



The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria, Inc.  
*Promoting National Security and Defence*

A constituent body of The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies Australia Limited

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## **RUSI VIC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER**

Volume 21 Issue 1 – March 2022

Editor: Mike Rawlinson

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**A man is airlifted from floodwaters  
by an Army MRH-90 Taipan Helicopter  
in northern NSW**

**Royal United Services Institute of Victoria  
Incorporated  
March 2022 Newsletter**

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RUSIDSSA	<a href="http://www.rusi.org.au">www.rusi.org.au</a>
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Defence Reserves Association	<a href="http://www.dra.org.au">www.dra.org.au</a>
Defence Force Welfare Association	<a href="http://www.dfw.org.au">www.dfw.org.au</a>
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Department of Veteran's Affairs	<a href="http://www.dva.gov.au">www.dva.gov.au</a>
Shrine of Remembrance	<a href="http://www.shrine.org.au">www.shrine.org.au</a>

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

## From the President:

### Major General Mike O'Brien CSC (Retd)



As a distraction from the pandemic, I have been involved with our central body in renegotiating our use of Defence premises with the Department of Defence. This time-consuming process appears to have been successful, at least for the time being.

For those interested in geopolitics and the military the last few months have been particularly interesting, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Australia China relations and the possibility of a Chinese naval presence in the Solomons. All have been thoroughly covered in RUSIV Weekly Defence Updates.

The Federal Election looms and defence is an issue. There is bipartisan support for the government's proposals to increase numbers and capability in the ADF and the Defence organisation. Defence allocations in the budget only go part way to funding these proposals. There must be much more to come. As there is no disagreement between the major parties on defence matters the choice at the federal election will be about which side can be trusted to implement the program.

I would like to thank Michael Small for his Defence Chronicle in our Quarterly Newsletter. In this issue he has stretched the time frame until 31 March to include events that are historically important. I hope that very soon we will be able to resume our monthly lunchtime addresses.

**Mike O'Brien**

## Defence Ethics

As a positive response to the Brereton Report on incidents in Afghanistan, the Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (RUSIV) is running an endowed essay competition on the topic of Ethics for the Australian Defence Force.

This annual competition, judged by an independent panel, will be open to Australian citizens. The prize is \$2000. Entries are due by 30 November 2022.

RUSIV is a non-partisan body that aims to inform the public on defence and security issues. It occupies Defence premises but is independent of the Department of Defence.

Further details can be obtained from our Secretary, LTCOL Bob Hart.

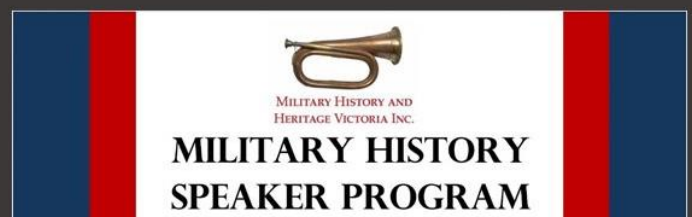


**For details visit the MHHV Web Site**

## Mutineers

**Speaker: Robert Hadler**

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event  
Wednesday 27 April 2022 7:00PM-8:00PM



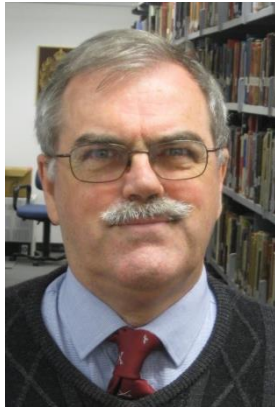
**The Bloody Beachheads:**  
The Battles of Gona, Buna and Sanananda  
*One-Day Conference Saturday 12 November 2022*  
Keilor East RSL, 2-22 Hoffmans Rd, Essendon VIC 3040.

**Keynote Speaker**  
Dr Peter Williams - author of *Japan's Pacific War*  
Register at [www.mhhv.org.au](http://www.mhhv.org.au)

 A row of three logos. From left to right: the 39th Brigade crest featuring a crown and the number 39; the Military History and Heritage Victoria Inc. logo featuring a brass instrument; and the Kokoda Historical logo featuring a circular emblem with a map of the Kokoda region.

## From the Secretary:

### Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart RFD



It looks like we are nearly back to normal now. Hopefully we will see some friendly faces, without masks, in the near future.

While we have been working through this last lot of restrictions. I have found a number of people are not emptying their email boxes or have moved to a new address and these newsletters are bouncing. If you know of a member complaining about not getting our newsletters etc, please ask them to contact me so we can clear up any mail problems.

We welcome new members: Rob Webster, Kevin Walsh, Graeme Miller, Kristy Semple, and Paul James.

We have been advised of the passing of former Councillor Colin Brown GM.

**Bob Hart**

## 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 lectures 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@rusivic.org.au](mailto:secretary@rusivic.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.

## The RUSIV Prize Essay – Australian Defence Ethics

The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria (RUSIV) is conducting an annual endowed essay competition for individual Australian citizens on a specified topic relating to Australian Defence Ethics.

At a time when many perceive that ethical standards are altering and technological changes are providing unforeseen ethical challenges, it is singularly important for the Australian Defence Force to have a strong ethical underpinning. The purpose of this prize essay is to provide strong support to the development of this ethics framework.

The prize of \$A2000 will be offered in 2022.

The topic set for 2022 is:

“How can the challenges to the Australian Defence Force’s ethical framework be met?”

Original essays of not more than 10,000 words (exclusive of footnotes) are to be submitted in a single pdf file (accompanied by a Microsoft Word file) to the Secretary of RUSIV ([secretary@rusivic.org.au](mailto:secretary@rusivic.org.au)) by 1600 hours AEST on 30th November 2022. Potential entrants are asked to notify the secretary of their intention to enter by 30 June 2022. There is no entry fee.

The style of the essay is to follow that of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*<sup>1</sup>. Essays must be the original work of their individual authors. Copyright in the essays will remain with their authors, though it is expected that the winning entry will be available for publication. A copy of each essay submitted will be held by the Library of RUSIV.

The Library of the Royal United Services Institute of Victoria’s considerable collection relating to military ethics is available to assist entrants.

Judging of the essay will be based on criteria including readability, breadth, importance, accessibility and relevance. The decision reached by the independent judging panel will be final. All entrants will be notified of the judges’ decision within two months of the submission deadline. RUSIV reserves the right not to consider entries which do not comply with requirements and the right not to make an award if no suitable candidate applies.

<sup>1</sup> Available at

<https://defence.gov.au/adc/adfj/Submissions.asp>

## **Opinion: Australia's National Will**

**Mike Rawlinson**

As we approach a federal election, both sides of politics agree that Australia's strategic circumstances have changed.

China is no longer just our major trading partner but has become a regional bully with capable armed forces. Defence is already an election issue. Australia needs to be perceived as a country that will not be intimidated in its pursuit of regional peace and stability. We would like China to respect Australia's sovereignty and values, to recognise the ADF's capability and professionalism and to be deterred from military operations against Australia's interests. Deterrence not only applies to overt military aggression, but also to the full range of grey zone activities including cyber interventions, aimed at coercing a political outcome.

For the ADF to be perceived as a credible deterrent, the force must be capable of inflicting unacceptable losses upon an aggressor. There are two aspects to the force's credibility: perceived military capability and perceived political will. Australia's military capability is complemented by the capability and reliability of its alliance partners.

If it chooses, Australia can afford a deterrent military capability, but it also needs the political will to deploy and engage its force. This political will rests very much on national resilience and social cohesion – national will. In a democracy, national will is reflected in public opinion and political support for the system of government.

