevant international regulation which allows a nation to requisition only its own-flagged vessels.

Britain was the world’s biggest shipbuilder until the 1950s, but the tally of British-flagged ships has now declined significantly – to less than 500 ships; and the sector now accounts for only about 0.06 per cent of GDP. Britain, however, intends to retain an integrated maritime industry in a post-Brexit economy. It has not imposed cabotage since the 19th century; and government involvement is still profound. Recent government maritime strategies have been used to free up market mechanisms. To attract industry, tax benefits have been introduced for British-flag registration; a tonnage tax will ease costs and increase training commitments; and there is a government-endorsed maritime shipbuilding strategy for commercial and military vessels.

**United States**

Over the past 70 years, the United States maritime industry has been predominant in America. While more liberal maritime trade practices were enshrined in other maritime nations like Britain, the United States continues to be characterised by the *Merchant Marine Act of 1920* (known as the ‘Jones Act’), which provides for the promotion and maintenance of the American merchant marine and, in effect, balances sovereign resilience and national security with economic security. Specifically, it requires that, for maritime commerce within United States waters and between United States ports, all ships must be built and owned and flagged in the United States and be crewed by United States citizens.

The Jones Act was created to generate a domestic seafaring capability including shipbuilding and repair, both commercial and military; a United States-flagged merchant fleet which would be available to the military; and a competent workforce across the whole enterprise. It was a deliberate and disciplined strategy; it simplified customs and border controls; and commercial security was assured through the dedicated use of a United States-flagged international fleet and prescribed entry points for foreign freight shipping. The United States also has a trade reservation where it requires, say, all liquified natural gas exports to be carried in United States-flagged ships.

The Jones Act has worked up to a point. There remains a thriving domestic maritime trade. Recent views of the Act point towards an emphasis on national security. The Department of Homeland Security says that, without the Jones Act, it would be difficult to oversee foreign ships arriving in the United States. The United States Navy considers that the Jones Act is essential to ensure that a strategic sea-lift capability and navy shipbuilding can survive in America. The United States Department of Defence considers that maintaining a United States-flagged fleet is in the national interest and it supports America maintaining a capability for building commercial vessels.

When considered through a national security lens, the effect is obvious. America’s military forward deployment policy is paramount. About 95 per cent of military equipment is moved by sea to support United States’ global operations; and some 70 per cent of the domestic maritime industry is available to support the military. United States-flagged ships constitute about 30 per cent of all container vessels globally and 90 per cent of all tankers, most of which are suitable for use by the military.

The Jones Act, however, has detractors who sought to repeal it in 2020 on economic grounds – they saw it as protectionist rather than globalist. Now, further legislation is being pursued, including the tanker security programme under the *Energizing American Shipbuilding Act of 2021*. This requires a certain percentage of natural gas and crude oil exports be transported on United States-built and United States-flagged vessels.

Despite the strong correlation of legislation and significant shipbuilding under these arrangements, shipbuilding in America has actually declined over the last 30 years. At the time of the cold war, there were 20 shipyards for major ship construction; now there are eight – four commercial and four military. In contrast, in 2019 China had 1291 ocean-going ships under construction and America eight.

**China**

When considering China’s maritime industry capability, it is wrong to focus solely on the size of China’s commercial or military fleet. After World War II, when China relied heavily on foreign shipping services, China adopted a policy of building up its domestic commercial fleet to meet the continuing demands of international trade – a similar intent to that of the Jones Act in America. But the Chinese economy is not a free-market one; it is a state-managed economy with an industrial policy. When a strategic sector is identified, China uses a whole-of-government approach to build it up. Thus, China has embarked on a global maritime trade path which ties together all elements of the maritime industry in a deliberate and disciplined strategy to achieve its global economic objectives.

In terms of shipbuilding, the number of yards has grown in recent years to over 2000, a mix of civilian and military. There has been consolidation between major companies to improve efficiencies and the arrangements are managed under a single ship management office. In terms of ports, domestic ports and ports
associated with the global belt-and-road initiative have been modernised with state-of-the-art technology and are managed centrally. Three of the global top 10 financial and brokerage institutions for shipping are now Chinese. It is assumed that control through mortgage over new shipping will be another path that the Chinese will seek to take. Legislatively, government strategic plans over the last 50 years have been for China to become the world's biggest ship builder and trader. From a workforce perspective, over 400,000 shipbuilding staff are now available across 2000 domestic shipyards and there are over 115,000 students in various nautical academies as mariners and engineers, and in research and development.

The results are quite staggering. As a ship building nation, China now accounts for about 40 per cent of newly-built commercial ships globally. In the last decade, China also constructed over 90 warships. China has over 5500 merchant ships engaged in international trade; 20 per cent of all containers carried by the top 10 global carriers are Chinese. Two-thirds of the world’s top 50 container ports are managed by Chinese concerns, and they manage about 70 per cent of the world’s shipping containers. The People’s Liberation Army Navy is now believed to be numerically larger than the United States Navy. China also has a coast guard of 150 modern cutters and a maritime militia estimated at about 2000 vessels. Recalling the two notions that I proposed earlier regarding the industry at large – i.e. the creation of a trading monopoly; and the ability to disrupt rather than destroy – both are now within the capability of China.

**Australia’s Maritime Industry**

So, having looked at how others do it, let us see how Australia’s industry compares. As a geographically-large nation with a small population, we operate a global shipping network. Locally, the sector includes domestic cargo, offshore oil and gas support, agriculture, tourism and fishing. In 2018, the estimated annual revenue generated by the maritime industry was about AU$6.9 billion dollars which added approximately $2.3 billion to the economy. About 10 per cent of global sea trade passed through Australian ports, the busiest being Port Headland supporting the iron ore trade between Australia and China.

