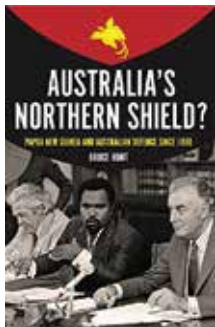


# Book reviews



## *Australia's Northern Shield? Papua New Guinea and the defence of Australia since 1880*

Bruce Hunt  
Monash University Publishing: Melbourne,  
2017, 374 pages  
ISBN: 978-1612-5196-8  
\$39.95

Reviewed by John Donovan

Bruce Hunt has written a comprehensive review of the place of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in the defence of Australia. He relies on primary-source documents, including formerly classified Cabinet notebooks. His book gives an insight into the development of policy over an extended period, and the speed with which long-established policy could change.

Hunt identifies early concern about the strategic value of PNG among pre-Federation colonial governments. They pressed Britain to take control of the eastern half of New Guinea, the western portion then being controlled by the Dutch. British interest was limited until Germany took control of north-eastern New Guinea and the New Britain archipelago. Britain then annexed Papua.

The Japanese victory over Russia at Tsushima 'elevated Japan to the role of a direct military threat', focusing attention on PNG as a 'shield' for eastern Australia. Hunt describes the fraught negotiations after the First World War, leading to an Australian mandate over the former German New Guinea, though control of German possessions north of the Equator went to Japan. Between the wars, Australia saw PNG as a defensive shield. After the Nazis took power, suggestions were made that German New Guinea should be returned, 'correcting the harshness of ... the Versailles Treaty'. Unsurprisingly, this proposal was not greeted with enthusiasm in Australia.

After the Second World War, Australian governments both Labor and Coalition supported the Dutch desire to retain control over west New Guinea (West Irian to the Indonesians) after Indonesian independence, and Indonesia was identified as a potential threat. Attitudes changed across the 1950s and early 1960s, as Australia gradually came to accept the need for change in west New Guinea, particularly after the US made it clear that it would not support Australia militarily, while the UK counselled that Australia needed to keep Indonesian goodwill.

Among the first politicians to change their position were the prime minister, Robert Menzies, and the attorney general (later minister for external affairs), Garfield Barwick. However, support for the Dutch continued almost until the last moment, tempered by the desire to reduce friction with the Indonesian government of President Sukarno. Although Indonesia repeatedly stated that it had no claims against PNG, Australian authorities considered the wording of its claims for west New Guinea capable of being used to justify a claim for PNG or, indeed, north Borneo.

The start of 'Confrontation' with Malaysia soon after Indonesia gained control of West Irian elevated concerns in Australia that a move on PNG might follow. Australia therefore decided to support Malaysia. Hunt follows the debates about Australian operations during Confrontation, including whether Australian forces should operate in north Borneo. Although Australia took a cautious line, Hunt notes that there were direct clashes between Australian and Indonesian troops. However, the attempted coup in Indonesia in September 1965, and subsequent purge of



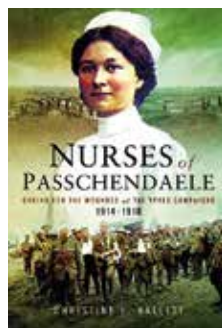
the Indonesian Communist Party, eased tensions.

As Hunt demonstrates, the Australian perception of PNG as a defence shield largely ended with the fall of President Sukarno. Australia's perception then identified Indonesia as its northern defence shield. Relations between Indonesia and PNG were managed to minimise friction between the three nations, particularly after PNG gained independence. Hunt describes the process under which the path to independence for PNG was complicated by secessionist movements and concern about a possible collapse of law and order.

Hunt demonstrates how politicians and the Australian defence and foreign affairs bureaucracy consistently maintained the need for PNG as a defence shield for over 80 years. What stands out in his account is the speed with which Australian attitudes then changed. Within a decade, the place of PNG in Australian defence and foreign policy diminished, with Indonesia becoming the new shield, while potential internal problems became the principal concerns about PNG. While PNG remained of 'unique strategic importance to Australia', there was no defence agreement with the independent PNG, only an undertaking with no explicit commitments.