As in Ukraine, ultimately this means the will of the people to fight and die defending Australia's sovereignty, freedom and democracy. It could extend to defending democracy in Taiwan. We need to be perceived by China as being prepared to fight to defend our values.

So how does Australia rate? In comparison with social cohesion in a country like Japan with a long history and homogeneous population, Australia can be perceived as having gaps in its national solidarity and far from universal pride in its democracy and achievements.

### **National Resilience**

Australia has recently experienced a severe drought, devastating bushfires, the COVID-19 pandemic and floods on the east coast. Generally, Australians have adapted well to adversity, and Australian governments and institutions have performed admirably. Australia has done well but could have done better if it had been better prepared. All sides of politics agree, Australia needs to be more resilient - better prepared for droughts, bushfires, floods, pandemics, other natural disasters, various national security threats including wars involving nuclear weapons, and the effects of

climate change. Social cohesion has been maintained during lockdowns and Australians have accepted quite severe temporary restrictions on their freedom.

### **Social Cohesion**

Compared with the US, UK and some countries in Europe, Australia has a reasonably high level of social cohesion. Areas where problems exist relate to inequality, institutional failure, immigrant assimilation, social justice causes particularly gender and race, aboriginal reconciliation and extremist groups.

Democracy in the Western world has been degraded as a tertiary effect of globalisation. Manufacturing industry has migrated to China and developing countries, taking with it well-paid production jobs. The resulting decline of former manufacturing towns and cities is contrasted with commercial capitals where tertiary educated elites have prospered in corporate management, professional services and public service. This inequality underlies both the election of Donald Trump in the US and the Brexit vote in the UK. It is characterized by the following destabilizing dichotomies: City/Country, Somewhere/ Anywhere, Graduate/Non-Graduate, Private Employment/Public Employment. The news media exploit these destabilizing dichotomies as they represent conflict - and a good story. The apparent binary gaps have been accompanied by populism in federal politics and a turn away from the major political parties.

From about 2004, social cohesion has been damaged by a decline in trust in government and institutions – churches, banks, other financial institutions, traditional media and now age care providers. Additionally, climate change and energy policy have been divisive issues over the last 10 years. Inner city Greens prioritizing carbon dioxide emission reduction have been pitted against voters in regional electorates with jobs in coal mines, coal-fired power stations and energy dependent industry. The major parties have been internally polarised along similar lines and a coherent policy has been slow to evolve.

Australia is an immigrant society which has integrated successive waves of immigrants from different countries. It is often claimed to be the world's most successful multi-cultural country. Despite long experience with welcoming immigrants, problems generally arise with each wave of immigrants and dissipate as they are absorbed into the community. Predictably the smaller the cultural gap between the immigrants' parent society and Australian norms, the less the likelihood of difficulties.

### **Mood of the Times**

The United States is the recognised leader of the free world. The mood there is of uncertainty, division and dissatisfaction with its democratic government. This mood appears to be shared across the West, with the political phenomenon of Trump, Brexit, Macron, and a loss of confidence in mainline political parties.

Australia is affected in two ways. First, it shares mood with the US as part of the West's anglosphere and is also closely entwined with the US in many financial and cultural areas. Second, as an ANZUS treaty partner Australia shelters under the US nuclear umbrella, and now is supported by AUKUS and the Quad. What happens to the US as a superpower directly affects Australia's outlook particularly in relations with China.

In Australia the mood is characterised by a lack of trust in politicians, inward looking identity politics, an entitlement and victim mentality, political correctness, nanny state paternalism, over-regulation, rent seeking, litigiousness, the gaming of tax and entitlement systems, unethical business conduct, and politicians putting personal and party interests before the national interest. Taken together the mood factors represent a degeneration of liberal democracy.

The cohesion of Australia's multi-cultural immigrant society is currently being undermined by a social justice movement emanating from the humanities faculties of universities that focuses on gender and racism. This has produced a drift towards identity politics and a victim culture that is inherently socially divisive. Collectively these concerns are labelled as 'woke'. Now a pejorative term, 'woke' was coined by Afro-American, left-wing activists, meaning alert to injustice in society, especially racism 'we need to stay angry and stay woke'. Woke is associated with Critical Race Theory (CRT), Black Lives Matter (BLM), and Cancel Culture. Another aspect of CRT is the promotion of white guilt.

If women, racial minorities and other minorities are inherently victims, then everyone else is inherently an oppressor. Identity politics leads people to see one another not as fellow citizens but as enemies. It creates and perpetuates division among citizens and a loss of faith in the nation and its institutions. While the grievances raised are usually legitimate and should be addressed, the intensity of social justice action weakens the fabric of society and distracts from issues of national importance.

Australia's successful multi-cultural society contains many fault lines of potential divisiveness which could be exploited to destabilize society, particularly using social media. However, immigrants from authoritarian regimes recognise Australia's freedoms and can be expected to be steadfast in defending them. Less certainty can be attributed to people who have grown-up in the prosperous and comfortable Australia of the 1980s and 90s.

Surveys indicate that many young adults born in Australia view our democratic system as ineffective and compare it unfavourably with undemocratic alternatives. They admire authoritarian regimes that can plan long-term and then take bold steps without any need to convince a sceptical public, listen to critics, or be held back by such awkward constraints as the rule of law. However, this autocratic action can also lead to great suffering.

Shocking TV coverage from Ukraine reveals a humanitarian catastrophe brought about by Putin's war of conquest and involving *people like us*. It provides a reality check and wake-up call for those who decry democracy and those who defend it.

Winston Churchill said,

*Many forms of government have been tried and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.*

Immigrants learn the values and virtues of Australian society and democracy via citizenship. These values should be reinforced for young Australians. While the Australian way of life is not perfect it is probably as good as it gets – a nation girt by beaches.

Our schools have been criticized for woke teaching and a woke national curriculum. Instead, they need to promote positive nationalism – pride in our country, its culture, system of government, economic success, and how contemporary society has evolved and developed. Knowledge of Australia's history should include its bright triumphs and darker aspects, its Aboriginal heritage, its British institutions, the ANZAC legend, the World Wars, and the part played by immigration in growing the Australian population.

Australia needs to celebrate its liberal democracy. Commemorations are important in maintaining traditions and promoting the values of our national character.

## Conclusion

The government's resolve in resisting coercion by China is weakened if there are serious divisions and instability in society.

A strong military must be complemented by national will as a vital component of a credible deterrent as it underlies the political will for action. As we have seen in Ukraine, a society that strongly believes in its liberal democracy and trusts its government can be a formidable opponent.

As is most likely perceived by China, Australia's national will has weaknesses that can be exploited. In terms of deterrence addressing these shortcomings may be just as important as increasing military capability.

We must promote and concentrate not on what divides us- but on what unites us, individual freedom, liberal democracy, the rule of law and the Australian way of life.

# A CHRONICLE of Events, Decisions & Issues relating to Defence Matters

November 30, 2021 – March 31, 2022

Michael Small

## November 30 2021

Defence and Foreign Affairs state that Australia has 58,600 ADF personnel to keep Australia safe. Australia's military force is a fraction of the size of our neighbours. South Korea has 599,000 troops and Indonesia has 395,000 troops. China has the largest army in the world with more than 2 million troops. China's navy has more than tripled in size over the past two decades.