As I noted earlier, however, there has been a persistent decline in Australian-flagged ships over the past 50 years – from 85 in the early 1980s to 13 at present, and possibly nine only by 2024. The predominance of foreign-flagged ships can be attributed to two factors: the high costs of Australian operations; and a decades-long liberal approach to allowing foreign operators to conduct coastal trade, despite efforts to redress the situation via reforms in the Coastal Trading (Revitalising Australian Shipping) Act 2012.

In terms of shipbuilding, there has been a persistent decline in commercial shipbuilding yards due mainly to high production costs. Two yards, Austal and Incat, though, are still viable commercial operations. Small yards are now for leisure craft only. It is important to note that the last Australian-flagged coastal trader was built in China. In terms of military shipbuilding, it is a different story. With a continuous naval shipbuilding plan (Defence 2017), the government has invested vast funds to produce ships for the military. There are two major yards, one in Osborne, South Australia, and the other in Henderson, Western Australia.

In terms of ports, there is a disparate management of ports, mainly state-based, with foreign ownership of companies in Darwin and Newcastle.

As to government legislation, there have been no significant reforms to legislation over the last few years, and as a result we have witnessed diminishing Australian ownership and increasing numbers of foreign-flagged vessels. That said, there has been consideration of disparate corporate tax measures and a seafarer’s tax.

Of note, unlike in Norway, there is no significant maritime cluster nor a significant cohesive strategy in associated government agencies. There are suitable structures to manage the high level of foreign ownership, but little engagement of ship finding or financing for domestic markets.

In terms of workforce, a recent skill study undertaken by Maritime Industry Australia Limited pointed to diminishing numbers and a lack of recognition of the relationship between the mariner skills and industrial skills needed to manage ports and the industry itself (MIAL 2018).

In summary, the Australian maritime industry is characterised by several factors. The industry is led by market forces and is reactive. It is focused on economic security, which has legislative support. There is, however, little focus on national security implications in terms of fuel security or other key critical trades. This has led to several peak bodies promoting strategic fleet skills management and regulatory changes. The biggest consideration is that there is no cohesive overall plan and consequently the risks to resilience are growing. (See Building Maritime Resilience figure next page.)

**Conclusion**

Evidence suggests that China is on the rise to becoming the dominant global maritime trading nation and may well be it already. China’s approach encompasses a cohesive, deliberate and disciplined coordination of all components of the maritime industry into a single national outcome. The benefits to China could be trade monopoly and the ability to dominate the market forces in today’s globalised trading regime. Other trading nations will feel the pressure.

Nations mentioned earlier which have retained some elements of a sovereign maritime industry will be able to manage resilience better than most. Australia’s maritime industry position on resilience, however, is mixed. The naval shipbuilding plan (Defence 2017) will generate a modest sovereign capability. Exports and
Imports will necessitate ongoing industry performance and ports will continue to operate, but increasing foreign ownership of the international fleet, combined with a loss of sovereign manufacturing capability, raises a risk to our resilience in a crisis.

Be it a global pandemic, trade monopoly, or conflict, experience has shown that a cohesive government-led maritime strategy, with aligned regulation and policy coupled with enduring oversight of the industry, is required. This can mitigate the extent of the risks in the future. But, sadly for Australia, sea blindness remains a national characteristic.

The Author: Vice Admiral Tim Barrett retired from the Royal Australian Navy in 2018 after a 42-year career. In his last role, as Chief of Navy (2014-2018), he progressed plans to regenerate Navy capability and contracts for new submarines, frigates and patrol boats. He now advises government and industry on a broad range of maritime issues and sits on several related boards. In uniform, he initially trained as a seaman officer but later specialised in aviation. He gained extensive command and staff experience, most notably as Commander Australian Navy Aviation Group, Commander Border Protection Command and Commander Australian Fleet. In 2017, he published a book (Barrett 2017) in which he outlined extensive opportunities that would arise during implementation of the planned investment in naval capability. He was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross in 2006, was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2009 and an Officer of the Order in 2014. [Photo of Admiral Barrett: the author]

References
CONTRIBUTED SHORT COMMUNICATION

Social media: the new intelligence collection platforms

Brant Johnston
Intelligence Analyst1

Mr Johnston demonstrates that intelligence collected from social media can have tactical value in a kinetic conflict.

Key words: battlefield intelligence; situational awareness; social media.

As always, the world and its battlefields are ever evolving. Technology, however, is developing faster now than perhaps at any time in history. A major technological development of the past two decades is social media and today's battlefield commanders and intelligence analysts need to leverage this new paradigm to significantly increase their intelligence picture. Every day, millions of posts are uploaded to different platforms in every corner of the globe and, used correctly, these posts can fill intelligence gaps, provide real-time situational awareness of unfolding events and, to a limited extent, provide strategic intelligence.

The exploitation of social media also can be incredibly more economical and easier to manage than other means, such as deploying a human asset to collect such intelligence. Perhaps, however, the greatest benefit of intelligence derived from social media is the ease and speed with which it can be distributed to forces, thanks to its open-source nature. Reduced need to classify information or carefully monitor its distribution, allows more people on the ground to receive more information faster and ultimately have an enhanced fighting edge.

Over the past year, there have been several notable examples of how social media exploitation could benefit the overall intelligence cycle. This paper will examine some of them.

Tracking Military Assets – The Battlecruiser Pyotr Velikiy

In its simplest application, social media can track a large number of military assets globally, giving greater situational awareness and advanced warning of potential threats. A recent example is the deployment of Russia’s Northern Fleet battlecruiser Pyotr Velikiy to the Barents Sea. On 21 May 2021, the Russian Ministry of Defence announced that the Pyotr Velikiy had sailed for the Barents Sea to conduct anti-submarine warfare exercises (Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation 2021).

Russian journalist Artem Kolodkin, however, had already posted a photo of himself aboard the battlecruiser in the Barents Sea on 13 May, a whole eight days before the press release (Kolodkin 2021). Furthermore, residents of Severomorsk, the main base of Russia's Northern Fleet, had already begun posting photos of the Pyotr Velikiy at anchor on Instagram from 21 May (Petkevich 2021) indicating it had already returned to port, despite ongoing media releases supposedly updating its training activities (Mironova 2021).

