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Michael P. Tracey

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## Letters to the Editor

### Australia's Post WWII Relations with Indonesia

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article "Australia's Post WWII relations with Indonesia", in *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 120, Sept/Oct 1996 by Lieutenant Commander P. Flynn, RAN.

I would like to comment on one important issue, the role of Indonesian Chinese in the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

Not many articles published in Australia on Indonesian issues are encouraging. Then I said to myself: "Gee, I wish this article was published by *The Age* or *The Australian* which are read by Australian people nationally. Then the misunderstanding between two countries could be reduced to a level of harmony". Especially, the article was written by a member of the Australian Armed Forces. Unfortunately, the *Australian Defence Force Journal* is read by members of Armed Forces only or people who work with the ADF. The readers are limited!

But there is one point in which the author makes one single error which is "... the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), whose membership consisted to a large extent of ethnic Chinese". It is not true! The majority of Indonesian Communist Party's members are Indonesian – from all walks of life such as: farmers, train workers, intellectuals, members of Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). Most support comes from farmers and train workers and only a few (or none) ethnic Chinese who were farmers or train workers.

For an example, on 23 May 1964, the Chairman of PKI, Aidit, together with 58 members of high ranking PKI officials went to villages (*turba=turun kebawah*) to find out and to prove that the majority of poor peasants supported PKI's programs against landlords.

At the time, Indonesia was still an agrarian society. Therefore, there were ethnic Chinese who became members of PKI, but they were a minority!

There was Baperki (Badan Permusyawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia – Indonesian Citizenship Consultative Council) founded on March 13, 1954 by a Chinese Indonesian, Siauw Gik Tjhan, a close associate of PKI, and it was a small ethnic Chinese social organisation with the majority of the members being ethnic Chinese. Lee William in "The Future of the Overseas in South East Asia" stated that "Baperki

until banned in 1965, the most important organisation of ethnic Chinese community". (OeiTjoe Tat, 1995:79). The party was banned because the party was pro-Sukarno.

It may be true that the PKI was funded by the rich Chinese businessmen. Doak Barnett reported in 1955 that it was a belief in Indonesia that the contribution from Chinese businessmen "make up a significant source of PKI ample political funds" (Hindley 117).

Kahin also mentioned that PKI taps the Chinese business community for "substantial funds". Some Chinese pay willingly, but undoubtedly they usually do so because of persuasion or pressure from the Chinese embassy or pressure from the Communist-controlled labor unions and the threat of retaliatory action in case of non-compliance (Hindley, 117).

Therefore, it was true that a substantial part of PKI funds come from the large Chinese business community but their membership in the party was a minority.

Anton Alimin  
Language Instructor  
ADF School of Languages  
Point Cook, Victoria

### Injuries in the Army

Dear Editor,

Lieutenant Colonel Rudzki's article, *Australian Defence Force Journal* No. 122 concludes that to reduce injuries in the Army that the focus should shift to maintaining fitness rather than seeking to improve fitness. The new BFA is championed as a final step. There can be no questioning the author's professional credentials in relation to sports medicine or his "coal-face" experience in working with combat units. Nevertheless this article is representative of systematic "cotton-wool" approach that threatens the Army's ability to train to win the next war. The cited BFA speaks for itself, it represents a significant drop in standards. This same process of dropping standards affected the CFA some years ago, and led to Land Command at the time introducing their own enhanced CFA for Infantry units. But does not the whole Army need to fight in war, to be prepared to meet unforeseen harsh and demanding circumstances? There used to be a saying in the Army, "train hard, fight easy". Physical training is an important element of training soldiers for war. This appears to be a

factor lost on the OH&S boffins. Physical training is not just about general fitness levels but physical and mental conditioning for battle. This includes physical and mental endurance. Any suggestion that a soldier has reached his fitness plateau once he leaves 1RTB is nonsense. The job has just begun, especially for those going to demanding Arms Corps. This is even truer of GRes soldiers completing initial Recruit Training.

On a recent training platoon testing exercise, two Reserve infantrymen (almost straight out of an Inf IET Course) collapsed within 500m of a start of an advance to contact. It appeared in retrospect that these soldiers had not undertaken any endurance training, (either basic or battle PT) on their course or were not even required to carry a pack. By the end of the exercise these men were physically conditioned. The point the boffins must remember is that the average section commander or platoon commander has a responsibility of finalising and improving the training of soldiers under their command. It is wholly unacceptable to have a soldier who can't carry a pack or who drops out on a march as this affects the combat power of his/her section, platoon and battalion.

The Army and training for war is an inherently physically demanding and at times risky venture. It is submitted that Lieutenant Colonel Rudzki's comparison with civil industry is entirely flawed. Neither does this research indicate the effect of the greater utilisation of women in the Army, particularly the effect of Common Induction Training (CIT) and employment in Land Command. There is reason to suspect that part of the increase in lower limb injuries is a result of this policy change and not poor training techniques. If this is the case, the policy and not poor training standards need to be reviewed.

Lieutenant Colonel Rudzki goes on to say, "no team should be fielded without a properly accredited coach, referee and sports trainer. These are norms in the civilian sector and should equally apply in military sport". The danger with this approach is that commanders will lose the ability to train their soldiers and develop team and unit cohesion. The fact is also that the norms in the civilian sector should not necessarily apply to the Army. Sport in the Army is not an end in itself but rather a means of achieving fitness and team cohesion. Furthermore, it is essential that junior leaders and commanders have the opportunity to train their own soldiers. Given this, the challenge should be to ensure that Officers and NCOs are taught relevant aspects of instructing in physical training and running sport (including injury prevention techniques) during their leadership

training. At all costs the mandatory resort to external experts (outside the platoon or company) specifically to conduct physical training and sport must be resisted, as this minimises the role of the combat team leader in training.

In his summary it is stated that research on recruits has shown that reduction in running distances can reduce injuries without any loss of military effectiveness. It is submitted his definition of no loss of military effectiveness may be open to challenge. Lieutenant Colonel Rudzki states in his concluding paragraph "Research findings have indicated appropriate preventative strategies, and these would seem to be a duty of care to implement them". With respect this statement must be wrong. It is submitted that even without a statutory duty of care, that under the present civil law given the proximity of circumstances and relationship, and foreseeability that a duty of care would be found to exist. This is not in itself a reason to lower training standards throughout the Army. The question that Lieutenant Colonel Rudzki should be asking himself is what is the standard of the duty of care and what would constitute a breach of that standard. Because a risk exists does not mean that an activity or a course of training cannot be conducted, but rather an assessment of the likelihood of those risks and the best way to minimise those risks. Adequate preparation and training of PT team leaders is one way such risks could be minimised. It should not be forgotten that the Army's role is to train for and if need be, win the next war. Surely we would be breaching our overriding moral responsibility to the soldiers under our command if we did not give them the best and most realistic training within our capability to help them survive and win in battle.

*Major D.W. Phillips (RAR)*  
*Training Major*  
*Sydney University Regiment*

*Dear Editor,*

I am a part-time officer with over 32 years service in the Reserve. It was with great interest that I read the article by Lieutenant Colonel Tamsitt, *Australian Defence Force Journal* No. 123 Mar/Apr 97. I agree with much of what he has written but he has left two questions unanswered. Perhaps he, or someone else can fill the gaps.

1. Having trained the recruits with relatively long training courses, he proposes that they "... then revert to more conventional Reserve training patterns to fit the constraints of civil employment".

Later on he proposes that night and weekend training be curtailed as uneconomical and that collective training be at a "training centre".

Could someone please explain how this training is to be conducted on only two weeks of service each year? Two weeks is the best you can rely on in the current civilian environment. What do the soldiers do for the other 50 weeks in the year and how do they complete any individual specialist training? We have tried eliminating night training before. It's very difficult to retain soldiers without continuity of contact.

2. Officers. How does the part-time Army obtain and retain its Lieutenants? The current pattern which requires several weeks training each year before commissioning will collect its recruits from students and the unemployed. What happens then to the officer's development if the training time is restricted to two weeks each year? For how long will the Lieutenant's family tolerate taking recreation leave to boost training time?

Captains and majors can be obtained by the expedients of PSOs and enlisting former full-time officers. While there are exceptions, these two methods are, in my experience, not conducive to quality or stability. Local experience suggests a considerable shortage of junior officers. We may get them in but how long will they stay under the proposed training regime?

I think we have to decide, although it seems to have been decided already, between two strategies for the part-time Army.

(a) Try to make the quality of training of the part-time soldier equal to that of the full-time soldier.

or

(b) Accept the fact that the performance standards cannot be the same with a part-time soldier and allow a catch-up period before being deemed ready for action.

I know there was a third strategy which had some of (a) and some of (b) (RRes and GRes) but we have just discarded that as too expensive.

The risks of these two appear to be that if you adopt (a) you may not get enough people and for (b) you may not reach the standard you want as the catch-up time may not be available. (Kokoda revisited). It comes to a choice of quantity or quality. We used to go for the latter: now we are trying the former. I hope we have considered some method of measuring its success or failure.

Any more ideas out there?

*Elvin Smith*  
Major  
11 Trg Gp

## A Trap for the Unwary

*Dear Editor,*

On reading the article, "The Application of False Principles and the Misapplication of Valid Principles", in your May/June edition, I was dismayed to see elements of anti-American bias and attempts to denigrate air power. Indeed, the author seems to have acted, in part, in accordance with his opening quote: "Military history has been used and abused by academics and military professionals alike in their endeavours to either explain, support, promote or refute military events, developments and theories."

As a first example of this, on the fourth page of the article, the following statement appears: "The strategic bombing campaign of the Second World War had produced dubious results and questioned the effectiveness of attacks on infrastructure targets." On the fifth page a similar statement appears: "But the doubts that had existed over the efficacy of the Second World War bombing campaign were to be raised in both Korea and Vietnam." Neither of these statements was attributed to a reference so, presumably, they are the author's opinion. Such attempts to deny the effectiveness of Bomber Command's role in WWII have been around for some years, but, can be shown to be based on some peculiar anti-air power bias and not on facts. Some of the published facts, resulting from the efforts of Bomber Command, apart from the destruction of factories, etc., were as follows:

- As a direct result of Bomber Command, the Germans were forced to employ some 1 000 000 men to operate their air defence system and a further 1 500 000 were involved in air raid precautions work and repair of industrial facilities. These able-bodied men would otherwise have been available for the armed services.
- There were some 30 000 anti-aircraft guns defending the Ruhr Valley, again absorbing manpower and production capacity.
- German bomber aircraft production was reduced from 60 *per cent* of their total aircraft production in 1942, to under 8 *per cent* by late 1944. This resulted from the need to switch to production of fighter aircraft (75 *per cent* of total production in 1944) in order to try and counter the raiding British bombers and their USAF allies.
- Nearly 50 000 sea mines were laid by Bomber Command which accounted for 40 *per cent* of German shipping losses.
- The number of coal trucks needed to support German industry was assessed to be 55 000 but bombing reduced their number progressively to 8 000 by 1945.

- Attacks on synthetic oil refineries were particularly effective and the shortage of fuel was already a serious problem at the time of the Normandy landing. By January, 1945, the production of essential fuel was almost zero and supplies were totally inadequate for the Germans to continue the war.
- Finally, there is the aspect that Bomber Command's efforts were a prime factor in winning the "Battle of the Bulge" in the Ardennes, when, in very bad weather, it cut the German fuel and communication lines.

Immediately following the previous quote from the fifth page of the article, the following sentence appears; "Air campaigns are costly in equipment, manpower and expended ordnance." Again, there is no quoted reference for this claim. Certainly, aircraft themselves are costly but, relative to the loss of troops in land battles, the loss of Air Force manpower is minimal. Similarly, some air borne weapons may be more expensive but, when accurately delivered, the cost-effectiveness balance moves in favour of air delivery.

A little further on the fifth page, the following comment appears: "Operating by themselves without pressure being applied on the enemy by cooperating ground forces, aircraft could harass the enemy and delay the movement of supplies, but could not carry the day by themselves." This statement is attributed to David MacIsaac. This allegation is another old, anti-air power line that is usually coupled to a statement that only ground forces can win wars by occupying ground. Apart from the previously quoted data, including the inability of the Germans to provide their fighting forces with fuel, the proponents of the "only armies can win battles" view very conveniently forget the Battle of Britain.

My final comments relate to further statements on the fifth page. First it is said that: "Air power, to be effective, must be supported by good intelligence and the selection of suitable targets". That, in fact, was what the Bomber Command offensive was all about. Further on in the paragraph, having quoted from a source which, referring to a battle in Vietnam in September-October 1967, stated in part, "strikes pummelled the enemy... and demonstrated that massed firepower was in itself sufficient to force a besieging enemy to desist" A.C.G. Welburn adds his view in the words: "Not to be defeated but made to desist". Surely, if an enemy "desists" or stops fighting, that is some sort of victory?

There is a long list in the Bibliography at the end of the article but I suggest two more for the benefit of the author. They are: *The Lost Command* by Alastair

Revie, with a foreword by Leonard Cheshire. This is a history of Bomber Command. The second recommended book is *Coningham*, a biography of Air Marshal Sir Arthur Coningham by Vincent Orange. This book also adds to the saga of carping at air power by some, including Bernard Montgomery.

*F. W. Barnes  
AVM, RAAF, (Ret.)*

## Darwin 1942

*Dear Editor,*

Recently in response to my request to your office to forward to me the Jan/Feb 1997 edition of your journal, for as Battery Commander of 14 Anti Aircraft Battery on 19th February 1942, I was anxious to read an RAAF account of the two air raids on that day on Darwin. Thank you for sending the same.

It was not my original intention to become involved in any comments, however there are some points I should bring forward, these are:-

1. Page 76. Artillery Units.

Delete: (a) 1/54 Anti Aircraft Coy

(b) 1/54 A/Searchlight Coy

Insert: (c) 1/54 Anti Aircraft Searchlight Co.

(a)&(b) did not exist

Insert: (d) 14 Anti Aircraft Battery

(e) 2 " " "

(f) 22 " " "

Deployment on 19/2/42 was as under:-

(d)	The Oval	4x3.7 inch Guns-Static
	Fannie Bay	" " " "
	McMillans	" " " "
	Elliott Point	2x3 " " "
	Stokes Hill	8 Lewis Guns on A.A. mountings
(e)	Berrimah	4x3.7 inch Guns-Static
	Quarantine	4x3.7 " " "

Quarantine was not operational on 19/2/42 as all equipment had not arrived.

(f) Batchelor 4x3 inch Guns-Mobile

Upon the closure of Elliot Point in late March 1942, these 2x3 inch Guns were placed on carriages and became part of 22 Battery at Batchelor.

2. Page 47 Col 2 Lines 39&40. "There were no anti-aircraft weapons at...-----Batchelor." This is incorrect. See 1 (f) above
3. Page 52 Col 1 Lines 19&20. "What it did do, however, was to alert the anti-aircraft batteries." The Batteries received no alert whatsoever. On the contrary, engagement of the enemy was the result of their own visual air sentry observations.
4. Page 52 Col 2 Lines 29-31. "There had been an error in aircraft identification by the Army, but fortunately for all concerned no hits were scored."

Instructions were issued by AA Group HQ that owing to the strong possibility of air attack, all aircraft entering the Gun Defended Area and not giving the Recognition Signal of the period were to be engaged. More importantly however, advice and instructions were issued to all AA gun sites that as some Hudsons had been captured, there was that possibility of their use by the enemy, also that six Hudsons were on route from Timor to Darwin with refugees on board, that these aircraft may not possess current recognition signals, but would enter the GDA on a given bearing as a means of establishment of identity. The aircraft were identified by Fannie Bay gun site as Hudsons, gave no Recognition Signal and their approach was well outside the prearranged bearing to the GDA. The gun site at Fannie Bay had every justification to engage, but fired two rounds ONLY at a *short fuze setting and as warning shots*, whereupon Recognition Signals were fired from the aircraft. No further rounds were fired by any AA guns. The officer in charge does, I believe, deserve every commendation for his discreet action.

5. Page 62 Col 1 Lines 9-13. "It was subsequently learnt, however, that the cause was due to incorrect setting of the fuzes laid down in tables based on the more temperate zones of Europe, with no adjustment for the tropical conditions." Anti-Aircraft Units elsewhere were issued with clockwork fuzes No. 208, which required no adjustment for temperature or barometric variations. The fuzes issued in Darwin were powder burning No. 199 needing adjustment for conditions of the moment. Also, we ascertained by way of a Fuze Factor Calibration Shoot that the basic Fuze Factor supplied for these Fuzes was incorrect. Thereafter there were superior results. Furthermore, there was a total ban on the use of ammunition for practice shoots. Had this ban not existed, I feel I am confident to say, the basic fuze factor error would not only have been detected prior to 19/2/42, but the gunners themselves would have had that much needed practice in the use of live ammunition; an essential training requirement. It was not until the first raid on 19/2/42 the gunners had *any* experience with the use of live 3.7 inch ammunition. European conditions to which reference is made do not apply.
- Mr Justice Lowe in his first report on page 10 stated "The evidence before me was all to the effect that the anti-aircraft batteries operated efficiently and that the personnel of the A.M.F.

performed very credibly in their baptism of fire. Their earlier shooting seemed somewhat short of the planes at which they were firing, but later their range was better and the defence became effective."

6. Page 70 Col 2 Lines 46-49. "Mr Lowe then went on to comment that; "On the night of the 19th looting broke out... and (continued) thereafter... even to the time when the commission was sitting."

Assuming the above is from "Australia's Pearl Harbor" page 202 by Douglas Lockwood and from the Lowe first report – page 11, then omitted from the Lockwood quotation is the following; "in some of the business premises and sporadic looting occurred."

Hence the actual quotation reads:

"On the night of the 19th looting broke out *in some of the business premises and sporadic looting occurred* even to the time the commission was sitting."

The above lessens considerably the implication that looting was widespread. If I may comment further on this subject, with Darwin coming under military control on 21st February, the Town Major was appointed from whom I obtained permission to remove food, which would have been wasted and a vast improvement on Bully Beef and Lima Beans. A great moral improver! Also approval was given for batteries and battery chargers, which were needed to replace those that were becoming unserviceable, supply from Army sources was unavailable. Be assured without these, the data transmission to guns and the shell loading equipment would have become inoperable.

I trust you accept the above as a correction of some points of facts in which I was involved, to an interesting article that I was pleased to read.

Dudley H. Vose  
Lieutenant Colonel ED (RL)  
President  
14 Anti Aircraft Battery (Darwin)  
Association

### Olympic Memorabilia – Melbourne Olympic Games 1956

Dear Editor,

I am a Secondary Physical Education Teacher in suburban Melbourne and am currently compiling a display for students of memorabilia from the Melbourne Olympic Games in 1956 for exhibition during the Sydney Olympics in the year 2000.

I understand that the Melbourne Olympics had a substantial input from the Department of Defence in

1956. I am currently collecting memorabilia from these Olympics and would be pleased to hear from any serving or retired members of the Department who may be able to assist me in this endeavour.

*Matthew Squire  
15 Nelson Road  
Camberwell Vic. 3124  
Ph: 03 9882 6165*

*Dear Editor,*

Recently whilst reading the review of Torres Strait Force – Cape York, Thursday Island, Merauke, 1942-45 (Reg A. Ball Author) in *Australian Defence Force Journal* No. 123 Mar/Apr 1997, I discovered an oversight that I believe requires clarification.

The final paragraph of the review quite rightly spoke of the “immense interest that the book will be to Torres Strait Islanders who today carry on the tradition in NORFORCE”.

Without putting too fine a point on the geographical impossibility of this contention, the majority of soldiers who carry on the tradition actually serve in 51 FNQR which, like NORFORCE

and the Pilbara Regiment, is a Regional Force Surveillance Unit (RFSU).

Members of Charlie Company, The 51st Battalion Far North Queensland Regiment, proudly carry on the traditions of all Torres Strait Islanders who have served in the Defence Force. From their Company Headquarters located at Thursday Island, these soldiers, drawn from 11 different island communities in the Torres Strait, contribute a real-time presence in the Torres Strait region.

51 FNQR is an integral element of the defence of Northern Australia and members of the Unit regard themselves as the “eyes and ears of the North”. This book will be of immense interest to all Torres Strait Islanders who carry on the tradition across a variety of individual units arms and services in the Defence Force.

*A.J. Egan  
Captain  
Adjutant, 51 FNQR*

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# The Spratly Islands: Potential Flashpoint for Conflict in the South China Sea

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By Major M.J. Dugdale, RA Sigs.

*“The furthest reaches of the South China Sea stretch some 1800km from undisputed Chinese territory on Hainan Island, and touch Natuna Island (in the south of the South China Sea) held by Indonesia. China moved south by stages, taking the Paracel Islands from Vietnam in 1974, then in the 1980s China extended its control into the southerly Spratly group.”<sup>1</sup>*

## Introduction

The appearance of the Spratly Islands belies their strategic and political importance. In this archipelago of tiny rocky outcrops in the South China Sea only 26 remain above water at the high tide mark and none is capable of sustaining a permanent population. The largest of the group is less than half a square kilometre in area, yet the Spratly Islands are embroiled in a bitter territorial dispute, not for the outcrops themselves but for their wealth of natural resources to feed and fuel growing regional populations and economies. China may be the most recognised claimant, espousing sovereignty of the entire archipelago, but the ASEAN states of Malaysia, Philippines, Brunei and the recently admitted member state of Vietnam to various extents lay claim to the islands and the surrounding continental shelf. In some respects, the Spratly Islands dispute is an extension of other territorial disputes between the claimants and perpetuates long held enmities and distrust. The nature of the claims, the strategic location of the Spratlys and the open clashes of competing national interests means that the Spratly Islands dispute is a potential flashpoint of conflict in the South China Sea. It certainly has the potential to galvanise attitudes towards the regional balance of power and security.

With the end of the Cold War there is little doubt that China is the most important state in East and South East Asia. How China fares in the future, and how it develops its relationships in the region will dominate the prospects for regional security, stability and prosperity. Its relationships with ASEAN will be

central to achieving recognition as a great global power and to this end China-ASEAN resolution of the Spratly Islands dispute will be fundamental to establishing long-term political, economic and security trends. The dispute can therefore be viewed as the distillation of simmering regional rivalries. This is particularly the case given that ASEAN is in many respects a grouping of states in name only; there is no historical precedent for a security alliance in the region. The fractured internal policies of ASEAN mirror the regional uncertainties about how to deal with China. Whether the Spratly Islands dispute will be resolved amicably or through conflict will set the tone for either future China-ASEAN cooperation or competition. This article will examine the Spratly Islands dispute in the context of China’s relations with ASEAN states. It will particularly look at the prospects for resolution given Vietnam’s recent admission to ASEAN.

## Spratly Islands: Flashpoint of Conflict

East and South East Asia is a region of dramatic economic growth, in many cases concomitant with modernisation of political and social systems. Sustainment of such rapid growth depends both on continued access to resources as well as the need to develop mechanisms to resolve conflicts. Unfortunately the former is being pursued assiduously while the latter has become almost an afterthought. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Spratly Islands dispute with military clashes, historical rivalries and arguable claims.

The Spratly Islands are believed to hold vast reserves of oil and minerals, as well as significant fisheries resources all of which are vital to the sustainment of China’s burgeoning economy and social stability. Several states, including China, Vietnam and the Philippines, maintain a military presence in the archipelago and have attempted to occupy some of the outcrops. These countries have already proven willing to resort to military action to back territorial claims. The potential for further military action is strong, particularly given that rapid

arms build-up is a feature in the post-Cold War regional relations.

