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THE USE OF MILITARY INTERVENTION BY MAJOR POWERS

by

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history states have intervened in the affairs of other states with both good and bad intentions. In some cases elaborate justification was made, in others none was ever stated. It could be argued that it was very much an accepted manner of carrying out business. However, with the establishment of world organisations such as the League of Nations and more recently the United Nations, this century interveners have more often than not felt the heat of world criticisms. Indeed, since the United States involvement in the Vietnam War, the term 'intervention' has acquired a distinctly negative connotation.

In spite of this, there have been many examples in recent years where major powers have reverted to military intervention as a component of their foreign policy. The United States has carried out military action in Grenada, Lebanon and Honduras while the Soviet Union has carried out military operations in Ethiopia, Syria and Afghanistan.

This essay aims to assess to what extent major powers might use intervention in Third World countries in the future to achieve their own national objectives.

## Definitions

One of the difficulties encountered by organisations such as the United Nations in arriving at a clear policy on intervention is the definition of the word itself. For example, when does involvement become intervention? Does supplying arms or providing military advisors constitute involvement or intervention? In the case of military advisors it can be a very subjective decision indeed. Does the threat of force constitute intervention or is it only when force is actually used? In writings on this subject the definitions can be as broad as 'where one state interferes by force or threat of force in the affairs of another state'.<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this essay the definition 'the use of military force to interfere in the internal affairs of other states'<sup>2</sup> has been used. This involves the use of military forces whether they belong to the intervener or to a proxy.

Two further definitions are required. Firstly, it is accepted that the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, are the major military powers which this essay will emphasise. However, it is also considered that the term should include other nations that are capable of projecting military power outside their immediate region. This refers to the United Kingdom, France and to a somewhat lesser extent China.<sup>3</sup> It can also be certain cases include nations that are militarily strong within a region and are capable of a limited projection of military power. Examples of this are China and Vietnam in South East Asia, Israel and Syria in the Middle East, Tanzania in Africa and Australia and New Zealand in the South Pacific. Where appropriate, discussion will include these latter two groups as well.

The final concept requiring discussion is that of national objectives. A decision to intervene has hopefully been made based on, amongst other elements, the intervening nation's national objectives. However, in many cases of past intervention it has been very difficult to ascertain exactly what was the national objective involved. Vietnam is a case in point. According to Professor H.M. Arnold there were some 22 different United States rationales cited as official justifications for involvement in Indochina from 1949-1967.<sup>4</sup> Even

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- 1 Winfield. Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences. London, 1932. Vol 8 p 236.
  - 2 Macfarlane, N. Intervention and Regional Security. International Institute Strategic Studies. London, 1985. p 2.
  - 3 References to 'China' means The Peoples' Republic of China.
  - 4 Arnold, H.M. 'Official Justifications for America's Role in Indochina 1949-67.' Asian Affairs, September-October 1975. p 31

when objectives are stated as in the case of Grenada, the unstated objectives are probably just as important. Therefore national objectives must be defined against a given intervention if they are to have any value.

### SOVIET AND AMERICAN ATTITUDES

In the age of imperialism prior to World War One the strong military nations intervened whenever and wherever they saw fit with little thought of justification. It was only with the establishment of the world, and more recently regional forums that the militarily weaker nations could call the interveners to task. Through such collective action pressure could be brought to bear with varying results. However, such organisations as the League of Nations had little or no teeth and it was as the result of interventions that they could not reverse that their demise came about. Japan's invasion of Manchuria and Italy's intervention in Ethiopia are probably two of the more classic examples.

After the experience of World War Two international relations underwent a dramatic change. In an effort to avert a similar event, the United Nations was established with attempts to overcome the inherent weaknesses of the League of Nations. Unfortunately, in the settlement of international disputes the new body had little more in the way of teeth to enforce its resolutions. In spite of the various peacekeeping forces established, with the notable exception of Korea, the United Nations has had little success in preventing or reversing interventions.

Two other important changes have occurred in this post-war period. The balance of power has clearly shifted from the traditional nations of Western and Central Europe to two essentially non-European nations: the United States and the Soviet Union. These two nations are diametrically opposed in ideology. The competition between the two had commenced during World War Two, reached its zenith during the Cold War and has been at a lower but no less intense level ever since. At the same time the colonies of the European powers began to gain their independence and became what is known as the Third World. They were loosely linked by their relative poverty, backwardness and their geographical fate to be mainly located in the tropical regions. Most received their independence in a smooth handover of power although almost all encountered serious domestic problems at an early stage. Indeed, one of the most pressing problems facing newly independent states was the establishment of a stable system of government as competing parties sought power. In their quest for rule, the parties turned to either the Soviet Union or the United States for support. Therefore, the superpower rivalry and ideological struggle was transferred to the Third World.

Where independence was not gained in a peaceful and controlled manner, such as in the case of the Portuguese colonies, the struggle became even more pronounced. Pro-independence elements gained ready support from the Soviet Union who regarded 'national liberation' as a major objective of the Soviet State and the Communist Party in general.

To make any sense at all of past interventions or the likelihood of future ones it is necessary to examine the attitudes of the two superpowers. In

this century it has been one of ambivalence to say the very least. Each has vociferously condemned cases of intervention by the other while going to extraordinary lengths to justify their own acts of intervention. As N. McFarlane as stated:

'...both sides of the global rivalry attempt to define the scope of the concept [intervention] in such a way as to reflect and further their own political interests. They justify such selectivity in terms of the legitimacy of aid to established governments or peoples attempting to exert their right of national self-determination, or more abstractly, they assert their commitment to the defence of freedom against communism or to the cause of proletarian inter-nationalism...'<sup>5</sup>

#### The Soviet Attitude

Since the Soviet Union has become an integral factor in the politics of the Third World it has undertaken a varied and extensive range of activities from minimum involvement to direct military intervention. It has always considered itself the champion of Marxist-Leninist ideology and has assumed the right to take action to preserve or foster this ideology. Certainly, prior to World War Two its capacity to conduct such a policy on an international scale was severely constrained by both domestic and political difficulties and the lack of a world-wide military capability. However, with a growing ability to project power, in particular military power, an initial tentativeness has given way to open assertiveness. Leonid Brezhnev told the 26th congress of the CPSU on 23 February 1981:

'...No one should have any doubts, comrades, that the CPSU will consistently continue the policy of promoting co-operation between the USSR and the newly free countries, and consolidating the alliance of world socialism and national liberation movements...'<sup>6</sup>

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5 Macfarlane, p 2.

6 Rubinstein, A.Z. 'The Changing Strategic Balance and Soviet Third World Risk-Taking.' Naval War College Review, March-April 1985. p 9.



Until the 1960s the Soviet Union has restricted its interventionist activities to Eastern Europe where it sought to consolidate its hold on the Baltic States and most notably on Hungary. Once its ability to project military power on an international scale had improved it began a series of interventions in the Third World. Probably its first venture was into Zaire in 1960 when it provided pilots, aircraft and military supplies to one of the sides of the civil war. The second intervention was more spectacular when initially arms shipments, then the stationing of troops and missiles brought it into a direct confrontation with the United States in October 1962. When the stakes became too high, the Soviet Union backed down. The 1970s saw a number of interventions in the Middle East, mainly in reaction to Israeli successes. Most notable amongst these was the massive air resupply of military equipment to Egypt and Syria in 1973. At the same time it placed its seven airborne divisions on a high state of alert for rapid deployment in the event that combat troops were required to stop the Israeli incursions. A.Z. Rubinstein considers that this case marks an important step in the history of Soviet intervention. He believes it suggests that the Soviet Union was prepared to commit whatever forces necessary to save a client state from defeat; it would go to extraordinary lengths to deny victory to a United States sponsored client and it was prepared to jeopardise detente if necessary to safeguard a prized Third World client.<sup>7</sup>

In the mid to late 1970s the Soviet Union intervened in two instances in African countries; firstly in Angola through Cuban proxies, then in Ethiopia. Both cases were to assist pro-Soviet national liberation movements. However, the most important act of intervention of that decade was the military action in Afghanistan. For the first time in the Third World, the Soviet Union blatantly interfered by means of military action in the affairs of a friendly government in order to replace one pro-Soviet faction with a more compliant one.

The Soviet Union's most recent intervention once again involved the Middle East when in 1982 it deployed air defence weapons and personnel to assist the Syrian forces in Lebanon. This action was probably aimed at deterring an Israeli attack on Syria, an important Soviet client state.

All these interventions are marked by three factors. Firstly, the Soviets do not intervene automatically every time their interests or the interests of a client are threatened but rather reflect a deliberate evaluation of benefits, costs and risks. Direct confrontation with the United States has been carefully avoided particularly since Cuba. Secondly, there is a strong relationship to geography and the associated capability to project military power internationally. In particular, close attention is paid to the states that share a common border with the Soviet Union (for example Afghanistan) or are in what K.A. Dunn terms

the 'arc of primary Soviet geopolitical advantage'<sup>8</sup> that is, the North Atlantic, Eastern Mediterranean, South Asian and North Pacific regions close to the Soviet Union. Of the approximately 190 incidents in which Soviet armed forces have been used as a discreet instrument of foreign policy between 1944 and 1979, only 41% occurred in the Third World and of these 63% were centered on the Middle East - North Africa and the Persian Gulf - Horn of Africa regions.<sup>9</sup> Finally, the Soviets maintain it is their right to assist, with military support if necessary, socialist nations seeking to maintain their ideology or groups seeking to win national liberation from non-socialist systems.

### The United States Attitude

The United States as the leader of the Western nations has asserted non-intervention yet at the same time has professed itself the guardian of international law and order and the upholder of freedom and democracy. The American attitude towards intervention in this century has been marked by radical foreign policy fluctuations between what W.V. O'Brien calls 'interventionist activism and non-interventionist remorse'.<sup>10</sup> While the history of United States intervention since World War Two has had some notable successes such as Lebanon and the Dominican Republic in the 1950s and Grenada in 1983, it has a greater number of marginal successes to outright failures from the Bay of Pigs through Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to the attempts to rescue the United States hostages in Iran. As an instrument, the United States has probably viewed intervention less as a component of its power but more as the result of a failure in diplomacy.

No single event has had as much influence on the United States' attitude to intervention than its involvement in Vietnam. What started as the provision of aid and advisors in 1960 progressed to the commitment of 184,300 troops in 1965 reaching a maximum of 543,400 in 1969. It cost the country over 57,000 deaths and an expenditure of over US\$120 billion before the withdrawal in 1973. Since that time Vietnam has loomed as a spectre over the possible United States use of intervention particularly in Central America. Therefore, the United States has tended to rely on intervention criteria that are predominantly

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8 Dunn, K.A. 'Power Projection or Influence: Soviet Capabilities for the 1980s.' *Naval War College Review*, September-October 1980. pp 31-47.

9 Kaplan, S.A. 'Diplomacy of Power: Soviet Armed Forces as a Political Instrument.' *Brookings Institute*, Washington, D.C. 1981. pp 42-45.

10 O'Brien, W.V. *US Military Intervention: Law and Morality*. London 1979. p 7.

legal and moral, for example the rescue of hostages from Iran or the students from Grenada.

An important consideration in comparing Soviet and American attitudes to intervention is the role of public opinion. In the case of the Soviet Union the attitude is based predominantly on that of their leaders with public support being largely unimportant, although a slight change can be seen since the protracted involvement in Afghanistan. In the case of the United States, the attitude is based on both the leaders and the people. In a public opinion survey on foreign policy conducted in 1986 it was found that a clear majority of the United States public were opposed to the commitment of American troops to combat except in the event of a direct Soviet invasion of Western Europe (68%) or Japan (53%). In the case of terrorists or nations which harbour terrorists, 54% of the public supported military action. The survey concluded that the public felt greater confidence since 1983 that the United States is playing a more important role in the world, therefore the public are more willing to use United States troops overseas in certain selected circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Public opinion and the experience of past interventions have placed a number of restraints on the United States decision makers as to what is acceptable to the widest sector of the United States public. Firstly, there is a tendency to be impatient and demand decisive results. This is probably most clearly reflected in the War Powers Act 1973 which requires the President to complete military interventions within 60 to 90 days. Secondly, there is disdain for and distrust of secret military operations and diplomatic manoeuvring. This has been brought about by such actions as the Bay of Pigs, the CIA and military involvement in Cambodia and cannot have been helped more recently by the Iran-Contra revelations. Thirdly, there is a legalistic and moral underpinning that makes Americans proponents of fair play and the adherence to the international 'rules' of fair play. Finally, the American public is relatively unsophisticated in its approach to international relations.<sup>12</sup>

### Future Interventions

It is believed that in spite of the restraints discussed above, both the Soviet Union and the United States will continue to intervene, but against a number of criteria. In the case of the Soviet Union, short of a direct confrontation with the United States, it will continue to use military interventions

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11 Rielly, J.E. (ed) American Public Opinion and US Foreign Policy 1987. Council on Foreign Relations, Chicago, 1987. pp 32-33.

