



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

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Editor: Mike Rawlinson

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Drones



High End - SkyGuardian

The RAAF was to acquire 12 SkyGuardian medium altitude, long-endurance, armed UAS but the project was cancelled in 2022 to provide funding for new cyber capabilities.

SkyGuardian was expected to provide the ADF with a reliable, armed, medium -altitude, long endurance, remotely piloted aircraft system providing persistent airborne intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, electronic warfare and precision strike capability for both land and maritime environments.

The latest RUSI National Journal can be downloaded at:

<https://www.rusinsw.org.au/Papers/2023A.pd>

Low End – SYPAQ* Cardboard Drone

Australia has been supplying Ukraine with 100 cardboard drones per month from March this year as part of an aid package deal.

Ukrainian forces reportedly used the cardboard drones in a successful attack on an airfield in western Russia on August 27.

The cardboard drones can carry 5kg of weight, have a wingspan of two metres and a range of 120km at a reported cost of US\$3,500 (\$5,300). Waxed cardboard is an ideal material as it offers weather resistance, flat-pack transportation (measuring 510mm by 760mm) . It is difficult to detect on radar.



*SYPAQ Systems is a Melbourne based innovative engineering and systems integration company.

**Royal United Services Institute of Victoria
Incorporated
September 2023 Newsletter**

RUSI VIC -2023

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RUSIDSSA	www.rusi.org.au
RUSI Whitehall	www.rusi.org
Dept of Defence	defence.gov.au
Aust Strategic Policy Institute	www.aspi.org.au
Australia Defence Association	www.ada.asn.au
RAAF Assoc 'Williams Foundation	www.williamsfoundation.org.au
Defence Reserves Association	www.dra.org.au
Defence Force Welfare Association	www.dfwaw.org.au
Military History and Heritage Victoria	www.mhvh.org.au
Department of Veteran's Affairs	www.dva.gov.au
Shrine of Remembrance	www.shrine.org.au



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)



I am pleased to announce a restart to our Lunchtime addresses. You should have received a flyer for 19th October for Sam Roogeveen. Sam is Director of the Lowy Institute's International Security Program. He will speak on his most recent book *The Echidna Strategy; Australia's Search for Peace and Power*.

Note the later time slot, 1300hrs for a talk start time of 1330hrs.

With our Secretary overseas, please RSVP to mikeobrien@bigpond.com by 12 October.

Mike O'Brien

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.

Are You Eligible?

The Veterans Card – Victoria

Victoria thanks Australian Defence Force (ADF) members for their service. The digital Veterans Card – Victoria entitles all past and present ADF members living in Victoria to discounts and benefits including:

- \$100 off light vehicle rego
- free trailer and caravan rego
- free marine licence
- fishing licence exemption
- free transport on Anzac and Remembrance Days
- veteran employment programs

Visit [Concessions for Veterans](#) for a [full list of benefits](#) and to make an [online application](#).

Who can apply:

All past and present ADF members, living in Victoria, can get a digital Veterans card. You can be on active duty, a veteran, or in the reserves.

Civilian ADF employees aren't eligible for the digital Veterans card.

What you'll need:

One of 3 ID numbers:

- PMKeyS number
- Regimental or Service number
- DVA Card number

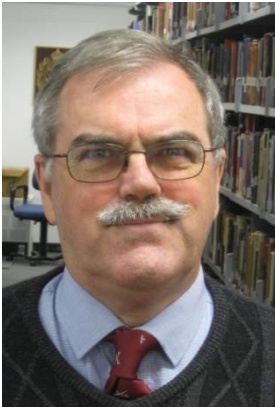
You'll also need to share two identity documents.

Choose from:

- Medicare card
- Australian birth certificate
- Australian driver licence / learner permit (current)
- Australian passport current or less than three years expired
- ImmiCard current or less than 3 years expired
- Foreign passport with a valid Australian visa with working rights
- Australian citizenship certificate

From the Secretary:

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart, RFD Retd



Dear members and friends,
While holidaying in Europe I am still in contact via the internet.

It appears I erred in sending out the Luncheon invite so early. As a number of you now cannot find it in the many emails you have received so I am re-sending it.

Come along and put faces to names, or simply catch up with old friends. And in so doing, you will be helping the training of the next generation of hospitality staff.

Just to let you know that the September RUSI-NSW lecture "The Defence Strategic Review - Implications of the Review of Defence Reserves recommendation" by Major General Douglas Laidlaw AM CSC is now available online:

<https://www.rusinsw.org.au/site/VideoTheatre72.php>

We have had a number of new member applications and they have been added to our membership list as probationary members. As they have to be voted in at a Council Meeting, which has not yet occurred, their names are being held over. As I am overseas, I cannot check my lists but I cannot recall any deaths since the last Newsletter.

If your contact details alter, please remember to inform us promptly!

My part of the family holiday to Europe includes visits to some of the battlefields of the two World Wars, starting with Villers Bretonneux. Then next week I hope to do Normandy, mainly Pegasus Bridge and Juno beach. Again, by myself as the main tour guides cater for the USA and only do Utah and Omaha. Juno has a large Canadian display and Pegasus Bridge looks like the main UK memorial. All the rest seem to be just beaches with no real observation points. There are a few old German posts but nothing special.

I will be back at the end of October.

Bob Hart

*For members who have not visited Villers Bretonneux and the Australian War Memorial, Bob has documented his experience and provided some useful information.
(Ed)*

Guide to Visiting Villers-Bretonneux



Australian War Memorial (*not on the day Bob visited*)

As most of you know, I am currently in Europe on a long awaited but very short Sabbatical.

Guided Tour charges to Villers Bretonneux are 500 euro each (approx. \$900AUD). We went the self-guided way - tickets on SNCF Paris to Amiens then change trains to VB. return journey, about \$ 40 AUD. Takes about 2 1/2 hours each way including wait time at Amiens.

We got there about midday. VB is a typical large village/small town, unmanned station and no transport in sight. No buses! In fact, as it was a rather overcast day, threatening rain and it was the middle of the working week, the whole place was rather deserted.

We walked a short distance to the Franco-Australian Museum, which is a new build over the school hall. Very well done with lots of visual displays and many artifacts. Unfortunately, it seems that anyone with a pile of stuff from old great uncle Fred who served in the Australian Army in WW1 feels this is a place to send his stuff as there were drawers and drawers of insignia etc that had either nothing to do with Europe as Old Fred had served in the Middle East or minimal connection with France. Still, a very worthwhile place to visit.

The Memorial and Sir John Monash Centre is about 3 km from the village so arranging a taxi is wise. The last kilometre is uphill (well, they did build it on a hill so that figures!) and if walking, there are no footpaths. You either walk on the grass or on the road.

The entrance is dominated by the pair of typical post WW1 grandiose monuments. You walk up the steps and suddenly it changes. A large grass strip, with white crosses on either side, thousands of them. You get a feeling of absolute waste as you wander through the crosses, mostly Australian, and you see the ages of these men. Every so often, a nameless grave with simply An Australian Soldier.

Continued Page 6

Opinion – Defence and the Intergenerational Report

Mike Rawlinson

The June Newsletter observed that the urgency required by the Defence Strategic Review was not reflected in the May Budget. The budget covered funding for the next four years. A longer-term perspective has now been provided by the 6th Intergenerational Report, presented by the Treasurer on 24 August.

Under the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act 1988* the Treasurer is required to publish an 'intergenerational report' (IGR) every five years that assesses the long-term sustainability of current government policies over the next 40 years, taking into account of the financial implications of demographic change. The basis of the report is the principle of intergenerational equity that benefits for the current generation should not compromise future generations. IGRs have been produced in 2002, 2007, 2010, 2015 and 2021.

The IGR 2023 Model is grounded on a number of assumptions. Assumptions relate to factors that the government can directly control, such as immigration, and others that it can only influence indirectly, such as fertility and productivity.

Australia's population is projected to grow at 1.1% a year from 26 million to 40.5 million in 2062-63. Australians are expected to live longer and the proportion 65 years old and over will more than double.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is calculated as the product of Population X Participation Rate X Productivity.

For IGR 2023, the Participation Rate is 66.6% in 22-23 declining to 63.8% in 62-63 as the population ages.

Productivity growth is 1.2%, as compared with the 2021 IGR assumption of 1.5%. This gives a Real GDP Growth Rate of 2.2%, down from 2.6% in the 2021 IGR. There are 40 years of budget deficits. Major budget categories are: NDIS, Aged Care, Health, Defence, and Debt Repayment. A surprise is that spending on the Age Pension will fall as more of the retired population have superannuation.

From the Government Summary - IGR 2023 at a glance.

'Five major forces that will shape the Australian economy over the coming decades are population ageing, expanded use of digital and data technology, climate change and net zero transformation, rising demand for care and support services, and increased geopolitical risk and fragmentation.

Australia's future prosperity will be influenced by how well we manage and maximise these shifts underway in the economy.'

Defence spending is expected to increase from around 2.0% of GDP in 2022-23 to around 2.3% of GDP in

2032-33 and is then assumed to remain at 2.3 % until 2062 -63. IGR 2023 acknowledges Australia's changed strategic circumstances, the Defence Strategic Review, the restructuring of the ADF, and the wider aspects of AUKUS.

In IGR 2023 the Defence Budget stabilizes at 2.3% of GDP. This is somewhat optimistic. Cost estimates for the building of new design nuclear powered submarines in Australia are highly unreliable and are probably gross underestimates. Considering all factors, a budget of 3-4 % of GDP would be more credible.

The Report does illustrate that to increase defence spending the government will need to increase revenue and/or decrease other spending or take on extra debt.

The picture of the economy presented by IGR 2023 is not particularly rosy, but it is a good platform for the Treasurer to pose the economic challenges that the government faces.

