

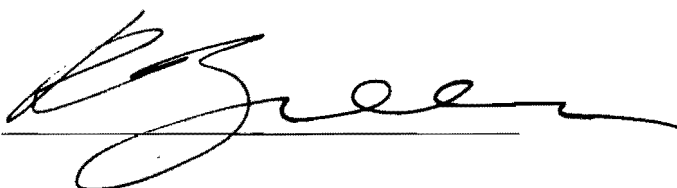
Australian Military Force Projection in the late 1980s and the
1990s:
What Happened and Why

by Bob Breen

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at the Australian National University, 2006



I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, or material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or the institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed: 

Robert John Breen

3rd May 2006

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Australian's proficiency in military force projection in the late 1980s and the 1990s. It concentrates on the operational and tactical levels of command. It is a critique. The following table summarises ten enabling functions of force projection and their supporting elements:

No	Function	Elements
1.	Generic Preparation	Military capability that is made up of force structure, readiness, mobilisation and sustainability
2.	Command	Command, control, communications and computer systems
3.	Specific Preparation	Concentration of force elements in mounting or home bases, reconnaissance, reinforcement, training, administration and issue of weapons, equipment and stocks
4.	Deployment	Concentration of personnel and matériel, loading, movement of force elements to area of operations and, best effect arrival and pre-positioning
5.	Protection	Intelligence, surveillance, contingency rehearsal and rapid response
6.	Employment	Conduct of operations that may include maintaining deterrent presence, manoeuvre and application of lethal force
7.	Sustainment	Planning and carrying out the movement of supplies and maintenance of forces through a supply chain
8.	Rotation	Reinforcement, relief, resting, retraining, re-equipping and redeployment of force elements
9.	Redeployment	Protected movement to specified locations, normally home bases
10.	Reconstitution	Return to required level of military capability

Australia depended on allies from 1885 until 1985. When they were not in a position to help, Australia struggled with the enabling functions of force projection. These deficiencies increased risk at tactical tipping points in New Guinea in 1942 and in Vietnam in 1966. These were short periods when the outcomes of tactical contests had strategic consequences for Australia. Both times, Australian troops prevailed against the odds, saving Australia from political embarrassment.

After 1972, Australia's strategic emphasis moved towards self-reliant defence and joint operations. By this time, the media had begun broadcasting military operations to a worldwide audience for interpretation by scores of commentators. Media representatives and their images and stories created news from tactical setbacks

that would have gone unnoticed in earlier times. This magnification and analysis increased the political and strategic consequences if all did not go well at the frontline.

Australia did not learn from the contests of 1942 and 1966, or subsequently. In 1987, risks emerged during a force projection to the waters off Fiji. Deficiencies were again evident in 1989 during the planning and preparation of forces for service in Namibia as well as during Exercise *Kangaroo 89*. Operations in Somalia in 1993, Rwanda in 1994, Bougainville in 1994 and 1997, as well as in East Timor in 1999, exposed persistent problems with preparation and deployment as well as force command, protection and sustainment. The origins of some problems were in the conduct of Exercises *Kangaroo 92* in 1992 and *Kangaroo 95* in 1995. Incomplete rehearsal resulted in defective performance on operations.

Governments deemed all national, regional and international Australian force projections in the late 1980s and during the 1990s to have been successful. Several produced significant political and strategic dividends. However, there was room for improvement. Higher levels of command put the tactical level under unnecessary additional pressure that increased risk. These problems made the case for consolidating ADF command and control arrangements and matching the responsibilities of commanders with the authority and means to achieve their missions. These systemic problems also made the case for a permanent joint commander of ADF operations, supported by a joint operations headquarters. This officer would command a rapid response command comprised of high readiness ADF force elements, including the infrastructure and means for specific force preparation, deployment and force sustainment.

ABBREVIATIONS

1 ATF	1 st Australian Task Force
1 RAR	1 st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
II FFV	Second Field Force Vietnam (US)
1 GL Group	1 st Ground Liaison Group
2 RAR	2 nd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
3 RAR	3 rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
4 RAR	4 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
2/4 RAR	2 nd /4 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
5 RAR	5 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
6 RAR	6 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
5/7 RAR	5 th /7 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
8 RAR	8 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
9 RAR	9 th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment
51 FNQR	51 st Far North Queensland Regiment
AAP	Australian Associated Press
AATTV	Australian Army Training team Vietnam
ABRI	<i>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia</i> or Indonesian Armed Forces
ACMAT	Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Matériel
ACPOL	Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Policy
ACOPS	Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Operations
ACLOG	Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Logistics
AD	Australian Defence
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
ADFCC	Australian Defence Command centre
ADFIG	Australian Defence Force Intelligence Centre
ADO	Australian Defence Organisation
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADFIG	Australian Defence Force Intelligence Centre
ADHQ	Australian Defence Headquarters
AFP	Australian Foreign Press
AFP	Australian Federal Police
AFPO	Australian Forces Post Office
AFS	Australian Force Somalia
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AJSP	Australian Joint Service Publication
ALCC	Air Load Coordination Centre
ALG	Air Lift Group
ALSF	Australian Logistic Support Force
ALSG	Australian Logistic Support Group
AME	Aero Medical Evacuation
AMF	Australian Military Forces
AN and MEF.	Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force
ANU	Australian National University
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
ANZUS	Australia New Zealand and United States

AO	Area of Operations
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
APS	Australian Public Service
AQIS	Australian Quarantine Inspection Service
ARA	Australian Regular Army
AS	Australia or Australian
ASC	Australian Service Contingent
ASC	Australian Service Commander
ASLAV	Australian Light Armoured Vehicles
ASRP-A	Assistant Secretary Resource Program - Army
AST	Australian Theatre
ASTJIC	Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre
ATOM	Anti Terrorist Operations in Malaya
AUSCOM	Australian High Commission
AUSMIPS	Australian Standard Materiel Issue and Movement Priority System
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AD76.	Department of Defence, <i>Australian Defence</i> , White paper presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon D.J. Killen, November 1976, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976
AD2000.	Department of Defence, <i>Australian Defence</i> , White paper presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon John Moore, late 2000, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976.
ARMY21.	Australian Army, <i>An Australian Army for the 21st Century</i> , Directorate of Army Public Affairs, October 1996.
ASP90.	Commonwealth of Australia, <i>Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s</i> , Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989
ASP97.	Department of Defence, <i>Australia's Strategic Policy</i> , Department of Defence, Canberra, 1997
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force
BCFESR	British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army
BSG	Battalion Support Group
BASB	Brigade Administrative Support Battalion
BCAT	Bougainville Crisis Action Team
BIG	Bougainville Interim Government
BRG	Bougainville Reconciliation Government
CAFS	Commander Australian Force Somalia
CAS	Chief of the Air Staff
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CDFS	Chief of the Defence Force Staff
CF	Combined Force
CFC	Combined Force Commander
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CINC	Commander in Chief (US)
CINCPAC	Commander in Chief Pacific (US)
CIS	Computer Information Systems

CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (US)
CJFA	Commander Joint Forces Australia
CJLOG	Commander Joint <i>Logistics</i>
CMF	Commonwealth Military Forces Also Citizen Military Forces
CMOC	Civil Military Operations Centre
CNN	Cable News Network
CNS	Chief of the Naval Staff
CO	Commanding Officer
COLLOG	<i>colonel logistics</i>
COMAST	Commander Australian Theatre
COMNORCOM	Commander Northern Command
COMSPTAS	Commander Support Command Australia
COMD DJFHQ	Commander Deployable Joint Force Headquarters
COMD PMG	Commander Peace Monitoring Group
CONUS	Continental United States
COSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee
COSC	Chiefs of Service Committee
CPX	Command Post Exercise
DAHS	Defence Administrative Health Services
DCG	Director Communications Group
DER.	Department of Defence, <i>Future Directions for the Management of Australia's Defence, Report of the Defence Efficiency Review</i> , Secretariat Papers, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1997
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DGJCE	Director General Joint Communication and Electronic
DISCON	Defence Integrated Secure Communications Network
DIO	Defence Intelligence Organisation
DJFHQ	Deployable Joint Force Headquarters
DA94.	Department of Defence, <i>Defending Australia</i> , Defence White Paper 1994, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994
DFSU	Deployed Forces Support Unit
DGDFLS	Director General Defence Force Legal Services
DGJMOV	Director General Joint <i>Movements</i>
DJOPS	Director Joint <i>Operations</i>
DJLOPS	Director Joint Logistic <i>Operations</i>
DMCA	Defence Movement Control Agency
DNSDC	Defence National Supply and Distribution Centre
DOA87.	Department of Defence <i>The Defence of Australia 1987</i> , presented to the Parliament by the Minister for Defence, the Honourable Kim. C. Beazley, MP, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987
DPP-A	Director Personnel Plans - Army
DPR	Defence Public Relations
DPS&C-A	Directorate of Personnel Service and Conditions - Army
EATS	Empire Air Training Scheme
EW	Electronic Warfare
FAA	Fleet Air Arm

FCU	Force Communications Unit
FDA	Force Development and Analysis
FPDA	Five Power Defence Agreement
FSR	Force Structure Review
FSCC	Fire Support Control Centre
FSB	Fire Support Base
FSB	Force Support Battalion
FTX	Field Training Exercise
GPS	Global positioning System
HMCS	Her Majesty's Canadian Ship Also Her Majesty's Colonial Ship
HMS	Her Majesty's Ship
HMAS	Her Majesty's Australian Ship
HQ	Headquarters
HQ ADF	Headquarters Australian Defence Force
HQNORCOM	Headquarters Northern Command
HQJFA	Headquarters Joint Force Australia
HQMC	Headquarters Movement Control
HQ SPPKF	Headquarters South Pacific Peace Keeping Force
HF	High Frequency
HQ AST	Headquarters Australian Theatre
HQ FLSG	Headquarters Force Logistics Support group
HQ LSF	Headquarters Logistic Support Force
HQ TMG	Headquarters Truce Monitoring Group
HRS	Humanitarian Relief Sector
HSCD	Head of Strategic Command Division
HIP	Head International Policy
HMNZS	Her Majesty's New Zealand Ship
IAW	In Accordance With
IDC	Inter Departmental Committee
IPG	Intermediate Planning Group
INMARSAT	International Satellite
intsum	<i>intelligence summary</i>
IT	Information Technology
JCE	Joint Communications and Electronics
JCPG	Joint Communications Planning Group
JEPS	Joint Exercise Planning Staff
JFSU	Joint Force Support Unit
JIO	Joint Intelligence Organisation
JLU	Joint Logistic Unit
JMOVGP	Joint Movement Group
JTC	Jungle Training Centre
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTFHQ	Joint Task Force Headquarters
LCAUST	Land Commander Australia
LCN	Land Component - North
LCM8	Landing Craft Medium Type 8
LCH	Landing Craft Heavy
LHQ	Land Headquarters
LNIDS	Logistic National Interim Demand System

log	<i>logistics</i>
LOGCC	<i>Logistics Component Commander</i>
LSF	<i>Logistic Support Force</i>
LSH	<i>Landing Ship Heavy</i>
LWSC	<i>Land Warfare Studies Centre</i>
MC	<i>Movement Control. Also Military Cross</i>
MCP	<i>Malayan Communist party</i>
MCU	<i>Movement Control Unit</i>
med	<i>medical</i>
MFAT	<i>Ministry for Foreign Affairs (NZ)</i>
MHQ	<i>Maritime Headquarters</i>
MLG	<i>Moorebank Logistics Group</i>
MP	<i>Military Police</i>
MSF	<i>Medical Support Force</i>
MSF	<i>Medicins Sans Frontiere</i>
MUP	<i>Melbourne University Press</i>
NAA	<i>National Australian Archives</i>
NCA	<i>National Command Authority (US)</i>
NCO	<i>Non Commissioned Officer</i>
NGO	<i>Non Government Organisation</i>
NGVR	<i>New Guinea Volunteer Rifles</i>
NOCCC	<i>Navy Office Contingency Co-ordination Centre</i>
NORCOM	<i>Northern Command</i>
NSCTS	<i>National Service Compulsory Training Scheme</i>
NVG	<i>Night Vision Goggles</i>
NSC	<i>National Security Committee</i>
NZDF	<i>New Zealand Defence Force</i>
NZPA	<i>New Zealand Press Association</i>
OC	<i>Officer Commanding</i>
OMC	<i>Owen Machine Carbine (AS)</i>
ONA	<i>Office of National Assessments</i>
OUP	<i>Oxford University Press</i>
pers	<i>personnel</i>
PNG	<i>Papua New Guinea</i>
PNGDF	<i>Papua New Guinea Defence Force</i>
PACOM	<i>Pacific Command</i>
POL	<i>Petrol, Oil and Lubricants</i>
POLMIL	<i>Political Military</i>
POR	<i>Post Operation Report</i>
PMG	<i>Peace Monitoring Group</i>
PM&C	<i>Prime Minister and Cabinet</i>
PXR	<i>Post Exercise Report</i>
Qantas	<i>Qantas Airlines</i>
RAA	<i>Royal Australian Artillery</i>
RAN	<i>Royal Australian Navy</i>
RANR	<i>Royal Australian Navy Reserve</i>
RN	<i>Royal Navy</i>

RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
RAR	Royal Australian Regiment
RFMF	Royal Fijian Armed Forces
RFMF	Republic of Fiji Armed Forces
RIMPAC	
RISTA	Reconnaissance, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition
ROE	Rules of Engagement
RHB	Reinforcement Holding Branch
RHC	Reinforcement Holding Company
RPF	Rwandan People's Front
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
RSPS	Research School of Pacific Studies
RSPAS	Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
SATCOM	Satellite Communications
SAS	Special Air Service
SASR	Special Air Service Regiment
SCA	Support Command Australia
SCD	Strategic Command Division
SDSC	Strategic and Defence Studies Centre
SDSS	Standard Distribution Supply System
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
sitrep	<i>situation report</i>
SGADF	Surgeon General Australian Defence Force
SPPKF	South Pacific Peace Keeping Force
SO1	Staff Officer Grade 1
SO2	Staff Officer Grade 2
SO3	Staff Officer Grade 3
SOFA	Status of Forces Agreement
Spt	<i>support</i>
SPTCOMDAS	<i>Support Command - Australia</i>
SR93.	Department of Defence, <i>Strategic Review 1993</i> , Defence Publications, Canberra, 1993
TAPG	Theatre Administrative Planning Group
TCOMD	Theatre <i>Command</i>
TMG	Truce Monitoring Group
TMO	Truce Monitoring Organisation
TNI	(<i>Tentara Nasional Indonesia</i> or Indonesian National Soldiers
UD	Unauthorised Discharge
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMIC	United Nations Assistance Mission in Cambodia
UNITAF	<i>Unified Task Force</i>
UNOSOM	United Nations Operations Somalia
UNSW	University of New South Wales
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority - Cambodia
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration - East Timor
UOW	University of Wollongong
US	United States
USSR	United Soviet Socialist Republics

VCDF
VHF

Vice Chief of the Defence Force
Very High Frequency

GLOSSARY

administrative control	This term covers the non-operational administrative responsibility, such as personnel management, including individual training.
aiguillettes	an ornamental tagged cord or braid, typically gold in colour, worn on a uniform around the shoulder and armpit with a cord extension attached to a middle button of a shirt or jacket.
area of direct military interest	According to DOA87, Australia's area of direct military interest included Australia, its territories and proximate ocean areas, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and other nearby countries in the South-West Pacific. It stretches over 7 000 kilometres from the Cocos Islands to New Zealand and the islands of the South-West Pacific and 5 000 kilometres south to 'the Southern Ocean'.
Bahasa	Official language of the Republic of Indonesia.
capability	Combination of force structure and its preparedness, encompasses equipment, trained personnel to operate equipment, and total support required to operate efficiently and effectively.
chain of command	The succession of commanding officers from a superior to a subordinate through which command is exercised. Also called command channel. (DOD, NATO)
combined	Between two or more forces or agencies of two or more allies. (DOD)
command and control	The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission. Also called C2. (DOD)
command, control, communications and computer systems	Integrated systems of doctrine, procedures, organizational structures, personnel, equipment, facilities, and communications designed to support a commander's exercise of command and control across the range of military operations. Also called C4 systems. (DOD).
command relationships	The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command; defined further as combatant command (command authority), operational control, tactical control, or support. See

	also chain of command; combatant command (command authority); command; operational control; support; tactical control. (DOD)
Concept of Operations	A verbal or graphic statement, in broad outline, of a commander's assumptions or intent in regard to an operation or series of operations. The concept of operations frequently is embodied in campaign plans and operation plans; in the latter case, particularly when the plans cover a series of connected operations to be carried out simultaneously or in succession. The concept is designed to give an overall picture of the operation. It is included primarily for additional clarity of purpose. Also called commander's concept or CONOPS. (DOD)
Concept of Intelligence Operations	A verbal or graphic statement, in broad outline, of an intelligence directorate's assumptions or intent in regard to intelligence support of an operation or series of operations. The concept of intelligence operations, which complements the commander's concept of operations, is contained in the intelligence annex of operation plans. The concept of intelligence operations is designed to give an overall picture of intelligence support for joint operations. It is included primarily for additional clarity of purpose. See also concept of operations. (DOD)
deployment	1. In naval usage, the change from a cruising approach or contact disposition to a disposition for battle. 2. The movement of forces within areas of operations. 3. The positioning of forces into a formation for battle. 4. The relocation of forces to desired areas of operations (NATO).
doctrine	A set of principles describing how the ADF will support the attainment of national objectives.
fire support coordination centre	A single location in which are centralized communications facilities and personnel incident to the coordination of all forms of fire support. Also called FSCC. See also fire; fire support; fire support coordination; support; supporting arms coordination center. (DOD)
force	An aggregation of military personnel, weapon systems, equipment, and necessary support, or combination thereof. (DOD)
forcible entry	Seizing and holding of a military lodgement in the face of armed opposition. See also lodgement. (DOD)
force activity designators	Numbers used in conjunction with urgency of need designators to establish a matrix of priorities used for supply requisitions. Defines the relative importance of the unit to accomplish the objectives of the Department of Defense. Also called FADs. (DOD)
force projection	The ability to project the military element of national power from the continental United States (CONUS) or another theater, in response to requirements for military operations. Force projection operations extend from mobilization and deployment of forces to redeployment to CONUS or home theater. (DOD)

	The projection of military power over extended lines of communication into a distant operational area to accomplish specific objectives (UK JWP 0-01)
force protection	Activities such as gathering, evaluating and communicating intelligence and employing counter-intelligence and protective agents and groups, such as Special Forces, to protect individuals, groups and force elements from hostile interference, including protection from the vicissitudes of operational environments, such as disease and harsh climates, through preventative health measures, clothing and equipment and conducive living conditions. (New definition)
force protection	a security program designed to protect designated information, materiel, personnel, operations, exercises, activities and installations from espionage, sabotage, subversion, terrorism and criminal activity through the integrated application of protective and operations security measures supported by counterintelligence and operations security processes (The Australian Defence Glossary).
force sustainment.	The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of deployed forces through a supply chain. In its most comprehensive sense, those aspects of military operations that deal with: a. design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel; b. movement, evacuation, and hospitalization of personnel; c. acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; and d. acquisition or furnishing of essential services. Also logistics. (DOD)
forward operations base	In special operations, a base usually located in friendly territory or afloat that is established to extend command and control or communications or to provide support for training and tactical operations. Facilities may be established for temporary or longer duration operations and may include an airfield or an unimproved airstrip, an anchorage, or a pier. A forward operations base may be the location of special operations component headquarters or a smaller unit that is controlled and/or supported by a main operations base. Also called FOB. See also advanced operations base; main operations base. (DOD)
joint	Connotes activities, operations, organisations and arrangements, in which elements of two or more services participate. (adapted from DOD).
land power	The ability to project military force by or from individuals and groups operating on land either on foot or from land, sea or aerial platforms, normally accompanied by application of direct and indirect fire support. Air Marshal M.J. Armitage and Air Commodore R.A. Mason, <i>Air Power in the Nuclear Age</i> , Urbana, New York, 1985
maritime power	The ability to project military force by or from a platform on or below water, normally the sea. air power. The ability to project military force by or from a platform in the third dimension above the surface of the earth. Air Marshal M.J. Armitage and Air Commodore R.A. Mason, <i>Air Power in the Nuclear Age</i> , Urbana, New York, 1985

littoral power	The ability to combine maritime, land and air power to project military force simultaneously on or below water, on land and in the air in a prescribed area. Air Marshal M.J. Armitage and Air Commodore R.A. Mason, <i>Air Power in the Nuclear Age</i> , Urbana, New York, 1985
operational level of war	The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives. See also strategic level of war; tactical level of war. (DOD)
posture.	Combination of capability and intent.
tactical level of war	The level of war at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and maneuver of combat elements in relation to each other and to the enemy to achieve combat objectives. See also operational level of war; strategic level of war.
military capability	The ability to achieve specified strategic effects. It includes four major components: force structure . Numbers, size, and composition of the force elements that comprise the ADF; e.g, divisions, ships, air squadrons. modernization . Technical sophistication of forces, units, weapon systems, and equipments. readiness . The ability to provide capabilities required by the commanders to execute their assigned missions. This is derived from the ability of each unit to deliver the outputs for which it was designed. sustainability . The ability to maintain the necessary level and duration of operational activity to accomplish missions. Sustainability is a function of providing for and maintaining those levels of ready forces, materiel, facilities and consumables necessary to support military effort. (DOD)
operationally ready	1. A unit, ship, or weapon system capable of performing the missions or functions for which organized or designed. Incorporates both equipment readiness and personnel readiness, ie personnel available and qualified to perform assigned missions or functions. (DOD) See readiness

operation order	A directive issued by a commander to subordinate commanders for the purpose of effecting the coordinated execution of an operation. Also called OPORD. (DOD)
operation	1. A military action or the carrying out of a strategic, operational, tactical, service, training, or administrative military mission. 2. The process of carrying on combat, including movement, supply, attack, defence, and manoeuvres needed to gain the objectives of any battle or campaign. (DOD)
operational art	The employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations, and battles. Operational art translates the joint force commander's strategy into operational design and, ultimately, tactical action, by integrating the key activities at all levels of war.
operational level of war	The level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure the logistic and administrative support of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives. See also strategic level of war; tactical level of war. (DOD)
pre-position	To place force elements, equipment, or supplies at or near the point of planned use or at a designated location to reduce reaction time, and to ensure timely support of specific force elements during initial phases of an operation. (DOD, NATO)
reconnaissance	A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of hostile forces and groups and influential stakeholders, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area. (DOD, NATO)
Rules of Engagement.	Directives issued by competent military authority which specify the circumstances and limitations under which Australian forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagements with other forces encountered. Australian Defence Force Publication 101, Glossary, 1994
task group	The second highest level in a task organisation, a task group is a grouping of units under one commander subordinate to task force commander, formed for the purpose of carrying out specific functions. (DOD)

technical control	It also covers specialised and professional authority for the proper management of assets including technical standards and regulations for maintenance, repair and use of vehicles, weapons, equipment and other matériel
redeployment.	The relocation of forces to advantageous areas of operations and locations and return of forces to the homeland.
strategic level of war	The level of war at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans. See also operational level of war; tactical level of war. (DOD)
theatre	A designated geographic area for which an operational level joint or combined commander is appointed and in which a campaign or series of major operations is conducted. A theatre may contain one or more joint areas of operation.
terminal operations	Activities related to receiving, unloading, storing, preparing and then loading and dispatching matériel to an area of operations. These activities can involve sea, land and air transport.

Acknowledgements

While I submit this thesis as my own work and take responsibility for its content, there are a number of people who deserve acknowledgement. I have been supervised and advised by an eminent and distinguished panel who set high standards, scrutinised drafts - leaving few blemishes undiscovered - and provided invaluable comment: principal supervisor, Professor David Horner, Official Historian and Professor of Australian Defence History at Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, the Australian National University; Emeritus Professor Paul Dibb, former Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre and Deputy Secretary of Defence; and Dr Alan Dupont, Senior Fellow for International Security at the Lowy Institute for International Policy. I also benefited greatly from advice given by: Professor Hugh White, Professor of Strategic Studies and Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, and Visiting Fellow, Lowy Institute for International Policy; Dr Richard Brabin-Smith, a Visiting Fellow, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, and former Deputy Secretary for Strategic Policy and Defence Chief Scientist; and three Chiefs of the Defence Force during the period covered by the thesis, General P.C. Gration, AC, OBE, (Retd), General J.S. Baker, AC (Retd) and Admiral C.A. Barrie, AC (Retd). I also received timely input and encouragement from Lieutenant General F.J. Hickling, AO, CSC, (Retd), a former Chief of Army. In the fields of military history, political science and military command, I doubt whether a more prominent and experienced group of Australian academics, former civil servants and military officers could have shaped this thesis. I would also like to thank my three examiners whose requests for amendments enhanced the thesis and the detail of its presentation.

During the three years of research, I depended on the professional assistance of Jenny Oldfield, and her staff at Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. I was assisted cheerfully and professionally by Paul Galvin, Kenneth L. Paterson and Athol Barker. Christian Knell, Registry Supervisor at Victoria Barracks in Sydney, also collected files for me and gave expert support on the Defence Registry Management System.

I have been most fortunate to have received the cooperation and trust of scores of ADF personnel on operations overseas and in Australia. Without their testimony, this thesis would have lacked credibility and authenticity. I am privileged to be able to give these men and women a voice in Australian military history. They deserve the opportunity to not only tell their stories, but also to comment on the circumstances they found themselves in.

Several senior ADF officers have assisted me to conduct research on operations that I have been able to revisit again for this thesis. Major General M.P. Blake, AO, MC, (Retd), Land Commander in 1993, sent me to Somalia. Major General P.M. Arnison, AC, (Retd), Land Commander in 1994, sent me to Rwanda. Lieutenant General F.J. Hickling AO, CSC, and his successors, Major General J.C. Hartley, AO (Retd) and Major General P.J. Abigail, AO (Retd), who were Land Commanders from 1996 through to 2001, sent me periodically to Bougainville and East Timor.

Finally, I thank my family, friends and colleagues who have offered their encouragement. Though most did not share the intellectual journey of discovery, they provided an environment of emotional support and friendship that was crucial for my well-being during the journey. Indeed, without the forbearance and understanding of my wife, Nicola, I am sure that I would have been journeying for a few more years yet.

Introduction

As a land girt by sea, Australians have a number of military choices. They can use geographical advantage and fight enemy forces from continental beaches, and in national air space and territorial waters. Alternatively, they can project military force to engage enemies further from the Australian homeland: closer to or in their enemies' homelands - preferably in the company of powerful allies. Australians also have a geographical dilemma and more military options. The continent is vast and divided into southern and eastern heartlands, where most Australians live, and a remote western and northern crescent hinterland. This hinterland can be likened to a curved archipelago located forward of the heartlands. It is comprised of an island of people and infrastructure in the south-west, near Perth, and isolated pockets of people and economically important resources and infrastructure extending north to another island of people and infrastructure near Darwin and then east across northern Australia to the Torres Strait Islands. How should Australia defend this national archipelago? Will there be sufficient warning time and political will to permit mobilisation and deployment of sufficient military force from the south and east coasts to the west and north? What proportion of Australia's armed forces should be located in the west and north? Australian military and political responses during World War II show that Australians will defend their national archipelago. Western and northern basing and conduct of major exercises in northern Australia in the latter two decades of the twentieth century confirm their choice. The strategic preference is to do so through a combination of pre-positioning forces and projecting military force from the heartlands to the hinterland and into the air-sea gap around the mainland.

Australians also have choices about responding to regional and international events that require military intervention: stay at home, leaving allies and the UN to face military and humanitarian emergencies alone, or participate in those operations that Australian governments deem to be in the national interest. Australian military history testifies to the choices that Australian governments traditionally make, cognisant of contemporary public opinion. The Australian people and their governments invariably choose regional and international force projection over fortress defence and isolationism, though the purpose, strength and duration of overseas operations and campaigns may be the subject of public debate and differing opinions.

The fundamental necessity of national force projection and historical preference for participating in overseas operations and campaigns does not imply that Australia has a tradition for power projection, unilateralism or pre-emptive attack. Australia has not sought to control other states, to act coercively without allied or international endorsement, or to take military action unilaterally and unexpectedly as a means to prevent or reduce threat. Indeed, Australia is a middle or regional power that does not have the will or national power – diplomatic, military or economic - to dominate other states. However, Australia is capable of exerting power in its near region and can leverage off relationships with powerful allies, such as the United States and Britain, to enhance both regional and international influence to protect Australian interests, though close relations with allies brings reciprocal obligations as well as benefits.

Indeed, Australia's experience of force projection has mostly been about alliance and international obligations. The Australian nation originated as a power projection of Britain in the eighteenth century, though the transportation of convicts, accompanied by a regiment of light infantry, was a modest beginning for control of a vast island continent. These colonial origins and an influx of Anglo-Celtic immigrants facilitated Australian participation in most of Britain's major force projections as a reliable dominion and ally. After World War II, alliance arrangements with the United States became more important. Following historical precedent, Australia returned to participating in the force projections of its most important ally. The Korean and Vietnam wars as well as the Gulf War in 1990-91 and the intervention into Somalia in 1993 are examples. Though the trend has been to participate in more UN-endorsed missions after the end of the Cold War, American participation and endorsement has and will continue to influence Australian decisions about joining major international military interventions.

Force projection is a term that appears to have originated in the United States but represents traditional use of military force by nations within or beyond their national borders, and territorial waters and air space.¹ Definitions of force projection and concepts akin to it, as well as underpinning functions, do not vary significantly. Britain and Australia do not have definitions of force projection in their military glossaries.²

¹ Department of Defense, , *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JP 1-0212, Department of Defense, Washington DC, April 2001. Also DOD Dictionary of Military Terms at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/> accessed on 9 April 2006.

² Ministry of Defence, *United Kingdom Glossary of Joint and Multinational Terms and Definitions*, Joint Warfare Publication 0-01.1, 4th Edition, The Stationary Office, London, March 2002 (Restricted).

However, American and British doctrinal publications agree that the projection of military force is a component of national power projection and, for Britain, one of the instruments of grand strategy.³ American military doctrine describes eight stages for force projection that begin with 'Mobilization' and end with 'Demobilization' with an emphasis on rapid deployment of maritime, land and air combat forces, quick results and sustainment.⁴ British doctrine describes 'Seven Fundamental Defence Capabilities' that include preparing, projecting, protecting and sustaining military force.⁵ Australia's military strategy includes offshore strategic campaigns that will require the Australian Defence Force (ADF) to project force.⁶ However, despite Australia's Defence Department glossary not including a definition of force projection, extant single service doctrinal publications describe intentions to project force beyond Australian territorial waters, territory and air space.⁷ Joint doctrinal publications are even more specific.⁸ For example, the aspirational joint publication *Future Warfighting Concept* declares that:

The ADF will be capable of deploying rapidly from its home bases to the place where it can generate the required effects. Where the physical movement of forces is appropriate to the effect required, these forces will arrive in the area of operations ready for immediate combat.⁹

While the ADF intends to project force nationally as a first priority and regionally and internationally at the behest of governments, doctrinal publications do not include detail on the mechanics. However, the publication *Joint Warfighting* does include 'Operational level functions' within a Joint Warfighting Framework that

Department of Defence, Chief Information Officer, *The Australian Defence Glossary, The Defence Language Management System*, <http://dlms.dcb.defence.gov.au/> (Restricted), Australian Defence Force, Glossary, ADFP 04.1.1, Defence Printing Service, Canberra, 2001 (Restricted).

³ Ministry of Defence, *British Defence Doctrine*, JWP-0-01, 2nd Edition, The Stationary Office, London, 2001, p. 2-4, Ministry of Defence, *Joint Operations*, JWP 3-00, The Stationary Office, London, 2001 and Royal Navy, *British Maritime Doctrine*, Second Edition, BR1806, The Stationary Office, London, 1999. US Department of the Army, *Decisive Force: The Army in the Theater of Operations*, FM 100-7, Headquarters Department of Army, Washington DC, 31 May 1995 and US Department of the Army, *Theater Distribution*, FM 100-10-1, Headquarters Department of Army, Washington DC, 1 October 1999.

⁴ US Department of the Army, *Decisive Force*, Chapter 6 Force Projection.

⁵ Ministry of Defence, *British Defence Doctrine*. P. 4-3.

⁶ Australian Defence Force, *Joint Warfighting*, Annex A to Ch 1.

⁷ Royal Australian Navy, *Australian Maritime Doctrine*, RAN Doctrine 2000, Defence Publishing Service Canberra, 2000, ch 5 and 6. Australian Army, *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, LWD 1, Defence Publishing Service Canberra, 2000, pp. 28, 53, 57 and 61. Royal Australian Air Force, *Fundamentals of Australian Aerospace Power*, AAP1000, Fourth Edition, Aerospace Centre, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2002 ch 7.

⁸ Australian Defence Force, *Joint Warfighting*, Capstone Series, Australian Defence Force Doctrine Publication ADDP-D-4, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, June 2004, pp. 1-3, 1-5,

⁹ Department of Defence, *Future Warfighting Concept*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2003, p. 36, <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/fwc.pdf>

represent all of the mechanics of force projection.¹⁰ These functions are similar to the eight stages described in United States Army doctrine. For the purposes of this thesis and cognisant that it is about Australian force projection, these operational level functions have been adapted slightly to form a framework of ten functions of force projection.¹¹ In contrast, the thesis favours the use of American military definitions for other terms. This has been done because Australian and British military glossaries are classified and the American glossary is not. Fortunately, the vast majority of military terms used are defined almost identically in American, Australian and British glossaries.

There is nothing new about the functions of force projection. They are as old as the formation of nation states. In rudimentary form, they predate them. From the earliest times when humans gathered in collective defence of their territory, or for conquest, they have executed all or some functions with varying degrees of capacity, proficiency and sophistication. Some clarification and definition is necessary before specifying the purpose and method of this thesis. The following table summarises the ten enabling functions and describes their supporting elements:

No	Function	Elements
1.	Generic Preparation	Military capability that is made up of force structure, readiness, mobilisation and sustainability
2.	Command	Command, control, communications and computer systems
3.	Specific Preparation	Concentration of force elements in mounting or home bases, reconnaissance, reinforcement, training, administration and issue of equipment and stocks
4.	Deployment	Concentration of personnel and matériel, loading, movement of force elements to area of operations and, best effect arrival and pre-positioning
5.	Protection	Intelligence, surveillance, contingency rehearsal and rapid response
6.	Employment	Conduct of operations that may include maintaining deterrent presence, manoeuvre and application of firepower
7.	Sustainment	Planning and carrying out the movement of supplies and maintenance of forces through a supply chain
8.	Rotation	Reinforcement, relief, resting, retraining, re-equipping and redeployment of force elements
9.	Redeployment	Protected movement to specified locations, normally home bases
10.	Reconstitution	Return to required level of military capability

¹⁰ Australian Defence Force, *Joint Warfighting*, pp. 2-15-2-16, Annex A to Chapter 2.

¹¹ There are eight Operational Level Functions. Two of them incorporate Redeployment and Rotation. These two functions are crucial for successful force projection. In order to better represent the generic chronology of force projection as well as the influence of these functions, they have been teased out and added as separate functions.

Force projection begins with functions that culminate in deployment.¹² Most nation states maintain pre-positioned extant military capability (generic force preparation) under some form of command and control (force command).¹³ Periodically, they mobilise extant and latent military capabilities and then prepare maritime, land and, in modern times, air force and Special Forces elements (specific force preparation) to take specified military action.¹⁴ They then move forces to advantageous locations and circumstances, preferably after thorough reconnaissance, to begin (force deployment).¹⁵ Typically, nations prefer to deploy force elements beyond their borders so that their populations remain safe and their homelands are not laid waste.

After deployment, commanders employ force elements (force employment) under designated command arrangements that are extensions of command in the homeland while ensuring their protection (force protection) and sustainment (force sustainment).¹⁶ During longer operations and campaigns, commanders reinforce, relieve, rest, retrain, re-equip and redeploy force elements (force rotation).

¹² **force projection.** The ability to project military elements of Australia's national power within Australia's borders and beyond in response to Government requirements for military action. The functions of force projection begin with generic preparation and deployment, and end with redeployment and reconstitution back to specified generic preparedness. Adapted from US Department of Defense, 'DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms', Joint Publication 1-02, Joint Doctrine Division, Washington, May 2005. See <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/> (hereafter DOD). **deployment.** The movement of forces to and within areas of operations, including positioning forces ready for operations and battle (DOD).

¹³ **military capability.** The ability to achieve specified strategic effects. It includes four major components: **force structure.** Numbers, size, and composition of the force elements that comprise the ADF; e.g., divisions, ships, air squadrons. **modernisation.** Technical sophistication of forces, units, weapon systems and equipment. **readiness.** The ability to provide force elements required by commanders to execute their assigned missions. **sustainability.** The ability to maintain the necessary level and duration of operational activity to accomplish missions. Sustainability is a function of providing for and maintaining those levels of ready forces, materiel, facilities and consumables necessary to support military effort (DOD). **command and control.** The exercise of authority and direction by designated commanders over assigned and attached forces for mission accomplishment. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures employed by commanders in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations (DOD).

¹⁴ **mobilisation.** The act of preparing for war or other emergencies through assembling and organizing national resources. More commonly, it is the process by which the armed forces or part of them are brought to a state of readiness for military action, including assembling, organizing, training, administering personnel and pre-positioning and/or loading matériel (DOD).

¹⁵ **reconnaissance.** A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of hostile forces as well as stakeholders, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographic, or geographic characteristics of a particular area (DOD).

¹⁶ **force protection.** Activities, such as gathering, evaluating and communicating intelligence and employing counter-intelligence and protective agents and groups, e.g. Special Forces, to protect individuals, groups and force elements from hostile interference. Force protection includes protection from the vicissitudes of operational environments, such as disease and harsh climates, through preventative health measures, clothing and equipment and conducive living conditions (New definition).

Final functions return forces to generic preparedness. After operations and campaigns end, force elements redeploy (force redeployment) back inside borders or to locations beyond borders. They reconstitute themselves (force reconstitution), either with more capability or less, depending on the perceived level of remaining threat or, more generally, on national will to maintain military capabilities for on-going defence or further conquest. Reconstitution completes the cycle of force projection back to generic preparedness.

Proficiency in the ten functions demonstrates Australian military capability and intent, and constitutes an important measurement of national military competence. Since 1885, Australia has projected force nationally, regionally and internationally when governments have decided to take military action. There have been disagreements about resources required for Australia's defence and the importance of alliances, as well as the purpose, composition and distance from Australian shores of force projection. However, the Australian people and their governments have been at one about the need to project military force decisively and effectively when and where it is required. Thus, proficiency in force projection defines Australian defence posture, measures military competence and has to meet government and public expectations.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Australian proficiency in military force projection – a matter of national importance in peace, national reputation for peacekeeping and national survival in war. It does not discuss defence budgets and alliance relationships, or purpose, composition and distance. It focuses on competence: were there weaknesses, increased risk and negative consequences? It is a critique. Consequently, it is bleak reading for those more used to narratives, reports and discussion of ADF success on operations and those dedicated to Defence and ADF reputation management. However, it is empathetic and constructive criticism that makes a case for change - one of the important roles of analytical military history.

It is reasonable to ask 'What is meant by proficiency in the functions of force projection?' For the purposes of this thesis, proficiency is the capability and capacity for prompt, strong and smart military action that achieves the effects specified by the Australian Government. The underpinnings of proficiency begin with maintaining

force sustainment. The science of planning and carrying out the movement of supplies and maintenance of forces through a supply chain. In its most comprehensive sense, those aspects of military operations that deal with: design and development, acquisition, storage, movement, distribution, maintenance, evacuation, and disposition of materiel; movement, evacuation, and hospitalisation of personnel; acquisition or construction, maintenance, operation, and disposition of facilities; and acquisition or furnishing of essential services. Also logistics (DOD).

generic military capability – force structure, modernisation, readiness and sustainability. There should be sufficient warning for assignment of forces as well as their specific force preparation. Preparations should be well-resourced, well-coordinated and well-informed by inputs, such as reconnaissance and intelligence, and cultural and political information. These preparations, that include assembling and loading personnel and matériel, should be followed by protected deployment that enables forces to arrive with best effect - on time, fresh and ready for employment. Command and sustainment arrangements should facilitate effective, efficient, intelligent and safe employment of forces to achieve desired results. These arrangements should also facilitate a rate of effort and force rotation that maintains the required tempo of operations. After operations and campaign, force elements should redeploy safely and reconstitute efficiently.

The thesis does not attend in detail to Australian military strategy or the strategic level of command.¹⁷ Strategic level sources are still classified and there is insufficient space in one PhD thesis to discuss the strategic level satisfactorily as well as examine the operational and tactical levels of command in detail.¹⁸ Absence of analysis of Australian political and military-strategic processes does not diminish the significance of this thesis. Within the context of force projection and the impact of the Information Age on military operations, the importance of understanding challenges facing lower levels of command has increased. Those operating there defeat hostile forces or create desired effects. Their success or failure often determines operational and strategic success or failure. In conventional land warfare, a divisional attack involving thousands of troops and employment of battlefield manoeuvre and significant firepower is – ultimately - a contest between opposing junior leaders and small teams. In maritime

¹⁷ **strategic level.** The level at which a nation, often as a member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theatre military plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans (DOD).

¹⁸ **operational level.** The level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events. These activities imply a broader dimension of time or space than do tactics; they ensure sustainment of tactical forces, and provide the means by which tactical successes are exploited to achieve strategic objectives (DOD). **tactical level.** The level at which battles and engagements are planned and executed to accomplish military objectives assigned to tactical force elements. Activities at this level focus on the ordered arrangement and manoeuvre of combat elements in relation to each other and to hostile forces to accomplish missions (DOD).

and air warfare, opposing commanders of vessels and their crews, and pilots, either individually or in combination with their aircrew, decide outcomes. During land-based peacekeeping operations, junior leaders and small teams establish deterrent presence and, guided by rules, engage hostile individuals, small teams, groups and crowds who threaten public order, with carefully calibrated coercion and possibly lethal force.¹⁹

The Information Age has elevated lower levels of command. Since the Vietnam War, media representatives have broadcast images and stories from the tactical level instantly to a worldwide audience. Scores of commentators then analyse, explain and assess critically. As a consequence, there can be substantial political and strategic repercussions if all does not go well at the tactical level. Tactical tipping points - the moments or short periods when tactical contests have significant political and strategic ramifications - are not new. What is new is that the media create tipping points by broadcasting tactical level setbacks or behaviour that would have gone unnoticed in earlier times.

There is also insufficient space in one PhD to discuss and compare Australia's projection of military force with allied force projection or that of other island nations. Both the United States and Britain have and continue to develop rapid joint force projection. The Americans constituted a Rapid Deployment Force in the early 1980s.²⁰ The British established a joint rapid response force and a permanent joint headquarters in the late 1990s.²¹ There have been differences of opinion about these initiatives.²² This thesis neither joins this debate nor compares the proficiency and efficacy of Australian force projection to the force projection of other nations. The thesis described benchmarks that form the basis for comparative analysis and measurement of proficiency earlier.

¹⁹ **Rules of Engagement.** Directives issued by competent military authority which specify the circumstances and limitations under which Australian forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagements with other forces encountered. Australian Defence Force Publication 101, Glossary, 1994.

²⁰ See <http://rapid-deployment-forces.ignaut.net/> for a short summary of the evolution of US rapid deployment forces and their command and control arrangements.

²¹ See <http://www.mod.uk/issues/sdr/jrrf.htm> for summary of joint rapid response forces.

²² Paul.K.Davis, 'Observations on the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force', Paper prepared for 23rd Annual Convention of the American International Studies Association held on 24-27 March 1982, *The RAND Paper series*, June 1982, <http://www.rand.org/publications/P/P6751/P6751.pdf>. David Isenburg, 'The Rapid Deployment Force: The Few, the Futile and the Expendable', Cato Policy Analysis No 44, The Cato Institute, Washington DC, 8 November 1984, <http://www.cato.org/pubs/pas/pa044.html>. Keigh Hartley, 'Can the UK Afford a Rapid Deployment Force?', *Royal United Services Institute Journal for Defence Studies* 127, March 1982: pp. 18-21. David Segal, 'Whatever Happened to Rapid Deployment?', *Armed Forces Journal*, March 1991, pp. 39-40. For a working bibliography on rapid deployment see http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/academic/history/marshall/military/mil_hist_inst/d/depoy2.asc.

The thesis fills a gap in the history of Australia's post-Cold War military operations, in general, and force projection, in particular. There are no published scholarly accounts of major joint and combined exercises that have rehearsed national force projection to defend Australia's northern hinterland. Though well covered by the media during their initial phases, Australian regional and international force projections in the late 1980s and during the 1990s have not received significant historical attention.²³

Political scientists publish analyses and debate Australia's strategic military posture, but rarely include the actual conduct of operations.²⁴ Defence White Papers express Government intentions for the nation's defence.²⁵ Governments also conduct reviews to clarify that intent.²⁶ Service and academic 'think tanks' frame strategic

²³ Of the operations examined in this thesis, the following publications and papers merit perusal. Monica Wehner and Donald Denoon, *Without a gun, Australia's Experiences Monitoring Peace in Bougainville, 1997-2001*, Pandanus Books, the Australian National University, Canberra, 2001. Alan Ryan, *Primary Responsibilities and Primary Risks. Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor*, Study Paper No 304, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, November 2002. Alan Ryan, *From Desert Storm to East Timor, Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the 'New Age'*, Study Paper No 302, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, January 2000. John Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre, The Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, Working Paper 118, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, June 2002 and Kent Beasley, *Information Operations during Operation Stabilise in East Timor*, Working Paper No 120, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, August 2002.

²⁴ Some examples are Helen Hookey, and Roy Denny, (ed.), *Australian Defence Planning: Five Views of Policy Makers*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No 120, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 1988, Graeme Cheesman, *The Search for Self-Reliance: Australian Defence since Vietnam*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1993, Alan Thompson, *Australia's Strategic Defence Policy: A Drift Towards Neo-Forward Defence*, Working Paper No. 29, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 1994, Desmond Ball and Pauline Kerr, *Presumptive Engagement: Australia's Asia-Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1996, Graeme Cheesman and Robert Bruce, (ed.), *Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers: Australian Defence and Security Thinking after the Cold War*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, in association with the Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1996, Paul Dibb, *Planning a Defence Force Without a Threat: A Model for Middle Powers*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, Mohan Malik, (ed.), *Australia's Security in the 21st Century*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, Alan Dupont, 'Transformation or Stagnation: Rethinking Australia's Defence', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol 57, no. 1, April 2003, and Michael Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance, Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901-2005*, Study Paper No 306, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, February 2005.

²⁵ Such as *Australian Defence*, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976, *Defence of Australia 1987* Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987, *Defending Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2000.

²⁶ Such as Paul Dibb, *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, Report to the Minister for Defence, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1986, Alan Wrigley, *The Defence Force and the Community: A Partnership in Australia's Defence*, Report to the Minister for Defence by Alan K. Wrigley, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1990, Department of Defence, *Strategic Review 1993*, Defence Publications, Canberra, 1993, Department of Defence, *Peacekeeping Policy: The Future Australian Defence Force Role*, Departmental Publications, Canberra, June 1993 and Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1997.

debate and raise the issues of the day.²⁷ Joint parliamentary committees join in this debate and offer their own views.²⁸ However, none of the aforementioned delve deeply into national exercises or offshore operations. Historians have published several institutional and general histories.²⁹ There is also a commendable series of publications marking Australia's centenary of Federation.³⁰ However, few historians have published histories of individual peacekeeping and post-Cold War operations.³¹ Aside from David Horner and the author of this thesis, none have published authoritative accounts or attended to the operational and tactical levels of command in detail.³²

²⁷ Such as Sea Power Centre, The Australian Naval Institute, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Air Power Development Centre, Royal United Services Institution, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Lowy Institute, Australian Defence Association, Australian Defence Studies Centre, UNSW/ADFA Defence Forum, Australian Centre for Maritime Studies, UOW, and Centre for Maritime Policy, UOW.

²⁸ Reports from Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, such as *The Australian Defence Force: its Structure and Capabilities*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, October 1984, *The Management of Australia's Defence Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, August 2000.

²⁹ Some examples are Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Studies in Australian History, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990, M. McKernan and M. Browne (ed.), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial in association with Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988, David Horner (ed.), *Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990 and Peter Dennis, and Jeffrey Grey, Ewan Morris and Robin Prior, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995.

³⁰ Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Army*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume I, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001. Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume II, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, David Stevens (ed.), *The Royal Australian Navy*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume III, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, David Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume IV, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, and Eric Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume V, Oxford University Press, Canberra, 2001.

³¹ There have been a few publications on Australian peacekeeping operations, such as Hugh Smith, (ed.), *Australia and Peacekeeping*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 1990, Hugh Smith, (ed.) *Peacekeeping Challenges for the Future*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 1993 and Peter Londey, *Other People's Wars: A History of Australian Peacekeeping*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004.

³² David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment: The Australian Defence Force's First War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992. Bob Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope: Australian Force - Somalia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, Bob Breen, *Giving Peace a Chance. Operation Lagoon Bougainville 1994, A Case Study in Military Action and Diplomacy*, Strategic and Defence Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra, 2002, Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished. East Timor: Australian Defence Force Participation in the International Force East Timor*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001, David Wilson, *Warden to Tanager - RAAF Operations in East Timor*, Banner Books, Maryborough, 2003, Bob Breen, *A Good Thing Worth Doing: Peace Monitoring in Bougainville 1997-1998* (forthcoming).

The emphasis is on land force projection and the Australian Army.³³ The navy and air force are intrinsic mechanisms of Australian force projection.³⁴ Navy and air force higher commands can prepare and deploy vessels and aircraft into Australia's sea and air space, the northern archipelago and the South Pacific, and around the world as long as there are secure ports and airbases to operate from. The roles of maritime and air force elements are generic, well-defined and determined by the design and capabilities of individual vessels and aircraft, as well as their groupings. The army has a number of more complex challenges. The first is to have forces equipped and rehearsed generically for war fighting as well as a range of likely contingencies. The second is to have sufficient time to conduct reconnaissance and to prepare. The third is to deploy force elements safely and effectively by land, sea and air after efficient loading. The fourth is to adapt to different and often complex and harsh operational environments. The fifth is to accomplish a variety of missions shaped by a number of stakeholders as well as overcome or deter whatever opponents await. The sixth is to maintain a tempo of operations, level of sustainment and rotation to succeed for the duration of an operation or campaign. The seventh is to redeploy safely and reconstitute efficiently. The navy and air force do not need the army except for securing and protecting threatened bases and providing some air defence. However, the army depends on Australian or allied maritime and air force elements, as well as civil assets and capabilities, for force projection to hostile operational environments beyond Australian shores. Typically, land force elements rely on navy and air force elements for deployment and protection as well as for the means for sustainment, manoeuvre, additional firepower and possibly redeployment. One of the proficiency tests of Australian force projection is to synchronise maritime, land and air force elements effectively, sometimes called littoral power.³⁵

The thesis briefly describes the first hundred years of Australian force projection between 1885 and 1985 before closely examining selected national, regional and international projections in the late 1980s and the 1990s. This closer examination of

³³ **land power.** The ability to project military force by or from individuals and groups operating on land either on foot or from land, sea or aerial platforms, normally accompanied by application of direct and indirect fire support. Air Marshal M.J. Armitage and Air Commodore R.A. Mason, *Air Power in the Nuclear Age*, Urbana, New York, 1985, pp 2-3.

³⁴ **maritime power.** The ability to project military force by or from a platform on or below water, normally the sea. **air power.** The ability to project military force by or from a platform in the third dimension above the surface of the earth. Ibid.

³⁵ **littoral power.** The ability to combine maritime, land and air power to project military force simultaneously on or below water, on land and in the air in a prescribed area. Ibid.

national rehearsals in 1989, 1992 and 1995, called the Kangaroo series of exercises, regional projections in 1987 (Operation *Morris Dance*, Fiji), 1994 (Operation *Lagoon*, Bougainville), 1997 (Operation *Bel Isi*, Bougainville) and 1999 (Operations *Spitfire*, *Warden* and *Stabilise* East Timor), and international operations in 1990 (Operation *Damask*, Persian Gulf), 1992 (Operation *Solace*, Somalia) and 1994 (Operation *Tamar*, Rwanda) is intended to reveal what happened at lower levels of command when Australian governments decided to take military action and the ADF – primarily the army - executed the functions of force projection. The thesis is largely based on new research using primary sources. For several case studies of regional and international operations in Bougainville, Rwanda, Somalia and East Timor, it constitutes the first authoritative historical examination. The thesis does draw on chronologies produced by the author as well as primary research already conducted for previous publications, especially interviews with eyewitnesses. However, it is fundamentally the result of new research of departmental files and additional primary sources. The narrative is new and uniquely set within a force projection framework.

The historiography of this thesis is informed by C.E.W. Bean, Australia's first official war historian, who wrote six and edited nine volumes on Australia's military participation in World War I. Putting aside academic debate about his myth-making and patriotic features of his scholarship, Bean advocated close examination of the operational and tactical levels of command.³⁶ He outlined his reasons on 22 February 1938 when he delivered an address to the Royal Australian Historical Society explaining challenges he had faced, and why he and his team of authors had decided to approach writing military history in particular ways.³⁷ The challenges and decisions he described just under 65 years ago help to explain and justify the historiography of this thesis.

Like Bean's official history, the thesis covers recent Australian military history for the first time. Bean and his colleagues had many sources, but little research or published work to guide their work. The challenge was to identify reliable sources. He

³⁶ For a summary of this debate and the views of its antagonists as well as an analysis of Bean's narrative approach, see Megan Hirst, 'Narrative in the War Histories of C.E.W. Bean', Academic Essays, Access: History Vol 2. No 2 (Summer 1999), pp. 65-76, in *The History Journals Guide*, Department of History, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 2005. See http://www.uq.edu.au/access_history/two_two.html.

³⁷ C.E.W. Bean, 'The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War - Sources, Methods and Some Conclusions,' (Read before the Royal Australian Historical Society, 22 February 1938) in *Despatch*, Journal of the New South Wales Military Historical Society Volume XXXVI Number 2, April/June 2001, pp. 2-22. First published in the Royal Australia Historical Society, *Journal and Proceedings*, Volume XXIV 1938, Part 2.

was wary of official records, such as the reports of commanders and their staffs. To illustrate, he said:

As for the history of Gallipoli, even the official records were so bare, and as I know by my own observations and researches during the campaign, so inaccurate, that any history based chiefly upon them could only be a travesty of the truth. All of us knew of instances - I personally found them to occur more often than not - in which the commander's report on an action contained important inaccuracies. Commanding officers, for example, constantly - and naturally - believed and reported that some movement made by their troops was the result of an order issued by them, when it had actually been initiated and carried out by a company commander or one of his men on the spot before the order from above arrived - if it ever did.³⁸

Bean collected information from eyewitnesses at the frontline to corroborate official sources. He said:

One of my first and strongest impressions in my work as War Correspondent was that of the unreliability of second hand reports. ... the facts had to be sought from the actual eyewitness or actors, interviewed as soon as possible after the event, generally over a cup of tea in a dug-out or mess hut; and when one found it [an account of an eyewitness], ... it was often surprisingly different from what the most careful and conscientious commander, working in the intense pressure of a campaign, had reported.³⁹ ...

Bean decided to write in detail using eyewitness information to add authority, veracity and interest. He said:

One other reason has rendered much detail necessary. Our task was not merely to record events and their causes, but to ensure that our narrative should be accepted as authoritative in other countries, as well as our own. In not a few important matters our history has been counter to narratives hitherto generally accepted; it therefore has to carry within its covers not merely our bare conclusions of fact, but also evident proof of them, *a result to be attained only by writing in detail* [author's emphasis]. This is the main feature of the Australian history, and it is essentially an Australian feature. ... many critics the world over have judged this detail to furnish the outstanding interest of the work. At any rate, we adopted that method with our eyes wide open, while constantly determined to keep before the reader the general shape of the wood as well as that of the trees.⁴⁰

³⁸ Ibid, pp. 6, 7.

³⁹ Ibid, pp. 20-1.

⁴⁰ Ibid, pp. 8, 9.

Bean cast himself as an important source of first-hand information and a central eyewitness. In so doing, he affirmed the advantage of having someone accompany campaigns to gather information, and to witness events and experience operational conditions. He said:

As far as the human side of the story of the AIF is concerned, and especially for the detail of what happened in and immediately behind the frontline, by far the most important source is my own collection - about 300 volumes of diary, regimental records and historical notes. The reason for this is that information was collected by a trained investigator, mainly at the time of the events, and in most cases from the actors themselves. This source is also authoritative as to the general setting and atmosphere in which the main events took place, this having been carefully noted at the time.⁴¹

Bean could have added that, in addition to his own diaries and journals, the personal diaries and correspondence of participants also constitute authentic and revealing sources. Bill Gammage's *The Broken Years* is an exemplar of this type of historiography. Gammage's approach also informs this thesis.⁴²

In summary, Bean met the challenge of writing contemporary military history by elevating a 'frontline' perspective gained from eyewitnesses, conducting first-hand research himself and including authoritative descriptive detail. His historiography informs this thesis in several ways. Two chapters are based on the author's first-hand research with eyewitnesses on operations and his journals - the type of research that Bean prized.⁴³ Three chapters are based on archival research of files as well as interviews with eyewitnesses. These five chapters contain descriptive detail that Bean also valued. Only the introductory chapter relies solely on official histories and secondary sources, cognisant that, in the main, they do not examine Australian proficiency in force projection.

One departure from Bean's historiography is a caveat about relying on eyewitness interviews in preference to official records and commander's reports. Those who participate in military operations provide useful information while their memories are fresh and their contributions are unbiased. However, participants can mislead in

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 13-4.

⁴² Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Penguin Books, Melbourne, 1975.

⁴³ The author conducted the following research visits; the Australian Force-Somalia in April-May 1993, the Medical Support Force in Rwanda over the Christmas New Year period of 1994-95, the Truce Monitoring Group and its successor the Peace Monitoring Group in Bougainville nine times in 1998 and 1999 and Australian force elements in East Timor for three months over the Christmas-New Year period of 1999-2000.

defence of their own reputations and actions, as well as those of others and their force element and service. They can also try to shift accountability for difficulties they had to endure as well as tactical setbacks to higher levels of command, when there were only partial - or no - causal relationships. Furthermore, memories do not remain fresh and recollections can skew over time. As a consequence, this thesis balances what was written and recorded in files at the time with recollections of interviewees and their written records.

Bean commented in 1938 that 'No history can tell the reader everything about its subject. The historian has to make up his mind what main questions he will endeavour to answer, and to build the rest of his work upon that structure.'⁴⁴ Within the framework of the ten functions of force projection, the narrative structure of this thesis follows the generic chronology of most regional and international projections, beginning with warnings and responses. Typically, media coverage of events and government and public reactions signal the prospects for force projection. Each level of ADF command responds and provides guidance down the chain of command.⁴⁵ Was warning timely and guidance effective? Did subordinate commanders and headquarters develop concepts of operation with or without sufficient higher command guidance?⁴⁶ Next are pre-deployment preparations and movements of forces that culminate in deployment. Were arrangements in place to facilitate or complicate specific force preparation and deployment? Was there sufficient time? Next is arrival of forces and initial responses. Typically, the first hours, days and weeks are tactical tipping points because of media coverage and comment. Did specific force preparation, deployment and force protection arrangements increase or decrease risk after arrival? How effective was force command, protection and sustainment over time? Did force rotation work well? Was force redeployment well-protected and efficient? Did forces reconstitute efficiently?

Answers to these questions favour the thesis' emphasis on land operations, but do not do so at the expense of the roles of the navy and air force. These services

⁴⁴ Bean, 'The Writing of Official History', p. 7.

⁴⁵ **chain of command.** The succession of commanding officers from a superior to a subordinate through which command is exercised (DOD).

⁴⁶ **concept of operations.** A verbal or graphic statement, in broad outline, of a commander's assumptions or intent in regard to an operation or series of operations. The concept of operations frequently is embodied in campaign plans and operation plans; in the latter case, particularly when the plans cover a series of connected operations to be carried out simultaneously or in succession. The concept is designed to give an overall picture of the operation. It is included primarily for additional clarity of purpose. Also called commander's concept or CONOPS (DOD).

supported each of the operations selected for closer examination. The thesis not only analyses their individual contributions but also arrangements for synchronising their efforts, especially for deployment and sustainment.

Thus, it is by answering these questions and discovering others to answer that the thesis explores causal relationships between weaknesses in executing functions of force projection and increased risk on ADF operations. While Australians expect that there will be risks when their governments decide to take military action, they also presume that their political, public service and military leaders will manage and minimise risk. They do not expect priorities and processes within government and Australia's armed forces to add to the inherent dangers of military operations. Given media magnification of tactical tipping points, deficient force projection could contribute to tactical setbacks and incidents that result in significant political and strategic consequences. Negative consequences may only diminish Australia's regional and international reputation and cause temporary political problems for governments during peace time. However, if Australia goes to a substantial military contest as part of an international military emergency or has to defend the approaches to the continent in a time of war, as was the case in 1942, the consequences could be disastrous.

In summary, this thesis contributes to Australian military history through describing and analysing Australia's proficiency in military force projection in the late 1980s and the 1990s. It offers a new framework and narrative structure for examining Australian military intent and competence. It is the first historical examination of the operational and tactical levels of command for several contemporary regional and international Australian military operations. While the thesis describes the past, it also has potential to shape the future. Bean alluded to the contribution of military history and this type of thesis to the future when he said:

How did the Australian people - and the Australian character, if there is one, come through the universally recognised test of this, their first great war? ... What did the Australian people and their forces achieve in the total effort of their side of the struggle? ... What was the true nature of that struggle and test as far as Australians who took part in it? How well or ill did our constitution and our preparations serve us in it? What were their strengths or weaknesses? And what guidance can our people or others obtain from this experience for further emergencies?⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Bean, 'The Writing of Official History', p. 7.

Chapter 1

Australian Force Projection 1885 – 1985

This chapter is an introductory history that does not describe all of Australia's force projections. It is a general summary punctuated with more detailed examination of the challenges of projecting Australian forces to New Guinea in 1914 and 1942, and to Vietnam in 1966 with only limited allied assistance. There was room for improvement in the latter two projections. Poor execution of the functions of force projection increased risk unnecessarily and contributed to tipping points where the outcomes of tactical contests and the conduct of those operating at the tactical level had significant strategic consequences for Australia and her allies. Both times, Australian troops prevailed against the odds - obviating major political and strategic embarrassment. By 1985, the nation aspired to become less dependent on allies and more self-reliant in defending Australia and its regional interests. The question was whether the Australian Defence Force (ADF) had learned from the previous 100 years of force projection in general and the tactical tipping points of 1942 and 1966 in particular.

Projections to the Sudan, South Africa and China

The first official projection of Australian military force occurred in March 1885. In 'an example of colonial military efficiency of a high order', 750 men and 200 horses embarked in Sydney for the port of Suakin in the Red Sea to participate in the British Sudan War.¹ Impetus had come on 11 February from Major General Sir Edward Strickland, a retired British officer living in Sydney. He proposed in a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* that 'Australia' – though yet to be a nation – should respond militarily to the death of Major General Charles Gordon at Khartoum on 26 January 1885.² Australia's first battalion group to deploy overseas arrived in the

¹ E.J.H. Howard in Foreword to Ralph Sutton, *Soldiers of the Queen: War in the Soudan*, New South Wales Military Historical Society and The Royal New South Wales Regiment, Sydney, 1985.

² K.S. Inglis, *The Rehearsal: Australians at War in the Sudan 1885*, Rigby Publishers, Adelaide, 1985, pp. 15-6.

Sudan in less than one month after official warning – by any standards, a rapid deployment.³

A call to arms for another British military campaign in Africa prompted the next projection. On 3 July 1899, Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, sent secret cables to colonial governments in Australia asking them to consider sending contingents 'in the event of a military demonstration against the Transvaal'.⁴ The British were not compromising during negotiations about the political rights of a burgeoning population of British immigrants, who had settled in the South African Republic of the Transvaal after the discovery of gold. The Republic declared war on 11 October 1899.⁵ In a repeat of the circumstances of the Sudan expedition, Australian men from the bush and the cities volunteered for service in the months leading up to the declaration of war.⁶ Cooperation between colonial governments, citizen committees and military authorities facilitated efficient preparation. Australian contingents arrived in South Africa in November and December 1899, fully equipped and horsed, about six weeks after enlistment. Further contingents followed at regular intervals over the next two years.⁷

In June 1900, the Australian colonies responded to another overseas military emergency.⁸ British forces, accompanied by French and Russian troops, landed in northern China and advanced on Peking in order to protect members of diplomatic legations and their families. Anti-Western members of the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists - nicknamed 'Boxers' - were besieging them.⁹ Further Western incursions started a short war with China.

With forces committed to the Boer War, New South Wales and Victoria sent small contingents of sailors and marines from their permanent and volunteer naval forces to assist. After official warning in early June 1900, the Victorian Naval

³ The contingent received two weeks specific force preparation (13 February-3 March) after official warning, arriving in the Sudan 27 days later.

⁴ K.S. Inglis in Preface of L.M. Field, *The Forgotten War: Australian involvement in the South African Conflict of 1899-1902*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979.

⁵ R.L. Wallace describes the lead up to the declaration of war in 'The Boer War, 1899-1902', in Ralph Sutton (ed.), *For Queen and Empire: A Boer War Chronicle*, 75th Anniversary Commemorative Edition, New South Wales Military Historical Society, Sydney, 1974, p. 18.

⁶ The most comprehensive account of Australian participation in the Boer War is Craig Wilcox, *Australia's Boer War*, OUP, Melbourne, 2002.

⁷ L.M. Field, *The Forgotten War*, Appendix C, Details of Colonial Contingents.

⁸ See Bob Nicolls, *Blue Jackets and Boxers*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986.

⁹ James J. Atkinson, *Australian Contingents to the China Field Force 1900-1901*, New South Wales Military Historical Society and The Clarendon Press, Sydney, 1976, p.11-8.

Contingent embarked in Melbourne on 31 July 1900. A 260-strong New South Wales contingent joined the Victorians on the same troop ship in Sydney, embarking on 8 August 1900, arriving in China 38 days later. After the British had employed the Australians for six months on garrison duties, they returned to Australia in March 1901.

Observations

Projections to the Sudan, South Africa and China between 1885 and 1902 were patriotic responses to military emergencies of the British Empire. The British fostered Australian contingents in absence of Australian capacity, capability or willingness to do so. Small sizes and dispersion among British formations, as well as the predominantly mounted infantry composition of Australian force elements in South Africa, also made creating separate Australian logistic support arrangements unnecessary.

Governments disbanded contingents after redeployment. International force projection was not first priority. Since the early days of the colonial period, generic force preparation had focused on defence from predatory European powers.¹⁰ The army depended on the dedication and patriotism of part-time volunteers to mobilise with their untrained compatriots to face threats to Australia's territorial sovereignty. In a manner similar to dispatching sporting teams for international competition, Australian governments, companies, institutions and citizens responded fervently with both public and private funds for projections in the service of the British Empire. In return, Australians were confident that the Empire would do the same.

Projection to Europe and the Middle East – 1914-1918

On 30 July 1914, the Imperial bugle sounded again. The British Government advised secretly: war in Europe is imminent.¹¹ Though Australia, like the other British dominions, would be at war with Germany if Britain declared war, their contributions would be self-determined.¹² Indeed, the Defence Act of 1903 prohibited the Australian Government from sending troops overseas unless they volunteered.¹³ There was

¹⁰ For discussion on Australian threat perceptions, see John Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: A history of Australian military developments 1880-1914*, Allen and Unwin in association with The Directorate of Army Studies, Department of Defence, Sydney, 1992.

¹¹ C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of ANZAC, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Volume 1, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1939, p. 25.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 1-2.

¹³ 'Members of the Defence Forces who are members of the Military Forces shall not be required, unless they voluntarily agree to do so, to serve beyond the limits of the Commonwealth and those of any

bipartisan support in Australia for a continental defence posture, with an implicit requirement for national projection from the heartlands to the hinterland. However, there were differing views about expeditionary operations on behalf of the British Empire.¹⁴ In 1914, the strictures of the Defence Act did not inhibit Australian force projection in support of another British military emergency. In the beginning, joining British forces in a war in Europe was popular.

Though thousands of Australian men rushed to join the military forces, Jeffrey Grey observed that 'in 1914, despite all the preparations for national defence of the previous few years, the Commonwealth was ill-prepared to meet the demands of war'.¹⁵ Years of secret warnings from the British Government and military planning by higher command staff in the army, followed by months of warnings in the press, had not equated to preparation time for force projection.¹⁶

After Britain declared war, the Australian Government placed the Australian Navy under control of the British Admiralty. Under the provisions of the Defence Act, the Governor General gave assent to the Government raising, maintaining and organising a volunteer force for service overseas.¹⁷ The Government in turn directed Brigadier General W.T. Bridges, Inspector General of the Commonwealth Military Forces (CMF), to prepare and dispatch 'an expeditionary force of 20 000 men of any suggested composition'. This force, called the first Australian Imperial Force (1st AIF), would be put 'at the complete disposal of the Home Government'.¹⁸ Bridges raised 1st AIF in a manner that repeated the recruitment processes for Australia's participation in the Sudan and Boer wars.¹⁹ There were plenty of volunteers, and the community and business provided generous support.

The British Government prompted Australia's first regional force projection on 6 August 1914 by requesting the seizure of 'German possessions and wireless stations'

Territory under the authority of the Commonwealth.' Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903-1953 and Army Regulations and Orders 1927, 1957 Reprint, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1957, p. 23.

¹⁴ See Mordike, *An Army for a Nation*, for description of debate between 'imperialists' and 'Australianists'.

¹⁵ Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Army*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume I, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 37-9.

¹⁶ For information on these warnings, see Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp. 34 and 39.

¹⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903-1953, Section 33, p. 19.

¹⁸ Bean, *The Story of ANZAC*, pp. 28-9.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

in the southwest Pacific region.²⁰ The new Chief of the General Staff (CGS), Colonel J.G. Legge, set about raising 'His Majesty's Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force' (AN and MEF) immediately. Unlike the six weeks for recruitment, preparation and dispatch of the 20 000-strong 1st AIF contingent, Legge's expeditionary force was 'to be promptly organised and despatched with the least possible delay. It was an affair of days.'²¹ He produced his concept of operations, organisation and orders for AN and MEF in 72 hours, specifying that it would total about 1 500 personnel.²² Twice the number of men needed for 1st Battalion, AN and MEF, were already assembling at Victoria Barracks in Sydney for enlistment with only a promise of 'service abroad'.²³ After being selected, attested, clothed, armed and equipped in a week, the 1000-strong infantry component embarked with the naval contingent and other elements on 18 August 1914. This was another rapid deployment comparable to the projection to the Sudan. The AN & MEF deployed 12 days after the official warning and 'seven days after the first infantryman had been enrolled'.²⁴ Six days after that, the auxiliary cruiser *Berrima*, carrying 1st Battalion, assembled with several Australian navy vessels off Palm Island north of Townsville, inside the Great Barrier Reef.²⁵

The AN and MEF then sailed for a final rendezvous with the flagship, *Australia*, and light cruiser, *Melbourne*, at Rossel Island, located near the south-eastern tip of New Guinea. In what may have been Australia's first high-level joint command conference on active service, Rear Admiral Sir George E. Patey, RN, Captain J.C.T. Glossop, RAN, Captain J.B. Stevenson, RAN, and Colonel W. Holmes, the land force commander, discussed final plans. Patey issued an operation order for the capture of Rabaul and hinterland soon afterwards. As commander of the AN and MEF, Colonel Holmes would exercise 'a free hand in relation to all operations ashore'.²⁶ Holmes landed small RANR patrols to search for German military forces and reinforced them when they made contact. Native auxiliaries under the command of German officers

²⁰ Ibid, p. 36. S.S. Mackenzie, *The Australians at Rabaul: The Capture and Administration of the German Possessions in the Southern Pacific, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Vol X, Angus and Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1927, p. 5.

²¹ Ibid, p. 23.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 28.

²⁵ A light cruiser, *Sydney*, a supply ship, *Aorangi*, submarine tenders, *Protector* and *Upola*, and two submarines, *AE 1* and *AE 2*.

quickly succumbed.²⁷ Medical staff on the hospital ship, *Grantola*, treated the few wounded Australians.²⁸ On 13 September 1914, the Australians hoisted the British flag at Rabaul. Thus, after the British request on 6 August, Australia had recruited a 1500-strong light infantry force, prepared and embarked it on a navy task group that then deployed several thousand kilometres into the northern archipelago. The AN & MEF had accomplished its mission for the Australian Government on behalf of the British Government in five weeks.

While AN and MEF projection was progressing, the Quartermaster-General's branch of the Defence Department had been working day and night to equip 1st Division, 1st AIF. Branch staff contracted Australian industry to produce a wide range of items and stripped the militia of stocks.²⁹ They drew on 'large quantities of army stores [that had been stockpiled] against the chance of sudden mobilisation'.³⁰ The 1st Division embarked after four weeks of specific force preparation. C.E. W. Bean, the official historian, assessed that 'no troops ever went to the front more generously equipped than the first Australian contingent', drawing attention to high quality webbing, clothing and boots.³¹ Jeffrey Grey qualifies this assessment by observing that 'the Australians arrived in Egypt without tents and were short of 'howitzers for the artillery' and ammunition.³² After arrival, the British army trained and sustained the 1st Division and following contingents until the 1st AIF was ready for battle in 1915.

Australia prepared and dispatched more than 330, 000 troops over the next four years.³³ John Robertson assessed that, 'Australia's experience in the 1914-18 war may be characterised as a great deal of slaughter with little military art'.³⁴ The Australian people received mostly patriotic propaganda about the conduct of the war and the doings of their men on the frontline. Only the names of the dead published in newspapers communicated the paucity of military art and the cost to a generation.

²⁶ Mackenzie, *The Australians at Rabaul*, p. 34.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 73.

²⁸ The capture of Rabaul cost the Australians six killed and four wounded; two of those killed were officers in command, apparently victims of German instructions to their indigenous subordinates to shoot officers first.

²⁹ Australia had 'factories which had been set up after 1910 to manufacture military equipment'. Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 39.

³⁰ Bean, *The Story of ANZAC*, p. 63.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 39.

³³ Ibid, p. 67. Grey nominates a figure of 331 000 men who served overseas during World War I.

³⁴ John Robertson, *Australia at War 1939-1945*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1981, p. 1.

Though journalists were present and published stories of Australian operations, there were no significant political or strategic consequences from any particular setbacks at the tactical level.

Observations

The projection of the AN and MEF into the southwest Pacific in 1914 was Australia's first regional joint force projection. The navy provided the means for deployment, force protection, sustainment, command and control support and landing parties. The army benefited from a surfeit of fit and capable men rallying for service overseas. There was also sufficient experience within the army to make efficient arrangements for specific force preparation. These arrangements at Victoria Barracks in Sydney enabled a 1 500-strong battalion group to be mobilised at very short notice. Though under-trained for conventional war, junior leaders and small teams were capable of the minor tactics required to engage and defeat lightly armed natives commanded by German officers. After the war, Australia administered German New Guinea. Strategically, Australia had one less inimical European colonial power in the near region. The nation had the opportunity to develop Papua and former German territories of New Guinea as a territorial buffer against military forces intent on invading the Australian homeland.

Generic force preparation, in the form of cooperation between government, citizens and industry, contributed to Australia's proficiency in getting sizeable force elements away to fight in Europe and the Middle East on time and in good order.³⁵ Though the British fostered Australia's participation and the nation paid a high price in lives and national treasure, the experience enhanced the nation's military capabilities and capacities. The army and navy practised force projection and Australia formed the nucleus of an air force. A generation of Australian officers now had experience in higher-level command and staff appointments. The generals and senior commanders for World War II would come from their ranks. Many of them would train the next generation for combat at sea, on land and in the air. However, this was the zenith of Australia's military power for the time being. The nation was sick of war. Forces were demobilised as quickly as possible, but there were initial expectations that Australia would remain militarily strong.

³⁵ Bean, *The Story of ANZAC*, p. 5.

Force Projection Developments 1918-1939

The 1920s began with high-level efforts to reconstitute the three services and the Defence Department into capable, competent and responsive organisations. Admiral Lord Jellicoe, RN visited to report on Australia's maritime capabilities.³⁶

Rationalisation of what became three separate services and defence administration followed but 'ambitious schemes were doomed by economic circumstances' and 'strong public support for disarmament' that was stimulated by the formation of the League of Nations and the results of Washington Conference on arms control in 1922.³⁷

Successive governments cut budget allocations for the navy, army and air force.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Australian Governments did not reconstitute for force projection; internationally, regionally or nationally; 'The role of the army was to be limited to local defence against minor attack.'³⁸ Britain would be responsible for offshore Australian defence. While Britain remained a first class military power, especially at sea, the Australian Government expected the British fleet, assisted by the Australian navy, to intercept any force intent on invading Australia.³⁹

After the 1937, Imperial Conference in London, Australia belatedly began to rearm in anticipation of an emerging threat to British interests from Nazi Germany and ominous changes to Japan's military posture. The Government, however, was still slow to authorise the changes needed to modernise the armed forces for force projection.⁴⁰ There did not appear to be the political will or public support for amending the Defence Act to facilitate deployment of troops beyond Commonwealth territory. The nation would still depend on rallying volunteers to make up its land forces for regional and international force projection. Each service was not able to recover from the financial constraints of the inter-war years by the time Australia was at war in September 1939.⁴¹

³⁶ Eric Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume V, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 68.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Robertson, *Australia at War*, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Though the Government doubled the budget allocation to the army in 1938/39, it still did not act on military advice for modernisation and mobilisation. Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, p. 85. On 6 December 1938 the CGS, Major General J.D. Lavarack, informed F.G. Shedden, the Secretary of Defence, that Japanese development of bases in their mandated territories in the northern Pacific that led him to conclude that 'the purpose of such bases is to facilitate offensive operations'. Horner, *Defence Supremo, Sir Fredrick Shedden and the making of Australian defence policy*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, p.66. See also Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp. 102-5.

⁴¹ David Stevens describes the reduction in maritime capabilities and consequences in David Stevens (ed.) *The Australian Navy*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume II, Oxford University

Projections of World War II

Two weeks after his declaration of war in September 1939, Prime Minister R.G. Menzies and his Cabinet decided to raise an expeditionary force of 20 000 men, called the Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF), and offer it to Britain.⁴² However, Menzies insisted on confirmation of British intent to defend the Far East before doing so.⁴³ David Day opined,

Menzies' failure to understand that Australia's continued survival, as with any country, rested primarily on its own efforts was to place Australia in a position of great peril. In Britain's view, the security of the distant dominion [Australia] was only one of many interests and was, as would soon be plain, far from the most important.⁴⁴

In early 1940, 6th Division, the first of four divisions that would constitute the main land force elements of 2nd AIF, sailed to the Middle East on ships sent by Britain. After arrival, the British military system prepared this formation, as well as those following it, for battle. British officers exercised strategic and operational command, and the British protected and sustained Australian force elements from all three services, as had been the case for World War I. Over the next 12 months, Australia continued to send forces to Britain and the Middle East despite growing evidence that the Japanese were taking advantage of the predicaments of Britain, France and the Netherlands in Europe to pursue hegemonic ambitions in South East Asia. Prime Minister Menzies allayed fears among Australians about the Japanese threat by assuring

Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 65 and pp. 98-100. Alan Stephens opined that 'the RAAF's ledger was in credit' in the areas of doctrine and professionalism of personnel, but acknowledges the obsolescence of aircraft and 'immaturity' of infrastructure' by September 1939 in Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume III, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 41 and 57. Jeffrey Grey concluded that the army was 'an ill-equipped and untrained force' in September 1939, Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 105.

⁴² Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 108.

⁴³ David Day, *The Politics of War. Australia at War, 1939-45, from Churchill to MacArthur*, Harper Collins Publishers, Sydney, 2003, Chapters 2 and 3. David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort 1939-45*, Allen and Unwin in association with the Australian Archives, Sydney, 1996, Chapter 2.

⁴⁴ Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 36.

them that it would be 'business as usual'.⁴⁵ He followed the British line that Japan, 'would sit on the fence'.⁴⁶

The first strategic penny dropped for Australia on 29 June 1940 when Britain evacuated the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and Germany defeated and occupied France. According to David Day, Australia did not undertake substantial rearmament after this strategic calamity for fear of 'antagonising the Japanese'.⁴⁷ Indeed, there appeared to be little thought given to reinforcing Port Moresby or Rabaul in New Guinea as forward operating bases. Australia chose appeasement and hoped that the British would avoid invasion of their homeland and still be in a position, with the Americans, to intervene in the Pacific if the Japanese attacked.⁴⁸ Unhelpfully, the Japanese Government began 'testing the British resolve in Asia now that it was fighting for its life in Europe' by making several demands that would enhance the success of its expansionist campaign in China and gain strategic advantage for further encroachment into South East Asia.⁴⁹

On 15 February 1941, Australia decided to project forces closer to home. The War Cabinet cancelled plans for 8th Division to go to the Middle East and redirected its brigades to Darwin and Malaya. The second strategic penny dropped after American naval officers broke the Japanese diplomatic code in July 1941. The Australian Government now knew that the Japanese planned to strike south.⁵⁰ Menzies called for 'an unlimited war effort': he was cutting it fine.⁵¹ His Government had relied on British assurances for almost two years.⁵² During that time, Australia had not rearmed,

⁴⁵ Robertson, *Australia at War*, p. 10. For another view on the political realities of 'business as usual' see D.M. Horner, *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat 1941-1943*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, p.22. Jeffrey Grey points out that 'an air of 'business as usual' characterised Australian military preparations until some months into 1940, Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp.107-08. Also Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 12.

⁴⁷ Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 60.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 61

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ D.M. Horner, 'Australia under threat from invasion', Chapter 10 in M. McKernan and M. Browne (ed.), *Australia: Two Centuries of War and Peace*, Australian War Memorial in association with Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p. 247.

⁵¹ Ibid. Horner, *Defence Supremo*, p. 84. Menzies told his War Cabinet as early as 21 May 1940 that there needed to be an 'all-in' war effort now that Germany had invaded France and the Low Countries.

⁵² An extract of these assurances is contained in John Robertson, *Australia at War*, p. 60.

recruited or reorganised adequately as strategic circumstances changed.⁵³ Fortunately, the German advance into Russia in June 1941 meant that Britain was safe from invasion for the time being.

After the Japanese bombed the US Pacific Fleet Base at Pearl Harbour on 8 December 1941 and landed troops in northern Malaya, the Australian Chiefs of Staff advised that 'It was necessary to establish and train now the forces that would be required to prevent and to meet an invasion'.⁵⁴ David Horner observed dryly that 'One would have thought that this would have been an admirable aim a year earlier.'⁵⁵ On 11 December, the War Cabinet agreed to deploy brigade groups north of the Australian mainland to Rabaul, Ambon and Timor, as an extension of the line of defence from Malaya.⁵⁶ The Government hastily mobilised 114 000 additional personnel for army service.⁵⁷ There were still many volunteers, but the Government was able to call up eligible Australian men for service outside mainland Australia because the Defence Act did not prohibit employment of Australian militia units in 'Territory under authority of the Commonwealth'.⁵⁸ Thus, the Government could deploy troops to New Guinea as well as to Australia's other offshore territories. By this time there was a 'realistic assessment that in the long run Australia might have to deal with the Japanese threat with minimum Allied support' - a useful conclusion that could have been reached years earlier.⁵⁹

Japanese forces defeated or captured Australian and British forces in South East Asia during the first three months of 1942. The British commander in Malaya surrendered Australia's 8th Division in Singapore on 15 February 1942. Australia sacrificed other Australian land and air force elements at Rabaul, Ambon, Timor and

⁵³ Ibid, p. 96. Andrews suggests that the Prime Minister, R.G. Menzies' economic and social conservatism governed his actions at this time rather than 'an analysis of the international situation'. Also see Dudley McCarthy, *Australia in the War of 1939-1945: South-West Pacific Area - First Year Kokoda to Wau*, Australian War Memorial, 1959, pp. 1-33. He describes a litany of organisational failures, such as 'fragmentary training' and 'a serious shortage of equipment of all kinds', as well as first priority being given to the AIF for the 'inefficiencies' of reinforcement in Australia in 1940 and the first half of 1941.

⁵⁴ Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 84.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ There was a gap between Government intent and tactical capability. Trained brigade groups were not available, so only battalion groups deployed.

⁵⁷ David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903-1953, Section 49, p. 23.

⁵⁹ David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 87.

Java without reinforcement by 11 March 1942.⁶⁰ This was a profound military, political and strategic humiliation.

The focus turned to Australia's mandated territory of New Guinea as the last line of defence; now Australia's frontline. Confident that Britain would stop Japanese forces further north, Australia had not developed New Guinea as a buffer with established forward operating bases or substantial pre-positioned forces. It was now the 11th hour. Having given higher priorities elsewhere, preparations in 1941 and early in 1942 in New Guinea were rudimentary.

In the New Year of 1942 Australia began its most important regional force projection since the AN and MEF operation in 1914. This time the strategic stakes were much higher and Australia's militia units would lead the way. On 3 January 1942, 39th and 53rd Battalions arrived to reinforce 49th Battalion that had been in Port Moresby since March 1941. Dudley McCarthy described 49th Battalion as 'neither well trained nor well disciplined'.⁶¹ General Sturdee, after a visit to Port Moresby on 11 July 1942, assessed the unit to be, 'quite the worst battalion in Australia'.⁶² McCarthy's description of 53rd Battalion as, 'a badly trained, ill-disciplined and generally resentful collection of men', also suggests that Australia did not deploy its finest to its last defensive line in New Guinea.⁶³ The last battalion of the *ad hoc* 30th Brigade, 39th Battalion, was 'in the full sense of the term, a 'scratch' unit'.⁶⁴ Rather than prepare 30th Brigade for jungle warfare against the Japanese, commanders in Port Moresby employed all three battalions as labourers for building infrastructure and unloading ships. 'Little time could be devoted to training the unseasoned troops.'⁶⁵ Australia could not look to its navy to fight the Japanese at sea. Maritime defences in New

⁶⁰ 8th Division, 2nd AIF, began deploying to Malaya in March/April 1941 and surrendered in Singapore on 15 February 1942. The 2/22nd Battalion group deployed to Rabaul in March/April 1941 and surrendered in January 1942. The 2/21st Battalion group, called 'Gull Force', deployed to Ambon in March 1941 and surrendered 31 January 1942. The 2/40th Battalion group, called 'Sparrow Force', deployed to Timor in January 1941 and the bulk of the force surrendered on 23 February 1942. A group comprised of 2/3rd Machine Gun Battalion and 2/2nd Pioneer Battalion and 2/6th Field Engineer Company, called 'Blackforce', deployed to Java as forward elements of 7th Division, returning from the Middle East, and surrendered on 11 March 1942.

⁶¹ McCarthy, *Australia in the War*, p. 46.

⁶² Fred Cranston, *Always faithful: a history of the 49th Australian Infantry Battalion 1916-1982*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1983, p. 137

⁶³ McCarthy, *Australia in the War*, pp. 46-7. See also F.M Budden, *That Mob! – The Story of the 55/53 Australian Infantry Battalion, A.I.F.*, self published, Ashfield, New South Wales, 1973, p. 2.

⁶⁴ Victor Austin, *To Kokoda and Beyond: The Story of the 39th Battalion 1941-1943*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p. xi.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 2.

Guinea consisted mainly of shore installations. No Australian navy vessels 'could be concentrated off the east coast of Australia to prevent a Japanese move against Port Moresby.'⁶⁶ On 8 March 1942, Japanese forces landed unopposed on the north coast of New Guinea, 'less than 200 air miles from Port Moresby.'⁶⁷ This was a testament to Australia's squandering of warning time. The landing occurred two and a half years after Australia's declaration of war; nine months after code breakers discovered Japanese intentions; four months after the first bombs fell on Pearl Harbour; and a month after Singapore had fallen.

Australia turned from Britain to the United States for succour in this 11th and 'gravest' hour.⁶⁸ Prime Minister J. Curtin handed over strategic and operational level command to the Americans on 18 March 1942.⁶⁹ On 27 March 1942 the Governor General in Council created an appointment for an officer with the title Commander-In-Chief, Australian Military Forces, to command the Australian Military Forces in time of war. This appointment took over the powers, functions and duties of the Military Board.⁷⁰ The first Commander-In-Chief was General Douglas MacArthur. On the same day that Australia relinquished command of her armed forces to General MacArthur, the Advisory War Council 'affirmed that Darwin and Port Moresby should be defended to the fullest possible extent, and that every effort should be made to provide forces for these areas'.⁷¹ On 23 March, Curtin appointed General Sir Thomas Blamey to command Australia's land forces. Blamey issued orders on 9 April 1942 for a reorganisation of Australian forces to defend Australian soil and followed up with operational instructions to thwart the Japanese capturing Port Moresby and then lodging on the northeast coast of Queensland and advancing south along the eastern seaboard.⁷²

Good luck favoured initial Australian preparations to defend New Guinea when aircraft from the US carrier, *Lexington*, raided Japanese forces assembling on the

⁶⁶ McCarthy, *Australia in the War*, pp. 46-7.

