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Promoting National Security and Defence
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RUSI VIC QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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Editor: Mike Rawlinson

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**RUSIV President MAJGEN Mike O'Brien thanks HE Vasyl Myroshnychenko,
Ambassador of Ukraine to Australia for his address
The War in Ukraine – Three Years On**

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria Incorporated June 2025 Newsletter

RUSI VIC -2025

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

President's Column

Major General Mike O'Brien CSC (Retd)



Dear Members,

In recent discussions with our interstate colleagues, we have reached agreements leading to the summary below:

What are we:

- A not-for-profit organisation
- Independent, apolitical
- Australia wide, with Branches in every State and the ACT
- Well governed – Incorporated, Constitution, Board, AGM, Audited Financial Statements etc
- Member based organisation
- DGR status for donations (NSW and Vic only)
- Public education organisation that promotes informed debate on defence and national security issues in Australia
- Long history of supporting the Australian Defence Forces

How

We:

- Hold lectures and seminars on defence and security issues, and military history
- Publish a highly respected professional journal
- Publish weekly and monthly newsletters for defence issues affecting Australia and our region
- Operate specialist libraries specialising in defence and security literature dating from the early 19th century
- Analyse conflicts around the World to determine "lessons learnt"
- Visit defence bases and installations
- Publish videos of lectures and seminars
- Operate an informative website

- Conduct social and networking functions for members.

History

- Formed in the late 19th Century to train and educate the officers of the militia and navies of the Australian colonies
- Continued the education of military officers for up to 50 years after the formation of the ADF in 1901.

What we must do

- Attract younger, and more industry and academia members
- Be a military innovator in the context of a risk adverse ADF
- Provide PME to current serving ADF members
- Develop a mechanism to feed into the Defence Business Intelligence Cycle
- Build constructive working arrangements with defence industry, academia, think tanks
- Improve our relationship with the higher echelons of Defence

In addition, we continue to discuss ways of publicising RUSIs and giving them an effective social media presence.

I would welcome your views on any issues raised by the summary. Please respond to the Secretary.

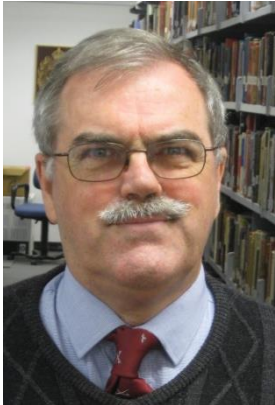
Mike O'Brien



April Lunchtime Address Speaker
HE Vasyi Myroshnychenko
Ambassador of Ukraine to Australia
Topic – The War in Ukraine – Three Years On

From the Secretary:

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart RFD



The only things I have are the new members.

"We welcome the following new members. John Nettleton, Greg Sargeant and Alexander O'Brien."

Bob Hart



The RUSI Needs You

Book Reviewers Wanted

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

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

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

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

Please contact the Secretary Bob Hart, by email: secretary@rusivic.org.au

Bequests

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria

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

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

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

To allow us to continue to provide services to members and the community into the future, you could greatly assist us by remembering the Institute in your will. Should you desire assistance in adding an appropriate codicil to your will, please contact the Secretary at secretary@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: Pressure to Increase the Defence Budget

Mike Rawlinson

At last the government is coming under pressure to increase defence spending. At the recent Shangri-La Dialogue, in Singapore US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told Defence Minister Richard Marles that Australia should increase defence spending to 3.5 per cent of GDP. This would recognise the security challenge posed by China and be a fair contribution to the security of the Asia-Pacific.

The Prime Minister has commented that how much we spend on defence is a matter of sovereign decision making based on capability not some arbitrary percentage of GDP. This is of course correct, but GDP percentages are a recognised indicator of a nation's commitment to its security, and Australia's 2.1 per cent is far less than warranted by its perceived security challenge. However, if the needed capabilities already identified in the DSR are costed, an amount of at least 3 per cent is indicated.

Our strategic situation has progressively deteriorated as spelt out in the 2020 Strategic Update, the 2023 Defence Strategic Review (DSR) and the 2024 National Defence Strategy (NDS). While the urgency of acquiring new capabilities has been emphasised current defence funding has barely changed. The government has committed to the future funding of the AUKUS submarines and has funded contemporary aspects by cancelling projects within the defence budget.

Former Chiefs of the Defence Force, the current CDF, a former Secretary, Defence Think Tanks, and University Professors, have all recommended increasing defence funding. This was reiterated by defence leaders and strategists at the Australian's Defence Australia Summit in Canberra on 16 June.

At the May Federal Election defence funding was not an issue despite the Coalition previously deploring the strategic situation and having a policy of increasing the defence budget to 2.5 per cent of GDP in five years. Politicians on both sides were most reluctant to address the question – where is the money coming from? Which welfare program needs to be cut?

Now the election is over, and the government has won an outstanding majority. The political landscape has the potential to handle some long-overdue reforms and put the National Interest to the fore.

The Prime Minister needs to take the lead and explain to the Australian people why an increase in defence funding is necessary and that this most likely will involve some financial sacrifice. Expectations need to be changed. In the National Interest there should be bipartisan support from the opposition – the alternative government. Any belt-tightening will need to be equitably shared by all Australians.