## December 4 -5 2021

Australia, Japan and US are considering (*i.e.* war-gaming) likely outcomes if a crisis over Taiwan develops into something more serious. Five conclusions may be drawn:

- (1) if a conflict is fought tomorrow, US would lose;
- (2) President Xi would prefer to win without going to war, and would focus on grey-zone tactics short of armed conflict;
- (3) if grey-zone tactics fail, China would invade and occupy Taiwan, but a seaborne assault would not be easy, the Taiwan Strait is 130km-wide;
- (4) it would not be difficult for CCP to manufacture an excuse to invade;
- (5) the first mover usually wins.

Therefore there are big incentives for China to strike first, before allies could mobilise and respond.

## December 10 2021

Government will replace *Taipan* helicopters with US *Blackhawks* and *Seahawks*, at a cost of \$7bn. The *Taipan* has not given either the Navy or the Army reliable service. Defence Minister Dutton informed Airbus of the decision this week. Government will buy 40 *Blackhawks* for the Army and 12 *Seahawks* for the Navy.

"China today, we might say, is a hybrid Confucian-Leninist state with a market economy enriching its middle-class support, China's middle class, estimated to be around 400 million strong and growing, has now overtaken in size the entire population of the United States".

Wood, Michael, 2020 *The Story of China, A Portrait of a Civilisation and its People*. Simon and Schuster, London and New York, page 529.

For comparison: Australia's population is 25.69 million. Shanghai's population is (est.) 26.32 million to 24.87 million.

## December 15 2021

The Defence Dept has cancelled a contract for the 40mm gun which was to be fitted to the RAN's new fleet of *Arafura-class* offshore patrol boats. There were

problems integrating the gun with the patrol boat's combat system. Defence ordered Luerssen, the German ship builder, to terminate the contract with Italian firm Leonardo Australia.

Ten boats are scheduled to be built in WA and two in SA.

Key defence programs which are running 3½ years late include: MRH90 Helicopters; Triton drones; Spartan aircraft; Air traffic control systems; Indian Ocean satellite comms; Battlespace communications; *Collins-class* submarine comms & electronic warfare.

Two major programs: the French submarine project, and the European NH industries *Taipan* helicopters have been cancelled.

## December 24 2021

Australia will get its first nuclear submarine at least five years ahead of schedule after Washington agreed to help speed-up the project. The Pentagon has backed the Government's push to shorten the timelines to acquire a nuclear-powered fleet at a time of growing regional instability and a rising China. Minister Dutton said he expected the first Australian nuclear submarine to be completed in the "first half of the 2030s" compared with the initial estimate of 2040.

## December 27 2021

Defence's procurement processes will be overhauled, cutting up to 12 months from the four years it takes to get projects to contract stage. Reforms will be introduced in 2022 to speed-up procurement processes as the Government focuses on how it will deliver its \$270bn rearming of the nation.

Defence Industry Minister Melissa Price will speedup tender processes, giving industry clarity on upcoming tenders, improving probity and guidance practices, and providing feedback to unsuccessful bidders to help them improve future proposals.

The reforms follow a 14-month review that received 250 responses including 144 from industry players ranging from small family-run enterprises to giant defence firms.

## December 28 2021

Defence Department has found there are no grounds to recommend government intervention to overturn the 99-year lease of the Port of Darwin to Chinese company Landbridge. The review disappointed some who were hoping it would reverse the decision, and allow the government to cancel the lease arrangement.

The National Security Committee of cabinet considered the review in which Landbridge won the contract to operate the port in a deal worth \$506m. Defence had not given the government the justification to cancel the Chinese holding over the asset in the critical northern reaches of Australia, despite a deterioration in the relationship with Beijing, and the emergence of conflicts involving trade, geopolitics and security.

## December 29 2021

Japan and Australia have signed an agreement, to be known as *The Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)*, or a 'visiting forces agreement'. Japanese Self-Defence Forces and the ADF will co-operate in joint drills,

disaster relief and rescue operations. Negotiations commenced in July 2014, but Japan's death penalty meant negotiations about the RAA took longer.

RAN consists of eight frigates, three air-warfare destroyers, two amphibious assault vessels and six diesel-electric submarines. The fleet on active duty is smaller than the one listed. Three of the frigates are being upgraded, HMAS Perth is inactive because of the difficulty in finding crew for the vessel. RAAF has 44 (of the 72 on order) of the *F-35 Joint Strike Fighters*.

### January 5 2022

*The Reciprocal Access Agreement* (RAA), emphasises Australia's relationship with Tokyo. The agreement will upgrade military co-operation, facilitating an increase in joint exercises, greater interoperability and easy access to military facilities for both sides. Japanese PM Fumio Kishida cancelled his trip due to Australia's Omicron outbreak. One of PM Kishida's first acts was to double Japan's defence budget from 1% of GDP from \$US50bn p.a. to \$US100bn (\$138.6bn). Fighter aircraft, submarines and warships for Japan's Self Defence Force will be acquired. Japanese ambassador Shingo Yamagami said the agreement with Australia would open a "new chapter in our co-operation".

### January 19 2022

PM Morrison will host UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, and UK Defence Minister Ben Wallace in Sydney this week. AUKMIN demonstrates the partnership between UK and Australia. The Government wants the Western Allies to have a presence in the Indo-Pacific region as a counterbalance to China. Defence Minister Dutton said the talks would consider ways to strengthen collaboration in defence capability, cyber security, critical technology, deterrence and sustainable investment.

### January 22 2022

PM Morrison has committed \$580m. to upgrade ports in PNG. Ben Wallace (UK Defence Minister) and Peter Dutton agreed, at the AUKMIN talks in Sydney, to deploy two RN offshore patrol vessels, HMS *Spey* and HMS *Tamar* to the Indo-Pacific to counter Chinese aggression. Minister Dutton said there would be an increase in the number of military rotations, associated visits, training, in people being embedded in both services and greater cooperation in exercises.

### February 1 2022

Reported that Australia's \$45bn *Hunter-class* frigates will be slower, have a shorter range than originally intended, and could be vulnerable to detection by enemy vessels. The Defence "*Engineering Team Assessment*" of the frigates program warns that the ships could also be less safe for crews, with the potential for sailors to become trapped below deck by floodwaters in "credible damage conditions".

### February 11 2022

RAAF has:

- (1) 44 *F-35 Joint Strike Fighters*, a fifth-generation, multi-role fighter, and will have 72 by end of 2023 with an option to buy another 30;
- (2) 24 *F/A-18F Super Hornets*, a fourth generation, multi-role fighter;
- (3) 12 *EA-18G Growlers*, electronic attack aircraft capable of disrupting, deceiving or denying military electronic systems, including radars and communications;
- (4) 15 *P-8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft*, maritime intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and response aircraft;
- (5) 7 *MQ-4C Triton Unmanned Aircraft*, high altitude long endurance that will be used for maritime patrol and surveillance roles;
- (6) 6 *Loyal Wingman Combat Drones*, jet-powered, to work with RAAF combat aircraft in both defence and surveillance modes.

**Regimental Marches of the Royal Australian Regiment:** For more detail see: Lt Colonel (Rtd) Tony Sillcock CSC, formerly Director of Music-Army, 'Music of the Royal Australian Regiment', *Band International*, Volume 43, Issue 3, 2021, pp 10-14.

1 RAR - *Waltzing Matilda*; 2 RAR - *Ringo no Uta* later *Ringo* (Japanese in origin after WW II); 3 RAR - had three regimental marches, *Highland Laddie*, *Kapyong*, and in 1967 *Our Director*. This third march was accepted (but without lyrics) as the regimental march; 4 RAR - *Inverbrackie* was based on *Botany Bay*, *The Drover's Dream* and *Click Go the Shears*; 5 RAR - *Dominique* (as sung by the Singing Nun) combined with *When the Saints Go Marching In*; 6 RAR - *Spirit of Youth*; 7 RAR - *Australaise* options included *The Trooper's Song*, *These Boots were Made for Walking*; 8 RAR - *Let's Go*, originally a bugle tune; 9 RAR - *Pass Me By*, initially combined with *Hey Look Me Over*. PS Some of the words to some of the marches had to be altered before final approval.