Social media in this case gave the user eight-days prior notice of the battlecruiser's movements and location. In a kinetic conflict situation, the extra warning time and informational advantage would be invaluable for a potential adversary.

Azerbaijan-Armenia War 2020

Such scenarios are not necessarily hypothetical either. Social media have already proven to be valuable intelligence collection tools in numerous conflicts, including the most recent hostilities over Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

From September to November 2020, Azerbaijan and Armenia reignited their long-time feud over Nagorno-Karabakh and fought a six-week war which finally ended on 10 November (Crisis Group 2021). While much has been written on the use of drones in this conflict, little attention has been given to the use of social media. Both sides heavily used social media platforms as weapons in their propaganda war. They spouted battlefield victories, many of which proved to be false, and made claims of war crimes, intent on drawing ire from the international community.

Outside of propaganda, however, local populations also fed information into social media which greatly enhanced situational awareness on the ground. Throughout the conflict, citizens posted captions, comments, photos, and videos which gave observers insights into movements of military equipment, positioning of strategic assets and real-time updates on the unfolding situation around them (Aldin 2021).

Perhaps the most significant piece of intelligence sourced from social media during this conflict was a Facebook post on 10 November, showing Armenian forces firing an Iskander short-range ballistic missile towards Azerbaijan (Tourmayan 2020). This was the first public information on ballistic missiles being deployed in the conflict and marked a major escalation. It was not until after the conflict had ended that Armenia acknowledged their use (Pashinyin 2021). For observers, this kind of granular information gave critical real-time updates on the ground, as well as forewarning and targeting information which could easily be exploited for tactical gains on the battlefield.

Russia-Ukraine Border 2021

Russia’s amassing of forces on its border with Ukraine in March 2021 is another recent example of social media providing both forewarning and tactical intelligence. Residents of western Russia posted on-masse videos and photos of large numbers of military personnel and vehicles travelling toward Crimea. The local Crimean population also posted locations and movements of these assets near the border. The day after the United States European Command raised its awareness level to “potential imminent crisis” (Vandiver 2021), users on Instagram posted footage of large numbers of Russian military equipment, including armoured personnel

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carriers and self-propelled artillery, crossing the Crimean Bridge (Simferopol novosti 2021).

Additionally, in a sign of the ever-evolving development of social media, TikTok was, for perhaps the first time in a conflict-like situation, an incredibly powerful intelligence collection platform. As users passed columns on the road, or witnessed trains carrying tanks and other armoured vehicles, they would immediately upload footage to the app. TikTok became a critical instrument in the monitoring of Russian movements across southwestern Russia.

Other social media sites, such as Twitter and VK, also revealed insightful information, including the movements and location of strategic equipment, such as a 59N6 Protivnik-GE radar on the side of a highway outside Feodosia and a 9S36 passive-phased array radar, which indicated the location of a Buk missile system in Voronezh Oblast (The Loud Hawk 2021; Girkin 2021). Military observers could exploit the information gleaned from social media to form better calculations of the possible number of Russian forces near the border, their composition, transport routes and location of critical assets.

Information Overload

Harnessing social media, however, does not come without its challenges. Approximately half the world's population now own at least one social medium account, and this equates to an immense amount of data. Everyday, there are approximately 350 million photos posted to Facebook and over 500 million tweets tweeted on Twitter (Smith 2019; Internet Live Stats n.d.). These statistics, whilst representative, are miniscule in comparison to the billions of posts across all social media platforms globally each day.

To filter relevant intelligence from the noise, analysts and militaries need to leverage the capabilities of artificial intelligence (AI). AI gives the user the ability not only to filter the data received by social media but to passively learn from the user which information is valuable and which is not, continually improving the filtering process. AI, however, does not negate the need for a capable analyst to review the filtered data, identify valuable intelligence, verify it, and incorporate it into the larger intelligence network.

Unlike intelligence derived by most other means, however, after the intelligence has been filtered, identified, and verified, its dissemination also can be immediate. It can be sent directly to forces in an easily accessible format, without the need for classification. This difference puts actionable intelligence in the hands of more forces, quicker.

Conclusion

Effective and timely intelligence in the right hands can be a significant force multiplier, providing a measurable edge over an adversary. The development of social media creates an additional tool for intelligence collection which, if used correctly, can greatly enhance and fill gaps in the intelligence picture: providing forewarning, force protection, situational awareness, asset tracking and targeting information.

Additionally, due to the necessities imposed by the classification of intelligence, information often can be bottlenecked, slowing and reducing the amount of critical information relayed to junior ranks. In a kinetic situation, these junior ranks, who in most circumstances are the ones fighting on the frontline, are the ones who would benefit the most from more tactical intelligence. While the data collected would still need to be analysed by both AI and a trained analyst, the open-source nature of social media and the ease of its distribution allow for greater and faster dissemination among forces, greatly mitigating the bottleneck effect. Intelligence, in the hands of those unable to act on said intelligence, after all, has nil effect on the battle, and it is perhaps in this respect that social media, as intelligence collection platforms, hold their greatest strength.

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References


Vernon Ashton Hobart Sturdee was born in Frankston, Victoria, in 1890 into a distinguished military family. He was educated at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School before becoming an apprentice engineer. He joined the Militia as a sapper in 1908 and was commissioned after nine months. He transferred to the Royal Australian Engineers, Permanent Military Forces, as a lieutenant in 1911.

He transferred to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1914, was promoted to captain and landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 as Adjutant, 1st Divisional Engineers. From September to December, now a major commanding 5th Field Company, 2nd Division, he controlled the engineering and mining work at Steele's, Quinn's and Courtney's posts.