Hunt records that personalities as different as Edmund Barton, W.M. (Billy) Hughes, H.V. (Bert) Evatt, Sir Robert Menzies, Sir Garfield Barwick and John McEwen took remarkably similar political positions on PNG. After federation, Barton sought unsuccessfully to develop a Pacific empire stretching as far as the Cook Islands and Tonga! After the Second World War, Evatt sought 'complete and exclusive power' over PNG, as well as parts of Borneo, which could then be exchanged for Dutch New Guinea (see Graeme Sligo, *The Backroom Boys*, Big Sky Publishing: Newport, 2013).

This book is an invaluable reference on Australia's strategic interests in PNG. There might be more information available but it is unlikely to change Hunt's conclusions.



## *Nurses of Passchendaele: caring for the wounded of the Ypres campaigns, 1914-1918*

Christine E. Hallett

Pen and Sword: Barnsley UK, 2017, 216 pages

ISBN: 978-1-5267-0288-3

£12.38

Reviewed by Dr Narelle Biedermann,  
James Cook University

In this impressive read, Hallett has somehow managed to bring together the stories of nurses, soldiers, doctors and others who were involved in the prolonged and unrelenting Ypres campaigns. At first glance, the reader expects to be taken on a journey with a few nurses who happened to be in or around the Ypres salient during some of history's most gruesome battles. Instead, Hallett gives us insights into caring from a wide range of perspectives, from the local women who nursed civilians injured and maimed as unfortunate collateral damage, through to Red Cross and military nurses from across the globe who all found themselves nursing the human by-product of modern war.

It does get a little confusing keeping up with these stories, as Hallett jumps from one location to another, but it is possible she does this to show us the widespread effect of the battles across Ypres. As a devotee of Australian military nurse histories, this book took me to places I hadn't really contemplated. I knew, of course, of the work of our Australian field hospitals, casualty clearing stations and ambulance trains which were never far removed from the battlefield itself.

But this book illustrated for me that our medical and nursing service was just a mere speck in the mass of medical care throughout the region across those five bitter years.

Hallett uses a combination of letters, diaries and personal accounts held so preciously in archives around the world to not just tell 'a' story but to tell 'the' story of nursing in France and Belgium. However, this is not an easy read; the reader needs to remain alert to changing locations and new characters in each chapter. There are maps at the beginning of the book—and it must be said that I needed to refer to them regularly as I tried to keep track of the battle movements and collateral impacts on towns and villages. It could have done with a summary of names and their details in one central place to refer back to, as it did become confusing keeping up with each nurse and their alliance or background. Nevertheless, it is a fruitful read.

As a nurse, I learned extraordinary amounts about different techniques for wound management and gas inhalation, for example, that are never mentioned in other works describing nursing from this time. My heart and feet ached at their stories of work without respite, sometimes whilst under fire, sometimes in awful climates. We think of nursing in this period as primitive and, perhaps compared to our technologically-driven contemporary profession, it was. However, Hallett reminds us of the evolution of nursing practices that were forced on them by the tsunami of casualties continuously presenting to them and the evolution of weaponry and warfare.

The nursing work that existed in 1918 was certainly way more evolved than it was in 1914. It cannot be understated that the work that all medical services provided during this extraordinary time were testament to their dedication and sacrifice to the service of humanity. But the emotional toll was immense. Oftentimes, I found myself reading the familiar tones of post-traumatic stress disorder and exhaustion—and realising that this experience is immune to time. Hallett's work is a perfect reminder of that, because she does not paint a romantic picture of nursing. This is not a book to bolster recruitment into military nursing services. Rather, she uses the words of those who were there to tell their truth. This was perfectly captured in a letter from a British nurse who wrote:

You could not go through the things we went through, see the things we saw, and remain

the same. You went into it young and light-hearted. You came out older than any span of years could make you. But at the time you did not reflect on it much, or on anything else. You did not dare to. Instead, you filled your mind with concrete facts—pulses and temperatures, dressings and treatments—because you soon learned that if you concentrated hard enough on them it stopped you remembering other things.

