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Promoting National Security and Defence

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Victoria Barracks
B Block
256-310 St Kilda Road
Southbank, Victoria 3006

www.rusivic.org.au
Email: secretary@rusivic.org.au

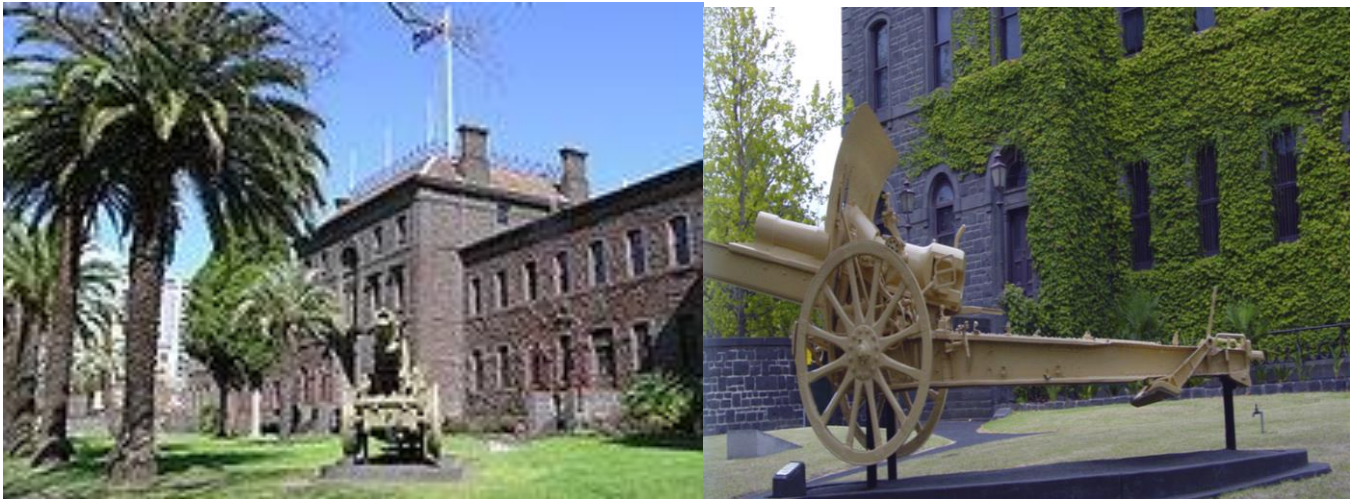
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RUSI VIC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

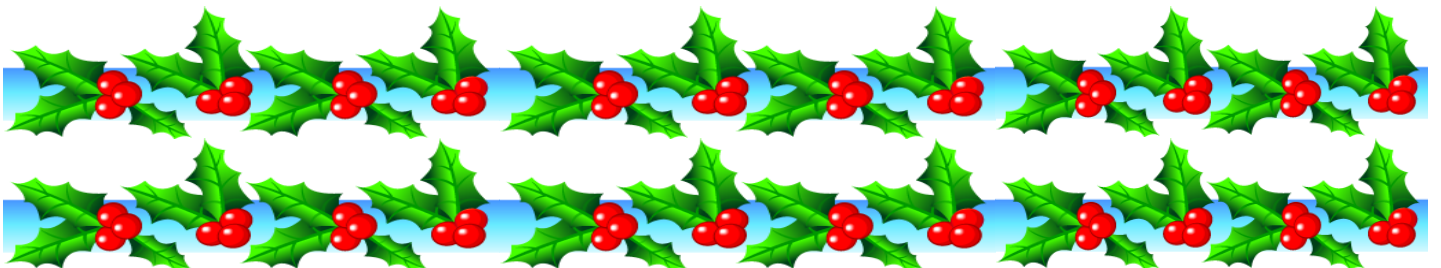
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Editor: Mike Rawlinson

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**Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year**



**Royal United Services Institute of Victoria
Incorporated
December 2024 Newsletter**

RUSI VIC -2024-25

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

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From the President:

Major General Mike O'Brien CSC (Retd)



I am distressed to tell you of the sudden death of our Vice President Navy, Commander Roger Buxton, RCN. Roger served for several terms as our Naval Vice President and had only just decided to step down at the AGM.

Roger was one of our most dedicated supporters and he had volunteered his valuable assistance to our library weekly for several years. We will miss his dedicated thoroughness, scholarship and humour. Our thoughts and prayers are with Sue and his family

Now, I would like to outline what occurred in RUSIV in 2024.

Our weekly defence update newsletter has continued and is well-received, gaining us several new members. I would ask everyone to distribute this to 'outsiders' to encourage them to join us too!

We awarded our \$2000 Defence Ethics prize this year and plan to continue it for the future.

We applied for heritage recognition by Heritage Victoria for our library collection -sadly, our request was not approved.

We continue to present information on RUSIV to interested groups and to encourage visitors. This strategy has produced several new members

As you gather, membership is our key issue. Having interns gives us a connection with a younger age group to counteract the age-related loss of some dozen members a year.