The claimants to the islands do so on the basis of dubious legal and historical rights to the territory. As the most proximate claimants with the greatest historical rivalry it is to be expected that China and Vietnam have had the most disputes about the Spratlys. Nevertheless, other ASEAN states and Taiwan have laid claims with varying degrees of belligerence, backed by a willingness to match their claims with military force. With such a rich history of claim, counterclaim and aggression, mixed with the islands' strategic importance, the view that the Spratlys is the greatest potential flashpoint for conflict in the region is justified.

### China and ASEAN

#### China's Approach

China maintains its right to complete sovereignty in the South China Sea and has actively sought to control the full extent of the area. Interestingly, though China states a firm legal claim it has yet to define its legal basis or to clarify the limits of its claim. Its claim of "historic use and administration" of the islands conflicts with similar statements made by other claimants, Vietnam in particular.<sup>2</sup> There have already been several military clashes with other claimants.

China's attitude towards its region, ASEAN in particular, is clearly depicted in its approach to the Spratly Islands dispute. It claims complete sovereignty of the islands but has declined international arbitration of the dispute. Perhaps recognising the lack of substance in its claim, China has also resisted taking the issue to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Though it bases its claim on historic use and administration of the islands, there is no evidence that it has exercised the effective control and administration of the territory that a claim on this basis requires. Beijing's approach to this archipelago so far from the Chinese mainland appears to depend more on exercising influence over the region and unfettered control of natural resources rather than on seeking territorial integrity. To this end it has consistently rejected attempts at multilateral resolution, despite several statements to the contrary which have not been matched by appropriate action. Though in 1990 China stated a preparedness to shelve the issue of sovereignty and instead concentrate on joint development of the islands' resources, it has

since then consistently distanced itself from any avenues that would lead to multilateral negotiations.

China is considered the greatest long-term threat in Asia not only because of its imposing demographics and growing military might, but because of its increasing need for resources to fuel its economic growth and its propensity for resorting to aggression as a first rather than a last resort in conflict resolution. Though in recent years China has noted the need to seek peaceful resolution of the dispute, including its apparent acceding to a 1992 ASEAN declaration which agreed that force should not be used to resolve the dispute, its actions since then have been tangential. Military modernisation continues unabated, concentrating on power projection capabilities. This included the establishment of an air base on the also-disputed Paracel Islands taken from Vietnam in 1974, thus increasing Beijing's air coverage to include the Spratly Islands. In addition, China used military force against the Philippines in the Spratlys in 1995 in clear contradiction of ASEAN's belief that China would honour the 1992 *Manila Declaration* and not attack an ASEAN member.<sup>3</sup> This could be viewed as China testing the extent of US interests in the area in light of the US withdrawal from the region, particularly the closure of bases in the Philippines. If so, the lack of a firm US response could encourage China to continue to hold out against ASEAN insistence on multilateral resolution. More so, Beijing's action tested the resolve of ASEAN as an organisation and the result was initially a lengthy silence and impotent diplomatic posturing by ASEAN. Though China has on several occasions stated the need to avoid unilateral action and to build on economic interdependence, its actions belie this.

In presenting a balanced view of the situation, China's military might must be reviewed in relation to that of other powers. China's military is substantially deficient in technology and the doctrine and tactics of modern warfare. Beijing's military modernisation drive since the technological success of the 1991 Gulf War has been an attempt to regain lost ground, particularly after the economic crisis in the 1980s reduced military expenditure. Though military modernisation remains a defining characteristic of China's move toward great power status, its military capabilities still remain less than those of most Western powers of similar economic means. China's military capability is also countered in some respects by the military capabilities of other regional states; military modernisation in Asia is certainly not a one sided equation.<sup>4</sup>

Recent history shows in China a tendency to use threats and bluff in an attempt to force other states to accede to its will. Is this a case of China's bark being worse than its bite? This would be a simplistic view. Political backdowns and preparedness by Beijing to adopt a wait-and-see approach in ongoing disputes with Hong Kong and Taiwan<sup>5</sup> may indicate that China's claims to the Spratly Islands could in the long term result in little more than political rhetoric and military posturing, but China's need for additional energy sources in the short term will force China to seek a resolution of the dispute. Though the political hierarchy will be tempted to adopt an aggressive approach in order to "save face" and to reinforce the pre-eminence of Communism as an ideology, the reality of China's growing interdependence with the region should drive China toward a peaceful solution.

### **Vietnam's Approach**

Vietnam became a full member of ASEAN in July 1995, far ahead of the schedule expected by all ASEAN nations, and represents the profound change in regional relationships that has occurred since the end of the Cold War. Until as little as eight years ago Vietnam had little or no contact with other South East Asian states, and indeed was acknowledged as an adversary of several states in the region following its invasion of Cambodia in 1978.

Vietnam's motivations for seeking ASEAN membership are complex, but can be distilled to two overriding precepts: economic recovery for the country and status in dealing with the growing regional threat posed by China. It is this latter which is of most interest in the context of this article. Membership of ASEAN will boost Vietnam's confidence and diplomatic skills to resolve territorial disputes when it clearly lacks the military capability to do so, and also lacks the national psychological support of its people to proceed with further military conflict as the nation struggles to recover from decades of continuous war.

Though Vietnam's motives for joining ASEAN and its desire for long-term peaceful resolution of territorial disputes with China are laudable, there are significant obstacles to be overcome. These will present problems for both Vietnam and ASEAN, while concurrently giving China the political freedom to manoeuvre. The most obvious difficulty is Vietnam's position as the second largest Communist nation in the world. For an organisation that was originally formed to stand against the spread of Communism in the region, the admission to their midst of a country ideologically opposed will require ASEAN states to revise their underlying motivations

for ASEAN unity, including the need to finally publicly acknowledge Beijing as the principle threat. Vietnam's different political system and its past actions regarding Cambodia and Laos, have naturally created suspicions in some ASEAN states such as Malaysia and Thailand, and it can be expected that relations will be tentative for some time until a measure of trust is developed.

With particular reference to the Spratly Islands dispute, Vietnam joins China as the only other nation claiming the entire region. Hanoi has reinforced its claim by military occupation of over 20 of the rocky outcrops, and has engaged China on several occasions, including the 1988 Chinese sinking of three Vietnamese supply vessels supporting the military occupation of the islands. Vietnam's ability to militarily reinforce its claim has diminished with its recent economic crisis and the loss of power projection capabilities provided by its past ally, the former USSR.

Vietnam and the other ASEAN states bring to the organisation differing views, sometimes diametrically opposed, on how to deal with China and its growing influence. Though most other ASEAN states have in the past considered a more lenient policy of non-antagonism and even appeasement of China as a possible way ahead, Vietnam brings to the forum a more belligerent attitude. It views ASEAN as a means to legitimise its foreign policy objectives, consolidate international relations, and boost credibility in regional diplomacy. Importantly, in light of China's substantial upgrading of its defence capabilities, membership of ASEAN contributes to Vietnam's security, not via any established security alliances but through ASEAN's international reputation as a respected organisation seeking to preserve regional stability for the mutual prosperity of all members. Membership of ASEAN clearly provides Vietnam with something it has lacked for several decades: an established and credible forum in which to deal with China. It can also expect to be heard in this forum, since any refusal by China to acknowledge Vietnam's right of access to ASEAN diplomatic avenues would be tantamount to a denial of ASEAN as an organisation of regional influence.

For ASEAN, the admittance of Vietnam to full member status reinforces the organisation as a meaningful institution capable of coping with change and refocussing its energies to the most pressing regional economic and security concerns. The admittance of a Communist country also sends the message that ASEAN is committed to regional cooperation. However, the inclusion of Vietnam, and the future attempts to resolve the South China Sea

territorial disputes, present challenges to ASEAN's ability to find a unity of effort, particularly given the inability of the non-Communist members to resolve differences prior to Vietnam's membership. It may be that the expansion of the forum to include different ideological approaches will force ASEAN to reconsider how it approaches intra and international relations, and specifically how consensus decision making is to be achieved. At the time of Vietnam's admittance, Singapore's Foreign Minister warned that "an expanded ASEAN would face ongoing challenges of remaining robust and united. All is not rosy. There are worrying trends and developments in the Asia-Pacific region. The challenges ahead will test our unity and diplomatic skills".<sup>6</sup>

The "challenges of remaining robust and united", especially when resolving territorial disputes and avoiding military conflict in the South China Sea, lie firstly in Vietnam having to adapt to the atmosphere of mutual trust, confidence and informality that characterises ASEAN relations. Hanoi's political system is still mistrusted by other ASEAN states, and it has no experience of bilateral or multilateral negotiation outside the strictly centralised controls and collective decision making of Communist ideology. Reaching comfortable middle ground for intra-ASEAN negotiations will take time and effort by all parties. A foreign affairs analyst from Thailand has stated that "there has been an underlying apprehension among ASEAN members that Hanoi will not be an easy partner to deal with considering its diplomatic history has been shaped by the need to deal with adversaries."<sup>7</sup> This same analyst has also stated an ASEAN concern that "Vietnam will not be able to understand or abide by the unwritten rules of ASEAN diplomacy and after its entry, posturing and bargaining will replace consultation and consensus building as the predominant form of conducting intramural affairs."<sup>8</sup> The future for Vietnam settling into ASEAN ways of doing business does not look promising. In the meantime, ASEAN will still lack a common approach towards China, and Beijing will continue to progress its efforts to control the Spratly's resources.

Whilst Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines have a tendency to be suspicious of China, Singapore and Thailand tend to be more sanguine. Overlaid on this is now the more aggressive approach taken by Vietnam. The legacy of mistrust between Vietnam and China includes serious military conflict over the Parcel Islands, the Chinese invasion of Vietnam in 1979 in response to Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia, and continual military and diplomatic sparring regarding the overlapping claims to the Spratly

Islands. Though there was some diplomatic thawing between the two nations after Vietnam acceded to international arbitration on the Cambodian issue, Vietnam has consistently maintained that its claim to the entire Spratly archipelago and continental shelf has precedence over China's claims. As a member of ASEAN, Vietnam would expect that the other ASEAN states would at the least provide diplomatic support in resolving its conflicting claim with China. It is unlikely that either Singapore or Thailand would be amenable to this. Vietnam may still find itself isolated from its neighbours regarding its position on the Spratly Islands dispute.

### **ASEAN's Approach**

ASEAN's key issues of concern surrounding China's involvement in the dispute are its burgeoning military capability and the ASEAN perception that this is aimed at destabilising the South China Sea, an area that is clearly the confluence of strategically important trade routes between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In addition, ASEAN's future as a credible foundation for regional security is being tested and in some respects is being found wanting.

ASEAN, and in particular the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), is a recent and tentative organisation of states primarily designed to progress economic and security issues for the prosperity of all members. However, ASEAN does not exist to determine the security policies of its member states, nor can ASEAN prevent its members dealing with China outside ASEAN's policies. There is also the added difficulty that ASEAN does not want to antagonise China, particularly with large ethnic Chinese populations in some of its member states such as Malaysia and Singapore, so refrains from openly voicing security fears regarding Beijing's actions in the South China Sea. Since the members of ASEAN are so far from reaching consensus on the level and nature of threat from China it is not surprising that ASEAN's responses to China's actions have been fragmented and usually not timely.

Though China and the ASEAN claimants pursued bilateral approaches to resolving the dispute throughout most of the 1980s, the end of the Cold War and particularly the reduction of the US presence in the region has forced the ASEAN states to move toward multilateral discussions. These states have recognised that "if they do not hang together, they will certainly hang separately".<sup>9</sup> ASEAN has come to recognise the necessity of a multilateral policy in order to avoid destabilising regional relations. This view is pitted against China's insistence on bilateral resolution with other claimants, both to ensure its

greater bargaining power and to prevent the growth of ASEAN, especially the ARF, as a regional power bloc. Any success by ASEAN in achieving a unified front in a negotiated settlement with China will be the long-awaited precedent that establishes ASEAN as a force to be reckoned with in representing South East Asian interests, and a legitimate counterbalance to China's growing regional power. This is clearly not in China's interests.

The Spratly Islands dispute can be viewed as the test case which determines the viability of ASEAN and the ARF as effective and influential organisations. Already there are signs that the ASEAN states are unable to present China with a united front. The various claimants are unable to negotiate an ASEAN approach, and in the wake of its military clashes with China the Philippines, probably the weakest ASEAN member claiming the Spratlys, has entered into a bilateral agreement with China for exploitation of the Spratly's resources. Though it cannot be said that Manila has abandoned ASEAN's preferred multilateral approach, it clearly sees that short-term stability of relations with China depends on reaching a bilateral consensus. This tends to play into China's hands, ensuring a bilateral approach is established as the precedent, reinforcing a sense of legitimacy to China's sovereignty claims, and placing China firmly in a position of strength to dictate the conditions of any future negotiations. ASEAN states will have to work harder to overcome internal differences regarding the perceived level of threat posed by China and to establish a defensible principle for ASEAN regarding sovereignty of the Spratlys that can stand up to multilateral discussions with China. Bilateral economic engagement, while anchoring China's economic and diplomatic development firmly in the region, will not of itself resolve this long simmering dispute where China feels morally justified to pursue territorial claims and control of resources.

For China, the entry of Vietnam into ASEAN may present unexpected rewards in that ASEAN's ability to resolve its internal claims for the Spratlys will be further complicated by Vietnam's extensive claims to the area, opening the door for China to push more strongly for bilateral discussions with ASEAN states. Though Vietnam has openly acknowledged that other ASEAN states have claims to the territory, a concession that China has refused to make, Vietnam will not easily acquiesce to other ASEAN claimants, particularly given the depth of its rivalry with China. Vietnam's admission that other claimants may be legitimate may open the door for a joint ASEAN strategy, but the prospects of a multilateral ASEAN

policy remain remote since Vietnam continues to pursue its competing territorial claims with China. Clearly, China will retain the diplomatic upper-hand towards controlling the Spratlys for the short-to medium-term while ASEAN seeks to resolve the tangle of conflicting internal approaches to achieve a cohesive policy.

There have been numerous discussions between the claimants, the most recent having been sponsored by Indonesia in 1994-95. Though a non-claimant to the Spratly Islands, Indonesia has a growing concern about the extent of China's interests in the South China Sea, especially given Beijing's reluctance to clarify the extent of its claims in the rich gas fields of the Naturna Islands controlled by Indonesia. An intense round of diplomatic discussions following China's move against the Philippines in 1995 succeeded in eliciting reluctant agreement by China to support peaceful solutions, and this at least forces China to review its propensity to use military force in the area.

### **Future China-ASEAN Relations**

Though a number of ASEAN states lay claim to the islands it is unclear whether any one of them has the capacity to exploit the resources without assistance. Additionally, there is the very real possibility that an ongoing dispute, particularly a military confrontation, will so destabilise the region that the disruptions to trade, investments and diplomatic relations would outweigh the economic benefits to be gained by unilateral control of the islands' resources. A multilateral resolution, with possibly joint development of the resource potential, may be the only realistic approach. This has certainly been identified by ASEAN and is not beyond the realms of possibility for China.

Any military solution that sees China dominate the South China Sea will have grave economic consequences not only for ASEAN but also for states such as US, Japan and the Koreans. It would inevitably widen the dispute to include all nations that rely on free passage of trade through the area. The backlash to China politically, economically and militarily would be formidable, causing setbacks to China's development that may take generations to overcome. The effect on China's social conditions and domestic unrest, already a profound problem for Beijing and its military, would be substantial serving only to speed regression toward political and social anarchy. The long-term effects on Beijing's relationship with ASEAN would be significant with two possible responses by ASEAN states: a unified ASEAN could become truly representative as a regional power bloc,

unlikely to accommodate any moves by China for development and expansion in the future, or ASEAN may split into pro-China and anti-China states, effectively negating ASEAN as a meaningful player in regional security and stability. It is not clear which of these eventualities is the more probable. Consequently, a unilateral military solution from China is unlikely. This does not however negate the prospects of future small scale military clashes, as the proximity of weapons platforms will inevitably raise tensions and precipitate local clashes.

## Conclusion

The strategic importance and abundant resources of the Spratly Islands archipelago make it one of the most sought after, and fought over, territories in Asia. The desire of countries such as China and Vietnam to control the entire island group will only continue to grow in order to sustain expanding economies and populations. It can therefore be expected that the Spratlys will remain central to determining the strategic balance of power in Asia.

The resolution of the Spratlys dispute will be the barometer against which regional relations will be measured in the future. Though economic engagement of China is one means to ensure the dependence of China on regional stability, it will require more than this to defuse simmering tensions and prevent the involvement of other regional or western powers. The intransigence of China in dealing in other than bilateral discussions with other claimants, together with the inability of ASEAN to resolve internal wrangling to develop an ASEAN "national interest" may mean that any peaceful solution to the dispute can only be resolved through bilateral negotiations. This has taken on added validity following the recent admission of Vietnam to ASEAN and the further complications this introduces to resolving an agreed ASEAN way ahead. In the long-term, Vietnam's more assertive approach to territorial disputes with China, together with its different political structure, may force ASEAN to review its approach to regional security and cooperation. In short, ASEAN may develop the political will to take on a true regional security role.

The proximity of opposing forces in the Spratly group and the recent history of military clashes raises questions about whether negotiations can be conducted free of further clashes. Though Indonesian sponsorship of discussions has created several opportunities to progress the situation, confidence that

resolution can be reached has been hampered by China's unwillingness to match its actions to its words. It remains to be seen whether the most recent Chinese agreements to resist the use of force in the area and pursue discussions with ASEAN will be honoured.

From a purely military perspective the Spratlys are indeed a potential flashpoint for conflict in the South China Sea. The strengthening ties that bind China regionally and globally may negate military posturing and force all claimants to pursue resolution through economic, diplomatic and security engagement rather than confrontation. To do otherwise would likely result in economic and diplomatic disaster for the protagonists, yet there remains a strong possibility that reason will not prevail and that at least localised military clashes will continue.

## NOTES

1. Gerald Segal, "East Asia and the Constraint of China" in *International Security*, Vol 20 No 4, Spring 1996. p.117.
2. *ibid.*, p.117.
3. A. James Gregor, "China, the United States, and Security Policy in East Asia", in *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly*, Vol XXVI No 2, Summer 1996. p.97.
4. Colin MacKerras (Ed), *Eastern Asia*, Second Edition, Longman Australia, Sydney, 1995, p.578. During the 1985-92 period the rise in regional defence spending was 12.6% for China, 28.5% for Japan, 22.4% for North Korea, 63.5% for South Korea, 31.2% for Malaysia, 36.2% for Singapore, 29.9% for Taiwan, and 27.6% for Thailand.
5. Segal, *op cit.*, p.116.
6. Dr Frank Frost, *Vietnam's Membership of ASEAN: Issues and Implications*, Parliamentary Research Service, Current Issues Brief No 3 1995-96. p.5.
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*Trainee with the UNTAC Mine Clearance Team. Photo by Major Andre Obradovic*

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# Demining Operations – Pandora’s Box or Treasure Chest?

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By Major D.J. McGuire, RAE

*“On the evening of assuming the position of Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia I returned to my quarters... drew a sheet of paper and began to write down all the things I would have to do. After some thought I wrote “M” four times on the sheet of paper. When later questioned by Churchill as to their significance I explained – morale, malaria, monsoon and movement; when I address these issues then we can achieve victory in South East Asia.”*

Lord Louis Mountbatten, August 1943

## Introduction

Lord Mountbatten’s appreciation of the problems faced by forces in South East (SE) Asia is as salient today as it was in 1943. Only one “M” need be added to his notes to modernise the appreciation, that being for mines. Current estimates indicate that more than 100 million landmines have been laid world wide across 60 countries – at least 20 million of these are laid in SE Asia stretching through Laos, Burma, Cambodia and Vietnam (Blagden, *Kuwait Mine Clearing after Iraqi Invasion, US Army Quarterly & Defence Journal*, 1996, p.11).

Landmines are unique among weapons in that they are both cheap to produce and almost indefinitely lethal. It is estimated that over 250 million landmines have been produced over the past 25 years. Main producers have been China, Italy, the United States and the former Soviet Union. Many Asian countries have, through necessity, copied these mines and produced their own lethal arsenal, further exacerbating the problem (*ibid.*, p.12). Recent moratoriums on the subject have led many countries to limit or ban the export and, in some cases, the use of anti-personnel mines. While positive, it fails to remove the current legacy or address the operational requirements that armed forces have for such devices.

Many commanders consider the use of military forces for the clearance of landmines, outside an operational environment, to be inappropriate. This is because it is deemed to have negligible applicability to the training of combat troops. The aim of this article is to give some background to the scope of the

landmine problem and highlight some important lessons to be learned from demining operations. Finally, it will examine some of the benefits to be gained through Australian military involvement in such operations.

## The Scope of the Problem

Landmines are cheap to produce and quick to lay. Estimates put that the cost of clearing a minefield is at least 100 times that of laying it using current technology. These figures are for mine clearance operations rather than tactical breaching operations<sup>1</sup>. In addition the work is dangerous, painfully slow and personnel intensive. For example, the number of deminers killed in Kuwait since the Gulf War is greater than the total of US soldiers killed during *Desert Storm* (*ibid.*, p.12). Exasperating the problem is that every country’s mine problem is seen as unique. Many of the underlying lessons to be learnt may be applied in almost every mined area but it is first necessary to understand some of the differences between theatres of operation.

## The Post *Desert Storm* Experience

Unlike the tropics, the troops operating in Kuwait after Operation *Desert Storm* had a dry and dusty heat to contend with when faced with clearing the hundreds of thousands of mines that ringed Kuwait city. The task was aggravated by an enormous amount of unexploded ordnance (UXO) that littered the battlefield and increased notably the threat to deminers. Further complicating factors included dense, often toxic smoke from burning oil wells, moving sands that covered perimeter fences and moved mines, and dust storms that often started without warning causing an immediate halt to operations.

Most of the post-war clearance operations were contracted to civilian companies like Commercial Munitions Systems International (CMSI). CMSI had, by August 1994, cleared more than 338 000 mines, millions of pieces of fragmentation and several hundred tons of UXO (Chirio, *Lessons Learnt Demining Kuwait, US Engineer Magazine No.23, 1994, p.25*). Other companies, such as Royal Ordnance plc, mirror these figures. The Allied Forces

cleared an estimated 200 000 mines before handing over responsibility.

The minefields laid in Kuwait were generally mixed and contained a proportion of blast and bounding fragmentation mines. A high number were buried (approximately 55 *per cent*) and most large minefields were fenced in a similar manner to western doctrine.

### **Cambodia and SE Asia**

M, M, M, M, M – monsoons, malaria, morale, movement, and mines. These key considerations are comprehensive and accurate. The wet and humid climate of the SE Asian region creates equally as many problems for demining operations as do the sandy deserts of the Middle East. As with Kuwait, in most cases mined areas are littered with fragmentation and UXO. Though moving sands are not a consideration, monsoonal flooding creates similar problems for demining operations. Unlike Kuwait, most minefields in SE Asia are not marked or recorded. This creates an invisible threat that both mentally and physically retards the country's development.

Mines in Cambodia are generally older generation mines compared to those in the Middle East and 96 *per cent* are anti-personnel mines. A high proportion of mines were originally surface laid, though jungle regrowth and humus from the vegetation has rapidly covered these. Metal mines like the POM/Z are often badly corroded and highly unstable while the plastic PMN range and 72 A/B range withstand the moist conditions much better (CMAC Brief, 1996).

Cambodia still has in excess of 8 million mines covering an area of 3 billion square metres (CMAC Statistical Data, 1996). Clearance operations are prioritised such that useable land is cleared first. Many mines are laid in remote areas of the country and are of little threat to the majority of the population. On current clearance rates, it is expected that 80 *per cent* of the arable land will be cleared by the year 2010.