Sound familiar? The effect of war, Hallett reminds us, is timeless.



### *The Shadow Men: the leaders who shaped the Australian Army from the Veldt to Vietnam*

Edited by Craig Stockings and John Connor  
NewSouth Publishing: Sydney, 2017,  
288 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-7422-3474-8  
\$34.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

The 12 contributing authors and the two editors are to be commended for this thoroughly enjoyable and informative read. The book contains ten short biographies of Lieutenant General Edward Hutton, Major General William Bridges, General Cyril White, Major General James Legge, Brigadier John O'Brien, Lieutenant General John Northcott, Lieutenant General Sydney Rowell, Colonel E.G. Keogh, Lieutenant General

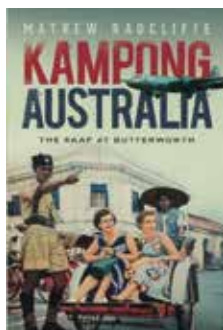
Thomas Daly and Lieutenant General Mervyn Brogan, all of whom made a significant contribution to the Australian Army.

The 'shadow men' title is intriguing as I actually thought that the ten characters were already relatively prominent and well-known figures in Australian military history. However, it presumably refers more to the new insights that the biographies provide, which 'retrieve the people from the gloom', as well as breaking new ground and correcting some misconceptions (that I held and) which may also be held by others.

One of the editors notes in the introduction that 'biography is the most popular form of history'. He also contends that 'biography is an exacting form of historical writing' and that the aim of the editors is for the stories to provide 'the contextualized life [of the individual officers] as part of a wider sequence of events and occurrences'.

Having served in the Army's Directorate of Plans and been part of some Army reorganisations during my 26 years of military service—and having read about many other changes in the past—I found the stories very useful to put the development of the Australian Army into overall context in both peace and war. Interestingly, the time that the ten 'shadow men' spent in actual command of troops was typically quite short, some ending in death and others in ignominy; rather, it is in their staff experiences that most of their shadows lay.

The obvious question is why these ten were selected over others who may have been more obscure or less notable but still played an important part in the 'management of organised violence'. Its publication begs more books to be written along similar lines. They are certainly much easier to read, and the information is much easier to absorb than what can be gained from books published with the conventional approach to historical writing. The Shadow Men should be compulsory reading for Army officers under training, and by every commander and staff officer contemplating leadership or change.



## *Kampong Australia: the RAAF at Butterworth*

Mathew Radcliffe  
NewSouth Publishing: Sydney, 2017,  
297 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-7422-3514-1  
\$39.99

Reviewed by Air Commodore Mark Lax, OAM, CSM (Retd)

It is about time that the story of the RAAF's or, more correctly, the ADF's presence in Butterworth was told as it was such a major undertaking and an important part of Australia's military history. As well as Air Force, Australian Army members also were posted there on rotation for base and area defence duties—and no doubt a few members of the RAN also spent time on attachment.

For over 30 years, countless thousands of Australian servicemen and -women made Butterworth or more likely Penang Island their home as part of Australia's contribution to forward defence in Southeast Asia. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve provided deployed forces for the defence of the Malay peninsula and, after 1971, the Five Power Defence Arrangements agreed to continue that commitment.

It was not just the mainly RAAF and Army members who served an overseas posting in Malaysia but also their families. When the base was at its height in the early 1980s, and given the average family size of partner plus two or

three children, it was estimated that over 5000 dependants were living there. Between March 1965 and July 1987, over 1000 children were born in the RAAF hospital's maternity ward and countless family members treated for their various ailments at RAAF expense.