⁶⁷ Austin, *To Kokoda and Beyond*, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Australian Prime Minister John Curtin broadcast on 8 December 1941, 'This is the gravest hour of our history'. Quoted in Gavin Long, *The Six Years War: Australia in the 1939-45 War*, The Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973, p. 127.

⁶⁹ Robertson, *Australia at War*, p. 22. David Horner concludes that, 'In the circumstances, it is arguable whether the government had any other alternative.' Horner, 'Australia under threat of invasion', p. 270.

⁷⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903-1953, Statutory Rules 1942, No 334, gazetted on 31 July 1942, p. 2.

⁷¹ Horner, *Crisis of Command*, p. 48.

⁷² Robertson, *Australia at War*, p. 27. See also Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp. 136-7.

northern New Guinea coast in mid-March.⁷³ These raids resulted in an unexpected four-week reprieve from a landward advance on Port Moresby. However, substantial Australian reinforcement did not arrive in New Guinea until 29 May when two inexperienced militia brigades disembarked: one at Port Moresby and one at Milne Bay, east of Port Moresby. Preparations at Port Moresby continued to be inappropriate and inadequate. Training programs replicated tactics for open warfare, not jungle warfare. There were no tactical level maps, and no tactical or logistic reconnaissance of the Kokoda Track, the major overland approach to Port Moresby. Soldiers did not fire their weapons or rehearse minor tactics under jungle conditions. Even after months of warning, there were still shortages of weapons, personal equipment, ammunition, vehicles and other stocks.⁷⁴

Despite reverses in the Coral Sea and near Midway Island, the Japanese still had ambitions in New Guinea. The high command issued orders on 14 June 1942 for their forces in New Guinea to advance overland across the Owen Stanley Ranges to capture Port Moresby. Another Japanese force also headed for Milne Bay to establish a forward operating base 'to cooperate in the attack on Port Moresby'.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, the strategic level of command in Australia, even with early warning from the code breakers, did not move 'quickly or decisively' to project more land forces to New Guinea to confront the Japanese advance on Port Moresby.⁷⁶

On 25 June 1942, Australia was approaching its most significant tactical tipping point in its military history when the first elements from 39th Battalion moved forward of the village of Kokoda to join the men of the Papuan Infantry Battalion, who were observing and harassing the Japanese advance. On paper, this cobbled together group of young, unblooded militiamen, a sprinkling of AIF veterans, natives and expatriates, called Maroubra Force, was no match for the numbers of experienced Japanese troops coming down the Kokoda Track. The first encounter battle confirmed this assessment. Kokoda fell on 29 July. Lieutenant Colonel W.T. Owen, CO 39th Battalion, lay mortally wounded among his men. After further skirmishes, the Australians concentrated south of Kokoda on 6 August and their new commander, Major A.L.

⁷³ David Horner, 'Defending Australia in 1942', in *War and Society*, Vol.11, no.1, May 1993, p.5.

⁷⁴ Cranston, *Always Faithful*, pp. 137-139. Budden, *That Mob!*, pp. 20-21. Stan and Les Brigg, *The 36th Australian Infantry Battalion 1939-1945*, The 36th Battalion Association, Sydney, 1967.

⁷⁵ Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942, Official History of Australia in the War of 1939-1945*, Series 3, Vol 1, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p. 535.

⁷⁶ Horner, 'Defending Australia in 1942', pp. 9-10.

Cameron, ordered a counter attack with three companies. After recapturing Kokoda, the Australians fought day and night for 48 hours before withdrawing with heavy casualties on 10 August after running out of ammunition and food. Force sustainment had failed them.⁷⁷ The battalion 'dug in at Isurava using bayonets, tin hats and empty bully beef cans for tools'.⁷⁸ Fortunately, events elsewhere at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, where American marines landed and captured a strategically important airfield on 7 August, resulted in a pause in the Japanese advance along the Kokoda Track. Thus, fortuitous circumstances gave the defenders of Isurava a breather.⁷⁹ On 8 August, Brigadier A.W. Potts, commander of 7th Division's 21st Brigade, arrived by air in Port Moresby on reconnaissance. A week later, after only having time to load up with ammunition and rations, Potts' 2/14th Battalion and, a day later, his 2/16th Battalion set out along the Kokoda Track, still dressed in their Middle East khaki uniforms, to relieve 39th Battalion.

Meanwhile, 39th Battalion engaged in sporadic close combat with an advance guard of about 300 Japanese troops, supported by mortars and heavy machine guns. The Japanese appeared to have better logistics than the Australians had at the time. Over one thousand Japanese troops were inbound from the Buna-Gona base area to press home their advantage and push Maroubra Force back to Port Moresby. Forward elements of this force began attacking on 13 August. After withdrawing under fire, Major Cameron ordered his sick and starving battalion forward again to Isurava. They held there for three more days as the tropical environment reduced the capability of both sides to achieve a decisive result. Numbers were not critical; land operations were reduced to limited tactical manoeuvre and close combat. The environment and consequent sickness were the levelers. The Australians had the advantage of withdrawing back onto their source of supplies while the Japanese were advancing away from theirs. Offensive action along the Kokoda Track, and at Milne Bay and on the island of Guadalcanal split and complicated the Japanese campaign.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Victor Austin wrote in *To Kokoda*, 'The movement of a battalion and ancillary units into the Owen Stanleys posed an instant supply problem for which our army was quite unprepared. With roadless mountains and no transport aircraft (in any case there were no dropping grounds, even if there had have been aircraft), a native carrier line had to be organised.' p. 80. See also McCarthy, *Australia in the War*, pp. 117-18 and pp. 131-32.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

⁷⁹ David Horner, 'Defending Australia in 1942', p. 13.

⁸⁰ Victor Austin, *To Kokoda*, p. 161. Austin points out that, 'Plentiful supplies from Rabaul had been got to his [Major General T. Horii's] Papuan beachhead.'

Australian logistic support was amateurish despite having over three months to plan and pre-position stocks since the War Cabinet called for 'every effort to be made'. The resupply chain that had failed 39th Battalion at Kokoda and Isurava now failed 21st Brigade. 'In short, the logistic planning and fulfilling of 21st Brigade's supply needs was a shambles.'⁸¹ Using an internal investigation report, Peter Brune identifies that, despite months of stockpiling in Port Moresby and the establishment of a series of supply points along the Track using native carriers, there were no 'army-trained supply personnel in the villages' and insufficient supplies had been pre-positioned anyway.⁸² Australian logisticians did not rehearse resupply by air.⁸³ A combination of inexperienced pilots, poor communications and incompetent army supply staff failed to get supplies to the right place at the right time in the right condition, though the drop zone selected once the campaign began - two dry lakes at a place nicknamed 'Myola' - were obvious features from the air. Brune concluded that, 'The case of the 'missing supplies' will forever remain a mystery – a shameful mystery.'⁸⁴

Fortunately, the Japanese were not able to deploy sufficient numbers at decisive points to overrun the Australians who had become adept at close combat, ambush and quick tactical withdrawals. Tropical diseases and dysentery reduced Japanese numbers steadily. Out-numbered Australian forces traded space for time after another Japanese push began on 26 August and continued into early September. Each fight and withdrawal wore the Australians down. Their American commander, General MacArthur, unaware of the conditions they were fighting under and the effect of inadequate logistics support, became impatient for counter-attack and criticised the performance of Australian troops.⁸⁵

Brigadier K.W. Eather arrived at the rear of Maroubra Force at Ioribaiwa with 25th Brigade on 14 September 1942. He had orders to attack and drive the Japanese back immediately. According to Steve Eather, his biographer, 'Eather commanded the last body of reliable and well-trained troops in a position to hold the Japanese advance.'⁸⁶ However, despite the five months in Australia, 25th Brigade began the

⁸¹ Peter Brune, *Those Ragged Bloody Heroes: From the Kokoda Trail to Gona Beach 1942*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991, p. 92. Victor Austin, *To Kokoda*, p. 144

⁸² Brune, *Those Ragged Bloody Heroes*, pp. 90-94.

⁸³ Horner, *Crisis of Command*, pp. 128-31. McCarthy, *Australia in the War*, pp. 197-98.

⁸⁴ Peter Brune, *Those Ragged Bloody Heroes*, p. 93.

⁸⁵ Horner, 'Defending Australia in 1942', p. 14. Also Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 145.

⁸⁶ Steve Eather, *Desert Sands, Jungle Lands: A biography of Major Ken Eather, CB, CBE, DSO, DSC*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2003, p. 63.

approach march to Isurava without sufficient jungle training, reconnaissance, maps or intelligence.⁸⁷ Eather pushed his unacclimatised and disoriented troops forward, but they were counterattacked and their positions infiltrated and outflanked. He decided to withdraw to better tactical ground for defence at Imita Ridge, 42 kilometres from Port Moresby. He wanted to consolidate his brigade and the worn-out Maroubra Force, within range of artillery support, before attempting further offensive operations. Eather's prudent withdrawal stretched the Japanese supply lines further. The Japanese high command ordered a withdrawal. Events elsewhere in the South Pacific, the delay imposed by the Australians in a demanding tropical environment and Japanese supply problems finally decided the outcome of the Kokoda campaign; not a final test of Japanese and Australian force projection in a battle at Imita Ridge.⁸⁸ The fighting on the Kokoda Track in August-September 1942 was a tactical tipping point that went in favour of Australia.

Following historical precedents, Australia demobilised rapidly at the end of World War II. However, in a departure from the past, several demobilising divisions provided volunteers for a regular infantry brigade that would constitute the main land force element in an Interim Army. The Government decided to retain regular troops for the occupation of Japan as well as reconstitute maritime and air capabilities. The coming Cold War would determine generic force preparation thereafter.

Observations

World War II, in general, and 1942, in particular, proved to be important periods for the development of Australia's strategic thinking and proficiency in force projection. Initially, Australians underwrote alliance and trade relationships, as well as racial and cultural loyalties, by projecting force to international theatres to assist Britain. After warning of a Japanese southern thrust, the Australian Government decided to pre-position forces in the national hinterland as well as in the northern archipelago. After the Japanese defeated forces that had been pre-positioned in Malaya and islands in the north, the Government decided to defend sea, air and land approaches to the homeland around New Guinea. For the first time, Australia projected force nationally to Darwin and regionally to New Guinea without substantial allied assistance. These World War

⁸⁷ The brigade had trained to fight the Japanese using out-dated tactics and techniques from the Malayan campaign and did not train under tropical conditions. *Ibid*, p. 55.

⁸⁸ Horner, 'Defending Australia in 1942', pp. 14-5.

II experiences confirmed that Australians expected their armed forces to be proficient in national, regional and international force projection.

Australia reached a significant tactical tipping point in August and September 1942. Good luck, rather than prompt, strong and smart force projection, helped Australian forces to prevail. Serendipity came in the form of coincidental Allied maritime victories in the Coral Sea and Midway, the *Lexington* raid and a US Marine landing in Guadalcanal, as well as the Japanese deciding to conduct three major operations simultaneously in mid 1942. These circumstances allowed Australia to reinforce Port Moresby in time to counter a Japanese advance along the Kokoda Track and lodgment at Milne Bay. Fortuitously, over-stretched Japanese lines of supply and difficult tropical climate and terrain assisted Australian forces further. However, lack of proficiency in the functions of force projection put unnecessary pressure on the tactical level of command and increased risk. The Australian Government ended up depending on fortuity and junior leaders and small teams displaying courage and tenacity at the right places, and at the right time, under the leadership of several exceptional unit and sub-unit commanders, to spare the nation from further strategic embarrassment.

Projections until Australia's Participation in the Vietnam War

During the 20 years after the end of World War II, until the Australian Government deployed a battalion group to Vietnam in 1965, Australia was a consistent participant in British military emergencies in Asia. Australia began by participating in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan where strategic circumstances were not urgent, the scale was not large, and the mission was to establish a deterrent presence in a benign environment.⁸⁹ Australia committed maritime, air and land force elements to the Korean War immediately when the strategic circumstances were more urgent, and the Americans were in the lead, supported by Britain.⁹⁰ However, the scale of Australia's contribution was not large. Unlike previous Australian responses to international military emergencies, there was no major voluntary enlistment. However, like earlier projections, British and American armed forces fostered Australian forces for the duration of the Korean War. Initially, Australian land forces were 'under strength, under equipped and collectively poorly

⁸⁹ Major General R.N.L. Hopkins, 'History of the Australian Occupation in Japan 1946-50', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, vol. XL. Part II, 1954, pp. 93-116.

prepared for war' and had to rely on a small voluntary enlistment program and reinforcement from the army.⁹¹ This injection of troops was successful.⁹² Australian infantry battalions acquitted themselves well on both offensive and defensive operations.⁹³ Though the Government did not amend the Defence Act in order to employ forces beyond Commonwealth territory, it did introduce the National Service Act 1951 to increase the numbers of men under arms in the Citizen Military Forces. In addition, the Government made provision for all enlistees into the Australian Regular Army and the Citizen Military Forces to sign an undertaking that they would serve anywhere.⁹⁴

Australia's contributions to the British military emergencies in Malaya, and later Malaysia, were further examples of measured and successful responses to the needs of a major ally.⁹⁵ For the Australian Government at the time, the strategic engagement of Britain and the United States in the region was critical because Chinese-inspired communism was on the march in South East Asia.⁹⁶ Australia, after an initial deployment of air force units in 1950, committed naval vessels and army units to a British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve (BCFESR) marking the end of an Australian defence posture to project force automatically to the Middle East in the event of a major war.⁹⁷ Like 1942, Australia's forward operating bases for defence against an

⁹⁰ See Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume I, Strategy and Diplomacy*, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981.

⁹¹ Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume II, Combat Operations*, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1985, Chapter 1, The Australian Army Enters the War.

⁹² Bob Breen, *The Battle of Kapyong: 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment in Korea 25-24 April 1951*, Training Command, Sydney, 1992, pp. 4-6.

⁹³ See O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume II*, Breen *The Battle of Kapyong ...* and Bob Breen, *The Battle of Maryang San, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment in Korea 1-6 October 1951*, Training Command, Sydney, 1993.

⁹⁴ Major G.C. Sligo, 'The Development of the Australian Regular Army, 1944-1952', in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), *The Second Fifty Years, The Australian Army 1947-1997*, Proceedings of the Chief of Army's History Conference held at the Australian Defence Force Academy, 23 September 1997, School of History, University College, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, p. 45.

⁹⁵ Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation: Australian Military Operations in Malaya and Borneo 1950-1966*, The Official History of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975, Allen and Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1996. Peter Dennis gives a summary of the origins of the Malayan Emergency and British responses to it in Chapter 1, The Emergency.

⁹⁶ Peter Edwards, (with Gregory Pemberton), *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*, *The official history of Australia's involvement in South East Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, Allen and Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1992, pp. 30, 41, 64, 167 and 169.

⁹⁷ Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, pp. 162-63. Edwards cites an Australian strategic assessment in 1952 as mentioning the idea of a strategic reserve. According to Robert O'Neill in *Australia in the*

anticipated southern drive from northern Asia - this time from China - would be peninsular Malaya and Singapore. Also like 1942, the army deployed a hastily reinforced infantry force that was in a 'parlous state' and 'did not reach its establishment [full strength] until just before leaving Australia'.⁹⁸ The battalion was also under-trained for counter-insurgency warfare in Malaya.⁹⁹ Following battalions fared better.¹⁰⁰

By 1956, the army was proposing that the Government divert resources from its national service scheme into establishing a permanent 'mobile, hard-hitting and air portable' brigade group, including armour, that would be maintained on high level of preparedness and readiness to move off shore.¹⁰¹ Mindful of the spread of communist-inspired nationalism in South East Asia, the Australian Cabinet decided to give 'absolute priority' to building up, equipping, and maintaining a regular brigade group.¹⁰² Ian McNeill, an official historian, wrote that, 'For the first time in peace, precedence would be given to the maintenance of a well-equipped, highly trained self-contained force for rapid deployment overseas.'¹⁰³ However, the Government only allocated funds for 1st Infantry Brigade Group to have two battalions. 'Little provision had been made for logistic support because planners assumed that this would be provided by Australia's allies.'¹⁰⁴

The creation of the 1st Infantry Brigade Group in 1957 heralded a new phase of land force readiness. The army began a three-year training cycle that included two months of collective training each year. In May 1959, a brigade group of 4 000 troops assembled in sub-tropical Mackay, Queensland, for Exercise *Grand Slam* in what McNeill described as 'the Army's biggest peacetime military manoeuvre'. The scenario was a limited war with a guerilla threat in Southeast Asia. 'The foundations had been

Korean War 1950-53, Volume I, a strategic reserve had been discussed by the ANZAM Defence Committee as early as 1952, p. 287. For assessment about the Middle East see Dennis and Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 90.

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 133.

¹⁰¹ Ian McNeill, *To Long Tan: The Australian Army and the Vietnam War 1950-1966, The Official History of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, Allen and Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 1993, p. 8.

¹⁰² Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

laid for a force which could react promptly to calls to fight in Southeast Asia alongside Australia's allies.'¹⁰⁵

On 25 September 1963, a few days after the inauguration of a federation of former British colonies - Malaya, Sarawak and Sabah - called Malaysia, Prime Minister Menzies announced that Australia would defend 'Malaysia's territorial integrity and political independence' from 'armed invasion or subversive activity' in concert with British and Malaysian armed forces.¹⁰⁶ Near neighbours, Indonesia and the Philippines opposed the formation of Malaysia. Unlike the Philippines Government, the Indonesian Government's policy was to 'crush' what President Sukarno declared would be a neo-colonial front for continuing British influence in the region.¹⁰⁷ Thus, the Indonesian Government initiated a period of 'low intensity warfare', called *Konfrontasi*, under Indonesian military command against Malaysia.¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, 'the longstanding American position, [was] that the defence of Malaysia was a matter primarily for the United Kingdom, secondarily for Australia and New Zealand, and only in the last resort for the United States.'¹⁰⁹

After a steady escalation of *Konfrontasi*, British and Malaysian forces were 'progressively becoming overstretched'.¹¹⁰ The Australian Cabinet decided on 3 February 1965 to deploy 3 RAR from the BCFESR, and a 100-strong squadron of the Special Air Service (SAS) from Western Australia, to Borneo to relieve British equivalents. Fortunately, Australia had not acceded to British requests for assistance when 3 RAR had first arrived in Malaysia on rotation in late 1963. There was evidence once again that the army's preparatory arrangements were inadequate.¹¹¹ Notably, higher command did not inform 3 RAR immediately after the Government's decision in

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Initially, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, hoped for a federation that would include Singapore and the Sultanate of Brunei. Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, p. 255 and 269.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 257.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, pp. 171-72. 'On 3 May 1964 President Sukarno announced the creation of the 'People's Double Command' (Dwi Komando Rakyat or DWIKORA), intended to fulfil the dual functions of intensifying the revolution and crushing Malaysia ... a gesture of entirely propagandistic intent ... Of greater military significance, on 2 June he announced the formation of Alert Command (Komando Siaga or KOGA), which was to coordinate the operations against Malaysia.' Dennis and Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 280-81.

¹¹⁰ Dennis and Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation*, p. 192.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 222.

February to deploy it to Borneo in March to relieve a Gurkha battalion in Sarawak. The battalion embarked after four weeks preparation and a short reconnaissance.¹¹²

Indonesia ended *Konfrontasi* on 11 August 1966. This was more to do with internal political events in Indonesia than the result of successful British operations in Borneo. Australian troops had performed well. In addition, Australian Special Forces came of age in a campaign that honed their capability for covert patrolling and reconnaissance operations.¹¹³

Observations

There were improvements in land force projection, especially force rotation, in the 1950s and early 1960s. The Australian Government responded to a perceived threat from Chinese-inspired communism by projecting small regular forces to participate in a US-led UN campaign in Korea and a British campaign in Malaya, and then Malaysia, to symbolise Australian resolve. However, there were persistent weaknesses in specific force preparation, deployment and sustainment of the first units to deploy. Land force elements had to improvise and depend on fortuitous circumstances, such as being given time after arrival and the good will of allies, to make up for these deficiencies before being committed to combat operations.

Australia expected allies to be the forward line of Australian homeland defence and to supplement the functions of force projection despite the experience of having to defend New Guinea in 1942 without substantial allied assistance. Little was done to develop autonomous logistic and higher-level communications capabilities, or to exercise joint command to enable independent projections like the AN and MEF projection in 1914. The Australian Government did not appear to expect self-reliant Australian joint force operations while British and American allies maintained a strong presence in South East Asia.

Indeed, Australia was still projecting land force elements as it had in 1885, 1900, 1914, 1940 and 1942. Light infantry battalions supported by field artillery were the core. The change for the Cold War was that land forces were not comprised of rallying volunteers already possessing many of the skills and attributes of soldiers. A

¹¹² David Horner, (ed.), *Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990, p. 160.

¹¹³ See David Horner, *SAS: Phantoms of War, A History of Australian Special Air Service*; updated edition, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002.

relatively small group of officers and men, who spent years in regimental service, maintained Australia's capability and capacity for land force projection.

The projections of the first 20 years after World War II confirmed that the Australian people expected their armed forces to operate in the archipelago and beyond to protect Australian interests and bolster alliance relationships. However, the British were about to withdraw east of the Suez. As a result, British grand strategy, cultural and racial ties, historical obligations or mutual self-interest would not necessarily prompt Australian military action as these factors had in the past. Australians would have to depend solely on American military power in South East Asia. This historic parting of the ways from the mother country was symbolised by the divergence of British and Australian policies over supporting the United States in Vietnam.

Projection to Vietnam 1965

The US decided in 1965 to escalate its military efforts in Vietnam and sought allies to participate. On 13 April of that year, the Menzies Government offered an infantry battalion group to support this escalation and announced acceptance of this offer to the United States as a request from the South Vietnamese Government on 29 April.¹¹⁴ Prime Minister Menzies promised rapid deployment. In a manner similar to 1950, his government left little time for preparation. What lay ahead was potentially more of a military contest with a higher operational tempo than was being experienced by Australian troops on patrol in peninsular Malaysia or in Sarawak and Borneo, under British command. After considering several options, the Government decided to deploy an *ad hoc* 1 RAR group to Bien Hoa Airbase in Vietnam to serve as the third manoeuvre battalion of the newly arrived US 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate).¹¹⁵

Like 1942 for New Guinea, 1950 for Korea and 1955 for peninsular Malaya, the army's readiness for rapid deployment was found wanting. Ian McNeill observed that 1 RAR 'was the unit at the most advanced state of operational readiness on the mainland and received first priority in manpower, equipment and training resources. ... and that 1

¹¹⁴ Edwards, *Crises and Commitments*, Chapter 18. Also Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987, pp. 286-87.

¹¹⁵ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 69-70. McNeill describes a reconnaissance to Vietnam by Brigadier K. Mackay, Director of Military Operations and Plans, in early May that informed the decision. Bob Breen, *First to Fight: Australian Diggers, NZ Kiwis and US Paratroopers in Vietnam 1965-66*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1988, p.10.

RAR had reached a high state of proficiency in counter insurgency training.¹¹⁶ In reality, 1 RAR was a newly reorganised, poorly equipped and collectively under-trained battalion despite its readiness status of having to deploy - after 21 days notice - to South East Asia in support of contingencies related to SEATO obligations (Plan Ambrose).¹¹⁷ The battalion was also under-strength and had scores of personnel who were medically unfit for overseas service.¹¹⁸ 'Manpower turbulence' ... 'was the biggest single problem' ... 'with men being changed over until the day before departure'.¹¹⁹ Almost all of the command appointments turned over in January and 1 RAR was completely reorganised in March. Eight of 12 rifle platoon commanders were inexperienced recent graduates.¹²⁰

1 RAR had not trained in combined arms tactics, employing armour, air mobility and combat engineers, or artillery and close air support.¹²¹ The battalion had not conducted any live firing range practices of its sections, platoons or sub-units, or employed artillery fire or close air support in the past 12 months. Blank ammunition was in such short supply that machine gunners had to simulate firing their weapons by operating wooden World War I gas warning clackers during training in infantry minor tactics.¹²² Some weapons, communications equipment and personal clothing and equipment were obsolete.¹²³ The 1st Australian Division in 1914 and 6th Australian Division in 1940 were better armed and equipped by the standards of their times than 1 RAR was in 1965.

Higher levels of command did not give CO 1 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel I.R. Brumfield, and his senior command group the opportunity to conduct a reconnaissance in South Vietnam or to liaise with the 173rd Airborne Brigade.¹²⁴ Administrative staff in 1 RAR found army logistic and other base support units and agencies to be unresponsive and inflexible.¹²⁵ There was no live firing of weapons or employment of artillery and close air support prior to embarkation, despite daily evidence in the media

¹¹⁶ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 73.

¹¹⁷ Bob Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force - First Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment in 1965', *Defence Force Journal*, No 60, September/October 1986.

¹¹⁸ Breen, *First to Fight*, pp. 14-16.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 76-77.

¹²⁰ 1 RAR Officer Manning List, 30 May 1965. Copy held by author.

¹²¹ Breen, *First to Fight*, pp. 78-79.

¹²² *Ibid*, p. 16.

¹²³ Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force'.

¹²⁴ J. Essex Clark, Interviews with author, 22 December 1984 and 26 January 1986.

of the use of artillery and air support. 1 RAR was a 'patrol-focused' group of infantrymen, trained for low-level counter-insurgency operations, not for what lay ahead in Vietnam.

The 1 RAR group arrived in Vietnam on time, but not in good order. Unloading was haphazard. Vietnamese contractors stole tonnes of stocks at the port or in transit to Bien Hoa Airbase.¹²⁶ Reception arrangements were inadequate. Unlike their forebears in World War I and World War II, who had time to train and equip, their American commander, Brigadier General E. Williamson, ordered the 1 RAR group to begin operations within 48 hours of arrival in Vietnam.¹²⁷ The Australians disappointed him by insisting on three weeks specific force preparation and then operating in a manner Williamson later described as 'pussy footing'.¹²⁸ After some earnest but largely fraternal negotiation, he allowed the Australians to employ their own tactics and techniques. The Australians rarely gave the Viet Cong the initiative to decide on time and place for battle. Equally, they rarely achieved the initiative themselves, despite stealthy movement and competent field craft. As a result, the Australians inflicted and received few casualties.

Colonel O.D. Jackson, Commander Australian Army Force – Vietnam and 1 RAR's national commander, supported Brumfield's cautious tactical approach. He could veto dangerous missions outside Bien Hoa airbase. Interestingly, communications from Australia did not facilitate the exercise of operational or strategic direction of Australia's high profile and politically sensitive involvement in the US escalation in Vietnam. 'The network between Canberra, Melbourne and Saigon had been established on a shoestring in both manpower and equipment.'¹²⁹ For the first three weeks after the 1 RAR group main body arrived in Vietnam, communication to Australia was by Morse Code. Though new equipment was installed later, communications were 'precarious' until November 1965 - six months after deployment.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Breen, *First to Fight*, p. 13.

¹²⁶ A.V. Preece, Interview with author, 22 December 1984.

¹²⁷ E.W. Williamson, Interview with author, 29 April 1986.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 133-35

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Like their 3 RAR forebears in Korea, the Australians became beggars, traders and thieves to overcome logistic deficiencies.¹³¹ In addition to stock losses soon after arrival, the 1 RAR group lacked construction materials and engineer support to develop their base - or financial authority to purchase these materials - and were deficient in other stores.¹³² The Australian supply chain was unresponsive.¹³³ Mail and urgently needed spare parts did not arrive for several months: no weekly fast steamers to bring letters as had been the case for the projection to the Sudan in 1885. Fortunately, the Americans were in a position to be generous and helpful in Bien Hoa, a major air point of entry into Vietnam. The Americans issued 1 RAR with new US-made Armalite automatic rifles, new tactical radio equipment as well as light anti-armour weapons, M 26 grenades and Claymore anti-personnel mines.¹³⁴

Observations

The Australian force elements deployed to Vietnam in 1965 were a welcome accompaniment to American operations and represented another allied flag. They were not substantial contributors to achieving the American tactical mission at the time, which was to kill, wound and disrupt as many Viet Cong as possible, and destroy their headquarters and logistics support infrastructure.¹³⁵ The Americans allowed time for the Australians to settle in and to conduct three weeks training, as well as making up their shortfalls in weapons, equipment, radio communications, other stocks and construction materials, and then sustaining them thereafter. Importantly, the Americans allowed the Australians to operate using cautious tactics and techniques. However, the 1 RAR group was a 'group' in name only and had not trained for combined arms operations.¹³⁶ The cohesion and proficiency of the 1 RAR group was more to do with the familiarity of members with each other through sustained regimental service and sound tactical level leadership at company, platoon and section level, than well-designed and executed generic or specific force preparation.¹³⁷

Second Projection to Vietnam 1966

¹³¹ Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force', p. 33.

¹³² Preece, Interview. Also Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force', p. 33.

¹³³ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 91.

¹³⁴ Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force', p. 33.

¹³⁵ Williamson, Interview. McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 172.

¹³⁶ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 76.

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 174.

In August 1965, the Australian Government deferred consideration of deploying an additional battalion group or a two-battalion independent task force to Vietnam, awaiting further strategic developments.¹³⁸ The army was over-stretched. With one of three regular battalions already operating in Malaysia, Australia was only capable of deploying and sustaining another infantry battalion offshore in 1965.¹³⁹ The army was maintaining 100 officers and warrant officers in Vietnam training South Vietnamese forces and supporting an increase in the strength of the Pacific Islands Regiment from 1 200 to 2000 personnel. The Government had also stepped up surveillance of PNG and northern areas of Australia during *Konfrontasi*. The army was also reorganising 'from pentropic to tropical warfare establishments' and training several thousand national servicemen.¹⁴⁰

The introduction of the National Service Act on 24 November 1964 was controversial because of the intention for Australian troops to serve overseas. Though the initial purpose was to increase the number of men under arms as a precaution in case there was an escalation of *Konfrontasi*, the Government's intention to employ national servicemen in Vietnam became obvious. The Government amended the Defence Act 1903 by Act No. 92 of 1964 to enable members of the army to serve outside Australian territory. Therefore, the Government not only exercised its legislative powers to call up eligible men for military service under the National Service Act but could also compel them to serve overseas.¹⁴¹ The Government's promises in the late 1950s of 'absolute priority to build up, equip, and maintain a regular brigade group and a 3000-strong logistics support force capable of rapid deployment' had not come to fruition. Conscription would underwrite the build-up in Vietnam. The first intakes of 20 year-

¹³⁸ Ibid, p. 181.

¹³⁹ Ibid, pp. 174 and 178.

¹⁴⁰ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper 'Lessons Learnt from Operation Hardihood: The Deployment of the First Australian Task Force to South Vietnam in 1966', Annex B, undated, p. 4. This paper appears to be an annex to a parent document that focused on logistics aspects of the deployment of 1 ATF. Probably written in 1971 for a CGS Exercise as part of a presentation by Major General G.F.T. Richardson CBE, Quartermaster General, 'Logistics Aspects of Operation Hardihood', AWM 101, item [10]. Copy held by author. Quoted in McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 203. See also Horner, *Duty First*, pp. 132-47 for information on reorganisation.

¹⁴⁰ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ 'Except as provided by the National Service Act 1951 the Defence Force shall be raised and kept by voluntary enlistment only'. Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903-1953, Section 35, p. 19. 'Members of the Army may be required to serve either within or beyond the territorial limits of Australia.' Defence Act 1903 Section 50C Territorial limits of service of Army, Commonwealth of Australia, Defence Act 1903, Act No. 20 of 1903 as amended taking into account amendments up to Act No. 142 of 2005, 16 December 2005, p. 13.

olds would not be available to reinforce units deploying to Vietnam until September 1965; another intake would follow in January 1966.

The Government imposed a ban on planning that 'virtually assured an unsatisfactory development of the [deployment] plan'.¹⁴² An internal army report mused that, 'embarrassing rumours and press speculation' before the deployment of 1 RAR [in 1965] had created an 'unusual' and sensitive political environment.¹⁴³ There had also been a leak of information before the announcement of the reinforcement of the 1 RAR group on 18 August 1965.¹⁴⁴ This resulted in 'Stringent political insistence that only a very restricted number of senior Service officers should know of Government intentions'.¹⁴⁵ The Government was also awaiting results of a British review of their military commitments in South East Asia. If the British called for more Australian troops to deploy to Malaysia after withdrawing some of their own forces, the Australian build up in Vietnam would be problematic.¹⁴⁶ The army did not authorise 5 RAR, the only battalion available at the time to rotate with 1 RAR in mid 1966, to prepare for overseas deployment.¹⁴⁷ In the meantime, the Government imposed strict secrecy on the possibility of deploying a second battalion to Vietnam.¹⁴⁸

Prime Minister Harold Holt announced an increase in Australia's contribution to the American campaign in Vietnam from 1200 to an independent task force of 4 500 personnel on 8 March 1966, and nominated 6 June as the deployment date for the main body of troops. The army had less than three months to prepare a two-battalion task force with its headquarters and supporting logistic elements (HQ 1 Australian Task Force (1 ATF), HQ 1st Australian Force -Vietnam (HQ 1 AFV) and Australian Logistics Support Force (ALSF)). This had to be achieved below a numbers cap of 4 500. Army headquarters staff had offered this figure for use in Cabinet submissions without

¹⁴² McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 181. McNeill explains the reasons for the ban. For consequences, see Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 21.

¹⁴³ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 3.

¹⁴⁴ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 181.

¹⁴⁵ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 187-88. See also Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way*, pp.322-23.

¹⁴⁷ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 198.

¹⁴⁸ McNeill explains origins of secrecy and its impact on planning, *Ibid*, pp. 181-82. Also Iain McLean Williams, *Vietnam: A Pictorial History of the 6th Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment*, Printcraft Press, Brookvale, New South Wales, 1967, p. 31. 6 RAR was raised on 6 June 1965 just after 1 RAR deployed to Vietnam. CO 6 RAR was told to prepare the battalion for service in Vietnam, but was not told that the battalion would actually deploy until March 1966, after the Government announcement. 6 RAR left six weeks later.

analysis of possible military roles and tasks in Vietnam.¹⁴⁹ During the following busy three months, the seeds were sown for 'consequential difficulties' that were 'to cause many problems when the task force deployed to Vietnam.'¹⁵⁰

Even after the Prime Ministerial announcement, Army Headquarters 'still had to operate on a strict "need to know" basis on points of detail'. Consequently, the warning order for deployment issued to the army for Operation *Hardihood* was 'highly classified.'¹⁵¹ To the army's credit, a reconnaissance party, led by the CGS, Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton, and comprised of senior staff and representatives from key corps, including engineers and ordnance, left for Vietnam within a week of the Prime Minister's announcement. To the army's discredit, planners 'strictly limited' tactical reconnaissance by representatives from deploying force elements.¹⁵²

Without tactical level reconnaissance and recent institutional experience, the army found it difficult to step up to preparing and deploying an all-arms formation after years of only preparing light infantry battalion groups sequentially. Army Headquarters instructions did not specify arrangements for force preparation, in general, or combined arms training, in particular. Each unit and sub-unit had conducted its own preparation. There was a culminating field exercise at Shoalwater Bay, located in Queensland, for the infantry battalions, but no training with assigned, armour, artillery and engineer sub-units.

According to a later report, the army disobeyed 'certain fundamental principles of logistic planning' and did not synchronise the efforts of operations, logistic and financial staff.¹⁵³ The allocation of 937 support troops within the numbers cap of 4 500 troops was inadequate. Lieutenant Colonel D.L. Rouse, designated chief of staff of ALSF, was unable to recruit or retain experienced logisticians in Australia. His headquarters staff was not finalised until 14 days before departure.¹⁵⁴ McNeill observed that,

¹⁴⁹ Staff calculated in February 1966 that a 'balanced' task force would require 4 100 troops. McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 188. However, McNeill points out that the army produced a task force organisation without 'detailed reconnaissance', 'consultation with the Americans' or 'wider consultation' within the army, p. 191.

¹⁵⁰ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 7. For description of this period see McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 184 and 191.

¹⁵¹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 6.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, p. 8.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, pp. 11-2.

¹⁵⁴ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 203.

The logistic force was a scratch organization hastily put together before the task force departed. ... The total strength and make up of the logistics organisation to support the task force was decided on before appropriate staff could be consulted because of the embargo on planning and imposition of secrecy before deployment.¹⁵⁵

Australian logistic planning staff appeared to assume US support, despite evidence that the Americans were facing their own challenges supporting the influx of their troops and matériel.¹⁵⁶ There was no tactical level logistic reconnaissance. Units began moving before 'the mission of the task force had been settled' in order to meet a 30 June deadline for commencement of operations.¹⁵⁷ Army Headquarters staff planned for deployment of 350 vehicles and 2 500 tonnes of stores. By the time the task force arrived, 700 vehicles, including 300 trailers, and over 6 000 tonnes of stores had been loaded and delivered in a haphazard manner that resulted in:

the separation of personnel from their equipment and stores, and delays in the arrival of urgent depot and theatre stocks.' An 'unexpectedly large and congested tonnage of stores' ended up in a 'movement transit shed' in the port of Vung Tau, unmarked and unclaimed, and yet to be unpacked and receipted.¹⁵⁸

Availability of ships and aircraft determined the deployment schedule of the task force, not on operational or logistic priorities. Major General K. Mackay, the newly appointed Commander 1 AFV, concluded later that 'We [the army] were poor at logistics; we have always been poor at logistics'.¹⁵⁹ The most embarrassing consequence was 5 RAR arriving at the forward operating base in Nui Dat 'critically low in ammunition'; helicopters had to fly four tonnes in urgently.¹⁶⁰

Newly promoted Brigadier O.D. Jackson raised his headquarters incrementally in Vietnam after the Government's March announcement. Consequently, as 5 RAR and 6 RAR arrived and settled into a base at Nui Dat in Phuoc Tuy province in May and

¹⁵⁵ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, Chapter 9 'Preparing the task force March-May 1966' and Chapter 11 'Establishing the base', April-June 1966.

¹⁵⁶ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, p. 8

¹⁵⁷ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 193. Priority stocks were sent by sea on commercial vessels on 10 April, advance parties left by air on 19 April, personnel, vehicles, equipment and stocks left on HMAS *Sydney* on 22 April and the main body of 5 RAR left by air on 27 April and was complete in Vietnam by 13 May to relieve 1 RAR. On 25 May *Sydney* sailed for the second time from Sydney and MV *Boonaroo* sailed with vehicles and stores the next day. 6 RAR was complete in Vietnam on 11 June 1966 and 1 ATF was functioning on 23 June, less some vehicles and stores, Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, pp. 9-10.

¹⁵⁸ Australian Army, Contingency Planning paper, pp.16-7. McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 203 and 232-233.

¹⁵⁹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 203.

¹⁶⁰ Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, p. 267.

June 1966, Jackson and his headquarters, as well as his logistic support units, were also settling in. Jackson, who was also national commander of the 1 RAR group, a 100-strong army training team and a squadron of six air force Caribou transport aircraft at the same time, assumed command in Vietnam, not in Australia as his subordinate commanders prepared their forces. Thus, 1 ATF was not concentrated and trained as a formation, yet, 'it was expected to function independently in Vietnam in the most complex of operational environments. ... in the glare of publicity in an atmosphere where the Opposition was criticising both the commitment and the need for conscription'.¹⁶¹

Command and control arrangements were complex. Jackson had both an operational and national chain of command. For operations, he reported to the American headquarters of II Field Force – Vietnam (II FFV). Nationally, Major General Mackay and Mackay's staff at HQ AFV scrutinised all of Jackson's American operational orders. For his part, Mackay was responsible for overseeing national interests and matters of Australian administration. He was also the army component commander. He reported to the newly appointed CGS, Lieutenant General T.J. Daly, for single service matters, and to Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton, in his new role as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, for all other matters.

Having relied on allies for just over 80 years, there were many problems with the occupation, establishment and operation of Australian bases.¹⁶² The choice of Nui Dat as a forward operating base and Vung Tau, 30 kilometres away on the coast, as a logistic support base, created a number of challenges and had some negative repercussions. There was some debate at the time, and among historians later, about separating forward operating and logistic support bases.¹⁶³ Nui Dat offered a Korean War-like defensive position in the centre of the province astride a major route, away from population centres with their brothels and bars, as well as the prying eyes of enemy agents and saboteurs.¹⁶⁴ Jackson could launch operations from Nui Dat with a degree of surprise. However, the Australians displaced thousands of villagers to construct their base. Subsequently, they were obligated to defend it with 50 percent of

¹⁶¹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 206.

¹⁶² *Ibid*, Chapter 11.

¹⁶³ See Robert O'Neill, *Vietnam Task: The 5th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment*, Cassell, Melbourne, 1968, and Terry Burstall, *Vietnam: The Australian Dilemma*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1993, for differing views. Also McNeill, *To Long Tan*, for opinions of senior Australian and American officers, p. 199.

their combat forces.¹⁶⁵ Australian intelligence assessments stated that the key to success would be breaking the close relationship between the locals and the Viet Cong.¹⁶⁶ The Australian and American clearance of Vietnamese citizens unlucky enough to be located on the approaches to the Nui Dat base, probably left many locals angry.¹⁶⁷ Arguably, this outcome created an opportunity for the Viet Cong to mount attacks against the Australian base in secrecy.¹⁶⁸ There was no one to displace at Vung Tau - an inferior location in scrubby sand dunes - described by Lieutenant Colonel Rouse as 'disgusting'.¹⁶⁹

The under-strength ALSG struggled to 'establish itself and its defences ... organise the unloading of the ships and aircraft, and prepare for the issue of stores to the task force, all at the same time' among the arid sand dunes of Vung Tau.¹⁷⁰ Monsoonal rains inundated both Nui Dat and Vung Tau during deployment, leaving arriving troops in uncomfortable and wet tented accommodation as they conducted their first operations and adapted to the operational environment.¹⁷¹ Despite almost three months of preparation in Australia, Brigadier Jackson wrote in July 1966, that his force was suffering critical shortages of spare parts, machine guns for base defence and clothing. Consequently, nearly 50 percent of his APC fleet was unserviceable awaiting spare parts.¹⁷²

While difficulties with preparation, deployment and logistics increased risk, other risk factors became apparent during initial operations. One was armoured support. There were no tanks for firepower or shock action in defence or for attack. The army raised the additional APC troop for 1 ATF from a draft of national servicemen. The troop 'did not employ radios before deployment and did not train with infantry aboard'.¹⁷³ Its commander, Lieutenant A. Roberts, had two years experience as a tank troop commander before arriving in Vietnam. His troop officer was Second Lieutenant

¹⁶⁴ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 198.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 274.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 224.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 244-49, and for the village of Long Phuoc, pp. 252-55.

¹⁶⁸ Burstall, *Vietnam: The Australian Dilemma*, pp. 78-81. Burstall makes a compelling case that the resettlement of local Vietnamese caused sufficient resentment to conclude that there would not have been much reliable information flowing to Australian intelligence sections on locations and movements of Viet Cong force elements.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 231.

¹⁷⁰ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 232.

¹⁷¹ O'Neill, *Vietnam Task*, Chapter 3. McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 249.

¹⁷² Burstall, *Vietnam: The Australian Dilemma*, pp. 77-8.

I. Savage, a recent graduate from a six-month commissioning course. He had no experience with armour. The troop's vehicles had already been used for 12 months to support the 1 RAR group. Other APC came from Australia, and were relatively new. However, they lacked internal and external radio communications, or turret protection for the vehicle commander, who was exposed from the waist up. He could only communicate changes of direction, while on the move, by pulling on two strings attached to the driver's epaulettes, in a manner akin to using horse reins.¹⁷⁴ The lack of combined arms training in general, and the inexperience and inferior vehicle capabilities of 1 APC Squadron, in particular, increased risk as Australia approached another tactical tipping point.

Another risk was the arrangements for helicopter support. The newly raised No 9 Squadron was a 'poor cousin' in the air force and did not train with 5 RAR or 6 RAR before deployment.¹⁷⁵ After rushed preparation, the air force assigned the squadron in general support of 1 ATF. As a result, Jackson did not command helicopter support, despite the crucial role helicopters would play for tactical manoeuvre and aero-medical evacuation. The uncooperative attitude of senior air force officers complicated helicopter support arrangements further.¹⁷⁶ Jackson concluded that, 'the orders he gave [to No 9 Squadron] appeared to be taken as a basis for discussion. ... [and] that the Army and the Air Force were fundamentally dissimilar in their thinking, with the latter unable to recognise its primary role of providing support'.¹⁷⁷ Senior army and air force commanders and their headquarters staff squabbled constantly over operating protocols, while junior army commanders and helicopter pilots and crews bonded in the dangerous and mutually dependent environment of operations.¹⁷⁸

Australian insistence on operating independently in Phuc Tuy province created force protection responsibilities. Jackson had to construct adequate fixed defences as

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 331-33.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Alan Stephens in *The Royal Australian Air Force* opines that 'No. 9 Squadron was not ready for war when it arrived in Vietnam. Only two of the Iroquois were fitted with armoured seats, none had door gun mounts, and the air crew did not have upper-body protection', p. 265. He went on to point out that the air force had had 12 months warning to prepare for deployment to Vietnam and had been asked to make modifications to aircraft by the squadron's CO who had been to Vietnam in 1964. Air force directives severely restricted the employment of helicopters for positioning and extracting troops, pp. 263, 265-67. Also Alan Stephens, 'An Analysis of the Development of Doctrine in the Royal Australian Air Force 1921-1991', PhD Thesis, University College of the University of New South Wales, 1992, pp. 329-40.

¹⁷⁶ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, 'Army-RAAF co-operation', pp. 430-33.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 300.

¹⁷⁸ Stephens, *An Analysis*, pp. 329-40. Also McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 300.

well as put effective security arrangements in place. It would be a major military and political set back for the American and Australian build-up in Vietnam, if the Viet Cong attacked 1 ATF soon after arrival and caused significant casualties and damage. After arrival, Jackson and his battalion commanders, supported by artillery, armour and engineer sub unit commanders, conducted an aggressive, high-tempo patrolling program.

The Battle of Long Tan

By the last week of July 1966, 6 RAR was engaging well-trained and disciplined groups of Viet Cong in brief but fierce fire fights in and around the home base of the D445 Battalion near the village of Long Tan, located six kilometres east of the Nui Dat base.¹⁷⁹ However, no one expected a substantial attack on the base. Former inhabitants were gone. The base was fortified and the perimeter patrolled regularly, under the cover of artillery and on-call close air support.¹⁸⁰ Warning from intelligence staff of an imminent 'multi-regimental attack' in July was faulty.¹⁸¹ Patrols did not find enemy forces. The credibility of intelligence estimates suffered as a result. This false alarm set the conditions for future warnings of imminent attack to be treated sceptically - another risk factor.¹⁸² An unanswered question was; where were the Viet Cong's 274th and 275th Main Force regiments? Both were responsible for the defence of Phuoc Tuy Province. Given the amount of disruption the Australians were causing, a strong response was a case of 'when', not 'if'.¹⁸³

Risks were increasing for the Australians. Initial 30-day deployment stocks ran out exposing an Australian logistic system that failed to resupply many items in a timely manner.¹⁸⁴ Members of both battalions were tired after two months of patrolling by day and night, with no respite from base defence duties.¹⁸⁵ A roster of recreation leave had begun. The result was an absence of several platoons on leave during August that further stretched infantry resources and left gaps in capability.

¹⁷⁹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 276-81.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 288-89.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 288.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p. 290.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 284. McNeill opined that 'The fight had now been taken right to the enemy, bringing closer the time when he would be forced to react.' See McNeill's analysis of the conditions just before the battle of Long Tan, in 'The situation in mid-August', pp. 300-02.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 300.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 250 and 298. Also a quote from a soldier's diary, p. 299.

On 14 August, the 1 ATF electronic warfare officer, Captain T. Richards, reported that a radio used by the headquarters of 275th Regiment was located five kilometres east of the Nui Dat base near the village of Long Tan. He and an intelligence officer, Captain R. Keep, had been following this radio as it transmitted from locations closer to Nui Dat each day for over two weeks.¹⁸⁶ Keep was convinced that 275th Regiment was inbound and intent on attacking. Senior staff officers at HQ ATF disagreed with Keep and were skeptical of Richards' signals intelligence after earlier warnings of a 'multi-regimental attack'.¹⁸⁷

Richards and Keep were right this time about the location of 275th Regiment and its commander's intentions. Rather than meet the Australians in inconclusive firefights that often resulted in sustaining casualties from artillery and close air support, as well as small arms fire, the commander of 275th Regiment had decided to strike at the Australian base. He pre-positioned his regiment just outside field artillery range east of the base; the last location fixed by Richards from the regiment's radio transmissions.¹⁸⁸ The Viet Cong commander took the risk of deploying 82 mm mortars, a Japanese World War II vintage howitzer and a number of recoilless rifles, with their crews and stocks of ammunition, within range of the Nui Dat base on the night 16/17 August. The Australians did not discover this move despite their patrol program and intelligence collection plan, and American air superiority. In the early hours of 17 August, these weapons bombarded the Nui Dat base for 22 minutes, wounding twenty four Australians and damaging seven vehicles and 21 tents - an explosive calling card.¹⁸⁹

Jackson and his operations staff were not used to interpreting signals intelligence and were also wary of over-reaction in light of the false alarms in late July that had made them 'laughing stock' at HQ II Field Force when they had sought rapid reinforcement.¹⁹⁰ Jackson directed Lieutenant Colonel C.M. Townsend, CO 6 RAR, to send out company-sized patrols in search of the Viet Cong mortar men and gunners who had attacked the base. However, he did not mention the possible presence of 275th Regiment. He also did not order patrols to where Richards had assessed that the

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, pp. 310-11.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 309.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 310.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 305 and 311.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 289.

regimental headquarters radio was transmitting.¹⁹¹ All of the company commanders sent out on 17 August believed that they were hunting members of a heavy weapons platoon.

By 3 p.m. on 18 August, when D Company 6 RAR, numbering just over 100 men, relieved B Company in the field, there had been nothing to indicate the presence of a 1600-strong Main Force Viet Cong Regiment. Unbeknown to the Australians, 275th Regiment, reinforced by D445 Battalion to an estimated strength of 2000 troops, was about to begin an approach march to attack them - plans secure and their presence undiscovered. A few minutes after 4 p.m., D Company contacted the regimental group among the rubber trees of the Long Tan rubber plantation. Soon the whole company was fighting for their lives under the withering fire of an enemy battalion, punctuated with assaults from several directions by groups of Viet Cong trying to out flank and overrun them. The dispersal of the platoons made it difficult for the enemy to find D Company's flanks and roll them up. This spreading may have also led to the Viet Cong commander assessing that he was facing a larger Australian force.¹⁹²

Like most battles, the Australians were to have good and bad luck over the coming hours. Initially, the Australians made their own luck. Officers and men maintained their battle discipline, as had their forbears on the Kokoda Track. They did not break and run when faced by superior numbers of heavily armed troops.¹⁹³ Accurate and sustained artillery fire from the base also created an advantage. Good luck came in the form of a sudden monsoonal downpour. This rain obscured the Viet Cong's view of the Australians. Fortuity also came in the form of a slight depression in the ground where the Australians had gone to ground. From there, they were able to cause heavy casualties among the assaulting Viet Cong.¹⁹⁴ It was also fortunate that Major F. Crowe, Jackson's senior logistician, had insisted on increasing allocations of rounds per field gun from 100 to 300. He achieved this stocking level for the 18 guns of

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 312. McNeill comments that companies patrolled that day without rations or additional ammunition in the expectation of returning to base after a three-hour sweep and subsequently soldiers went on leave as planned when no enemy were sighted on 17 August or early on 18 August, p. 315.

¹⁹² Ibid, pp. 348-49.

¹⁹³ See McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 326, for an account of how the battle discipline of 11 Platoon, D Company originated in sound training and mateship.

¹⁹⁴ D Company was engaged inside artillery range of three Australian field batteries and an American medium battery on a direct west-to-east line to their opponents. Rounds coming overhead impacted very close to the forward line of Australians and 'splashed' forward. Fire was continuous from the start of the battle until its conclusion. Gunners 'had to handle the ammunition, load and fire the guns, in pitch black under torrents of rain.' McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 324

1 Field Regiment, RAA, the day before the battle, after 14 days of concerted personal persuasion. If he had not done so, the guns would have run out of ammunition half way through the battle.¹⁹⁵ Later, two helicopters from No 9 Squadron flew from Vung Tau and were able to descend through a temporary gap in the rain clouds for an accurate drop of boxes of ammunition, wrapped in blankets, to their beleaguered compatriots, who were down to their last 100 rounds before resupply.¹⁹⁶ Lieutenant D. Harris, the most junior officer in the headquarters, listened to descriptions of the uniforms worn by D Company's attackers on the radio and concluded immediately that they were engaging a Viet Cong Main Force regiment. He not only warned Jackson straight away, but also had the perspicacity to warn Major R. Hagerty, Officer Commanding 1 APC Squadron, to bring his standby troop on line to carry a response force.¹⁹⁷

There was also bad luck of the Australians' own making. Hagerty's standby troop, led by Lieutenant Roberts, was not at full strength. Six vehicles out of its complement of 13 APC were off-line awaiting repair parts or undergoing maintenance. Hagerty allocated three APC from another troop to make up the numbers in Roberts' troop to 10 vehicles. These three vehicles lacked any internal communications or turret protection. Roberts's vehicles had had turret protection, but their radio equipment was obsolete, and there was no internal radio communications with the infantry aboard.

It did not take Jackson or Townsend long to assess that the Viet Cong would overrun D Company, if they did not organise reinforcement quickly. However, it took just under sixty minutes for Roberts and his *ad hoc* troop to trundle into headquarters 6 RAR seeking guidance on what to do next. After receiving very sketchy orders, 'to convey A Company 6 RAR to join D Company and break up the attack', Roberts moved the troop to the A Company lines where he 'found the company in hectic activity'.¹⁹⁸ The company was not ready to deploy until 5 45 p.m. - one and a half hours after the battle had been joined. After another 15 minutes of confusion over the route through the task force's wire fortifications, the relief force cleared the task force area at 'approximately 6 p.m.'. Roberts had never worked with Captain C. Mollison, acting

¹⁹⁵ The author bases this prognosis on the fact that artillery fire was continuous for the battle and an average of 199 rounds were fired by each gun (See McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 324). Theoretically, if they fired at the same rate when they only had 100 rounds per gun, they would have run out of ammunition well before the battle was over.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 327.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 317.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 331.

OC of A Company, and Mollison had never worked with him. They argued several times during the journey to the battle site.

By 6 45 p.m., two and a half hours after the battle had been joined less than five kilometres east of the task force base, the men of D Company had regrouped into all-round defence with their wounded. The Viet Cong had them surrounded. If they were able to attack from several directions at once in the next 15 minutes, under the cover of late afternoon gloom and sheets of rain, they would split defensive artillery fire. In so doing, they might get sufficient attackers through the ring of Australians to kill or capture them.¹⁹⁹ By this time, Roberts's troop with A Company aboard was engaging elements of D445 Battalion located on the flank of 275th Regiment.

After a number of impromptu and uncoordinated APC movements, Townsend arrived and took command. He directed Roberts to assault with A Company aboard, firing rapidly from open hatches, into the flank of the main enemy force confronting D Company. Ten minutes later, the Viet Cong had had enough. They withdrew from the area carrying most of their dead and wounded. After a difficult period handling the Australian dead and wounded in the dark, Townsend's force moved by APC and on foot at 10 45 p.m. to a nearby landing zone – seven hours after some men had been seriously wounded. Leaving the dead and wounded of the forward platoon on the battlefield that night was a bitter ending to what Jackson and Townsend initially interpreted as a military disaster: one platoon destroyed and - by Australian standards - heavy casualties sustained by the remainder of the company with nothing to show. At Long Tan, the Australians replicated several of the battles fought by the 173rd Airborne Brigade in 1965 and the first half of 1966 where the application of artillery fire had saved paratroopers, who were out-numbered and fighting for their lives, from slaughter. The Americans had justified their sacrifices and claimed victory by reporting large body counts. It was now the Australians turn to do the same.

On the clear and bright morning of 19 August, Townsend returned to the battle site. The body count of 113 Viet Cong by 11 a.m. confirmed that, in the official historian's words, 'D Company had achieved a stunning victory'.²⁰⁰ By 6 10 p.m., the number of enemy dead counted reached 188 bodies. Drag marks, blood trails and the amount of abandoned weapons and equipment on the battlefield showed that there had been many more casualties. The most enduring results of the battle of Long Tan were

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 328-29.

enhanced force protection that appeared to deter the Viet Cong from any more surprise attacks on the task force base for the remaining years of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War. The Australians set up a fire support base forward of the task force to give additional artillery coverage. They strengthened physical defences, nominated and rehearsed ready reaction forces and reinforced the task force with a squadron of Centurion tanks. These measures were all after-thoughts prompted by a tactical tipping point that could have led to a military disaster, rather than the results of astute specific force preparation, reconnaissance, deployment and force protection.

Observations

The initial projections of the 1 RAR group in 1965 and of 1 ATF to Vietnam in 1966 exposed problems with force projection that echoed deficiencies evident in 1942, 1950 and 1955. The Americans assisted the 1 RAR group in 1965. However, they were not in a position to do so for 1 ATF in 1966. The seven-month planning embargo from August 1965 until March 1966 crippled tactical training and logistic preparations for 1 ATF and, according to McNeill, 'important matters were overlooked'.²⁰¹ These matters increased risk and put unnecessary pressure on those working at the tactical level of command. This accumulation of risk could have resulted in Australia losing a contest at Long Tan that would have had significant political and strategic consequences.

Australian operations in Vietnam continued for another six years. Aside from a two-battalion sized operation outside Phuoc Tuy province in 1968 that also almost ended in military disaster, operations involved a slow, inconclusive attrition of Viet Cong guerrilla units in Phuoc Tuy province.²⁰² The army became proficient in the mechanics of force rotation. Battalion groups shed their national servicemen on return from Vietnam and most regular personnel moved on to other appointments in the army. Concurrently, other battalion groups reconstituted and prepared for their next tours of duty.

The Post-Vietnam War Period 1972-1985

²⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 342.

²⁰¹ McNeill, *To Long Tan*, p. 191.

²⁰² See Ian McNeill and Ashley Ekins, *On the Offensive: The Australian Army in the Vietnam War 1967-1968. The Official History of Australia's involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1975*, Allen and Unwin in association with the Australian War Memorial, Sydney, 2003.

Australia's participation in the Vietnam War ended almost 100 years of involvement in British and American campaigns. Even before the end of this last campaign, Australia's forward defence posture had begun a transition to 'defence-in-depth' of the Australian mainland. The withdrawal of the British east of Suez, the end of the volatile Sukarno era in Indonesia, the Nixon Doctrine enunciated in Guam in 1969 and a relatively benign near region after the end of the Vietnam War contributed to a shift of Government policy away from regional and international force projection.²⁰³

The election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972 ended selective conscription and finalised Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam.²⁰⁴ Though it did not initiate the demise of the forward defence policy, the Whitlam Government confirmed its end and began a process of 'monumental change'.²⁰⁵ David Horner suggested that the Australian Government began a 'reorganisation [that] revolutionised the way Defence conducted its business'.²⁰⁶ Prime Minister E.G. Whitlam appointed his Deputy, L. Barnard, as his initial Minister for Defence. Barnard found Sir Arthur Tange, the Department's Secretary, to be a willing and forceful organisational reformer.²⁰⁷ Since his appointment in 1970, Tange had not been able to persuade Coalition Governments to approve changes that he and other senior public servants, as well as some senior military officers, considered overdue.²⁰⁸ After consolidating both past and contemporary views, and with an eye on arrangements in Britain and the United States, Tange presented his recommended changes, *Australian Defence: Report on the Reorganisation of the Defence Group of Departments* (the Tange Report), to

²⁰³ David Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Volume V, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, pp. 50-1.

²⁰⁴ The previous Gorton and McMahon Governments had begun withdrawing Australian troops in 1971. By November 1972, remaining troops numbered 128 and Defence planners had no role for them beyond November 1972. The Whitlam Government ended conscription on 5 December 1972. The Governor General assented to the National Service Termination Act 1973 No 88 on 21 June 1973. Copy held by author.

²⁰⁵ Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, p. 208.

²⁰⁶ Horner, *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 46.

²⁰⁷ Sir Arthur Tange became Permanent Secretary on 2 March 1970. He had been aware of defence issues for many years and sought to bring about reform to its structure and management. The Tange Reforms had their origins in recognition that the Defence Department was an amalgam of interests rather than an entity. Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, pp. 192-93

²⁰⁸ One of the most farsighted senior military officers to recognise the need for a unified, joint ADF was General Sir John Wilton. His role in beginning the reform process in the 1960s is described in a biography, David Horner, *Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia's Asian Wars*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2005, Chapters 17 and 20. Also Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, pp. 183-96

Barnard on 15 November 1973.²⁰⁹ His intentions were structural, strategic and economic.²¹⁰ The structural objectives were to integrate 'the various aspects of defence' by abolishing the three service departments with their separate ministers and bureaucracies. A diarchy, comprised of a Chief of the Defence Force Staff (CDFS) and the Secretary, would lead and manage a new consolidated department simultaneously. The report also recommended fresh strategic thinking, based more firmly on Australia's 'new world situation'.²¹¹

The Labor Government accepted the Tange Report. The major weakness of these reforms, from a military perspective, was that the CDFS did not have a headquarters or staff to orchestrate the functions of force projection with the three services.²¹² A Chief of Joint Operations and Plans did not have sufficient authority or staff to summon the three services for joint planning, or synchronise service capabilities on behalf of the CDFS. In effect, the CDFS had statutory authority, but not the means to exercise it.

The 1975 Strategic Basis Paper 'was explicit that there was no requirement for the maintenance of Australian military forces for conflict in South-East Asia' and that 'there were no military threats to Australia or the prospect of major assault'.²¹³ In 1976, a newly elected conservative Government issued a Defence White Paper, *Australian Defence* (AD76). It explained Australia's changed strategic circumstances and emphasised force projection into the 'neighbourhood' rather than to 'some distant or forward theatre'.²¹⁴ The ANZUS treaty partners began conducting the Kangaroo series of joint and combined exercises. David Horner described exercise scenarios during this period as 'a window into the nature of the threat that the ADF was preparing to counter'.²¹⁵ There were no scenarios based on offshore counter insurgency or expeditionary operations. Initial exercises in the 1970s simulated conventional operations that in some ways replicated Korean War scenarios of offensive and

²⁰⁹ Sir Arthur Tange, 'Australian Defence: Report on the Reorganisation of the Defence Group of Departments.' Presented to the Minister of Defence, November 1973, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1973.

²¹⁰ Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, p. 200.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid, p. 204.

²¹³ Ibid, p. 210.

²¹⁴ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, White Paper presented to Parliament by the Minister for Defence, the Hon. D.J. Killen, November 1976, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 10.

²¹⁵ Ibid, p. 67.

defensive operations on land, with accompanying close air support. The navy simulated battles like those fought in the Coral Sea in 1942 and the air force fought off notional encroachments of Australian airspace by hostile military aircraft and provided air cover for the navy. By the early 1980s, the army exercised to defend small incursions by hostile forces intent on sabotaging Australia's mining infrastructure in the north-west (*Kangaroo 83*) and the navy and air force simulated the protection of the northern sea and air approaches to the continent.

Small contingents left Australia in support of UN overseas operations. None were urgent, large scale or particularly dangerous. Similarly, force elements from each service operated offshore as tokens of support and demonstrations of resolve as part of Cold War surveillance operations.²¹⁶ Several hundred ADF personnel, mostly from the army, served in support of the PNG Defence Force after independence in 1975. The Government had wound this effort back by 1985.

The ADF was not 'a truly joint force' by 1985. It lacked joint doctrine and clearly enunciated and practised joint command arrangements.²¹⁷ However, this situation was about to change. The CDFS, General Sir Phillip Bennett, had begun to strengthen ADF joint command and control arrangements.²¹⁸ Bennett formed Headquarters ADF (HQ ADF) in September 1984 to give the military-strategic level of command capacity to direct the three services for joint and single service operations. The parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence tabled a supportive report, *The Australian Defence Force: its Structure and Capabilities*, in October 1984.²¹⁹ A year later, Bennett dropped the word 'Staff' from his title, leaving him with a more commanding designation of Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). He established a 2-star position for strategic level joint operations and plans, and another for military strategic policy and military inputs into force development.²²⁰ Later, he added a 3-star

²¹⁶ Operation Gateway (1980-1989) was Australia's contribution to Western surveillance during the last decade of Cold War. Long range P-3C Orion aircraft and navy vessels maintained surveillance operations in the Indian Ocean and Malacca Straits. Australian submarines conducted patrols as part of US Cold War deterrence and surveillance operations against Soviet submarines. The army maintained an infantry company group at Butterworth airbase in Malaysia to protect allied aircraft.

²¹⁷ Horner, *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 73.

²¹⁸ *Ibid* p. 62.

²¹⁹ Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, *The Australian Defence Force; its Structure and Capabilities*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, October 1984.

²²⁰ The terms 'one-star', 'two-star', 'three-star' and 'four-star' corresponded to joint positions that could be filled by equivalent ranks in the three services. For example, the term 'one-star' equated to the ranks of commodore (navy), brigadier (army) and air commodore (air force), and 'two-star' equated to vice admiral (navy), major general (army) and air vice-marshal (air force).

position of Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF), who was to act as a chief of staff at HQ ADF with responsibilities for both policy development, and operations and planning functions. He also included a Joint Logistics Section at HQ ADF in order to link both departmental and service logistic organisations.

Bennett initiated staff processes for the establishment of environmental commands. In effect, he gave the three senior service combat commanders environmental titles (Maritime, Land and Air) and placed them under his command for ADF operations. Simultaneously, these officers reported to their service chiefs for raising, training and maintaining their combat forces. From 1984, the CDF, through his nominated joint force commanders, would command ADF operations. Bennett's initiatives, like those of Sir Arthur Tange in 1972, were the beginnings of a new era of Defence reform that would either enhance or detract from national, regional and international force projection.

Chapter 2

Projections to the Waters off Fiji, to Namibia and Northern Australia

During the period from 1986 until 1989, the Australian Government clarified its military strategy and projected force nationally, regionally and internationally. The latter projections presaged a post-Cold War period of offshore operations that successive Australian Governments would deem to be in Australia's national interests. This chapter describes and analyses, with emphasis on force command, what each of these projections revealed about Australia's proficiency in enabling functions.

Results were uneven. A national projection, called Exercise *Kangaroo 89*, rehearsed joint force command and employment after arrival and acclimatisation, but did not test other functions realistically. A regional projection to the waters off Fiji, called Operation *Morris Dance*, did the reverse. It did not test force command and employment after arrival in the area of operations, but did execute pre-employment functions under operational conditions, and at short notice. The international projection to Namibia, called Operation *Picaresque*, confirmed what had been glimpsed during *Morris Dance*. The ADF was unused to and had several systemic weaknesses in executing the enabling functions of force projection. Consequently, the tactical level of command endured additional pressure and risk during *Morris Dance* and *Picaresque*.

The Defence Minister, K.C. Beazley began a renewed effort to clarify Australia's military strategy in February 1985. He appointed P. Dibb, an academic at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University and former Deputy Director of JIO and Head of the National Assessments staff, as a Ministerial Consultant. He issued terms of reference for him to examine and report on the content, priorities and rationale for defence forward planning and to advise on what capabilities were appropriate for Australia's present and future defence requirements.¹ Dibb did not use the framework or terminology of force projection, as defined in this thesis, in his 1986 report.² However, he advocated projecting credible military power

¹ Kim C. Beazley, Terms of Reference, Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities, 13 February 1985, in Paul Dibb, 'Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities.' Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dibb, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1986, p. xv. Also Paul Dibb, Covering letter to Defence Minister K.C. Beazley, March 1986, in Paul Dibb, 'Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities', p. i.

² P. Dibb, 'Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities. Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dibb', Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1986.

nationally and regionally.³ He recommended a self-reliant and 'layered' national defence strategy that would defend the approaches to the Australian national hinterland.

⁴ For that, the ADF needed to be capable of projecting military force both nationally - from the heartlands to the hinterland - and offshore. He clarified what capabilities each service needed within the context of credible contingencies to project force.⁵ He put first priority on defending Australian territorial sovereignty through national force projection and pre-positioning force elements and military infrastructure in the hinterland.⁶ He also incorporated regional and international force projection by leaving open, 'an option to make modest military contributions in support of our more distant diplomatic interests and the military efforts of others'.⁷

The Dobb Report set the scene for and informed the White Paper, *The Defence of Australia 1987* (DOA87).⁸ It explained Australia's strategic posture for defending sea and air approaches to the mainland: a blueprint for defence-in-depth as well as national and regional force projection.⁹ The ADF needed to be 'able to track and target an adversary and able to mount sea and air operations throughout the area [of direct military interest] [as well as have] range, endurance, and mobility, and independent logistic support'.¹⁰ The two 'fundamental elements' of this posture were maintaining and developing capabilities for the independent defence of Australia and its interests, and promoting strategic stability and security in Australia's the area of direct military interest.¹¹ It summarised strategic intentions with the following words:

Australia's combined air, land and sea forces can secure our continent against any possible aggressor. Equally, those forces will have the capacity to support regional security too. They will be well-suited to supporting Australia's regional role. Long range ships, submarines and aircraft,

³ Ibid, p. 149 and p. 175.

⁴ Ibid, p. 44 and p. 51.

⁵ Ibid, Parts 3-6 and 7-8.

⁶ Ibid, Parts 1 and 2 and pp. 113 and 149.

⁷ Ibid, p. 43.

⁸ Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987. (DOA87)

⁹ Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia*, pp. 31-32. **posture**, a combination of capability and intent. Australian Defence Force Publication, 101, *Glossary*, 1994.

¹⁰ DOA87, Preface, p. vii, and p. 3.

¹¹ Ibid, p. vii. According to DOA87, the area of direct military interest included Australia, its territories and proximate ocean areas, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and other nearby countries in the South-West Pacific. It stretches over 7 000 kilometres from the Cocos Islands to New Zealand and the islands of the South-West Pacific and 5 000 kilometres south to 'the Southern Ocean'. DOA87, p. 2.

and highly mobile ground forces, will enable us to play our proper role in the region, and if necessary, beyond it.¹²

From the perspective of force command, Dibb supported an increase in the power of the CDF over the service chiefs.¹³ He wrote that:

a framework of functional commands should be developed so that peacetime arrangements more closely reflect the Joint Service requirements for credible contingencies.¹⁴

In the same month that Dibb released his report, the CDF, General Sir Phillip Bennett, issued a directive to the service chiefs and the three environmental commanders.¹⁵ The CDF would command the services through HQ ADF and appoint joint force commanders for operations.¹⁶ The service chiefs and the environmental commanders (Maritime, Land and Air commanders) would be the enablers of national, regional and international force projection. They would sometimes command operations that predominantly favoured one environment and the dominant use of a particular service's force elements. Generically, the army would continue to maintain 3rd Brigade in Townsville at high readiness for deployment. The navy and air force would also keep selected vessels and aircraft on short notices to move.

Operation Morris Dance

General P.C. Gration succeeded General Sir Phillip Bennett in April 1987. He inherited Bennett's aspirations for the CDF to command and control Australia's joint and single service operations. He also found himself putting Bennett's recent directives into practice for an urgent regional force projection. As had been the case for the Santo secessionist rebellion in the emerging South Pacific nation of Vanuatu in mid 1980,

¹² Department of Defence, 'The Defence of Australia 1987, An Introduction by the Minister for Defence', Australian Government Publishing Service, 1987, Australian National Library, p. 5.

¹³ Dibb, 'Review of Defence Capabilities', p. 99.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ General Sir Phillip Bennett, CDF Directive 5/87, 12 March 1987. Described by David Horner in *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, pp. 62-3.

¹⁶ The service chiefs could command single service operations, though the likelihood of significant projections of force not involving at least two services was remote, unless the means for deployment and sustainment of land force elements were contracted to commercial agencies, or allies provided strategic lift and means for sustainment. Larger projections would also require the application of fire power and deterrent presence of all three services.

a political crisis arose quickly and unexpectedly - this time in Fiji.¹⁷ On 14 May 1987, Lieutenant Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, Chief of Operations, and a group from the Royal Fijian Military Forces (RFMF) 'took over the Government' and command of the RFMF.¹⁸ He announced that he had suspended the commander of the RFMF and his chief of staff and had taken action 'in the national interest' after 'monitoring events of the past few weeks' that had led to the election of a government that appeared to strengthen Indo-Fijian political influence.¹⁹ Rabuka placed newly-elected Prime Minister Timoci Bavadra and members of his Cabinet under close arrest. In the following days, violence erupted between elements of the RFMF and groups of Indo-Fijians. There was also looting and some destruction of property.

Events in Fiji did not escape the notice of the ADF tactical level of command in Townsville. Major G.J. Stone, Second-In-Command, 1 RAR, the battalion in 3rd Brigade that was on standby for emergencies, asked the Brigade Major, Major P.L. Pursey, on Friday 15 May to make enquiries about whether he should be preparing the 154-strong Advance Company Group (ACG) to protect and coordinate an evacuation of Australian nationals from Fiji, should the need arise.²⁰ The battalion had an obligation to keep the ACG on seven days notice to move. Stone assessed that the situation in Fiji was volatile and troops might be needed immediately. Pursey called back and told Stone that Brigadier M.J. Harris, Chief of Staff at the newly renamed Land Headquarters in Sydney, had directed that notice to move for the ACG should not be reduced and no preparations were to be made. Furthermore, Stone was to discourage any activity or rumour that might suggest Australia was preparing troops for

¹⁷ A secessionist Francophile rebellion broke out on the island of Espiritu Santo on 28 May 1980, two months before the New Hebrides was to be granted independence from Britain and France on 30 July. The newly-elected Prime Minister, Father Walter Lini, called on members of the South Pacific Forum to quell the rebellion and declared a state of emergency. With independence still two months away, France put 100 paratroopers on standby in New Caledonia and Britain had 200 Royal Marines already located at Port Vila. In the end military action to quell the rebellion was taken by force elements from the PNG Defence Force, facilitated by Australian military logistics support and coordination. For a comprehensive account see Matthew Gubb, *Vanuatu's 1980 Santo Rebellion – International Responses to a Microstate Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No 107, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1994.

¹⁸ Field Force Command, FFCOMD IAB OPS 05557, WNG ORDER OPERATION MORRIS DANCE, 211241ZMAY87, 291-K1-11, National Australian Archives, Villawood (hereafter NAA Villawood). Copy held by author.

¹⁹ Statement by Colonel Rabuka on 14 May 1987. Transcript in HQ ADF SIC EBJ 'Fiji: Military Coup', 140824Z MAY 87, 304-K1-4, NAA, Sydney.

²⁰ G.J. Stone, Interview with author, 17 May 1997. G.J. Stone, Personal diary entry, 15 May 1987. Copy held by author. Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Salter, CO 1 RAR was in north-west Australia attending an exercise at the time.

intervention into Fiji.²¹ At the time, the Prime Minister, R.J. Hawke, Beazley, the Secretary, A.J. Woods, and Gration, as well as the three service chiefs were heading for Perth to attend a ceremony to handover a patrol boat to PNG as part of the Pacific Patrol Boat program on Saturday 16 May.

Colonel A.S. D'Hage, Director Joint Operations and Plans, HQ ADF, wrote later that:

It was apparent within HQ ADF that if, as a result of the coup, civil disorder in Fiji was to break down, the Australian Government would wish to take appropriate steps to safeguard Australian citizens.²² There was a paramount requirement not to be seen to be interfering in the internal affairs of another sovereign country, counter-balanced by an undisputed obligation of providing protection for Australians overseas.²³ ... both the Government and the ADF were faced with the difficulty of planning an operation without wishing to invite media speculation as to the probable tasks and preparation of a military force.²⁴

Thus, there were competing priorities of obeying international law and meeting obligations to Australian citizens as well as allowing the ADF time to prepare if there were signs that the situation in Fiji was deteriorating. In secrecy, staff at HQ ADF considered options on Saturday 16 May for evacuating between four to five thousand Australian nationals from Fiji based on assessments of the situation from JIO and DFAT. After Beazley, Gration and Woods had returned to Canberra from Perth on Sunday 17 May, staff from JIO briefed them 'at around midnight', prompting Beazley to direct that 'formal options for the evacuation of Australian nationals be developed'.²⁵

On Monday 18 May, staff at HQ ADF developed maritime and air options for evacuation. They were based on assumptions of cooperation from Fijian authorities and military and police forces. However, there were concerns that civil unrest might close roads needed by evacuees to move to airports or wharves. The Joint Planning Committee (JPC) convened later that afternoon to design Operation *Morris Dance*. Members included an option of employing Australian troops to keep routes open to airports and wharves, and to secure evacuation points. Air Vice Marshal P.J. Scully, the

²¹ Stone, Interview.

²² Colonel A.S. D'Hage, 'Operation Morrisdance: An Outline History of the Involvement of the Australian Defence Force in the Fiji Crisis of May 1987', *Defence Force Journal*, No. 80 January/February 1990, p. 4.

²³ Ibid, p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

Assistant Chief of the Defence Force (Operations) chaired the JPC. Membership was inter-departmental and included the Chiefs of Staff of Maritime, Land (also called Field Force Command at the time) and Air Commands and representatives from the service offices in Canberra.²⁶

By this time, a journalist in Fiji reported that Fiji was 'at a flashpoint after a bridge was bombed, cane fields were set on fire and brawls erupted between Fijians and Indians in the streets of Suva [the capital]'.²⁷ Shots were heard. Indo-Fijians went on strike, bringing the sugar industry to a standstill.²⁸ An Australian journalist managed to smuggle out and publish a letter from Prime Minister Bavadra appealing to Australia and New Zealand for help to restore the authority of his government. The pressure was mounting in the media for the Australian Government to take action. For their parts, Hawke and Beazley had 'quickly rejected intervention' to restore the political situation, but remained cognisant of their obligations to Australians located in Fiji and the expectations of allies, such as New Zealand and the US, that Australia would take the lead in any evacuation operation.²⁹ Cognition did not include allowing military preparation. Hawke and Beazley were reluctant to give permission in case such preparations were misinterpreted as a military intervention, rather than an evacuation operation.³⁰

Events were now overtaking the methodical workings of the Government's crisis machinery and ADF planning process. The JPC had no authority to issue warning orders to the services to be prepared to make force elements available to the CDF for evacuation operations in Fiji. Orders could only be issued with the authority of the CDF, after consultation with the Chiefs of Staffs Committee (COSC). The COSC, augmented with the Secretary and additional senior ADF officers and defence officials, met on the morning of 20 May. While members of COSC considered an appreciation of the situation by members of the JPC, New Zealand announced that a New Zealand Defence Force group was on standby to evacuate 1800 New Zealand nationals if they

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 5-7. D'Hage describes the 'High Command Planning Sequence' in these pages.

²⁷ *The Australian*, 19 May 1987, p. 1.

²⁸ Matthew Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response to the Fijian Coup: An Assessment', Working Paper No 171, Australian National University, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, November 1988, p. 5.

²⁹ Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response', pp. 1 and 8.

³⁰ General P.C. Gratton, Interview with author, 19 August 2005.

were endangered by increasing civil unrest.³¹ The media was broadcasting images of buildings being set on fire and looting as well as Fijian troops bashing Indo-Fijians with rifle butts to break up increasingly violent demonstrations against the coup.

Members of COSC preferred an evacuation by civil aircraft coordinated by High Commission staff in Fiji. However, Gratton concluded that, 'In his view, the situation had already deteriorated to such an extent that it was presently a questionable course'.³² The committee put aside the option to deploy an infantry company to assist with an evacuation for the time being. 'Until Government had made a decision [about conducting an evacuation], no higher state of readiness order was to be issued to the ODF, and planning was to be confined to Army Office' in Canberra.³³ This order was carried out to the letter after Major Pursey, on behalf of Brigadier P.M. Arnison, Commander 3rd Brigade, asked Brigadier Harris once again for permission to reduce the notice to move for the ACG in light of the New Zealand announcement and the apparent worsening situation in Fiji. Harris ordered him emphatically not to initiate any activity at 1 RAR that might spawn speculation about Australia intervening with military force.³⁴

Political sensitivity about being discovered preparing troops in Townsville should be seen in light of maritime tensions between Fiji and Australia at the time. Fijian military officers supporting the coup 'had become suspicious of Australian military intentions' and on the evening of Monday 18 May a Fijian patrol boat, HMFS *Kira* had challenged HMAS *Stalwart*, a supply ship, at sea.³⁵ At 1 p.m. Tuesday 19 May, the Fijian Naval Division Commander informed the Australian High Commission in Suva that Australian ships berthed in Suva had overstayed their diplomatic clearances and, if they did not sail immediately, their presence would be construed as a hostile act. Feelings were running high between two normally cooperative and friendly navies. Technically, the Fijian coup leaders in the RFMF were threatening action against Australian ships. That night, Fijian authorities formally challenged HMAS *Sydney*, a

³¹ JPC Report 2/87, 'Appreciation of the Situation in Fiji', 19 May 1987, 87-22646, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

³² COSC Minute 27/87 (Agendum 16/87 refers), Meeting Wednesday 20 May 1987, Paragraph 19. Defence Archives, Queanbeyan

³³ Ibid. 'ODF', Operational Deployment Force, was a title for a group of forces based on 3rd Brigade that had been designated for rapid deployment.

³⁴ Brigadier B.R. Dawson to author, 29 September 2004. Dawson was a member of the operations staff at Land Headquarters and recalled being in the operations room when Brigadier Harris spoke with Pursey and told him forcefully not to reduce the notice to move for the ACG and not to make preparations.

³⁵ D'Hage, 'Operation Morrisdance', p. 7.

frigate berthed in Suva, for not having a diplomatic clearance. All Australian ships departed from Fijian waters in the early hours of 20 May to avoid an escalation of tensions over their presence in Fijian ports.³⁶

Later that morning the ADF strategic and operational levels of command issued the first formal orders for *Morris Dance*. The first order was to assign army landing craft to HMAS *Tobruk*, the navy's heavy landing ship that was alongside at the Garden Island fleet base in Sydney.³⁷ At 1 p.m. the CGS, Lieutenant General L.G. O'Donnell, directed Brigadier Harris, who was acting Land Commander at the time, to put landing craft and crews as well as a detachment of communications personnel under command of the Officer Commanding, the Ship's Army Detachment, who was aboard *Tobruk*.³⁸ The crews from Chowder Bay on Sydney Harbour and a detachment of signallers from Holsworthy in Sydney, who were not on any formal notice to move for offshore deployment, were given four hours warning to get themselves, their craft and vehicles as well as their equipment on board.³⁹ At 9 p.m. the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral P.R. Sinclair, signalled that he would exercise 'full command' over all maritime force elements assigned to *Morris Dance*.⁴⁰ This action conformed to Bennett's March directive and sidelined O'Donnell and Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Vice-Admiral M.W. Hudson, from operational command of *Tobruk* and its embarked army elements. At 2 a.m. on 21 May, General Gration's staff issued a directive to the environmental commanders for the conduct of *Morris Dance*.⁴¹ Gration did not nominate a joint force commander because Cabinet had not decided whether there would be an evacuation and, if one was ordered, whether it would be by sea or air. Gration issued a further directive 30 minutes later to the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal J.W. Newham, to assign aircraft to the Air Commander, Air Vice Marshal E.A.

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 7-8.

³⁷ HMAS *Tobruk*, known as a Landing Ship Heavy, was the first purpose-built major amphibious ship in the navy. She was commissioned in 1981 and designed to carry troops (350-550), vehicles and stores, and put them ashore without the aid of port facilities.

³⁸ Signal was issued at 1024 a.m. on 20 May 1987. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-1, Attached to Air Vice Marshal P.J. Scully, Assistant Chief of the Defence Force (Operations), Operational [sic] Morrisdance – Post Action Report, , 15 December 1987, 87-25649. Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

³⁹ D'Hage, 'Operation Morrisdance', p. 9. The communications detachment almost did not make it. They arrived soon after *Tobruk* had sailed and were loaded on *Success*.

⁴⁰ MHQ Signal, 201050ZMAY87. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-2. Copy held by author.

⁴¹ General P.C. Gration, CDF Directive 16/1987, 201206ZMAY87, Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-2. Copy held by author.

Radford, thus completing the removal of all of the service chiefs from the operational command over force elements assigned to *Morris Dance*.⁴²

In reality, however, each service chief was still involved because Gration's directives, informed by Bennett's March directive, obligated them to provide logistic support.⁴³ Accepting that logistic support is a function of command, the joint force commander - either the Air Commander or Maritime Commander - would have to be supported by a joint logistic component commander once General Gration decided on who would command. However, there was no mechanism for appointing a joint logistic commander or for assigning the effort of logistic force elements or infrastructure from the services to a joint force commander for offshore operations. Thus, Gration had to include the service chiefs in supporting *Morris Dance* using their processes and procedures as well as logistic support assets, such as supply depots, distribution agencies, bases and airfields.

None of the orders on 20 May or the early morning of 21 May authorised any reduction in the notice to move for the ACG, despite the increased readiness of maritime and air force elements to conduct evacuation operations with army landing craft embarked on *Tobruk*.⁴⁴ For his part, Brigadier Harris once again reinforced his orders with an insistent Brigadier Arnison on 20 May prohibiting any preparations in 3rd Brigade.⁴⁵ For their parts, General Gration and Secretary Woods briefed Beazley and the Acting Foreign Minister, Senator G. Evans, after the COSC meeting on 20 May, about options for evacuation, but did not include reference to employing an ODF company.⁴⁶

According to a later account of the operation by Matthew Gubb, a research fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre the Australian National University, Cabinet met on the morning of 21 May and decided that Australia should have troops on

⁴² General P.C. Gration, CDF Directive 18/1987, 201227ZMAY87. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-2. Copy held by author.

⁴³ General P.C. Gration, CDF Directive, 5/87, 12 March 1987, Paragraph 5d. Also General P.C. Gration, CDF Directive 17/1987, 201230ZMAY1987 ordered Chief of the Air Staff to provide support to Air Commander Australia 'as required'. CDF Directive 18/1987, 201230ZMAY87 ordered the Chief of the General Staff to provide logistic support to Land Commander Australia, 'as required'. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-2. Copy held by author.

⁴⁴ On 20 May air force aircraft were on 12 hours notice to move for an air evacuation (Ibid, p. 9). On 20 May, the Maritime Commander had vessels sailing off Fiji and *Tobruk* was about to sail from Sydney. Ibid, p. 8.

⁴⁵ Stone, Interview.

⁴⁶ COSC Minute 25/87.

standby at sea for evacuation operations.⁴⁷ According to General Gration, the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral Sinclair, prompted his sudden decision to embark an ODF company on ships as part of Australia's 'contingency deployment' to the waters off Fiji after assessing that there would be insufficient numbers of personnel from ships' companies to coordinate an evacuation of several thousand people.⁴⁸ He asked Gration to make troops available to assist. As a result, seven days after the coup and one day after again prohibiting any specific force preparation, Brigadier Harris directed Brigadier Arnison by telephone to have the ACG ready to deploy by air to Norfolk Island by that afternoon in preparation for transfer to *Tobruk* and HMAS *Success* on their way to Fiji.⁴⁹ This was the only location *en route* to transfer an infantry company with its vehicles and equipment to ships.⁵⁰

At 9.30 a.m. on 21 May, Pursey called Stone and passed on Harris's orders 'to bring ODF Coy [Company] Gp [Group] to immediate notice to move for evacuation tasks in Fiji. Air mov[e] may be required PM 21 May. Deception plan to be used. None below rank of MAJ [Major] to know of plan'.⁵¹ The ACG had its company commander, company sergeant major, one platoon commander, one platoon sergeant and four of its nine section commanders away on training courses. Under normal circumstances, they could have returned from these courses within seven days and resumed their appointments. However, operational security, time constraints and the imposition of a deception plan prohibited this recall.⁵² Stone directed another company commander, Major B.A.R. Scott, to take command and bring his company sergeant major, one of his platoon commanders, a platoon sergeant, four section commanders and 18 soldiers with him to top the ACG up to full strength immediately. He told Scott that the deception plan was that Land Headquarters staff had ordered an immediate test of readiness and the ACG would be moving by road to High Range Training area inland from Townsville in a few hours time. Stone delivered his orders to the ACG at 1 p.m. The notice to move was changed abruptly to 12 hours around that time.⁵³ At 3.42 p.m., Stone received another warning order from Land Headquarters, placing the company on

⁴⁷ Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response', p. 6.