Though good speakers on our areas of interest are difficult to come by in Melbourne, we plan a comprehensive group in 2025. Please consider setting aside the last Thursdays in the months February to November so that we can guarantee a good attendance.

We are planning an exhibition from 31 July 2025 for three weeks at a galley in docklands. It will feature the remarkable life of Sir Charles Ryan. The central attraction will be his photos taken at Gallipoli. We will provide more information as the date approaches.

On behalf of our Council may I wish all members a safe, healthy and happy Christmas and a great 2025.

Please remember to visit us when you can!

Mike O'Brien

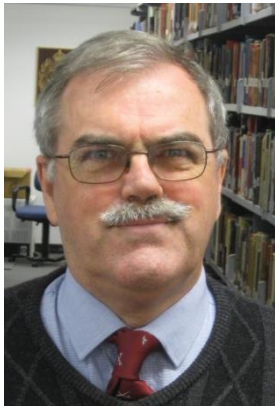


October Speaker Ross McMullin talks to his latest book "Life So Full of Promise"



With thanks - it's not a Tie!

From the Secretary:



Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart RFD

Thank you to all those members who offered assistance with our IT problems. We are working on a solution at the moment.

We are getting good feedback regarding our weekly Defence Updates and will endeavour to keep the Defence Updates going over the break.

On membership, we regret the passing of Roger Buxton. Our heartfelt condolences have been offered to his family.

We are pleased to welcome the following new members
Roger Clifton, Bunny Carrigan, Jack Dance,
Peter Whitelaw, Michael Sturmfels and Charles Barnett,

The National RUSI Journal is available and can be viewed at:

[RUSI Journal December 2024](#)

Finally, have a happy and safe holidays!

Bob Hart

Donations to your Library Fund are Tax Deductible

Help to maintain the Institute's Library as the best collection in Victoria on defence and military related subjects by donating to your RUSI VIC Library Fund. The RUSI VIC Library Fund is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) approved by the Australian Taxation Office, and monetary gifts to the Fund over \$2 are tax deductible by the donor.

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



**Presidential Address
Annual Luncheon 18 November
Angliss Restaurant**

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. 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:

On Strategic Bombing

Mike Rawlinson

The Opinion Article in the September Quarterly Newsletter discussed the bombing of Gaza by the Israeli Air Force. Essentially this was tactical bombing directed against Hamas forces. This article is about strategic bombing with a particular interest in the targeting of civilians and adds perspective to the Gaza situation.

Strategic bombing is usually thought of in respect of wars between States, where the goal is defeating the enemy by destroying its morale, its economy, particularly its ability to manufacture and transport materiel in support of military operations. Tactical bombing is bombing in support of ground forces.

Aerial bombing started in WW1 with small bombs dropped from German Zeppelins and allied aircraft on cities. This was looked on as morale or terror bombing. Post war the potential of aerial attack was recognised and Italian General Giulio Douhet's book *The Command of the Air* postulated that wars could be won by bombing alone, by a strategy of attacking an enemy's home economy and population. Air Power Theory further developed during the inter-war period with Trenchard in Britain and Mitchell in the US being prominent advocates. The belief that 'the bomber will always get through' supported the creation of independent air forces equipped with large numbers of long-range high-capacity bomber aircraft.

Under the Geneva Convention air warfare must comply with the laws and customs of war. To be legal, aerial operations must comply with the principles of humanitarian law: military necessity, distinction and proportionality. Attacks must be intended to help in the defeat of the enemy and must be on a military objective. Any harm caused to protected civilians or civilian property must be proportional and not excessive in relation to concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.

From the out-set strategic bombing would appear to have difficulty in complying with these criteria.

World War II -The European Theatre

Untroubled by this convention, in 1937 during the Spanish Civil War, Hitler's Condor Legion bombed the Basque town of Guernica and killed about half of the civilian population. In China the Japanese bombed Chongqing and other Chinese cities.

In 1939 Hitler invaded Poland and Warsaw was bombed by the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe's bomber force was designed for tactical bombing and consisted of twin-engine shorter-range aircraft. In the battle of Britain, it was initially used against RAF airfields, and then

switched to cities. As it turned out this was a major tactical and strategic error.

The response from RAF Bomber Command was to attack specific strategic targets. These attacks were ineffective due to inaccurate bombing of targets attributed to weather and inadequate navigation and bomb aiming technology. There were also very heavy losses from German fighters. Bomber Command changed its tactics to 'area bombing' at night.



RAF Lancaster

In 1942 the RAF was joined by the US Army Air Force (USAAF) flying the heavily armed B-17 Flying Fortress aircraft equipped with the still secret Norden bomb sight. The sight used an analogue computer to determine the optimum bomb release point, allowing precision bombing. The Americans bombed by day and the RAF by night. Hitting defended targets was still difficult.

Concern for civilians was not top of mind.

In July 1943 the RAF and USAAF mounted Operation Gomorrah a 10-day attack upon Hamburg. The RAF attacked at night with almost 800 aircraft dropping high explosive and incendiary bombs on the city. The USAAF carried out daylight precision attacks on dockyards. The incendiaries created a self-sustaining firestorm. Deaths were estimated at 40,000.



