



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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RAAF F-35A Lightning II

Exercise Pitch Black 2024

Exercise Pitch Black 24 concluded on 2nd August after three weeks of high-intensity modern air combat training in the skies over Australia's top end. It was the largest Pitch Black in the exercise's 43-year history with missions of more than 50 aircraft at a time in one of the world's largest military training areas. It brought together 20 participating nations and over 140 aircraft from around the world, with approximately 4400 personnel participating.

The exercise was conducted primarily from RAAF Base Darwin and RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory; with additional aircraft operating from RAAF Base Amberley. Exercise Pitch Black is the Royal Australian Air Force's most significant flying activity for strengthening international engagement and enhancing the RAAF's ability to work with overseas partners.

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

RUSI VIC -2024

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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)



This year has been a difficult one for obtaining speakers, particularly those from the Australian Defence Force. We hope that this will be fixed in 2025. In the meantime, please put our next speaking event in your diary. Ross McMullin will speak to us on his outstanding book, *Life So Full of Promise*, at 1200 for 1230 on Thursday 31st October at Anzac House, 4 Collins St Melbourne. This book has been awarded *The Age* Book of the Year Award. It's his second multi-biography about Australia's lost generation of the First World War.

Our Library continues to attract new members to RUSIV. It has also been the recipient of several significant donations. The most recent, from Professor Harvey Broadbent, AM has included recordings of veterans who fought at Gallipoli from both the Australian and Ottoman sides. We keep up with newly published books by obtaining review copies from publishers.

Robert Ellis volunteered to review books for us early in 2021. Despite his age, he became an enthusiastic reviewer, often having four rather thick tomes delivered to his home in a single visit.

Between March 2021 and May 2024, Robert reviewed 35 books. His last review - Michael Palin's *Great Uncle Harry* - was printed in our June Newsletter. Sadly, he passed away on Sunday 18th August 2024, aged 94. He will be truly missed, and I wish to publicly acknowledge his contribution to the work of our Library here at Victoria Barracks.

We need some more reviewers - can you help?

Mike O'Brien



The RUSI Needs You

Book Reviewers Wanted

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

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

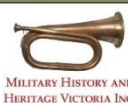


If you feel you can assist, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Please contact the Secretary Bob Hart, on 9282 5918

IN THE FIGHT
AUSTRALIANS AND THE WAR IN
BURMA 1942 – 1945

KEYNOTE – PROF. PETER STANLEY

ONE-DAY CONFERENCE SATURDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2024
 CAULFIELD RSL
 4 ST GEORGES ROAD ELSTERNWICK

From the Secretary:

Lieutenant Colonel Bob Hart RFD



The only thing of note is the membership notes.

"Renewal notices have been sent out. If you have not received one in the mail, please let me know. If you have received one, and have not yet paid up, can you please do so soon?"

We have been informed of the passing of Glen Doyle and have sent our sincere condolences.

We welcome three new members. Peter Mitchell, Michael Carney and Ross McMullin."

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

That's it for this quarter.

Bob Hart

Bequests

Royal United Services Institute of Victoria

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

The Institute maintains a specialist library to assist in this, as well as scheduling regular lectures and visits of interest. The costs of doing so, however are becoming burdensome and are exacerbated by an ageing and declining membership.

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

And in October:

Lunchtime Address

Thursday 31st October 2024 at 1200 for 1230 ANZAC House , 4 Collins St, Melbourne



ROSS McMULLIN

LIFE SO FULL OF PROMISE Further Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation

Ross McMullin is an award-winning biographer and acclaimed storyteller. *Life So Full of Promise: Further Biographies of Australia's Lost Generation* won the

2024 Age Book of the Year Award and was shortlisted for another national prize, the Nib Literary Award. It follows Ross's previous lost generation multi-biography

Farewell Dear People, which won The Prime Minister's Prize for Australian History and the National Cultural Award. His other books include his biography of Pompey Elliott, which won multiple awards. *Life So Full of Promise* features vivid stories about a popular doctor, a brilliant cricketer and a potential prime minister. You'll be entertained, enlightened and moved as Ross brings these extraordinary yet unknown Australians back to life

Coffee and Tea from 12.00 pm. Entrance fee: \$10

And in November:

Annual Luncheon

Monday 18 November

Angliss Restaurant

550 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

at 12-00 pm for 12-30pm

Details on flyer to members

Opinion:

GAZA – Air Strikes against Terrorists

Mike Rawlinson

Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) is a Palestinian Nationalist group recognised by most western countries as a terrorist organisation. It has had de facto control of Gaza since 2007 where it provides local government services. Hamas's long-term goal is the elimination of the State of Israel.

The Hamas terror attack against Israel on 7 October 2023 resulted in some 1200 deaths and 250 hostages. However, it is the Israeli response which has received condemnation from many countries as being disproportionate – a IDF 'high end' response to barbaric but 'low end' violence. A response that has resulted in the deaths of some 30,000-40,000 Palestinian civilians. Most of the deaths have been from air strikes.

States find it difficult to withstand the provocations of terrorism because the legitimacy of the modern state is based on its promise to keep the public sphere free of political violence. Harari, 2018, P193

The Israel Air Force is modern, well trained and optimised for short-range strike. It has more than double the number of fighter/strike aircraft than the RAAF. IAF aircraft are F-15, F-16 and F-35s as well as Apache strike helicopters and UAVs.



By responding in the way it has, the Israel Defence Force (IDF) has been fighting a war, the timing and situation of which, has been of its enemy's choosing. Using an extensive underground tunnel network and illegally siting units in and under schools and hospitals, Hamas has exploited the IDF's predictable 'high end' response to turn world opinion against Israel.

Best-selling author/historian Yuval Noah Harari in his 2018 book '21 Lessons for the 21st Century' provides a relevant insight into terrorism. Harari is Jewish, has a PhD in History from Oxford and lectures at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Terrorists hope that 'fear and confusion will cause the enemy to misuse his intact strength and overreact. Terrorists calculate that when the enraged enemy uses his massive power against them, he will raise a much more violent military and political storm than the terrorists themselves could ever create. During every storm, many unforeseen things happen. Mistakes are made, atrocities are committed, public opinion wavers, neutrals change their stance and the balance of power shifts.' Harari 2018, p189

While the 7 October attack has not been supported by an uprising of Arabs living within Israel or complemented by a strong offensive from Hezbollah in Lebanon, from the Hamas point of view its attack and hostage taking has been partly successful. It has frustrated the impending normalisation of relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia, and attacks on shipping in the Red Sea by Yemen's Houthis have damaged world trade. Countries affected by the trade constraints have incentives to pressure Israel to end the fighting.

The horror of the terror attack has been forgotten and world attention has been focused on the Israeli response. This has resulted a large and disproportionate number of civilian Palestinian casualties, and shortages of food, water and medical supplies in Gaza, all able to be exaggerated by Hamas propaganda. World media has thoroughly covered the sensationalist aspects of the bombing.

Not only has opinion turned against Israel but anti-Semitism has been sparked world-wide. In the UN General Assembly Israel has been condemned and accused of a Gaza genocide.



From Wikipedia, the Geneva Convention provides that air warfare must comply with laws and customs of war, including international humanitarian law by protecting the victims of conflict and refraining from attacks on protected persons.

There are no treaties specific to aerial warfare and restraints are covered by the general laws of war. To be

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

The Geneva Convention's Protocol I was adopted as an amendment in 1977, prohibiting the deliberate or indiscriminate attack of civilians and civilian objects, even if an area contained military objectives, and the attacking force must take all possible precautions and steps to spare the lives of civilians. However, forces occupying near densely populated areas must avoid locating military objectives near or in densely populated areas and endeavour to remove civilians from the vicinity of military objectives. Failure to do so would cause a higher civilian death toll resulting from bombardment by the attacking force and the defenders would be held responsible, even criminally liable, for these deaths.

However, in Gaza, Hamas has escaped world opprobrium for systematically using its own civilians as human shields.

While it appears that the IDF has been disciplined in adhering to the laws of war by not targeting civilians. It is certainly in their interests not to do so. The IDF has also given warning to civilians in future target areas to evacuate to designated safe havens. However, where the warning has involved short notice or requiring successive moves it can involve distress and exhaustion.

Gaza's dense, urban combat environment with tunnels, concealed weapons and hostages is not well suited to air strikes by the IAF. The explosive power of the weapons used, and high population density of Gaza's built-up areas make a high civilian death rate inevitable.

In the World Central Kitchen (WCK) incident, in which an Australian aid worker was killed, an in-country investigation by former Australian CDF ACM Mark Binskin found that the strike against the WCK convoy was caused by the failure of IDF personnel to follow established procedures together with poor real time communication between the IDF and NGO field operatives.