### February 14 2022

RAN has six *Collins-Class* submarines; eight *ANZAC-Class* frigates; two *Canberra-Class* Landing Helicopter Dock ships; three *Hobart-Class* destroyers; and one *Arafura-Class* Patrol vessel (twelve are planned).

### February 17 2022

Australia's cyber agency now has 'offensive' capabilities, when formerly only 'defensive' capabilities were mentioned. Cyber-attacks are already a feature of the grey zone warfare being waged by authoritarian countries. Grey zone warfare refers to political warfare mid-way between war and peace. Examples include: disinformation campaigns, intellectual property theft, coercion and propaganda. ASD and the Australian Cyber Security Centre have received an extra \$1.35b committed in 2020 over the next decade.



**February 24 2022**

*Russian armed forces move into Ukraine.*

**February 26 2022**

Australia will help Ukraine through NATO allies in the form of finance, military equipment and medical supplies, valued at \$A70m. Ukraine's *Chargé d'Affaires* in Canberra, Volodymyr Shalkivskyi, said the aid was welcomed.

**February 28 2022**

Army personnel will carry out military training in the Geelong area in the coming weeks. Military vehicles will be involved, but ADF assures public, no ammunition will be used.

**March 9 2022**

The size of ADF will be increased. The cost of this expansion is said to be \$28bn, but a later figure of \$38bn has been released.

**March 10 2022**

ADF will increase the number of uniformed personnel to 80,000 by 2040, amid strategic risks posed by China and Russia. The expansion would involve the biggest recruitment drive in 40 years. Under the expansion the total number of Defence personnel would rise to more than 101,000. The numbers are in line with the direction of the 2020 *Force Structure Plan* (FSP). Planning has been underway since the *National Security Committee* of cabinet approved the policy last November. Crews are needed to operate the proposed nuclear-powered submarines, the Hunter-class frigates and advanced long-range and defensive missile systems. Emerging domains such as space, information and cyber warfare are also part of the planned expansion of the ADF.

**March 11 2022**

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said the government was concerned about China's interest in setting up a naval base in the Solomon Islands. If the proposed nuclear-powered submarine bases were to be constructed on the east coast, China's PLA would be in a good position to maintain surveillance of Australia's east coast.

**March 13 2022**

*Day 17 of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

**March 15 2022**

PM will commit \$4.3bn for a dry-dock facility based at Henderson in Western Australia. The shipyard will be used to support naval and other commercial vessels. The construction of the dry-dock will involve 500 jobs and another 2000 for the ongoing work around the Henderson precinct. PM said the government had increased defence spending from 1.57 per cent to 2.1 per cent.

**March 17 2022**

*Day 21 of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

**March 18 2022**

Solomon Islands and China have a *framework agreement* following a video meeting which took place in Beijing. A "*memorandum of understanding*" was signed in respect to police co-operation.

**March 19 2022**

*Day 24 of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

**March 21 2022**

*Fourth week of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women Senator Marise Payne accuses Russia of committing war crimes in Ukraine for the first time since the invasion began.

**March 22 2022**

Defence Minister Dutton announces the creation of an *Australian Space Force* to mark the new *Space Command division of the RAAF*. The growing militarisation of space requires Australia to take a more proactive role to deter attacks on the country's satellite assets. Space Command is headed by Air Vice-Marshal Cath Roberts.

**March 29 2022**

PM Morrison has had crisis talks with the PMs of Papua New Guinea and Fiji over the proposed security agreement with China. The agreement would allow China: (i) to station armed police as well as other law enforcement and armed forces in the Solomons; and (ii) to establish a naval base less than 2000kms from the Australian mainland.

**March 30 2022**

*Day 35 of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.*

Solomon PM Manasseh Sogavare said the Solomons were ready to sign a security deal with China that will give China an outpost in the Pacific. Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council and Head of Government from March 15, 2013, said any attempt by Australia to disrupt co-operation between China and the Pacific Islands would fail. China has contributed billions into infrastructure projects with visible employment-driven goals.

**March 31 2022**

Spending on defence cooperation will fall from an estimated \$236m to \$227m in 2022-23. Solomon Islands will receive \$2.4m the second largest of Australia's aid recipients in the Pacific; Papua New Guinea \$49m; and East Timor about \$9.7m. The marginal fall in defence co-operation spending needs to be seen in the context of Australia's \$1.85bn in development assistance to the region.

President Zelensky addresses the Australian parliament and asks for Bushmaster armoured vehicles.

**End**

## Book Reviews

**This newsletter has 9 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.**

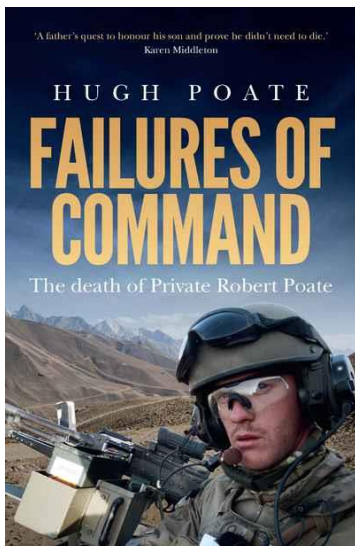
### *Failures of Command*

*The death of Private Robert Poate*

#### **Hugh Poate**

Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2021  
Paperback 368pp RRP \$34.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, March 2022



When his son was killed in an insider attack in Afghanistan on 29th August 2012, Hugh Poate was in disbelief that such an event could occur. With the next-of-kin of the other two killed, Poate commenced a personal crusade to establish what had occurred in 3RAR Task Force (Mentoring Task Force 5) prior to its deployment from Australia and subsequently in-theatre.

In contact with commanders at every level there emerged a litany of cover-ups, excuses, half-truths, denials, incompetence, negligence, orders not followed, and historical lessons not learnt. At every turn it was the reputation of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) that was being protected; and its fallen and injured soldiers and their next of kin were not even on the ADF's radar.

On 17th April 2013 Corporal Daniel Keighran VC read Robbie Poate's story at the first Last Post Ceremony held at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

The next-of-kin were denied the terms of reference to the ADF's enquiry, and Poate rightfully assumed many of his own concerns would not be addressed – the Army was investigating the Army. An Inquiry Officer's Report provided to the families three months after its completion was intentionally redacted (using 'contrived secrecy' as justification) to render it incomprehensible. Administrative action recommended by the Report was totally ignored as the Force commander, the company and patrol commanders were all promoted within a year of the tragedy. The Chief of the Defence Force

recommended to the Defence Minister that no Commission of Inquiry be held.

Comments made on their return to Australia by the Task Force soldiers about the standard of leadership and the lack of it shown by their commanders added to Poate's determination to uncover any cover up and to find the truth. As the three soldiers were from a Queensland-based unit, he made a submission to the Queensland Coroner's Office requesting an inquest into the three deaths. The Deputy State Coroner, on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2014, agreed to preside over the first-ever inquest into deaths in the ADF's 120-year history, and it would commence on 30 Jun.