⁴⁸ Gration, Interview.

⁴⁹ Stone, Interview. Brigadier B.R. Dawson to author, 29 September 2004.

⁵⁰ Gration, Interview.

⁵¹ P.J. Salter, 'Post Deployment Report Operation Morrisdance 21 May to 7 Jun 87', 1 RAR 611-10-1 (2), 29 July 1987, p. 2. Copy held by author.

⁵² Stone, Interview.

⁵³ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 4.

two hours notice to move from 3 p.m.. At 4 p.m., Scott issued his orders for a road move to High Range Training area and the troops settled down in their company lines awaiting notification of the exact time for them to mount up. Ten minutes later, General Gration sent a warning order to General O'Donnell to prepare the ACG for possible deployment to the waters off Fiji.⁵⁴

Stone and his men had not trained for any contingencies in the near region or for deployment on navy vessels. All recent movements to field exercises in northern Australia had been administrative trips by road or air.⁵⁵ In 1986 1 RAR had trained for low intensity conventional operations to defend the north-west of Australia from raids and small-scale enemy lodgements. The battalion had practised the protection of mining facilities from low level attack near Gladstone in Queensland during Exercise *Kangaroo 86*.⁵⁶ The emphasis on mainland operations had continued in 1987. By coincidence, CO 1 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Salter, was at Karratha in Western Australia with commanders and staff from 3rd Brigade at the time conducting scenario training for defending infrastructure in the north-west. For his part, General Gration expected that the company would have sufficient time at sea to appreciate what lay ahead and to rehearse procedures for coordinating an evacuation.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Stone made prudent preparations. Doubting whether there would be time to receive maps, intelligence, formal orders and ROE before departure by air to Norfolk Island, he sent the battalion's intelligence officer in civilian clothes into Townsville to pick up tourist brochures and maps of Fiji. Privately, he thought through what might lie ahead and wondered when he would be given permission to tell the troops where they were really going.⁵⁸ At 5.30 p.m., Radio 4TO Townsville broadcast that Prime Minister Hawke had announced that he had put a company of 110 troops on standby in Townsville for emergency evacuation operations in Fiji.⁵⁹ The figure of 110 had been selected for political purposes to ensure that it corresponded to the size of an evacuation force rather than a force for armed intervention into Fijian political affairs.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-2. Copy held by author.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 6.

⁵⁶ Horner, *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 67.

⁵⁷ Gration, Interview.

⁵⁸ Stone, Interview.

⁵⁹ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 3.

⁶⁰ General P.C. Gration, Annotation on draft Chapter 2 in Bob Breen, 'Australian Military Force Projection in the late 1980s and the 1990s: what happened and why.', PhD Thesis, ANU, 2005.

The difficulty for Stone was that the ACG was a 154-strong force trained, organised, equipped and heavily armed for independent operations.

It was not until 7 p.m. that Stone received permission from Land Headquarters staff, who had sought permission from staff at HQ ADF, to tell the company group officially about their real destination and mission.⁶¹ Apparently, Gration and the environmental commanders were not available to authorise this change to operational security because they were about to meet, or had begun a meeting, to discuss *Morris Dance* in Canberra.⁶² Morale and confidence were not enhanced among those below the rank of major when their first knowledge of their mission was gained through the media, or from spouses, partners, relatives and girl friends, who had listened to the radio.⁶³ They also realised that Stone and Scott had deceived them, albeit under orders. The complexity of ensuring the company group was fully prepared for operations in Fiji and simultaneously developing and issuing both real operational and deception plan orders was perhaps not appreciated by higher headquarters staff as they sought to keep preparations a secret. At 8.20 p.m. Gration directed O'Donnell to assign the ACG for employment on *Morris Dance*.⁶⁴

Stone summarised his personal and professional situation later:

For my first operational task in 18 years of service, training and exercises, I found myself preparing on the shortest of notice for a mission that I had never considered in training, let alone practised. It would involve deploying 4000 nautical miles by air and sea, with the prospect of moving directly into a foreign country about to erupt in civil war with 105 lightly-armed, fellow Australian infantrymen.⁶⁵

The reason that Stone was down to 105 infantrymen was a cap on numbers for the deployment. General Gration had agreed to Admiral Sinclair's request for embarked troops to assist navy personnel with coordination of an evacuation. An infantry platoon of about 30 personnel was insufficient. He assessed that a company of 120 infantrymen would be ample. He briefed Hawke and Beazley accordingly.⁶⁶ From Gration's point of view, embarking an additional 120 army personnel on ships at short

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² This has been surmised by the author from information in Anon, Operation Morrisdance, Annex A, p. A-3. Gration briefed the environmental commanders 'PM 21 May'. It was possible that staff did not want to disturb Gration while he prepared for this briefing or was already meeting with commanders.

⁶³ Stone, Interview.

⁶⁴ CDF Directive 19/1987, 211020ZMAY1987. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-3. Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 3

⁶⁵ Stone, Interview.

⁶⁶ Gration, Interview.

notice should have been well within the capacity and capability of the ADF operational and tactical levels of command. When the troops were aboard and the navy task group was pre-positioned off Fiji, he would have achieved the strategic objective of giving the Government a short notice maritime evacuation option, if the situation in Fiji endangered Australian nationals.⁶⁷

Initially, Stone had to cut back to 120 personnel from an assembled group of 154 men. Subsequently, he cut a further 15 soldiers as higher headquarters staff directed him to include specialist intelligence, legal and communications personnel under the numbers cap. He also had to re-configure and re-pack pre-packed deployment stocks to accommodate this reduction.⁶⁸ D'Hage commented later that the cap on numbers highlighted 'the difficulties caused by what is politically acceptable to Government and what is assessed [in this case, by lower levels of command] as being needed to meet the requirements of a military operation'.⁶⁹

In the opinion of Lieutenant Colonel Salter, the decision to prohibit preparations before 21 May 'caused considerable difficulty to the operational preparation of the group' and exposed a shortage of 'stores and equipment that had been previously notified as unavailable'.⁷⁰ Gration assessed that earlier permission to prepare the ACG would have become news 'all around town [Townsville] in no time'.⁷¹ It would have been unhelpful if the media had broadcast information on any form of military preparation in Townsville before the Government had declared its intentions. Before 21 May, the employment of an ODF company had been an option, not a probability. At 2.41 a.m. on 22 May, Land Headquarters issued a warning order for *Morris Dance*.⁷² It specified evacuation tasks for Stone and his men, should the ACG deploy ashore, and directed that machine guns were not to be taken. However, there was no time after receiving this order in Townsville later on 22 May for the ACG to train for evacuation operations or rehearse securing an airfield or wharf, or to test fire weapons to ensure serviceability or to zero them for accuracy.⁷³ Time was consumed complying with what Salter described as 'ridiculous' repacking and weighing of stores 'as higher direction

67 Ibid.

68 Stone, Interview.

69 D'Hage, 'Operation Morrisdance', p. 8.

70 Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 4.

71 Gration, Interview.

72 FFCOMD IAB OPS 05557, 211241ZMAY87, 291-K1-11, NAA, Sydney.

73 Zeroing a weapon is a technique used to ensure that the sights of a weapon are adjusted to match where a firer is aiming. It is based on the premise that each person has a different way of holding and aiming a weapon depending on their physical characteristics.

added or deleted items'.⁷⁴ There was also additional 'excessive problems in load planning' caused by lack of information on loading of dangerous cargo, such as ammunition, pyrotechnics and hexamine, the solid fuel tablets used by soldiers to operate small stoves for cooking.⁷⁵

This was a 'come as you are' operation. The ACG was equipped with Vietnam War era weapons, uniforms, webbing, equipment and boots that were adequate for the task ahead of them, if evacuation operations were conducted in the operational environment anticipated by General Gration. However, troops did not have body armour, night vision goggles, crowd control equipment, such as shields, batons and helmets, tear gas or sufficient communications equipment should the evacuation have to be conducted in a volatile and adversarial environment.⁷⁶ The absence of this specialist equipment and gas limited the escalation of responses to provocation by angry crowds or RFMF personnel to verbal warning, manhandling, fisticuffs, wielding rifle butts or pulling triggers.

There were differences of opinion within the ADF chain of command on what might lie ahead in Fiji. General Gration expected that the Government would only order an evacuation with the support of Fijian authorities and that those authorities would have control of the operational environment.⁷⁷ Lieutenant Colonel Salter expected that the Government would only order an evacuation when the situation in Fiji was anarchic and dangerous, and that Fijian authorities would most likely have lost control.⁷⁸ Independently, and also mindful of his responsibilities for the lives of his men, Stone supported Salter's assessment.⁷⁹ Thus, at one end of the spectrum of professional military judgment was General Gration, who had ordered General O'Donnell to make 120 army personnel available to the navy to bolster numbers of evacuation marshals. At the other end of the spectrum were Salter and Stone, who preferred that the contingent be heavily armed to create a deterrent presence rather than arrive more lightly armed than Fijian forces who might intentionally or accidentally provoke an incident.⁸⁰ The Government had made it clear in the media that Australia

⁷⁴ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 9.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ P.J. Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 8.

⁷⁷ Gration, Interview. This was also the view of Paul Dibb and senior Defence officials advising Gration at the time. Annotation on draft Chapter 2 in Bob Breen, 'Australian Military Force Projection'.

⁷⁸ Salter, 'Post Operation Report', p. 16.

⁷⁹ Stone, Interview.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

opposed the coup, so the arrival of Australian troops for evacuation operations might be misinterpreted by those in the RFMF who had participated in the coup as a disguised intervention to restore the Bavadra Government, and possibly cause action to be taken against them. The earlier confrontation over the presence of Australian naval vessels in Fijian ports illustrated the level of distrust and tension. Following their assessments, Salter and Stone insisted that the company deploy with its full complement of weapons. Reflecting differing opinions further up the chain of command, higher headquarters staff ordered Stone seven times to load and then to unload machine guns. They also questioned him closely about the need for grenade launchers and the number of grenades and amount of other natures of ammunition he was planning to take.⁸¹

At 2.45 p.m. on 22 May, staff at HQ ADF issued Gration's orders for *Morris Dance*.⁸² Land Headquarters issued another warning order a few minutes later putting Stone's contingent on 12 hours notice to move.⁸³ This notice was reduced to six hours at 4.30 p.m.. Lieutenant Colonel Salter received 'verbal advice' of a departure at 6 a.m. the next morning.⁸⁴ At 9.15 p.m., Land Headquarters staff issued the executive order for Stone and his men to fly to Norfolk Island before dawn the next morning, under the command of the Air Commander until embarkation on *Tobruk*. They would then come under the operational command of the Commodore Flotillas at Maritime Headquarters and the tactical command of Commanding Officer, HMAS *Stalwart*, at sea.⁸⁵ Stone received this order at 2 a.m. and his Rules of Engagement (ROE) at 2.30 a.m.. It had taken just under 12 hours for formal orders and ROE to reach Stone from the strategic and operational levels of command. Salter addressed the contingent at 4.15 a.m. and the troops departed for RAAF Base Garbutt at 4.30 a.m. for a 6 a.m. departure – sleepless but keenly anticipating what lay ahead.

Salter was particularly disappointed by General Gration's decision not to allow him and a small tactical headquarters to command the contingent that would be subject to intense media interest and under command of the navy. Stone had been appointed the Army Component Commander in a naval operation with eight rather than 13 headquarters personnel and a reduced number of medical and communications staff.

⁸¹ Stone, Interview.

⁸² General P.C. Gration, CDF Operations Instruction 3/87, 220444ZMAY1987. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-4. Copy held by author.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p.3.

⁸⁵ LANCOMAUS OPORD 2/87, 221115ZMAY1987. Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-5. Copy held by author.

Salter wrote, 'This situation was most unsuitable and resulted in unnecessary deviation from practised deployment procedures'.⁸⁶ Salter's disappointment originated with his expectation of the potential dangers that lay ahead on the ground in Fiji. It was also standard ODF practice for the ACG to deploy with its parent battalion's tactical headquarters.⁸⁷ For his part, General Gration envisaged Stone and his men participating in an evacuation operation commanded by Rear Admiral Sinclair through Commodore Flotillas and his tactical commander at sea. He did not support an increase in numbers or an enhancement of the command and control capacity of the land component assigned to *Morris Dance* to accommodate Salter and his tactical headquarters.⁸⁸

Stone and his men arrived at RAAF Base Garbutt at about 5 a.m. in anticipation of a 6.30 a.m. departure. Their stores and vehicles had arrived at Garbutt several hours earlier. The loading of stores and vehicles was not going well. After four C 130 transport aircraft had arrived later than expected, ground staff discovered that there were insufficient ramp pallets or experienced air movements specialists to load the aircraft efficiently.⁸⁹ In the haste to make up time, ground staff loaded the 1 RAR duty officer's vehicle with a full fuel tank and the wrong way round, not a Landrover that had been pre-prepared for air transportation.⁹⁰

After receiving maps of Fiji 30 minutes before final boarding, the contingent began taking off one and a half hours later than orders had specified. Three aircraft departed at 7.30 a.m., 8.15 a.m., and 8.50 a.m.. After take off at 8.30 a.m., the other aircraft that was transporting Stone and his headquarters staff had to return to Townsville. The crew discovered a leakage of fuel from the 1 RAR duty officer's vehicle. If this leak had not been detected, the fuel may have been ignited in flight from sparks from an electrical fault or some other source of combustion. Air force crew were also to discover a small Butane gas stove leaking in this aircraft after its next take off - undiscovered, it would have exploded at altitude with 'catastrophic' consequences.⁹¹ The owner had packed the stove in his pack 36 hours before in anticipation of a road trip to a training area, not a high altitude air move to an operation in the South Pacific, and had forgotten about it. Stone's aircraft took off a second time,

⁸⁶ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 5.

⁸⁷ Stone, Interview.

⁸⁸ Gration, Interview.

⁸⁹ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 9.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

but had to return again when crew discovered another Landrover fuel leak. Stone and his headquarters staff finally departed for Norfolk Island at 9.30 a.m..⁹² He arrived four hours after the first aircraft had landed. Major V.E. Walsh, a liaison officer from Land Headquarters, who had arrived at Norfolk Island the day before, met him.⁹³ Walsh, who had not been issued independent secure communications equipment before he departed from Sydney, was communicating and coordinating activities as well as reporting back to Land Headquarters through the local telephone exchange. All was not going well.

The navy had not been able to provide a liaison officer to the contingent who could have advised on what lay ahead for the transfer of personnel, vehicles and stocks to *Success* and *Tobruk* at Norfolk Island. Already tired, troops unpacked containers and redistributed their contents by hand into smaller and lighter loads because the army's 'BMSS containers were too heavy to be lifted full' by navy's Wessex helicopter.⁹⁴ The helicopter flew the contingent's stores from shore to ship as slung loads. Slater wrote later that, 'Had the storage arrangements aboard HMAS *Success* been known, BMSS (B) would not have been used as a container.'⁹⁵ Small civilian lighters, crewed by Norfolk Islanders, ferried vehicles.⁹⁶ 'It was only the clemency of the weather that made the job possible.'⁹⁷ 'This was a difficult task and it was surprising that a craft did not capsize.'⁹⁸

HMAS *Tobruk* arrived offshore at 10 p.m. that night. Utility helicopters picked the contingent up from shore and transferred them to the ship in the dark. This transfer was another risky activity because the helicopters 'were not equipped for night flying over water, which made height extremely difficult to judge'. Matthew Gubb, attributing an anonymous source in Maritime Headquarters, added that, 'with the exception of the senior pilot, the air crews were not current for flying their helicopters at night'.⁹⁹ After the weary infantrymen arrived, 'Reception on HMAS *Tobruk* was slow, with individuals having to unpack and store weapons, ammunition, pyrotechnics and

⁹² Land Headquarters, Operations Log entry, 12 20 PM, 23 May 1987, 291-K1-9, NAA, Sydney.

⁹³ LHQ Situation Report 2/87, 212300ZMAY87.

⁹⁴ Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response', p. 15.

⁹⁵ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response', p. 15.

⁹⁸ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 10.

⁹⁹ Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response', p. 15.

hexamine in separate stowage, on an unfamiliar ship, in the dark early hours of the morning.¹⁰⁰

There was another risky transfer of personnel two days later at sea. HMAS *Tobruk* was due to be present at a meeting of representatives from Pacific Forum countries in Apia, Samoa. As a consequence, the contingent, many of whom had been suffering from sea sickness, had to be transferred to other vessels in the *Morris Dance* task group on 26 May - 'a very windy day'.¹⁰¹ Troops were winched down from hovering helicopters onto rolling decks in challenging conditions. This was the first experience of this type of transfer for the soldiers, UHIB helicopter pilots and their loadmasters as well as the crews of HMAS *Parramatta* and HMAS *Adelaide*. During this transfer, three helicopters became unserviceable and another crashed onto the deck of *Tobruk*.¹⁰² There were no injuries.

There was a hospital and surgical facilities at Norfolk Island should there have been any accidents and injuries during the transfer from shore to ship. However, during the transshipment of troops at sea, there was no surgeon, anaesthetist or surgical facilities on any of the ships in the *Morris Dance* task group - 'a serious deficiency' according to Salter.¹⁰³ Given his expectation of an unopposed evacuation, General Gration, had not assessed that a surgical capacity was necessary.¹⁰⁴

Hindsight should not disguise the potentially difficult task that would have faced Stone and his men had the situation in Fiji deteriorated further and he had been ordered to protect as well as assist Australian High Commission staff to coordinate an evacuation of four to five thousand frightened people. His orders from Land Headquarters specified that Stone and his 105 infantrymen had to:

control, coordinate and administer personnel for evacuation, provide escorts for movement of civilian groups, marshal civilians at concentration points, provide communications on shore, defend Australian assets [in Fiji] and provide support to AUSCOM FIJI [Australian High Commission].¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report,' p. 10.

¹⁰¹ The navy task group comprised three warships (HMAS *Sydney*, *Adelaide* and *Parramatta*), four patrol boats (HMAS *Cessnock*, *Dubbo*, *Townsville* and *Wollongong*) and two support vessels (HMAS *Stalwart* and *Success*). Ibid, p. 11

¹⁰² Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response,' p. 13. Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 11.

¹⁰³ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Gration, Annotations.

¹⁰⁵ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 14. Salter quoted these tasks from Land Headquarters' operation order for *Morris Dance* (LANDCOM OPORD 1).

Land Headquarters, presumably in consultation with O'Donnell's staff at Army Office in Canberra, had elaborated on General Gration's supplementation of a maritime contingency deployment by specifying generic evacuation tasks that would be expected of the company group during a protected evacuation – a worst case scenario that Gration was not anticipating.¹⁰⁶

In Lieutenant Colonel Salter's opinion, higher levels of command had not appreciated 'the complexity of this [overall] task'.¹⁰⁷ Only one of the tasks specified in Stone's orders could have been attempted by the reduced ACG. A minimum of two additional company groups were needed. Only one follow-on company had been put on 24 hours notice to move from Townsville after the ACG had left.¹⁰⁸ He opined that, 'the [evacuation] task will only be required when law and order has broken down. The spectre of 1000 people of mixed race [presumably Indo-Fijians fleeing violence] attempting to get a seat on an aircraft designed for 200 should be imagined.'¹⁰⁹ The unserviceability of helicopters in transit had also reduced the capacity of the task group to transfer troops from ship to shore to nine soldiers at a time in two helicopters, thus making rapid concentration of force impossible.¹¹⁰ For his part, if General Gration had received information that Australian troops might have to operate in more dangerous circumstances, he would have ordered the deployment of more of them to create a deterrent presence.¹¹¹ With the benefit of hindsight, the difficulties the three services had deploying Stone's contingent suggested that rapid reinforcement at sea or on the ground in Fiji would have been problematic.

The situation in Fiji stabilised rather than deteriorated during the deployment phase of *Morris Dance*, as Gration had anticipated: there was no evacuation. Indeed, hundreds of nationals, who had wished to leave Fiji, flew out on commercial aircraft with the assistance of Fijian authorities.¹¹² Stone and his men were back in Australia by 7 June, 15 days after they had flown to Norfolk Island. Their adventures would not go down in Australian military history as a benchmark for joint force projection. It was now up to the ADF to examine what went wrong and apply lessons – thankfully, several important lessons had manifested without mission failure, loss of life or serious injury.

¹⁰⁶ Gration, Interview.

¹⁰⁷ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Annex A to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. A-5.

¹⁰⁹ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report', p. 16.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 15.

¹¹¹ Gration, Interview.

Air Vice-Marshal Scully acted quickly. On 3 June he wrote to the service chiefs and environmental commanders stating that, 'we need to analyse the potential strengths and weaknesses that became obvious throughout the operation.' He requested them to submit reports:

to provide differing perspectives of ADF actions in relation to Operation 'MORRISDANCE'. ... The reports are to highlight observed strengths and weaknesses and contain recommendations for improvements in planning processes, liaison, command arrangements and control measures within the ADF.¹¹³

The Deputy Exercise Director, Joint Exercise Planning Staff, who had been informed by reports from HQ ADF staff, the three services and the three environmental commanders, submitted a consolidated report on *Morris Dance* four months later in October 1987.¹¹⁴ He focused on the strategic level of command.¹¹⁵ As a consequence, his report would not inform COSC about the difficulties encountered by those working at the tactical level. The report evaluated higher level processes of planning, command, control, communications and administration. It concluded that strategic and operational level planning processes had neither complied with doctrine nor worked well. The interaction between HQ ADF and the three service headquarters in Canberra demonstrated that Bennett's recent directives had not yet streamlined ADF joint planning process. This was unsurprising considering that extant processes had not been tested for over 20 years and new arrangements had only been announced two months before and not practised. It recommended that HQ ADF should issue 'a Planning or Initiating Directive' to advise subordinate headquarters quickly and comprehensively on what planning data was needed to develop military response options for the Government.¹¹⁶

While the author of the report recognised correctly that 'the government may not make decisions on military options in the timeframe desired by HQ ADF ... [and that] when a government decision is made, a rapid response by the ADF will be expected.', he did not highlight that political leaders imposed strict secrecy during the Fiji crisis

¹¹² P. Dibb, Annotations.

¹¹³ Air Vice Marshal P.J. Scully, OPERATION 'MORRISDANCE' – POST ACTION REPORT, ACOPS BS2487/1987, 3 June 1987, 87-22646, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹¹⁴ Anon, Operation Morrisdance – Post Action Report, undated. Attached to Air Vice Marshal P.J. Scully, Operational (sic) Morrisdance – Post Action Report, 15 December 1987, 87/25649, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p.2.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 5.

that prohibited the CDF issuing planning directives or warning orders, and that political leaders would most likely do the same during future crises.¹¹⁷ The lesson was not that the CDF should issue 'Planning Directives' or 'Warning Orders' as early as possible – this was well understood by service officers - but that it was unlikely that, in a sensitive political climate, he would do so until the government was prepared to advise the public about its military intentions. As *Morris Dance* demonstrated, after the Prime Minister and Cabinet made their decision to project force, they expected the ADF to respond quickly.

The author assessed that assignment of force elements from the service chiefs to the CDF and environmental commanders was:

a cumbersome process ... The [Bennett] directives do not make clear whether this assignment is to be through the Service Chiefs of Staff or direct.¹¹⁸

He went on to observe that, 'The "either/or" command arrangements' that envisaged the Air Commander or the Maritime Commander commanding *Morris Dance*, depending on whether Gration ordered an air or sea evacuation, had:

resulted in a deal of 'ad hoc' co-ordination at lower levels, especially in the provision of administrative support, and contributed to the general comment of 'interference' and overlaps in actions taken and direction given by HQ ADF and Service Offices [in Canberra] ... the whole process was unnecessarily complicated.¹¹⁹

There was room for improvement for liaison between participating government departments and the ADF. Remarkably, HQ ADF quickly established liaison with the Department of Foreign Affairs but did not include the office of the Minister for Defence or the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.¹²⁰ The passage of classified information was impeded by lack of secure telephone and facsimile links between departments, ministerial offices and HQ ADF. There were also no independent military radio communications between Australia and the High Commission in Fiji or between the ADF liaison officer at Norfolk Island, Major Walsh, back to Australia or to deploying ships and aircraft.¹²¹

Command and control was further complicated because each service chief had responsibilities to provide logistic support through environmental commanders to

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 9.

¹²¹ Ibid. Also Annex D to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. D-1.

deployed force elements.¹²² Air Vice-Marshal Scully did not include representatives from Joint Logistics Branch, the Surgeon General and Financial Management Branch in initial planning. There was no 'integrated joint logistic planning and coordination'.¹²³ There was no joint logistic desk officer on duty in the control centre at HQ ADF. There was no air supply arrangements made for spare parts or mail.¹²⁴

The final major concern was arrangements for intelligence support. Major M. Dennis, who was assigned to Stone as a JIO liaison officer, did not have independent secure communications back to Australia or to Fiji. Understandably, intelligence agencies were not used to providing analytical and predictive support for offshore evacuation operations. For *Morris Dance* there might have been violent interference from hostile groups within the RFMF and nationalistic Fijian organisations. Australian intelligence services did not appear to be in a position to identify and monitor this threat. Certainly, Stone was not included as a recipient of intelligence of this kind and assumed, possibly incorrectly, that there was none.¹²⁵ The author of the post-operations report offered:

Experience from Operation MORRISDANCE confirmed the requirement to establish the intelligence system at the outset of any operation, possibly even before the involvement of the ADF has been confirmed and before command and control arrangements have been settled. ... There are still grey areas in the practical coordination of intelligence requirements, management of assets and division of responsibilities between the strategic and operational intelligence agencies.¹²⁶

Under the heading 'Intelligence', Salter wrote that, 'In the event of a requirement to deploy ashore', Stone would have appreciated information from Special Forces, who might have deployed ahead of them, as well as information on New Zealand intentions to avoid 'considerable confusion'.¹²⁷ The Maritime Headquarters report highlighted the need to know the intentions of other interested countries and, by implication, their intelligence operations as well as their evacuation plans.¹²⁸

¹²² Ibid, p. 8.

¹²³ Ibid, p. 12.

¹²⁴ Annex C to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. C-4.

¹²⁵ Stone, Interview.

¹²⁶ Anon, Operation Morrisdance – Post Action Report, pp. 13-4.

¹²⁷ Salter, 'Post Deployment Report, p. 15.

¹²⁸ Anon, Operation Morrisdance – Post Action Report. Annex C to Morrisdance Post Action Report, p. C-3.

Interestingly, JIO denied access to intelligence staff from the service offices to briefings on *Morris Dance*, an unhelpful demarcation according to the Army Office report.¹²⁹

Concerns about the problems encountered at the tactical level with coordination, joint procedures for deployment and logistic support appeared to be confined to lower levels of command. Colonel I.F. Ahearn, Colonel (Plans) at Land Headquarters assessed that the ADF lacked 'capability at the operational level to coordinate the operational deployment of a small joint force'.¹³⁰ Majors Walsh and Stone echoed this assessment in their reports.¹³¹ Ahearn's colleague at Land Headquarters, Colonel J.F. Bertram, Colonel (Administration) added that, despite orders from Land Headquarters earlier in 1987:

3rd Brigade had, and still has, shortfalls in their maintenance stocks and there were delivery times of between 45 days and 4 months for demands for supply. ... This [situation] tends to highlight a major concern with the AJSP (Army Joint Support Plan) for PLAN BENEFACITOR – [the plan that specified arrangements for rapid deployment and sustainment of the ODF.]¹³²

Gration responded to the difficulties identified during *Morris Dance* by modifying ADF command and control. In future, he would exercise command through his HQ ADF staff directly to a joint force commander for operations and not involve the service chiefs except in an advisory capacity.¹³³ This change had potential to simplify processes in Canberra and streamline transfer of strategic guidance to the operational and tactical levels of command.

Observations

The conduct of *Morris Dance* confirmed that the Government, in general, and the Defence Department, in particular, still had some way to go to synchronise joint force projection to promote regional stability and security in a time of crisis. The first

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. C-7.

¹³⁰ Colonel I.F. Ahearn, Colonel (Plans), Field Force Command, Minute to Chief of Staff, Brigadier M.J. Harris, 2 October 1987, 291-K1-11, NAA, Sydney.

¹³¹ Major V. Walsh., LAND COMD LO - NORFOLK ISLAND Minute 291/87, R553/1/1, 28 May 1987, 291-K1-11, NAA, Sydney. Major Walsh was a liaison officer who witnessed transshipment of personnel, vehicles and stores from air force C 130 transport aircraft to navy ships at Norfolk Island during the deployment phase of Operation *Morris Dance*. Also Stone, Interview and Stone, OP MORRIS DANCE Commander's Diary 21 May - 7 June 1987. Copy held by author.

¹³² Plan *Benefactor* was a contingency plan for short notice deployment of 3rd Brigade in emergency situations. Colonel J.F. Bertram., 'Lessons from OP "MORRISDANCE"', Minute COL (ADMIN) 5/87, 2 June 1987, 291-K1-11, NAA, Sydney.

¹³³ Gration, Interview.

challenge was to contemplate military action in secret but also allow the tactical level of command to take prudent preparatory action. The second was to streamline Government and ADF crisis machinery in areas, such as inter-departmental liaison and consultation, planning, force assignment and communication of strategic intent. The third was to specify command and joint logistics support arrangements early and include logisticians in initial planning. The fourth was to anticipate contingencies with relevant training and purchase of specialist equipment, including secure communications equipment, and to keep quantities on hand for short notice deployments. The fourth was to specify intelligence arrangements early enough to facilitate early warning, force protection and timely responses to threats. The fifth, and by no means the least challenge, was to get the operational and tactical levels of command from the three services working together more effectively and practising rapid deployment of land force elements by air and sea.

One of the features of *Morris Dance* was the different perceptions and attitudes of the strategic and tactical levels of command. General Gration had a first hand understanding of the Australian Government's intent while he advised political leaders and senior departmental officials on military response options. He also had the benefit of JIO and DFAT assessments of the situation in Fiji as well as information broadcast by the media. He based his assessment of the dangers that lay ahead in Fiji on these inputs and sought to calibrate Australia's initial military response carefully to accommodate political sensitivities in Australia and in Fiji as well as more generally in the South Pacific. It was Prime Minister Hawke's call on how to blend military and political imperatives and Gration's responsibility to manage the risks and deliver the required strategic effects.

Salter and Stone based their assessments of the dangers that lay ahead in Fiji on media reports and their preference to be prepared for worse case scenarios. They found it difficult to accept Gration's risk management of *Morris Dance* for several reasons. The first was that they felt that they could be trusted to keep secrets and to make prudent preparations without public exposure.¹³⁴ The second was that several higher levels of command interpreted Gration's strategic intent and complicated what he intended to be a simple contingency deployment. Orders issued to Salter and Stone via Army Office, Land Headquarters and HQ 3rd Brigade assumed that an evacuation would have to be commanded on the ground by an army commander and his headquarters, not

a naval officer aboard a ship. Gration's intention was the opposite. He envisaged army personnel acting as evacuation marshals in conformity to a naval plan that would be worked out in consultation with Stone at sea on the way to Fiji; a process reminiscent of the successful deployment of the AN and MEF to the south west Pacific to capture German military radio stations in 1914. The third reason was that Salter and Stone wished to prepare, deploy and operate as they and their men had been organised and trained. Down-sizing and leaving their machine guns and grenade launchers behind was an anathema to infantrymen, who prefer to operate with familiar and trusted teams and individuals around them, and weapons at their disposal to defend themselves as well as win military contests.

Gration's assessment of how the situation in Fiji would play out was vindicated by events. From a strategic perspective, he had delivered a short notice maritime evacuation option close to Fiji for the Government just in case events had not unfolded as they did. From an operational and tactical perspective, there had been too many risks. The processes and procedures for regional force projection were understandably rusty after a 15-year pause in offshore operations since the end of Australia's participation in the Vietnam War in 1972. However, there were systemic weaknesses in all of the enabling functions of force projection that increased risks unnecessarily.

Political volatility in the South Pacific suggested that there would be a need for more carefully calibrated regional projections of Australian military force in the future. Matthew Gubb's summary is apt:

A final point well illustrated by the Vanuatu case [Santo Rebellion in 1980] is the ultimate reliance of beleaguered microstates on rapid and decisive military assistance from one or two capable friends, rather than multilateral aid. The ease and speed with which unlawful elements can overwhelm a microstate government means that if external assistance is to be provided at all, then, as a rule, it must be provided extremely rapidly.¹³⁵

Rehearsal of National Force Projection - Exercise Kangaroo 89

Though not described at the time in terms of force projection, Exercise *Kangaroo 89* was a large scale national force projection from the southern and eastern heartlands to the north western hinterland to rehearse the defence of Australia. It would be the most significant domestic projection of Australian military force since World

¹³⁴ Stone, Interview.

War II. There was an emphasis on testing evolving joint command and control arrangements. General Gration had commissioned a report by Brigadier J.S. Baker on ADF joint command and control arrangements, knowing the results.¹³⁶ Informed by Baker's report, he decided to trial a joint operational level of command. He appointed the VCDF, Vice Admiral I.W. Knox, to act as a Commander Joint Force – Australia (CJFA) for the exercise and assigned headquarters staff to him from officers posted to the Australian Joint Warfare Establishment and 'shadow posted personnel from the Services for the period of the exercise and the prior work up activities'.¹³⁷ He envisaged Knox's headquarters, HQ Joint Forces Australia (HQJFA), being collocated with Air Headquarters at Glenbrook on the western outskirts of Sydney. Elements of both Maritime and Land Headquarters would join HQ JFA to simulate a permanent collocated joint headquarters.¹³⁸ In theory, Knox and his staff would interpret strategic guidance and then conduct *Kangaroo 89*. Thus, Gration and his staff would concentrate on the political interface in Canberra and Knox and his staff would concentrate on conducting simulated operations.¹³⁹

The concept for *Kangaroo 89* did not facilitate joint operations. In August 1988 General Gration identified a 'tendency towards three separate (maritime, air and land) exercises emerging'. He directed that planning be reoriented to 'ensure one integrated exercise'.¹⁴⁰ Integration was problematic because the three endorsed operational concepts were sequential rather than concurrent or integrated. The navy planned to fight a maritime battle in the Arafura Sea based on the scenario of an allied Blue task group intercepting an approaching Orange (enemy) task group, reminiscent of the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942. After this battle, maritime force elements would then stand by to support a land battle.¹⁴¹ The Air Force planned to practice operating with American and other allied aircraft to maintain 'airspace sovereignty' and 'fleet support operations', reminiscent of the air battle over Darwin and New Guinea as well as the Battle of Midway in 1942. After this period of air operations, aircraft would then be

¹³⁵ Matthew Gubb, *Vanuatu's 1980 Santo Rebellion*, p. 77.

¹³⁶ Department of Defence, 'Report on the Study into ADF Command Arrangements', Headquarters Australian Defence Force, Canberra, 1988, (Prepared by Brigadier J.S. Baker for the Chief of the Defence Force).

¹³⁷ Classified source.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, p. 112.

¹⁴⁰ Classified source, p. 4

¹⁴¹ Ibid, Annex F.

assigned to provide offensive and tactical air support for a land battle.¹⁴² However, the anticipated land battle was 'not expected to be of major proportions'.¹⁴³ There appeared to be little the navy or air force could do for the army after their single service activities, except provide surveillance and interdiction as well as some additional tactical mobility and some logistic support.¹⁴⁴ The exercise scenario allowed for only small groups of Orange raiders to challenge Blue land force elements that were to be widely dispersed to protect infrastructure, called 'vital area protection'. In reality, the only major land battle was to meet the challenges of logistic support – a battle to sustain 18 000 personnel deployed in remote locations - not to defeat conventionally capable enemy invaders. The real-time challenge would be to deploy, sustain, rotate and redeploy thousands of troops and a large fleet of vehicles during the exercise, and then return personnel and materiel to home locations on the east, south and south western coasts afterwards.

Exercise *Kangaroo 89* was the first opportunity to rehearse another level of command in northern Australia. Defence Minister Beazley approved the establishment of Northern Command (NORCOM) in March 1988 with its headquarters in Darwin. The new command was subordinate to the Land Commander in Sydney. Senior maritime and air force officers in the Northern Territory supported Commander NORCOM (COMNORCOM) as component commanders. His role was to plan and conduct surveillance operations with assigned forces across northern Australia and the northern approaches to the mainland - Australia's geographical frontline.¹⁴⁵ Accordingly, COMNORCOM, a one-star appointment, would coordinate surveillance and then orchestrate initial responses to incursions by hostile forces awaiting arrival of a senior joint commander, his headquarters and follow-on forces – a national projection of military force.

Activities for *Kangaroo 89* began in May 1989 when the first logistic elements moved from the east coast to the Northern Territory and continued through to mid-October, when the last logistic support unit returned to the east coast from Darwin. Major activities occurred in August. Though he did not use force projection terminology at the time, General Gration had decided not to rehearse a real-time warning period and a consequent period of time-constrained specific force preparation and tactical deployment. His priority was to maximise operating time in Australia's

¹⁴² Ibid, Annex H.

¹⁴³ Ibid, Annex G, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Promised close air support to the army did not eventuate due to restrictions on air hours.

northern hinterland within the exercise budget.¹⁴⁶ For the first ten days of August, COMNORCOM conducted surveillance and reconnaissance operations on behalf of the Land Commander. Over the next ten days, land forces moved across the continent in response to simulated raids in the Karratha area south-west of Darwin and a simulated commando attack on the air force base at Tindal, south of Darwin. During the last week of August, 3rd Brigade and 6th Brigade redeployed within the exercise area to contain and defeat enemy forces attempting to withdraw by air from a remote airstrip at Ngukurr on the Roper River, south of Darwin.

Though a *Kangaroo 89* Post Exercise Report prepared by Land Headquarters staff was not structured to address each function directly, it revealed deficiencies in most of the functions of force projection.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, exercise planners had created artificial conditions that resulted in several functions not being tested at all. In the opinion of this report, neither HQ ADF nor the *ad hoc* HQ JFA exercised joint command.¹⁴⁸ The three services moved their force elements independently and employed them separately within an exercise scenario written by the Joint Exercise Planning Staff group. The report went on to observe that neither General Gration nor Vice Admiral Knox issued strategic or operational level guidance respectively, or participated actively in the exercise by acting as higher level commanders. HQ ADF had not guided or synchronised inter-service planning processes, reconnaissance, intelligence, communications or movement. The report described the exercise scenario as ‘fanciful’ and unrepresentative of the build up of enemy operations on Australia’s northern approaches.¹⁴⁹ David Horner suggests that General Gration only envisaged a CJFA taking command for major operations. Theoretically, he would appoint one of the environmental commanders to handle lower level operations that favoured a particular environment.¹⁵⁰ For *Kangaroo 89*, he did neither effectively. Vice Admiral Knox was a notional commander with insufficient staff and communications to

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Gration, Interview.

¹⁴⁷ Land Headquarters, ‘Exercise Kangaroo 89, Land Command, Post Exercise Report’, Sydney, 30 November 1989. Copy held by author.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. The author of the report argued that an adversary would infiltrate personnel, such as Special Forces, into mainland Australia before ‘activity in the air-sea gap’, not afterwards as was assumed in the exercise scenario.

¹⁵⁰ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, p. 114.

synchronise the activities of the three services.¹⁵¹ None of the environmental commanders acted as a lead joint commander for phases of the exercise. There was no need. Each phase was designed as predominately single service activities.

It appeared to be too early to test the role NORCOM would play. Maybe this was a consequence of HQADF not participating and force elements from the three services not submitting to joint command, either under HQ JFA or NORCOM. Indeed, the army report asserted that the role of NORCOM was akin to 'a military district headquarters' providing garrison support and some local knowledge to participating units.¹⁵²

Part of the reason that the ADF could not make joint command work for *Kangaroo 89* was that force elements could not communicate efficiently - internally or externally – once they were in the field.¹⁵³ Force command needed secure, as well as open, communications links. Despite the requirement for technical coordination and direction, communications planning was conducted separately by the three environmental headquarters. The consequences were inefficient code, cryptographic, frequency and message traffic coordination and management. Deficiencies in secure strategic communications for forward environmental headquarters 'again hindered effective command and control'.¹⁵⁴

The Land Headquarters' report described tactical level communications as, 'adequate largely due to supplementation by Telecom facilities which were not targeted by Orange forces during the exercise'.¹⁵⁵ In other words, units used the telephone like other Australian citizens and the telephone system, normally a high priority target for infiltrators, was embargoed from simulated sabotage. The report described tactical service radio links as inadequate, unreliable and not secure. It contained hopeful statements that Project PARAKEET and Project RAVEN would overcome deficiencies in military communications by the late 1990s. It called for Project PARAKEET 'to be

¹⁵¹ For the purposes of the exercise, Vice Admiral I.W. Knox VCDF, was appointed CJFA but did not have a headquarters or means of communication to direct exercise activities. Ibid, p. 124.

¹⁵² Land Headquarters, 'Exercise Kangaroo 89', p. 20.

¹⁵³ A classified report written after the exercise attributed deficiencies in communications to: the age, capacity and limited number of equipments; shortages of trained personnel; a heavy reliance on Telecom systems which did not meet operational requirements; inadequacy of command and control communications facilities for a Commander afloat; the absence of an ADF multi-channel trunking system and poor ionospheric conditions which reduced the effectiveness of primary means of communications (HF). Classified source.

¹⁵⁴ Land Headquarters, 'Exercise Kangaroo 89', p. 23.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

accelerated if Army is to be able to meet credible contingencies in northern Australia and throughout the region' in the interim.¹⁵⁶

The Logistic Support Force (LSF) supported *Kangaroo 89* but neither deployed nor operated in a tactical manner during the exercise. Preliminary deployments of logistic units began in May and continued for 12 weeks so that logistic support was already in place for 18 000 personnel and a fleet of 256 M113A1 Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC), 16 main battle tanks and tank variants, nine Blackhawk helicopters and a number of light observation helicopters that would participate in the exercise.

However, the report deemed that *Kangaroo 89* was,

‘a good test for our logistic arrangements [but acknowledged that] there was no capability to allow for ammunition, canteen supplies, equipment pools, repair pools or a commander’s reserve to be deployed or resupplied from third line during the course of the exercise.’¹⁵⁷

Though, the newly-formed LSF had performed well, there were ‘inherent weaknesses’ in command and control arrangements, unresponsiveness and insufficient personnel for local purchase. The author of the report found this local purchase situation to be ‘ironic as the emphasis on local purchase stemmed from a decision not to hold stocks forward, as a measure to reduce manpower’.¹⁵⁸

Contracting of logistic support, especially road transport, had not worked satisfactorily. Some contracts were not in place in sufficient time for the arrival of force elements despite logistic units being in the exercise area for three months. There were control problems with hire stores, in particular ablution blocks and prefabricated buildings. The civil contract industry sub-contracted to small operators who failed to meet deadlines, comply with control arrangements and to secure items properly, such as machine guns in transit. ‘No major logistics problems were experienced’ but deficiencies in priorities and processes may have been masked by the length of time

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 24.

¹⁵⁷ The army uses four ‘lines of support’ to provide logistic support to force elements on operations. The terms apply to where the support will come from and what command and control arrangements will apply for each line, i.e. who will be responsible. First line support pertains to resources and logistic services under the control of unit commanders. Second line support pertains to the formation commander. Third line pertains to support provided by force commanders that is not organic to formations. The fourth line support is provided by logistic or administrative organisations from outside theatres of operations. Typically, fourth line relates to support provided from the National Support Area in Australia.

¹⁵⁸ Land Headquarters, ‘Exercise Kangaroo 89, p. 35.

afforded to logistic force elements to set up, stock up and solve problems that real operational conditions might not have afforded.¹⁵⁹

The report described strategic deployment and redeployment as confirming that, 'the movement of large numbers of personnel and large amounts of equipment can be achieved without great difficulty'.¹⁶⁰ However, there was an observation that the ADF movement instruction for *Kangaroo 89* was amended 800 times by signal and each amendment had to be processed manually.¹⁶¹ This appeared to be at odds with the ease the ADF had in moving its personnel and materiel.

The report identified 23 'Major Lessons Learned' and made 36 recommendations.¹⁶² Within the resource constraints of the exercise, it confirmed that land force elements from 1st Division based in Brisbane had sufficient generic force preparation to deploy to the north of Australia and conduct dispersed operations.¹⁶³ However, there was a range of capabilities needed before land forces could operate effectively in this setting. Night vision and surveillance technology was essential for 24 hour operations against enemy groups, who would use the night to offset a lack of air superiority and fire power.¹⁶⁴ The vast distances in the north of Australia warranted an enhancement of air support.¹⁶⁵ Communications needed to be upgraded by accelerating the replacement of tactical radios and force communications with secure satellite and high frequency links. There needed also to be a deployable joint force headquarters to direct planning at the operational and tactical levels, and to coordinate joint reconnaissance and surveillance, communications and intelligence plans provided by the strategic level of command.¹⁶⁶

Operation Picaresque

Operation *Picaresque* was a commitment to support a UN electoral mission in Namibia. It had been an operation in waiting for over ten years. In September 1978, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 435 that gave a mandate for UN-

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 36.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 29.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid, pp. 41-7.

¹⁶³ The exercise was 'one sided' because of resource constraints. This resulted in only Blue forces being umpired and activities being controlled from a master list of incidents created for Orange forces to exercise Blue forces.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 44 and 27.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 16-7.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 41.

supervised elections in this troubled south-west African trust territory administered by South Africa, to begin a political process towards independence. Australia agreed to support a UN multi-national force, called UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), that would be deployed to create a secure environment for the elections. Australian participation was motivated by an obligation 'to act responsibly and co-operatively in efforts to settle disputes and restore stability in areas of conflict' in concert with American and British allies, who had sponsored the UN initiative in the Security Council.¹⁶⁷

Deploying UNTAG to conduct elections was not feasible until South Africa, Cuba and Angola agreed to restrain the political and military organisations violently vying for power in both Namibia and neighbouring Angola. South Africa had agreed to withdraw from Namibia and Cuba had agreed to withdraw from Angola. The 305-strong Australian contingent was to be made up of 17 Construction Squadron and its workshop as well as headquarters staff that would establish a Chief Engineer (CE) headquarters within HQ UNTAG. Though the squadron had been brought up to seven days notice to move in February 1979 after UN Resolution 435 was first promulgated, ten years had elapsed without periodic updating of the Australian Joint Service Plan *Witan* that specified stock holdings and deployment arrangements.¹⁶⁸ When *Witan* was activated in August 1988 in anticipation of a ceasefire agreement being signed and a prompt deployment thereafter, 'planning commenced from scratch' and 'preparation of the ASC [Australian Service Contingent] occurred under difficult circumstances'.¹⁶⁹ Many containers that were supposed to contain contingency stocks were now empty; the result of personnel borrowing these stocks for ongoing activities and exercises, and not returning or reconstituting them.¹⁷⁰ There was an understandable reluctance to authorise expenditure of funds to prepare the UNTAG contingent until a ceasefire was deemed to

¹⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Namibia – Australian Participation in UNTAG', Outward Cablegram, 20 February 1979, p. 4, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁶⁸ 'On reactivating [Plan Witan] in August 1988, it was evident that much of the information on file and within the AJSP was either dated or inaccurate. There appeared to have been little attempt to update intelligence on Namibia and there was no provision for pre-deployment training. Training in explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), first aid, command post operations, radio/telephone procedures and communications, cultural matters, and knowledge of the UN organisation and procedures was deficient.' Australian Army, 'United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia', *Training Information Bulletin*, No 63, Army Doctrine Centre, 13 September 1995, p. 2-3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 2-2.

¹⁷⁰ K.W. Pippard, Interview with author, 20 December 2004. Pippard was the operations officer for the first Australian UNTAG contingent.

be holding and the UN Security Council had endorsed it again and ordered UNTAG to deploy. Consequently, ADF planners and units earmarked for deployment waited.

General Gration issued a warning order on 4 September 1988 immediately after Cabinet decided to confirm Australia's commitment to UNTAG.¹⁷¹ The Land Commander, Major General N.R. Smethurst, acting as the Mounting [preparation] Authority for *Picaresque*, issued a further warning order on 8 September.¹⁷² The CGS, Lieutenant General L.G. O'Donnell, who was responsible to General Gration for overall preparation and dispatch of army force elements for operations, issued an Army Office Staff Instruction on 12 September.¹⁷³ Smethurst followed up on 31 October with a further warning order for concentration of Australian Service Contingent (ASC) UNTAG at Holsworthy, nominating 1st Brigade in Holsworthy as 'the Fostering Formation' and 1 Construction Regiment as 'the Fostering Unit'.¹⁷⁴ On 9 November, Smethurst contributed further with an instruction for the raising, preparation and deployment of ASC UNTAG 'in order to advance essential preparation and planning' noting that his mounting instruction should be read in conjunction with General O'Donnell's staff instruction.¹⁷⁵ In effect, Lieutenant Colonel D.L. Thearle, CO 1 Construction Regiment, 17 Construction Squadron's parent unit, had two generals telling him what to do.

As a part of generic preparations, Colonel R.D. Warren, Director, Royal Australian Engineers (RAE) and the appointed UNTAG contingent commander, put the contingent through two weeks training and administration from 15 November to 1 December. This was prudent because this first contingent (UNTAG 1) was comprised of personnel from 36 donor units. This supplementation had been required because only 50 percent of an already under-strength 17 Construction Squadron had volunteered to serve in Namibia. After completion of this training, Warren put a reconnaissance party on 14 days notice to move. The main body of troops dispersed awaiting orders to concentrate again in Holsworthy where they would begin 40 days of specific force

¹⁷¹ Chief of the Defence Force, CDF SIC JFD, 042358ZSEP88, 4 September 1988, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁷² Land Headquarters, Warning Order LANCOMAUS SIG JFD OPS 17958, 080506ZSEP88, 8 September 1988, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁷³ Army Office, AOSI 23/88, 12 September 1988, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁷⁴ Land Headquarters, Warning Order for Concentration, LANCOMAUS SIG JFD OPS 20125, 310523Z OCT 88, 31 October 1988, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁷⁵ Land Headquarters, 'Land Headquarters - Australia Mounting Instruction for the Preparation and Deployment of ASC UNTAG Namibia (Operation Picaresque)', 9 November 1988, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

preparation.¹⁷⁶ Thus, Warren assessed that he needed just over 40 days preparation time before leaving for Namibia and had a reconnaissance group ready to move.

Sustainment arrangements were based on General Smethhurst dispatching the contingent with 30 days stocks. General O'Donnell and the army's Logistic Command, located in Melbourne, would be responsible for sustainment thereafter. Land Headquarters staff would handle personnel administration including providing reinforcements, in conjunction with Training Command, and also providing a 24 hour point of contact for 'problem resolution'.¹⁷⁷ Presumably, the newly-appointed Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Logistics (ACLOG), Major General J.C. Grey, and Logistics Branch staff in HQADF would advise General Gration on logistic support to *Picaresque* and keep him informed if there were any problems.

On 22 November 1988, an Australian engineer officer, Major J. Hutchings, who was attached to the UN UNTAG Planning Team at UN Headquarters in New York, had warned that:

the US Government intends to push for a Security Council resolution, thus authorising deployment, in the first or second week in Dec 88. It is likely if this occurs then D-Day will become a day in the first or second week in Feb 89. D-Day is the day all forces are in location ready to assume responsibility for Namibia. This therefore puts D-60 [60 days before D Day] as early as the first week in Dec 88.¹⁷⁸

Possibly prompted by Hutchings' report, General O'Donnell authorised Colonel Warren to establish his contingent headquarters at Holsworthy Barracks on the south western outskirts of Sydney in early December 1988. A ceasefire agreement was signed on 22 December. Elections were scheduled for November 1989, with independence to follow in April 1990. The UN wanted rapid deployment. However, this desire was not matched with prompt UN action. Even after the Security Council endorsed Resolution 435 on 16 January 1989, three weeks after declaration of the ceasefire, the UN would not authorise reconnaissance by contributing nations until its own reconnaissance group and mission advance party had arrived. While the ADF complied with this directive, other contributing nations, such as Britain and Canada, conducted reconnaissance by sending planning teams to Namibia unofficially.¹⁷⁹ The UN did not deploy its own

¹⁷⁶ Land Headquarters – Australia, 'Mounting Instruction', p. 3.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁷⁸ J. Hutchings, UNTAG Namibia – Update from Major J. Hutchings, Australian Embassy Washington Cable, 22 November 1988., paragraph 4, p. 1, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁷⁹ Australian Army, 'United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia' p. 2-2. Also Pippard, Interview.

reconnaissance group until 19 February and conducted its first briefing to national contingent commanders, including Colonel Warren, in New York on 22-24 February 1989. By this time members of UNTAG-1 had been given plenty of time to concentrate in barracks at Ingleburn after receiving pre-deployment training and administration at the School of Military Engineering. However, Colonel Warren and his reconnaissance team were not authorised to visit Namibia.

In the end, General Gration directed General O'Donnell on 7 March 1989 to 'raise, train and equip' an engineer force to UNTAG four days before the planned departure of the advance party.¹⁸⁰ The directive was an example of the joint command and control challenges that faced the ADF, in general, and Colonel Warren, in particular, for this operation. Gration made O'Donnell responsible for the national administrative and logistic support of the Australian UNTAG force and to replace contingents every six months. However, Gration would assume command of the force from O'Donnell 'from the time of loading in UN transport for movement to Namibia'.¹⁸¹ Colonel Warren would exercise full command of his contingent while under operational control of the UN commander in Namibia. He would report to General Gration for national command matters and to General O'Donnell for all national administrative and logistic matters. His 24-hour point of contact would be an operations room in General Smethurst's Land Headquarters.

Efficient command and control, communications and logistic support would be crucial for the success of *Picaresque*. Though the ceasefire in Namibia was holding, there was always a chance that rogue elements from any of the antagonists could attack UN personnel. The Australians would need reliable communications because they were dispersed in remote locations to provide engineer services to UN contingents. These small detachments were vulnerable to attack if hostilities resumed. International time zone differences meant that most emergencies in Namibia would occur 'after hours' in Australia.

In addition to possible danger to the safety of Australian troops, there was the certainty of logistic support challenges. The UN Field Service was responsible for overall logistic support in Namibia as well as providing construction materials for the Australian contingent to meet its responsibilities. Logistic support was made easier

¹⁸⁰ General P.C. Gration, 'Directive by The Chief of the Defence Force to The Chief of the General Staff United Nations Transition Assistance Group – Namibia Operation Picaresque', CDF Directive 1/1989, 3 March 1989, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

because Namibia was a developed area of Africa with well-established infrastructure and a thriving economy. The South African Defence Force was also able to release military infrastructure and supplies to UNTAG as South African troops withdrew. However, the Australians were operating a fleet of over 200 vehicles and plant equipment and other major items, such as water purification equipment, generators, and refrigerators. These items would need spare parts for servicing and repair that would not be available locally.

It was questionable whether the joint command and control arrangements would be sufficiently responsive to meet Colonel Warren's needs for direction and support, and General Gration's need for timely information ahead of the media that would be reporting and broadcasting to the world instantly. In an emergency, such as death or injury to Australian personnel or resumption of hostilities that threatened the contingent, Warren could contact the duty officer in Russell Offices, Canberra, to put him in touch with General Gration's staff or Gration himself. For logistic support and personnel issues Warren would have to contact Land Headquarters staff first, who would then pass them onto Army Office in Canberra, who would then pass them onto logistic staff at HQ ADF, who would then pass them onto staff at Logistic Command in Melbourne during working hours, who might then have to pass them back to Army Office or HQ ADF for resolution if there were conflicts in priorities, especially during a time when the preparation and conduct of *Kangaroo 89* was consuming significant staff time and resources.

The UNTAG-1 advance party flew out of Richmond airbase near Sydney on C5 Galaxy aircraft under UN arrangements, arriving in their bases at Windhoek and Grootfontein on 11 and 14 March.¹⁸² On 18 March, Major K.W. Pippard, Colonel Warren's operations officer, reported that 'It has become obvious that we are the best prepared of all contingents' and 'Both morale and work rate are high.'¹⁸³ By UN standards, Warren was probably right about being a well-prepared contingent. However, there were deficiencies over the coming months that had their origins in poorly-informed specific force preparation and an inefficient logistic support system.

Reconnaissance for *Picaresque* did not inform specific force preparation. Major Hutchings had accompanied the UN reconnaissance group in February and had reported

¹⁸² It took the UN another four weeks to arrange transport for the main body of the contingent and its engineer plant, vehicles, stores and equipment by air and by sea. Pippard, Interview.

¹⁸³ CE UNTAG, Facsimile to HQ ADF, 18 March 1989, pp. 2-3. Copy held by author.

back to HQ ADF via the Australian Embassy in Washington after his return. However, according to tactical level reports, this information did not get through to 17 Construction Squadron.¹⁸⁴ Warren and the officer commanding 17 Construction Squadron, Major D. Crago, did not receive authorisation to conduct a tactical level reconnaissance in Namibia despite the weeks of waiting.¹⁸⁵ This contributed to a lack of balance because the contingent did not know what would be expected of it after arrival and was 'over-structured' for some of the services it would have to provide and 'under-structured' for others.¹⁸⁶ 'The plant component of the contingent was too large in both manpower and equipment. ... Combat engineers were generally in short supply. ... a works section should have been deployed. ... The contingent was required to maintain a civil power grid in the north-east of the country. [and] ... did not have an electrical engineer on establishment'. There was no postal clerk to handle 'The high volume of mail received and dispatched by the contingent' and there was insufficient catering staff to support dispersed groups.¹⁸⁷

Several months had been available to analyse logistic and communications requirements after General Gration warned 17 Construction Squadron to be on stand-by for deployment to Namibia on 11 August 1988. A later operational analysis assessed that:

Little guidance was given, the chain of command was ill-defined, and tasking was coming from five agencies (Headquarters ADF, Army Office, UN Headquarters New York, Headquarters Land Command and Headquarters 1 Const Regt [Construction Regiment], with orders being contradictory.¹⁸⁸

The anticipated lag in UN logistics support and the requirement to support an Australian fleet of vehicles and equipment in Namibia obligated the ADF to establish a supply chain from Australia. This was done through use of the DFAT diplomatic bag or by commercial air freight: a system that would work for urgent small items but was problematic for the plethora of spare parts required. Compounding this problem was the age of vehicles issued to the contingent:

[They were] at the end of their service life and proved to be unreliable and a maintenance liability. ... [They had been] drawn from many units. These units took advantage of the

¹⁸⁴ Australian Army, 'United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia', p. 2-6.

¹⁸⁵ Pippard, Interview.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. Gration, Annotations.

¹⁸⁷ Australian Army, 'United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia', pp.2-6-2-9.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 4-1.

situation to get rid of their unserviceable vehicles. Considerable time and effort was spent in rectifying problems on arrival in country.¹⁸⁹

The resupply of spare parts for the contingent's plant, vehicles and equipment using a UN system, called a Letter of Assist, failed to deliver ordered items.¹⁹⁰ The contingent's 'field communications capability was initially unsatisfactory ... leaving detachments out of radio contact for extended periods' with no alternative means of communications except couriers. Fortunately, the UN was able to assist by providing 'equipment that proved more suitable for the conditions and more reliable than the Australian equipment'.¹⁹¹ This situation echoed the problems encountered during *Kangaroo 89*.

Prompted by reports that all was not well with logistic support to *Picaresque*, Major G.T. Burnham was designated as 'the Logistic Branch Army Office/Logistic Command Representative' in early September 1989 and ordered to 'investigate and ascertain the method and adequacy of logistic support'.¹⁹² Burnham was in a good position to observe, conduct interviews and report on the specific force preparation and rotation of the second contingent (UNTAG-2) as well as the experiences of UNTAG-1 because he travelled with UNTAG-2 during deployment and returned with the first contingent during redeployment.¹⁹³

Burnham's report highlighted several deficiencies. While not reporting extensively on the specific force preparation and deployment of UNTAG-1, he concluded bluntly that 'the ability to satisfactorily pack stores for overseas deployment has been lost' and that the quantities of repair parts and medical stores assigned to both

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, pp. 4-3 and 4-4.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 4-3. Items did not arrive until the second contingent was about to leave Namibia to return to Australia almost 12 months later in February 1990.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 4-13.

¹⁹² Colonel L.P. Miller, Director of Logistic Operations – Army, 'Terms of Reference for Logistic Command Representative on Visit to UNTAG', 29 August 1989. Colonel M.A. Hill (for General Officer Commanding, Logistic Command), 'Terms of Reference for Logistic Command Representative on visit to UNTAG', 1 September 1989, 570-K1-182, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁹³ Possibly mindful of his position as a staff officer at the operational level of command who had contributed to the specific force preparation and deployment of UNTAG-1 and UNTAG-2, Burnham reported in qualified terms such as 'generally satisfactory' and 'difficulties have been experienced ... but the situation is improving'. He reported back to Director Logistic Operations – Army, Colonel L.P. Miller, through Colonel Logistic Operations, Headquarters Logistic Command, Colonel M.A. Hill in October after spending just under four weeks in Namibia visiting each headquarters and force element in UNTAG.

contingents were inadequate.¹⁹⁴ The preparation of stores and equipment for UNTAG-1 and their loading on commercial shipping as well as unloading and reception in Namibia verified that most of the lessons from the projections to Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 had also been lost.¹⁹⁵ Thousands of dollars worth of stores and equipment had been pilfered whilst in transit and that there were no satisfactory reception arrangements in place for the arrival of the contingent's vehicles and stocks.¹⁹⁶

The army found force rotation difficult amidst competing priorities. General O'Donnell, probably unknowingly, followed a precedent set in 1885 for the colonial force projection to the Sudan. He delegated preparation of UNTAG-2 and reception of UNTAG-1 to HQ Second Military District (HQ 2 MD), formerly HQ Eastern Command, located at Victoria Barracks, in Sydney.¹⁹⁷ Under the overall control of HQ 2MD, he made 2 Base Workshops and 21 Supply Battalion located on the south western fringe of Sydney at Moorebank responsible for logistic preparations for UNTAG-2. These three organisations were not used to preparing and dispatching contingents for overseas service or administering over 300 personnel returning from overseas.¹⁹⁸ The last time HQ 2 MD had prepared and despatched an expeditionary force had been in 1965 when the 1 RAR group had also endured unsatisfactory service from 2nd Base Ordnance Depot, 21 Supply Battalion's predecessor.¹⁹⁹

Staff at HQ 2MD were later reported to have not been fully aware of their logistic responsibilities.²⁰⁰ It also proved difficult to prepare UNTAG 2 because higher priority was given to *Kangaroo 89*.²⁰¹ Contingent staff had to make informal arrangements with colleagues in units and supply agencies at Holsworthy and in Moorebank to acquire sufficient vehicles and communications equipment for pre-deployment training. These *ad hoc* arrangements did not succeed in overcoming systemic weaknesses. Supply depot staff issued UNTAG 2 with several defective

¹⁹⁴ Medical equipment was issued without being checked. As a consequence important items, such as the 'fibrillator monitor' that would be used to monitor heartbeats were deficient leads and unserviceable. Major G.T. Burnham, 'Report on Visit to ASC UNTAG Namibia by Major G.T. Burnham', HQ Logistic Command, Melbourne, 12 October 1989, p. II and p. I of executive summary.p.4.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 3 and 4.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ Army Office Service Instruction 23/88, Annex O.

¹⁹⁸ Pippard, Interview. Pippard recalled that reception arrangements by 2 MD staff for personnel returning to Australia was inefficient and cumbersome. After being away from family and friends for six months this was irksome

¹⁹⁹ Breen, *First to Fight*, p. 13. Breen, 'Problems of an Expeditionary Force', pp. 30-33.

²⁰⁰ Burnham, 'Report on Visit to ASC UNTAG', p. 17.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

weapons and some unserviceable medical equipment, and either insufficient or excessive numbers of other items.²⁰² Initially there was no automated means of monitoring inventories or issuing stock. A stores accounting computer system called Auto Q was issued hurriedly without sufficient training as a trial while UNTAG-2 was involved in 'an intense period of the preparation phase'.²⁰³ Burnham concluded that, 'it should never have been issued to the unit' until there were sufficient operators, and the unit had loaded its database and was used to using it to account for and issue items.²⁰⁴ An alternative would have been to leave the contingent to follow well-established manual procedures rather than add an additional complication to specific force preparation during this busy period.

The inefficiencies and cumbersome processes of Australian logistics were minor compared to the logistic system operated by the UN in Namibia where long delays were typical.²⁰⁵ As a consequence, both Australian contingents had to rely on the ADF logistic system for supply of particular spare parts and items. Results were uneven. Burnham reported that:

The availability of equipment for operational tasking has not dropped below 80 percent with the exception of Landrovers and Scammels [Plant Transporter Prime-movers, i.e. flat-bed trucks] which have been as low as 65 and 40 percent respectively. The operational viability of the units was only maintained through the availability of UN provided vehicles.²⁰⁶

He recommended the use of regular Australian air force resupply flights to overcome problems with the supply of spare parts and amenities, and to enable back-loading of items for repair and other unwanted stores.²⁰⁷ Earlier in his report, he noted that, 'Under AOSI 23/88 [General O'Donnell's instructions for UNTAG 2], regular dedicated aircraft flights to Namibia in support of ASC UNTAG were to be provided. As a result of a decision taken within HQ ADF, these flights did not eventuate.'²⁰⁸

²⁰² Australian Army, 'United Nations Transition Group (UNTAG) in Namibia', p. 4-6.

²⁰³ Burnham, 'Report on Visit to ASC UNTAG', p. 15.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Burnham commented that 'Logistic planning for the support of the UNTAG force in the Mission Area appears to have been non-existent'. Polish, Canadian and Danish supply units assigned by their nations to support UNTAG deployed with personnel, but no stock. Ibid, p. 7.

²⁰⁶ Many Land Rovers had not been checked properly or serviced before being issued. As a consequence, they broke down in Namibia. A particular problem was gear boxes. Ibid, p. 12.

²⁰⁷ Burnham, 'Report on Visit to ASC UNTAG', p. 15.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

While describing logistic support arrangements as 'generally satisfactory', Burnham's report exposed systemic weaknesses in the processes and procedures for specific force preparation, deployment, rotation of contingents and force sustainment.²⁰⁹ He also noted that redeployment would have been more efficient had a team of specialists been assigned to UNTAG-1 to assist with 'preservation, packing, handling of ammunition, movement coordination and ship loading'.²¹⁰ His major recommendations focused on force elements deploying with 60 days stocks and having another 60 days stock in Australia to be drawn on and topped up progressively. He noted that the system for issuing items to deploying contingents was inefficient and that insufficient time had been allowed for thorough checking of items that subsequently broke down in Namibia.²¹¹

In the end, the UNTAG mission was successful. The ceasefire held and armed forces withdrew, or were disarmed and demobilised. There were no significant outbreaks of violence during UN-sponsored elections in November 1989. UNTAG withdrew on schedule in the first half of 1990. Both Australian contingents adapted well to their operational circumstances and served with distinction in Namibia. The keys to success were close working relations with the British and Canadian contingents, friendly relations with both black and white Namibians, improvisation, initiative and astute use of local resources. Junior leaders and small teams performed well from dispersed locations.²¹² Fortunately, Namibia already had military infrastructure, essential services and sufficient economic development to sustain UNTAG forces, except in the less developed and more war-ravaged northern areas. Consequently, the logistic burden on the Australian engineers was lightened and the tempo of operations was high, but not overly demanding. There were no negative consequences from the poor standard of vehicles and equipment issued to both UNTAG contingents, lack of reliable tactical communications equipment and unresponsive UN and ADF logistic support.

Observations

Examined together, *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89* revealed a number of deficiencies in the functions of force projection, including some that had been glimpsed

²⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 16.

²¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 15 and 18.

²¹¹ Ibid, pp. 17-8.

during the short duration of *Morris Dance*. Unlike *Morris Dance*, there had been plenty of planning and preparation time, and none of the functions were tested under dangerous or hurried operational conditions. While both *Morris Dance* and *Picaresque* had exposed planning, and command and control difficulties, *Picaresque* had sufficient duration to expose problems with sustainment. The duration of *Kangaroo 89* should have tested logistic support as well, but exercise planners had put artificial arrangements in place in order to maximise the time force elements could use to exercise tactically after arrival. The environmental commanders employed forces for two weeks in one-sided activities. Orange forces did not operate freely against arriving and deploying Australian and allied Blue force elements, as might be the case for force projections to a military contest.

Both *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89* confirmed that that there was still much to do to apply joint force command and sustainment arrangements in the field. The command arrangements for *Picaresque* were unable to deliver efficient specific force preparation, force rotation or responsive logistic support. The arrangements for *Kangaroo 89* did not exercise the joint strategic or operational levels of command. The environmental commanders, their forward headquarters and their force elements exercised separately. By not participating, the strategic level of command left each of the services' contributions to *Kangaroo 89* unguided, uncoordinated and occasionally uncooperative.

Command and control problems originated from a lack of command unity and continuity as well as not applying the principle that logistics is a function of command. Operation *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89* were cases in point. For *Picaresque*, there was no single commander and headquarters staff responsible for preparing, dispatching, employing, protecting and rotating the two Australian contingents. If one officer, subordinate to the CDF, had known that he was solely responsible for the performance of Australian troops on this overseas operation, he and his headquarters would have exercised determined oversight to ensure that they were well-prepared, well-equipped and well-supported. In short, no single officer was accountable for *Picaresque* from beginning to end - except the CDF.

For *Kangaroo 89*, CJFA and HQ JFA did not have habitual relationships with the environmental commanders either for the conduct of day-to-day activities or for the conduct of the planning and conduct of the exercise. Sustainment was treated as a separate supporting function for *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89*. Logistic Command in

²¹² Pippard, Interview.

Melbourne did not operate a 24-hour service for problem solving and remained unresponsive to operational and exercise imperatives for *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89* respectively. The case for establishing a permanent joint force commander and a joint headquarters that would command assigned forces from the three services, as well as the means of resupply, was building.

There were signs that the ADF was preparing for the future defence of Australia by rehearsing the past. Maritime and air force elements manoeuvred forward of the northern coast to defeat approaching enemy maritime and air force elements; scenarios reminiscent of 1942. Land forces were left to deal with low level contingencies across the top end of the continent. This was a scenario akin to incursions by Japanese reconnaissance and raider elements before more significant lodgement by main forces, had the Kokoda campaign in 1942 turned out differently. The ADF was not synchronising maritime, land and air power into littoral power. The defence of Australian territorial sovereignty obligated all three services to project force together from the southern and eastern heartlands into both Australia's hinterland and the northern archipelago.

Though the merit of the DOA87 strategic posture was debated by commentators in the late 1980s, this endorsed government strategy and Australia's geographic imperatives obligated synchronised maritime, land and air force projection. Even with enhancement of infrastructure in the northwest of the continent and the planned relocation of conventional land and maritime force elements there, there would still need to be substantial projection from east coast bases and supply depots to the top end of the continent. Political sensitivities about sacrificing Australian territory and military concerns about giving an opponent the advantage of forward operating bases close to the homeland obligated land force projection to Australian administered territories offshore. The campaign to defend Australia in 1942 suggested that PNG would also have to be denied to approaching enemy forces by deploying land force elements there as well. Those land forces would need the support of the navy and the air force.

The Land Headquarters post exercise report for *Kangaroo 89* stated that the functions of force projection were not tested fully due to financial constraints.²¹³ However, the deployment of logistic and engineer units three months ahead of the main force was not only expensive but also created an artificial operational environment.

²¹³ This excuse is offered several times in Land Headquarters, 'Exercise Kangaroo 89', pp. 1-2, 5, 17-19, 20, 26, 29 and 30.

This benign situation was reminiscent of the deployment of Australian land forces to Vietnam in 1965 where the Americans provided force protection and sustainment for arriving Australian force elements in an established forward operating base at Bien Hoa Airbase. By not rehearsing force projection to a simulated hostile environment for *Kangaroo 89* and allowing a leisurely, untroubled build up of logistic support, the ADF remained reliant on allies or the UN to secure and set up forward operating bases and make reception arrangements. For his part, General Gration set priorities. He had not designed *Kangaroo 89* to rehearse or test mounting or forward operating base arrangements, tactical deployment or force sustainment and protection. There were more important things to do in the time available.²¹⁴

Though lessons from projections to Vietnam in 1965 and 1966 did not appear to have been applied, some difficulties were understandable. The shift in strategic emphasis away from expeditionary operations, that had begun with AD76 and had been continued by DOA87, moved priorities and processes in the ADF towards maritime and air defence of the approaches to the continent. Furthermore, there had been no requirement to project military force for 15 years until *Morris Dance* in 1987. So the ADF was out of practice for *Picaresque*. However, strategic guidance from 1976 until 1987 did not preclude projecting military force for reasons other than the defence of Australia. The Dibb Report and DOA87 accommodated the requirement to participate occasionally in offshore operations. The establishment of air-portable 3rd Brigade in Townsville on short notices to move testified to this strategic intent. Operation *Morris Dance* and *Picaresque* were not complex activities. They should have been trouble-free dry runs. Both operations exposed systemic weaknesses that put additional pressure on the tactical level of command and increased risk.

It was disappointing to see small-scale offshore operations not go as well as they should have for tactical commanders and their subordinates. It was more concerning that force projection did not go well for rehearsals of the defence of the Australian mainland. Expeditions like *Morris Dance* and *Picaresque* were small demonstrations of ADF capability, as well as Australia's regional and international good citizenship. Exercise *Kangaroo 89* was rehearsing Australia's defence posture as well as an aspiration for Australian military self-reliance.²¹⁵ Allowing for financial constraints, it

²¹⁴ Gration, Annotations.

²¹⁵ Department of Defence, 'Defence Report 1990-1991', Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1991, Preface, p. 5.

was still a higher order activity intended to test new command and control arrangements and ADF preparedness to defend the Australian mainland – the main game.²¹⁶

The ADF was still evolving into a joint defence force in the late 1980s. Operation *Morris Dance* was a short notice deployment in response to an unexpected and volatile political situation. None of the services had rehearsed jointly for political emergencies and consequent evacuation operations in the near region. This small-scale projection was a valuable ‘wake up call’. Operation *Morris Dance* confirmed historical precedents that Australian Governments would expect the ADF to project military force offshore at short notice in an emergency, especially in support of allies. Operation *Picaresque* was also a valuable warning for meeting the challenges of deploying and sustaining contingents serving with the UN on multi-national peace support operations. Some deficiencies were also understandable and expected for *Kangaroo 89*. It was a test bed for evolving joint command and control arrangements, as well as the first major trial for meeting the challenges of operating in the harsh northern regions of Australia.

In 1989, the question could have been asked whether Australia was sufficiently self-reliant to project joint military force across the continent, or further afield, on time and in good order. Based on *Morris Dance*, *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89*, the answer would most likely have been, ‘Not quite ready yet’.

²¹⁶ Compliance to DOA87 obligated the ADF to project military force from mainland bases to engage hostile forces using sea, land and air approaches to Australia and its territories. The physical characteristics of the area of direct military interest specified in DOA87 demanded a defence force ‘able to track and target an adversary and able to mount sea and air operations throughout the area [as well as] a defence force with range, endurance, and mobility, and independent logistic support. DOA87, Preface, p. vii, and p. 3.

Chapter 3

Projections to the Gulf and Somalia

From the perspective of Australia's military force projection, the first four years after the end of the Cold War were significant. From 1990 until the end of 1993, historical precedent combined with strategic and force structure reviews to shape Australia's military experiences for the remainder of the decade. The first precedent was an enduring impulse to participate in the military emergencies of powerful allies. The second, echoing the emphasis of Australia's immediate post-World War II foreign policy, was for Australia to play a more significant role in UN peace keeping operations. Recently reminded obligations to take a leadership role in regional crises also continued with the beginning of what became known as the Bougainville Crisis that would embroil PNG, Australia's nearest northern neighbour, in a war with secessionists in its most eastern island province. A massacre at the Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili, East Timor, reminded Australia of the continuing difficulties its other northern neighbour, Indonesia, was also having with what its government saw as secessionists.

1990 was a scene-setting year. The Government refined its strategic posture in light of regional developments in the late 1980s and the end of the Cold War. The Department of Defence produced a classified assessment of Australia's strategic priorities for the 1990s (ASP90) to update DOA87.¹ This document set priorities for enhancing joint command, control and communications, intelligence, surveillance, maritime patrol and response as well as the creation of flexible, 'rapid reaction ground forces' in the north of Australia.² The general principles for force structure focused on capabilities that were relevant to low and escalated low level conflict. The emphases were on operations in northern Australia, particularly in Australia's sea and air approaches, as well as joint operations – the elusive goal of achieving interoperability and cooperation between the services.

The Government dispatched three war ships to the Gulf in August 1990 - an example of Australia's penchant to support allies in military emergencies. The decision to support a US-led multi-national response to an Iraqi occupation of Kuwait also

¹ Classified in 1990 and released as an unclassified version in 1992, Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, Australia Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992. Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, p. 84.

² Department of Defence, 'Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s', p. 1.

corresponded to the Australian Government's inclination at the time to support UN-endorsed military action - especially if major allies were involved.

In 1991 planning for Exercise *Kangaroo 92* began. Like *Kangaroo 89*, this exercise was set within the context of short warning conflict in northern Australia. It was the next opportunity to test Australia's strategic priorities. The conduct of *Kangaroo 92* confirmed that the weakest functions of Australian military force projection were deployment, as well as force command and sustainment. Like *Kangaroo 89*, none of these functions, except force employment, were exercised under simulated operational conditions. It remained to be seen whether these weaknesses would manifest during offshore operations.

By early 1993, there were a number of operations testing the functions of force projection under real-time conditions, as the Government continued to support UN missions. Contingents of communications specialists were in Cambodia and Western Sahara, and a 1000-strong battalion group had deployed to Africa. They were measures of ADF proficiency in force projection. The most significant was Operation *Solace* in Somalia. This operation involved preparation and deployment of a major army combat unit at short notice and its sustainment with navy, air force and commercial assets along lengthy lines of communication. This scenario was relevant to Australia's strategic posture for rapid reaction land forces operating across thousands of kilometres in the north of Australia at short notice. Thus, it was a joint operation that would mark either a positive or a negative milestone in the ADF search for proficiency in planning and conducting joint operations for the defence of Australia.

This chapter begins by examining briefly the projection to the Gulf before summarising revelations about national force projection from *Kangaroo 92*. The core of the chapter is a detailed examination of *Solace*. The reason for this case study is to juxtapose strategic intentions and tactical outcomes. For example, Defence's strategic priorities were to invest in command, control and communications as well as intelligence gathering and joint interoperability and cooperation. Operation *Solace* demonstrated that after three years these investments were not paying off in the field. Joint command and control and intelligence as well as joint logistic support emerged as risk factors in Australian military force projection.

Maritime Projection to the Gulf - 1990

The deployment of a navy task group to the Gulf War in August 1990 marked a substantial improvement in force projection, especially in command and control; described as ‘a coming of age of the ADF’.³ David Horner in *The Gulf Commitment* wrote that ‘The Gulf crisis was the first major test of the new command arrangements’, concluding that ‘It [Operation *Damask*] would seem to be an ideal model for future ADF activity’.⁴ He gave the ADF a glowing report card. Strategic policy making machinery was ‘highly effective’. Cooperation between military and civilian staff had been ‘excellent’. Defence staff ‘reacted quickly to provide viable military options to government’. Between 20 August 1990 and 29 February 1991, an augmented COSC had met on 60 occasions to discuss the Gulf Operation.⁵ Planning benefited from the recent reorganisation. The new role of DIO [Defence Intelligence Organisation] with its responsibility for operational as well as strategic intelligence was vindicated. Finally, he wrote ‘The Gulf operation appeared to justify the broad ADF command arrangements that had been introduced during the previous five years’.⁶

Logistics, including air resupply, worked well. Horner quotes Commodore C.J. Oxenbould, commander of one of the navy task groups, as saying ‘The ships were supported by an excellent logistic chain which, with the support from RAAF transport, kept us well supplied’.⁷ Horner also pointed out, ‘But the ability to support and sustain air or land units was not tested’.⁸ Operation *Damask* only involved naval vessels, a small embarked army anti-aircraft detachment and a few air force resupply sorties flying in and out of established and secure airfields. Rear Admiral R.G. Taylor, Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Operations (ACOPS), planned *Damask*.⁹ The Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral K.A. Doolan, was the lead joint commander, and he appointed Commodore Flotillas, Commodore D.B. Chalmers, as his tactical

³ David Horner, ‘The ADF in the Gulf War’, *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia*, October 1992, p. 43.

⁴ David Horner, *The Gulf Commitment: The Australian Defence Force’s First War*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1992, p. 2 and p. 210

⁵ During General Gration’s tenure as CDF, COSC included the Secretary and invited senior civilian Defence officials.

⁶ Horner, ‘The ADF in the Gulf War’, Horner summarises the key themes of his book *The Gulf Commitment* in this article. The quoted words and sentences used in this paragraph are from p. 40.

⁷ Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 204.

⁸ Horner, ‘The ADF in the Gulf War’, p. 40.

⁹ Taylor was supported by two army officers Brigadier P.M. Arnison and Colonel R.B. Bishop. They would have utilised their maritime subordinates to develop planning detail. For example, Bishop relied on Commander M.J. Petch, RAN for advice. Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 17.

commander. The squabbles that bedevilled *Morris Dance* did not arise because this was a largely single service operation, in the company of major allies, who backed up with communications, logistic support and force protection. Thus, the ADF maritime projection to the Gulf testified to naval proficiency, not joint capability. It remained to be seen whether the ADF, in general, and the army, in particular, could project land forces at short notice and support them offshore.

Exercise Kangaroo 92

By the end of 1991, Joint Exercise Planning staff, guided by ASP90, had prepared scenarios and coordinating instructions for Exercise *Kangaroo 92*. Like *Kangaroo 89*, General Gration did not intend to test tactical deployment from the heartlands to the hinterland. His emphasis was on testing force employment in the wet season across northern Australia in March 1992. The focus was on low level contingencies that would exercise command and control arrangements between the Darwin headquarters (HQ NORCOM), HQ ADF, a newly-raised joint headquarters (HQ JFA), the environmental commanders and the service offices. About half the numbers of personnel deployed for *Kangaroo 89* participated in *Kangaroo 92*.

Once again the ADF made convenient arrangements. Combat elements had months to prepare. Logistic units established staging bases and pre-positioned stocks months ahead and were immune from 'enemy' interference. Personnel arrived administratively and spent at least a week acclimatising and finalising training and administration before conducting surveillance, reconnaissance and reactive operations.¹⁰ Reserve and regular troops protected vital infrastructure while maritime and air force elements sallied forth to defend the mainland against approaching enemy vessels and aircraft.¹¹ A battalion of US troops joined their Australian counterparts in defending infrastructure and reacting to raids.

Colonel R.M. Earle prepared the major army post exercise report for *Kangaroo 92* in June, commenting ambiguously that 'few lessons emerged; the exercise thoroughly reinforced the lessons from previous exercises in the area'.¹² The content of his report and several other army reports from the tactical level of command suggested

¹⁰ Colonel R.M. Earle, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92 – Land Component Post Exercise Report', Headquarters 1st Division, 19 May 1992, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney.

¹¹ During the preliminary phase from 9-20 March 1992 Army Reserve forces made up about 25 percent of deployed personnel.

¹² Earle, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92', p 1.

that there were cases where lessons were re-discovered from *Kangaroo 89* rather than applied for *Kangaroo 92*.¹³ For example, to save money, the ADF did not deploy tactically. The administrative movement of personnel using commercial air services from the east and south coasts was booked in advance to take advantage of booking discounts. This caused difficulty for units. Their tasks for the exercise had not been decided, let alone their order of arrival in the exercise area or what vehicles and stocks they should bring. The bulk booking approach meant that 'who' and 'what' would move to the exercise area changed many times as the Joint Exercise Planning staff issued instructions - repeating the many changes that occurred for *Kangaroo 89*.¹⁴ Once again the commander in Darwin and his staff did not know about or control force elements arriving in the exercise area, despite staff augmentation from HQ 1st Division in Brisbane.¹⁵ Some units arrived early only to find that catering and accommodation arrangements had not been made for them because they were expected later.

From the perspective of force projection, *Kangaroo 92* was not a full rehearsal. Similar problems, evident during *Kangaroo 89*, emerged again. Colonel Earle highlighted confusion in command and control arrangements caused in part by cobbling together a joint headquarters from staff from Darwin (NORCOM) and HQ 1st Division. There was also evidence that even collocation of staff from the three environmental headquarters Darwin did not create more collegial joint staff relationships.¹⁶ Once again, each service conducted largely separate exercises, supporting each other for joint application of firepower, by exception rather than by the rule. This was exemplified by the absence of a Fire Support Control Centre (FSCC) at the augmented joint headquarters in Darwin that was simulating HQ JFA.¹⁷ The role of an FSCC would be to manage maritime, air and ground space for the application of joint firepower.

¹³ Lieutenant Colonel G.L. Barnes, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92 Post Exercise Report', 1st Signals Regiment, 17 May 1992, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney. Lieutenant Colonel B.R. Edwards, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92, 10/27 RSAR [Royal South Australian Regiment,] Post Exercise Report', 10/27 RSAR, 15 May 1992, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney. Land Headquarters, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92, Commander Land Command Engineers', Post Exercise Report, June 1992, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney, . Lieutenant Colonel P.C. Simpson, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92, 5th Aviation Regiment, Post Exercise Report', 5th Aviation Regiment, 26 May 1992, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁴ Land Headquarters, 'Kangaroo 92 - Movements Post Exercise Report', LHQ Plans 41/92, 12 June 1992, Enclosure 1, p.1, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁵ Earle, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92', p.2.

¹⁶ Early in the exercise maritime, land and air force staff did not work with NORCOM staff until additional joint staff arrived. Even then, maritime staff remained in their normal office work environment and did not join their land and air counterparts inside wire fortifications that had been erected around a building improvised to accommodate HQ JFA for the period of the exercise. Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁷ Colonel P.B. Retter, 'LHQ PXR K92 - HQ LC Arty [Land Command Artillery] Comments', Covering Letter, 12 June 1992, p. 2, K92-00436, NAA, Sydney.

Typically this involves the three services coordinating the movement of their force elements in order to determine where and when they would apply firepower and manoeuvre to assist each other. Clearly, *Kangaroo 92* was not about joint application of conventional firepower; except that applied by warships and combat aircraft in the sea-air gap.

Joint exercise instructions were silent about changes in command relationships and times to report in. Arriving army units did not know when they would come under the command of HQ JFA. They spent time settling in before contacting the Darwin headquarters to inform staff that they had arrived. As a consequence, the exercise had a somewhat confused beginning.¹⁸ The other difficulty was ADF dependence on inefficient high frequency secure communications in the field.¹⁹ Australian forces were also still short of sensors and night vision technology to maintain 24-hour operations across northern Australia. Australian personnel may have looked enviously at their American counterparts from the US 4th Battalion/27th Infantry Regiment who were equipped with reliable tactical satellite communications equipment, sensors and night vision technology. Command and control difficulties were also exacerbated by the absence of national surveillance and intelligence collection plans for the exercise, though NORCOM coordinated surveillance operations. This deficiency was further magnified, according to Earle, by unreliable communications and unsatisfactory headquarters staff processes.²⁰

Despite creating an artificial setting for logistic support by establishing staging bases months ahead, there were persistent problems with the supply of general stores, spare parts, ammunition and mail.²¹ Some force elements did not comply, or were unable to comply, with a direction to deploy with 30 days stocks. Pre-positioned stocks were not sufficient to overcome some of these shortfalls. Local sources were also unable to meet needs for some spare parts.²² While acknowledging financial constraints, tardy arrival of ordered items as well as paucity of spare parts held forward was evidence of both an inefficient supply chain and ineffective forward holding policies.

¹⁸ Earle, 'Exercise Kangaroo 92', pp. 5-6.

¹⁹ 'The command of subordinate units was often totally inadequate due to the need to rely on HF secure communications.' Once again commercial telephone communications had to be used in conjunction with cooperative local police in remote locations to ensure that orders got through. Ibid, p. 7.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 3.

²¹ Ibid, pp. 27-28.

²² Ibid.

Colonel Earle enthused that *Kangaroo 92* had:

effectively tested the LCN [The term 'Land Component North' meant force elements from Land Command], the augmentation of HQNORCOM, the introduction into operations of augmented forces, civil-military cooperation, logistic support throughout the area of operations, communications and support available from the local infrastructure.²³

From the perspective of force projection, Earle's report and others from the tactical level confirmed that *Kangaroo 92*, like *Kangaroo 89*, was a test bed for evolving command and control arrangements. It exercised the capabilities and capacities of the ADF to operate in Australia's hinterland. Once again, General Gration had to set priorities for what would be rehearsed. He exercised force command and employment after arrival. Time and financial constraints did not permit him to realistically exercise other functions, such as deployment, force protection, redeployment and sustainment,. In the offing was another force projection that, like *Morris Dance* and *Picaresque*, would test these functions, as well as those rehearsed during *Kangaroo 89* and *Kangaroo 92*, under real-time operational conditions.

