



The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria, Inc.

Promoting National Security and Defence

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RUSI VIC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Mike Rawlinson

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Australia's AS21 Redback

Australia's future armoured forces are getting a major upgrade with the AS21 Redback Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV). Selected under the Land 400 Phase 3 program, the Redback will replace the aging M113AS4 APCs, bringing cutting-edge firepower, protection, and mobility to the Australian Army. The vehicles will be built in Geelong by HANWA Australia. The original order was for 450, but this was scaled back to 129 in April 2023.

**Royal United Services Institute of Victoria
Incorporated
March 2025 Newsletter**

RUSI VIC -2025

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Contents:

- 3** President's Column
- 4** From the Secretary
- 5** ***Opinion: National Security, Climate Change and Net Zero***
Mike Rawlinson

Book Reviews:

- 7** ***The Strategists*** by Phillip-Payson O'Brien,
Reviewer David Rees
- 8** ***The War in Ukraine***, by Nick Ryan,
Reviewer David Rees
- 9** ***How to Lose a War***, Amin Saikai,
Reviewer Robert Dixon
- 10** ***Warrior Soldier Brigand***, by Ben Wadham and
James Connor, Reviewer Michael Arnold
- 11** ***Normandy*** by Ian Hodges, Reviewer Michael
Arnold
- 12** ***South Pacific Air War Vol 5***,
by Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman,
Reviewer Neville Taylor
- 13** ***Action! Action! Action!*** by Nicholas Floyd and
Paul Stevens, Reviewer John Henry
- 14** Library Notes
- 15** New Library Acquisitions



Opinions expressed in the RUSI VIC Newsletter are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Institute.

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President's Column

Major General Mike O'Brien CSC (Retd)



If you hadn't noticed from January 2025 Our weekly e-newsletter went national as RUSIA Defence Update and is distributed to RUSIA members throughout Australia. It has been very well received. The Defence Update formula is to combine an interesting historical item with cutting edge defence news from the ADF, the region and the world.

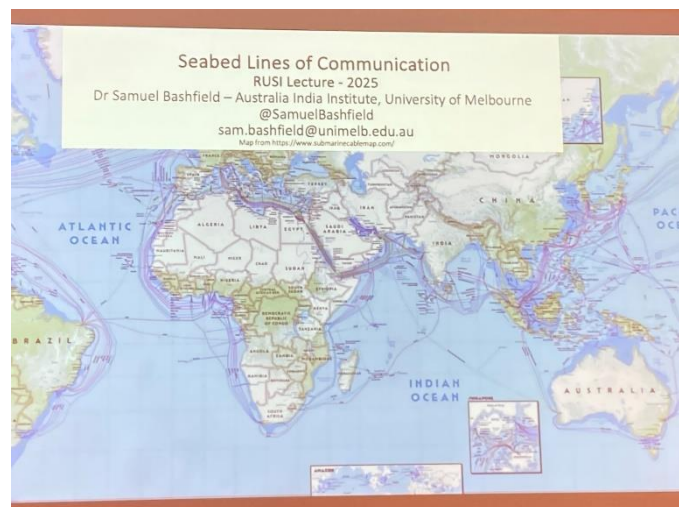
And there is lots happening. As well as wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, a CPLA-N Flotilla has sailed around Australia demonstrating that almost all our critical infrastructure is vulnerable to maritime missile attack. There are also doubts regarding US commitment to its Alliances. The Trump Presidency has introduced economic and geopolitical uncertainty into the world order.

RUSI commentators have been joined by authoritative individuals and now the US administration is recommending that Australia's defence spending be increased to 3% of GDP - starting now. As well as nuclear submarines under AUKUS arrangements Australia needs a larger and more capable, missile equipped Army and an Air Force with a longer reach.

Ed



February Lunchtime Address Speaker
Samuel Bashfield
Topic Submarine Cables – A Hidden Weakness?



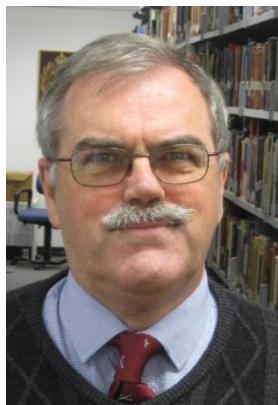
Here is a quote worth remembering in the Age of Trump

'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man. '

George Bernard Shaw 1905

From the Secretary:

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart RFD



Not much to tell.

Membership update

Since the last newsletter, we have been advised of the passing of John Cullen,

We welcome the following new members.

Paul Patty, Daryl Moran, Terry Trounson, Ian Toohill, John Lauria and Michelle McCormack."

Bob Hart



The RUSI Needs You

Book Reviewers Wanted

Due to the generosity of Australian and overseas publishers, RUSI – Vic Library finds itself swamped with copies of books that are required to be reviewed. To lighten the load and spread the workload, we are urgently seeking members who are prepared to assist with this task.

It matters not that you have never review a book before – we can provide you with easy-to-follow guidance.

