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If no Victoria Cross, then why not a Star of Gallantry?

The return of the Orions from the MEAO

*HMAS Vampire and her Last Captain:
CMDR WTA Moran RAN*

*The Limits of Extended Deterrence and the Risk of
Nuclear Proliferation in the North West Pacific*

On Maritime Military Health Services

2013 Creswell Oration

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a seaman officer who served on various projects with Admiral Purves, I was delighted to read Dr. Tom Lewis's article in the December 2012 issue.

However, there was no mention of his most obvious habit of smoking cigars.

Freddie told me on various occasions that he acquired this habit whilst serving as an engineer in the Bolivian Air Force. He said that, during the 1930s when it was difficult to get a job as a ship's engineer, he responded to an advertisement in a British paper inserted by the Bolivian Air Force and was accepted. He wasn't an airman for very long, just long enough to take up cigars.

Late in the evening, he was proud to declare that he was the only RAN officer to have served in the Bolivian Air Force. I am sure that he was not pulling my leg...

John Smith

To the Editor,

I have now received the December copy of *Headmark*. I must express my admiration for the professionalism and excellent presentation of this journal; it has changed immensely from way back when my husband was named as the "publisher" so that he could be sued and no-one else for the content – or at least that was as I understood it!

Jonathan Brett Young also asks me to thank you as he also received a copy of the December Journal – indeed I think he was so impressed he may take out a subscription! Despite his resignation from the RAN many years ago he retains close ties with his year; writes many obituaries for the London *Times* etc., and has only just resigned as Deputy Lord Lieutenant, after many years, of Sutherland County in Scotland.

I appreciated the biography of Fred Purves and was interested in the Vernon Parker Oration; he was also a close friend.

I wonder if you might be interested in a further story about Fred Purves told by him to me many years ago. During the Depression, when jobs were scarce and he was apparently in UK (and had some connection with Vickers; I'm speaking here of 1934/35 (?); he was in Bolivia during the war between Bolivia and Chaco and operating as an aircraft mechanic or engineer. He was arrested; placed, with others, on a truck, menaced by machineguns and threatened with death (he must have been all of 22 plus or minus at this stage) but managed, with the help of the Brit Embassy (or whoever the diplomatic people were then) to be repatriated to UK as a distressed British seaman. My husband and I did send him a postcard from La Paz in 1990 to remind him of his time in Bolivia!

There are many stories that can be told about Fred Purves but my favorite is after the first ships that were introduced in the RAN with "bridge control", which meant not having to signal down to the engine room for forward or reverse thrust etc., my husband (at this time a Commander) was with Fred Purves at a gathering in Garden Island or Penguin or somewhere like that in Sydney in the company of a number of senior officers, where one said senior officer brought up the subject of these new ships with "bridge control."

Fred's response was "you can give the bastards bridge control but you can't give them bloody brains!" Being the junior officer present my husband chose to absent himself very quickly!

Best regards

Valmai Patterson

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THE RETURN OF THE ORIONS FROM THE MEAO – ENHANCED RAN/RAAF TRAINING BENEFITS OR OPERATION RESOLUTE WORKHORSES

BY LIEUTENANT SEAN BATES

The AP-3C Orion (P3) aircraft is Australia's primary maritime patrol aircraft (MPA). For almost ten years, two were serving in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) conducting overland and maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions. There was, however, a long held belief that Australia's MPA forces, attached to Operation Slipper (Global War on Terrorism), would soon be returned to Australia.

In early 2010, the P3s were removed from Operation Catalyst (Stabilisation of Iraq) and re-focused their efforts on Anti-Piracy operations off the Horn of Africa and ISR operations over Afghanistan. This changed operational focus may have enhanced the belief that their tasking for the initial deployment to the MEAO was complete and that they would soon return to Australia.

On 23 November 2012 the Chief of the Defence Force formally announced that the P3s had completed their service in MEAO and would return to Australia. The return of the P3 detachment saw the conclusion of 2410 missions flown since their initial deployment to the MEAO in 2003, which is a significant achievement. The return of these airframes and crews means there is an increased availability of airframes for other taskings.

This availability can have benefits for the RAN and RAAF, particularly an improvement in both services high-end warfare skills. CDF has stated that '92 Wing will continue its primary roles to prepare for, conduct and sustain ISR and strike operations in support of Australia's national interests. This includes the significant border protection commitment in support of Operation Resolute.¹

The return of the deployed P3s will have a detrimental effect on the capability of the surface combatants still operating in the MEAO. The P3s have provided an invaluable service to Coalition warships by providing surface reporting out to ranges far greater than the ships radars. They also have the ability to stay on station for up to three times longer than embarked organic aircraft and patrol far greater distances. The loss of the P3s will also see a reduction in ISR missions provided to Coalition ground forces in Afghanistan. Although the overland ISR role is important this paper will solely focus on the P3s maritime capability.

Future Employment of the P3s

It is easy to say that the returning P3s should be re-directed to operate with Border Protection Command. This would be particularly relevant in the wake of recent media reports that sensationalize the influx of irregular maritime arrivals into Australian waters. Such media reports discuss at length the supposed inability of our Armidale Class Patrol Boat force to deal

with the increased number of arrivals by boat. The Chief of Navy has made several public comments about the inaccuracies of such reporting.

The reduction of Australia's air commitment to the Global War on Terror and anti-piracy does not necessarily mean more assets for Operation Resolute. The current commitment to Resolute is three airframes and two crews that are continually detached to Darwin from their home base at RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia. Generally only one crew is required to fly Resolute missions per day, while the other remains on standby for Search And Rescue tasks.

More ADF airframes being made available to Resolute does not necessarily mean more irregular arrivals will be detected. Intelligence gathered by civilian and military agencies at home and abroad, by a variety of means, provides information for Border Protection Command. This information is passed on to the MPAs (P3s and chartered Coastwatch aircraft) and provides a window for

*P3 releases
munitions over a
Meko 200 frigate
(Courtesy RAAF)*



possible Suspected Illegal Entry Vessels detection. The fact that the majority of SIEVs are detected before arriving in Australian waters would suggest that the balance of MPA use is about right in the north and northwestern approaches. So, if the boost to P3s is not going to be utilised by Border Protection Command, what is the best use for them?

92 Wing, which operates the P3s, will be glad to see the return of these two airframes and two crews from the MEAO. The return will aid their own wing training burdens and provide greater respite for Resolute deployed crews. However, there is a greater, mutually beneficial solution that can result from these assets returning. Airframes and crews could be reinvested into combined high-end war fighting training, which would have a greater net benefit for both the RAAF and RAN. Both services would benefit from the extra crews and aircraft being made available for joint training.

The RAN has long been concerned with the deterioration of high-end war fighting skills; Program Pelorus was created in 2011 to address this decline. A significant reason for this decline is the recent lack of aviation assets and submarines to support RAN's exercises and Unit Readiness Evaluations (URE). There are a number of additional reasons for this and it would be naïve to argue that an increase in P3 availability alone would reverse the trend. However, if more assets were made available for routinely occurring serials, Operation Rooms would be more familiar with inter-service operations, leading to an improvement in high-end war fighting skills.

92 Wing has identified their high-end war fighting skills are also diminishing, which can be directly linked to their recent operational tempo. Out of 18 airframes and 12 crews in two operational squadrons,



P8 Poseidon (US Navy)

MEAO and Resolute commitments have continually demanded five airframes and four crews. The normal commitments required for ongoing training of personnel and aircraft unavailability due to routine maintenance has added to the aircraft and crew availability difficulties. These factors, combined with normal career development courses further effect crew availability, which has resulted in less participation by P3s in Fleet Concentration Periods and like exercises.

This does not imply that the RAAF/RAN have been ignoring their diminishing skills. 92 Wing have included high-end war fighting skills simulation periods into a crew's 18 month training and operation cycle. The RAN's Sea Training Group (STG) has similarly undertaken training in the RAN's Major Fleet Units providing guidance and, where needed, training and evaluation. But only so much can be achieved with the current time and asset constraints. Although there is less the two services can do about the time facet, there is something that can be done to identify the best possible use of limited assets.

With an increase of air assets for joint and combined exercises the high-end war fighting training burden will be eased. Air assets can be best used in Fleet Concentration Periods,

such as the Triton series of exercises, PWO warfare assessment week and work up periods. This increased aircraft availability will reduce the strain on RAN aircraft controllers, particularly the Anti-Submarine/Anti-Surface Aircraft Controllers (ASAC), to complete the required number of live and dual control hours. PWO and Operations Room inter-service planning and execution skills will be further enhanced.

Greater cooperation would lead to an improvement in the high-end war fighting skills for the RAN's frigates/submarines and the RAAF's P3s alike. The opposite is also possible if the ADF fail to take up this challenge. Training opportunities and the chance to build significant high-end war fighting skills for both services will be lost and could take years to be reacquired, if at all. The ADF needs to make some hard decisions on where to employ the P3's in the future either in rebuilding high-end war fighting skills or border protection operations. Potentially more civilian aircraft charter options could be used in border protection operations and the P3s allocated to joint and combined exercises. Why have a highly trained war horse pulling a cart!

Other roles for P3's

Navies across the world have always had a close relationship with MPA forces. In

THE RETURN OF THE ORIONS FROM THE MEAO – ENHANCED RAN/RAAF TRAINING BENEFITS OR OPERATION RESOLUTE WORKHORSES

many nations, such as the United States, the MPAs are actually part of the Navy. This closeness is due to the unparalleled support surface combatants gain from MPAs in all capacities of operation. Militarily, P3s increase surface combatants success in detection, identification and prosecution of ASW and ASuW threats. In the constabulary role, P3s are able to respond to a SAR more expeditiously than a surface unit and clear enormous search areas in far less time than surface units or organic aircraft. This was most noticeable in the 1997 Southern Ocean rescues of yachtsmen Tony Bullimore and Theirry Dubois where P3s quickly located the stricken vessels and deployed life-rafts, on 6 January 1997, and the men were then picked up by the frigate *HMAS Adelaide* some three days later.²

MPAs also have a diplomatic role where by they provide assistance to friendly nations. P3s can patrol large expanses of ocean to identify illegal fishing or smuggling activities, particularly in the South West Pacific where many island nations do not have the aviation resources to undertake these tasks. The P3 is perfectly designed to work hand in hand with the RAN. They can search vast areas of ocean and then provide the necessary data to allow surface ships to undertake military, constabulary or diplomatic roles as required.

Replacement of the P3s

In the future, the size of Australia's MPA force will be reduced with the introduction of the P3 replacement, the P8 Poseidon. Only eight airframes, at this stage, are being purchased by the RAAF. Although eventually the P8s will be supported by a yet unspecified Unmanned Aerial System (UAS), the time for more inter service operability is now. It is time for the RAAF to deliver more P3s for high-end war fighting training and the RAN to take

advantage of inter-service operability opportunities, while the P3's remain in service.

Coupled with the border protection requirements, which are not likely to diminish in the foreseeable future, there will soon be fewer airframes to do the same amount work. This work consisting of border protection operations, supporting exercises at home and abroad and the conduct of SAR and diplomatic taskings, when required. Additionally, the introduction of an UAS will bring its own level of complexity for inter-operability between the RAN and RAAF. The new system may not be nearly as functional for the RAN as working with a manned system and in some cases, may not be as suitable for instance in deploying a life-raft to a sinking yacht.

With the return of the P3's, and their air and ground crews from the MEAO, 92 Wing will be better able to support the RAN in periods of high-end war fighting training activity. Unit work up periods, PWO warfare assessment weeks and the Triton series of exercises would all be positively affected. Greater training results will be possible for both the RAN and RAAF with 92 Wing able to commit more airframes, more regularly and for longer periods.

The ADF has a golden opportunity at this point to re-deploy the returning P3's to high-end war fighting training and seek other solutions for border protection operations. The risk of failing to do this is a continued diminishment of these hard to get – easy to lose skills in order to satisfy the current border protection issues. 🚢



P3 Border protector - HMAS Armadale leaves Darwin (Courtesy RAN)



Lieutenant Sean Bates RAN joined the Royal Australian Navy in 2005, graduating ADFA in 2007 with a Bachelor of Business. Having received his BWC in 2011 on Perth, Lieutenant Bates has participated in several domestic and international exercises. He is currently residing in the United Kingdom while working for the Sea Power Centre – Australia.

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(Endnotes)

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2 *Search and Rescue: A Miracle in the South*. Issue 3, January 2007. *Semaphore* Newsletter of the Sea Power Centre – Australia.

If no Victoria Cross, then why not a Star of Gallantry?

BY DR TOM LEWIS



The decision by the federal government recently that 13 former members of the armed forces would not be receiving retrospective recognition for their deeds is not only shocking. It is wrong.

Over three years of researching my book *The Submarine Six*, I came to know three of these men: Hec Waller, Robert Rankin, and Teddy Sheen, as well as can be expected across a gap of seven decades and their deaths in combat in World War II. Their actions in fighting on board His Majesty's Australian Ships *Perth*, *Yarra*, and *Armidale* were heroic indeed, and at the time they received little recognition. Waller and Sheen received what was called a "Mention in Despatches." It wasn't a medal, rather a badge, albeit a prestigious one. Many thousands¹ were awarded before it was phased out in 1975.

In WWII the MID was one of only two awards that could be given posthumously, the other being the highest award of the Victoria Cross. Exceptionally high circumstances were demanded before the Cross was given: it was "awarded for the most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valor or self-sacrifice or extreme devotion to duty in the presence of the enemy."² Of course, evidence to the deeds carried

out needed to be provided by witnesses.

The investigations into the circumstances of the naval people on the inquiry list – 11 out of the 13 – have not taken account of

the special circumstances surrounding naval battle. This is a new factor that has not been considered before, and should have been. By its very nature, witnesses to attest to such bravery are far fewer than in land combat, because the ships concerned often were sunk with massive loss of life. How was this taken into account?

In the action between the German raider *Kormoran* and *HMAS Sydney* for example, in November 1941, all 645 men died. With the loss of the battlecruiser *HMS Hood* in 1941, all but three³ of the 1,418 crew were killed. With the loss of the ships in which these Australians served, we saw on Waller's ship, the cruiser *Perth*, 353 of the 681 crew were killed in the action, and a further 110 ashore or in captivity later.⁴ (Fighting alongside the Australian cruiser, and also sunk, was *USS Houston* – her Captain Rooks received the very highest American award, the Congressional Medal of Honor. Why do the Americans reward their people so much more readily?)

The sloop *Yarra's* personnel, fighting as the sole convoy escort against numerous Japanese warships, saw even more of a kill ratio for the enemy: 138 out of 151 died in the action or in the water later. No officer survived. Teddy Sheen's ship, the corvette *Armidale*, was less battered: but she still had

100 out of 149 men

lost. And in Darwin harbour on 19 February 1942, Leading Cook Francis Emms – another of the 13 – was shot in the stomach in combat manning a machinegun against Japanese air attack. He died later that day.

His circumstances were a little different – the entire ship's company of *HMAS Kara Kara*, a ship tending the boom net defence across the harbour, numbered only 39 – and two of them were killed.⁵ Hardly many witnesses to hand, given their locations around and inside the ship – another factor that makes naval bravery hard to witness.

Awarding the Victoria Cross was even more difficult at sea as the recommendation needed to come from a senior commissioned officer, normally the captain. Captains were mostly to be found in battle on their open unprotected bridges – the point of aim for enemy gunners. Not surprisingly the captains of *Perth* and *Yarra* were killed in action at their posts. How was this limitation taken into account?

Given the attrition numbers, it's not surprising that the VC for naval personnel was more difficult to obtain than it is for land forces. Of the Victoria Crosses given in Australian military history, none have been therefore awarded to seagoing people, and only four to air servicemen.

Admittedly it was always going to be hard to award a Victoria Cross to even one or two of these gallant soldiers and sailors. To hand out a "bag of VCs" would cheapen the award. Nevertheless, it is surprising that at least some were not recommended: it would show the depths of concern



Victoria Cross, awarded to Major Peter John Badcoe of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps (SA Museum)

Left: Star of Gallantry (Australian Government)

If no Victoria Cross, then why not a Star of Gallantry?

we as a nation have for these people. Further, more thought should have been given to alternatives, despite the Tribunal's attesting that "the Tribunal was conscious that it should apply the standards and values of the time, and not those of contemporary Australian society and current expectations." This seems strange in an era of recognising that in the past injustices were inflicted on all sorts of people, from generations of children, to individuals – and we have been lately remedying them, with apologies to the stolen generation for example.

Take Lieutenant Commander Robert Rankin's case. He was commanding *HMAS Yarra*, and took her into combat against probably five ships, each of which outgunned him. But in a desperate attempt to save his convoy, which scattered like sheep before wolves, *Yarra* charged the enemy. She was shot to pieces.

Rankin's case is almost identical to that of British naval officer Fogarty Fegen, who commanded the converted liner *HMS Jervis Bay* in the Atlantic. Defending a convoy, Fegen as the sole escort charged his attacker, the German "pocket battleship"

Admiral Scheer to try and let his convoy escape. Like Rankin, he was killed in the action and his ship sunk. Fegen was awarded the VC for his actions.

Rankin had seen a strange and difficult war. He married just before the outbreak of hostilities, but had been called from his chosen specialty of naval surveying to serve in the British Navy. He had distinguished himself in senior positions in two support vessels, but his wife and new child had been packed off home to Australia, while his ships survived attack after attack in the Mediterranean. He was posted home to Sydney at the end of 1941, and almost immediately posted to his first command, *HMAS Yarra*; a surveyor in charge of a warship. There is not a sign of a demur in the service records of this quietly redoubtable man. He kissed his wife and by-now infant daughter goodbye – and never saw them again.

But through cumbersome administrative procedures, inertia and the need for Australian naval actions to be approved⁶ by the British parent navy, Rankin has seen no award at all for his actions. Not that it has been unnoticed: stories of the event; histories of the RAN since, and even the Australian Prime Minister at the time lauded the actions of the ship and her company.

This recent inquiry found that there had been errors in

HMAS Yarra (II)

Grimsby-class Sloop; built at Cockatoo Docks, Sydney; commissioned 21 January 1936

1,060 tons (standard), 1,500 tons (full load)

266 feet length x 36 feet beam x 10 feet draught

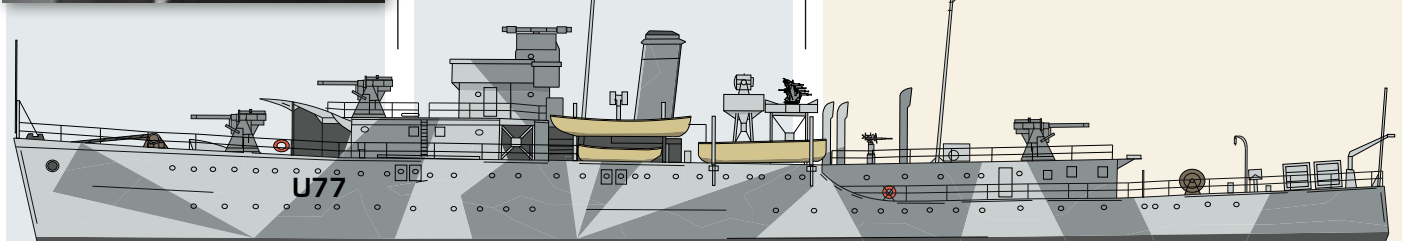
Crew: 160

Parsons geared turbines, twin screws; 2,000hp; 16½ knots; range: 9,000 miles @ 10 knots

Armament: 3 x 4-inch (Mark V) guns, 2 x 20mm guns (replaced original 4 x 3-pounder guns prior to Mediterranean service), 1 x Quad 0.5-inch AA mounting (on platform amidships), Depth charges (two stern chutes, two throwers), Minesweeping gear

HMAS Yarra was a sloop built locally in the mid-1930s to a modern British design. Sloops were not designed as true fleet warships, for example lacking the speed and torpedo hitting power of destroyers. Some therefore might have said that they should never have faced enemy warships, which was in fact Yarra's fate. Instead sloops were more suited to anti-submarine and anti-aircraft work, although in Yarra's short but eventful career she performed many duties including shore bombardment and even sinking an Iranian gunboat. Other sloops, such as Yarra's sister-ship, HMAS Swan, replaced their old open 4-inch single mounts with much more modern twin turreted guns, doubling their firepower as well as providing some protection for the gun crews. Nevertheless Yarra's open Mark V 4-inch guns could elevate to 85°, and her gun crews became very efficient, probably saving the ship during a couple of very heavy air attacks both in the Mediterranean and off Singapore.

Yarra's crew were justifiably confident in March 1942, having met and won every challenge thrown at them to date. The profile here shows Yarra as she appeared in 1941. Her appearance by 1942 was no doubt more worn and tattered, having just sustained damage from recent air attacks, and having received little assistance in the chaotic atmosphere of Java. As dozens of vessels fled for Fremantle or Ceylon, two powerful Japanese forces lay in their path. One of these included three heavy cruisers, each carrying three floatplanes. Yarra's convoy was probably spotted by these aircraft, and perhaps it was no accident that dawn on the 4th March found the convoy within sight of the Japanese cruisers. In a ship not best suited to surface combat, and against truly hopeless odds, Yarra's captain Lieutenant Commander Rankin turned about and attacked, hoping to buy time for his convoy. But the Japanese squadron was well practised, having just accounted for a British and an American destroyer, as well as other vessels. Before long an 8-inch shell smashed into the bridge, carrying away most of the superstructure and with it Rankin and almost all of the ship's officers. Barely a dozen of her crew were destined to survive. 138 were killed during the engagement.



the case of *HMAS Yarra*. There certainly were and not one decoration was awarded. But rather than correct that wrong, they gave the ship a "Unit Citation." No doubt this will be a source of pride for the present ship of that name and any successors, but it does not recognize the undoubted bravery of Robert Rankin, Lieutenant Commander Smith who took charge of the abandon ship routine, and Leading Seaman "Buck" Taylor, who stayed at his post firing his gun. Why was the VC not asked for in the case of Rankin? The Tribunal's reasoning seems to be that few survived who actually saw brave conduct on the part of Rankin and Taylor, and it is now 70 years on. That seems specious reasoning given the above argument. Surely the fact that the ship made for the enemy in the face of hopeless odds is indisputable – and should be evidence for Rankin's VC. British sailors were brought onto the upper deck of the Japanese cruiser in which they were captives to witness the destruction of *Yarra*. One wrote after the war that they were all deeply impressed by *the ship's* fight. They wrote that with *Yarra* on fire one gun was still firing back at the circling Japanese warships. That was Taylor's who had told his sailors to abandon ship but chose to stay with his dead Captain, his ship and his gun, fighting to the end. Taylor has been considered but refused further honour. There were a number of sailors, now dead, who undoubtedly saw this but is the fact they could not give evidence reason enough?

The Tribunal stated that it was now impossible for the Australian government to award Imperial honours, but even if that is correct there are however modern Australian awards which could be used such as the Star of Gallantry. Why not award these, or upon consideration, their lesser divisions of Medal or

Commemoration.⁷ Are we really to think that household names such as Sheean have been adequately rewarded? We now use the word hero to describe our prominent sports stars and sometimes their codes induct them into a Hall of Fame. Does the failure to recognise these naval heroes truly reflect the real values of the nation? Has the tribunal's decision reflected the national amnesia over the real heroism of our sailors where the stakes were not a game won or lost, or a cup or a trophy, but life itself? 🚢



Dr Tom Lewis OAM is a former naval officer and the author of 11 military history books. He wrote about the six men honoured by the names of the Collins-class submarines in The Submarine Six, published by Avonmore Books in 2012. He is the Director of the Darwin Military Museum, and the editor of Headmark.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Website. Honours and Awards. http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/honours_and_awards/?Name=&ServiceNumber=&Unit=&Award=Mention+in+Dispatches&Recommended=Both&Authority=All+authorities Accessed 3 March 2013.
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- 4 Odgers, *Navy Australia*. NSW: Child & Associates, 1989. (p.112)
- 5 Website. Royal Australian Navy. <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-kara-kara-i> Accessed 3 March 2013.
- 6 Navy was treated differently to Army and RAAF – the Senior Service ship commanding officers could not suggest the nature of the award and the sister services could. Naval awards also had to go through the British Admiralty; the Army's and the RAAF went through the Air Force or Army Ministers; then to the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. (See Bradford. *In the Highest Traditions*. p. 168) Also the government inquiry report: *Valour*. <http://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/inquiries/completed-inquiries/valour/Exec Summary para E6>: "In the case of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) units serving on the Australia Station during the Second World War, recommendations were forwarded by the RAN to London without passing through the Australian Government."
- 7 The *Valour* report. <http://defence-honours-tribunal.gov.au/inquiries/completed-inquiries/valour/Exec Summary E20>: The Tribunal also kept in mind that the Australian Defence honours system was not established to rectify past injustices caused solely by shortcomings in the Imperial system. Hence, in considering possible retrospective honours, the Tribunal concluded that it should apply the rules as they were at the time. One pertinent rule under the Imperial system was that only the VC and the MID could be awarded posthumously for actions in the presence of the enemy. The Tribunal therefore concluded that in considering possible retrospective posthumous honours for an action in the period when the Imperial system applied, it could only recommend the equivalent honours in the Australian system, namely the VC for Australia and the Commendation for Gallantry. To do otherwise would open the Tribunal to examining all the other cases where a posthumous MID had been awarded.

A complete list of sources relating to the sinking of *Yarra* and *Armidale* can be found in *The Submarine Six*, Avonmore Books.

