THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIAN ARMY DOCTRINE 1945-1964

M.C.J. Welburn

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For much of its history the Australian Army has been derivative of other armies, especially the British Army, and nowhere was this more evident than in the army’s doctrine. In the twenty years after the end of the Second World War, army doctrinal thinking was impeded by three often competing influences: conflicting strategic interests, the continual borrowing of other countries’ doctrines, and a practical emphasis on small-unit operations.

During the war in the Pacific, in the almost literal absence of the British and fighting in theatres close to home, the Australian Army developed a distinctive national doctrine for conventional jungle warfare, but in the immediate aftermath of the war this was thrown over in favour of British doctrine and the contingency of service in traditional theatres of imperial interest, principally the Middle East. The pentropic experiment of the late 1950s-early 1960s saw the army adopt a modified American doctrine while nonetheless retaining elements of British conventional thinking. By 1965, with pentropic organisation abandoned and the commitment to Vietnam beckoning, doctrine had come full circle with the return to a focus on small-unit operations in the jungle. For much of the period under review, there was a mismatch between Australia’s strategic outlook and its operational doctrine, one only finally resolved after the withdrawal from Vietnam.
The development of Australian Army doctrine, 1945-1964.

Bibliography.

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ABSTRACT

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Mark Welburn joined the Australian Army in 1990 and graduated from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1992, completing a double major in history. In 1993, he completed his honours study, achieving first class honours in history; in 1994, he graduated from the Royal Military College Duntroon to the Royal Australian Armoured Corps.
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# CONTENTS

Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion | 68 |

Appendix A:  
British, United States and Australian Principles of War | 71 |

Appendix B:  
Comparison of British and Australian Ambush Aides | 72 |

Bibliography | 75 |

Strategic and Defence Studies Centre | 82 |

Publications | 83 |
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA Australian Archives
AATTV Australian Army Training Team Vietnam
ABCA America Britain Canada Australia
AHQ Army Headquarters
AIF Australian Imperial Force
AMF Australian Military Forces
ANZAM Australia, New Zealand and (the British Military Organisation in) Malaya
ANZUS Australia New Zealand United States
APC Armoured Personnel Carrier
ARA Australian Regular Army
ARO Army Routine Order
ATM Army Training Memorandum
ATOM (The Conduct of) Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya
AWM Australian War Memorial
BCFESR British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve
BCOF British Commonwealth Occupation Force
Bde Brigade
Bn Battalion
CGS Chief of the General Staff
CMF Citizen Military Forces
CRS Commonwealth Record Series
CRW Counter-Revolutionary Warfare (also title of pamphlet)
CT Communist Terrorist
DAP Directorate of Administrative Planning
DMO & P Directorate of Military Operations and Plans
DMT Directorate of Military Training
DDMT Deputy Director of Military Training
FAREL FARELF General Headquarters Far East Land Forces
GHQ FARELF General Headquarters Far East Land Forces
GOC General Officer Commanding
GS General Staff
HQ Headquarters
JPC Joint Planning Committee
JTC Jungle Training Centre
LHQ Land Headquarters
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LMG</td>
<td>Light Machine Gun</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMG</td>
<td>Medium Machine Gun</td>
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<td>MTP</td>
<td>Military Training Pamphlet</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>NG</td>
<td>New Guinea</td>
</tr>
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<td>OWPC</td>
<td>Organisation and Weapons Policy Committee</td>
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<td>PMF</td>
<td>Permanent Military Forces</td>
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<td>RAA</td>
<td>Royal Australian Artillery</td>
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<td>RAAC</td>
<td>Royal Australian Armoured Corps</td>
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<td>RAC</td>
<td>Royal Armoured Corps</td>
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<td>RAR</td>
<td>Royal Australian Regiment</td>
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<td>RMC</td>
<td>Royal Military College</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>South East Asia Treaty Organisation</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>VCGS</td>
<td>Vice Chief of the General Staff</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

'The raison d'etre of an army... is to plan, train for, and fight wars'¹

James S. Corum

Doctrine exists at several levels. In earlier times wars were fought at the tactical level, and victory was often decided by the outcome of a single battle. Strategic wars, in the context of this monograph, were wars which ranged over a number of theatres, with victory determined as a result of battles fought over a period of time and which drew heavily on the resources of the combatants.

The development of military doctrine has always been a difficult task. As Donald Marshall states:

The primary focus in the evolution, testing, dissemination, and practice of doctrine must concentrate on understanding the nature of the principles and dynamics involved. Developers of doctrine must not be deluded by traditional techniques and tactical applications that have more form than substance, nor develop a doctrine to face an illusory threat. Such overstress can lead to reliance upon obsolete images instead of contemporary reality.²

The Australian Army, between 1945 and 1964, can be accused of just this failing. For much of the period it stressed tactical applications based on other countries' doctrines that were not applicable to identified regional threats. But it is not enough to state

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this without asking why it happened, especially when, at the end of the Second World War, the Australian Army possessed a doctrine that targeted its enemy and operational environment and maximised its strengths while minimising its weaknesses.

Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly emphasised the role of doctrine in contemporary warfare when he stated:

It is fair to say that without acceptable and sound doctrine, an army would be left with a recipe for chaos. Doctrine develops from the distillation of years of experience. It is never static; it is constantly developing, sometimes to a minimal extent over years, sometimes quite dramatically over short periods of time.3

The current official war historian, Peter Edwards, has asked whether 'Australian training, doctrine and equipment [was] well suited for the problems that the servicemen would face in combat?'4 This question still has not been addressed by Australia's military historians. This monograph attempts to answer the question by examining Australian tactical doctrine from the end of the Second World War to the pre-Vietnam period, a focus chosen because it is at the tactical level that individual characteristics of doctrine are readily recognisable. Additionally, at the strategic level, at least for the period under investigation, most Western armies operated under similar strategic principles (see Appendix A).

At and above battalion level, Australian Army doctrine is very similar to that of the British and American armies. But permeating up from section level, the Australian Army doctrine is innately Australian, originating from Australia's role in the South West Pacific campaign in the Second World War. The roles for sub-unit groups involved in low-level operations are totally different to those in battalion-plus operations, and it is no surprise that Australia derived doctrine from those levels where its experience was greatest.

3 Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly, letter to the author, 31 July 1993.
4 In Michael McKernan and M. Browne (eds), Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988), p.303.
As this work will show, the development of Australian Army doctrine from 1945 to 1964 was the product of certain processes. In particular:

- Australian doctrine was influenced by external factors, especially Britain's desire to see Australian troops committed to the Middle East.

- Australian military policy enunciated one line of thought while Australian military actions ignored such directions. For example, troops might be training in open warfare doctrine under desert conditions for service in the Middle East but actually be committed to counter-insurgency operations in Southeast Asia.

- Australian doctrine borrowed heavily from other countries' doctrines, even to the extent of re-issuing other countries' manuals with only the covering page changed.

- Small-group doctrine within the Australian Army has always reflected an Australian approach, and has certain enduring emphases, especially with regard to patrolling, tracking, ambushing and operating procedures for jungle operations.

- Australian doctrinal development has suffered from a lack of centralised direction at the highest level. Most initiatives were ad hoc and relied on individuals to see them through.

- The relationship between the Permanent Military Forces and the Citizen Military Force changed on a number of occasions and this impacted on capabilities and doctrine.

- Australian doctrine developed over time, and whereas the Australian Army was incapable of conducting the type of warfare it was required to conduct after 1945, by 1964 the army was capable of fighting according to its doctrine and in its region of primary concern.

Doctrine reflects the times in which it is written; it is a product of the bureaucratic politics and personalities of the army it serves, as much as it represents a distillation of thought on combat. An army's past, present and future vision will influence doctrine, because each contribute to an army's intellectual processes and pool of experiences. Additionally, in Australia's case, doctrine has also depended upon the
doctrines of the major powers to which Australia has been allied at the
time. Australian doctrine has variously followed British and US leads,
depending on the theatre of combat, the degree of involvement of
either of those countries, and which country's equipment dominated
Australia's order of battle.

This monograph will examine the development of doctrine
within Australia to meet Australian Army requirements from 1945 to
1964. It will establish the reliance of the Australian Army on foreign
doctrines, and demonstrate the influence of Australian military
experience in conflicts, and particularly small-unit tactics, on the
development of Australian military doctrine.
CHAPTER 1

DOCTRINE AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Evolution of Australian Army Doctrine

Before the First World War and until the early 1960s the Australian Army relied heavily on British Army tactical doctrine.\(^1\) The First and Second World Wars saw Australia as a resource for and extension of Britain's military power. Accordingly, the Australian Army was equipped, organised and trained to fight along British Army lines. In 1942, however, the Japanese threat to Australia forced the Australian Army to rethink its equipment, organisation and tactics for jungle combat.\(^2\) Until Australia became involved in the war against Japan, Australian soldiers had trained to fight in the Middle East alongside British forces in the 'real war'. But 'desert war doctrine' was incompatible with jungle warfare and Australia had to develop doctrine and tactics in a short space of time to cope with this new situation.

Consequently, Australian forces committed to Malaya and Papua-New Guinea found themselves in the unique predicament of having to develop their own unit-level doctrine. At the outset, doctrine published as Army Training Memorandums (ATMs) in the early period of the South West Pacific campaign failed to address the situation faced by Australian troops. In fact the doctrine concentrated on desert warfare and combined infantry/armoured operations.\(^3\) The Australians realised that to counter the Japanese threat effective jungle warfare doctrine would have to be developed quickly, as textbooks, tactical methods, equipment and clothing had all been designed for a European theatre.\(^4\) One observer goes so far as to state that the Australian troops were sent to fight the Japanese with no jungle warfare training or doctrine, an assertion which is supported by

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3. Army Training Memorandum (War) (Australia) (ATM) No.13, July 1942 to ATM No.18, December 1942.
Lieutenant General H. Gordon Bennett's May 1942 ATM for jungle warfare against the Japanese.\(^5\)

Bennett's document, entitled 'How to Fight the Japanese', was the first official attempt to rectify this situation. But Bennett's ATM was little more than a rehash of basic military skills and principles common to any army, combined with morale-boosting narratives of Australian soldiers triumphing over the Japanese. It included very little doctrine for actually fighting the Japanese.\(^6\) It was not until early 1943 that effective doctrine was produced for jungle combat.\(^7\)

Through their previous combat experiences, the troops of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) were able to develop effective tactics to counter the Japanese.\(^8\) For example, aggressive patrolling, the value of which had been learnt at Tobruk, was implemented almost immediately by Australian troops, as would be done again in Korea.\(^9\) But when replacements were injected into the AIF, their individual and jungle-warfare training proved exceptionally poor, leading to requests to the Directorate of Military Training (DMT) for all reinforcements to be trained uniformly in jungle warfare.\(^10\)

Notes on how to conduct jungle fighting supplied to the various military schools from DMT were far from detailed. In general they comprised descriptions of basic individual events and occurrences that had resulted either in victory or in defeat for Australian soldiers.\(^11\) One report told how three Australian soldiers attacked fourteen Japanese soldiers in close combat, resulting in

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\(^6\) For an example of Bennett's narratives, see page 13 of ATM No.10, May 1942, which reads like a 'Boy's Own' adventure with an Australian battalion killing some 1050 Japanese and destroying 10 tanks. Australian soldiers were depicted as the bronzed ANZACS of the myth - fearless and undefeatable.

\(^7\) ATM No.10, May 1942 to ATM No.26, October 1943.

\(^8\) O'Dowd, letter, 11 July 1993.

\(^9\) ATM No.18, December 1942.

\(^10\) Military Board 50/401/256, 'Training in Jungle Warfare', 28 Feb. 1942. The Directorate of Military Training was created to plan, implement and supervise the training organisation necessary for the production of soldiers of all ranks.

\(^11\) Ibid.
thirteen enemy dead and one captured, for no Australian losses.\textsuperscript{12} This example was given to foster aggressive action and to promote a belief in Western superiority; its usefulness in the development of doctrine must be doubted.

Many Australians felt that the fall of Singapore cost Australia many of its experienced jungle troops and left Australia open to invasion. Consequently, the Australian First Army's training focused on simple, tactically undemanding, toughening-up exercises concentrating on countering an invasion of Australia.\textsuperscript{13} Before the establishment of the army's Jungle Training Centre at Canungra, each brigade and division was responsible for training its soldiers in operational procedures.\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, there was no standardisation of techniques or training within the army, and the development of doctrine was the responsibility of each division's depot or training battalion. Generally the commanding officer of the training battalion was one of the most experienced officers in the division, with major responsibility to train reinforcements. But each officer's experiences were different, as too was the training developed based on lessons learnt. As a result, the training system comprised only written notes and précis by various individuals dealing with the tactics required.

Commanding officers of units also had the task of continuing the training of their units. To a great extent the quality of the training depended on how good the commanding officer was. Because of this haphazard approach to training, Australian infantry during the first phase of the Papuan campaign had to learn the skills of tropical and jungle warfare along the Kokoda Track and at Milne Bay.\textsuperscript{15} The Australian Army simply failed to address training deficiencies

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{13} 2/26 Bn War Diary, 26 Jan. 1942; Lt Col J.R. Wolfenden, 'Lessons from operations against the Japanese: resume of activities of LHQ Instructional staff to Nov. 43', tabled as evidence to Army Court of Inquiry into Bennett escape, 26-30 October 1945, in Bennett papers; 'Report by Lt-Col J.R. Wolfenden. Demonstrations- 25 Aust Inf Bde- 30 Aug. 42' in HQ 25 Bde August 1942 War Diary, App. O.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Précis of Bde Comd’s Conference', 1 May 1942 in HQ 17 Bde War Diary, Apr. 1942 App. 6. After the Second World War, brigades once again became responsible for training their recruits. This continued until 1952, when a centralised training school was established.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Dudley McCarthy, \textit{South-West Pacific Area: First Year} (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1959), pp.123-127. The battalions engaged in Papua-New Guinea had to learn about jungle warfare not in training, but in action, as did all other Australian infantry units in the Papuan campaign.
\end{itemize}
adequately. The experience and the knowledge of veterans was not passed on to new troops, who had to learn from their own experiences and suffered confusion, tactical difficulties and casualties which could have been avoided had some thought been given to their training.

As the jungle campaigns progressed, Australian forces adapted to the conditions through field changes, such as discarding or cutting down equipment and personal belongings to reduce weight, and dyeing clothing and webbing 'jungle green' to be rid of conspicuous khaki. According to O'Dowd, an NCO for most of the South West Pacific campaign, Australian troops learnt new navigational tricks with the compass in order to cope with limited visibility and constant obstructions. Dress was modified, the steel helmet was discarded as impractical, clothing was camouflaged and brass spikes were added to boots for traction in mud. Troops adopted fighting techniques from the Japanese, and adapted their own standard tactics, where suitable, to match jungle warfare conditions.

The nature of jungle warfare created a number of unforeseen problems. Support weapons lost their significance: fields of fire for medium machine guns (MMGs) were very much restricted, 2-inch and 3-inch mortars were subject to tree burst, and anti-tank weapons were useless. The lack of visibility made the ranging of fire support systems very difficult, so that at times a terribly inefficient method of sound ranging was adopted for 25-pounders. As these problems were encountered, DMT tried to establish some sort of common doctrine for dealing with them.