As benefactors of their generosity, we have an obligation to the publishers. They are often looking for a review to include in their publicity for the launch of a new title – so timeliness (a reasonably short turnaround time) is expected.

If you feel you can assist, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact the Secretary Bob Hart, on 9282 5918

Bequests

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria

The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria was established in 1890. It seeks to promote informed debate on and improve public awareness and understanding of defence and national security.

The Institute maintains a specialist library to assist in this, as well as scheduling regular lecture

es and visits of interest. The costs of doing so, however are becoming burdensome and are exacerbated by an ageing and declining membership.

To allow us to continue to provide services to members and the community into the future, you could greatly assist us by remembering the Institute in your will. Should you desire assistance in adding an appropriate codicil to your will, please contact the Secretary at secretary@rusivc.org.au. If you have added a bequest to your will, it would be of assistance to be advised of it (not the specific amount) in case we need to communicate with you or your executors.

Opinion:
National Security, Climate Change and
Net Zero

Mike Rawlinson

Government policy is to upgrade and expand the ADF as a deterrent against possible threats by China. This is a matter of urgency and will require a significant increase in defence's budget allocation. There is professional support for an increase from 2.03% to 3% of GDP.

Where will the money come from? Australia currently has a large national debt and competing commitments from the welfare requirements of an ageing population, growing expenditure on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Health and Education. While unemployment is low, and inflation is almost in acceptable levels, productivity has been very low for several years and the cost-of-living, particularly the cost of energy which underlies all prices, has skyrocketed. The high cost of energy can be directly linked to the government's response to climate change.

Climate Change

Climate change is happening – it always has. In geological time we are in a mild warming period. Popularised by former US Vice President Al Gore's 2006 documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth', climate change warming has been successfully portrayed as Catastrophic Anthropogenic Global Warming (CAGW) caused by human sourced emissions of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon-dioxide. CAGW has captured the fears and imagination of the West's educated elite and been the default position of the UN and most governments for two decades. The response of the UN has been for the developed countries to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from all sources. This includes mining, manufacturing, agriculture, transport and power generation. For electricity generation this has meant the replacement of the fossil fuels, coal, oil and gas by solar, wind, biomass, hydro and nuclear.

In Australia moderate increases in the cost of energy were to be expected as the country transitioned from fossil fuels to renewables (wind and solar). However, over the last 20 years this transition has been badly managed by governments from both sides of politics. Currently it is not only the affordability of energy by households, commerce, construction and manufacturing industry that are suffering but also the security and reliability of supply. Australia, a country rich in coal, gas and uranium, has gone from having the lowest cost energy in the world to among the highest.

Climate change has dominated the government's energy priorities. First the 2016 Paris Climate Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, and then the Glasgow 2021 Agreement to achieve 'Net Zero by 2050'. 'Net Zero by 2050' is an arbitrary target with no scientific basis, but it does have nice ring to it. It was accepted by most countries attending the Glasgow Conference. Both major Australian political parties are signed up to Net Zero, albeit with different interim targets.

The government has obsessively pursued its own interim target of 82% renewables by 2030. This has been to the detriment of energy security, reliability and affordability, as well as national security. From progress to date, it appears that this target was overly ambitious and is most unlikely to be achieved. The intended 'renewables only' (wind and solar) firmed by batteries, pumped hydro and gas, is thought to be unachievable. Overseas experience is that baseload power from High Efficiency Low Emissions (HELE) coal or nuclear is necessary to stabilize a grid which fed by intermittent renewables and provide reliability during long periods when renewable output is not available. (eg wind drought, overcast)

The US the Paris Climate Agreement

The Obama Administration supported the Paris Agreement of 2016. The US achieved a significant reduction in its emissions by the offshoring of industry (globalization) and switching fossil fuels from coal to gas obtained by fracking. The Trump Administration 2017-2020 withdrew from Paris while Biden 2021-

2024 rejoined Paris and Glasgow Net Zero by 2050. One of President Trump's first acts following inauguration in 2025 was to withdraw the US from the Paris Agreement. He has also banned offshore wind farms and proposes to expand oil and gas production.

Trump's grounds for withdrawal from Paris and Glasgow are that the provisions are unfair. The US Energy Secretary has identified net zero as a 'sinister goal', the aggressive pursuit of which has not delivered any benefits and instead has involved tremendous costs.

Unfair, relates to the position of the US and China. China is the world's largest emitter, and its emissions are increasing. From the 2024 Report of the Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (EDGAR) greenhouse gas emissions by country are China 30%, USA 11%, India 8%, Eu 6%, Russia 5%.....Australia 1.1%. Under the Paris Agreement China and India are regarded as underdeveloped countries and are not required to immediately decarbonise and can continue to use cheap coal powered electricity. China is planning 100 new coal-fired power stations as well as 10 new nuclear stations. China has benefited by becoming the supplier of 80 % of the world's solar panels and wind turbines as well as being the largest manufacturer of electrically powered vehicles,

The Effectiveness of Australian Decarbonisation

The Australian government's enthusiasm for decarbonisation is hard to justify as Australia is responsible for less than 1.1% of global emissions and the total elimination of all these emissions is calculated to have a negligible effect on global warming.