USAAF B-17 Flying Fortress

Despite the number of civilian deaths, this attack was not controversial as Hamburg was a major port and shipbuilding city with many legitimate targets. However, a similar subsequent operation conducted against the ancient city of Dresden where 25,000 died, was condemned for having a paucity of military targets.

Quotes by the Air Officer Commanding in Chief, Bomber Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris:

- *We are going to scourge the Third Reich from end to end. We are bombing Germany city by city and ever more terribly to make it impossible for her to go on with the war. That is our object, and we shall pursue it relentlessly.*
- *Attacks on cities are strategically justified in so far as they tend to shorten the war and so preserve the lives of soldiers.*

World War II - The Pacific Theatre

In the Pacific Theatre the USAAF undertook the strategic bombing of Japan, flying out of Guam with the new B-29 Superfortress bombers. This Superfortress was a larger aircraft with a pressurised crew compartment and could fly at 30,000ft. However, accurate high altitude, daylight, precision bombing proved elusive with the aircraft encountering jet stream winds over the Japanese islands. A further difficulty for precision bombing was target acquisition as Japanese industry was conducted in small factories dispersed throughout a city and surrounded by workers residences. Bombing at lower altitudes meant losses from fighters.

The commander, Major General Curtis LeMay changed tactics from high level precision attacks to area bombing cities at night from 5000ft using newly developed napalm.

Japanese cities were particularly vulnerable to incendiary attack as houses were lightly constructed of highly flammable material -wood, bamboo and paper.



USAAF B-29 Superfortress

On 9/10 March 1945, 300 B-29s attacked Tokyo. The resulting firestorm devastated 16 square miles of the city centre with an estimated 90-100,000 dead. This was the most destructive city attack in history. In all 67 Japanese cities were bombed in this way. Firebombing stopped when the Americans ran out of incendiaries. On 6 August 1945 an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and 8 August on Nagasaki. Immediate deaths were respectively 140,000 and 80,000 with many more dying later from the effects of radiation. Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945.

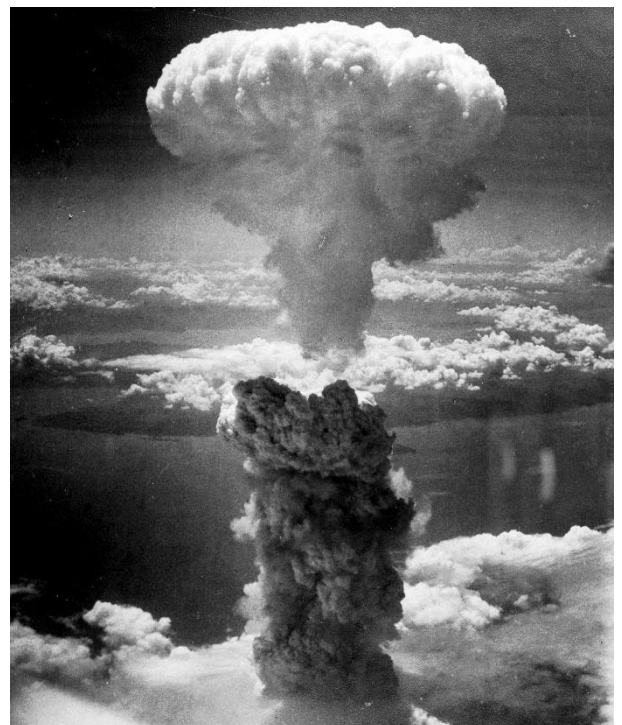
Thoughts of General by Curtis LeMay:

- *If you are going to use military force, then you ought to use overwhelming military force. Use too much and deliberately use too much; you'll save lives, not only your own, but the enemy's too.*
- *There are no innocent civilians, so it doesn't bother me so much to be killing innocent bystanders.*
- *If we'd lost the war, we'd all have been prosecuted as war criminals.*

Legal and Ethical Considerations

After the war the issue of indiscriminate bombing of cities was addressed in the charter of the Nuremberg Trials, as potentially a war crime. However, due to there being no specific international humanitarian law prohibiting illegal aerial warfare, the indiscriminate bombing of enemy cities was excluded from the category of war crimes at the actual Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials. No Axis officers or civil leaders were prosecuted for authorizing the bombing of cities. (Such prosecutions would have been extremely embarrassing for the victorious side.)

For similar reasons there has subsequently been no agreement as to the legality of the firebombing of Japanese cities, and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



Atomic Explosion over Nagasaki 9 August 1945

In 1996 the International Court of Justice gave an advisory opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*. The court ruled that there is neither customary nor international law any comprehensive and

universal prohibition of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. However, the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict, but maybe lawful in self defence if the survival of the state was at stake.

Ukraine

Russian bombing of Ukraine has been both strategic and tactical. The attacks on cities have generally been of the morale or terror variety aimed to erode the 'will of the people'. Contrary to Douhet's predictions, and in keeping with WW II experience, Ukrainian morale has held firm. With the onset of winter, attacks on Ukraine's power stations may prove to be more effective for the Russians. But again contrary to Douhet – the bomber does not always get through.