Rather than seeing difficult economic reforms as being an obstacle to defence spending, national security could be a driver of the reform process. Economic reform and national security can be mutually reinforcing objectives. They give all Australians a shared mission, to work together for a stronger country, and be prepared to sacrifice local/group interest for the National Interest.

Non-Nuclear Bunker Busters

RUSI VIC March 2012

In 1943 Barnes Wallis developed the 12,000lb 'Tall Boy' penetration bomb for use by RAF Bomber Command against heavily protected concrete targets. A development was the 22,000lb 'Grand Slam' earthquake bomb which was used against railway viaducts and underground submarine pens. It could penetrate 40 metres of earth and 2-6 metres of concrete. It was designed to be dropped from high altitude and arrived at near supersonic speed. Shortly after the war the US produced the T12 Demolition Bomb of 43,000lbs, before penetration bomb development was dropped in favour of nuclear weapons.

It was not until the second Gulf War that the US developed the 5,000lb GBU-28 Bunker Buster bomb which was successfully used by F-111s against underground facilities in Baghdad.

The GBU-57A/B Massive Ordnance Penetrator

The US Air Force has just taken delivery of the first GBU-57A/B or MOP (Massive Ordnance Penetrator). It weighs 30,000lbs and will penetrate 60ft of hardened concrete up to 200ft underground before detonation.



GBU stands for Guided Bomb Unit, and it means that the 20 foot GBU-57 A/B bomb is zeroed in on the target by a

GPS navigation system guiding its four lattice-type fins. The bomb is intended for only one purpose - to destroy the type of hardened concrete bunkers which house central command facilities and weapons of mass destruction. The MOP is the only non-nuclear means of attacking Iran's Fordow nuclear fuel enrichment plant which is deep underground.

The Massive Ordnance Penetrator is a relatively simple weapon. It is designed to penetrate supposedly untouchable facilities in one piece. The warhead case of

the MOP is made from a special high performance steel alloy designed to maintain the integrity of the penetrator case during impact so that the payload can then do its job most effectively by exploding deep underground.



The MOP is deployed from high altitude and allows gravity to add momentum to its 30,000 pound weight so that it hits with sufficient kinetic energy to bury itself 200 feet underground and penetrate hardened concrete, then it explodes its 5,300 pound warhead.

The MOP is designed to be carried by B-2 and B-52 bombers. The most likely aircraft to deliver the MOP, is the B-2 Spirit which can carry two MOPs.

***Opinion:* Hydrogen Update**

Mike Rawlinson

Hydrogen is the earth's lightest element and is the most abundant chemical substance in the universe. A gas (H₂) at normal temperatures, hydrogen is explosive in air when ignited. Hydrogen is a flexible, safe, transportable and storable fuel. It can be used to power vehicles and generate heat and electricity. When used as a fuel the only by-product is water. There are no carbon emissions. Hydrogen is a key ingredient for producing chemicals such as ammonia and methanol. Hydrogen can be burnt as a fuel or used to generate electricity in a fuel cell, but it is not a primary energy source and can be best thought of as an energy carrier.

In the December 2020 Newsletter I wrote an opinion piece on hydrogen. Hydrogen fuel is relevant for defence as it could reduce Australia's dependence on imported fossil fuel and contribute to national resilience. Australia has difficulties maintaining sufficient liquid fuel reserves but could be self-sufficient in hydrogen. In direct support of the military, hydrogen could provide the power for remote bases, and heavy vehicles. It could also be used for making synthetic liquid fuels for military use.

Great things were forecast. This article is an update. In 2019 the government announced a National Hydrogen Strategy as part of its commitment to reduce carbon-dioxide emissions in transitioning from fossil fuels. The strategy provided for the comprehensive development of clean (CO₂ emission free) hydrogen production in relation to exports, transport, industrial use, gas networks, electricity systems, as well as safety, skills and environmental impacts. Pathways were identified for an economically sustainable hydrogen

industry, consistent with the need to cut Australia's carbon dioxide emissions.

The most straightforward method of producing hydrogen is by the electrolysis of water. Because electrolysis has been expensive, most hydrogen has been produced using coal or natural gas as feedstock, with accompanying carbon emissions. The development of the renewable electricity generation industry has lowered the cost of electricity to potentially make generation of hydrogen by electrolysis commercially viable. Without any associated carbon-dioxide emissions the product is known as green hydrogen. Australia is ideal for generating hydrogen from renewables. It has sun, wind, and vacant land in sparsely populated regions.

National Hydrogen Strategy 2024

The 2019 Strategy was updated in October 2024. The new 100-page document starts: 'The National Hydrogen Strategy provides the framework for Australia to become a global hydrogen leader. -- Australia has a globally significant project pipeline of more than 100 projects announced since 2019.'¹



Objective 1:
Supply - Australia's hydrogen industry is globally cost-competitive

Over the past five years the government has provided substantial financial incentives from six separate funds to encourage investment in the industry including the Future Made in Australia Plan, the Hydrogen Production Tax Incentive and the Hydrogen Headstart Program.

The executive summary of the 2024 Strategy records that: 'most projects remain at the feasibility or engineering stage.'