There are problems associated with bombing a legitimate target. Intelligence must be reliable. The target must be able to be identified, and the bombing must be accurate. While modern guided weapons can deliver 'surgical' strikes, there are occasional system malfunctions. Older guided weapons are less reliable and accurate. All high-end weaponry is extremely expensive and may be only assigned to important targets. Unguided bombs are much less accurate and more likely to result in unintended civilian casualties.

A mainly ground campaign by the IDF would have resulted in far less civilian deaths but a much higher casualty rate of IDF personnel.

As well as devastating Gaza, the war has severely disrupted Israel's economy and caused civil and political instability in the country. Calls for a cessation of hostilities and the return of the hostages are opposed by hardliners whose aim is to eliminate Hamas to ensure Israel's future security. Having excellent propaganda skills in both regular and social media, Hamas has been able to exploit these internal divisions in Israel's democracy.

The Israeli response to Hamas maybe legal under the rules of war, but given the disproportionate number of Palestinian civilian casualties, is it ethical? Many people don't think so.

Humanitarian calls are short-term, requiring a cessation of fighting and a return of the hostages.

However, hardline leaders on both sides have a long-term view of the conflict. Terrorist Hamas aims are ideological, and it is prepared to accept the bombing deaths of Palestinian civilians as part of its war strategy. On the Israeli side the government is committed to ensuring the long-term security of Israel and is prepared to accept UN condemnation of the high civilian death toll from air strikes and border closures.



The aim of Hamas and its sponsor Iran is the destruction of the State of Israel. It has certainly massively disrupted Israel's economy, divided society over the progress of the war and the fate of the hostages, stoked civil unrest and political instability.

It is difficult to see a negotiated peace that results in the long-term security of Israel, but there may be surprises. There also remains the possibility of a wider war involving Hezbollah and Iran.

Gaza City is one of the world's oldest cities with recorded history from 15th Century BC. It has been devastated many times before.

Battle of Britain Memorial Service Address - Sunday, 15th September 2024

Brian Surtees

*RAF Association Memorial Service
at the Shrine of Remembrance
Battle of Britain Day - 15 September*

In 1940 the U.K. stood alone against the German forces. The distance between Wissant on the French coast and Dover is less than 20 Nautical miles. Many Germans considered the likely invasion little more than a large river crossing. It is a fact that Goering and his Luftflotte commanders recommended an immediate paratroop assault to seize airfields in the South of England, followed by a seaborne invasion while the U.K. was still reeling after the evacuation at Dunkirk. The British Ground Forces were disorganised and had lost most of their equipment while the R.A.F. had suffered considerable losses of aircraft and pilots. While the Royal Navy was still a force to be reckoned with it is fortunate that Hitler did not approve the operation. He was still hoping to avoid the need to invade through a treaty with the U.K. so that he could pursue his primary objective of invading Russia. Nevertheless, an English edition of Mein Kampf was printed in 1939. This was to be distributed in the U.K. after a successful invasion. Instead, it was issued to P.O.W. camps. We hold one of the few surviving copies in the Royal United Services Institute Library in Victoria Barracks.

During the month's grace, allowed before the commencement of the Luftwaffe attack on the Royal Air Force and its airfields in July, more than 460 new fighter aircraft were built in the U.K.



We rightly commemorate and honour the courage and sacrifice of the young pilots, Commonwealth, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Belgians, French and others, who fought and won the Battle of Britain in the air against greatly superior numbers. We should also remember the vital contributions of others that enabled and supported the fight. Churchill was of course the inspirational and courageous leader, the man of the times. However, he was also impatient and sometimes made demands influenced by emotion. It was fortunate that there were

senior scientists and military advisers possessed of cool professional judgement and the determination to be heard.

Robert Watson Watt was one such scientist. He pursued the development of Radar despite scepticism in the Air Ministry and Government. He conducted successful experiments in 1935, and this was the genesis of the Chain Home radar system that was to be so vital in 1940.



Chief of Fighter Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, supported Watson Watt and, with others, established a coordinated system of radar, Royal Observer Corps and efficient communication with operational control rooms. This was initially known as the Dowding system.



All relevant information was displayed on a map table updated by mostly female staff. Controllers were thus able to allocate fighter resources most efficiently. This was the first coordinated air defence system in the world. Other influential scientists, very important to the war effort, were Henry Tizard, R.V. Jones and Frederick Lindemann. They did not always get on well together!

Hawker's Sydney Camm designed the Hurricane fighter, which was responsible for 60% of the Luftwaffe's losses during August and September 1940, while Supermarine's R.J. Mitchell, designer of the magnificent Spitfire, sadly died in 1937 before he could see the achievements of his aircraft.

During the early days of the battle, which is recognised as occurring between the 10th of July and the 31st of October, two senior Luftwaffe fighter pilots, Adolf Galland and Werner Molders independently attacked Spitfires. In each case, the Spitfires used superior

manoeuvrability to escape. Galland remarked at the time "This is going to be a tough fight".

Churchill appointed Max Aitken, a Canadian businessman and Press Baron, better known as Lord Beaverbrook as aircraft production supremo in 1940. He made many enemies in his relentless pursuit of increased production. However, Britain built more aircraft per month than Germany throughout the war. Many small firms and cottage industries found themselves producing parts for aircraft. During the battle, there was never a shortage of aircraft, only pilots.

Air Marshal Dowding preserved the core of the R.A.F. by resisting Churchill's demands to send all available fighter squadrons to France when that battle was doomed. He was rewarded for his resolute calm leadership during the Battle of Britain by being summarily replaced after it.

During the Battle the R.A.F. Had several advantages, it was fighting over home ground. Pilots who were shot down and survived could be back in the air again within days. The psychological strain on these men can hardly be imagined. On the other hand, the Luftwaffe fighters had only about 20 minutes of endurance over the U.K. If these pilots were shot down and survived, they were still lost to the Luftwaffe. Many ran out of fuel over the channel and were lucky if they were rescued.

The bombing campaign switched to the cities just as the R.A.F. Ground facilities were in extremis and the pilots approaching physical and mental exhaustion. This was caused by Hitler's rage at a bombing raid over Berlin which in turn was in reaction to a random jettisoning of bombs by a German aircraft lost over London. 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.

A German bomber pilot was recorded as saying "Wherever we go the R.A.F. Is there waiting for us".

This was the first defeat for Hitler. It also preserved the U.K. as a base for Allied air operations, and the subsequent invasion of France and defeat of Germany.

A somewhat amusing sequel to the radar story occurred in Canada in the 1950s when Sir Robert Watson Watt was caught speeding by a policeman wielding a radar gun. Watson Watt penned a little poem to mark the occasion

Pity Sir Robert Watson Watt, strange
target of this radar plot.
And thus, with others I can mention, the
victim of his own invention.
His magical all-seeing eye enabled cloud
bound planes to fly.
But now by some ironic twist, it spots the
speeding motorist and bites,

No doubt with legal wit, the hand that
once created it!

Ghost Bat – Update

(from June Newsletter)

Mike Rawlinson

In a surprise change of plans for the RAAF, the MQ-28A Ghost Bat UAV will not carry weapons, instead being shifted to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance roles.

The Boeing MQ-28A Ghost Bat is a loyal wingman class stealth, multirole, uncrewed aerial combat vehicle in development by Boeing Australia for the RAAF. The UAV is designed as a force multiplier aircraft capable of flying alongside crewed aircraft for support as part of an integrated system including space-based capabilities and performing autonomous missions independently using AI.

The Ghost Bat uses a modular mission package system in the nose of the aircraft. The entire nose section can be removed and quickly swapped for another with a different payload for various missions including combat, force reconnaissance and electronic warfare.



Plans to make the Ghost Bat a "killer drone" were shelved after manufacturer Boeing lost out on a US program to make autonomous combat jets.

The USAF has picked the Anduril and General Atomics companies to continue developing their autonomous Collaborative Combat Aircraft concepts over designs offered by Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman. Ghost Bat was Boeing's entry. General Atomics is the manufacturer of the Reaper and Predator UAVs, while Anduril is a software company and newcomer to aviation.

Changing the Ghost Bat to intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) will avoid the very expensive development and proofing costs associated with the armed version. Had Ghost Bat been a winner in the US competition these costs would have been spread over the many thousands of UAVs anticipated to be required by the US military.

Book Reviews

This newsletter has 15 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.