12 Foster, G.D. 'On Selective Intervention.' Strategic Review, Fall 1983. p 52.

where it sees the opportunity for fostering the socialist ideology and certainly where it needs to protect client states. A.Z. Rubinstein argues that three factors strengthen the likelihood that the Soviet Union will increase its interventionist actions in the Third World in the years ahead:

'...the USSR's enormously enhanced capability to project military power beyond the confines of the Soviet bloc; its perception that the United States, notwithstanding greater defence spending, is increasingly constrained or unwilling to use its power for the promotion and defence of political-strategic objectives in the Third World (arms sales are not substitute for a coherent policy); and an increase in the opportunity factor, which derives from local and regional instability and the alacrity with which local actors turn to the Soviet Union in order to advance their own ambitions and acquire added leverage over the United States...'

In spite of the above, however, the United States is no less likely to carry out interventionist actions. In this decade it has established the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) for just this sort of purpose. In addition it has established a number of unified commands which include the U.S. Central command which has a mission involving three military objectives: preserving and protecting the United States and friendly access to Arabian Peninsula oil resources; assisting friendly states to provide for their own security against subversion and insurgency; and the prevention of military coercion of friendly states and the deterrence of attempts by the Soviets or hostile regional states to achieve gains by the threat or use of force.<sup>13</sup>

This leads to a number of conditions that must be met if the intervention is to go ahead. Professor Lewy argues that there are three such conditions.<sup>14</sup> Firstly, if it is perceived to be in the national interest. This would include the area of conflict representing a vital geopolitical interest for the United States such as the Panama Canal or the Straits of Hormuz. It would also include attempts by another power to impose by force an oppressive regime on people unable to defend themselves without United States aid and a conflict that is accompanied by systematic brutalities that outrage the rest of the world.

The second condition is that the intervention would have a reasonable probability of success at costs proportional to the importance of the result that

13 Defense 87. The Unified and Specified Commands. American Forces Information Service. November-December 1987. p 41.

14 Lewy, G. 'The Properties of Military Intervention.' Parameters, June 1981. p 4-7.

is sought. This basically says that a just cause such as those given above is necessary but is not sufficient reason in itself for intervention. This has already been demonstrated in a lack of United States action in Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and Cambodia during the Pol Pot regime. One of the requirements for success is a willingness on the part of the people who seek aid to help themselves. Henry Kissinger summed it up following the defeat of South Vietnam in 1975:

'...outside effort can only supplement, but not create local efforts and local will to resist...and there is no question that popular will and social justice are, in the last analysis, the essential underpinnings of resistance to subversion and external challenge...'<sup>15</sup>

The essence of this condition is that a good cause is not worth any price.

The third condition is probably the most important one as far as the United States is concerned. The domestic political situation must allow for the use of military intervention. The decision maker in a democratic society must take account of the domestic political environment in which he is operating. The time when the mass of people would accept any official definition of national interest and objectives has long since past. The indications were present when the United States intervened in Korea and were clearly demonstrated in the case of Vietnam. Studies have shown that after an initial bulge of public support the clock begins to count down and the support steadily declines. The decline accelerates if the intervention becomes too expensive, results in high personnel losses or lasts too long.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, public support is precarious at best. Further it is open to the efforts of the 'anti' element within the society as well as those from outside such as the United Nations and the Soviet Union. It is important to note here that the mixture of compulsion and propoganda that is available to a totalitarian, closed society such as the Soviet Union is not available to a democratic society.

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15 US Department of State. Henry Kissinger Before the Japan Society. Department of State Publication, 1989. pp 3-4.

16 Sabrosky, N. and Staudenmaier, Col W.O. 'A Strategy of Counterrevolutionary War.' Military Review, February 1985. pp 9-11.

### OTHER INTERVENTIONS

As indicated above, the ability to carry out military intervention in the Third World is not restricted to the superpowers. Other countries have successfully, and also not so successfully, carried out such military operations. France has intervened in the affairs of its former African colonies on a number of occasions, most recently in support of Chad. China intervened in North Vietnam in an attempt to change its policy towards Kampuchea and the United Kingdom, has intervened in Middle Eastern and African countries.

However, military intervention is not the sole prerogative of the non-Third World nations. During the past two decades there has been a greater distribution of economic and military power throughout the international system. This trend has been facilitated by massive transfers of arms to the Third world states who have not been reticent in using this new found military power to further their own interests and objectives in their region, particularly against neighbouring states.<sup>17</sup> Examples include Syria's intervention of the civil war in Lebanon, Vietnam's action against the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, Tanzania's action against the Idi Amin regime in Uganda and Libya in Chad which in turn resulted in French counter-intervention.

Our own area of the South Pacific has not been immune to intervention or the threat of such action. France and the United Kingdom were forced to intervene in the New Hebrides when the island of Santo attempted to secede in May 1981. When independence was attained at the end of July that year and the new nation of Vanuatu came into existence, the French and British troops withdrew and were replaced by a company of Papua New Guinean troops flown in by the Royal Australian Air Force and supported by a number of Australian troops who were on secondment to the Papua New Guinea forces.<sup>18</sup>

The most recent example in the South Pacific was as a result of the military coup in Fiji. Both Australia and New Zealand demonstrated a willingness to intervene on the grounds of protecting and if necessary evacuating their nationals. Australia went so far as to have parts of its operational Deployment Force embarked on Royal Australian Navy vessels off the Fijian coast while New Zealand had a number of naval vessels in or just outside Fijian territorial waters. In addition the Ready Reaction Force battalion was placed on standby.

17 Macfarlane, p 1.

18 'Secession of Santo - Attempts to Negotiate a Settlement - Other Developments.' Keesings Contemporary Archives, 2 January 1981. pp 30642-3.

## CONCLUSION

Military intervention will continue to be a feature of international relations as long as unstable Third World countries exist and as long as the ideological struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union continues. However, there are a number of constraints on such action and in the final analysis it will be a cost or risk calculation which will determine whether the intervention is conducted or not. The final question in this calculation will probably be, will the intervention lead to a direct superpower confrontation?

Other military powers including some Third World countries can also be expected to carry out acts of military intervention in the future. However, the cost and risk calculation cannot be expected to be as critical as it is to the superpowers. Their interventions will range from opportunistic military adventure (such as the Libyan military action in Chad), through genuine concern for a neighbouring state's problems (as in the case of Papua New Guinea in Vanuatu) to responding to an invitation for assistance.

In a perfect world, military intervention would not only be unnecessary but would be immoral. However as J.S. Mill pointed out last century:

'...the doctrine of non-intervention, to be a legitimate principle of morality, must be accepted by all governments. The despots must consent to be bound by it as well as the free states. Unless they do, the profession of it by free countries comes but to this miserable issue, that the wrong side may help the wrong, but the right must not help the right...'

Military intervention has been with us throughout history. The present international system means it will be a component of nations' foreign policy for the foreseeable future. Major military powers will continue to use military intervention to further their national objectives as and when they see fit and as long as they think that they can get away with it.

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"A COURSE CONTRARY TO TRAINING AND INCLINATION"- THE MANIFESTO OF THE FOUR COLONELS, 1938

by

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This article has been reproduced from the Australian Defence Force Journal No 68.

At the start of the twentieth century the land defence of New Zealand was vested in a volunteer, territorial militia backed by a very small cadre of 'regular' soldiers in administrative and instructional capacities. In 1909 this was replaced by a compulsory military training scheme in which all young men in the Dominion were required to serve in the militia for a period of years. This scheme, introduced by Sir Joseph Ward and implemented by the determination of Sir James Allen and Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, was discontinued in 1930. Despite the growth of Facism in Europe and the obvious spread of Japanese Imperialism in the East, little interest was shown by New Zealanders in the maintenance of their military forces after this date and the all-volunteer territorial army quickly withered.

When Major-General J.E. Duigan, CB, DSO, assumed office as General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Military Forces in May 1937 the condition of the army was a cause for much concern. The previous year's Annual Report had revealed that, with few exceptions, attendances at annual camps had been "disappointing", suggesting that this was partly due to seasonal harvests falling outside the anticipated period and the fact that rising prosperity in the towns had created staffing problems for many employers, making them loath to release employees to attend camps.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'Annual Report of the General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Forces 31 July 1936' in Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives 1936, Vol. III H. 19, p. 5.

In the first report to Parliament, Duigan noted that the Mounted Rifle Regiments were barely as large as squadrons and that several of the Infantry Regiments were smaller than companies. In addition to this, overall numbers were decreasing. He considered that the reasons for this alarming situation lay in a lack of public recognition of the importance of the Territorial Army. "...The success of a voluntary system (he claimed) depends largely upon the support it receives from the Government, the employers and the general public". He admitted that the introduction of the shorter working week had made it considerably more difficult for employers to release their staffs and that increased wages had widened the gap between the average man's civilian pay and the remuneration he received for his service in the Territorial Army. He noted that the Territorial had "...little inducement except personal enthusiasm" to fulfil his service obligations, especially when the machinery which existed to enforce his contract of service was never used.<sup>2</sup>

This concern was not Duigan's alone. During the Supply Debate later that year an opposition member (the Hon. J.G. Cobbe - National, Oroua) sought to find out what steps were being taken to improve the position of the Territorials, stating that the present position was very unsatisfactory, particularly as in the newly constituted Army Board the Territorial Force had no representative, yet provided the greater proportion of the manpower.<sup>3</sup> His concern remained, as the Defence Minister considered that present arrangements were "adequate".

In September, General Duigan had rationalised the Territorial Army from its divisional structure into a brigade format, made of 'composite' units formed from the traditional regiments and battalions, making a more realistic establishment for the still-shrinking force.

Not surprisingly, this cosmetic operation, together with the Government's continuing disregard for the land forces did no go unnoticed in the community. The *Christchurch Press* produced a feature in March, 1938, entitled "The Volunteer Territorial System - A Force Below Strength" and produced re-runs in pamphlet form.<sup>4</sup> Inspired by the remarks of the Hon. F. Jones, Minister for Defence, at a parade of the First Battalion, Canterbury Infantry Regiment, that "...we would welcome suitable men who desire to take an interest in military affairs" the article claimed that the Territorial Force was evidently a joke to a large proportion of the community and placed much of the blame on the Government, the Minister, the permanent military staff and the 'carefree' public.

2 *'Annual Report of the General Officer Commanding the New Zealand Military Forces 31 July 1937' in A.J.H.R. 1937-8 Vol. III, H. 19.*

3 *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates Vol. 249, p. 218. (9 Nov 37)*

4 *Christchurch Press, 19 March 1938.*

The correspondent claimed that the Government had done nothing to improve the public opinion of the Force, pointing out that whilst a labourer received a minimum of eighteen shillings a day and public work employees one pound the private soldier was only paid "four shillings a day and army tucker". With more pay, better uniforms (there had been no change since 1910) and by the generation of public enthusiasm the article argued that the Government could put the Territorials on to a satisfactory footing. Describing the Minister as "...sincere but handicapped both by his colleagues lack of interest in military experience" the writer claimed that he "...toils without inspiration" and was inevitably affected by his colleagues' attitude of placing politics before pragmatism. Comparing the cadre staffs with those of General Godley's day the correspondent found them wanting, describing them as clerks in empty barracks, stripped of their initial keenness by the burdens of routine and mundane administrative duties. Comparing the Territorials with the Citizen Air Force, with its glamour and smart uniforms, the article found the Army coming a sad second.

One could not, however, dismiss Mr Jones as hopeless. He had increased the naval vote and had initiated a programme of rapid and extensive expansion in the air arm, yet undeniably his approach to the land component of the defence forces was lacking any real drive or direction. The fact that, in addition to the Defence portfolio, he was also Minister of Telegraphs, Postmaster-General and the Minister in charge of War Pensions did not make his life any easier and reflected the low priority awarded to defence by the Savage Government.

The *Christchurch Press* article gave public prominence to a problem that was of obvious concern to a great many New Zealanders and especially to those directly involved with the Territorial Force - its own senior officers. A conference of senior officers was held at Trentham in early May 1938 at which five out of the seven colonels on the Active List were present.<sup>5</sup> On Friday May 6th, these officers, together with General Duigan, met with the Minister in his office in Wellington. Uncertainty exists as to who suggested the meeting as the officers claim they were 'granted' the interview and Mr Jones subsequently stated it took place at his invitation, but nevertheless it took place, and the officers placed before their Minister their views on what they considered to be the grave state of affairs pertaining in the Territorial Force. They considered that he listed "most courteously" to them and promised to make a statement encouraging public support for the army. However, he did not give any firm promise as to when he would make such a statement. The colonels requested General Duigan to obtain a definite date from the Minister and to intimate to him that they considered an interval in excess of two weeks would be "...undue delay in face of what we considered to be an urgent state of affairs".<sup>6</sup> They further stated that if they were not satisfied with the Ministerial statement they would feel obliged to publish their own considered opinion.

5

*The sixth was in the United Kingdom, the seventh on leave.*

6

*Auckland Star, 19 May 1938.*

General Duigan was understandably surprised and angered by this attitude as Mr Jones subsequently claimed that the general had told the colonels that he could not convey such a message as they "...had no right to dictate to the Minister".<sup>7</sup> Duigan's subsequent surprise when the colonels went ahead with their plan indicates that he underestimated their strength of intention on the issue, and one cannot help conjecturing that he did not mention the matter to Jones at the time, hoping that the colonels would feel bound by the traditions of the service and by the regulations to keep silent.