The training prior to the Papuan campaign toughened troops but it did not teach them tactical lessons needed to fight efficiently in the close confines of the jungle. Troops had to train in the jungle in order for them to master the difficulties of jungle tactics, movement and control before entering combat. The essentials of Australian tactical doctrine were sound, but troops needed to be taught to adapt their tactics to fight the Japanese. They needed to become familiar

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18 ibid.
19 ATM No.19, *January 1943*.
20 Moremon, 'Most Deadly Jungle Fighters', p.65.
with the jungle in order to concentrate on defeating the Japanese, and not have to fight the jungle as well.21

The first phase of the Papuan campaign proved the catalyst for change. The reconquest of the Kokoda Track and the battle of Milne Bay were important steps in the development of Australian jungle warfare training, and much of what was learnt was later published in ATMs after 1943.22 The Army High Command had finally recognised and accepted the need for specific jungle warfare training to prepare troops to fight in tropical jungle conditions. Land Headquarters (LHQ) formed two mobile training teams to formulate and expound tactical doctrine for jungle and mountain fighting and to introduce a uniform system of jungle training, stressing the need for aggression, rapid deployment, sound leadership, and the necessity of fitness in the tropics.23

Development of the Jungle Training Centre (Canungra)

A Guerilla Warfare School had been established in Australia at Wilson's Promontory, Victoria. It specialised in physical development in a harsh environment and training of troops in the conduct of raids and employment of demolitions as applied by Major David Stirling in Britain. When a jungle warfare school was established on 3 November 1942, Lieutenant Colonel A.L.G. 'Bandy' MacDonald, commander of the Guerilla Warfare School, was appointed to command it. An area around Canungra in south Queensland was selected as the site for jungle training as it had similar geographical characteristics to Papua-New Guinea.

The school took almost a year to open, however, with MacDonald told to be prepared to train troops by December 1943. MacDonald's background in guerilla and commando warfare provided the basis for Canungra's doctrine. His new Australian doctrine was a combination of the general experiences of veterans from Papua-New Guinea, British standard field craft, infantry doctrine

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22 Moremon, 'Most Deadly Jungle Fighters', p.66.
and précis for conventional warfare, and British commando training. The doctrine focused on meticulous individual and small-group skills, commando-style training, and high individual mental and physical toughness. Canungra, and a tactics school at Beenleigh, represented the first efforts to standardise the preparation of individuals who were to fight in the South West Pacific campaign.

The school at Canungra literally created doctrine 'on-the-run'. Instructional material was accumulated from the experiences of the instructional staff, who were recuperating combat veterans of New Guinea. But a problem arose as officer and non-commissioned officer instructors wanted to return to their combat units as quickly as possible. Consequently, over time Canungra evolved into a centre merely for physical training and preparation, and the tactics taught became generalised, rather than specific as in the beginning.

In early 1943, with more and more troops becoming proficient jungle fighters, and as tactics and skills were perfected, topics such as living in the jungle, fighting in the mountains, the use of artillery in New Guinea and jungle fighting techniques began to filter through in the written word. The publication in mid-1943 of the Training Pamphlet Jungle Warfare, extolling the lessons learnt from recent operations in New Guinea and the Solomons and the application of the principles of war to jungle conditions, was an important step in the process. The differences in development from Bennett's jungle doctrine to that being included in ATMs by late 1943–early 1944 was profound. In comparison to Bennett's morale-boosting narrative, there was now information on patrolling (devised in Tobruk but adapted to jungle conditions), the use of tanks and infantry in the jungle, the employment of artillery and mortars, aircraft, the importance of good marksmanship, ambushing, and other information necessary to the conduct of conventional jungle warfare.

By the end of the Second World War, the Australian Army had developed an effective jungle warfare doctrine based on lessons learnt from the Middle East and in the South West Pacific. The publication of documents such as Tactical and Administrative Doctrine

24 For the syllabus of the course see ATM No.21, March 1943, pp.14-16.
25 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
26 ATMs No.19, January 1943 to No. 21, March 1943.
27 ATM No. 21, March 1943, p.8.
for Jungle Warfare, 1945 marked the culmination of lessons learnt by the Australian Army through trial and error during its jungle campaigns. These pamphlets would later be used in the production of Australia’s counter-revolutionary warfare (CRW) doctrine in the early 1960s.28 The Australian Army had evolved into a highly skilled small-unit army; one, moreover, that had established a doctrine specifically for an Australian situation which had been developed, refined and proven in combat.
CHAPTER 2

POSTWAR PEACETIME DEVELOPMENTS

In March 1944 the Defence Committee examined the potential composition and capabilities required of a postwar army and concluded that international instability would 'preclude an early decision on post-war defence policy'. Under direction from the War Cabinet in May 1945, the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) was then created to conduct an appreciation of Australia's strategic military environment and to recommend a force structure for Australia's postwar forces. Its report emphasised the need for Australia's armed forces to attain a high state of peacetime readiness, and recommended the peacetime introduction of National Service and the maintenance of trained, permanent forces for all three services including the establishment of a regular, peacetime army.

But the immediate postwar foreign policy aims of the Chifley government were to maintain Australia's wartime status as a principal Pacific power and to increase Australia's influence in postwar settlements. To satisfy these priorities, the defence capabilities of the three services were restricted in favour of concentrating on economic development. Consequently, defence expenditure was sacrificed and the army's development from April 1945 to June 1947 was negligible.

In 1945 the Chifley government decided to furnish a composite force to participate in the occupation of Japan. After initial hesitation, the British government agreed to the creation of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), and the Australian
government was committed, de facto, to maintaining an interim, volunteer, peacetime army.\textsuperscript{6}

Delay in deciding the size, nature and role of the postwar army prevented the formulation of any strategic outlook, training and doctrinal policy for the military.\textsuperscript{7} Four factors contributed to this delay. The first factor was uncertainty as to the extent of the United Nations untried authority; the second, related to this, was the likelihood of the United Nations forming an international policing force; the third was indecision over the extent of Australia's contribution to the United Nations; and the final factor was the lack of knowledge of the role of new weapons (particularly nuclear weapons) in modern war.\textsuperscript{8} In the absence of direction, Australia's strategic basis remained the British Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{9}

Uncertain of Australia's military situation, DMT sought to retain, in entirety or in cadre form, most of Australia's wartime training organisation.\textsuperscript{10} In May 1946, Lieutenant General S.F. Rowell, Vice Chief of the General Staff, delegated to DMT responsibility for studying tactical and doctrinal developments. According to Rowell, DMT would have three tasks. The first would be to study the lessons of the Second World War and to draw conclusions from contemporary campaigns with the objective of perfecting current tactical and organisational doctrine. DMT was also to assess the tactical value of new weapons and equipment and, finally, to study tactical and organisational developments \textit{vis-à-vis} future commitments for the army.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} ibid.; for further information on BCOF, see D.M. Horner, \textit{High Command: Australia and Allied Strategy 1939 to 1945} (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1982), Chapter 18.
\item \textsuperscript{7} The Australian Army was based on a triangular organisation for infantry combat units. Four rifle companies (with one support and one headquarters company) formed the sub-units for a battalion. Three infantry battalions, of 960 men, comprised a brigade. Three of these brigades, plus some attached troops and divisional units, formed an infantry division.
\item \textsuperscript{8} AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.160.
\item \textsuperscript{9} Gregory Pemberton, \textit{All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam} (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1987), p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{10} AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.160.
\item \textsuperscript{11} MP 742/1/0, 240/1/3038, 'Tactical Investigation and Tactical Doctrine'.
\end{itemize}
Because of the Australian Army's policy of standardisation of establishments, practices and training with the British Army, and the lack of staff at DMT, no tactical investigations were ever undertaken.12 Rather it became the accepted practice for the Army Staff College to produce doctrine for the army.13 DMT did not even produce general army tactical doctrine to cover such basics as the 'Advance', 'Attack', 'Defence', and 'Withdrawal'. The postwar Army Staff College, which had had its curriculum remodelled to conform with those of other British Commonwealth staff colleges, became the de facto authority for army tactical doctrine.14

Doctrine was drawn from various accessible overseas sources, but especially from Britain. Additionally, much assistance was given by the Corps Directorates at Army Headquarters in the form of information on current developments at home and overseas applicable to their arms or service.15 Lieutenant Colonel R. L. Hughes, for example, submitted tactical doctrine for armoured regiments making direct reference to the Royal Armoured Corps' pamphlet which discussed the need for close cooperation between tanks and infantry for operational success. To accord with this British doctrine, Hughes suggested that the present organisation of the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) armoured brigades was not entirely satisfactory for training as its armoured brigades had no motor battalion under command. If Australian forces were to operate within an imperial framework, Hughes recommended that a motor regiment or part thereof be raised in armoured brigade areas to permit normal (British) training doctrine to be practised. The danger, of course, was that an unrealistic training environment for Australian forces was created.

The army's postwar practice of distributing Army Staff College précis to all commands, and having them recognised as

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12 ibid.
13 Before implementation, doctrinal précis produced by the Army Staff College were examined by the relevant Corps Directors. Army Headquarters had no involvement in their production.
14 Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, No.46 (1960), p.1103. The Australian Army Staff College was termed 'imperial in character' until 1960. From 1961, the term was dropped in accordance with Australia's move away from Britain, and Australia's adoption of the US pentomic organisation.
15 Minute, DMT to Infantry School, undated, MP 742/1/0, 240/1/3038, 'Tactical Investigation and Tactical Doctrine'.

official Army Headquarters doctrine, was successful until précis from British Tactical Schools were introduced to Australia by Australian officers returning from training in Britain. These Tactical School précis were considered more current than Army Staff College précis, which were derived from doctrine promulgated by the British Staff College at Camberley. In addition to receiving tactical doctrine in the form of Camberley précis, occasionally doctrinal changes were received in the form of British War Office memos. In Australia, these were reproduced as Army Headquarters Training Instructions.

Further complications arose because tactical doctrine was being disseminated by both the Australian Staff College and the various Corps Schools. The Commandant of the Infantry School, for example, received précis regularly from the equivalent British Tactical School, which rewrote its précis every four months. The Tactical Wing of the Infantry School reissued these pamphlets and any British War Office memoranda as Australian tactical doctrine. To ensure continued common standards in tactical doctrine and staff and command training throughout the British Commonwealth, liaison was established with other Commonwealth Staff Colleges, and Britain supplied several instructors to the Australian Staff College. In 1949, in an attempt to increase further the Australian Army’s compatibility with the British Army, the School of Tactics and Administration was established at Seymour, Victoria. The school trained officers from all corps in tactical handling and the administrative support of units. Training emphasised open-warfare doctrine, as did officer promotion courses. This reinforced Britain’s influence over the Australian Army’s operational capabilities, since ‘under the old Empire Defence scheme our area of responsibility and study was the Middle East, there being no threat to us in our region now that the Japanese had been eliminated’.

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16 ibid.
17 British Tactical School précis were updated every four months, whereas Camberley updated its précis once every year.
18 MP 742/1/0, 240/1/3038, ‘Tactical Investigation and Tactical Doctrine’.
22 O’Dowd, letter, 11 July 1993; Pemberton, All the Way, p.3.
DMT's role was now to determine which of the two sources of British doctrine, British Tactical School précis or Camberley précis, would be accepted as Australian doctrine. After receiving British précis, DMT produced or arranged for the production of an Australian précis and had it disseminated amongst the Commands, RMC, Staff College and other schools. Instead of creating Australian tactical doctrine as specified in 1946, DMT simply distributed British doctrine.

Also tasked to develop an 'Australian' Army, the Army Headquarters Organisation and Weapons Policy Committee (OWPC) was created in July 1946, primarily to consider equipment selection for use by the Australian Army. As the Committee based its endorsements on 'the general principle that standardisation of equipment with that of the British Army must be effected wherever possible', OWPC was as British-oriented as DMT. This emphasis on British army doctrine and equipment was confirmed at the highest level when on 7 September 1948 the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir Vernon Sturdee, approved the replacement of Australia's military equipment along lines similar to Britain's.

Postwar Development of the Australian Army

The army finalised its postwar plan during December 1946. The '1946 Plan' emphasised the need for Australia's military forces to retain an advanced state of readiness and called for the creation of a Regular Army Field Force. The Permanent Military Forces (PMF) would raise two infantry brigade groups, an armoured regiment, cadres for CMF units and headquarters elements. The Citizen Military Forces would comprise a Field Force of two divisions, an armoured brigade and certain corps and base troops. Under the 1946 Plan the government would be capable of maintaining a brigade group in Japan as well as meeting any commitments arising out of security arrangements or emergencies. For Australia to meet its postwar defence responsibilities, the plan required all army personnel to be liable for service overseas, and the army's combat organisations were

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23 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.201; Pemberton, All the Way, p.4.
24 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.201.
25 CRS A816, 31/301/121, 'Joint Operational Planning. Organisation for co-ordination plans for the Defence of Australia'.

to be similar to those used in the Second World War, albeit modelled on their equivalent units in the postwar British Army. In the event of war, Australia would contribute five divisions to fight as part of a British Commonwealth force. However, the 1946 Plan was rejected by the Chifley government as too expensive and too reliant on the politically unpopular employment of National Service to provide a basis for the five divisions.

On 4 June 1947, the Minister for Defence, John Dedman, outlined the '1947 Five-Year Defence Plan'. According to this new plan, Australia's armed forces would be designed for operations in support of Australia's foreign policies. The basis of Australia's postwar defence policy, as stated by Dedman's 4 June 1947 parliamentary announcement, were:

The forces to be placed at the disposal of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, including regional arrangements in the Pacific;

- The forces to be placed at the disposal of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, including regional arrangements in the Pacific;
- The forces to be maintained under arrangements for cooperation in British Commonwealth defence; and
- The forces to be maintained to provide for the inherent right of individual self-defence.

Specifically, the plan created Australia's first Regular Army with permanent combat units, and reintroduced the CMF as the basis for wartime mobilisation. In line with government policy, Australia's

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26 ibid.
29 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.242. The Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) was formed from the battalions of the 34th Infantry Brigade in 1948, which had been raised for use in Japan in the BCOF. The 34th Infantry Brigade had consisted of the 65th Battalion (7th Division), the 66th
armed forces were to develop two capabilities: compatibility with Commonwealth forces and an independent operational capability. These capabilities were to be achieved through interoperability with imperial defence arrangements and the continued use of British military training and doctrine. Units continued to be standardised on their British counterpart formations: the CMF with British territorial units and the ARA Field Force with the British regular forces. Despite Australia's intention to develop an independent operational capability, Australia's contribution to the British Empire was to be an operational force still reliant on the Commonwealth to provide supplies and any vital equipment.

Training the Australian Army

Postwar training for recruits was limited to basic instruction provided by the training companies in the various commands, followed by allocation to a corps where recruits were trained 'on-the-job'. This training system continued until 1952, when training became centralised and conducted in three stages. The first stage consisted of basic military training at a recruit training battalion at Kapooka, NSW. Upon allocation to a corps, recruits carried out further training at a basic training wing of the appropriate Army school, or at a recruit training sub-unit attached to the school. On completion, recruits were then given field training in an ARA unit of their corps. Despite changes in the early 1950s in Australia's strategic focus, training policy continued to stress the establishment of a force:

for operations against a first class power in normal European terrain or in desert conditions. Jungle, mountain, Arctic and amphibious warfare are, for the purposes of the training policy, regarded as special types of training which are normally limited to

Battalion (9th Division) and the 67th Battalion (3rd, 6th and 11th Division), which changed to 1, 2 and 3RAR respectively in 1948.