Crossing the Line

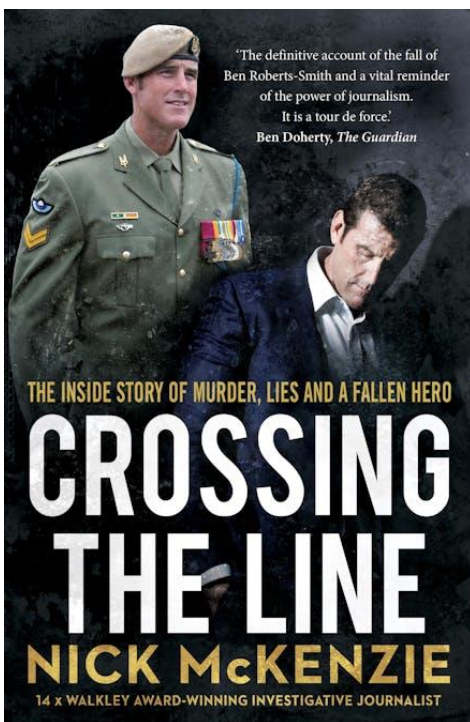
The explosive inside story behind the Ben Roberts-Smith headlines

Nick McKenzie

Sydney, NSW: Hachette, 2023

Paperback 320pp RRP: \$34.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, July 2024



Chris Masters' investigation into the Australia Special Forces in Afghanistan spanned 10 years, including being embedded with the ADF in 2017, was published as *No Front Line* (Allen & Unwin). It was then he passed concerning information to fellow journalist Nick McKenzie about unpublished reservations about events in the ten-year period. Threatened legal action and support from heavyweights Kerry Stokes and Brendan Nelson made the two wary but determined to continue to uncover the truth involving the SAS exploits in Afghanistan.

The incredible claims made by Roberts-Smith and the devious physical and psychological steps against anyone who dared to cast dispersions on his military actions bordered on the unbelievable. McKenzie's article *Leonardis* naming Robert-Smith appeared online

and he unsuccessfully sought to prevent its publication in *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* next day.

Nick McKenzie spent five precious years pursuing the truth about Roberts-Smith. By September 2018 both McKenzie and Masters had become aware of Roberts-Smith's intention to seek legal redress against Fairfax Media. Both journalists realised the outcome of the trial would determine their professional futures and commence to explore every possible avenue to provide evidence of Roberts-Smith's alleged gross misconduct. This entailed McKenzie making a trip to Kabul in 2019, where he contacted the family of the Afghan allegedly kicked off a cliff before being murdered. Back in Australia previously tight-lipped former SAS members were having second thoughts about remaining silent, and more evidence was gradually accumulated, and this also applied most importantly to General Brereton conducting the Inquiry into the SAS. Danielle, Roberts-Smith's former girlfriend provided the contents of six USB files buried in the garden by Roberts-Smith.

In June 2020 the Brereton Report was released with Roberts-Smith being the only SAS person named from a group responsible for 29 murders. Twelve months later the defamation trial commenced in Sydney's Federal Court building with Justice Besanko presiding. Australia watched 90 sitting days, during which more witnesses continued to come forward to give evidence for the defence. This included employees who worked under Roberts-Smith at Channel Seven in Brisbane and spoke of his bullying approach, his 'my way or no way' approach to management, and heavy drinking during office hours. Roberts-Smith and his legal team continued their campaign in discrediting witnesses. McKenzie and Masters were desperate for the judgement to list at least one murder in order to retain their professional integrity

With Roberts-Smith ensconced in Bali, on 1 June 2023 Justice Besanko handed down his judgement. He found that Roberts-Smith was a serial war criminal, a compulsive liar and a vicious bully involved in four murders. For McKenzie and Masters, their faith in themselves and the creed by which they worked had finally risen to the surface.

McKenzie has carefully woven many threads together to provide his readers with an accurate account of a watershed moment in the history of the Australian Defence Force and investigative journalism. He has demonstrated that truth and excellent reporting were able to triumph over bullies, fabrications, high-level backers and very 'deep pockets'.

Buckham's Bombers

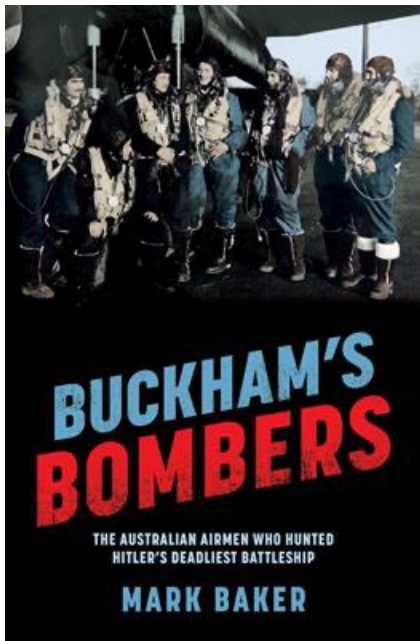
The Australian Airmen who hunted Hitler's Deadliest Battleship

Mark Baker

Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2024
Paperback 304pp RRP \$34.99

Reviewer: Adrian Catt, August 2024

With a remarkable *Foreword* by Sir Angus Houston, and a glowing testimonial from accomplished author and military historian Michael Veitch, both very well know gentlemen with ties to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), what is there left to say about Mark Baker's *Buckham's Bombers*? Well, plenty actually!



Such accolades highlight the importance and significance of this exceptional and exciting account of the adventure, daring and spirit of Bruce Buckham and his crew serving in British Bomber

Command, during World War II. Flying in the deadly skies of Europe in their Avro Lancaster bomber 'Whoa

Bessie from 463 Squadron based at RAF Waddington, Buckham most skilfully and miraculously flew endless bombing and cine sorties in treacherous skies, together with his crew comprised of mostly New South Welshmen, a Victorian, and a 'Taffy', over the course of two tours of duty.

Buckham's story begins with his initial and basic flying training in Australia, (where he crashed both a Tiger Moth, then a Wirraway in separate accidents), then moves on to his posting to Bomber Command in the UK. It is retold to the author in a series of interviews made more than 30 years after the conclusion of the Second World War. This riveting account details how Buckham selected his crew mates, their life at RAF Waddington, and their many extremely dangerous sorties. We are privileged to read detailed accounts of numerous 'hair-raising' sorties, such as during the Battle of Berlin, flights over Nuremberg, and the disastrous raid upon Maille le Champ, in France.

At Waddington, Buckham and crew were involved in endless hi-jinks and eagerly partook in the free-flowing alcohol on offer, both in the Messes, and at the public houses in town. This saw the crew getting into

fistfights with others; Buckham incurring the wrath of top 'brass', but he had the protection and respect of a Senior Officer (his Base Commander), who often bailed him out of trouble.

Accounts are given of long-haul flights into Scandinavia and Russia to destroy the German battle cruiser *Tirpitz*. The RAF took several attempts to destroy the *Tirpitz* at three different locations, eventually succeeding, whereas the Royal Navy had failed in numerous attempts, including whilst using three-men 'X-craft' midget submarines, 'Johnnie Walker' mines, and limpets; but successfully sinking the *Scharnhorst*. Buckham flew cine ops on the successful mission which saw the *Tirpitz* sunk.

'*Whoa Bessie*' encountered severe battle damage from flak and incendiary gunfire on several sorties and was very fortunate to make it back to RAF Waddington, with both the aircraft and crew pushed to the limit of their endurance; only adding to the anxiety of these *most* brave men, ever unsure whether their latest mission would be a 'one-way' ticket to death or captivity. On a lighter note, Buckham was very lucky not to have his wings 'clipped', after taking his crew on a celebratory low-level joyride flight over Paris and in overflying the Arc de Triomphe and the Champs-Elysees, incurred the wrath of the French Government.

Archangel in Russia was used as a staging point for a raid upon *Tirpitz*, after a fifteen-hour flight from RAF Lossiemouth, in Scotland. Not all raids were successful. For instance, a Bomber Command raid on a second series of German dams demanded by the United States Forces was a failure.

Fatigue of Buckham and his crew during their second tour saw them re-assigned to performing the daring role of cine recording from '*Whoa Bessie*' on countless 463 Squadron missions. Eventually burnt-out, Buckham and crew were grounded, but he was offered a position as VIP Pilot to fly British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Buckham declined and insisted on being returned home to Australia, so that he could be reunited with his wife, Gwen.

Buckham returned to Australia, decorated with a Distinguished Service Order (DSO), to his duties as an BHP Limited employee and forgot about the War for 30 years. He was approached by Mark Baker, to recount his wartime stories; Baker taking a further ten years after Buckham's passing to publish this tremendous book.

An enthralling, lively, fly-on-the-wall read of lives at risk on the ground and every sortie in the air. Buckham faced many 'close calls', returning often with severe battle damage to '*Whoa Bessie*', and with an exhausted and relieved crew. A pleasing and absorbing read of exceptional true tales that would be of particular interest to those who serve or have served in the RAAF, and military history readers.