### **Afghanistan**

Years of war against the former Soviet Union left Afghanistan with a dangerous legacy of mines and UXO. Unlike SE Asia, deminers in Afghanistan are faced with a mixture of low and high technology mines. High technology mines detonate with changes in magnetic field, vibration and other triggers, as well as pressure, and are fitted with anti-handling devices that greatly increase the threat to deminers.

Many of these landmines were laid in and around villages and were often buried under rubble during

battles and new mines laid on top. Many villages have multiple minefields laid on top of one another – a perplexing problem for clearance teams (Van Ree, *Presentation on Lessons from Demining Afghanistan*, 1996).

The harsh climate bakes the clay soils in summer and freezes then in winter making normal prodding impossible. Instead, all indications must be excavated to determine their nature. When over 99 *per cent* of indications given by the detectors are only metal fragments, it is obvious that much time is wasted. Deminers cannot ignore an indication as the risks and variables are too high.

### **Other Nations**

Demining operations are also being conducted in Somalia, Angola, Mozambique, and throughout Africa and South America. British Forces have, in most cases, fenced off minefields in the Falkland Islands as the benefits of clearance do not warrant the risk or cost involved. Each country presents the deminer with unique climatic and geographical demands that, on the surface, appear to bear no resemblance to other countries with mine threats. A more holistic examination of the problem indicates that most clearance operations have similar difficulties, and that lessons learnt from one operation are applicable, at least in part, to others.

### **Lessons Learnt**

The following lessons learnt from demining operations are born out of necessity (and Engineer “ingenuity”). Many lessons are learned in isolation and, in some cases, this is the first time they are discussed in a general demining article. Many lessons are applicable to the Army and the ADF in general, though these would not be passed on except for the Australian Army's ongoing involvement in humanitarian demining operations.

### **Mine Dogs**

The use of dogs in warfare is an age-old tradition dating back to the Assyrians and Germanic hordes of Europe (Maclean, *Warfare in the Ancient World*, 1984, p. 21). As recently as Vietnam, dogs were used as trackers and detectors of mines and explosive ordinance stashes. Their use has diminished greatly in Australia in recent years and the focus of existing dog teams in the Army has moved away from purely military tasks to more “High Risk Search” related tasks.



*A marked minefield in Cambodia*

Recently, deminers in Afghanistan have “rediscovered” this valuable asset and have had outstanding success in using specially bred dogs to detect minefield perimeters and to aid in the clearance of routes and minefields by indicating the location of buried mines. Their success has been impressive, with dogs being able to detect some mines to a one metre depth and UXO up to three metres depth (Van Ree, *et.al.*, 1996).

Many countries have religious and social taboos against dogs. Demining Technical Advisers have successfully overcome these barriers by demonstrating the skill of the dogs, their versatility and by emphasising the reduced risk to the deminers as a result of using dogs.

Dogs are not without their fair share of problems and the following is by no means an exhaustive list of these:

- **Training.** A mine dog can take up to 12 months to train and can be found unacceptable during late stages of training.

- **Fatigue.** Extreme weather conditions and winds can greatly reduce the effectiveness of the dogs causing fatigue and confusion.
- **Disease.** Most areas of operation are in third world countries with poor medical facilities and low hygiene standards. Ticks, lice, ulcers and infections can severely affect dogs, especially in tropical environments.
- **Scent.** Heavy leaching of the soil during the wet season potentially reduces the scent signature of explosives over time making mines harder to detect. The opposite appears to be the case in Afghanistan and other middle eastern countries where rainfall is less, hence the greater effectiveness of dogs in those areas.

Regardless of these and other difficulties the high productivity of dogs (up to 100 times more efficient than hand demining under ideal conditions), has led most countries affected by mines to establish pilot programs to gauge the suitability of dogs in that area. The military benefit of mine dogs is slowly being re-examined as their use in the detection of minefield

perimeters and route clearance is demonstrated in demining operations worldwide.

The potential to combine dogs with mechanical clearance techniques is also being examined and, if successful, will greatly reduce the cost and risk of clearance along routes and in open terrain.

### Tripwires and Anti-handling Devices

The task of clearance is complicated by the use of tripwires and anti-handling devices being used as triggering devices for, or in conjunction with, mines. The obvious problem is the threat of detonating a mine metres from where it is laid before it can be detected. This is a major problem in SE Asia where jungle regrowth rapidly covers old minefields and disguises tripwires. For this reason the search for tripwires is the first drill of any demining team. Only after the area is checked for tripwires will vegetation be cleared to allow a detector search and prodding where necessary.

As safety is of paramount importance during demining operations, mines are generally blown *in situ* to minimise the threat of anti-handling devices. Generally a partial excavation of mines is necessary so a destructive charge can be placed near the mine. This is not a major problem in Cambodia though the hard-baked soils of Afghanistan and Mozambique often make this task more dangerous.

The burning of vegetation to uncover tripwires and surface laid mines does not appear to greatly effect mines in Afghanistan (*ibid.*), as the vegetation is limited and the heat build up is negligible. In parts of SE Asia the dense vegetation greatly increases the heat generated when burning off. Anti-personnel mines like the PMN-2 and the 72A/B often partially melted during burn-off operations and this has the potential to increase the sensitivity of the mines.

### Clearance Techniques

All international recognised demining operations now have centralised training facilities, though in some cases primitive, to train deminers, Explosive Ordinance Disposal Teams, Mine Awareness Teams and intelligence gathering and minefield marking teams (Johnson, *The Lethal Legacy of Landmines*, 1994, p.38). These schools give the teams the consistency in training that is vital for safe demining operations. Most demining teams are trained and operate in two-man teams with a safety observer who monitors between one and four teams at a time. Unlike Australian military doctrine, the primary means of detection is by mine detector and not prodding. The sequence of work is generally as follows:

- **Tripwire Detection.** A deminer will move forward to the mine perimeter and check a one square metre area in his lane for tripwires and any surface laid mines. Any excess vegetation is then cleared and removed to allow the area to be swept with a detector.
- **Mine Sweeper.** The mine sweeper moves forward and sweeps the area. Any indication will be marked before he retires.
- **Prodder.** Any indications are then prodded by the second member of the team until the source is located. Prodding is preferably done in the prone position though environmental hazards and religious considerations sometimes dictate that a squatting position is used.
- **Destruction.** The placement of charges is generally the responsibility of the site supervisor and is done during a break in operations when the minefield is evacuated.

Once established, mine teams do not generally change members or alter their rotation sequence unless absolutely necessary. This procedure enables the teams to establish strong working relationships and bonds between members. Generally, a deminer will work for a maximum of 30 minutes before rotating with his partner (Chirio, *et.al.*, p. 27).

Another key element of any site is the medical support team, usually involving a medical assistant trained in trauma injuries and an ambulance (often a crudely converted 4x4 vehicle). The presence of this support and a clear casualty evacuation plan is essential for morale among the deminers and technical advisers. In Cambodia the medical staff are trained by US Special Forces Patrol Medics and are highly proficient in their duties.

It must be emphasised that these techniques have been developed for demining operations where there is a low or non-existent operational threat. Current MLW Pamphlets are the reference for operational mine breaching and clearance.

### Laterite Soils and Fragmentation

For obvious reasons, humanitarian demining operations demand 100 *per cent* clearance of all mines before an area is declared clear. One incident after an area has been declared "clear" will destroy the locals trust in the demining teams and necessary support will not be forthcoming.

These exacting standards are made even more difficult by laterite soil and fragmentation. Laterite soils are high in hydrated iron ores and are formed under special climatic conditions in tropical regions, such as Cambodia. These iron rich soils confuse mine detectors and make the use of them impossible. These

soils are by nature very dense and highly compacted making prodding difficult (*Dictionary of Geology*, 1979). This dramatically slows output and makes clearance very difficult.

When clearing an area all indications by the mine detector must, by necessity, be treated as mines until proven otherwise. As many minefields occur on and around old battlefields the ground is often littered with metal fragmentation. The extent of this problem is best demonstrated by examining clearance statistics for a Demining Unit in Cambodia for 1996 (See Table 1).

As can be seen, thousands of pieces of fragmentation are recovered for every one mine.

As a direct result of Australian military involvement in demining operations Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), aided by other Australian companies, is developing companion systems to complement the standard detectors and eliminate these problems. The benefits of such systems would extend to operational activities as well as humanitarian demining activities. The primary system involves the use of Ultra Wide Band (UWB) radar technology to detect low-metallic content mines with reduced probability of false detection due to fragmentation and laterite deposits. An effective hand-held system is *likely* to combine a Ground Probing Radar (GPR) with a metal detector. An initial version of such a system could be a cheap, light-weight GPR attachment for current mine detectors. This work is also being extended to cover close-in vehicle-mounted systems for road clearance (Chant & Rye, *Overview of Current Radar Land Mine Detection Research – DSTO*, 1996, p.1). The prospects both economically and militarily of these developments are very promising. Such developments are greatly assisted by Defence’s

ongoing involvement with demining operations such as Cambodia.

This is further enhanced by another Australian company, “MINELAB”, which has developed a ground tracking system which substantially reduces the ground noise interference caused by iron oxide mineralisation. This advance has given their detector a notable advantage over current military detectors. If this technology is combined with the developments made by DSTO then the benefits to mine clearance operations worldwide would be enormous. Effectively, the detector operator will both see and hear the indication and will be able to quickly assess if it is a mine or harmless fragmentation.

### Mechanical Clearance

All major demining operations have, at some stage, investigated the use of mechanical clearance devices. The success of these devices has generally fallen short of the expectations of the demining organisations. In Cambodia, dense regrowth over many mined areas makes going for vehicles impossible. The clearance of this could be done using dozers and chains though a real risk of detonating mines exists. Environmental restrictions also prohibit the use of these techniques. Rollers attached to T54/55 tanks were originally trialed on route clearance though the tanks proved to be too unreliable and did not achieve the 100 *per cent* clearance required.

Trials conducted in Afghanistan found that mechanical clearance cost approximately \$2.25 (US) per square metre compared to 20c for hand clearance. This combined with ongoing maintenance problems and repair after mine detonations meant that the trials were deemed a failure. Armoured tractors are being used to excavate deeply buried mines in and around villages with much success (Van Reed, *et.al.*).

**Table 1. Demining Statistics - Demining Unit 1 Kampot Province 1996**

MONTH	SQUARE MTRS CLEARED	A/PERS MINES	A/TANK MINES	UXO	FRAGMENTATION (PIECES)
January	289,658	145	4	53	153,000
February	305,750	103	0	27	102,531
March	447,422	188	2	38	202,100
April	384,251	87	0	32	68,175
May	330,203	122	0	141	222,165
June	178,250*	78	0	63	183,102

\*Commenced Clearance in an area with high laterite concentration.

Trials in Kuwait came up with similar results to those in Afghanistan. Cost was the predominant factor restricting the use of mechanical clearance devices (Blagden, *et.al.*, p.11). Further, landmines, like humans, can get cantankerous with age, and can either become more or less sensitive. They do not always go off when pressed; some need two applications of pressure, others may need more. On the other hand others go off at a touch, or explode spontaneously some time later – even mines of the same type in the same row can develop widely differing operating criteria.

This means that pressure-actuating clearance devices such as flails or rollers will not set off all mines. Repeated rolling improves the success rate but no guarantee can be given of 100 *per cent* clearance. The only way to do this is to use hand clearance techniques. Lightly armoured plant is a valuable asset when excavating deeply buried mines and UXO but does not replace hand clearance techniques.

Despite initial poor performances, new developments on the world market show much more promise. For example, South Africa has developed an anti-personnel mine roller that can be towed behind a modified armoured vehicle and gives high clearance rates in lightly vegetated terrain. Though not a total answer, it and other developments, offer a partial solution to the problem. Further, it offers protection and security to the deminers which greatly assists in maintaining morale – the key performance multiplier.

### Maintenance of Morale

High morale is the key to effective demining operations. This is just as applicable to the technical advisers as it is to the indigenous population. Having worked with technical advisers of different nationalities, who had tours ranging from four to 12 months, the author is of the firm belief that six months is an ideal tour duration. Where combat constraints do not apply, six months allows enough time to develop a rapport with the indigenous staff while not risking the development of personal problems often faced by those on 12 month tours. Lessons learnt from previous tours appear to have been applied – this is promising.

Small teams appear to be less well supported from Australia than larger contingents. Many members of small contingents have expressed concern over poor support in the areas of housing, pay and welfare matters. Often this is because parent units are no longer responsible for their support as this is transferred to a central authority. In many cases, spouses remain in the vicinity of the parent units but are isolated from the support agency. Regardless of who is “officially” responsible for the deployed

personnel, parent units should remain in frequent contact with families to avoid feelings of isolation and to provide backup where necessary.

### Other Lessons

Many other lessons can be learned from military involvement in demining operations. Some other lessons include:

- **Language Training.** Language training is essential for all members deploying on overseas operations to foreign speaking countries. This should give, at a minimum, a basic understanding of the language structure, characteristics and basic phrases for survival.
- **First Aid Training.** All members interviewed who have been involved in overseas deployments emphasis the need for more extensive first aid training prior to deployment, including treatment of trauma injuries and patient stabilisation. The survival of a contingent member may depend upon it.
- **Threat Education.** Contingent members must be accurately briefed on the current threat “in theatre” using accurate and recent information. Interviews indicate that this is still not being done adequately. Subject matter “experts” generally are poorly briefed and few have had overseas experience. Cost should not be a consideration when ensuring that deployments are trained and briefed by experienced staff with first-hand experience.
- **Combined Arms Deployments.** All members of the Defence Force would benefit from involvement in such deployments, i.e. as a staff officer at a headquarter level. Demining operations should, however, be left up to the subject matter experts, namely engineers. Recent experience indicates that General Reserve soldiers, if carefully selected, are experienced enough to fill positions on such deployments and their presence has the potential to enhance Australia’s standing on these operations.

There are many other minor lessons, too numerous to address in one article. Far more use should be made of the untapped resource of soldiers and officers who have participated in overseas deployments and operations in unit training programs. Unfortunately, indications to the author are that this is not being done and valuable lessons go unlearned by the wider Army community.

The benefits of Australian military involvement in demining operations are, in many cases, similar to those gained from any operational deployment. The most obvious benefits gained stem from an exposure

to a real threat. Other benefits can be grouped under headings such as training, cultural and diplomatic.

### **Threat**

The training environment can only expose a soldier to a limited threat due to the Occupational Health and Safety issues imposed on the Defence Force. While such restrictions are necessary they do limit the realism of training. Such restrictions are less apparent in an operational environment and there is, in some cases, no control over the threats that exist. The threat is real and puts new pressures on teams and individuals. These pressures often expose personal characteristics that would not be seen in a training environment. Generally, individuals return from such deployments wiser and with a new perspective on unit training strengths and weaknesses. They also have a better understanding of their own limits and strengths which can only assist their personal development.

### **Training**

Overseas deployments give participants the opportunity to evaluate their training “first-hand” and to make recommendations for its development on their return. Further, the deployment itself should be viewed as a training and educational experience. Participants are exposed to other armed forces, their equipment and tactics. They are forced to live in culturally and religiously diverse countries and eat food that is often different to their normal diet. Basically, they are taken outside their “comfort zone”! Lessons learnt in this atmosphere remain with the soldier and can be applied again and again in training.

Tactical and strategic training is frequently utilised by technical advisers on demining operations as they are called upon to formulate plans and budgets at all levels. Further, they are required to teach the indigenous staff these skills to ensure the long-term viability of these operations. The feasibility and practicality of our doctrine can be assessed in a “real life” operational environment and the lessons learnt may be applied within the ADF where applicable.

These deployments provide an ideal opportunity for Army trainers to get realistic feedback on courses and the Army Training System from staff overseas and to examine training techniques used in foreign countries. This aspect is under utilised and could be examined further.

### **Culture and Diplomacy**

It has been often said that Australian soldiers lack any culture or diplomacy. It would be more correct to

say that Australian service personnel have a unique brand of humour and culture that adopts well to adversity and thrives on challenge. The reputation of Australian technical advisers worldwide supports this view and is a compliment to the ADF and our heritage. Most Australian soldiers develop, after some time, a cultural tolerance and understanding and are respected accordingly by the indigenous populations. Past experience shows that the efforts of Australian soldiers overseas has improved Australia’s diplomatic standing in the world forum. Continued involvement in humanitarian and operational deployments should only enhance this reputation.

### **Conclusion**

Demining operations at present are both dangerous and expensive, yet experts are short on suggested methods to overcome this. Some treaties to ban the future manufacture of mines have been signed, or are in draft, but there is no easy answer to the problem of clearing existing mines. Vehicles with flails, rollers and other refinements exist but these are too few, too costly and too limited in their application. There is still no economic substitute for a person with a prodding rod, though ongoing developments in mine detector and mechanical clearance device technology offers great hope for the future.

Australian military involvement has encouraged DSTO and companies such as MINELAB to apply their combined expertise to overcoming the problems faced by deminers. These developments are revolutionary and will bring Australian industry acclaim and financial rewards. Of course, Australian Army Engineers can greatly benefit from the knowledge and technological advancements of these companies. This, combined with the knowledge gained from working with other armed forces in an operational setting, further emphasises the benefits of such deployments.

The involvement of Australian service personnel in demining operations has brought the ADF enormous international recognition and appreciation. Aside from the humanitarian and public relations benefits, there are considerable lessons to be learnt that apply to the peace and wartime operations of the ADF. Further, these operations provide the Defence Force with an ideal forum in which to evaluate training in a “real threat” environment and to develop the skills and knowledge of the service personnel that participate in them.

Such deployments are not without costs and complications but the benefits gained far outweigh any conceivable cost. The growing pool of veterans is a yet untapped font of valuable knowledge that should be utilised widely by units and training institutions. *"The failure to learn from experience is as heinous a crime as any; and is one that may cost, not only your life, but the lives of your men... such fools should be publicly whipped and disgraced for such is the severity of their ignorance."* (CAPT Richard Sharpe, 95th Rifles, after the siege of Badajoz, Spain, 1812).

#### NOTES

1. The use of the word *demining* has become part of engineer vocabulary. Without a clear understanding of the terms, confusion will continue. Here is a proposed simple set of definitions:
  - **Breaching.** Neutralisation of mines in a limited area to support momentum of offensive combat.
  - **Clearing.** Removal of mines before cessation of hostilities for military and tactical purposes.
  - **Demining.** Removal of mines over large areas after the cessation of hostilities. This term seems appropriate to mark a difference between combat clearance and clearance on cessation of major hostilities.
  - **Explosive Ordinance Disposal.** Removal of UXO and performance of other related tasks by soldiers formally trained and certified in explosive ordinance disposal skills.
2. Complaints on housing, pay and welfare have been made by a number of members of the last three contingents to Cambodia and selected members interviewed from other demining deployments. In all cases the author was assured

that these complaints have been made formally to the agencies concerned. The nature of these complaints have been treated in confidence but are all severe enough to affect morale of contingent members and their families.

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#### INTERVIEWS

1. Contingent Members – ASC 3,4, and 5 – Cambodia.
2. Mr B. Van Ree, Demining Technical Adviser and Regional Manager – Afghanistan.
3. Major G. Membray, SO2 Development, Directorate of Engineers.

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# Soldiers Bearing Gifts

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By Stephen Tully

The legal aspects of armed escorts for the protection of humanitarian convoys is a maelstrom of international legal themes. This article is confined to an examination of the range of action permitted within a state of war and evaluated under the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and the two 1977 Additional Protocols<sup>1</sup>.

Part A of the article will present a typology of the differing “species” of armed escorts and the material commonly transported in humanitarian convoys. The four varieties may be delineated as:

- i) unilateral State-initiated convoys;
- ii) United Nations (UN) measures, for example peacekeeping forces used in conjunction with convoys of assistance under the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);
- iii) convoys initiated by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and
- iv) non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who commonly employ locally-hired personnel.

Part B of the article will briefly sketch the legal position of humanitarian relief convoys under the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. Finally, part C will explore the most controversial issues arising from the discussion: the use of military resources of the armed escorts to push convoys through armed blockades (from both a legal and a military perspective); the nature of State consent to relief operations; and limits to the complementarity of humanitarian assistance with military protection in view of the emerging practice.

## Part A: A Typology of Armed Escorts and Humanitarian Convoys

Convoys of supplies are designed to supplement the local resources, since objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population are ordinarily protected from destruction<sup>2</sup>. Prisoners of War<sup>3</sup> and civilian internees<sup>4</sup> are permitted to receive individual parcels or collective shipments containing foodstuffs, clothing, medical supplies, books and objects of a devotional, educational or recreational character which may be provided by “a humanitarian body

which affords every guarantee of impartiality and competence”<sup>5</sup>.

Humanitarian organisations may also be called upon to assist with the evacuation of Prisoners of War to camps away from the combat zone and with their subsequent transfer and repatriation<sup>6</sup>, the transfer of civilian internees<sup>7</sup> to the evacuation of the occupied population<sup>8</sup>.

The nature of a relief organisation is characterised as an international body having more than mere sporadic humanitarian activities or the mere sending of relief but the actual personal participation in charitable work<sup>9</sup>. In this respect the International Court of Justice has commented that the provision of humanitarian assistance will not constitute intervention in the domestic sphere of a State if it is “limited to the purpose hallowed in the practice of the Red Cross, namely, to prevent and alleviate human suffering” and if it is “to protect life and health and to ensure respect for human beings, it must also, and above all, be given without discrimination to all”<sup>10</sup>.

Protection is specifically provided for under article 63 of the Fourth Geneva Convention to National Red Cross Societies, other relief societies and “special organisations of a *non-military* character”<sup>11</sup> (emphasis added). That article operates on the assumption that the relief societies observe strict neutrality and abstain from political or military activities<sup>12</sup>.

### i) Unilateral State-initiated Convoys

Armed assistance or protection afforded to humanitarian convoys and initiated by only one State raises the controversial issue of the circumstances in which a State may intervene in the domestic sphere of another.<sup>13</sup> Scheffer<sup>14</sup> has noted that whilst endangered nationals may be forcibly rescued, armed intervention to protect the civilian population from totalitarian repression is not as wholly legitimate. Some commentators<sup>15</sup> take the view that a genuine humanitarian intervention does not represent a challenge to the political independence of a State. However, any intrusion upon the manner in which a State treats its domestic population will unavoidably directly or indirectly readjust the political balance previously in existence (such as the case of the Kurdish protection zone in Iraq).

Similarly, having intruded into the territorial sovereignty of another State to ensure the safe

delivery of relief supplies, it seems perverse to argue that military assaults initiated by a relief convoy could be justified by self-defence. Intervention is unlawful if it employs methods of coercion which is an element "particularly obvious in the case of an intervention which uses force, either in the direct form of military action, or in the indirect form of support for subversive or terrorist armed activities within another State."<sup>16</sup>

The doctrine of humanitarian intervention and its susceptibility to abuse by powerful States over weaker ones risks allegations of "imperialism" such that strict standards are likely to be imposed by the international community if it is to be tolerated. Recent examples demonstrate that only where fundamental non-political human rights<sup>17</sup> are at stake to such a degree that the right to life is threatened on a massive scale will the international community consider supervised unilateral measures.