31 Interview, Cape, Canberra, 29 July 1993 (Major General Cape was Colonel (Plans) in Army Headquarters in the early 1950s); A. Chalfont, *Montgomery of Alamein* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1976), pp.285-291. This was in line with Britain's views of Australia as a manpower resource centre within the Commonwealth.

32 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.166.
officers who are instructed therein by means of tactical exercises performed without troops.33

Under the 1947 Defence Plan, CMF units were to be capable of integrating smoothly with ARA units for service overseas. By 1950 this concept became a reality, with ARA and CMF units, particularly artillery units, capable of conducting company-level exercises. National Service commenced in August 1951, and with a change in training priorities the level of training in CMF units fell from company to individual level. An overall decrease in CMF effectiveness occurred as the posting of large numbers of National Service recruits resulted in CMF units reverting to elementary corps training every time a new intake marched in.34 After the advent of centralised training in 1952, CMF units were once again able to concentrate on junior leader, unit and formation training.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the army was unable to conduct postwar unit training because of poor manning and lack of resources, which limited the practicality of all-unit exercises. Until October 1950, when 1RAR under the direction of Eastern Command carried out a set-piece battalion attack exercise at Green Hill, NSW, very little unit-level training took place. (1RAR's exercise was an attempt to prepare it for combat in Korea, and subsequently involved support by armour, field artillery, engineers and close air support.) Instead, training was limited to officer and NCO classes and skeleton company-level exercises. Even with the Regular Army Infantry Brigade Group concentrated in Japan, occupation duties prevented it from conducting battalion- or brigade-level training. Without the opportunity to bring the three regular battalions together in Australia, brigade-level operations were not conducted until the Korean War.35 In less than five years, the army had become an organisation capable of only the most rudimentary of tasks. The army's operational preparedness and capabilities in the period 1945 to 1950 were best summed up by Rowell when he stated that the army depended on its reserve of experienced personnel and war stocks from the Second World War to meet all contingencies.36

33 ibid., p.168.
34 ibid., p.167.
35 ibid., pp.166-168.
CHAPTER 3

KOREA: A 'SECOND WORLD WAR' CONFLICT

The Korean War was an unexpected commitment for Australia which further weakened its Commonwealth defence capabilities. Nevertheless, the army's postwar emphasis on open-warfare doctrine and training proved beneficial when forces were deployed to Korea.

At the outbreak of the Korean War, the Chifley government's Five-Year Defence Plan had entered its fourth year. Involvement in the Korean War, however, exposed the programme's ineffectiveness: Australia's armed forces were unable to expand rapidly and lacked any substantial operational capacity. While the army was able to build on its theoretical knowledge, the slow rate of equipment procurement and recruitment, together with financial restrictions, made field testing of new tactics or equipment impossible. For example, theoretical instruction in combined infantry/armoured operations could be conducted in the class room, but the army could not practise them in the field because of a lack of modern equipment and manpower. Consequently, by 1950 the army was severely limited in its capacity to provide combat forces with modern training at short notice. The implementation of a new plan under a new government to rectify the problems of the Five-Year Plan created additional problems. The mainstay of the new plan, National Service, imposed great strain on the army's training organisation, with its concomitant increase in numbers leading to a lowering of training standards in the army. In a dilemma, and operationally ineffective, the army fell back on the Second World War experience of its officers and men,

3 Interview, Brigadier G.D. Solomon, Canberra, 26 July 1993.
4 Interview, Major General Ron Grey, Canberra, 6 July 1993.
5 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
regardless of whether such experience was relevant or appropriate to the situations it had to face.

The Decision to Send Troops to Korea

The despatch of troops to Korea, once the announcement was made to commit forces, occurred in some haste, due in large part to early communist successes. The Chiefs of Staff concluded that the urgency of the situation in Korea outweighed the deficiencies present in 3RAR and the difficulties of employing it in Korea. Accordingly, 3RAR was committed, being brought up to combat strength by volunteers from BCOF and Australia. These reinforcements were referred to as 'K(Korea) Force' enlistees. Finding recruits had not been difficult, as young men and war veterans were keen to enlist for overseas operational service. The problems of training were minimised by restricting enlistment criteria to those with previous full-time duty. Training time was thus devoted to improving weapons proficiency, the use of anti-tank mines, specialist courses and battle inoculation training.

However, enlistments for K Force left the army stripped of manpower available for overseas service elsewhere. The provision of one battalion for operations had proven extremely difficult, reducing the army's resources almost to vanishing point and making a mockery of the 'rapid expansion' and 'trained force' concepts. Once again Australia was becoming involved in conflict with a force that

7 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53 by J.E. Murphy'; O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War*, Vol.1, p.74. As a result of the Cabinet's decision of 11 June 1950 to end BCOF, 3RAR had commenced its withdrawal from Japan and would need an extra 300 personnel to bring it up to fighting strength. 3RAR had also had its anti-tank guns, artillery and Bren-gun carriers removed in 1946-1947 as they were not needed for occupation duties. Another problem was the logistical difficulties associated with operating alongside American forces.

8 Interview, Cape, 29 July 1993.


12 Horner (ed.), *Duty First*, p.65; MP 742/1, 100/1/9, 'Australian Ground Force-Korea'. 
was suited to combat in an area other than the one in which it was to find itself.\textsuperscript{13}

The Korean War: A 'Second World War' Conflict

In 1950, Commonwealth forces were still patterned on the British model, sharing the same tactical organisations and establishments, staff procedures and doctrine.\textsuperscript{14} Consequently, there was less friction between the forces comprising the 28th Brigade (of which Australian units were a part) than between the Commonwealth forces and the Americans. Australian forces operated within a British brigade, employing standard British tactics and using compatible equipment, weapons and ammunition, except for 17-pounder anti-tank guns.\textsuperscript{15} This worked well until the Korean winter brought snow and freezing conditions. No planning had been undertaken for this eventuality and the Australian forces suffered until US Army cold weather gear was made available.\textsuperscript{16}

According to those present, the Korean campaign was fought mainly with Second World War tactics, weapons and equipment.\textsuperscript{17} Major offensive operations such as the initial advance into North Korea and, later, Operation Commando, followed lessons learnt from the earlier conflict.\textsuperscript{18} As the campaign developed, communications were greatly improved with the introduction of rotary-wing aircraft bringing a new dimension in communications and, to some extent, mobility.\textsuperscript{19} But these changes were implemented 'on-the-run' with little thought given to how troops were to operate and fight with new weapons and equipment.

Whilst the nature of Commonwealth defences drew from First World War experiences, the defensive tactics employed were similar

\textsuperscript{13} O'Neill, \textit{Australia in the Korean War}, Vol.1, pp.74,94,97,128.
\textsuperscript{15} O'Dowd, letter, 11 July 1993.
\textsuperscript{16} ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Daly, letter, 31 July 1993; Hassett, letter, 16 September 1993; O'Dowd, letter, 11 July 1993. Lieutenant General Sir Thomas Daly had commanded the 28th Brigade in 1952-53, General Sir Francis Hassett had commanded 3RAR from 1951-52, and Lieutenant Colonel Ben O'Dowd had been a company commander in 3RAR.
\textsuperscript{18} Daly, letter, 31 July 1993.
\textsuperscript{19} ibid.
to those used in the Second World War at Tobruk: systems of defended localities, mutually supporting and deployed in considerable depth, protected by formidable barbed wire and minefield defences, with strong mobile reserves. Australian defensive positions comprised fighting bunkers, communication trenches, living quarters, tunnels and command posts. Where possible the communication trenches, living quarters and tunnels were built with overhead protection to reduce casualties. In addition an aggressive patrolling policy, ranging from intelligence gathering and observation to raiding and ambushing, was designed to keep the enemy on the defensive and to provide early warning of an enemy build-up. Such tactics had been used to great effect during the desert campaigns of the Second World War and the doctrine again proved sound.

There is some disagreement over the necessity and effectiveness of aggressive Australian patrolling, however. It was certainly true that failure to patrol effectively often resulted in Chinese mass attacks against UN positions. For example, on the night of 23-24 October 1952 the positions of B Company, 1 Royal Canadian Regiment on Hill 355 were overrun by Chinese attacks. Chinese domination of no man's land had enabled the Chinese to construct fortified launch points close to the defensive wire for their assault. Grey believes that the Australian policy of aggressive patrolling was carried too far. By patrolling too aggressively, some Australian patrols found themselves well beyond their agreed patrol lines, vulnerable to Chinese counter-attacks and subject to casualties from UN artillery fire. Once Australian domination of no man's land had been achieved, it was not

20 Daly, letter, 31 July 1993; O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, Vol.2, p.168; Barton Maughan, Australia in the War of 1939-1945, Series One, Army, Vol.III, Tobruk and El Alamein (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1966), pp.137,147,618. At Tobruk, for example, the defenders carried out active infantry patrolling in all sectors with the utmost vigour. The garrison at Tobruk never lost its dominance of no man's land, keeping the besiegers' front-line infantry continually on the defensive. At El Alamein, heavily armed Australian patrols would either attack enemy defensive lines or enemy patrols. In one instance a 17-man patrol from the 2/15th Battalion ambushed a German patrol of 25 men from three to four yards away, with every German either killed or wounded. For further examples, see ibid., pp.635-6, 734-5.

21 O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War, Vol 2, Appendix N, 'Defences of the "Hook"'.

22 ibid.

23 Daly, letter, 31 July 1993.


necessary to continue patrolling at such a high level. Rather, a scaled-down patrol policy to maintain the ascendancy might have sufficed. If such a policy had been followed, it would have been similar to that followed by other UN forces. On the other hand, aggressive patrolling kept the troops active, restricted the enemy's options and provided intelligence in the form of prisoners.

There is no doubt, however, that Daly's policy of aggressive patrolling, combined with the Australian's attitude towards maintaining proper defensive lines, set the Australian forces apart from the rest of the UN contingent during this static phase of the war. The official historian, Robert O'Neill, suggests that these characteristics made the Australians much less susceptible to major attacks, or to heavy casualties. O'Neill notes that often when Australian troops replaced other allied troops in front-line positions, a low professional standard was obvious in the units relieved, and cites the Royal Canadian Regiment as an example. The Canadians had failed to maintain their minefields and had left rubbish around their pits, which made the number and location of the pits easily identifiable. 1RAR subsequently suffered unwarranted casualties when it began the normal patrolling routine that marked Australian defensive doctrine.

Australian defensive doctrine specified that infantry be positioned on the crests and side slopes of hills in Forward Defence Localities, in depth, capable of all-round defence. This conflicted with American doctrine for tactical defence. The Americans were unwilling to surrender any piece of territory, regarding it as 'a matter of honour ... [insisting] that it shall be defended to the last man and the last round, regardless of its tactical significance'. Grey attributes the differences in tactical doctrine between the American, British and Commonwealth armies to past experiences, especially of the two World Wars.

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26 Interview, Cape, 29 July 1993; Daly, letter, 31 July 1993. When Lieutenant General Daly, then a Brigadier, was appointed commander of the 28th Brigade on 27 June 1952, he immediately implemented an aggressive patrol policy, based on his experiences under Major General Morshead in the siege of Tobruk. Lieutenant General Daly states that the static phase of the Korean War was very similar to Tobruk.


28 Ibid., p.143.

29 Ibid., p.144.
world wars. The commanders of the British armies in the Second World War had been subalterns in the trenches of the First. The Americans did not share the British aversion to avoidable casualties, with American doctrine the product of two legacies: mobility and firepower. Commonwealth involvement in the American-dominated UN system created tension between the two forces, with constant American pressure for the Commonwealth to increase its aggressiveness. But this, in the eyes of many Commonwealth soldiers, merely resulted in unnecessary casualties.31

Artillery support, combined with the prolonged occupation of the Jamestown Line, proved vital to the success of Australian patrolling. According to Daly it enabled the defenders to develop an extraordinarily rapid and sophisticated system of fire support. This was also made possible by greatly improved radio communications. For example, in an extreme case, an infantry section leader on patrol could bring down the divisional artillery with remarkable accuracy if required.32

Australian forces drew continually on their Second World War combat knowledge, applying tactics that had proven effective against the Japanese in the South West Pacific campaign, such as using the ridges to achieve the tactical advantage in an attack (‘running the ridge’), patrolling and ambushing and claiming no man’s land as their own.33 But major operations involving other UN forces were very much conventional in nature: infantry assaults supported by artillery against entrenched positions. In fact Australian operations such as Operation Fauna were conducted in circumstances very similar to Gallipoli or the Western Front - the objective well defended, the ground icy and no man’s land covered in shell craters.34

In summary however, Australia’s involvement in the Korean War was one of constant patrolling and raids, with intermittent larger unit combat. The majority of engagements were small clashes in no man’s land involving no more than thirty men. As with Australian experiences in the Second World War, and later in Malaya, Korea was an infantry platoon commander’s war, with Australian experiences

31 ibid., p.145.
32 Daly, letter, 31 July 1993.
34 Horner (ed.), *Duty First*, pp.89-90.
again focusing on small-unit tactics and doctrine. Operations in Korea redeveloped old skills and lessons and built new confidence amongst the troops, while many junior officers gained combat experience. However, it contributed nothing to the development of an Australian doctrine.

Doctrine develops from the distillation of years of experience. It is never static; it is constantly developing, sometimes gradually over years, sometimes quite dynamically over a short period. Doctrine provides the basic guidelines which must be observed if any kind of teamwork is to be achieved. The classic withdrawal of 3RAR at Kapyong, and the brilliant assault on Maryang San were due to the relevant commanders, Ferguson and Hassett, and their company commanders, following well-tried doctrine that had evolved over many years. The successful operations of the Australian battalions holding the Jamestown Line followed tactics which had their origins in the Second World War, specifically the defence of Tobruk.

Influences on Australian Strategic Thought

During its involvement in the Korean War, Australia continued to re-examine the basis of its strategic outlook. The concept of postwar Commonwealth defence cooperation, with its emphasis on the Middle East, did not suit the situation that was developing in Australia's main area of strategic concern - Southeast Asia. Australia's strategic shift from the Middle East to Southeast Asia began soon after June 1948, when the Australian press emphasised Malaya's economic and strategic importance when British colonial authorities in Malaya declared a state of emergency in order to combat a wave of violence and unrest.

An assessment of the possible threats to the ANZAM region in 1950 identified the only threat to Australia as arising should Malaya
fall to the communists. Consequently the Australian Chiefs of Staff focused on Malaya and its position in Australian military strategic thought. But, at British insistence, the Middle East remained high on Australia's list of strategic concerns, at least in the short term. As a result, the Defence Committee was unable to give priority to either Malaya or the Middle East. This dilemma in strategic emphasis and direction created problems in determining training and equipment requirements because of the different nature of conflict applicable to the two possible areas of combat.

The Effects of the Korean War on Australian Army Doctrine

Notwithstanding doctrinal changes linked to the Korean theatre of operations, and Australian policy having made 'Malaya and south-east Asia the focus of its strategic interest, dropping any ideas of a commitment to the Middle East', the development and dissemination of Australian doctrine remained relatively unchanged.