In fact, several of the projects that had advanced further have been disbanded or deferred. In July 2024 hundreds of jobs were cut when Fortescue abandoned ambitious green targets including the goal of producing 15 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030. Also, the newly elected Queensland government withdrew \$1bn funding for the Central Queensland Hydrogen Project. Significant Australian and overseas investors have paused their interest.

Production costs of green hydrogen have not declined as anticipated, and infrastructure costs have increased. In May 2025 Fortescue abandoned the electrolyser technology being used by its Gladstone electrolyser factory and laid off about 90 staff.

Dr Andrew Forrest of Fortescue, who has been the most prominent advocate of green hydrogen, claims to have a new simpler, smaller electrolyser technology that has 95% efficiency, as opposed to the 60-70% efficiency of

¹ Executive Summary, National Hydrogen Strategy, p5.

previous technology. These electrolyzers will not be operational until 2026.

Currently green hydrogen is just not cost competitive. Also, there have been significant improvements in battery technology that negate the use of hydrogen in transport applications. Global enthusiasm for decarbonisation has waned such that few countries are now prepared to pay a premium for green hydrogen. The government's vision of green hydrogen being a major export industry does not look viable, at least not in the new few years.

Green hydrogen may still have an onshore role in the production of Green Iron by Electric Arc Smelting in the Pilbara, Green Steel at Whyalla, and possibly Green Ammonia.

Book Reviews

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

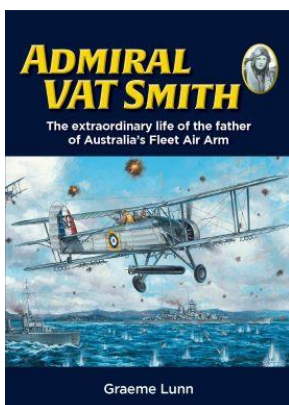
Admiral VAT Smith

The extraordinary life of the father of Australia's Fleet Air Arm

Graeme Lunn

Kent Town, SA: Avonmore Books, 2024
Hardback 248pp RRP \$49.95

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, April 2025



This work covers the extraordinary career of Admiral Sir Victor Alfred Trumper 'VAT' Smith AC KBE CB DSC MID RAN who joined the Royal Australian Naval College (RANC) as a cadet in 1927 aged thirteen, graduating as a midshipman in 1931. After graduation he spent some time with the Royal Navy (RN) in the early

aircraft carrier HMS *Glorious* and became convinced aircraft would be increasingly important to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). He began his flying career as an observer, the term used in the Fleet Air Arm for non-pilot aircrew officers. When Second World War broke out he was embarked with his squadron on the RN aircraft carrier HMS *Ark Royal*. As the senior observer of the carrier's Swordfish squadron, he led the first mass torpedo strike against a major warship at sea, the

daring (but unfortunately unsuccessful) daylight attack on the battlecruiser *Scharnhorst* off Norway in June 1940. Re-equipped with two-seat Fairy Fulmar fighters HMS *Ark Royal* moved to the Mediterranean where its main role was defending the Malta convoys. In May 1941 and again in September of that year the aircraft carrying Smith and his pilot was shot down and on both occasions he was rescued by a Royal Navy destroyer. *Ark Royal* was torpedoed on 13 November 1941 by a German submarine and sank the following day. Smith survived the sinking as did almost all of those on board the ship at the time.

He returned to Australia in 1942 and flew as an observer in a Supermarine Walrus aircraft launched from a catapult on the cruiser HMAS *Canberra*. Smith survived the August 1942 sinking of HMAS *Canberra* at the Battle of Savo Island. Returning to Europe he served in a RN escort carrier in the Atlantic and Arctic before both assisting to plan and participate in, the Normandy landings.

After the Second World War he was heavily involved in planning which followed the Australian decision to develop a carrier-based Fleet Air Arm (FAA) and was executive officer of the carrier HMAS *Sydney* in the Korean War. In 1960 he attended the Imperial Defence College, London, before taking command of the RAN's second aircraft carrier HMAS *Melbourne* (he was the first RAN aircrew officer to command a carrier). In April 1968, he was promoted to vice admiral and appointed Chief of Navy before serving as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff in the 1970s. He retired in 1975. As the title of the book says, an 'extraordinary life'.

The author, Graeme Lunn, himself a RANC graduate, served as a FAA pilot in the Royal Australian Navy before a long career with British Airways. This is very well-produced volume with an extremely large number of good quality photos (almost one a page) and some first-rate colour drawings of various aircraft. Some of the photographs show an aircraft about to land on a carrier with the photo taken looking up at the aircraft just before the tail hook catches the arrestor wire. Marvellous examples of the photographer's art! The book has a three-page index of names (of people, but unfortunately not of ships), a list of sources and a very comprehensive list of acronyms. This is a very well written and illustrated biography. I enjoyed reading it and also studying the photos included in the book as I am sure would anyone with an interest in the RAN and naval aviation.