The Minister kept at least part of his side of the bargain, and took the opportunity of an invitation to speak at the North Island provincial town of Dargaville on 17th May to announce his defence policies. Although he claimed that he had made "...very full reference to the land forces ... (and had) ... asked all sections of the community" to assist the Government in its efforts to increase the strength of the Territorial Force and "...bring it up to the highest state of efficiency"<sup>8</sup> there was unanimous criticism of his measures in Editorial columns on the following day. The *Christchurch Press*, in the most moderate opinion, stated that the scheme for the Territorial Force had "...already failed due to the shortage of recruits"<sup>9</sup>; the *New Zealand Herald* described the land forces part of the policy as its "fatal weakness" and claimed that the Jones plan for building up the Territorial Force "...gave no promise of being worked out"<sup>10</sup>; the *Auckland Star* claimed that the opportunity Mr Jones had been given to make a beginning had been "utterly ignored"<sup>11</sup> and the *Dominion* warned Mr Jones that "...soothing assurances are not enough, it is evidence that counts".<sup>12</sup>

The Minister had clearly tried to evade responsibility by claiming that much of the criticism of the Government's defence policy was "...political ... being indulged for the purposes of discrediting this government, but the *Dominion* reminded him that he could hardly accuse the New Zealand Returned Servicemens Association or the National Defence League of being actuated by political motives, and both these organisations had expressed anxieties about his policies.

The popular press was not the only section of the community to have reservations about the Minister's statement. Four of the five colonels considered it inadequate and decided that their duty to the country as citizen soldiers was to inform the public of their opinions

7 *Ibid*, 25 May 1938.

8 *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1938.

9 *Christchurch Press*, 19 May 1938.

10 *New Zealand Herald*, 18 May 1938.

11 *Auckland Star*, 18 May, 1938.

12 *Dominion*, 19 May 1938.

"...solely for the purpose of ensuring that an efficient land force shall be available for the defence of New Zealand".<sup>13</sup> The four officers responsible for taking this exceptional step were all men of long and distinguished service. Colonel C.R. Spragg, VD, was one of the Honorary *Aides-de-Camp* to the Governor General and had served in South Africa, Gallipoli and Palestine. He had been a captain at the same time as General Duigan and was probably the most experienced and certainly the most senior officer in the Territorial Force.

Colonel A.S. Wilder, DSO, MC VD, was also one of the Governor General's *Aides-de-Camp*, and a veteran of Gallipoli and Palestine. Like Colonel Spragg, he had commanded a Mounted Rifles Brigade until the 1937 reorganisation. Both were North Island farmers.

Colonel N.L. Macky, MC had served with the New Zealand Rifle Brigade in Western Egypt and France, and had commanded an Infantry Brigade until the 1937 reorganisation. He and the fourth colonel, R.F. Gambrill, VD, were both lawyers. Gambrill, like Spragg and Wilder, was a veteran of Gallipoli and had also commanded a Brigade before the reorganisation.

Although conscious of the probable consequences of such action on their military careers the colonels believed that as the senior officers of the Territorial Force they had an obligation to put aside personal considerations and to acquaint the public with the true state of the nation's defences. To do this they issued what was to become known as the "Manifesto of the Four Colonels".

The Manifesto had five main contentions, claiming that the Territorial Force as currently organised was insufficient for the defence of New Zealand; that its strength was insufficient even to meet the reorganised Brigade structure; that in many cases the physique of the serving members was below an acceptable level for active service; that the morale of the Force faced with constant reductions and lack of public support was at breaking point; and finally that much of the blame for this situation rested with the lack of support rendered by successive governments since the inception of the volunteer system.

The *Christchurch Press*, whilst acknowledging that the colonels had adopted an unusual course of action, considered that it was the only one left open to them,<sup>14</sup> and the *Auckland Star* described the Manifesto as a grave statement, commenting that "...the purity of motive which inspired it cannot be questioned", and remarking that the "lamentably small" section of the public which was sympathetically interested in the Territorial Force must have been "impressed and disturbed" by it.<sup>15</sup> The *Dominion*, describing the Manifesto as "disquieting" remarked that the colonels would not have taken such an extreme step unless "...very strongly impelled by their sense of public duty" and reinforced its earlier comments on the Dargaville statement by demanding that the Government

13 National Archives of New Zealand, Governor's Series G49052/1.

14 *Christchurch Press*, 20 May 1938.

15 *Auckland Star*, 20 May 1938.

and the nation take the "most energetic measures" for defending the country".<sup>16</sup>

The reactions of the Military authorities were, predictably, not so favourable. General Duigan promptly wrote to the military secretary to the Governor General (Major R.G.G. Byron, 4th/7th Royal Dragoon Guards) to apologise for the "unmilitary" actions of his officers, stating that the regulations were quite clear on this type of action and that he "could not allow" senior officers of the Territorial Force to set such a bad example. The Government, he claimed, was fully aware of the deficiencies of the Territorial Force. Duigan stated that he had "hidden nothing" from the Government and feared that there might have been "a political significance" to the statements, which he considered had come "at a very inopportune time". "...the Minister's statement (he continued) was received very well here, and a great deal of harm was done by the manifesto issued".<sup>17</sup>

It would appear from this letter that Duigan had not taken the colonels seriously when they warned him that they were prepared to issue a manifesto of their own. For the Chief of the General Staff to have so poor a knowledge of his senior Territorial officers, all of whom he had served with for many years is surprising. His inference that there may have been political motives involved in the issuing of the manifesto is also surprising, as the colonels were only stressing points that the nation's press had already made public. His remarks about his own conduct ("I have never hidden anything from the Government") have overtones of Pontius Pilate and his statement that "the Territorial Force is starting to buildup" is contradicted by both the popular press and by his own report to Parliament, issued on June 30th. In this he stated that only 41% of the below-establishment Force had attended camps that year.<sup>18</sup> One cannot help thinking that either Duigan or his staff, or both, had no real understanding of what was going on in the Territorial Force. Such an observation would be in keeping with the observations of the *Christchurch Press* in March which had claimed that the cadre staffs needed a "...higher standard of discipline and a closer association in a military capacity with the general public".<sup>19</sup>

Duigan took the only course open to him, as it was not too late for him to further the colonels' cause - even had he wanted to - and informed Byron that he had recommended to the Minister that the officers concerned be placed on the Retired List and that he wished the Governor General to know how disturbed he had been by the officers "taking the law

16 *Dominion*, 20 May 1938.

17 *Duigan to Byron*, 19 May 1938. NANZ, G49/52

18 'Annual Report of the Chief of the General Staff on the Military Forces of New Zealand, 30 June 1938' A.J.H.R. (1938) Vol. III, H. 19.

19 *Christchurch Press*, 19 March 1938.

into their own hands'.<sup>20</sup>

Byron replied to Duigan the following day, stating that he, too was most surprised that four senior officers would take such a course of action whatever their views. He continued that the Governor General (Lieutenant-Colonel Viscount Galway, GCMG, DSO, OBE), although not wishing to be involved in any way, especially as two officers concerned be placed on the Retired List.<sup>21</sup>

Duigan then instructed the Assistant Quartermaster-General in Wellington to demand from the colonels their reasons for acting contrary to the regulations. Although the correspondence between the AQMG and Duigan does not seem to exist any more it would appear that this officer raised some possible problems that might make the removal of the colonels more difficult than the Chief of the General Staff had thought. Duigan forwarded Macky's reply to the AQMG to Byron with the observation that "...whilst there is no great hurry to have these officers gazetted to the Retired List, in my opinion unnecessary delay would show weakness".<sup>22</sup> Byron was also having second thoughts and a letter from him crossed Duigan's, in which he attempted to withdraw his earlier letter expressing the Governor General's views. This letter, he claimed, was perhaps "a trifle misleading" and His Excellency had in fact only desired to express his support of his Chief of the General Staff in whatever action he saw fit to take in what was, "...to all outward appearances, a breach of regulations." Byron went onto mention that Viscount Galway was concerned that the colonels might not wish to quietly pass on to the Retired List, but might instead demand a court-martial before being convicted of a breach of regulations. Should such a situation arise, the Governor General could not confirm the proceedings of the court-martial if he was discovered to have expressed a previous opinion. Byron pointed out that in such circumstances the colonels would be entitled to refer their case to the King, which would "...greatly embarrass His Excellency's position".<sup>23</sup>

Duigan replied on the following morning, assuring Byron that he fully understood the position of the Governor General. He warned Byron that there was "...a flaw in the wording of the Act (The Defence Act) that may make things difficult", and that he was consulting with the Judge Advocate General and was awaiting the written opinions of that officer. He further cautioned Byron that "things are not as easy as they look".<sup>24</sup> As both Macky and Gambrill were lawyers it is reasonable to assume that they would also have been aware of such a flaw should they decide to contest the matter in a court-martial.

20 *Duigan to Byron, Loc. Cit.*

21 *Byron to Duigan, 20 May 1938. NANZ, G49-52/1.*

22 *Duigan to Byron, 23 May 1938. Loc. Cit.*

23 *Byron to Duigan, 23 May 1938. Loc. Cit.*

24 *Duigan to Byron, 24 May 1938. Loc. Cit.*

The colonels were gaining a degree of public support and a letter in the *Christchurch Press* stated that their "...courage to speak the truth, together with disregard of personal interest ... called forth the admiration of all those with the future of our land forces at heart".<sup>25</sup> An inter-provincial meeting of the New Zealand Farmers Union on 24th May passed a motion calling on the Government to adopt a vigorous policy of national defence.<sup>26</sup>

The Minister made his official reply to the Manifesto on 25th May when he declared that the colonels' action was "...regrettable and the reverse of helpful to the Territorial Force". He went on to disclose that as the Manifesto was lodged with the press on the same day that he made his Dargaville statement and that he considered that the colonels had therefore "...prepared and signed it prior to my speech".<sup>27</sup> The colonels never made any attempt to deny this point, and the fact that a fifth colonel (Colonel S.D. Mason) had signed the original and subsequently requested that his name be deleted adds weight to the Minister's claim. The *Dominion* approached Colonels Spragg and Macky, hoping for further comment, but were politely informed that as they had issued the Manifesto with a "full sense of responsibility" they had nothing further to add.<sup>28</sup>

The *Christchurch Press*, in an Editorial entitled "The Problem of Land Forces" took the Defence Minister to task, pointing out that he had not questioned the sincerity of purpose which dictated the Manifesto, nor had he attempted to argue its content. The Manifesto, it claimed, had supplied the need to arouse public concern over the Dominion's defence policies.<sup>29</sup> The *Auckland Star* stated that all Mr Jones had achieved was to give added prominence to the main thrust of the Manifesto, namely the adequacy of otherwise of the Dominion's defences. In its Editorial, headed "Minister and Officers" it suggested to Mr Jones that the questions of when and how the colonels came to issue the Manifesto were of small importance to the problem.<sup>30</sup>

In response to the questions from the AQMG, Colonel Spragg replied claiming that the course that he had taken was "contrary to my training and inclinations". However, he felt that he had acted in the best interests of the service, hoping that in so doing he might awaken the public to a sense of "their responsibility to support the Honourable the Minister for Defence and the Chief of the General Staff in their efforts to put our country into a proper state of defence."<sup>31</sup> This statement should

- 25 *Christchurch Press*, 20 May 1938.
- 26 *Auckland Star*, 25 May 1938.
- 27 *Auckland Star*, 25 May 1938.
- 28 *Dominion*, 26 May 1938.
- 29 *Christchurch Press*, 20 May 1938.
- 30 *Auckland Star*, 26 May 1938.
- 31 Spragg to AQMG, 2 June 1938. NANZ, G49/5211.



have dispelled any fears of political interference held by either the Minister or General Duigan. Colonel Gambrill was somewhat blunter, simply regretting that dictates of conscience placed him in a position which made the action taken "inevitable".<sup>32</sup> Colonel Macky made no comment on his actions and simply requested (undoubtedly to the relief of Duigan and Byron) that his appointment as *Aide-de-Camp* to the Governor General be cancelled as he felt that it would be "...impolite for my present status to obtain".<sup>33</sup>

This application, and a similar one from Colonel Wilder were met with approval by Byron who wrote to Duigan informing him that Viscount Galway had intimidated that he would accept their resignations "... before any disciplinary action is taken".<sup>34</sup> The resignations were gazetted on June 23rd<sup>35</sup> and did not escape the attention of the press. The *Dominion* sought comment from the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence and in each case was informed that the Minister concerned had "no statement" to make.<sup>36</sup>

The four colonels subsequently saved the army - and the Governor-General - the embarrassment of a series of courts-martial by offering their resignations and were placed on the Retired List (and therefore permitted to retain their rank and wear uniform) on 13th June.<sup>37</sup> There had never been any real alternative to them as they must have realised from the outset. To have fought the issue and to have sought public support would only have detracted from the sincerity of their motives and would have damaged their cause and they engaged in no further correspondence on the matter.