A continuing source of doctrine remained the précis, now entitled Australian Military Forces: Study Précis and issued by DMT. Doctrine was collated from all the corps and presented in a form readily available throughout the army. Amendments, if necessary,

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39 CRS A5799/15, 64/1950, 'Assessment of Possible Threats to the ANZAM Region (1950)'. In May 1950, the ANZAM region covered Malaya, Borneo, Indonesia, Papua-New Guinea, Australia, New Zealand and all the smaller islands extending eastwards as far as Cook Island. The rate of movement from South China to Malaya for enemy forces large enough to pose a threat to Malaya depended on the degree of resistance offered by the French in northern Indo-China, and by the Thai Army in Thailand. Assuming the best scenario for the Chinese, it would take at least six months, with the build-up being quite noticeable. It was estimated in 1950 that over 100,000 Chinese Communist troops would be available for operations against Malaya.

40 Prime Minister's Department file TS 429/24, 'Chiefs of Staff Appreciation on Australian Strategy in the Pacific and Far East, [14] September 1950'.

41 CRS A816 131, 14/301/713, 'Defence Committee Report, "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort, Planning for Co-operation in British Commonwealth Defence, Conclusions of the Council of Defence"'.

42 CRS A6059/2, 49/441/1, 'Press Publicity on Statement by Minister for Army on Suez Crisis'; McKeman and Browne (eds), Australia, p.300.

were issued at the beginning of each year. But the majority of précis still drew on British doctrine and were taken directly from British pamphlets. The 'normal' area of operations was described as 'European' or of a desert nature. Anything else was an 'exception'.

Much of the information and lessons learnt were based on British experiences in the Second World War, despite the shift in Australian strategic focus to Southeast Asia. In the examples used to illustrate the use of armoured forces in conventional warfare, one précis stated that while 'in European countries the armoured division is generally withheld for the break-through, it can be used in the desert against positions which have an open flank by operating against the flank and rear of the enemy's main position as part of, or even as the main feature of the "Break-in battle". There was no mention of the use of armour in jungle or close country.

Australian précis in the mid-1950s concentrated on modern warfare which, as far as the précis were concerned, was British mechanised, conventional warfare. The doctrinal document which formed the basis for all Australian operations was *Handbook-Operations*, which also dealt with conventional European-style warfare. Even warfare in 'restricted' countries (tropical or jungle environments) was conducted under methods more suitable for the open landscapes of the north German plains. Operations would all be conventional and large scale at division or brigade level.

This preoccupation with British doctrine was reflected in the establishment of the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC). With little need for Australia's armoured cars in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, the army's armoured elements were returned to Australia and converted to Churchill tanks, becoming the 1st Armoured Regiment. The RAAC was created along the lines of Britain's Royal Armoured Corps (RAC), right down to its doctrine and training methods. Consequently ties between the RAC and the RAAC, and their respective training schools and perceptions

on doctrine, were very strong. By 1952 almost the entire instructional staff at the RAAC Armoured School had been trained in Britain. Ties were strengthened further through RAAC attachments with the RAC in Korea and with the re-equipment of the RAAC in March 1952 with the British Centurion tank. As far as the RAAC was concerned, British armoured policy and doctrine was not only the latest, but the preferred, which was anomalous given the generally unimpressive performance of British armour in the Second World War.48

The implication in Australian Army doctrine was that Australian troops would fight not in Australia, or even in its region, but further afield supporting British and US armoured forces in combined operations.49 The Study Précis series was quite comprehensive in its coverage of topics, but it lacked analysis in depth. Précis did little more than provide an introduction to the doctrine used in a particular situation. In the majority of cases, the standard fall-back was to state that normal doctrine and principles would suit any circumstance, with only slight alterations needed to suit any divergent situation. Australian forces and equipment were held to be comparable with British Army establishments and equipment even though this was not necessarily the case. In another précis dealing with the employment of artillery, written notes in the margin stated that certain artillery pieces were for use in the British Army only.50 Emphasis on British doctrine and equipment was justified only if one assumed that, in the event of a major war, Australia would rely on Britain to provide equipment it did not itself possess. In that scenario, even where they did not possess the equipment in peacetime, knowledge of British doctrine and the capabilities of British equipment was sensible for the Australian Army, at least on the basis of experience in two world wars.

As with doctrine for Australia, the guiding principle governing the acquisition of equipment for use by Australian troops remained 'standardisation with the United Kingdom'.51 Standardisation simplified the problems of maintenance and repair through the possession of similar equipment if Australia and Britain were called upon to fight side by side. It also eliminated wasted effort.

48 ibid., pp.221-222.
51 AWM 113/10, 'History of the Post War Army 1945-53, by J.E. Murphy', p.150.
by Australia in designing equipment when Australia had the use of specifications and design drawings of British equipment.

Delay in implementing doctrine based on a new strategic policy continued the perennial problem of the Middle East versus Australia's northern focus. For all intents and purposes the Australian Army was still an adjunct to the British Army and was expected to fight alongside it, primarily in the Middle East: 'Many modifications were adopted in the last war culminating in 1945 in the Light Division. This has now lapsed. Present policy is that standard formations will be modified for operations in jungle as required'.52 The jungle warfare précis concentrated on the operation of brigade-level forces, usually involved in a series of divisional battles along one or more widely dispersed axes, as in Burma. The précis did state, however, that patrolling was of greater importance under jungle conditions than in any other condition of warfare.53 But, as with the other précis, jungle warfare was viewed as the exception to the normal scope of operations.

The précis on patrols was much more useful and appropriate to Australian conditions and capabilities. But it was not designed specifically for them, as patrolling can be conducted regardless of environment. However, the précis did present information on problems encountered in the jungle and how to minimise them. For example, automatic weapons were preferred along with grenades, enabling maximum but lightweight firepower to be brought to bear as required. Equipment and clothing were also discussed in terms of what to take and what to wear.54 The précis stated that an aggressive patrol policy must be laid down by the commander, and troops must be trained in patrol tactics, although the nature of those tactics was not covered.

Précis were also issued to cover the use of armour and artillery in a jungle environment. The greatest problem with both was the close nature of the vegetation which limited movement and fire effectiveness.55 Infantry was viewed as the predominant arm owing

This précis even had a British Crown Copyright notice.
Korea: A 'Second World War' Conflict

to its comparative mobility. In other words jungle warfare was infantry warfare. The organisation of the infantry battalion needed to be reduced in terms of weight and mobility for jungle conditions, and increased with respect to manpower in order to cope with mobility difficulties and manpower requirements in a jungle environment. Non-portable weapons were to be cut to a minimum as they were unsuitable for the jungle. The précis also called for flexibility with transport, and heavy close support weapons were to be pooled and allocated when necessary.

AMF Study Précis Book 8 was the first book which contained information on an identified enemy, the Soviet army. Despite being outdated as regards Australia's strategic area of concern, the précis was very detailed, discussing the national and military background of the Soviet Union, covering military organisation, political control, amenities, leave, pay, army formations, and doctrine and practice for attack and defence. Once again however, it was the British soldier who would win out against the enemy: 'A well trained British soldier, making full use of the weapons at his disposal, is undoubtedly the superior of his Russian counterpart'. As the British organisation was the standard Commonwealth organisation, there was thought to be little need for the alteration of the British-supplied documents for Australian purposes. They were simply 're-badged', copied and issued for use with little thought given to any anomalies in their text.

The annual Chief of the General Staff (CGS) Exercises continued to reflect the army's Middle East preoccupation, with exercises aimed at unit and brigade training set in the Australian bush with scenarios involving divisional formations, supply columns of trucks, and the threat of atomic weapons. Army Headquarters directed that training for 1952-53 was to emphasise desert warfare, with conditions similar to those existing in the Middle East and with a Soviet 'enemy'. The problem was that the army lacked basic military skills to make any large-scale training worthwhile. Poorly skilled

57 ibid., p.1.
59 McNeill, To Long Tan, p.4.
60 Interview, Grey, 6 July 1993.
troops waited for long periods for under-trained company and battalion commanders to make a decision. The end result of an expensive exercise was little real training benefit for any of the soldiers. The School of Tactics and Administration and the individual Corps schools perpetuated the Middle East emphasis, with those passing through the schools heavily influenced by British-based teachings despite Australia's focus on Southeast Asia.61

In the mid-1950s, the army sought an answer to its doctrinal deficiencies by updating its Second World War doctrine and reissuing it in the form of Tactics (Tropical Warfare), Part 1, Infantry Section Leading 1956 (Draft) and Tactics (Tropical Warfare), Part 2, Platoon and Company in Battle 1957 (Draft).62 Australian infantry battalions thus used a combination of tactical doctrines based on these two pamphlets and The Infantry Battalion in Battle.63 By the late 1950s, however, this doctrine was deemed unsuitable for Australia's strategic and military requirements. The doctrine Australia reintroduced dealt with conventional jungle warfare, not counter-insurgency as the strategic situation required. A battalion was too large to operate as a single unit for counter-insurgency jungle warfare conditions. The only possible place it could operate as a battalion per se was in open country in a conventional role. Where Australia did differ though was that purely Australian doctrine was aimed specifically at section and platoon level. So, from the mid-1950s to the early 1960s the Australian Army had essentially two doctrinal philosophies, one for jungle fighting and small-group operations (developed from Australian Second World War doctrine) and the other for conventional, battalion-plus operations (drawn from British Second World War doctrine).64

61 ibid.
62 The 1956 and 1957 pamphlets were derived from the Australian Military Forces, Tropical Warfare (Aust.) Pamphlet No.1, 1944 and Tropical Warfare (Aust.) Pamphlet No.2, 1945.
Despite changes in Australian thought, Australian doctrine to the mid-1950s still drew on and was influenced by British doctrine. An examination of the doctrine reveals the premise that in the event of war Australia would be fighting alongside British and other Commonwealth members in the Middle East, as it had done in previous conflicts. Australian Army training, doctrine and structure were still directed by these assumptions, despite current commitments to Southeast Asia.

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65 Interview, Grey, 6 July 1993.
66 McNeill, To Long Tan, p.4.
CHAPTER 4

MALAYA: THE REBIRTH OF JUNGLE WARFARE DOCTRINE

Succumbing to British pressure for Australian involvement in the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR), Australia agreed in 1955 to contribute units for possible use against large, well-equipped conventional communist forces. The creation of BCFESR recognised that the situation in Southeast Asia required the rapid development of Commonwealth plans for the region. The stationing of BCFESR in Malaya would provide some defence for Malaya but, more importantly, it would also ensure that forces were available and ready for deployment to Southeast Asia in response to the demands of modern war.

Development of British Army Anti-guerilla Doctrine for Malaya

Malaya was a guerilla's paradise. The area of operations covered the entire Malayan peninsula, which itself was covered in a combination of evergreen forest, dense undergrowth and triple-canopy jungle. A backbone of jungle-covered mountains ran down the peninsula. With the vegetation so dense and, for the most, traversable only by foot, it was very difficult for British and Commonwealth troops to conduct large-scale operations using modern weapons and conventional doctrine.

As with the Second World War, vegetation and terrain restricted the range and fields of fire of the weapons used by British and Commonwealth troops. The effects of the Strategic Reserve's modern weaponry were negated, making the Emergency a conflict fought between small groups of men using infantry weapons and

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1 Horner (ed.), Duty First, pp.93,96.
3 AWM 121, 413/A/1, 'Joint Planning Committee, ANZAM Defence Committee, "Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, Directive Regarding Employment"'.
similar equipment, with victory or defeat based on the individual abilities of the men and junior leaders of both sides.\textsuperscript{5} Difficulties of command and control combined with these factors to place a premium on initiative and training of individual soldiers and small unit leaders.\textsuperscript{6}

In comparison to large, modern, regular forces, the use of small élite units, such as 'Ferret Force', to patrol the jungle in search of insurgents was more successful. Their use showed that small, aggressive patrols were extremely effective, that close coordination between the police and the army was essential, particularly the sharing of information, and finally, that lasting ascendancy over an area had to be maintained to prevent the insurgents from returning.\textsuperscript{7}

There was nothing new in the tactics employed by 'Ferret Force' which, in effect, were based on aggressive infantry patrolling. However, the use of such élite units was a drain on available resources. 'What was needed was to raise standards of jungle craft so that all units in Malaya would be capable of sustained operations'.\textsuperscript{8} As a consequence, it was realised that with relevant training, ordinary infantry battalions could conduct 'Ferret' style operations with similar results. Hence future Malay, Commonwealth and British battalions underwent training which taught doctrine specific to countering insurgents at the British base at Kota Tinggi and the Australian Jungle Warfare School at Canungra.\textsuperscript{9}

By 1951, British and Commonwealth forces had formally abandoned the use of large-scale jungle sweeps to flush out insurgents. Compared to the success of small-unit operations, large-scale jungle sweeps were ineffective as they were easily evaded by the insurgents. In addition, the location of the sweeps was difficult to keep secret as the massing of troops was too obvious and, once in the jungle, they were too clumsy and noisy. The insurgents knew when

\textsuperscript{5} ibid., Chapter III, p.145; Transcript of interview, Brigadier James Ochiltree with Ian McNeill, 28 February 1985, held by Professor Peter Dennis, History Department, Australian Defence Force Academy, Tape 2 and 3, Part - Side 1, 23; E.D. Smith, \textit{Counter-Insurgency Operations:1, Malaya and Borneo} (Ian Allen, London, 1985), p.25.


\textsuperscript{7} ibid., p.147; \textit{The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya}, Chapter III, pp.4-12.

\textsuperscript{8} Coates, \textit{Suppressing Insurgency}, p.148.

\textsuperscript{9} Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993; \textit{The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya}. 
and from where they were coming and could easily move to a safer area, to return when the sweep was over.

Three factors, however, were identified if large-scale operations were to be successful:

- the plan had to include the denial of food and supplies to the insurgents as one of its basic ingredients,
- Special Branch information was a vital adjunct to information gathered from other sources, and
- the longer an operation concentrated in one area, the greater the number of kills and disruption of the insurgents' ties with the masses.¹⁰

After 1951, as a result of the food denial programme, the insurgents cultivated vegetable plots deep in the jungle. In order to destroy insurgent food cultivation, deep-jungle operations were mounted, such as Operation Termite, between July and November 1954.¹¹ But the results of such operations did not really warrant the time and money spent on them. Long-term, deep-jungle patrolling operations proved more effective.¹²

The Development of Small-scale Jungle Operations

From late 1948, many battalion commanders had sought a better answer to large-scale jungle sweeps. Several battalions, such as the 1/10th Gurkhas and the 1st Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment, experimented with patrolling and ambush using small offensive patrols operating within small operational areas.¹³

From 1948 to 1952, the average size of patrols over the whole Federation was fifteen men, dictated by the size of an infantry platoon. A full-strength platoon of one officer and thirty men could be quickly broken down into two patrols, led by the officer and the platoon

¹⁰ Coates, Suppressing Insurgency, pp.149, 151-152.
¹¹ ibid., p.157. The target was bombed from the air and three squadrons of 22 Special Air Service Regiment parachuted onto the target and suspected escape routes. Most of these forces were supplied by air throughout the operation, and troop-lifting and casualty evacuation was carried out by helicopter. But the operation only accounted for 15 insurgents.
¹² ibid., p.158.
¹³ ibid., pp.159-160.
There were advantages to a large patrol. Until the advent of helicopters, a patrol with a casualty required four men as a stretcher party, which would have to be changed regularly in the jungle. In addition two scouts were always needed and usually two Bren light machine gun (LMG) groups of two men each. If an insurgent camp was located, the patrol could be divided into an assault party equal to the estimated number of insurgents, while a series of two-man blocking parties could still be detached to ambush possible escape routes. In 1953 the effectiveness of patrolling and ambushing was compared to operations that did not include these aspects. The resultant report found that the odds of achieving a contact on the strength of information were one in ten for an ambush and one in seventeen for a patrol and, in the absence of information, were increased to one in thirty-three and one in eighty-eight respectively.