HMAS Vampire and her Last Captain: Commander WTA Moran RAN

BY MATTHEW B WILLS

This is the story of the Australian destroyer HMAS Vampire from the start of the war in the Pacific until she was sunk by Japanese aircraft off Ceylon on 10 April 1942

Destroyer losses in the Royal Navy during the first two and one-half years of World War II were inordinate. During nearly six years of war Britain lost at least 160 destroyers. This category of warship was particularly vulnerable to divebombers. *HMS Kelly* commanded by a future Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Louis Mountbatten, was sent to the bottom near Crete in May 1941 by at least 24 Ju 87 divebombers, the dreaded Stukas.

This is the story of *HMAS Vampire* that met a similar fate at the hands of carrier based Japanese divebombers off the east coast of Ceylon on 9 April 1942. *Vampire* was originally built for the Royal Navy. She was launched on 21 May 1917. She had a displacement of 1,090 tons. Her dimensions were 312' o.a. x 29' 6" x 10' 10" (mean draught). She was armed with four 4-inch guns and a few smaller calibre guns and six 21-inch torpedo tubes. Her S.H.P. of 27,000 produced a maximum speed of 34 knots. She carried a normal complement of 134 officers and ratings.

In 1932 *HMS Vampire* was transferred to the Royal Australian Navy. Britain's declaration of war against Nazi Germany on 3 September 1939 was immediately followed by similar declarations by Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Australia's Navy consisted of two 8-inch gun cruisers and four 6-inch gun cruisers, five destroyers (including *Vampire*) and two sloops.

With no armour plating *Vampire* was clearly vulnerable to bombs, shells

and torpedoes. It was not until the first month of the war that the Royal Navy received authority from the Treasury to purchase the Swiss designed Oerlikon antiaircraft gun, a fast firing weapon with a high muzzle velocity using 20-mm explosive shells.

Commander Louis Mountbatten made sure that his own ship, *HMS Kelly*, was among the first to be equipped with Oerlikons. At the commencement of the Pacific war *Vampire* was equipped with twin Lewis guns on her bridge and a Vickers gun on her quarterdeck, but none of the newer Oerlikons.

For the better part of two years *HMAS Vampire* served with the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean under overall command of the Admiral known as ABC, which stood for Andrew Browne Cunningham. He was greatly admired by the Australians. *Vampire* took part in countless actions against the Italians. In the forenoon on 11 July 1940 she was straddled by a stick of bombs. One of her commissioned gunners, JH Endicott RN, was mortally wounded by a bomb splinter. He was the first fatality in any Australian ship. By May 1941 *Vampire* was badly in need of a refit and was therefore withdrawn to the Singapore Naval Base where she arrived on 19 June.

This story really begins on 16 October 1941 when Commander William Thomas Alldis Moran Royal Australian Navy assumed command of *HMAS Vampire*. He was born in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia on 11



Vampire in her WWII fit-out (Tom Lewis Collection)

CMDR WTA Moran

December 1903. *Vampire* was his first command. He had less than two months to familiarize himself with his ship and his officers and ratings before the Empire of Japan launched its attacks on Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, the Philippines and Singapore.

Japanese bombers first raided Singapore in the early hours of Monday 8 December. By noon that day, Admiral Sir Tom Phillips Commander-in-Chief of the Eastern Fleet made up his mind that *HMS Prince of Wales* and *HMS Repulse* should engage this new foe. He called a meeting of their captains and others for 1200 onboard *Prince of Wales*. There is no official Royal Navy record of the names of those at that meeting; however Commander Moran's letter of proceedings forwarded to the

Australian Commonwealth Naval Board indicates that he was present. It was his first and only meeting with Captain John Leach MVO DSO who commanded *Prince of Wales*. Moran would have been well aware of *Prince of Wales*' battle in the Denmark Strait with the German battleship *Bismarck* and of Captain Leach's DSO.

At approximately 1700 Force Z consisting of HM Ships *Prince of Wales*, *Repulse*, *Express*, *Electra*, *Tenedos* and *HMAS Vampire* steamed into the South China Sea. Admiral Phillips, flying his flag in *Prince of Wales*, planned to attack Japanese troop transport early on 10 December. Late on 9 December Phillips made the difficult decision to return to Singapore after his force was spotted by enemy aircraft. The crucial battle between Force Z and the land-based aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy took place on 10 December. The first attack developed shortly after 1100. By 1320 the Japanese torpedo planes had sunk both the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*. For reasons that have never been fully explained Phillips had refused to break radio silence and request fighters while there was still time.

None of the destroyers was sunk or even seriously damaged. *Vampire* had fired at the Japanese aircraft with everything she had and Commander Moran believed that his gunners had damaged at least two enemy planes. The last signal sent from *Prince of Wales* to *Vampire* ordered her to pick up survivors from *Repulse*.

Commander Moran was the only destroyer captain to make a record of the exact number of survivors he rescued. From *Repulse* there were nine officers including Captain Tennant who was a year senior to his close friend Captain Leach, 213 ratings and one war correspondent, O'Dowd Gallagher of the *Daily Express*. *Vampire* also

rescued two ratings from the *Prince of Wales*. Neither Admiral Phillips nor Captain Leach was among the survivors. For almost ten hours Captain Tennant RN was a passenger on Commander Moran's ship.

Captain Tennant had lost his ship, 27 of her officers and 486 of her ratings. Moran could only offer the *Repulse*'s captain a bath and a clean uniform, but there was no consolation. Captain Tennant's grief was inconsolable.

Vampire reached Singapore at 1125 and secured alongside *Express*. Commander Moran immediately disembarked the wounded and then the remainder of the survivors. Moran and his men badly needed shore leave but it seems unlikely they were given any. The 11th of December was Commander Moran's 38th birthday. One would like to think that he turned command of his ship over to his First Lieutenant and treated himself to a birthday dinner at Raffles Hotel. Regrettably, there is no evidence that he was able to take leave of *Vampire*, even for a few hours.

The whole ship's company was given leave on 25-27 December but only to 1800. This limitation was due to air raid precautions and the difficulty of getting transportation to the ship after dark. In his letter of proceedings for December Commander Moran commented on a



HMS Hermes off Yantai China circa 1931 (Royal Navy)

disciplinary problem as follows: 'The Christmas spirit and the local beer were too much for some of the ship's company and I regret that a few misbehaved rather badly. They have been suitably dealt with, and behaviour on shore has been exemplary since.'¹

On that grim Christmas Commander Moran could hardly afford to be lax in enforcing discipline. Christmas night Hong Kong capitulated. The Japanese had gained superiority in the air and at sea from Hong Kong to Singapore. Their area of dominance would all too soon expand southeast throughout the Netherlands East Indies and to the west throughout the Bay of Bengal.

On 5 January Moran received some badly needed short-range antiaircraft guns consisting of two 2-pounder "pom poms" which were fitted in position

Vampire stern gun defences (Tom Lewis Collection)



HMAS Vampire and her Last Captain: Commander WTA Moran RAN

while *Vampire* was secured in the King George VI dock in the Singapore Naval Base. For the first three weeks in January *Vampire* was engaged in a variety of tasks including providing cover for mine laying operations and escorting allied convoys.

On 26 January a Japanese convoy consisting of two transports, the light cruiser *Sendai*, destroyers of the 3rd Squadron and a minesweeper appeared off Endau situated on the estuary mouth of the Endau River some 80 miles due north of Singapore. This was only five days before all British, Australian and Indian ground forces withdrew from Johore for their last stand on Singapore. The Japanese group carried essential ammunition. The British military historian HP Willmott has written of the vital role of this enemy convoy with these words, 'Without the Endau convoy of the twenty-six [January] Yamashita would have been forced to abandon the attack on Singapore or wage it with great difficulty.'²

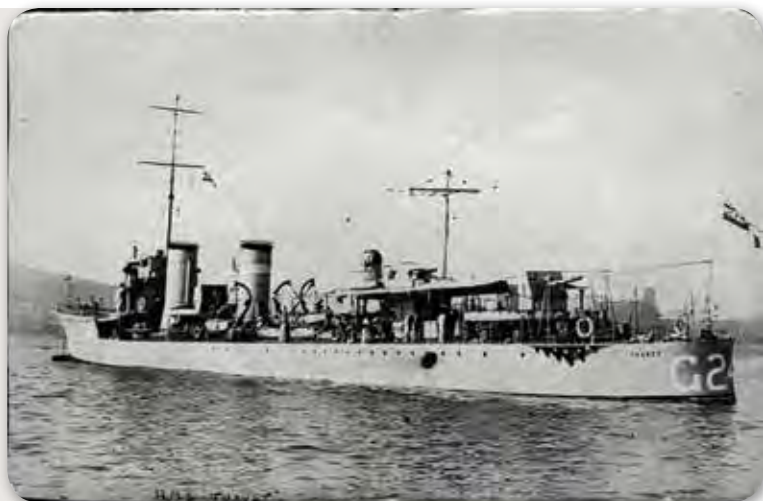
On the afternoon of 26 January the RAF and the RAAF made an all-out effort to disrupt the Japanese landings. The British, Australian and New Zealand pilots were only able to inflict direct hits on the light cruiser and the two transports. No Japanese vessel was sunk. Faced with heavy opposition from enemy fighters and accurate AA fire, the British lost 13 of 68 attacking aircraft with others badly damaged.³

That same day the captains of *HMAS Vampire* and *HMS Thanet*, also an ancient destroyer, were given verbal orders to make a night attack on the Japanese ships off Endau. The question has to be asked: Who ordered *Vampire* and *Thanet* to embark on what promised to be a one-way mission? Vice Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton did not. On 16 January Admiral Layton, who was Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet pending the arrival of Admiral

Somerville, had transferred his flag from *HMS Dragon* to *HMS Emerald*, a slightly newer cruiser, and had sailed for Colombo. The admiral left Rear Admiral EJ Spooner, Rear Admiral Malaya, in charge of all naval forces in Singapore.

It is certain that it is he who issued the order. Spooner's order may have been approved by the American Admiral Thomas C Hart who on 15 January had assumed command of Allied Naval Forces ABDA (American-British-Dutch-Australian Command). On 26 January Admiral Hart was far away somewhere in Java. It is unlikely that he was fully apprised of the proposed operation.

Spooner may not have been himself during the last half of January. In this period he had threatened to shoot a young Royal Navy officer called Geoffrey Brooke, a survivor from *Prince of Wales*, for allegedly looting. Brooke had taken possession of a brand new MG sports car which he thought was abandoned. Brooke would later write, 'Abandoned cars were two a penny ... The little car burbled happily along on return from somewhere one evening and my thoughts were anywhere but on personal trouble. Anthony Terry (Lieutenant Commander AH Terry RN) came out to meet me ... "Now you have done it," he said, "That car belongs to a Surgeon Commander Stephenson. You have been reported to the Admiral ... and he wants to have you shot!" ... Brooke's final words about Spooner were, 'Rear Admiral Spooner, undoubtedly under severe strain, had been making some strange decisions, and Terry was not exaggerating as I soon learned



HMS Thanet (Tom Lewis Collection)

from several sources!⁴ Because of Lieutenant Commander Terry's intercession the admiral soon forgot his threat to have Brooke executed.

Commander Moran as senior officer took charge of both *Vampire* and *Thanet*. In order to appreciate the tactical situation the firepower of Moran's force needs to be contrasted with the firepower of the six enemy destroyers he would most likely engage. *Vampire* mounted four 4-inch guns. *Thanet* mounted only three 4-inch guns. Five of the enemy destroyers had a main armament of six 5-inch guns mounted in twin turrets. The sixth enemy destroyer was armed with five 5-inch guns. Thus the total number of 5-inch guns on the Japanese destroyers amounted to 35 as opposed to seven 4-inch guns on the Australian and British destroyers. To make a bad situation worse *Vampire* only had three torpedoes. In fairness to Spooner his intelligence had informed him that the enemy force consisted of only two destroyers and one light cruiser.

To have any chance of success *Vampire* and *Thanet* needed to attack under cover of darkness. They departed Singapore at 1630 in broad daylight without attracting the attention of Japanese aircraft. The two ships steamed northward with *Vampire* in the lead at reduced speed to arrive off Endau after moonset. Shortly before 0200 *Vampire*, with *Thanet*

two cables astern, headed into the bay where the dark hulk of an island loomed to the northeast.

At 0237 *Vampire* sighted an enemy vessel on the starboard bow. She continued on her course without firing in hope of finding bigger game. Three minutes later *Vampire* sighted a second enemy ship dead ahead believed to be a destroyer. Commander Moran changed course to port and fired two of his torpedoes. The torpedoes missed the enemy ship, which was a minesweeper.

Vampire and *Thanet* lost the Japanese ships in the darkness and by 0313 they were close into Endau nearing shoal water. Finding no elements of the enemy convoy Moran made the decision to return to Singapore. At 0318 Moran sighted an enemy destroyer on the port bow. He then ordered *Thanet* to alter course to starboard and fire her torpedoes. Moran fired his one remaining torpedo which again missed.

Between 0318 and 1400 a confusing, intermittent battle developed between *Vampire* and *Thanet* and at least four enemy ships including one light cruiser and three destroyers. Commander Moran's first battle report describes *Thanet's* part in the night action:

After about three salvos from *Vampire*, *Thanet* opened fire with midship and after guns. She was only observed to fire about three salvos. When she was fine on our port quarter a large column of sparks shot up from the vicinity of her after tubes. Great clouds of black smoke issued from her and she sheered off to starboard at reduced speed ...⁵

Twenty minutes after being hit *Thanet* sank. Her captain Lieutenant Commander BS Davies was among the survivors. *Vampire* continued to engage the enemy ships. She fired a

total of 74 rounds. At least two of the rounds very probably damaged one enemy ship. Moran's final report reads: 'At the last salvo before *Vampire* ceased fire, two orange flames were seen to come from close to on either side of the searchlight of the destroyer on the port beam ... The searchlight went out and *Vampire* ceased fire.'⁶

Moran then ordered a smoke float to be lit and thrown over the side. When the flare was just astern of *Vampire* it produced some flame and a shower of sparks. The enemy cruiser immediately illuminated the float with searchlights and opened fire. An enemy destroyer then closed on the smoke float and was fired on by the cruiser and another Japanese destroyer, apparently under the impression that they were engaging an antagonist. This was the start of a battle between the enemy ships which continued for over half an hour. Before *Vampire* was out of sight of the enemy ships there was a large explosion north of her position which Moran believed to be the centre enemy destroyer. Moran attached his hand drawn map to his final battle report. His caption by the centre enemy destroyer reads: 'Enemy Destroyer 'A' Illuminating and closing S.F. (smoke float); heavily engaged by Destroyer 'B' and cruiser eventually appearing to blow up.'⁷

The enemy ceased firing at each other and Moran saw no more of them. *Vampire* safely arrived at the Singapore Naval Base at 1000 on Tuesday 27 January undamaged and without casualties.

The pride that Commander Moran had in his ship's company is best revealed in his own words.

It was the first full calibre firing of any sort carried out by the present ship's company and the Control Officer. The success they had, with the ship continually under wheel, reflects great credit on Lieutenant



HMS Hermes sinks, with members of the crew carrying out the captain's last order to abandon ship (Tom Lewis Collection)

Hermes sinking (Royal Navy)

BJ Peel RAN and Petty Officer JH Hutchings, the Gunner's Mate, who have trained the gun crews and the supply parties. The Gunnery Control Officer, Sub Lieutenant PN Thomson RAN (S) put up a splendid performance in his first full calibre shoot...

The temperature in the engine room was 140 degrees and the manner in which Engine Room Artificer J B Carter and Engine Room Artificer AH Rossell stuck to their jobs on the manoeuvring valves under such conditions was praiseworthy. Lieutenant (E) L L Williams RAN, the engineer officer, showed great leadership and ability in getting such good results.

One of my most anxious moments was after I had dropped the smoke float and saw my chance to shake off the enemy, but owing to searchlights, the smoke of gunfire and funnel smoke, I could not see the land. I asked Lieutenant Cartwright, who is the navigating officer, if he knew where we were, and the course down the channel. He assured me that he did and when we got a glimpse of the islands

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I found this to be correct. I consider this a fine piece of work on the part of this young officer, after the ship had been making frequent and large alterations of course during the battle. The conduct of the ship's company under fire was excellent.⁸

On 9 February 1942 at Colombo Lieutenant Commander Davies wrote his final battle report about the loss of his ship. His second paragraph reads, 'Our movements were governed by the fact that neither *Vampire* nor I knew the position of our objective namely the transports ...'⁹

On that same day in Singapore RAMY (Rear Admiral Malaya) wrote his final report on the night action off Endau. It included the words: The V [*Vampire*] did not go far enough north to locate the transports.¹⁰ This thinly veiled criticism is hard to fathom. During that long night neither the captain of *Vampire* nor the captain of *Thanet* had been told of the precise location of the transports. Indeed there was no way to locate them until first light on 27 January with a reconnaissance aircraft, provided one was available.

In making the decision to return to Singapore *Vampire's* captain obviously concluded that finding the enemy transports in the dark was next to impossible and that to have ventured farther north would have invited the certain destruction of both *Vampire* and *Thanet*.

The 27th of January 1942 was *Vampire's* last appearance in Singapore. The next day she left the Naval Base to escort a convoy to Sundra Strait with the Australian sloop *Yarra*. Between then and 5 February *Vampire* was involved in convoy duty in and out of Batavia. On 5 February *Vampire* sailed for Colombo escorting two merchant ships. She arrived in Colombo on 11 February where she joined the East

Indies station.

In February and March the war was still far from Ceylon; however, Singapore's surrender on 15 February and the Netherlands East Indies collapse on 12 March increased the risk that the Japanese would invade Ceylon.

Prime Minister Churchill acted decisively. The garrison at Ceylon was increased. Additional fighter aircraft were rushed to Ceylon. The Eastern Fleet was reinforced with two modern carriers, *HMS Formidable* and *HMS Indomitable*. They were joined by the small carrier *HMS Hermes* which was the first ship built as an aircraft carrier for the Royal Navy. On 24 March Admiral Sir James Somerville assumed command of the Eastern Fleet flying his flag in the battleship *HMS Warspite*.

When Admiral Nagumo led his five carriers into the Indian Ocean he had hoped to surprise and then destroy Admiral Somerville's Eastern Fleet which he believed to be concentrated at Colombo. In a rare intelligence success the arcane Far East Combined Bureau succeeded in intercepting and decrypting Japanese signals revealing that Nagumo's carriers would launch air strikes against Colombo on 1 April.

Somerville anticipated that the enemy would approach Colombo from the southeast and on 31 March he concentrated the Eastern Fleet 80 miles SSE from the southern tip of Ceylon. When the attack failed to materialize on 1 April Admiral Somerville ordered his two modern carriers *Formidable* and *Indomitable* together with his



old 'R' class battleships, which were running short of fresh water, to Addu Atoll some 600 miles southwest of Ceylon. *Hermes* and her escort *Vampire* were ordered back to Trincomalee on Ceylon's east coast to embark *Hermes'* aircraft.

The Japanese air raid on Colombo came on Easter Sunday, 5 April. That day in Colombo harbour Japanese divebombers sank the destroyer *HMS Tenedos*. Later that day they sank the cruisers *HMS Dorsetshire* and *HMS Cornwall* when they were about 220 miles south of Colombo desperately trying to join the Eastern Fleet. Admiral Somerville then wisely decided that he risked the annihilation of his carriers by engaging the vastly superior enemy fleet. Beginning on the night of 6 April he ordered a withdrawal first to Addu Atoll and shortly thereafter to Kilindini, East Africa.

On 8 April Nagumo decided to launch a heavy attack on the harbour at Trincomalee and nearby airfields before withdrawing from the Indian Ocean. The only major British warship at Trincomalee was *Hermes*. Her escort *HMAS Vampire* was moored nearby. When a Catalina aircraft discovered the approach of the

Hermes-Vampire veterans onboard a SLN patrol boat at Trinco harbour in 2005 (Courtesy Malcolm Ludgate)

Japanese carriers Vice Admiral Sir Geoffrey Arbuthnot, Commander-in-Chief East Indies, ordered the Flag Officer-in-Charge Trincomalee to clear the harbour. That night *Hermes* and *Vampire* sailed southward with a minelayer, a tanker, a Royal Fleet Auxiliary and a corvette.

The Japanese air raid on Trincomalee took place at 0700 on 9 April. About 55 bombers escorted by approximately 50 fighters flying at 15,000 feet bombed the China Bay airfield and the dockyard causing considerable damage. When the raid ended *Hermes* and *Vampire* were 65 miles to the south about five miles off shore. Both ships were ordered to return to Trincomalee where it was believed they would have the protection of fighter aircraft. About one hour and forty minutes after they were sighted by a single enemy aircraft, waves of divebombers commenced their attacks on *Hermes*. Within ten minutes the carrier suffered 40 direct hits and capsized and sank. Sixteen of the divebombers then attacked *Vampire*. She was hit by thirteen 250 kilogram bombs including a direct hit to her boiler room. Commander Moran ordered 'abandon ship.' Out of a total complement of 134 only seven ratings and one officer lost their lives. Sadly, that officer was *Vampire*'s captain. The fighter aircraft that might have saved his ship and his life arrived too late owing to a breakdown in communications.

Seven weeks later the Supplement to the *London Gazette* for 16 June 1942 read as follows: For gallantry, steadfastness and devotion to duty in *HMAS Vampire* and *HMS Thanet* in a night action with a superior Japanese force: Mention in Despatches Commander William Thomas Alldis Moran RAN.¹¹

The Australian training establishment *HMAS Cerberus* has in

its Recruit School a 'Moran Division' named in honour of Commander Moran.

It was Commander Moran's misfortune while in command of *Vampire* to witness the loss of three capital ships, *Prince of Wales*, *Repulse* and *Hermes*. He deserves to be remembered for more than those disasters. This Australian officer deserves to be commemorated most of all for the night action off Endau on 27 January 1942. Commander Moran made every effort to inflict maximum damage on the enemy. He had hoped to save *Thanet* by means of his funnel smoke and his smoke float. Unknown to him *Thanet* was already sinking from a fatal enemy shell. When a battle developed between the enemy ships, Moran made good his escape. In a difficult night action against a greatly superior force he had damaged one enemy ship, confounded the entire enemy force and saved his ship without suffering any damage or casualties. Rear Admiral Spooner's regrettable criticism that he should have taken *Vampire* and *Thanet* further north in search of the elusive enemy transports is unfounded. 🚢

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Author's Note

The author wishes to express his appreciation to Lieutenant Commander Douglas JP Hadler RN for his exceptional diligence in obtaining highly relevant documents from the Australian Department of Defence, from the National Archives, London and from the Imperial War Museum, London.

(Endnotes)

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- 3 Gill, Herman G., *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942* (Adelaide: The Griffin Press, 1957) p.559.
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- 5 Final Report from the Commanding Officer, *HMAS Vampire* to the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet under date of 10 February 1942. The National Archives London.
- 6 Ibid
- 7 Ibid
- 8 Ibid
- 9 Final Report from the Commanding Officer *HMS Thanet* to the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet under date of 10 February 1942. The National Archives London.
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Image: Eye in the Sky

The Limits of Extended Deterrence and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the North West Pacific

By **DEPTH CHARGE**



In February 2013 the Democratic Republic of North Korea (DPRK) detonated its third nuclear explosion in a tunnel under a mountain. Seismic analysis suggests the device detonated in February had a yield of 6-7 kilotons. The DPRK claimed that this was a successful test of a miniaturised warhead. Like every other statement that comes from Pyongyang this may or may not be credible. But whether it is true or not, the statement confirms where the clear intent of the Pyongyang regime lies. It plans to arm its existing long-range missiles with nuclear warheads and defend itself by threatening others in the region and beyond. In December 2012 the DPRK successfully launched a long-range rocket that put a satellite into orbit. Unlike the Iranians who plan to have the same nuclear strike capability in the Middle East, the North Koreans do not hide their intention to possess

deployable weapons with which to intimidate their neighbours as swiftly as their national resources will permit.

Every new detonation and every new missile flight over the Sea of Japan chips at the confidence of those who thought that their cities were safe from annihilation.

It is difficult to know whether the February explosion was fuelled by plutonium or enriched uranium. Plutonium makes building miniature warheads more practical but the North Koreans may be conserving their limited stocks of this material. A hidden uranium enrichment plant holds out the prospect of a much greater number of warheads being available soon. Either way, with every detonation the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its successful functioning in the North West Pacific takes another direct hit.

Historically it has been national pride, great power status and

the wish to demonstrate technical mastery which has driven proliferation since 1945. But determination to deter aggression and mistrust of an ally's capacity or willingness to do this for a friend have also been a major motivation for the ownership of nuclear weapons. The UK case study, which illustrates this truth, is now 35 years in the past but it may still have a lesson worth pondering as we contemplate the crisis developing in the neighbourhood.

To Trident or not to Trident

In the early 1980's, when the UK had to decide whether or not to replace its Polaris Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) with the Trident system, a national debate raged about the morality and utility of nuclear weapons. The Labour Party in opposition was viscerally opposed to all nuclear weapons and wanted unilateral nuclear disarmament on moral grounds. Prime Minister Thatcher and her Conservative Government were equally determined to replace Polaris and maintain an ICBM capability, regardless of the cost or consequences for the rest of the British defence budget. This debate was ideologically driven and it overflowed into the streets as the unilateralists made their feelings known through sit-ins and protests across the UK and at the Polaris submarine base at *HMS Neptune* at Faslane in Scotland.