Sent to France in June 1916 commanding 8th Field Company, 5th Division, Sturdee was commended for the ‘skill and energy’ with which he prepared for major operations near Armentières and became Commander Royal Engineers, Franks Force, in September-October. For his work in 1915-16, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). In February 1917, he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and given command of the 4th Pioneer Battalion. In November, he became Commander Royal Engineers, 5th Division. He was seconded in March 1918 to British General Headquarters, France, and gained invaluable experience in the conduct of large-scale operations. Returning to Australia in 1919, he was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and twice mentioned in dispatches for his Great War service.

Between the wars, Sturdee undertook staff and instructional duties in Australia and London, attended the Staff College at Quetta, India (1922-23), and the Imperial Defence College, London (1931). In Australia in the 1930s, he became Director of Military Intelligence and Operations, and Assistant Secretary (Military) to the Council of Defence, and was promoted to colonel. He was primarily concerned with the operational aspects of plans to mobilise forces to defend Australia and to raise other formations to serve overseas. In 1938, he became Director of Staff Duties and was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1939.

Following the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, Sturdee was promoted to lieutenant-general and appointed General Officer Commanding Eastern Command, Sydney, and Commander 2nd Military District. He prepared local defences and took charge of raising, accommodating, training and equipping 2nd AIF units in New South Wales. He also became President of the United Service Institution of New South Wales (USI 1939-40). On 1 July 1940, he readily accepted demotion to major-general on his appointment as commander of the 8th Division, but his pleasure in having been given an operational command was to be brief.

Almost two months later, he became Chief of the General Staff (CGS) on 30 August 1940 following the death of the then CGS, General Sir Brudenell White, in an aeroplane crash earlier that month. As CGS, Sturdee, now a lieutenant-general again, was also first military member of the Military Board and head of the Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff. A ‘gifted officer’, Sturdee was well qualified for his role as principal military adviser to the government. He oversaw the expansion of the AIF and the Militia, encouraged the local production of munitions, formulated plans to meet a southward thrust by the Japanese, developed coastal and anti-aircraft defences, and initiated a vast works programme.

When Japan entered the war in December 1941, Sturdee found himself obliged to deploy inadequate United Service 72 (4) December 2021
forces to outposts north of Australia, only to see them lost in futile and costly operations. Nonetheless, he correctly advocated that Port Moresby be held as the base for a counter-attack in Papua and New Guinea.

Between the wars, Sturdee had questioned the wisdom of relying on the British base in Singapore for Australia’s security. On 15 February 1942, the day Singapore fell, he submitted a paper that dealt with the future employment of the AIF. Observing that, in the war against Japan, ‘we have violated the principle of the concentration of forces in our efforts to hold numerous small localities’, he concluded that Australia was the only suitable strategic base from where the Allies could take the offensive against the Japanese. The immediate problem was to protect Australia from invasion. To that end, the 7th Division, which was en route to the Far East, and the remainder of the AIF in the Middle East should be brought home. He threatened to resign if the government rejected his advice, but Prime Minister Curtin agreed with him. While Curtin took on Churchill and Roosevelt to prevent the 7th Division from being sent to Burma, Sturdee firmly maintained his position against the views of the chiefs of staff in London and Washington.

In 1942, following the appointments of Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, and MacArthur as Supreme Commander, South-West Pacific Area, Sturdee was appointed to head the Australian Military Mission to Washington. In Washington, he forcefully brought Australia's requirements to the attention of the Combined Chiefs of Staff and established the right of direct access to General George Marshall, Chief of the United States Army. Sturdee was appointed a Companion of the Bath (CB) in 1943.

In March 1944, Sturdee returned to Australia and took command of the First Australian Army in New Guinea. From his headquarters at Lae, he directed the operations of 110,000 personnel engaged in fighting the Japanese between the Solomon Islands in the east and the border with the Netherlands New Guinea in the west. Those who served under him found him to be ‘a wise and tolerant commander who gave clear orders’ and left his subordinates ‘to get on with the job whilst he did his utmost to see that they were adequately supported’. At a ceremony on board HMS Glory at Rabaul, New Britain, on 6 September 1945, he accepted the surrender of all Japanese forces in his area. The signed copy of the Instrument of Surrender which Sturdee retained, is on display in the Institute’s Ursula Davidson Library. It was provided by his daughter via Colonel Don Swiney MBE (Ret’d).

On 1 December 1945, Sturdee succeeded Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces. Four months later, he resumed the duties of Chief of the General Staff. He oversaw the repatriation and demobilisation of the wartime army; organised the Australian component of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, Japan; established the Australian Regular Army; and reconstituted the Citizen Military Forces. To meet future military requirements, he strongly supported efforts to retain the industrial capacity that Australia had developed during the war. On 17 April 1950, he was placed on the Retired List.

In 1951, he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE). He became a director of Standard Telephones & Cables Pty. Ltd. and Honorary Colonel (1951-56) of the Royal Corps of Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He died on 25 May 1966 at the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg; and was accorded a full military funeral.

David Leece

References

*Dr David Leece, editor of United Service, is co-chair of the Institute’s Special Interest Group on Strategy. These are his personal views.*
This book is aimed at developing both current and aspiring strategists. Its title, though, is slightly misleading as the habits the author promotes apply to any strategist, regardless of the domains (land, maritime, aerospace etc.) of interest. Few points pertain exclusively to the sea, and these focus on understanding the mercurial nature of the medium in order to develop a mental “sea culture”.

The author holds the Wylie Chair of Strategy at the United States Naval War College, and earlier had a naval and then an academic career. The book demonstrates that he is very widely read, and has thought deeply on the nature of strategy and its application, both historically and in the present era.

Holmes believes that to excel at strategy, one should learn what excellent strategists do and practise that ritual each day. Over time, it becomes second nature to take the long view of national political and strategic ends; marshal diplomatic, economic, and military resources; and devise ways to put those resources to work for strategic gain.