After 67 Years a Bomber Command Memorial



On 28 June 2012, HM the Queen unveiled a memorial in London's Green Park, to honour the 55,573 aircrew of RAF Bomber Command who lost their lives during World War II. The centre piece of the Portland stone memorial is a nine feet high bronze sculpture depicting a seven-man bomber crew returning from a mission.

In total Bomber Command flew 364,514 operational sorties, 1,030,500 tons of bombs were dropped and 8,325 aircraft lost in action.

Bomber Command crews suffered an extremely high casualty rate: 55,573 killed out of a total of 125,000 aircrew (a 44.4% death rate), a further 8,403 were wounded in action and 9,838 became prisoners of war. Of the Bomber Command personnel killed during the war, 72% were British, 18% were Canadian, 7% were Australian and 3% were New Zealanders.

Some 10,000 Australian airmen served in Bomber Command during World War II. Of these, 3486 were killed in action and 546 died in training accidents in the UK – making the bombing campaign against Germany and Italy Australia's costliest combat action in the War.

The very high casualties suffered give testimony to the dedication and courage of Bomber Command's aircrew. The Command had 19 Victoria Cross winners. By 1943 only one in six was expected to survive a first tour of 30 operations, while few would survive a second tour. For

much of the war, the loss rate hovered around 5%, about 1 in 20 aircraft would, on average, be shot down on each mission.

Bomber Command destroyed a significant proportion of German industries notably in the Ruhr valley and many German cities including Cologne, Hamburg and Dresden. The raids caused the loss of up to 600,000 civilian lives.

Notwithstanding pride in the exploits of Bomber Command squadrons against specific military and industrial targets, the area bombing of cities entailing high civilian death tolls has always been controversial, and is one reason there has been no memorial until now.

The courage of the then young men who believed they were striking at the heart of the German war machine was tarnished by post-war angst about the ethics of bombing civilians.

The ancient German city of Dresden, where 25,000 civilians died in bombing raids, initially objected to the memorial. As a gesture of reconciliation towards German cities which had been subjected to firestorms from raids during the conflict, Dresden's objection was overcome by the placing of an inscription commemorating all the lives lost in the bombings of 1939-45,

The fighters are our salvation, but the bombers alone provide the means of victory.

*Winston Churchill
September 1940*



Tomahawk

At last ! The Navy has test fired Australia's first Tomahawk cruise missile from air warfare destroyer HMAS Hobart.

Book Reviews

This newsletter has six 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.

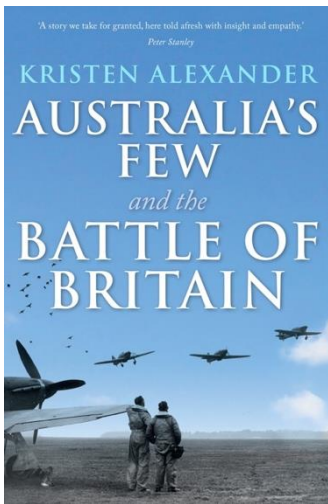
Australia's Few and the Battle of Britain

Kristen Alexander

Randwick, NSW: New South Books, 2024
Paperback 440pp RRP \$44.99

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, October 2024

This is a very well written and well researched book (in its fifth edition) which seamlessly blends biographies



with history. I strongly recommend it to anyone interested in the Battle of Britain and/or the history of RAAF recruitment and Flying Training at Point Cook.

During the summer and autumn of 1940, the Luftwaffe conducted a campaign to gain superiority over the RAF, especially Fighter Command. The result was the first major battle of World War II (or any

war) fought entirely in the air. The Luftwaffe's defeat by 'The Few' not only put an end to Hitler's planned invasion of Britain but also ensured that Britain could be the base for an Allied invasion of Europe at some time in the future. Thirty-five Australians flew combat operations during the Battle of Britain yet the role of the Australian 'Few' has received little attention. This book gives a personal account of eight of the Australian participants, drawing heavily on logbooks, RAF and other official archives, diaries, letters, newspaper articles and interviews with family members. The author follows these eight young men from childhood, through their education, training, personal relationships and flying careers to death in combat (in the case of seven of the eight men), and beyond that to commemoration.

The eight pilots that the author decided to cover in her book are: Jack Kennedy and Ken Holland from Sydney, Stuart Walch from Hobart, Dick Glyde from Perth, Pat Hughes from Cooma, Bill Millington from Adelaide, John Crossman from Newcastle, and Des Sheen of Canberra. Of these eight pilots only one (Des Sheen) survived the war, all of the others were killed during the Battle of Britain. All of these men flew in RAF fighter squadrons. (The first RAAF fighter squadron to be in action in Britain did not become operational until 22 May 1941, well after the Battle of Britain had ended.) Only four of

the men (Hughes, Sheen, Kennedy and Walch) completed their basic flying training with the RAAF in Australia, before taking up the offer of 'short service' commissions in the Royal Air Force and moving to Britain. The others travelled to Britain 'as civilians' and undertook flying training there. Of the eight pilots, four - Millington, Glyde, Hughes and Sheen - were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC, the third highest award for gallantry in the air) with Sheen also being awarded a bar to his DFC. The highest scoring Australian ace of the Battle of Britain was Flight Lieutenant Pat Hughes, of No. 234 Squadron RAF, who was credited with 14 kills before his death on 7 September 1940.