## ii) United Nations Measures

The Secretary-General of the UN has commented that "the 1990s have given peacekeeping another new task: the protection of the delivery of humanitarian supplies to civilians caught up in a continuing conflict."<sup>18</sup> The recent General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991) which aimed at strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance by the United Nations affirms aspects of the 1949 Geneva Conventions<sup>19</sup> but also introduces some novel elements.<sup>20</sup>

Only pursuant to Chapter 7 enforcement measures can the UN be authorised under the charter to intervene in the domestic jurisdiction of a State without its consent (Article 2(7)). An alternative jurisdictional foundation is where the UN is specifically empowered to act under international treaty law.<sup>21</sup> In this respect a significant basis for action lies in the form of Article 89 of the first 1977 Protocol which provides that in "situation of serious violations" the High Contracting Parties undertake to cooperate with the UN in action jointly or individually made pursuant to the Charter.<sup>22</sup>

### a) *The Application of International Humanitarian Law to the UN*

The Model Agreement between the UN and Member States concerning contributions to peacekeeping operations provides that the troops "shall observe and respect the principles and spirit of the general international conventions applicable to the conduct of military personnel"<sup>23</sup>. However, the situation is far from satisfactory<sup>24</sup>. The UN takes the view that as it represents the international community

at large, it cannot strictly be considered as a "Party" or "Power" within the terms of the Geneva Conventions. To this end, the Resolution adopted by the Institute of International Law<sup>25</sup> suggests in Article 2 that the law of armed conflict applies to the UN "as of right and they must be complied with in every circumstance by UN Forces<sup>26</sup> which are engaged in hostilities" (emphasis added). The proposed Convention on the Safety and Security of UN and Associated Personnel<sup>27</sup> only partially addresses the situation; the applicability of international humanitarian law to UN personnel will henceforth turn upon the ill-defined concept of "combatant" which may be the case even in the context of a non-forcible peacekeeping mandate.

### b) *UNHCR Convoys of Humanitarian Assistance*

UNHCR does not have any specific enabling provision for its humanitarian assistance function in its Statute of Office or in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>28</sup>. However, Resolution 2956 (1972) requested the High Commissioner "to continue to participate at the invitation of the Secretary-General, in those humanitarian endeavours of the UN for which his office has particular expertise and experience"<sup>29</sup>.

Mrs Sadako Ogata, the present High Commissioner, believes<sup>30</sup> that negotiating with the parties to a conflict to obtain their consent provides UNHCR with the necessary "humanitarian space" in which to operate. The High Commissioner further commented that "it is not for humanitarian organisations to support or oppose the use of force, but it may be incumbent on them to distance themselves from enforcement in order to preserve their mandates"<sup>31</sup>.

### iii) *ICRC Convoys*

The ICRC has a right of initiative to undertake humanitarian activities subject to the consent of the parties to the conflict<sup>32</sup>.

ICRC negotiations with the militia is less of an instance of recognising their legitimacy but rather a practical means of obtaining an assurance that the Geneva Conventions would be respected and to obtain authorisation for the ICRC to carry out its mandate. In addition, ICRC units have been allowed into a conflict area to evacuate the wounded<sup>33</sup> or to distribute aid throughout the region<sup>34</sup> pursuant to the authority of Security Council resolutions. During the Gulf Conflict, for example, the Security Council requested Iraq to cooperate with the Red Cross to repatriate all Kuwaiti and third country nationals<sup>35</sup> as well as to facilitate the distribution of foodstuffs within Iraq and Kuwait<sup>36</sup>.

The ICRC differentiates between the use of force as a means of imposing the passage and delivery of relief supplies and the use with prior consent of armed escorts for humanitarian purposes<sup>37</sup>. It takes the view that the obligation incumbent upon States to respect international humanitarian law together with the protection to be afforded to the protective emblem means that the possibility of obtaining consent through dialogue can never be ruled out<sup>38</sup>. However, this is not to say that the ICRC is not willing to call upon UN forces in specific situations, such as the transfer of prisoners through territory where their lives may be at risk, where the lives of its delegates are threatened or where military logistical support is sought<sup>39</sup>. The Somalia experience represented a precedent for the ICRC in that it had recourse to armed protection by clan representatives<sup>40</sup> for its food convoys in circumstances where State consent could not be obtained.

#### iv) Aid Agencies and the Employment of Locally-Hired Personnel

Local personnel are often aware of the prevailing conditions for which outside estimates or procedures are inappropriate. However, humanitarian aid workers become exposed to extortion or blackmail when carrying out their tasks. On the other hand, the *raison d'être* of non-governmental organisations is that they are independent from the institutions, including military resources, of a foreign government, and indeed armed escorts imply the existence of material which is worthy of protection<sup>41</sup>.

The employment of locally-hired gunmen poses problems in terms of the responsibility of the use of force being attributed to that organisation. *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) and other “second generation” health care agencies are less constrained by the passive consequences of neutrality but at the same time risk losing the permission to pursue their mission. For example, in the “extreme circumstances” of the genocide in Rwanda – the systematic extermination of the Tutsis and the seizure of aid supplies to finance the war effort – MSF was willing to override its neutrality to insist upon a humanitarian *volte-face*<sup>42</sup>.

**Part B: The Position of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys under the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols**

The fundamental premise under the Conventions is that “relief actions for the civilian population which are of *an exclusively humanitarian and impartial*

*nature and which are conducted without any adverse distinction* shall be undertaken subject to the consent of the High Contracting Party concerned”<sup>43</sup> (emphasis added). Where the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate the Occupying Power is bound to unconditional acceptance of external collective relief and must facilitate it “by all means at its disposal.”<sup>44</sup> The consignments consist in particular of foodstuffs, medical supplies and clothing but are not limited thereto if they have the character of relief supplies.

The free passage of consignments is the “keystone of the whole system”<sup>45</sup> in that they be allowed to pass through the blockade and not subject to seizure. However, the State granting free passage can inspect the relief supplies to verify that they do not contain material that may be used for a military purpose (such as weapons and munitions) but in no case can this right be abused in order to unduly delay the forwarding of relief or impede the manner in which the supplies are distributed. Nevertheless, the Fourth Geneva Convention provides that the passage of relief supplies may be regulated according to prescribed times and routes. The Occupying Power cannot “divert” relief supplies, which is understood as covering any change to its destination of any kind, and which must remain an absolute exception<sup>46</sup>. To do so requires the concurrent satisfaction of three preconditions: urgent military necessity; the interests of the population; and supervision by a Protecting Power<sup>47</sup>.

The three-pronged criteria for relief actions – humanitarian, impartial and non-discriminatory – were formulated with a view to explicitly prevent any pretext for interference in the conflict<sup>48</sup>. Only on this basis would the Parties to that conflict and each High Contracting Party allow and facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of all relief consignments, equipment and personnel. The 1949 Conventions and 1977 Protocols were not envisaged to cover the contemporary phenomena of the hybrid between armed military vehicles and collective relief convoys. For example, protection whilst searching for, removing and transporting injured civilians is only afforded to “persons regularly and *solely* engaged in the operation and administration of civilian hospitals”<sup>49</sup> (emphasis added).

Although Article 21 of the Fourth Convention provides that convoys of vehicles conveying wounded and sick civilians, the infirm and maternity cases “shall be respected and protected”, such a train is to be designated by the distinctive Red Cross emblem and therefore not the blue and white “UN” or “UNCHR” marking. The suggestion that the UN Agencies or the ICRC shall be responsible for the



*United Nations relief convoy*

international coordination of the relief action was specifically omitted from Article 70 of the First Protocol, thus preserving the role exclusively for the Parties<sup>50</sup>. The insertion into paragraph 1 of Article 70 such that relief actions are subject to the agreement of the Parties concerned was accepted on the basis that a Party “refusing its agreement must do so for valid reasons, not for arbitrary or capricious ones”<sup>51</sup>.

The respect and protection from attack owed to fixed establishments or mobile medical units shall not cease unless they are used to commit outside their humanitarian duties acts harmful to the enemy<sup>52</sup>. Significantly, the following conditions do not deprive such establishments from protection<sup>53</sup>:

- i) that the personnel are armed and use the arms in *their own defence* or
- ii) that in the absence of armed orderlies, the unit is protected by a picket *or by sentries or by an escort* (emphasis added).

Finally, it should also be noted that the provisions of the Conventions “constitute no obstacle to the humanitarian activities which the ICRC or any other impartial humanitarian organisation may, subject to the consent of the Parties to the conflict, undertake...”<sup>54</sup>.

### Part C: Three Controversial Policy Issues

#### i) Using the Military Force of Armed Escorts to Push Humanitarian Convoys Through Armed Blockades

##### a) *The Theoretical Legal Perspective*

The right of the High Contracting Party to prescribe the technical arrangements under which passage of humanitarian aid is allowed is often identified as the source of a frustrated humanitarian mission. Under customary international law the use of force is not the appropriate method for ensuring respect for human rights. In the *Nicaragua* case, the Court held<sup>55</sup> that “the protection of human rights, a strictly humanitarian objective, cannot be compatible with the mining of ports, the destruction of all installations, or again with the training, arming and equipping of the contras”.

On the other hand, the Preamble to the UN Charter states that armed force shall not be used save in the common interest. Collective or individual

military enforcement action made pursuant to Chapter 7 of the Charter is clearly feasible. In the context of an enforcement action which dispenses with the requirement for consent, the use of force may create an environment favourable to humanitarian action and may be the only effective method for deterring genocide.

Superficially, it seems paradoxical to argue that the use of violent measures to remedy serious human rights deprivations would be consistent with the purposes of the UN which prohibit the use of force but nevertheless seek to uphold minimum human rights standards. A specifically directed smothering military action of short duration has the potential to limit the extent of the armed conflict as demonstrated by the use of surgical air strikes by NATO in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The employment of military resources by the UN or regional organisations thus becomes dependant upon the degree to which there is consensus by Heads of State and concomitantly the perceived level of popular support for such action.

The Secretary-General of the UN has repeatedly specified that peacekeeping missions are authorised to use weapons only in self-defence which is stated to include “resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent it from discharging its duties under the mandate given by the Security Council”<sup>56</sup> (emphasis added). For example, Resolution 836 (1993) extended the mandate of the UN Protection Force in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) “acting in self-defence, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, ... in the event of any deliberate destruction in or around those [safe] areas to the freedom of movement of UNPROFOR or of protected humanitarian convoys”. The same Resolution also provided the legal basis for Member States to use “all necessary measures, through the use of air power ... to support UNPROFOR in the performance of its mandate”.

The use of force harks back to just war theory in that “evil behaviour sometimes warrants the use of otherwise unjustifiable interventionist methods to stop the harmful consequences”<sup>57</sup>. Economic and trade sanctions directed at the means of perpetrating warfare such as an arms embargo<sup>58</sup> require the lapse of considerable time to take effect, unduly penalise Parties which were complying with the Geneva Conventions and would have only a negligible effect upon existing arms stocks<sup>59</sup>. The much-heralded political solution to hostilities is difficult where there exists no single controlling authority (for example, in Somalia) or where assurances made at the political

level do not effectively filter to the commander in the field (as was the case in former Yugoslavia).

*b) An Evaluation from the Practical Military Perspective*

Brigadier Harbottle, who participated in the peacekeeping campaign in Cyprus between 1966 and 1968, is of the view that, when confronted by deliberate targeting of vehicles and provocative challenges to the impartiality of the escort force, “time and again quiet reasoning succeeded where militant action could have further aggravated the situation”<sup>60</sup>. The military response to a proposed life-line corridor must be dictated by the methodology of warfare employed by the parties to the dispute. In a “conventional” war, forcible protection for humanitarian assistance requires overall strategic considerations. Alternatively, a show of arms will be a sufficient deterrent to bandits who possess inferior weaponry or where the readiness of the international community to intervene is apparent.

Military units deployed as part of a peacekeeping operation are encouraged to observe the cardinal rule of absolute impartiality. The use of force offensively – for example, to enforce the mandate of providing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population – changes the character of the operation from peacekeeping (the use of force for self-defence) to peace enforcement (the use of force for mission accomplishment) but in view of recent Security Council pronouncements the particular instructions are inadvertently creating hybrid forms of military operations and concomitantly practical difficulties for the commander in the field. Operations having inadequate strength and inappropriate armaments would in any event preclude the use of force in many circumstances. For example, Brigadier Wilson argues<sup>61</sup> that whilst the escort would have sufficient combat power to override a recalcitrant check-point, there would be further check-points, a need to return via the same route and a desire for continuing cooperation.

Rules of engagement (ROE) delineate the circumstances under which the use of force may be initiated and the graduated means employed to restrain its use when forces are engaged in active combat<sup>62</sup>. However, they require adaptation to instances where troops are charged with the protection of convoys of relief aid. The military unit in its policing role is mandated to detain criminals or those who interfere with or threaten deadly force against the convoys and whilst the mission may include the safe transit of collective relief the use of

force is generally authorised only in response to threats to human life and not property.

**ii) The First Preference: Obtaining State Consent to Collective Relief under the Conventions and the Nature of Consent.**

It has been argued that “it remains a condition *sine qua non* that State consent is necessary for relief actions”<sup>63</sup>. Consent is considered indispensable to both peacekeeping operations<sup>64</sup> and ICRC missions and is specifically referred to in the Conventions and Protocols. In the event of defiance an unenviable balance must be struck between on the one hand retaining the consent of the belligerent and tolerating ineffectiveness with on the other swift protective action at the expense of continued impartiality. A suggested response is to tailor the composition of the armed escorts to the preferences of the belligerents, which is likely to consist of:

- a) those personnel from a State perceived to have sympathetic views or at all events considered neutral;
- b) personnel drawn from an impartial international organisation such as the ICRC;
- c) representatives from the UN or regional organisation; and
- d) military personnel from an unselected State but subject to authoritative appraisal.

Consent may become clouded by political requirements (such as the need for the host government to secure face-saving formalities) and practical considerations (such as the existence of multifarious factions each “sovereign” over particular regions).

Although General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991) affirms that “humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country”, such language is sufficiently malleable<sup>65</sup> to undermine the strictness of such a requirement. An appropriate weapon would therefore be to adopt what Newman<sup>66</sup> describes as the UN’s capacity for the “mobilisation of shame” or the equivalent label by the ICRC of “discreet indignation”.

**iii) The Emerging Practice and Limits to the Complementary of Humanitarian Assistance with Military Protection**

Whilst the employment of locally-hired personnel has been a standard feature of many relief operations, there is a growing acceptance of prominent military involvement with emergency relief. With the recent serious moves towards the establishment of a UN

rapid deployment force, the provision of “minimal security for humanitarian aid personnel might best be regarded as a legitimate characteristic of non-forcible humanitarian intervention”<sup>67</sup>.

Notwithstanding the increasing propensity of States to protect humanitarian convoys with armed military escorts (Iraq, Somalia, former Yugoslavia), it is clearly too early to state that belligerent respect for such a practice has assumed distinct legal persuasiveness independent of Memorandums of Understanding and the obligations pursuant to the Geneva Conventions. In the Bosnia-Herzegovina example, despite the fact that the Geneva Conventions were blatantly violated (for example, by sabotage of the water supply, levying exorbitant tolls upon convoy vehicles, deliberate targeting of relief personnel and seizure of supplies at gunpoint<sup>68</sup>) and the perceived inactivity of the military was the subject of strident criticism, nevertheless the demonstrated logistical and relief capability of the Western military establishments enhanced the delivery of emergency relief and averted the humanitarian catastrophe during the winter of 1992-93. Overlapping mandates between the armed convoys and the aid agencies prompted the Head of Civil Affairs for UNPROFOR to remark that “alone, neither UNHCR nor UNPROFOR would have been viable, together they achieved more than could have been predicted”<sup>69</sup>.

Although military resources are State representatives, they have the advantages (*albeit* expensive) of providing security-related functions, technical support, prior organisation, high mobility and specialised training<sup>70</sup>. Evaluated according to international humanitarian law standards, escorts providing a purely protective function are militarily neutral in abstaining from forcible interference and are impartial to the extent that they do not discriminate between the recipients of aid relief.

A recent Symposium on Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping Operations<sup>71</sup> concluded that the coexistence of humanitarian action with the use of force could only be temporarily initiated. Coercive techniques altered the nature of the relief operation beyond the deterrent function and created perceived complicity between aid workers and military forces.

The ICRC “works for a faithful application” of the Geneva Conventions<sup>72</sup> with a view to confidentiality and discretion. On the other hand, peacekeeping forces often have a kaleidoscope of objectives which may include a law and order mandate and the investigation and collation of evidence to be subsequently used in prosecutions under the Geneva Conventions. In addition, military forces act at the behest of directives devolved



*Ensuring the safe delivery of relief supplies.*

downwards from their government's foreign policy machinations, whereas relief agencies react responsively to immediate necessities. It is therefore appropriate for aid agencies to maintain an autonomous humanitarian channel of strictly impartial assistance unencumbered by political and military crosscurrents.

### Conclusion

The legal regime in relation to the provision of collective relief pursuant to the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols depend upon the moral obligation of States not to defeat the underlying spirit and policy objectives of these instruments. Recently, the Security Council has responded by authorising the use of all necessary measures<sup>73</sup> to achieve its humanitarian mandate. In an environment where aid agencies are also likely to be operating, the practical details of cooperation will produce emerging patterns of complementarity within "guidelines of action" such as the rules of engagement and the application of humanitarian law to UN forces.

The principle impediment to an unhindered flow of emergency relief remains the security situation along the so-called "corridors of tranquility". The

solution is a question of perception: whether armed escorts are merely protective measures to give effect to the international community's moral convictions or whether they represent something more sinister. It is this author's firm view that the point of a bayonet can never be incompatible as the protection to be afforded to collective relief. The underlying issue is the soldier's willingness to restrain the use of the former in a demonstrable effort to implement the objectives of the latter.

### NOTES

1. 1949 Geneva Convention I for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field; 1949 Geneva Convention II for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of the Armed Forces at Sea; 1949 Geneva Convention III Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War; 1949 Geneva Convention IV Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Conventions have subsequently been updated by the 1977 Geneva Protocol 1 Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts and 1977 Geneva Protocol 2 Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-international Armed Conflicts. For a compilation of these and other Conventions, see Roberts A. & Guelff R. (Ed), *Documents on the Laws of War*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, Second Edition, 1989 and Schindler D. & Toman J. (Ed), *The Laws of Armed Conflict: A Collection of Conventions, Resolutions and Other Documents*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Netherlands,

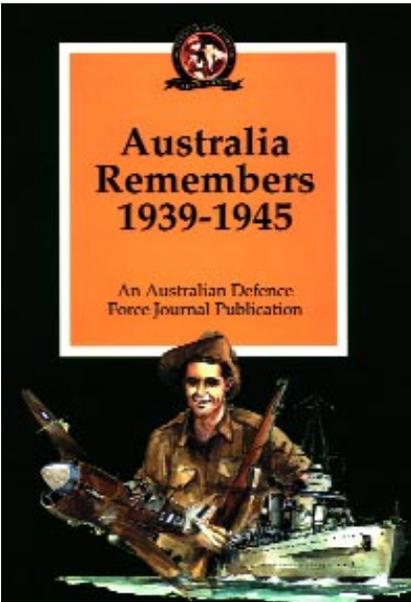
- Third Edition, 1988. For a useful guidebook, see Solf W.A and Roach J.A (Ed), *Index of International Humanitarian Law*, ICRC, Geneva 1987.
2. Article 54(2) Protocol 1. For commentary, see Allen C.A., "Civilian Starvation and Relief During Armed Combat: The Modern Humanitarian Law" (1989) 19(1) *Georgia J of Intl & Comp L* 1.
  3. Articles 69-77 of the Third Convention and Annex II relating to Regulations concerning Collective Relief for Prisoners of War.
  4. Articles 108-112 of the Fourth Convention and Annex II relating to draft Regulations concerning Collective Relief for Civilian Internees.
  5. Pictet J.S. (Ed), *The Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949: Commentary*, ICRC, Geneva, 1958.
  6. Article 9, Articles 46-8 and Article 118 of the Third Convention.
  7. Article 127 Fourth Convention.
  8. Article 49 Fourth Convention.
  9. Pictet (1958) *op cit* at 5 at pp.556-66 interpreting Article 142 of the Fourth Convention.
  10. *Military and Paramilitary Activities in and Against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v United States of America)*, Merits from 1986 ICJ Rep 14 at para 242-3.
  11. Pictet (1958) *op cit* at 5 p.334.
  12. Whilst an Occupying Power cannot remove personnel from the ICRC's activities, it may suspend operations if relief societies take advantage of their privileges to encourage hostile action. Pictet (1958) *op cit* at 5 at p.333 comments that the nature of measures that will be adopted depends on the circumstances but they can only continue for so long as the circumstances persist.
  13. For a comprehensive review of the legal, practical and moral arguments for and against unilateral intervention which are outside the scope of this article, see Benjamin B.M., "Unilateral Humanitarian Intervention: Legalising the Use of Force to Prevent Human Rights Atrocities" (1992-93) 16 *Fordham Intl L J* 120 or Kresock D.M., "Ethnic Cleansing" in the Balkans: The Legal Foundations of Foreign Intervention" (1994) 27 *Cornell Intl L J* 203. Also, Verwey W.D., "Humanitarian Intervention" in Cassese A., *The Current Legal Regulation of the Use of Force* Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Netherlands, 1986 at 57; Roberts A., "Humanitarian War: Military Intervention and Human Rights" (1993) 69(3), *Intl Affairs* 429.
  14. Scheffer D.J., "Toward a Modern Doctrine of Humanitarian Intervention" (1992) 23(2) *Uni of Toledo L R* 253.
  15. Tenson F.R. *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality*, Transnational Publishers Inc, New York 1988 at p.131; Farer T.J., "Humanitarian Intervention: the view from Charlottesville" in Lillich R.B.(Ed), *Humanitarian Intervention and the United Nations*, University Press, Virginia, 1973 p.149 at p.177.
  16. *Nicaragua case op cit* at 10 para 107-8.
  17. For a list of threats to fundamental human rights, see Brownlie I., 'Thoughts on kind-hearted gunmen' in Lillich (1973) *op cit* at 15 p.139 at p.140.
  18. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Empowering the United Nations" (1992/93) 72(5) *Foreign Affairs* 91.
  19. For example, i) the guiding principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality; ii) the affected State has the primary role for coordination; iii) humanitarian organisations working impartially with strictly humanitarian motives may supplement national efforts.
  20. For example, the UN should ensure the prompt and smooth delivery of relief assistance (para 12).
  21. For example, Article VIII of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.
  22. Murphy, Major T.J., "Sanctions and Enforcement of the Humanitarian Law of the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Geneva Protocol 1 of 1977" (1984) 103 *Military L R* 3 at p.64; Bourloyannis C., "The Security Council of the United Nations and the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law" (1992) 20 (2) *Denv J of Intl L & Policy* 335 at pp.339, 343.
  23. UN Doc A/46/185 Art X, (1991). See also Shraga D and Zacklin R., "The Applicability of International Humanitarian Law to United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Conceptual, Legal and Practical Issues" in Palwankar V. (Ed), *Report of the Symposium on Humanitarian Action and Peacekeeping Operations*, held at Geneva 22-24 June 1994, ICRC, Geneva, 1994 at p.44.
  24. Palwankar V., "Applicability of International Humanitarian Law to United Nations Peacekeeping Forces" (1993) 294 *Intl Review of the Red Cross* 227. See also: Sklaire M.R., "The Security Council Blockade of Iraq: Conflicting Obligations under the United Nations Charter and the Fourth Geneva Convention" (1991) 6(4) *The American Uni J of Intl L and Policy* 609.
  25. *Conditions of Application of Humanitarian Rules of Armed Conflict to Hostilities in which United Nations Forces may be Engaged*; Zagreb Session of 3 September 1971 found in Schindler and Toman (1988) *op cit* at 1 at p.903.
  26. Further defined in Article 1 to apply to "all armed units under the control of the United Nations"; *id*.
  27. Established by virtue of GA Resn 48/37. See Shraga and Zacklin supra at 23 at pp.45-7 for a fuller exposition.
  28. Macalister-Smith P., *International Humanitarian Assistance: Disaster Relief Actions in International Law and Organisation*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Netherlands, 1985 at p.38.
  29. For a review of the legal context in which UNHCR operates and the development of the peacekeeping machinery as a tool for protecting the delivery of international relief aid, see Domzalski H., "The Management of Refugees in Armed Conflicts" in Smith H. (Ed), *The Force of Law: International Law and the Land Commander*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, ADFA, Canberra, 1994 p.127.
  30. Ogata S., "Role of Humanitarian Action in Peacekeeping Operations" Keynote Address at the 24th Annual Vienna Seminar, 5 July 1994, pp.25.
  31. *Id* p.7. Per contra Sandoz Y., *Droit ou Devoir D'Ingerence and the Right to Assistance: The Issues Involved* (1992) 288 *Intl Review of the Red Cross* 215 at pp.223-4 takes the view that UN Specialised Agencies are more accurately characterised as humanitarian auxiliaries of armed forces and not as a relief agency as that term is properly understood under the Conventions.
  32. Common Article 9 of the First, Second and Third Conventions and Article 10 of the Fourth for international armed conflicts and common Article 3 in respect of non-international armed conflicts.
  33. SC Res 436, UN SCOR; 2089th Mtg, Oct 6 1978.
  34. SC Res 512, UN SCOR; 2380th Mtg, June 19 1982.
  35. SC Res 686, UN SCOR; 2978th Mtg, March 2 1991.
  36. SC Res 666, UN SCOR; 2939th Mtg, Sep 13 1990.
  37. Sandoz (1992) *op cit* at 31 at p.220-22. Generally, Maurice F. and de Courten J., "Humanitarian Policy and Operational Activities: ICRC Activities for Refugees and Displaced Civilians" (1991) 280 *Intl Review of the Red Cross* 9.
  38. Mr Jean de Courten, Director of Operations, ICRC, "Fulfilment of the humanitarian mandate in the context of peacekeeping operations" in Palwankar (1994) *op cit* at 23 p.32.
  39. *Id*.
  40. *Id* at pp.37-8.