European countries have been enthusiastic supporters of decarbonisation, and posited tariffs against non-compliers. However, this has been muted with their loss of access to Russian gas, and difficulty in meeting their own targets. In recent European elections voters have shown that they prefer cheap reliable, abundant energy ahead of fighting climate change. There has been a swing away from governments that would discriminate

against looser Net Zero policies by trading partners.

The Contribution of Carbon Dioxide to Climate Change

While the climate is slowly changing, it is worth re-examining whether these changes are due to human emissions of carbon dioxide. Although, the transition of fossil fuels to renewables, is almost universally accepted policy, and is backed by significant public and corporate vested interests, in fact the science is not settled. Science is a sceptical discipline, and it evolves by challenging existing norms. A consensus of scientists is not a scientific proof that is capable of being falsified.

While the physics of greenhouse warming is undisputed, both its total contribution to observed global warming, and the part played by human emissions compared to natural emissions has not been scientifically proven. Evidence in geological time shows that temperature and carbon dioxide concentration levels are correlated, but temperature leads carbon dioxide not the reverse.

'In the past climate changed due to tectonic, galactic, orbital, solar, ocean and lunar cycles. Past climate changes were not driven by carbon dioxide. Nothing has changed. (Plimer, Green Murder, p 8)

Fear of the future plus a combination of mutually reinforcing factors have made CAGW and decarbonisation unchallengeable, and alternative views have been rejected and its proponents cancelled in various ways. Now is the time for policy makers to reconsider these propositions and their probability, risk and the cost and benefit of alternative policies in the light of contemporary geopolitics.

We should be concerned with adaption to climate change, not decarbonisation. Adaption includes emergency management of extreme weather events, resettlement of effected populations and building resilience to anticipated changes in climate and sea level rise.

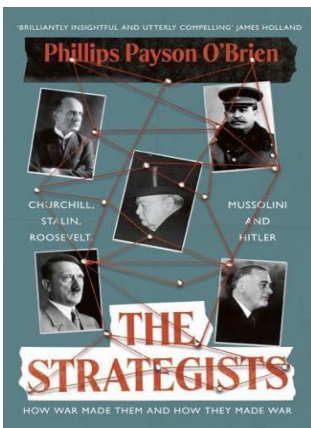
Continued page 13

Book Reviews

This newsletter has seven Book Reviews. On behalf of members the Editor thanks the reviewers. The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria Library thanks authors and publishers for providing copies for review.

If you would like a hard copy of a review, please contact the Secretary.

The Strategists



*Churchill, Stalin,
Roosevelt, Mussolini and
Hitler – How War Made
Them,
and How They Made
War*

**Phillips Payson
O'Brien**

London : Viking, an
imprint of Penguin

Books, 2024

Paperback 544pp RRP \$36.99

Reviewer: David Rees, February 2025

In this enthralling book about the key strategists of the Second World War, O'Brien, the author, has crafted a history of the war that focuses on the outcomes of some of the strategic decisions made by five critical leaders of the war, namely: *Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, Hitler, and Mussolini*. O'Brien is a professor of strategic studies at St Andrew's University in Scotland, so the book is well-researched and remarkably easy to read, making it a perfect choice for those interested in the Second World War's history. It includes 45 pages of *Endnotes*, an extensive *Bibliography*, an *Index*, and many black and white photographs of the leaders during their lifetime.

O'Brien argues that if one wants to understand strategy, one must first understand the strategist. Therefore, it is essential to research the leaders' backgrounds and see how their experiences of previous wars influenced their strategic decisions during the Second World War. The revisionist type narrative analyses in detail how effective the leaders' strategic choices were in meeting or failing to meet the personal aims of each leader. In hindsight, many decisions were individualistic

or idiosyncratic and not always made in the national interest. The author also points out that the leaders' public speeches and written plans frequently didn't reveal the leader's true intentions. They tended to distract people away from the hidden strategy using the diplomatic 'smoke and mirrors' technique of negotiating policy.

Apart from Roosevelt, who became the Assistant Secretary to the US Navy in the First World War and did not serve in the military, the four others did serve in their country's military. However, Roosevelt did visit Verdun in 1918, which significantly impacted his views about the futility of using troops against the new destructive weapons of war. Churchill served part-time as the Battalion Commander of the 6th Royal Scots Fusiliers in Flanders, Hitler served with the 16th List Regiment on the western front, Mussolini served with the Italian 11th Bersaglieri Regiment near Trieste and Stalin served in the Red Army. Hitler's war experiences led him to believe that to win a battle, the military needed bigger weapons and good protective armour rather than speed of movement on the ground. It also needed an air force that prioritised ground support. Roosevelt and Churchill believed in providing powerful and speedy air, sea, and land capabilities with good logistics while avoiding significant troop confrontations.