The Case for Unilateral Nuclear Disarmament

The middle ground was occupied by those academics who genuinely debated the credibility of what was known as 'extended nuclear deterrence'



North Korean naval men on parade (Public domain)

The Limits of Extended Deterrence and the Risk of Nuclear Proliferation in the North West Pacific

and the merits, or otherwise, of the British Government possessing a 'second centre of decision taking' and therefore a 'second strike capability'. Those who believed in a 'copper bottomed guarantee' of extended deterrence from Washington argued that the United Kingdom, unilaterally disarmed of its own nuclear weapons, would be no more exposed to attack or nuclear blackmail from the Soviet Union than any of the other NATO partners of the United States, only one of which, France, had its own nuclear weapons. This utilitarian case for British unilateral disarmament rested on the proposition that extended deterrence by the United States protected the rest of NATO, why should it not do the same for the United Kingdom? If it was good enough for, Ottawa, Bonn, Rome, Madrid, Oslo, Athens and Ankara to look to Washington for nuclear defence, it should be good enough for London.

The unilateralists' rationale for not buying Trident was further predicated on the utilitarian financial question: why spend a national fortune on a redundant system, which could never be used, when so many other national



programs, including conventional defence of the Central Front, were underfunded?

The Realist Case for an Independent second strike capability

The alternative 'realist' school of defence academics pointed out that the limits of the United States extended deterrence had never been tested. It was impossible to say how far a future American President would go to ensure that any foreign government, including that of its close ally the UK, without its own deterrent, could rely on

unconditional support from the United States in the face of nuclear threats coming from the Kremlin.

The nuclear realists asked the blunt question: if during a crisis the Soviets threatened to destroy Birmingham would any US President threaten to take out Kiev if Birmingham was incinerated? What would be the likelihood of such a protective counter threat actually being issued given that next Soviet threat might be to eliminate San Francisco or Washington, or both? Those who believed that this scenario was fantasy and would not occur had the burden of proof placed on them to



North Korea regularly displays its military might in march-pasts (US Army)

show that these dark imaginings could never happen under any circumstances – that this game of nuclear chicken would never arise. ‘Never’ was big word in this context. The onus of proof rested on those who believed that extended nuclear deterrence was a certain guarantee that a post-Polaris UK could relax safe in the knowledge that the US ‘had its back’ and would always be there for the British people, regardless of the consequences.

The unilateral disarmers lost the political argument and the British taxpayer, with some grumbling about the cost of it all, paid up for the Trident D5 SLBMs and the RN’s new submarines to launch them from. The seamless continuation of the UK’s independent deterrent from Polaris to Trident was maintained and is to this day.

It is true that there were many other reasons why the UK under Prime Minister Thatcher went ahead with replacing Polaris. National prestige and the continuing justification of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council no doubt all played an important part in the decision making. But the intellectual heart of the argument in favour of replacing Polaris, was that the UK could only deter nuclear threats, or an imminent attack, if the Kremlin knew that in London there was a second centre of decision taking, not beholden to the Pentagon or the White House.

The logic of the case for retention was that any future Soviet leader had to understand that the UK armed with Trident, had the capacity to destroy Moscow and half a dozen other Soviet cities even after London and the industrial Midlands had been incinerated. An undetectable, and therefore invulnerable, second strike from the sea would survive a devastated UK to extract revenge. That is how deterrence through massive

retaliation and mutually assured destruction (MAD) worked through the cold war.

Protests in the UK about the replacement for Trident, even in a post Soviet era are muted this century – the realists won the debate and it has largely stayed won. The UK’s opposition Labour Party’s leadership is no longer unilateralist. The UK now advocates multilateral nuclear disarmament but is proceeding with Trident’s replacement. France and Britain can now be seen as effectively offering some extended nuclear deterrence to the European members of NATO, including those which were formerly Soviet satellite states.

How might this case study in the limitations of extended nuclear deterrence from the United States inform our understanding of what may happen in the North West Pacific as the North Koreans press ahead with gaining nuclear-tipped ICBMs?

Japan, China and the American nuclear umbrella

Japan’s constitution famously denies it the right to ever possess armed forces capable of offensive operations and specifically bans it from ever acquiring nuclear weapons. Japan signed the NPT in 1970 shortly after it was opened for ratification. It had already been sheltering under the US nuclear umbrella since the Soviet Union first developed ICBMs in the early 1950s. For decades a Japanese independent deterrent has been constitutionally and internationally illegal, unnecessary and unthinkable. Extended American nuclear deterrence over Japan has seemed to be an eternal strategic fact of geopolitics and one that suited all parties – particularly the Japanese people, who are still the only population to have come under nuclear attack. Japan built up a first class navy of modern cruisers able to destroy low



North Korean missile (Public domain)



South Korea's ROKS Lee Sunsin (SS 068) arrives at Naval Station Pearl Harbor (US Navy)



Helicopters fly over the Republic of Korea Aegis destroyer Sejong the Great (KDX 991) during the International Fleet Review "Pass and Review."



Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines assigned to the 7th Marine Regiment, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Division, disembark from a US Navy landing craft air cushion (US Navy photo)

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*South Korean Navy
P-3C Maritime Patrol
Aircraft-photo by
Michael Nitz*

trajectory conventional missiles. Tokyo left deterrence of ICBMs to its great and powerful friend.

The arrival of Chinese ICBMs 30 years ago made this American guarantee of deterrence even more relevant and necessary to successive Japanese governments, but the Chinese capability has not, in itself, proved destabilising. China's doctrine and public pronouncements state that its nuclear capability is defensive. Their nuclear weapons exist, the Chinese say, to deter, not to wage war. Early in 2011, China published a defence white paper, which repeated its nuclear policy of maintaining a minimum deterrent with a 'no first use' pledge. Even with the rising tension between Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam and China over disputed islands and contiguous maritime zones, Beijing has not mentioned its capacity to target missiles at its neighbours. Given the number of nuclear weapons the USN has at sea in the region the Chinese are very wisely not about to refer to their own more modest capability in this currently highly charged international atmosphere.

This longstanding strategic stability is now under real strain. In February, in direct response to Pyongyang's third nuclear test, the Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera said in an interview, 'When an intention to attack

Japan is evident, the threat is imminent, and there are no other options, Japan is allowed under the law to carry out strikes against enemy targets.' This statement is a major 'reinterpretation' of the Japanese constitution in its adoption of a right of self defence untrammelled by alliance obligations. It is analogous to the British and French positions on second centres of decision making when faced with the Soviet SS20 medium range nuclear missiles put into Eastern Europe in the 1980's. The threat there was evident and might be imminent. No one knew that it was not. It is also reminiscent of the position of the undeclared nuclear power, Israel. The question therefore is Defence Minister Onodera considering aloud the right to use conventional missile strikes as a last resort, or is he preparing the ground for an independent Japanese nuclear deterrent, or is he being deliberately strategically ambiguous?

North Korea – Serious nuclear power or posturing minnow?

North Korea is not a rising economic colossus like China which needs the status quo of international world order and open trade and markets to keep its billion citizens fed. The DPRK is already sanctioned, has no legitimate trade relationships and remains impervious to the needs of

its inhabitants. It plays successive American administrations expertly and resists all attempts at leverage to conform with international norms of behaviour in exchange for much needed aid. It constantly claims it is about to come under unprovoked attack from the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) and that when this occurs it will retaliate mercilessly!

How far the leadership really believes that it is under threat and how much of this propaganda is for internal consumption it is impossible to determine – like almost everything else about the decision making process in Pyongyang. The military high command has installed the youthful Kim Jong-Un. The 'Hermit Kingdom' of North Korea has its new Emperor. Given the completeness of the regime's control over internal dissent Kim and his military henchmen must assume that they can look forward to decades more of dictatorial rule. They must judge that the only threat to this state of affairs could come from military attack or invasion from either China or the ROK backed by the United States. The nuclear weapons they are devoted to acquiring are clearly intended to checkmate that possibility. They have drawn their own conclusions about the vulnerability of non-nuclear armed Iraq to invasion in 2002.

Pyongyang's repeatedly stated aim is to achieve immunity from attack by possessing the ability to target with missile strikes South Korean cities and American bases in the Pacific. They also claim to have a rocket capable of striking the cities of the West Coast of America with ICBMs. Presumably Hawaii will also be on the future target list and a more reasonable aspiration given the range of the current generation of missiles. Japan is not mentioned but presumably Okinawa rates as a potential target given that



The ROKS Gangnamchan steams by a line of Republic of Korea Navy ships during the International Fleet Review "Pass and Review."

it is still hosts a sizeable US strategic base. If and when these nascent threats can be demonstrated to be realistic, by a missile launch with the range and accuracy to strike US targets beyond Korea, a threshold will have been crossed. At that point the posturing minnow with the ferocious rhetoric surely becomes impossible for the United States and perhaps China to discount as being a potential threat.

China and the DPRK – Stretching a friendship with China to breaking point?

The acquisition of enrichment technology from China via Pakistan kick-started the DPRK's nuclear programme. Pakistan got missile technology in return. North Korea has also been helping Iran with missile technology and was helping Syria to build a reactor until the Israelis bombed it flat in 2007. The DPRK's testing of nuclear weapons and missiles continues unchecked by the IAEA, sanctions or global condemnation. Even the condemnation of China, Pyongyang's erstwhile protector and

supplier, has made no difference to the testing program.

Since the end of the Korean War the Chinese have taken the view that they needed the DPRK as a buffer state. They supported their bankrupt neighbour because it was a Communist state and they were determined to avoid unification of the peninsula under America's ally South Korea. Whether this support is still so well founded and the objection to unification remains as true now is open to question. The prospect of a flood of North Korean refugees fleeing from starvation and brutality crossing the Chinese border is particularly alarming to Beijing. It may be that a more pragmatic view is gaining favour and any solution that avoids mass migration northwards into China may be considered a reasonable option, even perhaps a reunification under prosperous South Korea. That may be the least bad option for Beijing. Without the DPRK the justification for United States troops on the Korean peninsula would disappear.

In 2013, for the first time China

voted with the rest of the UN Security Council opposing the third nuclear test. China may be reassessing its guarantee of North Korea's continuing existence in its present form. Kim's determination to embarrass the Chinese leadership by ignoring its wishes over nuclear testing may be stretching a friendship past breaking point. After the test in February Beijing's foreign minister summoned North Korea's ambassador for a formal reprimand and expressed 'strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition' to the test. He urged North Korea to 'stop any rhetoric or acts that could worsen situations and return to the right course of dialogue and consultation as soon as possible'.

Before the February nuclear test North Korea uploaded a pirated YouTube video showing a devastated New York City after being struck by its missiles. This is highly provocative and not the nuanced approach to East-West relationships which Beijing favours as it plays a long game and rises steadily in the global order using industrial espionage to steal the information it

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USS Kittyhawk in Japan - the US is still South Korea's best ally (RAN photo)

needs to gain its ends. It must be galling for China to find it has no influence, far less control over a younger brother who keeps threatening to kneecap the biggest kid in the neighbourhood who is also China's biggest customer.

The Range Game

The DPRK's Unha-3 rocket has a theoretical range of 6, 200 miles which means it could reach the American mainland. Even if that were possible it is still just a missile without a warhead. Whether a distant intercontinental strike right across the Pacific will ever be achievable from North Korea, given the enormous problems, both technical and financial, that would need to be overcome is open to very serious doubt. The capacity to intercept and destroy in orbit single missiles and warheads has been demonstrated by Aegis armed warships. There is no expectation that the North Koreans can complicate the problem by building Multiple Independently Targetable Re Entry Vehicles (MIRVs), though decoy missiles may be possible. But perception is reality in the world of ICBM deterrence, as was proved

during the Cold War. It is the one missile that might get through, not the dozen that get intercepted, that determines national strategy, in a democracy.

Pyongyang's claims to be able to make a mainland strike are presumably intended to intimidate American citizens, the Pentagon, State Department and the White House. They may also be calculated to chip away at America's longstanding unconditional guarantee to South Korea to retaliate conventionally in the event of an attack from the DPRK. Are these threats clumsy attempts to diminish the credibility of extended nuclear and conventional deterrence? Presumably the intention is to intimidate Seoul into demanding an end to the US presence on the peninsula. If that is the aim, it is likely to be entirely counterproductive. Such a policy would come from an unsophisticated isolated regime entirely unfamiliar with the reality of the United States and its bipartisan understanding of its place in the post 1945 world.

South Korea and the threat to Seoul

South Korea has lived with the ongoing threat of a massive conventional artillery and rocket barrage striking Seoul for decades. Pyongyang regularly threatens to turn it into a 'sea of fire.' While this has been an uncomfortable reality, successive ROK governments have been secure in the knowledge that any attack would trigger massive conventional, and potentially nuclear, retaliation from US forces on the peninsula and from the seas off it. This counter-battery response would be instant and overwhelming.

That has been the theory. But in fact when in 2010 the North Koreans sank the ROK corvette *Cheonan*, probably using a midget submarine, killing 46 sailors, and later that year opened up an artillery and rocket barrage on Yeonpyeong island killing five South Korean civilians – nothing happened but protests and condemnation. The Chinese even disputed that the vessel had been deliberately sunk despite the incontrovertible evidence from the wreck. No price was extracted for these actions. This must have

emboldened the leadership to consider the possibilities that await them for further acts of conventional aggression once they are a declared nuclear power. What will Kim's regime then threaten and against whom will those threats be made? Will it be limited to South Korea?

The bellicose rhetoric that pours from the DPRK has been able to be discounted as the posturing of the weaker party by successive South Korean governments. But what happens when the threats from Pyongyang to the ROK are backed by the reality of battlefield nuclear weapons and the rhetoric persists? Will the ROK be content to live under the US 'copper bottomed guarantee' of instantaneous retaliation indefinitely when its northern neighbour is armed with short-range tactical nuclear weapons facing Seoul over the DMZ? These thoughts must be exercising the new ROK President Park Geun-hye as she prepares to deal with her northern neighbour's current intransigence and determination to acquire weapons of mass destruction aimed at her fellow citizens.

A paranoid military cult

In retrospect the old Soviet Union and its geriatric leadership that ruled for decades was a most risk averse and cautious entity. This was particularly true after the Cuban Missile climb down by Khrushchev in 1962. The generation occupying the Politburo had all seen what total war looked like 'up close and personal' and 1962 reminded them of the risks of war through miscalculation. Their build up of long-range strategic ICBMs, medium range SS20s based in Eastern Europe, and even their short range tactical or battlefield nuclear weapons were, we now know, essentially political and defensive in nature.

How sure can the ROK or Japan,

or potentially China, be that a sane cautious realist view will govern the actions of the nuclear armed paranoid military cult of personality that is the DPRK. Cults have a habit of ending in self-immolation in a bunker. What happens to the threat of conventional massive retaliation as a stabilising factor on the Korean peninsula if and when the nuclear warhead carrying missiles in the DPRK are real not just rhetorical? Will MAD remain just an acronym or be an apt descriptor for the behaviour of the regime in Pyongyang that possesses them?

An inconvenient reality

With deployable WMD in the possession of Pyongyang all governments in the region will be faced with a destabilising new reality in the North Pacific, including the Chinese. What happens to the credibility of extended nuclear deterrence if over the next five years, it becomes clear the North Korean regime has the capacity to drop a ballistic missile with a nuclear warhead on the American base at Guam, or on Hawaii or even California? Telling the American citizens of Guam to relax because every one of a brace of nuclear tipped missiles aimed at them would be taken out by interception long before any got to its target may not entirely convince them that they are safe. The same logic on a much greater scale applies to the Japanese who are closer in missile flight time to the North Korean's launch pads than Guam is.

How extended can nuclear deterrence be for Japan?

If the US citizens anywhere were even theoretically vulnerable, how confident could Japan feel in extended deterrence? If the conviction arose that the only reason Japan was a target for Pyongyang's nuclear missiles was because it was a base for

American troops and ships, would the Japanese increase their demands for US withdrawal and with it their nuclear umbrella? It would be a deeply divisive debate for the western alliance. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has already indicated that the Japanese Government will alter its self-denying constitution in the face of China's growing hostility. What further pressures may be felt for an independent nuclear deterrent if the Japanese public came to doubt the US could or would unconditionally provide its nuclear umbrella over Japan. Or, to put the UK 1980's debate and dilemma in a contemporary light, will a future Japanese government really believe that all future Presidents will be prepared to defend Kyoto if in doing so it risks a strike on Guam, Honolulu or even California?

Will Japan indefinitely be capable of upholding its obligations under national and international law which prohibit it from becoming nuclear armed? What pressures for an independent deterrent will come from a frightened electorate that remembers first hand, or has been taught, of the horror of Nagasaki and Hiroshima? At what point in international law does a belief that it is under nuclear threat justify a nation abrogating its membership of the NPT? How much doubt about existential protection is enough to precipitate a determination to possess an independent nuclear capacity? These are theoretical questions at present but may not remain so. A world where Pakistan 'legitimately' owns nuclear weapons because it is not a signatory to the NPT, and Japan is permanently denied them, under all circumstances, because it **is** a signatory, seems contrary to geopolitical common sense and lacks realism.

Unanswerable questions and

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the threshold of provocation

In theory this scenario where Japan and South Korea become nuclear powers will never arise because Washington will continue to state and re state that extended US nuclear deterrence over both is inviolable under all and any circumstances. It can also be asked how real is this potential threat from the DPRK ever going to be? How many long-range ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads will a bankrupt and sanctioned DPRK ever be able to muster anyway? These are currently unanswerable questions, but that is why they could matter to the Japanese and Korean public. Would the public perception of an undeterred nuclear threat of many missiles from the DPRK aimed at their cities be enough to change the pacifist mindset of the Japanese electorate? Time will tell.

Overreaction to a perception of risk

Uncertainty and fear of what an enemy has in their order of battle can be a potent catalyst for national over-reaction. This was a feature of the nuclear arms race throughout the Cold War. We now know that many old 1950's Soviet ICBMs would never have come out of their silos if their rocket motors had been ignited 20 years later, but that did not mean that they did not get counted in Washington as being on 'hair trigger' alert. On the contrary, their existence gave rise to the belief in a 'missile gap' between East and West which America strove to close with new generations of its own missiles.

One thing is certain, notwithstanding its post-Tsunami unpopularity with the electorate, Japan's civilian nuclear industry and sophisticated missile manufacturing capacity makes it very capable of creating deliverable land or air launched nuclear weapons, without external assistance, relatively swiftly

compared with countries which have no civilian nuclear industry.

Sino-Japanese unresolved enmity – the biggest threat to the hemisphere ?

Also predictable would be the Chinese reaction to any suggestion that Japan was to be tolerated in an abrogation of its post 1945 constitution, rejection of the NPT and acquisition of nuclear weapons for self defence. The response from Beijing would be strident demands in the Security Council that Japan be stopped from becoming 'a threat to the region.' None of this rhetoric would help defuse the many grounds for growing hostility between these two neighbours. That unresolved enmity is the biggest potential threat to a peaceful future for our hemisphere – bigger than the belief in North Korea that it can make itself immune from attack and can act accordingly. The question is whether the DPRK's determination to acquire WMD has the capacity to trigger the fusion of these two sources of regional instability.

Europe 1904 – 1914. A distant mirror

We seem to be sliding toward a more dangerous and less predictable region armed only with generalised optimism and the expectation that rationality and caution, will triumph. Perhaps the best and most concerning analogy is with the years leading up to the European catastrophe of 1914. Count Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of Germany, was asked about the chance of war breaking out again in Europe. His response was: If ever there is another war in Europe it will be over some damn silly thing in the Balkans!

An Archduke and his wife's assassination in Sarajevo was the 'damn silly thing' that lit the fuse. The powder keg was the unresolved hostility between the great alliances in the decade before 1914 and the fear of being

hit so hard and fast by an enemy that there would be no chance to strike back.

A century ago in a pre-nuclear age the logic of getting national 'retaliation in first' was alive and well and led to the destruction of a continent and a generation. It may be asking too much of the contemporary zeitgeist, when it is generally believed that the internet age has nothing to learn from earlier eras, but one can hope that light from this distant broken mirror can illuminate the contemporary complexity and growing risks of miscalculation for all the players in the North West Pacific. ✎

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ON MARITIME MILITARY HEALTH SERVICES¹

BY COMMANDER NEIL WESTPHALEN

Background

The last century saw two global wars, the first using chemical and the second nuclear weapons. There have also been smaller but at times no less devastating regional conflicts in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and southeast and southwest Asia, as well as numerous long-term but lower-intensity conflicts. The last 30 years has also seen an increase in peacekeeping and other military operations under the auspices of the United Nations, while the last decade has numerous military operations worldwide in response to terrorist incidents. Naval forces have frequently been at the forefront of many of these conflicts.

The maritime force structures of developed nations in the last hundred years have therefore entailed preparing for a wide spectrum of conflict. Strategic planning for this spectrum is becoming more difficult for various reasons, including the increasing complexity and cost of platforms, and recruiting and training the personnel with the skills and expertise required to operate them. Furthermore, the last hundred years also saw the global economic depression in the 1930s, the 1970s oil shock and the current global financial crisis, all of which have had major influences on national economies (and their defence expenditures).

The political and economic factors that determine maritime force structure have important implications for their supporting health services. In order to meet the changing needs of the navies that they serve, these health services not only need to respond to the health threats posed by the spectrum of conflict, but also the rapidly emerging developments



in both diagnosis and treatment, and expectations in health care delivery – within allocated resources.

In response to these changing demands, there are a small number of functions and roles that military health services can apply at the strategic level. These functions and roles are fundamental to ascertaining how military health services can best be integrated with the operational, personnel, logistical, infrastructure and training requirements of the (in this case) maritime forces that they serve. This article describes the strategic level functions and roles of maritime health services.

Current Situation

Over the past two decades, a combination of short-term political, media and/or resourcing imperatives has taken priority over the functions and roles of national military health services. These short-term imperatives continue to threaten their long-term effectiveness and efficiency.

For example, in the last ten years traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-

traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic amputations have dominated the attention of political and military leaders, veterans' groups and the media. Indeed, these injuries have become the 'signature wounds' of the recent southwest Asian conflicts. During this time, considerable attention has also been expended on other clinical conditions that can be characterised by their novelty, severity and/or lack of ascribable causation.²

These short-term military health imperatives have diverted attention from the far greater toll on military personnel from conventional yet lower profile preventable disease and non-battle injuries (DNBI). In the ten years





from October 2001, 81% of the 62,087 US military medical evacuations from the Middle East were *not* for 'signature wounds,' but for DNBI, of which about half included musculoskeletal injuries, 'mental disorders' and 'ill-defined conditions.' However, even these DNBI rates are still significantly exceeded by the morbidity and mortality in *non*-deployed US military populations.³

The US experience is by no means unique. Besides PTSD, the last 20 years have seen preoccupations in the US, UK, Canada and Australia with Gulf War Syndrome and depleted uranium exposures. Google searches have found 734,000 hits for "Australian Gulf War veterans PTSD", 128,000 hits for "UK Gulf War veterans PTSD" and 130,000 hits for "Canadian Gulf War veterans PTSD". Google searches for "depleted uranium" reveal a comparable number of hits.

In contrast, information on the functions and roles of military health services is almost non-existent. Google searches for "military health services" or "military medical services" produced over 813,000 and 583,000 hits respectively. Adding the phrase "functions and roles" reduced these hits to three, *none* of which reflect the functions and roles of military health services. Similarly, a Google search of peer-reviewed medical journals for these phrases produced 53 and 63 hits respectively; however adding



"functions and roles" also reduced these to zero.

The ongoing political, media and academic preoccupation with 'novel' conditions and exposures in these countries, has diverted attention from the long-term strategic functions and roles of their respective military health services. It is also driving a perception that military health services are simply civilian treatment services in uniform, for use primarily in operational circumstances. These two issues are having a disproportionate and negative influence on the current organisation and resourcing of many Western military health services.⁴

This view is supported by the published mission statements of many military health services. Consistent themes for the US⁵, UK⁶, French⁷, German⁸ and Australian⁹ military health services include maintaining medical readiness to deploy, providing health care to deployed forces, and restoration of health on their return. These mission statements can be misinterpreted as assuming that the strategic functions and roles of military health services are limited to the treatment and rehabilitation of military personnel.

Some guidance regarding the full range of functions and roles of military health services can be derived from multiple existing definitions of the term 'military medicine.' These include the

following:

- The administration and practice of health care for military service members and (in some countries) their dependents in non-deployed settings.¹⁰ This definition parallels the medical system that exists in the civilian sector, thereby perpetuating the view that military health services are simply uniformed civilian treatment services.
- The organisation of structured medical command and administrative systems that interact with and support deployed combat units.¹¹
- The medical research and development with respect to problems of military medical interest. Some of these advances have ultimately proved important beyond the purely military considerations that originally inspired them.¹²
- The branch of occupational medicine that attends to the preventive and interventional medical risks and needs of sailors, soldiers, airmen and other military personnel. This includes the historical prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, and the more recent interest in the ergonomic and other

health effects of operating submarines, tanks, aircraft, and other platforms.¹³

However, *none* of these definitions address *all* the fundamental strategic-level functions and roles of military health services per the following prioritised list:

- Operational health support.
- Casualty evacuation.
- Humanitarian Aid / Disaster Relief (HA/DR).
- Military medicine capabilities.
- Health-related suitability for military employment.
- Occupational and environmental health.
- Health promotion.
- Treatment services.