41. In 1991 the ICRC distributed \$125 million in relief supplies in war zones: Sommaruga C., "Assistance to victims of war in international humanitarian law practice" (1992) 289 *Intl Review of the Red Cross* 373 at p.382.
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44. Article 59 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. See also Article 69 of the First Protocol.
45. Pictet (1958) *op cit* at 5 at p.321.
46. *Id* pp.323-4
47. Article 60 Fourth Convention.
48. Per Mr Sandoz, ICRC, Meeting of Committee II, 15 April 1977 (CDDH/II/SR.84;XII,311) found in Levie H.S., *Protection of War Victims: Protocol 1 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions*, A Record of Certain of the Proceedings of the 1974-7 Geneva Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, Oceana Publications, New York, 1981, Volume 4, Civilian Population at pp.10-1.
49. Article 20 Fourth Convention.
50. Draft Report of Working Group B, Committee II, 27 April 1977, (CDDH/II/SR.84;XII,311) in Levie (1981) *op cit* at 48 at pp.13-4, 17-20.
51. *Id* at pp.14-5.
52. Article 21 First Convention; Article 34 Second Convention; Article 9 of the Forth Convention further specifies that protection may cease only after a due warning naming a reasonable time limit has been made and such a warning has remained unheeded.
53. Article 22 First Convention; see also Article 35 Second Convention; Article 19 of the Fourth Convention specifies that the presence of small arms and ammunition shall not be considered as acts harmful to the enemy. Compare also Article 13 of Protocol 1 which further specifies that the presence of members of the armed forces and other combatants in the medical unit is not a bar to protection.
54. Article 9 of the First, Second and Third Convention and Article 10 of the Fourth.
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56. 8 May 1990 in UN Doc A/45/217.
57. Kegley C.W, Jr, "Thinking Ethically about Peacemaking and Peacekeeping", Paper presented at the Conference on "Australia, the United Nations, Peacekeeping and Peacemaking", The Indian Oceans Centre for Peace Studies, University of Western Australia , April 30 to May 1 1995 at p.27.
58. For example, against the former Yugoslavia: SC Res 713, UN SCOR 3009th Mtg, Sept 25 1991.
59. See Bourloyannis (1992) *op cit* at 22 pp.354-5 for consideration of this issue.
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61. Wilson, Brigadier J.B., "Observations on Peacekeeping and Peacemaking in the former Yugoslavia" in Smith H. (Ed), *International Peacekeeping: Building on the Cambodian Experience*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, ADFA, Canberra, 1994 at 187 at p.191.
62. Ord III, Lieutenant General R.L., "Rules of Engagement: A Template for Interoperability" in Smith (1994) *op cit* at 61 p.205 at p.209.
63. Patrngoc J, "Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: Confluence or Conflict? Commentary" 9 *Aust Yearbook of International Law* 109 at 111.
64. Waddell Major J.G., "Legal Aspects of UN Peacekeeping" in Smith (1994) *op cit* at 61.
65. Scheffer (1992) *op cit* at 14 at pp.280-1.
66. Newman F.C., "Non-military Intervention by International and Regional Organisations in Regional Conflicts" (1983) Supplement 13 *Georgia J of Intl & Comp L* 341.
67. Scheffer (1994) *op cit* at 14 at p.288. "Today, nobody should be allowed to use outdated interpretations of weighty documents as protective walls behind which human rights can be systematically and massively violated with total impunity": Australian Chancellor Franz Vronitzky quoted at p.285. In a similar vein, see Fuchs P., "Emergency Coordination: A problem of humanitarian agencies or rather of politicians and generals?" (1995) 304 *Intl Review of the Red Cross* 87.
68. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees: the Challenge of Protection* , UNHCR, Penguin Books, 1993 at p.80.
69. Vieira de Mello S., "Humanitarian and Military Interface in Peacekeeping: Cambodia and Bosnia-Herzegovina: A Comparative Overview" in Palwankar (1994) *op cit* at 23 p.21 at p.23. Reference should be made to Guerasseu V. and Goldberg Brig Gen T., "Lessons of UNPROFOR: Discussion Paper", Department of Humanitarian Affairs, Round Table on Military Support for Humanitarian Operations, Geneva, 27-8 February 1995.
70. Gardenker L. and Weiss T.G., "Humanitarian Emergencies and Military Help: Some Conceptual Observations" (1988) 13(2) *Disasters* 118 at pp.126-9. For a fuller exposition of the nature of the military resources available, see Walker P., "Foreign Military Resources for Disaster Relief: An NGO Perspective" (1991) 16(2) *Disasters* 152 at p.154.
71. Palwankar (1994) *op cit* at 23.
72. Statute of the International Red Cross Article 6(4).
73. For example, SC Res 794 (1992) for UNITAF in Somalia, SC Res 836 (1993) for UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina and SC 940 (1994) for Haiti.

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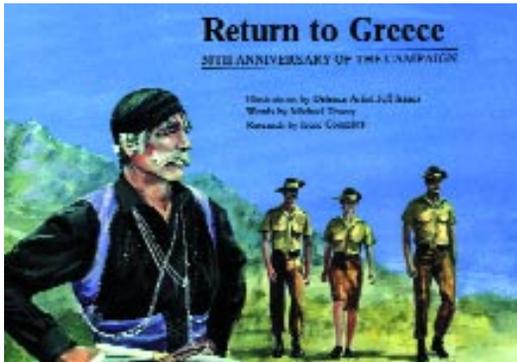
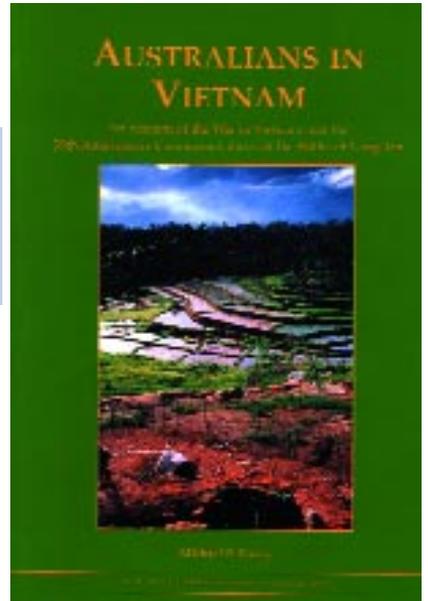


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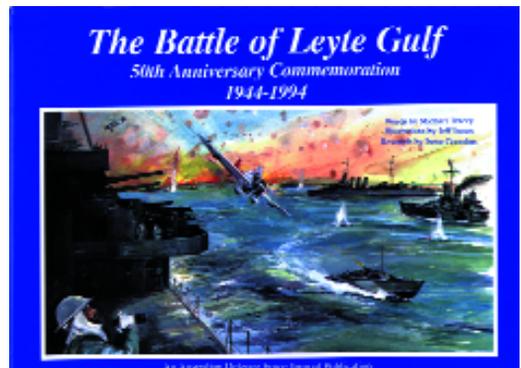


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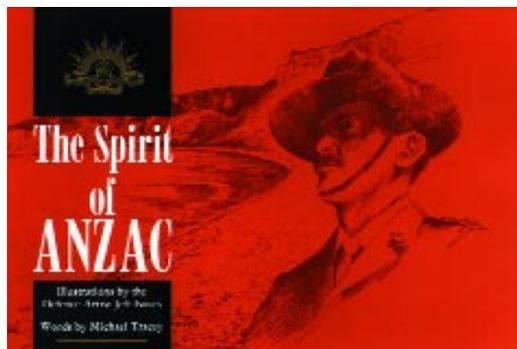
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# The Significance of Family Factors in the Decision to Leave the Defence Force – A Conflict of Commitments

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By Lieutenant Colonel T.P. Hodge, RFD

## Introduction

Employee turnover can be costly for any organisation. Every time someone quits, a replacement must be recruited, trained and given time on the job to gain experience. In the meantime, the consequences of having lost valued skills and knowledge may be felt in a reduction of the organisation's effectiveness, loss of custom and diminished staff morale and commitment.

## The Costs of Turnover

For the defence forces, the costs are greater. Firstly, unlike civilian employers, the defence forces in most cases cannot recruit someone directly into the vacant position. The vacancy will be filled on transfer or promotion from within, with subsequent backfilling down to recruit level and with some of these movements involving the relocation of members and their families. The time lag in getting an effective member in place can lead to serious manpower deficits which diminish the capacity of the defence forces to meet their operational goals<sup>1</sup>.

Secondly, there is the higher *per capita* cost of this replacement process. The selection, recruitment and training of military aircrew, for instance, is expensive and is an investment that the defence forces have at times found necessary to protect by the use of incentives to retain these personnel. Even the cost of training and maintaining the infantry soldier at the required level of proficiency is likely to be well in excess of costs typically borne by a civilian employer in the induction and training of new employees. Defence force personnel policy must aim to retain members at least until there has been sufficient return on the cost of their training.

Thirdly, turnover is a problem for the defence forces because of an increasing difficulty in competing for suitable recruits. As the 1988 "Cross

Committee" inquiry into personnel wastage in Australian Defence Force noted<sup>2</sup>, Defence planners must acknowledge demographic and social changes which are seeing:

- a decline in numbers in the critical 15-24 years age group
- an increasing level of expectation and discernment among a more highly educated population, and
- an apparently increasing reluctance of younger people entering the ADF to commit to a long-term career.

No longer is it sufficient to appeal to patriotism, adventure and three square meals a day to recruit and retain volunteers for the defence forces. Serving members are no longer prepared to accept lower standards of housing, working conditions and remuneration than their civilian counterparts<sup>3</sup>. Such are the changing attitudes of young Australians towards the long-term vocational commitment and expectations regarding employment that the ADF has been warned it faces considerable challenge in attracting and retaining the right people to serve<sup>4</sup> and the prospect of high separation rates in the future<sup>5</sup>.

## Separation Rates

This is not to say that turnover of defence force personnel is undesirable or unwelcome. There are benefits for any organisation in being able to displace poor performers, create promotion opportunities and bring in people with enthusiasm and new ideas<sup>6</sup>. However, this raises the question of whether there is an ideal or desirable wastage rate for the defence forces and what that rate may be. The Department of Defence some time ago concluded that the notion of a desirable separation rate for the ADF was unrealistic, given the differences between the single Services and, within each Service, between specialist employment categories<sup>7</sup>. A definitive "desirable" or "ideal" ADF separation rate was, it felt, too simplistic and of little value to detailed workforce planning. This did not deter the Cross Committee<sup>8</sup> from adopting the notion of a "manageable wastage rate" which would:

- promote a steady flow-through of personnel to keep the defence forces fit, energetic and enthusiastic;
- give some predictability of demands upon recruitment and training; and
- maintain force capabilities.

In recent years, separation rates have been low<sup>9</sup>. This has been attributed, at least in part, to Australia's economic recession and high unemployment<sup>10</sup>. While, appropriately, the ADF has in the meantime been contemplating and planning for the impact of the changes occurring in Australian society, there has not been the immediate problem of high turnover to contend with. However, separation rates are again expected to rise with the anticipated economic recovery, and, inevitably, focus will again shift to what can be done in the short term to retain defence force members. It therefore remains important to understand the factors that contribute to a member's decision to leave the defence force, and to continue to address these factors.

What follows looks firstly at the nature of defence force service, how the service may be changing, and how these changes may influence recruitment and retention. We then take a closer look at one group of factors, the so-called "family factors", their essential conflict with defence force interests, and the effect of this conflict on the member's commitment to his<sup>11</sup> military career.

### The Special Nature of Defence Force Service

Much has been said about the unique or special nature of military service. As the *Glenn Review* noted<sup>12</sup>, those who join the Services make a professional commitment quite unlike any other, to:

- accept the risk of serious injury or death in defence of the country;
- train for the application of extreme violence;
- accept lawful direction without equivocation; and
- forgo any right to withdraw labour or refuse a task.

This "profession of arms" must also endure arduous physical conditions and disruption of family life. There are, as the *Glenn Review* suggests, "many more congenial and less hazardous occupations."<sup>13</sup>

Service in the armed forces involves more than just an occupational choice. What differentiates the military from civilian occupations is the requirement to commit to a lifestyle that permeates almost every aspect of the life of the member<sup>14</sup>, including his family life. But it is not a commitment which is necessarily understood or appreciated by the

community it serves, particularly in peacetime when a nation not under immediate or foreseeable threat may question the need for, and cost of, maintaining the "custodians of military capability."<sup>15</sup> While "In war, the special nature of military service is ostensible to all"<sup>16</sup>, "In peacetime the rigours and demands of military service are much less obvious to the community at large."<sup>17</sup>

If the prolonged period of peace and freedom from threats has brought changes in the community's attitude toward the military, it has also brought change within the military. The essence of this change has been what Moskos describes as a movement away from the view of the military as an "institution" whose members have surrendered self-interest to a higher good and who regard themselves as different and separate from broader society, to an "occupational" view which sees the military as just another job in the market place and in which self-interest is the priority.<sup>18</sup> Under the traditional military institution, the member's primary affiliation was with the military, and he felt bound to others by the common cause and conditions under which they all served. In an occupational military, members identified with others who did the same sort of work<sup>19</sup> and had no particular commitment or loyalty to any employer.

If, indeed, the military has been moving toward an occupational format in the 20 or so years since Moskos suggested such a trend, one would expect that by now, it ought to be reflected in surveys of members' motivation for joining the defence force and in retention/attrition research. Certainly no such trend is reflected in "factors influencing the decision to join" during the five year period covered in the longitudinal survey research of Australian Defence Force Academy cadets reported by Moss<sup>20</sup>, who noted that institutional model indicators, such as comradeship and patriotism, were scoring equally highly with the occupational model indicators of steady job and pay.

A similar mix of institutional and occupational factors has commonly been reflected in exit and attitude/opinion surveys of ADF personnel. Family, mobility, and jobs have been identified as important factors influencing Army officers' decision to leave.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, pay and conditions of service have been found to be a strong influence on Army Other Ranks' decision to stay or leave.<sup>22</sup> Bergin suggests that those who join the ADF for institutional reasons are more likely to serve longer in the military than those who join for other reasons but, significantly, only "other things being equal".<sup>23</sup>



### *Balancing Military and Family Needs*

In its second submission to the Cross Committee, the Department of Defence suggested that separation from the ADF was influenced by a range of internal and external factors, including demographic, social, economic, industrial, and educational trends.<sup>24</sup> It went on to list a number of perceptions identified through Service surveys as influencing separation, including issues such as housing, career management, salaries, conditions of service, and organisational satisfaction. For the serving member, the process of deciding to voluntarily leave the defence forces is complex and likely to be influenced by feelings of:

- job (dis)satisfaction;
- organisational commitment;
- future intentions;
- the perception of how easy it may be to attain civilian employment and, ultimately;
- the strength of the desire to leave the service.<sup>25</sup>

Likely to be a significant influence for most in this process are the so-called *family factors* – those issues such as housing, children’s education, child care, spouse employment, mobility, separation, and support services. We now turn to a consideration of the influence of these factors in the decision to leave the defence force.

#### **The Significance of Family Factors in the Decision to Leave**

As the *Cross Report* noted, “It is a truism that the Australian Defence Force recruits soldiers and retains families.”<sup>26</sup> While relative to the civilian workforce, the ADF remains young (with 49% of members between 20-29 years of age), over half (58%) are in either a *de jure* or *de facto* marital relationship, and 35% are living with one or more children.<sup>27</sup> While most would be single at the time they join, a partner and, in most cases, children are acquired at some stage of the member’s military career. This inevitably brings about some changes to their motivation and some reordering of priorities. The question is, what is the nature of these changes and how do they affect the member’s commitment to the defence force?

That family factors have a significant influence on a member’s commitment is not questioned. A service family that is dissatisfied with the quality of life the defence force provide will exert pressure for the member to separate.<sup>28</sup> The way his family is treated may be the factor which determines whether he will stay or leave. Traditionally, the military has preferred

single recruits and has in the past, in asserting what it sees as its prior claim on the member, imposed barriers or disincentives to his marriage.<sup>29</sup> There has also been the traditional view of “the service family” as an appendage of the member, part of his kit<sup>30</sup> and something that supported and followed him without question wherever he was posted and whatever he was asked to do. While not extinct, such traditional views no longer prevail, not only because families have become more assertive for improvements to their quality of life, but also because the military is now aware of the importance of the family’s influence on a member’s service intentions. It is now acknowledged that the family occupies a key position on the boundary between the military system and the wider community, and will therefore play a decisive role in the member’s decision to stay in uniform or become a civilian. If the military does not assist the member to balance work and family responsibilities, and if instead there is conflict between the military and the family, it is inevitable that the family will eventually win and the member will separate.<sup>31</sup>

### Problems Experienced by the Family

How a member feels about his military career is influenced by different patterns of factors – personal, career/organisational, and family – at different stages of his career. But there is generally a growing pressure within the family which will increasingly cause conflict between the member’s career and family needs.<sup>32</sup> The new service wife will initially have the problem of adjusting to the military culture and its demands. Then comes the first posting as a married couple, not only separating her from her own family and friends but placing her in an unfamiliar location with little support or assistance to assimilate at a time also, when her husband may be absent under training for his new posting, or on deployment. Later, when children are born, the frequent and lengthy absences of her husband effectively imposes single parenthood responsibilities and disrupts marital and filial relationships, not to mention her own social relationships and career/employment opportunities. As the children reach school age, postings may be resented because of the disruption to the children’s education, particularly during the final years of secondary schooling. Throughout this period is the uncertainty of the standard of accommodation that may be allocated and the difficulties of yet another removal with its inevitable losses and breakages.

When Downes speaks of the additional clauses in the marriage pact for military wives to those contained in the civilian version<sup>33</sup>, she refers to the expectation that the wife will endure all of these problems, continue to dutifully support her husband in his military career, and continue to tolerate the intrusions and demands placed on her and her family by her husband’s employer. However, there is increasing indication that they are no longer willing to do so. Social changes, such as the increasing level of participation of women in education and in the workforce, and the predominance of the two-income family, have impacted upon the military family and have changed its priorities and expectations. The member is no longer prepared to automatically put the demands of his job above his family.<sup>34</sup> Husbands wanting to provide their families a better quality of life are being supported to this end by wives who are less willing to accept subordinate roles and who are demanding career opportunities for themselves.<sup>35</sup>

While the ADF has implemented a range of initiatives to address service lifestyle issues, such as housing, child care, support services, mobility and dislocation<sup>36</sup>, the military remains essentially institutional in character and in its view of the family as an integral part of the military community. As Smith notes, there are sound military reasons why the serviceman must be mobile and, for this reason, arrange his family affairs for the good of the military. And, however else any trend toward an occupational format may change the relationship between the military and its members, when the time comes for the member to put his life on the line he will be far more prepared to do it for his country than for his job.

### A Conflict of Commitments

In its own interests as well as those of its members, the military will undoubtedly continue to address service-related family problems. However, because of the military’s need to maintain core traditional institutional values<sup>37</sup>, there will also continue to be a conflict between the military and the military family which the member will experience as a conflict of commitments. Segal refers to this as a conflict between two “greedy” institutions, both of which demand the exclusive and undivided loyalty of the serving member.<sup>38</sup> While the military has always been “greedy” in this sense, the family has become so as a consequence of social changes.

The particular problem that Segal predicts for the serviceman is what follows as wives resist the

greediness of the family to participate in the workforce. This not only increases the potential for conflict between partners but also between the family and the military.<sup>39</sup>

Jans' study of the process of career adjustment among ADF officers speaks of a similar ongoing conflict of career-family priorities which changes over the officer's career cycle.<sup>40</sup> Officers tended to put their careers ahead of their families when:

- their wives did not have a strong career orientation
- they felt their career prospects were good, and
- they had strong military values.<sup>41</sup>

In the early career stage, an officer's priorities were with the military but at later stages career and family priorities became more evenly balanced, particularly as his children reached school age. Similarly, Bollen found that among Australian Army Other Ranks the effect of moving home on children's education and the desire to stay in one place became increasingly important from six years service onwards and most important after 15 or more years service.<sup>42</sup> The increasing importance of family factors with length of service has also been reported in overseas research.<sup>43</sup>

Jans offers the concept of a "force field" to describe opposing career development and family factors which are, for most service families and most of the time, in equilibrium.<sup>44</sup> But while there may not be perpetual conflict, conflict was more likely at later stages of the member's career when, for the children's education and the wife's career development, the family wanted more geographic stability. It was at this point that the member really began to experience the conflict of commitments. His career depended on his mobility but his family wanted stability. Unless he was at what Jans refers to as the "Canberra" stage of his career where most of his career paths took him to the Department of Defence or unless he was posted to a location within reasonable commuting distance (but possibly still involving at least weekly periods of separation), he may, depending on how he was feeling about his military career and how he viewed his prospects outside the service, decide at that point to put his family priorities ahead of his career and to separate.