Information Operations

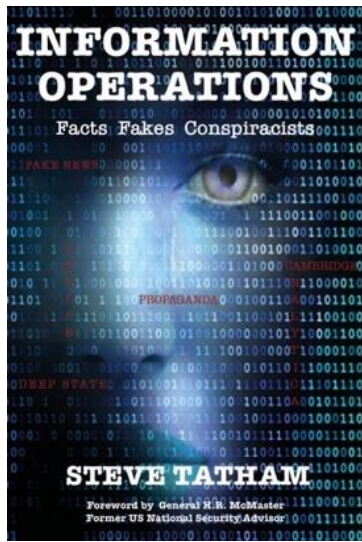
Facts Fakes Conspiracists

Steve Tatham

Havant, UK: Howgate Publishing, 2024
Paperback 272pp RRP: \$39.95

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, August 2024

Information Operations encompasses the following activities: propaganda, information warfare, psychological operations, strategic communication, information activities and misinformation and disinformation. Steve Tatham has had a career in the



Royal Navy and RN Reserve for the last 35 years with the last two-thirds being involved in Information and Psychological Operations. He has seen many of his peers come and go depending on the waxing and waning of information operations (IO) in the priority of the Ministry of Defence. Highly regarded in his field, he is providing an opportunity to

reappraise the place of information in our daily and military environments. His major tenet is that the human factor takes priority in IO. With countless historic examples of both successful and unsuccessful IOs, the reader is given an insider's view of many recent and past events.

Saudi Arabia was eager to reduce the influence of its extreme preachers. Research found that because its youth were deferential to authoritative figures, had star footballers been used in the IO, the campaign would have been far more effective. This became known as the *Behavioural Dynamics* (BD) approach as part of *Target Audience Analysis* (TAA). Tatham regarded it as the cornerstone to IO as it was based on population data.

The Cambridge Analytica scandal over the unauthorised access to over 87 million Facebook files was revealed in March 2018. Despite not being involved whatsoever, Tatham, being a recognized international consultant and expert, in a concerted campaign led by media and certain left-wing academics was erroneously accused of being part of the Cambridge Analytica scandal. This had a major personal impact upon him. The immediate result on IO was the abandonment of BD and TAA, thus making current and future IOs less effective.

The currency of this work is most evident – it took twelve months for the Ministry of Defence to grant its

approval for its publication. Tatham advocates greater education in activities such as clear thinking and reasoning to help future generations distinguish between fact and fiction. The *Conclusion* contains eight recommended steps to remedy deficits in public communication, and the same number of recommendations for improvement in the armed forces.

Information operations concern everyone in today's society – Steve Tatham has written for all comers using non-technical language that facilitates easy reading. This is a watershed work that has been meticulously researched (with the *Footnotes* where they belong – on the bottom of the page!).

Judgement at Tokyo

World War II on Trial and the Making of Modern Asia

Gary J Bass

Sydney, NSW: Pan MacMillan, 2024
Paperback 912pp RRP: \$39.99

Reviewer: Michael O'Brien, June 2024

Our library has a remarkable collection relating to the war crimes trials for the Pacific War. Included are the papers of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Francis Edington Mornane, ISO, Australian Army Legal Corps, relating to his service as Prosecutor at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials Tribunal from 1946. These unique papers are contained in five large boxes.

Judgement at Tokyo is, at first glance, a detailed account of the trial. It is remarkable for its detail. For example, it recounts the testimony of an Australian soldier who was the victim of an attempted decapitation. This segment

of the trial was presented by Mornane, though his name is not mentioned.

The trial represented a multi-national effort to define and codify international law and to deal with atrocities.

There is a comprehensive and worthwhile review of this book on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1FfbOGDQw4>.

This story relates strongly to the circumstances of the current conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. It is an important study for those interested in the ethics and laws of conflict.



Lest

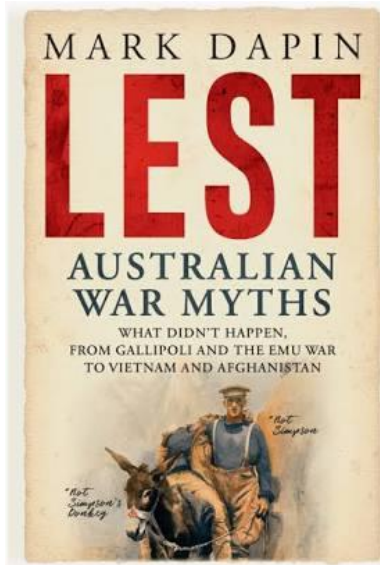
Australian War Myths

Mark Dapin

Cammeray, NSW: Simon & Shuster, 2024
Paperback 186pp RRP: \$34.99

Reviewer: Mike Annett, July 2024

This book can't be accused of having a title that leaves the reader wondering what it's all about and while the author, a journalist and academic historian, has written an entertaining and well-crafted tale, there is not much new in this example of a now familiar genre. That genre being the challenging or de-bunking of some long-cherished truisms or 'myths' of Australian military history.



There have now been several iconoclastic works of this type in the last few years, partly to provide a counter point to the raft of popular histories, especially those released during the Great War Centenary period, that provide most of the targets that Mark Dapin takes aim at. The usual tropes are there, the natural soldier of the

bronzed Anzac type, the perfidious British upper class sending trusting colonials to their doom, the single-handed Anzac effort at Gallipoli and Monash the brilliant, but almost sidelined general who won the war and could have replaced Field Marshal Haig as the overall commander of British Empire Forces on the Western Front.

We have Mark Dapin's entertaining writing correcting the record on these and many other falsehoods or exaggerations. However, the reality is that the record has in most cases already been corrected, if corrected is the right word because, as the author himself concedes, all the serious histories of Australia's military endeavours provide a fuller, more balanced perspective, without propagating lazy self-congratulatory jingoism.

Like most nations, Australia's military story is complex, nuanced and inevitably at times both tragic and inspiring. Not all the villains were British and not all Australians were heroes – self-evident perhaps but Mark Dapin sets it all out for us again. His examination of the anti-Vietnam War moratorium protest movement and its influence on subsequent community and political responses to the more recent 'wars of

choice' (for Australia anyway) in Iraq and Afghanistan is interesting and insightful given that he is now writing from the vantage point of a professional journalist and scholar; someone who has lived through these events and their aftermath.

On the other hand his section lambasting the former RSL leader, the late Bruce Ruxton and the 'no poofters' attitude to official commemorations during the period of Ruxton's presidency restates a long-corrected record – assuming that anyone, Ruxton included, genuinely believed what he thundered about at the time. In overall terms this, like much of the book, offers little new but for those who want a primer of Australian military myths and the rebuttals to all of them, this covers the field in an entertaining and insightful way.

Of course, the trouble with demolishing myths is that there is often a kernel of truth in many of them.

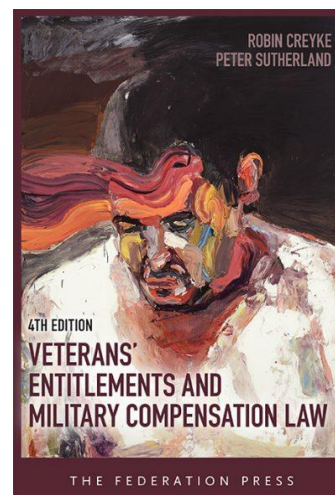
Veterans' Entitlements and Military Compensation Law

4th Edition

Robin Creyke, Peter Sutherland

Alexandria, NSW: Federation Press, 2024
Paperback 976pp RRP: \$144.00

Reviewer: Mike O'Brien,
June 2024



This is a book for lawyers rather than for veterans. It prints two Acts – *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* and its predecessor *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*. As the Acts unfold they are extensively annotated with all the relevant interpretative material

from courts and tribunals. The core of the book is complemented by a summary of the complex history of military compensation in Australia. There is also a valuable discussion of defence honours and awards and war grave entitlements.

The book is authoritative and logical, offering a clear path through the maze of current legislation.

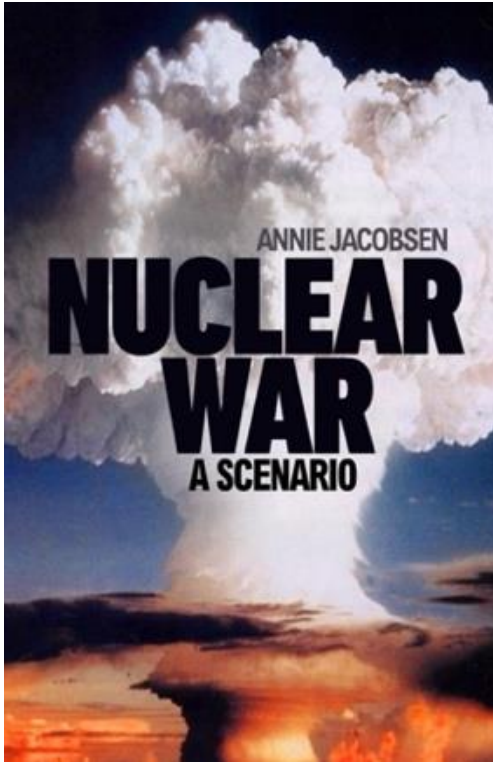
This is an important addition to our collection of books and pamphlets relating to the law and the military.