The relevance of this list lies in the mutual interdependence of military health services and the military forces that they support. Consideration of *all* the functions and roles of military health services is essential at the strategic level, if commanders are to meet their full range of responsibilities for the planning and conduct of military operations. This particularly refers to informed decision making with respect to health-related personnel, organisational, training, major systems and other fundamental capability inputs. This article explains the rationale for the presence of each item on this list, and how they are prioritised.

Operational Health Support

The primary reason that why military health services exist is to provide health support to (in this case) naval forces whenever and wherever they are conducting their operations.

Operational health support typically has *levels* of health services, ranging from preventive, primary, secondary and even tertiary care. These levels of care depend on the scale and nature



of the operational activities being undertaken, the number of personnel involved and estimations of casualty numbers and types. The operational environment (whether land, sea – including surface and sub-surface – or air) dictates the range of military and environmental health hazards likely to be encountered. This means that the responsibility for battle casualty (BCas) estimation is usually assigned to military planning staff.

Health support for seagoing operations needs to reflect the maritime environment in that:

- Life at sea is inherently *dangerous*: indeed, the effects of wind, water and underwater hazards have frequently proved more deadly than any human enemy. Furthermore, operational hazards by-and-large target *ships* rather than individuals. Both factors result in significant differences in the number and nature of maritime BCas and DNBI compared to those ashore. These differences have important implications with respect to training, organisation, materiel and other inputs into Navy health

capability.

- *Distances* at sea mean that seagoing health assets are required to be at least as self-contained as any other seagoing personnel, logistic and other operational enablers. This requirement is driven not only by personnel welfare and morale considerations, but also the need to ensure that where possible, mission success is not compromised by preventable health-related adverse events.
- The relevance of *mobility* to seagoing health support stems from how access to shore-based health services can alter considerably within a comparatively small timeframe. A ship alongside should have comparable access as the local shore-based population; however on sailing such access almost immediately entails using a boat to land patients, and within hours may entail using a helicopter, meeting other ships, or returning the ship alongside. This has important implications with respect to organic health service delivery

to seagoing units according to the mission(s) being undertaken, and identifying suitable shore-based health facilities where they are operating. These factors necessitate the application of a risk management approach, which may create problems when interacting with other health services that can afford to be more risk-averse.

- The inherent *flexibility* of warships means that they can be reassigned from one operation to another with little or no notice. Furthermore, the seagoing environment is both self-contained and relatively consistent: a ship doing RIMPAC off Hawaii faces more-or-less the same health hazards as one doing RESOLUTE off Ashmore Reef, as another doing SLIPPER in the Persian Gulf. These factors mean that unlike deployments ashore, health-related maritime individual readiness and force preparation needs to be tied to each member's posting to a *ship*, rather than whatever *operation* that their ship may force-assign to at a particular time.¹⁴

Ascertaining the health services required to support a military activity, and at what level, does not occur in a vacuum.¹⁵ Planning and practice for the prevention and treatment of both BCas and DNBI includes consideration of the logistic and administrative aspects of planning, training, establishing and operating the health facilities required, which may range from first aid to combat support hospitals. This entails the organisation of structured medical command and administrative systems that interact with and support operational units. As

this requires close engagement with operational commanders, the health personnel supporting them require a level of *military* expertise that is at least as important and relevant as their *clinical* expertise.

Casualty Evacuation

If naval forces are required to deploy, the supporting operational health services themselves need to be supported by a robust system for moving casualties between health facilities in what may be multiple operational area(s), and/or to return them home.

Casualty evacuation is about moving the right casualty, at the right time, to the right level of medical care, with the right amount of in-transit medical care. The geographic aspects of the operational environment (in particular with respect to designated support bases) dictate the mode of casualty evacuation.

Access to appropriate transport is essential for effective and efficient casualty evacuation. Usually only very large militaries have transport designed, equipped and dedicated for casualty evacuation. Maritime casualty

evacuation typically entails using a combination of sea, air and/or land transport.

The levels of casualty evacuation in the military setting are typically classified as follows:

- 'Forward' casualty evacuation typically refers to moving casualties from their point of illness or injury to a health facility that can provide initial assessment and treatment. This function is usually performed on behalf of tactical level commanders by uniformed health personnel. The mode of evacuation is dictated by the same military and environmental hazards as for operational health support. Health and transport resources may or may not be specifically dedicated for the role.
- 'Tactical' casualty evacuation typically refers to moving casualties from the collection/initial treatment health facility, to a secondary or even tertiary facility within the operational area, for casualties whose return to duty is likely to be delayed, or if they require



more appropriate diagnostic and definitive care. This function is usually performed on behalf of operational- or theatre-level commanders by specifically trained uniformed health personnel. The mode of in-theatre evacuation is also dictated by the resources available and environmental hazards, but is generally characterised by greater use of aircraft (whether rotary or fixed wing), which also may or may not be specifically dedicated for the role.

- 'Strategic' casualty evacuation refers to moving casualties from a theatre level health facility back to the country of origin. Depending on the nature and scale of the operation (which influences the number and types of casualties), this function can be performed on behalf of national commanders either by trained uniformed or civilian health personnel. Strategic evacuation over trans- or intercontinental distances can generally be characterised by the use of fixed wing aircraft, which (again) may or may not be specifically dedicated to the role.¹⁶

The medical personnel who undertake the maritime casualty evacuation role therefore require specific training in the provision of emergency care in an often austere operational environment, especially at the forward level. Although the use of aircraft at the tactical and strategic levels in particular means that casualty evacuation tends to be an air force health responsibility, the requirement for seamless joint casualty evacuation systems imply the need for *all* operationally deployed health personnel – including those

at sea – to have at least *some* aviation medicine expertise.

The planning and practice of BCas and DNBI evacuation must consider the logistic and administrative aspects of establishing and operating casualty collecting points and staging health facilities to return casualties home. The ability to move large numbers of casualties simultaneously if required, also requires the organisation of structured medical command and administrative systems that not only interact with and support operational combat units, but also the commanders and medical facilities at their destination.

The health personnel supporting operational commanders therefore require very high levels of service-specific expertise.¹⁷ Such expertise is *also* at least as important and relevant to health personnel in the casualty evacuation setting, as their clinical expertise.

Humanitarian Aid / Disaster Relief (HA/DR)

Given the often considerable resources and expertise that exists in many military health services, it is not surprising that governments direct or seek their assistance in response to local, national or international disasters. Military assistance to civilian communities has also been increasingly recognised by governments over the past two decades as being of political importance.¹⁸

Depending on higher level national direction, HA/DR can be therefore considered either a component of operational health support, or a discrete capability in its own right. However, in most situations HA/DR should be differentiated from operational health, in that:

- Rather than acting as a *supporting* arm to a deployed

force, military health services may be the primary force *being supported* by other arms. Although this is less of an issue in the *maritime* HA/DR setting, there is greater overlap between *land-based* HA/DR and operational health support if it needs combat force protection, typically in areas where there is a significant security threat in which Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and other civilian health care providers are unable to operate.

- By definition, HA/DR entails providing health care for civilians. The health-related HA/DR services required for women, children and the elderly are substantially different from those required for military populations that (still) predominantly consist of physically fit working-age males.
- Military health services are frequently called upon to provide HA/DR in response to natural disasters in the short term, either until normal services are restored, or until other health agencies can take over. Lack of predictability as to when HA/DR may be required means that the notice to move is often far shorter than for many other military operations. This particularly applies to maritime HA/DR taskings.¹⁹
- The short-term nature of military HA/DR operations also means that there is a far greater level of interaction between deployed military health services, NGOs and other civilian health agencies compared with other military

operations, particularly during the withdrawal phase. This also particularly applies to maritime HA/DR taskings.

The planning and practice of providing HA/DR health care therefore needs to consider the logistic and administrative aspects of establishing and operating military health facilities, this time in a *lead* role. This also entails the organisation of structured medical command and administrative systems that interact with and are (in this case) *supported by* other arms. This again requires close engagement with operational commanders, which means that the health personnel supporting them require very high levels of service-specific expertise. In the HA/DR setting, such expertise is therefore *also* at least as important and relevant to health personnel as their clinical knowledge and expertise.

Military Medicine Capabilities

Military medicine services are essential to maritime forces that operate certain capabilities, in particular combat aircraft (including but not limited to fast jets), submarines, special forces with a parachuting or diving capability, and or offensive or (in Australia's case) defensive chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) capability.

Aviation (Aerospace) Medicine (AvMed). The size and scope of the civilian aviation industry means there is probably more overlap with military AvMed, than for other military medicine capabilities. However, civilian AvMed agencies are unlikely to provide the full range of services required for seagoing aviation arms that operate fast jets, attack helos, and/or night vision aids.²⁰

Diving (Underwater) Medicine (DivMed). Although they have the capability to treat diving casualties, civilian hyperbaric medicine clinics

are primarily focused on hyperbaric therapy for a small proportion of older patients with relatively uncommon conditions. They also tend to be in fixed locations, typically associated with major tertiary treatment centres.²¹ Military DivMed services are also differentiated from their civilian counterparts, in that they are focused on *preventing* diving injuries, maintaining *readiness* to treat such injuries should they occur, and *only* then providing treatment when they occur, for populations that (still) predominantly consist of physically fit working-age males.²²

Submarine Medicine (SubMed). Although there is considerable overlap between SubMed and DivMed, the former typically entails a greater level of occupational health expertise (particularly for those navies that operate nuclear submarines), and providing for the prevention and treatment of *simultaneous multiple* hyperbaric casualties.²³

CBRN Medicine. The focus of military CBRN health services typically includes maintaining readiness to treat military CBRN casualties should they occur, and providing treatment when they occur, for populations that still predominantly consist of physically fit working-age males.

Depending on the scale (size and complexity) of the military capabilities being supported, these military medicine capabilities may not entail a recognised civilian specialist-level qualification. However, the requirement to deploy these health practitioners poses significant limitations on the use of civilian agencies that – whatever they may or may not have regarding the necessary 'treatment' capabilities per se – are unlikely to have the full range of *non-clinical* capabilities required to do so.

The planning and practice of providing military medicine support

entails consideration of the logistic and administrative aspects of establishing and operating military health facilities with this expertise. This also requires the organisation of structured medical command and administrative systems that interact with and support the operational units that need it. This requires close engagement with operational commanders, which means that the military medicine providers supporting them also require very high levels of service-specific expertise, including access to classified information. Such expertise is therefore *also* at least as important and relevant to health personnel as their clinical military medicine specialist skills. It also assumes greater importance at the policy level.

Health-Related Suitability for Seagoing Service

In order to meet their operational taskings while complying with their duty of care obligations, Navy personnel managers, commanders and divisional staff need medical *advice* regarding:

- Whether their particular sailor of interest has any medical condition(s) that limits or prevents them from doing their job(s), and
- Whether the jobs that their particular sailor of interest undertakes, will make any medical condition(s) they may have worse.

The inappropriate employment of medically unsuitable personnel may compromise achieving the operational mission. These personnel may also pose a threat to themselves if they are unable to receive the care they need, or if the operational setting makes their condition(s) worse.²⁴ Furthermore, evacuating personnel with known pre-existing conditions wastes resources

that could otherwise be used to achieve the mission, or may place others at risk.

Health-related suitability for service employment therefore encompasses entry and serving standards, short and long term employment restrictions, occupational rehabilitation and transition. This means that assessing medical suitability for Service employment is a day-to-day function undertaken by military health staff on a daily basis on behalf of personnel managers, commanders and divisional staff.

Health staff who provide care for seagoing personnel therefore not only need to know about the clinical status of their patients, but also something about the work that they undertake at sea, as well as the seagoing hazards to which they may be exposed.

However, the need to provide this advice may pose ethical dilemmas for treating health staff, with respect to balancing the needs of commanders and divisional staff against the needs of their patients. It is likely that civilian medical practitioners may be *required* by their medical registration authorities to default to the latter.²⁵

The provision of relevant advice regarding medical suitability for Navy service therefore requires knowledge and understanding of the hazards potentially faced at sea, as well as detailed knowledge of the tasks that they undertake. Provision of such advice frequently requires close engagement with commanders and divisional staff, which means that health personnel providing this advice also require a high level of Service-specific skills, knowledge and experience in addition to their clinical expertise. At the policy level, the ability to provide credible and consistent advice may be regarded by personnel managers just as, if not more important, than the clinical expertise of health staff.

Occupational and Environmental Health (OEH)

It has previously been noted that even in the non-warlike setting, Navy personnel are exposed to a wide range of physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic and other hazards. Furthermore, the very nature of maritime warfare uniquely places Navy personnel at risk from weaponry that is *specifically designed* to damage or destroy their workplace.²⁶

As in civilian workplace settings, most modern OEH legislation requires Navy commanders and divisional staff to minimise personnel exposures to hazards encountered in their workplaces that may adversely affect their health. Exceptions are typically only granted in those operational environments where control of hazardous exposures cannot be assured. However, risks deemed acceptable during these operations have frequently become highly emotive political issues, up to decades later.²⁷

Notwithstanding the advances in naval hygiene since Commodore George Anson's 1740-144 circumnavigation, infectious disease can still compromise maritime operations, with illness rates that can far exceed the morbidity and mortality rates from seagoing BCAs.²⁸ Prevention of infectious disease epidemics therefore remains fundamental to maritime health planning and implementation. Particular emphasis is placed on determining immunisation and other preventive strategies against endemic diseases, and using established public health and engineering practices to secure clean food and water supplies, and provide for waste disposal and sanitation.

The assessment and measurement of chemical, biological and physical hazards in the operational, training and peacetime environments in which Navy personnel work is important if



the incidence and cost of compensable illness and injury is to be contained. The absence of unions in most maritime workforces means that the imperative and responsibility for this task rests primarily with commanders and divisional staff.

The OEH paradigm for control of workplace hazards is useful for addressing most seagoing operational threats and other hazards. The hierarchy of control of workplace hazards consists of elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering controls, administrative controls and the use of personal protective equipment.

However, the provision of relevant appropriate OEH advice to maritime forces still requires a high level of understanding of the seagoing environment. This again requires close engagement with commanders, managers and supervisors, which means that the health personnel providing this advice also require a high level of service-specific expertise. At the policy level, such expertise is also at least as important and relevant as clinical expertise.

Health Promotion

Health promotion for military personnel requires a broader focus than the programs often usually encountered in civilian practice. The latter usually focus on prevention of chronic disease, such as addressing cardiovascular disease risk factors, the detection of diabetes and obesity, and/or the minimisation of tobacco, alcohol and other substance abuse. Chronic disease prevention remains particularly relevant for military health services that provide health care for ex-serving members and their dependants.²⁹

Although many of these considerations also apply to military personnel, health promotion is, or should be, aimed improving their health *education*, in order to enhance mission success through minimising casualties from avoidable factors, and improved functionality in hostile or challenging environments. Typical emphasis is therefore often placed on physical fitness, resilience training, prevention of heat stress, sea and combat survival, and personal health care.

In the maritime setting, health promotion can be applied by a combination of formal training programs, opportunistic interventions (typically during routine primary health care), and/or a planned component of other interventions (typically while undertaking health-related suitability assessments).

The provision of *relevant* health promotion requires a high level of understanding of the Navy population being supported. Effective health promotion programs also require effective planning and policy development, in conjunction with commander commitment.

This means that health personnel providing health promotion advice also require at least some service-specific expertise. At the policy level, such expertise is *also* at least as important

and relevant to health personnel as their clinical expertise.

Treatment Services

In most countries, there is an expectation that the standard of care for military personnel is at least comparable to that provided for the general civilian community. It is therefore accepted that military treatment services *do* have much in common with civilian health services, particularly with respect to primary, secondary and tertiary level health care.³⁰ It is this aspect of military health services that drives the perception that they are simply civilian treatment services in uniform.

However, there are some important differences, in particular:

- How and where these services are provided. In the seagoing setting, the services provided depend on the hazards and number of people in that environment.
- The age and sex distribution of the seagoing population compared to the civilian community.
- The requirement for health-related force preparation to counter hazards associated in particular with the *seagoing* (as opposed to the shore-based) operational environment.
- The extent of illness and injuries that arise from individual and collective training activities.
- BCas and DNBI associated with the seagoing operational environment.
- The importance of returning casualties to duty as soon as possible. This reinforces the importance for primary care providers to have a sound knowledge of the duties



undertaken by Navy personnel and the hazards potentially faced in an operational, training or normal maritime working environment.

- Difficulties in personnel administration and compensation for health care providers in the seagoing operational setting. This is usually overcome by use of uniformed health personnel.

The provision of military treatment services for Navy personnel therefore still requires a high level of understanding of the logistical and administrative considerations of operating military health facilities, which involves the organisation of structured medical administrative systems that are integrated with the Navy population that they support. This requires close engagement with commanders and divisional staff,

which means that the health personnel providing this advice also require at least some service-specific expertise. At the policy level, such expertise is *also* at least as important and relevant to health personnel as their clinical expertise.

Prioritisation of Military Health Service Functions and Roles

In most cases, health professionals commence their military service with the same skill sets as their coeval civilian counterparts. Their subsequent professional development is characterised not only by the acquisition of service-specific *clinical* skills, but also the development of *non-clinical* military knowledge, skills, experience and expertise with respect to the planning and provision of health care for military forces.

This means that civilian-equivalent treatment services only comprise the *entry* level for health personnel who choose to undertake a Navy career. In the early stages, they provide treatment services, initially in the base or 'garrison' setting, and later at sea. As they gain training and experience, they acquire a combination of both clinical- and service-specific skill sets. The latter assumes a higher priority as their career progresses from treatment roles, to planning, policy, advisory, supervisory, management and leadership roles.

The functions and roles of military health service attributes are therefore prioritised as follows (from highest to lowest), based in the level of military expertise required to perform them:

- Operational Health Support
- Casualty Evacuation
- Humanitarian Aid / Disaster Relief
- Military medicine capabilities
- Medical suitability for military duties
- Occupational and environmental health

- Health promotion
- Treatment services

The prioritisation of these functions and roles is based on the concept that the level of military expertise required to conduct them *increases* as one heads *up* the list.

Conclusions

With pressures on many national military services to become more cost-effective, there is a need to increase awareness of the strategic functions and roles of military health services. This will enable essential skills, knowledge and experience to be retained within military health services, as well as providing a sound basis from which commanders are able to make decisions in adapting their military health services to changing roles and demands.

Successful clinical care in support of combat operations depends on sound strategic health planning, provision of appropriate training, and provision of an appropriate infrastructure which is adaptable to changing military requirements. This means that the provision of clinical services in the military setting is dependent of the availability of highly skilled and trained personnel, whose capacity to provide clinical services (whether medical, dental, nursing or allied health), is simply a *pre-requisite* core skill.

In order to provide appropriate care to personnel who undertake military operations, these clinical skills must be supported by additional military skills. This in turn entails well developed processes and training, which need to be initiated and developed in the non-operational setting, and integrated and coordinated with the rest of the military service that they support. This approach provides the essential framework, planning and administration to allow high standards of clinical care to be delivered to

military personnel regardless of where they may be required to perform their duties.

The functions and roles of military health services can be used as a template to design their structure and organisation. The resulting structure will be driven by the size, the operational roles and capabilities of the (in this instance) naval forces that are supported, as well as the extent and demand for care of dependents, veterans and reserve personnel.

Basing the organisation of military health services on the level of service-specific expertise for each of these functions and roles promotes the development of professional mastery in military medicine. It facilitates the recruitment, training and retention of knowledgeable and suitably qualified military health service personnel (whether uniformed, government employee, or civilian contractor). This in turn has implications with respect to military health service policy development and its implementation, leading to the development of effective as well as efficient services.

In short, the full range of functions and roles of military health services *cannot* be met by 'uniformed civilian' treatment services. 🚢

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this article are those of the author, and do not represent those of the Royal Australian Navy, Joint Health Command, or the Australian Defence Force.

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World Naval Developments – Drones in Mali

BY DR NORMAN FRIEDMAN

We hear a great deal about drones, particularly armed ones, but it is rarer to see an analysis of how difficult it is to operate without them. A French report published in the wake of the rescue mission in Mali is illuminating. The Mali operation highlighted the growing role of an Al Qaeda affiliate which calls itself AQIM – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Mahgreb. The Mahgreb is the vast desert region of Africa stretching south from the Mediterranean. Most of it was once French colonies, and for decades France has helped local governments defend themselves. For example, in the 1980s French forces helped the government of Chad beat off a Libyan attack. The Mahgreb is now increasingly important to the world as a source of energy (in Mali AQIM was attacking foreign workers at a BP [formerly British Petroleum] site). Its vast empty spaces may, it is feared, become a refuge for Al Qaeda and its friends analogous to Afghanistan before 9/11. Such refuges are generally described in terms of training camps. Possibly the most important point about a refuge is that terrorists working there know who their recruits are. The mere existence of a system of face-to-face identification makes it difficult to infiltrate terrorist groups. Infiltration feeds the natural paranoia of terrorists and is probably the single best way to destroy them. The US government, for example, successfully attacked the Ku Klux Klan in exactly this way.

France operates UAVs, but not armed ones. Without them, its airborne fist in Mali is two Mirage fighters. They carry a lot more ordnance than a UAV, but they have nothing like its endurance – which is what matters most in the vastness of the Mahgreb. The territory involved is far larger than France. It is so large



A jet-powered drone with a comprehensive suite of weapons (Lockheed Martin)

that the two French surveillance UAVs spend half their endurance merely flying to and from the area of interest. A single fighter can spend no more than two or three hours over that area. The fighter patrols are supported by two tankers.

This is not classical air warfare, which focuses on fixed targets revealed by reconnaissance. For such warfare, what matters is how well an attacker can survive in the face of anti-aircraft weapons. Ideally the attacker spends almost no time over the target. That is why endurance over a target area is rarely quoted as a measure of tactical aircraft performance. However, in Mali as in Afghanistan, the targets which matter are fleeting. In Mali most often they are the individuals leading the AQIM operation. They can often be spotted by the UAVs, based on other forms of intelligence, but that does no good unless a fighter happens to be on station – which cannot be nearly often enough. This is, incidentally, much the same situation as in close air support, in which the targets which matter pop up at random times and do not remain in place for long.

The difference is probably that the targets of close air support fire are hard enough to require more ordnance than the average UAV can possibly carry. In

both cases the issue is, however, the same: something airborne has to be available when the target pops up. As the French example shows, the further away it is, the less time the airborne attacker can spend anywhere near the target. Manned aircraft have the additional limitation that pilots become fatigued, so their performance declines with distance from a base. This limitation was obvious when the British tried to support the Libyan resistance using Tornado bombers flying out of the United Kingdom. That they would have done much better with carrier-based aircraft, which could have spent much more time in the combat area, may explain why the British Government now considers its decision to eliminate its carriers an unfortunate mistake.

The US government has negotiated a basing arrangement with nearby Niger, and it seems likely that armed US UAVs will soon be deployed in support of the French in Mali. AQIM is a global problem, and the US government is pledged to pursue Al Qaeda and similar terrorists. US involvement of course raises the perennial problem of whether strikes by armed UAVs (rather than, say, by soldiers on the ground or by tactical aircraft) are somehow a new and

questionable form of warfare. That issue has been raised most recently by many on the German Left in response to a report that the German Defense Ministry now plans to deploy armed UAVs.

There seem to be two main arguments against UAVs. One is that they are typically used against particular individuals rather than against the mass (if that is the right word) of enemy personnel or the installations supporting the enemy. Such attacks on individuals are said to contravene the laws of warfare. A second is that because their operation never risks pilot casualties, it somehow makes war-making less painful for the government using the UAVs. The latter argument was highlighted when the US Air Force boasted about how it was controlling Predators from a comfortable base in Nevada, reducing attacks on terrorist leaders to something more like a video game. An additional argument, which seems to be particularly forceful in Germany, is that the UAVs that begin as military tools end as a means of government

surveillance of the German population. German history gives that last argument particular force, but surely German constitutional provisions have greater force.

Both of the first two arguments have some validity, but ultimately fall. It is certainly true that UAVs are used to hunt particular individuals. It is not clear how to deal with a guerilla or terrorist force without hunting down its leaders. Nor is it clear why attacking those leaders is significantly different from wartime sniping (assuming, as we and Al Qaeda do, that we are at war). It is certainly true that, if troops could be moved instantly into position, those same leaders could be captured and perhaps tried as criminals, but generally that is impossible. From a moral point of view, moreover, it is difficult to understand why the US or French government would prefer to risk our troops' lives in order to capture enemy leaders, when we have a much less expensive (in blood) way to deal with them.

Ultimately the argument is that by attacking the leaders in preference

to the followers, we attack a valuable enemy resource. As experienced leaders are killed, the enemy is more likely to falter and to commit errors which make our own operations more effective. At some point individuals may be less and less anxious to take dangerous leadership positions. Incidentally, if it is difficult for the French to keep a single Mirage airborne over central Mali for two or three hours, it is not clear exactly how they or we could possibly keep even a squad of soldiers in place waiting to pounce.

For the US government, moreover, UAV strikes are probably the only viable way to deal with the problem of sanctuary. No government, however friendly, is likely to be able to keep enemy combatants from fleeing into its territory. The border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is particularly porous, largely because the Pashtuns on both sides do not consider the border itself to be legitimate. The Pakistanis have mounted military operations on their side of the border, but in a territory whose inhabitants largely sympathize with our enemies

US Customs and Border protection drone (US Navy)



World Naval Developments – Drones in Mali



that is unlikely to be very effective. Intelligence gathering is a different proposition, and it can support UAV strikes. The strikes themselves have made the United States quite unpopular; a Pakistani once told me that now the United States can kill anyone it decides is a terrorist. In effect the UAVs have made terror two-sided. This is not a happy situation, but it may be the only way to convince people to reject Al Qaeda.