Inevitably, the consequences of such conflict for the member will be stress. He faces sanctions and stigma if he fails to meet the military's requirements of him, and his family need him as a husband/father and wage earner. As Spurgeon suggests, he may try to "stand with one foot in both camps" or to "place barriers between the two and protect himself from one or the other." Those are at least responses. A

problem really arises when the member cannot resolve his conflict.<sup>45</sup>

### Enlisting the Family as an Ally

As noted earlier, the ADF accepts that it has an obligation to redress service-related family disadvantages, not only to meet commitments under international convention and to conform with industrial and anti-discrimination legislation but also because it recognises the link between satisfaction of service family needs and ADF recruitment, retention, readiness, performance and morale.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, it is aware that there are dividends for the military in taking such initiatives. As Segal notes, "The more the military's actions make service members and their families truly hear and believe the message that the "military takes care of its own," the less will be the conflict between the two greedy institutions..."<sup>47</sup> Frowen says much the same thing, suggesting that military assistance for families increases the commitment of both family and service member to the organisation, enabling the military to effectively "enlist the family as an ally, thus increasing its influence over the service member."<sup>48</sup> According to Frowen, by providing a supportive and satisfying family environment, the military reaps the dividends of its members":

- greater satisfaction with service life (by relieving the stressful demands on families and hence on members),
- improved retention (there being strong evidence that separation decisions are made by the family rather than by the member alone),
- family adaptation (again recognising the influence the family has on the member's career motivation), and
- mission readiness (the evidence being that a member will perform his job better at individual and unit level where he is confident his family can manage in his absence and has support if they need it).<sup>49</sup>

### Conclusion

Just as the decision to join the military is an "aggregation of many individual decisions, random and otherwise, moderated by the selection process,"<sup>50</sup> the decision to leave is the response of an individual at a particular time to a coincidence of particular

influences, whether these influences be called institutional and occupational, extrinsic and intrinsic, “push” and “pull”, family and military. But why someone joins or leaves are not the only important questions. What we also need to know is what happens in between. What is the process that changes the enthusiastic, idealistic and committed recruit to the frustrated and dissatisfied time-server waiting for the first opportunity to get out?

### Directions for Research

We have seen that the influence of family factors on a member’s career commitment varies over the member’s family life cycle and with changing family structure<sup>51</sup>, and that it becomes more important with increasing years of service. The married member must constantly balance military and family needs, and increasingly the two become contradictory.<sup>52</sup> This has been explained in terms of the changing role and expectations of the family, and how these changes are accommodated by the military which is itself purportedly undergoing a gradual yet fundamental shift in its values and in the way it treats its members. But in the main, this research has not tended to consider the member as a variable, overlooking what influence the member himself might have in the process. If research is suggesting that people tend to join the military as a form of commitment and service<sup>53</sup> – that is, for institutional reasons – what do we know about what happens to this commitment? Is it possible that as the military shifts towards an occupational format, a similar shift from institutional to occupational values and motivation also occurs within the individual as his service continues? After all, how long can it reasonably or realistically be expected that a member will continue to submit personal interest to the higher good, particularly once that member also acquires responsibility for a family? Inevitably and for many reasons there will be a diminution of his institutional commitment, and as the intrinsic appeal of defence force service wanes, extrinsic considerations will gain greater sway. He may have joined an institution but he is leaving an occupation. The member may be able to rationalise this commitment in terms of “having done my bit” but essentially the situation is that the military no longer has sufficient “pull” to retain him.

While one could perhaps suggest that the reported low level of interest of separating Australian Regular Army personnel in transferring to the Army Reserve<sup>54</sup> is indicative of this lost commitment, such research is

essentially yet to be done. A proper understanding of the *process* of motivational changes that occur in the individual over the period of his service requires longitudinal research of the nature initiated at ADFA for officer cadets.

### An Extra Duty of Care

It was mentioned at the outset that the defence forces are finding it increasingly difficult in a changing employment market and with the changing nature of employee motivation to attract sufficient young people prepared to commit themselves on a long-term basis.<sup>55</sup> Those it manages to recruit, it will want to retain but it will only succeed in this for as long as it continues to support the member and his subsequently acquired family. In so much that defence force service imposes more than normal stresses on family life, the defence forces will continue to carry a more than normal duty of care to the service family.

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10. Weisse, U.J.A., *op cit*, June 1994, p.1.
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# Psyops Beyond 2000: Coordinating the Message

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By Corporal C. A. Jamieson, Aust Int.

*“The supreme act of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting ...”*

– Sun Tzu<sup>1</sup>

*“... psychological warfare may do more harm than good unless it is strictly coordinated with diplomatic and military activity”.*

– R. Crossman, *British WWII Psyops Specialist*<sup>2</sup>

## Psyops Re-emerges

In 1989 the *Australian Defence Force Journal* published an article entitled *Psychological Operations: Victoria per Mentem*<sup>3</sup> in which the author argued the need for the Australian Army to maintain a psychological operations (psyops) capability. At that time the Army’s psyops capability had been allowed to run down, with no dedicated psyops units or training courses in existence. Any real psyops capability was left in the hands of enthusiasts. Since that article was published the Army has raised two tactical psyops (tac psyops) platoons, one each for the First and Second Divisions, and the School of Military Intelligence now conducts a two-module psyops course annually.

Under guidelines proposed for restructuring the Army there is provision for a psyops team per task force to conduct tac psyops. These teams would probably have a number of loudspeaker assets and a limited print capability that will be used to support the task force commander’s mission. However, under the restructure there appears to be no provision for strategic or operational level psyops and no dedicated staff to undertake staff work or to provide the necessary coordination of the psyops mission and themes. Moreover, there appears to be no mechanism to coordinate psyops, public relations and civil affairs activities to ensure that no contradictory messages concerning the Army’s (and ultimately the Government’s) aims are received by friendly, neutral or hostile audiences. The aim of this article is to show that there is a need for a psyops unit at joint command level to coordinate psyops activities and to provide strategic and operational psyops guidance and support.

## Psyops at all Levels

Psyops is more than the art of calling out for the enemy to surrender before it is too late or showering them with leaflets depicting how well Australians treat POWs. Psyops is the military application of advertising and marketing that gets the commander’s messages to the various target audiences in order to change attitudes and behaviour, often whilst competing with conflicting messages sent by the international media or enemy psyops. Psyops should be conducted at all levels to ensure that everybody understands the same thing, *i.e.* what is happening and what they should (and should not) do.

In order for psyops to be effective it should contain four essential elements. The psyops product should be simple, truthful, well researched and not contradict messages originating from the same sponsor/source. A simple, true and believable message is much more likely to be acted upon than an avalanche of rhetoric and empty threats. In order for this to be maintained across a theatre of operations there needs to be coordination of psyops activities and it is Australian policy that psyops should be coordinated at the highest level practicable<sup>4</sup>.

## Coordination of Psyops

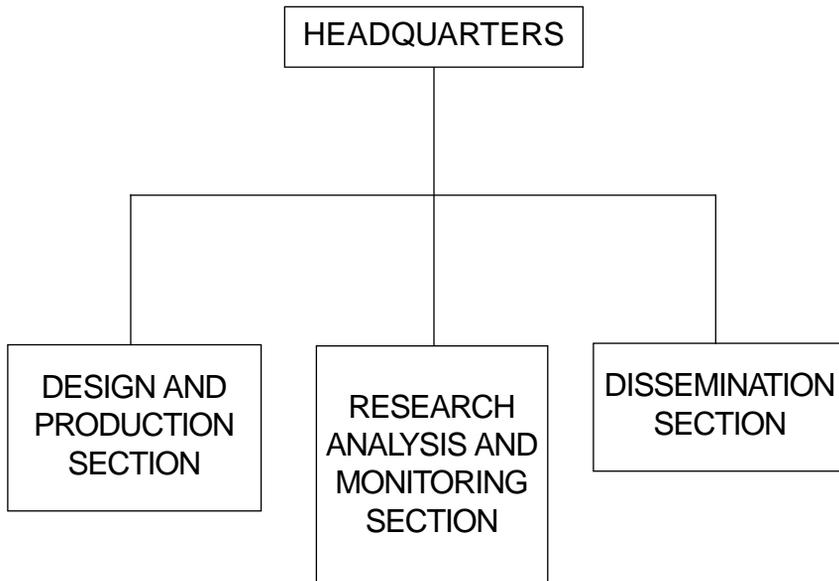
Currently there is no organised psyops structure above the tactical level. Therefore it is suggested that a Joint Psyops Unit (JPU) be formed. The JPU would provide the central campaign coordination, conduct centralised research gathering, and formulate psyops policy for the ADF. It would advise the CDF and component commanders on strategic and operational psyops and undertake the necessary campaign staffwork. It would design strategic and operational-level psyops items, provide design support for tac psyops teams and coordinate the common psyops themes and symbols to be used. It would not be the purpose of the JPU to over-ride the task force commander’s psyops tasking nor to dictate to him how he may use his psyops assets. The JPU would be there to ensure that all psyops products and messages complement each other theatre wide.

The JPU would provide a greater range of pysops items of a higher quality and/or quantity to assist the tac psyops teams. Tac psyops is normally restricted to loudspeaker operations and leaflet/poster production of limited quality, quantity and colour using in-house print equipment. The JPU would assist tac psyops teams by providing bulk quantities of higher-quality printed material. The JPU would also produce printed products (using any suitable surface such as clothing, stickers or novelty items in addition to leaflets and posters), audio products (such as radio broadcasts) and audio-visual products (such as video, using in-house or out-sourced production facilities) for strategic and operational level psyops. The JPU would also coordinate the delivery of strategic and operational psyops products.

The JPU could be created from the existing 2nd Division Intelligence Company Psyops Platoon, using its allocated reserve manpower of 12 soldiers as the basis for the part-time component of the new unit. Specialists from other corps (either full or part-time) such as a draftsman, journalist, clerk, psychiatrists, education officers, video and print-production personnel would be posted to the unit as well as representatives from the Navy and Air Force. The unit would consist of about 24 people, 50 per cent part-time and 50 per cent full-time. An example of the proposed unit appears at Figure 1.

**Communication Forum**

The JPU would also provide the forum for the co-ordination of psyops, public relations and civil affairs. This would allow each of these service providers to know what the other is doing and how they can help each other. It should be made clear that this is not an excuse to create a mammoth propaganda machine that would see public relations and civil affairs become an extension of psyops. There are clear delimitations between the three areas and these should be maintained. However, it can be argued that all three of these areas are inter-related, in that the effects of any one can have a flow-on effect to the other two. For example, in 1994 the Australian Medical Support Force sent to Rwanda was tasked to provide health support for the UN peacekeeping forces, with spare capacity being used to assist the Rwandan people and some Non-Government Organisations<sup>5</sup>. The initial civil affairs aspect of this assistance to the Rwandan people brought much local good-will, whilst the flow-on public relations aspect provided a positive image of the ADF to the Australian people. Furthermore, these actions had a favourable strategic psychological impact on both the countries within the region and those with troops on UN service there.



**Figure 1.** Organisation of the proposed Joint Psyops Unit

## The Malayan Lesson

The importance of a fully coordinated psyops campaign was clearly illustrated during the Malayan Emergency of 1948-60. During this campaign the successful coordination of psyops objectives with national military and civilian activities brought about the demise of the communist-inspired Malaya Races Liberation Army (MRLA).

Initially the psyops effort against the MRLA was driven by revenge, as many friends and relatives of officials and planters had been murdered by the communists<sup>6</sup>. The police and military were encouraged to kill the insurgents or, if possible, capture them for later trial and execution. Understandably this only stiffened the resolve of the terrorists as it gave them no alternative but to fight. This situation was also exploited by the communist leadership who used photos of dead MRLA members to inspire the rank and file to avenge these deaths<sup>7</sup>.

In September 1950 Hugh Carleton Greene<sup>8</sup> was appointed Director of Emergency Information Services – Malaya. Greene is credited with introducing the surrender and rewards policy which was crucial to the success of the campaign. The policy allowed for insurgents to voluntarily surrender themselves to the security forces and be absolved from prosecution regardless of their crimes. Rewards for information given by the public had been in place since the beginning of the emergency, but Greene insisted that special rewards be offered to named insurgents for helping other insurgents to escape the MRLA<sup>9</sup>.

At first there was great opposition to the policy, but gradually it gained acceptance as officials came to understand the psychological impact of the policy. The surrender and rewards policy provided a way out for disenchanted communists. This policy, combined with an effective food denial campaign and aggressive patrolling, reduced the communists to a rabble more concerned with survival than with revolution.

Another strategic/operational psyops tool is terminology. In 1952, despite much political opposition, the Psywar Section<sup>10</sup> persuaded the authorities to refer to the MRLA as the Communist Terrorist Organisation (CTO). In one move the communists had gone from being a “Liberation Army” to being a terrorist organisation, with all the associated imagery and horror that the word “terrorist” conjures up in people. Also, the conflict was always referred to as an emergency, with martial

law never being declared. The military acted in support of the police who retained primacy for counter-terrorist activities. Therefore the terrorists were never given the legitimacy of being an army at war. Instead the terrorists were outlaws fighting the police (who were ably assisted by the military).

The final ingredient for success was the establishment of joint civilian and military command with a unified purpose and common goals<sup>11</sup>. By giving clear psychological direction to the emergency the British were able to seize and hold the moral high ground which kept the communists from gaining large-scale support.

This coordination of psychological aims and goals serves as a reminder today that psychological coordination must occur at the highest levels, for it is often the psychological dimension of a campaign that decides how all other activities will follow. It is very unlikely that the level of psychological success in Malaya could have been achieved if psyops had been organised at the tactical level alone. Without a unified psychological approach, military victories at the tactical level could be squandered because of the lack of support or understanding at the strategic and operational level by the population we seek to serve.

## A Failure to Coordinate

The dangers of failing to coordinate psyops were made all too clear in Somalia following the commencement of the second UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II). During the operation US and UN officials never fully coordinated their “nation-building” activities<sup>12</sup> which resulted in a breakdown in communication between the UN and the US forces. Elements from the US 4th Psyop Group were tasked with producing and distributing psyops material in support of the operation, and there came a point where US officials decided that the actions of warlord General Mohamed Farah Aideed could no longer be tolerated. The psyops elements were then tasked to carry out “character assassination” of Aideed in their psyops products.

The problem was that at that time the UN was privately still negotiating with Aideed, and these contradicting activities only served to undermine each other. Later, US President Bill Clinton, whilst meeting with the families of the US Rangers killed in the disastrous firefight against Aideed’s forces in October 1993, said that he was surprised that the UN was still pursuing Aideed<sup>13</sup>. This constant inability of the US and the UN to coordinate their activities or to

implement a clear process for reconciliation in Somalia prompted the Somali people to view the UN and US actions as hostile.<sup>14</sup> The moral high ground had been lost, and with it the support of the Somali people.

### Conclusion

This article has argued for the creation of a Joint Psyops Unit within the ADF that would provide the necessary psyops guidance and coordination that is required by doctrine but has been missing to date. The proposed restructure of the Army has recognised the need for psyops, but has given priority to tactical psyops over strategic and operational psyops. Thus we are potentially left with the tail that wags the dog, and if this situation is not corrected psyops could devolve into a farce.

Australian Army psyops have come a long way in the last seven years. Thanks to much research, justification, planning and implementation we now have two tac psyops platoons that may be replaced by a greater number of smaller tac psyops teams. The proposed allocation of psyops teams to each task force would be more beneficial than the existing system of having a tac psyops platoon per division because the task force commander would have an effective behavioural-modification tool at his disposal that could quickly be brought to hand. However, the tac psyops teams need direction, support and coordination, hence the need for the JPU.

The ADF needs to remember that psyops is a complete weapon system, not a collection of

weapons. Without higher control psyops could contradict itself and would run the risk of causing more harm than good. By completing the structure with a Joint Psyops Unit the ADF would complete the weapon that, in the eyes of Sun Tzu, is the acme of military achievement.

### NOTES

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# Manoeuvre from the Sea – The Forgotten Force Multiplier

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By Lieutenant Commander John P. Robinson, RAN

*“...the goal of Manoeuvre Warfare is to incapacitate an enemy: disrupting his fighting system (systemic disruption) by concentrating superior force against that element of his fighting system most likely to cause incapacitation”*

*“...Maritime combat power can be projected ashore using manoeuvre from the sea through organic attack aircraft, submarine and surface launched attack missiles, Naval Gunfire Support (NGS), amphibious forces and special forces”*

*“...The ground combat function of manoeuvre seeks a position of advantage with respect to the enemy from which force can be threatened or applied. An important role of maritime power projection forces, particularly amphibious forces, is to provide manoeuvre from the sea in this sense”*

– **BR 1806 The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine**

## Introduction

*“...Manoeuvre Warfare theory is the intelligent use of force and is a logical development of the Principles of War, particularly the principles of surprise, flexibility, concentration of force and economy of effort... Maritime forces have the combination of mobility, firepower, flexibility and responsive Command and Control systems that are ideal for Manoeuvre Warfare”*

In this regard Manoeuvre from the sea provides a Commander with a versatile and flexible capability that is responsive to changing requirements ashore. Whilst the deployment to and indeed into an Area of Operations (AO), maybe undertaken by land, sea or air, or by any combination, the ability to conduct Manoeuvre operations within an AO from seaward, significantly increases the Commander's range of options. Of primary importance, is the enhanced level of flexibility that operating from seaward confers. In particular it enables the Commander to respond in a measured and decisive manner, capitalising on the characteristics of *mobility, firepower, flexibility and*

*responsive Command and Control systems* that are inherent to Maritime Forces.

In his address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre on 3 May 1996 the Minister for Defence, The Hon Ian McLachlan, AO MP stated that:

*“Australia's defence does not begin at our coastline. On the contrary, we cannot be secure if the region is unstable. Defence is making a growing contribution to our wider regional security aims. One of the issues we need to examine is how far that particular role can and should be taken.. Australia cannot be adequately defended only by guarding our territory and by merely looking on at the changes sweeping through Asia.”* He went on to say *“as an island country Australia needs to give special emphasis on sea and air forces. We will work to improve our capacity to locate and respond to potential aggressors in our maritime surrounds. In terms of land forces, I recognise a need to increase the flexibility and deployability of highly capable Army elements.”*

These statements, which have been consistently reiterated since then, provide an insight into the Minister's perception of the way Australia's Defence capability may be revamped. It is also an acknowledgement of the need to develop an ADF capability that is responsive and effective to a diverse range of possible scenarios within the region. These would appear to range from threats to continental Australia and it's offshore territories, to providing assistance and support to countries within the region. Paul Dibb, in a more recent article in the *Weekend Australian*, entitled *“Rethinking our Defence”* stated that:

*“In my view, the main arguments in favour of change to our defence policy are strategic. Since the 1994 Defence White Paper was issued by the previous government, the strategic outlook in the Asia-Pacific region has become more uncertain,”* and that *“a slide in the regional order in the next decade would present Australia with a dangerous prospect.”*

In noting that whilst the Government's Defence priority continued to be to the defence of Australia, an examination of our Strategic circumstances might result in the acquisition of *“regional add-ons”* to the force structure<sup>2</sup>.

Regardless of what might comprise “regional add-ons,” it will be vital for the credibility of the ADF in the region, that the ADF is able to respond quickly and robustly to any situation. The ADF must therefore aim to become multi-functional and with finite resources, must ensure that these resources are optimised and that every capability is maximised as a force multiplier. A key force multiplier is the conduct of *Manoeuvre Warfare*. As an “island country”, a key component of *Manoeuvre Warfare* is *Manoeuvre from the Sea*. Whilst the ADF has in recent years developed a limited amphibious capability, it’s full potential as a significant Force Multiplier in the context of *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, has yet to be realised. The need to capitalise on the inherent versatility of Amphibious Warfare as part of *Manoeuvre from the Sea* was identified in an abstract of the following paper from the Naval War College, Newport;

*“Today’s amphibious doctrine faces serious challenges from modern technology and an increasingly lethal battlefield. A possible solution to the problems thus created rests in the newly emerging concepts of maneuver warfare. Based on the principles of rapid reaction to shifting situations and decentralised control, maneuver warfare requires new tactics and techniques for amphibious landings. The new methods must be applied in an operational context, where naval and land forces are closely integrated. This integration demands new command relationships based on the operational situation, not parochial interests delineated by sea and land. While maneuver warfare will require some fundamental changes in the Navy and Marine Corps approach to landing operations, it will significantly enhance the flexibility and devastating impact that are hallmarks of amphibious warfare”.*<sup>3</sup>

In a more recent article entitled *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, General Charles C. Krulac, Commandant General, United States Marine Corps stated that:

*“Our ability to influence events in such a fluid and dynamic world rests on the capabilities we accrue in our armed forces. We must examine our organisations, our training, our equipment, and our institutional attitudes and set a deliberate course to cultivate the capabilities we will need tomorrow. Fundamentally, we must alter the way we view warfare. We must leap forward in our thinking, leap ahead organizationally, and leap over generations of accumulated hardware. In the 21st century, the Navy – Marine Corps team must field a more versatile, capable, and*

*responsive naval power-projection capability. Uncertainty and the tyranny of distance will require the United States to field naval expeditionary forces that can execute missions ranging from humanitarian relief to high-intensity conflict. They must be capable of operations in terrain anywhere from the open oceans to Third World urban slums. To do this, we need a force that blends high – technology and maneuver warfare with the advantages of sea basing. These requirements have given rise to the U.S. Marine Corps’ new operational concept: Operational Maneuver from the Sea (OMFTS)...”*<sup>4</sup>

Within Australia’s region, similar considerations are equally relevant, where tasks and roles are likely to be diverse and will be conducted over great distances. Whilst Australia does not have a “Navy/Marine” team to undertake these tasks, there is nevertheless a need to have forces available which are capable of responding quickly and effectively to a range of possible scenarios within the region. Australia’s geo-strategic situation dictates that such forces need to be able to respond to tasks on continental Australia, the offshore territories and into the region. In terms of operations being conducted on continental Australia, a major consideration must be the protection of the coastal flank of an AO, given that the coastal flank is likely to be extensive and isolated. However, the coastal waters also provide the Joint Force Commander with the means, through the employment of *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, with the ability to conduct and support operations within the AO, from seaward. In terms of the ADF conducting amphibious operations in northern Australia, the topography, especially in such isolated areas as Cape York, Arnhem Land, the Kimberley’s and the Pilbara, poses enormous logistic and resupply problems to Ground Forces. These difficulties become even more pronounced, during “the Wet” when many of the main tracks and roads throughout the northern region are rendered impassable. During Exercise *Diamond Dollar* in 1987, the Forward Arming & Refuelling Point ( FARP ) could only be established ashore in the Cape York area, by loading the full fuel bladders onto LCH for transit to the coast before being lifted ashore by Chinook helicopters. During *Operation Desert Storm* it was necessary for an Advance Force of Combat Engineers and Infantry to secure and establish a Forward Operating Base (FOB) for the Apache helicopter gunships well forward of the advancing Coalition Forces, prior to the assault on Saddam Hussein’s Republican Guard Divisions. How useful for the ADF to have a FOB that can range along the seaward flank of an AO, or deploy as



*Manoeuvre from the Sea*

required at the rate of 500 kms in 24hrs to support operations ashore. As an afloat Headquarters the Commander and his Sub-Unit Commanders are co-located, which greatly assists in the close coordination and preparation of orders. The Commander, through his C4I facilities, retains flexibility by remaining responsive to changes within the AO and is therefore able to amend those orders, if required, to meet the changed conditions ashore. *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, also provides the Commander with the ability to conduct concurrent operations into widely separated localities within the AO to either secure objectives or in preparation for the prosecution of further tasks. In view of the increased mobility and flexibility afforded by *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, this significant Force Multiplier capability is worthy of serious re-evaluation by the ADF. This is especially relevant, in view of the increased mobility now being sought by Army. However, the implementation of a rapid response capability from seaward into an AO using helicopters as the primary means, would require the employment of highly mobile combat troops with their own integral fire support weapons but supported from seaward and from the air. These forces would need to be well trained and highly capable if they

were to provide the level of responsiveness such a capability demands. They would in effect become “Marines” in all but name.