Nuclear War A Scenario

Annie Jacobsen

North Sydney, NSW: Penguin Random House, 2024
Paperback 200pp RRP: \$36.99

Reviewer: David Rees, August 2024



In her sensational narrative, Annie Jacobson paints a present-day scenario where following a nuclear missile attack on the USA, the US President launches a number of powerful thermo-nuclear missiles against the aggressor. This results in the involvement of the other nuclear nations and the outbreak of a nuclear world war. It concludes not only in the elimination of homo sapiens and their civilizations but the destruction of most other life forms as well.

She argues that because of the huge risk of failure of the nuclear deterrence principle and the likelihood that her frightening scenario could happen, all the nuclear weapons currently stockpiled in the world should be abolished. (A view also held by the Swiss-based Organization ICAN – International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons).

Jacobsen is a highly regarded American journalist and author of many books. She's good at dramatizing how a nuclear war could occur, and the book is really well-researched and well-written with excellent notes and references. It is based on historical (declassified) information obtained from exclusive interviews with politicians, scientists, engineers and military personnel and she demonstrates a firm grasp of military

organizations and weaponry. However, because of security requirements there is much fiction in the narrative. Nevertheless, when the story is interwoven with published facts about military arms, scientific data on nuclear bombs and missiles, as well as political organization structures, it achieves a non-fictional status which makes the story very believable and realistic.

The author initially traces the history of the development of nuclear weapons and states that since the end of the Second World War, the Americans have continually planned on how to fight a nuclear war. During the Cold War between the USA and the USSR from 1950 to 1989, the US stockpiled a maximum of 31,255 nuclear weapons. The stockpiling was based on the principle of 'deterrence' where the more nuclear weapons a country has, the less likely it was to be attacked. Fortunately, by 2020 the US had reduced its stockpile to less than 6,000 nuclear weapons.

The rest of the book dramatically describes in great minute-by-minute detail what supposedly could happen if a nuclear missile was launched from near Pyongyang in North Korea with its target being the Pentagon in Washington. At first, the missile launch is detected and tracked by the US Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS). Although defensive actions are taken by the US Strategic Command to kill the missile, they fail and another North Korean submarine missile is launched against the west coast of the USA. Both missiles hit their targets.

A timeline of the decision processes adopted by the US commanders and their advisors as well as in the other nations following the attack is described in three key chapters. They include the destructive outcomes from the first 24 minutes after the first missile launch to the next 24 minutes and finally to the last 24 minutes which ends in mutually assured destruction. (MAD)

In reading this book, one is reminded of Kubrick's 1964 film, *Dr Strangelove* starring Peter Sellers and George Scott in which fun is made of how a nuclear war could start and finish. At that time, only five countries had nuclear bombs, but the threat of a nuclear war was very high. In this book in 2024, the story is more serious because the number of known nuclear countries has increased to nine (Russia, USA, China, France, UK, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea) and between them, they have a total stockpile of over 12,500 nuclear warheads!

So, these days, perhaps a new startling book advocating the abolishment of nuclear weapons is a timely reminder of how insane a nuclear war could be.

Retaking Kokoda

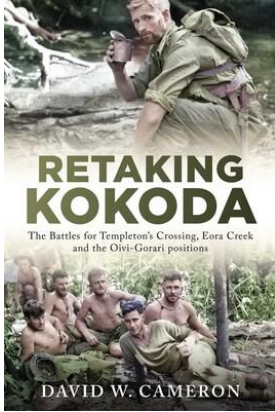
The Battle for Templeton's Crossing, Eora Creek and the Oivi-Gorari positions

David W Cameron

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2022
Paperback 364pp RRP: \$32.99

Reviewer: David Hardacre, June 2024

This relatively recent publication seeks to add Cameron's own research to the works of earlier authors. Throughout this study he emphasizes the challenging conditions faced in New Guinea – particularly from the heat and high humidity of sea-level tropics with daily rainstorms to the biting cold above 6,000 ft (or 1800 metres), and with soldiers lacking warm clothing, and with limited rations. The dense jungle conditions, with narrow tracks, steep ravines and swiftly flowing rivers made for tricky battle conditions, also



not made any easier by the logistics challenges and the limited mapping. This Cameron addresses by incorporating useful sketch-map outlines particularly covering tactical areas, also referring to air re-supply ('biscuit-bombing'), where possible, and casualty evacuation, frequently using native carriers on their return journeys, although some air-evacuation was attempted.

Of the battles themselves, much involved infantry minor tactics, featuring patrolling, reconnaissance, ambushes and skirmishes, often at platoon level, although unit commanding officers identified the major objectives, usually along tracks. Interposed with these are occasional involvements of higher-level commanders, and Blamey's directions. Whether he understood or accepted field commanders' concepts of operations is another question, particularly when Cameron points out that some of those commanders were replaced when starting to achieve results. Given the problems of communication, with field radios often ineffective, the limitations of signal line, and the distance to higher command headquarters, their judgments about battlefield situations would lack currency.

Cameron's observations about Blamey's infamous address to the surviving troops of 21st Brigade at Koitaki Cricket Ground (pp.433-435) are indicative of one of the many New Guinea situations other than fighting the Japanese.

Cameron's reference to the work of ANGAU (Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) and the manpower

provided by the native carriers is of particular significance, as without them, the Australian logistics problems would have been near-insurmountable. Equally recognized are the contributions of philanthropic organisations including the Salvation Army and its Red Shield comforts.

His inclusion of extracts from a limited number of published Japanese memoirs of the New Guinea campaign adds balance to understanding of the campaign. Additionally, his use of Allied translations of extracts from recovered Japanese documents (which provided some of the intelligence from which Australian command decisions derived) adds to an understanding of the Japanese approach, tactics, problems and their resolution, including addressing food shortages.

In summary, Cameron's study adds to knowledge and understanding of parts of the New Guinea campaign. The emphasis is that much of the fighting was in jungle, at short-range, at or below company level, and rarely involved Brigade level, apart from providing directives, and moving units to support battalions in close combat.

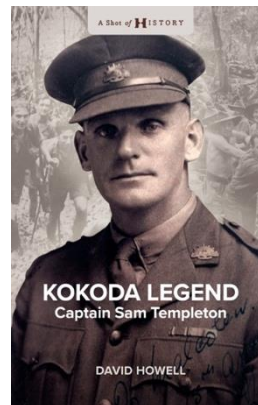
Kokoda Legend

Captain Sam Templeton

David Howell

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024
Paperback 304pp RRP: \$29.99

Reviewer: Neville Taylor, June 2024



Born into a Presbyterian family in Belfast in 1901, Sam Templeton grew up in a challenging environment that taught him life lessons he retained to his last day. At seventeen he joined the Royal Navy Reserve for the last year of the First World War. Two years later he commenced service in the Royal Irish Constabulary, but in less than a year he realised he'd become a 'marked man' in the eyes of the IRA, so sailed for Australia in May 1921.

Between the wars, Sam worked as a baker, railway shunter, then baker again. He married in 1928 and September 1930 saw him enlist the 5th Battalion, Victoria Scottish Regiment (VSR). A quiet, serious and hard-working individual who prided himself on his fitness, he rose to the rank of warrant officer as company sergeant major (CSM) of B Company.

October 1939 saw his unit called out and he undertook officer training before being appointed a provisional lieutenant. Following training appointments, he

realised that there was a chance of not seeing action, so in October 1941 he transferred to the newly formed 39th Battalion (39 Bn) as officer commanding B Company. The age difference between he and his soldiers saw him quickly become affectionately known as 'Uncle Sam'. Christmas saw the Battalion commence its move to Sydney ready for embarkation for Port Moresby.

Disembarkation saw 39 Bn occupying airstrips just outside Port Moresby where accommodation facilities were non-existent. On 15 Apr Sam was promoted to captain prior to the Battle of the Coral Sea (May) and the Midway Islands (June). These losses force the Japanese to abandon capture of Port Moresby by sea and an Australian commando raid captured Japanese plans to come south down the Kokoda Track.

B Coy 39 Bn were chosen to be the first troops to move northward with a view to prevent capture of Kokoda and potential airfield sites. Its heavy stores were to be shipped to Buna, then moved south to Kokoda. The Company camped at the southern end of the Track on 24 June, headed north on 7 July, crossed Eora Creek (later to be renamed *Templeton's Crossing*) on the 13th and arrived at Kokoda on 15 July. Sam allocated his troops to defensive positions, then reconnoitred north along the route his additional stores would be delivered.