Projection to Somalia 1992-93

In October 1992, events began to unfold that would prompt a land force projection, one of the largest since an *ad hoc* 1 RAR group had deployed at short notice to Vietnam in May 1965. The projection of a second 1 RAR Group in January 1993 would test how self reliant and proficient the Australian armed forces had become in the intervening 28 years. For the ADF, in general, and the army, in particular, Operation *Solace* would initially measure the generic force preparation and readiness of 3rd Brigade. Subsequently, it would be a test of joint deployment, command and sustainment.

The events leading up to departure of the 1 RAR Group in January 1993 followed a pattern that would be repeated in the 1990s. This time the UN needed the cooperation of member nations in Somalia, a largely ungoverned, war-torn area located at the north eastern corner of Africa.²⁴ Two years of civil war had destroyed Somalia's infrastructure and economy, and driven hundreds of thousands of Somalis from their homes. Drought now threatened to leave millions to starve. Four warlords, who

²³ Ibid, p. 1.

commanded well-equipped, but poorly-maintained militia armies, were contesting control of southern Somalia and its major cities. Urban criminals and nomadic bandits preyed on the populace in areas where the warlords did not exert their authority. In this lawless and violent environment, many Somalis were starving and dying from disease because humanitarian aid was not getting through to villages, cities, towns and refugee camps. Armed Somali gangs pillaged humanitarian aid as it arrived, while it was in transit and at distribution points. They extorted UN and aid agency staff into paying hundreds of US dollars each day to protect expatriate personnel and the trickle of aid that was getting through.

On 28 August 1992, four days after the UN published a report on the situation in Somalia, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 775 proposing the deployment of five infantry battalions to Somalia to protect aid distribution.²⁵ A few weeks later, additional staff arrived to enhance the headquarters of the existing observer mission called UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM) and a battalion of Pakistanis deployed to Mogadishu, the Somali capital. By November 1992, UNOSOM was bogged down. Warlords bickered with UN officials over what needed to be done, and stories and images of Somali women, children and old people starving to death flooded the international media.

Stimulated by media exposure on the Cable News Network (CNN), world public opinion grew for military intervention. Colonel B.V. Osborn, the Australian UN Defence Attaché in New York, predicted that Australia would be one of the nations the UN would ask to contribute. The Americans looked like they might offer to lead and underwrite logistic support and force protection.²⁶ Osborn's advice initiated contingency planning at HQ ADF and at Land Headquarters.²⁷ This type of planning had become routine because of an increase in the tempo of Australian military support to UN-sanctioned operations and missions overseas during 1991 and early in 1992.

²⁴ For a summary of the background to the crisis and Somalia's post-colonial history, see Bob Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope, Australian Force Somalia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, Chapter 1.

²⁵ Mr P. Hanson, former Assistant Secretary General, wrote this report. His visit was pursuant to Paragraph 14 of UN Resolution 767 adopted by the Security Council on 27 July 1992 which called for an evaluation of the situation in Somalia and recommendations for UN action. P. Hanson, 'The Situation in Somalia, Report to the Security Council', 24 August 1992, K92-00653, NAA, Sydney.

²⁶ Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Martin, Interview with author, 24 November 1993. Martin was the senior land operations staff officer in HQ ADF for Operation *Solace*.

²⁷ Lieutenant Colonel P.B. Retter, Interview with author, 5 July 1993, Martin, Interview. Retter was the senior planning officer acting in the position of Colonel (Operations) and Chief of Staff for the planning phase of Operation *Solace*.

General Gratton and Major General M.P. Blake, the Land Commander, made Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Martin and Lieutenant Colonel P.B. Retter from their respective headquarters responsible for preparing options for ADF support to a large scale US-led military intervention into Somalia. Initially, secrecy hampered contingency planning. Martin and Retter had little information to work with and were not permitted to involve Maritime or Air Headquarters in Sydney, or subordinate headquarters, such as HQ 1st Division in Brisbane or 3rd Brigade in Townsville, in their considerations.²⁸ Consequently, they could not discuss the options for deploying army units by sea and air to Somalia with their navy and air force counterparts, or other army headquarters staff in Canberra.²⁹ Strict secrecy also reduced their access to crucial planning information from army units and prohibited them from warning logistic support units, who would need as much time as possible to top up deploying force elements and prepare to load ships.³⁰

Both Martin and Retter knew that the timing of this operation was going to be a challenge. The ADF was about to stand down for the annual Christmas-New Year leave period. There would also be a high turnover of personnel moving to and from units as a consequence of an annual ADF posting cycle. If Cabinet approved an increased military commitment to Somalia, it would be difficult to recall personnel from leave and top up, train and send an expeditionary force 11 000 kilometres, across the Australian mainland and the Indian Ocean, to Somalia.³¹

On 25 November, Lawrence Eagleburger, the acting US Secretary of State, advised the UN Secretary General, Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali that the US was prepared to lead and sustain a multi-national peace enforcement operation into Somalia. He promised a force headquarters, 30 000 US troops and logistic support. Colonel Osborn

28 Despite this formal blanket of secrecy, Commander K.B. Taylor the newly-appointed CO HMAS *Tobruk* was told confidentially around 16 November 1992 that plans were being made to deploy a force to Somalia and it was likely that his ship would be involved. This was a wise security breach by someone because Taylor was then able to accelerate the schedule of major repairs his ship was undergoing at the time. Commander K.B. Taylor, Interview with author, 25 May 1995.

29 The author has not been able to ascertain why this level of secrecy was imposed. Earlier in 1992, a far more politically sensitive contingency plan for the overseas deployment of 3rd Brigade had been developed. This planning had involved all of Land Headquarters' subordinate headquarters, including 1 RAR and 2/4 RAR. Major S.J McDonald, Annotations on draft of Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, 11 December 1995.

30 Retter, Interview.

31 Ibid. Earlier in 1992 the Australian Government had sent a 30-strong contingent of movements specialists to assist the UN to coordinate the movement of international contingents to Somalia and on to their areas of operation. See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp.14-7.

advised HQ ADF that the Americans would be seeking allied support to occupy southern Somalia after they had secured key areas.³²

Awaiting a Cabinet response, General Gration directed that strict secrecy would continue to apply for contingency planning for Somalia. He was playing it safe. Only 3rd Brigade was available for overseas deployment. He was pessimistic about preparations for a deployment to Somalia being kept secret in Townsville.³³ Major General Blake allowed the brigade to stand down for Christmas leave on 4 December, leaving 1 RAR on a four-week notice to move, with a company group ready to move in seven days.³⁴ Blake did not warn either the brigade commander, Brigadier M.J. Keating, who was departing on an overseas posting, or his successor Brigadier P.J. Abigail, about the possibility of deploying elements of the 3rd Brigade to Somalia.³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, CO 1 RAR, went on leave with no knowledge that higher level staff were planning a deployment to Somalia that would most likely involve him deploying part or all of his battalion, as well as a number of assigned force elements.³⁶

Meanwhile, Retter and his staff prepared options. They ranged from deploying medical, supply, transport, engineer and maintenance sub-units of no more than 200 personnel to sending a full strength infantry battalion group of about 1200 troops with, or without, light armour.³⁷ On 3 December, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 794 endorsing, under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, the conduct of a US-led intervention into Somalia to be called *Operation Restore Hope*.³⁸ The mission was to establish a secure environment for the distribution of humanitarian aid as soon as possible. Prompted by a message from Osborn in New York that the Australian Government was about to be asked to support both *Restore Hope* as well as reinforce UNOSOM, Retter's team considered providing units and personnel for both operations. General Blake

³² Martin, Interview.

³³ Gration, Interview.

³⁴ Fortunately, 1 RAR had practised rapid deployment by air and sea in 1992. In March most of the battalion had deployed by sea in *Tobruk* to Melville Island, located in the north west of the Northern Territory, to participate in *Kangaroo 92*. During this exercise 1 RAR soldiers had rehearsed service protected evacuation training. This type of training involved setting up vehicle check points, controlling crowds and operating under Rules of Engagement. See Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, 'Operation Solace', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No. 104, January-February 1994, p. 29.

³⁵ Brigadier P.J. Abigail, Interview with author, 27 July 1993.

³⁶ Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, Interview with author, 28 July 1993.

³⁷ Land Headquarters, 'Post Operational Report Operation SOLACE', 2 July 1993, p. 4, K93-00085, NAA, Sydney.

decided he would only offer infantry battalion group options after he considered the operational environment in Somalia.

Retter recalled:

From the beginning we understood that the Americans planned to kick the door down in Somalia and, to use US Marine parlance, 'take down' Mogadishu and the major regional towns. The Marines were then going to hand over to coalition forces who would establish themselves throughout the country to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid. The Americans did not plan to stick around. We had to deploy a force that could take care of itself and fight hard to protect itself if that became necessary.³⁹

General Blake had taken the risk of telling Lieutenant Colonel Hurley the day before US Marines landed in Mogadishu on 9 December that his battalion was likely to deploy to Somalia by mid-January 1993, but swore him to secrecy until the Government made a public announcement.⁴⁰ In the end, Cameron Stewart, a journalist from the *Australian*, broke the news on 10 December that the Federal Government was considering an American request for 'Australia to provide a large number of troops to Somalia as a part of OP *Restore Hope*'.⁴¹ This appeared to be the Government's way of testing public opinion as a part of its decision-making process. On the same day, Hurley received news that General Blake had approved a force structure for a 910-strong battalion group.⁴²

The duration of the commitment and cost were now important issues for General Gration and Major General Blake, as well as Lieutenant General J.C. Grey, the CGS, who had been included in discussions. General Gration, after receiving advice from one of his staff, Major D.C. Ryan, decided to propose a 1000-strong battalion group that would serve in Somalia for 17 weeks at a total cost of \$ 20 million.⁴³ Grey and Blake concurred with this proposal. Blake was also conscious that, in the time frame of just over four weeks, whatever force was deployed had to stow its weapons, vehicles, equipment and reserve stocks on HMAS *Jervis Bay* and *Tobruk*. Planners did not

³⁸ Chapter 7 of the UN Charter permits the use of military force to enforce peace. It had been used to authorise US-led military intervention into Korea in 1950 and into the Persian Gulf area in 1990.

³⁹ Retter, Interview.

⁴⁰ Major General M.P. Blake, Interview with author, 5 July 1993.

⁴¹ Cameron Stewart, 'Australians asked to join operation', *The Australian*, 10 December 1992, p. 1.

⁴² Hurley, Interview.

⁴³ Blake, Interview. HQ ADF had no automated means for costing operational contingencies. Capping the force at 1 000 personnel and the cost at \$ 20 million was a 'guesstimate' by Major D.C. Ryan at HQ ADF in Canberra who was under pressure to provide 'a cost-to-numbers' estimate for 17 weeks. He advised General Gration that this was the best estimate he could give. At this point there had been no detailed analysis of the costs of a 17 week operation involving a battalion group of 1 000 personnel supported by APC. Major D.C. Ryan, Interview with author, 14 December 1993.

consider taking up ships from trade to provide strategic lift capacity.⁴⁴

Logisticians at HQ ADF designed a resupply chain for *Solace* around this time, but were probably unaware that they were working with a budget of \$ 20 million.⁴⁵ They discussed supply options based on a system that would transport stocks via commercial air freight from Australia to Nairobi and an air force C 130 transport aircraft detachment operating from Nairobi to the nearest suitable airfield in the 1 RAR Group's area of operations. They also proposed locating a small logistic support detachment in Nairobi to monitor and co-ordinate the sustainment of the 1 RAR Group. Though not mentioned specifically, this detachment would have been responsible for local purchase of items and mail. They envisaged HMAS *Success* being located off-shore providing additional logistic, communications and transport capabilities as well as operating Seaking helicopters in support of 1 RAR Group operations. Their proposal also mentioned a second sailing of *Jervis Bay* if all of the stocks required by the 1 RAR Group were not able to be deployed by *Success* and *Jervis Bay* during the deployment phase.⁴⁶ Concurrently, they worked on negotiating what was known as a cross-servicing agreement with the Americans that would result in American logistic units providing many classes of supply, such as water, rations, ammunition and fuel, as a cost effective option that left the ADF logistic system only having to provide items of supply unique to ADF vehicles, weapons and equipment.

Meanwhile, logistic staff at Land Headquarters and Army Office sought detailed justification for a list of special requirements submitted by 3rd Brigade's senior logistician, Major G.R. Banister. Staff officers were wary that 3rd Brigade was using *Solace* as an opportunity to order non-essential items and 'restock the shelves'.⁴⁷ On the contrary, Banister was seeking competitive edge for the 1 RAR Group by obtaining personal body armour, night vision, navigational aids for the troops and IT capabilities

⁴⁴ The Defence Movements Coordination Agency was unable to come up with funds to pay for a ships broker (\$ 600 to \$1000) to examine the availability of merchant shipping. As a consequence, merchant shipping was not considered and *Tobruk* had to cut short its maintenance period to support *Solace*. Commodore R.S. Pearson, 'Operation Solace – DLS-N', Directorate of Logistics Support- Navy, 31 May 1993, DLS-N 337/93, Paragraphs 14-15, N93/13632, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁴⁵ Pearson states that both the Immediate Planning Group and Joint Administrative Planning Groups at HQ ADF worked 'extremely well'. Ibid, Paragraph 12.

⁴⁶ HQ ADF, 'Logistic Assumptions - Options for supply of rations and options for general maintenance', undated but most likely written in December 1992, 92-34185, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. The nomination of *Jervis Bay* and *Success* to support *Solace* may have been because the planning group were aware that *Tobruk* was undergoing major maintenance in Sydney until 20 January 1993.

⁴⁷ Army Office, 'Requests for Supply', DGLWP E3L/I4J, DAAPA 1062, 200123ZDEC92, K92-00998, NAA, Sydney.

for command and control.⁴⁸ Army staffs approved most of Banister's requests after a week of haggling. There were insufficient supplies in Townsville to get the 1 RAR Group away with 30 days of operating stocks. Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Ayerbe and his logistic operations staff at HQ Logistic Command in Melbourne organised C 130 aircraft from Richmond air force base, located on the outskirts of Sydney, and semi-trailers from Brisbane to move stocks to Townsville at short notice.⁴⁹

On Monday 14 December, a group of officers met in Canberra for the second time under the chairmanship of Colonel C.E. Stephens, the army's Director of Army Activities and Public Affairs, in an effort to clarify costs and what resupply arrangements would be made for *Solace*. With hindsight, this was too little, too late. The Cabinet was due to meet the next day. The army was locked into financial estimates that were based on very sketchy planning information – a consequence of not trusting lower levels of command to keep secrets about contingency planning and not giving them time to come up with better estimates.

On 15 December 1992, the Government announced that it had decided to deploy another 1 RAR group overseas in four weeks time. This time it would be for five months rather than 12 months. Unlike 1965, there was bi-partisan political support and the Australian media and public opinion polls reflected widespread approval of the Government's action.⁵⁰ At the tactical level in Townsville, there were mixed feelings of jubilation and bitterness. Those who knew they were going were jubilant. However, over 80 personnel had been left behind to fit an arbitrary figure of 650 set by higher headquarters staff officers to keep the total strength of the AFS under 930 personnel. Hurley told each company commander what numbers they had to lose to 'down-size' the battalion for deployment. During the following days, he had to cancel the deployment of more members of his unit as extra specialist personnel were added to a newly-raised HQ Australian Force Somalia (AFS).⁵¹ Despite 1 RAR's high state of operational readiness, 56 soldiers from 2/4 RAR reinforced the three rifle companies and Infantry Corps members of the 1 RAR Band reinforced the remaining company.

⁴⁸ One example of the reluctance of higher headquarters staff to make special arrangements for the 1 RAR Group was an initial non-approval by staff from Materiel Division – Army for the purchase and issue of flak jackets and helmets. Annotations on Materiel Division – Army, 'Equipment Requirement – Bn Gp [Battalion Group]', 16 December 1992, A89-10676 DEGP /92, K92-00998, NAA Sydney. Approval was given later and flak jackets were purchased at a cost of just over \$ 700 000 and forwarded to Townsville by commercial air (Ansett) at a cost of \$ 50 000. Materiel Division – Army, 22 December 1992, A88-20268, DEGP-A 2221/92, K92-00998, NAA, Sydney.

⁴⁹ Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Ayerbe, Interview with author, 4 November 1993.

⁵⁰ Bob Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 32-3.

⁵¹ Fourteen signalers were assigned to provide 24 hour local and strategic communications. Six Military Police personnel were assigned to provide security and administrative support. A specialist communications detachment was assigned to liaise with US specialists in UNITAF. Two postal clerks and two Public Relations representatives were added later to enhance the capability to manage mail and public relations. HQ AFS, 'OP Solace ORBAT as at 1 Jan 93', 1 January 1993, K92-00997, NAA, Sydney.

This late reinforcement added to personnel turbulence in 1 RAR caused by the end-of-year posting cycle.

National Command Arrangements

While estimates of duration and cost were *ad hoc*, so was the formation of a national headquarters. Major General P.M. Arnison, Commander 1st Division, and Major General Blake decided the composition. Colonel W.J.A. Mellor, Arnison's Chief of Staff, and a staff group from his headquarters, supplemented by two staff officers from HQ 3rd Brigade, became a national headquarters for *Solace*. This was a puzzling decision. The provision of such a headquarters was already in the Standing Operating Procedures of 3rd Brigade for situations when one of its two infantry battalions was deployed.⁵² This headquarters commanded all of the units and sub-units making up the AFS, and was also located in Townsville where the AFS was preparing for departure.

On 16 December, the day after the Government's announcement, General Gration and Major General Blake met in Canberra to discuss what needed to be done to ensure that the 1 RAR Group was well employed and that Australian military and political interests would be protected while Australian units were under American command.⁵³ The ADF had not had to make these arrangements since 1965. Gration and Blake agreed that Colonel Mellor would be called, 'Commander, Australian Force – Somalia' (CAFS) but disagreed about the size and composition of his national headquarters. Blake sought more personnel. Gration wanted the numbers capped at ten, as had been proposed and agreed to by the Defence Minister. Both generals agreed that Mellor and his staff would be a liaison team and also monitor Unified Task Force (UNITAF) and Australian operations, co-ordinate visits and media activities, attend to political sensitivities and report back to Australia daily. Neither of them envisaged Mellor commanding the 1 RAR Group tactically.⁵⁴

Both Gration and Blake wanted Mellor and a small liaison team to fly to Mogadishu as soon as possible to negotiate with the Americans for a suitable area of operations and to determine what support Australian forces could expect from the American logistic system. Two days later, Mellor received a round of briefings in Canberra. Like Colonel O.D. Jackson, Military Attaché in Saigon, South Vietnam, in 1965, Mellor was a senior Australian officer in an area of operations with complex and challenging responsibilities. Mellor was given the dual role of being a military liaison officer to a senior American headquarters and also being a 'watch dog' on the fortunes

⁵² Captain M.R. Fulham and Captain I.A. Young., Interview with author, 20 August 1993. Fulham and Young were the two 3rd Brigade staff officers seconded to HQ AFS for *Solace*.

⁵³ Major General M.P. Blake, 'Somalia Book 1', Notes in a pocket notebook dated Wednesday, 16 December 1992. Retained by Major General Blake.

⁵⁴ Blake, Interview.

of a 1 RAR Group under American tactical command.

Specific Force Preparation

On 17 December, Blake decided to streamline specific force preparation by directing that his headquarters deal directly with staff at HQ 3rd Brigade and HQ 1 RAR and by-pass HQ 1st Division. Due to the absence of most army personnel on leave or moving from one posting to another, Blake's staff worked directly with Hurley and his staff. Hurley's preparations were greatly simplified by being able to by-pass HQ 3rd Brigade and HQ 1st Division. Thus, three lieutenant colonels ran pre-deployment preparations: Hurley in Townsville, acting on behalf of his Brigade Commander; Retter in Sydney, acting as Colonel (Operations) and Chief of Staff; and Martin in Canberra, acting as Director of Joint Operations and Plans.⁵⁵ Retter worked to Blake and Martin worked to Gration.⁵⁶

After the Government's announcement on 15 December, Major Banister and Major R.D. McLeod, 1 RAR's Quartermaster, faced the challenge of getting an army on leave – ten days before Christmas Day - to respond quickly to the logistic needs of the 1 RAR Group. HMAS *Jervis Bay* and *Tobruk* were due in Townsville on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve respectively. Major J.G. Caligari, 1 RAR's Operations Officer, wrote in his diary:

Despite the urgency and priority of this deployment, no one of any suitable rank is manning any of the agencies likely to be able to help us. Ho hum.⁵⁷

The chain of responsibility for logistic preparations and subsequent resupply began at HQ ADF. Staff there were developing logistic concepts and engaging their American counterparts on what the American supply chain could provide to the AFS after arrival.⁵⁸ Blake's administration staff, led by Colonel B.L. Vale, were responsible for provisioning the 1 RAR Group in conjunction with Major General D.J. McLachlan's logistics branch staff at the army's Logistic Command in Melbourne, led by Colonel T.B. Winter and Lieutenant Colonel A.W. Ayerbe. The weight of responsibility for immediate logistic planning fell to Vale because logistics is a function of command and Blake was the lead joint commander for *Solace*. He and his staff had to develop administrative orders and instructions, as well as ensuring that the 1 RAR Group was

⁵⁵ Martin had chaired all meetings related to *Solace* while the Director Joint Operations and Plans, Captain R.E. Swinnerton, RAN, was on leave. His planning group was made up of Commander B. Nye, RAN, Maritime Operations, Wing Commander C. Spence, Director Joint Logistic Operations, Lieutenant Colonel W.S. Nagy and his staff officer, Major D.C. Ryan.

⁵⁶ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 38.

⁵⁷ Major J.G. Caligari, 'Personal Diary of Operation *Solace*', Entry dated 19 December 1992. Copy held by author.

⁵⁸ Wing Commander B.C. Newham, Interview with author, 15 December 1993.

topped up with stocks to take to Somalia.⁵⁹ Overall responsibility for joint coordination of logistic support fell to General Gration. His logistics branch staff had been directly responsible for logistics for the deployment to the Gulf War in 1990.⁶⁰ In 1992, Gration had made General McLachlan and his headquarters in Melbourne responsible.

During the days after the Government announcement, Banister and McLeod sent over 1500 Priority One supply demands into the ADF logistic system to ensure the 1 RAR Group was capable of 30 days of independent operations and the Battalion Support Group (BSG) deploying with the 1 RAR Group would have 30 days further stocks in certain commodities.⁶¹ In theory, this should not have been difficult because 3rd Brigade was on the highest level of preparedness in the army and stocks had been set aside or pre-positioned in Townsville for short notice deployments. Indeed, only one battalion group was deploying, not the entire brigade.

Within 48 hours, the number of supply demands exposed a gap between declared preparedness and reality. The problem was exacerbated by a logistic system that could not cope with an influx of 1500 demands, followed by scores of further demands each day.⁶² McLeod found it especially difficult to obtain the spare parts that he knew would not be in the American logistic system. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and believed firmly in having spare parts on hand.⁶³ Many spare parts had not been available previously because of a lack of funds. Others had been set aside for other 3rd Brigade contingencies. Junior duty officers, who were the only personnel available at supply agencies, did not have the authority to release these stocks.⁶⁴

With hindsight, there were key officers and staff in logistic units who needed to be recalled so that swift action could be taken to top up the 1 RAR Group with equipment and stocks. Neither Blake nor McLachlan assessed that there was a requirement to recall logistic base commanders, fleet managers who controlled the army's inventory, or majors and captains who would normally do the detailed staff work and follow up on supply demands. Blake and Retter discussed a staff recall but felt that all was going well enough.⁶⁵ Vale assessed that all that could have been done

⁵⁹ Commodore R.S. Pearson, 'Operation Solace – DLS-N', p. 2. Commodore Pearson observed that logisticians at Land Headquarters tended to be insular and not inclusive of representatives from the three services. He makes several references to the lack of advice from Colonel Vale and his staff on what was going to be loaded on *Tobruk*.

⁶⁰ Brigadier G.R. Thomas, Interview with author, 15 June 1997. Brigadier Thomas was CO Moorebank Logistics Group for *Solace* and had worked in Strategic Logistics Branch during the ADF participation in the Gulf War in 1990-91.

⁶¹ Major R.D. McLeod, Interview with author, 3 May 1993.

⁶² The total number of demands submitted by the 1 RAR Group in the pre-deployment phase of *Solace* ended up being 1 950. Mellor, Colonel W.J.A. Mellor, 'Post Operation Report, Commander Australian Forces Somalia, Operation Solace', Headquarters 1st Division, 28 May 1993, p.6. Copy held by author.

⁶³ McLeod, Interview.

⁶⁴ Major G. R. Banister, Annotations on second draft of manuscript, Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*.

⁶⁵ Retter, Interview.

at the time was being done.⁶⁶ Ayerbe and his staff were working around the clock to get things moving. Colonel Winter showed no interest in recalling fleet managers, depot commanders and staff, or their own headquarters staff to follow up and manage supply demands coming from Townsville.⁶⁷

Loading Ships

It was difficult to coordinate the concentration of vehicles and stores on the docks in anticipation of the arrival of *Jervis Bay* and *Tobruk*. Major Generals Blake and McLachlan were responsible for mounting base operations. However, their staff did not produce mounting instructions, and neither nominated nor set up a mounting base headquarters in Townsville, or sent staff to Townsville to assist with coordinating myriad of activities associated with preparing and dispatching an expeditionary force. With hindsight, staff from Defence Movements Control Agency in Canberra, a joint organisation, should have been recalled from leave to help with maritime, land and air movements of supplies and concentration stocks at the docks.⁶⁸ Lieutenant A.R. Powell, RAN, had arrived to coordinate loading, but Maritime Command staff called him away to join a National Liaison Team, headed by Colonel Mellor, that was flying to Somalia in a few days time.

The days before *Jervis Bay* docked were chaotic. Despite previous experience loading 1 RAR's vehicles and stores onto *Tobruk* for field exercises, loading both ships required improvisation and involved many late changes. Loads of stores were arriving in Townsville on semi-trailers and by air around the clock. Until semi-trailers and aircraft were unloaded, no one in Townsville knew what stores had arrived. Similarly, it was difficult to track stores in transit and ascertain what stores were overdue. It was also very expensive to move tonnes of stores to Townsville from the major supply depots in Albury, Sydney, Brisbane and western New South Wales to top up the 1 RAR Group and reconstitute 3rd Brigade stocks at short notice just before Christmas.⁶⁹

The loading of *Jervis Bay* over the next two days was disordered. Troops loaded stocks as they arrived in unpredictable order from the army's supply system. They formed human chains and manhandled boxes into every spare space. All vehicles were stuffed with stores and sand bags, and rolls of barbed wire were stacked on top. The army did not have sufficient standard shipping containers to load ships efficiently. Loading ships manually for military operations using troops suggested that little had

⁶⁶ Colonel B.L. Vale, Interview with author, 11 May 1997.

⁶⁷ Ayerbe, Interview.

⁶⁸ Author was unable to find reference to any representative from DMCA being present in Townsville or synchronising maritime, land and air movements of supplies from Canberra. No interviewees spoke of DMCA coordination, but those involved in preparing for and loading ships spoke of a lack of joint movements coordination.

⁶⁹ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 45-46.

changed since the hectic days in 1942 when troops loaded and unloaded ships for the defence of New Guinea when they should have been training and preparing themselves for what lay ahead.⁷⁰

The disorder evident for loading *Jervis Bay* was repeated for *Tobruk* when she arrived in Townsville on 29 December.⁷¹ There were tonnes of stores on the wharf that had not been loaded onto *Jervis Bay*. There were almost hourly amendments to load lists to accommodate arriving consignments of stores.⁷² Troops loaded stores that *Jervis Bay* had left behind and then loaded the remainder in the order they arrived at the wharf. The ship was loaded to the 'gunwales' and bulked out. Over 50 pallets of stores and six specialist vehicles remained on the wharf as mute testimony to the gap between the intentions of the ADF logisticians and the final outcome. HMAS *Tobruk* sailed on New Year's Eve. Consignments of stores continued to trickle in over the next few days. Operations staff at Logistic Command did not make arrangements for vehicles or stocks left in Townsville to be forwarded to Somalia. There was no second sailing of *Jervis Bay*.⁷³

Intelligence Support

Despite reforms initiated by Major General J.S. Baker when he became the Director of JIO in the late 1980s, the new Director of DIO, Major General J.C. Hartley, appeared to be finding it difficult to generate timely intelligence for the 1 RAR Group to inform Blake, the lead joint commander, and Hurley's pre-deployment training. In Townsville, operations and intelligence staff had to rely on media reports and local Townsville libraries for information before Christmas because Hartley did not recall staff at DIO from leave to provide information.⁷⁴ The Intelligence Officer, Captain J.M. Burns, was left to brief those attending Lieutenant Colonel Hurley's orders for the operation using a map of Somalia from the Townsville Municipal Library that had been published in 1942. Based on what he was seeing on CNN, he assessed that the threat from the clan armies was high.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Rear Admiral R.A.K. Walls, Maritime Commander, commented that 'The method of stores movement by the army was very manpower intensive and very inefficient when compared to other nations operating the Somali AO [Area of Operations]. ... Had all loose equipment been stowed in containers, the security and transport of stores would have been much simpler', Rear Admiral R.A.K. Walls, 'Operation Solace – Post Operation Report', 9 July 1993, p. 8, MHQ 5/5/799. Copy held by author.

⁷¹ The challenges *Tobruk* and her crew faced preparing for *Solace* are described in Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 38-40 and pp. 51-3. Also Taylor, Interview.

⁷² Warrant Officer Class 2 R.W. Macdonald, 'HMAS *Tobruk* – The SAD during Operation Solace 26 December 1992-21 June 1993, Essay written in 1993.

⁷³ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 52-3.

⁷⁴ Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, '1 RAR Battalion Group, Post Operation Report – Operation Solace', 1 RAR S611-2-8, Phase 1, Pre-deployment Phase, 31 May 1993, 93/11393, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan, Major J.G. Caligari, Interview with author, 7 May 1993.

⁷⁵ McDonald, Personal Diary entry dated 16 December 1992.

This assessment persisted into January after lectures by representatives from DIO. They catalogued the military capabilities of the warlords and delivered complex and sometimes inaccurate explanations of Somali culture and the Muslim religion. In the opinions of Colonel Mellor and Lieutenant Colonel Hurley, these lectures confused soldiers, created pessimistic expectations of Somali behaviour and contributed to an overly-aggressive temperament about what lay ahead. By only describing what the warlords were reported to have in their arsenals, DIO staff left members of the 1 RAR Group with the impression that they would be involved in conventional, war-like operations.⁷⁶ There appeared to be little information on the intentions of the war lords. General Blake recalled:

It was frustrating not to have a clear intelligence picture of the likely threat to our forces once they deployed to Somalia. For example, we did not know whether the warlords had merely cached [hidden] their weapons and driven their 'technicals' across the border. If so, they could just wait until the US Marines and the bulk of US Army combat units had left, and then mount sizeable operations against coalition forces. Because of this uncertainty, and despite little evidence to support our concerns, we had to allow for the possibility that our force could be taken on conventionally.⁷⁷

Reconnaissance

Following precedents set for *Hardihood* in 1966 and *Picaresque* in 1989, higher levels of command once again failed to facilitate sufficient tactical reconnaissance for *Solace*. On 27-28 December, Colonel Mellor and two of his staff, an intelligence officer and public relations officer, traveled by road in an American convoy to Baidoa, the major city located in the Australian area of operations. They were able to visit the main town area and conduct an aerial reconnaissance by helicopter, courtesy of the US Marines.⁷⁸ At around this time, General Blake and Lieutenant Colonel Retter realised that no one from 1 RAR had gone to Somalia to conduct a reconnaissance and prepare the way for Hurley's advance party that was due to leave Australia in just over a week. On 28 December, Hurley gave Major S.J. McDonald, OC Administration Company, 24 hours to pack and fly to Canberra for briefings before catching a flight to Mogadishu. Three days later, in the early hours of New Years Day, he was sewing an Australian flag

⁷⁶ Ibid and Mellor, Post Operation Report, p. 6.

⁷⁷ Blake, Interview.

⁷⁸ Colonel W.J.A. Mellor, 'Report on Visit by CAFS to Baidoa 27-28 December 1992', 28 December 1992, K92-00653, NAA, Sydney.

logo on the shoulder of his shirt in a hotel room in Nairobi. The next day he landed in Mogadishu.⁷⁹

While McDonald was *en route*, Colonel Mellor requested liaison officers to assist with the hand over between the Americans and Australians in Baidoa. Major G.P. Hurcum, OC Support Company, 1 RAR, and Major R.H. Stanhope, Battery Commander, 107 Field Battery, attended briefings in Canberra and then flew to Mogadishu just over 24 hours later.⁸⁰ The arrival of McDonald, Hurcum and Stanhope as an *ad hoc* reconnaissance/liaison team, two weeks after Mellor's National Liaison Team deployed on 21 December, revealed not only rushed arrangements for reconnaissance and liaison but also misunderstandings about the role of the national headquarters. McDonald arrived on 2 January and told Mellor that he had been deployed to co-ordinate reception.⁸¹ By the time Hurcum and Stanhope arrived on 4 January, differences of opinion had developed between McDonald and Mellor over who had the authority to make reception arrangements and to determine the subsequent activities of the 1 RAR Group - an unhelpful start for internal relations in the AFS.⁸²

On 5 January, three days before Hurley's advance party was due to leave Australia, Mellor and the 1 RAR officers accompanied a US Marine convoy to Baidoa. Stanhope and Hurcum remained in Baidoa. McDonald returned a day after Mellor left and managed to pass on to Hurley some details about Baidoa. Hurley, the most important customer for both intelligence and reconnaissance information, arrived on 10 January. He had expected that his troops would occupy reasonably well-organised, but lightly-fortified defensive positions, designed to deter Somalis from infiltration into the airfield area and to prevent unauthorised access. What he saw was a congregation of American units housed in tents amidst a military junk yard overrun by hundreds of Somali adults and children, either milling about, scavenging, or begging. He realised that the structure of the 1 RAR Group and what had been loaded on *Jervis Bay* and *Tobruk* had not been informed by this reality.⁸³ His men had been trained to expect a military contest with the warlords and had loaded for conventional operations. Hurley and his troops had not expected to have to set up a tented camp to protect an airfield as

⁷⁹ Major S.J. McDonald, Personal diary entry, 2 January 1993. Copy held by author.

⁸⁰ Major G.P. Hurcum, Personal diary entry, 31 December 1992. Copy held by author.

⁸¹ McDonald, Personal diary entry, 2 January 1993.

⁸² Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 228-30.

⁸³ Hurley, Interview. Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 61.

well as a large town. They had come ready to live in fighting trenches behind barbed wire fortifications.⁸⁴

On the same day that Mellor and the officers from the 1 RAR Group visited Baidoa, Colonel Vale had convened a joint administrative planning group in Sydney. There were many more questions than answers because the level of support from the Americans was unknown as well as the resupply arrangements from Australia, including the role of *Tobruk*.⁸⁵ However, there was some optimism that US forces would provide the basics – water, rations and fuel – and a combination of civil air and air force aircraft, preferably 707 jet aircraft, would move stores from Australia to Somalia to support of the AFS.⁸⁶ ‘Dedicated AME [Aero-Medical Evacuation] Blackhawk would provide speedy evacuation from the point of wounding to a surgical facility’.⁸⁷

Arrival, Reception and Force Protection

HMAS *Jervis Bay* docked in Mogadishu on 14 January and soldiers from A Company, 1 RAR, as well as members of the crew unloaded the ship. Reception for the main body of troops arriving by air was disordered – a rerun of May 1965 in Vietnam. There was also an echo of the ADF preference for administrative deployments evident during Exercises *Kangaroo 89* and *92*. However, Mogadishu Airport was different from airfields at Tindal and Weipa in northern Australia. After Qantas B747 jets landed, Somali gunmen fired shots in the vicinity of waiting Australian troops while their weapons were in the holds of aircraft - the Board of Qantas Airlines would not have been impressed. After waiting for several hours on the tarmac for the arrival of American trucks, the Australians eventually ended up in unhygienic accommodation.⁸⁸ HMAS *Tobruk* arrived on 20 January and members of D Company unloaded the ship with the assistance of the ship’s company. Though no stores were lost to scavenging Somalis, someone did manage to steal a Steyr automatic rifle much to the chagrin of members of D Company who quickly became pre-disposed to deal with Somali males firmly if they did not comply with their directions.

⁸⁴ For information on how members of the 1 RAR Group perceived what lay ahead of them. See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 48-52.

⁸⁵ Major C.J. Mills, ‘Summary of Discussions, OP Solace, JAPG 5 Jan 93’, Admin 33/9, 7 January 1993, p. 1, K92-00998, NAA, Sydney.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 3.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 4.

⁸⁸ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp 63-4.

Force Employment

Members of the 1 RAR Group arrived in Somalia expecting a fight. Operation *Solace* was the army's first post-Cold War participation in a Chapter 7 UN-sanctioned multi-national military intervention. It was also the first time since Vietnam that Australian troops would face the challenges of conducting operations accompanied by media representatives. However, in 1993, media representatives could transmit 'live' around the world. In the past, the fate of junior leaders and small teams on operations would not have become public knowledge for some time. Reporting from Kokoda in 1942 and Long Tan in 1966, where the performance of a few Australian troops had strategic implications, was limited, censored and delayed. Reporting on the fate of Australians on patrol in Somalia would be instantaneous and not controlled by army commanders or public relations representatives. Within 24 hours of arrival in Baidoa, the 1 RAR Group, under close media scrutiny, faced the challenges of taking over from a US Marine battalion, occupying and securing a base camp, and beginning security operations in unfamiliar urban environment where the populace had been stirred up recently by vigorous building and house searches, and some Marine manhandling.⁸⁹ Commanders at all levels felt intense pressure to perform well immediately. If there had been a lack of discipline by a junior leader and his small team whilst on patrol, causing death or injury to Somalis, or a lack of judgment that led to Australian casualties, the world and Australia would have known about it within a few minutes. With these challenges in mind, prior preparation had to contribute to success at the cutting edge, not only for the ethical reason of keeping Australian troops safe and effective, but also to ensure that Australia's military reputation was upheld both internationally and nationally.

Higher levels of command did not issue the 1 RAR Group a concept or specific direction on how to operate in Somalia. General Gration reflected later that this was an American responsibility because the 1 RAR Group was under American operational control.⁹⁰ In reality, the Americans lightly supervised coalition contingents in Somalia and left them to operate independently. In any event, Hurley and his staff determined before leaving Townsville that they would have to defend themselves and their base,

⁸⁹ Ibid, pp 72-3.

⁹⁰ Gration, Annotations on draft Chapter 3, Bob Breen, 'Australian Military Force Projection in the late 1980s and the 1990s: what happened and why.', PhD Thesis, ANU, 2005.

and also protect UN and aid agencies in Baidoa and surrounding areas.⁹¹ The Australians arrived with seven significant advantages over their opponents: their individual training, teamwork, physical and mental toughness, superior weapons, flak jackets, low level communications and night vision technology.⁹² The key to tactical success was not only the advantages the Australians brought with them but also their individual and collective attitudes, and responses to the hostile environment in town and further afield. Though Australian dislike for arrogant and menacing Somali males was intense, Australian patrols exercised discretion. Ignoring provocation encouraged further provocative acts, especially from local youths with time on their hands and displaying more bravado than common sense.⁹³ Patrols responded swiftly and in a controlled, aggressive manner to provocation.⁹⁴ Australians returned high volumes of accurate fire when engaged by Somali gunmen, or split seconds before. Poor fire discipline would have stirred up and unsettled the citizens and refugees of Baidoa, rather than diffusing tension and uncertainty. The levels of reported violence and numbers of reports of weapons being fired in town dropped significantly after four successful fire fights in February and continued to drop in the following weeks. By April, Baidoa could almost be described as quiet on most nights. Though difficult to prove conclusively, it is logical to surmise that the word got around among local Somalis that Australians could be expected to respond firmly but fairly to infiltration and stealing at the airfield and threats to life and property in town. The many times Australian patrols showed restraint, and decided not to fire, contributed to their success. The tactics of presence, friendliness and communication help explain why many ordinary Somalis came forward to pass on information through interpreters to Australian intelligence teams and junior commanders on patrol.

Over the next four and half months the Australians accomplished their mission through a strong deterrent presence and winning short and sharp fire fights with Somali gunmen. The harsh climate, high tempo of operations and constant threat of encounters with armed groups tested junior leaders and their small teams. Negligible casualty and sickness rates, praise from humanitarian aid agencies, as well as from American senior officers, confirmed success and high regard. This tactical success validated individual and small team combat arms training in Australia. Like their forebears on the Kokoda

⁹¹ Caligari, Interview.

⁹² Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 336-37.

⁹³ Ibid, p. 90,

Track, and in Korea and Vietnam, they performed well and, given the humanitarian nature of *Solace*, displayed the right balance of compassion and aggression.

A number of factors would have increased risk had the Australians faced more capable opponents. The AFS did not have organic air mobility. As a result, arrangements for aero-medical evacuation were problematic.⁹⁵ Hurley's exercise of responsive tactical command over the vast distances of the Baidoa Humanitarian Relief Sector was also hampered. He and his company commanders would have taken several hours to arrive with reinforcements if hostile forces had attacked a platoon post at a remote location.⁹⁶

The AFS did not have operational control over *Tobruk*. General Gration's pre-positioning of *Tobruk* offshore in support of the AFS was prudent. However, unlike the Canadians, who had placed their support ships and embarked Sea King helicopters under command of their national commander in Somalia, neither Major General Blake nor Colonel Mellor controlled *Tobruk*.⁹⁷ Rear Admiral D.B. Chalmers commanded from Maritime Headquarters in Sydney. The ship spent much of its time fraternising and training with American and Canadian ships, and supporting the humanitarian aid effort as a coastal freighter between Mombassa and Mogadishu.⁹⁸ Chalmers would not authorise *Tobruk's* Sea King helicopter for command and liaison tasks or aero-medical evacuation over land in Somalia.⁹⁹

Typically, aero-medical evacuation (AME) on military operations is for casualties. However, AME helicopters may have been required just as urgently because of an inordinate number of Australian troops accidentally firing their weapons.¹⁰⁰ One soldier died as a result of one incident and there were several near-fatalities or serious

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 338-39.

⁹⁵ Arrangements had been made with the Americans based on optimistic response times. See Major General D.G. Rossi, 'Operation Solace – SGADF Post Activity Report', SGADF 1233/93, SG92-25260, 11 June 1993, p. 2, 4 and 5, 93/11393, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. In reality, the response times in Somalia were longer and more risky. See Major D.J. Duncan, 'Op Solace – Post Operational Support for Health Services', 1 BSG, Med 60/93, May 1993, pp. 2-3, K00044-49, NAA, Sydney. This was reported later as unsatisfactory. See Brigadier P.T.R. Buckley, 'Operation Solace – Post Activity Report', DGAHS (DOC/PLANS) 839/93, June 1993, p. 2, A92-3492611, NAA, Sydney. Buckley's reference was 'Manual of Land Warfare Two.1.1 'The Employment of Medical Services'.

⁹⁶ Hurley, Interview.

⁹⁷ Mellor, Interview. Colonel J.J. Culleton, Interview with author, 19 January 1996. Culleton had been the Australian Army exchange instructor at the Canadian Staff College in 1994-1995 and had studied Canadian participation in Operation *Restore Hope*. Also Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 361.

⁹⁸ Taylor, Interview.

⁹⁹ Ibid. Mellor, Interview.

¹⁰⁰ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 91 and pp. 97-8.

injuries.¹⁰¹ Post exercise reports attributed the high incidence of accidental firings to ‘a lack of instinctive training, coupled with high levels of fatigue and the requirement to change weapon readiness on numerous occasions’.¹⁰² While fatigue is expected on operations, additional levels of fatigue were attributable to austere accommodation at Baidoa airfield that was not conducive to sleep as well as the environment. The heat exhausted troops. The high tempo of patrolling in flak jackets and webbing, laden with water and ammunition exacerbated this situation. The sights, sounds, smells and malevolence of Somali society, as well as the possibility of sudden combat, combined with lack of sleep to add stress. Living conditions inhibited physical and mental recovery.¹⁰³ An earlier and more thorough reconnaissance may have foreseen the requirement to set up a tented camp with some amenities that would have offset some of these privations and their deleterious effects.

The *ad hoc* 1 RAR group that had deployed to Bien Hoa in 1965 faced a similar situation and had to beg, borrow and steal from American logistic units in their vicinity to make up their shortfall in construction materials, tentage and other camp stores. In January 1993, US Marines left their tents and some stocks behind, and US army and navy engineer units located at Baidoa airfield helped by refurbishing derelict and damaged buildings for the Australians.¹⁰⁴ However, austere living conditions, especially for the rifle companies, contributed to additional fatigue - fatigue that contributed to a high number of accidental firings of weapons that could have claimed more than just one life.

Force Sustainment

The army appeared to have neither thought through, nor practised whether it could really deploy a battalion group from 3rd Brigade in four weeks by sea and air with 30 days stocks. Typically, higher headquarters commanders and staff had months to plan for exercises and allowed weeks for units to assemble stocks and to plan ship loading. This planning time as well as time to concentrate stocks was not afforded for

¹⁰¹ Ibid, pp. 138-40.

¹⁰² Both Colonel Mellor’s and Lieutenant Colonel Hurley’s post operation reports made the same observation about accidental firings. This was not surprising because Lieutenant Colonel Retter and members of the Operational Study Team drafted both reports. Anecdotal evidence gathered during the author’s interviews with members of the 1 RAR Group in May 1993 placed fatigue as the major contributor to most accidental firings. Mellor, ‘Post Operation Report’, pp 31-2, Hurley, Post Operation Report, p. 15.

¹⁰³ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 92.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 238-39.

Solace. The army's operational and logistic chain of command was not able to deliver a satisfactory result in four weeks. The 1 RAR Group left on time, but not in good order.

The functions of force command and force sustainment entwined for *Solace*, as they would for any joint offshore operation. On 15 December, when the Government announced *Solace*, General Gration appointed Major General Blake as his lead joint commander. He issued orders specifying that the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral D.B Chalmers, who controlled *Tobruk* and other naval support vessels, and the Air Commander, Air Vice-Marshal G.J.J. Beck, who controlled transport aircraft, were to be prepared to provide the means for strategic sea and air lift as well as resupply.¹⁰⁵ Subsequent meetings between members of staff from Maritime, Land and Air headquarters verified Gration's intent and promises were made.¹⁰⁶ However, when it came time for the supply chain to respond to the needs of the 1 RAR Group after operations began in January, logistics did not work satisfactorily.¹⁰⁷

The ADF supply chain for *Solace* was somewhat bureaucratic but straightforward. Major M.L. Harnwell, Officer Commanding, the Battalion Support Group, and his staff initiated demands for resupply from Baidoa. Lieutenant Colonel G.M. Woolnough and his staff at the national headquarters in Mogadishu vetted them and sent them on to Land Headquarters. Colonel Vale and his staff vetted them again before passing them to Colonel T.B. Winter and his staff at Logistic Command in Melbourne, who vetted them once again before forwarding those that were approved to Logistic Command depots at Moorebank, located on the outskirts of Sydney, and at Bandiana, located on the outskirts of the inland city of Albury on the New South Wales-Victorian border.¹⁰⁸ The Moorebank Logistic Group (MLG), a consolidation of 21 Supply Battalion and other logistic units in the Moorebank area, was the principal depot and distribution point. Depots sent requested supplies to the Moorebank Freight Terminal for onward movement to Somalia. Major M. King on Winter's staff was responsible for the movement of items of resupply from Moorebank to Somalia. He was the sole staff officer in HQ Movement Control (HQ MC) for *Solace*: His role was

¹⁰⁵ 'Phase 3 Conduct of ops - MCAUST be prep to prov strat sea tpt for force resupply. ACAUST 'be prep to prov strat airlift for log resupply and AME from Australia.' HQ ADF, 'Operation Solace – Warning Order', 15 December 1993, CDF WNG O E3L/I4J, 92/34493. Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁰⁶ Major C.J. Mills, 'Summary of Discussions, OP Solace, JAPG 5 Jan 93', Admin 33/9, 7 January 1993, K92-00997, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁰⁷ See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, ch. 6, and ch.8.

¹⁰⁸ The depot at Randwick in Sydney was responsible for medical supply and the depot at Woolangara in western New South Wales was responsible for ammunition supply.

to co-ordinate with Wing Commander I. Jamieson, the senior air movements staff officer at Air Headquarters and his staff, located at Glenbrook on the outskirts of Sydney, to fly supplies to Somalia, either on air force aircraft or by commercial air freight. General Gration's staff allocated Jamieson \$ 2.4 million to support the AFS with commercial air freight.¹⁰⁹ King also had the option of asking staff at Maritime Headquarters to arrange for less urgent supplies to be sent by sea.

Major Harnwell soon realised that his demands for resupply were not going to be met in the requested timeframes. Logistic staff in Australia caused delay by questioning Woolnough about the type and quantity of supplies, especially spare parts for the vehicle fleet, in general, and APC, in particular.¹¹⁰ Initially, supply items for Somalia accumulated at Moorebank for several weeks until a storeman called Land Headquarters, asking whether arrangements had been made to forward them on.¹¹¹ After alerting Major King, who had no funds or an allocation of air hours for *Solace*, Land Headquarters staff had to negotiate with Jamieson and his staff to authorise resupply flights. For the remainder of *Solace*, supply demands accumulated at Moorebank for about two weeks. Jamieson then forwarded them to Mogadishu by C 130 transport aircraft after negotiations with Land Headquarters staff. They had to trade air hours allocated to the army to support domestic training for the hours needed to operate aircraft to Somalia.¹¹² Harnwell's troops had a round trip of 500 kilometres from Baidoa to pick up supplies from Mogadishu airport. Unlike other national air forces and contracted aircraft, the air force decided not to use Baidoa airfield to support the 1 RAR Group.¹¹³ For his part, King was able to organise one delivery of supplies by sea and one by commercial air to Mombassa and Nairobi using discretionary funds within Logistic Command.¹¹⁴

The system for sending items of supply from Australia was further complicated by the way items of supply were processed and packaged for onward movement.

¹⁰⁹ Lieutenant Colonel W.S. Nagy, Interview with author, 15 December 1993. Nagy was SO1 Joint Logistic Operations and Plans, HQ ADF during *Solace*.

¹¹⁰ This process is described in Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, ch. 6.

¹¹¹ Sergeant W. Schafferius, 5 March 1996. Schafferius was Warehouse Supervisor, DNSDC, during *Solace*.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ It is not clear why the air force did not use Baidoa airfield to deliver stocks to the 1 RAR Group. Commercial aircraft contracted by the UN, aid agencies, NGO and US contractors, Kellog, Brown and Root, used the airfield frequently to support their staff in Baidoa. Lieutenant Colonel G.K. Martin offered anecdotal evidence that staff at Air Headquarters were uninterested in supporting an army operation in Africa. Martin, Interview. The Australians grew to resent higher headquarters for not being able to direct the air force fly to Baidoa and avoid the 500 kilometre round trip to Mogadishu.

Demands for supply from Somalia went into the army's logistics system and later reappeared as containers of stores, marked only with their size, priority and weight, apparently for security reasons to discourage pilfering.¹¹⁵ Neither the army nor the air force had an automated means for tracking service demands from Somalia from when they were processed by fleet managers in the supply depots to the arrival of containers at Mogadishu airport.

Redeployment and Force Reconstitution

The ADF and Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) did not have a shared understanding of the standards of cleanliness and consequent requirements for preparing vehicles and equipment for return to Australia. Despite the experience gained in cleaning and returning vehicles and equipment from Namibia three years earlier, there were misunderstandings and friction.¹¹⁶ With hindsight, the ADF, unlike the US armed forces, was not used to contracting this type of activity to organisations like Kellog Brown and Root (KBR) that was operating in Somalia at the time. This type of organisation supported its own operations, and moved around the globe routinely. For a price, KBR would assist others to do so. Fortunately, the lower tempo of operations towards the end of the tour allowed Hurley to make personnel available for cleaning. However, the result was that tired men had to spend many hours cleaning vehicles and equipment both in Baidoa and at the port in Mogadishu, still a dangerous place for foreign troops.¹¹⁷

While the ADF and AQIS made ready to meet a deadline of 24 May for departure, Land Headquarters and Air Headquarters staff entered into negotiation about the redeployment of AFS personnel by air. Initially, Major L. Collins, a planning staff officer at Land Headquarters, recommended a commercial option for redeployment.¹¹⁸ Senior air force officers saw it to be in air force's interests to return the AFS to

¹¹⁴ See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, ch. 6.

¹¹⁵ Land Headquarters, 'Service Demands – Operation Solace', K93-00030, NAA, Sydney. Also Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 364

¹¹⁶ The author witnessed this misunderstanding and friction first hand in May 1993.

¹¹⁷ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 281. Also Mellor, 'Operation Solace – Post Operation Report', Annex K, Redeployment.

¹¹⁸ Major L. Collins, 'An Appreciation on the Return to Australia of HQ AFS and 1 RAR Group', 19 March 1993, K9300082, NAA, Sydney. Collins was SO2 Plans at LHQ.

Australia.¹¹⁹ The commercial option with Qantas airlines would achieve a 72-hour clean break for all AFS personnel from Baidoa and Mogadishu.¹²⁰ The proposed air force option would take six days and involve shuttling troops from Baidoa to Mogadishu in C 130 aircraft and onwards to Perth in air force 707 jet aircraft. The concept for withdrawal changed as a result of negotiations between the chiefs of staff of Land and Air Commands, and AQIS requirements were better understood.¹²¹ Consequently, Colonel Mellor was forced to locate troops at Mogadishu port and Baidoa cleaning vehicles and equipment under AQIS supervision, and also at Baidoa thinning out and handing over to a French airborne battalion.¹²² The result was an 11-day staged withdrawal and shuttle operation. During this period, the AFS was vulnerable because the Australian departure was obvious. Tired Australian troops stayed in dangerous places for longer periods. Fortunately, the ascendant warlord, General Aideed, did not see it in his interests to interfere with the departure of Australian troops in May 1993, unlike February 1995 during the final withdrawal of UNOSOM troops when heavy machine gun fire 'raked across the airport'.¹²³

Force reconstitution followed redeployment. Disassembly and cleaning processes, as well as other requirements for meeting AQIS standards, such as removing wooden trays from trucks and all rubber, porous and organic materials from vehicles and equipment, damaged the 1 RAR Group's vehicle fleet and major items of equipment. As a consequence, 1 RAR was non-operational and virtually non-deployable for six months after its return from Somalia. Its entire vehicle fleet and many major and minor items of equipment had to be replaced because of damage caused through having to comply with AQIS standards using rudimentary techniques under supervision of zealous inspectors.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Lieutenant Colonel G.K. Martin, Interview with author, 4 March 1994. Martin was CO 1st Ground Liaison Group during Solace. He was responsible for liaison with air force on behalf of the army for air force support for army peace-time activities and operations. He attended all meetings involving redeployment of the AFS from Somalia.

¹²⁰ Collins, 'An Appreciation on the Return to Australia of HQ AFS'.

¹²¹ The circumstances and nature of these negotiations is described in Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 277-81. Also Major T.W. Nye, Notes 'Air HQ JOPG [Joint Operations Planning Group] Meeting held on Friday 16 April 1993'. Copy held by author. Major Nye worked at Richmond Air Base as a ground liaison officer.

¹²² Mellor, Interview.

¹²³ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 320.

¹²⁴ Captain I. Westworth, 'Observations on pack up and return to Australia of the 1 RAR Group, Letter to author, 27 February 1996. Westworth replaced Major R.D. McLeod as Quartermaster of 1 RAR in May 1993. Also author's discussions with Lieutenant Colonel W. Austin at Land Headquarters in 1996. Austin was a rifle company commander in 1 RAR in 1993.

Observations

The Australian Government ordered - and provided additional funds for - participation in international military emergencies in 1990 and 1993. The navy demonstrated its proficiency in force projection during operations in the Gulf in 1990; but the ADF was less proficient in deploying and sustaining land forces in Somalia in 1993. Difficulties arose because land forces did not have time to prepare. Four weeks was insufficient. There were also problems with readiness, logistic responsiveness and mounting base coordination. Despite 3rd Brigade being a cohesive formation organised and trained for rapid deployment, the 1 RAR Group deployed with many new personnel and newly-reorganised small teams in haphazardly-loaded ships and administratively-loaded commercial aircraft, without a full complement of vehicles or 30 days deployment stocks.

By 1993, Defence appeared to be finding it difficult to translate some of the strategic priorities described in DOA87 and ASP90 into tactical level performance on operations or during joint exercises. Both Mellor and Hurley pointed out in their post operations reports that there were many similarities between features characterising land operations in Somalia and those expected during possible operations in northern Australia.¹²⁵ Force command and control and communications - the ADF's first strategic priority - was still cumbersome and joint commanders were unable to exercise joint command effectively. Communications difficulties identified during *Morris Dance*, as well as *Kangaroo 89* and *92*, were still conspicuous for *Solace*. Based on the performance of communications equipment, the army did not have efficient strategic, operational or tactical communications in 1993.¹²⁶

Intelligence gathering and evaluation was Australia's second strategic priority. The Force Structure Review in 1990 had foreshadowed 'the more effective use of intelligence for operational purposes' and an intention 'to distribute the processed

¹²⁵ Common features included large space to force ratios, similar terrain and climate, vulnerability of lines of communication, a variety of protective, surveillance and reactive tasks needing tactical mobility, and importance of timely and accurate intelligence. Mellor, 'Post Operation Report', p. 28.

¹²⁶ Land Headquarters, 'Operation Solace - An Analysis of Command, Control and Communications', Operational Study Team Paper, July 1993, pp. 7-11, K92-00720, Copy held by author. See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 239-40. Mellor, 'Post Operation Report', p. 20-1. Mellor, Interview. Also Land Headquarters, 'Operation Solace - An Analysis of Command, Control and Communications', p. 8

intelligence to decision makers and operational units on a timely basis'.¹²⁷ Whatever investments the ADF was making in intelligence capabilities were not paying dividends for decision-makers and operational units in 1993. Like logistic support, *Solace* presented an opportunity to practise in an operational setting. Staff at DIO appeared to lack an operational focus, if the support provided before and after deployment was any indication. Replicating the absence of an intelligence collection plan for either *Kangaroo 89* or *92*, DIO staff did not produce a plan for *Solace* or allocate force level assets, preferring to rely on the Americans.¹²⁸ Subsequently, HQ AFS requested and received additional human intelligence operators from within the army.¹²⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Hurley commented that 90 percent of effective intelligence for his operations during *Solace* came from human intelligence sources.¹³⁰ There was no automation of any of the intelligence functions in the AFS.¹³¹

The failure of the ADF to deliver responsive joint logistic support was the major revelation of *Solace*: a serious risk factor for self reliant Australian force projection. This weakness had been evident in 1942 when allies were not in a position to underwrite Australian operations with logistic support on the Kokoda Track. It was also conspicuous for the deployments of the 1 RAR group and 1 ATF in 1965 and 1966 respectively. Though circumstances were different in 1942, 1965, 1966 and 1993, there were several persistent weaknesses.

The first was reconnaissance and reception. Logistic planning and preparation for deployment needed time and information. Reconnaissance activities were *ad hoc* and rushed, and did not include logisticians. The Americans were left to host, protect, accommodate and transport Mellor and his national headquarters staff. The three 1 RAR officers, who were deployed at short notice for liaison and reconnaissance, had to largely fend for themselves. The army appeared to have lost its corporate memory of the arrival, reception and settling in of the 1 RAR group in 1965 and 1 ATF in 1966. Fortunately, the Americans fostered the Australians, as they had done in Vietnam, and provided force protection and impromptu camp construction to settle the Australians

¹²⁷ Department of Defence, *Force Structure Review*, Report to the Minister for Defence, 15 May 1999, p 13, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. Development Division, HQ ADF, and Force Development and Analysis Division conducted the FSR.

¹²⁸ Land Headquarters, 'Operation Solace – An Analysis of Intelligence Support and Civil/Military Operations', Operational Study Team Papers, July 1993, pp. 1-2. Copy held by author.

¹²⁹ Mellor, 'Post Operation Report', Annex C, AFS Intelligence Support, p. 1.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Lieutenant Colonel G. Peterson, 'Human Intelligence and Somalia – A Cost Effective Winner for a Small Army', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, No 104, January/February 1994.

into Mogadishu and Baidoa. Contingents from nations that the ADF liked to compare itself to, such as Canada, did not deploy in a manner that depended on spontaneous, serendipitous American good will. Their national headquarters, as well as their reconnaissance and advance parties, deployed with their own vehicles, communications and force protection elements, and they subsequently set up their own camps and facilities. Canadians took pride in being a less dependent ally.¹³²

The origins of subsequent weaknesses in force sustainment lay in not matching responsibility with authority over enabling functions, assets and resources. The lead joint commander, Major General Blake, commanded *Solace* on behalf of General Gration, but did not control the means, ways or resources for deploying and sustaining the AFS. Rear Admiral Chalmers controlled maritime assets, Air Vice Marshal Beck, controlled service aircraft and Major General McLachlan controlled supplies. Chalmers and Beck reported to Gration for operations, but also to their service chiefs for support to their service's activities in Australia and beyond. McLachlan reported to the CGS, Lieutenant General J.H. Coates, who was a member of COSC, but not in Gration's operational chain of command. McLachlan had no authority over vessels or aircraft to move supplies from Australia to Somalia. Unlike Chalmers and Beck, he did not have funds allocated to him to employ commercial resupply options for *Solace*.¹³³ He and his staff were responsible for concentrating supplies at Moorebank, from where the ADF movements system was supposed to dispatch them to Somalia efficiently. For *Solace*, this movements system comprised one army major, who was left to coax staff at Maritime and Air Headquarters into supporting *Solace*. With hindsight, the expectation that an army major at Logistic Command could direct Maritime and Air Headquarters to move stores to Africa for an army operation without written authority from General Gration, concurrence of Chief of the Naval Staff and Chief of the Air Staff, as well as their support command commanders, and an allocation of funds to reimburse navy and air force, was naïve.

¹³¹ Land Headquarters, 'Operation Solace – An Analysis of Intelligence Support', p. 6.

¹³² Mellor, Interview. Observations of other national headquarters in Mogadishu by the author in April-May 1993. Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 231-32.

¹³³ Walls, 'Operation Solace', p.8.

Command and control arrangements for sustaining the AFS were not synchronised.¹³⁴ General Gration did not appoint a joint logistic commander at the strategic or operational levels of command to be accountable to him, or to take responsibility, on his behalf, when problems emerged.¹³⁵ He had created the position of Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Logistics (ACLOG) in 1989 to coordinate logistic support for joint operations, as a result of the Sanderson Report.¹³⁶ There is no evidence that the incumbent ACLOG and his staff involved themselves in solving sustainment problems encountered on *Solace*.¹³⁷ The exception was Wing Commander Newham, a staff officer at Defence Movements Coordination Agency (DMCA), who reminded Wing Commander Jamieson at Air Headquarters, about the \$ 2.4 million allocation to support *Solace* with commercial air freight several times. For reasons unknown, Jamieson did not expend these funds in support of *Solace*.¹³⁸

Operation *Solace* was a test of the army's ability to support its vehicles and equipment fleets offshore with spare parts. The inhibiting consequences on operations were more serious by the 1990s because the army's fleets of vehicles, weapons and equipment were different from major allies, such as the Americans. Consequentially, the operation tested joint coordination of spare parts supply because the army depended on navy and air force for transport. There was also a requirement to maintain more

¹³⁴ The service chiefs were responsible for sustainment of *Solace*. There was no joint logistic leadership provided from HQ ADF or a joint approach taken in mutual self interest. The navy and army set up separate supply chains for *Solace*. The air force provided a reluctant resupply service to the army, but none to the navy. Indeed, Navy Support Command vied with Maritime Command for responsibility for logistic support to ships deployed on *Solace* by setting up an *ad hoc* group called an Operational Support Group at Mombassa to support *Tobruk* and *Jervis Bay* and any other naval vessels that might become involved in *Solace*, despite the procedure followed for Operation *Damask* (Gulf War 1990-91). Commodore Pearson, 'Operation *Solace*', Paragraph 10. The navy were unaware of the air force resupply flights organised by Land Headquarters and were critical of army's freight forwarding arrangements that did not include urgently needed navy stores and spare parts. Walls, 'Operation *Solace*', p. 6.

¹³⁵ Rear Admiral A.L. Hunt, 'Operation *Solace* Logistics Support', 23 September 1993, NSC N93/03302/FONSC 656/93, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. Hunt, who was Director General, Fleet Operations, Navy Support Command, makes the point that in absence any guidance from HQ ADF, Navy Office or Land Headquarters, he and his staff set up their own supply chain for *Tobruk*.

¹³⁶ Horner, *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 264.

¹³⁷ Colonel Nagy and Wing Commander Newham offered during their interviews that it was not the job of HQ ADF to sort out operational level problems. They expected the service chiefs and environmental commanders to do so and opined that interference from HQ ADF in operational matters would have been unwelcome. Nagy, Interview. Newham, Interview.

¹³⁸ 'AHQ [Air Headquarters] was reminded regularly by DMCA that it had been allocated funds for air transport of maintenance and it could, if so determined, use civil air freight'. B.C. Newham, 'DMCA Comments – LHQ POR for OP *Solace*', 20 July 1993, p. 1, LD 92 – 34938 (4), JMOVTOPS 054/93. Copy held by author. Newham, Interview. Also Lieutenant Colonel R.G. Greville, Interview with author, 7 February 1996. Greville was the officer appointed at Land Headquarters to coordinate air resupply for *Solace* with staff at Air Headquarters. He was never told of an allocation of \$ 2.4 million to Air Headquarters for commercial air freight to support *Solace*.

sophisticated equipment, such as satellite communications equipment and computers, in the field.

There is an element of risk in every military operation, even when force elements are not facing capable opponents. The 1 RAR Group faced lightly-armed rural bandits and urban criminals, as well as unarmed, but highly provocative, Somali males. The Australians operated in the field in a very hot climate for four and a half months. Though they lacked operational experience and local knowledge, they were well trained, adequately equipped and had sufficient combat support services within the group to meet these challenges. Operations in Somalia were risky and arduous, but not as dangerous as most combat operations in Korea and Vietnam.

It was incumbent on higher levels of ADF command to minimise personal risk for members of the 1 RAR Group, as well as political and strategic risks for the Australian Government during *Solace*. For the purposes of this thesis, risk minimisation was about effectively executing the functions of force projection. Higher headquarters were the enablers of these functions. Accordingly, force elements should have been given time and resources for generic force preparation and, when a projection to Africa was in the offing, issued timely warning, accurate intelligence and provided requested specialist equipment quickly. Operational commanders and staff should have facilitated: thorough reconnaissance and specific force preparation; well-coordinated and protected deployment and efficient reception and onward movement of forces to their area of operations. Subsequently, they should have provided judicious direction and efficient logistic support for the duration of the operation. Finally, they should have coordinated efficient redeployment and force reconstitution.

The ADF was not practising specific force preparation, deployment or sustainment under simulated real-time operational conditions for major joint exercises. Consequently, there was some confusion and lack of responsiveness during a real-time test of these force projection functions. Major General Blake delegated national command to Colonel Mellor and his *ad hoc* headquarters. He may have sought to validate the untried concept of a Deployable Joint Force HQ (DJFHQ) using an

enhanced HQ AFS, but he had misgivings as *Solace* drew to a close.¹³⁹ On balance, HQ AFS was not a DJFHQ.

In reality, HQ AFS performed an inspectional role, handled communications back and forward to Australia in behalf of the 1 RAR Group, double-handled pay and other administrative information, satisfied the information and reporting requirements of higher level headquarters and tried very hard to make a flawed resupply system work.¹⁴⁰

In summary, the 1 RAR Group adapted to challenging climatic, cultural and political conditions and created sufficient deterrence to protect the distribution of humanitarian aid. Junior leaders and small teams had the character and training to win in close combat and deal firmly, but legally, with menacing Somali males while showing compassion to destitute Somalis. However, operational command let the 1 RAR Group down. Troops lived in unnecessarily austere conditions that increased fatigue and levels of stress and contributed to dangerous accidental firing of weapons. If they had been wounded or injured, a problematic aero-medical evacuation system awaited them. Post operation reporting and interviews with commanders in the 1 RAR Group confirmed that the unresponsive and niggardly force sustainment, that also contributed to intermittent mail services and lack of amenities, not only inhibited operations and increased risk, but also lowered morale.¹⁴¹

In 1993, ADF arrangements for commanding and sustaining joint operations were still evolving. Fortunately, the threat and tempo of operations went down, after the 1 RAR Group arrived; not up as might be the case for other short warning operations against more competent military opponents. Thus, there were no negative consequences during or after *Solace* from the uneven execution of the functions of force projection. Like *Morris Dance*, *Picaresque* and *Kangaroo 89* and *92*, *Solace* revealed lessons for application next time. There was an urgent need to apply them because the

¹³⁹ Colonel Mellor expressed his satisfaction with the organisation and role of HQ AFS. See Mellor, 'Post Operation Report', p. 19. However, on 6 April 1993 Blake directed Lieutenant Colonel Retter to investigate how well the command and control arrangements had worked between HQ AFS and the 1 RAR Group. In retrospect, he felt that the tasks of a national headquarters should have been clarified better. He was also concerned that 'cobbling together' a headquarters from a 'makeshift' structure and putting a colonel in command may not have been the best way to set up command and control for a battalion group on operations. Lieutenant Colonel P.B Retter, Notes - 'LCAUST Brief on Tasks of the OST', 6 April 1993. Retter showed the notes to the author.

¹⁴⁰ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, p. 353.

¹⁴¹ Army psychologists, who conducted interviews during the final weeks of *Solace*, produced a classified report. Author reviewed and discussed this report with Lieutenant Colonel Hurley in July 1993. See Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, ch. 8

next time the Government chose to take military action at short notice Australian troops might face more demanding and dangerous circumstances.

While the post-Cold War period made sustained conventional operations unlikely, the Information Age made tactical performance strategically significant. In Somalia, other nations, including the US and Canada, endured these consequences when the tactical level of command failed under pressure with subsequent political repercussions. Thus, one of the new challenges for the ADF after 1993 was to adjust to these imperatives and force projections like *Solace*, or run the risk of contributing to tactical level failure that might result in political and strategic embarrassment.

Chapter 4

Regional Projection to Bougainville and Further National Rehearsal

Operation *Solace* was not a strategic aberration. Using a stock market idiom, *Solace* was a military investment that delivered substantial political, diplomatic and strategic returns. The Australian electorate warmed to the success of another expeditionary force. The operation enhanced Australia's reputation as a good international citizen, as well as a helpful and competent American ally. As *Solace* drew to a close, the Government was also receiving political and diplomatic dividends from a regional projection to Cambodia that included providing the commander of the UN mission there.¹

After some equivocation because of muted American interest in returning to Africa after recent experiences in Somalia, the Government directed the ADF to project a 300-strong Medical Support Force (MSF) to Africa in July 1994; this time to support a UN mission in Rwanda.² A few months later, the Government fulfilled promises made earlier in the year to Sir Julius Chan, the newly appointed Prime Minister of PNG, to support his initiative to find a political solution to the Bougainville Crisis.³ The ADF deployed a 650-strong joint command and logistic force to support a regional peace keeping force, comprised of contingents from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu. The mission was to provide a secure environment for the conduct of a peace conference in Arawa in Bougainville.⁴ In the following year, the ADF conducted Exercise *Kangaroo 95* in order to practise a joint military response to a short warning threat across the northern approaches to the continent; another opportunity to rehearse national force projection. Would the lessons from *Morris Dance*, *Picaresque*, *Solace*, *Kangaroo 89* and *92* be applied, or merely identified and confirmed once again?

¹ The mission in Cambodia was called UN Transition Authority – Cambodia (UNTAC). Its Australian commander was Lieutenant General J. M. Sanderson. See Londey, *Other People's Wars*, pp. 171-72

² Ibid, pp. 199-200

³ DFAT, Transcript of telephone conversation between Senator Gareth Evans and PNG Deputy Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, 23 May 1994, 94-26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁴ Land Headquarters, 'Operation Lagoon – Post Operation Report, Combined Force Peace Support Operations on Bougainville, PNG, Oct 94', Plans 120/941, November 1994, p. 1, K94-0132528. Copy held by author.

Identifying Lessons

In April 1993, Admiral A.L. Beaumont, formerly VCDF, replaced the long serving General Gration as CDF. Gration's operations instruction in December and further advice from his staff in January 1993 had directed the service chiefs and environmental commanders to produce post-operation reports on *Solace* after the AFS had returned in May.⁵ Major General Blake, who had responsibility for the main report, appointed Lieutenant Colonel Retter to head an operational study team to analyse *Solace* and report back. Retter's team visited Somalia for several weeks before the end of the operation. They were not only able to produce their own thorough post-operation report but also to write comprehensive reports for Colonel Mellor and Lieutenant Colonel Hurley, who signed them off with only a few amendments.⁶ In addition, Blake also authorised a visit by a team of psychologists, led by Lieutenant Colonel J. Kelley, and an operations analyst. Kelley and his team interviewed members of the 1 RAR Group to ascertain if there were extant psychological problems as well as to advise them on adapting to life back in Australia and what psychological support was available should they experience behavioural problems after return. The analyst's task was to conduct first hand research with members of the 1 RAR Group for an historical account of the operation that would be published in due course. Within three months of the return of the AFS from Somalia, Blake had forwarded several comprehensive post-operation reports and summaries to senior officers and officials in the army as well as to HQADF, with information copies to his navy and air force counterparts.⁷ Kelley submitted a report on his team's visit in July 1993 but it was deemed to be too sensitive

⁵ HQ ADF, 'Operation Order - Operation Solace', 23 December 1992, E3J/I4J, K92 00960, NAA, Sydney. Captain, R.E. Swinnerton, RAN, Director Joint Operations and Plans, 'Post Activity Report - Operation Solace', 6 January 1993, unreferenced minute, 93/28659, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. Air Vice Marshal, L.B. Fisher, ACOPS, 'Timetable for Post Activity Reports - Operation Solace', ACOPS BS 0494/93, 27 January 1993, 92/35053, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan

⁶ What Major General Blake described as the 'Stand Alone' papers were: Operation Solace - An Analysis of Inf Bn Security Operations; Operation Solace - An Analysis of Equipment Performance; Operation Solace - An Analysis of Command, Control and Communications; An Analysis of Intelligence Support and Civil Military Operations; and Operation Solace - An Analysis of Administration and Logistics. Major General M.P. Blake, 'OP Solace - OST Papers', LCAUST 3990/93, 6 July 1993, K85-00085, Copies of papers held by author. Mellor, 'Post Operation Report - Operation Solace', Hurley, 'Post Operation Report - Operation Solace'.

⁷ Major General M.P. Blake, 'Operation Solace Key Issues/Lessons Learned Summary', LCAUST Minute 3234/93, 8 June 1993, K93-00085, NAA, Sydney. Major General M.P. Blake, 'LHQ Post Operational Report - Operation Solace', LCAUST 3883/93, 1 July 1993, K93-00085, NAA, Sydney. Major General M.P. Blake, 'OP Solace - OST Papers', LCAUST 3990/93, 6 July 1993, K85-00085, NAA, Sydney. Major General M.P. Blake, 'OP Solace - Summary of Recommendations and Key Issues Requiring Action', LCAUST 4750/93, K93-00085, 3 August 1993, NAA, Sydney.

for wider distribution.⁸ The analyst published a 500-page book, *A Little Bit of Hope – Australian Force Somalia*, in 1998 and arranged with his publishers to distribute 500 copies to all senior army officers above the rank of colonel, formation headquarters and training establishments.⁹

Before the publication of *A Little Bit of Hope*, there was a substantial body of evidence that there was room for improvement in specific force preparation, deployment and sustainment of offshore operations. The need to refine command and control arrangements for force projection remained hidden. There was no mention of problems with national command or Blake's responsibility for operational outcomes but lack of control over the enabling resources to achieve them. Operational and tactical level post-operation reports highlighted problems with force sustainment.¹⁰ Commander Taylor, OC *Tobruk*, summed it up the best by writing that problems 'could have been significantly reduced had a joint approach to logistic support been adopted from the outset'.¹¹ The three services participated in a Tri-Service/Logistic Commanders' Conference in July 1993 to discuss the way ahead for joint logistics, in general, and movement and distribution of personnel and freight for operations, in particular. Rear Admiral A. Hunt, Director General of Fleet Operations, Navy Support Command, deplored the lack of communications between logistic organisations in each service and wrote, in respect to this conference, that 'This spirit of cooperation may facilitate positive changes where necessary for future operations'.¹² Air Vice-Marshal L.B. Fisher, Deputy Chief of the Air Force, wrote in December 1993 that 'Air Force can, within extant policy guidance, provide a total air freight service to its Defence customers'. However, he went on to comment that 'Distribution difficulties go much deeper than the air freight issue'. He described the ADF distribution system as 'disjointed' and lacking clear definition that resulted in 'confusion, conflict, waste and disappointment' as 'routine products of the present arrangements, regardless of whether those arrangements are supporting contingency [defence of Australia or other

⁸ Copies of Kelley's report on the psychological health of the 1 RAR Group and issues related to their service were distributed to Colonel P.J. McNamara, Colonel (Operations) Land Headquarters, Colonel W.J.A. Mellor, CAFS and Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, CO 1 RAR. The author discussed the report with Lieutenant Colonel Hurley in Townsville on 27 July 1993.

⁹ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*.

¹⁰ Mellor, 'Post Operation Report - Operation Solace', Hurley, 'Post Operation Report - Operation Solace', HMAS *Tobruk*, 'Operation Solace', Walls, 'Operation Solace', Hunt, 'Operation Solace, Logistic Support', Blake, 'Operation Solace'.

¹¹ HMAS *Tobruk*, 'Operation Solace Phase 4 – Quickrep', E31/I4J, 25 May 1993, p.2, 93 28659, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹² Hunt, 'Operation Solace, Logistic Support', p. 1.

operations] or peacetime requirements'. He recommended that ACLOG take up the challenge of improving force sustainment arrangements 'as a matter of urgency'.¹³

All of the reports commissioned by Blake as well as the analyst's book contained proof of deficiencies in the enabling functions of force projection. Blake directed his staff to follow-up a consolidated list of 71 'Key Issues Requiring Action' that were based on nine reports, papers and summaries. He wrote, 'Ideally, the majority of agreed recommendations should be implemented by 30 Nov 93'.¹⁴ When Blake's operations officer, Colonel P.J. McNamara, sent out the list of 71 recommendations again on 24 December - one of Blake's final orders before his retirement in January 1994 - most had not been implemented in a meaningful way.¹⁵ McNamara wrote that the list would be reviewed again in March 1994 to ascertain whether all of the agreed recommendations had been implemented. Possibly without Blake's drive to have the lessons applied, the list was not distributed again. His determined efforts to have the ADF apply lessons from *Solace* ended.

Participation in the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR)

In early 1994, events were in train that would result in the Australian Government responding to another UN-sponsored humanitarian relief mission in Africa. On 13 May 1994, a week before the first anniversary of the return of the 1 RAR Group from Somalia, the UN asked the Australian Government for a contribution to its mission in Rwanda.¹⁶ This troubled land-locked former Belgian colony in central Africa had been the scene for one of modern history's largest mass killings of human beings. Those nations that had formed a coalition to avert a humanitarian disaster in Somalia were reluctant to intervene in Africa again. Without the Americans in the lead, Australia balked at contributing to a coalition that did not contain significant contingents from any of its major allies. Defence Minister Senator R. Ray 'was concerned over security issues' but Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator G. Evans, a keen internationalist, sought support from his Cabinet colleagues for the ADF to make a contribution, despite Ray's reservations.¹⁷

¹³ Air Vice Marshal, L.B. Fisher, 'Co-ordination of Air Freight – Air Load Coordination Centre (ALCC)', DCAS 962/93, 13 December 1993, AF93 15058 Pt1 (47), Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁴ Blake, 'OP Solace – Summary of Recommendations', covering minute.

¹⁵ A conclusion reached by the author after perusal of files.

¹⁶ Londey, *Other People's Wars*, p. 199.

¹⁷ Ibid.

Australian equivocation ended on 25 June, ten weeks after the original UN request, when Evans was able to persuade Cabinet to authorise two six-month tours of duty by a 300-strong Medical Support Force (MSF) made up of a medical group, accompanied by an infantry company for protection, and a small logistic support element manned by members of Administration Company, 2/4 RAR, based in Townsville. The operation was conditional on a report from a reconnaissance party led by Lieutenant Colonel R.W. Shoebridge, a senior staff officer from HQ ADF, that departed for Rwanda in early July. The advance party of the MSF was expected to be in Rwanda in early August, if Shoebridge's reconnaissance report was favourable.

Admiral Beaumont did not issue a warning order authorising planning until Shoebridge reported back. Thus, Operation *Tamar* began with four weeks notice for force elements to assemble, prepare and depart. Beaumont decided to raise a hybrid joint unit rather than form the MSF from a medical unit, such as an army field hospital, using existing teams and drawing from an established inventory of equipment and stocks. Lieutenant Colonel P.A. McIntosh, CO 2/4 RAR, received orders to raise a joint MSF in four weeks.¹⁸ Staff from HQ ADF issued him an *ad hoc* force structure comprised of four majors, each responsible for medical, nursing, security and logistic services respectively. Thus, the MSF was split between medical and combat troops, and the medical component further split between navy, army and air force personnel, as well as between combat medics and base hospital personnel - potential ingredients for a disjointed, fractious unit.¹⁹

McIntosh decided to raise and prepare the MSF in Townsville in order to employ his battalion headquarters as well as utilise other facilities there to train and prepare personnel. Individuals and small teams began trickling into Townsville from over 50 donor units across the three services, in no specified order, from the second week of July. Townsville suited McIntosh, but not his medical corps officers, who wanted to inspect and check medical equipment and stocks being issued from the medical stores depot in Randwick, located in Sydney, before departure. Thus, preparation of the MSF began with tension over this issue and different expectations of standards of individual fitness and personal military skills between members of the three services. McIntosh was an infantry commander, who wanted everyone to comply

¹⁸ The CDF appointed, Colonel W. Ramsay, who was to serve as the UNAMIR senior medical officer, as the national commander.

¹⁹ The author visited Townsville in July 1994 and spoke with Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh and his subordinate commanders, key staff and members of the contingent.

with army standards for weapon handling, shooting and personal security. This came as shock to medical personnel from the other services, some of whom came from navy and air force base hospitals where handling and carriage of weapons was unknown.

Major General Blake had raised a unit to assist individuals and contingents for overseas service in 1992. He did this at Randwick Barracks by manning Reinforcement Holding Branch (RHB), a dormant sub-unit of the Logistic Support Force that had the traditional role of training and administering reinforcements. The RHB had assisted the 1 RAR Group with coordination of training in January 1993. By 1994, the RHB, now renamed Reinforcement Holding Company (RHC), had gained experience preparing individuals and small contingents for service on UN missions in places such as the Western Sahara, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Middle East, as well as administering reinforcements and visitors to those UN missions and UNTAC in Cambodia. The first commander of the RHB, Major C. Chidgey, took his staff to Townsville and assisted McIntosh's staff to establish a database of information on personnel assigned to the MSF and their preparedness to deploy. He and his staff also designed and assisted in coordinating a pre-deployment training and an administrative program.

McIntosh was frustrated by the lack of responsiveness from the ADF, in general and the army, in particular, to meeting the needs of the MSF, especially in light of the lessons he thought would have been applied after the experience of the 1 RAR Group the year before. From his perspective, higher levels of command neither issued clear guidance nor coordinated the provision of personnel from the three services. The MSF received second priority for logistic support after Exercise *Swift Eagle*, the annual 3rd Brigade field exercise. In addition to cannibalising his own battalion's vehicles, equipment and stocks, McIntosh and his subordinates relied on the good will of local unit and sub-unit commanders in Townsville to provide additional communications and computer equipment, as well as general stores.²⁰ Like Lieutenant Colonel Hurley the year before and the commanders of the two contingents for *Picaresque*, McIntosh was not afforded the opportunity to conduct a reconnaissance to guide his thinking and the preparation of his contingent. He arrived in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, with his advance party on 7 August 1994 to face the challenges of refurbishing an abandoned and damaged hospital, and settling into nearby barracks accommodation amidst armed units of the Rwandan People's Front that occupied adjacent barracks.

²⁰ Ibid.

Participation in the South Pacific Peace Keeping Force - 1994

As McIntosh and his advance party began the nauseating tasks of cleaning up a ruined hospital in August 1994 that had been the scene of murder and mayhem, events were already unfolding for Australia's next force projection into the near region since *Morris Dance* in 1987. Sir Julius Chan, the newly elected Prime Minister of PNG, was taking the initiative on the Bougainville Crisis, an armed secessionist uprising in the North Solomons Province that had embroiled the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) in nearly four years of costly counterinsurgency operations. He had begun negotiations with Australia in May 1994 when, as Foreign Minister, he had consulted his Australian counterpart, Senator Evans.²¹ Chan's plan depended on Australia providing diplomatic, logistic and other specialist military support for the deployment of a South Pacific peace keeping force to Bougainville to provide a secure environment for a peace conference.

The agreed trigger for convening a peace conference was the submission of a report from an Australian delegation that had visited Bougainville in response to reports of human rights abuses by the PNGDF. Senator S. Loosely, head of the delegation, presented his report in Parliament on 8 June.²² It contained a timetable for a peace process that would begin with community consultations and culminate with a peace conference later in the year. The report recommended that a regional peacekeeping force should provide security for the venue and delegates. In his formal reply to Loosely's report in Parliament, Evans signalled,

Australia could play a role in supporting a small regional peace keeping force, established to facilitate a peace process: this has not been put to us as a detailed proposal, and we await further elaboration of the concept. We would certainly consider any such proposal very sympathetically.²³

On the same day that Loosely tabled his report, Defence Minister Ray approved a plan for Operation *Lagoon*. The plan envisaged a Fijian-led South Pacific Peace Keeping Force (SPPKF) assembling and training in Fiji and deploying from there to

²¹ Classified source, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

²² Australian Parliament, *Bougainville: A Pacific Solution, Report of the Visit of the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to Bougainville 18-22 April 1994*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994.

²³ Australian Parliament, Government Response by Senator the Hon Gareth Evans QC, Minister for Foreign Affairs, to the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation to Bougainville, 8 June 1994, p. 4. Copy held by author. Evans went on to send further supportive signals through the media on 22 June when he told an interviewer on Radio Australia that there was a proposal for a peace keeping operation in Bougainville on the table and that Australia was prepared to give transport and logistic support. A copy of the transcript of Radio Australia interview with Senator G. Evans on 22 June 1994 is located in 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Bougainville via Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands.²⁴ In the covering minute to the plan, Admiral Beaumont wrote to Ray:

I am confident we could mount the operation successfully given the appropriate political climate, but because of the ADF's supporting role, the RFMF [Republic of Fiji Military Forces] would be key players; without them we would be on shaky ground militarily. ... You might note it would require approx [imately] three weeks from receiving your approval to proceed until all arrangements were in place to commence the conference.²⁵

Beaumont had set an ambitious timetable, presumably on advice from his Assistant Chief of the Defence Force – Operations (ACOPS), Major General J.M. Connolly. For the time being, the only persons officially aware of this plan were six officers at HQ ADF, Admiral Beaumont, Senator Ray and probably Senator Evans. It remained as a contingency plan, untested by wider analysis from staff at HQ ADF or subordinate headquarters. The need to keep the *Lagoon* plan a secret from staff at HQ ADF as well as the environmental commanders and their senior staff was puzzling. Senator Evans had talked freely to the media and in Parliament in June about Australia supporting a small scale, short time deployment of a SPPKF to Bougainville. Chan was reported later to have done some personal lobbying during a tour of South Pacific island countries canvassing participation in a SPPKF.²⁶ These indicators that a force projection was in the offing did not prompt HQ ADF to begin contingency planning with subordinate headquarters, who would have to plan and execute *Lagoon*. For their part, commanders and staff at subordinate headquarters, such as Land Headquarters, HQ 1st Division and HQ 3rd Brigade, did not take their cue from Evans' public statements to conduct any contingency planning either. General Baker, who was VCDF at the time, commented later that Senator Ray was not as keen as Senator Evans about supporting Chan's initiative in Bougainville. Accordingly, he gave no encouragement to Beaumont to begin more comprehensive planning with lower levels of command.²⁷

On 27 August, PNG foreign affairs officials, following Chan's direction, met secessionist leaders at Tambea in the Solomon Islands and signed the Tambea Accords. The PNG Government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), the armed

²⁴ HQ ADF, 'Outline Plan for OP Lagoon', CDF 160/1994, 8 June 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

²⁵ Admiral A.L. Beaumont, Cover note on 'Outline Plan for OP Lagoon', CDF 160/1994, 8 June 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

²⁶ Papua-New Guinea Government, Gabriel Dusava, Secretary PNG Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Circular: *Outcome of Bougainville Peace Conference*, 16 October 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

forces of the secessionist movement, agreed to pursue a peace process that would involve deployment of a SPPKF into Bougainville. This was a clear signal to Australia that more detailed planning was now urgently required. Australian diplomats met in Canberra during the following days to decide on the way ahead. Chan gave further impetus to the Bougainville peace process on 30 August, soon after being appointed Prime Minister. He used his inaugural speech to state that he would lead negotiations for peace in Bougainville with secessionist leaders. Five days after the Tamea Accords were signed and two days after Chan's announcement of his intentions, Admiral Beaumont had still not issued a warning order to subordinate levels of command. He advised Senator Ray on 2 September that he would continue planning in secret.²⁸ Ray may have directed Beaumont to wait for formal agreements between the PNG Government and the Bougainvillean secessionists on the conduct and location of the peace conference before issuing a warning order. In any event, time shortened for subordinate headquarters to plan, check and organise, and for logisticians to anticipate and pre-position.