The Army is therefore faced with the challenge of developing effective responses to a variety of scenarios in a timely and robust manner. As far as continental Australia is concerned the Army not only has the challenge of providing an effective defence and response capability but must do so into a vast and rugged hinterland that is sparsely populated and has limited infrastructure. In the offshore scenario, there is a need to deploy, lodge and support a land force onto isolated and distant territories. In similar style a response to provide support and/or assistance to a regional country to meet a variety of contingencies will require mobility and the ability to remain responsive to changing requirements. Such operations might be undertaken to secure an operating base, such as an airhead, as a precursor to conducting further operations. An effective means of responding to all of these scenarios will be through the deployment of amphibious forces, conducting *Manoeuvre from the Sea*. Whilst the ADF has developed and maintained a limited amphibious capability over the years, which included the formation and later disestablishment of

the Australian Amphibious Squadron at HMAS *Moreton* in Brisbane, it has never been fully developed and its significant potential as a Force Multiplier has yet to be realised.

It is considered that the development and application of such a useful Force Multiplier Capability is entirely relevant to a majority of ADF contingencies and indeed should, as the "classic Joint Operation" become a key element for the further development of this capability. *Manoeuvre from the Sea* enables response forces to operate from seaward on a very fluid and mobile basis and to be supported on a protracted basis if required.

A key attribute of Maritime Power is Poise which allows that ... "*Once in theatre, maritime forces can remain on station for prolonged periods, either covertly or more openly. They can keep options open or signal political resolve, and act as a force for deterrence or active coercion. Poise exploits mobility, versatility, sustained reach and lift capacity.*"

The reader will no doubt be aware of various operations, that have been conducted in recent years in which the USN & USMC have conducted evacuations of US and other foreign nationals from countries experiencing a total breakdown of Law & Order.

"...*Operations ashore will usually be joint, requiring effective co-operation and a clearly understood command structure. Contribution to a ground campaign by specific manoeuvre operations from seaward can be used for envelopment, turning movements or infiltration and interdiction of key vulnerability's ashore. Poising afloat, power projection forces can provide distraction by tying down a disproportionate number of enemy forces in defending a coastline thus rendering them unavailable for other operations*<sup>6</sup> (e.g. embarked US Marine Force standing off Kuwait prior to the commencement of the Ground War during Operation Desert Storm)."

The full development of an Amphibious capability by the ADF has in recent years suffered from both a lack of understanding as to the utility of this form of warfare as well as some deep seated Single Service reluctance to commit to this Joint capability. Australian Amphibious doctrine has therefore remained largely moribund and limited to the conduct of occasional set-piece Amphibious Tactical Lodgments (ATL's). This has greatly detracted from the flexibility and force multiplier capability inherent to this style of operation. Whilst the need to plan and prepare for set piece amphibious operations is not questioned, the opportunity should now be taken to expand upon the concept of

*Manoeuvre from the Sea* and to develop it as a key ADF Defence capability. Provided the correct level of strategic imperative was attached to the development of a more flexible and responsive form of Amphibious capability than has hitherto been the case, there is considerable potential to provide the ADF with a significant responsive and flexible capability to meet a variety of scenarios. As the classic "Joint Operation" it is wholly relevant to Australia's Defence and Geo-Strategic situation within the region, where flexibility and a high degree of mobility and responsiveness is required.

It is axiomatic that whilst Marines worldwide, well understand the business of operating ashore into an AO from seaward, the ADF, which lacks such a force, arguably has a significant need for such a capability. Whilst the formation of an Australian Marine Corps would provide the core of an optimum mobile and responsive capability able to operate from seaward, Army has over the years consistently proven that it is quite capable of operating effectively in an amphibious role. However, the Amphibious option remains limited in its application and is somewhat the "Ugly Duckling" within the inventory of ADF Military options. In the current climate of reassessment and review of strategic options it is considered essential that the role of the amphibious capability be fully re-examined from a strategic viewpoint, with a view to expanding its current limited utility to encompass *Manoeuvre from the Sea*.

A full assessment must therefore be made as to the extent to which amphibious warfare, as a function on *Manoeuvre Warfare*, can contribute as a Force Multiplier in the Defence of Australia and within the region. Such a review must include the development of a concept of Amphibious operations as well as the application of resources and the training of those forces involved. The further development of an amphibious capability should however be centralised under an appropriate authority, and comprise a specialist Joint Amphibious team to ensure that all aspects of this capability are fully addressed and coordinated. This team would also be able to provide the necessary level of specialist Amphibious advice to all levels of Command and become the focal point for its future development.

The need for an ADF amphibious capability to be managed on a Joint basis is further reinforced by the need to coordinate the necessary input into a wide variety of amphibious related projects that are currently being processed. To be effective and viable the development of all current and future projects relating to an amphibious capability must be coordinated to ensure that all aspects are considered

as part of a total capability. Indeed, in the amphibious context the total Ship-to-Shore requirement must be assessed, in order that a balanced capability, encompassing all air and surface resources, can be developed. It is envisaged that the same would be true of C4I as well as many other common-user requirements.

This is perhaps, not as formidable a task as might first appear but would require that the utility of *Manoeuvre from the Sea* be essentially acknowledged as a strategic capability and that the profile of Amphibious Warfare be significantly raised by affording it the level of strategic importance that it merits. It would then be possible to develop an ADF concept of Amphibious operations, which capitalised on the flexibility afforded by such operations.

In terms of resources, the ADF has long maintained a limited amphibious capability, through the employment of such Naval units as HMAS *Tobruk*, HMAS *Jervis Bay*, the LCHs and NLE, whilst Army has maintained the LCM 8s and LARCs. However, it is in regard to the acquisition and development of their successors, such as the two newly acquired LSTs (HMAS *Kanimbla* and *Manoora*), that all factors pertaining to their employment must be considered to ensure that in terms of *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, a total capability is developed. It should be noted that a significant Joint capability existed prior to the dis-establishment of the Australian Amphibious Squadron, when the Squadron was located in Brisbane with 6 Bde. The proximity of HMAS *Moreton* to Enoggera Army Barracks enabled a considerable level of joint training and staff planning to be conducted. This resulted in a high level of interoperability and rapport being achieved between all involved Army and Naval elements.

## Conclusion

The progression by many countries, towards a more responsive and integrated Joint Force comprising a balanced force structure is indicative of the reliance now being placed upon the mobility and speed of response, afforded by *Manoeuvre Warfare* and in particular *Manoeuvre from the Sea*. In terms of maximising military options available to the ADF, in either responding to, or pre-empting an incursion onto Australian territory, it is considered that the versatility and Force Multiplier effect afforded by *Manoeuvre from the Sea*, is a capability that the ADF can no longer afford to ignore. The ability to conduct limited

amphibious operations in set piece scenarios has been consistently proven by the ADF since Exercise *K&I* but its full potential as a highly versatile and responsive “*Modus Operandi*” has yet to be realised. However, for the ADF to acquire such a capability, will require that the development of Amphibious Warfare be taken out of the Single Service arena and its future development guided by an appropriate Amphibious Authority.

## The window of opportunity to develop this latent capability is now open and should be taken.

The concept of *Manoeuvre from the Sea* as a function of short warning conflict and or contingency situations would provide the ADF with an enhanced capability to respond effectively to a wide variety of possible scenarios. *Manoeuvre from the Sea* affords the Joint Force Commander with the ability to use the coastal flank of a landward AO for manoeuvre, whereby elements of his force can be inserted, reinforced or redeployed from the sea. That his Forward Support Base can range hundreds of kilometres along a coastline in 24 hours to support operations ashore speaks volumes for the flexibility and logistic sustainment such a capability provides. In terms of any increase to Defence involvement within the region, the same attributes remain valid and indeed are enhanced by the significant force multiplier effect such capabilities would bring to many areas of the region. This is especially true of isolated areas that are lacking in infrastructure and support facilities. It is therefore considered to be of the utmost strategic importance that the versatility and latent capability of a Sea-borne Joint Force capable of providing either military or humanitarian assistance, be recognised. The ability to undertake such operations, is however dependent upon the availability of appropriate naval and other assigned forces, with suitable amphibious and C4I capability. Whilst landing craft will always be required for the movement of heavier equipment and logistic resupply ashore, either through a Port or over a suitable beach as a LOTS operation, the primary means of movement ashore will be by helicopter. Helicopters provide the Commander with the most versatile and responsive movement capability but requires that all of the helicopter force is suitably marinised, so that they are able to support operations ashore on a fluid and highly responsive basis. Under these broader conditions Amphibious operations would be similar to Airmobile operations, except that they would be mounted and supported, from the sea. A high level of amphibious planning and training would however be required to ensure that such operations could be planned and conducted on a fluid and responsive basis. Whilst this capability may not be relevant to

every future ADF contingency, it is considered that as the “classic Joint Operation,” *Manoeuvre from the Sea* provides the ADF with a sound basis for conducting a number of ADF Joint Operations. As arguably the most complex of all Joint Operations and requiring the greatest levels of integration at all levels, this capability is regarded as vital. *Manoeuvre from the Sea* should therefore be adopted as a key ADF strategic capability, to ensure that the ADF is able to respond quickly and effectively to any potential contingency that might arise within the region in the foreseeable future.

*“Amphibious flexibility is the greatest strategic asset that a sea power possesses”.*

(Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart, *Deterrence or Defence* (1960))

#### NOTES

1. BR 1806 *The Fundamentals of British Maritime Doctrine* CH 4.
2. *Weekend Australian*, May 18 1996, *Rethinking our Defence*, Paul Dibb.
3. *Blitzkrieg from the Sea: Maneuver Warfare and Amphibious Operations*, Captain Richard S. Moore. United States Marine Corps, Naval War College, Newport, RI (May 1983).
4. *Operational Maneuver from the Sea*, by General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant General United States Marine Corps. Proceedings (January 1997).
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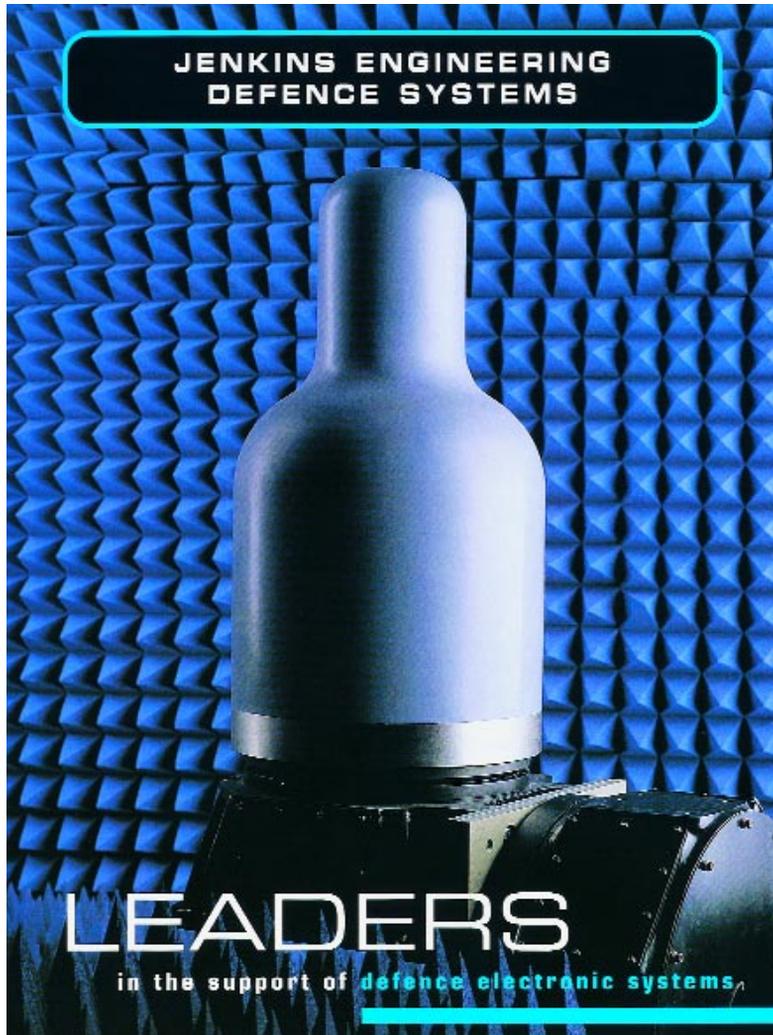
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*Qualified as Primary Forward Air Controller to 3 Commando Brigade RM, and appointed OC 611 TACP (1976-1979), Commanded RM Security Detachment Clyde Submarine Base Scotland (1979-1980). Appointed Second-in-Command and Operations Officer, Commachio Company (CT), Arbroath, Scotland (1980-1982). Posted on Exchange to AJWE as RM Amphibious Instructor(1982-1984). On return to UK, he was posted as Adjutant and Second in Command of Royal Marines, Deal, UK (1985).*

*He has undertaken operational tours of duty in The Middle East, Northern Ireland and Belize and training exercises in many other countries around the world. Since joining the RAN he has served with JEPS (1986-1988) (1992), graduated from the Naval Staff College (1988), appointed to Directorate of Naval Operations (DNO) as Staff Officer Joint Warfare (SOJW) then as Director Joint Warfare Navy (DJW-N) (1988-1991). Appointed to Directorate of Submarine Policy and Warfare (DSMPW) as Assistant Director (ADSMPW) (Jan 1993 - Dec 1996).*

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*Surface combatants from six regional nations joined with Australian units in fleet concentration period Kakadu II in 1995.*

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# The Place of the Surface Combatant in Regional Naval Development 1975-96

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*By David Stevens, Department of Defence*

## Introduction

Over the last two decades the South-East Asian region has confirmed its reputation as an area of major maritime importance. Not only do significant international sea lanes connecting the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific pass through it, but the region still contains enormous untapped resources. Moreover, by carrying the vast bulk of trade and communication the sea holds a central place in nearly all regional economies. These economies include some of the most dynamic in the world and some of the few maintaining or increasing levels of military spending. Particular issues of maritime security concern include boundary disputes, conflicting claims to offshore territories and resources, and problems with piracy, drug smuggling, refugees, marine safety and illegal fishing. This varied combination means of course that issues of national defence are often hard to separate from the many other uses that are made of the maritime environment. Further complicating the situation, is the interest that countries outside the region have in the protection of maritime trade passing through it and the fact that there are no general security arrangements in place, nor even a joint approach to matters such as sea lane protection.

Despite this apparent hotchpotch of coastguard and naval missions the prime function of regional navies has been and will remain to protect national sovereignty against seaborne threats. What tends to differ is the emphasis in how these threats are interpreted and the assets available to respond. Though in the past suffering from the disproportionate resources devoted to armies – which were often seen as the only forces capable of preserving territorial integrity – regional navies have made remarkable progress in the last twenty years. Specifically, several have taken steps to acquire more independent and comprehensive warfighting capabilities and in the process graduate from constabulary to offshore and trade defence roles.

Against this background of increasing capability and independence, this article aims to briefly examine how the role of surface combatants has developed in regional navies over the last twenty years. They have been chosen because, unlike submarines – which though often planned have seldom been delivered – surface forces have remained a core element of regional force structures. Surface combatants not only provide the basic requirements of security at sea but, as the most visible and flexible of maritime assets, are most likely to be on the scene in times of crisis, and through their acquisition, modification or enhancement provide a useful window into the more general intentions of nations.

## Constraints

There are some obvious limitations in a comparative examination of regional naval development. Divergent historical experience for example, may produce different naval policies in nations with outwardly similar geographic position and status. Thus the Philippines and Indonesia, two archipelagic nations, have developed completely different force structures. More fundamentally, some forces, like those possessed by Singapore, boast state of the art technology, while at the other end of the spectrum, developing nations such as Cambodia and Vietnam have had little to spare for basic platforms, let alone high budget equipment. Similarly, issues of infrastructure and training standards might easily provide a widely differing perspective of capability, while the important role of self-interest groups means that there will undoubtedly be other than purely strategic factors influencing acquisition decisions. Finally, the unique nature of the Asian maritime environment itself means that the determinants of naval development frequently interact in ways that are singular to the region.

Clearly it would be an oversimplification to suggest that all regional maritime forces were developing at either the same pace, to achieve the same milestones or even in response to the same influences. As James Goldrick, author of the most recent and sophisticated analysis of regional navies

has pointed out, the essential difficulty of a comparative analysis lies in identifying the parameters for measurement.<sup>1</sup> Despite these limitations it is nevertheless possible to identify some key elements shaping maritime force structures and there are sufficient similarities to make an overall view of the region a worthwhile exercise. Thus, though reference will continue to be made to individual navies it is not intended to fully discuss each in turn. Instead a broader approach will be taken in an attempt to understand these more general driving forces.

### The Threat

Notwithstanding maritime traditions stretching back hundreds of years, in 1975, when the region witnessed the last act in the prolonged struggle for Vietnam, most navies in the South-East Asian region were in only a limited stage of development. Though some such as the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) had been independent for a considerable period they had continued to operate under the implied or explicit umbrella provided by an external power, usually either the United States or Britain.<sup>2</sup> Because the need to develop a blue-water capability was not yet paramount, maritime forces for the most part were restricted to coastal operations and constabulary roles. The frigates or corvettes that were in service had been obtained largely as gifts, or on extremely favourable terms, and were often of Second World War vintage, lacking in capability and laborious to operate. Assets more recently procured were usually of patrol boat size and though fitted with more capable equipment and armament – in particular surface-to-surface

missiles (SSM) – the technical and tactical skills to operate these vessels effectively would take time to acquire. Furthermore, the formulation of strategy and doctrine remained essentially reactive and for the most part navies focussed on the sea denial role, hoping that well-armed light forces would be capable of defending or interdicting focal areas by holding their own against larger forces.

For the members of the Association of South-East Asian nations (ASEAN), and in effect the majority of Western orientated nations, the only conceivable source of direct external aggression was one of the communist powers. Only the Soviet Union possessed the naval resources to launch or sustain a serious attack by sea, but China with its large army and historical support of insurgent movements, had long been perceived as a far greater menace. Vietnam too had been a continuing source of concern, particularly after its occupation of Kampuchea in 1978 and domination of Laos, but again this threat would almost certainly have come from an overland assault, the maritime component being limited to tactical diversions. Certainly, while the Vietnamese and Chinese navies remained relatively weak the archipelagic states had little to fear from amphibious operations. Even in the event of lesser levels of conflict, or the contesting of conflicting maritime claims, there remained the background knowledge that the United States was still maintaining a powerful regional naval presence, making serious escalation unlikely.

However, after the American defeat in Indochina the Soviet Union began making concerted attempts to expand its regional influence through diplomacy and naval presence. The Pacific Fleet received priority in the acquisition of increasingly larger and more capable ships and by the mid-1980s it was the largest

**Table 1. Regional surface combatants 1975 - numbers and average age**

	Frigates (average age)	Corvettes (average age)	Fast attack craft - missile (average age)	Large patrol craft (average age)	Coastal patrol craft (average age)
Brunei	-	-	1 (8)	-	6 (2)
Indonesia	12 (16)	16 (24)	12 (15)	51 (15)	2 (1)
Malaysia	2 (17)	-	8 (5)	24 (10)	
Philippines	1 (32)	-	-	19 (24)	24 (6)
Singapore	-	-	6 (2)	7 (6)	4 (20)
Thailand	7 (12)	14 (36)	-	13 (12)	18 (10)

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 1975–76

**Table 2.** *Regional surface combatants 1985 - numbers and average age*

	Frigates (average age)	Corvettes (average age)	Fast attack craft - missile (average age)	Large patrol craft (average age)	Coastal patrol craft (average age)
Brunei	-	-	3 (6)	-	6 (6)
Indonesia	12 (20)	-	4 (5)	16 <sup>a</sup> (22)	8 (9)
Malaysia	4 (7)	-	8 (9)	27 (17)	-
Philippines	7 (42)	10 (41)-	-	13 (19)	73 (11)
Singapore	-	-	6 (12)	6 (14)	12 (4)
Thailand	6 (27)	-	6 (7)	25 (19)	33 (8)

a. Four of these vessels were listed as corvettes in 1975

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 1985–86

of the four Soviet fleets. Out of area deployments were frequent and of particular concern to the ASEAN nations was the Soviet use of Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam as a naval and air base, and the possibility that India might allow similar basing privileges in the Nicobar or Andaman Islands near the entrance to the Strait of Malacca. Though the Soviet deployments could be seen as strategically defensive and were not overtly aggressive, doubts over their intentions remained and these were not allayed by clear demonstrations of a willingness to use force. Incidents such as the destruction of a Korean airliner by Soviet air defences in 1983 simply served to further strain relations and strengthen the case for regional military expenditure.

Over a similar period a parallel maritime expansion became apparent in the Chinese Navy (PLA-N). After years of concentration on coastal craft, in the early 1970s the PLA-N began to alter its force structure, curtailing patrol boat construction while accelerating the building of larger surface combatants such as the 'Luda' class guided missile destroyers. Though these developments could be seen simply as a direct response to Soviet moves, the increase in Chinese capability also had obvious implications for the wider region. Throughout the 1980s the Chinese were able to maintain relatively large production runs of destroyers and frigates. Though still of comparatively uncomplicated designs, by fitting both indigenous and foreign sourced equipment these vessels were able to field credible capabilities in many areas of naval warfare. Like the Soviets, the Chinese also demonstrated their willingness to use force and employed their warships

in action against the Vietnamese on several occasions during the 1980s.

Even in isolation these developments would no doubt have caused a regional response. However, they were combined with clear signals from the United States that it expected regional nations to take adequate measures for their own defence, the reduction or elimination of insurgent threats to internal security, and the growing economic strength of the region. Perhaps even more significant, were the major changes in maritime regimes brought about by the 1982 United Nations Law of the Sea Convention, under which most regional nations gained extensive offshore resource zones.

Most recently the region has witnessed the effects of the collapse of the Soviet Union and in particular the wholesale deterioration of the ex-Soviet Pacific fleet. Though this is a change of major strategic significance and has virtually removed the possibility of a threat from that direction, in Asia-Pacific terms it must be seen in the context of the PLA-N's improving capacity to project power into disputed territorial waters and the perceived draw down of United States forces in the region. In the opinion of many analysts the previous, and relatively comfortable, bipolar balance of power has been replaced by an atmosphere of uncertainty. The often expressed fear is that a power vacuum now exists, with the region in consequence becoming more complex, multipolar and increasingly volatile. Events over the past year in the South China Sea<sup>3</sup> and Taiwan Strait<sup>4</sup> do nothing to contradict this view and any conflict that does occur in the future will almost certainly have a dominant maritime dimension.

## Changes in Security Emphasis

The net effect of the influences noted has been a change in security emphasis, and in particular a move away from the threat of internal insurgency and land assault and towards self-reliance in maritime security. The balance of defence budgets has undoubtedly tilted towards maritime capabilities and this has had a direct impact on the types of platforms and systems being acquired. These transformations can be identified throughout the Asia-Pacific region, but are especially apparent within South-East Asia. Singapore's continuing economic growth for example, has allowed the acquisition of modern weapons in all three branches of the defence forces, but after years as the 'third man' the progressive expansion of the maritime forces is particularly notable. Indeed it has recently been observed that, with the possible exception of the Philippines and Brunei, all ASEAN navies now possess assets that have allowed a shift from the more traditional to broader maritime tasks.<sup>5</sup>

The role of navies as a national symbol is well known within the region and there is no doubt an element of international prestige and status in regional naval development. Nevertheless, the surface combatants in service today show a vast improvement in capability over those of only twenty years ago. This is apparent not only in terms of weaponry, but also in an increased ability to gather, process and act on information. Especially when integrated with maritime patrol aircraft and national strategic systems, a modern vessel of frigate size is able to maintain an operational horizon out to at least 200 miles. Moreover, through advances in data handling and automation a contemporary warship normally offers far easier handling than its predecessors, making their introduction into regional inventories far less intimidating and in many functions reducing the time required to achieve operational effectiveness. Though there remain what have been aptly described as 'supermarket' style acquisitions – for example Indonesia's procurement of a large number of ex-East German vessels in 1993 – capability expansion in general reflects operational realities and considerable advances have been made in the formulation of indigenous strategy and doctrine.