As for morality, although the UAVs certainly do kill innocent people from time to time, they kill many fewer than the alternative methods of conventional air attack and ground assault do. Al Qaeda kills a lot more innocent people in its effort to frighten populations. Unless we hunt down its leaders, it will continue to do so with impunity. Which is the greater evil, that in pursuing Al Qaeda leaders who kill regularly we accidentally cause small numbers of innocent deaths, or that Al Qaeda will be left free to kill vast numbers of innocent people, often by bombing public places – by completely random attacks? Obviously morality should never be a matter of numbers. However, war is a brutal process. If we are to fight wars, we have to think seriously about which of various evils is worst. It seems fair to say that the

fewer innocent people we kill, the less unacceptable what we do is.

The issue of wars becoming too easy to fight is a deeper one. A government can certainly develop a taste for what it sees as an inexpensive way to fight. This issue came up during the brief time the United States had a monopoly on nuclear weapons. The reality is that although operating UAVs does not carry direct human costs for us, it is by no means the whole story of the war against Al Qaeda. Whatever success we are enjoying in Afghanistan comes from a combination of work with the population on the ground, which is hardly cost-free, and direct attacks on the Taliban. The Taliban cannot be cancelled out altogether by attacking its experienced leaders. Rather, the attacks on the leaders make our other efforts more effective.

For that matter, the apparently cost-free attacks directed from Nevada were never cost-free. The intelligence operation which revealed that those driving that particular car happened to be senior Taliban came from enormous efforts on the ground, often conducted at great risk to the individuals who gained the information on which the strike was based. We too often forget that any air strike is only part of a much larger process, most of which

involves difficult and dangerous work on the ground. We often ignore that human cost because we forget that intelligence gathering, which carries real human costs for us, is a larger and larger component of the current war against Al Qaeda and its associated. The human costs are often obscured because intelligence gathering is so secret. We are used to overlooking these costs because, in past more conventional wars, the intelligence component was a much smaller part of the overall effort. 🚀

Northrop Grumman RQ-4 Global Hawk has a wingspan of 40 metres, the same as a C130, a length of 14.5m, weighs in at 14,500kg, and has an endurance of 28 hours. (Northrop)



*Norman Friedman's latest book is **The Naval Institute Guide to World Naval Weapon Systems***

Australia's pivot to the Indian Ocean

BY SERGEI DESILVA-RANASINGHE

While much is being said about Australia's refocus towards the Asia Pacific, another equally interesting 'pivot' is Australia's initiative to simultaneously engage the Indian Ocean Region. Celebrating the 35th anniversary of the 'Two Ocean Navy', 2012 has been auspicious for Australia's relations with countries in the Indian Ocean Region, with Australia now poised to enter a new era in its diplomacy and strategic policy.

'Look West' policy in the making

Historically speaking, the development of an Indian Ocean policy is a relatively recent phenomenon, partly due to the fact that Australia's population is overwhelmingly east coast centric and reflects a different world view.

Commenting on this point, in 2010, Australia's Ambassador to the US, Kim Beazley, who is a noted Indian Ocean expert and the pioneer of the Two Ocean Navy policy in the 1980s, claimed: "I do think that West Australians have a different perspective to those in the east. For instance, Southeast Asia is viewed from the Indian Ocean perspective and the Indian Ocean, and what happens with India has always been seen as slightly

more important in Western Australia than in the east.

"There's a sort of sense in Western Australia...that we've never been defended and when the eastern states say, 'We have been!', we say, 'Where's the evidence of it?' This is what really gave some political impetus to the idea of a 'Two Ocean Navy' which was arrived at for strategic reasons.

"But West Australians like to see a substantial defence presence and very proud they are of the SAS and of serious air bases in the north. Also, they want indications that we are capable of protecting the offshore developments in Western Australia. People don't think about that in Sydney and Melbourne, but people in Western Australia obsess about it," he said.

Indeed, true to this sentiment, Western Australia's resources sector, has in recent years lobbied the state and federal government for a larger and more visible defence presence in Western Australia. In August this year, Reg Howard-Smith, the Chief Executive of the Chamber of Minerals and Energy Western Australia (CME), confirmed: "We believe there is a case for a greater defence presence to protect strategic

infrastructure both on and offshore, including oil and gas platforms, port infrastructure, and shipping lines in the North West.

"The resource industry has previously called for a greater defence presence in the North West of Western Australia, to provide increased protection for strategic infrastructure of national economic significance. The strategic importance of the North West will only continue to grow with the demand from China and India for Western Australia's minerals and energy. Safeguarding energy supply for domestic markets is also critical.

"CME was supportive of the Force Posture Review when it was first announced as it would consider energy security, and security issues associated with the rapidly expanding offshore resource developments in the North West of Western Australia. Oil and Gas Platforms and pipelines of the North West shelf provide the vast majority of Western Australia's energy needs, and the region itself is responsible for more than \$70 billion of Australia's production and export value of minerals and energy. The importance of this infrastructure makes it worthy of further protection."



Australia's pivot to the Indian Ocean

While domestic actors may have substantially shaped the debate on developing a national strategy to engage its western frontier, the impetus behind Australia's expanding Indian Ocean outlook is also likely to reflect upon the numerous external factors outside of Australia.

For example, it is not well known that since World War II, the ADF and Australian police have been involved in an estimated 46 UN and coalition missions in the Indian Ocean region. At present, thousands of ADF personnel are deployed in 11 overseas operations out of which nine are situated in the Indian Ocean region.

Furthermore, in the sphere of security cooperation, out of 17 countries that have signed bilateral counterterrorism MoUs with Australia, 11 are located in the Indian Ocean Region. This should not be surprising given that the *Failed States*

Index in 2011 pointed out that 11 out of the world's 20 most unstable states are located in the Indian Ocean Region.

Indeed, since the implementation of the Two Ocean Navy policy, the RAN, and the RAAF, have been at the forefront of safeguarding Australia's Indian Ocean interests. *HMAS Stirling*, which is located at Cockburn Sound in Western Australia, once safeguarded Australia's western frontier from a possible Soviet threat. In the post-Cold War era, the base continues to support RAN warships and submarines operating in the eastern, north-western, north-eastern Indian Ocean, and the Southeast Asian archipelago.

Partly reflecting this point, the current RAN Chief, Vice Admiral Ray Griggs, affirmed: "In my mind, and I know in the minds of most senior RAN officers, the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean has never changed and has always remained a critical waterway for the

RAN."

As the RAN's largest base, *HMAS Stirling* supports half the RAN's frigate fleet and the entire submarine fleet. Adm Griggs explained: "Today, we basically have a 50-50 split of the RAN's major assets between the east and west coasts. In essence, probably a third of the RAN is based in the Indian Ocean. A lot of our Darwin-based assets, which are patrol boats and the like, spend a large amount of time in the Indian Ocean,"

The very fact that the ADF has a strong Indian Ocean disposition has also a lot to do with Australia's military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan in support of the US, the prevalence of terrorism and insurgency, increasing concerns over human trafficking, management of fisheries, the RAN's ongoing contribution to anti-piracy operations, bilateral defence cooperation with Pakistan, the rapid rise of Chinese



influence throughout the Indian Ocean Region, expanding bilateral linkages with India, participation in the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) and other naval and strategic forums, widening economic and diplomatic ties with Africa, increased US interest in accessing ADF base facilities in Northern Territory and Western Australia.

Taking stock of a vast region

In devising policy towards such an inherently complex and contested part of the world, Australian policymakers need to be more cognisant of the region's geopolitical dynamics.

The Indian Ocean region contains 36 littoral and 14 dependent hinterland states, consisting of more than 2.6 billion people or 40 per cent of the world's population. There are at least five extra-regional powers that are heavily active in the region, namely the US, UK, France, Japan and increasingly, China. Similarly, there are also seven littoral states which are regional middle powers. They include Australia, India, Indonesia, Iran, South Africa, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Unsurprisingly, the nature of the region and its geopolitics has led to an escalating strategic rivalry between the US, China and India, on the one hand, Pakistan and India on the other, and a cold war confrontation between the US, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Iran.

Furthermore, what also makes the region more important is that the Indian Ocean is now considered to be the world's most important energy and trade transmission belt. More than 80 per cent of the world's seaborne trade in oil transits through Indian Ocean choke points, with 40 per cent passing through the Strait of Hormuz, 35 per cent through the Strait of Malacca and eight per cent through the Bab el-Mandab Strait. Moreover, reportedly up to 50 per cent of the world's seaborne container traffic, one-third of the world's seaborne bulk cargo, involving around 100,000 ships, annually transit

through the Indian Ocean and its adjacent waterways.

Another dynamic that adds to the complex geopolitical tapestry of the Indian Ocean region is the influence of Islam, which is one of the world's largest and fastest growing

religions. According to Kim Beazley: *"Islam is basically an Indian Ocean phenomenon and so the sorting out of what Islam needs is something of the Indian Ocean political activity."* He further emphasised: *"Presently, these are two big generators of global focus; the economy and Islam. If you take a very broad view, excessively broad some would say, about the hinterland, pretty well all of Islam is in the Indian Ocean or its hinterland such as the Middle East, East Africa, the Gulf, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and, of course, Indonesia, which is the biggest Islamic nation in the world."*

It is this complex and convoluted region that Australia will need to consider where its finite resources could be best utilised in the national interest. At this point in time, there appears to be a clear case for Australia to expand cooperation with Burma, France's Indian Ocean possessions, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, South Africa, Thailand, and the countries of South Asia, particularly Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, all of which have significant maritime security interests that are directly and indirectly related to Australia's national interests.

Of noteworthy interest, the manner in which our regional neighbours have shifted their attention towards the Indian Ocean can readily be seen among certain



Southeast Asian countries, which are also refocusing their naval and maritime security interests. Both Malaysia, which is a Five Power Defence Arrangement partner-nation, and Indonesia, are also increasingly focusing their attention towards their western shores. For example, the Malaysian Navy has built a base at Pulau Langkawi, Kedah, for its navy to operate along its Indian Ocean waters.

Similarly, Indonesia's Navy Chief, Admiral Soeparno, recently told *Jane's Defence Weekly*: "Indonesia is concerned about Indian Ocean maritime security, particularly because our main sea lanes of communication connect the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions. We have, therefore, deployed warships and naval aviation along our Indian Ocean territorial waters and EEZ," he said.

"The Indian Ocean is Indonesia's western-most defence perimeter and our navy regularly deploys maritime patrol elements around the northern and western recesses of Sumatra. Over the last few years, our navy has increased its defensive infrastructure and assets by establishing new naval bases along our Indian Ocean coastline. Indonesia has national interests in the Indian Ocean," Adm Soeparno added.

"While acknowledging that Southeast Asia is our main zone of interest, we

Australia's pivot to the Indian Ocean

also recognise that political and security developments in the Indian Ocean could directly affect the Southeast Asia region and vice versa. Therefore, the Indonesian Navy is trying to balance attention in both regions, which are critically important to our interests."

Rise of the Indian Ocean Region

In attempting to devise an Indian Ocean policy Australia has a major advantage over its other Indian Ocean neighbours in that it is effectively the only regional middle power in the vast and isolated southeast quadrant of the Indian Ocean, and is already a member of five multilateral Indian Ocean institutions. These encompass the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), IONS, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and UNESCO Intergovernmental Coordination Group

for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System. In addition, Australia is also a signatory to the Indian Ocean MoU on Port State Control.

In addition to this, the conclusion of the Force Posture Review this year, and the soon to be concluded Senate *Inquiry into the Indian Ocean region and Australia's foreign, trade and defence policy*, means that Australia is making significant headway in developing a strategy to engage the Indian Ocean region. This is especially timely given that Australia, from 2013 to 2015, is set to Chair the Indian Ocean's pre-eminent regional forum: the IOR-ARC comprising 19 member states, and shall also assume the Chair and Secretariat of the IONS in 2014.

Clearly, the resurgence of the Indian Ocean region in Australia is unlikely to be a temporary phenomenon, especially given the unprecedented rise of the Indo-Pacific economies, and the enduring nature of the geopolitical and security

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Sergei DeSilva-Ranasinghe has published widely on South Asian and Indian Ocean security issues and is currently undertaking his Masters by Research at Curtin University analysing: Evolution of Australia's Defence Policy and Strategic Interests in the Indian Ocean.

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2013 CRESWELL ORATION

"THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVAL COLLEGE: CRESWELL'S LAST GREAT LEGACY"

VICE ADMIRAL PETER JONES, AO, DSC, RAN – CHIEF CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to be asked to give the 2013 Creswell Oration. I commend the Navy League for this Oration series that helps commemorate the father of our Navy and also allows an opportunity for discourse on our Navy.

The title of this year's Creswell Oration is "The Royal Australian Naval College: Creswell's Last Great Legacy".

On the eve of tomorrow's commemoration in Geelong of the opening of the Royal Australian Naval College in February 1913 at its interim site, it is timely to recognize this less heralded aspect of Vice Admiral William Rooke Creswell's legacy to our Navy and our nation.

I am particularly honoured, therefore, to give this oration in the presence of not only the descendants of Admiral William Creswell, but also of the cadet-midshipmen who were part of the first intake.

In this oration, I will:

- briefly set the scene by touching on key aspects of the creation of our Navy as they impacted on the creation of the Naval College;
- describe and then analyse the RANC model, then
- relate how the Naval College performed in practice; and then
- assess the legacy.

Recently I had the opportunity to read the Creswell Papers that are now at the RAN Seapower Centre. What is remarkable, when you read the papers in conjunction with Sir William's memoir *Close to the Wind*, is for how long the Admiral advocated the need

for an Australian Navy. For many years prior to Federation, it seemed he was a lone voice.

William Creswell joined the Royal Navy as a 14-year-old cadet in 1865. After an eventful 13-year career including service against pirates off Zanzibar, Creswell resigned his commission to join his brother in a pastoralist venture in the Northern Territory then part of South Australia. In 1885 Creswell met an old shipmate Commander John Walcott, the-then Naval Commandant of the South Australian Defence Force. That meeting led Creswell to become First Lieutenant of the small South Australian gunboat *Protector*. Over the next two decades Creswell served in evermore responsible positions in colonial navies, including Commandant of the Queensland Naval Forces. From those vantage points he provided intellectual arguments for an Australian Navy. Creswell wrote innumerable letters and articles on the subject, as well as giving speeches

to various organisations and societies. Creswell later wrote:

"The undertaking I so lightly took in hand when I penned my articles for the *Adelaide Register*, thinking then only how I might convert unbelievers of the colony of South Australia, I subsequently discovered was Imperial in its dimensions. The small job I thought to accomplish in the twinkling of the eye turned out to be a mighty one, involving great protagonists and affecting the destiny of an Empire. My own small share in its accomplishments took me, as I have already observed, three and twenty years."¹

In the lead up to Federation William Creswell advocated in the press and with politicians the need for an Australian Navy to go hand in glove the new nation. His efforts would have gone in vain without the dogged support of Prime Minister Alfred Deakin. The Prime Minister held sway



Creswell badge amalgamated with that of RANC

Ships participating in the exercise Ocean Protector at anchor in Jervis Bay, NSW, with HMAS Creswell in the foreground (RAN photo)



against British Government opposition to an Australian Navy. The British at the time would have preferred that Australia continue to provide funds to their Government for naval protection. In 1905 Deakin said: "No Commonwealth patriotism is aroused while we merely supply funds that disappear in the general expenditure of the Admiralty"²

Creswell and Deakin understood that an Australian Navy was essential to the young nation's security and prosperity. As Deakin said in 1906 to the Governor General, "Nowhere are maritime communications more important than to Australia."

But to Creswell and Deakin, the Navy had another dimension. It would be a great national institution that would help bind the colonies together and help create an Australian identity. In the interests of time, I will not discuss the momentous events that led to the formation of the Australian Navy and the conception of the Australian Fleet unit centred on the battle cruiser *HMAS Australia*. Suffice to say the first Australian Fleet was much grander than even William Creswell's aspirations.

From earliest days, however, both Creswell and Deakin recognized that navies were more than just their ships. In particular they appreciated the need to train significant numbers of men as officers and sailors for the Australian Navy. How this was to be achieved coalesced into an increasingly coherent program with supporting public works in the years 1903 to 1912.

With respect to initial entry for sailors, the intent was to expand the modest colonial training facilities. His Majesty's Australian Ship (*HMAS Encounter*) became a training cruiser which would allow sailors to achieve basic naval and specialist competencies. For the sailors that would man the Navy's new Fleet,

they would receive further training on specific equipment in the UK. The manpower was to come from multiple sources, spanning sailors from the old Colonial navies, the merchant marine or fishing industry, fresh recruits and from the Royal Navy itself. The prospect of a new life in Australia and better pay and conditions provided sufficient attraction for a significant number of British sailors to transfer to the fledgling navy. They had experience in operating a blue-water navy and their contribution to the safe and efficient operation of the RAN Fleet cannot be underestimated. In the longer term, a dedicated training establishment was needed. Admiral Henderson identified a site at Crib Point near the site for a future naval base on Westernport, Victoria. As events unfolded, the training establishment *HMAS Cerberus* was commissioned but the naval base was never constructed.

In 1906 William Creswell, as part of a UK visit, called on Professor James Ewing, Director of Naval Education. The meeting was at the behest of the University of Melbourne which wanted the Commonwealth Government to fund a School of Naval Science on their campus. This would complement the new School of Military Science at the University of Sydney. The meeting with Ewing was of great value. Ewing was a remarkable figure and a practical educationalist.³ He had spent five years as the Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Tokyo University and during World War I would manage the Admiralty's famous Room 40 which broke the German coded signals.

From this and other meetings Creswell formed the view that while university training for some technical officers was essential, a naval college along the lines of the Royal Naval College at Osborne House was the correct course of action. In

1909 Creswell's trusted deputy and supporter, Captain Frederick Ticknell, wrote a memorandum which distilled the character and size of a naval college for the new navy. It was based on the Royal Navy model and would involve training 13-year-old cadets for four years. Because of the cadet system in place in some Australian private schools the title 'cadet-midshipman' would be used in the RAN to avoid confusion. In 1913 C.E.W. Bean wrote of RAN College training system:

That is the scheme. It will be a matter of fascinating interest to watch it develop – like watching an experiment from Plato's *Republic*. It is an attempt to obtain the best ability from the people, wherever it lies. The State realises that, for the sake of efficiency, it must catch young those who are to fill its higher posts. ...Is there any reason why that experiment, if it succeeds, should end with the Army and the Navy?⁴

While Creswell and Ticknell developed their plans for a Naval College, efforts were well underway to create a sister military college for the Army. On 30 May 1910 Colonel William Bridges, who had been involved in the School of Military Science initiative, was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed as Commandant of the yet to be established military college. The government had decreed that it was to be built on Federal land where the new capital of Canberra would be built. There would be distinct differences in the Army and Navy college models. The new military college would be heavily influenced by the US Military College at West Point as well as the Canadian Royal Military College at Kingston at which Bridges had been a cadet. In contrast to their much younger naval counterparts the Army cadets would be from 17 years old on entry and would initially receive three

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years training before graduation. This would be extended to four years once the shortfall of officers was addressed.⁵

A question that both Bridges and Creswell had to grapple with was the size of their cadet population. Bridges concluded the Military College would eventually have a population of 150 cadets. For the Navy the planned Fleet size became the guide and it was estimated that about 30 cadet-midshipmen would be needed each year. Based on the eventual 120 cadet-midshipmen at the Naval College Ticknell calculated the requirements for facilities as well as naval and academic staff. The naval staff would comprise a Captain, three Lieutenants, a gunner, a boatswain, a carpenter and an artificer engineer. The academic staff would be five masters and five assistants.

The officer the Royal Navy had loaned to be the inaugural Captain of the naval college had recently arrived in Australia. He was Captain Bertram Chambers. An astute Londoner and navigation specialist, Chambers had himself joined the Royal Navy as a 13-year-old cadet-midshipman. He had extensive sea service, most recently as Flag Captain to the Admiral commanding the Home Fleet. While commanding the flagship, the battleship *HMS Bulwark*, the ship was grounded. Fortunately for Chambers the damage was minor and he was acquitted at a court-martial.⁶ From the outset Chambers and Creswell established a strong rapport and they were to become life-long friends.

Consistent with the notion that the Services were important elements of nation building, it was decided by the Australian Parliament that both the proposed Royal Military College and the Royal Australian Naval College should be sited in Federal Territories. In the case of the Royal Military College it was at the Australian Capital Territory; in the case the Naval College

it was at the Australian Commonwealth Territory on Jervis Bay where the port for Canberra was hoped to be built. The citizens of Geelong generously offered not only Osborne House as the interim naval college but warmly welcomed the officers, sailors, cadets and their families into their community.

Fortunately for us today, there were other politicians to pick up the baton from Alfred Deakin. Worthy of mention was the first Navy and Defence Minister, Senator George Pearce, who said, "We do not regard the Navy as a toy – we regard it as a deadly instrument which may have to be used some day in the maintenance of our independence and liberty".

Senator Pearce and Prime Minister Andrew Fisher helped shape the distinctive character of the Royal Australian Naval College. I should elaborate on this aspect, alluded to by CEW Bean. In the Royal Navy parents were expected to pay for the tuition and uniforms of midshipmen for the duration of their training. This meant of course that officers were drawn from the middle and upper classes of British society. In a new approach consistent with the egalitarian aspirations of the new nation, Prime Minister Fisher insisted there be no impediments to boys from the working class being able to join the new Naval College,

At the opening on the Naval College, the Governor General Lord Denman said to the 28 new 13 year old cadet midshipmen assembled before him:

You cannot all be Admirals. You can all do you best to become efficient officers of the Royal Australian Navy. You are a picked lot of lads from every State of the Commonwealth and some day I hope you will be joined by comrades from New Zealand. You have advantage, which, so far as I know, no other country offers, in



Vice Admiral
Sir William
Rooke
Creswell



RANC with Creswell,
probably in the
1920s (RAN photo)

receiving this splendid education at the cost of the State.⁷

Captain Bertram Chambers fully embraced the egalitarian approach and declared that he would "guarantee that after six months at the College it would be impossible to tell that the lad had lacked any social advantage."⁸ The Government had also established a quota system to ensure a rough representation of suitably qualified boys from each state on the basis of their population.

The egalitarian desire was broadly met. Twenty-eight boys were selected, of which only a quarter of the initial

intake came with a private school education. Of the occupations of the parents, there was one millionaire, but the remainder were teachers, farmers, doctors, shopkeepers, policemen, an architect and a diamond cutter. One boy was an orphan of humble circumstance.

Having championed the need for a Naval College in Australia, William Creswell continued to play an important role in its early development. In particular he involved himself in the selection of the civilian Director of Studies and in the curriculum.

The other key figure in establishing the training regime and culture of the Naval College was Lieutenant Commander Duncan Grant. He was personally selected by Chambers and would rise to the rank of Captain and command the Naval College for two periods. Grant was a specialist in physical training who had served on the staff at the Royal Naval Colleges. Duncan Grant was a keen photographer and I have had the opportunity to view his fascinating collection of photographs. It is at times hard to tell which photographs are taken at the Royal Naval Colleges and which are taken at Geelong.

As to be expected, the curriculum, daily routines and accommodation arrangements for the Naval College were modeled closely on the Royal Navy. In later years Eric Feldt later reflected that:

The scheme of training was exactly the same as that used at Osborne in the Isle of Wight, where the British cadets were trained. The object was to produce a naval officer who was interchangeable and, in fact, so far as possible, indistinguishable from the RN officer. That was all right. That was the only way they knew how to produce a naval officer when it comes to that.⁹

It is important to note that there were



discernible differences between the RN and RAN Colleges, besides the egalitarian approach to selection. In the RAN College there was a greater emphasis on sport and a more humane approach to discipline.