Many youngsters did their schooling at the RAAF school on Penang Island which had been established to cater for their education, and many sporting and social clubs were established for time-off. All who went to Butterworth will have memories of their time in 'Kampong Australia', although some memories as this book recalls were not so happy.

The book is a social history of Australians in Butterworth and hence its title referring to a kampong or village in Malay. There is little about the base, the squadrons, the flying or defence exercises—that is not the point. Author Mathew Radcliffe was one of those children born in Butterworth and wanted to study the Australian social experience for his PhD.

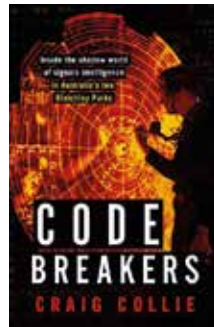
The story begins with the British and what Radcliffe calls Menzies' 'Cold War failure'—the forward basing of Australian defence personnel as part of the Menzies' Government commitment to regional stability. This basing was at Butterworth as, from 1955, the RAAF's No. 2 Airfield Construction Squadron further developed the old RAF station over a three-year period, after which Butterworth was handed over to the RAAF. In 1970, the base was in turn handed to the Malaysians and the RAAF entered a user agreement with the Malaysian Government. With changing defence policy, the RAAF withdrew its permanent presence in 1988 and, with that, the units closed and families came home.

As part of his study, Radcliffe returned to Butterworth in 2012 to research and no doubt reminisce. To assist him in his study, he sent out surveys to many former RAAF and Army members and their families to gauge what it was like living so far from the familiar surroundings of Australia and family and friends. Their many responses give life to the story—sometimes happy, sometimes sad.

However, to my mind, the book overly concentrates on the negatives: the inherent racist attitude of many who were posted there, the bad behaviour of some of the men, mostly single,

especially with respect to their treatment of the locals, and what the reader might presume was the prevalence of venereal disease resulting in much of Penang being placed 'out of bounds'.

I also felt that most of the story is devoted to the period from the 1950s to early 1970s—there seems little about the more recent experience of the 1980s leading up to withdrawal. As one who was in Butterworth on numerous occasions during that period, the changes were noticeable but unfortunately are not covered. Nevertheless, the book will certainly bring back memories of those who served in Butterworth and of their families who accompanied them. For that, it is worth the read.



## *Code Breakers: inside the shadow world of signals intelligence in Australia's two Bletchley Parks*

Craig Collie  
Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 2017, 400 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-7433-1210-0  
\$32.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

Signals intelligence was an Allied success story in World War 2 and it is incredible that it has taken so long for a book like this to be published. The author explains how it was not an easy book to write after a 40-year embargo on the release of information and with research uncovering a labyrinth of themes including tension between the

communications and intelligence functions; the Army, Navy and Air Force acting in near isolation of each other; and the oft overriding power struggles between the Allies manifesting itself at unit level.

It is enthralling reading and not too technical. While it is written with an Australian focus, it places the actions of signals intelligence within the overarching British and American context, as well as describing the impact of their own country's objectives. There is frequent reference to 'blinker US protection' of information as some intelligence actually went to the US before it came back to MacArthur's headquarters in Australia.

I would have liked to have read more from Japan's perspective, which clearly lagged behind the Allied success. But apart from an oblique reference to the Japanese reading the Australian covert operations code from East Timor, this research remains to be done. There is a strong focus on multiple key personalities and their bottom-up rather than top-down impact on operations. The development of capability, especially when it came to the constant, arcane and tedious process of code-breaking, is a feature of the story.

The story commences with the formation of the Signals Intelligence Branch in Melbourne in 1940—with the Americans joining in after their flight from the Philippines, while the Australian Navy Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (FRUMEL) remained a separate entity—and the 'if only' signals intelligence failure that was Pearl Harbor. Signals intelligence came of age in the Battle of the Coral Sea, where the intercepts were most interesting as I had not read about this level of detail before. Indeed, the subsequent Battle of Midway was an intelligence coup won in Melbourne. Central Bureau was then formed in April 1942 by the US and Australian Army and Air Force (with the Australian Navy not part of it).