Regionally, one of the first imperatives has been to include the protection of offshore assets and resources in addition to the traditional defence of ports and coastlines. Though this responsibility does

not necessarily require highly capable ships, it does require units able to readily respond to third party detections, maintain a presence and demonstrate graduated force if necessary. Earlier force structures were for the most part unsuitable, since inadequate long-range sensors, low-endurance and poor sea-keeping qualities meant that patrol boats could not venture far from a friendly coast and would certainly be ineffective in the boundary regions of an exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The acquisition of larger surface units provides a more versatile alternative, allowing most of these limitations to be addressed while also providing for the better surveillance inherent in a more stable platform and the option of a helicopter capability.

In this context Malaysia is a particularly good example of a nation attempting to cope with the problem of a territory fragmented by water and with maritime forces trying to fulfil both naval and coastguard roles. Prior to the 1980s the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) possessed only a few frigates and missile-armed fast attack craft. Though in practical terms simply the nucleus of a warfighting force, in conjunction with a force of riverine patrol craft this was sufficient while the Western alliance maintained its naval presence. However, after Malaysia had declared her 200 nm EEZ in 1980, the RMN found itself handed responsibility for policing this vast area in addition to the defence of sovereign territory. Funds became available for expansion and new capabilities and for a brief period in the mid-1980s the RMN was the fastest growing navy in Asia.

The acquisition of new capabilities has not been without difficulties but the RMN has at least been assisted in its expansion by the more general national plan to industrialise. Navies are technologically orientated and like other regional navies the RMN has found that the continuing push for industrialisation brings with it an improving capacity to operate and maintain sophisticated systems. The dilemma of finding a proper balance between the constabulary and warfighting roles remains but a partial solution is being sought in the RMN's current plan for a large buy of offshore patrol vessels.<sup>6</sup> These craft will be capable of a flexible and graduated response, fitted with a full combat system, helicopter and guns, but retaining space and weight for anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles.

With less extensive littoral zones Singapore's maritime security problems tend to be less complex than those of Malaysia. Yet Singapore has long felt that its small size, and hence lack of defensive depth, requires the ability to detect and challenge potential threats well beyond its borders. Patrol boats armed

with SSM initially filled this role but, while these packed a powerful punch in anti-surface operations, they invariably lacked the command and control facilities for coordinated operations with other naval and air assets and could do virtually nothing to contribute in more specialised areas of warfare. As the experience of the Iraqi Navy during the 1991 Gulf War clearly demonstrated, without an anti-air capability strike-craft are extremely vulnerable. Similarly without an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capability there is little that can be done to protect either your own craft or an escorted vessel against submarines.<sup>7</sup>

In addressing perceived shortfalls, increasing capability has sometimes been seen in terms of providing more 'reach' to maritime forces and hence the danger of provoking a neighbouring response. There have certainly been fears expressed of a regional arms race, however, in reality, the emphasis has not been so much on force projection as on the protection of shipping. Thus, the Singaporean Navy, having decided that its area of direct interest covered the length of the Strait of Malacca and out to 500 miles in other directions, began planning its 'Sea Lines of Communication' strategy in the early 1980s. By 1986 the decision had been made to build larger surface combatants, notably the six *Victory* Class corvettes. Commissioned between 1990 and 1991 these vessels were a considerable advance over the previous *Sea Wolf* class missile boats, incorporating a full combat data system, variable depth sonar and ASW torpedoes. In 1996 a further advance in capability was taken with the decision to fit the corvettes with the Israeli 'Barak' air defence missile.

Thailand, with its unusual coastline is faced with special difficulties in maritime security, but is another

good example of a regional nation engaged in a well-calculated naval expansion program. On paper the RTN has been numerically strong for many years but in practical terms has been hampered by the short range and lack of capability possessed by the majority of its forces. Operational concepts originally focussed on the requirement for the close defence of the Gulf of Thailand and eastern seaboard. Though occasional forays would be made into the Gulf, patrols generally remained within 15–20 miles of the coast.<sup>8</sup> Three modern general purpose frigates were acquired between 1971–74, followed by missile-armed fast attack craft in the late 1970s. With continual modernisation increasingly sophisticated weapons and sensors have been fitted to these units, while between 1991 and 1996 six Chinese design frigates were added as a cheap training force with some combatant capability.

Some confusion as regards naval roles and responsibilities was apparent in the late 1980s but, like Singapore, Thailand has now recognised that her long-term survival depends on the uninterrupted flow of trade. As firm evidence of this increasing interest in maritime security, Thailand has embarked on a much more ambitious naval program, centred on a small aircraft carrier due to commission in 1997. Though its main tasks are said to be SAR coordination and EEZ surveillance, the capability to embark VSTOL aircraft clearly goes far towards creating a blue-water force able to exercise limited sea control on both the east and west coasts. Now justified as a force that should be capable of both resource protection and trade defence the RTN may well provide a clear signpost to future maritime defence developments in the region.

**Table 3.** Regional surface combatants 1995 - numbers and average age

	Frigates (average age)	Corvettes (average age)	Fast attack craft - missile (average age)	Large patrol craft (average age)	Coastal patrol craft (average age)
Brunei	-	-	3 (16)	-	6 (16)
Indonesia	17 (27)	16 (12)	4 (15)	16 (16)	25 (5)
Malaysia	4 (6)	2 <sup>a</sup> (10)	8 (16)	27 <sup>b</sup> (25)	-
Philippines	1 (52)	10 (51)-	-	5 (4)	34 (9)
Singapore	-	6 (4)	7 (18)	6 (24)	8 (14)
Thailand	13 (22)	5 (5)	6 (18)	17 (20)	35 (23)

a. Listed as frigates in 1985

b. Includes two offshore patrol vessels

Source: Jane's Fighting Ships 1995-96

## Conclusions

The future security demands of the Asia-Pacific region are essentially maritime in nature and with many regional nations possessing the economic resources to take positive action there are an increasing number of what might be termed 'medium' maritime powers, capable of limited sea control operations outside their immediate coastal regions. This development has come about through a general requirement to detect and react to an adversary in the maritime approaches and the need for each nation at least to be capable of actively protecting and exploiting its own EEZ.

Regional navies have shown a steady growth since 1975 and now expect to undertake a far broader range of maritime missions increasingly utilising their own unique strategy and doctrine. The role of surface combatants is central to this revised maritime outlook, for they are highly visible assets able to provide a variety of response options across the entire spectrum of peace and conflict operations. Further quantitative and qualitative improvements can be expected in

regional navies as they attempt to maintain or achieve balanced fleets and answer the ever increasing demands within their maritime jurisdictions.

## NOTES

1. Recognising the limitations inherent in a simple comparison of numbers Goldrick instead uses a hierarchy of naval capability to act as a framework for the measurement of trends. See, J.V.P. Goldrick, 'Developments in regional maritime forces: force structure', in *Australia's Maritime Bridge into Asia*, S. Bateman & D. Sherwood eds., Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995.
2. Britain announced its decision to withdraw its force east of Suez in 1969 and though it has maintained naval deployments to the Far East on a regular basis the last major warships permanently based in the region were withdrawn in the mid-1970s.
3. China's occupation of Mischief Reef in the South China Sea.
4. China undertook live firing exercises in an apparent attempt to intimidate Taiwan.
5. Goldrick, p. 106. Though even Brunei is now planning to acquire corvettes with SAM and SSM capabilities.
6. See for example J.N. Mak 'The maritime priorities of Malaysia', in *Maritime Change Issues for Asia* R. Babbage and S. Bateman eds., Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1993.
7. During the next 10 years Asia is expected to be the dominant worldwide market for submarines. *Defense News*, November 18-24, 1996, p. 10.
8. J. Morgan and D. Fryer, 'Defense', in *Marine Policy in Southeast Asia*, G. Kent and M. Valencia eds, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, p. 259.

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## Book Reviews

**LODGE IN VIETNAM: A PATRIOT ABROAD:** by Anne Blair. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1995, xv, 200 P. : Ill., Maps; 24CM.

*Reviewed by Michael Fogerty*

Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., (1902-1985); American statesman; scion of a patrician Massachusetts family; was elected to first of three terms as Republican senator in 1936; was army combat officer in WWII; served as ambassador to UN from 1953 to 1960, when he became Richard Nixon's running mate in Nixon's unsuccessful first campaign for the presidency, was ambassador to South Vietnam (1963-64, 1965-67) when war there was escalating; later was one of succession of U.S. representatives at protracted peace talks in Paris. [Adapted from 1985 Current Biography Year Book].

This publication was originally prepared as a Ph.D thesis in History at Monash University in 1992 – where the author currently teaches as a research fellow. The dissertation was based on US Government and Saigon embassy documents obtained under the US Freedom of Information Act, the Lodge Papers collection (opened 1989) and interviews with American, Vietnamese and Australian officials who served with Ambassador Lodge on Vietnam duties in Washington and Saigon, 1963-1967.

While one might normally expect such a book to be written by an American researcher, perhaps closer to the actual years and the main players, its Australian author has produced a clearly written work of awesome scholarship and penetrating analysis – showing an adroit understanding of public policy. She skillfully interprets the various challenges Lodge faced and explains why in response he acted as he did. Here Dr Blair provides a dramatic and lucid account of Lodge and his steward-ship of the US mission in Vietnam during those fateful years. An oddity – a republican in a Democratic administration keen to demonstrate its political bi-partisanship on Vietnam.

Despite being jointly located in American studies group, it also has an Australian angle – briefly for the cameo appearances by an army officer (Colonel Francis Serong) and a diplomat (the late Bruce Woodberry). Furthermore, the author notes that "...the Australian embassy had good relations with Diem." For this reason, the book will be obvious relevance in appealing to many Australians whose experience of

Vietnam also traversed that period.

The book describes the anguish of the US administration in formulating an effective foreign policy towards the war. Crime writer James Ellroy would have categorised that history as "...the private nightmare of public policy." However, to be fair to both Ellroy and the decision-makers, the author contends that the absence of any coherent policy was itself the problem. In his desperation, Kennedy commissioned numerous high-level visits to Vietnam in search of a policy. "The fact-finding missions, however, were a symptom of Kennedy's impatience with Vietnam, combined with his desire to delay a major policy review of America's aims there."

All this was not helped by the competing rivalries between the various agencies who should have co-operated together in prosecuting the war rather than fighting each other. "...(Lodge) did not understand, or wish to learn about, the management skills necessary to a modern ambassador in charge of a large overseas team." In simpler terms, Johnson regarded him a dilettante. Dr Blair's book also provides the required ballast in Vietnam studies. There are many worthy books covering military aspects of the war but this book corrects the balance. Here we have a path-breaking contribution which examines the diplomatic and strategic dimensions of US foreign policy in Indo China during those formative years.

Primarily, this book remains a fascinating political biography of Lodge in his diplomatic career – his Vietnam days. It is also a compelling psychological study of Lodge for his skill in managing public opinion. To be sure, Lodge retained presidential ambitions and he strongly lobbied for a high level appointment to demonstrate his anti-Communist credentials. Ambassador Lodge's appointment was controversial for his role in Diem's ouster. The author writes of his influence in large brush strokes – leaving no doubt to his legacy. Dr Blair develops her argument with excitement and the necessary tension describing the background to the major foreign policy decisions taken at critical periods during the Lodge missions.

The book is a success in that the author does not carry any identifiable ideological baggage – showing only hard research and sound conclusions. Dr Blair states that Lodge was out of his depth in Vietnam. Yet curiously, in the same breath, she argues that

“... (I)n his Vietnam assignments, Lodge was a figure of immense authority and prestige. It is a pity, then, that his authority and noble aspirations on which it was based did not represent more coherent and better-judged policies.”

It may have been for this reason that Lodge pushed to be drafted for the Paris peace talks in 1969. One writer observed that he was given no chance to succeed. “He had been undermined repeatedly by the administration’s own efforts at outside secret talks. Despite all of Lodge’s attempts to achieve progress in Paris, Nixon and Kissinger had reduced his efforts to a mere charade. They had made use of Lodge’s credibility and reputation, and then deliberately enfeebled his authority to carry out the assignment properly.” (See Kent G. Sieg, ‘The Lodge Peace Mission of 1969 and Nixon’s Vietnam Policy’, ‘Diplomacy and Statecraft’, volume 7, March, 1996, number 1.

This is one of the ironies of this book. Surely, it is a boutique publication which targets a given academic audience yet it deserves a wider audience – it is written in such a fashion and style that will engage the attention of anyone fortunate to read it. It should go beyond the campus and standard library orders. Where once we did not understand those portentous events here the author painfully tells us why so many countries became involved to the extent they did. This book is highly recommended as a valuable contribution to the literature and for general reading overall.

**NEW ZEALAND AND THE KOREAN WAR VOLUME II COMBAT OPERATIONS: by Ian McGibbon. Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1996.**

*Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel G.J. Harper, RNZAEC*

In 1993 Ian McGibbon’s first volume of the official history of New Zealand’s involvement in the Korean War was published to wide acclaim. Subtitled “Politics and Diplomacy”, it was regarded by many commentators to have been the best book yet produced on New Zealand’s defence and foreign policy. McGibbon’s second volume of the history, that dealing with combat operations, was eagerly awaited.

In Volume II of the history McGibbon has produced the definitive account of New Zealand’s combat experience in Korea. Despite it being McGibbon’s first work of military history at the operational and tactical level, he has handled the task with great dexterity. Every major and minor operation of 16 Field Regiment, the main New Zealand Army

unit sent to Korea, is covered here and McGibbon has pieced its story together from a wide range of sources. Not forgotten either are the other units – the transport companies, signallers and so on. Also prominent is the story of the New Zealand naval presence – where two frigates of the RNZN were part of the monotonous, lengthy and arduous UN blockade of North Korea.

Despite the relatively long duration of the New Zealand combat forces in Korea – from August 1950 – November 1954 – there were few high points. The main two were the battles of Kap’yong and Maryang San (Hill 317), and historians will not find any better accounts of these battles than is featured here. Yet for the New Zealanders most of the war involved static operations of supporting units established on existing positions and stalemate. The nature of the conflict and the type of unit sent to Korea – a deliberate decision by the New Zealand Government – was reflected in the low-level of casualties making Korea the least costly of all major conflicts in which New Zealand has been involved.

Although every significant action has been pieced together from a variety of sources and McGibbon has a fluid and easy writing style, the stalemated nature of the war, the type of unit sent and the small-scale of New Zealand’s commitment to Korea does not necessarily make for exciting reading.

In fact some of the most interesting parts of this book do not relate to combat operations at all. The selection process for “Kayforce”, as the Army deployment was called, makes fascinating reading. Among those selected for active service from the initial flood of volunteers in August 1950 was a man suffering from broken ribs, a Tongan overstayer, a boy of sixteen years of age, and a man recently released on parole from a mental institution.

In a chapter on coalition warfare is an account of how New Zealanders interacted with their UN allies. It is little wonder that between the New Zealanders and Australians there developed a “special bond” although most outsiders could not recognise it. As one New Zealander wrote home every time Australian and New Zealand troops met there were “volleys of hard words, mud, water, old eggs or anything throwable. The other UN forces think we are crazy, but actually we are the only troops who have such a strong bond of comradeship and that’s our way of showing it”. Not understanding this close relationship, an American soldier witnessing some Kiwi soldiers abusing Australians stated, “Gee! You guys sure don’t like one another!” while a senior British officer once ordered that only polite exchanges of greeting were to be permitted between

the New Zealand and Australian Army drivers. Both sides immediately complied and produced such lengthy, time consuming and sickly greetings between each other ("Felicitations, my Antipodean brother!") that all concerned were soon ordered to return to the older and much healthier forms of address.

This meticulously researched and very readable account of New Zealand's combat operations in Korea has filled an important gap in New Zealand's military history. It has been well worth the wait.

**STILL THE SAME: Reflections on active service from Bardia to Baidoa, compiled and edited by Garth Pratten & Glyn Harper, Army Doctrine Centre, Mosman 1996, illustrated paperback, 280 pages.**

*Reviewed by A. Argent*

What a pity the idea that led to this book wasn't seized upon two generations of soldiering ago. Even the rather cumbersome wire recorders of those days would have captured a goldmine of experiences from commanders of all levels from both the World Wars.

Fifty years on, students at the Army Command and Staff College between 1992 and 1995 interviewed a number of officers who commanded units or sub-units on active service and who patently, over the years, have given quite an amount of thought and energy in training for war and leadership.

One editor of this book is a consultant historian at the Army Doctrine Centre; the other, after service in the Australian Army, is now the Director of New Zealand's Army Military Studies Institute.

Those interviewed by the Staff College students include a former CGS, Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly who was, firstly, the adjutant of a 2nd AIF infantry battalion and then a brigade major in the Desert and during the siege of Tobruk and, finally, the commanding officer of his original battalion at Balikpapan and another CO, who commanded a regular battalion in Somalia, hence the "Baidoa" of this book's sub-title. The "Bardia" comes from Major "Jo" Gullett's reflections and he needs no introduction. His "Not As a Duty Only" stands alone. There is also contribution from a 2/6 Battalion officer who served in it as a platoon commander – Major David Hay.

Active service in northwest Europe, Korea, Malaya, Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and South Vietnam (six interviews for Australia's longest war) is also covered. It is not all infantry battalion service. the SAS and Armour are included.

The editors have written a thoughtful introduction – "The Use of Oral History in Military History

Research" – and there is an equally thoughtful conclusion. This book is a timely and welcome publication because it reminds all that the only reason for any defence force is to train for war and to fight, something it seems often forgotten in the plethora of peacetime reviews and re-organisations.

Unfortunately, there are a number of irritating misprints – it was *Operation Jaywick*, the tank is a Centurion, the ship of shame until the Navy took it over was *Jeparit* and there is no such unit as the Royal Irish Guards.

**THE BAYONETS OF THE REPUBLIC: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94. by John A. Lynn. Westview Press, Colorado, 1996. 356 Pages.**

*Reviewed by Major Darren Kerr, Aust. Int*

Have you ever wondered how tall was the average citizen-soldier in the army of revolutionary France in 1794? What about the percentage of 1792 volunteers who served two years in the French revolutionary army? If so, wonder no more because John Lynn is here to answer all the questions you have had, and more.

Although somewhat facetious, my introduction should give you some idea of the depth of research in John Lynn's latest book, *The Bayonets of the Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94*. This book is a reworking of the first edition which was published in 1984 and is a detailed examination of the *Armee du Nord*, probably the most important of the French revolutionary armies. John Lynn, a professor of history at the University of Illinois, is one of the world's foremost experts on the armies of revolutionary France. In *Bayonets of the Republic*, he takes that extensive knowledge and provides a very readable and fascinating examination of the reason for the success of the *Armee du Nord*; success historically attributed to revolutionary zeal and massed bayonet charges, and little else.

Few people will approach this book with any knowledge of the *Armee du Nord* and yet most will probably have heard of its leaders – the comte de Rochambeau, the marquis de Lafayette, Charles Francois Dumouriez and Jean Baptiste Jourdan. The *Armee du Nord* was raised in 1791 in the post-revolutionary period when France feared armed intervention by the monarchs of Europe. The fact that the monarchs of Europe would have been hard-pressed organising a weekend BBQ, let alone an invasion of France, was not known to the leaders of the revolution and the *levee en masse* was born. During the period 1791-94, the *Armee du Nord* lost

many battles but held the frontier largely intact and eventually defeated the armies sent against it. The question that Lynn seeks to answer is "To what can the ultimately victorious career of the Nord be attributed?" His answer is finally a simple one – "the citizen-soldiers which made up the army" – arriving at this answer is the complex part.

The book is divided into three broad sections. Section One provides a narrative history of the campaigns of the *Armee du Nord* and introduces the names and events crucial to the remainder of the book. Section Two discusses a theory of combat effectiveness and examines in minute detail the composition, control and motivation of the army. While Section Three outlines the doctrine, training and tactics which ultimately led to victory. Military readers are likely to find the final section of most interest.

The overall aim of the book is to develop a convincing theory of combat effectiveness which can account for the ultimate success of the Nord. The conclusion Lynn reaches is that a combination of high motivation plus effective tactics resulted in the superior French performances. As Lynn writes:

*Troops were committed and spirited, possessed of both endurance and energy. The flexible combinations of infantry formations, ably supported by artillery, allowed them to adjust tactics to terrain and circumstances. As a consequence, an analysis of victory in the north must be an analysis of the combat effectiveness of the Armee du Nord.*

What makes this book so fascinating is the relevance today of his detailed observations on the constituents of combat effectiveness. His analysis could be applied to any army throughout history and the result would be equally illuminating. The book should be of interest to both the military reader as a sort of "how-to" primer and the general historical reader as a lively and readable addition to historical literature. A very worthwhile purchase.

(The average height was 1.67m and 23% were 1792 volunteers)

**VICTOR TWO: by Peter Crossland, Bloomsbury Publishing, Great Britain, 1996 soft cover 179pp, 8 pages of black and white photos, \$19.95.**

*Reviewed by Captain M.C. Stewart*

The English SAS were apparently embarrassed by the success of the book *Bravo Two Zero* because it made famous the least successful of the SAS missions in the Gulf War. I initially thought that *Victor Two* would redress the balance in that regard, however I was proven wrong. *Victor Two* is a blatant attempt to

cash in on the rash of books about the SAS in the Gulf War started by *Bravo Two Zero* and is a sorry effort not worth time taken to read it.

Crossland writes informally, mostly in the first person from the viewpoint of an infantry Private and then a Trooper in the SAS. The book is short and lacks substance. There are several attempts to pad it out, chapter headings account for 19 pages alone and the liberal use of second hand stories throughout, such as a twelve page summary of the *Bravo Two Zero* mission, complete the job. This is very disappointing because the strength of books of this type is the gritty detail of first person narrative relating personal experiences.

The section dealing with the SAS in the Gulf is filled with character assassinations, descriptions of political infighting amongst the Squadron hierarchy, bad intelligence, poor equipment, poor leadership and general ineptitude from many of the key members. Throughout the book Crossland mostly refers to all ranks by their first names which, while perhaps the practice in the SAS makes it difficult to work out who is who in a squadron size organisation.

The main action is a description of a vehicle mounted, squadron level raid on *Victor Two*, an already damaged Iraqi radar installation that was thought to be guiding mobile Scud launchers. The actual attack from orders group to withdrawal is barely successful and covers a mere 22 pages. The book is sub-titled "Inside Iraq: The Crucial SAS Mission" while on the back cover it is described as "The inside story of the SAS mission that turned the tide of the Gulf War". The *Victor Two* mission was neither crucial nor the turning point of the Gulf War, indeed, this implies that the Coalition, on the eve of *Desert Storm*, would have lost the war had it not been for the *Victor Two* mission. Crossland and a colleague themselves suspect that the attack is simply done so that the SAS could say it had launched a squadron level attack in the campaign and so that the troops could be "blooded" (their term).

Crossland's personal problems are described at length throughout the book. Most of these problems are brought on by his infidelity and his son's terminal illness, either way I felt sorry for those whom they affected and was not interested in them in the slightest.

Overall *Victor Two* is a poor book attempting to ride a current wave of popularity for works of this type. Its descriptions of the SAS in the Gulf are hardly inspiring and the character assassinations, political infighting and total ineptitude describing many of the actions will only deepen the embarrassment of the British SAS.