A Bird's Eye View

Australia's Drone Operations in Afghanistan

The Australian Air Campaign Series - 10

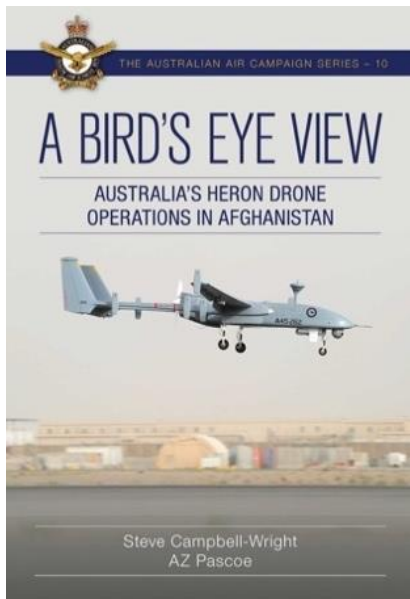
Steve Campbell-Wright and AZ Pascoe

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024

Paperback 432pp RRP: \$19.99

Reviewer: Adrian Catt, March 2025

This tremendous book focuses on the technology, skills, and personnel in battlefield overwatch, (particularly of Special Forces and their rival insurgents), and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) sorties, executed primarily by Israel Aerospace



Industries 'Heron' model drones, leased by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) from maintenance support contractor MacDonald Detweiler & Associates (MDA), and also with the interaction and training support of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

This publication commences with a history of Air observation craft

and techniques, originating from the days of balloon flight, leading into powered aircraft of the First World War, and how drone operations emerged and unfolded in the conflict in Afghanistan for the RAAF.

The text covers the types, development, and evolution of drones, as well as their cameras, (FLIR, Infra-red, day, night,) sensors, control mechanisms and mechanics, (including powerplants), range, loiter duration, service ceiling, etc., and the possibility of payloads of armaments for strike.

The RAAF didn't carry out strike from drones in the Afghanistan theatre but instead left this task and responsibility to the mighty US Forces. The RAAF drone missions were primarily as overwatch support of Special Forces (SF) tasks, and in particular, the hunt for improvised explosive devices (IED's), as well as locating and tracking insurgents. Coverage is also provided about Australian Army operation of small drones, and Royal Australian Navy (RAN), use of drones, (some re-usable), as targets for gunnery and surface to air (SAM) practice.

As the Heron was an unmanned aerial system (UAS), this comprehensive book introduces and explains how these pilot-less drones are flown from the ground control station (GCS), by a pilot and mission operator,

backed-up by a ground-based mission control station (MCS), crewed by intelligence officers, analysts, image specialists, and tacticians, sending and receiving information with the Heron via a ground data terminal (GDT).

No.5 Squadron was stood up by the RAAF to deliver Heron operations in Afghanistan; the 5 Flight personnel initially receiving their Heron training at RAAF Williamtown, NSW, and with the RCAF in Suffield, Canada. Subsequent rotations were later trained within Australia, at RAAF Williamtown, NSW, and Woomera, South Australia. 5 Flight personnel were joined and supported by MDA at Woomera: MDA being responsible for maintenance and flight preparation of Heron drones utilised by the RAAF in simulated searches for IED's, and training for Imaging crews.

This book sheds light on the day-to-day life of personnel assigned to Camp Baker and Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan, revealing quarters, shopping and leisure activities. More importantly however, focus is given to the significant roles played by female personnel on deployment, especially the vital role of intelligence gathering, by forming close associations with Afghan women in their local communities and family groups.

Chillingly, Heron UAS crew watched helplessly as a Special Operations Task Group came to grief when their US Army Blackhawk helicopter crashed at Shah Wali Kot, on 21/6/2010, resulting in the deaths of three operators, and the serious injury to seven others.

RAAF Heron service ended in Australia in June 2017 after serving in the Afghanistan campaign, and on operations *Pitch Black 2016* and *Diamond Storm 2017*.

Towards the end of this superb, but jargon-laden book, [thank goodness for the *Glossary*], emerging drone technology and platforms of interest to the future of RAAF are introduced in individual break-outs, including the following types: Aero Guard, MQ-4C Triton, MQ-28A Ghost Bat, and MC-55A Peregrine ISR & EW (Electronic Warfare); concluding with glimpses into the future battlefield scenario of 'swarming drones'.

Exceptionally well researched and written, this comprehensive book will slake the need for knowledge sought by military aviators, and those with serious inquiring minds. Most positively recommended.



Tomahawk – Land Attack Cruise Missile

Her Great Adventure

Dorothy 'Puss' Campbell WW2 Army Nursing Sister

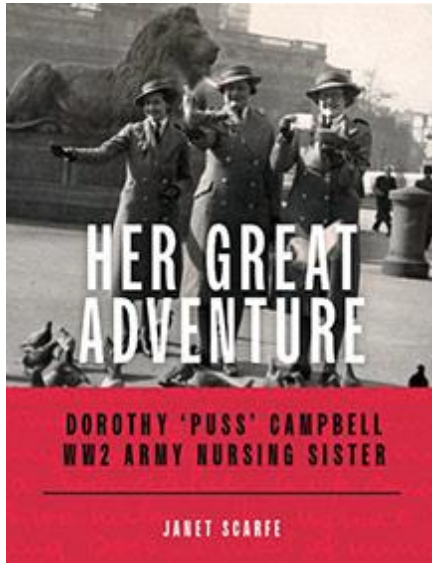
Janet Scarfe

North Adelaide, SA, Janet Scarfe, 2024

Paperback 309pp RRP: \$39.95

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, June 2025

Dorothy Janet 'Puss' Campbell was among almost 3600 women to serve in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) during the Second World War. Enlisting in September 1939, Puss at age 29 was called up in May



1940 and embarked on the P&O liner SS *Stratheden* with destination unknown. Among special well-wishing letters, one from her younger sister Betty indicated that she prayed God would keep Puss safe on her 'great adventure'.