Eschewing the approach of devoting a chapter to each of the men the author very skilfully weaves the stories of the men into the chronology of the Battle of Britain. The accounts of their training and combat are extremely detailed and well written. The chronological approach allows the author to show that over time physical tiredness and mental strain took their toll.

The book contains 30 photographs, including photographs of all eight men but not all show them in uniform and displaying their 'wings'. For example the only photograph in the book of Dick Glyde is captioned "Young Dick Glyde" and shows him in civilian clothes. I think a more fitting tribute would be include a photograph of him in uniform. (Such a photo exists and indeed it appears in the Author's Blog page - see [Australia's Few. Kristen Alexander's Battle of Britain Blog: Australians in the Battle of Britain. 13 August 1940.](#)) The only photograph in the book of aircraft flown by the pilots shows fighter pilots of the RAF's 87 Squadron racing to get to their Hawker Hurricanes in an airfield in France early in 1940. Although not taken during the Battle of Britain this is relevant to the story as before the Battle of Britain one of the pilots (Glyde) was in France serving with 87 Squadron. I think it unfortunate that the book does not contain a photo of a Supermarine Spitfire given that three of the men (including Pat Hughes) flew Spitfires.

An enormous amount of research has gone into the book and this is reflected in the 34 pages of notes & references and also in the very detailed and thus very useful index covering 14 pages. The publisher is to be commended for allowing such a lengthy index to be included in the book.

Kristen Alexander is a Canberra-based writer and researcher. In 2020, Kristen was awarded a PhD by UNSW Canberra for her thesis 'Emotions of Captivity: Australian Airmen Prisoners of Stalag Luft III and their Families'. *Australia's Few* which is her fourth book, won the nonfiction category of the 2015 ACT Writing and Publishing Awards.

Life So Full of Promise

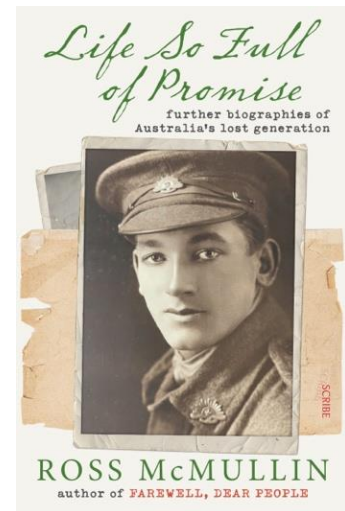
further biographies of Australia's lost generation

Ross McMullin

Brunswick, VIC: Scribe Publications, 2023
Paperback 640pp RRP: \$44.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, September 2024

Ross McMullin wrote *Farewell Dear People* (Scribe Publications, 2012) – a multi-biography of ten young Australians lost in the First World War. They were stories of interwoven families that highlight the great prewar potential of the main character, the time spent in



conflict, and finally, the loss to his nation and family. *Life So Full of Promise* is the same length as *Farewell Dear People* but looks at the lives of only three young men of the lost generation. It has been awarded the 2024 Age Book of the Year for non-fiction.

Brian Colden Antill Pockley was born in Sydney in 1890 of a well-to-do family, attended a

private school excelling academically (becoming Dux) and in athletics, cricket, rugby and tennis. He completed his medical studies and on 1 August 1914 in the Medical Corps and was part of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force dispatched to Kabakaul, New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago to capture the German radio complex. On the first day of action, 11th September, Captain Brian Pockley became the first officer to die in an Australian unit in the First World War.

Born in Hay, NSW in April 1896, Norman Frank Callaway showed great cricketering potential and his family moved to Sydney in November 1912. At 17 he commenced playing Sydney Grade cricket with Paddington, and in February 1915, playing for New South Wales became the first man in first-class cricket to score a double century on debut. Enlisting in the 19th Battalion in May 1915 he arrived on the Western Front in late December. Reported missing during the Second Battle of Bullecourt on 3 May 1917, it was later confirmed that Private Callaway died on that day. His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial.

Murdoch Nish McKay, usually known as 'Doch', was born in Bendigo in 1891. His father was an excellent cricketer who was selected for an Australian tour of England. His family moved to Melbourne for his final secondary school years and at Scotch College he displayed well-above average ability in athletics, cricket and tennis. He

entered Ormond College as a resident law student in 1907 having just turned 16. He remained in Ormond throughout his course aided by the scholarships arising from his superlative results, including the feat of double first-class honours in his third year. He finished top in final year with first-class honours, winning the prestigious Supreme Court Prize and qualifying for the Master of Laws degree — all shortly after he turned 20. The law professor concluded that in almost two decades at Melbourne University he had taught no abler student. Playing for Bendigo in 1911 against the touring English team between that summer's first two Ashes Tests, Mackay top-scored with a fine innings. He completed his articles with a Bendigo firm of solicitors and embarked on a career as a barrister. His ability was soon evident. Having been at the Bar little more than two years, he was engaged to appear in a landmark constitutional case before the High Court, a remarkable achievement when he had just turned 24.