Contact with the Japanese who had landed at Gona and moving south was imminent, and ambushes set, were overrun by superior numbers. On 26 August at Oivi (just north of Kokoda), Sam, whilst on his own, had his right femur shattered by enemy fire. In pain, he dragged himself into hiding that was short-lived, before being captured by the Japanese. As the first Australian officer to be captured, the next day a doctor reset his leg and administered morphine to make him more comfortable until an interrogator and translator arrived. Stoically, Sam, under rigorous interrogation, fed the Japanese greatly inflated numbers and exaggerated locations of Allied troops. This information was subsequently found in Japanese headquarters' intelligence reports, but their influence on subsequent Japanese strategy remain unknown. Sam was eventually bayoneted in the stomach by his interrogator and then buried by the doctor. On returning to the burial site post-War, the doctor could not find the grave, and assumed the Japanese had recovered the body as one of their own.

This work has been comprehensively researched and presented in a most readable style. (This reviewer read it in its entirety without leaving his chair!) This is a well-balanced biography and coupled with a genuine experience of the Kokoda Track, takes the reader back the 80 years when this amazing officer honoured those he led by his own high standards right to the end.

Let the Bastards Come

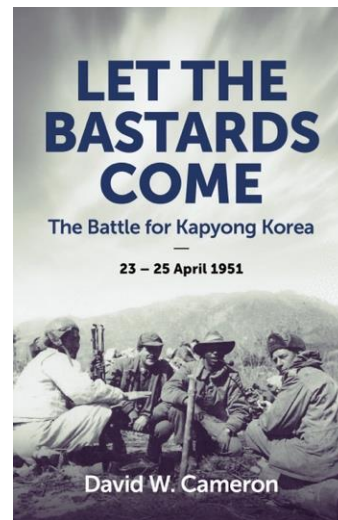
The Battle for Kapyong Korea, 23-25 April 1951

David W Cameron

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024
Paperback 530pp RRP: \$32.99

Reviewer: David Hardacre, August 2024

This study provides not only an account of the battle of 23-25 April 1951, but the lead-up to the battle from the start of the Korean War. This includes President Truman's replacement of the Allied Commander, General Douglas MacArthur, by General Matthew Ridgway, and the introduction of Chinese Peoples' Liberation Force volunteers to support the North Korean forces which were losing ground after their invasion of the South.



Significantly, United Nations forces had recaptured ground lost in the early battles and

were advancing well north of the 38th Parallel, the initial post-1945 border. Massed Chinese attacks had forced withdrawals by the UN forces, but some ROK (South Korean) forces were routed, leaving gaps in the front-line. These the Chinese forces exploited, using massed infantry for human wave tactics.

An especially critical gap in the vicinity of Kapyong (north of Seoul) was plugged by the 1200 Australian (3 RAR) for 24 hours, and Canadian (2 PPCLI) infantrymen for twelve hours, supported by New Zealand (16 FRNZ) artillery and 15 American Sherman tanks. Notably, skillful use of infantry minor tactics, using ground prudently, the close coordination of defensive artillery fire and the effective use of armour in location, together with resupply of ammunition, stand out. The importance of the battle lies in the defensive line being held, rather than allowing a Chinese breakthrough to penetrate deeply into the South. This is the main aspect of Cameron's study. For Australians, the names of Lieutenant Colonel Ferguson, Major Bernard O'Dowd and Captain Reg Saunders, will be among those recognised.

The book itself is a well-researched paperback of over 500 pages, with one general map of the Korean Peninsula and several local maps of operational areas involving 3 RAR. It provides updated research and analysis, particularly of the events of 23-25 April 1951, and as such is commended to the prospective reader.

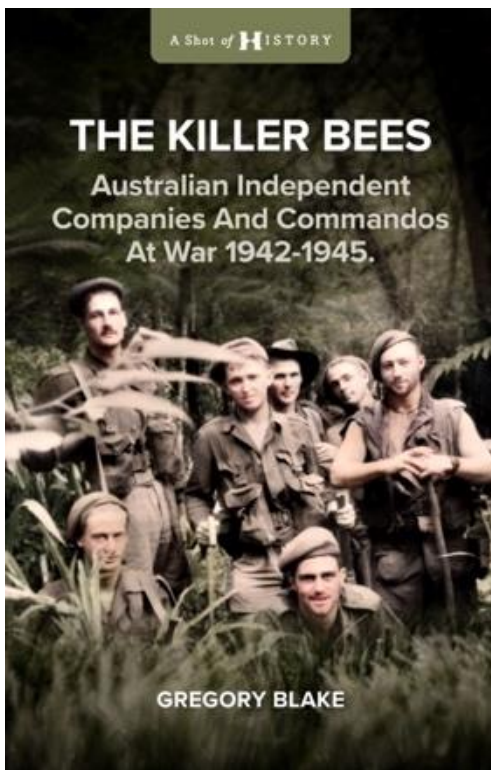
The Killer Bees

Australian Independent Companies and Commandos at War, 1942 - 1945

Gregory Blake

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024
Paperback 320pp RRP: \$29.99

Reviewer: David Rees, June 2024



The aim of the Independent Companies (ICs) within the Australian Army in the Second World War was to conduct long range reconnaissance, harass and destroy enemy personnel and equipment, conduct sabotage and disrupt the enemy's communication system. Like "killer bees", they needed to find a victim, sting fatally and fly away.

According to the author, Australian ICs were created as a result of some secret communications between the Australian and British Chiefs of Army, *Sir Cyril Brudenell White* and *John Dill* in 1940. At that time, Britain had a secret Special Operations Executive (SOE) for controlling a number of British Independent Companies tasked with secret operations behind enemy lines. An agreement was apparently reached to set up similar independent companies in Australia with training help from the SOE.

However, the Australian Army for reasons unknown, had no knowledge of this ICs agreement because a little time later, Sir Cyril Brudenell White was accidentally killed in an RAAF air crash near Canberra in August 1940. So, when a training team from SOE arrived by ship in Melbourne in November 1940 with

Tommy guns, explosives and maps ready to train the Australian ICs, they were arrested by the Australian Army before the confusion about their purpose was made good.

Gregory Blake, the author, argues that the Australian Army initially never had any idea what to do with Independent Companies. Although training facilities were set up at Tidal River at Wilson's Promontory in 1941, the senior army staff just weren't ready for operating ICs. So, in June 1941, after a special breed of volunteers were selected for an initial training course for IC 2/1, the course was stopped and the recruits and trainers disbanded.

When Japan entered the war in December 1941, the Army fortunately had a rethink about ICs. New companies IC 2/2 and IC 2/3 were suddenly re-formed and trained and quickly posted to Timor and New Caledonia to prepare for fighting a guerrilla type war against the Japanese. Subsequently, between 1942 & 1945, a total of eleven Independent Companies (ICs) or Commando Squadrons (CSs) as they were later named, were formed.

The book describes, the various campaigns carried out by the ICs and CSs, in Timor, New Guinea and Bougainville. They include the IC 2/2's and IC 2/4's roles in Timor, the IC 2/5's role in Wau and Salamaua, the IC 2/7's role in Bena-Bena, the 2/6's role around Lae and with the American 32nd Division in Buna and finally the IC 2/8's role with the 3rd Division in Bougainville.

The role of the ICs was often misunderstood by some senior Army Divisional commanders. It was mainly because of the ICs unorthodox tactics and the innovative, tough, resilient and uncompromising unique qualities of the ICs commanders and men. However, when the role was understood, even as a sort of 'Jungle Cavalry', the benefits of having such special unconventional warfare experts fighting alongside the regulars were huge.

Gregory Blake writes in a very readable style, but the book may not appeal to some serious historians as it doesn't provide any footnotes, index, detailed campaign maps or army organizational charts. The author wanted to make it easier for the public to read! Nevertheless, the book still relies on a broad spectrum of reliable historical sources to compose an interesting story about Australian ICs and the important roles they played as killer bees behind enemy lines in the Second World War.

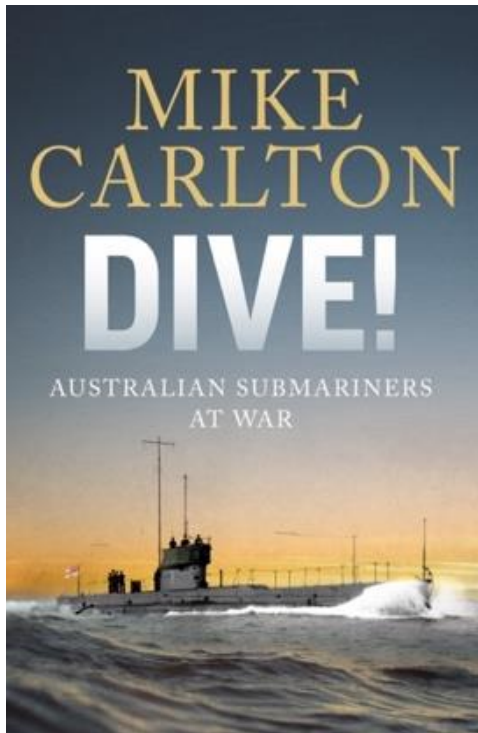
Dive!