From diaries, photographs and the official war

diaries of hospitals, Dr Janet Scarfe, a niece of Puss, has provided a comprehensive picture of all aspects of nursing sisters' lives in wartime service both overseas and at home.

Because of potential danger in the Mediterranean Sea, the SS *Stratheden* called at Colombo, Cape Town and Freetown, Puss crossing the Equator three times before arriving in Glasgow in July 1940. At most of the hospitals Puss was assigned to, there was a period required to ready establishments for occupation before staff and patients could use the facility. This saw the sisters using this time for sight-seeing, shopping, accepting male officers' invitations to mess dinners, dances, golf and excursions; and initially, acquiring the necessary uniforms for wards.

Puss's first hospital was the 2/3 Australian General Hospital (AGH) located at Milford 50kms south-west of London. As for most of her postings, the author has used three chapters to cover the establishment of the hospital, personnel, patients and the state of the war; the problems and difficulties faced by the Matron and the nursing sisters; and finally, the sisters' lives away from the hospital and the opportunities they took to explore the outside world, developing friendships and romances. One noteworthy occasion was an inspection by King George VI on 4th July 1940.

In March 1941 the 2/3AGH sisters were moved to Kilo 89 at Gaza Ridge, Palestine and were attached ('staging') to a tented 2/1AGH. Puss used her spare time in Palestine to explore all the Biblical sites she knew of from her school days. By mid-June, Puss had joined her 2/3AGH colleagues in Alexandria to be reformed as 2/11AGH located on two floors and the basement of Alexandria's Greek Hospital. Late November saw the 2/11AGH personnel back in Kilo 89 prior to reaching Adelaide in March 1942 - 'home' after an absence of almost two years. Trenches, sandbagging and air raid precautions had changed the landscape considerably. After six weeks 'staging' at home, the sisters headed to Queensland to 117AGH in Toowoomba, then onwards on 5th June to establish 2/11AGH in tents in Warwick. Battle casualties from PNG, blackout regulations, regular respirator drills, and clothing coupons left everyone in no doubt there was a serious war out there.

By February 1943 some of the sisters from 2/11AGH were transferred 2/4AGH in Redbank. Puss was appointed a lieutenant in the AIF in March, and based on her length of service, promoted to captain in August. Hopes of going 'North' were finally realized in September 1943 when she was recalled from leave in Adelaide to go to 2/11AGH at Dobodura (adjacent to Buna and Popondetta, PNG). The tropics saw the nurses clothed in long-sleeved shirts, trousers, boots and gaiters. At this time penicillin was becoming far more readily available. The heat and humidity posed problems for the medical staff as well as patients. Puss was chronically fatigued and suffering from dermatitis, and rather than move north to possibly Lae, in March 1944, she applied to be transferred back to Australia - reaching Adelaide on 25 May.

The balance of her service in the AANS was in Australia:
105AMH (Military) Daw Park Adelaide, May 44 – Mar 45
2/14AGH Townsville, Mar – Sep 45

112AMH Greenslopes, Brisbane. Oct – Nov 45

105AMH Daw Park Dec 45 – 6 Jul 46 when her service in the AANs was terminated

Puss, now aged 36, had served 2247 days, 889 of them outside Australia.

Rather than continuing as a nursing sister, Puss joined the Radiotherapy Clinic at the Royal Adelaide Hospital where she worked from 1947 until retiring in 1970.

1953 saw Puss go back to nursing when she joined the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (formerly the AANS) in the Citizen Military Forces. She was promoted to major in 1956 to become the Officer Commanding 9 Company RAANC in Adelaide. Puss retired from CMF in 1958.

Puss led an active life until she became frail in her final years. She passed away in Oct 2006 at 96 years of age.

The author has gone to incredible lengths to ensure this to be a first-class record of her aunt's 'great adventure'. Its format being 270 x 205mm has enabled the

exceedingly large number of photographs, facsimiles of diary entries, newspaper clippings, invitations and other documents to be combined with the text in a seamless manner. *Endnotes* are located at the end of each chapter, while an *Appendix* consisting of six maps has been devoted to sea journeys, hospital locations and places visited. *Notes on Sources* has been conveniently broken into types, and the *Index* consists of three sections – Names, Places and General items.

A most professional work that reveals the painstaking research undertaken by an author truly dedicated to her writing. This is a ground-breaking approach to a vital aspect of Australia's military history.

The RUSI – Vic Library is most grateful to the author for making her work available for review.