The book describes how the three Allied leaders interacted with each other at the conferences held in places such as Casablanca, Yalta and Teheran. They tried to sort out their differences, such as when Roosevelt and Stalin wanted to prioritise the support for an early troop landing in France in 1943. In contrast, Churchill wished to prioritise troop landings in the Mediterranean. The leaders eventually agreed to prioritise equally against the wishes of their military staff.

The author concludes by stating that the idea that each leader had a clear and logical national strategy is a myth, and some people, in writing history, make strategic thinking more complex than it really is. However, this book is as much about top-level leadership as it is about grand strategy during wartime and is still highly recommended.

The War for Ukraine
Strategy and Adaptation Under Fire

Nick Ryan

Annapolis, MD, USA: Naval Institute Press, 2024
 Hardback 360pp RRP \$64.99

Reviewer: David Rees, January 2025

In his analysis of the on-going war between Russia and Ukraine, the author describes how each side has learnt from the progress of the war to date and how they continue to develop new strategies and adaptations to their weapons and tactics in order to create winning advantages. *Mick Ryan* is a well-known commentator on warfare and he is a retired Australian Army major-general. His

speciality is in the study and teaching of military strategy and with that background, he is able to provide a deep understanding of the various strategies, tactics and weaponry employed by both sides and how effectively they have been used and further developed.

In addition to the wealth of observations on the war for Ukraine, the book has 68 pages of *Endnotes*, an extensive *Bibliography* of 32 pages as well as an extensive *Index*. In explaining his views on the war, *Ryan* draws on the strategic works of other well-known writers like *Carl von Clausewitz*, *Eliot Cohen* and *Lawrence Freedman* and many others. So, the book is an excellent historical reference for strategic theorists, politicians, military leaders and academics.

Ever since the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, which made Ukraine one of the twelve independent sovereign states within the Russian Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Vladimir Putin's view was that Ukraine and Russia were still one state. Putin's strategy for bringing Ukraine back under Russian control was initially to capture the Ukrainian Crimean Peninsula. His method was to use covert actions and subterfuge before achieving battlefield success in 2014. He then followed up in February 2022 with a second military invasion of the southern and eastern regions of Ukraine with the objective of occupying

the whole of Ukraine by a process of demilitarisation and 'de-Nazification'.

He saw the attempts by the Ukrainians to develop closer ties with the European Union and NATO as a major threat to Russia. This was especially the case in 2019, when *Volodymyr Zelenskyy* became the new elected President of the Ukraine. By the time of the second invasion, *Zelenskyy* had quickly developed better strategies than his predecessor to effectively resist any Russian moves towards conquering his country. These included the continued changing of the Ukrainian military from a Russian-type culture and organisation to a NATO-type organization using some of NATO's tactics and weaponry. This depended a lot on the sustained training and support received from the USA, Europe and other democratic countries like Australia.

Under *Zelenskyy's* inspired leadership and his clever strategies and adaptations, the smaller Ukrainian military forces, inflicted heavy casualties on the Russian forces during the first year of the war compared with their own lesser losses. *Zelenskyy's* key strategy was to successfully ensure that by his own efforts, the West would continue to help to defend Ukrainian freedom, sovereignty and its Western liberal views on morality. He also ensured that the people of Ukraine were unified by his ability to continuously communicate a common believable purpose for defending their country and to continue fighting the war.

Ryan argues that the strategies used to date have not resulted in a win for either side. The main purpose of the book, nevertheless, is to learn lessons from its narrative of a modern war, especially when the character of war and its weapons have changed from previous wars. Some of the main lessons learnt for democratic countries was the need to provide better deterrence systems and better defence against cyber-attacks, new autonomous weapons, long range missiles and drones. Other lessons included a better preparation for the defence of targeted civilians and infrastructure, better stockpiling of weapons and better industrial defence equipment manufacturing support.

This is a 'must read' book for those interested in modern warfare and a desire to know more about the Ukrainian war. It is highly recommended.

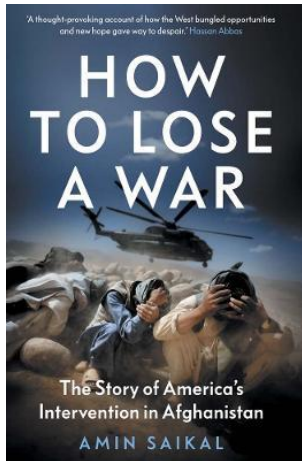
How to Lose a War
*The Story of America's Intervention in
 Afghanistan*

Amin Saikal

Cambridge, MA, USA: Yale University Press, 2024
 Hardback 320pp RRP \$39.95

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, February 2025

This is an account of the West's failures in Afghanistan from 9/11 to the fall of Kabul and the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021. It is a methodically documented and very detailed account which has as its focus the failure of the West (and various US administrations in particular) to ensure that there was a stable post-Taliban government in