Australian Preparations for Involvement in Malaya

Within the Australian Army the absence of a jungle warfare doctrine suited to anti-guerilla operations resulted in Australia, once again, having to rely on British doctrine. As previously discussed, Australian doctrine had little relevance to either the actual or likely military commitments of the period - Malaya and Southeast Asia. Britain however had developed a doctrine to suit Australia’s new strategic focus - *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya* (commonly referred to as the ATOM pamphlet).

A review of the types of training undertaken by Australian forces indicates that troops were trained only in conventional combat for the Middle East. This was despite the fact that the Regular Army had been instructed in mid-1953 to conduct training in conditions

14 ibid., p.161.  
15 ibid.  
16 *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*, Chapter XII, pp.4-5.  
17 Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency*, p.163.  
18 *The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya*. The first edition was published in 1952 by General Templer, High Commissioner and Director of Operations, Federation of Malaya. The doctrine it contained was developed by the Far East Land Forces (FARELF) Training Centre.  
19 Interview, Breen, 17 July 1993.
likely to be met in the Far East and Southeast Asia. The army, despite the change in policy, had not been exposed to jungle training techniques and doctrine at a time when such exposure was needed. Duntroon graduates of 1954, for example, barely discussed jungle tactics, with the number of periods allocated to jungle warfare (1-2 hours) equal to the time spent on arctic warfare.

The standard British manual for the Malayan Emergency, the ATOM pamphlet, was not used within Australia as official doctrine. But, once in Malaya, Australian troops had to fit in and operate alongside British Commonwealth forces. Accordingly, prior to their deployment to Malaya, many commanders tried to acquire a copy of the ATOM pamphlet to give their troops some idea of what to expect.

Meanwhile, the Australian Army was desperately trying to develop an Australian jungle warfare training capability. This responsibility was eventually given to the Director of Military Training in Melbourne, Colonel (later Lieutenant General Sir) Mervin Brogan, with Lieutenant Colonel Ted Serong subsequently tasked with re-establishing jungle training. He made two recommendations: firstly, that jungle training be re-established at Canungra, and secondly, that Canungra be run by a colonel who was able to select his staff.

One of the first people Serong requested was Major Ben O'Dowd, who was serving in Malaya. O'Dowd had operated with the British from 1952-1954 at the British jungle warfare school at Kota Tinggi and Serong wanted O'Dowd to become the Senior Instructor of the yet-to-be-reopened Canungra Battle Wing. Serong informed O'Dowd that the reason for Canungra's re-establishment was a change of policy in Australia, and that 'we were going back to Tropical Warfare as our basis for future operations'.

O'Dowd reported to Brisbane, where he was told he would be working with Lieutenant Colonel George Warfe, who had been a commando in the Second World War and who was to be the Chief

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20 McNeill, To Long Tan, p.4.
22 Interview, Grey, 6 July 1993.
23 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
Instructor of the Jungle Training Centre. Warfe had been heavily influenced by commando-style training as both a student and instructor at Wilson's Promontory, and believed in meticulous attention to individual skills, mental and physical toughness and small-group tactics.25

Between them O'Dowd and Serong determined how to train a battalion for the Malayan Emergency. O'Dowd's job was to develop doctrine for training. In this he was influenced by his time spent at Kota Tinggi, his own experiences as a veteran of the South West Pacific campaign as an infantry NCO, and as an officer in 3RAR in Korea, where patrolling had been developed under the conditions of static warfare.26

O'Dowd maintains that he and Serong developed the necessary doctrine of drills and jungle training techniques which are still in use today. He saw the Malayan Emergency as a junior commander's war, with emphasis on drills, instinctive shooting, field craft and patrolling. Breen believes that Serong and O'Dowd, from 1954 to 1956, established Australian Army doctrine for jungle warfare and refined the techniques of teaching the doctrine to individuals and small groups.27

By the time Australian troops were deployed to Malaya, British and local forces had all but put down the insurgency. Consequently, the Australian role was limited to searching the Malayan jungle for the remnants of the insurgent forces.28 Australian forces learnt the techniques of jungle searches in small patrols radiating out from company bases, they developed skills of jungle navigation, drills for ambushing and to counter ambushing, methods for coping with a constantly moving enemy, and exercised the initiative and independence of junior leaders.29

25 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
26 O'Dowd, letter, 11 July 1993; Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993. The British trained a cadre of instructors from a battalion, who then returned to the battalion and passed on the jungle training taught at Kota Tinggi. The Australian method put units through as a whole so that jungle tactics and methods were passed on correctly. Canungra did adopt training techniques used by the British however, such as the use of 'demonstration platoons', 'enemy', and coloured helmets to denote various positions within a formation.
27 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
28 McNeill, To Long Tan, p.6.
29 ibid.
The Development of Australian Army Doctrine 1945-1964

Australian Involvement in the Malayan Emergency

The Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, announced on 1 April 1955 that Australia, Britain and New Zealand would share responsibility for the BCFESR's in Malaya. From 1955 to 1960 Commonwealth forces were to fight alongside one another in the BCFESR's secondary role of anti-terrorist operations. The initial Australian commitment comprised 2RAR and the 105th Field Battery, RAA.

2RAR was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Ochiltree. With a strength of 35 officers and 739 soldiers, 2RAR was organised in accordance with the ATOM pamphlet for counter-insurgency operations with four rifle companies each of three platoons, a support company with signals, assault pioneer, mortar and medium machine gun platoons, and a headquarters company. When the ATOM pamphlet was made available to Australian forces in Malaya it became the 'Bible' on which they based their operations.

In keeping with the ATOM pamphlet, the aim of operations in Malaya was to clean out a state, eradicate the communist terrorists (CTs) and the CT influence and, as each state was cleared, designate it a white area. Units did not operate at the battalion level, but as companies operating from operational bases. A battalion would be allotted an area within which companies would be allotted a company area. Each company would then work within that area, except if there was a CT ambush or attack on a rubber estate, when the battalion would come together for larger scale operations. But such actions were the exception rather than the rule, with the CTs usually leaving an area as a result of increased activity.

33 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 4 and 5, 30; Tape 2 and 3, Part - Side 1, 7.
34 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 5, 45; The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya.
35 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 2 and 3, Part - Side 1, 15.
Companies would spend approximately four to five weeks in an area to familiarise themselves with the terrain before conducting operations. A company base was a fixed position accommodating 120 to 130 men, surrounded by barbed wire and, in some instances, perimeter lighting. Within the allocated company area of approximately 20 miles, Australian section or platoon-level patrols would search the jungle for CT bases. Patrols would be out for anything from overnight, two or three days, or sometimes up to ten days searching for CTs.

As part of BCFESR, troops in Malaya were required to conduct conventional warfare training. 2RAR's conventional warfare exercises were to be in August and December 1957, focusing on China as a first-class Asian power, with a predominance in manpower and an atomic potential of up to 2 kilotons. But within BCFESR there was no such conventional contingency planning, since no one really considered such an eventuality would occur. Nevertheless, as part of their commitment, 2RAR was scheduled to be retrained half-way through its tour of Malaya. When the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wells, visited 2RAR he was told that the battalion did not want to interrupt its counter-insurgent operations and revert to major war training, and he agreed that it would be better to defer such training until the end of the tour. Even then conventional war training was not taken seriously.

The Impact of the Malayan Emergency on Australian Army Doctrine

There is no doubt that preoccupation with anti-terrorist operations affected the Strategic Reserve's stated primary aim, which was to combat conventional communist forces. With all efforts directed towards fighting CTs in Malaya there was little emphasis on conventional warfare, particularly as the Chinese conventional threat

36 Ibid., p.13.
37 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 5, 55, 56, 49; Smith, Counter-Insurgency Operations, p.30. Some patrols operated for periods of three months.
38 CRS A6059/2, 65/441/42, 'Major War Training-2RAR'. On 3 July 1957, 2RAR received 'Operational Instruction No 26-Major War Training 2RAR'. 2RAR was ordered to practise establishing defensive positions, train with mines, artillery and mortar fire, conduct assault warfare training and be taught the use of radioactive equipment.
39 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 3 and 4 Side 1, 62-63.
was believed irrelevant by those stationed in Malaya. Consequently, the Strategic Reserve's ability to react quickly to a conventional threat in the region was limited. 2RAR, for example, had no anti-tank guns and was not trained for such warfare. It is surprising to note that given the possible employment of nuclear weapons, and the Strategic Reserve's stated primary role as a rapid response force to meet conventional Chinese aggression in Southeast Asia, 2RAR was not provided with any information on the conduct of operations involving nuclear weapons. 2RAR, and presumably other units in the BCFESR, were not even advised of the degrees of notice they would receive if they had to change from their secondary role to their primary role. In fact, the probability that the BCFESR would ever operate in its primary role was clearly extremely low.

As a result of their participation in the Malayan Emergency, Australian forces became well versed in the conduct of anti-terrorist operations in a jungle environment. The ATOM pamphlet had such a strong influence on Australian operations in Southeast Asia that much of it was later incorporated in the Counter Revolutionary Warfare, Patrolling and Tracking and Ambush and Counter Ambush pamphlets of 1965. Australian troops also learnt the need for close cooperation with local forces, police and community leaders. They became practised in civic action and accustomed to using helicopters in small numbers. Most importantly, however, they learnt the virtue of patience when seeking an elusive enemy. A lot of the experience gained through living and working in the jungle, and the adaption of weapons, rations and equipment to suit the environment, was useful in the period leading up to and including Australia's commitment in Vietnam. The Malayan experience also had a significant impact on the formulation of Australian doctrine for counter-insurgency warfare. As a result of Australian units rotating through BCFESR, jungle experience spread throughout the army, with the subsequent effect that the presence of jungle-experienced combat veterans made the transition within the Australian Army from limited war to counter-insurgency much easier in the lead-up to Vietnam.

40 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 4 and 5, 2.
41 ibid., 3.
42 McNeill, To Long Tan, p.6.
43 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 4 and 5, 32.
Malaya proved to be a catalyst for the rehabilitation of jungle warfare doctrine in the Australian Army. Jungle warfare was combat at section and platoon-level, which suited Australian experiences and capabilities. And from the 1950s to the 1970s, jungle warfare training and doctrine remained virtually unbroken. But once again the catalyst was external, with Australia adopting and depending on British doctrinal developments to cater for future Australian operational commitments.
CHAPTER 5

THE PENTROPIC ORGANISATION

Towards Pentropic

British Commonwealth armies had encountered difficulties in formulating new policy for the nuclear age since 1946. The process was particularly difficult for Australian and British armies due to their involvement in UN and counter-insurgency wars which left them little opportunity to address the nuclear situation. By the late 1950s, Australia and Britain finally had the opportunity to examine a new organisation that could possibly suit both nuclear and counter-insurgency roles.¹

The 1959 Australian Strategic Basis paper considered global war unlikely, suggesting that priority for the Australian Army should be to develop a limited war capability. Consequently a major reorganisation was necessary to enable the army to concentrate on achieving an adequate, regular force, readily available and properly equipped to meet a limited war situation in Southeast Asia.²

The impetus for the reorganisation of the army came as a result of Britain, in the late 1950s, investigating a new tactical concept to replace the standard British infantry division with a mechanised brigade group.³ Australia had studied the British Army's reorganisation of January 1957, but DMT considered it unsuitable for

¹ CRS A6059/2, 15/441/25, 'Infantry Commanders Course 1954-57'.
² CRS A6059/2, 41/441/69 Part 1, 'Reorganisation of the AMF 1959/60-1961/62'.
³ Homer (ed.), Duty First, p.132; CRS A6059/2, 15/441/25, 'Infantry Commanders Course 1954-57'. Since 1954 Britain had been examining the concept of nuclear warfare on the battlefield and the need to alter the army's organisation to suit it. The British concept revolved around closely integrated infantry/armoured battle groups to fight the Russians in the Middle East and Europe. The basic organisation of the new British Infantry Brigade Group was:

3 x Infantry Battalions
1 x Armoured Regiment
1 x Field Engineers Squadron
1 x Signals Squadron
1 x Field Regiment
1 x Medium Battery

In direct support
Australia's role in Southeast Asia. The new British tactical doctrine developed at Camberley centred on mechanised brigade groups organised for deployment with NATO forces on a European battlefield. These changes in British organisation and tactics, along with changes in Australia's area of strategic concern, led to calls for the reorganisation of the Australian Army. There were three possible alternatives: firstly, to maintain compatibility with the British army; secondly, to develop a uniquely Australian organisation; and finally, to follow the US lead with its adoption of the pentomic organisation, which was based on groupings of five units or sub-units.

Adoption of the last option would involve the introduction of a pentagonal structure which would eliminate the brigade echelon and replace it with larger battalions. The United States had adopted such an organisation, designated 'pentomic', in 1956. In December 1959 the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir Ragnar Garrett, chose to adopt for the Australian Army a derivative of the pentomic organisation known as the pentropic organisation. As a result, in the late 1950s, the Australian Army underwent a number of major adjustments in terms of organisation, capabilities and priorities.

Australia's association with Britain through the BCFESR continued to influence the army, but developments in the region suggested that a closer involvement with the United States would be advisable. Australia's policy of 'forward defence' implied the need for greater military compatibility with US forces to ensure that in any future Allied operations, organisational and logistic interoperability would be possible.

The presence of US military power in Southeast Asia, and continued assurances of support in the event of communist aggression, were the two most vital factors impacting on the security arrangements of the nations in the region. This US presence was

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4 AWM 121, 13/C/4, 'Notes on Some of the Events Preceding the Development of the Pentropic Division'.
5 J.C. Blaxland, Organising an Army: The Australian Experience 1957-1965 (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989).
6 Homer (ed.), Duty First, p.134.
7 ibid.
8 McKernan and Browne, Australia, pp.299-302.
significant because Britain's limited resources no longer permitted it to make a major contribution to security in the Far East in view of competing demands of the European and Middle Eastern theatres.

But Britain still exerted a profound influence on the development of the Australian Army through Staff College interchanges, shared battle experiences, and the use of British doctrine originating from the British Tactical School and Camberley Staff College. T.B. Millar wrote in 1965 that 'Australian servicemen have been brought up on British traditions, arms, equipment, ships and doctrine. These things are not lightly or quickly discarded', and that there was 'still a greater degree of affinity, of identity of thinking and feeling on defence matters, with Britain than with the United States or any foreign country'. But Britain could not guarantee Australia support in the Pacific region, whereas the United States could not avoid being a Pacific power. So Australia had to come to terms with a decline in British military capability and will, and the rise of the United States, a point amply demonstrated by the Suez crisis in 1956.

Adoption of the Pentropic Organisation

The realisation of both Britain's and Australia's limitations in the Southeast Asian region caused Australia to reconsider its strategic position. Increased communist aggression in the Asian region focused Australian concerns on Malaya, which was increasingly viewed as the pivot of Australia's defence. It was important to display support for both US and British policies and strategies, and to encourage these countries to retain a presence in Southeast Asia. Such an outcome would help meet Australia's strategic concerns, in particular the need to ensure that a major ally was operating in the region.