Australian Submariners at War

Mike Carlton

North Sydney, NSW: Penguin Random House, 2024
Hardback 480pp RRP: \$45.00

Reviewer: Adrian Catt, August 2024



This book is a *most* interesting blend of historical and biographical accounts of Australian submariners and their boats, submarines. It includes coverage from the development and origin of experimental, rudimentary craft through the ages, to the development of sophisticated (and survivable) evolution of technology-laden key defence weapons capable of both offence and deterrence.

This text covers the design, construction, crewing, and flawed delivery of Australia's first submarines, AE1 and AE2 and their difficult journey from the UK at the outbreak of World War I. Also included are details of their challenges, failures, deployment and subsequent loss. The crew of AE2 were captured and their boat sunk after their daring penetrating raid of the Dardanelles and saw the remaining three years of World War I in a Turkish prison, where they faced brutality, starvation, torture, and repeated failed escape attempts. Desperate stuff!

Dive! explains that Australia's initial submarines were commanded by Royal Navy (RN) commissioned officers, whilst NCOs and other ratings were from the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). RAN personnel did their basic training in Australia before being posted to the UK for specialised submariner training. The book mentions all the shore establishments which RAN

candidates passed through to qualify for their prestigious 'Dolphins' badge; and that even fewer RAN Officers' completed the gruelling British 'Perisher' Course for prospective submarine commanders.

The author takes the initiative to explain crew structures/duties on-board the boats, as well as performance, ability and tactics for the various classes of Australian and British submarines at war, highlighting a very steep learning curve for the entire crew, owing to the many hazards and dangers of deploying and operating in such boats. Much to its credit, this book contains excellent cross-section diagrams of the various classes of Australian submarines.

This work contains numerous exciting stories of daring wartime adventures/missions, and how/what crews faced pioneering and refining manoeuvrability and tactics, with endless drills and practice of crash-dives, fire and flooding etc. honing their seamanship. We are told of bold and daring raids upon Scandinavian fjords, their challenges, failures and successes. We also learn details of raids in Singapore, Vietnam and Hong Kong upon enemy shipping and communications, and of the men, their equipment and techniques, as well as failures; men washed overboard and vessels flooded, sent to watery graves.

Revealed are the role of midget subs in performing reconnaissance and pathfinding the way for the D-Day landings at Normandy, France during the Second World War. In the Pacific Ocean the US Navy (USN) was not initially interested in deploying Australian submarines as they saw no role for these RAN boats, but they were eventually lobbied with a pitch which changed their view.

Outlined are Cold-War shenanigans between RAN and Russians in Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) sorties in the Pacific, Indian and Southern Oceans. The book carries through to 'O-boats' design, deployment and decommissioning; and the tragedy and near loss of Collins-class boats is also mentioned.

Easy reading – engaging and suspenseful. An exciting page-turner, this book is straight-forward and unpretentious; but colourful when it needs to be. Very well done!



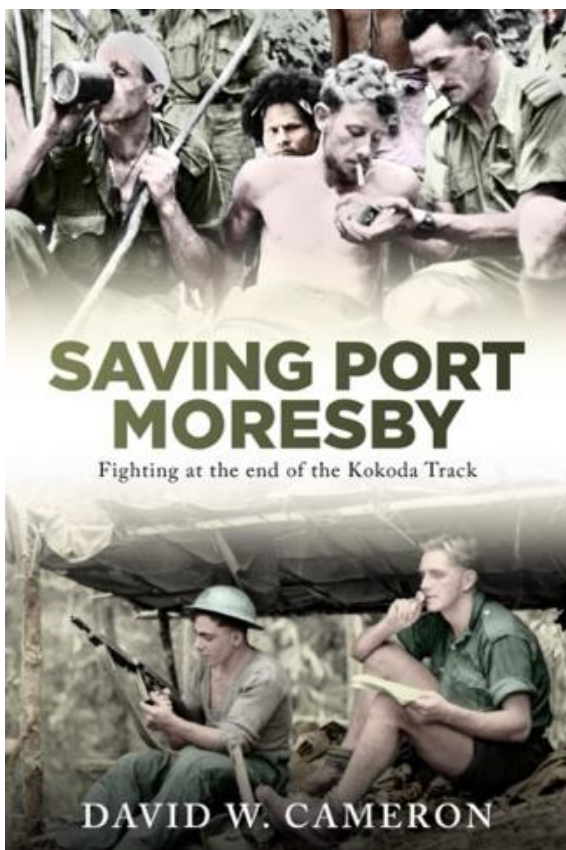
Saving Port Moresby
Fighting at the end of the Kokoda Track

David W Cameron

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2022
 Paperback 304pp RRP: \$36.99

Reviewer: Robert Dixon, August 2024

This is the sixth book David Cameron has written on the campaign in Papua in 1942 and early 1943. Each book provides great detail of the fighting in a specific geographic area and time period. This book is no exception, it provides a very detailed account of the fighting which took place in the Owen Stanley Range in September 1942. During this period there were a series of battles along the Kokoda Track which resulted in the Australian forces being forced to withdraw southwards as far as Imita Ridge, the last defensible ridge in the Owen Stanleys beyond which lay easy road access to Port Moresby, only 50kms away.



Contrary to the impression given by the book's subtitle it is not limited to fighting at the end of the Track, indeed it is not until well over half-way through the book that the author covers the southern-most limit of the Australian withdrawal and thus the southern-most limit of the Japanese advance. That the author does not limit himself to the fighting at the end of the Kokoda Track is of much benefit to the reader as I think that this work, more than any other written on this topic, impresses upon the reader a number of

important insights into the events which took place at that time.

First, the author does not limit his attention to the activities of the Australian and Japanese armed forces but also devotes appropriate space to the activities of members of the Salvation Army, whose 'Red Shield Posts' were present not only at Owers' Corner (this is at the very beginning of the Track) away from the fighting but were also present with units in contact with the Japanese and they withdrew only as the Australian infantry withdrew.

Second, the author's account is very well researched, and battles are often vividly described in terms of the actions of individual men. As a result, the reader becomes very conscious of the chaos and confusion and sheer terror present in any fighting, especially in mountainous jungle terrain, and thus the courage of those men involved. Thirdly, it is clear that positions might easily be out flanked and that it was difficult for men to stay in contact with their units, especially during withdrawals. The outcome was that men would become missing, often taking many days to rejoin their units. Finally, the work also provides a very accurate account, it seems to me, of the difficult relations between the commanders in the field and the Commander-in-Chief, General Blamey.

The book is very well written and includes over 40 black and white photographs, nine being photos of Japanese officers and troops at various points on the Kokoda Track. There is a fourteen-page index, mostly of names and the book also includes six drawings which help the reader understand the positions and number of the forces involved in particular battles. Unfortunately the book does not include a map which solely covers the Track where it passes over the Owen Stanleys. Instead the reader has to get by with a single map which shows the whole length of the Track from the North Coast of Papua across to Port Moresby. Although this map shows the sites of the various battles covered in the book, the area covered by the map is so large that place names towards the 'end' of the Track – the places which are the focus of the book – are in very small font and often very close together and difficult to read.



Ghost Bat

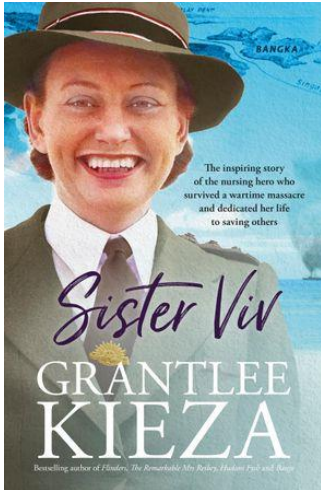
Sister Viv

Grantlee Kieza

Sydney, NSW : HarperCollins Publishers, 2024
Paperback 352pp RRP: \$35.99

Reviewer: Mary Brandy, July 2024

Vivian Bullwinkel grew up in Broken Hill, New South Wales, and trained as a nurse there. After gaining further qualification and experience, she, with friends, volunteered to join the Australian Army Nursing Service and was posted to Singapore.



When the Japanese attacked Singapore in 1942, evacuation was ordered. Vivian and 64 other nurses boarded the SS *Vyner Brooke*, a British registered cargo ship, which was then bombed by enemy aircraft. It sank within half an hour and many drowned. Vivian and 21 nursing colleagues were among the 150 personnel who made it to Radji Beach on Banka Island, Sumatra.

Japanese soldiers on the beach forced these women to wade back into the shallow waters of this remote beach to be shot. Vivian felt pain in her back, fell forward, waiting to die as soldiers bayoneted survivors. Somehow Vivian survived. The next three and a half years were spent in various brutal Japanese camps where Vivian used her skills to help others survive the horror that surrounded them. Upon restoration of peace, Vivian returned to Australia. Her commitment to nursing was always underpinned by the memory of her fallen comrades.