Many of the habits that he wishes to encourage are ones that apply to commerce and the conduct of life in general. He advocates that, rather than proceeding through life in an unconscious manner, encountering and reacting to whatever comes over the horizon, the strategist should adopt a conscious, aware, critical and rigorously professional and questing perspective – an approach that seeks to shape events towards a desired outcome for the benefit of the strategist’s nation. None of this is new, and is the purpose of multiple, extant, human disciplines, religions and philosophies.

Holmes triumphs the benefits of what we call a renaissance education, a ‘catholic’ approach, and undertaking a career striving for excellence, in order to train a person for strategic analysis. As per Marx and Weber, he believes in the value of the dialectic interaction via the thesis and the anti-thesis.

Often his language is precocious: “I plunder philosophy, history, biography, and strategic theory for wisdom that is relevant for practitioners”. In part, this comes from his enthusiasm for the approach advocated by Feynman: “It is designed to help readers study their profession in the kind of undisciplined, irreverent, and original – yet determined manner”.

Holmes draws heavily on both the ancient precepts of Aristotle and the modern Covey to emphasise the need for a consistently conscious, disciplined and ‘aware’ approach: “There is no substitute for thinking for yourself and exercising individual judgement”. Like the Jesuits, a person has to start young in order to engrain solid habits in their 20s. A series of habits of enquiry, which embrace new things and change, whilst avoiding ruts. For Holmes, developing foresight is at a premium in modern strategic competition.

Much of his subsequent commentary is a re-affirmation of the application of the Principles of War i.e. select and maintain the aim, concentration of effort etc. His chapters conduct a tour through the last two centuries of world diplomatic and military history, where Holmes displays his knowledge, peppered by insights and homilies. These include: the utility of the indirect approach and asymmetric techniques; the need to be self-aware to avoid the traps of hubris and ambition; and the need to devote great effort to understanding one’s audience of key stakeholders, to effectively communicate with them, and to validate the process.

For instance, he draws on Carl von Clausewitz, who exhorted strategists to amass superior forces at the decisive place and time, while abjuring secondary commitments that scatter resources about the map and risk leaving each force too weak to accomplish its goal. Similarly, Alfred Thayer Mahan devised a formula for sizing fleets to overpower foes in important waters or coastal zones. In contrast, Sun Tzu, B. H. Liddell Hart and J. C. Wylie, advocated the ‘indirect approach’ to strategy.

One useful technique he draws from Kissinger is the ‘bad cop, good cop’ approach of initially intimidating an opponent by waving the big stick, and then reassuring them by offering inducements. He also reaffirms Luttwark’s thesis that the use of the terms of ‘war’ and ‘peace’ can be counterproductive. Rather, the strategist should have the perspective that the norm is perpetual conflict, with just the level varying over time.

Chapter 4 focuses on the role of the strategist leader in war and the necessity of mastering a person’s passions to avoid being ruled by hubris, anger or despair. As such, the strategist needs to develop the ability to employ cognitive dissonance to events, in order to avoid overreaction and to gain dispassionate perspective able to generate deep insights. To illustrate this, he compares the careers of Alcibiades and Washington in an insightful manner. He also ropes in Winston Churchill: “In War: resolution; in Defeat: defiance; in Victory: magnanimity; and in Peace: good will”.

In all, it is an entertaining read, and a good refresher of the techniques that a serious strategist needs to consistently and rigorously employ.

Ian Wolfe
This is the story of Admiral Sir John Fisher's creation of the British Home Fleet in 1907 and its evolution into the Grand Fleet of 1914. Fisher formed the Home Fleet by combining a core of armoured warships with the reserve divisions of warships previously controlled by the three Royal Navy home port commands. This concentration was a logical development of growth and change in naval strategy, technology and tactics. Human failings and larger-than-life characters, such as Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Jellicoe, Callaghan and many other officers, are central to the story.

Pre-war planning accepted the importance of the torpedo and its delivery by submarine. But, in the event, surface vessels and their heavy guns held the field, largely due to financial constraints and manning requirements. While torpedo-armed flotilla craft were seen as the best solution, they only ever supplemented the battleships.

Other important factors included the Balfour Government's anti-militarism and wish to cut naval expenditure to fund social reforms, the 'naval-industrial complex', interpersonal conflicts, funding for shore establishments, and the evolution of design and usage preferences for battleships, torpedo-boat destroyers, submarines and cruisers. The use of fuel oil in place of coal had major logistic and financial implications and led to the creation in 1909 of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. External factors included: a transition to facing Germany after the defeat of 1909 of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. Externally, after the defeat of the Dual Alliance between France and Russia; and apprehension as late as 1908 that the United States might form an alliance with Germany.

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A clash between Fisher and his subordinate Lord Beresford, who organised a campaign criticising Fisher's handling of the Navy and its reform, was appalling. Fisher was not blameless – he followed three 'Requisites for Success': ruthless, relentless and remorseless. He had been chosen largely to prune expenditure. The Senior Service under Fisher had become 'secretive and uncooperative with the outside world ... evidenced by the decline in contributions by senior naval officers to the Royal United Services Institution' (p. 252).

The role of Prince Louis Battenberg in the immediate response by the Admiralty to the outbreak of hostilities in 1914, is shown as most creditworthy. An awkward change of command from Sir George Callaghan to Sir John Jellicoe, took place on the day Britain declared war against Germany.

The credit given to the Grand Fleet for keeping the lines of communication open and enabling the land forces to prevail in 1918 is well earned. In November 1918, it comprised 45 dreadnoughts from three nations, 40 cruisers and 5 aircraft carriers. It included five United States Navy capital ships.

With the British and United States Merchant Marines, it had ensured Allied command of the sea that provided 'the spearhead of which the Allied armies have been the point' (p. 1).