On 4 April 1957, the Prime Minister, Menzies, announced an official review of defence policy. While global war was considered unlikely, it was possible that a limited war could occur in the

11 ibid., p.257.
13 Millar, Australia's Defence, p.41.
Southeast Asian region at any time. It was further decided that a quick, retaliatory response would be needed to counter any aggression in the region. It was therefore necessary to have highly trained, effective and compact units available for immediate employment.14

In September 1957, the Minister for the Army, J.O. Cramer, announced the formation of a new mobile regular brigade group organisation designed specifically for the Southeast Asian region.15 This new brigade was to be mobile, hard-hitting and air-portable, similar to US forces, with emphasis on mobility and firepower.16

But Australia remained dependent on support from its allies, primarily the US, if its concept of 'forward defence' was to have any effect against a major power.17 The Defence Committee identified four key factors which would impact on Australia's defence capability: the requirement to commit forces to meet Australia's regional obligations overseas; the need for a rapid expansion capability; the needs of Home Defence; and the civil and defence production needs of Australia and her allies. The Defence Committee believed that Australia's defence requirements would be best met by hard-hitting, flexible, mobile and readily available forces, of sufficient size and availability to fulfil Australia's role in all of the situations envisaged.18

The 1959 Strategic Basis report furthered this line of thinking, with follow-up forces to be made available sooner to support an initial deployment. It recommended that Australia's first priority remain the establishment and provision of the regular forces and their support forces. The second and third priorities concentrated on the establishment of forces that could be made available in the first three to four months, with further forces available within the first six months.19 The Defence Committee observed that the second and third priorities were only attainable if the non-regular forces were raised on a basis of liability for overseas service as, under defence legislation,

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16 CRS A6059, 41/441/18, Board Minute on Supplement No.3 to Military Board Agendum 43/1956, 1 November 1956.
17 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, Report by the Defence Committee, January 1958'.
18 ibid.
19 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, January 1959'.
The CMF was not permitted to serve overseas. The Minister for Defence, A. G. Townley, agreed with these recommendations, believing them soundly based and reflecting the realities of the political and military situation facing Australia.20

The Defence Committee concluded that Australia’s forces should be designed to act independently, but be capable of acting in conjunction with Australia’s allies in regional defence arrangements.21 Consequently, Australia had to move away from its traditional policy of operational and logistic integration and dependence on a major ally.

On 26 November 1959 Townley announced a new three-year defence plan based on the 1959 Strategic Assessment. He stated that an 'inescapable conclusion had emerged that there must be a major re-organisation of the Army to enable it to concentrate on the provision and equipment of the type of forces required by the strategic situation'.22 The allies lacked the conventional forces to oppose large-scale attacks by numerically superior communist ground forces.23 Any chance of a successful defence would depend on the use of nuclear weapons. Yet large communist strategic offensive capabilities, combined with the possible deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in China, would make any allied use of nuclear weapons extremely risky. It could, in fact, spark a nuclear retaliation and escalate a conflict to global proportions.24 Thus Australia’s forces had to be capable of operating in a nuclear environment, and this could only be achieved through the adoption of the pentoic organisation.

The 1959 reorganisation aimed to improve the capability of the regular forces to respond quickly and to make these forces more readily available. Australia needed a small, highly mobile and professional defence force with a rapid reaction capability. National Service had proven a burden on the Regular Army in terms of diverting limited finance, equipment and manpower resources, but a decreasing threat of planned global war rendered National Service

20 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, January 1959'; The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, Report by the Defence Committee, January 1958'.
21 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, January 1959'.
22 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Ministerial Statement By The Honourable A.G. Townley, M.P., on Defence Review, Parliamentary Debates, 26 November 1959'.
23 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, January 1959'.
24 ibid.
obsolete. Approximately 3000 Regular Army personnel who had been required to support the National Service scheme, which cost approximately £9 million per year, were consequently made available for the field force.25

With the adoption of the new pentropic organisation, priority was given to building up a Regular Brigade Group, as well as a battalion in the Strategic Reserve in Malaya. The Regular Brigade Group was to be raised from its pre-1959 restricted establishment of 4170 in two battalions, to a full establishment of 5530 in three battalions, including the raising of a logistic support force.26

The cessation of National Service, combined with the decision to reorganise the army, enabled nearly £30 million to be reallocated to the provision of modern equipment.27 The brigade group was to be re-equipped first, then CMF formations. By July 1960, for example, the army was to be re-equipped with the new Australian-made FN rifle and the Italian 105 mm pack howitzer.28

Underlying the restructuring was the perceived need for the army to be capable of participating in two types of limited war: independent operations and operations with allies. As part of its ability to operate in conjunction with its allies, Australian forces would most likely be involved in counter-insurgency operations.29 These forces would also have to be capable of conducting sustained limited conventional warfare if the enemy discarded cold war tactics for conventional war.

There are two major theories justifying the adoption of the pentropic organisation within the Australian Army. The first is that the army was following the standard of the time, that of the US armed forces. The second, and more realistic in Breen's opinion, is that it was a political move designed to maintain capabilities and to justify to

25 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Ministerial Statement By The Honourable A.G. Townley, M.P., on Defence Review, Parliamentary Debates, 26 November 1959'.
27 AWM 121, 11/A/1, 'Ministerial Statement By The Honourable A.G. Townley, M.P., on Defence Review, Parliamentary Debates, 26 November 1959'.
28 Ibid.
29 AWM 125, 47/1, 'Composition of the Army, Part II'.
Parliament the expenditure of resources and its position in comparison with the other two services. By adopting a new structure, the army would be able to retain more resources than if it just stayed the same.30

The CGS, Garrett, had been faced with the need to obtain more funds for an army which was still using worn out Second World War weapons, equipment and vehicles. Adoption of the pentropic organisation would provide new weapons and material for the army, and would retain money from the defunct National Service within the army budget allocation.31

Blaxland offers a number of reasons for the adoption of the pentropic concept by the Australian Army. Firstly, political and military decision makers saw the pentomic 'battle group' (a battalion with supporting arms) as a force large enough to be noticed, both politically and militarily. Secondly, the commitment of anything smaller overseas was deemed to be politically and militarily embarrassing. Thirdly, the pentomic battle group was also larger than the traditional Australian battalion, and would be more capable of operating in jungle operations which were very manpower intensive. Finally, the United States could supply in bulk what Australia needed in terms of military equipment, which Britain could not. Indeed, the need to be compatible with a future ally in the region had been an important factor in the decision-making process.32 The 1960 pentropic organisation was seen as representing a genuine attempt to modernise and integrate Australian military forces with those of Australia's newly-emergent major ally.33

The pentropic organisation also addressed the problem of the limited manpower available to the army. The smallest, self-contained unit the army could provide for overseas service had been a brigade. But the army had only one brigade, and many commitments. As the army did not want to commit its entire operational force to one conflict, the only other option would be a battalion.

30 Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
31 Horner (ed.), Duty First, p.134; CRS A 6059/2, 60/441/114, 'The Australian Army Family of Weapons and Equipment'.
32 Blaxland, Organising an Army, Chapter 3.
But a battalion was not a self-sufficient fighting unit, and it would have had to operate under the command of a larger allied force, as happened in Korea. Consequently, the Australian Army would have had little control over its operational deployment. The Korean War had demonstrated the problems which had resulted from different operational procedures, tactical doctrine, organisation and military thinking associated with British-derived armies working within a larger US formation.

The pentropic organisation would enable a brigade to be replaced with an organisation larger than a battalion but smaller than a brigade, but one still capable of independent action.\(^{34}\) The Australian Army could create three or four such formations, increasing, at least in theory, the number of separate conflicts it could be engaged in without having to increase the size of the army.\(^{35}\) The three scenarios in which the army might have to operate, Borneo, Vietnam and Papua-New Guinea, could thus be covered. Under the brigade system this would be impossible without national mobilisation and massive financial expenditure.\(^{36}\)

The Minister for Defence, Townley, announced officially on 29 March 1960 the reorganisation of the Field Force along 'pentropic' lines. The new organisation was claimed to be less vulnerable to nuclear attack and more capable of meeting defence commitments in Southeast Asia. The adoption of the US-based pentropic organisation would supersede Australia's postwar British-based doctrine and organisation, and create a 'lean, powerful, versatile organisation, readily adaptable to any type of operation in which it is likely to be involved in South East Asia'.\(^{37}\)

The new pentropic division totalled some 14,000 men compared to the previous British-derived division of 13,000. The pentagonal structure was to provide maximum flexibility in grouping to meet the requirements of any specific situation. Except for its tanks, the division was air-transportable using a combination of heavy and

\(^{34}\) Interview, McNeill, 15 July 1993. For a more detailed account of the creation of the pentropic organisation and its strengths and weaknesses, see Blaxland, Organising an Army.

\(^{35}\) Interview, McNeill, 15 July 1993.

\(^{36}\) ibid.

medium transport aircraft. However, the division was dependent on outside organisations for all tactical and logistic airlift requirements and vehicles to move itself in one lift, as armoured personnel carriers were only available in the combat support group to lift one battalion in its tactical sub-units.38

The concept of the 'battle group' was the basis of the pentropic division. Control of the pentropic battle group (which included supporting arms and services, such as armour, artillery and engineers) would be exercised by an infantry battalion commander, referred to as the 'battle group commander'.39 Numerically, a pentropic battalion was about one and a half times the size of the British battalion, but with more than twice the firepower. The difference was that, in theory, a pentropic battalion contained eighty assault sections compared to thirty-six in a normal battalion.40 The pentropic battalions also supposedly made for extra manoeuvrability, offensive action and protection, while allowing for the customary wastage of manpower through operations. Such a force would be capable of relatively independent operations, and be big enough politically to send as a contribution to an allied effort, yet small enough not to tax the Australian Army too heavily.41

In explaining why the 1960 pentropic division would be superior to a 1945 infantry division in manpower, firepower and mobility, Cramer said that the:

pentropic division is especially designed for employment in tropical terrain and to meet the particular needs of South-East Asia. It is a lean, versatile and powerful organisation. Its designers had experience with, and gave cognizance to, the lessons gained from the employment of the jungle division. Moreover, the concept of the pentropic division acknowledges and reflects the need under conditions of modern war to reduce vulnerability and increase flexibility.42

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38 The Pentropic Division in Battle (Provisional), Part 1, Organization and Tactics, 1960.
40 ibid.
41 A6059/2, 41/441/60, 'Availability of the Field Force-1958'.
The army's identification of the type of enemy forces likely to be engaged supported the selection of the pentropic organisation as the basic building block for combat. The 1961 pamphlet, *The Phantom Army (Provisional)*, depicted the enemy as both a guerilla and a conventional force. The aim of the pamphlet was to provide information on the 'enemy', giving details of his military organisation, weapons and tactics. The enemy was a mix of communist Asian forces: revolutionary, insurgent or guerilla forces, and conventional military forces. The emphasis, however, was on conventional forces, with only 31 of the document's 162 pages dealing with insurgent forces.

The 'enemy' was depicted as an infantry army of great size which had learnt the value of employing well-balanced forces, equipped with a wide range of modern weapons and equipment. The 'enemy' was capable of remodelling its regular forces to meet any opponent on more equal technological terms, and the size, political reliability and manpower reserves of the 'enemy' would allow it to operate in any theatre of war in the Far East or Southeast Asia without being unduly affected by wastage.

The pamphlet went into some detail regarding the employment of conventional communist forces, addressing such aspects as the infantry division, regiment and battalion; the armoured division and regiment; the field artillery division and regiment; and such specialities as the anti-tank artillery division, anti-aircraft division, the parachute division, engineer division and chemical warfare elements.

The *Pentropic Division in Battle* series covered the effects and limitations placed on the army by the nature of the Southeast Asian region. Unlike earlier pamphlets, this series addressed problems that the army would face. It did not state that Europe was the norm, instead concentrating on Southeast Asia. Conventional combat was no longer the only form of combat which received attention, and more emphasis was given to jungle warfare. For instance, *Organization*

44 ibid., pp.36-37.
45 Military Board, *The Phantom Army (Provisional)*.
stated that a withdrawal in jungle would result in interference from penetration or infiltration through the front, envelopment round the flanks, air and airborne attack and guerilla activity. Examples and situations were taken from the Southeast Asian region, and applied to the principles of the advance, attack, defence and withdrawal.

Effects of the Pentropic Organisation on Army Training

But these changes were not reflected in basic doctrine. Regular Army and CMF training reports for 1960-61 highlight that the introduction of the pentropic organisation had very little effect on unit activities. Training for the 1st Division in 1960-61, for example, aimed to bring the division and its combat support group to a state of readiness for anti-insurgent operations and limited war (with possible use of nuclear weapons) in Southeast Asia. However, the general training requirements were not met. No training for nuclear warfare had been conducted below divisional headquarters level, which is not surprising when much of the information on nuclear war was hypothetical: 'No army in the world had yet to defend against nuclear attack; nor has any army used nuclear fire to assist in its defence; hence there is no direct experience to draw from'. Consequently, it had been difficult to introduce nuclear considerations in exercises, there had not been enough time to establish and train pentropic units in their tactical doctrine, and finally, it had proven impossible to exercise even one complete battle group. Regular and CMF units had been exercised at the unit level, but the amount of actual pentropic influence is debatable. According to Major Tony 'Pancho' Tonna, then a Bren gunner in 3RAR:

> some officers got us together to tell us we were now in a Pentropic Battalion. It had absolutely no effect on me, my Bren still weighed just as much in the bush and we still did the same things.

Despite the introduction of the pentropic organisation, therefore, very little change occurred in tactical doctrine and the operation of units. A

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47 ibid., p.187.
48 CRS A6059/2, 65/441/150, 'Annual Training Reports: ARA and CMF 1960/61'.
49 The Pentropic Division in Battle (Provisional), Part 1, Organization and Tactics, p.180.
discussion between 1st Division officers on the effects of the pentropic organisation determined that 'there is no departure from previously established principles'.

The Demise of Pentropic

Some observers felt that the pentropic experiment was clichéd in its approach. Its capabilities were never realised, while too much of the justification of the concept was jargon-ridden and unconvincing. Moreover, the pentropic system did not work in the field. But these critics conceded that the army at the time was the best trained peacetime army Australia had ever possessed.

The army, however, was torn between its uniquely Australian organisation and its British Commonwealth duties. The Australian battalion in Malaya was based on a British tropical establishment, which meant that prior to the establishment of a second tropical establishment battalion, in 1964, a pentropic battalion had to be broken down and its training adjusted before it could be sent to Malaya. The standard battalion then went to Malaya leaving behind its pentropic shell. It then took several months, depending on the reinforcement situation, to re-raise this ruin into an operational unit, a process which often created tension and discontent within a unit.

In fact, the Australian Army was actually two armies in organisation, equipment and doctrine: on the one hand it was a nuclear/conventional army, and on the other it was a counter-revolutionary army. Since it did not have the numbers to sustain two separate organisations, troops were shuffled between the two. The two separate organisations requiring constant retraining, reorganisation and the re-equipping of soldiers in order for them to be able to carry out two very different roles and responsibilities.

