

**CONFERENCE**

# Information Warfare: *Shaping the Stories of Australians at War*

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25-26 November 2010

Australian Defence Force Academy  
Canberra, Australia

Co-sponsored by:

School of Humanities and Social Sciences, UNSW@ADFA

School of English, Communications and Performance Studies, Monash University

National Security Institute, University of Canberra

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### **CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

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Professor David Lovell      HASS, UNSW@ADFA  
Professor Peter Leahy      NSI, UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

### **Supported by:**

Ms Shirley Ramsay      HASS, UNSW@ADFA

# General information

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**Conference Venue**      **Australian Defence Force Academy**  
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[Map reference: Building 30]

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## Thursday 25 November 2010

<b>0850-0900</b>	<b>WELCOME TO ADFA</b> Commodore Bruce Kafer, AM, CSC, RAN (Commandant)
<b>0900-1000</b>	<b>PLENARY SESSION 1: THE MILITARY</b> <b>'EVOLVING ENGAGEMENT: OBSERVATIONS ON WORKING WITH THE MEDIA'</b> Brigadier Alison Creagh, CSC, Director General Public Affairs, Australian Defence Force -(Chair: Professor Peter Leahy)
<b>1000-1030</b>	<b>MORNING TEA</b>
<b>1030-1200</b>	<b>SESSION 1: <i>Managing the Message</i></b> (Chair: Professor Peter Leahy) 3x20 minute papers, 30 minutes for discussion/questions 1. <i>'Inconvenient truths'</i> General Peter Cosgrove AC MC (Retired) (Former Chief of Defence Force) 2. <i>'The Media – Can't live with them – Can't live without them'</i> Major General Mark Kelly (Former Commander ME Ops) 3. Brigadier Adrian d'Hage AM MC (Retired) <i>'Should the relationship between the military and the media be the basis for the eleventh Principle of War?'</i>
<b>1200-1300</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>1300-1400</b>	<b>PLENARY SESSION 2: THE MEDIA</b> <b>'THE MEDIA'S LEFT AND RIGHT OF ARC'</b> Mr Chris Masters, Contributing Editor, Sydney's <i>Daily Telegraph</i> (Chair: Associate Professor Kevin Foster)
<b>1400-1530</b>	<b>SESSION 2: <i>Working with the military and getting the story</i></b> (Chair: Associate Professor Kevin Foster) 3x20 minute papers, 30 minutes for discussion/questions 1. <i>'The politicization of Afghan war coverage in the Australian media'</i> . Mr John Martinkus (University of Tasmania) 2. <i>'The media never lose'</i> Mr Tom Hyland (International Editor, <i>The Sunday Age</i> ) 3. <i>'Afghanistan: the 'good war'? the 'quiet' war?'</i> Ms. Karen Middleton (Chief Political Correspondent, SBS)
<b>1530-1600</b>	<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>
<b>1600-1730</b>	<b>SESSION 3: <i>Media Coverage of Australians at War</i></b> (Chair: Dr Richard Trembath) 4x15 minute papers, 30 minutes for discussion/questions 1. <i>'In the line of fire: early reportage of the Diggers on Trial Story'</i> Dr Jacqui Ewart (Griffith University) 2. <i>'How deadly is the war in Afghanistan?'</i> Mr Michael Gillies-Smith (Public Affairs Advisor) 3. <i>'An Australian Story: Anzac Day coverage interrogated'</i> Ms Sharon Mascall-Dare (University of South Australia) 4. <i>'John Howard as Wartime Leader'</i> Dr Frank Cain (UNSW@ADFA)