McKay involved himself in the militia and served in Melbourne and Bendigo units. When European war suddenly erupted, Doch preferred to undertake advanced officer training with a view to serving in a later contingent. He married early in May 1915, only a week before he left Melbourne as a captain in the 22nd Battalion. At Gallipoli he proved to be an outstanding officer — brave and decisive, inspiring and selfless, and was promoted to major. Perilous experiences followed in France in 1916, particularly after his unit participated in the Somme offensive. The 22nd was involved in two attempts to drive the enemy away from the Pozieres heights. The first conspicuously failed, and the second seemed on the verge of becoming a similar fiasco when Major Murdoch Mackay made a crucial front-line intervention. He took charge, devised and directed alternative methods, and enabled the attackers to attain their objective. While displaying this superb leadership, Major Mackay, MID (Mentioned in Dispatches) was killed on 23 August 1916. The tributes were glowing. Some who knew him well felt that he had appropriate attributes for the very highest positions in the nation.

Ross McMullin, himself a Melbourne District cricketer in the 1970s, has provided highly-researched accounts of the three families and considerable detail of the cricketering exploits of all three young men. His approach to each family begins at least two generations before the birth of the young men and continues well beyond them paying the supreme sacrifice. Two very generous inserts of high-quality black and white photographs complement the easy-to-read text.

This is a landmark work in documenting the fabric of Australian society in the decades straddling the First World War. A commendable achievement.

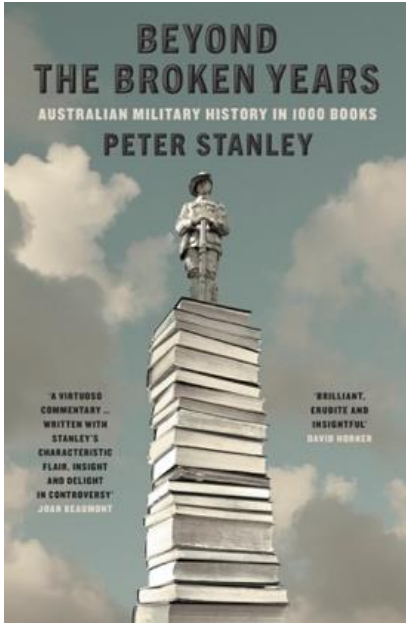
Beyond The Broken Years *Australian military history in 1000 books*

Peter Stanley

Randwick, NSW: New South Books, 2024
 Paperback 272pp RRP \$39.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, November 2024

This is indeed a monumental work. Peter Stanley has reviewed the works of 1300 Australian military history authors both before and after Bill Gammage's ground-breaking *The Broken Years* (1974) which was a published PhD thesis that contained personal accounts of First World War combatants for the first time. Stanley has dedicated four decades in assisting authors and researchers and fostering the concept that Australia's history is incomplete without consideration and inclusion of its military history.



When the Archives Office (Canberra) was able to release documents far sooner than the previously-held 50 years' period, military historians were eager and able to emulate Gammage by incorporating first-hand experiences in their own histories. The Australian War Memorial (AWM) held thousands of documents including personal diaries and letters, but before Stanley joined the AWM as Principal Historian in 1980, it had refused to assist historians in their research.

Stanley provides a brief history of Australian military history as the first part of this work. Included is coverage of 'storians (current-day writers that do not allow historical fact to spoil a good yarn). He then examines the coverage of conflicts that Australians were engaged in prior to the First World War. The six chapters covering the First World War and the interval before World War Two include society's attitude to conflict, the reality of casualties and the two failed referenda on Conscription and the impact on society and those damaged returned servicemen who had to be supported by family and society. The manner in which writers wrote is closely examined and those who made the biggest impact are highlighted.

The major theatres of the Second World War and the immensely contrasting climate and geography of conflicts, prisoners of war, the impact at home, politics and strategies, like the First, was well-covered by unit histories immediately following 1945. The occupation

of Japan by the British Commonwealth Occupation Force after the Armistice, Korea and the Cold War, the Vietnam War, peacekeeping forces and conflicts in the 21st century are then briefly visited.

A final major portion of Stanley's work looks at 20 different themes that have been historians' interest. They include the Anzac legend, heroes, commanders, the separate arms, films and recordings, First Nations combatants, memory and memorials, battlefields, the Australian Defence Force (past, current and future) and future public interest in Australian military history. The immense number publications reviewed have been examined and the prominent authors named. This has been interspersed with fascinating no-nonsense backgrounds of the influential literary and 'political' people at the time. Lack of humour is certainly not one of Stanley's characteristics! Two chapters - *A Dictionary of Australian Military History* (now) is a most comprehensive chapter and is followed by *The War Never Ends* glimpsing into the future. A fine *Index* rounds out this work.