During the army's experiment with the pentropic concept, Australia still had treaty responsibilities to, and was liable to fight

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51 CRS A6059/2, 65/441/150, 'Annual Training Reports: ARA and CMF 1960/61'.
52 Interview, Grey, 6 July 1993; Hassett, letter, 16 September 1993.
53 Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 4 and 5, 34.
54 Interview, Grey, 6 July 1993.
55 ibid.
with and certainly to train with British, US and New Zealand forces.\textsuperscript{56} The United States and New Zealand, however, had doubts concerning the compatibility of the Australian pentropic organisation. If placed under their command they would not know how to control it.\textsuperscript{57} Also, should an Australian unit be replaced in a defensive position by a non-Australian battalion, that battalion, due to its smaller establishment, would be incapable of defending the same position. The Australians faced the opposite problem; should an Australian battalion replace a non-Australian battalion in a defensive position, the position would be too small for the number of Australian troops.\textsuperscript{58} At the sixth Quadripartite Infantry Conference in 1964, the problem of interoperability of infantry units of the American, British, Canadian and Australian (ABCA) armies was examined. As a result, the United States (with its three-rifle company battalions) and Australia (with its five-rifle company battalions) were invited to examine the concept of a battalion organisation containing four rifle companies, following the pattern of both Britain and Canada.\textsuperscript{59}

Perhaps the main reason for the decision to dismantle the pentropic organisation was the need for more battalions, so that a greater number of units could be deployed at any one time. The change from pentropic to an organisation similar to the old British pattern would enable infantry battalions to be reduced to approximately 800 men, with the result that the army would be able to field more battalions. As it happened, with the aid of conscription in 1964, the army created 5, 6 and 7RAR when the pentropic order of battle was disbanded.\textsuperscript{60}

By late 1964, the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton, had decided that there were four main factors in favour of a reorganisation of the Field Force. Firstly, in line with Australia's new strategic basis the 1st Division was more likely to operate in two separate strategic

\textsuperscript{56} CRS A6059, 2/441/30, 'AHQ Operation Instructions'. As part of Plan Ambrose (named Hammerhead on 14 November 1961), planning for overseas operations was on the basis that the Australian Army Force would be a component of a SEATO Force deployed for limited war in Southeast Asia. Australia's contribution was to be a battle group and logistic support force under the command of a component headquarters.

\textsuperscript{57} Interview, McNeill and Ochiltree, Tape 4 and 5, 35.

\textsuperscript{58} ibid.

\textsuperscript{59} CRS A2653, 604/R6/7, 'Annex D to Military Board Submission No 13/1964'.

\textsuperscript{60} Interview, Breen, 17 June 1993.
areas than fight as one cohesive formation. Secondly, Australia's perceived Cold War role implied the need for smaller, lightly supported, infantry battalions. Thirdly, the availability of tactical air support allowed the overall reduction of road transport; and finally, the possible use of National Service would help alleviate the army's manpower problem.61

By October 1964, the Defence Committee perceived the entire Southeast Asian mainland to be under direct threat of being overrun by communists, with the likelihood of success against the Viet Cong in Vietnam considered 'not good'. Combined with the above was an increasing fear of Indonesian aggression which could lead to limited war. Consequently, with the range of likely military situations Australia had to be prepared to face, Australia's future security depended on its security arrangements with the United States and, once again, Britain.62

Situations short of limited war for which Australia had to be prepared to provide forces without prejudice to a limited war capability included:

- the support of Malaysia against Indonesian confrontation or a resurgence of communist terrorist activities;
- the support of SEATO counter-insurgency plans;
- bilateral military assistance in mainland Southeast Asia, for example to South Vietnam and Thailand;
- covert Indonesian activity in Papua-New Guinea; and
- United Nations peacekeeping tasks.63

None of these tasks were thought to be of short duration and all could extend over several years. Australia already had forces committed to cold war/counter-insurgency tasks in Malaysia, South Vietnam and Thailand. Even if limited war did not occur, it was deemed likely that there would be increasing demands placed on Australia's military forces to contribute to cold war/counter-insurgency situations. It was doubtful whether the pentropic organisation, in light of the new

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62 AWM 121, 11/A/2, PT 2, 'Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, 1964'.
63 Ibid.
strategic concerns, would be suited to counter-insurgency warfare. A different organisation would be more capable of conducting counter-insurgency operations.

The demise of the pentropic organisation in December 1964 was a response to the changing strategic concerns facing Australia. US abandonment of the pentomic organisation, combined with operational difficulties between Australia and its allies, meant that the Australian Army would find it difficult to conduct limited warfare operations. Australia was just as likely to fight alongside British forces in the BCFESR as with the United States, which meant that compatibility with Britain was a serious matter.

The abandonment of the pentropic organisation followed the November 1964 Report by Major General J.S. Andersen. The general conclusions of the Andersen Report stated:

In general we see the infantry division reverting more to the style of the triangular division with a cavalry regiment, three field regiments, three field squadrons of engineers, a completely redesigned signals regiment and ten infantry battalions, controlled by three task force (or brigade) headquarters. We also see as organic to the division an aviation wing comprising a light aircraft squadron and a utility helicopter squadron, commanded and manned by Army personnel.

It was stressed however that the change should not be seen as retroactive, with the term 'task force' simply being substituted for 'brigade'. The new organisation was based on a nucleus of two or more battalions capable of operating in an independent role. In line with Australia's strategic concerns, low priority was given to the division fighting en masse in any limited war engagement.

The deteriorating strategic situation in Vietnam and Confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia in 1964 and 1965 had far-reaching effects on the role and structure of the Australian Army: counter-insurgency training began; the pentropic organisation was

64 Homer (ed.), Duty First, p.146.
65 ibid., p.144.
66 ibid., p.145.
abolished; the army increased its regular battalions from four to nine; a second battalion of the Pacific Islands Regiment was formed; the Special Air Service Company was expanded into a Regiment; selective National Service was introduced; the armoured corps was reorganised into regular armoured, cavalry and armoured personnel carrier regiments; and the Army Aviation Corps was formed.

Commitments to Confrontation and the Vietnam War also had long-term implications for the army's structure. Defence issues that needed to be addressed included the following: CMF troops could not be deployed overseas without a Defence Act amendment; for troops to be deployed at short notice, forces needed to be at a relatively high state of readiness; forces deployed overseas could not rely completely on combat or logistic support from allies; and the value of possessing a range of capabilities (tanks, civil affairs, psychological operations, signals and intelligence) was confirmed. But the main change for the Australian Army was the adoption of counter-revolutionary warfare as the raison d'etre of the army.
CHAPTER 6

TOWARDS COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE

In 1961, General Headquarters Far East Land Forces (GHQ FARELF) ordered the 28th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group (specifically its Australian commander, Brigadier Frank Hassett, and a team of officers in Malaya) to prepare a manual for a brigade group operating in Southeast Asia in an anti-insurgency role against a Viet Minh-type enemy supported by Chinese military forces. The term 'anti-insurgency' was regularly used to refer to all situations short of limited war.1

During his time as brigade commander, Hassett had become absorbed in the nature of French operations in Indochina, particularly how to organise, equip and train a force to fight the Viet Minh. Until 1960, no Western power, including Australia, had given this type of warfare much serious thought. Hassett's major purpose in undertaking this venture was to prepare his brigade for possible employment in its SEATO role on the Southeast Asian mainland.2

Hassett used a range of British, Australian and US military pamphlets and books on guerilla and jungle warfare to write the FARELF pamphlet.3 But his use of doctrine developed by the Australian Army during the Second World War was clearly evident, especially the AMF's Infantry Training, Volume IV, (Australia), Parts 1 (1956) and 2 (1957), which were derived from the Australian Military Forces, Tropical Warfare (Aust.), Pamphlet No.1, 1944 and Pamphlet No.2, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'; CRS A6059/2, 38/441/3, '28 Commonwealth Infantry Brigade Group Instruction for Mobilisation for Overseas Operations'.

1 Hassett, letter, 16 September 1993.
2 Hassett's pamphlet drew on sources as varied as British, US and Australian military publications: The Phantom Army; The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya (1958); Infantry Training, Vol.IV, (Australia), Parts 1 and 2; Guerilla and Anti-Guerilla Operations, FM 31-15; and Guerilla Warfare and Special Forces Operations. Hassett also used a range of books, such as Bernard Fall's Street without Joy, Nguyen Vo Giap's People's War People's Army, Spencer Chapman's The Jungle is Neutral and Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's Guerilla Warfare.
Towards Counter-Revolutionary Warfare 61

1945.4 Major General E. A. W. Williams, Chief of Staff at General Headquarters FARELF, thought Hassett's work exhibited a strong British Commonwealth flavour, but with more Australian emphasis, 'almost more Australian in its philosophy than British'.5 Lieutenant General Sir Nigel Poett, Commander-in-Chief FARELF, supported this view, stating that the doctrine was based on existing equipment currently available to British and Commonwealth forces in Malaya (except helicopters).6

Informed of Hassett's work, the Deputy Director of Military Training, Colonel E.G. McNamara, wrote to FARELF on 9 February 1962 expressing interest in the work with a view to introducing it to the AMF if it proved suitable.7 DMT requested that draft copies of Hassett's Tactical Doctrine in South East Asia be sent to Australia for appreciation. Hassett's work was considered so important to Australia that the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir Reginald Pollard, wrote to Poett asking that Australian authorities be permitted to work with Hassett on the pamphlet.8 Tactical Doctrine in South East Asia was to be published as a War Office training document with the approval of the Australian and New Zealand military authorities, ultimately becoming part of the War Office's Land Battle series of pamphlets.

In a minute to the Directors of Military Operations and Plans and Administrative Planning dated 31 August 1962, the Director of Military Training, Brigadier G. F. Larkin, reported receipt of Hassett's draft. DMT had undertaken to cooperate in the project:

in order that a common doctrine on this subject may exist for the British and the Australian Armies. However, differences in organization, equipment etc, may preclude the adoption of the UK pamphlet in
In examining the draft Larkin thought it a good mix of British and Australian information on the subject. It met requirements on matters of doctrine but would have to be adapted to suit Australia's pentropic organisation. The DCGS also thought that the differences in organisation would force the army to proceed with the production of its own doctrine using Hassett's first draft as a basis. In line with this view, Larkin, who believed that the pamphlet would do a lot for the coordination of British and Australian doctrine, wrote to FARELF on 14 December 1962:

We are now working towards producing, for use in the Australian Military Forces, a pamphlet on anti-guerilla doctrine. Work on this pamphlet has started from the basis of the original drafts produced by Brigadier F.G. Hassett. It is therefore hoped that the doctrine to be produced for use in Australia and the Far East Land Forces will develop along parallel lines.

Meantime, the Australian Staff College had held a symposium between 26-29 November 1962 to discuss the organisation and employment of the pentropic division. At the symposium a tactical concept for 'Anti-Revolutionary Warfare' was presented which highlighted the absence of an effective doctrine for the army in this type of operation. It was noted that by 1962 Australian battalions with artillery and other support had been operating in Malaya against insurgents for seven years. As a result the Australian Army had a high degree of jungle combat experience but no doctrine of its own, having used the British ATOM pamphlet. The Staff College symposium recommended that the army develop a cogent doctrine quickly, that a revolutionary warfare centre be established to develop that doctrine, and that close liaison be maintained with similar centres.

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9 Minute, Brigadier G. F. Larkin to DAP and DMO & P, 31 August 1962, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
10 Letter, Brigadier G. F. Larkin to GHQ FARELF, 14 December 1962, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
11 Brief-AMF Counter Insurgency Doctrine, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
Towards Counter-Revolutionary Warfare

The identification of training needs in Australia was finally catching up with the type of operations that would be conducted in Australia's area of strategic interest, with particular emphasis on counter-insurgency in a jungle environment.

To meet this increasingly urgent need, the 28th Brigade's first draft was quickly adapted and issued on 14 December 1962 as 'Army Routine Order 21/1962' (ARO 21/62 or 'Anti-Guerilla Operations in South East Asia-Interim Tactical Doctrine'). It was accompanied by the advice that it was an interim tactical doctrine pending promulgation in 1963 of the *Pentropic Division in Battle*, Pamphlet 11, *Anti-Guerilla Operations*.

In June 1963, DMT stated that the information contained in Hassett's pamphlet and the Australian interim tactical doctrine promulgated in ARO 21/62 were derived from a common source. In August 1963 a comparison was made between the completed FARELF pamphlet and ARO 21/62, which concluded that 'the tactical doctrine laid down in ARO 21/62 covers the major points contained in the FARELF pamphlet'. But refinements had to be made to ARO 21/62 to suit Australia's needs as Australian forces were unlikely to be committed in Phase 1 of an insurgency (the passive stage) but rather in a highly developed Phase 2 active stage. The interim doctrine in ARO 21/62 would continue to suffice, therefore, until the *Counter Revolutionary Warfare* pamphlet, designed specifically for the Australian Army, was published in 1965.

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12 ibid.
14 Brief-AMF Counter Insurgency Doctrine, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
15 Minute, Major General (GOC Northern Command) to AHQ, 20 August 1963, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
16 Brief-AMF Counter Insurgency Doctrine; Minute, DMT to Comds, 20 June 1963, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'. In communist revolutionary warfare, communist rebels use political, economic and military means against the established government of a country. Its military method includes insurgency, in which guerilla, regional and regular forces may all play a part. It may be inspired from within or from outside the country. In Southeast Asia, communist revolutionary warfare follows the pattern established by Mao Tse Tung of protracted revolutionary war in three phases: the passive phase; the active phase; and the counter-offensive.
In September 1963, the *Pentropic Division in Battle (Provisional)*, Pamphlet 11, *Counter-Insurgency 1964* was published. It was based on information from ARO 21/62, the 28th Brigade's *Anti-Guerilla Operations in South East Asia* and the ATOM pamphlet, sources which were also used to create the Australian Army pamphlets *Patrolling and Tracking* and *Ambush and Counter Ambush*. DMT had decided not to include all the technical information in *Counter-Insurgency*, but to create two comprehensive all-arms pocket-sized pamphlets to cover both limited war and counter-insurgency aspects of patrolling, tracking and ambushing.

The abandonment of the pentropic concept and Australia's increased emphasis on cold war doctrine was reflected in the 1965 series *The Division in Battle*, which emphasised limited and cold war, with only a passing reference to nuclear warfare. But the new series' area of primary concern remained the tropical zone (Southeast Asia down to Papua-New Guinea) which had been identified in the *Pentropic Division in Battle* series.

The likely enemy was identified as a mix of insurgents, guerillas and regular military forces, numerically superior and much better organised, trained, equipped and led than those of the Malayan Emergency. Doctrinal emphasis, however, was on an ability to deal with a range of cold war tasks without needing major modifications to enable the army to fight a possible limited war. To be more specific, by 1965 Australia's doctrine focused on counter-revolutionary rather than counter-insurgency warfare.

In November 1964, while reviewing *The Division in Battle*, Pamphlet No.11, *Counter Revolutionary Warfare 1965* (CRW), Larkin stated that because of closer Australian involvement with US forces in South Vietnam, US doctrine and terminology had to be considered. During the Malayan Emergency Australian forces had used and

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17 Minute, Lieutenant Colonel J. Salmon to DDMT, 24 July 1963, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
18 Minute, Brigadier G. F. Larkin to Comds, 9 September 1963, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
20 ibid.
21 Brief-Categories of Counter Insurgency Operations, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
subsequently adopted British terminology such as 'framework operations' and 'cordon and search'. Following the creation of the Australian Army Training Team, Vietnam (AATTV), however, US terms began creeping into Australian usage. A June 1963 Report by the Australian Services Attache in Saigon included examples of US terms used by the AATTV such as 'Fix and Destroy', 'Search and Clear', and 'Clear and Hold'.