But the Fleet's performance was by no means flawless. These flaws included the predictable defeat on 1 November 1914 at Coronel near Chile; and the failure of the Royal Navy and French Navy to clear the Dardanelles in 1915 because they could not neutralise Turkish coast artillery, did not change their bombardment return route, and attempted to use ineffective fishing trawlers to clear sea-mines.

The story embraces the inconclusive Battle of Jutland – although that is deemed a strategic victory because the German High Seas Fleet was thereafter mostly confined. It mentions the five collisions between eight vessels on 31 January 1918 that caused the loss of two submarines and 100 men, and damaged three other submarines and a light cruiser. It canvasses the stellar contribution of the United States Navy in defeating German U Boat wolf packs, thereby allowing supplies of men and matériel to cross the Atlantic and support the land battles in France and Belgium.

The book, however, fails to canvass the provision by the Dominions of major vessels except HMS Queen Elizabeth by Federated Malayan States – it mentions HMS New Zealand, but not that it was financed by the New Zealand government; it does not mention HMAS Australia. It also fails to acknowledge the use of Dominion-trained officers in British warships; it uses French phrases without translation; and it would benefit from a timeline of events.

The considerations which led to the Grand Fleet's creation – diplomatic, technical and financial – continue to be relevant today. They underscore the controversy about Australia's decision announced in September 2021 to cancel a submarine contract with the French and enter an arrangement with the United States and Britain to acquire, build and operate nuclear-powered submarines.

The book is of compelling worth to every country reliant on maritime forces for security and open sea-lines of communication for sustenance. It is well written with relevant photos, comprehensive notes, a bibliography, and an index. It would be invaluable to any student of naval affairs and staff work, and the complex interactions of politicians, bureaucrats and serving Defence Force members.

Ken Broadhead
Withdrawing your forces while ‘in-contact’ with the enemy is a challenging military manoeuvre. To suggest that it be done in conjunction with a reverse amphibious landing would probably result in receiving a ‘Fail’ in any staff college exercise. The successful withdrawal of Allied forces from the Gallipoli Peninsula in late 1915 and early 1916 remains one ‘bright spot’ in an otherwise costly, and some say, futile campaign. Yet, there have been few accounts of that final chapter of the Allies’ attempt to ‘knock Turkey out of the war’. The Gallipoli Evacuation fills this gap.

Peter Hart was the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum for 39 years, during which time he interviewed thousands of veterans. He has written several books on the First and Second World Wars, but has been obsessed with the Gallipoli campaign and is a well-regarded tour guide to the Gallipoli battlefields.

From the outset of the campaign, the Allies’ attempts to move inland to support the Navy in penetrating the Dardanelles defences were stymied by a resolute Ottoman defence. The landing of an additional British Division at Suvla Bay in August failed to break the stalemate. Hart examines the many factors that then led to the decision to withdraw the force. Those factors, and the process by which the decision was made in both military and political circles, were more complicated than many realise. The Navy believed that another effort to force the Dardanelles might still be possible with its improved minesweepers. Even when that course was dismissed, there was an argument that, by maintaining a force on Cape Helles, the Cape could be developed into a second Gibraltar to control the Dardanelles. The Allies, however, could not continue expending resources on the campaign, particularly with other theatres developing in Mesopotamia and North Africa stretching logistics to the limit.

The decision to abandon the campaign was Lord Kitchener’s to make after General Sir Charles Monro had concluded that “a complete evacuation was the only wise course to pursue”. Even when the decision to withdraw was made, the operation was going to be operationally complex and tactically daunting. Many feared that as much as a third of the force might be lost because the Turks would maintain close contact. The odds against success were even higher for the Allied forces on Cape Helles who were to be withdrawn a week after Suvla and Anzac and after the Ottomans had become fully alert to the Allied actions.

While the book provides insights into the strategic context for the withdrawal, its main focus is on the organisation, subterfuge and luck that combined to effect an extraordinary disengagement in the face of an enemy that was in some places only a matter of yards away. Every day, the Turks moved up more guns, threatening to blast to pieces the flimsy piers, breakwaters and blockships that acted as makeshift harbours to feed and supply tens of thousands of men. Winter was approaching and a tremendous storm imposed immense damage and loss of life. The detailed evacuation plans were brilliant, especially the early introduction of silent periods. Yet, it was still a close-run thing. A spell of bad weather in the final days might have destroyed the flimsy piers, leaving thousands trapped helpless should the Turkish guns open up and their infantry overwhelm the remaining thinned-out Allied forces.

Hart blends context and events with personal anecdotes. Utmost secrecy, cunning and ruse were needed to ensure the enemy did not realise thousands of men with guns and equipment were leaving and grasp the opportunity to massacre the ever-diminishing Allied presence. This infuses the story with an increasing sense of tension. While the book is consistently enjoyable, and humorous in places, the author shows respect for the men discussed consistent with the serious view he takes of the topic.

Hart’s account, like most others of the Gallipoli campaign, suffers from a paucity of sources from the Ottoman perspective. While he is able to include a few quotes, the larger questions remain of whether the Ottomans knew what was occurring and chose to let the evacuation proceed without serious interference. Hart partially makes up for this with a discussion based on his extensive knowledge of the campaign and the personalities of its actors, but he also might have benefitted from consulting Harvey Broadbent’s Gallipoli: The Turkish Defence (The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2015) and Edward J. Erickson’s Gallipoli: The Ottoman Campaign (Pen & Sword Military, Barnsley, UK, 2010).

The Gallipoli Evacuation includes several black and white images, three basic maps, a bibliography and an index. Hart has written a fascinating book that conveys the risks and demands of the operation. There are not many accurate and informative non-fiction historical books written over a century after the event that leave the reader gripped and barely able to put down until complete, but this is certainly one of them.