This is a must read for everyone interested in military history. It is an easy, at times humorous read that possesses the true stamp of authenticity.

Of Service

Jehani Therone

Melbourne: Harvest Publishing by House of JT, 2024
 Hardback 628pp RRP: \$279.99

Reviewer: Mike O'Brien, November 2024



This remarkable book is a tribute to Australia's living veterans. Each of those interviewed tells a moving story of their experience. The author is a gifted photographer, and her black and white portraits are of the highest artistic merit.

The production of this rather heavy volume is notable. It was printed in Florence and particularly well-bound. As well as being a tribute to the men and women included, it is an artistic testament to the author and designer of the book. It should be seen to be believed.

The signed copy so generously donated by the author will be treasured!

A Heavy Reckoning

War, Medicine and Survival in Afghanistan and Beyond

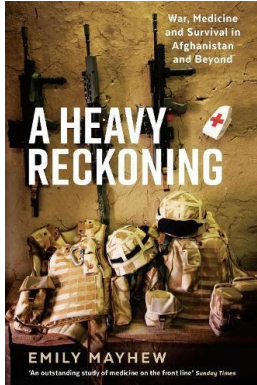
Emily Mayhew

London : Profile Books, 2017

Paperback 320pp RRP: \$26.99

Reviewer: Rowan Story, September 2018

This remarkable and powerful book is about the recent British military medical experience in Afghanistan. It is as far from a dry historical text as it is possible to imagine. The author, Dr Emily Mayhew, is a military medical historian specializing in the study of severe



wounding, its infliction, treatment and long-term outcomes in twentieth and twenty-first century warfare. She is historian-in-residence in the Department of Bioengineering at Imperial College in London and a Research Fellow in the Division of Surgery.

It is surely an enlightened country that can facilitate such a position. The histories of

medicine in war have in the past often been written after the fact. Dr Mayhew is writing and questioning as events unfold. Her questions about the nature of emergency medical interventions are profound and would perhaps be unlikely to arise from someone from a more scientific background. Between 2001 and 2014, 456 British service personnel died and 1,981 were wounded in Afghanistan. A significant number of those wounded did not die when, going on past experience and previously accepted knowledge, they should have. These casualties have been designated as 'unexpected survivors'.

'In the second decade of the twenty-first century there is a small but significant group of people who have lived through situations of physical catastrophe on the battlefield previously thought unsurvivable. And there are people who have enabled that survival by standing at the limits of life and death and refusing to accept them.'

That these 'unexpected survivors' did in fact survive is a testament to the rapid advances of military medicine in the wars of the last 15 years. It is a truism to say that human anatomy, physiology and biochemistry are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. What the last 15 years have shown, however, is that military doctors and scientists have become more adept and agile at recognizing how anatomy, physiology and biochemistry can be managed better for the seriously wounded casualty.

The book is divided into three sections. **Part one - Afghanistan** deals with the Field Hospital at Camp Bastion and the work of the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT) and the Critical Care Air Support Team (CCAST).

Part two – Home describes the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, rehabilitation at Headley Court, the complex nature of the pain associated with blast injuries and an exceptionally clear discussion

Part three – Beyond deals with the research carried out by Royal British Legion Centre for Blast Injury Studies at Imperial College, prosthetic limbs and a further examination of Chronic Pain and PTSD.

The three sections contain many first-person interviews and are linked with a narrative that describes the journey, from point of wounding to eventual rehabilitation, of the United Kingdom's first casualty to survive a triple amputation blast injury, Mark Ormrod, Royal Marines.

The **Epilogue – Medics** – is an extremely sensitive, perceptive and humane examination of the almost inevitable effects of exposure to severe wounding on the treating doctors and nurses.

Emily Mayhew writes in a way that is vivid and accessible to all. At times she is blunt and at other times remarkably subtle and sensitive. At all times she is rigorous in looking for the important lessons that can be learned from the chaos of war.

Those who have been involved in the work that she describes will possibly find both resonance and recognition. For others this important book will help them to a better level of understanding.

Due to the generosity of the reviewer a copy of this book is now in the RUSI Library.

Nuked

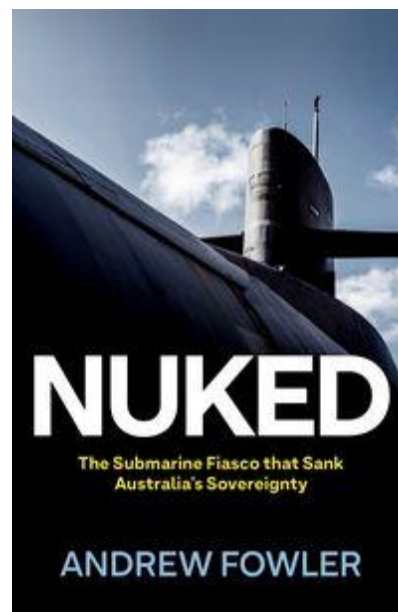
The Submarine Fiasco that Sank Australia's Sovereignty

Andrew Fowler

Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2024

Paperback 224pp RRP: \$35.00

Reviewer: David Rees, August 2024



In September 2021, the Australian PM, *Scott Morrison* together with the US President, *Joe Biden* and UK PM, *Boris Johnson* formally announced the formation of the AUKUS partnership. Its purpose was to retain stability in the Indo-pacific region due to China's increasing threat to the region's security as

well as Australia's interests. Under the partnership, Australia, for A\$368 billion would procure eight nuclear powered submarines from the USA and UK with some being built in Australia. At the same time, the previous contract with France for acquiring twelve non-nuclear submarines was cancelled.