At all five pre-inquest conferences, members of the ADF did not convey any condolences and avoided eye contact - the victims and their next of kin were regarded as persona non grata. Despite it being a public inquest, the ADF wanted everything on their terms – even denying the families legal representation. A letter to the Australian Prime Minister promptly gained the next-of-kin paid legal representatives of their choice. By 24th June in excess of 4000 pages of interview transcripts, briefs of evidence and other classified documents were finally made available. [900+ pages of electronic evidence had the 'Find' feature intentionally removed!] The families gained a postponement until 13th October 2014.

On Day 2 of the inquest, the ADF had the court seating altered so they could have people sitting immediately behind the families, rendering them unable to confidentially converse with each other. The ADF collected mobile phones during closed sessions, but their men were 'sprung' opening up a phone connected to a computer outside the court in the second week of the inquest. One key witness (a major) was unable to give evidence as he 'was suffering from PTSD', but he was able to take up a prestigious position at RMC soon after inquest finished.

The Coroner delivered his findings on 22nd September 2015. The deaths were due to:

- The recent escalation in insider attacks
- The failure to implement an order issued sixteen days before the fatal attack by the Supreme Commander of the International Security Assistance Force – namely, to increase planning to risk minimising insider attacks
- Inadequate preparation for the mission involved in the insider attack
- Post reports of previous ADF visits to the location not found
- Flawed risk assessments

The Coroner noted Counsel Assisting identified a sixth systemic deficiency – there had been inadequate training to deal with insider attacks.

On the final day of the Inquest the families were summoned to a room by a key ADF member (with no indication of any reason) and were illegally intimidated and harassed by him. The Coroner considered the action as 'most inappropriate', and an official complaint was made to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). The six people who were present were interviewed by the

Assistant Inspector-General of the ADF (IGADF) as were ten others ADF personnel who were not present. The CDF indicated that the IGADF had found the no unacceptable behaviour by the brigadier concerned.

Post-inquest, those senior ADF personnel who had worked with the families, knew them well and mixed with them on military occasions, immediately 'cut them dead'.

Closure was not to come to the families of the deceased. Thirteen months after his deadly attack, the killer (Hekmatullah) was captured in Pakistan. He was found by using standard intelligence techniques, the same that should have been in operation during the ill-fated mission, and would have exposed his attack plan and escape. Pleading guilty in the Supreme Court of Afghanistan, he was sentenced to death in December 2013. His execution was supposed to take place on 3rd June 2017, but it was postponed. Without consultation with the Afghan Government or any of the 50 nations who fought the Taliban, on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2020 the Trump administration announced 5000 Taliban prisoners would be swapped for 1000 Afghan National Army prisoners. Hekmatullah walked away a free man!

Hugh Poate has studied the ADF, its personnel, its mode of operating and its culture in considerable detail prior to going to print. He expresses grave reservations about the current roles and the legislation that encompass all military investigators and investigations. His final five chapters examine the failure of those being responsible to act independently, the failures in leadership, the lack of respect and recognition of those at the 'bottom of the food chain', and finally, the lessons to be learnt.

This is a genuine work of intense dedication and unapologetic lifting and peering under every stone. In the current ADF climate, this is a publication Defence Recruiting wishes had never seen the light of day.

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## ***Mosul***

*Australia's secret war inside the ISIS caliphate*

### **Ben Mckelvey**

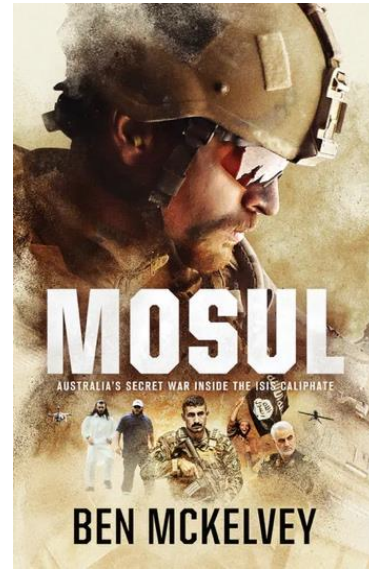
Sydney, NSW: Hachette, 2020  
Paperback 352pp RRP \$34.99

Reviewer: Roger Buxton, March 2022

This is about more than Australia's secret war inside the ISIS Caliphate. If the connection between the War Against Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq, and Islamist inspired terrorist acts in Australia were not always obvious, this book shows how they were linked.

Events in Afghanistan and Iraq led to concern and growing paranoia among some young Islamic men living in Australia. Inspired by online Islamist propaganda or by radical prayer groups such as the one run by Abdul Benbrika, they conspired to carry out attacks in Australia, assisted others to leave to fight with ISIS or went overseas to fight themselves. Fearing that terrorist attacks were about to take place, the police arrested 22

men in Operation Pendennis in October 2005, but this did not completely prevent acts of random terror. The Lindt café siege in Sydney and the unprovoked murder of Curtis Chang in front of the NSW Police Headquarters occurred later and are described here.



The historical developments in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria leading to the evolution of the ISIS Caliphate from Al Qaeda in Iraq are set out as well as the involvement of both the Australian Defence Force and Islamist fighters from Australia.

The Australian Defence Force involvement is described through the experiences of members of Number 2

Commando including Ian Turner, Cameron Baird and Nathan Knox, some of whom survived while others did not. The descriptions of battle and its aftermath are disturbing (to the extent that suggested support services are included on the last page), and some are downright chilling. The reported rivalry between the Commando and the SAS Regiments, and the sometimes lack of a collegiate spirit between experienced and new members of Commando units are surprising.

The Commandos were fighting a war against a brutal and merciless enemy, and we should be thankful that there were Australians who called themselves 'shooters' and who were eager to 'get into it'. The commandoes were very effective fighters, but the effects of battle and its devastating aftermath took, and continue to take, a heavy toll in damaged lives and suicide.

The final chapters deal with the war against Islamic State after it had swept through Anbar Province in northern Iraq, driven out the Yazidis and threatened Baghdad itself. A Special Forces Advisory Team in Erbil worked with the Peshmerga but the book concentrates on the Commando involvement with the Iraqi Counter Terrorism Service (CTS), an elite unit that recaptured Mosul in house to house fighting, losing more than half its strength in doing so.

The type of war fought against ISIS may or may not be repeated, but reading this disturbing book gives some idea of modern war against a ruthless enemy determined to either win or die and prepared to destroy the city it is defending in the process. Perhaps more importantly, it shows its effect of the war on the men who fought it.

## ***Edith Blake's War***

*The only Australian Nurse killed in action in the First World War*

### **Krista Vane-Tempest**

Kensington, NSW: New South Books, 2021

Paperback 336pp RRP \$34.99

Reviewer: Rob Ellis, January 2022

This is the story of the only Australian Army nurse to have been killed in action during World War I.

Edith Blake as the eldest of three daughters and two sons of a butcher, Charles Blake, and his wife Catherine, known always as Kate. Both parents were children of English migrants who arrived in Australia in middle to later years of the nineteenth century. Mr Blake worked variously as a carrier a distributor for a major milk company, and later as proprietor of a café and refreshment room in Chippendale, a Sydney suburb. He was always able to provide a home for his wife and children, and, for his three daughters, with the certainty that they would not be destined to work in unskilled jobs.



Edith, born in 1887, opted at the age of 21, to choose to enter one of the few professions then open to young women, by being accepted as a trainee nurse at the Coast Hospital for Infectious Diseases [later Prince Henry Hospital] at Little Bay, south of Sydney.