Though the military careers of the four had now ended it would appear that their stand had not been entirely in vain, Public awareness of the problems facing the Territorial Force had been aroused and the Government had been made to realise that the issue was not an active one, in need of urgent attention. Letters to the Editor of the *Dominion* had already urged the establishment of an Officer Training Corps<sup>38</sup> and a return to compulsory military training.<sup>39</sup>

32 *Gambrill to AQMG, 2 June 1938. Ibid.*

33 *Macky to AQMG, 2 June 1938. Ibid.*

34 *Byron to Duigan, 10 June 1938. Ibid.*

35 *New Zealand Gazette 1938 No. 46 (June 23) p.1513. Resignations took effect on 11th June.*

36 *Dominion, 25 June, 1938.*

37 *New Zealand Gazette 1938, No. 48 (June 30), p.1557.*

38 *Dominion, 21 May, 1938.*

39 *Ibid, 21 May 1938. (two letters)*

On 3rd June the New Zealand Defence League sent a deputation to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence in which it was suggested that if the voluntary system failed to produce the desired numbers, compulsory military training should be reintroduced.<sup>40</sup>

On 1st July when the next session of Parliament opened, the subject was raised in the Address-in-Reply debate. The National President of the Returned Servicemens Association, the Hon. W. Perry, MLC (Wellington) stated that the blame for the inadequacies of the Territorial Force had to be shared by both the Government and the people, both of which "...for a long time past have not got behind the Territorial system".<sup>41</sup>

The Defence Ministry subsequently produced a recruiting pamphlet in which Mr Jones informed the public that

"...a volunteer army is dependent on the spirit of service not only in the fit, keen men who join up, but in the community backing which they must have. Given a national appreciation of its importance, every unit will soon have a waiting list."<sup>42</sup>

The Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, meanwhile, made its own investigation into the problems confronting the prospective volunteer and claimed that the two most formidable obstacles were "...fear of economic loss and prejudicing employment through asking for leave and interference with sport".<sup>43</sup> To overcome the first problem the Chamber considered that the Government had to increase the serviceman's pay and the employer had to be prepared to make up any difference between the military and civilian pay for periods of compulsory training such as camps and courses.

The Chamber's statement drew several letters to the Editor. One correspondent noted that his son who had served for two years in the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry Regiment whilst employed by a Christchurch firm had had "every obstacle" placed in his way when it came to attending camps and had been "curtly refused" leave to attend the 1938 annual camp.<sup>44</sup> In a subsequent editorial the *Christchurch Press* revealed that public servants attending annual camps only received military pay if they

40 *Auckland Star*, 3 June 1938.

41 *N.Z.P.D.* Vol. 251, p. 110.

42 Jones, F. *The Defence of New Zealand: The Importance of the Territorial Army*. Wellington, Government Printer, 1938.

43 *Christchurch Press*, 3 June 1938.

44 *Ibid*, 8 June 1938.

produced a certificate from their department stating that they were either on leave without pay or on their annual holidays.<sup>45</sup> This revelation made a mockery of the Government's claim that it encouraged its employees to participate in Territorial training.

On 28th July Mr Jones, in a Ministerial Statement, introduced the first pay rise for the Territorial Force since 1910, raising all pay scales by three shillings a day. These rises gave a private soldier seven shillings, a lieutenant eleven shillings and a colonel one pound four shillings a camp allowance of five shillings a day was instituted, as was a travelling allowance of "up to 1½d. a mile" to and from parades. These measures, he claimed, would result in the Territorial Force recruiting up to establishment and becoming a "...thoroughly efficient section of the Defence Forces of the Dominion".<sup>46</sup> As the pay scales now placed all those below the rank of colonel on a pay rate below the minimum for a labourer or a public works employee it is rather difficult to accept the Minister's optimism.

Nevertheless, the new moves did meet with some success. In this 1939 Report to Parliament Duigan noted that camp attendances in the Territorial Force had risen from 41½ to 77%. This increase, he suggested, could be attributed to a combination of increased public support, on appeal by the Prime Minister (which included his appreciation of the efforts made by the volunteers) and the international situation.<sup>47</sup> Despite his public confidence, a few weeks earlier he had expressed some reservations in private. In a memorandum concerning the Pacific Defence conference he had noted that the Territorial Force still lacked modern equipment, had insufficient reserves of ammunition and was "...quite incapable of undertaking mobile operations."<sup>48</sup>

It is reasonable to assume that the moves that were made to improve the standing of the Territorial Force were made as a result of the stand taken by the four colonels. That such a stand was necessary in New Zealand in 1938 is what gives the Manifesto its importance.

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- 45            *Ibid*, 14 June 1938.
- 46            *N.Z.P.D. Op. Cit.* pp. 781-2.
- 47            *A.J.H.R. (1939) Vol. III, H. 19, pp. 1-2.*
- 48            *N.A.N.Z. Army Department 1, MO 7/9/1.*

## The Manifesto of the Four Colonels

### *Text of the Manifesto*

"Conscious of the very poor measure of support accorded to the forces by the public, we find it necessary to inform them of our opinions in the hope that the country itself may decide whether or not it requires a Territorial Army.

If it decides that such a force is a necessity then it must assume the duty of supporting these volunteers who have been endeavouring loyally to preserve the nucleus of a Territorial Army for many years with little or no public assistance. This action is taken by us solely for the purpose of ensuring that an efficient land force shall be available for the defence of New Zealand.

We claim an intimate knowledge of the problem of our defence and the state of unpreparedness now existing. We realise that as the senior volunteer officers we have a duty to place on record what we believe to be the facts:

1. That the present organisation and establishment of the force is insufficient for the defence of New Zealand.
2. That the number of volunteers trained and in training is insufficient to complete the establishment as at present laid down.
3. That the standard of physique and training of the serving volunteers in some cases is such as to render them unsuited for the purposes of expansion of the present organisation in time of need.
4. That the morale of the existing volunteers is being sapped by the successive reductions in strength and lack of public support -that we fear a disintegration of our present skeleton unless a definite support is accorded by the government and the people and assurances are given that the force is desired and will be fostered.
5. That in our opinion the failure of the present volunteer system would not have occurred had the active support of successive governments been accorded our land forces since the inception of the volunteer system.

In conclusion, we hesitate to mention the effects of this statement on our personal positions as military officers. However, we would like the people of New Zealand to realise that the gravity of the present situation is such that we feel all personal considerations must be put aside if we are to carry out our duty to our country as citizen soldiers."

**C.R. SPRAGG**      *Late Commander, 1st Mounted Rifles Brigade*

**N.L. MACKY**      *Late Commander, 1st Infantry Brigade*

A.S. WILDER      Late Commander, 2nd Mounted Rifles Brigade

R.F. GAMBRILL    Late Commander, 2nd Infantry Brigade  
Deleted at his own request:

S.D. MASON        Late Commander, 3rd Infantry Brigade

National Archives of New Zealand,  
*Governor's Series, G49/52/1.*

#### QUOTABLE QUOTES

*"Warfare is one of the oldest occupations known to man. It is as ancient and enduring as song or measurement and is likely to persist as long as man remains what he is -contentious, tribal, acquisitive and prone to impose solutions by force."*

*General Sir John Harlett*

THE WORD

by

WOI P. Tamepo, RNZIR

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This article originally appeared in "Grapevine", the 2 Cant NMWC magazine.

Consider this definition:

"Mental and moral self-control resulting in orderliness, a proper subordination and the capacity for co-operation."

So What?

Think what your home life, your business, your rugby team or anything at all for that matter, would be like if:

- \* every family member did exactly as they wanted without any thought for others in the family.
- \* if there was no plan or supervision for work in business or industry.
- \* an All Black team did not obey its captain's orders, did not play in accordance with the rules or did not play as a team.
- \* you disobeyed the traffic road rules.

Then surely, the definition written, must be applicable to us all, whether we be civilian or soldier.

What is it?

It is not a natural quality in a man, and it has to be taught, but it is a distinguishable quality between a soldier and a civilian and must therefore be understood by everyone.

It has been defined in many different ways by many great soldiers. It has been described as 'the ingrained habit of unhesitating obedience which controls and directs the fighting spirit.'

It is the means by which the natural qualities in a soldier are welded together and converted into a military asset.

*Natural qualities?*

- \* Courage - which is born of self-confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- \* Endurance - which comes from physical and mental toughness.
- \* Alertness - which combines inquisitiveness.
- \* Comradeship and loyalty - the essence of which is the team spirit and esprit-de-corps.

These natural qualities are found to a greater or lesser degree in every man but experience has shown that all of them, combined with the definition, completely knit them together to form the WORD, and with certain forms of military training can be developed and strengthened.

*The Word?*

Without the WORD men remain civilians in uniform, even if they possess the four qualities and are technically proficient. They may still make reasonably efficient soldiers provided they are well led and as long as things are going well. But if the leaders are removed or become casualties a soldier in whom the WORD is not instilled is a danger to the team.

Other words have been used besides training. These include, chastise, punish, strict course of learning etc, but it is only by use of our defined WORD that the four qualities are converted into military assets.

*Is it achievable?*

Yes, by aiming at perfection, not just now and then but always, whether under supervision or not, however, do not become inflexible.

This attitude is the very secret and must be applied to everything, whether it be in the office or in the field.

*Is it a state of mind?*

Does the soldier still carry on after he has reached the limits of normal endurance and resolution? If he does then well and good, he has conquered the definition sufficiently to maintain the state of mind involved.

But the following factors must be considered:

- \* Example - this is of the utmost importance. Officers and NCOs must be the example of prompt and cheerful obedience. They must show loyalty to their commander in all circumstances and must never criticise orders in the presence of juniors.

- \* Explanation - the days of 'theirs is not to reason why' are over. Commanders at all levels wherever possible must explain the reason for orders. A soldier who understands is a soldier that will react.
- \* Inspections - a mundane and tiresome task but they are very vital. Inspections are the means by which a superior ensures that his orders have been executed. A badly turned out or prepared soldier is an asset to the enemy but a liability to you.
- \* Firmness and Humanity - if the definition is not strictly adhered to it will soon not exist at all. Do not confuse strictness with severity.
- \* Orders - if it cannot or is not enforced then don't issue it. Democratic ideals have not altered the need and orders must be obeyed.

*Do you know the Word?*

It is not a natural quality, it must be taught and enforced.

It welds together the natural qualities of courage, endurance, alertness, comradeship and loyalty to produce the ideal soldier.

There are two kinds, self and imposed, the Army requires both, but the former is by far the more valuable.

Being physically fit and tough is not enough. Self control and the strengthening of the mind is only produced by ...

*What? - the word,*

## D I S C I P L I N E

### P O I N T T O P O N D E R

*"The counsellor says "Be forthright! Be articulate! Be confident! Possess a commanding appearance!" The young man replies*

*"All very good, so far as it goes. I will, if I can.*

*But tell me, how do I do these things?"*

S.L.A. Marshall (1)



MUSINGS ON MIASMIC MOMENTS WITH THE MILITIA

by

Mile IgnotusFor Starters

Men whose capacity for recollection extends beyond the last issue of Uniform Upkeep Allowance (a miserable number), will recall that the most recent edition of this Journal contained a contribution by Mile which described in some detail the sanity retention programme required if you ever had the ill luck to be posted to Defence HQ. A parting word in the expose was the threat of further verbiage to follow as Mile was contemplating "lifting the Lid on the TF". Like all idle threats they are soon forgot, but not by the Editor, and some malevolent threats have been impacting around Mile's Desk (Executive Grade III, Chair sans high back). Under those sorts of stimuli Mile has had no option but to deliver yet another diatribe that will fearlessly reveal all that you never wanted to know about those strange cousins of ours, the Territorial Force.

Aah the TF, in most circumstances they provide us with an intriguing sub species of soldiery provoking milk interest jocularity depending upon the predicament they are enmired in at the time. Their novelty becomes more of a concern if and when one finds his moniker attached to a posting order consigning the carcass to a spell of campaigning with our amateur comrades.

An Admission

It must be admitted that Mile was a tad loathe to embark on this chapter, his previous discourses had exposed events that are safely behind him. Having spent some time with the "Volunteers" and with the prospect of perhaps having to survive another posting in their company it has been necessary to fabricate a fair bit, (in fact all), of this article in the interest of saving the career plot. Therefore you can safely assume that all that follows is pure fiction and if you can see any semblance between yourself and my flights of fancy then it is pure coincidence and you should be bloody well ashamed of yourself.

What's Going Down

Having covered the tracks so to speak let's get stuck into the main part of the dissection. We will follow the path of our Hero, the Man of Spirit, (MOS), as he is launched from his position of comfort in the

snug womb of a regular camp out into the wilderness.<sup>1</sup> There is something of a culture shock here, being torn from all the comforts of life on camp where everything has been hammered into submission and there is naught to fear save the Orderly Officer list and the off chance of being lumbered as mess secretary. For those who have been living in, it can be a particularly cruel prospect losing the privileges of the trice daily automatically issued fodder, the daily re-org of the sleeping pit and the denial of rights to the 1700 bar snacks. Other culture shocks are in store for you, some of them are detailed in the following paragraphs.