When addressing increases in the defence budget, people need to understand and remember that strategic circumstances have changed. China is now the source of both our prosperity and our insecurity. For decades the region has been benign, and Australia has been able to get away with defence on the cheap. Now, and in the future we will need to pay our way.

The Defence Strategic Review recommended changes in the ADF are currently funded by reallocations and efficiencies within the Defence portfolio. More of this is likely to occur once the review of the composition of the Navy's surface fleet is complete. As anticipated by IGR 2023, future defence budgets will require increases as new missile and submarine programs get underway.

Depending on the scenario, China already has sufficient forces and has indicated that it could be disposed to use military force, a threat involving coercion could emerge quite quickly. As restructuring of the ADF will take decades, in the interim deterrence will be provided by US forces. There will be tighter cooperation between US forces and the ADF, particularly involving logistics and prepositioned equipment. US air elements have agreed access to RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal with a rotational detachment of USN reconnaissance and maritime patrol aircraft operating from northern bases.

Deterrence will come from nuclear powered attack submarines operating from Fleet Base West. From 2027, four USN Virginia Class submarines will have rotational deployments from FB West alongside one RN Astute Class submarine. They will be progressively replaced by RAN nuclear powered submarines.



In 2032 the first of (3-5) RAN Virginia Class submarines are planned to arrive. The first RAN AUKUS submarine (built in the UK) is expected in the late 1930s. AUKUS submarines built at Osborne will be delivered from the early 1940s with one being built every three years. On the planned schedule the new AUKUS Submarine fleet will just all be in the water by 2062-63, coincidentally within the period of IGR 2023.

Community understanding of Defence will become more important if the Defence budget is to increase at the expense of health and the welfare. There will be stiff competition for funding from NDIS, Health and Aged Care portfolios as these are politically sensitive. In the past governments have met such challenges by deferring defence programs. This risky choice should no longer be available.

Funding stresses will be lessened if the government can achieve a faster rate of GDP growth. This could come from increases in the growth of population, participation and productivity. Population growth via immigration appears to have been overdone at present as it exceeds the country's ability to provide housing and domestic infrastructure for the immigrants.

Since IGR 23 was released, the government has potentially increased the participation rate by allowing aged pensioners and other welfare recipients to undertake some work without compromising their benefits. There is room for this initiative to be broadened.

The path with the greatest potential for increasing GDP is by increasing Australia's productivity. There is huge scope for structural reform of the economy including comprehensive tax reform, reform of the compact between the federal government and the states; and for ending the wasteful duplication of government services.

Another area for ongoing reform is for a reduction in red and green tape and regulations from multiple agencies and authorities that serve to strangle investment. Australia needs to be seen as an easy place to do business and a good country for international investment.

An improvement in productivity is unlikely to occur without the provision of secure, reliable and affordable electricity which underwrites both national security and the viability of the economy.

Why hasn't restructuring happened already? A current problem for Australian democracy is that with slim majorities in power, neither of the major political parties has been willing to undertake, or even foreshadow major structural changes as reform will be opposed by their political adversaries and the beneficiaries of the current system. The risk is that a government publicly contemplating reform will fail to win the following election.

Political leadership is needed to explain the need for change and why the national interest should be put first. Australia's changed strategic situation is potentially an enabling factor in overcoming opposition to economic reform, where the national interest is accepted as outweighing political and economic vested interests.

Australians need to have a mature appreciation of the country's relationship with China. Even if relations with China improve markedly, it must be remembered that China is a superpower with massive modern armed forces. It also has an authoritarian, top-down, government under the auspices of the Chinese Communist Party and President-for-Life Xi Jing Ping. The situation can be subject to rapid change.

RUSI has an ongoing role in raising public awareness of this vital national security issue.

Villers Bretonneux (continued)

The centre of the strip is perhaps 50-75m wide and then it leads you to the Lookout tower, or that's what I call it. By this time, it had started drizzling rain. The tower is just that. Over 100 steps to the top and it is all staircase. I got to the top and was immediately hit by sleet driving in from the west. They mention the driving rain in the morning of the attack to retake VB. Perhaps this was what the weather was like then.

With nothing to see but mist and rain, it was down those 100 steps again and round to the rear. This was the recently opened Sir John Monash centre. It is all underground and thankfully both waterproof and climate controlled.

And it was impressive. Get the audio guide. It is a must. Everywhere there are audio visuals, normally 5 sequences per screen that trace the Australian efforts from first enlistments to going home. Extremely well done and very thought provoking, And there is a Commonwealth War Graves area as well to go through.

Being an Old infantryman, I could not see the sense in walking in the rain so a request to the staff at the Monash centre for a taxi saw one in about 15 minutes. 9 euro, and I was back in the station waiting room. Overall impression? Highly interesting, very moving and well worth the approx. \$50 AUD to do so. If you want a guide and have the money, you will probably get there faster and may get to see more of the battlefields, but this was within my budget and what I really wanted

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

June 1 2023 – August 31 2023

Michael Small

June 1 2023

US government has warned that allegations of war crimes against Australian soldiers in Afghanistan could prevent US armed forces working with Australia's SAS. In testimony to senate estimates today, General Campbell said he received a letter from the US defence attache in Canberra suggesting the SAS may have been tainted by the allegations of war crimes raised in the Brereton report.

Ben Roberts-Smith has lost his defamation case. Justice Anthony Besanko found imputations published in six articles by The Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and The Canberra Times were found to be substantially true. The proceedings were dismissed, after Justice Besanko found the articles proved some, but not all, of the defamatory imputations, in a major win for the newspapers. Justice Besanko found the decorated veteran to be a murderer and a war criminal.

June 9 2023

Day 471 of Russia's *special military operation* in Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin said nothing had changed. The ultimate goal of Moscow's '*special military operation*' in Ukraine was to capture the Donbas. This war began February 20, 2014, but the war, we know today, began February 24, 2022.

June 12 2023

Day 474 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Russia's Special Military Operation in Ukraine Prigozhin/Wagner Group Episode

Yevgeny Prigozhin was a Russian Oligarch and leader of the Wagner Private Military Company (State funded mercenaries). In Dec 2022 Wagner had about 50,000 mercenaries in Ukraine. Prigozhin publicly proclaimed that Wagner was militarily more successful than regular Russian forces. The Defence hierarchy responded by starving Wagner of ammunition. Prigozhin publicly protested. Prigozhin complains and develops a high public profile within Russia. In mid-June the Ministry of Defence required Wagner forces to become subordinate units of the Russian military. Prigozhin was advised to avoid standing close to open windows.

June 24 2023

Prigozhin leads an armed rebellion by Wagner forces directed against the Ministry of Defense. They rapidly advance on Moscow. Putin denounces the rebellion as treason, but negotiations result in a settlement and Prigozhin is moved to Belarus. While Wagner forces in Ukraine are progressively incorporated into the regular Russian military, the Wagner Group remains in Africa.

June 25 2023

Defence and industry leaders will meet in Canberra this week. [The 20th ADM Congress on Wednesday, June 28 2023 will bring together Ministers, Shadow Ministers, senior Defence and ADF personnel](#) to discuss the future of Australia's defence capability and acquisitions as the impact of the DSR continues to reverberate.

June 26 2023

The Defence Department has introduced a common selection process for special forces regiments, with some SASR figures saying it will undermine the unit's status and capabilities by forcing it to compete for the best recruits. The move is aimed at removing rivalry between SASR (which considers itself Australia's most elite special forces unit), and the 1st and 2nd Commando regiments. SASR and Commando entrants will now take the same entry course before being admitted to a particular unit.

July 5 2023

Day 497 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Howard Springs centre in the NT which gained national prominence for quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic will house thousands of troops from both Australia and overseas under a new lease agreement struck by the Commonwealth and NT governments.

Under the deal the Howard Springs centre on the outskirts of Darwin will be converted into a defence accommodation precinct for housing Australian and international defence personnel. Initially for a five-year term the lease will cost the Commonwealth about \$50 million a year, including \$18 million in payments to the NT government.

July 9 2023

Day 501 of Russia's war in Ukraine.



**Rheinmetall Boxer – Made in Queensland
Exported to Germany**

July 19 2023

PM Albanese has announced a deal to sell Germany more than 100 Boxer heavy weapon carriers, worth more than \$1bn to the Australian economy. PM said the two countries were ready to announce a series of deals including that involving the Boxers. These will be produced by the German company Rheinmetall in Redbank, Queensland.

August 1 2023

Day 523 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

August 2 2023

Day 525 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

August 15 2023

Germany has made a bid to build a \$5bn fleet of corvettes for Australia. Peter Luerssen, the owner of Germany's largest shipbuilder, will this week meet with Defence Minister Richard Marles and senior defence department officials in Canberra about a proposal to build up to 10 heavily armed corvettes for the RAN in Australia.

Corvettes are a smaller warship which would fulfil the call in the recent Defence Strategic Review for the navy to comprise a mix of smaller Tier 2 warships alongside larger Tier 1 warships such as the three *Hobart-class* air warfare destroyers.

August 17 2023

Day 539 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

August 20 2023

Defence will need to recruit secular alternatives to religious chaplains or face increasing risks to its members' health and wellbeing. Colonel Phillip Hoglin, a reservist and military researcher, said the ADF is becoming less religious, but has only a handful of secular support officers.

Figures released by the Department of Defence in response to questions from Senator Jacqui Lambie show there are 108 Pentecostal chaplains, and that each of them represents just 15 religious ADF members on average.

The Australian Christian Churches (ACC, formerly Assemblies of God) has 13 chaplains and only 13 members. The ACC (believes in talking in tongues, faith healing, miracles and the second coming) has stated that it supports the biblical view of marriage as a lifelong, exclusive union between a man and a woman. There are five chaplains identifying as nondenominational Christians, while 4,217 serving members identify that way – a ratio of one to 843.