Sport figured greatly in the life of the cadets. They played rugby, soccer, Australian rules, boxing, hockey and cricket against the staff and local teams, as well as visiting schools and ships. Because of the small numbers of cadet-midshipmen, soccer was the predominant winter game until

successive entries joined and rugby became the dominant sport. In addition, athletics and the 'Swedish' system of physical training were adopted from the Royal Navy model. A Naval College brochure which extolled the Swedish system said it "is conducted not with the idea of 'putting on muscle' but the building up of a healthy and vigorous constitution. Particular attention is paid to the development of the chest, and thus of the heart and lungs, as health and therefore physical efficiency are largely

The hospital at RANC (now inside HMAS Creswell) probably in the 1920s (Courtesy RAN)

RANC waterfront with power station (Tom Lewis Collection)



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dependent on the healthy action of these organs."¹⁰

Naval discipline was ever-present, even on the sporting field, and on one occasion one of the boys refused to swap football jerseys with another on the order of the Sports Officer. The boy "was marched off the playing field by a file of the guard, two six-foot sailors in gaiters and side arms". John Collins wrote he:

wondered aloud whether he would be hanged that night or in the morning.' 'They always hang them at dawn' whispered the cadet next to me. Rather to our surprise he was not hanged. If I recall correctly he was awarded the most serious punishment other than dismissal, namely, a caning strapped over a box horse before the assembled cadets and ship's company. Grave offences were usually dealt with in this manner which had much to recommend it, so long as you were not the victim. Even for him it was soon over, and better in many ways than a long drawn-out period of extra drills."¹¹

A College officer recalled "I have never met a man who remembered a cadet to whimper. Gasps and grunts were proper: but no blubbering."¹²

The Naval College discipline was not however the brutal style practiced at the Royal Navy Colleges of the time. I believe we have Chambers and Grant to thank for this. In particular, Chambers' approach was in part due to his own experiences in 1881 at *Britannia* Naval College where he was beaten so often that he and some fellow midshipmen regularly hid in an old boat shed.¹³ Chambers also had great empathy for the less naturally gifted cadet-midshipmen and a willingness to go to extra efforts to ensure their eventual success. Chambers would eventually rise to the rank of Vice Admiral and in introducing his



memoirs, he wrote: "My apology for putting this story of my life on paper is the desire to show that a person of average ability, and in a profession for which by constitution and mentality he has by no means well fitted, may still score a modified success provided he tries his best."¹⁴

The College experience for the cadet midshipmen was intense. The typical summer day for the cadets began with Reveille at 7am followed by breakfast and a short parade before studies commenced at 9am. Studies would continue after lunch until 4.30pm when there would be sport until 6pm. After dinner, the cadets' accommodation would be inspected and from 7.30-8.30pm there would be homework followed by cocoa and biscuits with lights out at 9.15pm. On Wednesday and Saturday afternoon sport would commence at 2.15pm while Sunday there would be an hour of divinity studies followed by divine service. Sunday afternoon was set aside for recreation. Eric Feldt later said: "Well, it left no time for idle dreaming. It took every part of the day and took up all you can do. All the energy you had went into your living the ordinary life and carrying out the instructions that were given. It was, we realise since, a

form of indoctrination."¹⁵ This regime continued when the College moved to its purpose built facility at Jervis Bay. It well prepared the boys for the rigors of sea life.

On 12th December 1916 the Pioneer Class finally graduated from the still-new naval College at Jervis Bay. During their time at Jervis Bay they had the distinction of leading the Naval College rugby team that beat the older Duntroon team in their inaugural encounter. At their graduation, Admiral Creswell was in attendance. He made the journey from Nowra to the Jervis Bay with a correspondent from the *Sydney Morning Herald* and gave an interview with the reporter enroute. He reflected on the Navy and this momentous occasion to the reporter:

The life of the Navy is a life apart. It may be likened to one of the great monastic orders. The political life of the day sees changes. The work of the Navy goes on regardless, to a large extent, of the political issues. The life of the Navy, during the past ten years, does not seem to have been realised by the public. The old idea of a comparatively idle life on foreign stations has disappeared. The past decade has been one of

The Royal Australian Naval College - based at what was later to become HMAS Creswell - takes on the Duntroon Army cadets in 1916 - and wins (RAN photo)

strenuous endeavour, of practical work in the North Sea, and of the maintenance of that efficiency which has served the Empire in such good stead during the past two years.¹⁶

For the correspondent it was his first visit to the Naval College and he reported:

As we cross the heights leading down to Captain's Point, with the College buildings visible four miles away, the idea of a life apart appealed to me. Here, indeed, was a miniature monastic order nestling by the waterfront in a pear-shaped bay, with clean white sand marking the foreshore. It seemed a sylvan retreat, this spot where the personnel for Australia's Navy were being trained. Outside the Heads the sea was running. The wind was a little treacherous. There was even a tendency to squalls. This sea brought the sylvan retreat into relationship with the stern business with which it is concerned. The call of the sea was there. The spirit of the Navy was there.¹⁷

In many respects that graduation, in the presence of the Governor General Sir Munro Ferguson, marked the final legacy of William Creswell. During the proceedings the *Herald* correspondent noted Creswell's reflective and proud countenance.

By that stage he had been the architect and had overseen all the elements required of a new Navy. Importantly the Navy had demonstrated their mettle in battle and made a meaningful contribution to the Great War. At the ceremony the Governor General announced:

I am sending the following cable to the King: Sir Ronald Ferguson, with humble duty, begs to inform your Majesty that he has to-day said good-bye to the first contingent of Cadets who have passed out

of Jervis Bay Naval College as Midshipman to be posted to your Majesty's Fleet. Sir Ronald is confident that they are fitted by training and character to worthily maintain the traditions of your Majesty's sea service."¹⁸

In his obituary of Admiral Creswell in the British "Naval Review", the first Captain of the Naval College, Bertram Chambers, wrote of Creswell's achievements:

It is perhaps not amiss to add here that Sir George Pearce, the Minister of Defence during the first and most anxious years of the scheme, was a man of both ability and tact, a fact which greatly helped to get measures accepted which were by no means always palatable to certain other members of the Labour Government.

It seems incredible, when one remembers the procrastinations and delays inseparable from such work, that in the three years before the outbreak of the war so much should have been accomplished. Sir William Creswell, as the first member of the Naval Board, can claim credit for: The completion of the first fleet unit: main details of naval administration settled: *Brisbane* well on in construction at the Cockatoo Island, which had been taken over by the Commonwealth: Naval College and boys' training ship *Tingira* actually in operation: work started at Western Port: depots and wireless stations in being – to say nothing of a large number of seamen under training. It was a state of things which few would have ventured to anticipate as a possibility.¹⁹

To conclude the Oration, it is important to assess how the Pioneer class performed in the Grand Fleet and beyond. The Class spread into four ships, *HMAS Australia* and HM Ships

Canada, *Glorious* and *Royal Sovereign*.

In the *Glorious*, the Australian midshipmen found the Gunroom run by two sub-lieutenants with a total of 20 midshipmen or snotties, as they were called onboard. Edwin Nurse wrote:

It was a strange life we had entered. I didn't like it much. The sub-lieutenants and senior snotties made the junior 'snots' fag for them and beat them if necessary. A survival of the public school I suppose. We five were of course junior snotties. But we were so big and strong compared to them that they didn't order us about with much assurance. We did minor fagging duties for a while until for some trifling thing they decided to beat 'Bagger' (Ernest Cunningham). He was the smallest of us. Getting organized the revolt. We marched in en bloc, told them we refused any further fagging and demanded the release of 'Bagger'. Though they outnumbered us four to one, they didn't do anything more than argue. We won on points, and they made us senior snotties forthwith."²⁰

Besides their physical size, the fact that they were selected from a broader pool of society caused comment within the Royal Navy. The Commanding Officer of the battleship *HMS Agincourt* wrote:

The success generally speaking of the scheme of education and training at the R.A.N. College is, I think, accentuated, when the fact is taken into consideration that the selection of candidates is made on a far wider basis that is the case in the Imperial service, although the actual conditions of entry are similar. In manners, general conduct and appearance there is no noticeable difference between any of the RAN Midshipmen, and of these characteristics I can speak

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highly. The system of practically open competition which obtains, I understand in Australia, seems to me to have thoroughly justified itself, and the competition being extremely severe (about 17 to 1) the boys entered should be the pick of the community. The advantages of such a system, i.e. of selection from the very first on a wide basis, are here exemplified, as opposed to a system which attempts to select boys from training ships and the lower deck, which, so far as my information and experience go, has proved an utter failure.²¹

Further vindication of the system advocated by Creswell and other I have previously mentioned was attained in the service of the Pioneer Class in the interwar period and World War II.

Finally, I would reflect on the twenty-eight 13 year old boys who joined at Geelong in 1913. The Pioneer Class were the first and the greatest class to enter the Royal Australian Naval College. Their contribution to the Navy and Australia was remarkable. In war time from young midshipmen such as Eddy Nurse in charge of a gun in the *Glorious* during the Battle of Heligoland Bight; Ernest Cunningham tragically losing his life in the submarine *K17*, to latter years where John Collins, Harold Farncomb, Harry Showers, James Esdaile, Joe Burnett and Frank Getting commanded cruisers in World War II. Fittingly by war's end Commodore John Collins commanded the Australian Squadron and was onboard the *USS Missouri* for the Japanese surrender. Less appreciated was the notable contribution members of the class made to our broader society. A number such as John Howells became highly respected teachers or in the case of King's Medallist Winn Reilly successful businessmen.

It was therefore in the final analysis

the graduates of the Naval College, like the Pioneer Class that demonstrated the leadership, courage and sacrifice that cemented Admiral Creswell's final legacy. 🚢



Vice Admiral P.D. JONES, AO, DSC, RAN joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1974 and is a surface warfare specialist. Vice Admiral Jones' sea-going postings have included command of the frigate HMAS Melbourne and Commander Australian Surface Task Group. During 2002-2003, the then Captain Jones commanded the RAN Task Group in the Arabian Gulf as well as the multi-national Maritime Interception Force. He is the present Chief of the Capability Development Group.

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LEADING THE WAY IN ACTIVE PHASED ARRAY RADAR TECHNOLOGY



Photo courtesy of the Royal Australian Navy. © Commonwealth of Australia 2011

Jack Crace: Boy from the bush, Task Group commander at the Coral Sea, and Admiral RN

BY MIKE TAYLOR

A century after Federation, the spirit of independent Australian nationalism has never burned brighter; and as time goes by it will burn brighter still. But one area that seems to have, so far at least, avoided public notice is the several native-born Australians from the earliest days of nationhood who achieved high rank in the Royal Navy. The first Australian-born admiral was Philip Parker King; two Australian-born commanders of the Australian Squadron/Fleet were Rear Admiral John Saumarez Dumaesq CB CVO RN who earlier commanded *HMAS Sydney* in World War I; and Rear Admiral Robin Campsie Dalglish CB RN.

Another of somewhat later vintage is Rear Admiral John Gregory Crace CB RN, and he is the subject of this article. Jack Crace, who joined the Royal Navy and went on to command the Allied Task Group 17.3 during the Battle of the Coral Sea, was born on 6 February 1887 at Gungahleen (now Gungahlin, ACT), and spent all his boyhood there.

FROM RURAL BEGINNINGS... TO THE RIVER DART

Crace was the second son of pioneer pastoralist Edward Crace (after whom the Canberra suburb is named) in a family of two sons and seven daughters. The family seat was an impressive two-storey residence. It is still intact and is now (2012) occupied by the CSIRO.

Crace senior drowned when the boy was five; the lad's elder brother Everard, working in London in the wool business, came home to run the property. When Jack was 12 he went to The King's School in Sydney as a boarder; after a year he left to complete further education in England to prepare himself for a career in the Royal Navy. He was eligible for a reserved colonial cadetship, and joined *HMS Britannia*

moored in the River Dart, in May 1902. He was fulfilling an obsession that he could not explain. He knew nothing of naval life, and grew up far from the sea; but it was what he wanted to do with his life, and fulfilled a long-held ambition.

Jack Crace graduated from *Britannia* around the middle of his class in September 1903, and joined *HMS Good Hope*, flagship of the Cruiser Squadron of the Channel Fleet. He did well at sea: his Captain reported him to be a smart, reliable and capable young officer of great promise.

In 1906 he undertook 18 months of Sub-Lieutenant's courses ashore and then was posted to *HMS Powerful*, then the flagship of the British Squadron operating in Australian waters, based in Sydney. He saw his family and home after an absence of nine years. His mother and several unmarried sisters still lived at Gungahleen with Everard as Manager. Jack was promoted Lieutenant in September 1908 whilst in *Powerful* and returned to England.

FIRST COMMAND, AND SPECIALISATION

Crace received his first command in 1910, *T.B.105*, a torpedo boat serving as tender to the Afloat Torpedo School at Devonport, and next year he was sent to *HMS Vernon*, the Torpedo School in Portsmouth, for specialist training as a torpedo officer. In that era a Torpedo Officer's duties included all aspects of the ship's electrics: lighting, power for machinery and turrets, plus telephones and other internal communications equipment.

After a period in a non-seagoing battleship, Lieutenant Crace was posted on loan to the RAN for service in the new battlecruiser *HMAS Australia*, in UK waters. Crace was eager to apply time and energy to solving technical



Admiral John Crace

problems. He wrote the ship's Electrical Detail Book; joined with another officer in inventing a contrivance for the control and operation of the ship's searchlights; invented a torpedo safe-range indicator, which the Admiralty accepted for trial manufacture and assessment; and collaborated with another officer in producing a "Book of Questions in Torpedo" as a guide to Midshipmen preparing themselves for promotion to Lieutenant, which was also used by the Admiralty.

Such "inventiveness" was not unusual among officers of the period. Navies were still adjusting to the massive changes from wooden hulls to steel, sails to power, and muzzle-loaders to breech-loaders. Electric power had a multitude of applications. Submarines emerged, and had to be countered. Flags were supplemented by radio. There were many fields for inquiring minds to see solutions to problems and opportunities presented by new technology, and to exploit them for advantage. The careers of many officers of the period show the

results of such creativity; devices that came to be taken for granted in the 1940s (the Battenberg course indicator being one of the better-known ones) often came from ingenious young men working at sea.

At age 30 in 1917 Crace was promoted to Lieutenant Commander, and posted to the Mining School at Portsmouth. He had made a big impression in *Australia*. His Captain described him as “a most excellent Lieutenant T full of ability and resource and never at a loss when carrying out repairs or introducing improvements.”

A CONVENTIONAL TRAJECTORY - AND PROMOTIONS

His career path from that point until 1939, when he took command of the Australian Squadron, was a conventional trajectory for an officer of such talents. He was Torpedo Officer of the mighty battlecruiser *HMS Hood*, building in 1918. He was promoted Commander in 1920, and received an appointment to the Admiralty in Whitehall.

In 1924 he became Executive Officer of the cruiser *HMS Danae*, which visited Australia as part of an RN squadron making a world cruise – including visits to Australian ports. He was Commander of *HMS Osprey*, the anti-submarine school newly formed at Portland, then after promotion to Captain, commanded destroyer-leader *HMS Valhalla* and the 6th Flotilla; then back to *Osprey* again; the Admiralty again in 1932, and in 1934 to command of the light cruiser *HMS Emerald* in the West Indies for two years (which he afterwards recalled as his most enjoyable time in the service). In early 1937 Crace was back in Admiralty, and stayed there until war broke out.

COMMAND OF THE AUSTRALIAN SQUADRON

By 1939 Crace had enjoyed a successful career. He acknowledged that he had



HMAS Hobart in 1946, having survived the war (RN photo)

received more than his share of luck, attributing much of that good fortune to his Australian origins. Unquestionably this was a factor in postings to *Australia* and *Danae* and his next posting as Rear Admiral Commanding Australian Squadron (RACAS — it seems that at the time, the former “Australian Fleet” no longer qualified for that title, owing to paucity of units), following his promotion to Rear Admiral on 1 August 1939.

On 1 November 1939 he hoisted his flag in *HMAS Canberra*. He said at the time: “Speaking as an Australian I feel highly honoured to be chosen to command our Navy, and it is a happy augury that my flag flies from a ship named after my home town, Canberra.” He is quoted as wistfully recalling the few public buildings that dotted the Limestone Plains of his childhood, the

Church of St John the Baptist where he was christened, the parsonage, the tiny cottage which also served as post office, the pub, and the shoeing forge and the store. But it became clear that this was not to be a happy posting.

In 1939 the RAN was relatively small. It comprised 13 ships: two heavy cruisers, four light cruisers, five destroyers and two sloops. The five destroyers had been detached to the RN; HMA Ships *Perth* and *Hobart* were deployed out of the Australian area at that time. *HMAS Sydney* was in refit and would shortly be deployed to the Mediterranean after Indian Ocean convoy escorting duties. *HMAS Adelaide* conducted patrol and convoy duties within the Australia Station. Thus Crace had only three worked-up cruisers to command at sea.



Crace centre with staff, LCDR John Bath, CAPT Harold Farncomb CMDR Pat Perry, and LCDR George Oldham (RAN photo)

Jack Crace: Boy from the bush, Task Group commander at the Coral Sea, and Admiral RN

FRICTION

Command of the Australian Squadron became an unfortunate source of friction between the Squadron Commander and the Naval Board in Melbourne. Squadron exercises and the monotony of escorting convoys across the Tasman Sea led to Crace recording problems being experienced with the Naval Board on operational control of his squadron. He believed that staff at Navy Office were taking decisions which impinged on his role as sea-going commander, and that they demonstrated unwillingness to note his views. (The First Naval Members during the period were Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin KBE CB RN until March 1941, and Admiral Sir Guy Royle KCB CVO CBE RN thereafter.)

This tension went on throughout Crace's time in Australia to the extent that he offered to resign the command, proposing an amalgamation of his duties with that of Commodore-in-Charge Sydney to relieve tedium, and giving total squadron control to Navy Office. Privately, Crace called himself "Flag-Officer-Without-Authority".

Nevertheless he was much admired by the local media. *The Bulletin* held that he had proved to be "well liked in the RAN, and his methods admirably suit its temperament." Another publication commented approvingly, "Efficient in himself, looking for efficiency in others but, above all just and fair in his treatment of all hands, RACAS ... had won a high place in the affections and esteem of those who serve under him."

JAPAN ENTERS THE WAR

In late 1941, to his dismay, Crace's posting back to the Royal Navy was deferred until April 1942, which would take his time in the RACAS appointment to 2½ years. But even this came under threat when Japan entered the war on 7 December 1941. Before

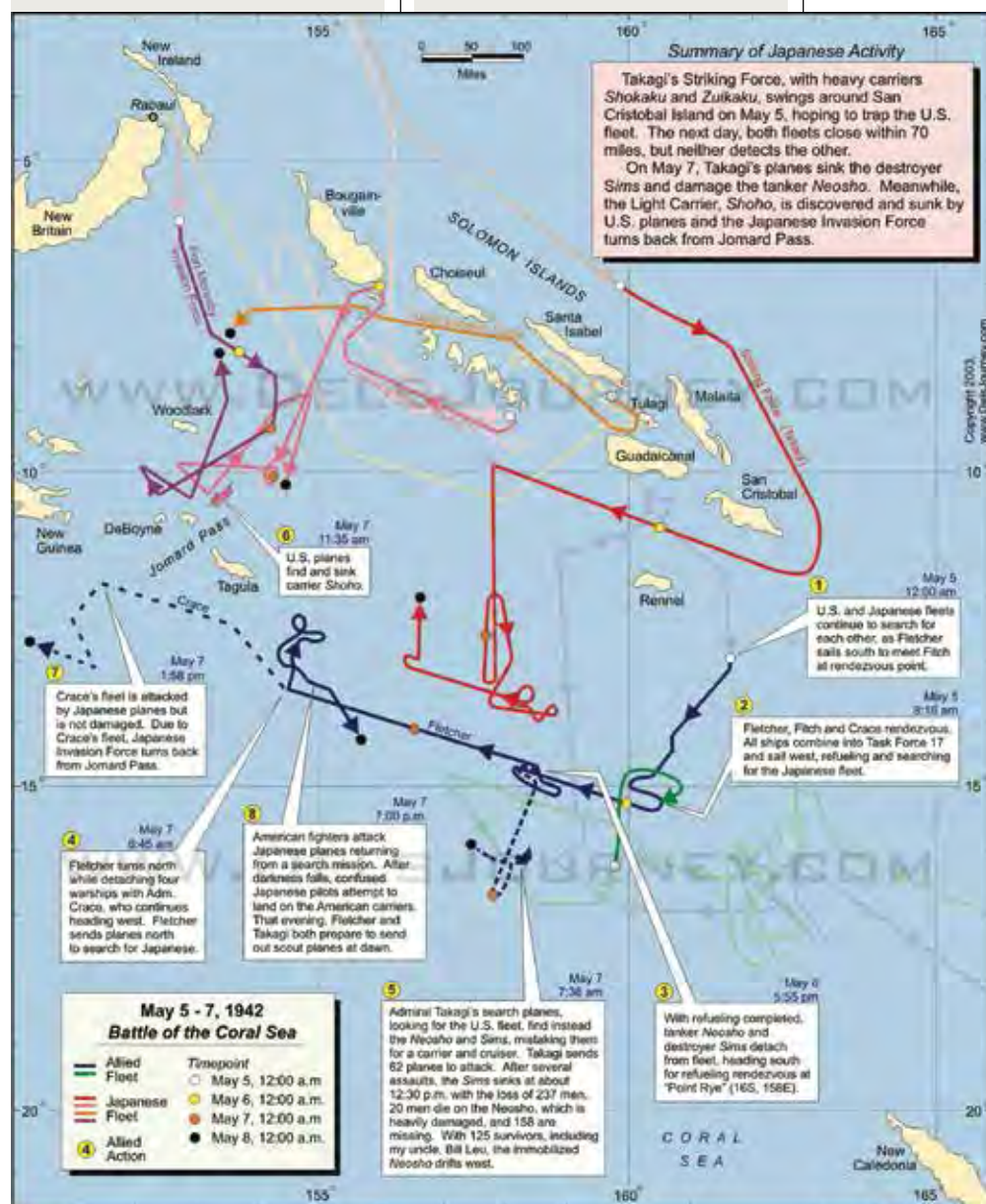
then, *HMAS Sydney* had already been sunk; *HMAS Perth* soon would be; *Canberra* was in refit. Crace flew his flag in *HMAS Australia*.

The Australian Squadron joined the US Navy's Task Force 17 in the Coral Sea to prepare to repel a southward thrust of Japanese Fleet Task Forces expected through the Louisiade Archipelago, the island chain stretching eastward from New Guinea's "tail". The Battle of the Coral Sea has been well covered many times elsewhere; and this account is mainly concerned with the actions of TG17.3 - but it must be placed in the overall context of the battle.

The Allied OTC was Admiral Frank Fletcher USN commanding Task Force 17, to which the Australian Squadron was initially attached. In the preparatory stages for the battle, Fletcher established Task Group 17.3, under Crace's command, comprising the heavy cruisers *HMAS Australia* and *USS Chicago*, the light cruiser *HMAS Hobart*, and destroyers, US Ships *Farragut*, *Perkins* and *Walke*.

BATTLE OF THE CORAL SEA

Fletcher detached TG17.3 at 0530 on 7 May 1942, assigning it the objective of preventing a Japanese invasion force from passing through the best deep-



water passage through the Louisiade Archipelago, Jomard Passage, *en route* to intended landing at Port Moresby (which was known to be the Japanese plan from signal interception and decryption). To achieve that objective, TG 17.3 was stationed south of Jomard. The remainder of Fletcher's force, based on the aircraft carriers *USS Lexington* and *USS Yorktown*, plus escorts, operated further to the south-east, where they were unable to provide air cover for Crace's force.

Fletcher's main force, TF17, after detachment of TG 17.3, was centred on the two fleet carriers *USS Yorktown* and *USS Lexington*, with six cruisers and 10 destroyers.

Japanese forces involved in the Coral Sea battle were under the overall command of Vice Admiral Shigeyoshi Inoue, in his flagship the cruiser *Kashima* in Rabaul. Under him, the Port Moresby Invasion Force had 11 transports and about 5,500 troops; it left Rabaul on 4 May. Its close escort was the Port Moresby Attack Force with one light cruiser and six destroyers. Also in support was the Covering Group of the light carrier *Shoho*, four heavy cruisers and one destroyer. The main Japanese Carrier Strike Force comprised fleet carriers *Shokaku* and *Zukaku*, two heavy cruisers and six destroyers. The Japanese forces operated generally to the north of the Louisiades.

CONFUSION REIGNS

Neither main carrier force knew where the other was, although Allied aircraft had sighted the invasion convoy. The Battle of the Coral Sea was one of the most confusing sea battles in history, marked as it was by mistakes and misidentifications by both sides.

On 7 May, Japanese reconnaissance aircraft sighted Crace's TG, but erroneously reported the two heavy cruisers as battleships. Somewhat deterred, the Japanese temporarily

reversed the course of the invasion convoy. The same day the Japanese launched strikes on what they believed to be the position of the American carriers, but found only an oiler and a destroyer. The destroyer was sunk; the oiler was severely damaged (and later sank). About the same time, Fletcher launched a huge strike on what he thought was the main force of Japanese carriers; it wasn't, it was the covering force for the invasion convoy, in which the only carrier was the light carrier *Shoho*, which was sunk.

On the same day Crace's force, TG17.3, was attacked by Rabaul-based aircraft at 1430. Under a hail of AA fire from every ship, the attackers were forced to release their torpedoes at long range; all of them missed. The ships were then subject to strafing, followed shortly afterwards by high level bomb attacks. There were 12 torpedo bombers and 19 high-level bombers involved.

No doubt Crace and others were mindful of the disaster that befell the British battleship *HMS Prince of Wales* and battlecruiser *HMS Repulse* off the east coast of Malaya just five months earlier, when both ships fell to Japanese bomb and air-launched torpedo attacks. But on this occasion, in a model of co-ordinated air defence from the three cruisers – *HMAS Australia* (Captain H B Farncomb CB DSO RAN), *HMAS Hobart* (Captain H L Howden CBE RAN) and *USS Chicago* (Captain H D Bode USN) – and their escorts, all air attacks were repulsed with at least five enemy aircraft destroyed (though Japanese records show that only two of the 12 torpedo-bombers returned to Rabaul). The Japanese claimed to have sunk a *California*-type battleship in this action; in reality, none of Crace's force suffered a hit other than small-arms fire from the strafing.