At almost 60 years of age Vivian found herself back in a war zone as a primary driver of Operation Babylift. During this operation twelve volunteers travelled to Southeast Asia to rescue and relocate Vietnamese orphans. Vivian's strength of spirit and her compassion continued to be evident throughout her life – a very stoic and brave woman who deserves her recognition as a hero and a great Australian.

The author, Grantlee Kieza, has researched facts well and has been able to present a sound balance between these facts and telling this story. It is an interesting and compelling read – a story told in graphic detail that describes Vivian's determination and courage, her resilience to survive against the odds.

Whilst this story of survival against a strong Japanese force has been told often, the author has been able to

set the scene for a wider audience with his writing about her early life and family. Growing up with her grandfather had taught her how to push her body to do impossible when life depended on it. The relevance of this lesson did not go unnoticed later in her life.

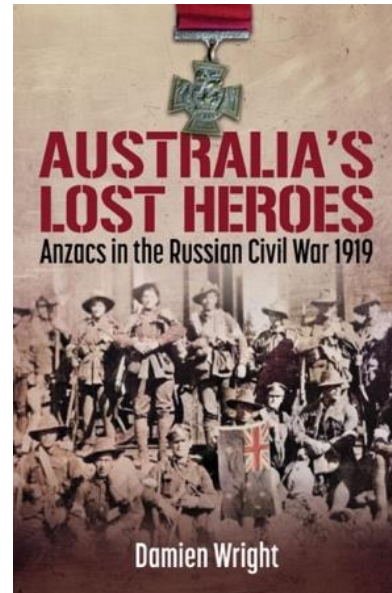
Sister Viv is an inspiring story of an heroic young Army nurse who, after surviving a wartime massacre and incarceration, returned to Australia to dedicate her life to caring for and saving others.

Australia's Lost Heroes

Damien Wright

Newport, NSW: Big Sky Publishing, 2024
Paperback 420pp RRP: \$32.99

Reviewer: David Rees, June 2024



Damien Wright has done much to clarify why 150 Australian soldiers were sent to fight in Russia towards the end of the First World War. They were not sent as an AIF unit but as individuals who had temporarily been discharged from the AIF and voluntarily enlisted in the British army for one year. This enabled them to participate in two of the Allied Brigades consisting of

battalions from Britain (3), America (3), France (1), Italy (1) and smaller units who formed the North Russian Relief Force (NRRF). The NRRF was sent to Russia in 1918 to assist the White Russians in their civil war against the Russian Bolshevik Reds. Like the New Zealand and Canadian volunteers who enlisted in the British army for NRRF duty, the Australians volunteers were allowed to wear their own AIF army uniforms.

At the start of the First World War, the Russian army lost most of its battles with Germany on the Eastern Front. By early 1917 the Russian army was in tatters and had suffered over two million casualties. Its supply of munitions, food and clothing to the front line was inefficient and inadequate, despite receiving war stores from the British & French through the northern ports. By March 1917, things were so bad that the Tsar abdicated and a provisional Russian government was set up which formally created a Russian Republic with the aim of continuing the war against Germany,

Austro-Hungary and Turkey. However, it was soon dissolved when the Bolshevik revolution occurred in October 1917 and Lenin, the Bolshevik leader together with a Soviet Congress, assumed power.

Lenin opposed the continuation of the war and negotiated an armistice with Germany in December 1917 and a formal peace treaty at *Brest-Litovsk* on 3rd March 1918. Some of the Russians who disagreed with Lenin aligned themselves with the old Tsarist order known as *The White Russians*. Their aim was to overthrow the Russian Bolsheviks and restore hostilities against Germany. Many Western allies decided to support the White Russians by creating the NRRF. They reasoned that with the war stopped on the Eastern Front, more German Army Divisions could be transferred to the Western Front. The Americans on the other hand, only joined the NRRF as long as the Imperial government was not restored and that there was no interference with the political liberty of the Russian people. By October 1919, the Allied participation in Russia had failed. The remaining NRRF troops were evacuated by Royal Navy troopships and subsequently, the White Russians were defeated thereby ending the Russian Civil War in 1921.

The book is written in two parts. The first describes how the NRRF was formed and gives backgrounds to the Australians who volunteered for it as well as descriptions of the roles they had in the battles against the Red Army. The second part covers the postwar stories of two AIF Australians in the NRRF who were awarded Victorian Crosses for their valour in Russia - *Corporal Arthur Sullivan and Sergeant Samuel George Pearse*). Cpl. Sullivan survived the war and returned to Australia but died in 1937 after a tragic road accident in London. Sgt. Pearse was awarded his VC posthumously. He was killed in action and buried in North Russia but the location of his grave was lost for over 100 years. The author, with help from Pearse's family and a Russian historian, went to great lengths to successfully rediscover the burial location in 2019. He vividly describes the diplomatic and bureaucratic difficulties he experienced over many years in finding the grave.

The author provides a comprehensive index as well as good maps and appendices which include a list of the names and military details of the Australians who were in the NRRF. This is a very worthwhile read.

Donations to your Library Fund are Tax Deductible

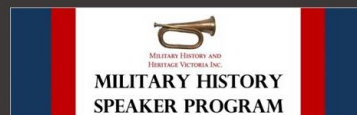
Help to maintain the Institute's Library as the best collection in Victoria on defence and military related subjects by donating to your RUSI VIC Library Fund. The RUSI VIC Library Fund is a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) approved by the Australian Taxation Office, and monetary gifts to the Fund over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

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

Life So Full of Promise
further biographies of Australia's lost generation.

Speaker: Ross McMullin

MHHV Zoom Speaker Event
Wednesday 30 October 2024 7:00PM-8:00PM



Library Notes:

We have been busy installing more bookshelves (Bunnings) in the pamphlets area this last month as we rapidly ran out of space there. The deeper shelves in the larger units allow double banking of the pamphlet holders. While this is not quite so convenient it makes the best use of space. We are also progressively finding space for more bookshelves in the main library area so that we have got rid of the horizontal storage of books. This activity has involved moving and reshelving a great number of items, hard work! Incidentally had we made a movie of the President and his staff assembling the shelving kits it would have run a close second to Eric Syke's comedy movie *The Plank!*

I would also like to thank our cohort of reviewers for their high-quality efforts.

More Examples of Rare items backed up in digital format

A Soldier's Diary 536 Sgt W.J. Crawford 8th Bn AIF 1915
 Chronicles of D-Day Rupert Curtis
 Soldiers of 'M' Special Unit
 Red Platypus 24th Australian Infantry Brigade 1940-1945
 Tears of Gratitude Charles Watson
 Commonwealth Military Attaché Japanese Army Russo-Japanese War 1904 (4 parts)
 Right or Wrong Elements of Training and Leadership Illustrated 1937 Dept of Def Melbourne
 Some Aspects of Naval Discipline HMS Repulse [1938 or 1939]
 Propaganda Leaflet Stabilisation Force has helped bring peace and stability to Dili.
 Australian Repatriation Scheme
 Victorian Military Forces Regulations 1884 Victoria

Best wishes to all members

Brian Surtees

Hon Librarian

New Acquisitions (since June 2024)

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject
<i>Divided Isles</i>	Edward Acton	Solomon Islands and the China Cavanaugh switch.
<i>Death on Bloody Ridge</i>	David W Cameron	Chunuk Bair - the battle that decided the fate of the Gallipoli Campaign.
<i>Saving Port Moresby</i>	David W Cameron	Fighting at the end of the Kokoda Track.
<i>Combat Cops</i>	Nigel Allsopp	The past, the present and their stories.
<i>War's Changed Landscape</i>	Paddy Walker and Peter Roberts	A primer on conflict's forms and norms.
<i>The Western Way of War</i>	Peter Roberts	
<i>Krithia</i>	Mat McLachlan	The forgotten Anzac battle of Gallipoli.
<i>Nuked</i>	Andrew Fowler	The submarine fiasco that sunk Australia's sovereignty.

New Acquisitions (since June 2024) Continued

Books reviewed in this *Newsletter* have not been included

Title	Author	Subject
<i>Forged in Fire</i>	Scott Ryder	An Australian commando's story of life and death on the frontline.
<i>Australia's Few and the Battle of Britain</i>	Kristen Alexander	An RAAF crew flying with the RAF in Britain's darkest days.
<i>Military Strategy</i>	Jeremy Black	A global history.
<i>The Bravest Scout at</i>	Ryan Butta	The many lives and tragic death of <i>Gallipoli</i> Harry Freame, the Anzac hero betrayed by his nation
<i>The Eastern Front Military Law in Australia Second Edition</i>	Nick Lloyd Dale Stephens Peter Sutherland Robin Creyke (Eds)	A history of the First World War
<i>No One Knows Their Destiny</i>	Tonia Eckfeld	The Eckfeld Records - inside the Dunera story.
<i>New Cold Wars</i>	David E Sanger	China's rise, Russia's invasion, and America's struggle to defend the West.