August 21 2023

RAN will be able to strike land targets 1500km away under a \$1.7bn deal to purchase cruise missile systems from US. China warns AUKUS partners against using the military partnership to target the communist nation, the government is unveiling a deal that includes the \$1.3bn purchase of 200 Tomahawk cruise missiles, giving RAN a "world leading" shooting capability.

**Tomahawk Cruise Missile**

The government is paying \$430m for 60 anti-radiation guided missiles, which will provide aircraft with "sophisticated technologies to identify, locate and engage land-based targets".

August 23 2023

Yevgeny Prigozhin is a passenger on his private business jet which explodes in flight.

August 27 2023

Day 549 of Russia's war in Ukraine.

August 29 2023

Three US marines remain in hospital after a Osprey crash that claimed the lives of three of their colleagues in a training exercise off the NT's coast. Experts are suggesting the incident could have been caused by mechanical faults, environmental factors or human error.

August 30 2023

The pilot, the squadron executive officer and a marine corporal, were killed in the crash, the cause of which is still not known. Twenty other marines on the MV-22B Osprey when it crashed on Melville Island survived.

End

More on the Low-End Drone

While the airframe is low-end, and not pretty, the navigation, control and guidance system is hi-tech.

The Battle of Britain

**Talk given by Brian Surtees at the
RAFA Battle of Britain Memorial Luncheon
on Friday 15th September 2023
Glen Waverley RSL**

Eighty-three years ago, the U.K. stood alone geographically against the all-conquering German forces. Although the Commonwealth was in support the fact remains that the enemy was a scant 21 miles away, held back for the moment by the English Channel.



In the preceding 12 Months the Germans had defeated and invaded Poland, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, and France. The tactics were the same, defeat the enemy's Air Force in the air and on the ground and a blitzkrieg invasion with the Luftwaffe supporting the army. By the time the Germans reached the Channel coast they were experienced, and battle hardened. The Luftwaffe refined its tactics in the Spanish Civil War and was confident of defeating the R.A.F. The only doubt was caused by the confrontation with the R.A.F. Fighters sent to France where the Luftwaffe came up against modern fighters, Hurricanes, for the first time and they lost some 147 aircraft to French and R.A.F. Fighters. The R.A.F. Lost many light bombers, 36 fighters and some 30 experienced fighter pilots. Although the R.A.F. Refined its tactics e.g., adopting the Luftwaffe loose pair instead of the inflexible vic formation the campaign was doomed, and it is to Dowding's credit that he refused Churchill's demands to send more squadrons to France.

You fight with what you have, not what you wish you had. After Dunkirk the British Army was disorganised and ill equipped, had the Germans been able to invade they would have won. However, the Channel was in the way and if an invasion was to succeed against the opposition of the Royal Navy Air Supremacy was essential. The Luftwaffe vastly outnumbered the R.A.F. And started a campaign to defeat it and destroy its airfields. This was undoubtedly the correct strategy. However, the R.A.F. Had several advantages, it was fighting over home ground and was assisted by the world's first fully integrated detection, reporting and control air defence system. Detection was by the Chain Home Radar system and the Royal Observer Corps; reporting was by an efficient communications system and control was exercised by Operations rooms staffed by mostly women map markers and senior Controllers who allocated squadrons to confront the threat. The

bombing campaign switched to the cities just as the R.A.F. Ground facilities were in extremis, thanks to Goering and Hitler's faulty decision. Thus, the battle was finally won by courageous young pilots supported by an efficient servicing and supply system and an operational control system that put them in the right place at the right time, to the dismay of the Luftwaffe. This was the first defeat for Hitler, and it saved the U.K. from Nazism. It also preserved the U.K. as a future base for allied air operations and the Normandy Invasion.

Most of you will have seen the film "The Battle of Britain" made in the late 1960's. This is an excellent film that accurately reflects what happened. The flying scenes are very good and were filmed using real aircraft and pilots. No significant computer graphics in those days. The aircraft fleet were based at RAF Duxford and comprised Me.109's and Heinkel 111's of the Spanish Air Force and a collection of Spitfires and Hurricanes flown by RAF Pilots. In addition, there was a B25 camera ship painted a lurid Red on the port side and green on the starboard side. This was presumably to help pilots tell their left from their right! On filming days there would be a notice to airmen (NOTAM) indicating where the filming would take place. Inevitably they would stray all over the place, usually chasing good cloudscapes for background. One day they were filming bang in the middle of the letdown lane for RAF Bassingbourn, where I was based, flying Canberra aircraft. On the day in question, I and my student pilot and navigator descended, unsuspecting, out of cloud at about 10,000ft to find ourselves in the middle of a World War II air battle! With Me.109's to the left of us, Spitfires and Hurricanes to the right of us and Heinkels ahead of us. Onwards we rode into the valley of death and were not shot down. That sequence would have ended up on the cutting room floor. (apologies to Alfred Lord Tennyson for mangling his poem)

Apparently, after the first practice filming session the Director called all the pilots together for a debrief and said words to the effect that the aircraft were so far away, he could hardly see them and consequently useless for filming. The pilots needed to do better. The second session was very different with everyone queuing up to almost chew the tail off the camera ship. The result was evident in the final product.

One other notable occurrence was on the day the Spanish Air Force contingent first arrived at Duxford. One of my students was visiting Duxford tower on the day as he had spent the early part of his life in Spain, was fluent in the language and wanted to see the arrival. The visibility was poor and although the Tower Controller could see the aircraft the Spanish Pilots could not see the airfield. Their English was deteriorating in direct proportion to their increasing agitation and decreasing fuel state. To his credit my student spoke up and said, "I speak Spanish, can I help?" A very relieved Controller handed him the microphone and said words something like "Tell them to turn left!" So, the day and possibly the film was saved.

Book Reviews

This newsletter has 12 Book Reviews. On behalf of members the Editor thanks the reviewers. The Royal United Services Institute of Victoria Library thanks authors and publishers for providing copies for review. If you would like a hard copy of a review, please contact the Secretary.

The Oboe Landings

1945

[Australian Campaign Series – 34]

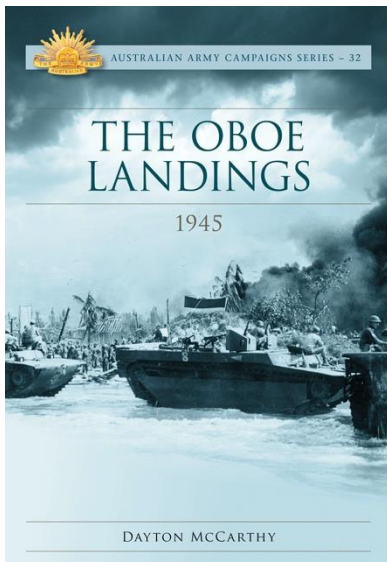
Dayton McCarthy

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2023

Paperback 264pp RRP: \$19.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, June 2023

With the Allies gaining the ascendancy in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) and General Douglas



MacArthur intent on sharing the glory with no one, saw Australia's 7th and 9th Divisions in training mode in Queensland in late 1944. In order to maintain morale, they were training for amphibious landings codenamed *Oboe* in Borneo in 1945.

Initially there were six landings intended, but these were cut back to

three, while still retaining their original numerical designations. The landings, in sequence, were *Oboe 1* (1 May) on Tarakan, *Oboe 6* (10 June) on Brunei and *Oboe 2* (1 July) on Balikpapan.

McCarthy provides his readers with the political and military background from the 1942 days in Papua to the seizure of Morotai in northern Indonesia (from whence the landings would be launched). From 1943 the full requirements of amphibious operations from staff planning, inter-service co-ordination and rehearsal were gradually developed. Each operation required months of staff work using reconnaissance reports, aerial photographs, in-theatre agents and local sources. For each of the *Oboe* landings, the troops involved (on both sides), the topography – especially landing beaches, and the objectives have been laid out. This massive manning involving all services from Australia and considerable input from US and British forces. All landings required the forces sailing in landing craft nearly 2000 kilometres from Morotai to the beaches.

Oboe 1: The 28th Infantry Brigade Group (from 9th Division) of 15 500 had a pioneer battalion, cavalry

and commando squadrons, a field artillery and an anti-aircraft regiment, supply and transport personnel, a field ambulance, three RAAF construction groups and an Australian Beach Group. Its major objective was to capture Tarakan and its airfield to be ready in a week for Allied use for other *Oboe* landings. The landings were on three beaches with muddy tidal flats, all unopposed by the two Japanese light battalions-plus (2200 men) who fought delaying tactics from inland prepared defences. It was 5 May before the airfield was captured, but it took eight weeks to repair it due to inclement weather and massive pre-landing bombardments cratering the airstrip.

Oboe 6: Pre-landing bombardment was far more selective prior to the landing of 24th Brigade Group on Labuan Island and 20th Brigade Group (both from 9th Division) in Brunei Bay. These were two synchronised landings not separate operations for the 29,000 to 30 thousand troops tackling a reported Japanese force of 8,800. A major objective was to use Brunei Bay as a naval base for future operations. Again the landings were unopposed, but obstinate opposition was encountered inland.

Oboe 2: The 7th Division Group of 18th, 21st and 25th Infantry Brigades and a total force of 33,300+, including a minesweeping vessel and 121-ship attack amphibious group landing on three beaches against 3-4000 Japanese soldiers and armed labourers. This was the largest amphibious force assembled in World War 2. It quickly gained its planned objectives including Seppinggang airstrip and used riverine operations from Penadjam.