Afghanistan capable of unifying the divergent factions between political opponents and diverse tribes. The documentary material is augmented by much new information obtained from high-level Afghani sources, mostly members of the various Afghani governments established by the US. The level of detail is such that I think the book is best approached by readers already familiar with the history of the war in Afghanistan and with US government foreign policy since 9/11. In relation to the latter the author pays particular attention to the agreement reached between the (very impatient it would seem) Trump administration and the Taliban in early 2020. As the author points out 'it basically addressed the Taliban's fundamental demands in return for very little' (p 124). It is also notable that the Afghan government was excluded from the discussions which led to this 'Doha Accord' - did someone say 'Ukraine'? The Accord did not provide for a universal ceasefire, but instead only for one between the Taliban and the US and allied forces. After the signing of the bilateral US-Taliban deal, the US stopped supporting the Afghan military in its offensive operations, insurgent attacks against Afghan security forces surged while attacks on US and allied forces declined dramatically.

In addition to drawing attention the failure to secure a reliable and effective Afghan leadership and a workable system of governance the author also discusses other factors which led to the defeat. Foremost is the role of Pakistan in providing a safe haven and logistic support for the Taliban. The book makes it clear that the failure to have the support of Pakistan virtually guaranteed that it was only a matter of time before the US and its allies had to accept failure. This was in marked contrast to the 1980s when Pakistan was the base for the Saudi American alliance supporting the *mujahideen* against the Soviets. The author also draws attention to the Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq in 2003 which resulted in military resources being devoted to the war in Iraq at the expense of the war in Afghanistan.

I mentioned above that the focus of the book is on the failure to establish a stable Western-style democratic government in Afghanistan. The author argues that the failure was largely due to the imposition of a highly centralised system of government when a more decentralised and federal system of government might have better suited a country with such marked tribal divisions. *How to Lose a War* provides a timely warning for Western policy makers seeking to reshape non-Western and tribal countries in their own image.

The book has one very useful map of Afghanistan, 37 pages of *Endnotes*, seven pages of *References* (the number of pages devoted to *Notes* and *References* is indicative of how detailed the book is) and a twelve-page *Index* (which does not include any mention of Australia or Australian forces).

The author, Amin Saikal (born in Kabul, Afghanistan), is Emeritus Professor of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies, and the Founding Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Australian National University. He is the author of a large number of books including *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious Rule* (2009), *Modern Afghanistan. A History of Struggle and Survival* (2012) and *Iran at the Crossroads* (2015).

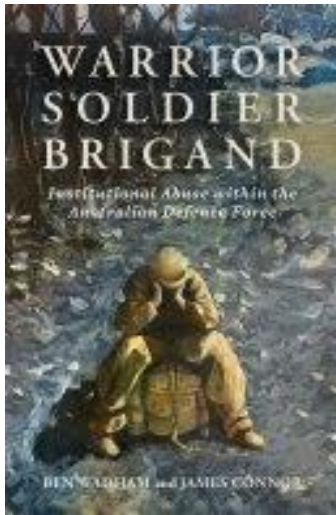
Warrior Soldier Brigand

Institutional Abuse within the Australian Defence Force

Ben Wadham and James Connor

Melbourne, Victoria Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2024

Paperback 496pp RRP: \$45.00



Reviewer: Michael Arnold, January 2025

As a former senior Army Officer, I found *Warrior Soldier Brigand* a confronting read. The authors analyse the root cause of institutional abuse within the ADF and do not pull any punches. Using actual cases studies, garnered from a range of Defence

reviews and inquiries, they paint a picture of sustained and widespread systemic abuse. The damage to a large number of Australian servicemen and women and their families, who are victims of this abuse is incalculable. Ben Wadham is a former soldier turned academic, while James Connor is an academic with 15 years of experience at the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). The book is academic in its handling of the topic but is easy to comprehend.

The authors argue that three pillars shape abuse in the ADF, namely martial masculinity, military exceptionalism and fraternity. They note that the ADF has traditionally been an almost exclusively white male domain, which since the end of Vietnam War (and with it, the end of conscription) has become more culturally diverse. This change has been profoundly challenging and they argue that the ADF failed to manage it, and the consequent abuse, effectively.

They posit that there are five types of military institutional abuse, these being administrative abuse, reputational damage and sabotage, sexual assault (and sexual harassment), hazing and bastardisation, and extreme endurance training. They discuss how and why these forms of abuse have proliferated in the ADF, focusing on the period 1969 to 2024. They recount truly awful, individual cases of abuse, using them to highlight

widespread cultural issues, including collective failure of leadership by numerous SNCOs and officers of all ranks. They examine bastardisation at a range of well-known institutions, including the Royal Military College, Duntroon and the Army Apprentices School. They assess the increased number of women in the Services from 1987 and the consequent growth in instances of abuse, including sexual assault and harassment. They also assess the invidious impact of administrative abuse, which is often targeted at victims of other forms of abuse by officers and SNCO/WO, who should know better.