Copies of *Her Great Adventure* are available from openbookhowden.com.au/bookshop

Gull Force

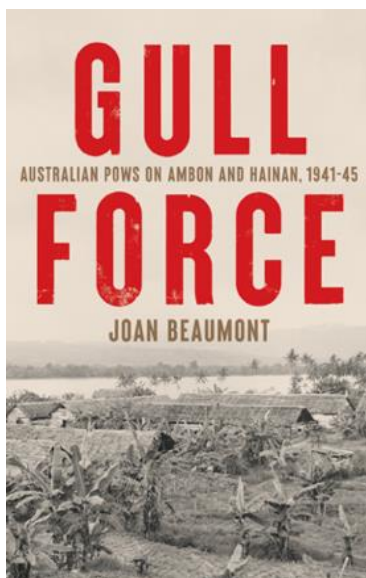
Australian POWs on Ambon and Hainan, 1941 - 45

Joan Beaumont

Randwick, NSW: New South Books, 2025

Paperback 432pp RRP: \$39.99

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, April 2025



This is a revised edition of a book about Gull Force published by the same author in 1988. The main difference between the two editions is the addition of a lengthy chapter at the end of the revised edition which includes new material on war crimes trials, the final burial place of POWs who died in captivity and the effects of the war-time experience on the survivors and their families. The

publication of a new edition is to be welcomed as, compared with the amount of attention paid to the experiences of POWs involved in the Thai-Burma railway and the Sandakan death marches, the terrible fate of the soldiers of Gull Force on Ambon (especially) and Hainan is little known. This work addresses this gap in our collective memory and, in doing so, provides much 'food for thought'. This is especially the case in regard to 'leadership' (or the lack thereof) and for that reason I would encourage serving officers and NCOs to read the book in addition to anyone who has an interest in the treatment of Australian POWs in the hands of the Japanese.

Gull Force was the name given to a group of 1131 men (most of whom were Victorians from the 8th Division's 2/21st battalion) who were sent to Ambon in late 1941 with orders to assist Dutch forces in the defence of the island.

The Japanese invaded Ambon in early 1942. After brief fighting, outnumbered and lacking naval and air support, the Dutch and the Australians surrendered. During the fighting 54 Australians were killed in action while a small number escaped and made their way back to Australia. Of those who surrendered to the Japanese 229 men who were defending an airfield were massacred shortly after laying down their arms by being bayoneted, clubbed to death or beheaded. The remaining 804 men who were in defensive positions elsewhere on the island became Prisoners of War and were placed in a camp named Tan Tui on Ambon.

In October of 1942 263 of the Australians POWs in the camp were shipped to the Chinese island of Hainan, then occupied by the Japanese. The POWs in both camps were subjected to harsh work, beatings, disease and starvation. Some of the men on Ambon died as a result of Allied bombing while a small number of the POWs on Hainan died when Chinese guerrillas attacked a work party. Ultimately, as the homepage of the 2/21st Battalion Association (<https://www.gullforce.org.au/>) records, '1131 men who were sent to defend Ambon during World War Two, 779 [of them] made the ultimate sacrifice'. It was one of the highest death tolls that Australians experienced as POWs in any theatre of the war.

The book is very well written and very informative. It devotes an appropriately large amount of space to disciplinary issues in the camps and the often-inappropriate ways in which the CO responded to matters such as prisoners stealing food from other prisoner's gardens. Two things about the author's treatment of this topic puzzle me. My first puzzle is why the CO did not insist that from the very beginning gardens would be 'communal' in every sense of the word. I'd have thought that matter should be addressed in the book. My second puzzle is to do with the approach adopted by the author when discussing disciplinary (and other) matters. Throughout the book the author sees the POWs as either officers or other ranks. Yet a number of senior NCOs (sergeants, WO2s) were in the camps and one would imagine they could be expected to have some responsibility for maintaining discipline. Surely this is not something which commissioned officers alone are responsible for.

The work has 21 very interesting photographs, three maps and a number of very informative tables. It also has an *Index* and 27 pages of very helpful *Notes*. The author is an acclaimed military historian and is Professor Emerita at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University.

Highly recommended.

Great at Heart

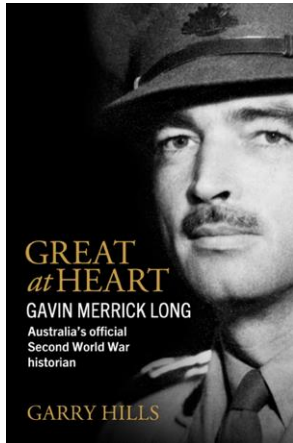
Gavin Merrick Long, *Australia's official Second World War historian*

Garry Hills

Randwick, NSW: New South Books, 2024
Paperback 192pp RRP: \$39.99

Reviewer: Michael Arnold, April 2025

The publisher's headline for *Great at Heart* is Gavin Merrick Long finally gets the biography he richly deserves. After reading this very good first-time effort by Garry Hills, I heartily agree. Long has been totally overshadowed by his mentor and confidant, Charles Bean, which is surprising given that, he too was an accomplished journalist and war correspondent and would go on to be the editor and principal author of the official history of the Second World War. Hills suggests that Long was too self-effacing and was never attracted by the limelight and consequently has been forgotten.



Garry Hills is the president of the Queensland Air Museum and was a pastoral minister of a local church before dedicating himself to being the primary carer of his special needs son. Hills makes a compelling case for greater recognition of Long's extraordinary contribution to both war time journalism and, of course, editing and writing Australia's official history of the Second World War.