McCarthy has gone to great lengths to inform his readers of the incredible number of units with special skills and their roles in ensuring a seamless and smooth operation in landing the troops, establishing beach maintenance areas, providing vital logistic support and resupply, as well as ensuring that command and control was uninterrupted. He poses that with our recent awareness of future amphibious operations, there exists a knowledge gap of eight decades and no service personnel with many of the skill sets needed for them to be quickly replaced. There are a generous number of on-site photographs, biographies of commanders, weaponry, aircraft and landing vessels. Clear battle maps enable the reader to easily follow the described actions. A short *Bibliography* and a good *Index* rounds out McCarthy's work.

A detailed, and perhaps nostalgic look at what we had, and wondering how that expertise can be rekindled. Some food for thought for the senior leaders in all our services.

Sons of War

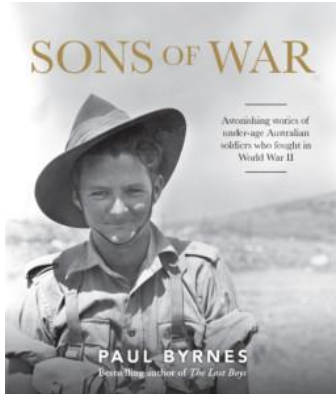
Astonishing stories of under-age Australian soldiers who fought in World War II

Paul Byrnes

Sydney, NSW: Affirm Press, 2022
Hardcover 384pp RRP \$45.00

Reviewer: Adrian Catt, June 2023

Following upon the success of his excellent work *The Lost Boys* about underage Australian soldiers of World War 1, author Paul Byrnes has followed a similar, but enhanced formula, and excelled himself with this subsequent work; a vignette of 30 underage Australian boys whom enlisted in the Army during World War II.



Byrnes may have thought he would struggle with a second book, but by adopting the same technique of detailing each boys home life, sneaky attempts at enlistment, and eventual entry and deployment as a soldier, here he goes further to set-the-scene and provide outlines of the campaigns, tactics and commanders to which these crafty, but naïve, boys were deployed.

Seeing the same training, deployment, mischief, combat, sickness, and wounding as their mature-aged combatants, we follow these boys as soldiers from broken or impoverished homes to foreign lands such as Tobruk, Greece, Crete, Malaya, Borneo and New Guinea. In these places they were expected to hold their own and endure fatigue, combat, starvation, illness, wounding, imprisonment, even death, though most couldn't even shave.

Poor command decisions by both British and Australian commanders are highlighted in this book. The cost for reckless insertions, lack of air-cover, and poor supply provisioning are described here in human terms, by the definition of lives incarcerated or lost. The author draws attention to the spectacular failures of the British in Greece and Malaya, and the Australians with Gull, Lark and Sparrow Force, to illustrate his sad point.

Naïve boys seeking adventure or escape, even financial prosperity in tough times, paid a heavy price for their eagerness to 'do their bit'. Lying about their age, using false documents or forging their parents' consent was the easy part. Byrnes spotlights that many of those known to be underage were killed in action. Those who weren't were to eventually be repatriated to Australia, only to be haunted by Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or alcoholism for the remainder of their lives. A huge price to pay for serving your country.

Author Byrnes may have thought he didn't have a second book within his ability, but he has created a factual, detailed and engaging work of which he ought

to be proud. War is hell, not an adventure. If only these boys had truly known what they were signing-up for....

Recommended to readers of Australian Military History, and human interest.

Guy Griffiths

The Life and Times of an Australian Admiral

Peter Jones

Sydney, NSW: Australian Scholarly Publications, 2021
Paperback pp312 RRP: \$43.95

Reviewer: Scott Whitechurch, August 2023

Newly graduated RAN Midshipman Guy Griffiths had a brutal introduction to his service career. He was one of the survivors of his first warship, HMS Repulse, when it was sunk in Malaya in December 1941. Later he would rise to the rank of rear admiral and have a distinguished career, making significant contributions to the Navy in both sea and land postings.



Griffiths' life is the subject of a superbly written and researched biography by Vice-Admiral Peter Jones RAN (Retd). The author brings to the book a detailed knowledge of his subject – both Navy and Griffiths himself. The book's focus is on Griffiths' career from the time he entered the RAN College in 1937 to his retirement in 1980 as Commander Naval Support Command. This period coincided with a time of significant change in the growth and development of the Navy.

Griffiths saw action in three wars - World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. His major service in World War II was as an officer in HMAS *Shropshire* in the Pacific. In that ship he participated in the last great battleship action, the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and witnessed numerous kamikaze attacks. In Korea he served in HMAS *Sydney* and HMAS *Anzac*, being the Gunnery Officer of *Anzac*. He was the captain of HMAS *Hobart* during its first deployment during the Vietnam War. The author has excellent and vivid descriptions of Griffiths' participation and different roles all these wars.

His first seagoing command was HMAS *Parramatta*, interestingly without first having served as an executive officer. In this and his other commands, *Hobart* and *Melbourne*, he distinguished himself as a leader of men and as a commander of happy and efficient ships. At page 204 the author states 'To many of *Hobart's* officers and sailors, Guy was the finest captain they had served under'. His leadership ability and concern for naval personnel comes out clearly in the book. Griffiths said that he had learned effective leadership from three men – William Tennant in

Repulse, Godfrey Nichols in *Shropshire* and David Harries in *Sydney*.

Like any officer, Griffiths had shore postings. Several of these are of particular interest. He had a role in the HMAS *Voyager* Royal Commission, drafted an excellent paper on Fleet composition and the need for a properly balanced Fleet. He also acted as an advisor to the Royal Malaysian Navy. However, his lasting contribution to the Navy in personnel management and his leadership skills were used to great effect. One of his most significant achievements occurred when he became Chief of Naval Personnel. Himself a graduate of the Royal Navy's Staff College, he had long seen the need for our Navy to have its own Staff College, instead of relying on the Royal Navy's. As Chief of Naval Personnel, he was the initiator and driving force behind the creation of the Royal Australian Navy Staff College – a truly lasting benefit to our Navy.

The book should be of wide appeal to not only those interested Naval history but those interested in biography – both military and general. It is highly recommended.

Missing

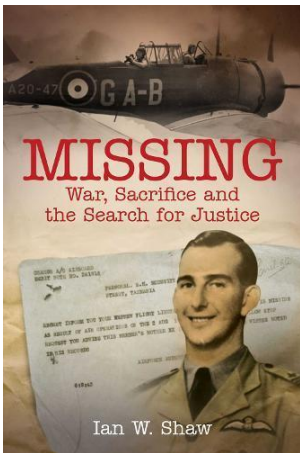
War, Sacrifice and the Search for Justice

Ian W Shaw

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2023

Paperback 336pp RRP: \$32.99

Reviewer: Roger Buxton, August 2023



To the families and friends of those who go to war and fail to return, to be reported as missing may be almost as bad as the certainty of death itself. Ian Shaw has written about one case out of thousands, but a case where 'missing' becomes 'a prisoner of war' whose whereabouts are unknown.

This is a very Australian story. The subject, Daryl Maxwell Sproule, is the third son of Irene McDevitt and Albert Sproule and the book begins by describing the early days of the McDevitt family in southern Tasmania. Daryl was a gifted musician who graduated in law at the University of Tasmania in 1939 and was also an excellent footballer, whose exploits on the field are covered in some detail.

In 1940 Daryl, who had volunteered for the RAAF at the beginning of the war, was posted to South Australia for flying training and then to RAAF Point Cook with 21 (City of Melbourne) Squadron flying Wirraway aircraft. The squadron then moved to Malaya with two Hudson squadrons and was based on Singapore Island as the RAAF's contribution to the air defence of Malaya. The passion of Australian servicemen for Australian

Rules football continued and matches were arranged between the 2/9th Field Ambulance team, representing the Australian Army and the combined RAAF team led by Daryl Sproule for the 'Champions of the East'. This sporting interlude was ended by the Japanese invasion on the morning of 8 December 1941.

By this time 21 Squadron's obsolete Wirraways had been replaced by the not-much-better American Buffalos, but these were slow and no match for Japanese Zero fighters. The defence of Malaya relied on the striking power of the air force with the army being deployed to defend the airfields. This plan rapidly collapsed when the defending British Blenheim light bombers and the Australian Buffalos were quickly destroyed – often on the ground – by more modern Japanese aircraft and the airfields then abandoned. Ian Shaw provides a good description of this chaotic situation as their aircraft were destroyed and they were forced back to Singapore and eventually evacuated by sea.

Back in Australia Daryl was confirmed as a flight lieutenant and posted to No 77 Squadron RAAF flying the new American Kittyhawk fighters. The squadron moved to Papua where it was based near Milne Bay and then on Goodenough Island from where strikes were carried out against the Japanese in New Britain. On 2 August 1943 newly-promoted Squadron Leader Sproule, on his first day in command, led his squadron on a sweep along the southern coast of New Britain where his aircraft was damaged and successfully ditched close to the beach. Daryl was seen to leave the aircraft and walk ashore into the jungle. At this point he was reported missing, but I must leave the last half of the book so as not to be a spoiler for the reader.

Ian Shaw has taken the case of a missing Australian squadron leader and turned it into a readable combination of family history, Australian Rules football, the air war against Japan, the home front and the consequences of going "missing". There is a bibliography and extensive end notes. While all the information provided is interesting, I would have preferred that some of the early family history and details of the home front had been removed and the book shortened. That said, the descriptions of the fighting are well researched, and the second half of the book maintained my interest to the end.

The Chipilly Six

Unsung heroes of the Great War

Speaker: Dr Lucas Jordan

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event
Wednesday 18 October 2023 7:00PM-8:00PM



Military History and
Heritage Victoria Inc.