Wadham and Connor suggest that most militaries ascribe to a genuine warrior ethos, that is, '... an ethical militarism that forges the principles of heroism, gallantry, strength dominance, ethical violence, discipline, dependability, valour, fearlessness and charisma.' They suggest that all too often in the ADF, the brigand, which is the antithesis of the warrior, prevails.

They posit that the senior leadership of the Defence Force and often the government have not effectively dealt with institutional abuse, usually ascribing incidents as being committed by a 'few bad apples' or even 'bad orchards'. Instances of abuse are considered as being 'out of the ordinary', whereas the authors suggest that it is inevitable in military organisations. The authors also describe in detail, Defence's tactics to resist meaningful cultural change as demanded by a succession of federal governments. Wadham and Connor acknowledge that it is extremely challenging for the ADF's senior leadership to inculcate a true warrior ethos throughout the entire organisation but note that given the harm institutional abuse does to individuals and indeed, to military capability, they must succeed.

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Please make cheques to the 'RUSI VIC Inc Library Fund'. Receipts will be provided

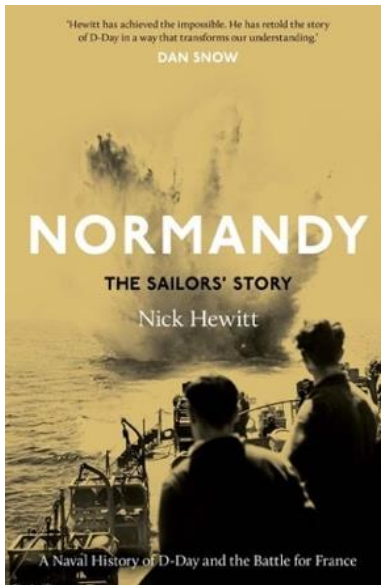
Normandy

The Sailors' Story: A Naval History of D-Day and the Normandy Campaign

Nick Hewitt

Cambridge, MA, USA: Yale University Press, 2024
Paperback 400pp RRP: \$36.99

Reviewer: Michael Arnold, February 2025



Nick Hewitt is a British Naval Historian who was formerly Head of Collections and Research at the National Museum of the Royal Navy. *Normandy – The Sailors' Story* is his fourth work on World War Two naval history. The book is an account of the Royal, US and other allied Navies' vital and,

as the author states, overlooked contribution to the Battle of Seine Bay, that is, the lead up and execution of the Normandy Landings; and the follow-up operations. The Battle of Seine Bay commenced with Operation Neptune, which was the naval support to the D-Day landings on 6 June 1944. It involved 7000 ships and nearly 200,000 sailors and it effectively concluded in late September 1944.

The book is a monumental work incorporating maps; orders of battle and other graphics; and photographic images, which show the incredible complexity and magnitude of the operation, while portraying the human cost. It is superb narrative that weaves the perspectives and memories of Battle of Seine Bay participants, including junior officers, NCOs and ordinary sailors into a comprehensive portrait of the planning, training, preliminary operations, execution of the naval aspects of the Normandy landings, and the herculean follow up operations.

Normandy – The Sailors' Story is structured to reflect the sequences of events that led up to the allied invasion of France including attaining control of the English Channel, the planning,

intelligence and deception operations, the massive task of assembling the armada, finding sufficient sailors and their comprehensive training, including the highly dangerous but vital landing rehearsals. It moves onto the immediate build-up to the landings, including the fraught decision-making regarding the marginal weather in early June 1944; the challenge of the crossing the Channel; and the naval action at the landing beaches of Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. Hewitt lampoons many of the current myths, in particular, a number of those regarding Omaha, fostered by works of fiction and Hollywood films, most notably Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*. He states that these narratives almost totally preclude the heroic efforts of sailors, both American and British, noting that naval bombardment was key in ensuring success at Omaha, Sword and the other beaches. The book also overviews the Normandy beachhead build-up, the incredible logistics effort to both sustain it and enable the consequent breakout and advance. Hewitt also details the extraordinary but ultimately doomed efforts of the German naval forces to interdict and disrupt the allied efforts.

I learned that much of the credit for the success at Normandy belongs to the senior allied naval commander, Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, RN, a largely forgotten figure deserving of much greater recognition. It is clear Ramsay was a supremely gifted commander, meticulous planner and imaginative tactician and strategist, who more than delivered for Eisenhower and his senior army commanders. Ramsay did not get to write a memoir post the war as he was killed when his aircraft crashed on take-off as it was setting off from an airfield near Paris on 2 January 1945.

Hewitt's writing style is engaging, precise and easy to comprehend. The book demonstrates extensive research and a mastery of the subject matter. I highly recommend this book as it fills an important gap in the historical analysis of the Second World War. I believe it would appeal to all readers of military history and not just those with a predilection for naval matters.