Chan met with the BRA Commander, General S. Kauona, at Honiara on 2 September. They signed *Commitment for Peace on Bougainville* the next day. The document contained arrangements for a ceasefire, nomination of Arawa as the peace conference site, a schedule for the peace process and the tasks that would be required of the SPPKF, including the creation of a secure environment in three neutral zones, and collection of arms at those zones prior to transporting delegates to Arawa. There would be a cease-fire from midnight on 12 September and a peace conference was planned to begin on 10 October. They scheduled discussions for raising the SPPKF on 9 September in Nadi, Fiji.

Chan's insistence that the peace conference would begin on 10 October caught his own and the Australian Government by surprise. When he first proposed this timetable late in August, his advisers and departmental officials, as well as the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby, had advised him that it was unworkable.²⁹ However, Chan maintained his position: the conference would begin no later than 10 October. The ADF now had less than six weeks to prepare and deploy a SPPKF comprised of contingents from Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu to Bougainville.

²⁷ General J.S. Baker, Interview with author, 30 August 2005.

²⁸ Admiral A.L. Beaumont, 'Op Lagoon Planning', CDF 258/1994, 2 September 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

²⁹ Classified source, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Beaumont nominated the Land Commander, Major General P.M. Arnison, as his lead joint commander for *Lagoon*. His staff sent a copy of the *Lagoon* contingency plan to Arnison's staff three days later on 5 September. By then, Arnison had sent his senior planning officer, Lieutenant Colonel J.R. O'Connor, to the Gulf of Carpentaria to brief Brigadier P.J. Abigail, Commander, 3rd Brigade, about *Lagoon*, in anticipation of him becoming the combined force tactical commander. After the briefing on 5 September, O'Connor told Abigail and two of his senior staff that he would be convening a planning conference on 9 September to consider a planning directive that was being developed by staff at HQ ADF. Abigail insisted that his Brigade Major, Major D.L. Morrison, attend. O'Connor later tried to dissuade Morrison from attending because it was not time for the tactical level of command to be involved.³⁰ Morrison insisted. He recalled:

I think it was very opportune that I was there. This was the first time all of the 'doers' met for Operation *Lagoon*. The navy, the air force and the movers [probably 11 Movement Control Group] were in the loop. There were about 12 officers there who represented organisations that would have to make things happen. The meeting opened with a briefing from the Land Commander, General Arnison, followed by some intelligence people and then [Lieutenant Colonel] Bob Shoebridge told us about what had been happening in Canberra. I had no idea that HQ ADF had known about this operation for months and that very little real planning had gone on, especially in the logistics and administrative areas.³¹

Beaumont's draft planning directive went well beyond providing strategic guidance. It specified tasks for Major General Arnison and then went on to include operational and tactical details. After a day of deliberation, the members of O'Connor's planning group produced notes for a concept of operations and a draft directive to Abigail. In this draft, Arnison directed Abigail to present a concept of operations on 15 September to the staff at Land Headquarters so it could be refined before transmission to HQ ADF for approval. Arnison had given Abigail and his staff a significant challenge because they knew very little about the situation in Bougainville, Rules of Engagement for a combined force, or the potential threat to the SPPKF. Morrison recalled later:

I left Sydney with a very loose draft directive [from Arnison] for the Commander [Abigail], my notes from the meeting and

³⁰ Major D.L. Morrison., Interview with author, 24 October 1997.

³¹ Morrison, Interview. Lieutenant Colonel R.W. Shoebridge, SO1 Land Operations, HQ ADF.

some other loose paperwork that I had managed to gather. At this stage everything about this operation was loose.³²

Morrison flew back to Townsville to find that Abigail had returned from *Swift Eagle* to meet him and find out what *Lagoon* was all about. Even with the sketchy information they had, Abigail knew he had to begin developing concepts and anticipating what would be required to support the SPPKF.³³ Offsetting the tight deadlines and gaps in information, Abigail, Morrison and Major I.K. Hughes, Abigail's senior logistic staff officer, were used to producing plans and getting 3rd Brigade into action at short notice. The brigade was on an operational footing from *Swift Eagle* and had benefited from preparing and despatching the MSF to Rwanda.³⁴

Abigail and his staff were well into tactical level planning by the time Colonel G.W. Hurford, Director Joint Operations and Plans, HQ ADF, and Colonel P.J. McNamara, Colonel (Operations), Land Headquarters, were finalising a planning directive for Admiral Beaumont to sign.³⁵ Hurford and McNamara were having difficulty keeping subordinate headquarters informed of latest developments. The outcomes of a meeting in Nadi, Fiji, on 9 September that specified arrangements for assembling and training the SPPKF were communicated quickly to HQ ADF for incorporation into Beaumont's planning directive. However, planning had already begun at Sydney and Townsville, based on earlier advice. As quickly as some aspect of the operation was planned, changes arrived from HQ ADF.

After several days of intensive work, Abigail and Morrison flew to Sydney on 15 September to brief General Arnison's staff. Abigail argued for a substantial increase to the size of the combined force. He assessed that the SPPKF should comprise 390 South Pacific troops supported by 250 ADF personnel, not including the crews of support ships *Tobruk* and *Success*. After Abigail's briefing, planners began refining his concept to incorporate information from the most recent draft of Beaumont's planning directive and other sources.³⁶ Morrison noticed that, like the planning meeting on 9

³² Ibid.

³³ Brigadier P.J. Abigail, Interview with author, 18 March 1997.

³⁴ Lieutenant Colonel I.K. Hughes, Interview with author, 23 October 1997.

³⁵ Colonel P.J. McNamara, Interview with author, 31 October 1997.

³⁶ The other information incorporated into the concept came from documents produced by the Assistant Defence Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel G. Young, and his planning team in Port Moresby, reports from Colonel D.J. Hurley, who had been sent to assist the PNG Government with its planning and intelligence reports on the Bougainville Crisis. Morrison, Interview.

September, there were no logisticians or engineers attending to comment on whether operational concepts were logistically sound.³⁷

Coincidentally, planning at Land Headquarters was going ahead as another round of diplomatic negotiations began in Suva, Fiji. This situation replicated the coincidence of the first planning meeting on 9 September being held on the same day as the meeting of participating nations in Nadi. Once again, decisions made at the strategic level in Suva did not inform Land Headquarters planning until later. As a consequence, changes had to be made to plans. Defence legal officers and officials developed important documents, such as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and ROE without information on the operational plan and *vice versa*.³⁸

Planners at Land Headquarters decided to pre-position a reconnaissance group in Townsville and put its members on a short notice to move. Staff at HQ ADF would not authorise anyone to deploy offshore until the Australian Cabinet had approved *Lagoon*. Colonel S. Draunidalo, the nominated Fijian tactical ground force commander, was the reconnaissance leader. Colonel F. Tupou, a Tongan officer nominated to command a liaison headquarters, and a Ni Vanuatu representative would accompany him. Representatives from 3rd Brigade, *Tobruk*, Land Headquarters and Air Headquarters as well as a representative from the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby and an interpreter, who would join the reconnaissance group in Port Moresby, were to comprise the remainder of the group.³⁹ In anticipation of the Australian Cabinet approving *Lagoon* on 19 September, Arnison put Draunidalo and his team on 12 hours notice to move from 6 p.m. on 18 September. At this stage, no decision had been made in Canberra on whether Brigadier Abigail should go on the reconnaissance.

Planners at LHQ also decided on 18 September to send liaison officers to Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu to keep abreast of events as contingents were being formed and their support requirements became known. Abigail telephoned Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Martin, CO 1 RAR, that afternoon, directing him to have three officers ready to move the next day. Most of Martin's officers were on local leave or about to depart Townsville on leave after *Swift Eagle*. He went down to the 1 RAR Officers' Mess and nominated three of the officers he found there having a late afternoon beer. The next afternoon, Abigail briefed Major J.O. Cronin and Captains G. Ducie and S.J. Grace.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel G.J. Cartledge, 'Op Lagoon – Legal Post Operation Report', 16 November 1994, p. 2, 94/26461, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Cronin flew to Fiji, Ducie to Tonga and Grace to Vanuatu; none of them spoke the local language or had been to the South Pacific before.⁴⁰ Arguably, DIO, DFAT or HQ Special Forces should have provided officers with the relevant language and cultural skills. Higher levels of command left 3rd Brigade to 'make do'.

Meanwhile, the navy was preparing for participation in *Lagoon*.⁴¹ Beaumont had ordered the Maritime Commander to provide sea transport, command and control afloat, and aviation and medical support. On 16 September, the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral Chalmers, issued a warning order to *Success* and *Tobruk*, appointed CO *Success*, Captain J.S O'Hara, to command the group and designated *Tobruk* to be Abigail's headquarters afloat. Lieutenant Commanders I.C. Allan and R.J. Singleton assisted O'Hara to exercise command as well as to fulfil his duties as Brigadier Abigail's maritime advisor. Major General Arnison had operational control of navy vessels. This was the first time that navy vessels had been placed under control of a joint commander – a lesson from *Solace* being applied?⁴²

Land Headquarters staff sent the concept of operations for *Lagoon* to HQ ADF on 16 September. Despite almost doubling the numbers of troops from early estimates, acting CDF, Lieutenant General J.S. Baker, and Major General Connolly supported Abigail's concept of operations. Subsequently, Senator Ray approved the concept on 18 September and Cabinet approved a joint Defence-DFAT submission the next day, allocating \$5.2 million to Defence in supplementary funding. Though the political outcomes were problematic, the peace conference at Arawa represented the best chance of beginning a negotiated settlement of the Bougainville Crisis since the Endeavour Accords brokered by New Zealand in 1990 had failed.

In the days before and after Cabinet approval, the ADF operations network worked well. Connolly's staff in Canberra and Arnison's staff in Sydney trusted each other to exchange drafts of documents, to question any aspect of planning and to offer advice. The smooth working relationships between HQ ADF and Land Headquarters were also reflected in the relationships further down the chain of command between McNamara's staff and Abigail's staff. Morrison recalled that he was in constant contact with Lieutenant Colonel O'Connor and his staff, and occasionally received useful and

39 Land Headquarters, 'Members of the Recon Gp': LHQ OPS SIG E3L/I4S, 160557ZSEP94, K94 01325, NAA, Sydney.

40 Major J.O. Cronin, Telephone discussion with author, 31 December 1997.

41 Captain J.S. O'Hara, RAN, 'Op Lagoon POR Maritime Aspects', 24 October 1994, 98 18173, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

42 Commodore J.S. O'Hara, RAN, Interview with author, 13 November 1996.

informative telephone calls from Lieutenant Colonel Shoebridge at HQ ADF. The operations staffs at the strategic, operational and tactical levels of command were working harmoniously through a line of experienced army officers who knew each other. Planning and preparation for *Damask* in 1990 had also worked well because there was an unbroken line of experienced navy officers at each level of command, who knew each other well.

Intelligence, Communications and Logistic Support

While operational planning was running smoothly within tight deadlines, the equivalent processes for intelligence, communications and logistics were not synchronising. For *Lagoon*, the ADF was responsible for these functions. Tactical level effects would be important. The Australian intelligence community, in general, as well as intelligence assets and capabilities deployed to Bougainville, in particular, had to anticipate any threats to members of the ADF personnel, SPPKF, or delegates to the conference. Urgent messages had to be transmitted quickly for timely decision making, especially in response to threat. For example, DIO had to deploy sufficient assets and effort to identify any armed groups on Bougainville intending to disrupt the peace process by harming peace keepers or delegates. Intelligence had to be communicated efficiently up and down the chain of command so that commanders could monitor a threat, take evasive action or neutralise it. For their part, ADF logisticians had to deploy sufficient stocks and set up a supply chain to provide basic commodities, such as rations, water, ammunition and other consumables, such as spare parts, as well as logistic services, such as catering, maritime and air transport, medical support and mail.

Thus, the scene was set in September 1994 to test Australia's first two strategic priorities – command, control and communications as well as intelligence gathering and evaluation. There would also be a further test of logistics, though the short duration of *Lagoon* would not fully test a supply chain unless operationally important assets broke down or were left behind, as was the case for *Solace*. Inadequate reconnaissance and intelligence had shaped *Morris Dance*, *Picaresque* and *Solace* detrimentally. The question for *Lagoon* would be whether anything had changed since *Solace* where initial logistic planning and subsequent lack of support had put additional pressure on the tactical level of command and increased risk. More specifically, would the ADF logistic system respond quickly enough to meet the needs of a deploying force, load ships efficiently and provide responsive support thereafter?

For *Lagoon*, Beaumont and his staff had to understand threats to the peace conference in order to develop strategic guidance, design force structure and specify ROE. Abigail also had to understand threats and examine the operational environment first hand, including meeting key stakeholders. Logisticians needed to know about infrastructure, terrain, water supply and climate as well as what types of organisations and numbers of personnel, vessels, aircraft, vehicles and major items of equipment they would be supporting.

Secrecy at HQ ADF stymied operational level intelligence planning from June to September 1994 – those who kept secrets in Canberra kept secrets from those who kept secrets in Sydney. DIO and other agencies did not warn intelligence staff at Land Headquarters that the ADF might be going to support a regional peace support operation in Bougainville. Lieutenant Colonel R.A. Hill, the senior intelligence analyst at Land Headquarters, took the initiative. He and his staff briefed Major General Arnison and key operations, communications and logistic staff on the situation in Bougainville every week since Chan became Prime Minister. Hill felt that it was his duty to keep his commander informed about unstable areas of the near region. He was also aware that Senator Evans was talking about the ADF supporting a SPPKF in Bougainville.⁴³ Despite these briefings, Arnison did not authorise contingency planning.

After Beaumont issued his warning order for *Lagoon* on 2 September, Hill and his staff developed an intelligence collection plan targeting all armed stakeholders in Bougainville and submitted it to intelligence agencies in Canberra and elsewhere. Intelligence support for *Lagoon* could not follow the doctrine of conventional warfare. There was no specified enemy, but there were several ill-defined threats. This meant that ADF intelligence personnel and assets would have to be directed to gather information on the PNG defence and police forces, and their intelligence services as well as Bougainvillean secessionist groups and their political and military allies and opponents. Hill based his assessment on the premise that despite none of these stakeholders declaring publicly that it was their intention to disrupt the peace process by attacking peacekeepers or delegates, there were rogue elements from each group capable of taking violent or destructive action without authorisation of their superiors.⁴⁴ During this time, Hill received no intelligence guidance from higher headquarters or agencies in Canberra. Neither Major General Arnison nor members of his operations,

⁴³ Lieutenant Colonel R.A. Hill, Interview with author, 31 October 1997.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

communications or logistic staff requested specific intelligence. This ambivalence, accompanied by an inference that intelligence was an irrelevant contributor to a peace keeping operation, did not augur well for force protection for *Lagoon*.

Representatives from intelligence agencies at the strategic, operational and tactical levels did not meet during the initial planning phase for *Lagoon* in early September. Consequently, there were no intelligence arrangements or procedures worked out for the operation.⁴⁵ This meant that there was no shared assessment of what intelligence elements should be deployed to support either Arnison as the lead joint commander or Abigail as the combined force commander. If a threat arose quickly and unexpectedly, there was no shared understanding of how information would be passed in a timely way to these two key decision makers. In effect, the ADF intelligence community decided that, aside from convening a Bougainville Crisis Action Team on 6 September within the ADF Intelligence Centre (ADFIC) in Canberra to advise Major General Connolly, it would be business as usual.

Business as usual meant that intelligence agencies would continue to operate independently, in compartments and in great secrecy. Hill and his staff were unable to influence the provision of intelligence to their commander or task agencies to do so. For example, he knew from ADF peace support operations in Somalia and Rwanda that human intelligence constituted the most effective way to anticipate threats to ADF personnel. DIO staff ignored his requests for a human intelligence network to be recruited in Bougainville while there was time to do so. General Baker commented later that it would have taken several years, not a few weeks, to set up a human intelligence network in Bougainville, adding that Defence had no authority to do so: PNG was a sovereign nation and one of Australia's important neighbours.⁴⁶ There also appeared to be no co-ordination between Defence intelligence agencies and other government departments with intelligence gathering capabilities. This lack of coordination and mutual trust was not unusual at the time.⁴⁷

Undaunted, Hill reminded his superiors and agencies in Canberra that interpreters as well as liaison officers would be required to go ashore in support of South Pacific commanders and ADF support personnel. He recommended that they be directed to gather intelligence to protect Bougainvillean delegates. Frustrated with the

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Baker, Interview.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

lack of response, he and his staff established their own small Bougainvillean human intelligence network through informal contacts.⁴⁸

For *Lagoon*, HQ ADF staff directed Hill to deal only with ADFIC that was under Connolly's command. This one-off arrangement ensured that staff who reported to Connolly would decide what information Arnison's intelligence staff would receive. As a consequence, Hill was unable to access certain types of data and information directly, losing the capability to interpret and advise Arnison independently. Hill also lost authorisation to task intelligence agencies. Arnison would have to depend on Connolly and his staff. Unfortunately, these *ad hoc* arrangements did not result in agreed procedures for reacting to a crisis or independent secure communications linking ADFIC directly to Abigail and his staff.

In summary, DIO and other intelligence agency support for *Lagoon* was plugged in at the strategic level for Connolly and his staff through ADFIC. However, Arnison and Abigail, the operational and tactical level customers, were not connected. Their intelligence staffs were making their own arrangements. All intelligence would be passed using the same frequencies as operational and logistic information. Thus, intelligence gathered at the tactical level in Bougainville would compete with other communications traffic to get up to Arnison's staff, and then on to ADFIC. Similarly, intelligence gathered at the strategic level would compete with other traffic to get down to Abigail and his staff in Bougainville.

Logistic Preparations

While the ADF intelligence community made tenuous arrangements for *Lagoon*, ADF logisticians went into their planning cycle. Secrecy at HQ ADF had not only left logisticians in subordinate headquarters and at Logistic Command in Melbourne in the dark until early September, but also logisticians within HQ ADF itself. This resulted in some internal friction. Colonel Hurford, Director, Joint Operations and Plans at HQ ADF, gave Captain R.W. Sharp, RAN, Director Joint Logistic Operations and Plans at HQADF, a copy of the contingency plan for *Lagoon* in the first week of September. Sharp commented later that:

It took us precisely 60 minutes to work out that it [the plan] was unachievable. We made representations that it had to change but initially they fell on stony ground. It was not until the operators at the operational level [at Land Headquarters]

⁴⁸ Hill, Interview.

made the self-same observations to the strategic level [HQ ADF] that our views became legitimate and the force structure changed.⁴⁹

By 9 September, when the South Pacific Forum delegations who had expressed an interest in participating in *Lagoon*, met in Nadi, logistic support planning at HQ ADF had been under way for several days.⁵⁰ There were many more questions than answers. There was no strategic concept of operations guiding logisticians. Admiral Beaumont's planning directive was still a draft and its approval was a week away. Issues like the structure of the force, duration of the operation, modes of transport to be used and the locations of forward mounting and operating bases were critical prerequisites for any meaningful logistic preparation.

It was not until 13 September that Major General Connolly submitted the final draft of Beaumont's planning directive to the acting CDF, Lieutenant General J.S. Baker, for signature. By this time, Abigail and his staff in Townsville had already begun to develop a concept of operations for delivery to Land Headquarters on 15 September. In effect, Brigadier Abigail was working without logistic guidance from above and Captain Sharp was working without operational and tactical guidance from below.

Guided by a draft of Beaumont's planning directive, but still without Abigail's concept of operations, Sharp convened an administrative planning group in Canberra on 13 September to set some parameters and identify all of the questions that would need to be answered in order to sustain *Lagoon*.⁵¹ Sharp decided that the combined force was to be self-sufficient because of the short duration of the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Ayerbe, the acting Colonel (Operations) at HQ Logistic Command, who had attended Sharp's planning meeting on 13 September, signalled to Land Headquarters that there were significant problems concentrating stores in Townsville in time to meet the operational timetable. He suggested that *Tobruk* load in Sydney, closer to the issuing depots and the freight terminal at the newly-designated Defence National Stores Distribution Centre (DNSDC) at Moorebank.⁵²

⁴⁹ Captain R.W. Sharp, Interview with author, 19 March 1997.

⁵⁰ Planning documents are filed on 94-27354, 'Operation Lagoon - ADF Support to Bougainville Peace talks - Joint Log Ops and Plans Aspects', Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁵¹ HQ ADF, 'Notes from JAPG held on 13 September 1994', 15 September 1994, 94 27354, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁵² Hughes, Interview.

Ayerbe's suggestions did not please Major Hughes at HQ 3rd Brigade.⁵³

Ultimately, he would be responsible to Abigail for the administration and supply arrangements for *Lagoon*. He wanted stores to be concentrated in Townsville, checked by the people who would use them, accounted for by his staff and then loaded on *Tobruk* under his supervision. Since returning from *Swift Eagle*, Hughes and his staff had been confirming the brigade's stock levels to identify what items needed to be ordered in. One of the early challenges was concentrating stores for setting up and supporting the peace conference. Major General Arnison supported Hughes's views on where stocks should be concentrated and loaded. An expensive concentration of stocks in Townsville began – as had been the case for *Solace*.

Hughes directed his staff to raise requests for hundreds of beds, and other accommodation stores, as well as office furniture, tentage, office equipment and stationery. He recalled:

The concern I had was whether we could get sufficient stores in on time. We were told early in the piece that we would be responsible for setting up and supporting the entire conference. We did not have time to debate the issue or seek clarification of exact requirements. I had staff working long hours ordering all of these items. They did a great job and all the stuff came into 2 Field Log Battalion [located in Townsville].⁵⁴

On 16 September Captain Sharp sent a copy of his strategic concept for logistics to Land Headquarters. However, guidance passing from the strategic level to the operational level did not have much impact on tactical planning and preparations in Townsville. Hughes had closely monitored the development of Abigail's concept. By the time his proposals had been approved at Land Headquarters on 15 September and at HQ ADF on 17 September, Hughes had submitted all demands for stocks for *Lagoon*, including his best guess at the requirements for the South Pacific contingents. Time would run out for delivery if he waited for guidance from above.⁵⁵ It was too late to get information from Cronin, Ducie and Grace on the logistic status of South Pacific contingents. They had only left Townsville on 17 September.

In addition to meeting the logistic requirements of the operation in Bougainville, Hughes also had to organise support for the administration and training of the South Pacific contingents in Townsville. It had been difficult supporting the administration

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Hughes, Interview.

and training of the MSF for service in Rwanda while units were in Townsville preparing for *Swift Eagle* six weeks before. Fortunately, South Pacific contingents and Australian personnel not based in Townsville would arrive while 3rd Brigade units were away on leave after *Swift Eagle*. Abigail and Hughes decided to use vacant facilities and the close training areas of 1 RAR and some of their administrative personnel to prepare the SPPKF. Fortunately, Major Chidgey and RHC staff had arrived in Townsville already to prepare a training program for the SPPKF, in conjunction with a 10-man New Zealand Army training cadre. He and his staff 'had a very good feel for what was happening in Townsville because they had prepared the MSF and had worked with the brigade before hand'.⁵⁶

Once again those who would have to estimate the additional funds required for *Lagoon* did not have sufficient information - as had been for *Solace*. Staff at Army Office, who were responsible for assessing cost, had not seen or been involved in the development of Beaumont's planning directive, Sharp's logistic concept or Abigail's operations concept.⁵⁷ In the 48 hours leading up to the Cabinet meeting on 19 September that would approve Australia's participation in *Lagoon*, Brigadier R.M. Earle's staff at Army Office tried to ascertain costs. He reported later that:

Estimates produced for Cabinet prior to the deployment were based on extremely limited information and as a result do not accurately reflect actual costs. Little information could be obtained from 3 Brigade, through Land Headquarters, requiring numerous assumptions to be made in order to meet the deadline for submission.⁵⁸

In summary, by the third week of September all intelligence and logistic support planning had happened without detailed guidance, information or co-ordination. There had been no reconnaissance to inform anyone's deliberations. At the tactical level, the intelligence staff at 3rd Brigade, guided by Hill's staff at Land Headquarters, had made

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ R. McDonald, Deputy Director of Costs – Army, 'Additional Cost to the Army Program for Op Lagoon', 16 September 1994, 94-27354, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. At this time McDonald envisaged ADF personnel being paid Separation, Hard Lying and Field allowance while they were on *Tobruk* or ashore in Bougainville and a deployment allowance of \$A 25 per day. There was little information about the additional costs that might be incurred equipping and supporting the South Pacific contingents.

⁵⁸ Brigadier R.M. Earle, 'POR [Post Operation Report] - Operation Lagoon - Quick Rep', 3 November 1994, 98 18173, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. The concept of operations had been completed by Abigail on 14 Sep, refined by Land Headquarters staff on 15 Sep and approved by the CDF on 17 September, two days before the Cabinet submission had to be considered. Those doing the cost estimates in Canberra should have been monitoring the development of this pivotal document. Hughes had submitted all additional demands for stocks by 16 September, having sent information copies of his requests to Land Headquarters.

ad hoc arrangements to collect intelligence and had produced substantial quantities of information on Bougainville for their commanders and staffs. At the operational level, Hill's intelligence staff at Land Headquarters waited in vain for strategic guidance, formal tasking and advice on intelligence gathering and reporting procedures from ADFIC.⁵⁹ Hughes's logistic staff at 3rd Brigade had taken the initiative to ensure that stores were ordered in time.

Reconnaissance and Planning

Operation *Lagoon* was now about to enter a reconnaissance phase that would precipitate another round of rushed planning, hasty gathering of resources, robust negotiations and last-minute organising. There was debate among Australian officials in Canberra about whether Abigail should go on a reconnaissance scheduled for 21 September.⁶⁰ There was a desire among Australian diplomats to keep public exposure of Australian involvement in *Lagoon* to a minimum. The aim appeared to be to minimise Australia's profile in the peace process, in general, and ADF command of *Lagoon*, in particular. However, DFAT officials did recognise that Abigail needed to have a first hand understanding of both the political situation in Port Moresby and Bougainville as well as the operational environment around Arawa and the neutral zones.⁶¹ In the end, Abigail accompanied Colonel Tupou, the SPPKF Tongan commander, and Colonel Draunidalo, the SPPKF Fijian commander, on the condition that he adopted a low profile and did not answer questions or discuss any political issues during meetings.⁶²

The reconnaissance on 21-22 September proved to be crucial. Abigail, Draunidalo and Tupou worked out that they needed more troops and more Blackhawk helicopters, and that the SPPKF had to undergo a ten-day training program to prepare for operations in Bougainville. In two days, Abigail came up with requirements that ADF planners had been unable to anticipate over the previous four months or during the three weeks after Chan and Kauona had signed the Honiara Agreement on 2 September. The reconnaissance also allowed Abigail, Draunidalo and Tupou to make a collegial assessment of challenges that faced them and establish mutual respect. Indeed, without Abigail's diplomacy and his ability to win the respect of Draunidalo and Tupou soon

⁵⁹ Hill, Interview.

⁶⁰ Abigail, Interview.

⁶¹ Classified source, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁶² Abigail, Interview.

after meeting them, Fiji and Tonga may not have participated in *Lagoon*.⁶³ Abigail, Tupou and Draunidalo had also met and established contact with PNG civil and military authorities as well as Bougainvillean stakeholder groups.

Just before Abigail departed with the SPPKF reconnaissance team on 21 September, HQ ADF issued an operation instruction and Land Headquarters issued a operations order, both signed on 20 September - the day after Cabinet approval of *Lagoon*.⁶⁴ Reconnaissance had not informed any of these documents. However, they constituted Abigail's higher level guidance. He convened his first planning meeting for the combined force on 24 September, after returning from his visit to PNG. The challenge facing Abigail and his staff was how to integrate guidance that was contained in several disparate documents. The Ceasefire Agreement provided neither legal coverage nor guidance on important issues. The PNG Government and the Bougainvillean secessionists had signed it, but neither the Australian Government nor the governments of the South Pacific contingents had endorsed it formally. The governments of Australia and PNG had signed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) that gave legal coverage, but this agreement was silent on many of the important issues related to creating a secure environment. The ROE contained protocols for search and detention of persons and use of force, but these rules had not been agreed to in the SOFA or the Ceasefire Agreement. Consequently, it was left to Abigail to decide what powers of search, arrest, detention and application of force the SPPKF would have in the neutral zones - a potentially career-shortening position to be in if anything went wrong.⁶⁵

Abigail's mission was,

To provide a secure environment for the conduct of a
Bougainville Peace Conference, and to provide security and
movement for selected delegates.⁶⁶

There was no explanation of what constituted a delegate or the criteria that would be used to identify delegates requiring security, transport, medical support, accommodation and meals. Estimates of the numbers of delegates who might attend the peace conference varied from 1500 to 500. The rush to achieve a starting date of 10

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ HQ ADF, OPS OPSINST 34/94, 20 September 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. LHQ, OPOD 53/94, DTG 200546ZSEP94, K01357, NAA, Sydney.

⁶⁵ Abigail, Interview.

October obviated orderly conference registration. Flexibility became a key concept because it was very difficult to predict the way the peace conference would unfold. Threats to security could emerge in many different ways. Abigail and his staff decided that the SPPKF should not operate at less than platoon strength to maintain national identity and also to deter ambush. The planning staff anticipated as many contingencies as they thought might occur and how the combined force would respond.⁶⁷ There was also concern that the combined force might have to provide last minute logistic support to set up conference facilities if PNG Government preparations for the conference did not go according to plan. The major outcome from Abigail's planning was a tactical concept of operations founded on guidance from higher headquarters, information gathered during his reconnaissance and his detailed mission analysis that identified many enabling tasks. The concept focused on creating a secure environment by maintaining strict neutrality and a deterrent presence, and reducing any tension between participants during the conference through good offices.

Meanwhile, Captain O'Hara handed command of *Success* over to his Executive Officer, Commander M.S. Campbell, and moved to Townsville at Abigail's invitation on 23 September 1994. O'Hara reported simultaneously to two senior officers - Rear Admiral Chalmers, who maintained technical and administrative control, and Brigadier Abigail, who had operational control. Abigail decided to exercise operational control of navy vessels through O'Hara, not directly to the officers commanding ships. There was some controversy about these command and control arrangements at the time.⁶⁸ O'Hara reported later that, 'This indirect method of command, utilising the component method, worked well'.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Major General P.M. Arnison, 'Directive to 47054 Brigadier P.J. Abigail, Combined Force Commander - Op Lagoon', LCAUST Directive 27/1994, 22 September 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁶⁷ Eventually, they were to be tabulated for use at Combined Headquarters and in the field to guide commanders on the responses expected of them. Copy held by the author.

⁶⁸ Abigail, Interview. O'Hara, Interview.

⁶⁹ O'Hara, 'POR - Maritime Aspects', p. 3.

⁷⁰ HQ ADF, 'OP Lagoon', OPSINST 34/94, 20 September 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. Land Headquarters, 'LCAUST Concept of Operations', 20 September 1994, K01357, NAA, Sydney.

Specific Force Preparation

On 25 September, the first warning signs that preparations were not going according to plan emerged. The Fijians were going to be late.⁷¹ Abigail would not be able to promise that the SPPKF would be ready for movement from Townsville to Arawa until at least 7 October. This would leave insufficient time to deploy and secure neutral zones if the conference began on 10 October. Chan had to be persuaded to postpone the start of the peace conference until at least 15 October. This would allow for 10 days' pre-deployment training and sufficient time to secure neutral zones and set up the conference site.

Admiral Beaumont briefed Ray about this situation on 26 September.⁷² He pointed out that there were critical safety and legal issues at stake that could cause major problems later if the SPPKF was deployed without sufficient training. The ADF had a duty of care to ensure that all troops could handle their weapons safely, complied with the medical counter-measures against malaria and other tropical diseases, and were thoroughly briefed and rehearsed in the use of ROE and Orders for Opening Fire. There was also a legal requirement to brief troops on the principles of peace keeping, the Geneva Conventions and the Laws of Armed Conflict. The South Pacific contingents needed thorough training in helicopter operations, including night deployment. Not to do so, would risk the lives of South Pacific soldiers as well as Australian aircrew. There was also a requirement to conduct command post exercises and other training to ensure that all components of the combined force could work together cohesively and thoroughly understood the mission. Not to do so, might risk the lives of those in the field and the lives of Bougainvilleans, as well as those needing urgent medical evacuation. Finally, Beaumont wrote that unless there was training in how to use the night vision equipment, radios and other technical equipment expensive breakage or malfunctions could occur. While issues of safety, legal obligations and expensive breakages were significant, less tangible justifications for the 10-day training period, such as the cohesion and morale of the force, were also crucial and made sense. Beaumont emphasised to Ray that a minimum of seven days was required to prepare the site at Arawa, and to deploy and secure neutral zones. Time was needed to co-ordinate the withdrawal of PNGDF forces and to assure local Bougainvilleans of the SPPKF's

⁷¹ Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Brief to Minister by ACOPS Situation at 1600 hrs 25 September 1994.', 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁷² Admiral A.L. Beaumont. 'Brief to Defence Minister Robert Ray – Preparation of the SPPKF', 26 September 1994, 94-26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

neutrality and good will. Things could go wrong if the PNGDF withdrawal was rushed and SPPKF forces were not settled in before the peace conference began.

Unfortunately, pre-deployment training got off on the wrong foot after the Fijian contingent arrived on 28 September. The ADF had not paid enough attention to culture, ceremony and status. Several officers among the South Pacific contingents were members of prominent families or nobility in their home countries. There were no formal welcoming ceremonies for them as individuals, or for their contingents as participants in a historic regional combined operation. The 'business-like, deadline-conscious' ADF staff appeared to ignore the importance of welcoming ceremonies, church services and after hours socialising among the South Pacific contingents.⁷³ The Pacific islanders found the assumption by RHC staff that they would conform to Australian doctrine and adhere to a 'minute-by-minute' training timetable set up by the Australians and New Zealanders without prior consultation quite patronising.⁷⁴

Deployment

Meanwhile the maritime component of the combined force was coming on line. HMAS *Tobruk* berthed in Townsville on 28 September. However, despite the efforts of the Commanding Officer, Commander J.W. Wells, and staff at Maritime Headquarters to seek guidance and advice, there was no information available from the army on the logistic requirements; a rerun of the problems encountered for *Solace*.⁷⁵ Logistic staff at both Land Headquarters and HQ Logistic Command did not appear to have briefed their naval counterparts at Maritime Headquarters on logistic requirements before *Tobruk* sailed from Sydney. In effect, the first orders Wells would receive about the role his ship would play and its load came from Captain O'Hara in Townsville after he arrived. The loading of his ship now became a 'hand to mouth' activity reminiscent of *Solace* ten months before. Over the next few days, stores accumulated on the Townsville wharf and members of the Ships Army Detachment on *Tobruk* developed a loading plan 'on the run' in conjunction with Major Hughes and his 3 Brigade staff. In an early indication of the communications problems awaiting the operation, naval communications staff discovered that the portable INMARSAT telephone installed by Land Headquarters communications staff was not suited to being on a ship. The

⁷³ Major L.K. Qusiadraturagu, 'A Report on the Bougainville Assignment', 25 October 1994, copy held by author.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ O'Hara, 'POR OP Lagoon – Maritime Aspects', p. 2.

INMARSAT was normally ground based and depended on a small dish pointing up at the satellite in stationary orbit being used to transmit the signal. The rolling of a ship and its movement through the water meant that the INMARSAT dish was not stable and able to keep its direction.⁷⁷

By the end of September there was still no news of whether Prime Minister Chan would postpone the start date of the conference. By this time, the South Pacific contingents had begun pre-deployment training and administration in Townsville.⁷⁸ Staff at HQ ADF issued final ROE for *Lagoon* the night before training began.⁷⁹ Training in these ROE was going to be rushed even if the full 10-day period was allowed. Specific force preparation in Townsville was still predicated on the start date for the conference being postponed until 15 October. If Chan did not agree, then there would be some difficulty completing sufficient training in time. There were also indications that the PNG Government had not allowed sufficient time to put basic infrastructure, such as accommodation, food preparation areas, sanitation services, electrical power and a clean water supply in place for the conference. Because there was no clear division of responsibility, the ADF could be left with the blame for not providing sufficient logistic support and amenities to facilitate the conduct of the conference.

On Saturday 1 October after renewed pressure from inside the PNG Government and from Australia for him to postpone the start date of the conference, Chan appealed directly to Australian Prime Minister Keating to insist that the ADF deploy the SPPKF prior to the start date of 10 October. He pointed out that the deployment time could be reduced if troops were moved by air, rather than by sea. He called for a substantial advance party to be deployed to Arawa by 8 October to establish a presence. Keating contacted Senator Ray soon after a conversation with Chan and told him to instruct the

⁷⁷ Lieutenant Colonel G.J. Allan, Post Operation Report (POR) LHQ CIS – OP Lagoon, CIS OPS 2/66/95, 30 January 1995, Annex N, p.3, K94-01440, NAA, Sydney.

⁷⁸ Numbers: Fiji 232, Tonga 107 including crew of patrol boat, Vanuatu 47. Total of 386 South Pacific personnel.

⁷⁹ Extract 'The policy of the Combined Force is Reduce Tension. avoid the use of force and provocation. Force may not be applied except in self-defence. ... Unit self-defence is an inherent right of Combined Force elm to spontaneously defend themselves or designated entities against actual armed attack (hostile acts) or immediate threats of armed atk (hostile intent). No mines/graduated response. End contacts ASAP'. Included in Land Headquarters, 'Post Operation Support for Operation Lagoon – Combined Force Peace Support Operations on Bougainville, PNG', October 1994', LCAUST 137/94, 28 November 1994, K94-01325. Copy held by author.

ADF to have the SPPKF on Bougainville before the peace conference started on 10 October.⁸⁰

Confirmation that the peace conference would start on 10 October had a significant impact. Pre-deployment training stopped.⁸¹ HMAS *Tobruk* had to be loaded with personnel and stores in less than 24 hours. At around this time, *Tobruk's* ships army detachment staff assessed that there was too much stock on the wharf. The ship would be overloaded and possibly 'bulk out'.⁸² Captain O'Hara's only option was to load *Success* with the stores that would not fit aboard *Tobruk*. Unfortunately, both ships bulked out before all stores could be loaded. HMAS *Tobruk* was also 200 tonnes over her authorised weight limit. Commander Wells advised O'Hara of the final weight only five hours before she was due to sail. He and Wells spent the next hours calculating the risk factors in allowing her to sail on schedule.⁸³ Any delay would result in the SPPKF not getting on the ground in Bougainville in time to set up the peace conference venue and protect delegates. O'Hara analysed the weather forecasts for the voyage to Bougainville. Fortunately the weather was on the side of *Lagoon* - calm conditions. O'Hara and Wells accepted the increased risk and *Tobruk* sailed on schedule. This was another potentially career-shortening decision for both officers if anything went wrong

While *Tobruk* and *Success* were at sea, the main body of the combined force flew out on 6 October in Australian and New Zealand C130 Hercules transport aircraft. To satisfy Chan's request, a 100-strong advance party flew directly to Buka Island airfield from Townsville to meet up with four Blackhawk helicopters and two Caribou transport aircraft that had been pre-positioned there to fly them to Arawa by 8 October. HMAS *Tobruk* arrived in Honiara on 7 October. Abigail, his staff, the main force of the SPPKF and the ADF logistic support force were aboard by 2 a.m.. She sailed from Honiara at 5a.m. on 8 October with 669 combined force personnel aboard for the 26-hour passage to Loloho. The previous 24 hours had been a tiring period for all

⁸⁰ Classified sources, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁸¹ Major Chidgey concluded that, 'The Force has had insufficient time to assimilate the training and other aspects of the concentration.' He went on to assess that the SPPKF was not prepared for its role and lacked the internal cohesion for contingents to work together effectively. Major C. Chidgey, 'RHC Post Activity Report - Op Lagoon', RHC 611-1-23. Included in Land Headquarters, 'Post Operation Support for Operation Lagoon. Copy held by author

⁸² The term 'bulk out' is used to describe a situation when the volume of cargo cannot fit into the available storage space.

⁸³ O'Hara, Interview.

personnel. The cramped conditions and the general excitement at finally being inbound to Bougainville were not conducive to catching up on lost sleep.⁸⁴

HMAS *Tobruk* anchored in Arawa Bay at 5.30 a.m. on 9 October, the day before the conference was due to begin. This arrival less than 24 hours before the start of the conference meant that neutral zones had not been secured, the conference site was not set up and administrative support for the conference was not in place. Planners had assessed that it would take seven days to achieve these objectives. The 100-strong advance party had been working without rest since arriving the day before to secure the conference site and set up facilities, but there was still much to do.⁸⁵ Troops on *Tobruk* now had 12 hours to do what they could during daylight hours of 9 October.

Just to add to the challenges facing Abigail and his headquarters:

when *Tobruk* berthed alongside Loloho Jetty, a combination of high hills surrounding the berth, the metal cranes, warehouses and ship ore loading facilities on and adjacent to the jetty resulted in the loss of both HF [High Frequency] and VHF [Very High Frequency] communications. Without SATCOM [satellite communications], HQ Combined Force would have had no strategic or tactical communications, other than UHF [Ultra High Frequency], for approximately 16 hours.⁸⁷

Though this loss of communications capacity did not interrupt effective and secure communications, there had been difficulties in coordinating communications support for *Lagoon*.

Like logistic planning, communications planning for *Lagoon* had followed a divided approach; vertically between each level of command and horizontally between each service. At the strategic level, the mechanism for joint planning, the Joint Communications Planning Group (JCPG) that was sponsored by the Director General of Joint Communications and Electronics had not met. If it had, subsequent problems would have been reduced.⁸⁸ There would have been one point of contact for allocating and clearing frequencies with PNG authorities. As it was, the combined force depended on INMARSAT terminals to provide telephone, facsimile and data services back to

⁸⁴ Morrison, Interview. Hughes, Interview.

⁸⁵ Draunidalo established his Fijian Ground Force headquarters at Arawa with the Ni Vanuatu contingent providing close protection and a quick reaction force. The Fijians established seven checkpoints around the conference site with two checkpoints on the main road into town.

⁸⁶ O'Hara, POR Maritime Aspects, p. 3.

⁸⁷ N.P. Middleton, 'Post- Operation Report – Operation Lagoon', CM 4594, 2 December 1994, p. 3, 94-26834, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Australia that were 'subject to congestion due to the uncontrolled access to the overall system'.⁸⁹

At the operational level, 'there was poor information flow from all parties', according to one navy report.⁹⁰ A Land Headquarters report noted, 'some army and navy coordination problems' that resulted in late arrangements for distribution of cryptographic equipment and an unnecessarily large number of communications and cryptographic plans.⁹¹ At the tactical level, Abigail's senior communications officer, Major W.G. Teece, was not appointed as the Chief Communications Officer immediately to develop a joint communications plan and bid for additional equipment. This left each service to make separate communications arrangements for *Lagoon*.⁹² Also, *Tobruk* had not received a substantial update 'to her communications fit' for two years and her HF receivers and transmitters continually broke down and took 'some time to repair'.⁹³ Army signallers rigged army RAVEN tactical radios on *Tobruk's* flag deck that enabled Abigail and his staff to communicate with Australian radio operators who were with SPPKF platoons, giving Abigail a good understanding of how South Pacific contingents were going. There were persistent problems communicating between army RAVEN equipment and non-RAVEN equipment being operated by navy and air force.⁹⁴

Force Employment

Operation *Lagoon* was always going to be a dangerous, politically sensitive operation with risks for Australia's standing in the South Pacific. From the day Admiral Beaumont issued his warning order on 2 September there had been insufficient 'thinking time'. Late notice for deployment had put those working at the tactical level of command under pressure. Neither Arnison nor Abigail had sufficient time to gather information, work through contingencies or develop tactical plans, supported by mature

⁸⁸ Major D. Belham, 'Operation Lagoon – Post Operation Report – Communications Aspects', May 1995, p. 2, 94 26303, NAA, Sydney. Belham was Acting Deputy Director Communication Office, Joint Communications and Electronics Branch, HQ ADF.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Warrant Officer RS K.J. Slavin, Op Lagoon – Quickrep, Minute to Chief of Staff, 24 October 1994. Copy held by author.

⁹¹ Land Headquarters, 'OP Lagoon – Post Operation Initial Report', LHQ SIC E3J/14S, OPS/PLANS 30618/94, 270609Z OCT94, p.6, K98 18173, NAA, Sydney.

⁹² Major W.G. Teece, 'Operation Lagoon – Communications Post Operation Report (POR)', 28 October 1994, p.3, 103 Signal Squadron, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁹³ Ibid, p.2. See also Land Headquarters, 'OP Lagoon – Post Operation Initial Report', p. 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.3.

logistic, communications and intelligence plans that were also informed by reconnaissance. Repeating the circumstances of *Solace* the year before, logistic planning, gathering supplies and loading of ships had been disordered and rushed. Guiding documents from HQ ADF and Land Headquarters were either largely irrelevant by the time they were signed or had been produced in isolation to each other. There were contradictions and gaps. All higher level documents had been produced without the benefit of reconnaissance.

The consequences of this additional pressure were now beginning to show. Communications capabilities were limited and untried. There had been no time to test satellite equipment that had been fitted to *Tobruk*. Communications managers had not anticipated the impact of infrastructure around Loloho. This crash in communications was a great source of frustration for General Arnison who was trying to command *Lagoon* from Victoria Barracks in Sydney.⁹⁵ It was during this time that two Bougainvillean gunmen opened fire in the vicinity of the conference site. This was an unsettling start for the SPPKF's first day in Arawa. The sound of shots frightened several hundred Bougainvilleans who had gathered for the conference, as well as the 600 inhabitants of a nearby displaced persons camp. There was a loss of confidence in the SPPKF.⁹⁶

The withdrawal of PNGDF troops from Arawa had also caused problems on the roads leading to the conference site at the Arawa High School. Locals reported to members of the SPPKF that groups of armed young men were intimidating and robbing people coming to the conference. Colonel Tupou convened an emergency meeting of the Ceasefire Committee at the Arawa High School at 5.15 p.m, informed the meeting that the optimism present when delegates began arriving in Arawa had been replaced by fear. The robberies, intimidation and the shooting incident had lowered the morale of those gathered for the conference and inhabitants of the displaced persons camp.⁹⁷

These incidents put Tupou, Draunidalo and the SPPKF in an awkward situation. Criminal gangs had become emboldened by the PNGDF withdrawal. Bougainvilleans gathering in the Arawa area were at risk, especially at night. Peniai called for a curfew

⁹⁵ Staff at Land Headquarters told the author that *Lagoon* exposed several short falls in Land Headquarters capabilities to command off shore operations. These were overcome under General Arnison's personal direction. He commissioned a Joint Operations Room at Land Headquarters that was capable of world wide communications and supported by secure automated command and control and intelligence systems.

⁹⁶ Classified sources, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁹⁷ Colonel F. Tupou, 'BPC [Bougainville Peace Conference] Minutes of meeting held on 9 October 1994'. Copy held by author.

and regular patrols to ensure security. The ROE for *Lagoon* did not permit the detention of persons behaving suspiciously, only their questioning. The ROE were silent about the confiscation of weapons in the neutral zones. There was also no provision for curfews or interventions to protect the lives and property of Bougainvilleans if they were being assaulted or robbed. Bougainvilleans expected the SPPKF to protect them during the conference. In reality, the SPPKF was not authorised to enforce law and order in neutral zones or anywhere else in Bougainville. The combined force was there to maintain a deterrent presence. The ROE of 'presence' would be insufficient to deter criminals from going about their business. The SPPKF may have had the right mission, but it did not have robust ROE to achieve it. The difficulty in controlling armed groups on the ground was emphasised on the day the conference opened when one of the Australian Sea King helicopters returned from a routine reconnaissance mission with two bullet holes in its tail section. O'Hara reported stirringly that 'This was the first occasion the RAN had incurred battle damage since the Vietnam War'.⁹⁸

Later that day, an ADF intelligence officer informed Abigail that the PNGDF had set an ambush, supported by Australian-supplied Claymore anti-personnel mines, on the main route into Arawa. Local PNGDF forces appeared to be using the conference as an opportunity for pay back. Abigail told the local commander to abandon the ambush site and move his troops out of the area.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, as dangers from gangs and the PNGDF increased, ADF communications capabilities decreased. Lieutenant Colonel S.H. Ayling, a communications staff officer with HQ ADF, reported that the INMARSAT satellite, through which most communications were being sent, was overloaded and there was also congestion elsewhere in the Defence network.¹⁰⁰

End of the Conference

Colonel D.J. Hurley, who was attending the conference as an advisor to the PNG Government, assessed that it was Prime Minister Chan's intention to press on with the conference even if senior Bougainvillean secessionist leaders did not attend. Chan planned to garner sufficient signatures from attending delegates to make progress

⁹⁸ O'Hara, 'POR - Maritime Aspects', p. 6.

⁹⁹ Abigail, Interview. Classified sources.

¹⁰⁰ Lieutenant Colonel S.H. Ayling, 'Brief to CDF', HQ ADF Joint Communications and Electronics Branch, 10 October 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

towards a settlement and to undermine support among Bougainvilleans for hardline secessionist leaders.¹⁰¹ A group of PNGDF soldiers assured non-attendance by firing at a BRA liaison team, seriously wounding one member.¹⁰² Chan still had several days to bring the PNGDF into line and to make further overtures to the secessionist leadership. He decided to end the peace conference the next day, blaming the non-attendance of senior secessionist leaders for his decision.¹⁰³ Subsequently, his representatives signed a document with moderate Bougainvillean delegates.¹⁰⁴

The SPPKF redeployed by sea and air in 72 hours, continuing a tradition of well-executed Australian military withdrawals begun at Gallipoli in 1915. In the months after the peace conference was abandoned, the campaign by the PNGDF to find a military solution in Bougainville continued. The post-conference agreement signed between the PNG Government and a delegation of moderate Bougainvilleans did not result in the renewal of a peace process. The leader of the moderates, Theodore Miriung, was murdered several months later.

Observations

From the perspective of force projection, there are many observations to make about the seven weeks of intense diplomatic and military activity associated with *Lagoon*. Though its duration was brief, *Lagoon* exercised all of the functions of force projection except force rotation.¹⁰⁵ For the first time Australia had responsibility for a multi-national peace support operation. The ADF was in command and there were no major allies present to command, protect or sustain. More complex than *Morris Dance*, *Lagoon* tested Australia's self reliance and two top strategic priorities and begged the

¹⁰¹ Hurley, Interview.

¹⁰² Bob Breen, *Giving Peace a Chance, Operation Lagoon, Bougainville 1994: A Case Study of Military Action and Diplomacy*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No 412, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 2001, pp. 73-6.

¹⁰³ Papua New Guinea Government, 'BRA has let Bougainvilleans down says PM', 14 October 1994, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan,.

¹⁰⁴ Papua New Guinea Government 'Commitment for Peace Agreement', 18 October 1994, Copy on 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. This agreement was signed by a number of representatives from village councils, church groups, women's groups and local BRA commanders.

¹⁰⁵ Land Headquarters began meaningful planning for *Lagoon* in Sydney on 9 September. Four weeks later, an *ad hoc* combined force, comprised of over 650 ADF personnel supporting nearly 400 South Pacific troops, were present at a peace conference in Bougainville during the period 10-14 October 1994. The combined force was clear of PNG territory by 22 October. The operation involved specific force preparation, deployment, command, sustainment, protection and redeployment of a combined force over long distance and employment in an uncertain threat environment.

comparative question, 'Had the ADF improved its capacity and capability for regional force projection in the seven intervening years between *Morris Dance* and *Lagoon*?',¹⁰⁶

Land Headquarters reported to HQ ADF that the operation had been:

conducted without casualties or incidents, without wasting resources, and with all agencies informed of events in a secure and timely manner. ... The joint planning and execution of OP Lagoon was highly successful. ... The joint command arrangements worked well.¹⁰⁷

Members of COSC proudly assessed that:

Overall, the planning and conduct of the Operation were most successful. All objectives were satisfied with no modification to the strategic Concept of Operations being required, although the ADF plan was amended to satisfy additional PNG Government and BRA requirements. This Operation validated ADF doctrine as flexible and appropriate for mounting and conducting coalition operations of this type.¹⁰⁸

From the perspective of proficiency in force projection, *Lagoon*, like *Morris Dance* and *Solace*, left room for improvement. The ADF, in general, and the army, in particular, had increased rather than minimised risk for the tactical level of command. Admiral Beaumont and his staff did not deliver timely warning or particularly effective guidance. Their guidance was late and contained some unworkable and logistically unsound tactical details, or left gaps in important areas. The army's logistic support system was again unable to meet tight deadlines and load ships efficiently. HMAS *Tobruk* was at risk during her voyage to Bougainville. Reforms within the Defence intelligence community begun by Major General Baker in the late 1980s had still not resulted in unity of purpose, efficient communications and best tactical level effect where it counted. The behaviour of members of the PNGDF in Bougainville could have resulted in not only loss of Bougainvillean lives but also the lives of members of the SPPKF.

There appear to be two explanations for not using warning time more efficiently. The first is that Admiral Beaumont, like his predecessor, General Gratton, did not appear to be confident that contingency planning for a peace operation in Bougainville

¹⁰⁶ The priorities were; command, control and communications; intelligence collection and evaluation; maritime surveillance; maritime patrol and response; air defence; protection of shipping, offshore territories and resources; and protection of important civil and military assets and infrastructure.

¹⁰⁷ Land Headquarters, 'OP Lagoon – Post Operation Initial Report', LHQ SIC E3J/I4S, OPS/PLANS 30618/94, 270609Z OCT94, 94-18173, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

could be kept secret outside a small compartment of officers within HQ ADF. The second was that senior officers at lower levels of command would not pre-empt strategic guidance, even after media reports suggested that an operation was in the offing. The ADF depended on hierarchic process and sequential planning. For his part, General Baker commented later that the Government often prohibited planning as it considered its options. He offered that Admiral Beaumont, like any CDF, was often not authorised to take action to prepare the ADF that might pre-empt diplomatic and political processes and considerations.¹⁰⁹

There were three major penalties for keeping secrets at HQ ADF from June until September 1994. The first was that the strategic level contingency plan for *Lagoon* was developed without the benefit of inputs from a range of specialists. Nor was there any input from subordinate headquarters staffs, who had access to relevant and up to date information. Consequently the HQ ADF *Lagoon* plan was logistically unsound and did not contain sufficient detail on aspects, such as arrangements for joint communications and intelligence, to be useful for subordinate headquarters. The second penalty was rushed planning. This led to a number of aspects of the operation being overlooked, some joint arrangements not being well defined and individuals - especially in Townsville - being put under additional pressure.¹¹⁰ The third penalty was that short notice put the army logistic and movements system off-balance and forced an expensive concentration of stocks in Townsville and impromptu ship loading.

Sequential, hierarchic planning processes make sense when there is time to follow them. However, planning for *Lagoon* showed that when time was tight these processes did not work satisfactorily for the tactical level of command. Parallel

¹⁰⁸ COSC, 'Operation Lagoon - Post Operation Report', Agendum No 5/95, 4 April 1995, p.1, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁰⁹ Baker, Interview.

¹¹⁰ Some overlooked aspects were ROE for navy vessels and their companies, and times to issue cryptographic equipment. O'Hara, POR Maritime Aspects, p. 7. Examples were joint communications procedures, joint intelligence arrangements, mail and resupply. For communications, Land Headquarters did not nominate OC 103 Signals Squadron as the combined force chief communications officer until 5 October 1994. As a consequence, no one synchronised instructions or distribution of codes and equipment. With four weeks to plan, this aspect of the operation was cobbled together in four days. Major W.G. Teece, 'Operation Lagoon Communications Post Operation Report (POR)', 103 Signals Squadron, Townsville, 28 October 1994, 94 26834, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan. For mail and resupply, the lessons of *Solace* about HQ Movement Control were identified again. One navy report complained of 'significant time delays regarding supply of urgently required stores'. There was also confusion between navy and army about mail services. Commander Australian Navy Supply, 'OP Lagoon - Strategic Movement of Mail/Stores', COMAUSNAVSUPT, SIC E3J/14S/QGK, 110420Z OCT94. Copy held by author. Most of the pressure was put on Commander 3rd Brigade and his staff who had to develop concepts and orders and organise the preparation of the combined force before deployment.

planning became a matter of necessity. Commanders and staff took action to assemble and prepare personnel and materiel based on draft documents, telephone discussions between headquarters staff and individual initiative rather than as a result of reacting to signed instructions that authorised action and allocated resources. For example, staff members at Land Headquarters were well into developing a concept of operations 48 hours before Lieutenant General Baker signed a planning directive. Brigadier Abigail was writing his concept of operations on the day the CDF issued his planning directive. Admiral Beaumont issued an operation instruction on the same day that Major General Arnison issued his concept of operations. None of these documents were informed by reconnaissance, so all were redundant by the time Abigail returned from his visit to PNG on 21-23 September.¹¹¹

Further analysis of decision-making at HQ ADF revealed that there were inbuilt delays:

The ADFCC [Command Centre] can be viewed as a distributed decision making environment where parts of a problem are solved by different people. For the most part, decision-making occurs outside formal meetings, and so meetings become a means to inform of decisions, rather than a forum to make decisions. This phenomenon can lead to delays in conveying decisions and information to a wider audience. Many members of the Immediate Planning Group felt the majority of meetings fulfilled a briefing rather than a planning and decision making role. A core group of senior ADFCC staff effectively formed an "Executive Immediate Planning Group" which appeared to do more of the planning and decision making than the larger Immediate Planning Group.

Several Inter-Departmental Committee [IDC] members were unable to make immediate decisions and often had to refer to their superiors. This was time consuming and disruptive to the IDC process....Rarely were liaison officers from the relevant departments present in the ADFCC.¹¹²

Brigadier R.M. Earle, Director General Army Operations Support, criticised the HQ ADF planning process. On 3 November 1994 he wrote that planning guidance from HQ ADF lacked clear military objectives and a strategic end state. He criticised Admiral Beaumont's planning directive as being a mixture of tasks and constraints that 'did not provide the essential strategic parameters for the operation to the Lead Joint

¹¹¹ By the end of September HQ ADF had issued seven amplifications of the original operations instruction.

¹¹² M. Chin, J. Clothier, R. Davis, B. Noakes and J. O'Neill, 'Operations Lagoon and Carmine: A Post Operations Report', Information Technology Division Electronics and Surveillance Research Laboratory, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, 1995, 94 26303, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Force Commander [Arnison] resulting in an inefficient planning cycle'. He went on to point out that use of the phrase 'maintain a presence' required specific definition for it to constitute guidance for tactical commanders, who would allocate troops to each task.¹¹³ Higher headquarters putting pressure on 3rd Brigade to develop concepts of operation at short notice with little guidance was not new. The development of concepts of operations and the hard work of mounting and dispatching force elements at short notice had fallen to 3rd Brigade in May 1987 for *Morris Dance*, in December 1992 for *Solace* and in July 1994 for *Tamar*.

Once again HQ ADF did not facilitate sufficient tactical level reconnaissance. Two days after Cabinet approved *Lagoon* on 19 September a small group that included Brigadier Abigail left for PNG and the Solomon Islands. Combat and logistic commanders from the SPPKF were unable to see the Loloho wharf area or Arawa until they arrived the day before the conference began. They had no time to achieve situational awareness. Prime Minister Chan may have forced the combined force into rushed deployment for political reasons. However, it was the ADF that ignored the old military adage, 'Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted' - as was the case for *Solace*.

There was no separation of liaison and reconnaissance functions. From the point of view of liaison, the two-day visit to PNG by Abigail, Draunidalo and Tupou enabled them to meet for the first time and to develop concepts for subsequent operations. By the end of the two-day visit, they had developed some *rapport* and a common approach. This high level liaison resulted in at least one of the donor nations confirming its commitment to the SPPKF.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the reconnaissance party also met stakeholders in Port Moresby, Arawa and Honiara. They heard from key protagonists and made personal and professional assessments of the issues they raised. The visit also enabled Abigail, Draunidalo and Tupou to assure PNG officials and Bougainvillean groups in person about their commitment to neutrality.

From the point of view of reconnaissance, the visit enabled Abigail and his two senior subordinate commanders to assess the security environment on Bougainville first hand. They found it to be more benign than their intelligence briefing in Australia suggested.¹¹⁵ This first hand experience enabled the nature and extent of subsequent security operations to be better understood. It also enabled an initial assessment to be

¹¹³ Earle, 'POR – Operation Lagoon - Quick Rep', p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Abigail, Interview.

made of the security and control requirements for the four prospective neutral zones. However, because of a restriction on numbers, Abigail's commanders and operations and logistic staff were not able to conduct liaison and reconnaissance in each of the neutral zones, including at the site of the conference at Arawa, or to meet key locals and ascertain each area's particular security requirements. Thus, in strict military terms, this activity was more like a top-level liaison visit, not a reconnaissance that would inform preparations.

More thorough reconnaissance may have revealed the need for more troops on the ground. Even though Abigail was able to convince higher levels of command that he needed 390 combat troops rather than the original number of 120 specified in the Ceasefire Agreement, the force structure for *Lagoon* was neither sufficient to accomplish its mission nor was it allowed enough time to coordinate security and movement of delegates, especially in light of apparent PNGDF intentions to ambush secessionist leaders. A security force of 390 personnel, comprising an *ad hoc*, under-trained headquarters and eight under-strength platoons was not adequate. Furthermore, the combined force did not have time to employ force multipliers, such as liaison, human intelligence, technical surveillance and high and low level communications to offset the lack of numbers to cover the main routes to the conference site.

From the outset, Abigail, Draunidalo and Tupou decided that the combined force had to undertake a period of collective preparation, training and team building to improve its effectiveness, cohesion and engender a sense of purpose. Abigail's staff assessed that a period of around 21 days would be required after contingents arrived in Townsville before the SPPKF could secure the peace conference site and three other neutral zones. Prime Minister Chan did not accept this timetable for political reasons. He insisted on starting the conference on 10 October. As a consequence, the recommended timetable was reduced to 14 days. There were several negative consequences. Training was truncated, resulting in the SPPKF not satisfying Abigail's standards for off shore deployment. There was a lack of cohesion and mutual confidence among the contingents comprising the combined force and its deployment was more complex, expensive and tiring. Rushed deployment did not allow sufficient time to verify with conference organisers who were delegates that warranted SPPKF

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

protection. PNGDF intelligence operatives in plain clothes infiltrated the conference site. Secessionist leaders had no confidence that the SPPKF would protect them.¹¹⁶

Operations began on Bougainville only 48 hours before Prime Minister Chan opened the peace conference. Criminals intimidated conference delegates and accompanying family members and friends as well as curious locals because SPPKF force elements did not have time to establish themselves in designated neutral zones or around Arawa. Though thwarted, rogue PNGDF elements were able to set up an ambush undetected after the arrival of the SPPKF and subsequently to engage a BRA liaison group and wound one of its members. These incidents verified that the SPPKF was not in a position to guarantee security or properly support the conference for its brief and abortive duration. Kauona described *Lagoon* as '*the most poorest (sic) example of "peace keeping duties" ever undertaken in the history of peace-keeping in the world*'. [Kauona's emphasis]¹¹⁷

The logistic system once again proved, as it had for *Solace* the year before, to be unresponsive to a deployed force. This was disappointing. The operation had only lasted a little over a week and all force elements were supposed to be self-sufficient. Captain O'Hara was particularly critical of the logistic system, in general, and HQ Movement Control (HQ MC) at HQ Logistic Command, in particular. He reported that, shortly after arrival in the waters off Bougainville, the Sea King helicopter embarked on *Success* was grounded due to a defective fuel pressure gauge. His staff ordered a replacement immediately. No advice or expected delivery date of the item was received, despite several signals from *Success* and O'Hara's headquarters staff to Land and Maritime Headquarters. Maintenance personnel on *Success* subsequently made *ad hoc* repairs and the aircraft flew – an increase in risk. O'Hara went on to point out that no mail system had been set up for *Lagoon*. He observed that 'over 15 bags weighing 300-400 kilos accumulated at RAAF Richmond until an unscheduled C 130 was finally organised to move this and other stores to Buka'.¹¹⁸

The Land Headquarters post operation report pointed out that:

the overall plan for strategic resupply was not well understood by respective joint logistic planners. ... The role

¹¹⁶ Bougainville Interim Government, Statement General Sam Kauona, Bougainville Negotiation Team for peace on Bougainville and Papua New Guinea, media release, undated. Copy held by author.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ O'Hara, 'POR Maritime Aspects', p. 6.

of HQ MC in strategic resupply was also not well defined.¹¹⁹

Brigadier Earle had also picked up on the ineffectual role of HQ MC at Logistic Command. He pointed out that 'HQ MC was by-passed occasionally. Strategic lift assets entering or leaving the AO [Area of Operations] should be advised to HQ MC to ensure efficient use of assets for cargo'.¹²⁰ The failure of the under-staffed, under-authorised and under-resourced HQ MC clearly demonstrated that the ADF had not applied lessons from *Solace*.¹²¹ The inefficient use of 'assets for cargo' suggested that air resupply was not being well managed again, and the navy and army may not have known when air force aircraft were coming and going from Bougainville.

The most disappointing aspect of the failure of the ADF logistic system to support *Lagoon* adequately was that these deficiencies had been identified during *Solace* the year before. The failure of HQ MC, the unresponsiveness of the supply system and the inefficiency of the air freight system had been identified in most post operation reports. A related concern was the failure of staff at DMCA, the joint movements agency in Canberra, to co-ordinate maritime, land and air movements in support of *Lagoon* when HQ MC at HQ Logistic Command was failing to do so - as had been the case for *Solace*.¹²² It appeared that Air Vice-Marshal Fisher's plea in December 1993 for ACLOG to fix the ADF distribution system as a matter of urgency had not been taken up.¹²³

The failure of strategic level intelligence services to support *Lagoon* adequately was also a force protection failure evident for *Solace*. Colonel D.J. Buchanan, who had led a Bougainville Crisis Action Team (BCAT) at HQ ADF during the operation, pointed out a number of gaps and difficulties in the passage of information.¹²⁴ He had formed the BCAT on 6 September. From 7 until 21 September it operated during office hours providing intelligence products to the planning process in Canberra, such as a Bougainville contingency planning package and military threat assessments.¹²⁵ On 22

¹¹⁹ Land Headquarters, 'Post Operation Report for Operation Lagoon', pp. 31-2.

¹²⁰ Earle, 'POR - Operation Lagoon - Quick Rep', p. 2.

¹²¹ Breen, *A Little Bit of Hope*, pp. 58, 226, 250, 266 and 363.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Fisher, 'Co-ordination of Air Freight', p. 2.

¹²⁴ Colonel D.J. Buchanan, 'Strat Int Spt to Op Lagoon - POR', 8 December 1994, 98 18173, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹²⁵ DIO, 'Bougainville: Situation Update', 9 September 1994, K94-01400, NAA, Sydney. DIO, 'Military Threat Assessment - Bougainville (Threats to ADF personnel visiting)', 14 September 1994, 98-18173, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

September Buchanan and his staff began a regimen of briefing Major General Connolly at 4 p.m. and Admiral Beaumont at 5 p.m. each day. According to Lieutenant Colonel Hill the content of these briefings were not shared with operational decision makers at Land Headquarters or Abigail's headquarters on *Tobruk*.¹²⁶

Operation *Lagoon* posed particular problems for the ADF intelligence community. There were no independent and secure communications between HQ ADF and Abigail's headquarters off-shore at Arawa. Consequently, documents containing strategic assessments would have to depend on the command communications system for transmission. Buchanan commented that information collected by the combined force once it was deployed from Townsville:

was almost nonexistent outside the overloaded command chain communications link. In the worst case, information from Bougainville was 12 hrs old and filtered twice before it got to the BCAT. Significant information passed [by the BCAT] to CFC [Combined Force Command] on *Tobruk* but did not make its way to INTSUMs and SITREPs [*Intelligence Summaries and Situation Reports*].¹²⁷

With hindsight, the SPPKF was deployed into a situation where the intentions of the PNG Government and PNGDF force elements in Bougainville were different. Australian diplomats and DIO should have known this and advised Abigail of the risks involved. In the end, two army intelligence personnel in Arawa informed Abigail and his staff of the dangers posed by the PNGDF, not the intelligence system.¹²⁸

In summary, ADF planning processes at the strategic and operational levels were too secret and too slow, and there were deficiencies in deployable logistic support as well as communications technology for force projection. Operation *Lagoon* could have been a strategic tipping point for Australia in the South Pacific if the PNGDF ambush had succeeded or Fijian troops protecting secessionist delegates had been involved in a fire fight with PNGDF forces. Senior ADF commanders preferred to record *Lagoon* as a success. This assessment seemed to obviate a closer examination of its lessons. A review of command, control and communications, intelligence gathering and evaluation and joint logistic support arrangements for ADF operations might have been the outcome of deeper analysis. Tactical level reports had been frank.

¹²⁶ Hill, Interview.

¹²⁷ Buchanan, 'Strat Int Spt to Op Lagoon', p. 3

¹²⁸ The author interviewed Australian intelligence personnel involved in discovering the PNGDF ambush, the presence of PNGDF intelligence personnel and the non-compliance of local PNGDF commanders to the Cease Fire Agreement.

Higher command reports were less so. Operation *Lagoon* also demonstrated that Australian Prime Ministers and members of Cabinet will override professional military judgement and take risks to achieve political outcomes - and they will expect the ADF to do likewise. Despite insights from *Lagoon*, the ADF did not appear to be changing planning, preparation or deployment processes.

Exercise Kangaroo 95

The next opportunity for the ADF to rehearse evolving joint command and control arrangements and national force projection for the defence of Australia was Exercise *Kangaroo 95*. The aim was to exercise elements of the ADF:

in the planning for and conduct of combined and joint operations, at the operational and tactical levels, for short warning conflict in northern Australia and its maritime approaches.¹²⁹

There was a strong emphasis on exercising every level of command as well as the ADF intelligence system, command support systems and the 'logistic arrangements required to support joint and single service operations'.¹³⁰ The exercise began in January with the release of 'strategic level scenario information' that was followed by the Joint Exercise Planning staff progressively releasing intelligence that the environmental commanders and their staffs analysed and then adjusted extant contingency plans for deployment. In July, the newly-appointed CDF, General J.S. Baker, assessed that the growing threat from Orange Forces warranted military action and released a warning order that triggered surveillance and reconnaissance activities across northern Australia – an enemy was at the continental gates. In August 1995, the service chiefs assigned forces to Baker who then deployed them to the north to conduct protective, reactive and offensive operations against Orange maritime, land and air force elements. This time Orange Forces were given some freedom to oppose Blue Forces, but not until after they had arrived and settled in. On 26 August, after just over three weeks of joint operations Baker released assigned forces back to the service chiefs and environmental commanders so they could conduct two weeks of single service training, including live firing.

Exercise *Kangaroo 95* was a better-organised and conducted rerun of *Kangaroo 89* and *92* scenarios. Rather than allow each service to exercise independently and then

¹²⁹ Joint Exercise Planning Staff, 'Joint Exercise Instruction, Kangaroo 95', undated, p. 1, K01095, NAA, Sydney. Brigadier I.J. Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95, Post Exercise Report', vol. 1, February 1996, p.11, K01095, NAA, Sydney.

participate in joint operations, exercise planners forced the services to respond jointly to a build up of intelligence that Orange Forces were about to raid the Australian mainland. This was more realistic than the sequential approach taken for *Kangaroo 89* and *92*.

Once again the Darwin headquarters, HQ NORCOM, was augmented with staff from the ADF Warfare Centre and 1st Division in a renewed effort to create and exercise a joint operational headquarters. The Deputy Exercise Director, Brigadier I.J. Bryant, wrote in his post-exercise report that these *ad hoc* arrangements had not worked well, suggesting that the time had come for a permanent theatre-level joint force headquarters with 'a commander, balanced staff, appropriate communications and forces assigned as the CDF requires'.¹³¹ His recommendations were similar to those of a visiting parliamentary committee. The parliamentarians reported that ADF command and control arrangements for joint operations were unwieldy and inadequate.¹³²

Overall, Brigadier Bryant's post exercise report for *Kangaroo 95* was upbeat, declaring that all command and control objectives had been achieved.¹³³ However, Major General Arnison and other reports did not agree. Arnison wrote bluntly in his post-exercise report:

COMNORCOM as a RAN Commander [Commodore Lord] did not have the skills or experience and HQ NORCOM staff did not have the staff capabilities to effectively conduct land operations. This has resulted in bad lessons learned and opportunities wasted.¹³⁴

With similar frankness, Lieutenant Colonel G.D. Mulherin, wrote:

HQ NORCOM did not function at the operational level during Ex K95, although its regular staff will insist it did! Because of the C2 [command and control] arrangements, HQ NORCOM really only acted as a Land Component HQ at the tactical level, **but** was not equipped or structured to do that role [Mulherin's emphasis].¹³⁵

In reality, HQ NORCOM staff spent the vast majority of their time sorting out real-time administrative issues for *Kangaroo 95* rather than notional issues related to defending Australia from Orange Forces. Mulherin, who worked there during the

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95', p. 164.

¹³² The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, 'Report on the visit of the defence sub-committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade to Exercise Kangaroo 95', 8-11 August 1995, K01095, NAA, Sydney.

¹³³ Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95', pp. 11-2.

¹³⁴ Arnison, 'Exercise Kangaroo 95', p. 5.

exercise, commented that 'as much time was spent on which local contractor was to repair the LCH [Landing Craft Heavy] as was spent on 3 Bde [3rd Brigade] operations'.

¹³⁶ Only a handful of staff responded as a joint force headquarters within the exercise scenario. The vast majority of staff dealt with the challenges that Northern Territory and Cape York Peninsula authorities, land owners and the populace were facing with 18 000 troops, hundreds of vehicles and scores of aircraft manoeuvring across the remote northern parts of Australia. This situation echoed what had been observed in Major General Smethurst's report for *Kangaroo 89*. Even during major rehearsals of national force projection, HQ NORCOM continued as an administrative headquarters, not an operational headquarters commanding the defence of Australia. Staff there coordinated garrison services to visiting force elements and became responsible for liaison and problem solving with local government authorities and the community.

Colonel D.R. Cocker, Commander of the Logistic Support Force, highlighted that command support systems for the exercise relied unrealistically on domestic telecommunications as had been the case of both *Kangaroo 89* and *92*.¹³⁷ Brigadier C.R.R. Hoeben, Commander 8 Brigade, pointed out that while 3rd Brigade was equipped with new Australian-made RAVEN tactical radios, his brigade and other army reserve units were equipped with US-made ANPRC 77 sets that were unsuited to dispersed operations in the Top End. Their equipment was also incompatible with RAVEN radios operated by their regular army compatriots and could not send or receive secure High Frequency messages.¹³⁸ For their part, regular formations had continuing difficulty making high frequency communications work reliably. Often they took the easier, but operationally unrealistic, option of using domestic telephones to pass messages, another precedent from previous *Kangaroo* exercises.

Once again the ADF did not deploy tactically. Commercial aircraft moved personnel to staging bases at Katherine, located in the Northern Territory south of Darwin, and Weipa, located on the south western coast of the Cape York Peninsula, in accordance with commercial timetables and administratively convenient loading. While HQ NORCOM staff had a better understanding of these movements and when to

¹³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel G.D. Mulherin, *Kangaroo 95*, Points for PAR – SO1 ARTY [Artillery], 28 September 1995, p.1, K01095, NAA, Sydney.

¹³⁶ Ibid, p. 1.

¹³⁷ Colonel D.R. Cocker, 'Op Balmoral Post Activity Report – Logistic Support Force', 27 September 1995, p. 6, K01095, NAA, Sydney.

¹³⁸ Brigadier C.R.R. Hoeben, 'Kangaroo 95, Post Exercise Report, HQ 8th Bde', 14 October 1995, p. 6, K01095, NAA, Sydney.

assume command of arriving force elements, there was still no automated or manual process for accounting for personnel entering the exercise area.

Though DMCA staff in Canberra planned the movement of personnel and cargo months in advance and formed an *ad hoc* joint movements group, there were still some coordination problems.¹³⁹ The services still controlled logistic and personnel administrative support and appeared to exercise this control independently. One example was the entry of an army truck convoy into the exercise area without the knowledge of either HQ NORCOM or General Baker's Exercise Control Headquarters. Orange Forces captured and notionally destroyed the convoy and its supplies—an unexpected glimpse of the realities of protecting lines of supply that Brigadier Bryant quipped, 'detracted from an otherwise successful strategic resupply operation'.¹⁴⁰

Brigadier Hoeben pointed out that the rotation of army reserve units whose participation was limited to 16 days in and out of the exercise area was disorganised and resulted in some units staying for up to three additional days and other units having to leave early to conform to flight times.¹⁴¹ Major General Arnison joined Brigadier Bryant in recommending that the time had come to form a permanent joint movements group.¹⁴² This unit would command joint movement control offices around Australia. They hoped that raising this unit would solve problems that emerged during major field exercises and would also streamline routine movement of ADF personnel around Australia on a day-to-day basis – peace-time practice that should result in optimal joint movements for field exercises as well as offshore operations.

Convenient force sustainment arrangements applied for the exercise, with logistic support units under Colonel Cocker's command moving into the exercise area to set up staging bases and pre-position stocks more than a month before the arrival of

¹³⁹ According to Commodore P.F. McQuire, Director General Navy Logistics Plans, ACOPS and ACLOG were concerned about strategic resupply as a result of 'recent exercises and operations' by late 1994. He identified this concern as being expressed in 'ACOPS/ACLOG Minute LD94-25227, 5 November 1994'. The Deputy Commander of Navy Supply and the Director of Fleet Operations, Navy Support Command, had both expressed concerns about the role of HQ MC during the course of *Lagoon*. The raising of a joint movements group for *Kangaroo 95* was the result of an Operations Movements Review that concluded its investigations in mid-1995. Commodore P.F. McQuire, RAN, 'Operation Lagoon – Post Operation Report', 13 December 1994, N94-27278, DGNLP 669/94. Copy held by author. Several units found that their air movement of personnel was not coordinated with the road movement of their vehicles, equipment and stocks. One example was the arrivals of both the advance party and main body of 2nd/17th Battalion within 24 hours and the subsequent arrival of their road convoy some days later. 2nd/17th Battalion, RNSWR, 'Kangaroo 95, Post Exercise Report', September 1995, pp. 4-6.

¹⁴⁰ Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95', pp. 116-17.

¹⁴¹ Hoeben, 'Kangaroo 95', Annex H, p. 3.

the main body of personnel, and leaving a month after everyone had returned to their home bases.¹⁴³ There was a commendable effort to achieve some level of joint logistic support by co-locating Cocker and his staff at HQ NORCOM and raising Joint Force Support Units at Katherine and Weipa. In reality, Cocker did not tell navy or air force logisticians or their headquarters what to do, or set priorities for air resupply. Cocker's army staff manned each Joint Forces Support Unit, who interacted in a collegial way with staff from air force logistic and movements elements located at airfields.

At the strategic level, there were still problems with coordinating surveillance activities and intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination. Bryant pointed out that there was no strategic intelligence collection plan issued from DIO to identify and set priorities for intelligence staffs at lower levels of command. There was also no national surveillance plan to do likewise for operations staffs. Bryant made recommendations that there was an urgent need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of DIO, ADFIC and the joint intelligence staff at HQ NORCOM when it was acting as a joint force headquarters.¹⁴⁴ This was an echo of the uneven performance of the ADF intelligence system for both *Solace* and *Lagoon*.

The army's north eastern regional force surveillance unit, 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment (51 FNQR), was in a unique position to comment on joint surveillance and intelligence activities because its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Tink, and his subordinates interacted with each of the services. Tink questioned whether a maritime or air surveillance plan for the exercise existed, let alone a joint plan. He wrote in his post-exercise report:

At no time during this exercise were the air, sea and land [surveillance] operations co-ordinated to an adequate degree, resulting in much duplication of effort and in some cases, uncontrolled confusion.¹⁴⁵

Observations

While it is understandable that Brigadier Bryant might favour a more positive interpretation of the achievements of *Kangaroo 95* from his position as its Deputy Exercise Director, there appeared to be a significant gap between his optimistic

¹⁴² Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95', pp.119-21. Major General P.M. Arnison, 'Exercise Kangaroo 95, Post Exercise Report', p. 8.

¹⁴³ Cocker, 'Op Balmoral Post Activity Report', pp. 1-2.

¹⁴⁴ Bryant, 'Kangaroo 95', pp. 71-2.

¹⁴⁵ Lieutenant Colonel R.J. Tink, 'Kangaroo 95, Post Exercise Report', 51st Bn FNQR, 20 September 1995, pp. 2-3. Copy held by author.

assessment and some bleak realities. The question was whether the Kangaroo series in general and *Kangaroo 95* in particular marked improvement or steady decline in capacity and capability for self-reliant joint force projection. Exercise *Kangaroo 95* cost Defence \$ 65 million. Major General Arnison assessed that the exercise did not deliver value for money because it did not rehearse proficiency in joint tactical level war fighting. He questioned the merit of spending this amount of money to deploy 18 000 personnel, hundreds of vehicles and scores of ships and aircraft from the east and southern coasts to northern Australia and sustaining them there for four weeks just to rehearse joint command and control.¹⁴⁶

If Arnison had taken a broader view across the planning and conduct of both the Kangaroo series and offshore operations, such as *Morris Dance*, *Solace*, *Tamar* and *Lagoon*, he might have noticed some persistent trends.

National Force Projection

In response to an imminent threat of hostile or unwelcome incursions into Australian territorial waters, airspace or land mass, the Government would expect the CDF - for both political and military reasons - to deploy maritime, land and air force elements promptly and in sufficient strength to create a strong deterrent presence on the ground, in the air and at sea simultaneously. Responses to emerging threats would afford more preparation time to the ADF but still require proficient execution of the functions of force projection. Furthermore, it would be rare for one service to deploy without the support or accompaniment of one or more of the other services. Consequently, there would be a requirement for a competent joint headquarters to command national force projections.

The purpose of the Kangaroo series of exercises was to rehearse the planning and conduct of joint operations for short warning, low level conflict across the northern approaches to Australia. Logically, the ADF should have rehearsed the preparation and dispatch of naval vessels, troops and aircraft at short notice across the continent and into the sea-air gap. Logistics and synchronised movement of personnel and matériel would be important. For the navy and air force, these challenges could be met more easily than the army. The navy and the air force could sail and fly their combat units as well as their logistic support elements to an area of operations promptly unless many vessels and aircraft were undergoing maintenance at the same time. One caveat would be that

¹⁴⁶ Arnison, 'Kangaroo 95', p.4.

the air force would not risk aircraft operating into or out of insecure airfields. The army faced the more complex challenge of getting personnel, who had received specific force preparation – hopefully informed by thorough reconnaissance - to the right places and at the right times with their weapons, vehicles, aircraft and equipment. Furthermore, arriving combat units would need to be followed quickly by logistic units and stocks, as well as follow-on forces to sustain their subsequent employment against hostile forces.

Thus, the army was dependent on strategic lift. Following the principle of self-reliance and in anticipation of a military contest, navy and air force would be obliged to provide initial lift for land forces. Australian military history is replete with instances where naval vessels and service aircraft – either Australian or allied - have deployed land forces. Commercial or allied vessels and aircraft would move follow-on forces when it was safe to do so. In order to achieve both efficient preparation for short warning conflict and well-coordinated strategic lift, the ADF needed a capable joint movements organisation at each level of command to coordinate the assembling, loading and dispatch of assigned forces. This organisation would not only direct military movements and loading of ships and aircraft, but also contracting, loading and movement of commercial vessels and aircraft. Exercises *Kangaroo 89, 92 and 95* demonstrated that the ADF was unable to lift its land force elements efficiently, either by military or commercial means, even after months of planning for national force projection and non-tactical loading.

With hindsight, both General Gration in 1989 and 1992, and General Baker in 1995, set ADF priorities on force employment after arrival, not on specific force preparation and deployment before arrival. Both recalled later that they would have liked to have rehearsed all functions thoroughly, but were constrained financially from doing so.¹⁴⁷

As a result of only rehearsing tactically after-arrival, the ADF went about deployment of land force elements backwards - logistic units first and combat units second. For *Kangaroo 89* and *92*, the ADF had also adopted a sequential deployment of the services rather than a concurrent build up of force elements under direction from a joint headquarters. Post exercise reports confirmed that financial constraints and mandatory acclimatisation requirements did not permit tactical deployment and immediate employment. However, navy vessels, service aircraft and army heavy road transport assets could have provided strategic lift for 3rd Brigade and its initial logistic

¹⁴⁷ Gration, Interview. Baker, Interview.

support to secure forward operating bases and vital infrastructure - everyone was going to the Top End anyway. Allowing for financial constraints, the nub was the way land force elements deployed, not necessarily the means. Given this lack of rehearsal, would 3rd Brigade and its organic logistic units be able to move tactically and have 'right of way' over the other services and army organisations, if the brigade was deploying to a military contest in the hinterland?

Regional and International Force Projection

Operations *Solace* and *Lagoon* showed that four weeks was insufficient time for the army to project force regionally and internationally. This time frame obligated the three services to synchronise their efforts and assets. The navy and air force had well-practiced procedures, but the army didn't. The navy and air force synchronised the resources of fleet bases and airbases respectively to facilitate preparation and deployment of ships and aircraft for *Solace* and *Lagoon* – same procedures for peace as for operations. The army found it difficult to coordinate mounting base operations and logistic effort. The pressure was put on 3rd Brigade, in general, and deploying force elements, in particular, to get themselves ready. *Ad hoc* arrangements in Townsville between local commanders had to suffice. The RHC could help with coordinating personnel administration and training, but Major Chidgey and his staff were not in a position to coordinate arriving cargo and loading ships and aircraft. That was the role of logistic commanders and joint movements staff. For *Solace* and *Lagoon*, Generals Gration and Baker did not appoint ACLOG or the Director of Joint Movements to be responsible to them for the timely preparation and dispatch of forces. They expected ACLOG and the Director of Joint Movements to do their jobs and the lead joint commander and his staff to direct specific force preparation and deployment.¹⁴⁸ However, senior logistic and movements staff in Canberra did not synchronise operational level processes. And neither Major General Blake for *Solace* nor Major General Arnison for *Lagoon* had authority over the assets of the other services, or logistic and movements organisations to control these enabling functions of force projection. They were customers, not controllers.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Operation *Solace* and *Lagoon* were real time tests for mobilising joint logistic support, ADF maritime, land and air transport and subsequent force sustainment.¹⁴⁹ There was room for improvement. Arrangements for Exercise *Kangaroo 95* had made progress. General Baker authorised the establishment of a joint movements group and two joint forces support units. However, there was still some way to go to set up and operate efficient supply chains from southeast coast depots and the new Defence National Storage and Distribution Centre to northern Australia. The ADF was still struggling with setting up supply chains that could sustain forces, either deployed to Australia's hinterland or overseas. There appeared to be merit in appointing a joint logistic commander and assigning navy, army and air logistic support commanders to him in order to better manage supply chains. This would parallel the CDF's relationships with the environmental commanders and make one officer directly accountable for sustaining ADF operations.

By the end of 1995, after the last units had returned home from *Kangaroo 95* and the second contingent of the MSF returned from Rwanda after an eventful and successful six-month tour of duty, Australia had four force projection impediments. Command, control and communications – Australia's top strategic priority – was still not working effectively. Intelligence gathering and analysis – Australia's second strategic priority – had been exposed as inadequate for regional and international operations. Though not described specifically as a strategic priority, the *Kangaroo* series as well as offshore operations had exposed inefficiencies and unresponsiveness in joint logistic support, including preparing forces for deployment and strategic lift. Finally, and most lamentably, the three services were not cooperating for either exercises or operations. Their resistance to joint command and control was a serious impediment. The root of army's resupply problems for offshore land operations lay in both deficiencies in its own supply processes and also problems with securing maritime and air transport effort.