### Impact No 1 - Your Arrival

Rest assured this will be an underwhelming experience. The greeting team will comprise of an aged storeman with an asthmatic panel van. You will be conducted across town (and across the tracks), to a locale that in the terms of an overenthusiastic real estate jockey could be termed as being "...ripe for urban renewal". The Drill Hall will be a picturesque example of Russo-War Scare erection that comes into the 20th century with a maintenance bill that threatens the National Debt. The decor will be brown on brown and you will admiringly note that a philosophy of austerity has been imposed with definite savings being made in the areas of lighting and heating. You will be shown amongst the gloom a rabbit hole of an office with a fading photo of HM brightening one wall, the ground underfoot will be lino with tasteful pieces of tongue and groove peeking through in the heavy traffic areas. On your desk will be arranged files in the pending tray to provide a sturdy sangar. At the top of the heap you will discover three little darlings that will provide you with endless entertainment. They are labelled Investigations, Command Inspections and Schedule of Auditors Inspections.

You will inspect the civilian receptionist, (invariably named Beryl if over 40 otherwise it will be Charlene). There will be no-one else to meet you, your predecessor will not be around for the handover having just secured a rapid release from the service for some undisclosed but no doubt vile crime. The rest of the troops will have disappeared for a "recce", a word that masks a variety of minor criminal activities. If at this juncture you are feeling slightly depressed and in need of a quick snort it is probable that you will find the Garrison Club is nailed shut with a sign on the door saying it will remain that way until the completion of the Summary of Evidence. This is the appropriate occasion to head back up town to local Officer's Club and indulge in a few sherberts. A series of G & Ts plus a session of earache from a fading veteran of the counter attack at Galatas will restore your spirits.

On returning to the Drill Hall to collect the kit you will surprise the Transport NCO busy hosing the blood out of the boot of the staff car following the completion of the "recce" to the Tinwald Piggery.

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*For some obscure reason TF units tend to be located in population centres away from decent military folk. This means your posting will most likely mean domestic upheaval. With any luck the next Defence Review will reverse this unsavoury phenomena.*

Still no sign of the rest of the cadre staff who are doubtless by this time downtown at the RSA knocking off meat raffles (porcine type) to the idle and disorderly that infest such places. Resist any temptation to slash your wrists, just retire to the motel and prepare yourself for a long seige.

### Meeting the CO

This will not be too traumatic an occasion, most TF COs seem to be quite amiable chaps<sup>2</sup> and your CO will be no exception. He will welcome you on board, make a comment on how well Bill, (your predecessor), got on with the locals, (a comment you can only endorse heartily as every second phone call to your office since your arrival has been for Bill. Half from desperate sounding ladies and the remainder from representatives of debt collectors). Most likely he will dismiss Task Force HQ as, "not knowing their bums from their elbows", and spend the rest of the time nattering about the Regimental Ball. You will note some alarm that this little number will require a logistics input similar to Golden Fleece and that you will be honchoing the entire drama. Any reference about the inflammatory nature of the files you found on your desk will be airily dismissed with cavalier rejoinder of "no cause for gloom there young shaver, I always leave all that admin poop to you RF chaps, after all that's what you are all frightfully good at".<sup>3</sup>

### The Other Officers

Let's face it the TF can provide a haven for romantics, a fair proportion of the officers (99.99 repeating per cent) will have expectations of glory and glamour. Remember this when dealing with them. There is a wide variety of people from all sorts of backgrounds and I have made a few sweeping generalisations about their characteristics according to their occupational class, eg:

- a. Farmers. Hulking types who fantasise that they have an eye for the ground. Their military kit gets worn out twice as fast as anyone else's as it gets used seven days a week on

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2            *There are thin chances of promotion for the TF past Lt Col so Mile's principle No 14 comes into play which briefly says "The most disagreeable bastards in the world can become quite mellow once they reach their ceiling and accept it".*

3            *At this point your course report from the School of Tiny Minds & Admin will flash through your temporal lobes. The sepulchral tones of the CI as he handed you your JSO's results with a weary statement of "...Mile, you are one of those chaps whom it would be pointless wasting the time and efforts of my staff on trying to discover any latent skills in the field of military administration within your skull, go thou and never again darken the doorway. You have been granted a bare pass with a strong recommendation that you never ever be placed in any position of administrative responsibility".*

the lambing beat. Watch out for any attempts to have training on their properties. You will wind up with the assault pioneers laying fences, the medical platoon drenching ewes and workshops whanging new rings into the ute.

- b. Teachers. This species has plenty of time on their hands (their endless vacations ensure that) so a military post can provide some evasion away from their dismal classrooms to prove their leadership talents. They will bang on about their excellent man management and training skills. You should be able to check the veracity of such claims by inspecting their ex pupils who will be parading their numerate and illiterate qualities down at the local dole office.
- c. Lawyers. Charming chaps but having devoted their professional lives to prevaricating on every issue don't expect any sort of decision from them which hasn't been gold plated with pre conditions, exceptions and exemptions.
- d. The Unit MO. Most of these chaps appear to have graduated from medical school with an implacable belief that MB Ch B qualifies them automatically to be Brigadiers in drag. With the news media's current preoccupation with hounding the medical fraternity from pillar to post the starlight team have calmed down in recent times and have lost some of their usual arrogance in exchange for heightened paranoia. If you are getting a little weary of him just say that some journo from a glossy monthly magazine has been ringing up and asking questions about the medical treatment of women in the unit. That should get him in a fair state of panic.
- e. Ex Regular Officers. There are some people who will never be satisfied with one ride on the roundabout and having completed one (undistinguished in most cases) term with the firm these retreads think they will do better the second time around. Can cause terminal boredom with their constant harping on about long (best) forgotten minor incidents. Otherwise known as the "When we were..." crowd.

### What They Think of You

The RF Officer's role in life is to act as the unit mother in law and as the Abominable No Man. Your ever eager enthusiastic officers will be constantly banging their wild ideas against your firm, (and often terrified) NO! Intemperate suggestions will gush forth all fraught with the consequence that yours is the neck that will be on the block. Firmly dismiss any but the most pedestrian suggestions. You will be badgered constantly with all sorts of ill considered flights of fancy such as:

"...lets take the local spastics white water rafting"

"...can we take the GPMGs goat shooting."

"...we want to lend the Adjutant a horse to take on parades"

"...why don't we have a raid on Task Force HQ and 'snatch' the

BM?"

"...when are the subalterns going to get batmen?"

### The Cadre Staff

With any luck at all you will arrive to a unit fully equipped with RSM, Chief Clerk, RQMS and Transport NCO plus a number of intriguing types known as the Cadre NCOs. Like the curates egg these chaps can be good in parts. The trick is to find out what those parts are and then make sure that the lads are kept occupied doing the things they are good at and are kept well away from those little areas in which their talents are minimal or worse. Cadre NCOs can fall into a number of categories, I will only dismember two of them, these being:

- a. The now old and not so bold. Having served 18 years, got the "letter" and passed the Senior NCOs course on the third attempt there will be little you can teach this chap. With his sights firmly set on a next posting as the proprietor of a seven day dairy his intermediate goals would seem to be conservation of strength until release date is reached. Often located in or close to the Garrison Club where considerable efforts are made to keep the liver well rotted. His desk will be an archeological prize that will contain all sorts of treasures such as incomplete stores demands, unsigned leave applications, 'lost' fuel cards and a variety of claims in varying states of fermentation. You should ensure that your most enthusiastic and artless officer becomes his superior officer, they both deserve each other.
- b. The Young and the Very Restless. Just out from the School of Infantry with a nauseating spring in his step and an unquenchable vigour to "...get stuck in and make D Coy the strongest, the fittest and the smartest team in the Task Force". He will organise night parades, recruiting drives, company functions, charity runs, open days, sports raffles, family BBQs and anything else that zings into his head, operating on the premise that it is his mission in life to turn the sorry band of callow, pimply youths that form his troops, into a second Ranger Coy. Incessant demands will be made for parachute training, assault craft drills, abseiling, jungle lane shoots, unarmed combat etc. Get him internally posted to Log Coy. The combined forces of the chaps in the catering and transport platoons would defy the proselytising efforts of Sister Teresa, let alone your tyro.

### Logistics

Another key man in your empire will be the RQMS. Again these fellows can appear in a variety of shapes some with talent, others with cunning. I personally believe that there are only two species of RQMS, the Stores Manager breed being one and the other is of course the Gopher. Fate will dictate which example you will be saddled with.

The Stores Manager will present you with an immaculate store with every item right dressed off, both on the shelves and in the

ledgers. Security will be exquisite. From the moment you step into the "Q" Kingdom you will realise that here everything is in its place and there is a place for everything. Behind the desks shiny young storepersons will be slaving away checking vouchers with a frantic efficiency. Truly an auditors dream and when they hove into view they will be dazzled by the evidence of sublime efficiency. Of course to maintain such a store requires that the actual items spend as much time on shelves as possible with every attempt to actually take them out and use them being vehemently discouraged. After all if things are used they only get worn out, lost, misused or stolen. Funnily enough these stores supermen in many instances do not shine in adversity, once dragged away from their desks and thrust into the paddock they can become a wee bit confused.<sup>4</sup> Fastball demands for extra rations, ammo, fuel or whatever are greeted with horror and plaintive cries of "I need the right documentation" or "we haven't got an entitlement for that, we will need to raise a submission", or "I haven't got my microfiche so I can't help you". All of which is not very helpful when you have got the CO on your back screaming for mess furniture and you are parked up in Six Cross in a howling blizzard.

The Gopher RQMS has none of the virtues of his counterpart. To enter his store takes considerable courage. Your man will be found dropping a new motor into his mum's Norton Commando. A request for an item will be met with a cheerful, "No problem Boss, I think we have got one of those somewhere". The next 20 minutes will be spent raking through what you thought was a small dump of compost but which you now realise is in fact the camp equipment bay. Venture into the RQs office and you are in heart attack territory. The key cabinet will be open, the lock having been cut through many moons ago. Spare surfaces will be occupied by a variety of forms of military persuasion with no semblance of order prevailing anywhere. His staff will be a number of fugitives from justice with looks of malevolent cunning on their visages. You will find them in the garage busy painting the unit tac signs on a number of recently purloined items of equipment. However when the rain is hammering down, the transport hasn't arrived at the right RV, the troops are sodden and all about you are despairing, you can rely on the RQ to front up with a bucket of hot curry, spare wet weather kit and a snort of rum to revitalise the senses.

### Training

You will be pleasantly surprised to discover that apart from the burdens of trying to administer your lost tribe you will also be required to make an effort to sort out some form of plan for their training. Again the TF expectations can sometimes be a little more than what the system can deliver. The TF lust after action activities which make loud noises and cause physical damage. Any attempt to involve them in more cerebral pursuits will be met with negative body language, (they won't turn up), sulky demeanours and downright obstinance.

It is in fact relatively easy to keep the team satisfied and so long as every training weekend incorporates a falling plate shoot, helo drills, abseiling, an assault river crossing, an escape and evasion exercise, a Regimental Dinner in the field and a fire power demo the lads should be reasonably satiated and will be able to head back to their civilian environs to awe their mates with improbable tales of derring do. Somehow doing a few hours hacking through military law lectures doesn't have quite the same mana as launching the final assault into enemy territory.

The training programme will be easy to sort out. Look up the one the unit had last year and identify the events at which there was the greatest attendance and note these down. Next check the sports calendar for the coming year and mark down All Black games, one day cricket dates and all Ranfurly Shield Challenges. Check the meteorology for the year and identify the times when;

- a. there is plenty of snow about, and
- b. the alpine fishing season opens.

This sort of preparation will isolate for you the best times to have the lads out doing their thing. Modify the nomenclature on the programme you are plagiarising (skill learnt at Tactical School) so that it appears that you have at least been original and issue the appropriate training directive. Incorporate at least one Charter Parade and a Regimental Dinner. The rest will be the same old boring round of regimental training, range weekends, driver refreshers, TEWTs and open days. No cause for gloom the average soldier's (RF or TF), memory only extends back as far as the previous all ranks party so your notions will be greeted with enthusiasm. The cunning trick here is to deceive the masses into believing that all the ideas were theirs in the first place. That way they will be even more excited about the coming adventure.

### Socialisation

Soldiers are gregarious brutes and the TF are no exception. Although there has been some attempts to restrain the fermented beverage intake in the RF, such crusades have had less success with the militia. The Garrison Club is as important a structure as the Orderly Room. It will be in your interests to ensure that it is kept open and well populated. Conversely, rather like an M16 mine that some hoon has emplaced back to front, Garrison Clubs can do a man's prospects substantial damage if not guided in the right direction.

The other time when you will need to keep your wits about you will be at Annual Camp when the TF arrive with the traditional questions burning in their brains, these being:

- a. "When do we get fed?"
- b. "When do we get paid?"
- c. "When do we go home?"
- d. "When does the Soldiers' Club, Sergeants' and Officers' Messes open? (NB they never ask when these institutions

will close it is axiomatic that once opened they will remain that way until the end.)

There are a number of crafty ploys that will keep the lads happy and watered at Camp without appearing to transgress the imprecations from Task Force HQ that this will be a "dry camp". I do not intend to reveal these in this forum save note that Hugo Fanning (our hero from previous times) once attempted to have his entire unit diagnosed as being drug addicts with the intention of placing them all on a heroin substitution programme of Lion Brown.