## Friday 26 November 2010

0900-1000	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION 3: HISTORY</b>  <b>CREATING A MASTER NARRATIVE: HOW ANZAC HOMOGENISED AUSTRALIAN WAR EXPERIENCES'</b>          Professor Marilyn Lake (La Trobe University)          (Chair: Professor David Lovell)</p>
<b>MORNING TEA</b>	
1030-1200	<p><b>SESSION 4: <i>How did we get here? Historical perspectives on military media government relations</i></b> (Chair: Professor David Lovell)  <i>4x15 minute papers, 30 minutes for discussion/questions</i></p> <p>1. <i>'They only want the best version put forward to the public: Australian war correspondents and censorship in the Pacific War, 1941-45'</i>          Dr Richard Trembath (University of Melbourne)</p> <p>2. <i>'Duplication, rivalry and friction': the Australian Army, the Government and the Press during the Second World War'</i>          Dr Ian Jackson (Australian War Memorial)</p> <p>3. <i>'Standard operating procedure: how the Australian media was muffled in Vietnam'</i>          Ms. Chelsea Mannix (University of Melbourne)</p> <p>4. <i>'Australian war reporting and the legacy of Balibo'</i>          Dr Ross Tapsell (University of Wollongong)</p>
<b>LUNCH</b>	
1300-1400	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION 4: MEDIA FUTURES</b>  <b>RADICAL IDEAS OF OPENNESS IN WARTIME: THE EMERGING DIGITAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE</b>          Dr Donald Matheson (University of Canterbury, NZ)          (Chair: Dr Jacqui Ewart)</p>
1400-1530	<p><b>SESSION 5: <i>Where to next?</i></b>  <i>4x15 minute papers, 30 minutes for discussion/questions</i>          (Chair: Dr Jacqui Ewart)</p> <p>1. <i>'Old stories, new media'</i>          Mr Prakash Mirchandani (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU)</p> <p>2. <i>'A little help from our friends: Learning from Dutch/Canadian military-media relations in Afghanistan'</i>          Associate Professor Kevin Foster (Monash University)</p> <p>3. <i>'Understanding Australians in Peace and War within Defence: Researching the Past, Present and the Future Australian Defence Force'</i>          Dr Chris Clark and Dr Greg Gilbert (Office of Air Force History)</p> <p>4. <i>'Culture of Secrecy? The ADF and Transparency since 1999'</i>          Mr Damian Dwyer (University of Wollongong)</p>
<b>AFTERNOON TEA</b>	
1600-1730	<p><b>ROUND TABLE: <i>Hitting the Reset Button</i></b>          (Chair: Professor Peter Leahy, Director NSI, University of Canberra)</p>

## PLENARY 1

### **'Evolving Engagement: Observations on working with the Media'**

**Brigadier Alison Creagh, CSC, Director General Public Affairs, Australian Defence Force**

How are the stories of Australians at War currently told? How does Defence Public Affairs work with the media to tell the stories of the men and women of the Australian Defence Force? This paper will make observations on working with the media in my first nine months as the Director General Public Affairs. It will consider the media's commentary of Defence Public Affairs and provide an insight into the role of Defence Public Affairs in facilitating media engagement in Australia and on operations. The paper will argue that Defence's media engagement is evolving and will continue to evolve.

#### *Biographical note*

Brigadier Alison Creagh has served in a wide range of appointments in various Army and joint Australian Defence Force units and headquarters. Her experiences include operations, planning, training, capability development, acquisition and personnel management. She commanded the Defence Force School of Signals and the independent 145th Signal Squadron. Brigadier Creagh has significant operational experience, most recently in Headquarters International Security Assistance Force (HQ ISAF) in Afghanistan for nine months over 2007/2008. She was also deployed on operations to Iraq and Afghanistan in 2006; East Timor in 1999 and Officer Commanding 145 Signal Squadron in 1999/2000; and Cambodia in 1993. She also provided support to the Sydney 2000 Olympics in 2000. Brigadier Creagh was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross in 1994 and a NATO Meritorious Service Medal in 2009.

Brigadier Alison Creagh commenced her appointment as Director General Public Affairs for the Department of Defence in February 2010.