B-17s of the USAAF operating out of Queensland bases also participated



Detail of *HMAS Australia* early in WWII (Tom Lewis Collection)



Dramatic shot of the detonation of a 1,000-pound (450 kg) bomb on *Shoho* during the Battle of the Coral Sea (US Navy)



USS Lexington (USN)



The XTBD-1 *Devastator* pictured in flight near Naval Air Station Anacostia in Washington DC. *Devastators* helped sink the *Shoho* (US Navy)

with enthusiasm in the 7 May battles. After the sinking of *Shoho* and the reversal of course of the invasion convoy, they bombed the convoy. And after the attacks on Crace's TG17.3 by the Rabaul-based aircraft, the B-17s bombed TG17.3 for good measure. In neither case did any of their bombs find a target.

THE REAL CARRIER BATTLE

On 8 May early efforts by both sides to

Jack Crace: Boy from the bush, Task Group commander at the Coral Sea, and Admiral RN

locate the enemy's main carrier force were rewarded almost simultaneously at about 0820, at which stage the two forces were about 210 nm apart. Both groups launched strikes. The Americans hit *Shokaku* with several bombs, severely damaging hangars and flight deck. The vessel was incapable of conducting aircraft operations and withdrew to the north east under escort. *Zuikaku*, well covered by low cloud, was not located by many aircraft.

The Japanese strikes on the American carriers hit both of them. *Lexington* sustained severe damage from two torpedoes and two bomb hits and hull damage from several near-misses. She was able to steam, and successfully recovered her returning aircraft; but fires resulting from the damage later became uncontrollable. She was abandoned, and was sunk by *USS Phelps* later in the day.

Yorktown took a bomb through the flight deck which exploded four decks below; and sustained hull damage from near misses. She sustained heavy casualties, but remained operational.

Aircraft losses on both sides were heavy, though Japanese aircraft losses exceeded American by about 50%. His aircraft losses convinced Inoue that the Port Moresby assault must be further delayed. With one carrier unable to operate aircraft, and both air groups seriously depleted, Inoue's self-defence capability was severely compromised; he withdrew his forces to the north, towards his secure base at Rabaul.

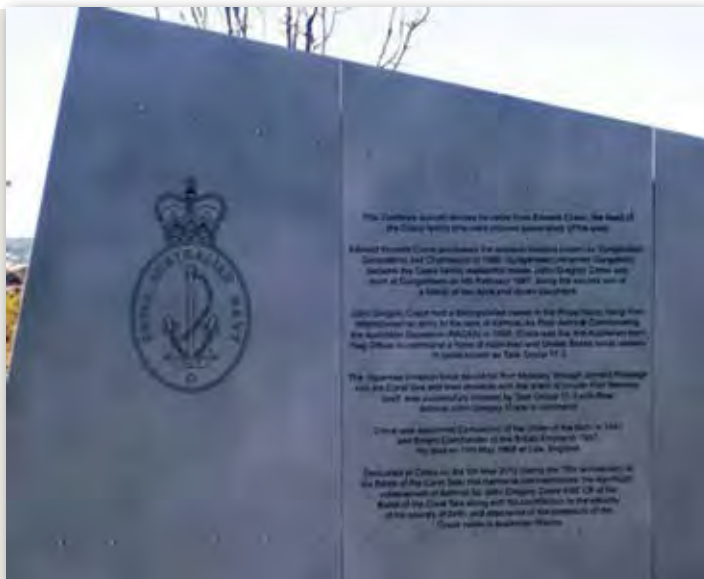
The Allied forces, with their carrier strength halved and their air group seriously depleted (many serviceable aircraft sank with *Lexington*), were also in no condition to continue the battle. Additionally, TG17 had lost its oiler and ships were already low on fuel; furthermore, erroneous intelligence reports led Fletcher to believe that both the Japanese fleet carriers were undamaged. Fletcher withdrew his

surviving carrier, *Yorktown*, and her escorting forces to the south.

CRITICISM OF FLETCHER

Fletcher's conduct of operations has attracted some criticism. His stationing of Crace's force far from carrier-based air cover left it exposed to land-based air attack - though to its credit Crace's ships survived that challenge with distinction. Fletcher's communications policy was frugality personified, driven by an obsession with maintenance of radio silence. For that reason, it seems, Crace was never told that his assigned target, the invasion convoy, had been withdrawn; nor was he informed of Fletcher's movements either during the battle, or when he vacated the area. Ultimately, in an information vacuum, with no orders, and desperately short of fuel, Crace had no option but to withdraw too.

Having said all that, if Fletcher had not positioned Crace south of Jomard, and TG17.3 had not defended itself so capably, the convoy in all probability would not have reversed course as it did. The tactical situation confronting



Crace Memorial, Hotspur Street, Crace ACT

Fletcher on 6-7 May might then have been very different, possibly triggering a less-favourable outcome for the battle.

WHO WON?

The battle was a tactical victory for the Japanese, but a strategic one for the Allies: it was the first time a major Japanese advance had been stopped. More importantly, in the longer term, both *Shokaku* and *Zuikaku* and their air groups were unable to be made ready for the Battle of Midway; but *Yorktown* was there. Today, Coral Sea is universally regarded as a decisive Allied victory; in reality, it was a close-run thing.



The Coral Sea battle looms large in US naval consciousness. An aerial view of Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard, San Francisco, California 25 August 1971. The carriers are the USS Ranger (in dry dock), USS Coral Sea, and the USS Hancock left. (USN)

EPILOGUE

Rear Admiral Crace returned to England very soon after the Battle of the Coral Sea. He became Admiral Superintendent of Chatham Dockyard and remained in the posting until his retirement in 1946. During this time he was promoted to Vice Admiral, and on retirement to the rank of Admiral. He was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) in 1947.

After a seven-year battle with leukemia Crace died at Liss, Hampshire, on 11 May 1968, aged 81. There were ten Admirals in attendance at his funeral, but no RAN officers or Australian representatives were present. Admiral Crace was never invited to a Coral Sea Commemoration ceremony.

Thankfully, this lack of recognition and honour to a distinguished former RAN Squadron Commander who played a leading role in the nation's defence during a heroic moment of its history has been rectified by the superb Memorial in Crace Hilltop Reserve, Hotspur St, Crace ACT. This was made possible by the contributions of the development company, CIC Australia, and the ACT Government; and the advocacy of two veterans who were crew-members of *HMAS Hobart* during the Battle. Thanks to all of them, future generations of Australians will continue to be reminded of Jack Crace's part in Australia's naval history: in battle, he commanded Australian and Allied forces with distinction in a crucial engagement, on the outcome of which Australia's security depended. He was tried, and not found wanting; he earned a special place in our lexicon of military leaders. 🇦🇺

Commander Mike Taylor RAN (Rtd.) graduated from RANC in 1955. He commanded HMAS Vampire in the early 1980s. After resigning from the RAN he worked for the Australian Maritime Safety Authority for 12 years. He has for many years conducted volunteer work for his local sub-branch of the RSL, and has been active in sub-branch management as an office-holder. He

is Chairman of the ACT Division of the Naval Officers Club and a regular and valued contributor to their Newsletter.

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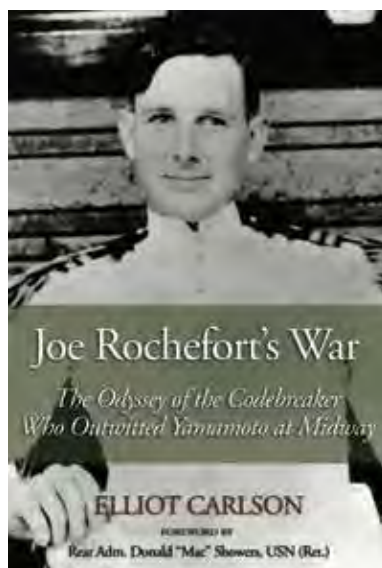
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Book Reviews



JOE ROCHEFORT'S WAR; THE ODYSSEY OF THE CODEBREAKER WHO OUTWITTED YAMAMOTO AT MIDWAY

*Elliot Carlson, Naval Institute Press
Reviewed by Dr Tim Coyle*

To the well documented history of US code breaking and communications intelligence (comint) comes this biography of Joe Rochefort, lauded as the man who lured the Japanese fleet to its defeat at Midway. But while the book covers the drama of code breaking and comint so crucial to victory in the Pacific, it also reveals the jealousies and politics of the interwar US Navy and the treatment of unconventional officers whose personalities did not accord with the perceived standards of the line officer cadre.

Joe Rochefort's War is a worthy addition to the intelligence literature of World War II. The author, Elliot Carlson, provides a definitive chronology of Rochefort's naval life which, with the exception of his family, was his whole life. The author reveals Rochefort's natural problem solving and analytical capabilities which,

when turned to comint and code breaking, reveals a voracious tenacity for concentration, imagination and innovation, carried out in dungeon-like surroundings in the 1920s 'Main Navy' building in Washington and in a Pearl Harbor basement in 1941-42. He and his similarly gifted professional associates were largely scorned by 'line' officers, which Rochefort's irascibility did not mitigate.

Joe Rochefort, who entered the US Navy as an apprentice electrician in April 1918 after having dropped out of high school one month before graduation, retired as a captain in January 1947. In US Navy parlance, he was a 'mustang' (commissioned from the lower deck) although his time as an enlisted man only lasted until 1919 when he was accepted for engineering officer training in the Naval Auxiliary Reserves. He received a rare commission into the postwar downsized US Navy and he was to spend the next five years aboard the oiler *USS Cayuma*.

While the author emphasises Rochefort's mustang status as a disadvantage in the almost wholly Annapolis-officered USN, his fitness reports and the opportunities open to him as a junior officer belies this stigma. It is only as a commander and later captain that his progress was arguably hindered by antagonistic Annapolis officers. This antagonism had a lot to do with Rochefort's outspoken attitudes, based on his intolerance of those who disagreed with his analyses and views. But he had strong allies, including Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander in Chief Pacific (CinC PAC), who recommended him for the Distinguished Service Medal for his Midway intelligence coup. Detractors in 'Main Navy' convinced the US Navy Commander-in-Chief (COMINCH) Admiral King to deny this award, which was posthumously

bestowed on Rochefort by President Reagan in 1986.

Rochefort began his code breaking career in September 1925. Having escaped the tedium of the *Cayuma*, he was serving in the battleship *Arizona* when he was posted to Washington for temporary duty to receive training in 'advanced cryptanalysis'. This career move came as a result, according to Rochefort, of his friendship with a *Cayuma* shipmate with whom Rochefort shared an interest in the game of bridge and in the solving of crossword puzzles. This officer had departed the *Cayuma* for the Chief of Naval Operations' staff and had facilitated Rochefort's transfer.

Despite the formidable and harsh working conditions in the 'sprawling, brutish-looking headquarters which stretched for blocks along Constitution Avenue', there were opportunities for ambitious junior officers to make their mark in the highly competitive and budget paring interwar US Navy. However, his Main Navy billet in the Code and Cypher Section (CCS) of the Office of Naval Communications (ONC) was unfashionable and little understood or appreciated by line officers as code breaking ranked equally with intelligence as a dead end calling.

Although the USN had been active in cryptography since 1917, the emphasis was on operational security of its own communications rather than breaking the codes of potential adversaries. Rochefort undertook a cryptanalysis course run by CCS senior officer Lieutenant Laurance Safford, a pioneer code breaker. An indication of the determination and application required of a tyro code breaker was Rochefort's four month full time attack on cryptograms and puzzles from the War Department's manual *Elements of Cryptanalysis*. Safford's posting to sea left Rochefort as CCS senior officer after four months.

Rochefort's professional staff comprised one civilian assistant, the formidable Aggie Driscoll. Associated with CCS was Room 2646 where two Japanese linguists, Emerson Haworth and his wife, were laboriously translating a copy of the 1918 Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) operational code (the Red Code), which had been acquired through 'black' methods. An indication to the modern reader of the apparent lack of coordination within the USN intelligence community of the 1920s was that the Haworths, despite four years of work on the Red Code, could not complete the work because they could not find English equivalents for Japanese technical terms. Rochefort sought assistance through the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) which managed to find Lieutenant Commander Ellis Zacharias, an accomplished Japanese linguist, serving in a cruiser. Zacharias' subsequent intelligence career has been well documented elsewhere as one of the USN's greatest cryptanalysts. Zacharias' description of CCS and its work is worth quoting:

The few persons who were assigned to this section of the navy department were taciturn, secretive people who refused to discuss their jobs or to reveal details of their assignments. Hours went by without any of us saying a word...just sitting there in front of piles of indexed sheets on which a mumbo-jumbo of figures or letters were displayed in chaotic disorder, trying to solve the puzzle bit by bit like fitting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

The Red Code succumbed after over a year of intensive concentration. But Rochefort didn't only have Japanese codes to deal with. The rivalry between ONI and ONC continued to fester as it did throughout the rest of Rochefort's naval intelligence career. ONI had turned over the Red Code to ONC with the expectation that the information gleaned from the code would be shared. When this did not happen, ONI sought to take over Rochefort's section, which was subordinate to ONC.

This feud between the two Offices is discussed in detail throughout the book and is fundamental to Rochefort's later struggles to justify his assessments to the detriment of his career. Rochefort's two year posting ended in September 1927 when he was ordered to sea. His achievements at Main Navy were, in his view, mixed. Although he had gained valuable cryptanalysis experience, he was disappointed in the naval political climate which permeated the comint world and resolved to avoid the field – which had career limiting potential – in the future. However, Rochefort found he could not totally divorce himself from comint and, when ordered to the flagship *USS California*, became involved in US fleet communications security which he found to be abysmal.

The next significant move which would consolidate Rochefort's

intelligence credentials and his unconventional career was his 1929 selection to study Japanese for three years. Rochefort's ally – Zacharias at ONI – had facilitated this posting, which took only two students per year. Rochefort's fellow language student was Lieutenant Commander Edwin Layton, who later became Admiral Nimitz's, intelligence officer. Layton, in his autobiography *'And I was There: Pearl Harbor and Midway – Breaking the Secrets'*, closely parallels *Joe Rochefort's War* in the commentaries and assessments of the Pacific comint war.

The description of Rochefort's and Layton's adventures as language students in Japan is particularly interesting given the rising tensions between the US and Japan and the USN's identification of the IJN as its main threat. Applying himself to his studies with characteristic intensity Rochefort relished the independence of a foreign language student whose only association with the USN was to collect his monthly paychecks from the embassy.

With his advanced Japanese language skills and cryptanalysis experience, Rochefort's destiny as the man who provided the intelligence assessment for the Midway victory was sealed with his posting to COM14, the Pearl Harbor decryption unit. COM 14, nominally subordinate to ONC, was administered by the Hawaiian-based 14th Naval District, providing comint support to the Pacific Fleet.

COM14, named Station Hypo, together with Stations Cast (Corregedor, Philippines) and Negat (Main Navy) comprised the USN's comint capability. Associations were also established with the British Far East Combined Bureau at Singapore and Hong Kong. Station Hypo was located in the basement of a Pearl Harbor administrative building and

comprised 23 personnel made up of language officers, traffic analysts, ship plotters and cryptanalysts. The author details the strengths and idiosyncrasies of Rochefort's crew, whose intense efforts in meeting the cryptology and traffic analyses challenges were instrumental in the intelligence coup that led to the Midway victory.

In 1941 the USN's cryptology target was the IJN's JN-25 code, the 1938 replacement for the Red Code. JN-25 proved consistently hard to attack and Hypo found that its main operational intelligence capability was Traffic Analysis (TA). TA's disadvantages included its inferential characteristics, requiring analysts to assess what was going to happen by drawing on the past, even though the information may have been very recent.

The lack of entry into JN-25, nor access to the US decrypts from the Japanese Purple diplomatic code, coupled with deficient TA, led Hypo and the other stations to assess that the IJN was moving against Singapore and Malaya in early December 1941, while the Hawaiian attack force was forming up under complete radio silence. JN-25 became the cryptanalysts' highest priority after the Pearl Harbor attack. Although Cast and Negat had made some inroads into JN-25, the immediate post-attack period saw Hypo assume the lead. The repercussions following the 7 December attack and the loss of Wake Island to the Japanese have been exhaustively covered in many works. The book's author, Carlson, adds to this volume of narrative with Rochefort's reactions, particularly his erroneous perception that the IJN did not practice radio deception.

On 21 January 1942 Rochefort received a note from his ONC superior Commander Safford that '...a whispering campaign has started in the Navy department...' Shortly afterwards Safford was replaced by Commander John Redman who, together with his brother Rear Admiral Joseph Redman, would expel Rochefort from Hypo and dog his intelligence career for the remainder of the Pacific war. Joseph Redman had championed radio deception which Rochefort denied had been used by the IJN.

In his defence of Hypo at the Roberts Commission – convened on 18 December 1941 to investigate the Pearl Harbor attack – Rochefort stated that there was an IJN buildup by early November around Palau in the Caroline Islands which was assessed as a task force to secure the resource-rich South East Asian countries. But around early December all communications associated with the aircraft carriers vanished. These assessments were all by TA and although correct as regards South East Asia, had completely missed the Central Pacific operation. The Roberts Commission did not raise the radio deception issue and Rochefort was not directly accused of failure to detect the

Book Reviews

IJN strike force.

Events leading to the Midway episode emerged in mid-February 1942. Hypo TA noted activity indicative of a strike group formation, which included seaplanes. Hypo's cryptanalysts, having made some progress into JN-25, assessed a possible carrier attack against Pearl Harbor on 4 March. Decrypts established that the operation was designated 'K'. Hypo and Cast surmised that the codes AA and AK were Wake Island and Pearl Harbor respectively. This assessment was based on an IJN message addressed to AA asking for an estimate of the number of ships at AK. AA responded that: '...aviation facilities, repairs completed...three battleships present'. Cast partially decrypted a signal associating 'AH, AFH and AF' with operation K. Although these locations were unknown, their similarity to AK lead to the assessment that they were somewhere in the Hawaiian island chain.

Operation K, comprising two long range 'Emily' flying boats, took place on 4 March. The aircraft ineffectively dropped bombs in the Pearl Harbor area and the fact that they were not intercepted caused consternation in the US Command. Hypo's experience in decrypting the location indicators led the station to note the increasing mention of AF in radio traffic. On 10 March Rochefort signaled stations at Palmyra, Johnston and Midway Islands that they may be attacked by flying boats. He also signaled Nimitz and COMINCH Admiral King: 'AF probably somewhere in this area. AF is probably Midway'. On 11 March US radar on Midway detected two contacts, one of which – an Emily flying boat – approached Midway and was destroyed by intercepting aircraft.

By April Hypo could read up to 15 percent of JN-25 signals, with gaps filled by TA and inspired guesswork.

Comint pointed to carrier movements away from the Dutch East Indies towards the South West Pacific, New Guinea and Northern Australia. The Battle of the Coral Sea turned on the Hypo and Belconnen (former Station Cast removed to Melbourne) decrypts and analyses which identified Port Moresby as the primary IJN combined fleet target.

Hypo and Cast reported on potential operations against the Aleutian Islands during May and also a campaign to commence around 21 May. This was based on a signal from the battleship *Kirishima* to Admiral Yamamoto, the Combined Fleet commander that the ship would be unavailable due to maintenance 'during the said campaign' with work being completed by 21 May. Adding to the build up for upcoming operations was a 6 May decrypts in which the Kwajalein-based IJN 4th Air Attack Force requested 10 aircraft radio crystals for specific frequencies applicable to aircraft communications with submarines for use in the 'second King campaign', which indicated that the target was AK, Pearl Harbor. Additionally, a force of four battleships and three aircraft carriers, with supporting combatants, were assembling in Japanese home waters for an operation around 21 May. There was no inkling of the target; the Aleutians was a possibility but Hypo assessed the South Pacific was more probable.

On 8 May Hypo reported a merging of the IJN Second Fleet of battleships and cruisers with the First Air Fleet of four aircraft carriers – the most formidable IJN force ever assembled. Subsequent decrypts revealed that the force would depart Sasebo on 21 May for an unknown destination. During the first two weeks of May IJN transmissions increased exponentially, overwhelming the US comint operators

and analysts. Rochefort and Hypo were working round the clock...I would personally translate about 140 messages a day' Rochefort stated. On 13 May Hypo solved the task force destination question: it was Midway Atoll.

The sequence of events leading to the identification of Midway as the strike force's objective constitutes the core of *Joe Rochefort's War*. Its summary in this review is offered as an illustration of his effectiveness as a comint analyst and unit commander who was instrumental in providing CinCPAC with the intelligence information which led to the successful interdiction and destruction of the IJN's premier strike arm and changed the direction of the war in the Pacific.

The 13 May intercept comprised a signal from the 4th Air Attack Squadron to the aircraft transport *Goshu Maru* to proceed to Imieji – a small IJN air base to load air base equipment and munitions for transport to Saipan. On arrival the ship was to join the occupation force and load base equipment and ground crews and proceed to Affirm Fox...everything in the way of base equipment and military supplies which will be needed for the K campaign... Significant to the decrypts was the use of the term 'invasion force' indicating an amphibious element to the operation.

The Hypo decrypts identifying Midway as the destination for the strike force were forwarded to Op-20-G – part of ONC and Hypo's nominal superior – which hotly disputed the assessments. Admiral Nimitz was conscious that he might be risking the Pacific Fleet on radio intelligence provided by Rochefort and told his intelligence officer, Layton, that he could not be satisfied with Rochefort's 'guess' as to the identity of AF. Layton told Rochefort that...he was to do anything he could within his power to try to solve this problem and to pin down the fact that AF was or was not Midway..'

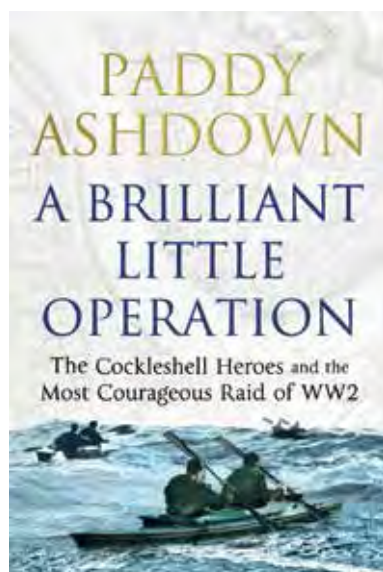
On 19 May Rochefort consulted his analysts and they found a solution. The confirmation that AF was Midway came from a contrived Hypo-directed signal sent in plain language from the USN's Midway air station that the island's water distillation plant had broken down resulting in a critical shortage of fresh water and urgently requested Pearl Harbor to replenish the losses. The Japanese station on Wake Island intercepted the signal and repeated the message to Tokyo. The Japanese acceptance of the ruse convinced Nimitz that AF was Midway.

The machinations and repercussions leading to the Battle of Midway and its aftermath are covered in as much detail in the book as the actual sequence of comint intercepts and decrypts. Rochefort's high profile, built on his code breaking, coupled with his open deprecation of the Main Navy intelligence staff, who he believed hindered his comint

efforts, were the catalysts for his removal from Hypo. This occurred in November 1942 when he was posted to a new challenge; that of overseeing the construction of high capacity forward-deployed floating docks for the Pacific as part of the USN's Construction Battalion organisation. Rochefort returned to naval intelligence duties as a captain in September 1944 to serve as a section head for Pacific Strategic Intelligence directly responsible to COMINCH, Admiral King.

Joe Rochefort's War is a seminal biography of a dedicated, irreverent and irascible officer engaged in a line of naval appointments which, through intense concentration, innovation and natural talents, contributed to a turning point in history with the triumph of Midway. The book is an intimate glimpse into the USN of the interwar and war years with its intelligence community's internal feuds and conflicting loyalties. The author's extensive use of primary sources provides a solid base for the Rochefort biography which, while lauding his achievements, does not resile from exposing his defects in his relations with the naval authorities and associated agencies.

Joe Rochefort's War is a worthy addition to naval intelligence historical literature and is recommended, together with the contemporaneous biography of Australia's own naval cryptanalyst, Eric Nave (*A Man of Intelligence*; Ian Pfennigwerth), for reading by current naval intelligence specialists. The challenges, pitfalls, successes and disappointments experienced by Rochefort and his colleagues in the great maritime battles of the recent past are as relevant today as they ever were. 🚢



A BRILLIANT LITTLE OPERATION: THE COCKLESHELL HEROES AND THE MOST COURAGEOUS RAID OF WWII

By Paddy Ashdown

ISBN 978-1-84513-701-4

Aurum Press www.aurumpress.co.uk
£25 in the UK

413 pages including Appendices, Notes and Bibliography

Reviewed by Commander David Hobbs MBE RN (Ret'd)

Paddy Ashdown was a Royal Marines officer who qualified as a swimmer canoeist in the Special Boat Service long before he took up politics; his work, therefore, shows knowledge, insight and the ability to bring the story of Operation 'FRANKTON' to life.

He writes in a lively and informative style that holds the readers' attention and his book follows years of research into archives in the UK, France and Germany; interviews with surviving witnesses and a genuine admiration for the courage and achievements of Major 'Blondie' Hasler and his small team that is apparent from the first page. He

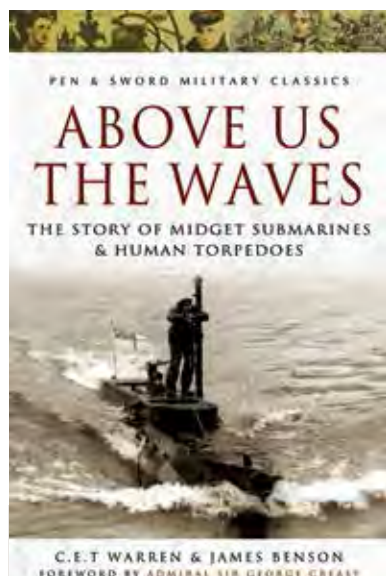
describes the rivalry and lack of communication in London between the Strategic Operations Executive, SOE, based in Baker Street, and Combined Operations based in Richmond Terrace in Whitehall, both of whom planned strikes against the same target, giving just enough factual detail to show its impact on the operation as it was carried out. Bombing by the RAF was ruled out because of fears it would cause French civilian casualties.