Army units were sent to Darwin and Port Moresby and, in July 1942, Central Bureau moved to Brisbane following the deployment there of MacArthur's headquarters. With an impasse between FRUMEL and Central Bureau, it took a long time for Central Bureau to break the high-level Japanese codes, although there were useful liaison visits to overcome these dilemmas. The Battle of the Bismarck Sea

was another Allied code-breaking success, as was the shooting down of Admiral Yamamoto, although it risked Japan learning that the Allies had broken its codes.

The book traces military successes and failures along the north coast of New Guinea from a signals intelligence perspective, during which time buried Japanese codes were located and also recovered from a sunken Japanese ship. General MacArthur was actually able to listen to the Japanese Army Command in New Guinea using air patrols as plausible cover. Central Bureau sent units to Hollandia as part of his headquarters, and Australian wireless units were the only Army units in the US-led invasion force of the Philippines.

Central Bureau remained in Brisbane with a forward base in Hollandia and an advance unit in the Philippines. By August 1945, there were 1000 Australians working with Central Bureau in Manila. The book finishes with a subsequent focus on the Soviet Union and its even more complex codes, leading to the formation of an embryonic Australian Defence Signals Branch. This book is an important contribution to Australia's secret military history as it places all other past and purely kinetic accounts into a new relativity.



## Rebooting Clausewitz: 'On War' in the 21st century

Christopher Coker  
 Hurst and Company: London, 2017,  
 188 pages  
 ISBN: 978-0-1906-5653-9  
 £15.99

Reviewed by Craig Beutel, Department of Defence

Carl von Clausewitz remains a primary text in military academies, staff colleges and war studies programs more than 200 years after the Napoleonic wars. But could an observer of the Battle of Borodino really relate to the Battle of Mosul?

Indeed, the Prussian general has had his fair share of detractors. To Basil Liddell Hart, Clausewitz was the prophet who misled the World War 1 generation, a sentiment backed by German General Erich von Ludendorff who claimed that 'all of Clausewitz's theories should be thrown overboard'. Contemporary commentators such as Martin van Creveld, John Keegan and Mary Kaldor have also questioned the relevance of Clausewitz in explaining modern-day conflicts.

In *Rebooting Clausewitz*, Professor Christopher Coker from the London School of Economics aims not to prove that Clausewitz is still relevant but rather demonstrate that he has been vindicated both by modern conflicts and contemporary thinking. He contends that while Newton may no longer be read in the science syllabus, Clausewitz is still compulsory reading

for strategists and military practitioners, as 'he knew more about war than anyone else and he also knew more than he realised'.

One of the challenges in reading Clausewitz (even when translated into English) is the length and impenetrability of his writings. Coker notes that modern students often just want the facts, a 'Dummies guide to war', favouring instead the 'how-to' dictums of Sun Tzu. But he contends that the richness of Clausewitz is his ability to teach one how to think about war.

In *Rebooting Clausewitz*, Coker aims to achieve accessibility and relevance through a conversational format, as a time-travelling Clausewitz speaks with various audiences at West Point, a think-tank and over dinner at a private club. Accordingly, the book tends to read as historical fiction, although the dialogue is interesting—sometimes question and answer, sometimes monologue—which keeps the pages turning.

To create this world and justify his role as Clausewitz's muse, Coker's seeming mastery of everything from theology to biology—and every discipline between—makes the text unnecessarily dense. In some sections, Coker also becomes academically indulgent, basking in the freedom of fiction to demonstrate his own expertise. Coker also writes at times in an opaqueness mirroring that of Clausewitz, which runs counter to the book's proposed purpose.

