

STRATEGY AND COMMAND

ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA'S TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARS

American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan wrote in 1908: 'If the strategy be wrong, the skill of the general on the battlefield, the valour of the soldier, the brilliancy of the victory, however otherwise decisive, fail of their effect.'

In *Strategy and Command*, David Horner provides an important insight into the strategic decisions and military commanders who shaped Australia's army history from the Boer War to the evolution of the command structure for the Australian Defence Force in the 2000s. He examines strategic decisions such as whether to go to war, the nature of the forces to be committed to the war, where the forces should be deployed and when to reduce the Australian commitment. The book also recounts decisions made by commanders at the highest level, which are passed on to those at the operational level, who are then required to produce their own plans to achieve the government's aims through military operations at the tactical level.

Strategy and Command is a compilation of half a century of research and writing on military history by one of Australia's pre-eminent military historians. It is a crucial read for anyone interested in Australia's involvement in twentieth-century wars.

David Horner is an Emeritus Professor at the Australian National University, where he was Professor of Australian Defence History for fifteen years. He has an international reputation for military history and strategic analysis and is considered Australia's premier military historian.

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TWENTIETH-CENTURY WARS

DAVID HORNER



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PREFACE

The Australian Army has a long and admirable record of fostering serious research and publication about its history. From the outset ‘Military History’ was part of the formal education of staff cadets at RMC Duntroon, and for a time officers’ promotion depended upon candidates being able to analyse Stonewall Jackson’s Shenandoah Valley campaign in promotion exams. An understanding of the Army’s history and traditions remains central to its *esprit de corps* in its most literal meaning, and historical study has a utility in foreseeing and fulfilling the Army’s roles in an uncertain world.

Since the 1970s (as a consequence of educating officers at university level), the Army has produced several generations of educated soldiers, several of whom became historians of note. The pioneers included John Coates, Robert O’Neill, David Horner, John Blaxland, Peter Pedersen, John Mordike and Bob Hall. Their successors include Jean Bou, Bob Stevenson, Garth Pratten and Craig Stockings (either as regulars or reservists). Several of them have written books published in the Australian Army History Series. The creation of an Australian Army History Unit in the 1990s demonstrated the Army’s commitment to encouraging and facilitating serious history within and about the Army.

One of the most impressive demonstrations of the Army’s dedication to history has been its long association with several major publishers, and notably with Cambridge University Press. This has been a productive relationship, initially brokered by Dr Roger Lee, the long-term head of the Army History Unit, and my predecessor as General Editor, Professor David Horner, the author of this book. Roger’s successor as head of the Australian Army History Unit, Tim Gellel, a former member of the Australian Intelligence Corps, is continuing and indeed extending that

relationship, giving the Army, and the nation that sustains it, history they both need.

The Cambridge Australian Army History Series brings to a professional, academic and popular readership historical work of importance across the range of the Army's interests and across the span of its history. The series seeks to publish research and writing of the highest quality relating not only to the Army's operational experience but also to its existence as an organisation and to its contribution to the nation.

The Australian Army History Unit has created a community of writers and readers (including soldiers in both roles), the product of whose questions, research, debate and writing informs Australia's understanding of itself and its part in Australia's history. It is a history to be proud of in every sense.

For more than forty years, Professor David Horner has been a vital and influential exponent of the understanding and interpretation of the historical relationship between Army and society in Australia. After serving as an infantry officer in Vietnam, he became a leading scholar of Australian military history with his books *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat* (1978) and *High Command* (1982), indicating the thrust of his scholarship over his long and productive career. Through such books as his biographies of Thomas Blamey and George Vasey, Professor Horner exemplifies the biographical analysis of Australian command historically, and has fostered many historians who have followed his lead, example and advice. As well as his thirty-five books (dealing with a great range of periods and approaches, including the General Editorship of the *Official History of Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations*), Professor Horner has produced many papers, articles and chapters, often responding to the needs of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force. These works, which are found in a plethora of proceedings, journals and compilations, often limited in availability, express the extent of his work, including on more recent military commitments, issues and problems. This book brings together (and revises and comments on) the thoughts and the words of one of Australia's most profound influences on the study of strategic command, contributions based on a secure grasp of the historical experience and development of the Defence Force. It will prove useful to Australians and others

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seeking to understand how the exercise of command can contribute to the Defence Force's part in furthering Australia's national interest, a matter of enduring and often vital importance for members of the Australian Army, and those who ultimately depend upon it for their national security.

Professor Peter Stanley, FAHA
General Editor, Australian Army History Series
UNSW Canberra

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABDA	American, British, Dutch, Australian (Command)
ACOPS	Assistant Chief of Defence Force (Operations)
ADC	aide-de-camp
ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
ADHQ	Australian Defence Headquarters
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and United States (Security Treaty)
AWM	Australian War Memorial
BCOF	British Commonwealth Occupation Force
CA	Chief of Army
CAB	Cabinet Office (United Kingdom)
CAF	Chief of Air Force
CCOSC	Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CDFS	Chief of the Defence Force Staff
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CJFA	Commander Joint Forces Australia
CMF	Citizen Military Forces
CN	Chief of Navy
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
CO	Commanding Officer
COMAFV	Commander Australian Force Vietnam

xvi ABBREVIATIONS

COMAST	Commander Australian Theatre
COMFLOT	Commodore Flotillas
COSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee
DAFP	Documents on Australian Foreign Policy
DIO	Defence Intelligence Organisation
DLI	Durham Light Infantry
DSO	Distinguished Service Order
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GSO1	General Staff Officer, Grade 1
HMAS	His (or Her) Majesty's Australian Ship
HMS	His (or Her) Majesty's Ship
HQAST	Headquarters Australian Theatre
HQJOC	Headquarters Joint Operations Command
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
MC	Military Cross
MP	Member of Parliament
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NORCOM	Northern Command
NSW	New South Wales
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OCMH	Office of the Chief of Military History
PREM	Records from Prime Minister's Office, United Kingdom
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RAR	Royal Australian Regiment
RF	Royal Fusiliers
RN	Royal Navy

SCA	Support Command Australia
SS	Steamship
SWPA	South-West Pacific Area
TNA	The National Archives (United Kingdom)
VCDF	Vice Chief of the Defence Force

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