To many Australians the announcement came as a bolt out of the blue, especially the change of the submarine type to nuclear using highly enriched uranium reactors. It was even more of a surprise to the French Naval Group and the French President *Emmanuel Macron*. In April 2016, the French had won a bid to jointly design and build twelve non-nuclear submarines for the RAN, against competition bids from a Germany and Japan. Although there were problems about the degree of local build content offered by the French, these were thought by the author not to be sufficient to cancel the contract with them.

The author *Andrew Fowler* is a journalist and former investigator on the ABC's *Foreign Correspondent* and *Four Corners* TV programs. He is very opinionated in his views about the submarine contract and his analysis of it is very controversial. He tries in his book to fathom why the procurement of submarines became such a political fiasco. A difficult task, as most of the procurement information, processes and decisions were made behind closed doors. However, he is able to provide a detailed story with some insight from the redacted information available and interviews with politicians and key government staff, into what he believes are some deception politics behind the major changes in Australia's military capability and its impact on the country's sovereignty.

It is often stated that one over-riding objective of defence policy and posture is not only to deter an aggressor from attacking one's country but also to provide effective war fighting capabilities. Fowler argues that one can either adopt an independent defence posture or rely on a joint defence posture with trusted allies. Up to now Australia has supported the latter on both sides of politics without compromising any sovereignty. However, like former prime minister *Paul Keating*, he views the AUKUS partnership as an arrangement which puts Australian sovereignty at risk. He cites a statement from General *Douglas MacArthur* to *John Curtin* in 1942 during the Second World War:

The US has no sovereign interest in the integrity of Australia, its interest is in the strategic impact of the utility of Australia as a base from which to attack and defeat the enemy.

Whether this is valid 82 years later in regard to the AUKUS partnership is a moot point! At least the book is one way of stirring up further controversy in spite of some people saying that AUKUS is here to stay and critics should get used to it.

(For background information on the RAN submarine acquisition, there is an excellent article by *Mike Rawlinson* in the June 2024 RUSI Quarterly Newsletter and updates from *Michael Small* in earlier Newsletters.)



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, by email at secretary@rusivic.org.au

Library Notes:

We are all saddened and shocked by the sudden death of LCDR Roger Buxton, CD, RCN (Rtd). Roger was a core member of our volunteer cohort, and we will miss his wise counsel and valuable work in the library.

During the last few months, we have received several donations, including books on naval affairs (including Lord Nelson's letters to Lady Hamilton!).

Another important donation was several large-format books on works by Australian Artists. These books have a high financial value. A collection of watercolour paintings of the Anzac Cove area now hangs on our walls. A selection of our rare contemporary maps of Gallipoli have been professionally framed to protect them, and they are also displayed on our walls. We need to buy more walls!

While thinking with empathy and compassion for Sue Buxton and her family in their time of sorrow, we offer our best wishes to all members for Christmas and the New Year.

Brian Surtees

Hon Librarian

New Acquisitions (since June 2024)

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject
<i>Admiral VAT Smith</i>	Graeme Lunn	The extraordinary life of the father of Australia's Fleet Air Arm.
<i>How to Lose a War</i>	Amin Saikal	The story of America's intervention in Afghanistan.
<i>Australian Contributions to Strategic and Military Geography</i>	Stuart Pearson Jane L. Holloway Richard Thackway (Eds)	
<i>Warrior Soldier Brigand</i>	Ben Wadham and James Connor	Institutional abuse within the Australian Defence Force.
<i>The SAS 'Deniables'</i>	Tony May	Special Forces operations, denied by the authorities, from Vietnam to the War on Terror.
<i>Blood on the Snow</i>	Robert Service	The Russian Revolution 1914-1924.
<i>The War for Ukraine</i>	Nick Ryan	Strategy and adaptation under fire.
<i>Peter's Wars</i>	Peter Geddes	A memoir.
<i>Why War?</i>	Richard Overy	Why has war been such a consistent presence throughout the human past?
<i>The Buna Shots</i>	Stephen Dando-Collins	The amazing story behind two photographs that changed the course of World War Two.
<i>Palestine</i>	Joe Sacco	A renowned illustrated 'comic book' from a master cartoonist.

<i>The Legend of Albert Jacka</i>	Peter Fitzsimons	Australia's first VC winner in the First World War.
<i>WAR</i>	Bob Woodward	The final year of Biden's presidency and the 2024 election candidates.
<i>Action! Action! Action!:</i>	Nicholas Floyd and Australian Artillery 1871 – 2021.	The history of the employment of Paul Stevens