Marcus Fielding
BOOK REVIEW:

The Royal Australian Air Force history: 1921-1996

by Dr Chris Clark, Dr Alan Stephens and Dr Mark Lax

Big Sky Publishing: Newport, NSW; 2020; 2034 pp.; ISBN 9781922488008 (hardcover); RRP $69.99 ~ Ursula Davidson Library call number 903.92

The history of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) is presented in this three-volume box set, covering three distinct periods of the Air Force since its establishment in 1921. The history of the RAAF during World War II is covered separately in four volumes published in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. This three-volume box set was drawn together to commemorate the centenary of the RAAF.

The first volume covers 1921 to 1939 (when the RAAF entered World War II). Written by Chris Clark, it was first published in 1991. This volume describes the challenging start of the RAAF as it emerged as a small, but independent air force, before expanding fifty-fold during World War II to become the world's fourth largest air force. However, its early existence was strongly contested by the Army and Navy who resisted the notion of independence, instead preferring to control air elements as part of their own forces. A lack of funding during the Great Depression, and a period during which the RAAF suffered an atrocious spate of aircraft accidents in the 1920s, did not make the assured existence of the RAAF any easier – reflected in the title The Third Brother.

Going Solo by Alan Stephens addresses the second period from 1946. It covers the demobilisation of the wartime air force, military commitments in Korea, Malaya, Indonesia and Vietnam, and a move towards joint warfare, culminating in the Golden Jubilee of the RAAF in 1971. The importance of the control of the air was undisputedly acknowledged by the end of World War II and signalled the end of the threatened existence of the RAAF as an independent air force. The demobilisation period is often overlooked, but it was masterfully managed, seizing the opportunity to place the “new” air force on the right strategic path for the defence of the country. The period marked the need for the RAAF to go solo and marked a shift of focus to the Australian region of the world. This was reinforced with the close association that the RAAF and United States Forces experienced during the Vietnam War. The author describes the major force elements of the developing Air Force: fighters and air defence; bomber; maritime patrol; and transport forces.

The final volume, by Mark Lax, covers the period 1972 to 1996. During this period, the RAAF arguably “came of age”. Throughout the preceding period, the RAAF had been expeditionary in nature and committed to the support of Australia's treaty and alliance obligations as part of a forward defence posture. Now it was time to shrug off the “protective embrace of great and powerful friends” and to develop a modern, technologically-advanced regional air force, able to prosecute air operations under its own command arrangements. It was designed for the defence of Australia, but also was capable of contributing to regional stability, peacekeeping operations, wider defence exercises and assistance to the civil community. It marked a period of independence, maturity and managing change, reflected in the title Taking the Lead.

Chris Clark (The Third Brother) graduated from the Royal Military College in 1972 and served in the Australian Army Intelligence Corps until 1979. He then served in the Departments of Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Prime Minister and Cabinet. He has written several commissioned histories and worked at the Australian National University and the Australian War Memorial. From 2004 until 2013 he was RAAF Historian and Head of the Office of Air Force History.

Alan Stephens (Going Solo) is a visiting fellow at the University of New South Wales, Canberra (UNSW). Previously he was a senior lecturer at UNSW, a visiting fellow at the Australian National University, an advisor in federal parliament on foreign affairs and defence, and an RAAF pilot. He has lectured internationally, and his publications have been translated into more than twenty languages. In 2008, he was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his contribution to military history.

Mark Lax (Taking the Lead) is the Senior Air Force Fellow at the Office of Air Force History. After a 33-year career in the Permanent Air Force, retiring as an Air Commodore, Mark continues to serve in the RAAF Reserve and has since completed a PhD in Military History. He lectures widely and writes on the broad spectrum of RAAF history in this the RAAF's 100th year. Histories of air forces often focus on aeroplanes at the expense of people – this is not the case with this history. While the three volumes cover significant detail, they are easy to read and will hold the reader's attention. They are indexed very well and have excellent end notes. They provide a complete history of all aspects of the RAAF in each of the periods they describe. I thoroughly recommend them to every reader with an interest in the history and development of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Bob Treloar
BOOK REVIEW:

**The battle of the Bismarck Sea: the forgotten battle that saved the Pacific**

by Michael Veitch

Hachette Australia: Sydney; 2021; 342 pp.; ISBN 9780733645891 (paperback); RRP $32.99; Ursula Davidson Library call number 950.15 VEIT 2021

Why another book on the Battle of the Bismarck Sea? The official history outlined the battle and placed it in its World War II context. McAulay’s seminal work fleshed out the detail from both the Allied and Japanese perspectives. A plethora of other histories and memoirs have examined the battle, many based on primary sources.

Michael Veitch is an Australian author, actor and ABC television and radio broadcaster, best known for his roles in television shows and for his books on World War II aviation, marine science and travel. *The battle of the Bismarck Sea* is his tenth book. It is a summary of the extant body of work on the battle, much of which is listed in a bibliography at pp. 329 – 332. It draws only on those secondary sources and presents no new primary material. There are no end notes, and where direct quotations are made, the partial citations of the original sources do not include page numbers. Hence, the book will be of limited value to historians.

The book recounts that, by the end of 1942, on the verge of having to withdraw from both Guadalcanal and Papua, Japan resolved to hold its position in New Guinea. To this end, it decided to reinforce its New Guinea garrisons, by sending additional infantry divisions by sea from Rabaul.

An initial convoy in January 1943, which sailed from Rabaul to Lae through the Solomon Sea along New Britain's south coast, was attacked by Allied air forces, largely ineffectively. The reinforcements enabled a Japanese advance from Salamaua to Wau with a view to capturing the strategic Australian airfield there, but the Japanese attack failed.

The Japanese immediately began planning a second convoy to transport the 51st Division to Lae. A convoy of eight troop transports, eight escorting destroyers, some 100 land-based fighter aircraft and several submarines was assembled at Rabaul.