Hasler led a team of 11 other Royal Marines in an attack on enemy shipping in Bordeaux that had evaded the British blockade and brought in valuable commodities from the Far East. Several were about to sail on the return voyage with strategic materials including aircraft designs and components from Germany to Japan. The marines were launched from HM Submarine *Tuna* outside the fierce tidal rip off the Gironde Estuary to paddle their two-man canoes 70 miles up the river to the port. Only two canoes reached the target area to set their limpet mines which sank four ships but, more importantly they struck an enormous blow at the German sense of impregnability.

Such was the importance attached by Mountbatten, Head of Combined operations, to carrying out the attack as soon as possible that, unusually, it included no plan for the extraction of the small force and marines that were captured by the enemy were executed because of an order by Hitler that commandos were to be shot. The exact way in which several met their end will probably never be known and they have no known grave; Ashdown's research has revealed that they may even be buried in a German cemetery as 'unknown German soldiers' having been buried in unmarked graves after their execution. Only Major Hasler and Marine Sparks, his number two, managed to escape and evade long enough to join up with French patriots who guided them to the Spanish border and eventual freedom.

This has to be the definitive work on the achievement of the 'Cockleshell Heroes' and I was particularly moved by the author's penultimate words "no amount of Whitehall infighting, no petty inter-departmental jealousies, no squabbling rivalry, no intrigue, no deception, no stupidity can detract from the extraordinary bravery, endurance and determination of the young men who followed an outstanding leader, 'Blondie' Hasler, into the mouth of danger on that bitterly cold night of 7 December 1942."

By our standards they lacked the equipment normally associated with special forces, wearing standard-issue kit with no radios and little food; they were ill served with information but their courage shines through on every page. This is an outstanding book about a remarkable operation. I recommend it very highly. 🚢



C.E.T. WARREN & JAMES BENSON, ABOVE US THE WAVES: THE STORY OF MIDGET SUBMARINES & HUMAN TORPEDOES

Barnsley South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Books, 2006.

ISBN 1-84415-440-8.

Reviewed by Ian Pfennigwerth

With the benefit – and luxury – of hindsight, it is possible to conduct a broad cost-benefit analysis of the multitude of ‘special’ forces which the British, in particular, seemed able to conjure up out of nothing to prosecute elements of the Second World War. This book deals in detail with two such units: the midget submarine force (X-craft) and the human torpedo (chariot) force.

Their material balance sheet makes bleak reading: one German battleship damaged, one merchant ship sunk, one Italian cruiser destroyed, and two Japanese submarine cables cut. The cost was the expenditure of skills and resources on the design and development of the special vehicles, the establishment of bases, support facilities and conversion of mother

ships, the diversion of skill, talent and manpower from regular service into these clandestine activities, and the loss of several submarines, X-craft, chariots and 39 officers and men of the Commonwealth navies.

However, to accept this conclusion would be to ignore the strategic situation which demanded some form of action to offset German and Italian successes at a time of extreme stress on the Royal Navy and, in the case of the chariots, a Churchillian edict – after two of his battleships had been sunk in Alexandria Harbour by chariots – to ‘emulate the exploits of the Italians’. It would also ignore and discount the skill, dedication, fortitude and courage of the men who led the two special units and those who conducted their assaults on the enemy.

In this book, first published in 1953, the authors had access to the veterans who had survived the war, so it presents at first-hand the experiences of those who had trained for and executed their orders. What shines through is their willingness to accept primitive equipment: chariots which were difficult to control and even keep at a safe operating depth; and severe environmental constraints – rubber suits without gloves for operations in Norwegian fiords.

Operation of the X-craft was similarly fraught with difficulties: four men crammed into a small space in which they could not all stand, for hours on end with limited oxygen using primitive navigation to reach their heavily defended targets. They at least had the possibility of making a post-attack rendezvous with the submarines which had towed them to the operating area: charioteers were obliged to surrender to the enemy, whose ships they had just attacked and hopefully destroyed, a fact that precluded their use in the Pacific.

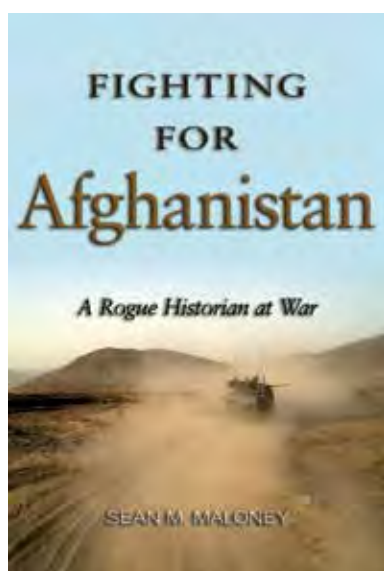
And, although few of the missions

on which they were sent met with complete success, none failed to damage the enemy and to exact a price in increased security measures, additional defences and the more subtle loss of confidence in their ability to defend against these new British threats.

It was a combination of bad luck and swift action by the captain of *Tirpitz* that left his ship merely severely damaged instead of sunk in Kaafjord by X-craft in September 1943. An earlier attempt on the battleship by chariots had failed just short of its target when the rigging holding the craft under the hull of a Norwegian trawler parted and they were lost. The X-craft attack on Bergen in April 1944 missed its floating dock target through inadequate intelligence and not by any fault by the crew. Chariot tasks in the Mediterranean were badly compromised by navigation difficulties and equipment malfunctions and not through any lack of determination by the two-man crews, several of whom were lost.

So, although one could discount these two special units as of small consequence in the totality of the Second World War, as examples of innovative responses to difficult operational problems they would be hard to fault. Certainly, the number of awards won by the men of the X-craft and chariot units indicates their relative value at the time and in the circumstances in which they conducted their operations. Not surprisingly, Australians feature in both the list of the recipients and those who were lost.

This book is easy to read, extensively indexed and contains a glossary of terms no longer in naval use. The maps showing the routes of attacks are particularly useful, and there are several photographs of interest as well as well-presented diagrams of the arrangements of the chariots and X-craft. It is recommended for both the merely interested as a true ‘ripping yarn’ and to the naval specialist as a case history on how to conjure up something from almost nothing and to create a weapon with which to attack the enemy. 🦋



FIGHTING FOR AFGHANISTAN: A ROGUE HISTORIAN GOES TO WAR

United States Naval Institute Press

By Sean Mahoney

Reviewed by Michael Paes

The story of General Petraeus harnessing the intellectual capital of historians and historical studies to achieve successes in Iraq and Afghanistan is well known. His promotion of studies in counter insurgency in order to analyse the manner in which insurgencies have been dealt with was essential to the redraft of the US Army counter insurgency field manual. Ex-Australian Army Lieutenant Colonel John Kilcullen was seconded to Petraeus' office during operations in Iraq to advise in this area, and is now a world authority in this field of research.

Among the myriad of civilian contractors and government workers who have been involved in the campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is interesting to note the number of historians who have advised and recorded what has been happening in theatre at various levels. This brings us to Sean Mahoney, an Associate Professor of History at the Royal

Military College of Canada. He also served as historical advisor to the Chief of Land Staff for the War in Afghanistan. He is the first historian to deploy with Canadian forces into active operations since the Korean War. He has written *Enduring the Freedom: A Rogue Historian in Afghanistan*, which looks at some of his early experiences in Afghanistan, and *Confronting the Chaos*, which recounts his experiences in Afghanistan during the 2004-05 period. *Fighting for Afghanistan: A Rogue Historian Goes to War* is the third instalment to this series. It is Mahoney's first-hand account of his experiences with Task Force Orion in southern Afghanistan in the summer of 2006. This book is an easy to read, enjoyable, well written and engaging piece.

When it comes to writing the history of contemporary operations, there seem to be three genres which prevail throughout the discourse. Firstly, there are the many soldier accounts of their experiences in war. These usually involve a tactical level fighter sharing with the world the brutal and trying experiences of modern war, in which young men and women are given impossible tasks and, despite possessing the weapons and equipment to achieve great things, are not allowed to use their full arsenals due to budgetary, command or national limitations. Quite often, these pieces portray the lone warrior or band of brothers as a unit working against the enemy and the system which doesn't seem to understand or support them.

Another genre is the many accounts of journalists which are written with the investigative aim of exposing ineptitude at certain levels. This genre generally involves well connected journalists, some of whom have been embedded with coalition units or spent time in the communities which exist in the conflict zones. They portray a

corrupt or inefficient system belying the war, whereby distant command chains and bureaucrats, who do not understand the cultural complex or nature of the conflict, are bumbling their way through the destruction of a society.

Finally, there are the many historical accounts of what happened and continues to happen in conflicts written by historians and commentators who are removed from the battlefield. These are generally quite stoic and academic in their intent. Rather than offer an experience, they offer an analysis which is useful as a text for students in training institutions. Throughout these genres, soldiers and officers from the author's country are usually portrayed as exceptional human beings capable of great feats which are rooted in their national character.

Mahoney's work strikes a middle ground between all of the above genres, using elements of each, as well as adding his own unique style. He is able to write at a level which satisfies both the inquiring academic and the casual reader's mind. One thing which makes this book stand out is that Mahoney worked at every level in theatre from platoon to combined headquarters. He was involved in active patrols and at the receiving, as well as, delivering end of live fire. He sat in offices with Generals and contributed to operational planning with the general staff. He spent time in detention centres and at bases which were run by a combination of contractors, foreign military and local authorities. With this first-hand experience he is able to comment on all aspects of operations with acerbic wit and clarity. There is no blame afforded to the headquarters staff for difficulties on the grounds and even Generals are given a humorous persona in this very personal account.

All players in the theatre of this war are covered; the soldier, the contractor at the patrol base, the disaffected villagers, enemy commanders, locals who are trying to make a difference and the military complex which has imposed itself on the landscape that has been dubbed 'the graveyard of Empires.' The cast in this book are presented as if they are weaved together by an author who is seeking a convenient plot to describe modern war, except this is the real thing.

Mahoney's account is passionate and unashamedly patriotic. It is sympathetic to the plight of the Afghans while at the same time, uncritical of coalition soldiers. There are the odd shots across the bow of government policy, for example, he comments on the caveat regarding fuel consumption which limited aircraft to certain flying hours per month without exception as to operational necessity. However, this criticism was made without any large scale accusations against coalition governments, rather, as an observation from someone who wants to see the war-weary soldiers given a chance to succeed in their missions.

Book Reviews

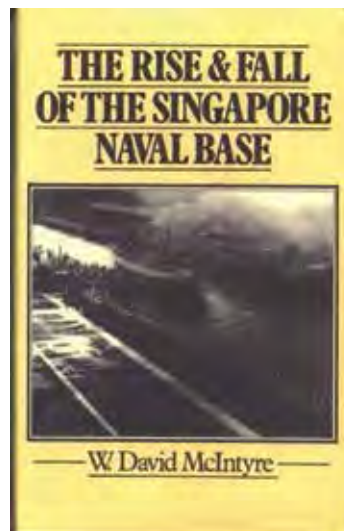
Maloney's book is not a textbook. It contains endnotes but these are not a bibliography of the existing literature on the war in Afghanistan, but rather supporting documents which give his experiences context. This further highlights how his piece finds a niche between first-hand accounts of war and scholarly writings.

In one story, Maloney recounts how operational planners invoked the words of General Templar, the mastermind behind the success of the Malaya Emergency, when planning for a clear, hold and build operation in Southern Afghanistan. The frustration of an historian to hear this kind of language only being used at such a late stage in the campaign (five years in), emerges in this anecdote. It provides a stark reminder of the importance of the utility of history, and the need to have a command of its use prior to going into operations, rather than resorting to it half way through operations. Through this experience, Maloney highlights how history provides a dialogue for contemporary operators, through which an understanding of the interrelation of past and present assists in best determining how to address the strategic issues that confront occupying forces.

Those who have served in the Afghan theatre may be interested to read about the Canadian experience in order to discover how another country has interpreted events which Australian soldiers have also been involved in. This reviewer believes that anyone who is interested in the wider discourse regarding the war in Afghanistan should read this book. It shows the functioning of coalition warfare and exposes readers to the experiences of soldiers and officers at all levels of a theatre. This reviewer confesses to not having read Mahoney's first two instalments of the trilogy, to this end, it can be said that *Fighting*

for Afghanistan is a book which can be read as a stand-alone piece in itself, as well as being a gateway piece which compels the reader to find the predecessors and read up on Mahoney's previous visits to the war zone. His "rogue history" provides a compendium of anecdotes, lessons and commentary that would be beneficial for staff colleges and training institutions of armed forces around the world, even if to only provide a footnote in the study of modern warfare.

The legacy of post-September 11 counter insurgencies seems to be coming to a close with ISAF troops looking to withdraw from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. New forms of warfare such as the drone campaign, cyber warfare and the race to claim every island in the oceans as sovereign territory are taking precedence over the interventions of the last decade. Western governments are also grappling with how best to respond to war amongst the peoples scenarios which are being witnessed in Syria at the time of writing of this review. With this shift comes a collective and institutional amnesia of lessons learned in counter insurgency. Mahoney has done his part to document Canada's experience and it is to be hoped that if we see interventions return to the forefront of military operations in the future, policy makers and future commanders like Petraeus and advisers like Kilcullen will pick up Mahoney's works and take heed of the experiences which are found therein. 🐼



THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SINGAPORE NAVAL BASE, 1919–1942

by W. David McIntyre

The Macmillan Press Ltd.: London; 1979; 289 pp.; ISBN 0333248678;

Ursula Davidson Library call number: 740 MCIN 1979

Reviewed by Ian Pfennigwerth

The crumbling and capitulation of the 'impregnable' redoubt and naval base of Singapore in February 1942 has spawned many books. The fall of this cornerstone of Allied defence policy in the Far East and the basis upon which Australian defence capabilities and strategies were built was a traumatic event. Most writers have attempted to analyse the causes of the collapse of British resistance and to assign blame. However, this book, published in 1979, starts from first principles and details the story of the design and construction of the base itself and the associated defence works.

'Everybody knows' that the defences were inadequate (true), that the naval guns could only enfilade the sea approaches to Singapore (false), and the Japanese were shown to be invincible jungle fighters (also false). What McIntyre demonstrates is that there was a long chain of causation that produced the first result and that the project was bedevilled by political, financial and strategic wrangling from the very start, and that the military planning for its manning and defence was deeply flawed.

Readers will be familiar with the well-rehearsed arguments about the merits of the 'main fleet to Singapore' basis for the naval reinforcement of Singapore, but may not be aware that the arrangements for bolstering the island's air defences were equally fragile and tenuous. The failure by military commanders to exercise their troops, the bulk of them Indian regiments, in the arts and sciences of jungle warfare seems inexcusable. Effective construction of defences and the provisioning was

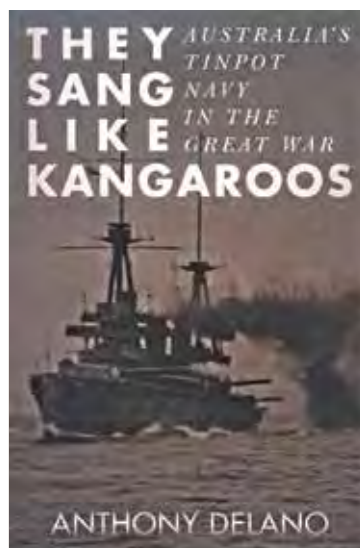
hamstrung during the 1930s by an interminable war of words between the gunners and the aviators about which could provide the most effective defence, shells or aircraft bombs.

Meanwhile, the centrepiece of this crucial defensive position, the naval dockyard, lurched from crisis to crisis. There was simply not enough money voted, nor the priority given, to have this ambitious major work of construction completed, so that the dockyard opening ceremonies had to be photographed from predetermined angles to ensure that the state of incompleteness was not revealed to the enemy – or more importantly – to the British and their allies. McIntyre concludes that senior British politicians and military officers were engaged in a programme of corrosive disinformation from the early 1930s.

There was never an official enquiry into what Churchill described as ‘the worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history’, and in his discussion in his chapter titled ‘Post-Mortem’ McIntyre suggests cogent reasons why this was so. None of the senior figures in the British government from 1923 to 1941, or their senior military advisers, could escape censure for their role in the steps that led to the debacle. It would have been too embarrassing to reveal the shifting sands on which the strategic jewel in the British Crown in the Far East had been built.

McIntyre provides a very good set of notes on the British and other records to which he had access from 1972 onwards, but he did not have the advantage of the discussion that signals intelligence of the time can now add to this sad saga. Nevertheless, this is a valuable and interesting book and the researcher will be gladdened by McIntyre’s assessment of other publications on the subject available to him at the time. 🦘

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THEY SANG LIKE KANGAROOS: AUSTRALIA'S TINPOT NAVY IN THE GREAT WAR

By Anthony Delano

*Australian Scholarly Publishing,
North Melbourne, 2012*

ISBN 978-1-921875-72-4.

247 pp

Reviewed by Greg Swinden

Oh dear. My grandmother often said that if you can not say something nice about someone, then say nothing at all. My grandfather, a veteran of both world wars, however said if you point a rifle at someone: then shoot to kill. Regrettably for this book I will take the latter point of view.

Anthony Delano has attempted to put forward a new light on the history of the Royal Australian Navy during World War I, but does so poorly, yet he has obviously done quite a lot of original research. The back cover states the book “offers yarns from the earliest days of the RAN that are largely unheard”; and pretty much this is what it is – a rambling stumble through the history of the Australian Navy at war during the period 1914-1918.

They Sang like Kangaroos relies **very** heavily on AW Jose’s Official History of

the RAN in the war of 1914-18 and offers little in the way of new material at the strategic or operational level. There are several interesting anecdotes at the tactical level from what are obviously first hand sources (such as National Archives, family records and the like) but as the author fails to provide a suitable bibliography, a list of source material or even an index it’s hard to discern fact from fiction. His writing style at times shows some journalistic flair but on other occasions it replicates a text message from a teenager. I don’t know what he means by describing *HMAS Swan*’s Commanding Officer as having a “Doctor Zhivago moment” and still find it hard to believe that the 11 Australian sailors at Zeebrugge were the spearhead of the operation which involved over a thousand men!

Overall this is a disappointing book. It is riddled with factual errors and unsupported assumptions and, while I am no Anglophile, the constant ‘British bashing’ throughout wears thin very quickly. The French and Italians get similar treatment. The proof reading is abysmal: there are several errors in typesetting, spelling, missing words and obvious errors in fact that could have been easily corrected if someone with a cursory knowledge of Australian naval history and the English language had been allowed to look at it prior to publication.

Whilst lavishly illustrated the photos are often very blurry and poorly, or incorrectly, captioned. Several of the photos look like poor photocopies from other books or have been lifted from dodgy websites and few have their sources attributed. One even looks like a photocopy of the picture from the top of an Airfix model kit. Having seen the bulk of the original photos (which are very clear) it’s a mystery as to where these poor quality photos were obtained. The book could also have greatly benefited from the use of several maps – but there is only one postage stamp size map of the Mediterranean included – complete with the identification of Tobruk, Bardia, Benghazi, Derna, Mersa Matruh, Sidi Barrani and other World War II North African battlefields! The overall publishing is poor.

The bottom line is don’t waste your money on buying this book. Borrow a copy from your local library and read it in an afternoon and make your own decision as to its value. Unfortunately *They Sang like Kangaroos* is more like a Quokka drowning in a mud puddle. 🦘



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Visions from the Vault

A HOBART REGATTA TO REMEMBER



After the arrival of the Australian Fleet Unit in October 1913, the RAN did its best to show as many Australians as possible their newly acquired sea power. The Hobart Regatta, held on 27 January 1914, attracted thousands of spectators, and certain events were specially arranged for the fleet.

‘One of the most interesting’ of these, according to a contemporary report, was the parade of copper punts:

The *Australia* had a very well constructed model of the ship erected on her copper punt; this was driven by a torpedo, and going along at a good speed the *Young Australia* created quite a sensation. The *Melbourne* had a model of a

submarine, the *Sydney* one of the old *Victory* in which were visible a couple of sailors and one officer in the uniform of 1805. *HMS Sealark* [a survey vessel], which was also at Hobart at that time, had entered a pirate ship, but the elements were unkind to it and the pirates very soon got a taste of the unpleasantly cold water. As they were towed away, sitting in drenched clothes on their upturned raft, they looked more like shipwrecked mariners than rovers of the High Seas.

The *Australia* was awarded the prize for best decorated copper punt, and the *Encounter* took the prize for the most humorous. The latter has not yet been described

– it consisted of a motor car, and was an exceedingly good imitation. To see this quaintly constructed craft skimming over the water was a sight not to be missed. The ‘car’ had four occupants, gaily attired – one as a lady with flaxen hair, and whose complexion was particularly attractive on account of the vivid red of her nose. The party waved fondly to the crowds on shore, now and then each of them in turn would raise a black bottle to their lips – the lady evidently enjoying her share – and vigorously ‘tooting’ as any craft approached them, they circled in front of the Reserve to the excessive amusement of all the onlookers. 🍷

ANI ON-LINE: A GUIDE TO THE NEW WEBSITE.

Our new website is now on-line! In addition to the features available on the previous site, the new site also features a library of past journals, a discussion forum, a news section and member list. This short guide is designed to help you take full advantage of the new features.

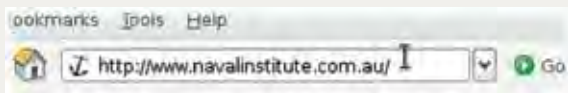


Figure 1

OBTAINING AN ACCOUNT

In order to access the new features of the site you must have a user account for the website. If you have a current subscription to the ANI, navigate to the website www.navalinstitute.com.au using your web browser (figure 1), click the "Members Login" menu item (figure 2), then click the link to download an application form. Fill in the form, then fax or post it to the ANI Business Manager. Once your account has been created, you will receive an email that outlines your member ID and password.



Figure 2



Figure 3

LOGGING IN TO YOUR ACCOUNT

Once you have your account details, you are ready to login and access the new features of the site. In order to login, navigate to the website (figure 1) and click the "Members Login" item (figure 2). Enter your member ID and password as they were provided to you, then click the "Login" button. The case of the member ID and password are important: i.e. "CaSe" and "case" are considered entirely different words by the authentication system. Each letter of the password will appear as a single "*" to prevent others from seeing your password as you type. If you have entered your details correctly, you will be presented with the news page. The grey status bar at the top notifies you of the account you are using (figure 4). You are now able to access all of the new features of the site.

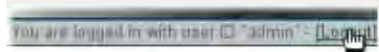


Figure 4

LOGGING OUT OF YOUR ACCOUNT

In order to protect your identity and to prevent malicious use of your account by others, you must log out of the site when you are finished browsing. This is especially important on public computers. In order to log out, click the "Logout" link in the grey status bar (figure 4).



Figure 5

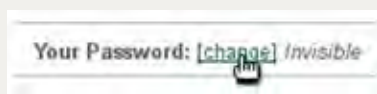


Figure 6

CHANGING YOUR DETAILS

When your account is created, only your member ID and password are stored in the system for privacy reasons. However, you may provide other details that are visible to other ANI members. In order to change your details, login and click the "Change Your Details" menu item (figure 5). Then select the "change" link (figure 6) next to either your personal details or password. Change the text appropriately and click the "save" button (figure 7).

The personal information that you provide will be visible to other members of the ANI but will be hidden from members of the general public. You may provide as much or as little detail as you wish but none of the fields are compulsory. However, you may not change your member ID as it is the link between the on-line database and our off-line records.

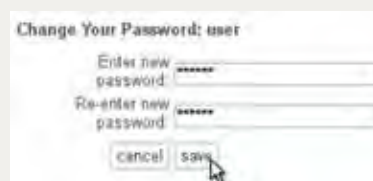


Figure 7

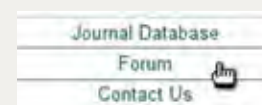


Figure 8

PARTICIPATING IN THE FORUM

In order to post topics and replies in the discussion forum, first login and click the "Forum" menu item (figure 8). Then select a forum that you would like to view by clicking its "View Topics" button (figure 9). Select a topic that you would like to read by clicking its "View this topic" link (figure 10). If you are not interested in any particular topic, you may add your own by clicking the "Add New Topic" button (figure 10). Similarly, once you are viewing a topic, you may post a reply by clicking "Add New Post". Fill in the heading and body of your reply and click the "Submit" button to add your reply to the topic. If you change your mind while writing your reply, you may click the "Cancel" button and your reply will not be added to the topic.



Figure 9



Figure 10

FURTHER QUESTIONS

If you have specific questions regarding website features or even a feature request, post a topic in the "Website Questions" forum and a site administrator will reply. Otherwise, happy browsing!

Thinking of Making a Contribution?

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Separate paragraphs by one line. Single spacing only. Use one space only after stops and colons.

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Use numbers for 10 and above, words below. Ship names use italics in title case; prefixes such as HMAS in capitals and italics. Book and Journal titles use italics.

Use single quotation marks for quotations. Do not use hyphens for any rank except Sub-Lieutenant.

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