### The Local Head Shed

A place to avoid but one in which it is necessary to keep a tame mole who can provide the necessary early warning of impending dramas such as staff visits, investigations, horrid "civic aid" projects and requests for the return of the staff car to the transport pool. You will find the HQ infested with the usual array of officers most of whom fall within the categories already discussed in previous papers.<sup>5</sup> Thrusters will be trampling through Ops Branch and making a general nuisance of themselves, no great problem they can be quickly kneecapped.<sup>6</sup> The key men are down in Logistics and Personnel Branches. There should be some retired soldier holding down the civvy SO3 post. It is critical that you befriend this fellow. The standard ploy is to catch his ear with a few key phrases along the lines of "...well Bill this Army has never been the same since they got rid of the No 4 for the SLR, at least then you could tell if a man was a soldier or not by whether his forearm was parallel to the ground at the slope". By carefully massaging this chap's ego you will be well placed when it comes to sliding the sticky problems through. Another key player is the AQM. These chaps can really pull the rabbits out of the hat when the lumps hit the propeller during a stocktake and you find yourself three toolkits, five tents and 123 rifle magazines adrift.

The brigade major is invariably a harrassed character who will be best avoided. He always has a pained expression on his face because the "Firm" is making him pay his dues for that expensive military education he has been granted. It is bad enough for the chap trying to balance his mortgage and save his marriage without being saddled with his current appointment. (Have some sympathy, you will have to deal with only one TF CO, he has got a whole raft of them to direct.) Another good reason to keep civil is the fact that this fellow is on the way up. It pays to maintain an amiable relationship with such people.

Task Force HQ will do its best to keep you busy by incessantly demanding an extraordinary flood of information from your unit. There will be returns on an astounding range of subjects. Most will appear to

5 *If you haven't read Mile's early pithy contributions to the Army Journal then hunt back through the last three editions.*

6 *See Army Journal No 5 Dec 87.*



have little if any relevance apart from ensuring a rapid turnover of the stocks of message pads. Again it should be realised that most of this poop comes from higher. It is not the SO2 Pers who has an interest in the number of Officers of Latvian extraction who have passed School Certificate History. That query has originated from some obscure office in Defence HQ where the originating ingrate is gathering material for a Sociology paper.

The real art of dealing with a HQ is to organise the counter battery programme. Every demand for information should be met with a counter barrage of bumph that quickly clogs the channels of communication. Send in extensive reports on each and every activity you do, check the dead files and raise all the old submissions that were rejected three or more years ago. This will cause the task force staff to get sick and tired of you and they will go out of their way to avoid you.

### The Numbers Game

Immense importance is placed on unit strengths and unit efficiency and these can be easily fabricated by smart application of strength state returns. There are a plethora of these; posted strengths, established strengths, efficient strength and effective strength being some of them. As the RF Staff you will be torn between keeping the strength states suspiciously healthy and embarrassingly accurate. A healthy strength state allows you to make the most of block scales for ammunition and rations while a purging of the books, (to get rid of the deadwood), will reduce the admin load. The unit CO will of course be the most optimistic, especially when amongst his peers, and brave predictions of the numbers that will be fronting up to Annual Camp can be embarrassing when on day one the anticipated massed legions evaporate to look something akin to the remains of the 7th Cavalry after Little Big Horn.

If you wish to avoid this sort of humiliation then a clever TF unit will run two Annual Camps in the same year by using the feeble excuse that half their chaps are tied up with dog trials/university exams/shearing/harvesting and so need an alternative Camp to attend. By this means you will have two poorly attended camps and you can fob off the visitors who enquire as to the lack of cannon fodder with an airy "Oh yes, we have only got about 50 lads here but we expect the other 400 in July".<sup>7</sup>

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*Mile can still recall the fond occasion at Helwan one year when the APCs rattled up to provide company APC drills to one of these phantom outfits. The troop of turret heads were less than pleased to be confronted by "B" Coy who numbered only 13 souls on parade. The OC was not abashed exclaiming "Jolly good, one track per man and one as a spare, that gives us all bags of room".*

### Annual Camp

We cannot avoid discussing Annual Camp, the *raison d'être* of your existence. This is the biggie and rest assured that if due to your painstaking efforts, planning and preparation the camp passes by without incident, receives a four page spread in the local bugle and excites the visiting dignitary to exclaim "bloody good show, I haven't seen such a fine effort ever before" then the MBE will be going directly to the CO. If on the other hand despite all you have done the padre writes off a Unimog, the bandmaster is caught interfering with the Regimental Goat and the RSM faints when he is getting his Long Gong it will be your fault old son and no one elses. Best then you get the damage control plan in action.

The first thing you must do prior to camp is do all the organising and planning yourself. The TF don't like planning, it sounds like logistics and all those other terrible things that the average officer cannot or will not understand. That way at least you will have your hands on the helm and you will know what is meant to happen, and more importantly, no one else will. This ensures that minor cock ups can be explained away with a deft turn of phrase such as, "Of course you didn't get any rations, that was all part of the plan to see if you could manage an unexpected crisis such as no rations for three days. Get back out there, show a bit of leadership and live off the land my boy".

To maintain the all omnipotent presence organise your own turnout to be of a standard far beyond what the TF can aspire to. Doing so, will enhance your reputation and make all round you green with envy. Twas a time when this was relatively easy to organise as the TF never got any good gear anyway. The RF would be kitted out with their DPMs, cammy wet weather kit, GP boots, pommy webbing and yank field jackets. The poor old TF would shamble around in their grimy JGs and plastic raincoats, looking and feeling second rate, exactly the frame of mind you wanted them in. Fanning once went to camp with 28 sets of JGs all pressed and starched in his tin trunk. He would change twice a day and thus manage to appear as sharp as a tack throughout the 14 days while all around him wilted. These days, because of some misguided policy, the TF actually get serviceable uniforms as well as decent wet weather gear. It is the poor RF who look like poor relations these days. Oh make sure you ban the TF using private cars to come to camp. It will do your soul no good to be afflicting your optics with the view of all the Range Rovers, Mercs and RX 7s lined up in review order in the park, (and that is only in the private soldiers' area).

### The Public Presence

As HM's representative there will be a fair amount of time devoted to keeping in good with the locals. The level at which you apply your efforts will reflect your immediate ambitions. If on a terminal posting then obviously you should secure a billet with the local Rotary Club which is a good venue to grease your way into future employment, (don't try Jaycees they tend to be full of civvy thrusters from the real estate and used car trade, not a MOS scene). Alternatively if the time up country is only a passing fad then get into the local Hunt Club, Hash Harriers or Yacht Club. The socialisation opportunities here are excellent.

On a more formal note the unit will probably be tied into some form of charter parade. Even worse, some units have had the misfortune to have been the descendents of a multitude of colourful mobs raised about 1887 and you will have inherited the civic duties not only of 11 Rolleston Rifles but also those belonging to the Lumsden Volunteer Cycle Corps, the Kaikoura Mounted Rifles, the Submarine Mining Volunteers, the Scottish Horse Mounted Rifles and Prince Alfred's Mess Tin Repair Coy to name but a few. All these ghosts will have real time parade commitments to a variety of rural hamlets and boroughs each of which will have a mayor whose military ardour was inflamed by CMT intake No 2 and has ever since wanted to be on a saluting dais.

The best way to deal with the charter parade is to persuade the CO that the unit should demonstrate its hi-tech capacity and replace the march past with a roll past in unit vehicles. This will save the RSM's sanity and prevent the undoubted humiliation of having to watch your gaggle of dsylexic (in drill terms) troopies stagger up High St in their emaciated sub units to the discordant sounds of the Regimental Pipes and Drums. How much better it is to have the lads pass by the reviewing dias their bums firmly nailed to the seats of the Unimog, (if the unit really embarrasses then have the canopies on and the back flaps lowered).

### Massaging the Media

As you will be protruding into the civilian community somewhat there is every chance that you will have to handle the local public relations activities. This sort of activity can have its pitfalls as the odd remark made to a young dewy eyed lass at the mayoral bunfight can reappear in the Murchison Mail as a front page headline screaming "Army says Mongrel Mob need Napalming". To avoid these moments it behoves you to meet the 'Press' and establish a working relationship with them. This goes somewhat against the grain as you will have been indoctrinated into believing the media are a threat to the nation on a par with the contraction of the ozone layer. Most officers appear to be almost paralysed by any thought of contact with the fourth estate. Never fear, tonight's headline is tomorrow's fish and chip wrappings. Find a friendly reporter and cultivate him a tad, some day you may need this guy when something really bad happens, (eg, the RSM is nailed for DIC in an APC after it has impacted with the Rangitiki Bridge). In these moments a quick word to Harry can often get the story from the front page and five columns with photos back to page 15 and a paragraph inserted between the Bridge Club scores and the NZR timetable.

### The Good Things

It will take a while but after surviving the initial shock of total immersion into the civilian community it is possible to glean some miserable moments of gratification from your onerous post. Look forward therefore to the few precious liberties you will enjoy, amongst which will be:

- a. The freedom from having to tolerate the presence of all those other quasi military types that provide so much pain back in the real world. One sees little of chalkies, lawyers, psychs, civil administration officers or any of the

other irritating characters that do so much to make life unbearable.

- b. The opportunity to organise your routine to meet the actual demands of the job in hand rather than having to turn to at 0800 each day, fill the time in mindless boredom until 1630 and legging it for the home patch.
- c. The fact that TF soldiers do not impose a massive drama as far as looking after their dependants is concerned. Unlike the RF camp followers who need constant massaging to make sure their delicate psvches are kept from being crushed by all the slings and arrows of todays life, the TF family concerns are none of yours. They appear, (unlike the RF camp followers), to be able to manage their lives with minimal interference from you or any other do-gooder.

### Valete

You will find your tour will pass rapidly, there will be plenty of excitement and one day you may discover that you are developing almost an affection for your mob. If this does occur apply for an immediate posting. For goodness sake man you could start having all sorts of dreadful thoughts such as "well at least these guys do show a bit more imagination than some of the RF drones" or "it's true you know, our best soldiers have always come from the TF, the RF have always minded the shop until the country got in the clag and had to mobilise the militia". Such hereseys will do your career plot considerable damage, best you get yourself back into the mainstream so get your sights set on a comfortable post where the work is minimal, the allowances unreasonable, the responsibilities inconsequential and the climate amenable. Spot yet in Singers squire.

Pip Pip!

Mile Ignobis

THE ROLES OF TECHNOLOGY AND INTUITION IN DECISION MAKING

by

Major J.O. Thomson, BA (Mil), RNZSIGS

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Major Thompson was promoted to Captain in 1982. In 1983 he was posted to 1 RNZIR, Singapore, as the Signals Platoon Commander and assumed the appointment of 2IC Support Company in July 1984. He was promoted to Major on assuming the appointment of Officer Commanding Force Signals Group in December 1986.

Major Thompson is presently attending the Australian Staff College, Queenscliff and will return to New Zealand in December 1989.

INTRODUCTION

'Too many choices must be made too often. Data is expensive to collect, often of uncertain quality or relevance. Analysis is laborious and often far too expensive even though imprecise or superficial. All rigorous analysis ... starts with an intuitive choice and ends with an intuitive decision. The first definition of the problem is inescapably intuitive. It must be in order to be recognised as a problem at all. The final decision is intuitive. It must be or there is no choice and therefore no need for a decision.'

Harry Levinson

The contention of the proper or possible relationship between science and the human element in the decision process has been flourishing ever since F.W. Taylor's proposal of 'scientific management' for the business community around the turn of the century.<sup>1</sup> The problems of applying Newtonian systems to the phenomenon of human decisions were, and still are vast, resulting in polarisation of opinions on the subject. Early supporters of Taylor ascertained that management was an emerging science. The vehement responders claimed managerial decision making was an art in which proficiency depended upon years of experience and the resultant intangible ability to make subtle, intuitive judgements. Such an art, it was argued, simply could not be rendered down to mere scientific equations.

Time however has shown that science is more than mere equations. Behavioural and managerial sciences are accepted inroads to the better understanding and more efficient execution of the decision process. Classical science has made quantum advancements giving the military commander an impressive array of tools and advisors to aid him in his decision process. This evolution of the sciences now gives rise not to the question of art or science, but to the degree the two are intertwined by the commander in his decision process.

In order to unravel the question of degree or reliance the modern commander places on the art and sciences, several factors require examination. The first of these is the decision itself. What is it and what are the essential elements and processes that constitute or produce this phenomenon? Such analysis of the decision will enable better understanding of how the commander's subconscious processes categorises and condenses the vast complexities into manageable, recognisable choices.

The second factor requiring examination is intuition. What is intuition, how has it served the commander and why has it been considered the major factor in his decision process? These questions must be answered in order to examine the relationship between intuition and technology in the decision process.

The third factor to be addressed is the technology available to the commander. What are these major advances in the sciences that have caused the dominant role of the commander's intuition to be called into question, and what role are they designed or destined to play?

Having examined the factors, the relationship between the roles of intuition and technology as tools available to the commander will be addressed. To what extent should be rely on each, and under what circumstances would

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Morris W.T. 'Management Decisions - Art or Science.'  
Yewdall G.A. (ed). Management Decision Making.  
Devon, 1969. p 3.

credence or weight be directed toward one at the expense of the other? Do factors such as education and upbringing, or the generation gap, give clues as to the trust a modern commander may devote either to the intuition that has served him so well in the past or to the new technological tools and associated advisors that now besiege him.