Larkin noted that CRW needed to incorporate US terms for Vietnam and British terms for the BCFESR. Since 'Australian doctrine is traditionally based on British doctrine it was decided to use the US terms, which tended to be more specific, within the general framework of the broad British categories'. As a result CRW incorporated a combination of current US and British military terms, and Larkin commented in November 1964 that it contained little that was original, as it was 'mostly stolen from UK/US publications and adapted to meet Australian concepts'.

Comparison between the CRW and ATOM pamphlets demonstrates how much the former was based on the latter. If the words were not always identical, the same principles or meanings were enunciated. To take an example, Chapter XII, page 1, of the ATOM pamphlet dealt with the use of air strikes on enemy camps; on page 139 of the CRW pamphlet the same subject was addressed with only minor word changes in the text.

Subjects treated in the ATOM pamphlet but regarded by the authors of CRW as inapplicable were included in two other pamphlets: Ambush and Counter Ambush and Patrolling and Tracking. These reflected the contents of several chapters of the ATOM pamphlet. For example, in the establishment of a patrol base, the ATOM pamphlet stated that, 'A jungle base depends largely on secrecy for its security, and it is always necessary to have a cover plan which will draw away CT attention from your base. Deception should

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22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Minute, Brigadier Larkin to DDMO, DAP and D Maintenance, 12 November 1964, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'.
26 Minute, Lieutenant Colonel J. Salmon to DDMT, 24 July 1963, CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'. ARO 21/62, the
always be planned. Patrolling and Tracking stated: 'A patrol base depends largely on secrecy for its security. Deception must always be planned'. Most subjects dealt with in the 1965 pamphlets were found in the ATOM pamphlet, and if they were not identical, they were so closely paraphrased that their origins were obvious. (See Appendix B for a detailed comparison.) Sub-unit training for infantry in the ATOM pamphlet and the Division in Battle series emphasised the same principles and techniques. Take, for example, vehicle movement along a road. The ATOM pamphlet stated that:

Men travelling in a vehicle must be able to see all round them, fire their weapons or throw grenades without hindrance and debus in quick time - all within the minimum restriction of movement.

while Ambush and Counter Ambush stated:

Troops travelling in vehicles must be able to see all round them, fire their weapons and throw smoke grenades over the vehicle's sides without hindrance. They must debus quickly with the minimum of restriction of movement.

Both then discussed similar methods to achieve this.

In Hassett's opinion, the 28th Brigade's doctrine was the basis for the 1965 pamphlets. Thus Australian doctrine for Vietnam, as well as attitudes to civic action, grew from Australia's involvement in the Second World War, Korea and the Malayan Emergency. After twenty years, the army had created a doctrine to suit its specific needs based upon past experience. For example, the AATTV used doctrine

28th Brigade's Tactical Doctrine in South East Asia and the ATOM pamphlet were also used to create these pamphlets.

27 The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya, Chapter VI, pp.1-2.
30 The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya, Chapter XIII, p.8.
31 Military Board, Ambush and Counter Ambush, pp.48-49.
33 Breen, First to Fight.
Towards Counter-Revolutionary Warfare

and procedures that had been included in the ATOM pamphlet, and those same ATOM lessons were later incorporated in the 1965 Australian pamphlets Counter Revolutionary Warfare, Patrolling and Tracking and Ambush and Counter Ambush. But while the ATOM pamphlet was a very practical, and a very effective, pamphlet, it only dealt with the employment of infantry and artillery in a controlled counter-insurgent environment. The 1965 Division in Battle series however, taken as a whole, dealt with the employment of an army comprising infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, intelligence, signals, aviation, ordnance, medical, provost and all the other elements of a modern army.

There is no doubt that the CRW pamphlet epitomised the type of operations Australian forces would conduct in Southeast Asia. But, unlike the ATOM pamphlet, CRW did not stand alone but was part of a series which reflected doctrine for Australia's army for counter-revolutionary operations in Southeast Asia. This doctrine prepared the Australian Army as a whole, rather than just parts of it, for operations in Australia's area of strategic interest.

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34 McNeill, The Team, p.195; CRS A6059/2, 52/441/36, 'Anti-Guerilla Operations DMT Training Pamphlet'. Techniques taught included map reading, jungle navigation, ambush drills, night harbours and constant patrolling and tracking of the enemy.

CONCLUSION

The Australian Army, despite its flirtation with the US-influenced pentropic concept, remained heavily dependent on British doctrine, equipment and training during the period from 1945 to 1964. At the end of the Second World War Australia's tactical doctrine was not suited to the requirements of its postwar strategic interests. Australia tried to match military doctrine and capabilities to the requirements of its region of interest, but the process proved inadequate. The greatest handicaps faced by the army were conflicts of interest and the time delay associated with the implementation of a new doctrine. When a new doctrine was implemented, it often only lasted for a short period of time before a new strategic focus evolved, rendering present doctrine obsolescent. Consequently there was little time for the army to become familiar with the demands of any new doctrine. As a result, doctrinal development in the postwar period up to the late 1950s stagnated, replaced by a belief that conventional doctrine and principles could be adapted to suit any situation.

Strategic thought and doctrine within the Australian Army remained divergent for most of the period under review, only reuniting just before the Vietnam War. The Australian Army developed from being an army for conventional jungle warfare (Australian doctrine) in 1945, to an Imperial force (British doctrine) from 1945 to the late 1950s, to a nuclear/conventional army (combination US and British doctrine) in 1960, and finally to a counter-revolutionary army (combination Australian and British doctrine) in 1965. This transition was virtually full circle in doctrinal terms, refocusing on small-unit operations in the jungle and emphasising the importance of patrolling and ambushing. The lessons of 1945 were repeated in 1965.

Bereft of direction until the mid-1950s, the army had been searching for a doctrine to suit its strategic outlook. Not surprisingly the doctrine it employed was as vague as the strategic direction it sought to support. It was not until the mid-1950s that Australia's strategic outlook concentrated on one theatre, with Australia refocusing from the Middle East and Malaya to Malaya only. The differences in organisation, doctrine and equipment for conventional open warfare and jungle warfare in the 1950s were almost as great as
those between nuclear and jungle warfare in the 1960s. The Australian Army was too small to conduct operations in two very different environments against two very different enemies. This was apparent in the late 1940s and 1950s, and was confirmed again in the early 1960s with the pentropic organisation.

Overseas commitments did not permit the army to formulate doctrinal change until the early 1960s. The army's reorientation towards small-unit jungle warfare in the mid-1960s saw the army come full circle, reverting to a refined version of its Second World War experiences, doctrine and organisation, with emphasis on counter-revolutionary warfare instead of conventional jungle warfare. After nearly twenty years, the army's doctrine, equipment, and organisation were once more in tune with its strategic area of concern.

Australia's strategic focus shifted to Southeast Asia from 1953, but it was not until 1965 that official doctrine was promulgated to enable the army to operate there. In a purely doctrinal sense, for a period of twelve years the Australian Army was unprepared for combat operations in Southeast Asia. The creation of doctrine is not an easy process, and an army's doctrine, organisation and equipment cannot be altered as quickly or as easily as a new strategic policy or focus of concern can be announced. It is, of course, easier to reorder an army if a suitable doctrine has been developed by another army, but doctrine has to be compatible with the capabilities of the receiving army and capable of being implemented. Australia's adoption of the pentropic organisation is an excellent example of a doctrine incorrectly applied to an inappropriate situation. On the other hand, the adoption of Britain's counter-insurgency doctrine is an example of a doctrine which suited the Australian Army's resources, abilities and strategic area of interest. The fact that this doctrine originated from British and Australian (which in turn was partly derived from British) sources made its adoption much easier. It did not require radical organisational change within the army, and most of the army's personnel were familiar with the doctrine through operational experience in Malaya.

The Australian Army's operational capabilities never officially matched its strategic responsibilities until 1965. Strategic thought and theory said that the army could meet its responsibilities, but the army's actions said otherwise. Fortunately when the army was called
upon to perform, as in Korea and Malaya, it had within its ranks men who had experience of the same or similar forms of combat. The Australian Army's ability to call on these men to develop an ad hoc system of tactics and techniques for the immediate situation maintained the army's reputation as a force to be reckoned with. The importance of defining the strategic area of concern cannot be overstressed as it directs the army in the creation of a doctrine to match strategic policy requirements. To work in the belief that people with knowledge will be available whenever needed is dangerous. To be too rigid in one's approach to doctrine, as was Frederick the Great, is to court defeat. But at the other extreme, to be lax and doctrinally unprepared, as Australia was between 1945 and 1964, tempts a similar fate.

Australian Army doctrine in this period was marked by three, often competing, elements: conflict of strategic interests, the continual borrowing of other countries' doctrines, and emphasis on small-unit operations. A truly indigenous doctrine was not created for the army until the publication of *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare* in 1984, based on a policy of self-reliance, emphasising the defence of Australia by Australians within a framework of military alliances.¹

As Major General J.F.C. Fuller once observed, 'The central idea of an army is known as its doctrine, which to be sound must be based on the principles of war, and which to be effective must be elastic enough to admit of mutation in accordance with change in circumstances.'² The Australian experience between 1945 and 1964 emphasises further the need to match that central idea to the aims which it is intended to further.

---


## APPENDIX A
BRITISH, UNITED STATES AND AUSTRALIAN PRINCIPLES OF WAR (IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRITISH (1920)</th>
<th>BRITISH (1948)</th>
<th>BRITISH (1954)</th>
<th>UNITED STATES (1921)</th>
<th>UNITED STATES (1949)</th>
<th>UNITED STATES (1954)</th>
<th>AUSTRALIAN (1992)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of the Objective</td>
<td>Selection and Maintenance of the Aim</td>
<td>The Selection and Maintenance of the Aim</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>The Objective</td>
<td>Selection and Maintenance of the Aim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive Action</td>
<td>Offensive action</td>
<td>Maintenance of Morale</td>
<td>Offensive</td>
<td>The Offensive</td>
<td>The Offensive</td>
<td>Concentration of Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Offensive action</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Economy of Effort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>Concentration of Force</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Mass</td>
<td>Economy of Force</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy of Force</td>
<td>Economy of Effort</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Economy of Force</td>
<td>Economy of Force</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Concentration of Force</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Offensive action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Economy of Effort</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Unity of Command</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Manoeuvre</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of Morale</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Simplicity</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Australia employed the same 'principles of war' as Britain for 1920, 1948 and 1954. The Australian 'principles of war' for 1992 contain the same 'principles' as the British 'principles of war' for 1948. Further analysis reveals a long-standing British influence on Australian doctrinal concepts.

# APPENDIX B
## COMPARISON OF BRITISH AND AUSTRALIAN AMBUSH AIDES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATOM AMBUSH ORDERS - AIDE MEMOIRE</th>
<th>AMBUSH AND COUNTER AMBUSH AMBUSH ORDERS - AIDE MEMOIRE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remember Security - Do not use the telephone. Do not allow men out after briefing</strong></td>
<td>(Remember security - Do not use the telephone - Do not allow men out after orders)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested Headings</strong></td>
<td><strong>Situation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Situation</strong></td>
<td>1. <strong>Topography.</strong> Use of patrol reports, air photographs, maps and local knowledge. Consider use of a guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) <strong>Topography.</strong> - Use of air photographs, maps and local knowledge consider use of a guide</td>
<td>b. <strong>Enemy.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) <strong>CT.</strong> -</td>
<td>(1) Expected strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Expected strength</td>
<td>(2) Anticipated order of march.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Names and anticipated order of march. Photographs.</td>
<td>(3) Dress and weapons of individuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Dress and weapons of individuals.</td>
<td>(4) Habits, including reaction to previous ambushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Which is the VIP.</td>
<td>c. <strong>Friendly Forces.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) What are the habits of party concerned.</td>
<td>(1) Guides to accompany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(c) SF.</strong></td>
<td>(2) What other forces are doing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Guides or SEP to accompany.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) What other SF are doing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(d) Clearance.</strong> -</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Challenge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Password.</td>
<td>e. <strong>Civilians.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Identifications.</td>
<td>(1) Locations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(e) Civilians.</strong> -</td>
<td>(2) Habits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Locations.</td>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Habits.</td>
<td>2. This must be clear in the mind of every man.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Mission**
   This must be clear in the mind of every man especially when a particular CT is to be killed.
### 3. Execution

(a) Type of layout.
(b) Position and direction of fire of groups.
(c) Dispersal point.
(d) Weapons to be carried.
(e) Composition of groups.
(f) Timings and routes.
(g) Formations during move in.
(h) Orders re springing.
(i) Distribution of fire.
(j) Use of grenades.
(k) Action on ambush being discovered.
(l) Order to cease firing.
(m) Orders re immediate follow up.

(o) Orders for search.
(p) Deliberate follow up.
(q) Signal to call off ambush.
(r) Rendezvous.
(s) Dogs - if any.
(t) Deception plan.
(u) Alerting.

### Execution

3. a. Type of layout.
   b. Position and direction of fire of groups.
   c. Dispersal point.
   d. Weapons to be carried.
   e. Composition of groups.
   f. Timings and routes.
   g. Formations during move in.
   h. Orders for springing.
   i. Distribution of fire.
   j. Use of grenades.
   k. Action on ambush being discovered.
   l. Orders for immediate follow up if possible.
   m. Orders for search.
   n. Deliberate follow up.
   o. Rendezvous.
   p. Dogs - if any.
   r. Signals for:
       (1) Enemy are approaching.
       (2) Open fire.
       (3) Cease fire.
       (4) Assault.
       (5) Searching group out.
       (6) Withdraw.
       (7) Abandon position.

### 4. Administration and Logistics

(a) Use of transport to area.
(b) Equipment and dress: - Footwear for move in.
(c) Rations - if any.
(d) Special equipment: -

### Administration and Logistics

4. a. Use of transport to area, if any.
   b. Equipment and dress including footwear for move in.
   c. Rations, if any.
   d. Special equipment.
| (1) Night lighting equipment. | (1) Night lighting equipment. |
| (2) Cameras. | (2) Explosives. |
| (3) Fingerprint equipment. | (3) Cameras. |
| (4) Fingerprint equipment. | (4) Fingerprint equipment. |
| e. Medical. | e. Medical. |
| (1) First field dressing, first aid packs. | (1) Evacuation plan. |
| (2) Medical Orderly. | (2) First field dressing, first aid packs. |
| (3) Stretcher and ambulance. | (3) Medical orderly. |
| (4) Stretcher. | (4) Stretcher. |
| (f) Reliefs. | (f) Reliefs. |
| (g) Administrative Area, if required; orders about cooking, smoking. | g. Administrative area if required; orders about cooking, smoking. |
| (h) Transport for return journey. | h. Transport for return journey. |
| [i) not included in original] | i. Inspection of personnel and equipment: |
| (j) Inspection of personnel and equipment: | (1) Men with colds not to be taken. |
| (1) Men with colds not to be taken. | (1) Men with colds not to be taken. |
| (2) Is zeroing of weapons correct? | (2) Zeroing of weapons correct? |
| (3) Is ammunition fresh? | (3) Is ammunition fresh? |
| (4) Are magazines properly filled? | (4) Are magazines properly filled? |
| (5) Insect repellent. | (5) Insect repellent. |

5. Command and Signals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Success signal.</th>
<th>Command and Signal</th>
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<td>[Taken from The Conduct of Anti-Terrorist Operations in Malaya (Third Edition - 1958), Appendix A]</td>
<td>[Taken from Military Board, Ambush and Counter Ambush (Canberra: Army Headquarters, 1965), Appendix B]</td>
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