Nursing, in this time, between 1900 and 1914, was seen as a profession – one that was suitable for physically-fit young women with a reasonable standard of education, and some sense of vocation. It had better social standing than most alternatives, such as teaching, retail shop assistant or governess, but the training was hard and the remuneration small. Edith Blake started as a trainee on £10 per year for the first three months. After this the salary rose to £20 a year, and by increments of £5 annually until graduation after the four-year course. Trainees 'lived in' – board and meals were provided, but each trainee had to provide her own uniform and text-books. The trainees, known as 'probationers', worked twelve-hour shifts, and started, as all trainee nurses did, as little more than a housemaid – scrubbing floors and cleaning equipment, undertaking some basic nursing duties such as changing dressings on wounds, and studying in her little 'free' time.

This gave them, after four years, recognition as a trained nurse by the Australian Trained Nurses Association. In other hospitals, it was a three-year training period, but the four-year course gave Coast

Hospital nurses recognition in Britain, whereas the three-year trainees in most other Australian hospitals needed a fourth year of training to work in Britain. This difference was to be important when Nurse Blake was seconded to the British Army's Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, as were many Australian nurses who volunteered to serve during World War 1.

Ms Vane-Tempest has given her readers a detailed account of the life of a young nurse on Active Service between 1914 and 1918, It is based on Edith's diary and her 138 letters home to her parents and sister Alice [known as 'Queenie'], who carefully kept these. Fortunately, she did so, or otherwise we would not have had this moving account of the sacrifices that military nurses made, for little return and under difficult conditions, often acting under the instructions and orders of officers who had little or no medical training or experience. Often, the Army's medical orderlies, being serving soldiers, often resented taking orders from women who, although supposedly with Commissioned rank, did not wear military uniforms, and were paid far less than junior non-commissioned men. Frequently, these men were ill-disciplined, unmotivated, and poorly trained. The Volunteer Aid Detachment female nursing aids were also ill-trained and needed constant supervision. All this fell on the nurses, as the majority of Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) physicians and surgeons felt that control and supervision of these lower ranks and female volunteers was beneath their dignity and responsibility, although, as Nurse Blake points out, there were some quite exceptional Medical Officers. [It is worth noting that only three men have ever been awarded the Victoria Cross and Bar – and two were RAMC doctors in France, during World War I. Many Army Medical officers may have deserved this decoration at least once, but very few got it. The third VC and Bar were awarded to a New Zealand infantry officer in World War 2].

The diaries and letters cover all the activities that would have filled the time of a young nurse in Edith Blake's situation. Her service took her to Army Base Hospitals on Lemnos, Malta and at Salonika and Alexandria, caring for casualties from the Dardanelles Campaign, on hospital ships plying the Mediterranean Sea, and on passage between Malta and Britain, and in Base Hospitals in Britain, caring for wounded from the brutal campaigns in France. Interspersed through the diaries and letters are accounts of sight-seeing and theatre going with her friends, mostly other Coast Hospital nurses in Britain, of visits to members of her parents' families, who still lived there, of the boredom that came when waiting for movement orders and postings that were usually delayed or confusing (or both), and through it all, carefully worded accounts of her work – the routines, the difficulties, and the sadness of being unable to help ease the suffering of the many wounded she cared for, in Base and other hospitals and on hospital ships. It was a full life, doing worthwhile work to which she was deeply committed.

Edith Blake's story ends on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1918, when the Hospital Ship HMHS Glenart Castle was torpedoed by the German U-boat U-56, ten miles west

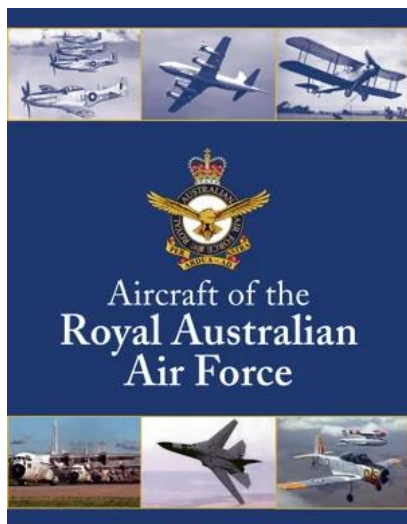
of Lundy Island. Of the 182 crew, patients, and medical personnel aboard, only 29 survived. Staff Nurse Blake was not among those rescued.

For readers who have an interest in the history of the Nursing profession, or in the social history of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Australia, this is a book that should be read. Ms Van-Tempest has given us insights to a formative period in Australian culture and has told the story of her great-aunt's unfortunately shortened life, during which she achieved so much that was good. We should honour the memory of people like Edith Blake and mourn that her life was cut short when she had so much to give to her country and its people.

## ***Aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force***

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2021  
Hardback 640pp RRP \$59.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, February 2022



This impressive tome outlines the story behind 176 aircraft types used by the RAAF in its first 100 years. Included are comprehensive notes on the history of acquisition, operation, and service record, as well as those lost in service. The legendary exploits

of aircrew have also found their place beside the history of the aircraft. Excellent photographic coverage entices readers to continue browsing, with photos of historic occasions frequently included.

The aircraft have been broken into three Series, and they are listed as A1, A2, etc for each Series. The First Series comprised only twelve aircraft, the Second Series 2 one hundred which led on to the (current) Third Series. This basically places aircraft in their chronological appearance in the RAAF, but this categorization has been supplemented by an included *Index* and *Quick Reference Guide* (by role) to enable easy navigation for those not aware of an aircraft's A-number.

There has been more than sufficient detailed history included to satisfy the researcher or any layperson wishing to acquaint themselves with our most technical Service. An excellent and fitting publication to mark the RAAF's centenary and a must for any military history library.

## ***Passchendaele***

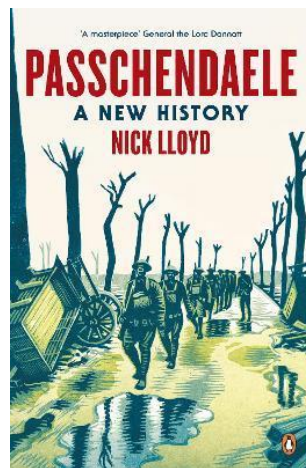
*A New History*

**Nick Lloyd**

London: Viking, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2017  
Paperback 464pp RRP \$23.75

Reviewer: Mike O'Brien, January 2022

Another book on the Third Battle of Ypres – Passchendaele – why? The reviewer's simple answer is balance. Too little attention is paid to the German half of this story. Lloyd redresses this gap.



This is a battle-by-battle account of the campaign. It covers the politics, particularly the vacillations of Lloyd George and the interplay between Robertson (Chief of the Imperial General Staff) and Haig. The differing tactics of the Army Commanders (Gough and Plumer) are examined, and the clear advantages of the latter's 'bite and hold' approach pointed out.

During the five-month campaign, almost half a million men were lost. Of course, Australians are likely to be interested in the battles in which the I & II Anzac Corps were involved. Lloyd gives the Australians close attention for all the battles in which they took part. He perhaps pays lesser attention to the New Zealanders, particularly for the Battle of Broodseinde. The fighting in these weeks cost the Australians 38,000 casualties and the New Zealanders at least 4300. Despite its infamous reputation, the battle took a heavy toll on the German defenders and underlined the effectiveness of 'bite and hold' set-piece attacks.

Nick Lloyd teaches at the UK Joint Service Command and Staff College at Shrivenham. This was book was shortlisted for the British Army Military Book of the Year, the Military History Monthly Book of the Year, and was chosen as one of the Telegraph's '50 Best Books of 2017'.

The successor to this book is to be a three-volume history of the First World War. The first in this series, *The Western Front* (2021) is in our collection awaiting review. I would highly recommend *Passchendaele*.