South Pacific Air War ***Volume 5***

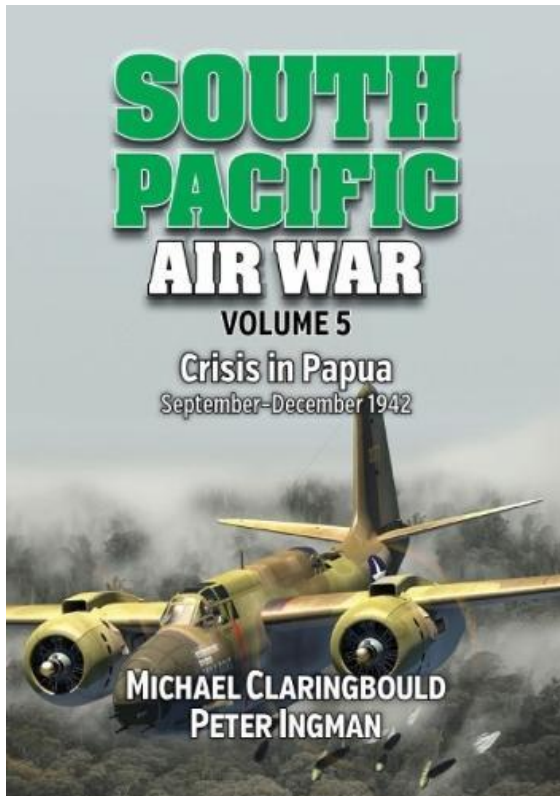
Crisis in Papua September - December 1942

Michael Claringbould and Peter Ingman

Kent Town, SA: Avonmore Books, 2022

Paperback 236pp RRP: \$46.95

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, February 2025



This volume records the day-by-day activities of both sides over a fifteen-week period that saw a move from air combat to more support for forces involved in land battles. Commencing with superb, coloured maps and overviews of both the Allies and Japanese, it can read with the preceding four volumes or stand alone and read as an individual work.

The series has been written by two highly-acclaimed authors who have virtually 'lived and breathed' the history of aviation in the Southwest Pacific, Michael has been instrumental in locating downed aircraft and identifying lost crews of both sides of the conflict. Michael has been involved in the recovery of aircraft, their subsequently restoration and placement in aviation museums.

the increasing logistic difficulties facing the Imperial Japanese Army, there was a gradual withdrawal back to the coast at Buna and Gona.

The Allies were able to build up the number of aircraft on PNG at Port Moresby, thus shortening flying times and extending 'time over target'. Bombing raids harassed Japanese operations at Rabaul from which the Japanese were trying to provide aircraft for both PNG and Guadalcanal theatres.

Kokoda was recaptured by the Allies in mid-November, making available airstrips for Allied missions no longer required to fly over the treacherous Owen Stanley Ranges. Constant strafing runs put the IJA under huge pressure that resulted in the fall of both Gona and Buna. At the end of December, the command of Japanese aircraft was shifted from the Imperial Japanese Navy to the Japanese Army Air Force.

The incredible detail of the day-by-day action over the fifteen-week period has been compiled as a result of exhaustive research of war records from both sides – aircraft types, crews, altitude flown, munitions expended, damage sustained, lost aircraft and fate of crews. Despite the much-improved Allied situation in the fifteen weeks, it came at a huge cost – Allied aircraft lost 115, fatalities 348, compared with the Japanese numbers of 51 and 72 respectively.

There are black and white photographs of aircraft, their crews and ground locations generously interspersed in the text, with even more impressive inclusion of Michael's full-colour artwork of aircraft. Respective appendices listing aircraft losses and fatalities for the period provide a sobering view of the incredible attrition rates suffered by both sides. A *Sources and Acknowledgments* and detailed *Index* round out this volume.

On completion (i.e., Volume 6 is published) this series will make an invaluable contribution to the history of the events that threatened Australia's security in the early years of the Second World War.

Action! Action! Action!

The History of the Employment of Australian Artillery 1871 – 2021

Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company

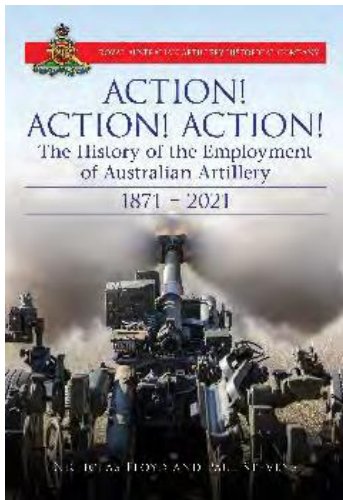
Nicholas Floyd and Paul Stevens

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024

Paperback 288pp RRP: \$19.99

Reviewer: John Henry, January 2025

The publishing of this book has been funded and



managed by the Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company. Its authors are Major General Paul Stevens (Retired) and Lieutenant Colonel Nick Floyd, but as their Acknowledgement at the end of the book discloses, they have secured and blended into the book the input of an extensive range of people able to

contribute expert knowledge and advice. As the *Foreword* by Brigadier John Cox (Retired), Chair of the RAA Historical Committee, explains, it is primarily targeted at aspiring professional Gunners, but is also for all Gunners, whether serving or retired, and can also provide family and friends of Gunners with some understanding of service as a Gunner. Brigadier Cox comments that the book provides a strong sense of the arc of the profession's history but also satisfies a requirement to understand the essentials of its past and might assist leaders to perceive possible futures.