Gavin Long was born in Foster, a gold mining settlement in Victoria in May 1901. He was the son of George Long, an Anglican vicar and educator, who served during the First World War. Long was an excellent scholar and, thanks to his father, was able to get a high-quality education, which included an Arts degree at the University of Sydney and later a Diploma of Education. After completing the latter, he had a sabbatical in the UK with his future wife, Jocelyn, whom he married in secret on 5 September 1925. By the time he returned to Australia six months later, he decided on a career in journalism, taking up a position as a junior reporter at the Melbourne *Argus*. He later accepted a position as a senior reporter at the *Sydney Morning Herald* and it was there that his career took off.

At the *Herald* he began corresponding foreign affairs, which became a major interest for him for the remainder of his career. In the 1930s with the rise of Nazi Germany and the growing belligerence of Imperial Japan. During this period, his focus shifted to defence matters and Australia's lack of preparedness for the coming war. Towards the end of 1939, the *Herald* posted Long to its London bureau. He would go on to report the outbreak of war and then joined the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) on its ill-fated efforts to support French forces repel the German's incursions.

Later he would report from North Africa and then the disastrous Greek campaign. Hills states that Long's reporting during this period, was in the main, exemplary. He very rarely lapsed into either hyperbole or jingoism unlike so many correspondents of the time. Likewise, his experience of the horrors of modern warfare and its toll on its human participants would inform his future work on the official history of the war. He would ensure that the contributions of ordinary soldiers, sailors and airmen would not be neglected in favour of senior commanders and political leaders.

Long was recalled to Australia in June 1941 and continued writing on Defence matters for the *Herald*. In September of 1942, Charles Bean asked Long to meet and as a result of this meeting his professional path would change for ever. Bean informed Long that he was going to petition the government to commission an official history of the Second World War and wanted Long to be its general editor. Bean was successful and the book goes into great detail on the machinations between Long and the government, the bureaucracy and the Australian War Memorial regarding the scope and style of the history as well as the appointment of the other authors.

The magnitude of the challenges in assembling Australia's largest ever history project for Long and his team are laid bare by Hills. These included managing the various vested interests, including former military commanders, political leaders and other vested interests. He had to battle bureaucratic intransigence as well as manage the other writers, which Hills demonstrates, was no small task. The history would eventually comprise 22 volumes of which Long wrote three.

Hills notes that it is probably more within the scope of an academic treatise than a general biography to assess Long's the quality of the official history. However, he does state that there is very little criticism of the work but does note that there are four areas that have received criticism and deserve scrutiny. The first criticism is that official history fails to provide a comprehensive account of Australian prisoners of war. Secondly, there has been criticism of the book *The Japanese Thrust* for the lack of attention to the well-documented criminal behaviour of some Australian soldiers fleeing the Japanese as Singapore fell. A third criticism concern's Long's account of the Battle of Bardia. Australian historian Professor Craig Stockings accuse him of inaccurate interpretation and assessment of the strategic and tactical elements of the battle. While Stockings recognises Long's excellent legacy in other respects, he suggests Long was captive to the 'Anzac myth'. The final criticism relates to Long's account of the Southwest Pacific campaigns of 1944 and 1945 in his book *The Final Campaigns*. This arose from the debates surrounding the necessity of the campaigns.

Perhaps the last word belongs with Professor Robert O'Neil, who asserts that Long's task as an official historian was so immense that it could not be completed without some gaps. The official history has won high praise internationally and as Hills notes 'a generation of scholars has been satisfied' with its contents.

I highly commend this easy to read and compelling biography of one of Australia's great historians. It is high time Gavin Merrick Long reclaimed his place alongside that other great chronicler of Australians at war, Charles Bean.

New Cold Wars

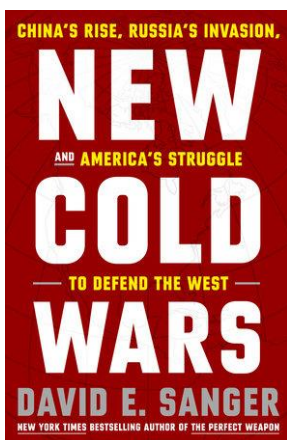
China's Rise, Russia's Invasion and America's Struggle to Defend the West

David E Sanger with Mary K Brooks

New York : Crown, 2024

Paperback 528pp RRP: \$45.00

Reviewer: Bruce Brown, April 2025



Three decades ago, the global geopolitical environment appeared to have reached a state of relative stability. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had unequivocally ended the Cold War, Saddam Hussein's ambition to control Kuwait had been thwarted and China was pre-

occupied with economic development. The US had achieved a pre-eminent position in the world prompting the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama to argue that the triumph of western liberal democracy had effectively led to the end of history. There was even collaboration between the US, Russia and China to restrict the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea.

Come the mid-2020s, however, the world has entered a new and challenging phase. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the destabilizing behavior of President Donald Trump and the growing bonds between Vladimir Putin's Russia and Xi Jinping's China have contributed to what David Sanger, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author, terms the 'New Cold Wars'. Whereas the original Cold War was a two country, military and ideological contest with crises such as that over Cuba in 1962, with the threat of mutually assured destruction for both sides, the new Cold Wars are far more complicated and dangerous.

The US, Russia and China are now engaged in a struggle for military, economic and technological influence in the world. With more players and layers, there is potential for miscalculation and unintended consequences for any response to contested issues.