**'Niche Wars:**  
Australia in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2001-2014'

Speaker: Professor John Blaxland

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event  
Wednesday 5 May 2021 7:00PM-8:00PM

MILITARY HISTORY  
SPEAKER PROGRAM

## ***Not Playing the Game***

*Sport and Australia's Great War*

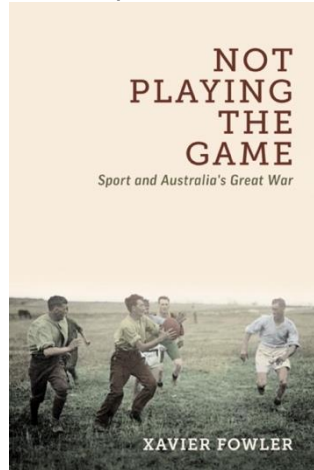
**Xavier Fowler**

Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2021

Softcover 288pp RRP \$39.99

Reviewer: Rob Ellis, January 2022

During the First World War, one of the more contentious social issues was: 'Should football and other organised professional sports continue to be played during this War?' The two sides in this discussion were, effectively, the middle-class, Anglo-Saxon Protestant



sector of the community that favoured limitation or prohibition of professional sport, and the mainly Irish Catholic working-class that provided a large proportion of the supporters of professional football, and who worked in or followed horse-racing.

The wider community was sharply divided over the issue. It was seen, by Australia's middle class that player payments to

professional sportsmen were a disincentive to volunteering for the entirely-volunteer Australian Imperial Forces. Especially, from early 1916 on, troops were desperately needed to replace the very heavy casualties from the fiasco of the Dardanelles Campaign and the mishandled operations of the Western Front.

Despite two referenda, Australia did not introduce conscription during World War 1, as the troops serving in France voted heavily against it – in sufficient numbers to provide the majority necessary to defeat the motion.

The middle-classes believed that experience in competitive sport gave young men the character, fitness, and experience to fit them for military service, and many volunteered. One by-product of this was that the Melbourne Australian Rules football club Melbourne University, withdrew from the Victorian Football League before the 1915 season started, as almost all its players had volunteered for the AIF. The other nine clubs continued to compete in the 1916-1918 seasons, despite opposition from some activists who supported volunteering by all fit men.

Other sports cut back on their activities, under pressure. John Wren, who owned or operated many of the privately owned non-club 'proprietary' racecourses in the eastern States, was a target for the supporters of volunteering. There were, however, fewer restrictions on the turf club fixtures, as the breeders and trainers were seen to be providers of cavalry horses for the Australian Army – which had few if any cavalry units.

In his analysis of Australian sporting activities and population, the author concentrates largely on New South Wales and Victoria, and particularly on the Victorian Football League and the New South Wales

Rugby League, which were the two main professional sporting leagues in Australia, although both codes were played in other states, but not always professionally.

Much of the effort to attract sportsmen and employees to volunteer to volunteer was focussed on football clubs and the proprietary tracks, rather than the venues owned and operated by the racing clubs whose members, owners & trainers were largely middle-class Protestants. It was seen by some that gambling on horse-racing attracted money that could have been better spent on supporting the war effort. This attracted strong opposition from the working-class population. Gambling on horse-racing and following their favourite football club were the only relief that a large part of the population had from the stresses of civilian life - unemployment, rising costs of living and concerns over the safety of family members or friends serving in the armed forces.

The author bases much of his analysis of the impact of racing and football on the numbers of people employed therein but provides only very limited data to support his findings. Just 6 of the 9 V.F.L. Clubs are represented in the 'Status of Employees' in these clubs, and that only for one season, in 1917 - but only 168 men are listed, - of whom 29 were classed as 'medically unfit' and 29 as 'eligible to serve'. Only 18 had enlisted, but 87 were classified as 'married' or as 'Sole Supporters' or 'Only Sons', who were not expected to volunteer. There are no comparable data for other professional or amateur sports organisations. There is no data for Australian Rules clubs in other states. The Rugby clubs are broadly ignored, although there is mention of soccer clubs only in one state – Western Australia, which between 1914 and 1918 had only just over 300,000 people, and few soccer clubs which were more likely to have amateur players.

Similar data on proprietary racing venues covers only 1914 and 1917, at only three of the many courses owned or managed by John Wren, at Richmond, Fitzroy and Ascot Vale – and show that total employment had fallen from 7,257 to 2,113 – a fall of slightly over 80%. Many of these 1,386 employees may have left to join the armed forces or engaged directly in other work associated with the war effort, but the author provides no information on this.

Little or no mention is made of comparable data from Rugby [League or Union], soccer, cricket, tennis, and golf clubs in Victoria [as most of these had only amateur participants], or many of the larger church-affiliated private schools in all states, except to note that headmasters generally encouraged Old Collegians to volunteer and mourned the many who were lost.

Except for casual mention of cancelled matches and a few minor issues, there is no discussion of support for or disregard of the situation in other states. Tasmania and South Australia do not even appear in the Index, but as their populations were 190 000 and just over 300 000 respectively, it probably didn't impact greatly on the argument that some professional sporting organizations could have contributed more to Australia's support of the Allied cause in 1914-1918, and this

appears to be the central argument the author puts forward.

This book could be construed as an attack on the unpatriotic attitudes of some sporting clubs during World War 1 and focuses on the influence of religious and social class differences, Australian Rules Football, especially in Victoria, and non-Turf Club horse-racing. However, it goes only lightly over the support many of them gave, in a wide variety of ways, between 1914 and 1918.

Overall, Mr Fowler's book gives an interesting review of an issue that could arise in wartime in many societies, but unfortunately, he provides little supporting data on the contribution to the War Effort by many Australian professional and amateur sporting bodies and clubs. He also ignores the benefits that might have accrued had there been a close-down of professional sport between 1914 and 1918.

### ***The Battle for Shaggy Ridge***

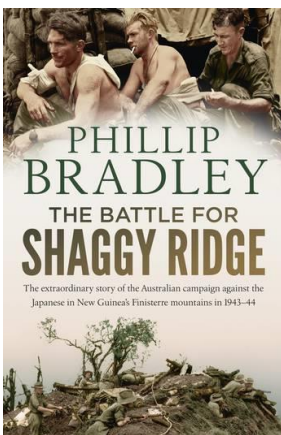
*The extraordinary story of the Australian campaign against the Japanese in New Guinea's Finisterre mountains in 1943-44*

#### **Phillip Bradley**

Allen & Unwin, 2021

Paperback 328pp RRP \$32.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, February 2022



Following the Allied offensive against Lae and the seizure of the airfield at Nadzab in the Markham Valley in early September 1943, the Japanese moved to reinforce their defences at Kaiapit further up the Valley. In an endeavour to cut the Japanese supply line from Madang, Major General George Vasey, Commander of Australia's 7th Division was eager to be able to fly his

troops into battle rather than move across country. The Fifth Air Force (US) wanted the strip at Kaiapit, so the 2/6 Independent Company were flown into Sangan – a short distance from the objective. With excellent aerial and ground reconnaissance and sound planning, the Company successfully captured Kaiapit on 19/20th September before the Japanese reinforcements arrived. This operation preceded the Australian assault on the Finisterre Mountains which contained the (about to become) iconic *Shaggy Ridge*.

[Many of the key features were given the names of Australian soldiers who had died there. The Ridge was named after Lieutenant Bob 'Shaggy' Clampett who first took a component of 2/27th Battalion up onto the Ridge on 14th October 1943.]