MILITARY HISTORY
SPEAKER PROGRAM

Barbarossa

How Hitler Lost the War

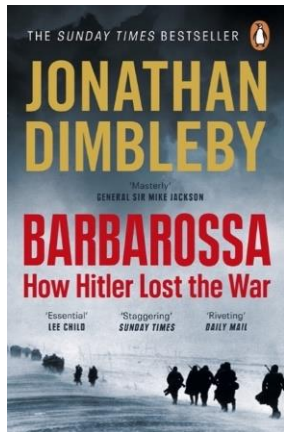
Jonathan Dimbleby

London: Penguin Books, 2022
Paperback 656pp RRP: \$24.99

Reviewer: Adrian Catt, June 2023

With so much more to offer than the title suggests, the extensive testimonials within expand upon the glowing references and the publisher's back-jacket text, highlight that this is an exceptional work.

Whilst setting the political scene in Europe since World War 1, this encompassing text sets out the rise of



Hitler and Nazism in Germany, the Great Depression, and tensions, alliances and allegiances between Germany, Russia, Britain and the United States, leading up to and into World War II.

Hitler's dream of eradicating Bolshevism and Jews, whilst pursuing the utopia of Lebensraum for the German people, was as evil and twisted as Russia's ethnic-cleansing of Kulaks, and the

oppression of its citizens. The détente of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was to be shattered by Hitler when he planned and launched his *Barbarossa* offensive against an unsuspecting Stalin, in spite of repeated British and Kremlin warnings.

Barbarossa was delayed because the Nazis were challenged by other battles in Finland and Greece. The *Barbarossa* assault on Russia was to proceed unwisely in the face of on-coming severe winter weather on the Eastern Front. Nazis successful lightning attacks and the tactic of encirclement were most effective initially, but Hitler made many mistakes and flawed tactical changes. The most obvious problem was allowing armoured divisions to run too far ahead of infantry, and crucial supply lines. Through the bloody, bitter and horrific fighting, both German and Russian soldiers were to fight in atrocious weather, and with food a severe problem, many thousands would also starve to death. The Nazi supply lines were mostly non-existent, with vital winter-weight clothing, food and resources trapped in Poland; never to be delivered to the front despite the continual clamouring from all Commanders in the field. Here, the Russians had a 'home ground advantage' when it came to re-supply of men and materiel.

The Nazis regrouped and launched *Operation Typhoon*, causing the *Great Panic* in Moscow as it was encircled, albeit at a distance. Alas, it was to no avail as the Japanese had brought the US into the War, on the side of the Allies, and the vast production of the US was to provision vital materiel to both Russia and Britain. This enabled the Russians to drive the Germans back, defeated.

This book could have been way briefer and just as informative if it had been written in plain English. The excessive flourish and embellishment with rich, highfalutin language is creative, colourful and masterly, but quite pompous, tiresome and unnecessary. Otherwise, this work really has earned its glowing accolades.

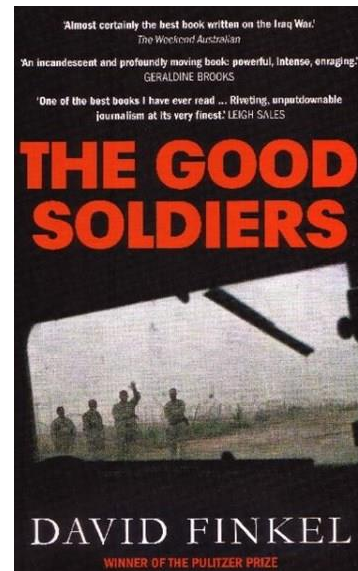
The Good Soldiers

David Kinkel

Brunswick, VIC: Scribe Publications, 2009
Paperback 304pp RRP \$24.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, June 2023

David Finkel spent eight months embedded with 2-16 Battalion, nicknamed the Rangers during the period April 2007 to April 2008. The battalion was part of George W Bush's 2007 'surge' in Iraq.



The optimistic Rangers departed the United States determined they were 'going to make a difference' where others had failed. With an area of operations in one of Baghdad's most notorious neighbourhood, their naivety does not take long to evaporate – with the impact of the loss of their fellow soldiers and

the ever-hardening and callous attitude of those residents they were trying to protect taking its toll.

Finkel has the trust of the Battalion. They know he'll report what he sees. There are graphic descriptions of how soldiers died and extremely detailed reports of the injuries they suffered. One member was left with only one limb - half an arm. Finkel could not believe this soldier's stoicism and visited him in an Army hospital in the US just before the soldier lost his fight for life.

The stress on the Rangers continued to build with the nightmares and other manifestations of tortured minds being described as if they came from a counsellor's notes. Finkel proudly claims that any event he did not witness was described on the basis of interviews with the participants. There has been no glorification of war or the motives of the soldiers. This is war as it is, and the varying degrees that individuals coped is there to be read.

This is a riveting, albeit shocking account of the Iraqi war. It is something that all politicians should read before they next commit their country's young men to combat.

Blood and Ruins

The Great Imperial War 1931 - 1945

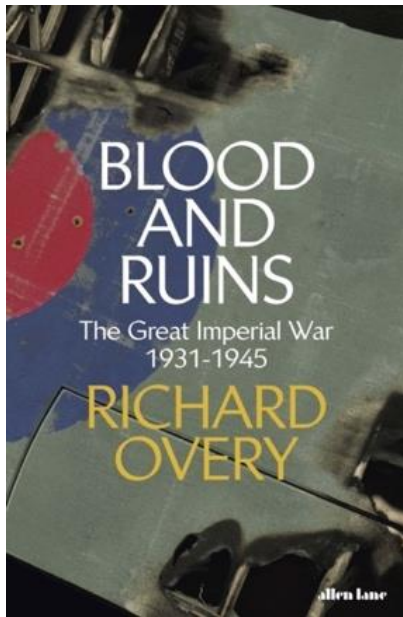
Richard Overy

Melbourne: Penguin (Allen Lane imprint), 2021

Hardback 1040pp RRP \$75.00

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, June 2023

Blood and Ruins is written by a renowned historian of the Second World War and is, in my view, the best one-volume history of the war yet written, especially in relation to the war in Europe, North Africa and in South and East Asia. The author, Richard Overy,



is a Professor of History at the University of Exeter and will be well-known as a result of his many books on World War 2 and his appearance in TV documentaries

covering specific topics such as Hitler, Goering, the Air War, the Economy in the Third Reich and The Origins of the Second World War. He is clearly well placed to write a history of wars in

the period he has chosen to cover, 1931 – 1945. This is a rather long book (878 pages excluding the very extensive notes and bibliography) but, as the author makes clear in the Introduction, it is conveniently divided into two parts.

The first part of the book is made up of four chapters exploring his 'grand theme' that the war must be viewed as an effort of three rising powers with imperial aspirations—Germany, Italy, and Japan—to gain new territory in continental Europe, the Mediterranean basin and in both East and Southeast Asia. This part takes up one-third of the book. Two of these chapters (accounting for over one-quarter of the book), describe in some detail events as they unfolded between 1940 and 1945 and it is in these chapters that we find relatively lengthy descriptions of what the author believes are the three key battles of the war: El Alamein, Guadalcanal and Stalingrad (but he does not limit his attention to these three battles, far from it). It is also in these chapters that Overy recasts the way in which we should view the Second World War, and especially its origins and its aftermath. Standard accounts explain the Second World War as a military reaction by peace-loving nations to the imperial ambitions of Hitler and Mussolini in Europe and the Japanese military in Asia and the Pacific. These accounts tend to neglect the political, economic, social and cultural context of war, and rarely incorporate into their accounts the violence that

continued long after the formal end to hostilities in 1945 (the book ends with examination of the Korean War). Overy contends that proper sense cannot be made of the Second World War and its consequences without understanding the broader historical forces that generated years of social, political and international instability worldwide from the opening decades of the 20th century, and which eventually prompted the Axis states to undertake programs of imperial territorial conquest. He argues that this was the 'great imperial war', a violent end to almost a century of global imperial expansion which reached its peak in the 1930s and early 1940s, before descending into the largest and costliest war in human history and the end, after 1945, of all territorial empires (excepting the USSR). Thinking along these lines yields a number of new propositions. First, that the conventional chronology of the war is no longer useful. The warfare between 1939 and 1945 must provide the heart of the narrative, but the history of the conflict goes back at least to the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931 and forward to the insurgencies and civil wars prompted by the war, but unresolved in 1945. Secondly, that the war in Asia and its consequences were as important to the creation of the post-war world and the unravelling of the colonial empires as the defeat of Germany in Europe, arguably more so. Thirdly, that the Allies (and especially Britain, under Churchill), despite their rhetoric, were fighting more to protect and recover their empires than to introduce democracy and self-determination for their many subjects.

The second part, making up the other two-thirds of the book, is best seen as a reference Encyclopedia covering in some detail a very large number of specific topics which are often explored using a comparative approach. Examples of topics covered here are: Mobilising human and other resources; importance of women in civilian and military activities; military transformation in armoured capability and ground support aviation and in the doctrine linking the two; evolution of anti-tank weapons; radio and radar; intelligence and deception; blockades and bombing; How did the different states justify the war?; pacifism; civil defence; the many faces of wartime resistance; war crimes and punishment; gender violence and war; violating the laws and customs of war; race crimes; resistance of the Jews; maintaining morale; Bond drives, price controls and rationing; leasing and lending; problems maintaining food supply (with attention being given to war-time famines in Greece, China, Bengal and French Indochina which resulted in over seven million deaths).

The two parts of the book are sufficiently distinct that one can read any of the topics in the second part of the book without having read the chapters in the first part of the book and vice-versa. The length of the book is such that it might be best seen as a work of reference to be 'dipped into' rather than something to be read as we might read a novel, 'from cover to cover'.