Considering the time that this contention has been brewing, and the rapid advancement of technology, a brief look to the future is in order. What insight can be gained into the future relationship between intuition and the sciences.

This essay aims to examine the relationship between the roles of intuition and technology in the commander's decision making process.

### THE DECISION

What is a decision? The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a decision as:

'Settlement (of question etc.), conclusion, formal judgement; making up one's mind, resolve; resoluteness, decided character.'<sup>2</sup>

A simpler answer is that it is what happens when one makes up one's mind. However, a more practical definition of the purpose of discussion is that posed by E.F. Harrison and simplified by Leigh:

'A decision is a precise moment during a continuous process of evaluating alternatives. These alternatives concern different courses of action in relation to a goal. The decision maker's expectation about a particular course of action impels him to make a selection or commitment towards which he will direct his intellect and energies for the purpose of obtaining his objective.'<sup>3</sup>

For practical purposes Leigh divides the decision into two broad categories and the decision process into five elements.<sup>4</sup> The two categories are programmed and unprogrammed. The former is where time, quantified data,

2 The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Fifth Edition).  
Oxford, 1974. p 574.

3 Brech E.F.L. 'Management - Its Nature and Significance.'  
London, 1969. p 5.

4 Leigh A. 'Decisions, Decisions!' Hampshire, 1983. p 37-48.

appropriate skills and favourable environment are all present. The latter categorises the new, unstructured decision that may have little or questionable data available, and perhaps no previous standard against which it can be measured or compared. It may also be made in a fast moving, fluid environment which may prevent a final outcome before a new decision is made. The applicability of this categorisation to the modern commander requires no further amplification.

The first of the five elements of the decision process is that the decision is interdisciplinary. The decision is made with reference to the vast fields of endeavour of the decision maker. Such fields include science, values, ethics, experiences, individual and group behaviour and social environmental factors such as law and politics.

The second of the elements is that the decision is a systematic process. In this text, 'systematic' implies not simply an ordering of defined and analysed steps, but the combination of these steps with the contrasting nature of the intuitive aspect of the subconscious. This element requires of the commander a personal thought input. Such input is based upon experience gained from an ongoing education process, enabling him to coordinate data in order to adapt it to his decision process.

The third element is that the decision is information based. Before a commander makes a decision he will collect information about the various aspects of the options available. Such information will form the basis of his subsequent decision process.

The fourth element of the decision is that it is about uncertainty. The decision relates to the future which is always, to some degree, uncertain. The decision deals with probability and may be dependant upon, inter alia, guesswork, hunches, statistics or science, either singularly or combined. It is this element with which the commander has the final input. The question of strict probability however is not relevant in all situations. The commander's decision that results in the loss of several combat fire units on the way gaming board may not have the same rule of rational choice applied if, in the same scenario, that commander was actually in one of those units and at war.

The final elements of the decision is that it is concerned with action. Action, be it corrective, preventative or anticipatory, links the decision to a result. The result will determine if the action taken achieved the objective (assuming that this was well defined in the first instance), and hence if the decision was correct (assuming no post decision factors intervene). The military commander, like his medical counterpart the doctor, does not always have the luxury afforded the scientist who can rerun his experiment if his initial decision was wrong.

### The Decision Process

Having reviewed the decision, it is appropriate to examine the process from which it was derived. In 1980 a study by E.R. Archer of various decision



process models and frameworks resulted in his presenting a nine phase framework of the decision process.<sup>5</sup> The first, and key phase to this framework, is the continual monitoring of all the subsequent phases to ensure their continued relevance and direction with regard to the initial aim. The remaining phases are:

- (2) The definition of the problem.
- (3) Specify the objectives or aim.
- (4) Diagnose the problem and identify causes.
- (5) Develop suitable courses of action.
- (6) Establish the criteria for assessing alternatives.
- (7) Appraise alternative solutions.
- (8) Choose the best course of action.
- (9) Implement the best course of action.

This framework is akin to the appreciation process taught to and used by the military commander.

### INTUITION

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines intuition as:

'Immediate apprehension by the mind without reasoning; immediate apprehension by sense; immediate insight.'<sup>6</sup>

That intuition has served the competent commander well in the past needs no addressing. How this holistical asset has helped in the decision process, and why it has been considered the dominant factor in that process, does however, require examination in order to discuss the relationship between intuition and technology in that process.

In the past, time and experience have proved that the successful commander's intuition could be trusted. Experience had added to the mental resources upon which the subconscious could draw. Commanders whose intuition

5 Leigh A. p 52.

6 The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Fifth Edition). p 639.

failed to serve them effectively were defeated or surpassed by those whose intuition satisfied the occasion. The successful commander had little in the way of analysed data to either support or refute his intuition which was likely to serve him well when time and knowledge were scant. Thus the successful commander's intuition, based on the application of previous experience, became the basis for the 'modus operandi' of his decision process.

The scientist on the other hand used intuition to raise a question or propose a solution but does not rely on his instinct alone. Logic and experimentation are the corner-stone of scientific result. Intuition is not to be trusted but rather tested. For the commander however, this test is not in the laboratory or computer banks but rather in the actual outcome of the decision itself. There is no room for a rerun of the 'experiment' if he is wrong.

### TECHNOLOGY

Modern technology is an extremely vast sphere with many different and complimentary fields, all pertaining in some way to the advancement of human endeavour. The telephone, production line, aeroplane, television, fibre optics, lasers and space flight are but a few of the technological advances made in recent times. The decision process has not been bypassed by technological advancement, indeed technology is now accepted as an important and integral factor of that process.

Calculators, telecommunications systems, word processors, reproducing machines and many other developments now have a specific influence on decision making in various ways. None however has had such a dramatic impact on the decision process as the computer.<sup>7</sup> The first use of the computer to predict something was by the military, when in 1930's, the US Army used a computer to produce artillery anti-aircraft fire tables.<sup>8</sup> These tables offered the artillery officer every possible mix of conditions that would affect the aiming of his weapon. The tables enabled the destruction of an aircraft to be predicted prior to its arrival within range. This is the first instance of the computer helping in the commander's decision process. Intuition and guesswork had been removed from the artillery arsenal by technology.

Decisions require, inter alia, information, and computers are purpose built information storage and retrieval systems. The decision maker has access to myriad computer data bases that contain massive amounts of information. He also has access to specialists who aid in the updating, recall, manipulation and

7 Leigh A. p 161.

8 Burke J. 'Connections.' Ondon, 1979. p 115.

analysis of this information. there are however problems for the decision maker in this area. The data banks, although large, are not always specific enough for the individual decision maker's personal needs. Also, the intermediary, although skilled in his own sphere, is not always fully conversant with the objectives and requirements of the decision maker. These are common problems for the decision maker who, through a lack of appropriate education or infrequent exposure to the systems, cannot use them efficiently. The technological systems are not 'user friendly' and more importantly are not directly linked to the decision maker's own knowledge, ideas and intuition.

One field of computer orientated advancement aimed at addressing the problem of decision maker interface with the computer is that of Decision Support Systems (DSS).<sup>9</sup> The DSS are a development toward the better integration of the computer and the decision maker into the decision process. They involve the use of user designed models inserted into the computer, a large pertinent data base and a powerful user orientated command language that enables the decision maker to interact with both the model and the data base. The DSS are being developed not as independent tools like the present data base systems, but rather as interacting components that meld into the decision process. They are simple and effective to use and are designed to aid and encourage the decision maker.

The use of the computer to produce the artillery fire tables was, by modern standards, elementary. Today, the ability of the computer to make a decision whose elements can be mathematically based is well used. This capability to make a programmed decision independent of human intervention can be seen almost daily on the world sharemarkets, where computers sell stocks and shares automatically when the price reaches a predetermined level. The unprogrammed decision, however, does not so readily lend itself to execution by technology. The many unquantified variables demand of the computer more than the simple binary distinction of the programmed decision. This aspect of technology in the decision process will be addressed later in the essay.

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ROLES

The foregoing discussion has shown that there is a place for both intuition and technology in the commander's decision process. A suggested principle for the relationship of intuition and technology in the decision process, proposed by William Morris, is as follows:

'Use analysis to accept as inputs simple judgement or decisions well within (a commander's) experience, and to extend logically the

consequences of these inputs to situations not within his experience and easy intuition.<sup>10</sup>

The extent to which one dominates the other differs through the spectrum of programmed and unprogrammed decisions. Technology has relieved the commander of the requirement to make many mundane decisions. There is still however the very real requirement for the commander to make the important complex decisions himself. A suggested role of technology would not be to relieve the commander of the requirement to make decisions, but rather to extend, clarify and support his decision process. Intuition, on the other hand, could be said to define the initial concept, fill the technological gaps and be used to make the final choice of the options presented. Neither intuition nor technology, or a combination of both, will ever guarantee the commander a correct decision or satisfactory outcome. They do however aid the commander to work through his decision process in an orderly, logical fashion, and to arrive at a reasoned, responsible decision in light of the information to hand.

Two intersetting inferences can be drawn from the principle presented above. The first is that because technology will assist the commander to make decisions of a higher quality and greater consequence, that decision level that he now deals with may be delegated to subordinate decision makers. Those subordinates would in turn use the same technology to assist them to raise the quality of their decision process to meet the increased responsibility level. Thus technology, by raising the level of decision capability at the various command levels, will in fact thrust the requirement for those commander's to exercise their ultimate, intuitive decision at a higher echelon than before.

The second inference that can be drawn from the principle is that the commander's initial judgement or decision will have a high intuitive as opposed to technological input, as it will be made within the commander's personal capability. The intuitive base direction proposed by the commander is then extrapolated by technology to give the commander direction and guidance for the greater decision possibilities that will emerge. Accepting that at the end of this process the commander will be required to make a final decision regarding the choice of various options, again that final decision will be intuitive, for if technology shows there is no choice then no decision need be made. Thus the initial and final decisions are intuitive, while technology has enhanced the capability of the commander to combine his intuition with technology to address complex situations previously beyond his capability.

### Time Constraints

Time waits for no man, and the commander will on occasions be required to make a decision when the time frame is such that technology may

only offer limited assistance of the type described above. For many decision maker's, and the military commander in particular, the diagnostic step in the aforementioned decision process could be considered a critical point when time is short. It is in the diagnostic phase that the commander develops a concept of the problem that his limited human mind can comprehend. The question arises at this stage as to what degree of uncertainty in this concept is the commander willing to tolerate before moving on to the next phase. At what stage is it rational to suspend data collection and analysis, and proceed with 'reasonable' uncertainty? When time has been short, a valuable source of support for the commander has been his intuition. Intuition enables the commander to fill the missing pieces of the picture that the available data presents to him. Thus he can bring into better perspective a concept with which, although not necessarily happy, he is willing to proceed. In such cases intuition could be said to have extrapolated technology to guide and support the commander in his decision process.

### Alternatives

In the aforementioned decision process, phases five, six and seven require of the decision maker a 'what if?' appraisal. Such an appraisal addresses the result of the interaction of various factors under consideration - 'what if this was done,' or 'what would happen if...?' When the required data and expertise are available the computer can be used to answer the vexing question of what if? Computerised 'spread sheets' combined with databases are routinely used to solve mathematically based 'what if' questions posed by economists, accountants, managers and others who, like the military commander, are decision makers in their respective fields. Not all the questions these decision makers will want answered, however, are likely to have quantifiable input factors. In such cases, the ability of technology to give an acceptable answer is limited. Intuition will therefore play a major part in the answering of such questions. It may be able to quantify the abstract factors, thereby enabling technology to incorporate them into its calculations, or, when this proves impracticable, it may simply be used in lieu of technology.

### Technology as a Check

One of the advantages of technology is that being void of emotion it can be used as an effective yardstick against which the validity of the commander's initial intuitive leanings may be measured. By bringing the clinical science of the analyst to bear on an intuitive base decision, inaccuracies due to over simplification, faulty logic, incorrect information or personal bias may be brought to light. Thus technology not only enhances an initial intuitive decision, but serves as a way of testing such decisions for basic inaccuracies before progressing through the decision process to the point of implementation.

### Trusting Technology

Senior commanders grew up in an age that saw computers change from massive, expensive and highly specialised contraptions, to small every day items

found in many homes. They have had to learn to accept these machines into a pattern of thought and decision that has served them well. Even so, to have to rely on the input from a scientist as the basis of a command decision would, it is suggested, go 'against the grain' for some. However, for the younger commander who went through his education process with a computer at school and perhaps another at home, the spectre of relying on or relating to technology may not be so horrific. In his decision process the younger commander may be more willing to accept and rely upon technological input than his elder counterpart.

No commander of worth would make a decision that he knows is wrong. Similarly, that commander is unlikely to make a decision that he 'feels' is wrong. He will likely use every tool that is practicably available to assist him to make that decision. The degree to which he relies on either intuition or technology, it is suggested, will depend upon the individual commander, the individual decision he is required to make and the specific conditions under which he is working.