Sanger explains at length how the US found itself in the New Cold Wars. US presidents of both parties, guided by poor intelligence, wishful-thinking and faulty assumptions imagined that China and Russia would reason, like Americans, that economics would override territorial and other nationalist ambitions. In addition, US administrations failed to respond effectively to events such as Putin's speech in 2007 which was disparaging of the US and the Obama administration's failure to provide arms to Ukraine after Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014.

Overall, Sanger has provided a most informative and readable account of the power dynamics currently shaping global politics. His use of extensive on-the-record interviews with foreign policy professionals make for a lively narrative. His account of the conversation in 2022 between Biden's secretary of defense Lloyd Austin and his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu presents the reality of diplomatic negotiations. Austin warned Shoigu that if the Russians used a tactical nuclear weapon in Ukraine, the United States would directly intervene with grave consequences for the Russian military. Highly recommended for any person seeking to understand the contemporary world order.

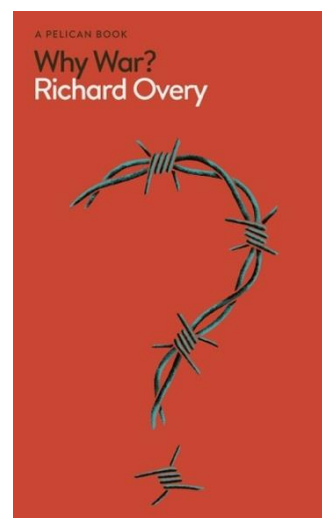
Why War?

Richard Overly

North Sydney, NSW: Penguin Random House, 2024

Hardback 400pp RRP \$64.99

Reviewer: Paul Willee, March 2025



This erudite treatise, described by its renowned author as an impertinence, certainly attracts the attention of the reader. Especially when it is followed by a denial it is about War.

The book aims to explore how various modern disciplines have explained warfare and the credibility of these explanations.

The author clearly distinguishes between war and warfare declaring that despite the interchangeability used by some modern writers, his usage requires the reader to understand war as a particular event; whereas warfare describes the many ways conflicts are planned,

organized and fought by societies and cultures where war is an anthropological feature.

The apparent conundrum is explained by its target audience being those members who might want to be educated about the way modern scholarship has tried to answer the question 'Why War?' There are several more caveats.

The cores of the work then follow with a division of the disciplines into two broad categories, each with its own chapter, the major human sciences. First: biology, psychology, anthropology and ecology. second: four broad-motivational categories: resources, belief, power and security.

Even if the quest be thought futile; and despite the disclaimers, the caveats ultimate recognition of the work is worthy because -the acclaimed historian shines through the text - his references drawn from the millennia.

Nevertheless, a potential reader would need to be drawn to the content by a powerful existing curiosity. The text is concentrated and not always onomatopoeic.



A Frigate launches a Missile. Some Questions:

How many Vertical Launch System (VLS) Missile Cells does it have?

What missiles do they support:

- Anti – Submarine
- Anti- Aircraft
- Anti – Ship
- Land Attack
- Decoy

Could they support a Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missile?

Library Notes

The only unusual activity during the past quarter involved using our very capable scanner to assist an outside organisation with their project. This was the production and preparation of an illustrated book for children. The illustrations were painted in watercolour in large format and we were able to aid by scanning these to a very high digital resolution in the format that they required.

Another interesting and valuable scanning job involved a two-volume illustrated history of the French army parachutists. Neville Taylor continues his essential job of sourcing new Books from the publishers. A list of the latest ones can be found in this newsletter. We have established a mutually beneficial relationship with the librarian at ANZAC House. We are scanning personal diaries held at that library with the result that both the RSL library and ours will have digital copies. A reminder that members can request a link to any of our recorded talks which will enable viewing online and/or downloading.

Best wishes to all

Brian Surtees

Hon Librarian

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

New Acquisitions (since March 2025)

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject	
<i>Gallipoli Soup</i>	Tim Knight	A war story of statecraft and sacrifice.	
<i>The Dark Path</i>	Williamson Murray	The structure of war and the rise of the West.	
<i>Under the Same Moon</i>	Peter Mitchell	An Australian battalion at war and a family at home.	
<i>How Drones Fight</i>	Lars Celandner	How small drones are revolutionizing warfare.	
<i>A Bird's Eye View</i>	Steve Campbell-Wright and AZ Pascoe	Australia's drone operations in Afghanistan.	
<i>Oboe One, Tarakan, 1945</i>	Peter Stanley	An Australian tragedy.	
<i>The Impossible Survivor</i>	Jeff Steel	From stockyard to the Great	Escape.
<i>War 4.0</i>	Dean-Peter Baker Mark Hilborne (Eds)	Armed conflict in an age of speed, uncertainty and transformation.	
<i>1945: The Reckoning World.</i>	Phil Craig	War, empire and the struggle for a	New
<i>Stay Loose</i> Somalia, East Timor,	Adrian Hodges	30 Years – An infantry soldier's	story:
<i>Start Digging You</i>	Tom Gilling	The turning point of the Second <i>Bastards!</i> World War against Rommel and the Axis at El Alamein.	



Fighting to the Finish: Australia in 1945

– Strategy, Victory, and Legacy

Military History & Heritage Victoria One-Day Conference

Caulfield RSL 4 St Georges Rd, Elsternwick VIC 3185

11 October 2025

Keynote Speaker: Emeritus Professor David Horner AM, FASSA