An Australian reader will obviously be interested in what the author has to say about such campaigns as: (i) the Siege of Tobruk - this eight-month siege marked

the first major setback for the Axis forces in the North Africa Campaign not least because the capture of Tobruk was essential if the Axis forces were to take Alexandria and Suez; (ii) the Battle of Milne Bay – this was the first major battle of the war in the Pacific in which Allied troops decisively defeated Japanese land forces who were forced to withdraw completely and abandon their strategic objective; (iii) the Battle of the Coral Sea - the first ever naval action in which the opposing fleets neither saw nor attacked each other with naval gunfire, instead attacking each other over the horizon with carrier-borne aircraft, and; (iv) the Battle of Midway - a decisive victory for the US Navy and a major turning point in the War in the Pacific as the Japanese lost four carriers and more than 200 of their most experienced pilots.

With regard to all four battles the book is deficient in one way or another. To begin with the Battle of Milne Bay is not mentioned at all and the Battle of the Coral Sea only gets a very brief mention. The siege of Tobruk is mentioned a number of times. However, there is no mention of the defence of Tobruk itself as a military operation or campaign in its own right. While close to one page of the book is devoted to a description of the Battle of Midway Overy dismisses claims that it was a significant strategic victory for the US Navy.

One final comment. The list of Contents at the front of the book gives only the titles of the eleven chapters and at least one of these, 'The Emotional Geography of War', is hardly self-explanatory.

The book has an extremely comprehensive 34-page Index, over 78 pages of Notes, six tables and nine very informative and easy-to-read maps (two of which cover East Asia and the Pacific).

Empire, War, Tennis and Me

Peter Doherty

Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 2022
Paperback 272pp RRP \$32.99

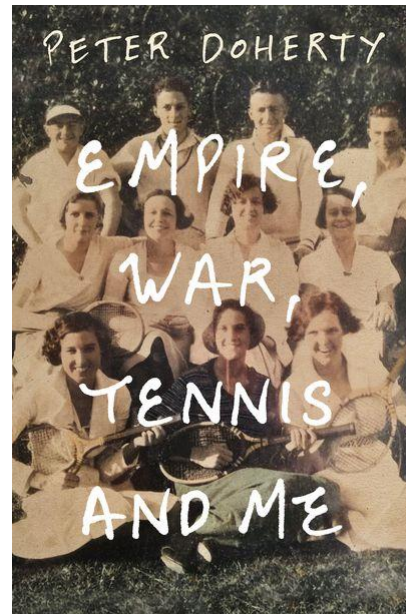
Reviewer: Bruce Brown, July 2023

Peter Doherty is well known to many Australians as the joint 1996 Nobel Laureate for Medicine and Physiology. What is less known is his love of tennis and interest in the impact which the game has had, not only on his own family but also local community and national life. Furthermore, in this unique book - a combination of history and family memoir – he places the story of tennis in the context of world events and its evolution from a game limited to the social elite to a popular sport particularly in places that were part of the British Empire.

His accounts of people and events provide fascinating insights into various eras such as pre-World War I Europe. When, for example: '*Upper-class American Elizabeth Ryan won the women's singles at the 1914 imperial Russian Lawn Tennis Championships*

the last ever played. The ball boys wore footman's uniforms and handed the ball back on silver platters', and Norman Brookes is described as an 'upper-middle-class-colonial' whose tennis success 'led him to being adopted by an aristocratic wealth and power set that coalesced in summer to swim, play tennis and various other amusements around Monte Carlo and Cannes.'

Doherty explains how the rules and terms of tennis evolved through the influence of people with a military background. Their lives revolved around regulations and procedures that enabled armies and navies to operate in a disciplined manner.



His own family narrative is placed in the context of world events. His great uncle Charlie Byford supplied the enthusiasm and drive to have a tennis court built at the Byford family home in the Brisbane suburb of Oxley in the years leading up to the beginning of World War II in 1939. Following the outbreak of war, Charlie and his brothers volunteered for war service. Charlie died while a prisoner of war at the hand of the Japanese army.

Jack Byford enlisted in the 2nd AIF on 8 February 1941. His initial deployment that year was in Palestine and Syria. Then with the bombing of Pearl Harbour the focus of his war experiences shifted to Southeast Asia. By the time he was discharged in early 1946, he had spent 828 days in Australia and 808 days overseas, which Doherty writes was not unusual for WWII with soldiers staying with their units for a period after the end of hostilities.

Having explored tennis and the post-World War II era, the book ends on a positive note: '*What has changed for the better since 1945 is that our chosen tennis gladiator can be a man or woman, gay or straight: black, brown or white: Caucasian, African or Asianand apart from cheering our own local heroes, we don't really care.'*

This is a most enjoyable, informative, and readable book which will satisfy readers with an interest in military and/or sporting history.

Resistance

The Underground War in Europe 1939-45

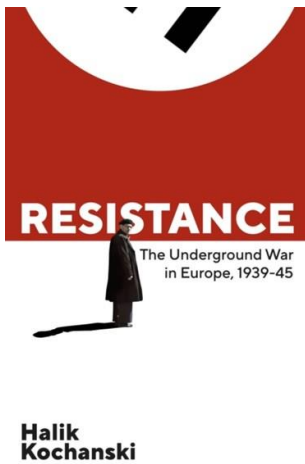
Halik Kochanski

Penguin Allen Lane, 2022

Paperback 568pp RRP \$34.99

Reviewer: Rob Ellis, June 2023

This book can best be described as a monumental work. The actual text is 849 pages containing an estimated 335,000 words, plus a further 62 pages of foot- and end-notes and a bibliography citing approximately 680 reference sources. But more than this, it is a monumental piece of research that memorialises the many thousands of men and women who gave their time, and, for far too many, their lives during the German/Italian Axis military occupation of most of the European continent during World War 2.



Ms Kochanski has given excellent cover of a wide range of Resistance movements that came into being in at least twenty countries, the numerous quasi-military groups which were engaged in sabotaging the occupiers' equipment and logistics networks, destroying their supply lines and communications, and killing their troops and the collaborators among residents of the occupied

countries.

The structure and general nature of these groups were diverse. Some were led by military officers who had 'gone underground' after their units were broken up or disbanded after defeat or surrender. Some were created by individuals or small groups of both civilians and soldiers who refused to accept battlefield defeat. Many went into hiding and joined Resistance groups to avoid being conscripted to labour units in Germany or the commandeered industrial plants in occupied territories. Many groups were formed around a nucleus of people who had escaped to Britain ahead of the occupation of their countries, where they had been trained in espionage and sabotage and then returned to their homelands with the support of Allied liaison service personnel from organisations such as the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), and later, the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS). These two organisations throughout the war provided advisers and trainers, radio operators and liaison officers to many resistance groups, and also provided arms, explosives and communications equipment, food and medical supplies, usually by parachute drop from British and American or other Air Force squadrons specially formed and trained for this role. This support added to the Resistance groups' ability to wage war on the occupying forces with something more than weapons that could be

obtained from the defeat of Axis troops or raids on their supply depots and logistics systems.

Numerous resistance groups paid for this aid by providing the Allied powers with information on German troop strength and movements, new equipment, supply bases and fortifications. They also aided escaping war prisoners, giving them shelter and succour, and providing secret pathways to safety in neutral countries, from which many returned to continue the fight against the oppressors. Many civilian refugees were also aided to escape to friendly countries, if and when threatened with incarceration in death camps at places such as Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald or Ravensbrück, or in the forced labour camps that were set up to provide slave labourers for Germany's overstretched industrial plants. Typically in each country there were usually several different resistance groups, each owing allegiance to different political and other movements. Some groups were loyal to the country's government-in-exile, to a deposed monarch or to a particular political party to religious organisation, or, in some cases to a foreign power, often the Moscow-based and pro-Russian Communist party.

This lack of common objectives meant that resistance groups sometimes carried out activities that were not in line with the general strategies of the British or American planners, so that tight controls were exercised on the resistance fighters in so far as this was possible. The problems were particularly noticeable in Greece, Yugoslavia and France, where some partisan groups were loyal to the monarchy - in Greece and Yugoslavia - as well as to groups which preferred to support a post-war republican government while other segments of the Resistance took its orders from supporters of the local Communist Party, or direct from Moscow. These differences created problems for the SOE and OSS liaison officers as it sometimes led to what amounted to civil wars, with a resistance group with a particular orientation sometimes joining up with German or Italian troops in a temporary alliance to put down a different group which supported some alternative leadership or allegiance.

Some Resistance groups were large, well-organised and posed a significant threat to the occupying enemy troops by destroying their equipment, shattering their supply lines, and killing many of the troops sent against them. Others, usually with an excess of zeal, became engaged against larger and better-equipped forces and suffered heavy losses. However there were successes, and the Germans particularly had to maintain large numbers of troops guarding supply lines and installations or in hunting down Resistance forces when they desperately needed troops in combat units in Russia, Italy, and after

D-Day, in France and Eastern Europe. *continued*

All this activity is covered by Ms Kochanski in a clear and well-structured account which shows the depth and extent to the research that has gone into presenting a wide-ranging picture of the bitter and sometimes bloody fighting that went on between

occupying troops and committed Resistance fighters in clashes in which little mercy was shown by either side.

German forces, especially when lead by coordinating their activities with the Waffen-SS and Gestapo, committed many atrocities against Resistance fighters and innocent bystanders. This was especially the case in Czechoslovakia where 199 men of the town of Lidice were massacred and over 180 women and children sent to labour camps as a reprisal for the assassination of Reinhardt Heydrich, deputy to the SS leader Heinrich Himmler, and recently appointed Reichsprotektor in Czechoslovakia. Similar brutal retaliations took place in France, Greece, Holland and Russia and almost the entire Jewish population of the Warsaw ghetto was killed or sent to concentration camps from which few came out alive after the war. Detailed accounts of these horrors are given for almost every country in which there was a Resistance throughout the book and show the depth of the research that has gone into this thorough study of some of the worst aspects of what was the bloodiest and most bitterly fought war of the last two centuries.