Despite having been given unambiguous statutory authority from the amended Defence Act of 1976, each CDF had been unable to synchronise the three services for

¹⁴⁹ Operation *Solace* also exposed a gap between army's declared state for preparedness for 3rd Brigade and the reality of its readiness to deploy. The shortage of shipping containers and the haphazard loading of support ships for both *Solace* and *Lagoon* suggested that there was also a gap between the intentions of ASP90 and the FSR to have effective rapid reaction forces in the north of Australia and tactical level realities that were exposed when tested under operational conditions.

ADF joint operations. Each service made its own arrangements for the Kangaroo series. They neither submitted to joint command nor provided logistic support under joint arrangements. Thus, it was not surprising that there were logistic problems on joint operations.

The case for a permanent joint force headquarters that integrated the environmental commanders and their staffs to manage national, regional and international force projections had been made. Exercises *Kangaroo 89*, *92* and *95* as well as *Morris Dance*, *Solace* and *Lagoon* provided the evidence. A permanent joint force headquarters with a deployable component would not only develop joint plans for both large and smaller scale exercises and operations based on strategic guidance, but also have sufficient authority, logistic priority and assigned forces from the three services to enable it to execute joint operations. Theoretically, such a headquarters, led by a senior joint commander and supported by a joint logistic commander, would end *ad hoc* joint command and control arrangements, such as those that applied for the Kangaroo series of exercises and during nominally joint operations, such as *Solace* and *Lagoon*. The imperative was to synchronise the contributions of the service chiefs, the environmental commanders, movement agencies and the commanders of the three service logistic support commands.

If 50 percent of solving problems is identifying correctly what they are, General Baker was well-qualified and sufficiently experienced to address the first two impediments to Australian military force projection. He had authored the 1988 study into command and control arrangements for the ADF and had been the inaugural military director of JIO and founding father of DIO. It remained to be seen whether his service background and paucity of command and operational experience would enable him to root out the reluctance of the services to submit to joint command and to comply with logistics support arrangements for major exercises and operations. He would recall later that he had no doubt that he was in a contest with the tribal traditions of the services.¹⁵⁰

The unasked and unanswered question in 1995 for General Baker as he faced the challenges ahead was whether he - or a CJFA - would have the headquarters, intelligence capabilities, joint logistic and movements arrangements as well as the cooperation of the services to project force effectively when the Government ordered the ADF to take military action?

¹⁵⁰ Baker, Interview.

Chapter 5

Projection to Bougainville 1997

General Baker was determined to achieve effective joint command and control arrangements for ADF operations that would harness assigned forces from the three services and synchronise joint intelligence, logistics and movements.¹ Collocation of existing environmental headquarters would not be sufficient to achieve unity of command.² He wanted a new integrated joint headquarters at the operational level of command, separated geographically from Canberra.³ In March 1996, he directed the Maritime Commander, Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, to also act as Commander Australian Theatre (Interim) (COMAST (I)), and raise Headquarters Australian Theatre (HQ AST) at Potts Point in Sydney. He also directed Oxenbould to raise the Australian Theatre Joint Intelligence Centre (ASTJIC) and gave him command of 1 Joint Movements Group (JMOVGP).⁴

There was a brief test for Baker and these evolving command and control arrangements in November 1996. The Government asked him to examine the possibility of sending a battalion group to eastern Zaire (also known as the Congo) in 10 days, via neighbouring Rwanda, to join a Canadian-led UN military intervention.⁵ The mission was to open and protect land corridors for humanitarian aid to reach thousands of displaced

¹ This process began in February 1995 when a small planning staff distributed draft statements of the mission and responsibilities of COMAST to General Baker and environmental commanders. HQ AST, 10/1/5, 16 February 1995, HQ AST, Potts Point. In December 1995, General Baker distributed instructions specifying his requirements for a single joint operational level commander and a permanent operational level joint headquarters. He also specified that HQ AST would include joint intelligence, logistics and movements staff. General J.S. Baker, 'CDF Directive 582/95', 22 December 1995, pp. 1-2, 94 4323, HQ AST, Potts Point.

² Baker, CDF Directive 582/95, p. 1.

³ Baker, Interview.

⁴ General J.S. Baker, 'CDF Directive 13/96', 5 March 1996, 94 4323, HQ AST, Potts Point.

⁵ Colonel C.R. Prickett, Defence Attaché [UN New York] 'Eastern Zaire: Multinational Force', Facsimile Message to Lieutenant Colonel D. McMillan, DJOPS, HQ ADF, 14 November 1996. Copy held by author. Land Headquarters, 'WNGO – Possible ADF Commitment to a Multinational Force in Eastern Zaire', 160540ZNOV96, K96 01190, NAA, Sydney.

persons fleeing an escalation of hostilities. Once again images broadcast by CNN of the plight of thousands of starving and vulnerable African men, women and children aroused world opinion. These images combined with residual guilt over the failure of the UN to intervene in Rwanda to prevent genocide in 1994 to put pressure on capable members of the UN to deploy forces urgently. Canada was in the lead because the Americans were reluctant to lead a coalition into Africa, but they would secure and control an airport.⁶ The Australian Government was responding to informal American, Canadian and British calls for assistance.⁷

This crisis passed as quickly as it had arisen. The world lost sight of the thousands of displaced persons when antagonists brutally dispersed them into remote forest areas and prevented further images being broadcast. Without CNN camera crews to show the way, a Canadian reconnaissance team remained in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, with nowhere to go. The UN called off the intervention. This near-deployment demonstrated that the Government expected the ADF to take risks to deploy troops in an emergency. This reality was not lost on Major General F.J. Hickling, Major General Arnison's successor as Land Commander, who was the officer responsible for preparing and dispatching land force elements to operations. The near-deployment in November 1996 prompted him to appoint a full time operations analyst on contract and commission studies into past short notice deployments to derive processes and procedures to expedite preparation and dispatch of Australian contingents for offshore operations.⁸ These studies began with *Morris Dance* and *Solace*. Hickling planned to apply lessons from these operations to contemporary practice for force projection – necessity proving to be the mother of invention.

On 31 January 1997, General Baker assigned the environmental commanders and Commander Special Forces as component commanders to Major General J.M. Connolly, the first Commander Australian Theatre (COMAST). Baker went on to consolidate coordination of ADF joint logistic support for operations under Major General D.M. Mueller, the first Commander Support Command – Australia (COMSPTAS) in July 1997. This position was analogous to COMAST at the operational level of command.⁹ He commanded each of the service logistic support commanders for the provision of joint

⁶ Prickett, 'Eastern Zaire – Multinational Force', p. 1.

⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

⁸ Lieutenant General F.J. Hickling, Letter to author, 5 September 2005.

⁹ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, p. 268.

logistic support from the National Support Area in Australia to national, regional and international ADF operations. The service chiefs still commanded them for single service logistic support. Like COMAST, COMSPTAS would depend on cooperation between his small staff groups and maritime, land and air staff working in their respective headquarters to make these arrangements work.

By July 1997, Baker was also establishing a new Australian Defence Headquarters (ADHQ) organisation that the Defence Efficiency Review had recommended in April.¹⁰ Command and control arrangements also included a deployable joint force headquarters (DJFHQ) based on the army's HQ 1st Division in Brisbane. This created an option for Baker to assign a joint task force headquarters to COMAST to deploy to northern Australia or overseas to command a combined and/or joint operation.¹¹

A year after the near-deployment to eastern Zaire, Major General Connolly gave Major General Hickling less than three weeks to raise and embark an *ad hoc* 178-strong logistic support force for service in Bougainville. By this time, Connolly had been COMAST for almost 12 months. Despite reluctance within Defence to underwrite a New Zealand-led operation, this unarmed force, including a 19-strong contingent of Australian Public Service (APS) truce monitors, left on *Tobruk* in early December 1997 for service in Bougainville to support a New Zealand-led Truce Monitoring Group (TMG).¹² The short notice deployment exposed problems with the same functions of force projection that had bedeviled offshore operations since *Morris Dance*. However, this time Hickling and his staff anticipated, planned for and made preparations for the operation independently. He established an informal link with DFAT to bypass HQ AST and Strategic Command Division (SCD) at ADHQ to identify and act on Australian Government intent. His staff took the initiative to issue low and unclassified warning orders by facsimile and telephone, and to concentrate and prepare reconnaissance, advance parties and the main body of troops in anticipation of formal orders from higher headquarters. Even so, Major General Connolly and his staff proved to be impediments to efficient force projection and complicated rather than simplified force projection. Also, in a rerun of problems faced during *Solace*, force sustainment proved to be unresponsive and air resupply was inefficient and tardy.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 129.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 142-43.

Fortunately, Operation *Bel Isi* in Bougainville evolved into a long-term offshore commitment. Unlike *Solace*, there was time to solve command and control, and force sustainment problems. By October 1998, command, supply and rotation were working well. Unfortunately, intelligence arrangements proved to be unsatisfactory once again. Opportunities to practise processes and procedures for *Bel Isi* proved to be crucial two years later when Australia faced its most significant politico-strategic and force projection challenge since Japanese forces were advancing on Port Moresby in 1942.

This chapter charts factors that influenced Australian force projection from the raising of HQ AST in 1996 to the end of 1998 when the ADF found itself sustaining a long term regional force projection in Bougainville.

In Search of the Operational Art: Raising Headquarters Australian Theatre

The raising of HQ AST involved a number of concurrent processes. The first process was preparation and distribution of a series of papers seeking consensus from the environmental commanders and COSC on the form and functions of what would become known in 1998 as the theatre level of command. The second was a build up of staff numbers for HQ AST from the three services in a refurbished building adjacent to Maritime Headquarters at Potts Point in Sydney. The third was the planning and conduct of the Crocodile series of exercises that would be akin to the Kangaroo series to test these evolving joint command arrangements. The fourth was a search for a site to collocate component commanders and sufficient staff to plan and conduct campaigns, operations and prescribed activities.

For the purposes of this thesis, the establishment of HQ AST is only described from the perspective of its impact on Australian military force projection, i.e. did these processes enhance or detract? The COMAST and his headquarters faced challenges that obligated astute anticipation, efficient planning and dissemination of guidance, orders and instructions, as well as timely reconnaissance and deployment. The trend since *Morris Dance* had been for the Government and the strategic level of command in Canberra to insist on secrecy and forbid contingency planning at lower levels of command until a few weeks before deployment. Consequently, there was less time for preparation and reconnaissance. Numbers caps on land force elements compounded this risk factor,

¹² Baker, Interview.

resulting in *ad hoc* force structures and improvised headquarters. Intelligence support also needed attention. Joint logistic support and the air force air resupply chain - major risk factors for *Solace* - needed to be more responsive to deployed forces. Would COMAST and HQ AST mitigate or increase risk?

There was a contest of ideas in 1996. Rear Admiral Oxenbould, assisted by Colonel G.C. McDowall, developed papers describing the structure of HQ AST and sought to define responsibilities, roles and tasks, as well as relationships, between nine two-star officers and their headquarters as well as COMNORCOM in Darwin and COMD DJFHQ in Brisbane, who would be involved in ADF operations operationally or logistically. Oxenbould and McDowall proposed two options in their first paper in May 1996.¹³ The first was for COMAST and HQ AST to coordinate the efforts of each component in a collegial way, and for environmental commanders to be responsible for assigned operations 'in their own right'.¹⁴ The second was for each component to be responsible for assigned operations 'on behalf of COMAST', as his environmental deputy commanders.¹⁵ The two options represented similar functional models, but very different staff relationships. The collegial approach suited peacetime and did not change relationships or staff focus on service training and sustainment responsibilities. The integrated option offered 'greater unity of command in war' and would change the staff focus to campaigns and operations as well as peacetime training and sustainment.¹⁶

Oxenbould distributed a draft organisation for HQ AST to the environmental commanders on 18 December 1996 in preparation for submission to COSC on 26 February 1997.¹⁷ He sought comment by 27 January. This draft described the organisation for HQ AST that reflected Option 1, confirming that for the time being joint command and control at the operational level would depend on cooperative rather than command relationships – an evolutionary not revolutionary approach.¹⁸ While COMAST commanded the environmental commanders for operations on paper, his chief of staff only coordinated staff

¹³ Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'Structure of Headquarters Australian Theatre', HQ AST 31/96, 623-11-1, 20 May 1996, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 8.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 12.

¹⁷ Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'ADF Command Arrangements Organisation of Headquarters Australian Theatre', HQ AST 23/96, 18 December 1996, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁸ Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'Organisation of Headquarters Australian Theatre', draft dated January 1997, Annexes A and B, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

effort from each component through his small joint administrative, planning, intelligence and operations cells and a modest joint command centre.

The challenge for the Joint Administrative Cell at HQ AST, under these cooperative arrangements, was substantial. An officer of colonel equivalent rank was responsible for developing policy and directing planning for joint logistic support to operations, that also included 'drawing extensively' on 1 JMOVGP for movements and each environmental headquarters for personnel administration.¹⁹ This officer and a handful of staff would also be expected to 'direct and control, within the authority delegated by the joint commander, logistic, personnel, health and other administrative support for the joint campaign and coordinate component and subordinate administrative support', and movements.²⁰ Thus, he or she would interact with seasoned chiefs of staff and equivalent ranks on the staffs of three component commanders in Sydney, three service headquarters in Canberra and three headquarters of each of the logistic commanders of each service as well as NORCOM and DJFHQ.

The challenges for the officer of colonel equivalent rank commanding ASTJIC were also substantial. He or she had to prepare joint intelligence estimates and plans, and coordinate the collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence for the planning and conduct of joint campaigns as well as higher level intelligence support for operations. This officer and a small staff would be interacting with 15 national and three international agencies as well as intelligence staffs at three environmental headquarters and HQ Special Forces, NORCOM and DJFHQ.²¹

More broadly, the services favoured a 'top down' approach that would see HQ AST assuming responsibilities and taking staff from ADHQ rather than taking a 'bottom up' approach that focused on HQ AST assuming responsibilities from the environmental headquarters and taking staff from them.²² It was on this principle that a contest of ideas ensued that appeared to be based on each service chief and environmental commander

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 11.

²⁰ Ibid, Annex G, p. 2.

²¹ Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO), Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), Defence Security Branch (DSB), six Defence Centres and six regional counter intelligence sections in Australia. Defence staffs in Indonesia and PNG, and intelligence staff at US HQ Pacific Command in Hawaii.

²² Director Force Structure Planning, 'Brief for VCDF (through ACPSG) Tri-Service Team Review – Proposed Interim HQ AST Organisational Structure', ADHQ, 18 October 1996, Copy less attachments held by author. This brief summarised the concerns of the three services contained in 'Tri-Service Team Report – Proposed Interim HQ AST Organisational Structure', unreferenced and undated.

wanting someone else to assign staff positions to HQ AST. General Baker knew of these sensitivities.²³ He had already directed Oxenbould to produce a paper that devolved control of ADF operations from ADHQ to HQ AST that would involve no net increase in staff but would transfer 30 percent of staff positions from ADHQ to HQ AST.²⁴ This approach added Air Vice Marshal B.G. Weston, his ACOPS, to the contest to conserve staff numbers.

Referring to CDF guidance, Oxenbould argued that ADHQ would 'direct' operations and HQ AST would 'control' them.²⁵ He recommended transferring a number of staff from ADHQ to HQ AST based on his understanding of what this meant. He envisaged COMAST establishing a strong relationship with the US Commander in Chief of Pacific Command (CINCPAC), located in Hawaii. In his reply to Oxenbould, Weston disagreed with Oxenbould's interpretation of Baker's guidance and proposed minimal staff transfers and retention of the relationship between the CDF and ADHQ, and CINCPAC and Headquarters Pacific Command (PACOM), in Hawaii.²⁶ He opined that COMAST and HQ AST would not develop political/military relationships with allies in the Australian theatre, in general, or become involved in the US-Australian bilateral military relationship, in particular.²⁷ Weston argued that COMAST was a theatre/operational commander, not a theatre/strategic commander.²⁸

Oxenbould wrote back to Weston on 21 November 1996, as his tenure as both Maritime Commander and COMAST (I) drew to an end, complaining that he could not believe that:

CDF would accept such an expensive proposal in duplication of effort, and such a diminished role for HQ AST in the planning and conduct of campaigns.²⁹

²³ Baker, Interview.

²⁴ Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'Devolution of Tasks to HQ AST', HQ AST 167/96, 15 October 1996, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

²⁵ The guidance Oxenbould referred to was, General J.S. Baker, 'CDF Directive 13/1996', 5 March 1996, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point. Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'Devolution of Tasks from HQADF Operations Division to HQ AST', 11 October 1996, p. 1, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

²⁶ Air Vice Marshal B.G. Weston, 'Devolution of Tasks to HQ AST', ACOPS BR2573/96, 96 4957, 29 October 1996, pp. 1-2, Copy on HQ AST 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 3 and Annex B.

²⁸ Ibid, Annex B, p. 4.

²⁹ Rear Admiral C.J. Oxenbould, 'Devolution of Tasks to HQ AST', HQ AST 204/96, p. 1, 21 November 1996, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

Oxenbould's counter arguments to Weston reveal several dilemmas. He pointed out that CINCPAC was a theatre/strategic commander, who had strategic, operational and tactical level responsibilities, but US armed forces doctrine did not recognise a theatre/strategic level of war. Consequently, Oxenbould argued that CINCPAC and his staff should deal with CDF and ADHQ for strategic matters, and COMAST and HQ AST for theatre matters 'just as the CDF deals with both CINCPAC and the Pentagon'.³⁰ Weston's argument was that the US National Command Authority (NCA), comprising the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), commanded each geographic Commander in Chief (CINC). Therefore, CINCPAC was responsible for both shaping the political and military environment in American national interests in the Pacific area and interacting with regional allies for operations. He was also responsible to NCA for planning and conducting campaigns and operations in his own right. Thus, CINCPAC and his staff dealt with the CDF and ACOPS satisfactorily at the strategic level, and he and his component commanders and staff also dealt with Australian forces from the three services and special forces at operational and tactical levels harmoniously. The question unanswered by Weston was whether CINCPAC needed to deal with COMAST at all, except to recognise him as a standing joint force commander?

Baker appeared to be mirroring the American CINC system by creating COMAST, but then not allowing COMAST the full powers of an American CINC. As a super power with global concerns, the United States created several permanent theatre/strategic commanders but there was no separation of strategic and theatre levels of command within an American theatre. Why then did a middle power like Australia need to add a theatre level of command within its one Australian theatre? A pertinent question was whether Australia needed both a CDF and a separate CINC equivalent?' It may have been simpler to have a CDF and a chief of joint operations within ADHQ who reported to him.

Putting aside these unanswered questions, the more important issue for the ADF was how to synchronise nine 2-star officers and their headquarters, as well as a regional commander in Darwin (COMNORCOM) and the commander of a deployable headquarters in Brisbane (COMDDJFHQ) to execute the functions of force projection effectively and efficiently. Recent operational experience, as well as the results of the Kangaroo exercises, suggested that a permanent joint force headquarters was required. Arguably, if the US

³⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

CINC model was applied and Weston's arguments supported, the CDF and ADHQ already constituted a CINC for the Australian theatre and only needed to incorporate environmental component commanders and their staff to operate like a CINC. Though COMAST was intended to be an Australian equivalent of an American CINC, he was not given authority over the environmental commanders and their staffs or over the service logistic commanders to synchronise Australia's military force projection. For his part, Major General Mueller, COMSPTAS, was given command of each service logistic support commander but depended on cooperative arrangements between his staff groups and component headquarters to get things done.³¹ The question was whether these arrangements gave sufficient control to synchronise logistics for ADF operations.

Oxenbould also used another argument that sounded fine in theory, but was unlikely to work, based on recent operational experience. He wrote that:

In reality, the transition from strategic to operational planning must be a gradual one rather than a clean break, but it is essential that the operational level interaction be established early and that it develops primacy as planning proceeds and the focus moves from strategic to operational decision making.³²

Here was another dilemma. Since *Morris Dance*, the strategic level of command had never involved subordinate headquarters in early contingency planning. There had been no time for gradual transition from strategic to operational planning processes for *Solace* or *Lagoon*. Planning processes had to be fast and concurrent - not gradual and sequential. Governments were not giving the ADF time to plan down through each level of command under hierarchical and sequential arrangements because of a political and diplomatic need for secrecy. Australian force projection only worked well when there was plenty of preparation time, like ADF involvement in UNTAC in Cambodia, or when operations that were largely single service, like ADF participation in the Gulf War in 1991.

There was also another dilemma. The strategic level was not likely to delegate decision making to lower levels of command. International and national media scrutiny and political sensitivity to exposure of tactical errors and incidents to a world wide audience meant that the strategic level on behalf of political leaders remained intimately interested in both operational and tactical level decision making and outcomes. Politicians

³¹ Horner, *Making the Australian Defence Force*, pp. 268-274.

³² Ibid.

were unlikely to wait patiently for the military chain of command to process information from the tactical level through to the strategic level via an operational level of command when the Australian public was receiving instantaneous information through their television sets. Nor were they likely to leave it to the military chain of command to contemplate problems through several layers of command to come up with courses of action when the next newspaper or television deadline obligated the Government to respond to a tactical incident within hours.

Air Vice Marshal Weston replied to Commodore Oxenbould on 18 December 1996, the same day that Oxenbould distributed his pre-Christmas paper on the organisation and tasks of HQ AST.³³ Weston chose not to address substantive issues, but to emphasise an evolutionary approach. He pointed out that HQ AST would interact with allies in the theatre by managing the combined exercise program and other activities.³⁴ He also joined Oxenbould in the view that, when the Government had decided to take military action, strategic and operational decision making would be sequential and devolve naturally from the strategic to the operational level of command giving COMAST freedom to plan and conduct campaigns and operations.³⁵ Neither recognised that recent operational experience and political insistence on secrecy as well as the imperative for rapid politico-strategic responses to tactical level incidents rendered this orderly model of contingency planning, force preparation and devolved decision-making obsolete.

From 31 January 1997, the first COMAST, Major General J.M Connolly, though he was of the same rank, commanded the environmental commanders for operations. His staff operated on a collegial basis with staffs at Maritime, Land and Air Headquarters for planning and conducting campaigns and operations. On 14 July, he submitted an agendum paper to COSC, 'The Permanent Form and Function of HQ AST'.³⁶ Connolly noted that on 26 February COSC had prescribed a 30 percent cut in the staff numbers proposed by Oxenbould in his pre-Christmas paper. He also noted that on 1 May 1997 the VCDF, Vice Admiral C.A. Barrie, had imposed an overall ceiling of 800 staff on HQ AST, DJFHQ and

³³ Air Vice Marshal B.G. Weston, 'Devolution of Tasks to HQ AST', ACOPS BC 2842/96, 18 December 1996, 96 4957, HQ AST, Potts Point.

³⁴ Ibid, pp. 2-3.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 2.

³⁶ Major General J.M. Connolly, 'The Permanent Form and Function of HQ AST', HQ AST 430/97, 14 July 1997, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

NORCOM, and that HQ AST should be 'structured for war but adapted for peace', in accordance with the Government's Defence Reform Program.³⁷

Connolly was not tempted by the cut in staff numbers or the invitation to structure for war to propose a more integrated model for HQ AST. His paper confirmed that cooperative relations would apply between his staff branches and component staffs, and that ASTJIC, Joint Administrative Branch and 1 JMOVGP would coordinate intelligence, logistic support and movements for joint operations respectively.³⁸ While Connolly anticipated that the forthcoming Crocodile series of exercises would validate these arrangements, real-time events were in the offing that would test the form and function of HQ AST more thoroughly.

Back to Bougainville

On 17 March 1997, Brigadier General J. Singarok, Commander of the PNGDF, revealed publicly that the Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan, and several members of his Cabinet had arranged for contractors from Sandline International to establish and train a task force to deploy to Bougainville to kill or capture members of the secessionist leadership group and retake the Panguna copper mine near Arawa. Singarok mounted and conducted Operation *Rousim Quik* to deport members of the Sandline training cadre and to deter incoming aircraft carrying military hardware for the operation.³⁹ These events constituted a strategic surprise for Australia as well as an intelligence failure.⁴⁰

The Chan Government cancelled the Sandline contract after Singarok's disclosures. In subsequent elections, Chan lost his seat, and his coalition lost power. Prime Minister W. Skate formed a new coalition, promising a renewal of negotiations for the end of the Bougainville Crisis, rather than pursuing a military solution. The New Zealand Foreign Minister, D. McKinnon, seized this opportunity to engage Skate and offer good offices. New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) engagement with this diplomatic initiative began a week or so after *Rousim Quik*. The CDF, Lieutenant General A.L. Birks, summoned his ACOPS, Brigadier R.C. Mortlock, to a meeting with McKinnon and his senior negotiator,

³⁷ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

³⁸ Ibid, Annexes C and G, and p.10.

³⁹ See Mary Louise O'Callaghan, *Enemies Within*, Double Day, Sydney, 1999, and Sean Dorney, *The Sandline Affair*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, for detailed accounts of the circumstances and outcomes of what became known as the Sandline Affair.

J. Hayes, Head South Pacific Branch. They told Mortlock that New Zealand was looking to broker dialogue between the PNG Government and secessionist leaders in Bougainville. Initially, the NZDF would transport Bougainvillean delegates to and from Bougainville and host talks among the Bougainvillean factions at a military camp in New Zealand.⁴¹

On 2 July 1997, McKinnon announced that talks between Bougainvillean representatives would be convened on the following weekend at the army camp at Burnham. From Hong Kong, the Australian Foreign Minister A. Downer supported the New Zealand initiative as 'a useful development'. He confirmed that Prime Minister J.W. Howard and the New Zealand Prime Minister, J. Bolger, had been discussing PNG affairs. Australia and New Zealand would be working together.⁴² Like *Lagoon*, Australia's Foreign Minister was giving Defence explicit strategic warning of Australian diplomatic reengagement with finding a solution to the Bougainville Crisis and a possibility of Operation *Lagoon II*.

The outcome of the talks at Burnham in July was the Burnham Declaration. All Bougainvillean factions agreed to invite the PNG Government to discuss conditions for a truce as the first step towards declaring a cease-fire. The declaration also foreshadowed the use of 'a neutral Peace Keeping force' on Bougainville to monitor compliance with the truce and ensure that there were no breaches of any agreements made by the PNG Government and Bougainvillean factions.⁴³

The successes of the Burnham talks, the safe return of delegates and the release of five PNGDF prisoners by the BRA as an act of goodwill demonstrated that cooperation between New Zealand diplomats and the NZDF was working well.⁴⁴ Diplomatic co-operation between Australia and New Zealand was also working well. Downer and McKinnon met in New Zealand on 22 August. The next day they released a joint statement emphasising that Australia and New Zealand were united in their desire to assist the new

⁴⁰ Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, 'Hidden Agenda', *The Australian Magazine*, 14-15 August 1999, pp. 28-33.

⁴¹ Brigadier R.C. Mortlock, Interview with author, 27 October 1998.

⁴² NZPA, AFP and AAP correspondents, 'NZ talks aim at ending Bougainville crisis', the *Australian*, 3 July 1997.

⁴³ 'The Burnham Declaration, By Bougainville Leaders on the Re-establishment of a Process for Lasting Peace and Justice on Bougainville', 5-18 July 1997, Paragraphs 4-5. Copy held by author. Text included as Appendix A in Monica Wehner and Donald Denoon (ed.), *Without a gun: Australians' experiences monitoring peace in Bougainville, 1997-2001*, Pandanus Books, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, 2001.

⁴⁴ David Barber, 'Bougainville rebels free five soldiers in goodwill gesture', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1997.

Skate Government to solve the Bougainville Crisis. Downer then flew to Port Moresby to meet with Skate on 25 August, a day before McKinnon was scheduled to meet Skate and then travel with him to Bougainville. The mission of both ministers was to bolster Skate's commitment to a negotiated settlement and to pledge Australian and New Zealand support to assist the peace process and reconstruction in Bougainville.⁴⁵

Use of Warning Time

Downer was also preparing the Australian public for ADF involvement in a neutral peace keeping force on Bougainville in similar ways to how his predecessor had prepared the Australian public for ADF involvement in *Lagoon* in 1994. The day before Downer and McKinnon released their joint statement, L. Murdoch, the International Affairs correspondent with the *Age*, wrote an 'exclusive' article about ADF contingency plans for providing logistic support to a regional peace keeping force on Bougainville, once the PNG Government and Bougainvillean leaders agreed to a truce. Quoting a spokesperson for DFAT, Murdoch stated that Australia would be prepared to assist with a peacekeeping force if 'there was a genuine peace to keep'.⁴⁶ Australia's role would be to provide transport, communications, and medical services, rather than armed troops that might raise suspicion and hostility among Bougainvillean secessionist leaders, who were still angry about ADF assistance to the PNGDF. A few days after Murdoch's article, an article in the *Weekend Australian* predicted that an ANZAC peace keeping force would serve in Bougainville by the end of the year.⁴⁷

By 26 August, Skate had announced his Cabinet's endorsement of the Burnham Declaration as a basis for negotiation for a round of talks between the PNG Government and Bougainvillean representatives. For his part, Downer pledged over \$100 million in additional aid for Bougainville over five years, but demurred when asked about Australia sending troops to the island. He affirmed Australian support for New Zealand efforts, suggesting that the ADF would provide only logistic support to a New Zealand-led regional peace keeping force. In the shorter term, he said that Australian service aircraft would

⁴⁵ Correspondent in Wellington, 'Anzac force on cards for Bougainville', the *Weekend Australian*, 23-4 August 1997.

⁴⁶ Lindsay Murdoch, 'Troops may join PNG mission', the *Age*, 21 August 1997.

⁴⁷ A correspondent in Wellington, 'ANZAC Force on Cards for Bougainville', the *Weekend Australian*, 24 August 1997.

transport Bougainvillean delegates to and from Honiara for the next round of talks in Burnham.⁴⁸ On 30 September and 1 October, Australian air force aircraft picked up delegates for another round of talks at Burnham from locations in PNG and the Solomon Islands.⁴⁹ Downer and his Cabinet colleague, I. McLachlan, the Minister for Defence, had combined well to underwrite the New Zealand efforts by transporting a broad representation of delegates from both the PNG Government and PNGDF, as well as from Bougainville, to Burnham.

On 10 October, all parties represented at Burnham signed the Burnham Truce Agreement.⁵⁰ It contained a timetable for renewal of a new peace process. There was a clause calling for the PNG Government to invite in a neutral peace keeping force to monitor the truce.⁵¹ The signing of the Burnham Truce Agreement did not trigger engagement with the NZDF and the ADF on arrangements for participation in a regional truce monitoring group. Remembering the near-deployment to eastern Zaire in November 1996, Major General Hickling authorised contingency planning at his headquarters.⁵²

Combined Planning and Reconnaissance

Lieutenant General J.M. Sanderson, the Chief of Army, called Colonel D.J. Hurley into his office on 20 October 1997 to advise him to be prepared to accompany Mortlock and a small team of diplomats and military officers to PNG and Bougainville later in the month.⁵³ Presumably, Sanderson had anticipated deployment of Australian army personnel to Bougainville and had selected Hurley because he had been an adviser to the PNG Government for *Lagoon*.

⁴⁸ Geoffrey Barker, '\$100m in extra PNG aid but troops not on the agenda', the *Australian Financial Review*, 26 August 1997. Craig Skehan, '\$100m to rebuild war-torn island', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 1997.

⁴⁹ Lindsay Murdoch, 'Australia flies rebels from Bougainville', the *Age*, 30 September 1997.

⁵⁰ Copy held by author. Text included as Appendix B in Wehner and Denoon, *Without a gun*.

⁵¹ David Barber and Craig Skehan, 'PNG pact with rebels', The *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1997. Jane Dunbar, 'Bougainville truce creates climate for lasting peace treaty', The *Weekend Australian*, 11-12 October 1997.

⁵² The author was working full time at LHQ during this period and attended all meetings of Major General Hickling's Bougainville Watch Group. The first meeting was on 26 September 1997. Hickling recognised the high probability of ADF force elements deploying to Bougainville in November after the signing of the Burnham Truce Agreement. He authorised contingency planning and other preparations, such as updating maps, identifying availability of logistic force elements and gathering intelligence. The author briefed him on lessons from *Solace* and *Lagoon* on 3 November 1997.

⁵³ Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley. Interview with author, 3 March 1998.

The next day, Brigadier Mortlock and his chief of staff for the coming operation, Lieutenant Colonel R. P. Cassidy, met with New Zealand diplomats in Wellington.⁵⁴ They assessed that there was uneven support for a New Zealand-led regional monitoring operation in Bougainville among senior Australian Defence officers and officials in Canberra. However, the New Zealand diplomats assessed that the expectations generated by the Burnham Truce and the obvious willingness of Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer to support New Zealand initiatives would overcome reservations in the Australian Department of Defence.⁵⁵

After meetings in Canberra, Mortlock led a Resources Group, comprised of Australian and New Zealand diplomats and military officers, to PNG to assess expectations for a truce monitoring group.⁵⁶ On 28 October, Major General Connolly warned his component commanders and their staffs not to conduct any planning because it was premature to develop options for ADF involvement in Bougainville before the receipt of strategic guidance from Canberra.⁵⁷ Coincidentally, on the same day, Lieutenant Colonel A.L. Gunder, Hickling's senior plans officer, issued a draft concept of operations and force structure for a truce monitoring group supported by a 170-strong logistic support team to staff at LHQ and HQLSF, seeking their input.⁵⁸

Staff at ADHQ, HQ AST, the environmental headquarters and DJFHQ had been following developments in Bougainville with great interest in the media. More particularly, they monitored the progress of the Resources Group through Colonel Hurley's daily reports that were distributed concurrently to each level of command. They waited impatiently for guidance and authority to take action. Colonel J.J. Culleton, Colonel (Operations) at Land Headquarters, directed his staff to send out a situation report on Bougainville on 3 November. This report was a thinly disguised warning order. Culleton had assessed that it was easier to apologise than to ask permission.⁵⁹ It alerted DJFHQ and

⁵⁴ Lieutenant Colonel R.P. Cassidy, Interview with author, 8 February 1998. Cassidy was Brigadier Mortlock's senior NZDF staff officer and chief negotiator for Operation Bel Isi.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Resources Team comprised Brigadier Mortlock, J. Hayes, D. Irvine, Australian Ambassador to PNG, G.L. Moriarty, PNG Section, DFAT, Colonel Hurley, Lieutenant Colonel R.P. Cassidy, N. Moore, New Zealand Embassy, PNG.

⁵⁷ Author's note in his personal diary on 28 October 1997.

⁵⁸ Lieutenant Colonel A.L. Gunder, 'CONOPS – Truce Monitoring Group (Bougainville)', e-mail, 28 October 1997. Copy held by author.

⁵⁹ Author's note in personal diary, 3 November 1997.

LSF that ADF logistic elements would most likely be deployed to Bougainville soon. Major General Connolly sharply criticised Culleton for ‘jumping the gun’ through his Chief of Staff, Air Commodore A.G. Houston.⁶⁰ The Strategic Watch Group met on 4 November and Land Headquarters staff acquired a copy of a warning order drafted by General Baker’s staff later that evening.⁶¹ General Baker issued his warning order later that night and Connolly issued his own warning order the following day on 5 November that included ordering the immediate deployment of planning and liaison officers to New Zealand – a rush was on. Baker’s warning order foreshadowed ADF involvement in Bougainville, but it did not provide guidance on the nature of ADF support or deployment timings. Despite this warning, Major General Connolly continued to put contingency planning on hold for the truce monitoring group until further clarification arrived from Canberra.⁶²

On 6 November, the Resources Group recommended that a Truce Monitoring Group (TMG) be comprised of 85 monitors and 65 support troops, not including helicopter support.⁶³ It was a very optimistic assessment of the support that would be required. Military staffs in Canberra and Sydney now waited expectantly for the outcomes of discussions between General Baker, and General Birks. By this time, Hickling’s staff had assessed that a 170-strong logistic and communications support force, including a headquarters supplemented by intelligence capabilities, would be required to support about 85 monitors deployed in four teams around Bougainville, and that *Tobruk* was needed.⁶⁴

Planning and Deployment

It was now up to Baker and Birks to issue strategic guidance for planning, preparation and despatch of force elements for what was to become known as Operation *Bel Isi*. Lieutenant Colonel D. Bell, a senior logistic officer from HQ AST and Majors G. Watman and R. Holmes from Culleton’s planning staff left for New Zealand on 6

⁶⁰ Ibid. Colonel J.J. Culleton, discussions with the author during this period. In early November 1997, the author attended all meetings related to the deployment Bougainville convened in LHQ.

⁶¹ Note in author’s diary, 4 November 1997.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Resource Group Report on a Proposed Truce Monitoring Group for Bougainville undated, but covered by a facsimile sheet signed by Colonel Hurley on 6 November 1997. Copy held by author.

⁶⁴ Lieutenant Colonel A.L. Gunder, discussions with author in early November 1997. Gunder was Staff Officer Grade 1 (Joint Plans) at LHQ who chaired the Bougainville Watch Group and coordinated contingency planning. He had been receiving copies of Colonel Hurley’s daily progress reports from the Resources Group.

November. Culleton soon knew through informal channels opened with DFAT that Prime Minister Howard had told the Defence Minister McLachlan and Foreign Minister Downer that when the New Zealanders deployed to Bougainville, it was diplomatically and politically essential that ADF personnel deploy with them.⁶⁵ After Major Watman arrived in New Zealand on 6 November, he informed Culleton that the NZDF was planning to send a reconnaissance group to Buka on or about 17 November and an advance party and main body of troops would depart for Bougainville by the end of November. Based on these timings, Major General Hickling and his staff had about three weeks to assemble, prepare and dispatch a support force comprised of headquarters and logistic support personnel as well as their vehicles, equipment and stocks to Bougainville.

On Thursday 6 November, Connolly's staff considered the Resources Group Report and a brief prepared by DFAT officials in Canberra advising the Government of possible options for supporting the TMG.⁶⁶ There was a question about what type of organisation would be required to support 85 monitors from New Zealand, Fiji and possibly Vanuatu, dispersed in four or more team sites around Bougainville? Authors of the brief recommended that the Australian Government opt for 85 monitors supported by 65 troops as had been recommended by the Resources Group. They preferred the figure of 150 personnel, but recognised that 'the group is limited in logistic support capability'.⁶⁷ A TMG of '220 plus' personnel was discussed in the brief as more logistically viable, but dismissed because the ADF was about to support drought relief operations in PNG [Operation *Sierra*] as well as the TMG.⁶⁸ For their parts, General Baker and Major General Connolly wanted the NZDF to assume as much logistic support responsibility in Bougainville as possible and to limit ADF support to delivering stocks to a port and an airfield.⁶⁹ The New Zealanders would be responsible for distribution of stocks from these

⁶⁵ Discussions between the author and DFAT officials in November 1997.

⁶⁶ DFAT, 'Bougainville – Australian Involvement in a Truce Monitoring Group', Brief prepared by DFAT for the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Defence, 6 November 1997. A copy was distributed informally to all levels of ADF command. The author received a copy on 7 November 1997. Copy held by the author.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

⁶⁹ Baker, Interview.

two points of entry and providing tactical air and ground transport as well as communications, medical, repair, maintenance and engineering support.⁷⁰

By Friday 7 November, the ADF and NZDF, in consultation with their respective Foreign Affairs Departments, had agreed to some key appointments. Brigadier Mortlock would command the TMG with an Australian colonel as his Chief of Staff. An Australian lieutenant colonel, Lieutenant Colonel P.R. Rogers, Commander, 9 Force Support Battalion, based in Randwick, Sydney, was appointed to command an ANZAC logistic support team. This composite unit would provide a range of logistic services to HQ TMG and monitoring teams.⁷¹

Over the weekend 8 and 9 November, staff in Canberra, Sydney, Auckland and Wellington developed documents that would decide the structure and set the direction for the TMG. On Sunday, there was some robust discussion about timings for deploying reconnaissance groups, advance parties and the main body of ADF personnel and equipment to Bougainville at a theatre commanders' meeting convened by Connolly. Major General Hickling, who knew the New Zealand timetable, wanted as much warning and authority as possible so he and his staff could give subordinate headquarters and force elements time to prepare. After several specific questions, Connolly promised Hickling that there would be over two weeks warning and preparation time before force elements would begin a period of specific force preparation. This subsequent preparation period would comprise three days for personnel to prepare in their units and a fourteen-day training period in Sydney before deployment. Connolly appeared to be unaware of the New Zealand timetable or had chosen to ignore it.⁷² He appeared to have missed the point in the DFAT advice to Government of 6 November that the TMG could be assembled in two weeks and that New Zealand was:

willing to put their own people (including support personnel) into Bougainville as soon as practicable after 14 November. Notwithstanding ADF planning constraints, if we are to have any influence Australia must not be seen to [be] lagging behind New Zealand support for the TMG.⁷³

⁷⁰ Colonel J.J. Culleton to author at the time. Culleton attended most of Connolly's briefings and staff planning meeting at HQ AST in early November. General Baker confirmed that it was the Prime Minister's intent for ADF elements to accompany NZDF elements into Bougainville, Baker, Interview.

⁷¹ Notes in author's personal diary, 7 November 1997.

⁷² General Hickling passed on this information to Colonel Culleton on Monday 10 November 1997.

⁷³ DFAT, 'Bougainville – Australian involvement in a Truce Monitoring Group', p. 4.

As the ADF immediate planning cycle began over the weekend 8 and 9 November, differences of opinion emerged over the ADF deployment timetable and whether 65 logistic personnel were sufficient to support 85 monitors in four dispersed locations. Hickling was convinced that the New Zealand deployment timetable would apply because the New Zealanders were in command and it was the Australian Government's intent to support their efforts.⁷⁴ Connolly's staff assessed that because the ADF was providing the strategic lift and most logistic and higher level communications support, Connolly's timetable would apply.⁷⁵

General Birks issued a planning directive to Major General J.A. Dennistoun-Woods, the New Zealand Chief of the General Staff, on Monday 10 November after appointing him to chair a Joint Operational Commanders Group to prepare a plan for a NZ-led TMG for what was then called Operation *Polygon* by Friday 14 November.⁷⁶ Birks' timetable for reconnaissance and deployment of force elements was ambitious. He directed Dennistoun-Woods to identify the composition of the reconnaissance party when he submitted his plan to him on 14 November.⁷⁷ He envisaged the NZ Cabinet giving approval for his planning directive on 11 November and authorising deployment of a reconnaissance group on 18 November with the concurrence of the PNG Government. An advance party would arrive in Bougainville six days later on 24 November and the main body of personnel and matériel would arrive by sea a week later, on or about 2 December. Presumably, Birks anticipated the ADF conforming to these timings.

Connolly's staff released a second warning order on 11 November that conformed to Birks' deployment timings.⁷⁸ The mission was, 'to co-ordinate the provision of selected ADF administrative elements in support to the TMO (sic) in order to promote conditions for success of truce monitoring operations in Bougainville'.⁷⁹ He tasked General Hickling to prepare an ADF reconnaissance group for movement to Bougainville in five days time,

⁷⁴ Major General Hickling briefed his staff to this effect on Monday 10 November 1997. Notes in author's diary, 10 November 1997.

⁷⁵ Culleton, Interview and discussions.

⁷⁶ Lieutenant General A.L Birks, 'Planning Directive by the Chief of the Defence Force to Brigadier J.A. Dennistoun-Wood, Chairman, Joint Operational Commanders Group (JOCG) for Operation POLYGON, Bougainville Truce Monitoring Group', CDF Directive 13/ 97, 10 November 1997, HQ NZDF 03130/PNG/1. Copy held by author.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 5.

⁷⁸ COMAST 'Warning Order for OP Terrier', COMAST 9/97, 11 November 1997. Copy held by author.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

an advance party to move in 17 days time on 28 November by air and the main body of troops to leave by sea on *Tobruk* in 19 days time on 30 November, with an arrival planned for 6 December in Loloho, the port near Arawa. General Connolly's intention at this time was to command ADF participation himself until he was ready to delegate responsibilities to Hickling or COMD DJFHQ, Major General T.J. Ford. Within minutes of receiving Connolly's warning order, Hickling's staff released a warning order to concentrate, train and administer a reconnaissance group in Sydney.

Guidance from Birks and Connolly on 10 and 11 November respectively, triggered the NZDF and ADF planning cycles for Operation *Bel Isi*.⁸⁰ After months of warning, the ADF and NZDF were about to begin combined planning for the deployment of a TMG that had to be on its way to Bougainville in less than three weeks time. The only land force elements on this notice to move were members of 3rd Brigade in Townsville. However, logistic personnel earmarked for deployment would be coming from Lieutenant Colonel Rogers' 9 FSB that was on several months notice to move. Given the agreed timetable for deployment, individuals and units looked like receiving very little time to prepare at home locations before concentration in Sydney. Rogers' troops may not have been on the right notice to move, but they were in the right place to move from.

Despite the receipt of a warning order on 11 November to prepare a reconnaissance group by 18 November, General Hickling was concerned that higher level planning processes were already falling behind the political and diplomatic timetable, and that specific force preparation would be rushed. While he and his staff could dispatch a reconnaissance group quickly, there was an urgent need to identify, concentrate and prepare an advance party and the main body of troops with their vehicles, equipment and stocks. It would be embarrassing if the New Zealanders and regional monitors arrived in Bougainville, and the ADF did not have logistic arrangements in place to support them. Connolly's assurances to Hickling on 9 November were now redundant. Birks' timetable meant that an ADF reconnaissance group would have less than six days to concentrate in Sydney and conduct pre-deployment preparations. An advance party would also have less than a week after that to prepare unless Hickling received authority to issue a warning order

⁸⁰ Originally the NZDF named the operation to support the TMG 'Polygon' and ADHQ named ADF participation as 'Terrier'.

soon that specified the composition and pre-deployment timetable for an advance party and main body of troops.

The problem was that there was disagreement in New Zealand among planning staffs on the composition of the TMG.⁸¹ By 13-14 November, planning for *Bel Isi* split into two processes. At the strategic and operational levels of command in Canberra, Sydney and Wellington, staff debated concepts of operations and discussed two proposals for the structure of the TMG. Concurrently, they prepared briefs for senior ADF officers and Defence officials who were concerned about aspects of *Bel Isi*. The tactical levels of command in New Zealand and Australia were seized by Birks' deployment timetable and began issuing warnings informally in anticipation of the results of higher level negotiations.

With strategic negotiations bogged down, Hickling's staff took risks and warned units informally based on the contingency of a 260-strong TMG: 175 Australian and New Zealand logistic and communications personnel supporting 85 monitors. Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy in Linton, New Zealand, also issued warning orders for a 260-strong TMG with contingencies for it to deploy to Bougainville with or without ADF support.⁸² While the strategic level of command continued developing a combined concept of operations and negotiating numbers, the lower levels of command in Australia and New Zealand began a race to prepare, pack, load and go.

Specific Force Preparation

On Friday evening 14 November, an ADF reconnaissance group under command of Colonel S.K. Joske, who had received notice of his appointment as Mortlock's Chief of Staff 48 hours before, assembled in Randwick and began two days of training and administration. Across the Tasman, Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy set up HQ TMG in a Territorial Army depot in Linton, and was also concentrating and preparing a reconnaissance group.⁸³ He was in contact with Major G. Watman, a liaison officer from Land Headquarters, and Watman was in contact with Colonel Culleton, who had returned

⁸¹ Colonel J.J. Culleton to author by telephone, 14 November 1997. Notes in author's diary, 14 November 1997. Culleton was in New Zealand with ADF negotiators.

⁸² Cassidy, Interview.

⁸³ Major General Hickling informed Joske on Thursday 13 November after breaking a deadlock on whether he or Major General Ford, COMD DJFHQ, would be the lead joint commander for *Bel Isi* by having Lieutenant General Sanderson intervene with General Baker personally to press Connolly to make an appointment so orders and instructions could be issued.

from negotiations in New Zealand. Joske and his team packed for a 90-day deployment despite being briefed by HQ AST staff that the reconnaissance would last for six days and the team would return to brief following force elements. Joske received advice from Hickling's staff that his team would be obliged to continue liaison after arrival in Bougainville rather than return to Australia to brief following force elements.⁸⁴

While reconnaissance groups assembled in Randwick and Linton, negotiations continued at the higher levels in Canberra and Wellington. Hickling's staff hoped a 260-strong TMG would be endorsed because they had taken the risk of warning out ADF force elements based on that structure and knowing New Zealand intentions. Time was of the essence because these elements and individuals would have to top up with stocks, pack, concentrate in Sydney and embark in less than two weeks.

On Monday 17 November, Foreign Minister Downer and Defence Minister McLachlan issued a joint statement advising the Government's acceptance of an invitation from the PNG Government to participate in the TMG and the deployment of 'a small joint Australian and New Zealand advance party ... in the very near future'.⁸⁵ The next day, Joske's reconnaissance group flew to Townsville. After they took off, Connolly assumed command from Hickling. General Baker's intention was to have Joske meet up with the New Zealand reconnaissance group in Townsville and then fly to Port Moresby for a briefing from the PNG Government, and after that fly to Buka from Port Moresby. Staff at HQ AST told Joske and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel Rogers, that they would be in Townsville for at least 48 hours, awaiting the arrival of the New Zealanders. They would leave on 21 November.⁸⁶

At about 7 p.m. that evening, Major Watman advised staff at Land Headquarters that the New Zealand reconnaissance party was going to fly out at midnight New Zealand-time to Buka. There was no intention to rendezvous with Joske's group in Townsville. After receiving a telephone call from Connolly's staff at 1030 p.m.,⁸⁷ Joske flew out to

⁸⁴ Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, Personal diary entry, 15-16 November 1997. Copy held by author.

⁸⁵ Australian Government, 'Joint Statement The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon Alexander Downer and the Minister for Defence Hon Ian McLachlan, Australian Participation in the Bougainville Truce Monitoring Group', FA 140, 17 November 1997. Copy held by author.

⁸⁶ Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, Mobile telephone conversation with author, PM 18 November 1997.

⁸⁷ Colonel S.K. Joske. Commander's Diary entry, 19 November 1997. Copy held by author.

Buka the next morning.⁸⁸ The New Zealanders were maintaining their schedule for deployment to Bougainville. The ADF was still catching up.

As the NZDF and ADF reconnaissance groups flew to Buka on 19 November, Hickling's staff issued the next warning order for the concentration and preparation of an advance party. At the same time, ADF and NZDF staff in Wellington and Auckland continued to refine a combined concept of operations for *Bel Isi*. Realising that the New Zealand timetable was being executed despite delays in confirming a concept of operations and structure for the TMG, Hickling's staff went ahead with specific force preparation for a 260-strong force.

Deployment

The NZDF and ADF reconnaissance parties arrived at Buka airfield a few hours apart early on 19 November 1997. An enthusiastic crowd of Bougainvilleans gave the NZDF reconnaissance party, led by Colonel C.W. Lilley, a tumultuous welcome. Joske's group arrived one and half hours later and met up with Lilley and his group at the airfield. They then joined a nearby reception function after welcoming speeches. Misunderstandings between the reconnaissance parties continued from this mistimed beginning. Brigadier Mortlock gave Lilley a priority to get his engineer troop commander and group of engineers across the Buka Passage, a body of water separating the northern and southern islands of Bougainville, and drive south. His objectives were to report back on the viability of the route to Arawa. Mortlock also directed Lilley and Major J. Shirley, the senior engineer officer, to get to Arawa to begin negotiations and preparations for opening the nearby port at Loloho and the airfield at Kieta.⁸⁹ Initially, Colonel Joske thought that Lilley was moving too quickly. The group could afford to wait until the next day to settle in and issue comprehensive orders before crossing the Buka Passage and heading south. Lilley pointed out that he had issued his orders in New Zealand before departure. Joske could decide whether to move that afternoon or be left behind. For his part, Lilley left by chartered helicopter with Shirley and flew to Arawa.⁹⁰ In the end Joske

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Colonel C.W. Lilley, Interview with author, 25 October 1998.

⁹⁰ Wing Commander Athol Forrest, RNZAF, e-mail to author 17 August 2000. Copy held by author. Forrest was the NZDF Defence Attaché to PNG and was in Buka to coordinate arrival and onward movement of the NZDF reconnaissance party.

and his group accompanied the NZDF troop commander and his men across the Buka Passage later that afternoon.⁹¹

The NZDF and the ADF had differing views on what this phase of *Bel Isi* was supposed to achieve. Major General Connolly and his staff had a traditional sequential view of reconnaissance. Joske and his group would return to Australia and report back before the advance party and the main body of troops departed. The New Zealanders envisaged their reconnaissance group reporting back *en route* and opening up a forward headquarters, the port at Loloho and the Kieta airfield in preparation for the imminent arrival of ships and aircraft carrying troops and matériel. The New Zealanders also engaged and reassured Bougainvillean leaders and the populace about the TMG mission as they drove down the coastal road from Buka to Arawa and Kieta. Australian planners had not anticipated this political task. Joske had neither linguistic nor public relations support. The New Zealanders had several interpreters in their team. The New Zealand Defence attaché from Port Moresby, Wing Commander A. Forrest, prepared the way for Lilley and his team at Buka. With hindsight, neither the NZDF nor the ADF had fully anticipated political requirements. The arrival of the first elements of the TMG was significant, but could not be exploited because Lilley had to fly south as soon as possible to prepare the way for the remainder of the TMG. During his journey south, Joske had to disappoint some villages on the way that had organised welcoming ceremonies for the first TMG troops to arrive – a culturally clumsy start to *Bel Isi*.⁹²

The 170-kilometre journey south to Arawa took 11 hours on 20 November because of the need to cross several rivers and damaged bridges, and collect engineer information along the way.⁹³ For Connolly and his staff at HQ AST, this was an anxious period. They were unable to communicate with Joske and his group, who had taken their satellite communications with them on the drive south. This INMARSAT equipment, the same type that had been fitted to *Tobruk* for *Lagoon*, could not operate from moving vehicles. Lilley left a rear link signals detachment at Buka to communicate with HQ TMG in New Zealand and maintain tactical level communications to his group during the potentially

⁹¹ Colonel S.K. Joske, Commander's Diary entry, 20 November 1998. Copy held by author.

⁹² Rogers, Diary entry, 20 November 1997.

⁹³ Ibid.

dangerous journey south. Much to his reported chagrin, Connolly and his staff had to use this New Zealand link to ascertain what was going on.⁹⁴

In the following days, Lieutenant Colonel Rogers spent a frustrating time trying to obtain information from HQ AST on the composition of the TMG and what stocks and equipment were about to be loaded on *Tobruk*. He needed to know how much accommodation and working space was required at Loloho, and whether there were sufficient tents, camp stores and other items being loaded on *Tobruk* to satisfy requirements. Information from logistic planners at HQ LSF in Randwick and Land Headquarters, who were responsible for loading *Tobruk*, was not getting to Rogers. He commented in his diary that there appeared to be no combined planning with the New Zealanders, ineffective coordination of logistic preparations at HQ AST and no understanding among HQ AST staff of the need for him to influence what was being loaded. He wondered why he was on a reconnaissance if his information was not being used to inform logistic preparations. He knew what conditions were like on the ground and what resources would be needed to clean up Loloho port and get logistics operating efficiently.⁹⁵ For their parts, Connolly and his staff were not responsible for force preparation. They may have been seized by the fate of Joske and his reconnaissance group in Bougainville and less interested in the fate of matériel being assembled on wharves and loaded at Woolloomooloo, the navy's fleet base on Sydney Harbour..

Rogers's other observation at the time was that Connolly's staff were micro-managing and minimising army personnel numbers. However, there was no similar examination of maritime or air crew numbers. Navy and air force could decide on the numbers needed to support an operation but 'Army was given a number and told to get on with it'.⁹⁶ Rogers wondered why higher levels of command caused so much disruption and disappointment among army personnel, who had trained together and wanted to deploy together on operations. He had been left to downsize his logistic support elements at short notice and form *ad hoc* organisations that had not trained or worked together. None of these decisions were made with the benefit of reconnaissance. Now that he needed more personnel to clean up the wharf area at Loloho and help set up logistic support facilities and

⁹⁴ Major J.G. Howard, Interview with author, 10 February 1998. Howard, a NZDF Special Forces officer, was a member of Lilley's reconnaissance party and then operations officer for Monitoring Team Buin.

⁹⁵ Rogers, Diary entry, 24 November 1998.

⁹⁶ Rogers, Diary entry, 27 November 1998.

accommodation areas, he was told he could have no more personnel, even on a temporary basis. The figures for the TMG appeared to have been decided on or rounded off by senior officers and their staffs without the benefit of an analysis of the roles and tasks of HQ TMG and Rogers's Logistic Support team (LST), or reconnaissance.⁹⁷

Connolly's staff issued an operation order for *Bel Isi* just after midnight on 20 November. This was the first formal guidance since 11 November. It gave five days warning for the dispatch of an advance party and nine days for a main body of troops. Staff at Land Headquarters had warned Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, Commander LSF, and his staff earlier in November about the forthcoming deployment. Soon after receiving the operation order from HQ AST, Hickling's staff nominated HQ LSF as the mounting headquarters for *Bel Isi*. Aside from assembling, training and administering personnel using DFSU, Wilkinson's major challenge was to concentrate stocks, vehicles and equipment at Woolloomooloo and load *Tobruk*. He and his staff had to meet these practical challenges in less than ten days. On 23 November, an advance party arrived in Randwick for three days pre-deployment training and administration. On the afternoon after the advance party flew out to Bougainville from Richmond on 26 November, the main body of troops arrived. Concurrently, Wilkinson's staff organised the concentration of heavy engineering equipment, a number of Land Cruisers, Land Rovers and heavy vehicles as well as tonnes of equipment and stocks at Woolloomooloo.

Lieutenant General Birks and Major General Connolly signed a combined operation plan on 27 November – too late to influence specific force preparation or deployment. *Tobruk* sailed on 29 November.⁹⁸ They foreshadowed that the TMG would transition into another organisation after Leader's Talks were held on or about 31 January 1998. The PNG Government and the representatives from Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Vanuatu signed an agreement for their contribution to the TMG on 5 December. By that time

⁹⁷ The author monitored issues related to numbers for *Bel Isi* soon after the Resources Group submitted their report on 6 November, nominating a 150-person structure. There was no logistician in the group to point out that this was unworkable. Subsequently, after exhaustive analysis, the bare minimum was assessed by staff in both New Zealand and Australia as 264 personnel. The final cap figure issued by HQ AST was 250, suggesting that the 264 figure had been arbitrarily rounded off.

⁹⁸ Major General A.L. Birks and Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Combined AS/NZ Operational Plan Operation BEL ISI', HQNZDF 03130/PNG/1, 27 November 1997. Copy held by author.

advance parties of the TMG had arrived in Bougainville, and the main bodies of troops were either in the air or at sea, heading for Bougainville.⁹⁹

Once again, the ADF appeared to have effectively and efficiently planned, prepared and deployed force elements on time and in good order at short notice. The timely sequence of events beginning after the joint statement by Downer and McLachlan on 17 November justified this perception of Australian military force projection. A reconnaissance group left Australia within 48 hours on 19 November, an advance party by air in six days and the main body by sea in 12 days. Based on these outcomes, *Bel Isi* was an example of synchronised diplomatic and military effort that confirmed extant arrangements and justified the introduction of COMAST and HQ AST into the ADF chain of command for operations. In reality, the New Zealanders had shown the way and had unknowingly driven the Australian military decision cycle. Formal processes for Australian military force projection had been too slow. It had been *ad hoc* arrangements between internal coalitions of willing staff at the tactical level within the ADF and NZDF, as well as the PNG Section at DFAT that had delivered these impressive results.

The momentum of the establishment of the TMG at Loloho increased significantly with the arrival of *Success* and *Tobruk*, on 5 December.¹⁰⁰ Rogers was surprised and disappointed to find that *Tobruk* had been slowed down for several hours doing 'figure 8s' to allow *Success* to catch up so both ships could arrive together. Rogers needed to discharge *Tobruk* as soon as possible to set up the LST to support monitoring operations.¹⁰¹ The New Zealanders had already conducted site reconnaissance and were calling on Rogers to provide the logistic support to set them up. Rogers had anticipated he would have to accommodate no more than 200 personnel in Loloho in line with the numbers cap put on HQ TMG and LST. Unlike higher headquarters in Australia, the New Zealanders did not seem to be fussed if their numbers exceeded agreed limits. By 8 December, Rogers was accommodating 207 NZDF, 145 ADF personnel and a Fijian and a Ni Vanuatu liaison officer, a total of 354 persons.

⁹⁹ 'Agreement between PNG, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu Concerning the Neutral Truce Monitoring Group for Bougainville, signed in Port Moresby, 5 December 1997. Copy held by author.

¹⁰⁰ Rogers, Diary entry, 5 December 1997.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Force Command

There was no gradual devolution of command and control and decision-making from the strategic to the operational level for *Bel Isi*. At the strategic level, Baker delved into the tactical employment of ADF personnel by not allowing Australian military personnel to move outside the Arawa-Loloho-Kieta area, or female APS monitors to deploy to monitoring team sites until security had been assessed to his satisfaction.¹⁰² At the operational level, Connolly commanded an accompanying force protection operation that restricted the employment of *Success* and its Sea King helicopter that were positioned in support of TMG operations in Arawa Bay.¹⁰³ Major General Hickling was left to command the military mechanics of *Bel Isi* as the nominated lead joint commander, under the watchful eyes of Baker and Connolly. Like his predecessor, Major General Blake, the lead joint commander for *Solace*, Hickling had no control over maritime or air force assets. HMAS *Tobruk* sailed immediately after unloading and the air force refused to support *Bel Isi* with a weekly courier flight from Townsville.¹⁰⁴ For his part, Mortlock resented Australian micro-management. Restricting his employment of Australian personnel and use of assets located in his area of operations suggested a lack of trust as well as confidence in his competence and judgment.¹⁰⁵

Colonel Joske reported to both Connolly and Hickling. Staff from both HQ AST and LHQ contacted him wanting to discuss issues. He had to keep staff from both headquarters aware of the content of conversations he had had with staff from the other headquarters. There was much duplication of effort and reporting. The origin of this arrangement, according to Connolly's staff, was Connolly's desire to retain control of the political and military dimension of ADF involvement in *Bel Isi* and also to personally direct any responses to emergencies that might threaten Australian lives.¹⁰⁶ Joske wrote at the time, 'I predict that before long there will be a turf battle'.¹⁰⁷

The NZDF arrangements for *Bel Isi*, like Canadian arrangements for their contingent in Somalia in 1993, were more cohesive and cooperative. The crews of New

¹⁰² Mortlock, Interview.

¹⁰³ Classified sources.

¹⁰⁴ Rogers, Interview. Hickling, Letter.

¹⁰⁵ Mortlock, Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Culleton, discussions.

¹⁰⁷ Joske, Commander's Diary entry, 13 December 1997.

Zealand ships HMNZS *Canterbury* and HMNZS *Endeavour* and their embarked helicopters became active participants in the clean up and establishment of the LST at Loloho, as well as monitoring team sites at Buin and Tonu in southern Bougainville in early December 1997.

Force Sustainment

Logistic support was one of the contentious issues between the NZDF and the ADF during the lead up to *Bel Isi*. Two separate national logistic systems ended up supporting the TMG. There was no coordination of supply chains. During the rushed days in November, there were robust discussions at Land Headquarters and LSF about the command and control of logistic support for *Bel Isi*, including the provision of weekly air force courier flights and arrangements for mail.¹⁰⁸ Colonel Culleton and Lieutenant Colonel M. Slip, a senior logistician at Land Headquarters, offered that problems identified during *Solace* could be overcome by including logistic staff with operations staff at Land Headquarters and establishing a special 'Operation *Bel Isi* Coordination Cell' at DNSDC to monitor resupply.

Colonel Wilkinson sought to be appointed Commander Joint Logistics as a component commander at HQ AST. Wilkinson commanded most of the logistic personnel and assets before their assignment to *Bel Isi*. Unlike Culleton's staff, his formation was involved in the practical challenges of running logistic operations in Australia on a daily basis. Culleton's logistic operations staff did not have habitual relationships with deployed logistic personnel or day-to-day experience of ensuring that items of supply reached customers on time. As a joint logistic commander, Wilkinson envisaged being responsible to Connolly and Hickling for force sustainment of *Bel Isi*. He sought command of Rogers and the LST, as well as influence over DNSDC, 1 JMOVGP and navy and air force assets.¹⁰⁹

Major General Hickling did not concur with Wilkinson's views, or that the results of operational analysis of *Solace* and *Lagoon* warranted the appointment of a joint logistic

¹⁰⁸ The author attended all meetings at LHQ related to these matters and received briefings on outcomes of meetings at HQ AST from LHQ staff.

¹⁰⁹ Author attended meeting between Colonel Wilkinson and Major General Hickling on Monday 24 November 1997.

component commander.¹¹⁰ Hickling took Culleton's advice that remedial measures he and Slip had put in place should be given the opportunity to work. He did not press Major General Connolly to appoint a combined and joint logistic commander, who would monitor NZDF logistic support as well as control the ADF supply chain to Bougainville that would necessarily depend on navy and air force assets.

A comparative examination of the Australian and New Zealand force sustainment for *Bel Isi* reveals the gaps between intent and outcome. Major General Connolly and Commodore M.J. Wardlaw RNZN, ACOPS NZDF, signed a combined New Zealand-Australian logistic support instruction for *Bel Isi* on 4 December 1997. Major General Hickling signed his administrative instruction for *Bel Isi* on 5 December 1997.¹¹¹ Wardlaw's and Connolly's instruction contained descriptions of the New Zealand and Australian arrangements for resupply that also specified coordination requirements. On paper, both their combined instruction and Hickling's instruction synchronised force sustainment effectively. There were some differences between NZDF and ADF approaches, but overall the NZDF and ADF resupply chains were viable, if nominated agencies complied with directions given to them.

By coincidence, both NZDF and ADF nominated their corresponding land headquarters to set up 24 hour logistic operations cells and to coordinate resupply. Headquarters Land Force Command in Auckland established a TMG Logistic Support Agency.¹¹² Land Headquarters in Sydney supplemented its operations room with logistic watch keepers, who came from Wilkinson's staff at HQ LSF in Randwick. Both instructions made their equivalent support commanders and joint movements organisations responsible for the provision of supply and movement of personnel and matériel to and from Bougainville. The instructions sought 24 hour-a-day responsiveness as well as cross-Tasman coordination of resupply flights. These flights were to occur on a weekly basis, with RNZAF and RAAF providing flights on alternate weeks.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ HQ NZDF, 'Combined Australia – New Zealand Logistic Support Plan Bel Isi Truce Monitoring Operations on Bougainville', NZDF03130/PNG/1, 4 December 1997. Signed by Commodore M.J. Wardlaw, RNZN, Assistant Chief of the Defence Force (Operations) and Major General J.M. Connolly, Commander Australian Theatre. Copy held by the author. Major General F.J. Hickling, 'Admin Instr 01/97 – OP Bel Isi 051210LDEC 97', 5 December 1997, K97-01255, NAA, Sydney. Copy held by author.

¹¹² HQ NZDF, 'Combined Australia – New Zealand Logistic Support Plan', p. 5.

¹¹³ Ibid, pp. 5 and 7 for NZ arrangements and pp.8 and 9 for Australian arrangements. Hickling, Admin Instr 01/97, pp. 1, 2 and 4 restated ADF arrangements.

Aside from logistic watch keepers at Land Headquarters, the engine room for the ADF resupply chain was to be a DNSDC Bel Isi Coordination Cell, with representation from 1 JMOV GP, 'to ensure all demands from Bougainville are actioned IAW [in accordance with] required timeframes'. Hickling's instruction directed this cell 'to provide periodic reports' to his staff and Major General Mueller, Commander of Support Command Australia in Melbourne on progression of demands with information copies 'to HQ AST on volume of demands and any problems arising'. Wardlaw's and Connolly's instruction directed Mueller to:

Ensure all demands placed on the AS [Australian] resupply system for Op *Bel Isi* are tracked and satisfied within AUSMIMPS [Australian Standard Matériel Issue and Movement Priority System] time frames.

In addition, Mueller was to:

Provide details to HQ TMG LST on delivery date/time for all demands placed on the AS [Australian] resupply system for duration of Op *Bel Isi*.¹¹⁴

The demand chain for resupply was included as Annex B to the combined instruction as a 'flow diagram'. It showed that LST staff at Loloho would send demands for supply to logistic staff at HQ TMG in Arawa, who would send them onto Land Headquarters staff. Presumably logistic watch keepers would then forward them to DNSDC, who would satisfy demands and arrange with the joint movements group (1 JMOVGP) for consignments to go to Richmond RAAF Base for onward movement to Bougainville, either in RNZAF aircraft transiting through, or on air force aircraft from Air Lift Group (ALG) based at Richmond. In short, General Baker delegated theatre command of *Bel Isi* to Major General Connolly, who delegated operational command to Major General Hickling, who directed Major General Mueller, the national distribution centre at Moorebank, the joint movements group and Headquarters Air Command - in an instruction - to make the supply chain to Bougainville work, in conjunction with the RNZAF.

Thus, Hickling and his staff had responsibility for resupply, but depended on the cooperation of enabling supply and movements agencies. That cooperation was not guaranteed by command relationships. Would Mueller, the Joint Administration Branch at Connolly's headquarters, and his joint movements group, as well as a special Operation *Bel*

Isi Cell at the distribution centre make the system work better than it had for *Solace* and *Lagoon*? Would seconded logistic staff from Administration Branch, Land Headquarters and watch keepers from Wilkinson's headquarters, who were supplementing Culleton's operations staff, be sufficient to solve problems as they arose? Discussions over the provision of a weekly Air Force courier were over quickly. The air force was not disposed to providing a weekly courier to Bougainville.¹¹⁵ Replicating *Solace*, staff from air lift group at Richmond advised that when a C-130 load of stores and personnel were ready for onward movement, they would assign an aircraft in accordance with extant priorities.

By January 1998, the consequences of rushed logistic planning and capping numbers without analysing services to be provided were now being felt. Resupply arrangements began to fail.¹¹⁶ There was no co-ordination of air movements by the NZDF and the ADF into and out of Bougainville.¹¹⁷ Staff at joint movements groups in Auckland and Sydney did not have a mechanism through a joint logistic commander and his headquarters or through Land Force Headquarters, NZDF, or Land Headquarters in Sydney, to do so. In fact, there was no communication between the two land headquarters across the Tasman Sea except through liaison officers, who reported what they saw, but were not employed to remedy co-ordination problems. Major Smith, the ADF LO at Land Force Headquarters in Auckland, wrote:

In summary, the co-ordination of air movements, and the use of each other's aircraft for the onward movement of personnel and stores had not been well coordinated at this stage of the operation, which means that it could be not described technically as a combined operation, i.e. not one whereby the logistic resources are put under the command of an individual either to move or to resupply.¹¹⁸

In effect, *Bel Isi* incorporated two parallel force sustainment operations. According to Rogers, there was no monitoring of the priorities of demands for items of supply.

¹¹⁴ HQ NZDF, 'Combined Australia – New Zealand Logistic Support Plan', p. 8.

¹¹⁵ The author attended these discussions in early December 1997.

¹¹⁶ Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, 'Administration for the Truce Monitoring Group', Annex C to proposed 1 Australian Service Contingent Operation Bel Isi Report, p. 1. Forwarded to author on 13 August 1998 with a covering note advising that the annex was intended for inclusion in a Post Operations Report (POR) from ASC 1, but Colonel Joske did not produce a POR.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 4, Paragraphs 21-23. Also Major N. Smith, 'Morning Situation Report, 20 January 1998, 'the joint movements group in NZ are not receiving timed information on RAAF flights in and out of theatre. I am not sure whether the problem is at Air Command in Australia or 1 JMOVGP. JMOVNZ would appreciate being informed of flight schedules.' Smith was ADF LO at Land Force Headquarters in Auckland. He wrote several reports in January about lack of co-ordination of resupply flights.

Onward movement of consignments from Australia and New Zealand was decided by order of arrival at air force bases, not operational priorities. There were numerous examples of where low priority items were flown to Bougainville ahead of more critical items.¹¹⁹ On 23 and 24 January 1998, Rogers sent minutes to Culleton's staff listing items that had not been delivered on time or not at all.¹²⁰ He recognised that the Christmas period meant that the ADF logistic system would be less responsive; however, the operational tempo in Bougainville did not take a Christmas holiday. He anticipated that delays would mean that vehicles and equipment would continue to be unserviceable for excessive periods of time. He pointed out that his authorised holding of spare parts in Bougainville was limited. As a consequence, the LST had to rely on a 'just in time', responsive resupply system from Australia. Furthermore, all vehicles and specialist equipment items had been kept to a minimum, thus there were no spare vehicles or major items of equipment to bring on line if others became unserviceable while waiting for spare parts.¹²¹ He wrote that, 'The result is that if an item is unserviceable, the LST capability becomes severely limited until parts can be obtained'.¹²²

In his minute to Culleton on 23 January, Rogers provided specific examples of critical spare parts not arriving on time. One of the two refrigeration containers broke down on 29 December and still awaited spare parts before it could be repaired three weeks later. For the time being, *Endeavour* was keeping perishable food cool. One of two 60 KVA generators had been unserviceable since 14 December awaiting spare parts. If the other generator broke down, there would be no electrical power in Loloho except that provided by New Zealand ships alongside. Rogers emphasised that the LST should not have to depend on RNZN good will. After the New Zealand ships left on 31 January, the ADF logistic support system for *Bel Isi* would be on its own.¹²³

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Rogers, 'Administration for the Truce Monitoring Group', p. 4.

¹²⁰ Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, 'Satisfaction of Demands for OP BEL ISI', LST 05/98, HQ TMG 611-1-1, 23 January 1998. Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, 'Satisfaction of Demands for OP BEL ISI', LST 06/98, HQ TMG 611-1-1, 24 January 1998. Copies held by author.

¹²¹ The key items requiring spare parts at the time were Land Cruisers and Land Rovers, LCM8 landing craft, generators and refrigerators.

¹²² Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, 'OP Bel Isi LST LOGREP 01/98 for Period ending 30 Jan 98', LST 19/98, 31 January 1998, HQ TMG 611-1-1. Copy held by author.

¹²³ Rogers, 'Satisfaction of Demands for OP BEL ISI', 23 January 1998.

Rogers detected that the Australian air force air freight system was off loading consignments for *Bel Isi* and reloading them later. Some items were just not arriving or had been lost somewhere along the supply chain. From mid-December until mid-February 1998, the number of outstanding demands not satisfied by their requested delivery date grew steadily. An average of 50 per cent of items were late, with about half being over two weeks late.¹²⁴ He was sending logistic reports each week describing the deterioration in resupply, including his highest priorities for remedial action. A familiar pattern from *Solace* emerged. The ADF logistic system just could not supply spare parts to an off-shore operation in a timely manner and well meaning staff at Land Headquarters could only pass on concerns to Major General Mueller's headquarters in Melbourne.

Rogers wrote:

To put it quite simply, the satisfaction rate is disappointing, and does not reflect what should be expected on an operation. It is apparent that delays are occurring in some instances within the supply system and other instances because consignments were unable to be married up with aircraft in a timely manner. In particular there had been a number of opportunity aircraft flying into Bougainville which have been poorly utilised.

The LST was structured on very light manning on the basis of receiving regular and responsive resupply from Australia. The commitment to provide the latter has changed, and it may be appropriate to reconsider a number of key premises regarding the structure and operation of the LST. If this would occur, we would need to increase the holdings of some critical items in order to ensure greater redundancy [spare capacity] on the ground. Holdings of repair parts would also need to be increased in Bougainville with the additional manning required to manage those holdings.

¹²⁵

Culleton passed Rogers' concerns through staff channels to distribution staff at DNSDC and supply staff at HQ Support Command. There is no evidence that anything was done to implement Rogers' recommendations.¹²⁶ The air force freight handlers

¹²⁴ Rogers, Minutes 5/98 and 6/98 of 23 and 24 January 1998 respectively. Lieutenant Colonel P.M. Rogers, 'OP BEL ISI LST LOGREP 02/98 for Period Ending 7 February 1998', LST Minute 23/98, 7 February 1998, HQ TMG 611-1-1. Copies held by author.

¹²⁵ Rogers, Minute 5/98, p. 2.

¹²⁶ The author reviewed numerous e-mails and signals from LHQ to 1JMOVGP and Sydney Joint Movements Control Office (JMCO) in Sydney at the time drawing attention to 'lost' consignments and the possible need to re-order items of supply from DNSDC if they could not be found. Presumably JMCO staff passed these concerns onto air force staff at ALG, Richmond.

continued to off load and delay *Bel Isi* consignments *en route*. Distribution staff delivered consignments of stores for Bougainville, either boxed or not, to Richmond Air Base for onward movement on the next available aircraft. They left it to someone else to pack, load and dispatch consignments. Once *Bel Isi* consignments were picked up in accordance with air force priorities, aircraft flying north often stopped off at Amberley Air Base near Brisbane and Townsville Air Base to refuel and take on further consignments. On several occasions, Bougainville consignments were off-loaded to make way for consignments assessed by air force freight movements staff to be of a higher priority. Thus, Bougainville consignments remained at Richmond until they came to the head of the air freight queue and began to accumulate in hangers at Amberley and Townsville awaiting onward movement when there was space available on transiting aircraft. There was no automated means to identify when, where or why air force staff off loaded *Bel Isi* consignments, or when they were likely to be loaded for onward movement again. Bags of mail were in stranded consignments waiting in Sydney or off loaded at Amberley and Townsville. No one was counting the mail bags into the air force air freight system and verifying their arrival in Bougainville. Intermittent mail services that had bedevilled *Solace* now diminished the morale of those serving in Bougainville, who were more disappointed because their operation was only one and half hours flight time from Townsville.¹²⁷

By mid-February 1998, the ADF resupply system into Bougainville was becoming more unreliable and the NZDF system had virtually stopped. Roger's staff had submitted just over 850 demands for resupply during the previous ten-week period. An average of 56 percent of demands arrived on time, 28 per cent arrived over two weeks late and a further five per cent arrived over four weeks late. Just over 10 per cent of demands did not arrive at all. During the same period, his staff submitted 770 demands to the NZDF logistic system under combined logistic support arrangements agreed by the ADF and NZDF. An average of 16 per cent was satisfied on time, with a further 14 per cent arriving over two weeks late. At the end of the period, 68 per cent of demands had not been met at all. After 31 January 1998, the NZ resupply system shut down, leaving 90 per cent of outstanding demands unsatisfied.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Rogers, Diary entry, 2 January 1998. Copy held by author.

¹²⁸ Rogers, 'Administration for the Truce Monitoring Group', attached tables Sheet 1 and 2. Copy held by the author.

It was somewhat ironic that Colonel Wilkinson, who had failed in his quest to be appointed Joint Logistic Commander in December, arrived at Arawa on 15 February 1998 to take over from Colonel Joske as Chief of Staff. He received a personal insight into the problems of resupply. His trunk containing his personal effects was off loaded without his knowledge or consent in Townsville. Subsequently, it took ten days for his trunk to reach him in Bougainville.¹²⁹ By the time Wilkinson arrived, Rogers had handed over to Major A.K.T. Faithfull and had returned to Australia. Before his departure, Rogers wrote in his final report that air resupply arrangements and lack of spare parts were limiting operational effectiveness.¹³⁰

By the end of February 1998, Hickling had had enough. He directed the acting Commander LSF, Lieutenant Colonel C.W. Boyd, to manage demands from the TMG and to monitor and trouble shoot the *Bel Isi* resupply system. The provision of logistic watch keepers in Culleton's operations room had failed. The Operation *Bel Isi* Coordination Cell at DNSDC was disbanded. Once again the ADF's national distribution organisation had proved to be 'base-centric' and unresponsive. The ADF's joint movements organisation (1 JMOVGP) proved to be a booking agency rather than a logistic agency monitoring the movement and delivery of consignments. The air force air freight system continued to disappoint. Hickling and his staff had failed to ensure a responsive resupply chain to a deployed force, as Arnison and his staff had failed for *Lagoon* and as Blake and his staff had failed for *Solace*. None of these officers had authority or control over the enabling organisations or transport assets.

In an effort to improve the management of the *Bel Isi* resupply system, Boyd established a 24- hour-a-day logistic operations room, dubbed the Logistic Management Centre, run by captains and warrant officers at HQ LSF. He and his staff performed the functions of processing, monitoring and troubleshooting the supply chain for *Bel Isi* but were not given any authority over enabling agencies operating the chain or access to Major General Hickling to discuss resupply issues. Operations and logistic staff at Land Headquarters ensured that they would still be conduits to Hickling on issues related to *Bel*

¹²⁹ Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, Conversations with author in Bougainville in February 1998. The author was in Bougainville at the time conducting research.

¹³⁰ Rogers, 'Administration for the Truce Monitoring Group', p. 5

Isi.¹³¹ Thus, Boyd had responsibility for the performance of the resupply system, but no authority to report directly to Hickling or to influence the air freight system.

In March 1998, staff at the Logistic Management Centre managed to improve the resupply and air movements system substantially by hectoring distribution staff at DNSDC and staff at supply depots. Though there was no automated cargo visibility system in the air force freight system, Boyd's staff monitored the movement of consignments by telephone. He requested that army corporals from Joint Movements Control Offices at Amberley and Townsville search air force aircraft for *Bel Isi* consignments wherever they were in the air force system. The dogged approach of these corporals kept *Bel Isi* consignments on aircraft and moved offloaded consignments back onto transiting aircraft as well as ensuring a regular delivery of mail bags.¹³²

For the first time, a group of logisticians led by an experienced logistic commander followed up on every supply demand, and manually tracked every *Bel Isi* consignment through the air freight system. Boyd and his staff, with the assistance of communications specialists from the army's 145 Signals Squadron, developed software to automate the processing and tracking of demands for items of supply dubbed LNIDS – Logistic National Interim Demand System. For the first time in its history, the ADF had an automated system of following the progress of demands for an offshore operation – from the time they were raised, to the time when they were delivered.

The transfer of day-to-day logistic management to HQ LSF proved to be timely. In April 1998, the TMG was about to transition under a new mandate called the Lincoln Accords to an Australian-led Peace Monitoring Group (PMG). On 4 March, Mortlock's replacement Colonel J. Mataparae distributed a brief on preparing the TMG for a reduced New Zealand presence.¹³³ He recommended an abrupt reduction of numbers of NZDF personnel from 160 to 30 and return of selected vehicles, stores and equipment to New Zealand. He envisaged achieving the transition by 30 April. He was trying to draw in ADF resources as soon as possible to achieve this transition.

¹³¹ Author discussed these issues with Lieutenant Colonel Boyd in February 1998.

¹³² Ibid. Also author's personal observations during several visits back and forward from Sydney to Bougainville.

¹³³ Colonel J. Mataparae, 'Preparing the TMG for a Reduced NZ Presence', LHQ Operations Log, 4 March 1998. Copy held by author.

Wilkinson had been aware of the New Zealand policy to minimise support to *Bel Isi* soon after his arrival in mid-February. Indeed, General Baker recalled later that the NZDF had been trying to maximise ADF support and minimise their own from the inception of New Zealand diplomatic initiatives to seek a political solution to the Bougainville Crisis.¹³⁴ Wilkinson had also become concerned about the serviceability of NZDF vehicles and radio equipment. Unroadworthy vehicles and faulty radio equipment increased the risk of accidents and breakdown in communications during emergencies when patrols were away from base camps. Beginning on 1 March, Wilkinson began sending special situation reports to Major General Hickling describing the deterioration in safety and operational effectiveness caused by vehicle and radio unserviceability. Risk was also accumulating because the NZDF was not replacing NZDF Special Forces personnel, who had completed their tours of duty. In their stead came inexperienced drivers and radio operators.¹³⁵ Wilkinson wrote on 5 and 6 March specifying the challenges Colonel Mataparae and he faced trying to get sufficient NZDF support.¹³⁶ Mataparae and senior officers in New Zealand were at loggerheads over safety issues related to numbers of helicopters and air hours, serviceability of vehicles and communications equipment and supply issues, such as spare parts, replacement of Special Forces personnel and canteen services. After not receiving reinforcement and satisfactory resupply in the first week of March, the RNZAF advised that the next resupply flight would not arrive before 18 March.

Wilkinson now requested 10 Land Cruisers and Australian drivers with radio communications skills to be dispatched urgently to ensure that team operations could be conducted safely. He also sought support to set up a back-up ADF tactical communications network to guarantee communications in an emergency. He wanted experienced Australian driver/signallers assigned to each monitoring team to ensure that each team had an experienced operator at its base camp 24 hours a day. He assured Hickling that ADF personnel would be safe in monitoring teams now that Bougainvillean moderates had

¹³⁴ Baker, Interview.

¹³⁵ Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, 'Special Commanders SITREP OP BEL ISI', LHQ Operations Log, 1 March 1998. Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters.

¹³⁶ Colonel J.B. Wilkinson., 'Special Commanders SITREP OP BEL ISI', LHQ Operations Log, 5 March 1998. Colonel J.B. Wilkinson., 'Special Commanders SITREP OP BEL ISI', LHQ Operations Log, 6 March 1998. Colonel J.B. Wilkinson, Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters.

convinced hard liners that the ADF would have to assume control because the New Zealanders could not be expected to meet the costs of monitoring operations indefinitely.¹³⁷

Major General Connolly directed Hickling not to act upon Wilkinson's requests until further clarification was sought from the NZDF. In Wilkinson's opinion, the achievement of TMG objectives and the safety of monitoring team personnel were now being threatened by New Zealand pride and Australian stubbornness. Nothing was being done about the serviceability of vehicles or radio equipment. Of 23 NZDF vehicles located with monitoring teams, 12 of them were off the road. Team commanders were operating most of the remaining vehicles in an unroadworthy condition.¹³⁸

By the second week of March, the situation on the ground in Bougainville with vehicle and radio serviceability was not improving. The promised experienced drivers had not arrived from New Zealand. The NZDF was not improving the supply of spare parts or sending replacement vehicles. On Monday 9 March, D. Ritchie, First Assistant Secretary South Pacific, Africa and Middle East Division, DFAT, spoke with Admiral Barrie, VCDF at an interdepartmental meeting. Ritchie made it clear to him that the situation on the ground in Bougainville was unsafe and endangered APS monitors. He referred to Wilkinson's signals that had been passed to him by R. Puddicombe, the Australian diplomat serving as the Deputy Commander of the TMG. Ritchie recommended immediate action to clarify the situation on the ground and to determine the way ahead for logistic support.

Barrie's reaction to Ritchie's information was to contact Connolly and direct that Connolly or Hickling go to Bougainville and take whatever action that was required. General Connolly was reported to have been irritated by this unexpected intervention from Canberra and the release of Wilkinson's correspondence to DFAT.¹³⁹ Connolly wrote to Barrie on 12 March suggesting that Wilkinson had been guilty of 'special pleading' outside his chain of command and that he had provided unbalanced reports.¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, Connolly directed his staff to facilitate the deployment of ten Land Cruisers and drivers.

¹³⁷ Wilkinson, 'Special Commanders SITREP', 5 March 1998.

¹³⁸ Wilkinson, 'Special Commanders SITREP', 6 March 1998.

¹³⁹ Culleton, Interview.

¹⁴⁰ Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Rectification of TMG Capability Deficiencies', 12 March 1998. Colonel J.B. Wilkinson's, Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters.

General Baker appointed Brigadier B.V. Osborn, a senior officer with years of recent experience specialising in intelligence, as the first commander of the PMG. Major General Connolly signed his directive to Osborn on 29 April, the day before he took command.¹⁴¹ Connolly would retain 'theatre' command and delegate 'operational command' to Hickling, 'including administration and logistic support'.¹⁴² Connolly stated that Australia's military strategic intent was:

to conduct peace monitoring group operations in accordance with the Lincoln agreement, and to that end you are required to ensure that the monitoring and reporting are to remain the main effort.

Connolly directed Osborn:

to manage a phased transition from the current predominantly military operation to a civil commercial undertaking as soon as feasible. ... [and] to co-ordinate the transition to civil and commercial arrangements in a way that focuses combined efforts and does not compromise the impartiality of the PMG, yet still allows effective monitoring of the situation on Bougainville during the time of increasing political and reconstruction activity.¹⁴³

On 5 May, Osborn received a written directive from Major General Hickling detailing his responsibilities and reporting obligations.¹⁴⁴ Though not differing substantially from Connolly's directive, it did formalise that Osborn was serving two masters and had two lines of reporting and communication. Connolly's directive also confirmed that navy vessels and air force aircraft moving in and out of Osborn's area of operations would remain under operational control of the Maritime and Air commanders. Though titled, 'Combined Force Commander' and 'Joint Task Force Commander' respectively, Connolly and Osborn were neither.