### THE FUTURE

Today behavioural scientists are analysing the decision process and increasing the capability of the computer to enable it to not only make programmed decisions of its own accord, but also to work in close partnership with the decision maker on unprogrammed decisions. This latter development revolves around the requirement for the computer to 'learn' for itself. Hitherto the ability to learn was the hallowed domain of the human decision maker. It was this ability that enabled him to build a foundation of knowledge upon which his trusty intuition could call.

Heuristics is an embryonic technological study involving the focusing of technology, specifically artificial intelligence, on, inter alia, the unprogrammed decision.<sup>11</sup> Heuristic, as defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary is a:

'...system of education under which the pupil is trained to find things out for himself.'<sup>12</sup>

This technique in the computing field is based on the computer 'learning' by trial and error. Heuristics is a complementary study of the human decision process and artificial intelligence. The study is aimed at enabling computers to use the same problem solving techniques as man, thereby improving the decision maker's ability to deal with unprogrammed decisions.

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11 Leigh A. p 162.

12 The Concise Oxford Dictionary (Fifth Edition). p 574.

## CONCLUSION

The advances in technology available to the commander since the first artillery tables were computed are both useful and impressive. Taylor's suggestion that science could aid the manager in the decision process has now ceased to be a contentious issue. As long as there are choices to consider, decisions will have to be made, and science has proven that it has an important role to play in that decision process.

The decision itself can be classified into either programmed or unprogrammed decisions. The former, with well defined variables, readily lend themselves to execution by computer, independent of human intervention. The latter, with often undefined variables, do not so readily lend themselves to such execution. Intuition can be used to define, or quantify these variables, in order for technology to better include them in the calculations. Alternatively, if this is not practicable, intuition would be the dominant factor in the decision.

Heuristics is a study involving focusing artificial intelligence on, inter alia, the unprogrammed decision. It is aimed at enabling computers to use the same problem solving technique as man, a feat that will require the computer to learn for itself. When such technology is available to the commander, the unprogrammed decision will fall within the competence of technology. The commander will then have an improved ability to deal with the unprogrammed decision with less reliance upon his own intuition.

The commander will, it is suggested, 'go' with what he 'knows' is right. That both intuition and technology will undoubtedly play some part in his decision process is not in question. It is up to the individual commander to decide when to give credence to technological advice or his own intuition. The weight he may lend to either aspect will depend not only on the extent to which the decision could be considered programmed or unprogrammed, but also to factors such as his confidence in his scientific advisors and the technology they espouse, the ability of technology to react in the available time, or even the extent to which he himself is able to interact with the technology.

The future is always uncertain. The technological advancements such as artificial intelligence will have ongoing influences on the commander and his decision process. The relationship that the roles of intuition and technology will play in that process will vary with the types of decision and the different environments in which they are made. Perhaps one man's look to the future will give an indication of what the technological future holds:

'Man abandoning part of his old identity, melting so that he can be forged anew, fashioned in such a way that he can be welded to machines that amplify his senses, extend his grasp, deepen his understanding of himself and his world. Together, man and machine become something more than either could

have been alone, a cybernetic organism, a cyborg.<sup>13</sup>

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TEACHING MILITARY HISTORY:The Revival of the 'Staff Ride'

by

Professor Laurie BarberandMajor G.J. Clayton MA (Hons) RNZAEC

*Professor Barber is an Associate-Professor of History at the University of Waikato. He teaches military history courses on the New Zealand wars, the Pacific campaigns of World War II, and the Falklands war. He is a regular contributor to the journal.*

*Major Clayton is a Master of Arts with First Class Honours in History, who is currently Education Officer ATG Waiouru, and a candidate for a Doctorate of Philosophy in Military History.*

Major-General A.J. Godley, General Officer Commanding New Zealand's defence forces from 1910 and Commander of the first New Zealand Expeditionary Force in World War I, was an enthusiast for military education by way of 'the staff ride'. In the 1980s 'tactical exercises without troops' (TEWT) provide a similar educative service. Unfortunately, the teaching of military history to New Zealand's officer corps has largely neglected 'the staff ride' and the TEWT formula. For many military history is synonymous with bookish study of past, and seemingly irrelevant, campaigns and commanders.

1988 has seen an attempt to revive 'the staff ride' as a military history teaching technique. A change of syllabus for the military history officer promotion course has made the New Zealand wars the focus of study. At the same time a new historical interest in 'battle site' research has been directed to guiding candidates in studies of the campaigns, battles, and skirmishes of the New Zealand wars. By enmeshing tactical study and academic military history analysis candidates have been provided with opportunities to make precise assessments of the political and tactical decisions made during these wars.

A visit to the battle sites of the Northern War of 1845-46 (sometimes called the 'First New Zealand War' or 'the Hone Heke war') allowed the New Zealand wars course lecturer, Associate-Professor Laurie Barber of the University of Waikato, and Major Garry Clayton, the course conductor, to trial the 'staff ride' technique. The group was

equipped with tutorial documents that provided several contemporary descriptions of the campaign, with maps and with later assessments. James Belich's work, *The New Zealand Wars*, was indicated as the critical work with conclusions the team must test. The teaching plan allowed for off-site battle study followed by an on-site TEWT.

The on-site TEWT was immediately seen to be the crux of the technique's success or failure. A set procedure was followed in the examination of each of the Northern War's battles - the fall of Kororareka, the battles of Puketututu, Ohaeawai and Ruapekapeka. All candidates were required to make an off-site description of the battle with reference to the advantages or disadvantages of the protagonists, over resources, decisions made, outcome, and assessment of command competence and soldier aptitude.

Immediately following the off-site study candidates were taken to the actual battle sites. There, all candidates were challenged to assess the battle on its actual ground. A nominated candidate was tasked to give a ground brief, while two other candidates followed with a description and analysis of the protagonists' ground positions and battle plans. Staff and students then physically walked the battle site, questioning and discussing movement and outcome. An assessment discussion was then promoted to allow candidates to decide the merits and demerits of tactics and command decisions.

Tentative conclusions drawn from this preliminary trial are encouraging. The University teacher involved noted the experiment's success in engendering speedy familiarity with the inter-involvement of topography, military resources, rival political and tactical aims, and the actual fighting sequences. Candidates showed much greater aptitude in positioning alternative assessments, with clearer marshalling of argument than did a sample dealing with the same problems and not employing the 'staff ride' technique.

One of the common criticisms of the past teaching of military history is the seeming irrelevance of the subject and its teaching to the modern battlefield. The writers of this paper argue that the 'staff ride' formula largely undermines this objection. A combination of academic and on-site study assured a relevancy that won an enthusiastic reaction from the candidate sample group. Their ability to assess the tactical decisions made in the 1840s was supported by an awakened perception that tactical principals and leadership ability do not change.

#### CLASSIC THOUGHTS

*'Nine-tenths of tactics were certain enough to be teachable in schools: but the irrational tenth was like a kingfisher flashing across the pool, and in it lay the test of generals.'*

T.E. Lawrence

BOOK REVIEWS

*IN GOOD COMPANY. One Man's War in Vietnam*, by Garry McKay, Allen and Unwin 1987. Reviewed by Lt Col R.G. Mortlock, RNZIR.

There is a book missing from the bookshelves of virtually every reader of the Arts of War. Libraries abound with the memoirs of a whole panoply of Generals and Colonels, along with a feast of commentaries by eminent academics. Even the occasional private soldier has taken up his stubby pencil to describe the lot of those on the receiving end of the military machine. It is the story of that most junior officer, the platoon commander, which is invariably missing. Yet in most wars, the critical decision often rests with these humble lieutenants.

Garry McKay has set out to help fill the void, and describes his story as a young officer in that least understood of wars, Vietnam. The depth of his experience is recounted with a simplicity of language which, if anything, adds force to the scenes he unfolds. To McKay, an entrenching tool is very much a spade, and this typical infantry directness breathes an unexpected humility into the structure of the story. I have no doubt that other soldiers will discover passages which serve to fire up forgotten images.

Not that this book is some sanitised trip of nostalgia. Indeed, at times its starkness is shocking. The tale travels systematically from his induction into the Australian Army as a 'ballot-winning' National Serviceman, through the officer factory of Scheyville where he is pummelled into the rough shape of a platoon commander, and on to his subsequent employment in that role at the 'sharp end' of Vietnam. There is an appealing realism throughout. McKay's soldiers are real people. They smell with all the evil of tropical bodies unwashed for a good six weeks at a time. There is no glory in this book, only a modest account of young men doing the job their Nation sent them away to do.

Here most of all, is an account of an unending tension of interminable patrols; the hunter and the hunted, and the ease with which these roles can be reversed when least expected. Here is the struggle of a young man to create and maintain a fighting team carved out of the self-willed, and independently-minded youths that most of us have for sons and brothers. And here is the compassion of the strange relationship which develops among fighting men, who, knowing each others' flaws, still manage to construct a true and generous regard for each other as a fundament to survival.

McKay writes undramatically about the drama of battle, and therefore, puts it in a proper perspective. He unashamedly presents his doubts and fears in describing the confusion that was part and parcel of engaging the enemy in jungle settings where limited visibility made every decision a gamble. His description of the battle between his battalion and the invading 33 North Vietnamese Army Regiment, on 21 September 1971 at Nui Le, will be an eye-opener for those who hold the belief that the ANZAC involvement was one of suppressing poorly armed, patriotic peasants. For the soldier on the ground, this was war on as grand a scale as any.

Few good books have been written about the Vietnam War, but this one is good. Readers may, perhaps, assess for themselves why platoon commanders don't write their experiences. Gary McKay exemplifies the fusion of the enormous energy of youth and the almost frightening lack of experience that is inherent in the junior leader. It takes courage to unveil to critical eyes, the consequences of this unfortunate but unavoidable mix. To me the hub of the story is the author's question to himself when lying severely wounded, and in the most desperate of situations:

*"Well McKay, what the hell are you going to do now?"*

Such is the lot of the platoon commander.

Many people will hold strong and opposing views to those expressed in this book. However, here is a chance to see the complexity of the war through the eyes of 'one who was there'. If you wish to fault the images as presented, or if they conflict with your opinions, it would be well to remember that McKay wrote his story primarily for the new generation of young platoon commanders. He has been careful to tell his truth.

**Editor's Note:** Lt Col Gary McKay MC is currently the CO of 8/9 RAR and served in NZ on exchange duty at HQ 3TF in 1978-79.

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**VIETNAM GUNNERS:** 161 Battery, RNZA, South Vietnam 1965-71. by S.D. Newman, Moana Press, 1988. Reviewed by Professor Laurie Barber.

*Vietnam Gunners* is a useful and timely account of New Zealand's artillery presence in the Vietnam war. Stephen Newman, a New Zealand artillery officer, and a university graduate, has crafted an informed and vigorously written description of 161 Battery's contribution to the South Vietnamese cause.

In July 1965 161 Battery arrived in South Vietnam, to be placed under the command of the US Army's 173 Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa. From June 1966, the battery was reassigned to serve with the 1st Australian Task Force at Nui Dat. The battery remained with the Australia field regiments until its recall from South Vietnam in May 1971.

*Vietnam Gunners* records the active service of 161 Battery in chapters built around the successive battery commanders - from Kenning's battery of June 1965 to June 1966, to Master's battery of September 1970 to May 1971. The author has included battle maps of each commander's battery, to show gun positions, dates and names of the fire support bases. His work is well illustrated by action photographs, some in colour.

Newman has effectively combined Commanders' diaries, operational files, correspondence with participants, and oral interviews, to win his

knowledge of events. His strength is his professional background as an artillery officer - well used to cite appropriate detail. More identification of political and military problems, as a background to each battery section, would have strengthened his work further. At times it is difficult to see the wood for the trees.

But this is a minor criticism. This book stands tall alongside earlier unit historians and deserves a place on the bookshelves of military histories, veterans, and the growing number of readers interested in New Zealand in war and peace. Nearly 800 gunners served with 161 Battery and Stephen Newman records their tale with attention to their reactions -to battle, to the monsoons to the red dust, and to the emptiness of out-of-battle days. *Vietnam Gunners* was launched at the Vietnam Veterans' Reunion at Queen's Birthday 1988. It is offered for sale at \$34.95 (including GST) in softcover, and a limited hard cover edition is priced at \$44.95. Copies are available at the QEII Army Museum.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

*I note with interest that you as the Editor of the Army Journal No 6 dated Jul 88 have failed to give due credit to the author of the final article in that journal called "It is Really Quite Simple". You maybe interested to know that I wrote that article initially for the Malaysian Staff College annual magazine in 1975 and modified it (considerably) for the IRNZIR Journal of 1980 or possibly 1981.*

**E.B. BESTIC**  
Colonel

Editor's Note: The article was published in good faith believing it to be the original work of another senior officer. For a small sum his identity will 'not' be revealed.

**LESSON FROM WAR**

The smallest detail taken from an actual incident in war is more instructive to me, a soldier, than all the Thiers and Jominis in the world. They speak for the heads of states and armies, but they never show me what I wish to know - a battalion, company or platoon in action. The man is the first weapon of battle. Let us study the soldier for it is he who brings reality to it.

*(Aron Du Picq, pioneer writer on the behaviour of men in way and Crimean war veteran who died in battle in the Franco-Prussian war)*