The Germans fought it out to the bitter end, sending teenage boys and old men to their deaths in the ruins of Berlin and other major cities, towns, villages and rural hamlets as Russian and Western Alliance troops rolled inexorably across the fields of Germany and surrounding countries. The many Resistance fighters who had survived until the Spring of 1945 rose against the occupying forces until disarmed by the Allied forces moving into the areas of Resistance operation, and gaining control over surrendering German, Italian and other national contingents for whom the war was now over.

Perhaps the saddest part of Ms Kochanski's book is contained in the latter chapters on the *Aftermath*. As the Allies moved into Germany and other occupied countries, there were reprisals against German officials and collaborators. Many were tried by quasi-military courts and sentenced to death or long terms of imprisonment, many others died at the hands of Resistance fighters or civilian mobs - frequently without any opportunity to defend themselves. It is probable that similar reprisals took place in Eastern Europe as it came under Soviet control, for the Russians had loyal supporters in part of Eastern Europe and had scores to settle over the reprisal by German and other Axis forces against innocent civilians wrongly blamed for supporting Resistance groups particularly in Belorussia and the Ukraine.

This is not an easy book to read. While it is well written and superbly researched, it is also complex and written from the viewpoint of one who believed that the Resistance fighters were almost always right, and that some Axis personnel were brutal and acted against the Rules of War. As a consequence, when Allied forces moved across Europe in 1945, many people in the occupied countries may have acted as brutally and as callously as did the Axis troops and officials, and possibly some miscarriages of justice took place and are glossed over.

For those who want to broaden their knowledge of Europe under Fascist occupation between 1939 and 1945, this is a book that should be read. For those who oppose totalitarian undemocratic forms of governance and civic administration, it is a warning of what could happen during and after a war of conquest. It is also a book that should be read carefully as it contains many messages for those who live under liberal democratic systems of governance as to what could happen if an autocratic totalitarian system of government is imposed as an outcome of war or a political coup. The author has created an excellent account of a horrifying era in our history and signposts the need not to let it happen again.

Phelps argues that to overcome this it is essential that the crews operating the drones on kill missions have complete trust in the motivation and judgement of those who are directing them to kill.

The book has a six-page bibliography and a comprehensive index.

The Tiger has Many Lives

The story of Rod Wells POW Survivor

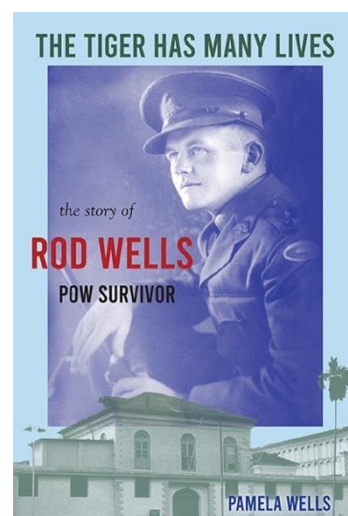
Pamela Wells

Harcourt, VIC: Sevenpens Publishing, 2022

Paperback pp304 RRP: \$34.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, August 2023

Pamela Wells, after 29 years of marriage to Rod Wells that ended with his passing in 2003, has assembled a massive amount of material to produce a wonderful biography of a most amazing and fascinating Australian. The narrative is in the first person that has made it extremely personable.



Pamela, after his marriage 'proposal' – "We will be married one day," regarded his smile like that of a tiger, and Rod subsequently became known as 'Tiger'. It was appropriate as it encapsulated the characteristics of this clever and tenacious man 21 years her senior.

Born on New Year's Day 1920 and raised in country Victoria, Rod was an enthusiastic lad whose curiosity and energy knew no bounds. On friendly terms with the local pharmacist, he acquired the ingredients and successfully manufactured enough TNT to remove a very large quantity of earth from the wall of the nearby Waranga Basin – finally coming to appreciate the danger in which he had placed

himself and his co-conspirator. [Just as well at that time Rod did not have access to today's internet!]

In 1936 Rod began an apprenticeship at the Maribyrnong Government Ordnance Factory, before joining the Victoria Education Department as a student teacher. November 1939 saw his enlistment in the 2nd Australian Imperial Force, selected for officer training and commissioned a year later after undergoing signals training. He arrived in Singapore in August 1941 and was captured six months later when Singapore fell to the Japanese on 15th February 1942. Five months later he had been shipped to the POW camp at Sandakan, Borneo.

In an effort to remove the sense of total isolation felt by his fellow detainees, the first twelve months saw Rod ingenuously create both a clandestine radio receiver and transmitter by sheer improvisation. A 'weak link' in the process saw Rod and his associates arrested in July 1943 and handed over to the Japanese Military Police. They were moved to the civil prison at Kuching, Sarawak where their military trials were held in February 1944 – Rod received a 12-year prison sentence, while his colleague was immediately executed. If Rod had remained at Sandakan, he would most certainly have perished on one of the three Death Marches that saw only six prisoners of the approximately 2400 Australian and British held there surviving. Rod spent thirteen months in the notorious Kempeitai Gaol, Outram Road, Singapore before being transferred to Changi when his body weight was only 20 kilograms. Five months later he was liberated by the Allies and discharged from the Army in January 1946. He was inducted into the Army Lodge, Melbourne in 1946 and served for more than 50 years.

Four years of study saw Rod become Head of Science at Shepparton High School, but his hankering for work with radio and electronics saw him re-enlist in the Australian Army in the Headquarters Signal Regiment. Two years later, having completed a degree in electrical engineering, he was appointed a Fellow of the Institute of Radio and Electrical Engineers. This led to him attending the Royal Military Academy of Science, Shrivenham where he undertook post-graduate studies before a two-year secondment to the UK Ministry of Supply. Returning to Australia in 1955, he was attached to the HQ Department of Supply and attended the Maralinga atomic trials in 1956 as one of only two Australians on the scientific response team.

The following year Rod was promoted to major and attended the UK Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in Berkshire. Two years later he transferred to the Army Reserve Officers' Retired List as a lieutenant colonel. Appointed a Scientific Officer in the Defence Department in 1960, he continued further training and work in and with the UK. In 1974, after a two-year wait, his proposal forecast came to fruition - his marriage to Pamela took place. Four years later he resigned from the Defence Department and set up his own private consultancy business. A long and meticulously-planned self-sufficient and sustainable dwelling and large workshop - years ahead of their time

- were built by Rod at Waranga Basin Rushworth in 1984.

Rod retired in 1987 due to ill-health; on a visit to the UK in 1995 he recorded an interview at the Centre for the History of Defence Electronics in Bournemouth on the building of the clandestine radio. He was awarded Life Membership of the Royal Australian Signals Corps and the RSL. With the onset of dementia, Rod was moved into the Rushworth Nursing Home in June 1999 and remained there until he passed away on 12th October 2003.

This incredible resilient, no-nonsense and well-liked Australian was greatly respected by his peers and admired by many others. In September 2007 a new building at the Holsworthy Army Barracks, the home of 126 Signals Squadron, was named 'The Rod Wells Wing'.

Pamela Wells has done Australia a great service in bringing all the aspects of her late husband's life to our attention. Meticulously researched, it is illustrated with photographs and maps, contains a generous *Bibliography*, six *Appendices* and an *Index*. The reader can feel the love and devotion this special couple had for each other in their years together.

This book can be purchased at The Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, or online from:

<https://sevenpenspublishing.com/the-tiger-has-many-lives-the-story-of-rod-wells/>

The Chipilly Six

Unsung heroes of the Great War

Lucas Jordan

Randwick, NSW: New South Books, 2023

Paperback 346pp RRP: \$34.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, July 2023

The Allied attack commenced on 8th August 1918, but the British III Corps failed after 30 hours to seize their objective of Chipilly Spur overlooking the River Somme because of entrenched German machine gunners who also fired into the flank and rear of the Australian Corp's advance. At midday on the 9th, Company Quartermaster Sergeant Jack Hayes and Sergeant Harold Andrews were absent without leave from C Company 1st Battalion AIF on the lookout for souvenirs near Chipilly Village and could see the reason the British advance had stalled. They returned to their lines but were denied permission to take a patrol over to Chipilly. By 1800 hours they were told to take a 'strong patrol' (minimum of platoon with a Lewis gun), but Jack and Harold took only four colleagues with them!



Outflanking the German line of machine guns, the six acting as 'scouts' for

D Coy 2/10th London Battalion, captured 47 prisoners and 27 machine guns. The Brits capitalised on the gains of the 'Six' and the Spur was captured, enabling the Allied advance to continue. The entire action encompasses a mere thirteen pages (including two maps)! The exploits of the 'Six' were never included in either Australian or British Official War Histories. The two sergeants were each awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, three of the private soldiers were awarded the Military Medal and one a Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Lucas Jordan has broken his work into six distinct parts. The reader learns of the family background and enlistment history of the six, before the brief account of the action at Chipilly Spur. The six went into battle again on 23rd August in the Froissy Valley – this time Jack Hayes, Private Jerry Fuller and Private Bill Kane were all wounded and were evacuated to England. The fourth part deals with the differing experiences they had in returning to a changed Australia at the height of the Spanish Flu epidemic.

Many Australians would not be aware of the schism between the Soldiers' Clubs and the emerging Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League (RSSILA which became today's RSL). Jack Hayes was extremely active in the Marrickville Anzac Memorial Club, helping the families of soldiers who were on hard times. It was a chance encounter involving Jack Hayes that led to the very first Dawn Service at 0430 hours on 25th April 1928. These memorial clubs continued their good work through the Depression of the 30s and into the post-Second World War period. Jordan's final part looks at Jerry Fuller and Bill Kane enlisting to fight in the Second World War along with the some of the sons of the Six.