Meanwhile, the demoralised United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) in the South-West Pacific Area received a new commander, General George C. Kenney, who was determined to forge a new instrument of American air power capable of destroying Japanese naval forces in the area. He was ably assisted by Group Captain William ‘Bull’ Garing DFC, the senior air staff officer of the Royal Australian Air Force’s (RAAF) Northern Area Command, who would devise the tactics for attacking convoys; and Major Paul Irving ‘Pappy’ Gunn, USAAF, who would modify the American aircraft to increase their lethality and enable the new attacking techniques of masthead-level bombing and skip bombing. So, the United States 5th Army Air Force came into being. It would be supported by several RAAF bomber and fighter squadrons from Northern Area Command.

The second Japanese convoy departed Rabaul on the night of 28 February 1943 under dense cloud cover bound for Lae, this time along New Britain's north coast through the Bismarck Sea and thence south through the Vitiaz Strait into the Huon Gulf. On 1 March, the convoy was briefly sighted in the Bismarck Sea by Allied reconnaissance aircraft and a transport, the *Kyokusei Maru*, was sunk off the north-western tip of New Britain on 2 March during another brief sighting. The convoy turned south into the Vitiaz Strait that night and delayed there for several hours awaiting air cover.

The main battle occurred at the southern end of the Vitiaz Strait on the morning of 3 March. Over a period of some 30 minutes, successive co-ordinated waves of Allied fighter and bomber squadrons attacked the convoy from different altitudes and from different directions. All seven remaining Japanese transports and four of the eight escorting destroyers were sunk.

That afternoon, hundreds of Japanese survivors were observed floating on rafts and wreckage in the Huon Gulf, some being rescued by Japanese destroyers. Kenney and Garing ordered that every effort be made to prevent the survivors from reaching Lae. On 4 March, Allied aircraft strafed the Japanese survivors.

It is estimated that some 3000 Japanese were killed during the battle. A similar number were rescued by destroyers and submarines and were delivered to Lae or returned to Rabaul, but the 51st Division had been destroyed as a fighting force. The USAAF had lost six aircraft and 13 aircrew; the RAAF none. It had been an annihilating victory. Japan would never attempt to reinforce New Guinea by naval convoy again.

The book, written in a journalistic style, is well researched. In Veitch’s hands, the story becomes an exciting yarn. It is likely to appeal to readers of all ages and backgrounds who are unfamiliar with the battle; and to those already familiar with it who seek a one-volume summary of the literature written in an entertaining manner.

David Leece

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United Service 72 (4) December 2021
‘Strategy’ is not a concept often voiced in connection with Australian defence matters; put simply, our defence strategy is a matter of using what the Australian Defence Force (ADF) operates in ways that most effectively mesh with the plans of our major ally – the United States (US). In this book, Stephen Willis has provided a clear insight into how the US Services, and specifically the US Navy (USN), design and implement strategies to meet US requirements and circumstances.

The US National Security Act 1947 and subsequent legislation introduced immense difficulties for all four US Services. For the first time, there was to be joint consideration of individual Service plans, with the aim of coordinating the national strategy to be adopted and implemented through a cabinet-level Secretary for Defense. The formation of the US Air Force independent of the US Army and the consequences of the strategies adopted for World War II – including the decline of Britain as an international power, the rise of the Soviet Union, and the advent of nuclear weapons – created a witch's brew of competing interests. Until close air support to land forces was demonstrated effectively by the USN in Korea, aircraft carriers were thought inappropriate strategic instruments. Not until the success of the Navy's Poseidon Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile programme in 1959 was the USN regarded as an effective part of the national nuclear-deterrence force.

Strategists do not grow on trees. The USN hierarchy recognised and responded to the need for concerted action to develop and nurture a capability for strategic development within the office of the Chief of Naval Operations and to teach strategic thinking at the Naval War College. This became particularly urgent when succeeding efforts by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy to take the Service chiefs and their staffs out of the chain of command were approved by Congress. A further incentive was the arrival of Defense Secretary McNamara’s civilian ‘Whiz Kids’ to devise and oversee defence equipment programmes. All this probably has a further incentive was the arrival of Defense Secretary McNamara’s civilian ‘Whiz Kids’ to devise and oversee defence equipment programmes. All this probably has a

1970 onwards. The motivating factor was the achievement of four key goals – nuclear strike, defence of sea lines of communication, power projection and overseas presence. Zumwalt saw that the USN must exercise a global presence to counter Soviet influence and mischief making. These concepts led to the publication of the 1980 Maritime Strategy, which also highlighted the use of the USN’s offensive power exercised by a fleet of 600 ships. Then, in a very short period of time, the decline and abrupt collapse of the Soviet Union, which concluded in 1991, rendered the entire strategy untenable.

USN strategists scrambled to shape a new strategy in the absence of a major maritime competitor, while dealing with a US Marine Corps that saw for itself a role outside its traditional amphibious roots, and the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act 1986, which mandated joint planning at the expense of the individual Services. Thrown into the mix was the ‘Base Force’ concept promulgated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which cut the naval force by a quarter. What emerged was a strategy of naval support to land forces ‘... From the Sea’, with its emphasis on littoral operations, however defined. Successful Chiefs of Naval Operations attempted to shift the perennial struggle for resources between warfare communities towards the ideas of forward presence and logistical support. ‘... From The Sea’ was followed by a series of similar attempts of varying impact to chart a course for the USN, while the Service confronted the enormity of mandated reductions in its seagoing strength. More staff effort was devoted to saving the fleet than devising a strategy to direct its capabilities and development – hence Willis’s title: Strategy Shelved.

This book is dense with insights into the processes and the personalities involved in developing and implementing USN strategies from the 1940s which may, at first glance, deter potential readers of any Service background. A careful and conscientious study of Willis’s work, however, will be rewarding in demonstrating key essentials in devising plans to give effect to national strategy in an increasingly ‘joint’ environment. The author’s other theme is the need to isolate and protect strategy development from the demands of warfare communities and other lobby groups. To do so is both difficult and somewhat divisive. Its achievement is a measure of the success of senior leadership in meeting the challenges of the shifting and volatile world in which we live and the Australian Defence Force operates.