Nevertheless, *Rebooting Clausewitz* is an enjoyable read for those well versed in Clausewitz and interested in exploring the deep recesses of his work in a new and entertaining presentation. There are some real gems of insight, particularly in testing Clausewitz's thoughts against modern research and in suggesting avenues for further research on Clausewitz and the study of war.

In considering what Clausewitz would make of this book, Coker suggests the question best be left unasked. But on the question of whether this book is useful to practitioners of war, my answer is yes. Although readers will not enjoy every page, they will certainly gain a better understanding of Clausewitz and his enduring relevance.



*The Rag Tag Fleet: the unknown story of the Australian men and boats that helped win the war in the Pacific*

Ian W. Shaw  
Hachette Australia: Sydney, 2017,  
336 pages  
ISBN: 978-0-7336-3729-2  
\$32.99

Reviewed by Jim Truscott, OAM

This little-known story is a long overdue record of how a small fleet of Australian trawlers not much larger than gunboats supplied US and Australian forces in the attack on Buna and subsequently across the Pacific in the Philippines and China. Evolving from an exploratory US mission, it quickly became obvious that there were very few deep-water ports or port facilities in the Southwest Pacific area of operations, and that there was a need for a Small Ships Section to fill the gap until specialised US vessels would become available in mid-1943.

The US Army strategy to acquire these Small Ships commenced in June 1942 and, aided by the Australian Shipping Control Board, the Section searched for commercial fishing trawlers that could winch themselves off a beach. Soon there were some 17 crewed trawlers berthed in Sydney, repainted grey and armed with machine guns, along with an array of sail-boats and punts and a 280-tonne schooner as a mobile floating command post. As the Japanese sought to sever the supply line between America and

Australia, bases for the Small Ships were established in Townsville and Port Moresby, with Milne Bay becoming a major base.

Coordinated by the Combined Operations Services Command, the Small Ships became integral to the build-up for the attack on Buna. As air resupply was thwarted by bad weather, limited airfields and a shortage of aircraft, the Small Ships became a critical pipeline carrying men and munitions for the allied assault on Buna, Sanananda and Gona. The sea lines of communications from Milne Bay were absolutely vital to moving parts of the assaulting force into positions and in their resupply.

In the build-up, a Japanese air raid destroyed four of the Small Ships just before the attack, with a crucial loss of artillery guns and ammunition. Then two more Small Ships were damaged leaving only one operating. The story reminded me of the equally dire resupply situation just a couple of days before the International Force in East Timor was about to be lodged in Dili but without adequate commercial ships for supply.

The assault on Buna began but it ground to a halt for lack of resupply. Air supply could not match sea supply and the direction was given for all Small Ships between Sydney and Port Moresby to go to Milne Bay. The changing of US commanders at Buna made little difference to the bogged-down assault, when it was armour and more artillery that was needed. The account highlighted the chestnuts of unsupported infantry attacks being unworkable and that air supply alone usually cannot deliver the tonnage required.

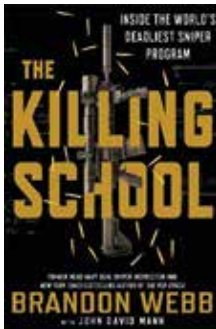
Soon eight light Stuart tanks were delivered by the Small Ships and specialised landing craft started to arrive which allowed the landing of the Australian 18th Brigade. Even though steel barges that could be towed were also introduced, enabling supply bases to be better set up, there was still the constant risk of the Small Ships running aground by night and being strafed by day including by friendly fire.

The battle for the beach-heads was over by January 1943 and, from that point on, amphibious warfare became the norm in the Pacific. Large ocean-going tugs and landing ships, constructed in Australia and the US, started to arrive in 1943 and a training program was set up in Sydney to build up Australian crew numbers. The Small



Ships were then absorbed into the US Army Transportation Service and subsequently involved in operations in the Philippines and China before being closed down in January 1946.