Advancing up the Markham and Ramu Valleys, the Japanese were ambushed at Kesawai on 28th September, and an attack nearby on 4th October saw the Japanese withdraw into the foothills of the Finisterre Range. Thus began a long and extremely demanding series of skirmishes and battles:

- 11 Oct 2/14 Battalion (Bn) captured Pallier's Hill
- 12 Oct A Japanese attack was made on John's Knoll on Trevor's Ridge
- 8 Dec Japanese attacked Isarabi
- 12/13 Dec After a preliminary air attack, 2/25 Bn was attacked at Kesawai
- 27/28 Dec 2/16 Bn attacked numerous Japanese strongpoints on Shaggy Ridge
- 19/25 Jan 2/2 Pioneer Bn, 2/9 Bn and 2/10 Bn mounted Operation Cutthroat along Shaggy Ridge
- 21 Jan 2/12 Bn captured Prothero One. Japanese attacked, then moved back. 2/9 Bn took over responsibility for Shaggy Ridge on 23 Jan
- 24 Jan 2/12 Bn moved off Shaggy Ridge down to Kankiry Saddle to attack Feature 4100. The Japanese reoccupied the Feature overnight
- 29 Jan 2/9 Bn capture of Feature 4100 saw the Japanese withdraw down the Mindjim Valley to Madang
- 1 Feb 2/9 and 2/10 Bns occupied Crater Hill
- 24 Apr Madang fell to the Allies.

Bradley's narrative is written as if it is the subtitles to a television documentary. His reader is 'there', experiencing the impossible terrain, the exhaustion of load carrying and fighting, punctuated by the continuous loss of men through death and injury. His impeccable and tireless research and interviews of combatants from both sides have produced an accurate and unbiased account of one of Australia's most important military campaigns.

Embedded easy-to-follow battle maps add to the reader's grasp of the manoeuvre involved by the combatants. An excellent array of historic photographs taken by official photographers, as well as more recent colour plates, convey the true nature of what confronted troops of both sides. This is a serious academic work rounded out by fourteen pages of *Notes*, a seven-page *Bibliography* and a comprehensive *Index*.

An excellent addition to any military history collection.

## **When He Came Home**

*The Impact of War on Partners and Children of Veterans*

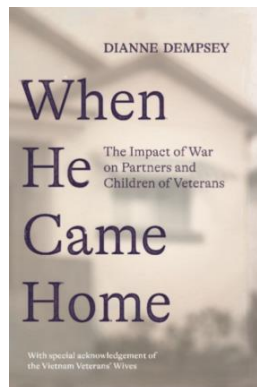
**Dianne Dempsey**

Sydney, NSW: Arcadia, 2021

Paperback 448pp RRP \$29.95

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, January 2022

Whilst this extremely enlightening work concentrates on Vietnam veterans and their families, there has been cognisance of the struggles that faced the wives and children of First and Second World War veterans. The author has worked tirelessly for recognition of the problems and for fair and equitable support and treatment of our service personal.



Governments have historically suffered from 'permanent amnesia' when it comes to recognising combat stress in its veterans after they return from conflict. In addition to combat stress, those who went to Vietnam were pilloried on

departure and again on return for being involved in 'an unjust war', rejected by the RSL, and not permitted to participate in Anzac Day commemorations. It took decades for acknowledgement of the damage men suffered due to pesticides used as defoliants, and today the impact of pesticides on their descendants is still not acknowledged.

Many veterans have also found the mountains of red tape involved in applying for Department of Veteran Affairs assistance just too hard to overcome. It now requires professionally trained people lodging an application for it to succeed. During the past three decades a number of support organisations have emerged after the hard work and persistence of both wives and veterans. These have succeeded in improving support for veterans and their family, but there still remains a number of holes in the safety net.

Eight families have shared their stories on how PTSD manifested itself in their household, how the partner did or did not cope, the effect on family life, and life today in a more supportive environment. Four cases of intergenerational trauma are examined – where the lives of earlier veterans passed their stress on to their sons. A 2014 Vietnam Veteran's Family Study of 27 000 Australians concluded that 23% of the offspring of veteran families experienced harsh parenting involving either verbal abuse, excess physical punishment and humiliation, and ridicule, bullying or mental cruelty. The final series of stories are of three households involving contemporary serving ADF members, and recent veterans and their families.

Dempsey's *Conclusion* includes the *Postscript* with the April 19, 2021 announcement of a Royal Commission into ADF and Veteran Suicide. Fourteen books are listed

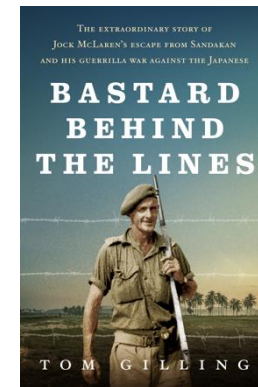
in *Recommended Reading* – ranging from *Mr Brother Jack* (1964) to *The Long Shadow: Australia's Vietnam Veterans Since the War* (2020). A comprehensive support network has been listed in *Resources for Veterans and Families*.

## **Bastard Behind the Lines**

*The extraordinary story of Jock McLaren's escape from Sandakan and his guerrilla war against the Japanese*

**Tom Gilling**

Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin 2021



Paperback 256pp RRP \$29.99

Reviewer: Mike O'Brien,  
December 2021

Jock McLaren, MC and Bar (1902-1956) indeed led an extraordinary life. He was born in Scotland and claimed under-age active service in the First World War in the Highland Division. Tom Gilling cautions the reader in his prologue: "What people knew about him was only what he allowed them to know, and it was not always true."

In outline, McLaren joined the 2nd AIF (2nd/10th Ordnance Field Workshop) and was captured in Singapore. He escaped from Changi and was recaptured. He was transferred to Borneo by the Japanese as part of E Force. He escaped and made his way to the Philippines, joining an American-led guerrilla force. His action led to the award of a Military Cross. During this time, he told of removing his own burst appendix without anaesthetic, a feasible operation but perhaps with some exaggerated details. He returned to Australia and joined the clandestine Services Reconnaissance Department. He undertook several hazardous operations in Borneo lasting to the end of the war and was awarded a bar to his Military Cross.

This is the second biography of McLaren – Hal Richardson published *One Man War: The Jock McLaren Story* in 1957 - a book also in our collection. It was based on conversations with McLaren and thus its contents are open to question. The reviewed book relies on deeper research. Perhaps echoing Gilling's incredible achievements, the book is less than well-organised. It takes until page 150 to discover McLaren's pre-world War Two marriage.

There is an index and a reasonably extensive bibliography in Gillings's book. The omission in the latter of the several volumes of *The Official History of Special Operations Australia* is inexplicable. The balance of style leans strongly to the journalistic. It's a great yarn but a doubtfully accurate history.



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<i>The Sailor's Bookshelf</i>	ADM James G Stavridis	Fifty books to know the sea.
<i>On Operations</i>	<u>B A Friedman</u>	Operational art and military disciplines.
<i>The Battle of</i> for pointless sacrifice.	Ian Finlayson	The battle that has become a metaphor <i>Passchendaele</i>
<i>Our Exceptional Friend</i>	Emma Shortis	Australia's fatal alliance with the United States.
<i>Survivor</i>	Mark Wales	Life in the SAS.
<i>The Good Soldiers</i>	David Finkel	The 2007 fifteen-month US 'surge' in Iraq.
<i>Mau Mau Whitewash -</i>	Lee Boldeman	A critique of the Revisionist <i>Britain slandered</i> Account of Mau Mau.
<i>Morrison's Mission</i>	Paul Kelly	How a beginner reshaped Australian foreign policy. (A Lowy Institute paper)

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