The book is just what its subtitle describes, set out in a chronological and easily readable narrative, but this is just the framework on which is built a work that cannot fail to achieve the purposes Brigadier Cox identifies. The chapters each deal with a discrete successive period, beginning with a one paragraph summary. So as not to disrupt the flow of the narrative, but so as to add to its understanding, there are separate inserts that accompany each chapter, generally of a page, that each explain some technical aspect or give a brief account of illustrative aspects of the conduct of a Gunner of that period who has distinguished himself either by leadership or bravery. Not just is

the book a readable account in plain English. It explains the inevitable acronyms and provides a *Glossary*. It also brings in the relevant domestic and at times international political background helpful to understand changes in artillery weaponry, organizations and roles.

The *Appendices* include tables of the organization of Gunner units at significant dates, a table of significant artillery dates, both in Colonial and Commonwealth history, the *Glossary*, and the *Footnotes*. The care and scholarship that has gone into the writing of this book is evidenced by the footnotes to be found throughout the book, anything from thirteen for Chapter 6 to 57 for Chapter 15. There are 101 footnotes to the *Appendices*. In each case they give the source of the footnoted piece of information given in the chapter.

No Gunner should be without a copy of this book.

Continued from page six

National Security, Climate Change and Net Zero

Like national security, a country's adaptive capability needs to be backed by a strong economy.

Australia – Energy Policy

Renewables are an important part of the energy mix and will contribute to the preservation of fossil fuels for future generations. However, the pace of transition needs to be slowed. Energy policy needs to prioritise secure, reliable and affordable power to support economic growth with a strong economy and a strong defence not Net Zero.

Library Notes

Since the last library report, we have benefitted from several excellent donations of books.

A most unusual donation from the publishers was a 39-volume set of illustrated personal histories, covering several areas and eras of conflict throughout the world. The production quality of the set is superb, and it was only after some perusal that we realized it referred exclusively to the Plymouth Brethren. Furthermore, in the Foreword, it stated that only Members of the Plymouth Brethren should be allowed to view the books! Oh well! Included were two DVDs containing digital versions of the set. The volumes are very rare.

We also received more good books from our friend Ken Watson, a volunteer at the Civil Aviation Historical Society at Essendon Airport. Ken has been such a valuable source that he appears on our Roll of Honour Plaque!

The Naval Historical Society has given us another high-quality timber and glass bookcase. This kind donation means that all our rare books are now safely stored in these lockable bookcases.

Best wishes to you all.

Brian Surtees

Hon Librarian



MENACE AT HOME AUSTRALIA UNDER ATTACK 1939 – 1945

KEYNOTE – PROFESSOR DAVID HORNER

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE SATURDAY 10 MAY 2025

CAULFIELD RSL

4 ST GEORGES ROAD, ELSTERNWICK, VICTORIA, 3185



MILITARY HISTORY AND
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BOOKS



Under the Same Moon

An Australian battalion at war and a family at home

Speaker: Peter Mitchell

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event

Wednesday 25 June 2025 7:00PM-8:00PM




MILITARY HISTORY
SPEAKER PROGRAM

New Acquisitions (since November 2024)

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject
<i>The Contest for the Indian Ocean</i>	Darshana M Baruah	
<i>Trigger Warning</i>	Nathan Bolton	A Special Operations engineer in Afghanistan.
<i>Gull Force</i>	Joan Beaumont	Australian POWs on Ambon and Hainan, 1941 – 45.
<i>Uprising</i>	Stephen Gapps	War in the colony of New South Wales, 1838-1844.
<i>Great at Heart</i>	Garry Hills	Gavin Merrick Long Australia's official Second World War historian.
<i>A Bird's Eye View</i>	Steve Campbell-Wright and AZ Pascoe	Australia's drone operations in Afghanistan.
<i>The Battle for Milne Bay New Guinea 1942</i>	David W Cameron	
<i>The Secret Submarine</i>	Tom Lewis	A forgotten battle off Australia's shores.
<i>Intelligencer</i>	Alan Fewster	<i>The secret world of Walter Cawthorn Australian Spymaster.</i>
<i>Action! Action! Action!:</i>	Nicholas Floyd and Australian Artillery 1871 – 2021.	The history of the employment of Paul Stevens
<i>Bill's Secrets</i>	Belinda Probert	Class, war and ambition.
<i>British & Commonwealth Armies 1939-45: Vol 1 & 2, Supplements 1 & 2.</i>	Mark Bevis	Order of Battle.




The Allonville Disaster

notorious or forgotten?

Speaker: Peter Stanley

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event
Wednesday 16 April 2025 7:00PM-8:00PM



**MILITARY HISTORY
SPEAKER PROGRAM**