I would have liked to have seen more images and a coastal chart of New Guinea but, nonetheless, this book is an important contribution to the military history of both the US and Australian armies. It also redresses the lack of acknowledgement of the involvement of Small Ships in the war in the Pacific. It finishes with the long overdue recognition by the Australian Government in 2009 when the Australian members of this US Army unit were finally granted entitlement to Australian Defence honours. It is a thoroughly enjoyable read.



### *The Killing School: inside the world's deadliest sniper program*

Brandon Webb, with John David Mann  
Hachette: Sydney, 2017, 480 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-2501-2993-2  
\$32.99

Reviewed by Lex McAulay

This is really two books in one. Part of the content is the establishment of a US Navy SEAL sniper school, and part is the battlefield experiences of some US snipers in Mogadishu, Iraq and Afghanistan, though these experiences are not related directly to expertise acquired at the sniper school described.

According to the content, Brandon Webb and a colleague, Eric Davis, both relatively junior Petty Officers, were ordered to establish a sniper school for SEALs. The next senior ranks were two distant Senior Chief and Master Chief Petty Officers. There is no reference to commissioned officers in command or as instructors, and no reference to the administrative support necessary for student selection, travel, accommodation, food and messing, vehicles and a budget. Apparently, all that happened elsewhere and, by implication, two junior NCOs decided on course policy, final course content, acquisition of training accommodation, use of shooting ranges and instruction.

A major theme of this part of the book is the decision to make a radical departure from the usual hassling of students and the in-your-face aggression from instructors who want students to fail. Instead, it was decided to greet students in a friendly manner, treat them from the beginning as intelligent adults who have reached an acceptable standard of training and expertise, and bring them to a superior level of sniping capability. Mistakes in weapon handling and errors in shooting were not used to cudgel the student and berate him as a nincompoop, on the usual pretext of performance under stress, but as a learning aid quietly acknowledged.

The entire structure of the course was revised, so that shooting came as the final phase, preceded by instruction in all other aspects. It was also recognised that some people are excellent practitioners of a skill but cannot teach. This problem is acknowledged in both civilian and military fields. Webb does make the point that qualification in instructing and creation of a lesson plan and course syllabus was vital to success.

Webb and Davis created a course that raised the level of instruction, standardised the course content (previously US East Coast and West Coast content were different in some aspects), integrated modern science and technology, trained the student to operate alone and introduced a mentorship program. Surprising results were achieved and became known throughout the US military establishment. Webb does acknowledge the people and writings that brought about this change, and that the two distant Chiefs had compiled much of the course content, but contends that he and Davis refined it.

The first 100 or so pages of the book relate the early life, enlistment and careers of the men whose experiences comprise the 'in the field' final component of the book, then comes the establishment of the sniper school, and finally memoirs of operations in Mogadishu, Iraq and Afghanistan. Some readers, like this reviewer, might find the memoirs presented in an irritating way. Rather than have a complete section devoted to one man or team, the account gives about two pages to, say, Mogadishu in 1995, then jumps to another, to others, then back to Mogadishu and so on. The maps are gathered at the front of the book, which is convenient when working through the 'interwoven' memoirs. The photos are a mixture of those people mentioned, as youngsters, in training, and in the field.

Throughout the book, reference is made to a famous deceased US Marine Corps sniper from the Vietnam era. Several of his exploits have

been repeated in various books without question as to veracity and been re-enacted for some sniping DVDs on TV channels. This reviewer has contacted several of those publishers with questions for the authors of these books, for official operational details of date, time, place, enemy unit, any relevant US medal citation and so on to authenticate these feats but has not received any reply. Some of the claimed shooting feats have been tried on US ranges in good weather and without operational stress, and cannot be replicated.

These points aside, the book is interesting. The reviewer has no knowledge of current Australian Army training methods but hopes those involved in Army shooting, and recreational shooters also, will find something of interest in this book. Basically, a good read about 'thinking outside the square' to achieve perfection. Recommended.