This is a story of heroism that needed to be told. It has been embedded in a noteworthy commentary on Australian society in the post-1918 years.

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.

War in the Pacific

Volumes 1 and 2

Peter Harmsen

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2021- 2022

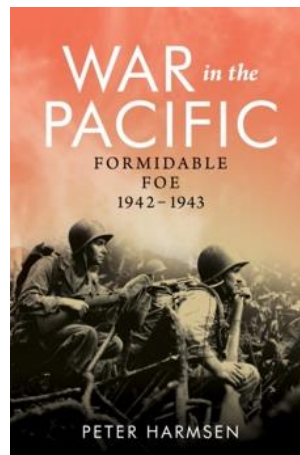
Reviewer: Neville Taylor, August 2023

The *War in the Pacific* series (a third volume is forthcoming) presents detailed accounts of the belligerent Japanese stance in China and Southeast Asia since the 1905 conflict with Russia and its occupation of southern Sakhalin Island, Manchuria. Events are cleverly intertwined with the politics and events in the Western Hemisphere with appropriate thoughts and comments by principal players of all sides.

Both volumes contain relevant maps of the utmost clarity, comprehensive *Endnotes, Bibliography, Index*, and a generous collection of black and white photographs. a *Glossary and Abbreviations*. Harmsen's grasp of prose and his precise use of words enables his reader to absorb an incredible insight into events in a very short time.

Volume 1: *Storm Approaching 1931 - 1941*

2021 Paperback 272pp RRP \$32.99



Harmsen takes us back almost two millennia to the initial animosity between Japan and China. A brief history, including their differing approach to the inevitable intrusion of Western explorers, merchants, missionaries and their isolation policies, sets the scene for the decade prior to World War II.

Japan was determined to exert its influence, initially in China, then throughout Southeast Asia and the western Pacific. Incrementally it captured key Chinese cities until 1937 without actually declaring war until late in that year. 1938 saw Japan suffer its first defeat by Chinese forces assisted by Russian aircraft.

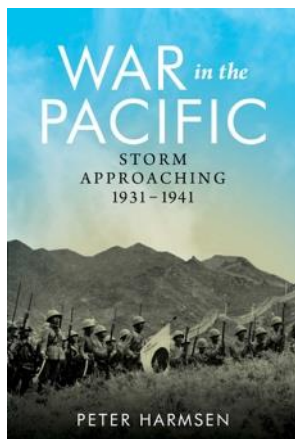
Japan had very early chosen to ignore the treaty limiting its naval build-up and embarked on a program of building both battleships and carriers, whilst obtaining a foothold in Indochina in July 1941. In January 1941 the US Ambassador to Japan was tipped off about a possible Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

The final chapter describes in detail the actual 7 December attack in the Western Pacific as well as the Japanese landings on the Malay Peninsula and bombing of Clark airfield in the Philippines.

War in the Pacific

Volume 2: Formidable Foe 1942 - 1943

2022 Paperback 272pp RRP \$32.99



The reader is immediately catapulted into the events off the Malayan Peninsula when HMS *Repulse* and HMS *Prince of Wales* rushed out of Singapore without any air cover and were promptly sunk in the space of one hour on 10 December 1941 by Japanese torpedo bombers.

Hong Kong and the islands of Guam and Wake were the next to fall to the rampaging Japanese forces. The resource-rich Netherlands East Indies was the next Japanese objective, with eastern expansion as far as Rabaul with a view to launching air strikes from the New Britain island. By 15th February Singapore, Britain's 'fortress', was in Japanese hands with tens of thousands of Allied combatants becoming prisoners of war. Despite some successes in air battles, the Allies were still at the mercy of the Japanese, with the Philippines falling on 6th May. The Japanese even envisaged using a naval base in Ceylon, destroying Britain's Eastern Fleet and linking with Rommel's Afrika Korps.

In April 1942 US planes bombed various cities in Japan to show the Japanese they were not unreachable. From January to May the Japanese invaded Burma through Thailand. In May the Japanese attempted to invade Port Moresby by sea from Rabaul, but they were met in the Coral Sea in a battle fought between carrier-based aircraft. There was no victor, and the Japanese returned to Rabaul. A month later the Battle of Midway saw the Japanese lose four carriers and 322 aircraft whilst the US lost the carrier USS *Lexington*. Six months after Pearl Harbour and the Japanese were in defensive mode as they could not replace their losses and the US had gained air supremacy.

Striking north in the Pacific, on 7 August the US landed on Guadalcanal in the Solomons. It was a savage battle for Henderson Field, its vital airstrip. Finally, on 4 January, the Japanese executed an undetected night withdrawal. Over two weeks at the end of August, the Japanese army suffered its first defeat when they tried to secure the airstrips at Milne Bay. After seeing the lights of Port Moresby, with no food and little ammunition, the Japanese withdrew back along the Kokoda Track with Kokoda being recaptured by the Australians on 2nd November.

Japan attempted to reinforce Lae with almost 7000 troops in a convoy from Rabaul in March 1943. It was totally destroyed by US carrier aircraft in the Battle of the Coral Sea. The Japanese had captured two of the Aleutian Islands – the only US soil occupied in the War. A fortnight-long battle in May saw the US recapture Attu

and Kriska Islands. Again, the Japanese tried to reinforce Rabaul with a convoy of ten cruisers and eight destroyers. On 4th November, a two-carrier US group sank six of the cruisers, two destroyers and destroyed 25 aircraft. Later that month, the US successfully invaded Tarawa Island in the Gilbert Islands held by 2600 Japanese.

With commitments over such a massive part of Asia and the Pacific, the Japanese were forced to use the minimum-sized force in each theatre. While they struggled for resources and had limited manufacturing capacity, they then lost the ability to resupply their forces that were often only sustained by their determination to never be captured.

Book Reviewers Wanted

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

It matters not that you have never review a book before – we can provide you with easy-to-follow guidance. As benefactors of their generosity, we have an obligation to the publishers. They are often looking for a review to include in their publicity for the launch of a new title – so timeliness (a reasonably short turnaround time) is expected.

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

Please contact the Secretary Bob Hart, on 9282 5918



**Pegasus Bridge (9 June 1944)
(Bob Hart yet to visit)**

Library Notes

The library has received another generous donation of books from Colonel Marcus Fielding and several other donations as well. An important acquisition has been a sophisticated scanner capable of scanning books and most other types of material. This was funded by a grant from the Fielding Foundation. Thanks again Marcus. We are learning how to use this scanner and have already scanned a few rare pamphlets, maps and books. It will take some time to use its full potential and the emphasis will be on scanning and preserving rare items in digital format. We have been able to dispose of a considerable number of duplicate books to good homes, but our stock is increasing again. Most of the duplicates are in very good condition and everyone is invited to arrange a visit on Mondays or Thursdays to view and purchase at low prices.

Brian Surtees

Hon Librarian

Defenders Of The Queen: Imperial And Colonial Defence 1850 – 1901 – One Day Conference

Sunday November 5 @ 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Registrations open NOW!

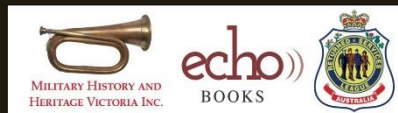


DEFENDERS OF THE QUEEN IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL DEFENCE 1850 -1901

KEYNOTE - DR CRAIG WILCOX

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2023
WAVERLEY RSL

161 COLEMAN PARADE, GLEN WAVERLEY, MELBOURNE.



Keynote Speaker – Dr Craig Wilcox

Paper - Maritime frontier conflict, and other items from the colonial military history to-do list

Abstract - What do we know about Australian military history from 1850 to 1901, and what don't we know? A lot in both cases, but one gap in our understanding seems striking. For all the attention given to the struggle between British settlers and Aborigines in nineteenth century Australia, we're not seeing a maritime counterpart to it in commercial scuffles on islands around Australia, in the policing of Pacific islands by warships based in Sydney, and in the occupation and pacification of Papua. Thinking about a maritime or Pacific theatre of frontier conflict reminds us of Australia's longstanding power in the region. It also challenges how we think about conflict on the Australian inland.

[Registration opening NOW!](#)

New Acquisitions (since June 2023)

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject
<i>The Battle of the Beams</i>	Tom Whipple	The secret science of radar that turned the tide of the Second World War.
<i>1942: The Year the War came to Australia</i>	Peter Grove	The bombing of Darwin and the attack on Sydney by the Japanese.
<i>The Yachties</i>	Janet Roberts Billet	Australian volunteers in the Royal Navy 1940-45.
<i>He Belonged to Wagga</i>	Ian Hodges	The Great War, the AIF and Returned Soldiers in a country town.
<i>Guy Griffiths</i>	Peter Jones	The life and times of an Australian admiral.
<i>For the Fallen</i>	Paul Paffen	The 1921-1922 Melbourne Public Library Mural Competition within the setting of Decorative Painting in Australian Art.
<i>Bold & Lucky</i>	Alan Powell	Australia's Colonial Navy 1824 – 1831.
<i>Australia's Tasman Wars</i>	Craig Wilcox	Colonial Australia and Conflict in New Zealand, 1800 – 1850.
<i>My Mother, The Spy</i>	Cindy Dobbin and Fred Marnie Nicholls	The daring and tragic double life of ASIO agent Mercia Masson.
<i>Walking with the ANZACS</i>	Matt McLachlan	An updated Guide to Australian Battlefields on the Western Front.



'An absolute cracker of a story'
Ross McMullin

'A superb piece of investigative historical storytelling'
Peter Stanley

THE CHIPILLY SIX

UNsung HEROES
OF THE
GREAT WAR

The Chipilly Six

Unsung heroes of the Great War

Speaker: Dr Lucas Jordan

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event
Wednesday 18 October 2023 7:00PM-8:00PM



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