Immediately after arrival, Osborn began sensitive negotiations to have the parties to a ceasefire, that had been signed on *Tobruk* at Loloho on 30 April, comply with the

¹⁴¹ Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Directive by Combined Force Commander to 44087 BRIG B.V. Osborn, Commander Peace Monitoring Group for Operation Bel Isi Phase II', COMAST Directive No 19/98, HQ AST 455/98, 29 April 1998, HQ AST 612-10-3, 29 April 1998, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁴² Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Major General F.J. Hickling, 'Directive by Land Commander – Australia Directive to 44087 BRIG B.V. Osborn, Commander Peace Monitoring Group and Commander Joint Task Force 106', Directive 26/98, 5 May 1998, K97-01211. Brigadier B.V. Osborn Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters.

conditions of the agreement.¹⁴⁵ Unhelpfully, F. Ona, self proclaimed President of an independent Bougainville and hardline secessionist, delivered public and private threats to the PMG.¹⁴⁶ Osborn presented Connolly with his assessment of the future of the PMG during his initial visit to Bougainville on 27 May 1998.¹⁴⁷ In his opinion, Connolly and Baker were overly focused on getting the ADF out of Bougainville as soon as possible, and handing over to DFAT and AusAID. In Osborn's view, they did not appear to appreciate the complexity and exhausting nature of negotiations and the fractiousness of armed groups in Bougainville, or that there was an ever-present danger of a return to fighting.¹⁴⁸ Osborn was drawn to his DFAT confidants, who worked closely with him on a daily basis to facilitate progress towards a political solution to the Bougainville Crisis. Since taking command on 1 May, Osborn found that his most important advisor was his Australian chief negotiator, G.L. Moriarty, and his most important strategic level confidant was Ritchie, who attended all of the key negotiations and had an astute understanding of the issues in Bougainville and PNG. Ritchie in Canberra and Ambassador D. Irvine and his staff in Port Moresby provided the political 'back stopping' Osborn sought. Like Osborn, Ritchie assessed that the future of the PMG should be decided by events, not by a timeline, and the continued participation of the ADF would be crucial for success.¹⁴⁹ Osborn felt that *Bel Isi* required 'a whole of government approach', but that this was not being achieved because Connolly and Baker wanted to disengage.¹⁵⁰

Though the PMG was evolving into a reasonably capable *ad hoc* regional peace keeping organisation, well-supported by an intensively managed supply chain from Australia, there were problems with monitoring operations and morale by July 1998.¹⁵¹ The internal as well as the external political and cultural dimensions of the PMG's mission were still immature. The source of much of the internal friction, as well as politically and culturally insensitive behaviour, was poor selection and inadequate pre-deployment training

¹⁴⁵ Copies of briefs, minutes and records of conversations are located in Osborn's Commander's Diaries at Land Headquarters. Also Brigadier B.V. Osborn, Interview with author, 23 July 1998.

¹⁴⁶ Copies of letters from F. Ona to Brigadier Osborn are located in Osborn's Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters.

¹⁴⁷ Brigadier B.V. Osborn, 'Concept of Operations – PMG Operations on (sic) Bougainville', 4 June 1998, HQ TMG 611-1-1. Copy held by author.

¹⁴⁸ Brigadier B.V. Osborn, Interview with author, 29 July 1998.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

of both Australian and New Zealand personnel.¹⁵² Specific force preparation and rotation were not working effectively. Some Australian and New Zealand personnel were not only ignorant of the cultures of the Fijians and Ni Vanuatu, but were also antagonistic to their more relaxed Polynesian colleagues. This attitude also applied to Bougainvilleans. Some Australian and New Zealand patrol commanders had been making political gaffes in their addresses to village gatherings that exposed their ignorance of the origins and nature of the Bougainvillean Crisis and Bougainvillean culture.¹⁵³

Specific force preparation and rotation for the transition from the TMG to the PMG had not been well-designed. Pre-deployment administration and training for the Australian contingents at Randwick was unsatisfactory. Many Australian personnel had to endure late warning for deployment and poor administrative support from their units and higher headquarters.¹⁵⁴ Often they had received either incorrect or insufficient information on what personal equipment and clothing to take to Bougainville. Those assigned to monitoring teams felt that they had not received sufficient relevant information on the political and cultural dimensions of monitoring operations. Despite being located at Randwick Barracks, no Australians who had served with the TMG were invited to brief the next rotation of personnel during their pre-deployment training on conditions in Bougainville.¹⁵⁵ It appeared that the enabling ADF personnel management agencies and DFSU were unable to properly select and prepare ADF personnel for regional force projection.

Osborn took the opportunity during a visit by the newly appointed Land Commander, Major General J.C. Hartley, on 29 July to air his concerns about a range of

¹⁵¹ Brigadier B.V. Osborn, 'OP Bel Isi II: Post Operation Report – BRIG B.V. Osborn', Peace Monitoring Group, Arawa Youth Centre, 20 October 1998, pp.7-9, K97-01211, NAA, Sydney.

¹⁵² Ibid, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵³ Osborn, Interview.

¹⁵⁴ Lieutenant Colonel G.R. Banister, 'Chief of Staff Post Deployment Report', HQ PMG, 11 August 1998, pp. 1-3. Copy in Brigadier Osborn's Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters. Banister was Chief of Staff PMG from 1 May 1998 to 31 August 1998. His report summarised the ineffectiveness of specific force preparation and rotation.

¹⁵⁵ Major P.M. Nothard, Interview with author, 25 July 1998. Nothard was the operations officer at Monitoring Team Buin. Corporal L. Kenny, Interview with author, 25 July 1998, Kenny was a linguist and intelligence operator at Monitoring Team Buin. M.J. Byrne, Interview with author, 27 July 1998. Byrne was an APS peace monitor at Monitoring Team Wakunai. Major D.J. Bartlett, Interview with author, 28 July 1998. Bartlett was operations officer at Monitoring Team Arawa.

issues that he assessed were impeding him from achieving his mission.¹⁵⁶ One of Osborn's key areas of concern, aside from insufficient 'political back stopping' by his military chain of command and a lack of a whole of Government approach, was intelligence. He raised his concerns during Hartley's visit, as well as in a letter on 9 August 1998 and in his post operation report on 20 October. Frustrated at the lack of improvement in intelligence arrangements over the six months of his time in Bougainville, he was scathing in his assessment of DIO, Connolly's intelligence centre (ASTJIC) and Office of National Assessments (ONA) in Canberra.¹⁵⁷ He noted that ASTJIC had provided one substantive assessment of the future of the peace process, and that last advice from DIO had been in January 1998. He wrote:

My real concerns at the time [9 August] was that I was basically having to operate in an information vacuum because of very limited collection and processing capabilities in the PMG and that we were seeing virtually no reporting on Bougainville from DIO, ONA and ASTJIC.¹⁵⁸

He concluded his criticisms by stating that, 'I still remain concerned with the continuing low level of intelligence support available to the PMG from outside the theatre'. He pointed out that the PMG had:

regularly articulated its information requirements to the theatre level [ASTJIC] [but] At no time has the PMG received any advice from the theatre level as to how or when it would meet the PMG's requirements.¹⁵⁹

After apprising Hartley of a range of problems in July, there was a steady improvement in force preparation, rotation and logistics for *Bel Isi*. He wrote, just before his tour of duty ended in October, that, 'the level of support provided by LHQ [Land Headquarters] and the LSF [Logistic Support Force] are of the highest order and staffs are to be congratulated on the improvements that have been implemented over recent months.'¹⁶⁰ He commented that:

the overall coordination and effectiveness of supply will [not] be further improved until a single person is made responsible for overseeing the supply and delivery of all matériel to the PMG regardless of the sourcing Service. I

¹⁵⁶ Brigadier B.V. Osborn, 'Discussion Points – LCAUST, 29 Jul 98', 29 July 1998. Copy located in Osborn's Commander's Diaries. Copy also held by author.

¹⁵⁷ Osborn, 'Operation Bel Isi II: Post Operation Report', pp. 6-8.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

believe that this will not be possible until a Joint Logistic Command is established. In the meantime, we welcome LCAUST's [Land Commander] recent decision to place the LSF in direct support of the PMG and note there has already been a significant improvement in the responsiveness of the LSF as a result.¹⁶¹

Osborn's period of command ended on 15 October 1998. Prospects for the peace process were still uncertain though the initial truce and ceasefire had held for 12 months since the Burnham II talks in October 1997. There was plenty of unfinished business to keep his successor, Brigadier R.A. Powell, busy. The election of a Bougainville Reconciliation Government was dependent on agreements on governance for Bougainville that would take some time to conclude and involve an amendment to the PNG Constitution - another lengthy process. If legislation was not enacted to make way for autonomy, Bougainvillean moderates would face significant pressure from hard line secessionists to withdraw from the peace process. Thus, with issues perilously balanced, Brigadier Osborn left Bougainville and Powell began his six month tour of duty.

Observations

The first 10 months of *Bel Isi* demonstrated that Baker's introduction of Major General Connolly (COMAST) and his headquarters (HQ AST), as well as Major General Mueller (COMDSPT-A) and his headquarters (HQ SPTCOMD-A), into the chain of command for ADF operations was not working. Command, control and communications as well as resupply of spare parts had not improved substantially since *Solace* and *Lagoon*.¹⁶² Unity of command was not achieved. Theory was not validated in practice. Joske, Wilkinson and Osborn all reported to two commanders simultaneously. Connolly retained what he called theatre command for *Bel Isi* and operational command of reactive force protection operations, while delegating operational command to Hickling as a lead joint commander.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, p. 9.

¹⁶² Brigadier B.V. Osborn, 'OP Bel Isi - Communications Report', PMG 001/98, X687/98, 3 June 1998. Commander's Diaries, Land Headquarters. Osborn wrote a covering letter to a report by his signals officer Captain Stokes entitled 'X6 Post Operational Report' submitted unsigned on 28 May 1998. Stokes identified difficulties caused by an unclear relationship between HQ AST and LHQ for communications as well as a number of challenges he faced with ad hoc staffing caused by the numbers cap and inexperienced staff. He emphasised that an inefficient resupply of equipment, batteries and parts, 'had a significant effect on operational capability at the time'.

General Baker's efforts to establish an effective permanent joint force headquarters and to delegate responsibility for synchronisation of the environmental commands and joint logistic support for ADF operations were not achieving success on the ground. Theoretical expectations of cooperation and synergy between the environmental commanders, the service chiefs and the service logistic commanders were not met. It might have been different if Connolly had been given full command over the environmental commanders, as well as their staffs, rather than have his small joint staff groups interact and coax them. However, Connolly appeared to be facing deeply-rooted resistance from the three powerful service tribes to joint command. Generals Gration and Baker as well as Admiral Beaumont had not been able to exercise effective joint command for joint operations or Kangaroo exercises, so it was not surprising that Connolly found it difficult for *Bel Isi*. He was impeded by sharing the same rank as his subordinate commanders, his lack of authority over maritime and air assets for deployment and resupply, and naïve expectations of collegial cooperation between service commanders and their staffs and his small joint staff groups.

Baker's appointment of Major General Mueller as COMSPT-A did not result in effective joint force sustainment for *Bel Isi*. Based on Rogers's tactical level reports of faulty resupply, Mueller had command over service logistic commanders but navy and air force transport assets remained outside his influence. Indeed, logistic support arrangements for *Bel Isi* were largely the same as they were for *Solace*. Baker made the same agencies with different titles responsible. Fleet managers from Support Command-Australia, formerly Logistic Command, and distributors and fleet managers from DNSDC, formerly Moorebank Logistic Group, as well as staff at ALG, controlled the ways and means to support *Bel Isi*. The same competing priorities that were extant in 1993 applied again in 1998 because the core business of these agencies was providing logistic and movements services to the ADF in Australia, not to off-shore operations. Like Connolly, Mueller faced resistance to joint command and control of logistic resources and maritime and air assets for operations.

Major General Hickling declined to press Connolly to appoint a logistic component commander to coordinate joint logistic support for *Bel Isi*. Aside from the results of his staff's operational analysis of *Morris Dance*, *Solace* and *Lagoon*, he had no precedents to follow. The Kangaroo series of exercises did not rehearse joint force sustainment under a

joint logistic commander. For the time being, Major General Mueller had responsibility for coordinating joint logistic support for *Bel Isi*. He may not have welcomed the appointment of a joint logistic commander at Connolly's headquarters. In 1993, General Officer Commanding Logistic Command, Major General McLachlan, might have been equally resistant to such an appointment in Blake's headquarters because resupply to offshore operations was his responsibility.

Given the artificiality of logistic rehearsal for the Kangaroo series, it was unsurprising that the emphasis during planning and reconnaissance for *Bel Isi* was not on logistic support arrangements. Though air force and maritime support would be crucial for resupply, neither Connolly nor Hickling had influence over maritime or air force movements to and from Bougainville. For their part, joint movements staff at 1 JMOVGP did little better than the 'one-man' Headquarters Movement Control for *Solace* and *Lagoon*. This organisation was a booking coordination centre, not a strong regulatory organisation responsible for monitoring resupply or enforcing operational priorities over peace-time precedents and practices.

From the perspective of the functions of force projection, *Bel Isi* was not all bad news. Major General Hickling and his successor, Major General Hartley, and staff at Land Headquarters maintained habitual links with DFAT for APS peace monitor training. These links doubled as early warning of Government considerations for taking military action. Hartley, like Hickling, wished to avoid being forced into rushed planning and preparation for future projections because he and his senior staff were not included in initial strategic level contingency planning. Habitual links strengthened between Land Headquarters, the deployable headquarters in Brisbane (DJFHQ) and 3rd Brigade to ensure that information on possible contingencies was passed quickly in an environment of trust, rather than one characterised by fear of leaks. Staff from Land Headquarters conducted seminars for DJFHQ and 3rd Brigade on lessons from previous short notice deployments, such as *Solace*, *Tamar* and *Lagoon*, that emphasised making good use of warning time that would more often come from the media, in general, and CNN, in particular, rather than the ADF chain of command. Based on the adage that, '50 per cent of solving a problem is knowing what it is', commanders and staff learned from these seminars how to anticipate and manage risk

factors, such as numbers caps, short notice for preparation, raising *ad hoc* headquarters and unresponsive logistics, including inefficient air resupply.¹⁶³

One of the major enhancements for force projection derived from *Bel Isi* was in supply chain management. Osborn's post operation report testified to his satisfaction. Hartley's decision in October 1998 to place newly-promoted Brigadier Wilkinson and his LSF in direct support of *Bel Isi* removed Land Headquarters, the logistic support 'post office' for *Solace* and *Lagoon*, from being accountable for the performance of the supply chain. Hartley did not have the authority to create a joint logistic commander, but he made force sustainment a subordinate command - not a subordinate staff - responsibility. The Logistic Management Centre, backed by the authority and experience of a one-star logistic commander, proved to be more effective in improving the ADF supply chain to a deployed force than the *ad hoc* cell formed for *Solace* in 1993 with two staff under the leadership of a newly-graduated junior officer, or an *ad hoc* Bel Isi Coordination Cell at DNSDC that had failed almost immediately in 1998.

The arrangements Major General Hartley put in place to anticipate short notice force projections, to educate subordinate headquarters and formations, and to improve force sustainment recognised lessons from the past and trends evident for the future. These arrangements reduced, but did not remove, risk from Australian force projection created by higher level ADF command and logistic arrangements. The ADF still did not have a military commander-in-chief for operations and a permanent joint force headquarters with the authority and resources to deliver prompt, strong and smart force projection as part of a whole of government response to international or regional events. The ADF also lacked a permanent joint logistic commander or headquarters capable of establishing and managing supply chains to deployed forces – whether they were deployed for Australian territorial operations or further a field.

For the time being, the Land Commander and his operations staff, supported by Commander LSF and his headquarters, made the military mechanics of *Bel Isi* work. Concurrently, informal links with DFAT created an early warning mechanism for force projection as well as establishing an informal inter-departmental conduit for the political and cultural dimensions of force projection into Australia's near region. These *ad hoc* arrangements made *Bel Isi* an exemplar of sustained force projection, but they would only

¹⁶³ The author conducted these seminars and maintained links on behalf of the Land Commander.

work if the Land Commander was in command. The challenge for General Baker, Major General Connolly and Major General Mueller was to learn from *Bel Isi* and put in place arrangements that would make joint command of operations, with accompanying logistic support, work more effectively.

Chapter 6

Projection to East Timor

In August 1942 and 1966 an accumulation of risks resulted in a small number of Australian troops facing several thousand well-equipped, well-trained and more experienced enemy troops. Fortunately, climate, terrain and the resilience of junior leaders and small teams, as well as effective artillery support in 1966, offset the numerical and tactical superiority of their opponents. Australian troops prevailed against the odds. If either of these two tactical tipping points had gone the other way, there would have been severe strategic embarrassment for Australia. There could have been public pressure for a change in Government and investigations into the competence of the Australian armed forces.

For 48 hours in September 1999, members of the Indonesian military forces and their East Timorese auxiliaries provoked members of an Australian vanguard of the International Force – East Timor (InterFET) in the streets of the East Timor capital, Dili. Indonesians outnumbered Australians, who carried only a first line of ammunition.¹ On the night of 21 September, a 600-strong East Timorese territorial battalion confronted a 40-strong Australian vehicle check point on Dili's main road. Good luck, superior night fighting technology, the presence of light armoured vehicles and discipline under pressure resulted in another historic tactical tipping point going Australia's way. Had there been an exchange of fire that night, there would have been heavy casualties on both sides and several hours of confused fighting between Australian, Indonesian and East Timorese territorial troops. There was also potential for Indonesian and Australian naval vessels to have clashed, as Australian ships rushed to deliver ammunition to Australian troops, as well as for Australian transport aircraft and helicopters to have been attacked at Dili airport. Australian and Indonesian relations would have plummeted to an historic low, and Australia's reputation in the region and respect as an American ally would have diminished significantly.

¹ A 'first line' of ammunition is a term to describe the amount of ammunition ordered to be carried by each individual and vehicle. The amount of ammunition is limited by the capacity of individuals to carry ammunition as well as other commodities such as water. Australian armoured vehicles not only carry their own ammunition but may also carry quantities of small arms ammunition for combat troops. A second line of ammunition is normally located with a sub-unit headquarters.

This chapter covers the events and an accumulation of risk that influenced Australia's most significant post-Cold War force projection in September 1999 to East Timor. It examines them from the perspective of Australian military force projection at the end of the twentieth century.

Command and Control

The quest for an effective way of planning and conducting operations and campaigns continued in 1998. Close to the second anniversary of Oxenbould's submission to COSC, Major General Connolly submitted a 'Mid Trial' report on 1 December 1998, as his period as COMAST drew to a close. In March, he had proposed the introduction of:

Theatre Command (TCOMD) as the necessary command authority for COMAST to effectively and efficiently conduct campaigns, operations and other activities, at the theatre level, as directed by CDF. Theatre Command is the strategic mechanism through which CDF defines strategic objectives and assigns strategic resources to the Theatre and by which the ADF/ADO [Australian Defence Organisation] prioritizes support to the Theatre Commander [COMAST]. ...The residual functions of full command remain the responsibility of the Service Chiefs. TCOMD cannot be delegated or transferred.²

Connolly intended that his December report would demonstrate the 'efficacy of this doctrine'.³ His first finding was that there had been 'no negative impact' on the environmental commanders from the reporting regimes and coordination arrangements he had added to their staffs' workload for him to exercise Theatre Command.⁴ He went on to extol extant sequential arrangements for the devolution of authority from the strategic level to the theatre command level and subsequent assignment of forces from the service chiefs to him. He contended that Theatre Command facilitated rapid development of concepts of operation and speedy formation of joint task forces.⁵ Theatre Command had worked well and 'the establishment of AST and TCOMD has achieved a unity of command that was previously lacking in the ADF joint environment'.⁶ He regretted that operational circumstances during the initial period of

² Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Mid Trial Report for COSC on Theatre Command', HQ AST 261-8-2, 1 December 1998, p. 1. HQ AST, Potts Point.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p. 2.

⁵ Ibid, p. 8.

⁶ Ibid.

the trial had not provided the opportunity to test his concepts. Little did Major General Connolly know that a strategic surprise awaited Australia in 1999 that would not only test the function of force command but also every other function of Australian military force projection.

Connolly did not overlook logistics. He sought authority to 'assign priorities and issue directives to COMSPTAS, for logistic support' and to 'command theatre operations through JTFs' [Joint Task Forces] that would comprise either a 'predominantly land package' or 'maritime package'.⁷ Left unexplained was why the service chiefs and their logistic support commanders would comply with his priorities and directives. Based on *Solace*, *Lagoon* and the first 10 months of *Bel Isi*, it was unlikely that either the Maritime or Air Commander would give Connolly or a JTF commander control over the means of resupply or a guarantee to deliver the desired rate of effort or effect. It was also just as unlikely, based on the experience of *Bel Isi*, that Major General Mueller (COMSPTAS) and his headquarters could guarantee an efficient supply chain to a deployed force.

On 26 May 1999, the new COMAST, Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, submitted a progress report on theatre headquarters development with an accompanying document, 'Concept for the Command of the Australian Theatre'.⁸ He echoed Connolly's assessment of the value of Theatre Command.⁹ He envisaged taking over the planning and conduct of campaigns for the defence of northern Australia from the headquarters in Darwin, HQ NORCOM. 'The role of NORCOM would be essentially that of a "covering force", providing surveillance, protection, and response to minor incursions'.¹⁰ As a consequence, HQ NORCOM would not be augmented with component headquarters staff as it had been for the Kangaroo series to conduct the defence of northern Australia. Treloar's headquarters would conduct the defence from Sydney, either through the deployable headquarters (DJFHQ) that, presumably, was going to pack up and deploy north, or directly to assigned forces. He concluded that DJFHQ was 'the ADF's only viable potential major JTFHQ [Joint Task Force

⁷ Ibid, p.6 and Major General J.M. Connolly, 'Concept for Command of the Australian Theatre', 1 December 1998, p. 6, HQ AST 261-8-2, HQ AST, Potts Point.

⁸ Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, 'COSC Agendum 19/1999, Progress Report on Theatre Headquarters Development', HQ AST 716/99, 26 May 1999, 623-11-1. Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, 'Concept for the Command of the Australian Theatre', 26 May 1999, HQ AST 261-8-2, HQ AST, Potts Point.

⁹ Treloar, 'COSC Agendum 19/99', pp.1, 5.

¹⁰ Ibid, p.2.

Headquarters]’.¹¹ It remained to be seen whether this forward deployment of DJFHQ would work. In reality, DJFHQ was not a truly joint headquarters anyway. Navy and air force did not fill assigned staff positions.¹² For their part, these services probably concluded that there was not enough day-to-day work at DJFHQ for their staff.

Treloar had not sought to change arrangements that had applied when Connolly was COMAST except to diminish the operational role of NORCOM and clarify the DJFHQ concept. Expectations of sequential and devolved planning and decision making remained. Indeed, Treloar expected General Baker’s successor as CDF, Admiral C.A Barrie, and his staff to issue Military Strategic Estimates for anticipated contingencies followed by warning orders and possibly execution orders for preliminary operations before ministerial and cabinet submissions were submitted.¹³ This sequence, or one like it, had not been followed since Australia returned to projecting force beyond Australian territorial waters and air space in 1987. Indeed, the theatre planning process added another sequential layer to a cloistered strategic process.¹⁴ His small joint staff groups would still be left to coordinate environmental headquarters staff, who would remain responsive, but not necessarily compliant. Collocation of staff into ‘one joint operations centre, a planning centre and an administrative centre’ was a long way off. Treloar’s improvised ‘virtual collocation’ by video conference, e-mail and periodic meetings was an untried concept.¹⁵

While Air Vice Marshal Treloar was comfortable about the form and function of HQ AST and evolving arrangements for operational command, a group of consultants from Price Waterhouse Coopers were not convinced.¹⁶ They based their criticisms on a comparison of HQ AST and HQ CINCPAC [Headquarters Commander in Chief – Pacific] in Hawaii as well as first hand research in Sydney with staff at HQ AST and Maritime, Land and Air headquarters. They did not explore the wider architecture of ADF joint command, but concluded that HQ AST and its relationship with the environmental headquarters was dysfunctional and ineffective. Their report stated that,

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Cosgrove, Interview.

¹³ Treloar, ‘COSC Agendum 19/99’, Annex B – The Strategic Planning Process and Theatre Planning.

¹⁴ This process had been reviewed and made more efficient, but secrecy isolated this refined strategic planning process from lower levels of command. Commodore J.S. O’Hara, Air Commodore A.G. Houston and Brigadier B.G. Stevens, ‘Report of Review of the Strategic/Operational Relationship, 14 October 1998, HQAST 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁶ Price Waterhouse Coopers, Defence HQAST Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) Scoping Study, Volume 1: Report, 14 July 1999. Copy held by author.

‘HQ AST is not working cohesively, efficiently or effectively’. The headquarters was not ready to assume leadership of the joint operational environment and did not have the right culture, processes, organisational structure or knowledge and information management.¹⁷ Furthermore, a major realignment of leadership, technology and core business processes was needed to overcome changes initiated by Major General Connolly that were ‘too slow and too little’.¹⁸ Basing their evidence on observation, interviews and an examination of documentation, the consultants found that ‘leadership meetings’ focused on information exchange and reporting, not ‘developing common operational strategy’. Environmental headquarters staff did not regard HQ AST as ‘value adding’. And, overall, there was an emphasis on process, and not on outcomes, as well as ‘a lack of common understanding of shared purpose’.¹⁹

The Price Waterhouse Coopers report and ‘Concept for the Command of the Australian Theatre’ were at odds. Presumably, Air Vice Marshal Treloar read the consultancy report. However, he did not engage Price Waterhouse Coopers consultants to solve the problems they had identified. Arguably, the Theatre Command trial had a further six months to go and the Price Waterhouse Coopers report was just another input. Exercise *Crocodile 99*, like the Kangaroo series of exercises, was intended to test the effectiveness and efficiency of ADF joint command and control arrangements. The focus for the Crocodile series would be on whether the separation of strategic and operational levels of command through the creation of COMAST and HQ AST would work under simulated ‘war’ conditions for defending northern Australia.

Projection to East Timor

On 6 February 1999, Foreign Minister Downer opined that he expected the East Timorese to reject an Indonesian offer of autonomy within the state of Indonesia and that an international military force would be needed to safeguard East Timor’s subsequent journey to nationhood.²⁰ In early March, he flagged a military role for Australia in East Timor after a self-determination process that was being negotiated by Indonesia, Portugal and the UN.²¹ Thus, the ADF was faced with the prospect of a

¹⁷ Ibid, Executive Summary.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 14-6.

²⁰ Geoff Kitney, ‘Downer: UN force needed in transition’, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 February 1999, p. 5.

²¹ Alexander Downer, ‘We stand ready to help in any way we can’, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1999, p. 17. Robert Garran, ‘Military destined for Timor’, the *Australian*, 2 March 1999, p. 1. Greg

force projection to East Timor. Australia's diplomatic involvement in the East Timor question also created potential for Australian and Indonesian military forces to confront each other there. There was a lot at stake for the Indonesian army (TNI).²² As the institution charged with the protection of the Indonesian nation state, TNI would lose face if East Timor achieved independence. Since the invasion in 1975, the Indonesian army had campaigned unsuccessfully to defeat East Timorese pro-independence forces. Like armies throughout history, the Indonesians had a deep desire to vindicate their blood sacrifice by defeating their enemies.²³ Perhaps more importantly, Indonesian generals would have been concerned that an independent East Timor might also set a precedent and encourage secessionist movements in other provinces. In a relatively new country deeply divided by religion, ethnicity, and cultural traditions, TNI saw itself as the only organisation capable of protecting the unity and integrity of the Indonesian state.²⁴

On 27 April, Prime Minister Howard met with President Habibie in Bali to discuss reported massacres of East Timorese civilians in regional centres and in Dili by

Sheridan, 'No alternative but to take the risk', the *Australian*, 2 March 1999, p.1. Paul Kelly, 'East Timor on the road to chaos', the *Australian*, 3 March 1999, p. 13.

²² The author has used the acronym TNI (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia* or Indonesian National Soldiers). This title applied after 1 April 1999. Before then, the Indonesian armed forces incorporated the policing function, and were known ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* or Indonesian Armed Forces).

²³ Harold Crouch assessed that, 'An overwhelming majority of army officers had served in East Timor at one time or another and some had served three or four tours of duty there. Many officers also felt a deep emotional attachment to East Timor as the place where several thousand Indonesian soldiers had died'. Harold Crouch, 'The TNI and East-Timor Policy', in James J. Fox and Dionisio Babo Soares (eds.), *Out of the Ashes: Destruction and Reconstruction of East Timor*, C. Hurst and Co, London, 2000, p. 138.

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 137-38, 146. Also, Colonel K.A. Brownrigg, Comments by e-mail on draft chapter on Operation *Spitfire* in Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished, Australian Defence Force participation in International Force East Timor*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001. Copies of e-mails held by author. Brownrigg was the Australian army attaché in Jakarta in 1999 and monitored the attitudes of senior Indonesian officers to events in East Timor in 1999.

pro-integration militia during the previous weeks.²⁵ Howard's intervention in an internal security matter in an Indonesian province was unprecedented.²⁶ Several days before this meeting, the *Australian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a DIO intelligence assessment on East Timor.²⁷ It identified the role of TNI in instigating violence through militia surrogates. Notwithstanding this leak, President Habibie appeared to welcome Howard's visit and affirmed a partnership between Australia and Indonesia to facilitate a solution to East Timor's political status.²⁸ The two leaders emerged from their talks issuing assurances that the East Timorese would be given the opportunity to decide their political future in a secure environment.²⁹

On 5 May 1999, President Habibie signed a tripartite agreement between Indonesia, Portugal and the UN for a 'popular consultation' in East Timor in August.³⁰ If the majority of East Timorese voted "No" in this ballot and the Indonesian Parliament endorsed the result, then the Indonesian Government would invite the UN to assist with the transition of East Timor to nationhood. Given competing interests in East Timor and its violent history since 1975, senior ADF officers, Defence officials and analysts in Canberra and Jakarta must have known that the period leading up to the ballot would be violent and that there was potential for an anarchic aftermath. East Timorese pro-integration and pro-independence factions were vying to win popular support for their causes. The pro-integration side, backed by elements of Indonesia's security forces and

²⁵ On 5 April there was an attack on civilians sheltering in a priest's house in Liquicia and on the weekend 17-18 April militia gangs had killed and injured a number of civilians in Dili. Lindsay Murdoch and Peter Coleman-Adams, 'Freedom Slaughtered, Howard outrage as military shoot down peace process', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, pp. 1, 9. Lindsay Murdoch, 'Revealed: Our Timor role', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 1999, pp. 1, 9. Mark Dodd, Peter-Coleman-Adams and Hamish McDonald, 'Massacre shatters brief day of peace', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1999, p. 1. Don Greenless, 'Militias murder, kidnap during truce signing', the *Weekend Australian*, 24-25 April 1999, p. 12. Mark Dodd, 'Militia Law', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1999, p. 39.

²⁶ Greg Sheridan, 'High-risk Howard throws caution to the wind', the *Australian*, 21 April 1999, p. 8. Robert Garran and Don Greenless, 'PM's bid to stop thugs', the *Australian*, 20 April 1999, pp. 1, 16-7. ²⁷ Mark Dodd, Peter-Coleman-Adams and Hamish McDonald, 'Defence report warning of violence', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1999, pp. 1, 17. Richard McGregor and Alan Stokes, 'PM told of Timorese slaughter', the *Weekend Australian*, 24-25 April 1999, pp. 1, 12. The DIO report referred to was, DIO, 'ABRI backing violence', Current Intelligence Brief, 4 March 1999.

²⁸ Paul Kelly, 'Habibie's signal to the army', the *Australian*, 21 April 1999.

²⁹ Don Greenless, 'A full and free choice', the *Australian*, 28 April, p. 1. Greg Sheridan, 'The vital questions left unanswered', the *Australian*, 28 April, p. 1.

³⁰ United Nations, Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the Portuguese Republic on the Question of East Timor, 5 May 1999. Copy of text included as Appendix 3 to Ian Martin, *Self Determination in East Timor, The United Nations, the Ballot and International Intervention*, International Peace Academy Occasional Papers series, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 2001.

military intelligence organisations, were already exerting significant coercive power.³¹

In June and early July, first-hand media reports, protests from the newly-deployed UN Assistance Mission - East Timor (UNAMET) and reports from Australia military liaison officers serving with UNAMET, identified an alarming situation.³² Local Indonesian army and police units, members of East Timorese territorial battalions and militia groups were intimidating the population to vote for integration. In these circumstances, Indonesian security forces might be too busy either quelling or instigating unrest to provide security for an emergency evacuation of Australian nationals and UN staff.

In great secrecy, contingency planning for an ADF-led evacuation operation in East Timor called *Spitfire* began.³³ Following precedents set in the past, Admiral Barrie did not authorise inclusion of representatives from lower levels of command in a strategic level planning compartment.³⁴ Later, he commented that the political environment in Canberra was most sensitive due to leaks of information about what the Government knew, or did not know, about the situation in East Timor – ‘We were reading about our business in the media everyday.’³⁵ For their part, commanders and staff at lower levels of command in Sydney, Townsville and Darwin kept abreast of unfolding events in East Timor in the media and by following reports from Colonel P.B. Symon, an ADF officer, who was a senior UN military liaison officer with UNAMET, and national commander for Operation *Faber*, ADF participation in UNAMET.³⁶ Staff at Land Headquarters convened periodic meetings to discuss the situation in East Timor and intelligence staff provided weekly updates.³⁷ Major General P.J. Cosgrove and his

³¹ While there may still be some debate about interpreting evidence and confirming causal relationships between Indonesian security forces and militia violence, the balance of evidence shows that there was a strong link. See Peter Bartu, ‘The militia, the military, and the people of Bobonaro’, in Richard Tanter, Mark Selden, and Stephen R Shalom (ed.), *Bitter flowers, sweet flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the world community*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York, 2001, pp.73-90. Hamish McDonald, Desmond Ball, James Dunn, Gerry van Klinken, David Bouchier, Douglas Kammen, and Richard Tanter, *Masters of Terror: Indonesia's Military and Violence in East Timor in 1999*, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University (Canberra Paper #145), 2002. Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad, (ed.), *Roots of violence in Indonesia; contemporary violence in historical perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002. Freek Colombijn, ‘Explaining the violent solution in Indonesia’, *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 9-1 2002, pp. 49-56.

³² Colonel P.B. Symon, ‘OP Faber, Australian Service Contingent I Sitreps and Orders June – October 1999’, Undated. Copy held by author.

³³ Major General P.J. Cosgrove, Interview with author, 3 January 2000.

³⁴ Cosgrove, Interview.

³⁵ Admiral C.A. Barrie, Interview with author, 6 September 2005.

³⁶ Symon, OP Faber.

³⁷ Author attended these meetings and was present at weekly briefings at Land Headquarters and daily video conferences between HQ AST and each environmental headquarters.

staff at DJFHQ assessed that there might be a need for the ADF to evacuate Australian nationals and UN staff. This operation might also include securing protected areas for those fleeing violence. It would take the UN some time to assemble and deploy an international force to East Timor to restore public safety, if the Indonesian Government invited foreign troops to do so.³⁸

Admiral Barrie, Air Vice Marshal Treloar, Major General Hartley, the Land Commander, Major General Cosgrove and Commodore M.F. Bonser at NORCOM in Darwin and their respective staffs became seized by the fate of UNAMET in East Timor. They would be the chain of command for ADF operations in East Timor. Whereas previous force projections had not benefited from reconnaissance and first hand intelligence, ADF officers participating in Operation *Faber* gave the ADF eyes and ears in East Timor.³⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Symon visited Darwin on 16 July and was able to brief planning staff from all levels of command in Darwin and also in Sydney and Brisbane via video conferencing facilities. Symon recalled that this was a pivotal meeting because he realised how little those he spoke to understood the situation in East Timor, the conditions he was working under or the urgent need to support him with independent secure communications. He was also disappointed with the lack of detail in contingency planning. In his view, extant plans had not changed significantly since he left DJFHQ at short notice to serve with UNAMET in mid-June. He was also concerned that he and his fellow Australian observers were being targeted. All had received death threats and knew that they were under surveillance.⁴⁰ Major General Hartley took his staff's advice and arranged for Symon to have secure satellite communications.⁴¹

Logistics would be the major challenge for any projection to East Timor. Major General Mueller was not a member of the Strategic Command Group (SCG). Consequently, he was not privy to contingency planning. Unauthorised preparations had begun among a group of logisticians from each level of command who shared an assumption that logistic support and movement of personnel and matériel would be keys to success in East Timor.⁴² From Canberra, Colonel C.W. Boyd, Director Joint Logistic Operations and Plans, Brigadier Wilkinson's erstwhile deputy during the first 12

³⁸ Cosgrove, Interview.

³⁹ Operation *Faber* covered ADF participation in UNAMET.

⁴⁰ Lieutenant Colonel P.B. Symon, Interview with author, 21 August 2000.

⁴¹ The author had personal involvement in this decision. Also discussions with Colonel S.J. Dunn, Colonel (Operations) LHQ and Lieutenant Colonel M. Hoare, SO1 Intelligence, LHQ, at the time.

months of *Bel Isi*, kept Wilkinson informed and provided confidential guidance on the prospects in East Timor.⁴³ For his part, Wilkinson and his two force support battalion (FSB) commanders, Lieutenant Colonels B. McManus, 9 FSB, and M.C. Kehoe, 10 FSB, had already studied options for supporting ADF and coalition operations in East Timor. Wilkinson's Logistic Management Centre was managing a supply chain for *Bel Isi*, so it would be a matter of increasing staff numbers and refining processes and procedures for East Timor. They had shared their findings with Lieutenant Colonel D.C. Cousins, Cosgrove's senior logistic staff officer, who concurred that there would need to be a terminal in Darwin to receive supplies from around Australia, and possibly overseas, for onward movement to East Timor. Joint Logistics Unit – North (JLU-N) in Darwin, commanded by Major General Mueller, did not have the capacity or capabilities to command terminal operations or to resupply a force deployed to East Timor. It had been established to service the needs of local ADF units, not to support force projection. The other complicating factor was that Air Vice Marshal Treloar controlled ADF joint movements in support of the force projection to East Timor, not Admiral Barrie and his headquarters or General Cosgrove and his headquarters. In addition, Bonser's headquarters in Darwin (HQ NORCOM) was an obvious but unrehearsed headquarters for mounting base and terminal operations there.⁴⁴

Within the context of Australian force projection, July was a paradoxical month. Foreign Minister Downer and the Defence Minister, J. Moore, hinted publicly at Australia's military intentions in East Timor.⁴⁵ 1st Brigade in Darwin had been brought up to 28 days notice to move after Moore announced on 11 March that there was a need to be prepared for 'contingencies that could arise in the region, including East Timor'.⁴⁶ Admiral Barrie and his staff were involved in secret contingency planning at ADHQ. Elsewhere in the ADF, unauthorised planning had begun without strategic guidance. In

⁴² Brigadier J.B. Wilkinson, Interview with author, 6 May 2005.

⁴³ Colonel C.W. Boyd, Discussions with author at the time and subsequently. Also Colonel C.W. Boyd, 'OP Warden: Draft Concept of Logistic Support', Version 3, 11 September 1999. 'This concept has no official status. It was developed by DJLOP [Boyd] from earlier planning with input from HQAST, LHQ and LSF ...'

⁴⁴ **terminal operations.** Activities related to receiving, unloading, storing, preparing and then loading and dispatching matériel to an area of operations. These activities can involve sea, land and air transport.

⁴⁵ Robert Garrahan, 'Troops on Timor alert, Military numbers doubled in readiness for urgent move', the *Australian*, 7 July 1999. pp. 1, 7. The front page of the *Australian* contained a photograph of HMAS *Jervis Bay*, a large, fast catamaran alongside in Darwin. This vessel had been leased by Defence in April and was able to accommodate 500 personnel comfortably, a further 300, less comfortably, or a mix of personnel, vehicles and supplies (See Horner, *The Making of the Australian Defence Force*, pp. 11-2) The accompanying article contained information on the state of readiness of the ADF to deploy to East Timor.

a similar way to *Bel Isi*, the strategic, operational and tactical levels of ADF command split into separate planning processes. The *Sydney Morning Herald* echoed widespread expectations that there would be a break-down in law and order after the ballot result was announced in early September.⁴⁷ It did not appear to be difficult for ordinary Australians to connect the new levels of ADF preparedness and the events in East Timor. Presumably, this connection did not escape Indonesian military and civil authorities who were orchestrating violent intimidation in East Timor. Consequently, both Australia's preparedness for force projection and TNI's force projection into East Timor to facilitate a pro-integration ballot result were open secrets.

By early August 1999, reports by media and UNAMET representatives in East Timor warned an international audience of a strong likelihood of violence after the ballot result was announced in early September.⁴⁸ Images and stories of violence had begun to arouse world public opinion in favour of international intervention. Despite assurances from General Wiranto, Defence Minister and TNI Commander-in-Chief, that TNI and the Indonesian police would maintain law and order after the ballot, there was little evidence of their commitment to do so during violent incidents that they allowed to occur unchecked in the weeks and days leading up to the ballot.

In strict secrecy, Brigadier M. Evans, Commander 3rd Brigade, convened a meeting of his local commanders at his headquarters in Townsville on Sunday 22 August. He briefed them on what he knew of *Spitfire* and discussed other scenarios. Lieutenant Colonel Kehoe attended, even though he worked for Brigadier Wilkinson, and was not one of Evans's subordinate commanders. From that day on, with Wilkinson's encouragement, he attended all of Evans's conferences relating to East Timor and provided whatever assistance he could to contingency planning.

Admiral Barrie was maintaining close control of contingency planning in Canberra and forbade planning elsewhere. As was the case in 1966, the Government was highly sensitive to leaks so Barrie was forced to tighten operational security.⁴⁹ A high level defence committee noted later that:

⁴⁶ Horner, *Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Lindsay Murdoch, 'Fears of after-vote bloodbath increase', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 July 1999, p. 4.

⁴⁸ David Jenkins, 'All over bar the shooting', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 August 1999, p. 11. Mark Dodd, 'Fear, squalor and the breach of faith', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 August 1999, p. 25. Hamish McDonald, 'Island of fear and faith', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 August 1999, p. 39.

Martin, *Self Determination*, pp 81-2.

⁴⁹ Barrie, Interview, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

Planning at all levels had been inhibited by the compartmentalisation of information, implemented due to previous major security leaks. ... At times lower headquarters felt that there was a lack of strategic guidance.⁵⁰

This 'lock down' not only left Air Vice Marshal Treloar and his staff waiting for strategic guidance and devolution of planning and decision making from ADHQ, but also bypassed the service chiefs. They complained later that they had not fulfilled the role of senior environmental advisors and that their input into the compartmented SCG had been ineffective.⁵¹ Treloar commented that compartmentalisation 'introduced additional risk and costs' and compromised operational security, as lower level commanders and staff guessed or acquired information from other sources.⁵² Interestingly, Barrie's centralisation of both the strategic and operational planning for the projection to East Timor unintentionally emulated what the American Commander-in-Chief in the Pacific (CINCPAC) would have done from his headquarters in Hawaii if the Americans had been planning a similar force projection. Barrie planned the East Timor campaign with his Head of Strategic Command Division, Major General M.J. Keating, and his joint staff. He did not delegate this work to Treloar and his staff groups, who would have coordinated environmental staff effort. By early August, Major General Cosgrove had become a member of the SCG secret compartment. Thus, Barrie and Cosgrove integrated the strategic, operational and tactical levels of command and became partners, in conjunction with Major General Keating, in Australia's most strategically significant force projection since 1942.⁵³

Deployment

The Defence Minister, J. Moore, ordered Admiral Barrie to pre-position forces in northern Australia for *Spitfire* on 26 August.⁵⁴ Assigned Special Forces and other force elements had less than 12 hours warning to pack and move.⁵⁵ Personnel were warned after arriving at work on the morning of 27 August and were packed, palletised

⁵⁰ Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁵¹ Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁵² Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁵³ Cosgrove, Interview.

⁵⁴ Brigadier S.H. Ayling, Discussions with author in May 2000. Ayling was appointed Director General InterFET in September 1999. He was privy to strategic level planning and orders for *Spitfire* in August 1999.

⁵⁵ Major J.F. McMahon, Interview with author, 15 December 1999. Major McMahon was OC 3rd Squadron, SASR. Captain Craig Stockings (ed.), *Paratroopers as Peacekeepers*, 3 RAR, Sydney, 4 October 2000, p. 8.

and flying by mid afternoon.⁵⁶ A joint evacuation force assembled at Tindal airbase south of Darwin under Cosgrove's command. It was a joint force comprised of army sub-units, supported by Black Hawk battlefield helicopters and several C-130 transport aircraft.⁵⁷ Alongside in Darwin was HMAS *Jervis Bay*, the navy's fast catamaran. From the perspective of generic and specific force preparation, *Spitfire* was mounted at extremely short notice but was an exemplar of what happens in practice when strategic stakes are high. Though there were many uncertainties ahead, the strategic level of command was engaged and ready to direct the tactical level of command. Admiral Barrie and his staff were in contact with Brigadier A.J. Molan, the Australian Defence Attaché in Jakarta, who had already positioned himself in Dili with a small staff group to facilitate cooperation with Indonesian security forces for an evacuation operation and to report back to Barrie on the evolving situation.⁵⁸ Major Generals Keating and Cosgrove monitored the situation closely. The ADF was ready. However, there was still some way to go if a more substantial projection had to follow an evacuation operation.

By this time, Admiral Barrie had appointed Air Vice Marshal Treloar as the ADF's national commander to support operations in East Timor.⁵⁹ On 30 August, Treloar appointed Brigadier Wilkinson as his Logistic Component Commander (LOGCC). Wilkinson had already persuaded Major General Hartley to send Lieutenant Colonel McManus and an advance party from 9 FSB to Darwin to set up a terminal for forward logistics.⁶⁰ For the time being, McManus and his staff focused on supporting the burgeoning evacuation force. However, Wilkinson had also briefed him to plan to support a larger scale operation in the future.⁶¹ Wilkinson also alerted Major General Hartley to the need to raise a force logistic support group headquarters (HQ FSLG) to coordinate logistic support in East Timor, should the Indonesian Government invite a larger international intervention. He also directed Lieutenant Colonel Kehoe to prepare for deployment to East Timor to set up a terminal in Dili for supplies that McManus and

⁵⁶ Ibid. Major P.C. Steel, Interview with author, 15 December 1999. Major Steel was OC 5 Aviation Squadron Group.

⁵⁷ For further detail see David Horner, *SAS: Phantoms of War, A History of Australian Special Air Service*, updated edition, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002

⁵⁸ Brigadier A.J. Molan, Comments by e-mail on draft chapter on Operation *Spitfire* in Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished*, Copies of e-mails held by author.

⁵⁹ Barrie, Interview.

⁶⁰ Brigadier J.B. Wilkinson, 'Brief to G84 Steering Group. Logistic Lessons from Operations in East Timor 1999-2000', HQLSF, 7 February 2000. Copy held by author.

⁶¹ Author was privy to these arrangements at the time.

9 FSB would be forwarding from Darwin, if a larger ADF force deployed into East Timor.⁶²

On 30 August, the East Timorese voted.⁶³ The large turn out was a strong indication that they had rejected autonomy. The withdrawal of international UN volunteers and international election observers began as soon as ballot boxes were sealed and were on their way to Dili. All but essential UN staff began to leave East Timor immediately. Only UN political staff, Military Liaison Officers and UN civilian police remained. Outbreaks of violence resulted in UNAMET staff from some areas leaving under emergency conditions.⁶⁴ Helicopters flew to outlying areas from Dili picking up staff who had witnessed growing chaos.⁶⁵ While the votes were being counted, East Timorese militia groups intimidated UNAMET and media representatives in Dili while they rampaged through the streets burning houses of suspected pro-independence supporters.⁶⁶ From all around East Timor, there were reports of Indonesian security personnel standing by while militia looted, intimidated and burnt.⁶⁷ Indications of the mayhem that was about to engulf East Timor were evident as early as Thursday 2 September, when widespread violence broke out in Maliana near the border with West Timor, forcing UNAMET to evacuate its staff urgently and inhabitants to flee.⁶⁸ Militia groups and local Indonesian security forces began to loot and burn Maliana.⁶⁹ The UN released the ballot result on Saturday 4 September. There was quiet before the storm. Many East Timorese seemed to know what would be in store. Within a few hours of the announcement, the sacking of East Timor and terrorising and displacement of its people by marauding militia gangs and East Timorese territorial troops began in earnest.

Following past precedents, it was Foreign Minister Downer, who announced on Saturday 4 September that, in light of growing violence, Australia would offer to lead an international military force into East Timor, if the Indonesian Government invited

⁶² Lieutenant Colonel M.C. Kehoe, Interview with author, 3 February 2000.

⁶³ Martin, *Self-Determination*, Appendix 6.

⁶⁴ Don Greenless and Robert Garra, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002, pp. 197-200.

⁶⁵ Major J. Gould, Situation Report as at 5 September 1999. Gould worked for Lieutenant Colonel Symon in UNAMET headquarters. Copy held by author.

⁶⁶ Martin, *Self-Determination*, p. 92.

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 94-7.

⁶⁸ Ibid, pp. 89-101. Also Tim Fischer, *Seven Days in East Timor*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2000, pp. 99-102.

⁶⁹ Gould, Situation Report.

the UN to intervene.⁷⁰ Some were surprised that this announcement triggered 'detailed planning' in the ADF, not unfolding events since May that suggested Australia should be ready to lead a coalition of the willing into East Timor.⁷¹ At about 10 p.m. on Sunday 5 September, Major General Cosgrove called Brigadier Evans at home and requested him to convene his staff and develop a concept of operations, for what by morning would be called Operation *Warden*. His staff at DJFHQ would then have time to review the concept on Monday 6 September and then send it to Treloar's headquarters in Sydney for forwarding to Canberra by 7 September for consideration by the SCG and the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC). Evans called in his Brigade Major, Major M.C. Fielding, his senior logistician, Major D.M. Stevens, and his Intelligence Officer, Major J. Blaxland. They worked until 4 a.m. before sending off a concept document to meet Cosgrove's early morning deadline.⁷² On the same night and morning that Evans, Fielding, Stevens and Blaxland were developing the concept for *Warden*, hundreds of East Timorese climbed the walls around the UNAMET compound in Dili and jumped in to save themselves or just their children from marauding militia. Many of them lacerated themselves and their children on razor wire.⁷³ The UN had had enough. The Secretary General's Special Representative in East Timor, I. Martin, began to discuss an evacuation of remaining UNAMET staff.⁷⁴

The SCG compartment approved the *Warden* concept on 7 September and briefed it to the NSCC on the same day President Habibie declared martial law in East Timor and gave an ultimatum to General Wiranto to restore public safety.⁷⁵ Admiral Barrie issued his warning order for *Warden* the next day.⁷⁶ Concurrently, the US was exerting increasing pressure on Indonesia to quell violence and arson, but there was no intention of deploying US troops to East Timor.⁷⁷ Australia would have to lead and support an international intervention alone.⁷⁸ Though not specifically intended to do so, *Spitfire* triggered preparations in 3rd Brigade, the only formation trained and capable of rapid deployment. Fortunately, Brigadier Evans and his staff had been warned

⁷⁰ Don Greenless and Robert Garran, *Deliverance; The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2002, p. 238.

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 236.

⁷² Brigadier M. Evans, Interview with author, 6 February 2000.

⁷³ Martin, p. 98.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Greenless and Garran, p. 239.

⁷⁶ ADHQ, CDF WNGO, 13/99 OP Warden, SIC 14X, 100830ZSEP99. Copy held by author.

⁷⁷ Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

⁷⁸ Greenless and Garran, pp. 242-44.

informally in April about the likely scenario of having to provide either a protection force for the UN in East Timor, or forces to protect an evacuation.⁷⁹ Planning for deployment to East Timor had been going on secretly for months. Unlike *Morris Dance*, *Solace* and *Lagoon*, force elements from 3rd Brigade would have detailed maps, infrastructure information and recent intelligence estimates for a forthcoming operation.

Admiral Barrie now faced the challenge of conducting further evacuation operations in East Timor and preparing for *Warden*. The evacuation force in Tindal, and at the airport and alongside at the port in Darwin now exceeded 600 personnel from all three services and involved ships and aircraft. Operation *Spitfire* had begun as a limited protected evacuation operation employing maritime and air force transport assets. It looked like merging into a larger scale joint force operation. Molan and his staff in Dili were Barrie's eyes and ears.⁸⁰ Local TNI commanders appeared to have lost control of their rank and file, who were joining East Timorese territorials and militia, in looting and sacking, and also terrorising the population, who had fled, or were fleeing Dili.⁸¹ This was a volatile and dangerous environment that could lead to the strategic nightmare of an accidental clash between Australian and Indonesian troops. Admiral Barrie had warned members of the NSCC that intervention into East Timor under these risky circumstances could lead to a war with Indonesia.⁸²

While Cosgrove and his headquarters staff would, by their professional inclination and experience, concentrate on projecting land forces into East Timor to stabilise the situation on the ground, there were ominous strategic developments at sea and in the air. Indonesian maritime and air force elements had begun to arrive, possibly to facilitate a withdrawal of TNI forces from East Timor. The New Zealand Centre for Strategic Studies reported later that the Indonesian navy had deployed a T209 submarine as part of a maritime task group to the waters off East Timor and the Indonesian air force had deployed Skyhawk and F16 jet aircraft into West Timor.⁸³ Thus, Admiral Barrie had to deter Indonesian interference with an ADF evacuation operation and be ready for anything that might follow if there was interference. He

⁷⁹ The author met with Brigadier Evans and his subordinate commanders and headquarters staff in April and briefed them based on UN planning documents he had been received from Australian staff at UN New York and his assessment of the course of events in East Timor.

⁸⁰ Barrie, Interview.

⁸¹ Brownrigg, Comments on draft.

⁸² Barrie, Interview.

⁸³ Centre for Strategic Studies, 'Strategic and Military Lessons from East Timor', *CSS Strategic Briefing Papers*, vol. 2: Part 1 Victoria University of Wellington, February 2000, p. 1. See also Horner, *The Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 24.

could do this from his headquarters through Commodore Bonser's Darwin headquarters (HQ NORCOM) to maritime and air force units deployed to northern Australia, or through his headquarters to Treloar who would direct maritime and air force elements deployed to northern Australia. David Horner confirmed that Barrie decided:

to place F/A-18 fighters, F-111 strike aircraft, forward air control aircraft and aerial tankers on alert during the initial deployment. ... Similarly, warships with a high level of capability in anti-submarine warfare escorted the ships transporting the forces to East Timor. [these forces] remained under the Commander Australian Theatre [Air Vice Marshal Treloar].⁸⁴

Fortunately for the ADF, probably the strongest deterrent to Indonesian interference was a blunt warning from the Americans to General Wiranto, the presence of a US Marine expeditionary force off northern Australia that had sailed in from Okinawa for Exercise *Crocodile 99*, and the position of the United States Government that law and order should be restored in East Timor as soon as possible.⁸⁵ Once again, the Americans would provide protection for an Australian force projection, as they had done in Korea in 1950 and in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966.

The ADF was now faced with the concurrent challenges of executing *Spitfire* and preparing for *Warden*. In reality, the two operations were merging as phases of a single force projection that Major General Cosgrove and his staff had predicted earlier in the year. The projection into East Timor would begin with a small *Spitfire* force and be followed, given an Indonesian invitation and UN endorsement, by Evans' 3rd Brigade and Cosgrove's DJFHQ, augmented at short notice with *ad hoc* maritime and air force staff groups.⁸⁶ For their part, the Indonesian Government, the TNI and their militia surrogates appeared to be executing a preconceived plan.⁸⁷ The first phase appeared to be to drive out foreign witnesses to the punishment about to be meted out to the East

⁸⁴ Horner, *The Making of the Australian Defence Force*, pp. 24-5.

⁸⁵ See Garran and Greenless, Chapter 12.

⁸⁶ Horner, *The Making of the Australian Defence Force*, pp. 19-20.

⁸⁷ There were reports that the Indonesian Cabinet was split between a liberal elite that had gained influence after the demise of the Suharto regime in 1998 and 'old-guard nationalists'. The nationalists probably supported the razing of East Timor and the displacement of thousands of East Timorese population and at least condoned the actions of TNI. Don Greenless, 'Rogue element', the *Weekend Australian*, 11-12 September 1999, p. 29. John Martinkus in *A Dirty Little War*, Random House, Sydney, 2001 claims to have discovered a copy of the TNI plan two months before its execution. Hamish McDonald, 'Australia's bloody East Timor secret, spy intercepts confirm Government knew of Jakarta's hand in massacres', the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 March 2002. McDonald quotes from material from radio intercepts from the Defence Signals Directorate alleged to have been leaked to him by Defence officials that point to a TNI plan to drive East Timorese out of the territory and lay waste to its infrastructure. Also Greenless and Garran, *Deliverance*, Chapter 11.

Timorese for rejecting autonomy.⁸⁸ The second phase appeared to be the destruction of infrastructure, looting and population displacement, disguised as an emergency evacuation plan. The final phase appeared to be to leave East Timor abruptly and invite the UN and the international community to take over. If this was the plan, no TNI opposition would be expected during an evacuation of foreign nationals, but there might be some resistance if international forces interrupted the second, destructive phase.

Operation Spitfire

After a close examination of political consequences and increasing pressure on beleaguered UNAMET staff at the UN compound in Dili, the UN sought Australian help to evacuate its remaining staff on 9 September.⁸⁹ The Indonesian Government agreed to permit Australian air force aircraft to land at Dili and Baucau, as well as to supervise safe passage for all evacuees. Admiral Barrie decided to conduct a limited evacuation operation using C-130 transport aircraft accompanied by Special Forces troops, who would be unarmed but ready to respond to threat. Additional ground forces moved to northern Australia. Barrie put 3rd Brigade on higher states of readiness to provide follow-on forces.

On 10 September, Brigadier Molan and Colonel Brownrigg met the first C-130 aircraft landing in Dili. Aside from reception duties, they were there to convince TNI commanders to prevent hostile militia from interfering with the evacuation. Despite the work both attachés had put into explaining evacuation procedures with local Indonesian commanders, the presence of Australian Special Forces troops on Indonesian soil created a high level of tension among Indonesian air force special force troops at the airport who recognised who they were. Molan and Brownrigg found they had to work very hard to calm them.⁹⁰ Australia and Indonesia had arrived at a tactical tipping point and the Indonesians cooperated. Fortunately, the ADF had the right people, at the right place and at the right time.

Later on 10 September, after Brigadier Molan had diffused a dangerous confrontation at Baucau airport, the evacuation proceeded from Dili without militia interference.⁹¹ Molan and his staff assembled evacuees and co-ordinated between UNAMET staff and local TNI commanders. Violence and mayhem continued as militia

⁸⁸ Martin, *Self Determination*, p. 94.

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 100.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Described in Breen, *Mission Accomplished*, pp. 9-11.

gangs - many of whom were intoxicated - looted, burned and terrorised. Martin and a core of key UNAMET staff remained at the UN Compound. Operation *Spitfire* was almost over, but the looting and razing of East Timor continued unabated.

In the early hours of 14 September in a second evacuation, Martin and the remainder of his staff left East Timor. Soon after, Molan returned to Jakarta with his staff. Molan and Martin left liaison officers at the Australian Consulate building to maintain contact with Indonesian commanders and authorities, and to continue reporting to Canberra and UN New York respectively.

Operation Warden

Meanwhile, President Habibie declared martial law in East Timor on 7 September. General Wiranto appointed Major General K. Syahnakri, his chief of operations, as the Chief of the Martial Law Authority in East Timor. Fortunately, Brownrigg and Syahnakri had developed mutual respect through frequent contact in Jakarta. Within a couple of hours of his arrival in Dili, Syahnakri summoned Brownrigg and briefed him on his intentions. He could not order newly arriving TNI units to quell the violence and destruction by confronting Indonesian troops and police as well as East Timorese auxiliaries. Even if those units obeyed his orders, his directions would risk Indonesian soldiers shooting their rampaging colleagues – a politically unacceptable outcome. His plan was to withdraw all locally posted TNI personnel, especially those of East Timorese ethnicity and replace them with troops from Java. Unfortunately, this plan would take negotiation and time to implement. In the meantime, the terror campaign would continue for several days unchecked until there was a sufficient build up of replacement units.⁹²

The gathering of world leaders in Auckland, New Zealand on 11 September for the annual meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Community (APEC) became the focal point for putting international pressure on Indonesia to allow international intervention. Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer lobbied US President Clinton and a coalition of national leaders to put diplomatic pressure on the Indonesian Government to agree that the time had come to invite in an international military force.⁹³ An open debate in the General Assembly illustrated Indonesia's isolated position. The possibility of economic sanctions added to the pressure on President Habibie. On 12

⁹² Brownrigg, Notes on draft. Also Greenless and Garran, *Deliverance*, pp. 228-29.

⁹³ Greenless and Garran, Chapter 13.

September, he announced that the Indonesian Government would accept international intervention into East Timor.⁹⁴ Those directing the militia violence appeared to have underestimated the power of the stories and images being broadcast from East Timor to the world to arouse widespread international outrage and censure, as well as the prospect of severe economic penalties.

The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1264 on 15 September authorising what was to become International Force - East Timor (InterFET), to take all necessary actions to restore peace and security in East Timor and to protect and support UNAMET in its tasks. The resolution also authorised InterFET to facilitate humanitarian assistance.⁹⁵ On 16 September, Indonesia cancelled its security agreement with Australia.⁹⁶ In what was a dramatic example of the Australian Government taking political and military risks, Australia was now poised to launch its most strategically important and demanding force projection since 1942. Admiral Barrie, Major General Keating, Air Vice Marshal Treloar, Major General Cosgrove and Brigadiers Evans and Wilkinson and their headquarters and force elements stood on the threshold, awaiting final orders for deployment. Admiral Barrie took command:⁹⁷

This operation will be Operation *Stabilise* and is to be commanded by Major General Cosgrove, under my command. ... Operation *Stabilise* and *Warden* together represent the most significant military commitment of the Australian Government, on behalf of the Australian people since World War II. Our logistic support must also be a world class performance.⁹⁸

Deployment

The ADF was about to attempt to do what had not been rehearsed in any of the Kangaroo series of exercises and had not been done well on recent short notice force projections to Somalia and Bougainville. Barrie had to synchronise a joint deterrent effect and also have sufficient force elements poised for a rapid and decisive response should anything go wrong during the InterFET deployment. Air Vice Marshal Treloar,

⁹⁴ Ibid, pp. 258-61.

⁹⁵ Martin, *Self Determination*, Appendix 5.

⁹⁶ See Horner, *The Making of the Australian Defence Force*, p. 13, for a summary of the tensions between Australia and Indonesia at the time.

⁹⁷ According to David Horner, Admiral Barrie decided to by-pass COMAST and HQAST and take command himself because of 'the international nature of the force'[InterFET]. Professor David Horner, 'The Evolution of Australian Higher Command Arrangements', Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 2002, p. 29. Copy held by author.

⁹⁸ Admiral C.A. Barrie, Chief of the Defence Force and Commander in Chief, Operation Stabilise, ADHQ, 'Operation Stabilise', I4X CDF/440, 190700Z SEP99. Copy held by author.

who commanded the joint movements system through 1 JMOVGP, was responsible for the efficient execution of Cosgrove's movement plan and any subsequent movements support he required from Australia. Commodore Bonser and his staff in Darwin had the Joint Movement Control Office – Darwin under operational control. Thus, he and Group Captain I. Jamieson, commander of 1 JMOVGP in Sydney, one of the senior staff officers who had coordinated air force support for *Solace*, were in charge of coordinating movement of personnel and matériel staging through Darwin to East Timor, as well as from East Timor. This would be one of the most significant challenges of *Stabilise*. Unlike the Kangaroo series, troops and supplies would have to deploy under operational conditions, in a pre-planned tactical order of arrival. Logistic support would follow, not be awaiting them.

Major General Cosgrove envisaged a four-phase campaign in East Timor with specific but limited military objectives. The first phase would be to negotiate with Major General Syahnakri to establish optimum safe preconditions for lodgement. The second phase would be rapid deployment of as many combat forces as strategic lift would permit. The third phase would be to establish a secure environment in Dili and then throughout East Timor. The final phase would be a transition of InterFET to a UN peacekeeping operation.⁹⁹

Colonel Brownrigg, supported by his maritime and air force counterparts from the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, and Special Forces troops would constitute the first ADF elements on the ground. Brownrigg and his colleagues would reassure General Syahnakri and his commanders that InterFET was a neutral force, only intent on assisting with security while he withdrew miscreant TNI and auxiliary units from East Timor. Colonel Brownrigg facilitated a meeting between Cosgrove and Syahnakri at Dili airport on 19 September. Both generals affirmed that they would take every precaution to ensure that those under their command would not be drawn into gun battles through lack of discipline on either side or through manipulative provocation by third parties.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, Brownrigg and his colleagues maintained contact with senior TNI and navy and air force commanders after Cosgrove left. Phase 1 went well.

On the night 19/20 September, Phase 2 of *Stabilise* was poised to begin. Cosgrove's plan depended on the ADF movements system being able to deliver as many combat troops from 3rd Brigade as possible in the first 48 hours to create a

⁹⁹ Cosgrove, Interview.

¹⁰⁰ Brownrigg, Comments on draft.

deterrent effect on the ground in Dili. There would be risks. Lieutenant Colonel Cousins did not plan to have substantial reserves of bulky and heavy basic commodities, such as ammunition, rations and water, on hand. He took this risk in order to allow more troops and armoured vehicles to be deployed quickly. His arrangements depended on an efficient air bridge to and from Dili. There was little room for error. He specified logistic and movement arrangements for three weeks.

Group Captain S.R. Cameron controlled the transport aircraft that Cousins would depend on. He established 96 Combined Air Wing Group to coordinate air operations in support of InterFET. The core of Cameron's capacity was a force of 12 Australian C-130 Hercules transport aircraft and 16 crews. For the air bridge, Canada, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, Britain, the United States and Thailand had provided or promised a further 16 C-130 aircraft and 21 crews.¹⁰¹ Commercial shipping would only operate in a secure environment, so the sea bridge for lodgement would depend on the Australian navy's *Jervis Bay*, *Success* and *Tobruk* shuttling to and from Darwin and Dili on schedule and other navy vessels positioned offshore holding contingency stocks on board for emergencies.¹⁰²

Seven C-130 aircraft left Townsville for Dili in the early hours of 20 September. While they were inbound, a further five C-130 aircraft flew from northern Australia carrying a vanguard of Special Forces troops and their supplies of fuel and other necessities. They landed at Komoro Airfield ahead of the aircraft from Townsville. Brownrigg, dressed in summer dress uniform, beret and aiguillettes, met his compatriots as if they were arriving for a diplomatic visit: a ploy to ease tension.¹⁰³ The TNI officer commanding Indonesian special force troops guarding the airport and his subordinate commanders were polite, cordial and cooperative.

The arrival of the first company from 2 RAR, the InterFET advanced force, was more risky because they ignored orders to leave the aircraft carrying their weapons in a non-threatening manner. The troops ran down the lowered ramp and, in the way that they had trained to do many times before, dispersed at the run, hit the ground and adopted a half moon formation with weapons pointing out - at the ready.¹⁰⁴ Fortunately

¹⁰¹ Group Captain S.R. Cameron, Interview with author, 20 February 2000.

¹⁰² Commodore B.D. Robertson, Interview with author, 18 February 2000. Robertson was Maritime Component Commander HQ InterFET from December 1999 until 23 February 2000 after Commodore J. Stapleton.

¹⁰³ **aiguillettes**, an ornamental tagged cord or braid, typically gold in colour, worn on a uniform around the shoulder and armpit with a cord extension attached to a middle button of a shirt or jacket.

¹⁰⁴ Major R.V. Parker, Interview with author, 19 December 1999.

the benign arrival of the earlier C-130 aircraft and subsequent friendliness had diffused Indonesian suspicion at the airport. However, the environment in the remainder of Dili was hostile. The 2 RAR company that was assigned to secure the port, in conjunction with a contingent of Indonesian Marines, was harassed by TNI and East Timorese territorials accompanied by militia driving past in trucks, sporting red and white bandannas and brandishing weapons.¹⁰⁵ The occupants yelled out death threats, made cut-throat gestures with their hands and occasionally fired weapons into the air. Initially this was unsettling for the Australians who instinctively readied their weapons for return fire, but they soon assessed that they were not being attacked.¹⁰⁶ They were being tested by undisciplined individuals, who displayed more menacing bravado than bravery.

At sea, Indonesian navy vessels provoked Australian navy vessels. Smaller Indonesian craft sailed on collision courses, changing course at the last minute. Larger ships were sailing across the bows of Australian vessels to force them to slow down or to change course. Indonesian captains did not respond to radio calls from Australian commanders. These provocations continued all day and into the night. Like their compatriots in Dili, all the Australian maritime commanders could do was maintain disciplined vigilance and not be drawn into an incident that might provoke an escalation of hostilities.¹⁰⁷

Unfortunately, the air bridge from Darwin to Dili encountered difficulties after the first aircraft had discharged their loads in Dili and returned to Darwin to load and fly back to Dili. Unbeknown to Major General Cosgrove, Brigadier Evans and Lieutenant Colonel Cousins and their staffs, there were competing priorities for C-130 aircraft. They assumed that no one else would use C-130 aircraft flights into Dili until 2 RAR, Cosgrove's and Evans' tactical headquarters, vehicles and initial supplies of ammunition, rations and water were on the ground.¹⁰⁸ Risks would increase substantially if there was a gap in the arrival of troops and their initial supplies. Cousins and his staff had planned each aircraft load meticulously and the order of arrival of tactical and logistics elements into East Timor with 3rd Brigade staff. Brigadier Evans had directed that all elements would pack 'light' and take a 'Spartan' approach, in

¹⁰⁵ Major J.L. Bryant, Interview with author, 23 December 1999. Bryant commanded this company.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Commander D.W. Bates, Interview with author, 18 February 2000. Bates was Chief of Staff, Maritime Component at HQ InterFET.

¹⁰⁸ Evans, Interview. Cousins, Interview.

accordance with Cosgrove's direction to put as many combat troops on the ground as soon as possible. He planned to insert a 600-strong force from 2 RAR quickly with a minimum of vehicles and supplies. They would carry their water, ammunition and rations on their backs and would wait 24 hours for resupply and more vehicles.¹⁰⁹

Even with operational imperatives and 24-hour operations, Komoro Airfield could only handle a finite number of landings and take-offs.¹¹⁰ Every aircraft load was either contributing to or detracting from Cosgrove's plan and overall force protection. Cousins' movement schedule fell apart by early afternoon on 20 September. After the first sorties that had brought the special forces contingent and the first two companies of 2 RAR, the remainder of 2 RAR with vehicles and supplies, including an aircraft bringing bottled water, were delayed while unplanned sorties of media contingents, air force personnel, equipment and supplies, and UNAMET personnel and vehicles were flown in. Consequently, vehicles that Cousins had instructed be brigaded in Dili to distribute water did not turn up. Medical personnel and supplies were delayed at a time when no one knew whether or not there would be casualties. Evans and Cousins at Dili airport watched in dismay as aircraft arrived and did not discharge their expected loads.¹¹¹

There was no senior officer or senior movements staff in charge of the deployment plan for InterFET. Major General Cosgrove did not command the maritime or air force assets needed to support his deployment. Admiral Barrie commanded these assets as CDF, but depended on Treloar to provide logistic and movements support. Treloar in turn depended on subordinates at the operational and tactical level to make the deployment work according to Cosgrove's plan. Brigadier Wilkinson depended on McManus. Commodore Bonser and Group Captain I. Jamieson depended on JMCO-Darwin staff to coordinate movements of personnel and supplies to Dili. However, local movements staff were well aware of the InterFET lodgement plan, but they only had nominal control over each C130 aircraft load. Senior ADF officers and Defence officials in Canberra pressed them to ensure that contingents of media and groups of

¹⁰⁹ Evans, Interview. After the first 12 sorties come and gone on the morning of 20 September there was only capacity for 13 more sorties that day. The total of 25 C130 sorties flew in and out of Dili on 20 September. Table provided by Group Captain S.R. Cameron during his interview with author on 20 February 2000. Copy held by author.

¹¹⁰ Cameron, Interview.

¹¹¹ Evans, Interview. Cousins, Interview.

UNAMET staff and their vehicles arrived in Dili to satisfy political imperatives.¹¹² Group Captain Cameron, the tactical commander of C130 aircraft, sent air force personnel, equipment and supplies to set up airport operations in Dili and Baucau. He was unaware of the impact of his decision on 3rd Brigade.¹¹³ The remainder of 2 RAR and medical personnel and vehicles were bumped back in the queue lining up to load on aircraft flying to Dili. There was unruly behaviour at Darwin airport as members of 3rd Brigade, who desperately wanted to join their comrades in Dili, were left waiting while they watched journalists and air force staff and supplies load and depart ahead of them.¹¹⁴ Some movements staff were subjected to verbal tirades and threatening behaviour.¹¹⁵

Confusion and frustration in Darwin increased risk, but did not endanger the initial 24 hours of the InterFET lodgement. Australian Special Forces provided force protection with specialist assets and improvised their mobility by commandeering scores of UNAMET vehicles. Sufficient troops were on the ground for high priority tasks. Australian, American and other coalition vessels patrolled offshore near Dili harbour to deter interference. The unplanned use of aircraft forced Cousins to use all of his contingency stocks of water immediately, ordering bottled water to be brought ashore from *Success*.¹¹⁶ Later in the afternoon and evening, Company Quartermaster Sergeants from 2 RAR commandeered stocks of bottled water from the airport that had been flown in to build up stock holdings for the air force.¹¹⁷ The logistic crisis eased when 3 RAR and a squadron of Australian light armoured vehicles (ASLAV) and APCs arrived on *Jervis Bay* and *Tobruk* on the morning of 21 September. Once they were aware of 2 RAR's predicament, the arriving paratroopers carried off cartons of bottled water from *Jervis Bay* and placed them on vehicles at the wharf for their comrades before continuing on to their first objectives in the city.¹¹⁸ The lodgement was working.

¹¹² Admiral Barrie directed Colonel K.H. Jobson to fly in a contingent of media representatives and satellite communications equipment as soon as he could on 20 September. This was a strategically important task. Arguably, it should have been incorporated formally into the deployment plan from the beginning. Jobson virtually commandeered a C130 aircraft to accomplish his mission. Brigadier K.H. Jobson, Letter to author, undated. Copy held by author.

¹¹³ Cameron, Interview.

¹¹⁴ Captain L.T. Sargeant, Interview with author, 21 December 1999. Sargeant was a nursing officer waiting at Darwin Airport on 20 September. He recalled incidents of booing, jeering and shouting.

¹¹⁵ Captain K.L. Saunders, Interview with author, 7 February 2000. Saunders worked at JMCO-Darwin during the initial deployment of InterFET and was subjected to several tirades.

¹¹⁶ Cousins, Interview.

¹¹⁷ Warrant Officer Class One, P.F. Mele, Interview with author, 9 January 2000. Mele was Regimental Quarter Master Sergeant, 2 RAR.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

3rd Brigade secured initial objectives as planned. However, the danger of an accidental clash between InterFET and TNI forces had not passed. Brigadier Evans and his two-battalion brigade of about 1 500 troops, with limited supplies of water and ammunition on hand, was outnumbered by nearly 15 000 Indonesian troops in Dili, who presumably had plenty of ammunition in their barracks.

Overnight on 20 September, the Australians observed new plumes of smoke rise as arsonists lit more fires in the suburbs and in Government buildings. They heard the sounds of gunfire as well as explosions of accelerants used to start new fires. Long convoys of TNI soldiers crammed into trucks with their personal belongings and loot rolled through the streets, heading towards West Timor. At any time, a truck load of soldiers and militia would drive past groups of InterFET troops on sentry duty and patrol, shouting and gesturing malevolently.

By the afternoon of 21 September, InterFET had made its presence felt throughout Dili. Soldiers were patrolling and clearing houses and buildings that were suspected of harbouring militia. There were a number of incidents that could have resulted in a clash between Indonesian and Australian troops. At midday, a group of 300 TNI Marines threatened and tried to intimidate a patrol from 3 RAR.¹¹⁹ Earlier, a 3 RAR patrol had raised and aimed their weapons at a truckload of TNI personnel, who had raised and aimed their weapons at them.¹²⁰ The discipline of Australian troops was commendable, considering that many had only received their training in Rules of Engagement whilst in transit to East Timor, or waiting in Darwin and Townsville for deployment: the risks of rushing the tactical level.¹²¹

Concerned about the mayhem the night before and mindful of the InterFET mandate to create a secure environment, Brigadier Evans decided to restrict the movement of trucks of provocateurs and arsonists on the night of 21 September by ordering 2 RAR to set up vehicle check points (VCP) along the main road through Dili.¹²² He was setting the conditions for confrontation. Lieutenant Colonel M.D. Slater ordered Major J.L. Bryant to set up three VCP, several hundred metres apart on the main east-west road through Dili. Slater's intent was to prevent anyone using side streets to get around a single VCP sited on this main route. He was setting a VCP snare

¹¹⁹ Stockings, *Paratroopers as Peacekeepers*, p. 28.

¹²⁰ Ibid, p. 23.

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 20. Lieutenant Colonel N.W. Welch, Notes on draft chapter of Bob Breen, *Mission Accomplished*, May 2000. Copy held by author. Welch was CO 3 RAR. Lieutenant Colonel M.D. Slater, Interview with author, 9 January 2000. Slater was CO 2 RAR.

¹²² Evans, Interview.

to entrap truckloads of arsonists moving at night. Slater ordered Bryant to stop anyone who was armed, but not in uniform. If they did not have suitable military identification, then they were to be detained for further questioning. Slater allocated six ASLAV to form two-vehicle herringbone obstacles at each VCP that would force vehicles to slow down and zig-zag between the vehicles to get through. Truck drivers would not argue with a .50 calibre machine-gun mounted on top of an armoured vehicle. Slater strengthened his VCP by reinforcing Bryant's company with his Assault Pioneer Platoon and six pairs of snipers. Bryant allocated an Assault Pioneer section and two pairs of snipers to each of his three rifle platoons.¹²³

At around 10 p.m., a 600-strong East Timorese territorial battalion, accompanied by TNI personnel, and travelling in a convoy of about 60 trucks, crammed with soldiers, family members and loot, drove into Dili from Baucau. They had murdered, burnt and pillaged their way west and were heading directly for Slater's checkpoints.¹²⁴

Indonesia and Australia were now approaching another tactical tipping point that could have substantial strategic implications, in general, and for the InterFET campaign, in particular. Unfortunately, Slater's VCP operation and Syahnakri's withdrawal operation had not been fully explained at the daily coordination conference at HQ InterFET.

Brigadier Evans and his staff and Slater and his staff were not told of the movement of this battalion either by Syahnakri's staff or by Australian intelligence.¹²⁵ The Australians manning the check points were unaware that it was in everyone's interest to let this convoy proceed. In the vanguard of this battalion were about 40 outriders on motorbikes. These men wore an assortment of bandannas, T-shirts, singlets and camouflage trousers. Each had a rifle slung over his back.¹²⁶ These were the types of people Slater had directed Bryant's men to stop and detain at the check points.

Lieutenant S.M. Casey's platoon positioned at the eastern VCP was the first to encounter these East Timorese out riders. Casey's interpreter, Lieutenant G.A. Chisnell, spoke with the leader of the outriders in *Bahasa*, asking him for his identification and informing him that the Australians had orders to detain any armed

¹²³ Slater, Interview. Bryant, Interview.

¹²⁴ McDonald, Ball, Dunn, van Klinken, Bouchier, Kammen, and Tanter, *Masters of Terror*. The activities of 745th Territorial Battalion are covered in this publication. Also Cameron Barr, 'A brutal exit', *The Christian Science Monitor*, 13 March 2000.

¹²⁵ Evans, Interview. Major M.C. Fielding, Interview with author, 6 February 2000. Fielding was Brigade Major for 3rd Brigade.

¹²⁶ Lieutenant S.M. Casey, Interview with author, 23 December 1999.

persons not in uniform and who did not have suitable TNI identification.¹²⁷ While he spoke, riders revved their engines and looked on with menace. The leader demanded to be let through immediately. Behind the motorcyclists, trucks began to slow down and stop. Soldiers from the rear trucks began to dismount and move forward calling out for information on why the convoy was held up. Seconds ticked by - tension mounted.

As the leader of the outriders and Chisnell continued to negotiate, the remainder of Casey's platoon and the Assault Pioneers positioned themselves. They were outnumbered and out-gunned. Chisnell and the leader of the outriders raised their voices in argument. Most of the Australians wore night vision goggles, and all were in flak jackets. They had clear vision of the area. The territorials in the trucks over-looking the scene were in the dark and assumed they could not be seen. They raised their weapons and pointed them at Casey and Chisnell.¹²⁸

The Australian infantrymen held their weapons down at their sides but pointed their muzzles up at those in trucks who had raised their weapons. They were preparing to fire. Their laser designators formed bright green spots on the chests and heads of the unknowing territorial soldiers. In a split second, a volley of 5.56 mm rounds would follow the laser beams if they showed that they were about to take a sight picture and pull their triggers. The Australian cavalrymen also trained their .50 calibre machine-guns on the line of trucks. Undetected on top of a bus shelter, the snipers could also see at night through their scopes. They moved their sight pictures from head to head as they assessed the danger to Casey and Chisnell.¹²⁹

Casey's signaller described the scene over his radio to Bryant, stationed at the next check point, who now had an important decision to make. Would he let the motorbikes and trucks through, or tell Casey to insist on them pulling over to be screened in the search area? Realising that the situation could escalate into a very dangerous stand off or gun battle, Bryant decided to let the convoy through to his VCP, so he could assess the situation personally.¹³⁰ This would diffuse the situation at Casey's location but also give him time to seek guidance from Slater. While Bryant contacted Slater, the motorbikes and trucks zig-zagged past the two ASLAV and drove on.

¹²⁷ Lieutenant G.A. Chisnell, Interview with author, 28 December 1999.

¹²⁸ Corporal M.D. Cooke, Interview with author, 28 December 1999. Cooke was a member of Assault Pioneer Platoon.

¹²⁹ Private P.A. Francis, Interview with author, 28 December 1999. Francis was a member of Sniper Section, 2 RAR.

¹³⁰ Bryant, Interview.

A second confrontation quickly ensued. This time the outriders were more aggressive and those in the trucks behind them became more resentful at being stopped a second time. In the face of raised voices and raised weapons, Lieutenant P. Hallday's platoon, attached Assault Pioneers and the snipers repeated what had occurred at Casey's check point. While laser beams again lit up the territorials, Bryant received word that he was to let the battalion through without further delay.¹³¹ Apparently, Slater had consulted Brigadier Evans, who assessed the danger immediately, and directed that 745th Battalion should not be delayed any further.¹³² Calling out abusively and brandishing their weapons, the territorials drove out of Dili and on to West Timor - a clash with Australian troops avoided narrowly.

There were several more provocations from truck loads of TNI soldiers, territorials and militia overnight on 21 September. The Australians maintained their discipline and vigilance. In many cases, their Rules of Engagement would have permitted them to open fire when weapons were pointed at them, and mock fired, like in a children's game of 'cowboys and Indians'. However, it was a dangerous and potentially fatal game. The sounds of a fire fight in the dark, that would have soon involved light armoured vehicles, could have escalated as TNI troops spilled out from their barracks, firing at any InterFET personnel they encountered. Fortunately, there was no fire fight and the vast majority of TNI soldiers remained in their barracks or continued moving peaceably to the port for embarkation.

Over the next few days there were several more tense moments as Australian troops and hostile groups confronted each other and InterFET troops conducted house and building searches. On the fifth day, Evans assessed that the time had come to increase pressure on remaining militia and to send a strong deterrent message to any hostile TNI elements considering an attack on InterFET troops or assets. Admiral Barrie was visiting the area of operations for the first time. Major General Cosgrove accompanied him to Evans's briefing. He briefed Barrie that he intended to launch a sweep of the city in four hours time, using his two Australian battalions and all of his light armoured vehicles and his battlefield and reconnaissance helicopters.

Evans's aim was to break the will of militia groups to stay in Dili and its environs. He also wanted to demand, and then to command, the respect of TNI units

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Evans, Interview.

and East Timorese territorial troops still located in barracks in Dili.¹³³ Some Indonesian commanders still seemed to assume that they could do as they wished in Dili because they outnumbered InterFET almost 10 to 1. Their troops and territorials had erected road blocks to deny access to areas where their barracks and other government facilities were located. Some TNI troops and many territorials still expressed their resentment to InterFET troops through gestures, taunts and threatening graffiti.

InterFET had a UN mandate to restore peace and security using whatever means necessary. Evans's planned to exercise this mandate with a simple plan. One battalion would establish a number of road blocks along a north-south line at one end of the city and the other would sweep towards these roadblocks from the other end of the city, pushing any militia in front of them. H Hour was 12.30 p.m., the hottest part of the day when many Indonesians and East Timorese would be taking a siesta. This timing would achieve surprise and maximise shock. All operations were to finish at exactly 4 p.m. to demonstrate that InterFET could turn on operations at short notice and then turn them off instantly. As infantry and armoured vehicles moved through the city, accompanying Australian engineers would destroy roadblocks.

Evans also planned to have all available rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft flying above the city. He wanted to demonstrate air superiority, mobility, observation and, even though they were only installed for self-protection, some aerial firepower by having loadmasters operate the two machine-guns mounted on the Black Hawks in an offensive manner reminiscent of the role of air force door gunners during the Vietnam War. Helicopters were directed to fly low and hard across the city looking for anyone likely to oppose the advancing line of troops and light armoured vehicles.

The sweep, called Operation *Brighton*, began as planned at 12 30 p.m. Armoured vehicles sped from fire position to fire position on the ground, Black Hawks flew low and fast, swinging their machine guns in a threatening manner and troops pushed through briskly, combing every street with weapons at the ready. Reconnaissance helicopters monitored their assigned areas, reporting back and investigating any suspicious sighting by flying in low and hard. Black Hawks also hovered in the sky with snipers aboard keeping an eye on any individuals or groups who might oppose their comrades on the ground. Operation *Brighton* ended at 4 p.m., after three and a half hours of exhausting manoeuvre. It appeared to have had the desired effect. Incidents of trucks carrying territorials and militia provoking InterFET troops on

¹³³ Evans, Interview.

guard and on patrol fell significantly. There were still acts of arson, but Dili became a less confrontational place.¹³⁴ The chances of further tactical confrontations diminished. Evans began pushing companies out to towns away from Dili and began planning for a move to the East Timor-West Timor border.

On 27 September, Major General Syahnakri handed over responsibility for the security of East Timor to Major General Cosgrove, leaving only a token TNI presence in Dili. Syahnakri had made the transition work. He had reduced an estimated 15 000-strong security force to a Dili garrison of about 1 300 troops. The militia and their controllers were gone. InterFET had achieved most of its mission in seven days. This first week set the scene for the rest of the campaign. Dili, the political and spiritual centre of East Timor, was secure. UNAMET staff had returned. UN aid agencies, such as the World Food Program and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid, had begun facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid. During this time, a coalition of nations apparently liked what they saw. They confirmed promises of support and began sending contingents of troops. However, several did so in expectation of receiving ADF logistic support. Wilkinson's *ad hoc* supply chain had sustained the 3rd Brigade group during the first critical days of the campaign in Dili near a port and an airfield. Australian military logistics now had to step up to force level. Thousands of coalition troops were inbound and 3rd Brigade would need to be supported on the border.

Force Sustainment

The lodgement of sufficient vehicles and stocks to sustain arriving InterFET forces was delayed for several days and in some cases, over a week, because of the collapse of movement coordination in Darwin under the weight of competing priorities. There was just not enough transport, movements staff or handling capabilities at Darwin airport or its port to push through the volume of personnel, vehicles, equipment and supplies required. However, Cousins's priority on water, food, fuel and ammunition paid off. Cosgrove and Evans were able to prosecute the campaign in the first seven days without significant logistic limitations. A combination of stocks afloat on navy vessels in Dili harbour, the maritime shuttle of supplies and vehicles on *Jervis Bay*, *Tobruk* and *Success* and the flexibility to load urgently needed items on aircraft flying

¹³⁴ Fielding, Interview.

around the clock from Darwin assured supply of the basics of water, food, fuel and ammunition.¹³⁵

Brigadier Wilkinson and his staff had foreseen the coming requirements to support a force that would climb to over 10 000 personnel, about 50 rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft and a fleet of over 1 200 vehicles. Their challenge since they began planning for *Warden* on the weekend of 8-9 September had been to mobilise in two weeks a logistic system that had been pared back over the previous ten years. Commercial operators had replaced many logistic functions and none would be venturing into harm's way until InterFET had secured East Timor. There was also some high level resistance among senior ADF officers to using contractors in East Timor.¹³⁶ Specialist services, such as movements, stevedoring, water transport, petroleum operations and postal and amenities services, had been cut or no longer existed. There was no deployable logistic force headquarters. Logisticians in Canberra, Brisbane and Sydney had been decimated as a result of the Force Structure Review, Commercial Support Program and the logistic redevelopment projects of the early 1990s.¹³⁷ There were also deficiencies in the military logistic infrastructure in Darwin. Joint Logistic Unit – North was structured to support local military units and field exercises. There was no surge capacity to support offshore operations.¹³⁸ There was little stock on depot shelves anywhere in Australia in many classes of supply because ADF force sustainment was based on purchasing items commercially and distributing them to units 'just in time'.¹³⁹

Planning conducted at HQ LSF in Randwick on 8 and 9 September had marked an important logistic milestone during the transition from *Spitfire* to *Warden* and then to the multi-national Operation *Stabilise*. For the first time, a formation headquarters that commanded logistic units and was used to solving practical logistic problems was

¹³⁵ Cousins, Interview.

¹³⁶ Contrary to Major General Mueller's 'concept of civilianising logistic support wherever possible', ... 'there are some senior Army officers who refuse to entertain any notion of allowing contractors to totally control the log support of certain items into EM [East Timor], eg fresh food. The rationale is that it is a war zone ...' Lieutenant Commander R. Van Geelen, 'Future Force Spt in Darwin – Op Warden', Minutes of a meeting convened by Brigadier J.B. Wilkinson, LOGCC, 3 October 1999. Copy held by author.

¹³⁷ Brigadier J.B. Wilkinson, 'Brief to SCA (A) Conference – Logistic Observations in East Timor 1999-2000', 24 February 2000. Copy held by author.

¹³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Murray, 'From SCA LO – Arrangements in Darwin', e-mail to Commander M. McKeith, HQSCA, 26 September 1999. Murray was a liaison officer from SCA located with HQ LSF. In this e-mail, he describes his efforts to have interim logistic support arrangements continue for several more weeks because JLU (N) 'was flat out supporting normal dependency [local Darwin-based ADF units] and that SCA was not easily able to reinforce JLU (N)'. Copy held by author.

making plans, taking action and warning units for deployment. Wilkinson and his staff had simultaneous responsibilities to expedite logistic preparations for lodgement of the 3rd Brigade group, as well as to build a supply chain to sustain the main force of international units that arrive in the following weeks. He found staff at short notice to enable HQ LSF and DJFHQ to meet the planning challenge and to establish an InterFET force logistics headquarters (HQ FLSG). Once word was out among serving and retired logisticians, many offered to help and volunteered to serve in East Timor.¹⁴⁰

As soon as President Habibie announced on 12 September that his Government would accept the deployment of an international force into East Timor, Wilkinson ordered a large-scale move of vehicles, equipment and stocks to northern Australia. When Admiral Barrie issued his executive order on 14 September for *Warden*, additional stocks of basic items, such as jerry cans, rations and ammunition were already arriving in Darwin, and more convoys were on their way. Purchasing action had begun for repair parts and essential items that had long lead times.¹⁴¹ Staff at 1 JMOVGP had begun to charter shipping and to contract commercial road and air transport. For the first time since Australian troops had deployed to the Kokoda Track in 1942, Australian military logisticians were being asked to sustain a major Australian offshore operation by drawing on Australia's military and commercial supply and transport systems.

Wilkinson built the supply chain for InterFET using his two force support battalions and the newly-raised 60-strong HQ FLSG. The plan was for stocks to be sent to Darwin from the distribution centre at Moorebank in Sydney (DNSDC) and other regional base logistic units around Australia. Lieutenant Colonel McManus would then arrange for storage and subsequent movement of consignments to East Timor to meet InterFET needs, using air and sea bridges comprised of ADF, international and Australian commercial assets. Lieutenant Colonel Kehoe would receive stocks in Dili at the port and Komoro Airport, and then distribute them to InterFET units. Thus, the logistic concept was to send as much stock to Darwin as possible and then regulate its flow into East Timor from Darwin. To do otherwise would result in stocks arriving in Dili in bulk without adequate facilities or assets to transport, secure, store or distribute them – a replication of Operation *Hardihood* in 1966.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Wilkinson, Interview.

¹⁴¹ Wilkinson, 'Brief to SCA (A) Conference'.

The command and control of mounting base operations in Darwin was a major unrehearsed challenge. Darwin had become a major forward mounting base with significant logistic, movements, garrison support, and liaison and coordination responsibilities. Commodore Bonser and his staff had facilities, resources and contacts in Darwin to enable efficient interaction between agencies involved in supporting InterFET. While lacking logistic operations experience, they had been operating around the clock since UNAMET operations began in June, gaining further experience during *Spitfire*.¹⁴² Nominally, both Commodore Bonser and Lieutenant Colonel McManus reported to HQ AST, the Australian national headquarters responsible for supporting *Stabilise*. In reality, McManus reported to Wilkinson, who ran force sustainment out of his headquarters in Randwick. Bonser reported to Treloar, whose logistics staff was occupied crafting logistic agreements with inbound international contingents, preparing a force sustainment plan and dealing with demands for items of supply not in the Defence inventory.¹⁴³ Treloar's staff was not running logistic operations, in general, or mounting base operations, in particular. McManus was happy to occupy office facilities at HQ NORCOM, but he would not comply with Commodore Bonser's invitation to integrate his staff in a central operations room, or to report to Bonser on the planning and conduct of terminal operations.¹⁴⁴ This led to unhelpful friction that echoed the differences evident between Darwin-based staff, and commanders and staff of visiting ADF force elements during the Kangaroo series.

McManus had a number of challenges. His support battalion was structured predominantly to provide road transport, not to manage the receipt, local purchase, storage and on-forwarding of stocks. Consequently, he did not have personnel trained to operate a local purchase function for InterFET in Darwin or the complicated Standard Distribution and Supply System (SDSS). He did not have sufficient personnel to prepare pallets or to unload and load aircraft to the extent required. In addition, he became the InterFET mailman, with only four qualified personnel to do the job. He decided to establish an organisation he dubbed the Top End Distribution Squadron (TEDS) at old military warehouses at Berrimah, and a terminal operations unit at RAAF Base Darwin, comprised of air dispatch, distribution, and supply functions. Wilkinson arranged through senior personnel managers in Canberra to assign staff to McManus to

¹⁴² Colonel R.M. Boyd, Interview with author, 22 March 2000.

¹⁴³ Lieutenant Colonel S.K. Dickens, 'Update 13 Oct', E-mail to Commander M. McKeith, HQ SCA, 13 October 1999. Dickens was a SCA liaison officer located at HQLSF. Copy held by author.

¹⁴⁴ McManus, Interview. R.M. Boyd, Interview.

coordinate TEDS activities with over 18 supply, movements and regulatory organisations. In the end, McManus's Force Support Group became a composite unit comprising over 125 personnel and assets from 9 FSB, 10 FSB and Brisbane-based 7 Combat Service Support Battalion.¹⁴⁵

Major General Mueller was unable to augment his northern supply unit (JLU-N) in time to coordinate ongoing logistic support to InterFET.¹⁴⁶ Wilkinson's *ad hoc* arrangements had to apply for some weeks yet.¹⁴⁷ He and his staff were working very long hours to get future force level logistic arrangements in place while dealing with day-to-day challenges. The onus was now on Group Captain A. Kilgour, Air Vice Marshal Treloar's senior logistic staff officer, and the Theatre Administrative Planning Group (TAPG) at HQ AST to determine policies for how force level logistics would work. Major General Mueller's staff was calling for guidance on stockholding policies, logistic arrangements for international contingents, an engineer support plan, viability of using SDSS direct from East Timor to SCA units as well as policies on maintenance, repair and contracting.¹⁴⁸

To assist them to develop a comprehensive sustainment plan for *Stabilise*, members of the TAPG visited East Timor on 29 and 30 September to attain more situational awareness. They presented a highly critical report to Air Vice Marshal Treloar that prompted him to fly with Wilkinson to East Timor urgently several days later to ascertain how they could help staff at the force logistic headquarters in Dili (HQ FLSG) meet logistic challenges.¹⁴⁹ The TAPG report contained a litany of problems under the headings of Command and Control, Distribution, Infrastructure Development, Support Services and Personnel Issues and called for Wilkinson to conduct a number of reviews, allocate more resources and take remedial action. After releasing their alarming report, members of TAPG returned to working on a document entitled,

¹⁴⁵ McManus, Interview. Also charts, tables, diagrams and lists of personnel given to the author at the time of his interview with Lieutenant Colonel McManus. Copies held by author.

¹⁴⁶ Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Murray, Brief for SPTCOM (A) [sic] (through DLOGOPS (A)), 'Rationalising Darwin Based Spt to OP Warden/Stabilise', 22 October 1999. Murray points out that 'FSG Darwin is performing functions that are core business of SCA' and that there was a meeting on 3 October to discuss transitioning functions to SCA, but Major General Mueller had directed that no action be taken to implement transition. On 24 October 1999, Mueller agreed to a transfer of functions and transition began on 15 November 1999 and was complete by 15 December 1999.

¹⁴⁷ Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Murray, 'Transfer of Functions from FSG Darwin to SCA', E-mail to Commander M. McKeith, HQ SCA, 4 November 1999. Copy held by author.

¹⁴⁸ Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Murray and Lieutenant Colonel S.K. Dickens, E-mails sent to Commander M. McKeith, HQ SCA 4 September – 18 October 1999. Copies held by author.

¹⁴⁹ HQAST, TAPG, 'TAPG Information Brief for COMAST, OP Stabilise – High Priority Logistic Support Issues', 23 October 1999. Copy held by author.

‘INTERFET Sustainability Plan and Transition Plan to UNTAET [the follow-on UN mission]’. They had alerted Treloar to the scale, difficulty and complexity of his responsibilities for *Stabilise*, but left Wilkinson to sort out the problems. After redirecting staff effort to reply to the TAPG report in order to reassure Treloar and Barrie, Wilkinson and his Logistic Management Centre staff returned to the practical business of making his interim logistic support arrangements work.¹⁵⁰

Colonel G.D. Cavenagh, Commander of FLSG, wrote to Brigadier Wilkinson on 21 October informing him that there were several ‘significant factors that continue to complicate logistic operations in EM [East Timor]’.¹⁵¹ The strategic level of command, in general, and HQ AST, in particular, had failed to sign up arriving coalition contingents to implementing agreements for logistic support and to anticipate their logistic support needs. Most contingents arrived in need of terminal assistance to unload, immediate resupply as well as catering and transport support.¹⁵² A deepening logistic and engineer crisis loomed.

By late October, after six weeks of arduous operations, there were expectations in Australia and East Timor that it was time to establish more comfortable living conditions for units on the border and elsewhere. By this time, 22 kitchens were offering fresh meals, but many personnel still slept on the ground and there was insufficient tentage to accommodate them. There were no laundry facilities and soldiers washed their uniforms in empty ration tins.¹⁵³ Since early October, Cousins and his staff had been pressing for camp and accommodation stores to be pre-positioned in Darwin. Major General Mueller’s staff was having difficulty responding to these requests amidst their competing priorities.¹⁵⁴

By this time, terminal operations in Darwin were under pressure. McManus’ local purchase staff was overloaded and there were insufficient contractors in the Northern Territory to provide additional capacity and supplies. His terminal operations at Darwin Air Base and the port were fully stretched. He had insufficient operators to use SDSS efficiently. Consequently, there was a backlog of unsatisfied demands for supply and many unsatisfied and dissatisfied customers in East Timor.¹⁵⁵ The logistic

¹⁵⁰ Wilkinson, Interview.

¹⁵¹ Colonel G.D. Cavenagh, ‘Logistic Capability Issues – Op Stabilise’, InterFET, 21 October 1999. Copy held by author.

¹⁵² Ibid, pp. 1-4.

¹⁵³ Mele, Interview.

¹⁵⁴ Cousins, Interview.

¹⁵⁵ McManus, Interview. Also TAPG Information Report.

system had been catching up from the beginning and was showing the strain. Concurrently, engineers in East Timor were concerned about the purchase and on forwarding of construction stores. There was insufficient experienced staff, both in Darwin and in SCA in Melbourne, to order and coordinate the delivery of millions of dollars worth of construction stores. These stores were afforded a low priority for movement from Darwin. In addition to all of these difficulties, there was no computerised logistic management system for tracking the location of consignments of supplies or construction stores.¹⁵⁶

The ADF supply chain to East Timor was jamming up and difficult to manage. It was unable to improve simultaneously the living conditions of InterFET troops in the field, satisfy demands for water, food, fuel, spare parts and other items, keep construction stores flowing to the engineers and build up stocks before the coming wet season. By this time, McManus's FSG was on-forwarding to East Timor an average of 176 tonnes of cargo a day and 60 refrigerated containers of food a week. Major General Cosgrove intervened and set priorities.¹⁵⁷ His first priority was to maintain the basics and the tempo of operations. If InterFET reduced pressure by scaling back operations and reducing its presence, especially on the border, he was concerned that this might embolden the militia groups and leave his troops and the population vulnerable to hit and run violence. His second priority was to stock up before the wet season. Based on his briefings, the wet season would isolate his troops logistically. Without pre-positioned stocks, they would have a difficult time maintaining operational tempo. His third priority was the living conditions of his troops. He was a Vietnam veteran and had commanded at unit and formation level. He assessed that his Australian and New Zealand troops on the border and his security units in Dili could cope with several more weeks of austerity while stocks of food, water, ammunition and fuel were built up to sustain them through the wet season. As soon as stocking levels were achieved, he would supply camp stores and other amenities.¹⁵⁸

The pressure on the logistic system supporting *Stabilise* did not go unnoticed. Major General Hartley visited East Timor on 4 and 5 November. He spoke with commanders and staff and distributed a highly critical assessment to Air Vice Marshal

¹⁵⁶ Colonel B.R. Dawson, 'Interim Asset Visibility Project – SDSS to CVS Interface', HQ SCA, DLOGOPS 2370/99, DLIM 01172/02, 8 November 1999. Copy held by author.

¹⁵⁷ Major General P.J. Cosgrove, Interview with author, 30 January 2000.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

Treloar and Major General Mueller after he returned to Australia.¹⁵⁹ He ascertained that, despite appointing Wilkinson as logistics component commander at HQ AST, there was a need for an over-arching logistic coordination agency.¹⁶⁰ What he failed to mention was that Wilkinson in Australia and Cavenagh in Dili had not been given operational control over maritime or air force logistic units and assets, or over the joint movements system. He also commented that there was little effort to forecast major logistic and engineering requirements. Compounding these two major weaknesses, Hartley assessed that there were signs of an imminent logistic disaster, especially with the wet season only weeks away. He pointed to the backlog of unsatisfied demands for resupply, a lack of visibility of items within the movements system, a deficit of logistic and engineer assets in East Timor and insufficient shipping.¹⁶¹ His report also contained examples of commanders taking into their own hands the resupply of spare parts to keep their vehicles and equipment going and commandeering camp stores from depots to improve the living conditions of their troops.¹⁶²

Hartley's report produced a number of strong reactions. Air Vice Marshal Treloar sought an explanation from Wilkinson.¹⁶³ Hartley had brought to the surface the gap between customer expectations and what the supply chain was delivering. This distraction from the task of solving the problem caused uproar amongst logistic commanders and staff supporting *Stabilise*. They felt that their efforts were being criticised at a time when they could do no more to satisfy Cosgrove's priorities.¹⁶⁴ In effect, Hartley's report had identified and reinforced what they already knew - the logistic system was under pressure and struggling to respond to simultaneous demands. Hartley's concern for the living standards of the troops that he had assigned to InterFET was understandable. However, Cosgrove and his logistic commanders and staff were trying to make an ADF logistic and movements system work after a decade of down-sizing, commercialisation and artificial exercise rehearsal. Compounding this problem was the inability of Mueller and his business units to set up and operate a supply chain at short notice to meet the challenges of *Warden* and *Stabilise*.

¹⁵⁹ Major General J.C. Hartley, 'Logistic Problems – East Timor', LCAUST OU05279/99, 6 November 1999, K99-00405, NAA, Sydney. Copy held by author.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁶³ Brigadier J.B. Wilkinson, Discussions with author in November 1999.

¹⁶⁴ Cavenagh, Interview. Cousins, Interview. Kehoe, Interview. McManus, Interview.

Throughout November, logisticians at all levels worked long hours to reduce the backlog of supplies, to build stocks before the wet season set in and to push through camp stores and other amenities to improve the living conditions of those in the field. For example, 2 RAR received a full complement of stretchers, tents, camp stores, such as chairs and tables, and duckboards by 12 November, eight weeks after they had landed in Dili.¹⁶⁵ The week before, backlogs in demands for spare parts and other critical items had been overcome. Mail was regular. A canteen service and showers were available every day in Balibo and Maliana, the two major Australian bases on the border.¹⁶⁶ The Joint Amenities Unit was operating in Dili providing stock for canteens at all the major bases, a duty-free service for returning troops, Interflora and video hire. Local labour had been hired in most locations to do laundry, and to clean kitchens, toilets, accommodation and working areas. All kitchens produced high quality food and were supported by an efficient fresh food resupply system.¹⁶⁷

On 22 October, Major General Mueller had agreed to a transition plan for McManus's FSG to hand over most logistic support responsibilities to SCA. Mueller authorised transfers of personnel from logistic units from all around Australia to Darwin, as well as bringing ADF reserve personnel onto full-time service. By 12 November, Wilkinson had met with Mueller's staff to finalise transition arrangements. The intention was to move coordination of the supply chain from Darwin to Sydney (DNSDC) now that everyone knew when, where and what supplies and services would be required in East Timor. Staff at Mueller's northern supply unit (JLU-N) was augmented to enable it to be a forward supply organisation and terminal for InterFET. By 15 December, Major General Mueller and SCA had taken over logistic responsibilities for *Stabilise* and a more conventional logistic system replaced Wilkinson's interim arrangements.

Though there was still nine weeks to go before InterFET would be relieved by UN forces on 23 February 2000, the InterFET mission had been accomplished by mid-December. Indeed, InterFET had been a garrison force since mid-October. The redeployment and reconstitution of Australian InterFET force elements was well planned and executed. Staff at HQ InterFET applied lessons from *Solace* for preparation of vehicles and equipment to Australian quarantine standards before

¹⁶⁵ Mele, Interview.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Cousins, Interview.

returning to Australia.¹⁶⁸ There was plenty of time to plan, set up and conduct cleaning and packing operations. Based on outcomes, InterFET was an outstanding success. Based on processes, there was much for the ADF to reflect on.

Reflections

In November 1999, senior ADF officers and Defence officials reflected on pre-deployment preparation, deployment and initial InterFET operations.¹⁶⁹ The major issues were command and control and the performance of the ADF logistic system. From the perspective of command and control, the consensus was that *ad hoc* and secretive planning processes and a late change to command and control arrangements were unhelpful. There was a call for a review of the role of HQ AST and criticism of the uneven flow of information from the Strategic Command Group (SCG). There were also criticisms of intelligence collection and evaluation. One service chief commented that DIO only offered 'classified news' readily available in the media and that the 'intelligence requirements of SCG had never been communicated to DIO'.¹⁷⁰ There was evidence that logistic and communications staff functions at ADHQ were dysfunctional and that staff capability and crisis management structures as well as communications and information security within Defence and from Defence to other Government departments were unsatisfactory.¹⁷¹ One report commented that, 'The transition from a foreign policy crisis to a whole of Government crisis was not well handled and Defence's lead role in managing a peace enforcement operation was not recognised by other departments'.¹⁷²

On 24 November 1999, Air Vice Marshal Treloar submitted a report on Theatre Command for higher level consideration.¹⁷³ He affirmed that Theatre Command was working well and would work even better when component commanders were collocated in one building, 'a logical outcome of current ADF capability evolution. ... The collocated Headquarters will be structured for war but adapted for peace'.¹⁷⁴ He

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Classified sources, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷⁰ Classified sources, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷¹ Classified sources, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷² Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷³ Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, 'Theatre Headquarters', HQAST 01568/99, 24 November 1999, 623-11-1.HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁷⁴ Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, 'The Form and Function of HQAST', HQ AST 01570/99, 24 November 1999, p. 14, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

also emphasised that 'the importance of the DJFHQ can not be overstated'.¹⁷⁵ He noted, however, that 'Other than a liaison officer from Air Force and Navy there are currently no non-Army personnel in DJFHQ's joint staff; the core of the HQ and of any JTFHQ'.¹⁷⁶

There was also consensus among senior ADF officers that there was room for improvement of arrangements for command and control of logistic support. Higher level logistic planning processes had also proved to be inadequate.¹⁷⁷ There was a strong case for appointing a permanent strategic logistic component commander at ADHQ in Canberra.¹⁷⁸ There was also comment that Brigadier Wilkinson had been more of a joint logistic coordinator, rather than a joint logistic commander.¹⁷⁹ He never had authority over maritime or air force logistic units or assets. In effect, navy and air force had operated their own supply chains to their force elements, using their own vessels and aircraft, while also endeavouring to meet Wilkinson's requirements for land forces. Once again, the joint movements system (IJMOVGP) had acted as a booking agent and coordination centre rather than a regulatory agency that managed priorities on behalf of commanders. Thus, Wilkinson never had control of the means to move personnel and supplies to the right places at the right time, or over mounting base operations in Darwin.

The ADF contemplated its experiences from *Spitfire*, *Warden* and *Stabilise* over the following months of 2000. There were several events organised to examine logistic lessons.¹⁸⁰ By September 2000, the newly appointed Commander Joint Logistics (CJLOG), Major General P.F. Haddad, and Air Vice Marshal C.M. Hingston, Head National Support, had written a paper entitled, 'National Support and Theatre Sustainment – Lessons from East Timor'. It addressed command and control, logistic

¹⁷⁵ Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, 'The Form and Function of DJFHQ', HQAST 01569/99, 24 November 1999, p. 1, 623-11-2, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁷⁷ Classified sources, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷⁸ Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁷⁹ Classified source, Defence Archives, Queanbeyan.

¹⁸⁰ HQ AST, Augmented Theatre Commanders' Meeting, 21 February 2000. The agenda item was 'Logistic Lessons from Operations in East Timor', SCA Conference, 24 February 2000, Presentation 'Logistic Observations for Operations in East Timor 1999 to 2000'. HQ AST, 'OP Stabilise – Lessons Learnt Seminar', 1 March 2000.

management systems, combat service support capabilities, supply chain performance, civil support capability and international arrangements and agreements.¹⁸¹

Their main argument was that if logisticians from Melbourne had been involved early in planning processes in Canberra, extant logistic support arrangements would have worked. Haddad and Hingston deplored Wilkinson's appointment at HQ AST. They argued that Wilkinson had:

blurred accountabilities, and further complicated a fragile supplier/customer relationship between SCA business units [such as DNSDC and JLU-N] and INTERFET.¹⁸² Further, some of these arrangements also resulted in a duplication of effort, and a tendency of the ADF to fall back on its traditional single Service processes.¹⁸³

They went on to opine that Wilkinson's deployment of McManus and 9 FSB to Darwin and the creation of his Force Support Group, including TEDS, 'resulted in a high degree of inefficiency at a critical period in the deployment [of InterFET]' and 'uncoordinated effort'.¹⁸⁴ In short, Wilkinson's arrangements were 'overly complex and inefficient'.¹⁸⁵ They concluded that the recent establishment of the new Joint Logistic Command (JLC) and the appointment of Haddad as CJLOG 'should address these shortcomings' in the command and control of logistic support to ADF operations.

Haddad and Hingston noted that current logistic management systems had not worked satisfactorily for offshore operations in East Timor and criticised the use of stand alone systems, such as LNIDS, that had been developed by Wilkinson and his staff to automate resupply processes for *Bel Isi*. Their solution was to allocate more funds to upgrade SDSS and to support Major General Haddad's Supply Chain Management Project.¹⁸⁶ They also noted that 'the Achilles heel of the ADF's ability to sustain operations' was lack of 'organic logistic capability' and sufficient specialist staff in the services.¹⁸⁷ Their solution was to recommend that the Deputy Secretary – Strategy 'review the adequacy of its [army's] organic support force structure by modelling future force options against realistic contingencies'.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ Major General P.F. Haddad and Air Vice Marshal C.M. Hingston, 'National Support and Theatre Sustainment – Lessons from East Timor', 6 September 2000, classified file, Defence Archives Queanbeyan. Copy held by author. (Note. Reference itself is not classified.)

¹⁸² *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 3.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p. 5.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

Haddad and Hingston concluded that there had been too many logistic forward operating bases for *Stabilise*.¹⁸⁹ This assessment echoed persistent comments by SCA staff that the resupply chain was too 'Darwin-centric' and that DNSDC in Sydney, should have been the hub for the supply chain to *Stabilise*.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, Haddad and Hingston implied that SCA could have provided far superior force sustainment to *Stabilise* without the Darwin and Townsville forward operating bases had Major General Mueller and the environmental logistic support commanders and their staffs as well as Colonel P.J. Haddad, Commander, DNSDC, been included in initial planning for *Spitfire* and *Warden*.

In sum, Haddad and Hingston blamed the strategic level of command for not properly warning and including Major General Mueller and logisticians at SCA in the initial planning for the force projection to East Timor. This exclusion left extant logistic arrangements unable to respond effectively and resulted in Brigadier Wilkinson having to set up *ad hoc*, inefficient and complicated arrangements. In effect, Haddad and Hingston were stating that the same Melbourne and Sydney-based logistic organisations that had failed to manage the supply chain satisfactorily for *Solace*, *Lagoon* and *Bel Isi* would have delivered a superior service for *Stabilise*, if there had been more time to plan at the beginning.¹⁹¹

On November 2000, Defence Minister Moore wrote to Admiral Barrie questioning the direction the ADF was going with Theatre Command and all of its financial implications in light of *Warden*.¹⁹² Admiral Barrie put the onus of reply on Air Vice Marshal Treloar, who in turn requested Brigadier M. Paramor, his newly arrived Chief of Staff to draft a letter.¹⁹³ Treloar's reply asserted that 'recombining' the operational and strategic levels of command 'would be problematic as each level needs to respond to different imperatives'.¹⁹⁴ The strategic level needed to provide military political and operational advice to government and to direct strategic level joint and

¹⁸⁹ Haddad and Hingston, p. 5.

¹⁹⁰ Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Murray and Lieutenant Colonel S.K. Dickens, E-mails to and from SCA September 1999 – December 1999. Copies held by author.

¹⁹¹ Headquarters Logistic Command (HQ LOGCOMD) in Melbourne and the Moorebank Logistic Group in Sydney had supported *Solace* unsatisfactorily in 1993. For *Lagoon*, Moorebank Logistic Group had become Defence National Supply and Distribution Centre (DNSDC) and this centre and HQ LOGCOMD provided unsatisfactory support. For *Bel Isi*, HQ LOGCOMD had become Headquarters Support Command- Australia (HQ SCA), and this headquarters and DNSDC provided unsatisfactory support.

¹⁹² Minister of Defence, The Hon J. Moore, Copy of unreferenced letter to Admiral C.A. Barrie, 9 November 2000, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁹³ Brigadier M. Paramour discussions with the author in November 2000.

combined planning, as well as interact with other government departments. The operational level needed to plan and conduct campaigns and optimise joint operational level war fighting. Indeed, during the force projection to East Timor, his headquarters had also commanded 22 other operations and activities, including Operation *Gold*, ADF support to the Sydney Olympic Games.¹⁹⁵

In regard to the projection to East Timor, Treloar pointed out that the situation there had developed quickly and that strategic planning had occurred under tight secrecy with limits to military options. Thus, in a very short amount of time, Strategic Command Division under Major General Keating had to build a coalition and execute a combined operation. This time constraint and the international nature of the operation resulted in raising Major General Cosgrove and his headquarters to the operational level as a coalition commander. However, the tasks left to HQ AST were ‘manifest, complex and critical’.¹⁹⁶ He and his staff had to coordinate operational level planning and concept development, act as a conduit for national commanders to participate in the coalition, coordinate force preparation for troop contributing nations and rotation of ADF contingents, direct force sustainment and support of all contingents participating in InterFET, plan and conduct 22 ongoing and supporting operations and direct ADF force reconstitution.

Treloar argued in his letter that he and his staff had freed up Admiral Barrie and ADHQ to control a politically sensitive operation that obviated any command and control ‘concerns of the coalition partners’. It also enabled Major General Cosgrove to have more direct access to the Australian Government in his role as a coalition commander. Thus, by-passing HQ AST facilitated initial coalition building and also allowed Treloar’s staff to concentrate on ‘critical force support requirements’.¹⁹⁷ The force projection to East Timor reinforced the utility of Theatre Command to meet an increased tempo of operations and allowed the strategic, operational and tactical levels of command to focus on appropriate ‘range of issues particular to their very different requirements’.¹⁹⁸ Accordingly, merging the strategic and operational levels of command would be a ‘retrograde step’.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Air Vice Marshal R.B. Treloar, ‘Response to Minister of Defence’, HQ AST 1305/00, 29 November 2000, 623-11-1, HQ AST, Potts Point.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 2.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

Reflections on command and control and logistic support arrangements for *Warden* and *Stabilise* were thorough. However, there were trends that echoed the failed efforts of the past to learn from operational experience and apply lessons to future operations. One trend was to change the form but not the substance of arrangements for executing the functions of force projection. For example, past operations demonstrated conclusively that there were fundamental problems with force sustainment of deployed forces. These problems were not cited in reports to justify changes. Another trend was not to look back to previous operations to verify what worked well and what needed to be changed. Senior defence committees seemed to examine and note what happened in the most recent operation, but not the cumulative evidence of problems from past operations to inform their deliberations on what might need to be done. The ADF did not appear to have a mechanism or organisation for analysing its operational performance objectively over time and identifying and acting on persistent systemic problems. In short, the ADF did not audit its operations.

Observations

Judged on outcomes, the rapid deployment of Special Forces and the 3rd Brigade group as the vanguard and advanced force respectively for InterFET was an outstanding success. Within 48 hours, over 1 500 combat troops and two squadrons of light armoured vehicles were on the ground, supported by battlefield and reconnaissance helicopters. After five days, Brigadier Evans was in a position to assert control of Dili and conduct forays into regional towns. On the seventh day, Major General Syahnakri handed over control of East Timor to Major General Cosgrove after withdrawing all but a small TNI garrison force. By that time, militia groups and their controllers were in West Timor. The Australian-led InterFET went on to accomplish its UN mandate in just over three weeks.

Judged on processes, the initial phases of *Stabilise* were further examples of flawed, *ad hoc* force projection with consequent increased risk. Serendipitous events, such as participation in *Faber*, the prospect of *Spitfire* and logistic experience gained on *Bel Isi*, rather than effective, well-rehearsed planning and preparation contributed to a level of readiness and intelligence not achieved for *Solace*, *Lagoon* or *Bel Isi*. Improvised supply chain management demonstrated that there was still some way to go before Australia could effectively and efficiently support either Australian territorial operations or operations further afield. Even after the appointment of a Logistic

Component Commander at HQ AST, each service organised its logistics separately. Neither Major General Cosgrove nor Brigadier Wilkinson commanded the means for resupply. However, maritime and air component commanders located with their staffs in HQ InterFET gave Cosgrove more control over logistic support than his predecessors, Major Generals Blake, Arnison and Hickling, who commanded *Solace*, *Lagoon* and *Bel Isi* respectively.

The ADF still struggled to synchronise joint command and control and logistic support, including movements and mounting base operations. Major General Connolly's mid-trial report in December 1998 had identified inadvertently why this was so.²⁰⁰ He assumed that the Australian theatre commander (COMAST) would be left to plan and prosecute campaigns.²⁰¹ The strategic level of command would be left 'to concentrate on those functions which can be met only at the strategic level', such as providing military strategic advice to and maintaining 'the military strategic interface with Government'.²⁰² In reality, when the strategic stakes were high, the chances of COMAST commanding ADF operations autonomously would be low.

Time would also be the enemy of Connolly's concept of Theatre Command. The use of warning time before *Stabilise* demonstrated that there was a difference between knowing about a forthcoming force projection and being able to prepare for it. This situation was further complicated in 1999, as was the case in 1965 and 1966, after there had been leaks of information to the media. The lesson from this historically persistent phenomenon was that some force elements had to be on high states of readiness and well-rehearsed for contingencies. Based on precedents since 1987, typical contingencies would be emergency evacuations of Australian nationals, participation in offshore military operations in the company of major allies and humanitarian disaster relief. Accordingly, in the army, SASR, 3rd Brigade and those units able to provide disaster relief, such as health support battalions and engineer regiments, had to be authorised to plan in secret early enough to avoid rushing specific force preparation and deployment. In the navy and air force, vessels and aircraft had to be readied in secret to support the movement, protection and sustainment of land forces.

Typically, secrecy in Canberra would impose limits on preparation and deployment times. Major General Connolly, guided by General Baker, had added another level of command that would leave tactical level planning staffs waiting for two

²⁰⁰ Connolly, 'Concept for Command of the Australian Theatre'.

²⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

levels of command above them, i.e. SCG and COMAST, to agree on a concept of operations. For politically and strategically sensitive operations this might take some time. The NSCC and SCG were unlikely to authorise tactical level contingency planning for these types of operations until cued to do so by external events, such as UN or American endorsement for an operation, or to react urgently to a crisis, as was the case for *Morris Dance*. The trend since 1987 had been for Government to give the ADF four weeks or less to prepare and deploy. In September 1999, Admiral Barrie established the precedent of by-passing the theatre level of command and forming a direct partnership between the strategic and operational levels of command during emergencies, or for strategically important operations.

Air Vice Marshal Treloar had echoed Connolly's expectations of sequential planning and devolution of decision making in his May 1999 report to COSC. He added a further assumption that was not sustainable when examined against the lessons from the Kangaroo series and the limited preparation and deployment times allowed for *Lagoon*, *Bel Isi* and *Stabilise*. Treloar characterised the ADF joint commander and his headquarters in Darwin (COMNORCOM and HQNORCOM) as a 'covering force', providing surveillance, protection, and response to minor incursions. He envisaged DJFHQ, or possibly an environmental headquarters, deploying forward to command operations in northern Australia on behalf of COMAST, not COMNORCOM and his headquarters. However, political sensitivities about flagging military intentions would leave DJFHQ or an environmental headquarters with very little time to move and take charge of joint operations in northern Australia. Forward deployment of headquarters had not worked for the Kangaroo series after months of planning. It was unlikely to work with a few weeks to plan and set up.

Both the Kangaroo series and *Stabilise* demonstrated that Darwin-based staff became fully occupied providing garrison services for visiting forces and acting as the interface between local authorities, industry, the populace and ADF force elements. While the northern supply unit (JLU-N) was the logical organisation for supply of Australian territorial and Inner Arc operations, the ADF's commander in Darwin, (COMNORCOM), a permanent commander with an established headquarters that had habitual relationships with local authorities and industry, was the logical commander for mounting base operations. Just as importantly, COMNORCOM could take control of

²⁰² Ibid, p. 1.

terminal operations and ensure that personnel and supplies moved in and out of Darwin, and further afield, following the intentions of a joint force commander.

Operations *Faber* and *Spitfire* served operations *Warden* and *Stabilise* well. These operations overcame the historical reluctance of higher levels of ADF command in the past to authorise timely operational and logistic reconnaissance and intelligence gathering. Operation *Faber* put ADF officers on the ground in East Timor in June. They provided first hand information and identified the nature of TNI covert operations there.²⁰³ They were also able to form important relationships with Martin and his UNAMET staff to make prudent preparations for evacuation immediately after the ballot.²⁰⁴ Operation *Spitfire* provided the stimulus to increase the readiness of the ADF, in general, and to create a joint evacuation force in northern Australia, in particular. Operation *Spitfire* planning and command and control arrangements focused Major General Cosgrove and DJFHQ on East Timor in June. The evacuation force was deployed early enough to acclimatise and rehearse the capabilities of all three services for a short notice projection into East Timor. Reinforcement of this force also stimulated logistic planning and a timely deployment of logisticians to Darwin to plan and support forward mounting base operations.

In many ways, *Bel Isi* also served *Warden* and *Stabilise* well. Wilkinson and his staff had been resupplying *Bel Isi* efficiently for almost 10 months by the time *Warden* was in the offing. There had also been five rotations of logisticians through Bougainville. They had conducted air resupply, water transport, maritime and air terminal operations, petroleum operations and provision of health and catering services under difficult climatic conditions. Hundreds of personnel who were to participate in *Spitfire*, *Warden* and *Stabilise* gained valuable experience.

Events in Darwin during the first critical 48 hours of InterFET deployment and subsequent difficulties with McManus's terminal operations demonstrated that movements arrangements for deployment as well as for mounting base operations did not work effectively and introduced significant risk should there have been an accidental clash between TNI and Australian troops in Dili in the first 48 hours. Given the unsatisfactory coordination of movements from the south and east coasts to the north for the Kangaroo series after months of planning, it was not surprising that there were movements problems in Darwin for the InterFET deployment, after just over a

²⁰³ Symon, 'OP Faber, Australian Service Contingent 1, Sitreps and Orders'.

²⁰⁴ Symon, Interview.

week of planning. Disruption of 3rd Brigade's deployment plan introduced unnecessary risk during the first critical 24 hours. There were political imperatives for media representatives and satellite communications to arrive in Dili on the first day. However, it was unnecessary to use aircraft to carry UNAMET staff and their vehicles to Dili when there were already a number of UN staff and hundreds of UN vehicles there already. It was also unnecessary to dispatch as many air force personnel and supplies to set up airport operations. There was sufficient staff and communications equipment in Dili already to control aircraft movements, under field conditions, until Dili was secure.²⁰⁵

The creation of the joint movements organisation, 1 JMOVGP, and its placement under theatre command (COMAST) had not solved coordination problems, let alone conflicts between priorities set by joint task force commanders, like Blake, Arnison and Hickling, and air force commanders. Commodore Bonser and his staff had operational control over movements staff in Darwin, but no control over C130 aircraft. Major General Cosgrove had command of *Warden* and *Stabilise*, but no control over the means for the deployment of his land forces. As a result, a high risk operation became riskier.

In the same way that Admiral Barrie by-passed Air Vice Marshal Treloar and HQ AST, the service chiefs by-passed Major General Mueller and his logistic headquarters in Melbourne (HQ SCA) when the strategic stakes were high and time was short. Like Treloar, Mueller commanded the maritime, land and air force logistic commanders but only had small staff groups to enable him to do so. Collegial relationships between his staff groups and more capable environmental staff groups were not enough to harness or effectively command joint logistic capabilities in support of *Spitfire*, *Warden* or *Stabilise*. Under pressure, the services set up their own supply chains and Wilkinson had to establish interim emergency-like logistic support arrangements for land forces until operations achieved a steady state. By 15 December 1999, supporting operations in East Timor was akin to running a peace-time base-to-base supply system. This was when Major General Mueller and his staff were prepared to take over.

The contribution of Major General Haddad and Air Vice Marshal Hingston to applying logistic support lessons from *Stabilise* did result in a helpful consolidation of

²⁰⁵ Indonesian air controllers operated the control tower in Dili during the day and the Australian Air Force Attaché, who had accompanied Colonel Brownrigg to Dili, and his staff operated communications equipment in the control tower after Indonesian staff had left for the day. Cameron, Interview.

joint logistic support management. Haddad became the joint logistic 'supremo' for operations within the structure of the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO). He commanded joint business units around Australia that supplied and were supplied from DNSDC in Moorebank. Thus, he was responsible to the CDF and COMAST for national, regional and international supply chains to agreed points and also to direct joint logistic operations beyond agreed points of delivery, through deployed logistic component commanders. Unlike Mueller, Haddad would be a permanent member of the SCG. He had a joint headquarters and a 24-hour Joint Logistic Centre in Melbourne that replaced Wilkinson's Logistic Management Centre in Randwick.

There were several aspects of these new arrangements that would warrant testing in the new century. The first was the simultaneous roles CJLOG would play at each level of command and for mounting base operations in places, such as Darwin and Townsville where land forces would be prepared for deployment. His first roles were to advise the CDF and act as a permanent Logistic Component Commander for COMAST. The mechanism for this advice would be the Theatre Administrative Planning Group (TAPG). This was the place where personnel management and logistic staff would meet with environmental logistic staff, accompanied by a liaison officer from the joint logistic centre in Melbourne (JLC), to provide input to COMAST administrative instructions to the environmental commanders. While advising the strategic and theatre levels of command, CJLOG was also commander of JLC responsible for the delivery of logistic support to an agreed point or points in or near Joint Force Areas of Operation. He commanded joint business units around Australia and DNSDC, that were collectively responsible for delivery of services and commodities, but he did not command some of the enabling infrastructure or the vessels and aircraft that would have to deploy forces and transport supplies.

Presumably, if DJFHQ deployed to northern Australia or offshore again, and a tactical level Logistic Component Commander was appointed, he or she would report to CJLOG. Also, reporting to CJLOG would be commanders responsible for mounting base operations in locations, such as Darwin or Townsville. He would be responsible for setting up and commanding reception, staging, onward movement and integration of force elements at points of entry overseas. Thus, his span of command would include managing the supply chain to an Australian territorial or offshore operation as well as mounting, staging and forward operating bases.

As a result of this centralisation of joint logistic command, CJLOG had simultaneous responsibilities in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne, as well as for mounting bases in Darwin and Townsville and forward operating and staging bases overseas. The only force sustainment function that CJLOG did not own or directly influence in 2000 was joint movements. Even after the difficulties encountered in Darwin for the initial phases of *Warden* and *Stabilise*, 1 JMOVGP remained under command of HQ AST in Sydney.

Thus, for a major national, regional or international force projection, CJLOG had a challenging span of command. He would have to engage personally and simultaneously with three levels of command and interact with the CDF, COMAST and his three environmental commanders who controlled logistic units, vessels and aircraft as well as one or more joint task force commanders and force logistic component commanders. He would have to set up and command mounting base operations and interact with managers of corporate support infrastructure groups and the commander of mounting base headquarters. He would also have to set up and command force protection and logistic operations to forward mounting, staging and operating bases, as well as ports and airports where personnel and matériel would be unloaded and prepared for onward movement. Inevitably, contractors will seek his time to offer their services and counterparts in coalition partners will also seek his input and advice. The question that arises from the projection to East Timor in 1999 is: Did anything change afterwards to facilitate the ADF being able to project force more promptly, efficiently, effectively and safely next time, especially if the Government again allowed only a few weeks to prepare and deploy?

After *Stabilise*, the ADF did not substantially adjust command and control arrangements for operations in 2000. The theatre level of command was left in place awaiting the collocation of the environmental commanders and their staffs in one building with COMAST and his staff. Concerns remained. Would there be sufficient time for the strategic level of command to delegate planning and conduct of campaigns and operations to COMAST and his staff? If there was sufficient time, would political circumstances allow the theatre level to conduct campaigns and operations without undue interference? Would the Australian Government wait for the passage of information from the tactical level through to the strategic level, via an intermediate level of command, when it was instantaneous from the tactical level to the world?

The ADF did change arrangements for logistics more substantially, but left historical weaknesses. The new CJLOG was left to compete for, but not command, enabling logistic resources. He had no assigned deployable logistic support headquarters or units. He commanded DNSDC, but not the means, such as navy vessels or service aircraft, to move stock along supply chains to deployed forces in the north of Australia or elsewhere. Joint Logistic Command consolidated force sustainment arrangements, but left CJLOG in charge of supporting too many functions simultaneously. There would be competing priorities within these functions as well as for the use of navy vessels and service aircraft.

So, despite ending the twentieth century with one of Australia's most strategically important and risky military force projections, the lessons were not applied again. Intuitively, one might have expected that a force projecting island nation like Australia would have become more and more proficient, having had opportunities for both rehearsal and practice for more than 100 years. The reverse was true - especially when allies were not in a position to help. During the decade leading up to *Stabilise*, the ADF was neither as proficient as it thought it was, nor as competent as it should have been. Operation *Stabilise* once again exposed historically persistent weaknesses in the enabling functions of force projection. Australia had depended on good luck and the resilience of junior leaders and small teams at tactical tipping points in 1942, on the Kokoda Track, and in 1966, at Long Tan in Vietnam, and had to do so again in the streets of Dili in 1999. For *Solace*, *Lagoon* and *Bel Isi*, deficiencies in force projection increased risk. The same increase in pressure occurred for *Stabilise*. Why was this so? Why were there still problems after 115 years of participation in the military emergencies and campaigns of allies?

In 1987, the Government announced that Australia's defence would be based on self-reliance and joint operations.²⁰⁶ At that time, Australia and its armed forces had been conditioned by just over 100 years of dependence on allies for the functions of force projection. Overcoming the legacy of this conditioning was the major challenge for self-reliant projection. Following the habits of 100 years, the ADF did not design, develop or rehearse all of the enabling functions – especially those that had been provided by allies, such as deployment, protection and force sustainment, during the late 1980s and the 1990s. The ADF preferred to rehearse force employment after arrival, rather than pre-deployment functions that would optimise arrival and subsequent

²⁰⁶ Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia*, pp. 1-2, pp. 60-2.

employment and sustainment. The major impediment to joint operations was 100 years of allies employing Australian contingents from the three services separately. The services clung to the experiences of the previous decades by preferring to exercise and operate separately, and resisting joint arrangements for their command, employment and sustainment.

Faulty force projection increased risk on operations in the late 1980s and the 1990s. While tactical level reports described the risks, higher levels of command appeared to be out of touch, favouring good news over bad. After all, operational outcomes were excellent and these operations enhanced Australia's military reputation. Consequently, there appeared to be only passing interest in the increased pressure put on the tactical level of command. There also appeared to be little enthusiasm or mechanisms for applying lessons. The ADF became a victim of its own success. Even when Governments decreased official warning time to an average of four weeks, force elements appeared to deploy on time and in good order, and accomplish their missions. Fortunately, no capable opponents awaited them that might have taken advantage of the unhelpful circumstances of their preparation, loading, deployment and subsequent supply chain management.

An alternate hypothesis is to link strategic guidance with deficiencies in force projection, and play down 100 years of conditioning and inter-service rivalry. Though it is not the purpose of this thesis to explore strategic level decision making and policy development, an examination of DOA87 does not reveal a direct link. The architect of DOA87, P. Dibb, correctly assessed that, 'Australia is one of the most secure countries in the world' and faced 'no identifiable military threat'.²⁰⁷ However, he did not advocate continental defence or isolationism. DOA87 left all three services with generic capabilities for force projection. In respect to land forces, it specified that, 'More emphasis will be given to highly mobile forces capable of rapid deployment'.²⁰⁸ Dibb saw Australia's geography as both a boon and a 'daunting task' for force projection.²⁰⁹ Remoteness from centres of global conflict and the sea and air gap around the continent, as well as self sufficiency in basic commodities, were blessings for Australian defence because they posed significant force projection challenges for

²⁰⁷ Paul Dibb, *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ Department of Defence, *Defence of Australia*, p. 63.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p. 3.

enemies.²¹⁰ However, the daunting task for the ADF would be self-reliant defence of Australian territorial sovereignty. Dibb envisioned Australia having to project military force over thousands of kilometres from the southern and eastern heartlands to the western and northern hinterland.²¹¹ To achieve this, Dibb recommended an emphasis on projecting maritime and air power with support from ground forces able to operate over 'vast distances' - within continental Australia - to defeat 'raiding groups'.²¹² While DOA87 assessed that the primary purpose of land force projection would be national, there were sufficient land force capabilities to enable both regional and international projection. Dibb recognised that logistics would underwrite force projection. He recommended pre-positioning both combat forces and 'integral ADF logistic capacities within operational areas in the north'.²¹³ He also identified the need for, 'sustained exercises in the north, supported by bases in the south, to test and identify weaknesses in our logistic train'.²¹⁴

After 100 years of dependency and separate service employment, the ADF found self reliance challenging and synchronising the services for joint operations difficult. Self reliance obligated Australian Governments to determine their own responses to regional and international events, and for Defence to offer viable military response options, within the context of Australia's enduring national interests. Governments could either facilitate effective force projection by making decisions quickly and communicating them efficiently, or equivocating and not articulating required strategic effects well. In the end, Governments and the ADF strategic level of command gave lower levels of command an average of four weeks official warning for regional and international force projection and the ADF was found wanting.

The problems encountered during the four weeks before deployment originated in a lack of practice. The crux was slow responses down the chain of command. Orders and instructions arrived too late to influence tactical level preparations and deployment. The ADF did not rehearse the use of warning time, planning processes, joint command and control, force protection, tactical deployment or force sustainment under simulated operational conditions. Flawed rehearsal became defective performance. The strategic

²¹⁰ Ibid. See p. 1 for geographic advantages and p. 2 for economic advantages of self sufficiency in basic commodities.

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 3.

²¹² Ibid. See pp. 7-9 for emphasis on projecting and defending with maritime and air power and p. 10 for organisation, disposition and mobility of ground forces.

²¹³ Ibid, p. 12.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

and operational levels of command shrouded warning time in secrecy and then rushed planning. Planners imposed arbitrary and disruptive caps on numbers in land force elements and made *ad hoc* force command arrangements. There was insufficient preparation and reconnaissance. Though a small unit assisted land force elements after 1991, tactical commanders had to rely on their own initiative and resourcefulness to prepare their forces, and special pleading to secure additional resources for force preparation and capability enhancements before deployment.

Lead joint commanders nominated mounting authorities and mounting headquarters. However, the army did not have doctrine or practiced procedures for mounting base operations. There was no over-arching ADF machinery for synchronising joint logistic preparation or personnel administration, except through collegial cooperation at the tactical level. Logisticians were under pressure to concentrate stocks for ship loading at short notice, often at great expense and always with unsatisfactory coordination. The consequence of rushing planning, preparation and deployment was increased risk at sea off Fiji in May 1987 and off Bougainville in October 1994. For land projections to Somalia, Bougainville and East Timor, troops arrived tired, under-rehearsed and with an unnecessarily incomplete understanding of what lay ahead. Yet they were required to perform well immediately, under intense media scrutiny. The results of increasing risk could have been casualties, diminution of Australia's military reputation, and some political and diplomatic embarrassment. Fortunately, ADF force elements were not facing opponents or circumstances on arrival that took advantage of their fatigue and lack of situational awareness.

The challenge for each CDF in the late 1980s and the 1990s was to overcome the impediments of 100 years of conditioned dependence and inter-service rivalry. The Australian services maintained separate command and sustainment systems, and trained for independent employment until the early 1980s. Sir Philip Bennett's successors did their best to exercise their statutory authority to command assigned forces from the services for operations. The services resisted. Successive Kangaroo exercises failed to bring the three services under joint command or to establish efficient joint movements and sustainment arrangements. There was no testing of the logistic train. Once again, faulty rehearsal contributed to defective performance on operations. The navy and air force did not support a land operation in Somalia satisfactorily in 1993, despite General Gration ordering them to provide vessels and aircraft for sustainment. Major General

Blake had responsibility for operational outcomes in Somalia, but not the enabling authority over navy vessels and service aircraft to support his deployed force.

After experimenting with improvised arrangements in 1992 and 1995 on Kangaroo exercises, General Baker appointed a permanent theatre commander and raised a theatre headquarters in Sydney in 1996. The aim was to create a separate, as well as a geographically separated, operational level of command to plan and conduct joint campaigns and operations. The assumption was that interaction under a theatre commander would encourage the development of a culture of inter-service cooperation among environmental commanders. Indeed, the eventual aim was to collocate environmental headquarters under the theatre commander in one facility. The problem was that there was insufficient time for development of strategic guidance and subsequent devolution of planning and decision-making to a theatre level of command. Experience showed that four weeks was not long enough for another level of command between the strategic, operational and tactical level to receive and convert strategic guidance into orders and instructions and prepare force elements for deployment. Collegial cooperation between staff at the environmental headquarters and small coordinating staff groups at the theatre headquarters neither facilitated prompt force projection nor better logistics. Major General Hickling, the lead joint commander for operations in Bougainville in 1997, could not rely on HQ AST to give him sufficient guidance and warning time before deployment. Subsequently, he could not rely on his environmental colleagues to provide his desired rate of maritime or air resupply effort or effect.

The projection to East Timor in 1999 also demonstrated that, when time was short and political and strategic stakes were high, there would be circumscribed devolution of command to a theatre level. The CDF, Admiral Barrie, delegated national, not operational command, to his theatre commander, Air Vice Marshal Treloar. Arguably, his successors would most likely do so again in similar circumstances. Media scrutiny of this projection also epitomised the instantaneous visibility of the tactical level to a world-wide audience and scores of commentators. The operational commander in East Timor, Major General Cosgrove, communicated directly to this audience, as well as directly to Barrie and his senior staff. There was a limited role for Treloar and his headquarters. The argument that having Treloar and headquarters in the chain of command freed Barrie to command this strategically important operation by continuing to command 22 on-going operations was thin. In

reality, the three environmental headquarters had a closer relationship to those operations than theatre staff. There is some substance in an argument that Treloar commanded ADF assets that were on standby in case there was interference with the InterFET deployment, but it would have been most unlikely that he would have had the freedom to respond to a threat. Admiral Barrie and Prime Minister Howard would most likely have exercised command and control of operations against Indonesian forces.

The other problematic argument justifying a separate and separated theatre level of command was that Treloar coordinated logistics for the East Timor projection. In reality, neither he, nor his logistic counterpart in Melbourne, Major General Mueller, meaningfully coordinated force sustainment, which largely reverted to service control. Improvised and unrehearsed logistic arrangements applied for three months during the most critical period of the InterFET projection. The Land Commander, Major General Hartley, and Treloar's Logistic Component Commander, Brigadier Wilkinson, had to make *ad hoc* arrangements during this period for managing mounting and forward operating bases, as well as the supply chain.

Joint force commanders, who were usually army officers, were unable to control logistic priorities or the vessels and aircraft they needed to deploy and sustain their forces. For their part, ADF logisticians and the navy and air force did not rehearse short notice tactical deployment of land forces or joint supply chain management. The ADF movements system moved troops and matériel administratively for major field exercises and for offshore operations. Deploying troops were passengers on haphazardly loaded navy vessels and administratively loaded air force and commercial aircraft. Fortunately, for these projections, there was time to unload and reorganise after arrival, and to move tactically thereafter. It did not matter that commanders, who were responsible for operational outcomes, did not control loading or the means for deployment. There was no substantial military contest awaiting their forces on arrival.

Circumstances in Somalia in 1993 showed that leaving the navy and air force to set priorities for their support of joint operations could increase risk for land forces. Navy and air force control of a maritime helicopter and C130 aircraft respectively reduced aero-medical evacuation and resupply options for Australian troops. Delivery of cargo to Mogadishu, 240 kilometres away from the Australian base at Baidoa, impeded operations and increased risk. Arguably, an 11-day staged withdrawal from Somalia was riskier than a 72-hour clean break.

The penalties for operational commanders not having firmer control over logistic priorities and the means of deployment and resupply could have been high in September 1999. The projection to East Timor required efficient and precise tactical loading and deployment. While the navy and air force did not have competing priorities for previous projections, both services did for the InterFET deployment because of the posture of Indonesian maritime and air force elements, in general, and limited airport infrastructure in Dili, in particular. Fortunately, the navy had capacity to assign transport vessels exclusively in support of the InterFET deployment. However, there were competing priorities for the use of service aircraft flying into Dili. Neither Major General Cosgrove nor his tactical land force commander, Brigadier Evans, had control of these priorities. Consequent delays in getting troops and initial supplies to Dili increased risk significantly. If out-numbered Australian troops had become involved in an accidental escalation of hostilities in Dili on 20 or 21 September 1999, they would have run out of ammunition and potentially taken and inflicted heavy casualties – a tactical set back that would have had significant strategic, diplomatic and political repercussions.

Control of the enablers was the root problem for deploying and sustaining deployed land forces. Service chiefs and their logistic support commanders were not in the chain of command for ADF operations, but they controlled logistics. This was not a major issue for navy and air force. These services owned transport assets to support their organic logistic capabilities. They routinely practised force sustainment under operational conditions. Both services were competent in independent deployment and distant logistic support, including supply of spare parts. The army was a dependent service bereft of the means for deployment and resupply, and under-rehearsed in supply chain management. After Defence established a commercialised and joint distribution centre in Sydney (DNSDC) as well as joint logistic business units (JLU) around Australia in the 1990s, the army lost control of much of its organic logistic infrastructure and became another customer. Offshore land operations competed for logistic support with navy and air force priorities as well as with the needs of domestic training and base-to-base supply. Accordingly, force sustainment was not pushed to land operations by commanders responsible for operational outcomes but had to be pulled from service chiefs, their logistic commanders and departmental managers, amidst competing priorities.

Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, after over 100 years of dependence on allies for sustainment and independent service employment, and just under 30 years aspiring to self reliance and a joint and commercial logistic culture for operations, ADF logistics was still not working satisfactorily. New arrangements that were put in place in 2000 after the projection to East Timor awaited testing in the new century.

During the 1990s, Australia's second strategic priority after command, control and communications, was intelligence gathering and evaluation. The focus was on conventional threats to the homeland. However, there was an intention to improve intelligence support for operations. Once again gaps in rehearsal contributed to poor operational performance. The ADF did not practise providing force protection. Planners did not issue joint intelligence collection or surveillance plans for the Kangaroo series of exercises. There was no accompanying force protection operation for the projection to Somalia. Contingents of Australian troops were vulnerable on arrival at Mogadishu. Deploying with insufficient intelligence support and force protection increased risk during the hours, days and weeks after arrival when situational awareness was low, potential threat was high and tactical tipping points were emergent under media scrutiny. Lieutenant Colonel Hurley had to request improvements to intelligence support in Somalia after arrival. Intelligence support did not work well for projections to Bougainville in 1994 and 1997, increasing risk. Fortunately, both diplomatic staff and Special Force personnel were on hand for reception and force protection for arriving InterFET troops in Dili in September 1999.

The crux of the problem was control over priorities and assets. For projections to Somalia and Bougainville, lead joint commanders and their deployed subordinates did not have control over intelligence assets, communications or the rate of effort. There appeared to be both competing priorities and a culture at DIO that emphasised strategic rather than tactical support. The emphasis also appeared to be on technical rather than human intelligence. Tactical level reports from Somalia and Bougainville suggested that the emphasis should have been better balanced, or possibly the other way around.

At the beginning of the twenty first century, the ADF was still struggling to institutionalise self-reliant joint force projection. More comprehensive rehearsal in the latter decades of the twentieth century might have moved the paradigm from projecting maritime, land and air power separately, sequentially or by exception, to creating

methods and means for projecting littoral power.²¹⁵ For national projection, better rehearsal might have facilitated joint manoeuvre, sustainment and application of decisive joint firepower. For regional projection, it might have resulted in more effective maritime and air support of land operations. For international projection, it might have facilitated the provision of more effective national command arrangements and more efficient joint logistic support to deployed maritime, land and air force elements.

All of the Australian force projections of the twentieth century were successful and enhanced Australia's military reputation. Arguably, if Australia continued as a dependent ally and did not aspire to self reliant defence and joint operations, the *status quo* would suffice. However, circumstances in 1942 and 1966 and during the late 1980s and the 1990s required Australia to project force independently and demanded inter service cooperation. This thesis shows that independent projections in the late 1980s and the 1990s were successful, but there was room for improvement. The challenge for the twenty first century would be to reduce the level of difficulty the ADF was having with force projection in the latter two decades of the twentieth century.

²¹⁵ See Chapter 1 note 25 for a definition of littoral power.

Conclusion

Australia is a lucky country run mainly by second-rate people who share its luck. It lives on other people's ideas, and although its ordinary people are adaptable, most of its leaders (in all fields) so lack curiosity about the events that surround them that they are often taken by surprise.

Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country*, 1964¹

The historian has actual men and women, real characters, crowds and choruses as the subject of his work; and it seems to me that if he cannot see that their qualities, motives and ideas in interplay combine to produce vast actual drama in the rise and fall and other vicissitudes of nations, then he is inadequate for his real task. Surely, especially at times such as the present, men and women look to the historian to tell them, as far as possible, not the partisan view of a period or an episode; it is difficult for them to shut their ears to the din of party propaganda, both honest and charlatan. The guidance which they seek is surely that of someone who will at least attempt to exhibit to them events, causes and results as they actually happened on the world stage. And if the historian cannot write that drama in its full truth, with the interplay of good and ill, wisdom and folly, all parties working to its complex conclusion, then so much less the historian he.²

C.E.W. Bean, 22 February 1938

From the perspective of military force projection, Australia's luck and time is running out. When Donald Horne wrote, *The Lucky Country*, he had in mind that, while other nations were becoming cleverer, Australia was still relying for its prosperity on the luck of its geographic, climatic, agricultural and geological circumstances. He called for Australia to become more innovative and proactive in shaping its future and making decisions in its national interests.³ Militarily, Australia has also been lucky rather than clever. At two historic tactical tipping points in 1942 and 1966, the nation

¹ Donald Horne, *The Lucky Country*, Terra Nova, Melbourne, 1964, p.220.

² C.E.W. Bean, 'The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War', p. 21.

³ For some views on Horne's legacy of ideas see Macgregor Duncan, Andrew Leigh and David Madden, 'Wise Hedgehogs and Clever Foxes', 19 September 2005, ON-line Opinion, <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=195>, Anne Henderson, 'Still the Lucky Country, Never Was, Still Isn't', Address to National Archives, 2 March 2003, <http://www.naa.gov.au/exhibitions/events/henderson.html>, and John Mulvaney, 'Still A Lucky Country?', Presentation to National Archives, 15 April 2003, <http://www.naa.gov.au/exhibitions/events/mulvaney.html>.

depended on good fortune prevailing over incompetence. Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, the ADF was fortunate that more capable opponents or more demanding circumstances did not put deployed land forces under more pressure. Operations that should have been trouble free dry runs for force projection were bedevilled by persistent deficiencies and unnecessary risks. Good luck and resilience of junior leaders and small teams avoided strategic and political embarrassment.

Time is running out because Australia's geographic advantages are no longer as significant in protecting the nation from attack as they used to be. The worldwide jihadist threat to Western interests and moderate Islam does not depend on invading maritime and air armadas for success. Jihadists are sophisticated, learning enemies employing barbaric but astute tactics that produce strategic effects. The attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001 are exemplars. They infiltrate borders, as well as nesting in the homelands of their adversaries before striking unexpectedly. The London Underground attacks in 2005 are examples. They learn from their operations and strike again, as experiences in Bali in 2002 and 2005 as well as the ongoing bombing campaign in Iraq testify. They need to be fought by learning organisations and capable intelligence systems within 'whole of nation' security efforts. This thesis concludes that, from the perspective of force projection, the ADF was not a learning organisation and did not have capable intelligence systems at the turn of the century. The need for several inquiries into Australian intelligence in recent years suggests that the thesis is not alone in this assessment.⁴

Time is also running out because Australia's security circumstances are likely change.⁵ So far, Australian Governments have been able to offer allies token

⁴ Inquiries in 2003 and 2004 by successive Inspector Generals Intelligence and Security, Mr W. Blick and Mr I. Carnell. Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies by Mr Philip Flood in 2005. For documentation and correspondence, see <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications.cfm>.

⁵ While it is useful to examine Australian Government documents related to Australia's security circumstances and expectations for the future, it is also instructive to examine United States and British assessments of global security issues and the consequent American and British strategic postures under the present administrations in documents such as, George W. Bush, 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', The White House, March 2006, George W. Bush, 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', The White House, 17 September 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html> accessed on 17 April 2006, United States Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report, 6 February 2006, United States Department of Defense, The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America, Department of Defense, Washington DC, March 2004, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 'The National Military Strategy of the United States of America: A Strategy for Today; A Vision for Tomorrow', Department of Defense, 2004, Department of Defense, 'Annual Report to Congress, The Military Power of the People's Republic of China 2005', Office of the Secretary of Defence, Washington DC, 2005. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/index.html> accessed 17 April 2006, and UK Ministry of Defence, *Delivering Security in a Changing World*, Defence White Paper, The Stationary Office, London, December 2003.

contributions to campaigns against jihadists in Iraq and Afghanistan. There may come a time when the United States Government insists on more substantial Australian commitments in more dangerous settings against jihadists, or in response to other military emergencies in countries such as Iran, North Korea and Taiwan.⁶ Regional emergencies may also require Australia to respond rapidly into dangerous and volatile environments.⁷ At the time of writing, jihadists have not attacked Australia. There may come a time when the Australian Government orders a prompt, strong and smart response to an attack in the homeland. The Government may also require the ADF to pre-empt an attack at short notice that is being mounted regionally or internationally. Based on this thesis, the ADF may be found wanting, because it has continually failed to apply lessons from its own operational history.

In 2003, the CDF, General P.J. Cosgrove, opined that 'the Australian Defence Force has come a long way in recent years. In my view, we have positioned ourselves as a modern, professional military organisation through the quality of our work'.⁸ He announced that the vision for the future was encapsulated in a Future Warfighting Concept that emphasised and enhanced previous concepts contained in another Defence guidance document, *Force 2020*, of the Seamless Force, effects-based operations and network centric warfare.⁹ The accompanying booklet to Cosgrove's covering letter offered that:

This approach seeks to apply strength against weakness. It values surprise and deception. It requires an ability to act fast, to reach out to the critical place at the right time, and create simultaneous problems that an adversary cannot resolve. In order to fight this way, the ADF will need the ability to be deployed and sustained at home and at a distance. ... The ADF's ability to project power within Australia and its adjacent air and sea space remains vital;

⁶ At a recent conference on Next Generation Threats, Professor R.J. O'Neill, former Chichele Professor of the History of War, All Souls College, University of Oxford, former Chairman of the Council of Institute of Strategic Studies and inaugural Chairman of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute offered that it was possible that Australian forces could be asked to participate in US-led operations in Iran, North Korea and Taiwan. Patrick Walters, 'Our troops "facing three wars"', the *Australian*, 26 October 2005.

⁷ Australian Government views on Australia's concerns for the South Pacific region are described in Department of Defence, *National Security: A Defence Update*, Canberra, 2003, pp. 19-22, <http://www.defence.gov.au/ans2003/index.htm>.

⁸ Department of Defence, *Future Warfighting Concept*, Canberra, 2003, <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/fwc.pdf>, Foreword.

⁹ Department of Defence, *Force 2020*, Canberra, 2002, <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/f2020.pdf>. Department of Defence, *Future Warfighting Concept*, Foreword and p. 1.

but the need to be capable of deploying forces overseas – generally as part of a coalition – remains important.¹⁰

This is the credo of modern force projection that echoed an earlier Defence publication, *The Australian Approach to Warfare* that stated ‘whilst Australia’s posture is defensive, we should seek to attack hostile forces as far from our shores as possible’.¹¹ The importance of force projection in support of allies was stated in *National Security: A Defence Update* in 2003 that was produced in response to the changing world security environment, precipitated in part by the successful jihadist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001.¹² In 2005, at the Inaugural Australian Strategic Policy Institute International Conference, ‘Australia’s Defence and Security: Challenges and Opportunities at the Start of the 21st Century’, the Defence Minister, Senator R. Hill, stated:

The role of the expeditionary force might have changed, but the need to be able to project our military forces – in meeting today’s security challenges, is as vital as ever – possibly more so. This was recognised by the Howard Government in its 2000 White paper which endorsed a program to significantly enhance our joint force expeditionary capacity.¹³

However, in 2003, three years after its last lucky force projection to East Timor and the publication of *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, the ADF demonstrated once again that its structure, processes and procedures were impediments to acting fast, reaching out to the critical place at the right time, and deploying and sustaining at a distance.¹⁴ Post operational reports from Operation *Anode*, a regional projection of a 2 500-strong Australian-led combined force to the Solomon Islands to support a restoration of law and order, confirms this thesis’s conclusion that the ADF is not a learning organisation and has the wrong structures and processes for force

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 2, 16. Also see pp. 36-7 for descriptions of the requirements for force deployment, force protection and force generation and sustainment.

¹¹ Ibid, See pp. 15, 18 for ‘Internal Benchmarks’ of force projection. Quote is from Department of Defence, *The Australian Approach to Warfare*, Canberra, 2002, p. 20, <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications/taatw.pdf>.

¹² Department of Defence, *National Security*, pp. 13, 23.

¹³ Senator Robert Hill, Speech to Australian Strategic Policy Institute Inaugural International Conference, ‘Australia’s Defence and Security: Challenges and Opportunities at the Start of the 21st Century’, 14 September 2005, <http://www.defence.gov.au/media/index.cfm>.

¹⁴ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, presented to Parliament by the Minister of Defence the Hon John Moore, Australia Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 2000. <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper>.

projection.¹⁵ The Government gave the ADF four weeks to prepare and deploy in July 2003 after contemplating its options in secrecy for several months. There was a familiar and lamentable pattern of the Government and the ADF not using warning time effectively, followed by rushed planning, reconnaissance and preparation, haphazard ship loading, number capping and raising *ad hoc* headquarters.¹⁶ Orders and instructions took too long to produce and did not influence preparations and deployment.¹⁷ Good luck favoured this operation. No capable opponents awaited arrival. There were no substantial consequences from what were now becoming traditional problems with logistics, except that Australian and regional troops were inconvenienced and endured unnecessarily austere living conditions for four weeks.¹⁸

Is this thesis too pernicky? Will there always be difficulties and risks with military operations? Indeed, do military operations always depend for their success on the resilience of junior leaders and small teams? Should a middle ranking power like Australia aspire to self reliance? Allies have and will continue to underwrite Australia's defence. Is it understandable and unremarkable that Australia began the twentieth century as a dependent British ally and finished 100 years later as a dependent American ally? Does the thesis over-emphasise the opinions of eyewitnesses at the tactical level and their post-operations reports as well as other evidence from departmental files? Surely these are minority views lacking a broader perspective? The majority view, endorsed by both senior Defence committees and successive governments, is that the ADF has performed very well on operations during the late 1980s and the 1990s and will continue to do so into the new century.¹⁹

¹⁵ Lieutenant Colonel J.J. Frewen, 'Combined Joint Task Force 635 (CTF 635) Post Operation Report (POR) – OP Anode, 24 Jul – 18 Nov 03', Guadalcanal Beach Resort, Solomon Islands, 21 January 2004, Addressed to COMAST (Rear Admiral M.F. Bonser). Frewen was Commander Combined Task Force 635 from 24 July-19 November 2003. Copy held by author. Air Commodore D.G. Green, 'Operation Anode Evaluation Report', ADFWC 120-21-1, January 2004. Copy held by author. This was a report drafted for Air Commodore Green by Lieutenant Colonel P.R. Tyrell, who led a Theatre Evaluation Team from the ADF Warfare Centre during the pre-deployment and deployment phase of Operation *Anode*. Tyrell submitted it for signature in January 2004 before departing on long service leave. It is a frank critique. To the author's knowledge, Tyrell's report was not signed and distributed. Army Headquarters, 'Operational Evaluation of the Tactical Level Land Specific Aspects of Operation Anode', 12 December 2003. Copy held by author.

¹⁶ Frewen, 'Combined Joint Task Force 635', pp. 3-12. Tyrell, 'Operation Anode Evaluation Report', pp. 1-8. Army Headquarters, Operational Evaluation of the Tactical Level, Executive Summary, pp. 1-8.

¹⁷ Frewen, 'Combined Joint Task Force 635', p. 7.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹ See Department of Defence, *The War in Iraq: ADF Operations in the Middle East 2003*, Canberra, 2003. Department of Defence, *Winning in Peace Winning in War: The Australian Defence Force's Contribution to the Global Security Environment*, Canberra, 2004, <http://www.defence.gov.au/publications.cfm>.

Military operations are dangerous and difficult to manage. However, the imperative should be to minimise risk to one's own forces and maximise the risk to one's opponents. It is also important to ease the inevitable pressure on people who are being sent into harm's way, not the reverse. Junior leaders and small teams deserve the best chance they can get. The media will soon notice if they don't. Relying on allies to cover gaps in Australia's proficiency in force projection is not only folly, but also demeaning to Australia's nationhood. Australia is obligated to develop a self reliant defence. Not to do so invites the unsatisfactory circumstances of the defence of New Guinea in 1942, the battle of Long Tan in 1966 and the dangers in Dili in 1999 to repeat in some form next time the ADF is required to lead or operate alone. Reports from the tactical level are neither minority opinions nor the views of institutional dissenters. Evidence of eyewitnesses and first hand research adds credibility. The Defence Department has an obligation to manage its public reputation but not to ignore reports from those who were in harm's way because they contain inconvenient observations.

Was adopting the historiography of C.E.W. Bean wise? In his official histories of Australia's military participation in World War I, Bean emphasised recording 'the plain and absolute truth' and telling 'a bare and uncoloured story'.²⁰ Peter Stanley, Principal Historian at the Australian War Memorial - Bean's second monument to Australian military history after his official histories - points out that Bean's narratives were 'by no means uncoloured and nowhere near the absolute truth'.²¹

Megan Hirst joined Stanley in suggesting that Bean excluded significant events from his histories and confined his narrative within his chosen themes of Australian nationhood and manhood.²² In doing so, he 'distorted' Australian military history.²³ Citing other authors, she goes on to assess that Bean wrote his histories in a romanticised, epic style that celebrated sacred male friendship, i.e. mateship, with homo-erotic overtones. Hirst and Stanley, among others concluded that, though Bean declared his intention to tell 'the plain and absolute truth', he really set out to commemorate and immortalise.

These criticisms of Bean's historiography seem to weaken the preference in this thesis to follow his emphasis on first-hand research, frontline sources and descriptive

²⁰ C.E.W. Bean, *The Australian Imperial Force in France during the Allied Offensive, 1918*, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, vol. VI, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1942, p. 1096, and C.E.W. Bean, *The Story of Anzac*, p. XXX..

²¹ Peter Stanley, 'Reflections on Bean's Last Paragraph', *Sabretache*, Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, vol. XXIV, July/September 1983, p. 4.

²² Hirst, 'Narrative in the War Histories of C.E.W. Bean', pp. 67, 69, 71. Stanley, 'Reflections', pp. 8-9

²³ Hirst, p. 68.

tactical detail. However, the thesis adopted Bean's research method, not his commemorative intent or heroic, Homeric style. Indeed, the thesis reversed his style. It examines and criticises rather than commemorates and inspires. Its narrative is aligned to a framework of the ten enabling functions of force projection and follows the chronologies of selected operations and major exercises. It is akin to an historical audit of contemporary ADF operations. Like an audit, it devotes more words to breaches of best practice than compliance. While there are books and articles critical of the conduct of Australian military operations and campaigns, it was not Bean's intention, or possibly the intent of most Australian military historians, to audit or critique Australia's armed forces on technical proficiency.²⁴ Arguably, military history audits, like their corporate counterparts, would not attract a wide and admiring readership. However, an audit approach to history not only gets closer to the plain and absolute truth – the objective of good scholarship – but can also become important for the nation's future defence.

Thus, the thesis departs from the laudatory and commemorative style of Bean's histories and some contemporary popular histories.²⁵ It follows the more technical and objective style of the official histories of World War II, Korea and Australia's involvement in South East Asian conflicts 1948-1975. It also follows Bean's preferences on sources. The focus on files, post-operation reports and eye-witness interviews yields a narrative that moderates an ADF corporate story of success. The ADF has a solid public record of operational success in the late 1980s and the 1990s. In contemporary parlance, the ADF delivered the required outcomes to the Government and the people of Australia. This thesis offers a more balanced interpretation of ADF operations and exercises in the late 1980s and 1990s – Bean's 'interplay of good and ill, wisdom and folly, all parties working to its complex conclusion'.²⁶

There would not be a significant difference between this thesis and official interpretations, if the ADF audited its operations independently. In the late 1980s and the 1990s, tactical level reporting did not move up the ADF chain of command without modification. Self-congratulatory and optimised reports from higher levels of command, typically from headquarters that commanded operations, did not encourage

²⁴ Examples of critiques of Australian military operations are, Terry Burstall, *Vietnam: The Australian Dilemma*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1993 and Matthew Gubb, 'The Australian Military Response to the Fijian Coup: An Assessment', Working Paper no. 171, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, November 1988.

²⁵ Patsy Adam-Smith, *The Anzacs*, Claremont Penguin, Melbourne, 1978. Peter FitzSimons, *Kokoda*, Hodder Headline, Sydney, 2004.

²⁶ C.E.W. Bean, 'The Writing of the Australian Official History of the Great War', p. 21.

senior ADF committees to take action to apply lessons.²⁷ An exception was the reporting on logistics in 1999 for the projection to East Timor. This operation did attract the interest of the Australian National Audit Organisation. The resultant audit report identified many of the difficulties the ADF was having deploying and sustaining land forces.²⁸ A useful innovation might be for the ADF to conduct audits of its operations, within the framework of the functions of force projection, employing an organisation or board comprised of suitably qualified and experienced persons that is outside the chain of command, but reports to the Defence Minister and the CDF.

The thesis also offers a different interpretation of the ADF operational record because it is the product of first hand research with eye-witnesses and documents from files. It follows the tradition of the official histories for World War II and afterwards - critical as well as commemorative and factual. Dudley McCarthy describes the carnage and misfortunes of the Kokoda Campaign in 1941-42.²⁹ Robert O'Neill points out that 3 RAR was 'under strength, under equipped and collectively poorly prepared for war' before telling the story of the battalion's hasty deployment to the Korean Peninsula in 1950.³⁰ Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey record the poor preparation of battalions moving to Malaya in the 1950s and 1960s.³¹ They point out that 2 RAR was in a 'parlous state' and 'did not reach its establishment until just before leaving Australia' and that several years later 3 RAR was not ready for operations when it embarked.³² Ian McNeill leaves the reader in no doubt about the mismanagement that preceded the battle of Long Tan and the luck that had to prevail for the Australians to avoid a military disaster.³³

The ADF has an institutional obligation to tell its story as part of Australia's national story. It also has a duty to record, retain and analyse operational performance and apply corporate memory to the planning and conduct of future operations. Alan

²⁷ An example is Land Headquarters, 'Operation Lagoon - Post Operation Report, Combined Force Peace Support Operations on Bougainville, PNG, Oct 94', Plans 120/941, November 1994, K94-0132528. Copy held by author.

²⁸ Australian National Audit Office, Audit Report No.38, Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor, Australian National Audit Office, Canberra, 2001.

²⁹ McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year Kokoda to Wau*. See pp. 46-48 for assessment of the quality of units deployed to New Guinea in 1942 and pp. 117-8, pp. 131-2 and pp. 265-68 for descriptions of logistic support and air resupply.

³⁰ Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53, Volume II, Combat Operations*, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1985, Chapter 1, The Australian Army Enters the War.

³¹ Dennis and Grey, *Emergency and Confrontation*.

³² Ibid, p. 90. The authors cite members of the battalion complaining that too much time was spent rehearsing for a pre-embarkation parade when weapons training for reinforcements would have been a wiser use of time. Subsequent marksmanship on operations was poor, pp. 98-9. Comments on 3 RAR, p. 222.

³³ Ian McNeill, *To Long Tan*, pp. 174- 342.

Ryan points out that it would be useful to employ historians on operations both for telling the story and to provide useful operational analysis and corporate memory from past operations.³⁴ Thus, historians, who would not be in the chain of command, could conduct first hand research and write histories of operations soon after they occur. The result would be satisfaction of imperatives to record as well as to learn from history simultaneously. These accounts would be the first draft of official histories, enriching them with eyewitness reports while history was being made. However, Captain Sir Basil Liddell Hart highlighted one of the problems identified in this thesis when he wrote in *Thoughts on War* in 1944 that 'The discovery of uncomfortable facts had never been encouraged in armies, who treated their history as a sentimental treasure rather than a field of scientific research.'³⁵

This thesis is a constructed narrative of events as well as a dissertation. Though not setting out to do so, it has made the case for consolidating ADF joint command and control and the ways and means of force projection. The three services and their environmental commanders and their staffs are not positioned organisationally to contribute effectively. The separate and separated theatre level of command does not work. The ADF logistics system is still not functioning well for force projection.³⁶ And intelligence organisations have failed to deliver at the tactical level - where it counts.

Senator Hill announced a new Joint Operations Command on 16 March 2004 and there have been further refinements in 2005.³⁷ Reflecting the advice of General Cosgrove, his intentions were 'to simplify and streamline the ADF's command structure and allow more effective control of forces on operations'.³⁸ Based on the historical analysis in this thesis, he did not go far enough in 2004. However, announcements in mid-2005 that the Chief of Joint Operations and his deputy will exercise command through an integrated joint headquarters located at Bungendore near Canberra rather than one comprised of collocated environmental staff almost completes the

³⁴ Alan Ryan, 'Thinking Across Time: Concurrent Historical Analysis on Military Operations', Land Warfare Studies Centre, Working Paper no. 114, July 2001.

³⁵ Captain Sir Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Thoughts on War*. London, Faber and Faber, 1944. Quoted in Anthony H. Cordesman, 'Iraq, Grand Strategy, and the Lessons of Military History', 2004 S.T. Lee Lecture on Military History, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, 19 October 2004. p. 4.

³⁶ Brigadier W. Jackson, 'An Evaluation of Australian Defence Force Logistics Support to Operation Anode for the Chief of Joint Operations', September 2004. Copy held by author.

³⁷ Senator Robert Hill, 'Changes to Defence Force Higher Command Arrangements', Media Release 54/2005, 16 March 2005.

³⁸ Ibid.

transformation required to facilitate prompt, strong and smart Australian force projection for the future.³⁹

The final step is to match responsibility with the ways and means to deploy, sustain and manoeuvre. As the officer responsible for ADF operations, the CDF needs a paramount headquarters that incorporates joint command of operations, a strategic joint logistics component commander, joint movements and access to a deployable joint force headquarters. The CDF's headquarters needs to provide options and advice, both upwards to government and across to other departments and allies, as well as leadership and direction downwards to service chiefs and environmental commanders.

The new Chief of Joint Operations has responsibility to deliver specified military effects at the right place at the right time. Based on historical precedents, he will be allowed about four weeks or less to do so. In 2004, General Cosgrove recognised that to fulfil this role, the Chief of Joint Operations had to have authority over environmental commanders and their staffs. In 2005, the newly appointed CDF, Air Chief Marshal A.G. Houston, recognised that it would be more effective to integrate rather than just collocate environmental staff groups and environmental commanders in one facility. However, the step that is yet to be taken is to consolidate high readiness ADF force elements, intelligence assets, mounting bases and the means for force sustainment and joint movements – the enablers.

The ADF's operational and major exercise experiences of the late 1980s and the 1990s makes a case for the formation of an ADF rapid response command under the Chief of Joint Operations. This command would be comprised of permanently assigned combat and logistic formations and units from the three services, intelligence assets, vessels, service aircraft and infrastructure.⁴⁰ This would change the paradigm for ADF joint operations from 'pulling' assets and support from the services to 'pushing' assets and support to deployed forces that are under operational control and have been rehearsed thoroughly for force projection. Service chiefs and Defence equivalents

³⁹ Author discussed these new arrangements with Lieutenant General K.J. Gillespie, VCDF and Chief of Joint Operations on 5 August 2005.

⁴⁰ The British Government recognised the need for consolidating force projection capabilities into a Joint Rapid Reaction Force (JRRF) in August 1996. The British armed forces solved the problem of only assigning a lead joint commander just before deployment by appointing a Chief of Joint Operations (CJO) and establishing a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) as well as the JRRF. However, they demurred on permanent assignment of high readiness force elements and a direct relationship between CJO and Chief of the Defence Services (CDS). See Richard M. Connaughton, *Organizing British Joint Rapid Reaction Forces*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn, 2000. http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/1726.pdf. See <http://www.armedforces.co.uk/mod/listings/10006.html#PJHQ>.

would still retain technical and administrative control of personnel and assets assigned to rapid response command, but not operational control.⁴¹

Most importantly, a rapid response command would rehearse the functions of force projection under simulated operational conditions and develop a joint force projection ethos and culture. This type of rehearsal could facilitate whole of nation responses to regional and world events requiring some form of military action, as well as efficient specific force preparation, deployment and sustainment. Thus, warning time would equal preparation time. Planning compartments could be vertical down to the tactical level of command rather than just horizontal across organisations and departments in Canberra. Reconnaissance could include each level of command and a range of specialists belonging to the one organisation. Forward elements could practise tactical deployment, preceded and accompanied by force protection elements, and followed by responsive joint logistics with stamina, as well as intelligence that would blend human and technical capabilities.

In summary, the history of Australian military operations until the end of the twentieth century was mostly about national, regional and international force projection. After the first projection to the Sudan in 1885, Australian forces, fostered by allies, participated in international military emergencies and wars, as well as South East Asian and Pacific area campaigns for the next 87 years. By 1972, Australia's military posture was evolving to include national force projection. In the White Paper, AD76, the emphasis moved to self-reliant defence of the homeland and near region.⁴² The ADF spent the next 11 years periodically rehearsing national force projection. During the late 1980s and the 1990s, Australian governments returned to responding militarily to particular regional and international emergencies and events, mostly in the company of allies, while still continuing to rehearse nationally. In the twenty first century, this trend has continued.

This thesis tells the story of Australia's military force projection in the late 1980s and the 1990s and analyses proficiency within the framework of ten enabling functions. It concludes that all was not well. The ADF has to consolidate rather than

⁴¹ **technical control.** It also covers specialised and professional authority for the proper management of assets including technical standards and regulations for maintenance, repair and use of vehicles, weapons, equipment and other matériel. **administrative control.** This term covers the non-operational administrative responsibility, such as personnel management, including individual training.

⁴² In 1976 the Government issued a Defence White Paper, *Australian Defence*, (AD76) that explained Australia's changed strategic circumstances and emphasised force projection into the 'neighbourhood' rather than 'some distant or forward theatre'. Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, White Paper presented to Parliament by the Minister for Defence, the Hon. D.J. Killen, November 1976, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 10.

divide command and control arrangements. At the same time, the ADF had to divide into a rapid response command for operations and assign the service chiefs to the crucial tasks of raising, training and maintaining their environmental capabilities. They would retain technical and administrative command of forces assigned to rapid response command. At the time of writing, a rapid response command does not exist. Its formation awaits a victory for common sense under the present Defence senior leadership group, a major terrorist attack on Australian soil or on Australian interests overseas, or a military disaster.

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Interviews. Recordings of interviews are located in the repository of the Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post Cold War Operations Project at the Australian War Memorial.

Author as a Source. The author conducted research with Australian forces in Somalia (April-May 1993) and, periodically, in Bougainville (1998-2000) and East Timor (2000-2002). His journals contain interview notes, records of conversations and meetings as well as observations, both professional and personal. Copies of these journals are currently held by the author and will be located in the repository of the Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post Cold War Operations Project at the Australian War Memorial in due course.

Ranks. Sometimes there is a difference between the military ranks of individuals mentioned in the text and identified as sources in footnotes and in the Bibliography, usually as interviewees. The rank used in the text and when the person has been used as a source is the one worn at the time.

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 Major General M.P. Blake MC, AO, 25 July 1993, Land Commander Australia
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 Major D.J. Fraser, OC A Company
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 Captain J.C. Hill, CMOC
 Major G.P. Hurcum, OC Support Company
 Lieutenant Colonel D.J. Hurley, (Letters)
 Captain M. Lewis, Company Second In Command
 Warrant Officer Class 2 P.W. Macdonald, Ships Army Detachment, HMAS *Tobruk*
 Major S.J. McDonald, OC Administration Company
 Major R.D. McLeod, Quarter Master
 Major M.J. Moon, OC C Company
 Lieutenant A.P. Pritchard, Platoon Commander
 Corporal G.D. Ramage, Photographer, Media Support Team
 Major J.D. Simpson, OC D Company

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 Captain A. Somerville, Company Second In Command
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 Captain E.G. Boulton, 21 January 2000, 3 BASB, Operations Captain
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 Group Captain S.R. Cameron, 20 February 2000, Air Component, CO Air Support Wing
 Colonel G.D. Cavanagh, 17 January 2000, Commander FLSG
 Lieutenant S.M. Casey, 23 December 1999, OC 9 Platoon, 2 RAR
 Corporal D.M. Cheung, 13 January 2000, Operator, 72 EW Squadron
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 Lieutenant Colonel D.C. Cousins, 23 February 2000, SO1 Personnel and Logistic
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 Captain D.J. Crowe, 16 January 2000, CMOC Officer, 8/12 Medium Regiment, RAA
 Brigadier M. Evans, 6 February 2000, HQ 3 Brigade, Commander WESTFOR
 Major M.C. Fielding, 6 February 2000, Brigade Major, 3rd Brigade
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 Lieutenant P. Halleday, 23 December 1999, OC 8 Platoon, 2 RAR
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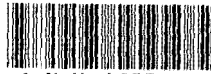
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