## SESSION 1

### **'Inconvenient truths'**

**General Peter Cosgrove AC MC (Ret'd) (Former Chief of Defence Force)**

This paper examines the concept and reality of the modern relationship between the Australian Defence Force and the Media. It reflects on the dichotomy between an informed and supportive public and the military requirement to manage its operations to secure maximum advantage

#### *Biographical Note*

The son of a soldier, General Cosgrove graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in 1968 and was sent to Malaysia as a lieutenant in the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. During his next posting in Vietnam he commanded an infantry platoon and was awarded the Military Cross for his performance and leadership during an assault on enemy

positions. In 1999 he was appointed as Commander of the International Forces East Timor (Interfet), responsible for overseeing East Timor's transition to independence. In 2000 he was made Chief of the Army, and in 2001 he was Australian of the Year. He was appointed Chief of the Defence Force in the following year and retired from the Army in July 2005. After Cyclone Larry devastated Far North Queensland in 2006 General Cosgrove led the successful recovery until completion in early 2007. General Cosgrove serves on the boards of Qantas and Cardno.

**'The Media – Can't live with them – Can't live without them'**  
**Major General Mark Kelly (Former Commander ME Ops)**

The coverage of Australia's overseas military commitments in the post Vietnam era has been inconsistent. This could be attributed to a number of factors which include the military's own predilection for control over the flow of information, the media's perceived preference to report only the critical incidents and large scale events and its natural apathy towards reporting the routine activities which the success of every operation depends on, and the all pervasive political imperative. There has not been a standard approach in telling the story of our offshore deployments and operations to the Australian audience. This includes the general public, the families and dependants of our servicemen and women, and indeed Defence's own internal audience. As a result, there has been almost a 10 year gap in the ADF's and Army's collective history during our recent experience in the Middle East and Afghanistan, due to the limited reporting that has occurred on our commitments to these complex operations. How do we strike the right balance? What is the right model to apply to these situations to ensure the story is told. While it may be difficult to template a suitable approach, there are certain immutables which if applied should allow the media to gain the information it seeks and the story to be told. This paper draws on the author's personal experience during some of our recent operations in an attempt to uncover a consistent approach in dealing with the media.

*Biographical Note*

Major General Mark Kelly was a career Infantry Officer, who served in Australian Army for over 35 years and commanded at every level including Platoon, Company, Battalion, Brigade, Division and Land Command Australia. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College Duntroon, University of NSW, Deakin University, the Australian Army Command and Staff College and the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies. His operational experience includes service with the Commonwealth Monitoring Force in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia during the Independence Elections in 1979/1980, Chief of Staff of INTERFET in East Timor in 1999/2000, with US Central Command in the Middle East planning operations in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa and Iraq during 2003/2004, and as Commander Joint Task Force 633 commanding all Australian Defence Force elements in the Middle Area of Operations and Afghanistan from 12 Jan 2009 to 14 Jan 2010. He is now the Repatriation Commissioner at the Department of Veteran Affairs.

**'Should the relationship between the military and the media be the basis for the eleventh principle of war?'**  
**Brigadier Adrian d'Hagé, AM, MC (Ret'd)**

The Australian military, together with the military of other Commonwealth countries, including the United Kingdom, utilise ten principles of war. It might be argued that while

the media affects principles such as *Security*, *Surprise* and the *Maintenance of Morale*, none of these principles directly address the importance of the relationship between the military and the media. This paper argues that the military has not always handled well, its relationship with the media. The paper argues that the digital age has so radically changed the way in which information impacts on both national security and the battlefield, that the military-media relationship has become critical, and deserves a principle in itself.

### *Biographical Note*

Adrian d'Hagé was the Director General of Public Information (Defence) from 1990 to 1996. He holds degrees in Oenology (Wine Chemistry) and Theology and is a Research Scholar at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at ANU where his doctorate is entitled *The Influence of Religion on US Foreign Policy in the Middle East*. d'Hagé is now a writer and the author of the best-selling novels, *The Omega Scroll*, *The Beijing Conspiracy*, and the recently released *Maya Codex* (Penguin).

PLENARY 2
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### **'The Media's Left and Right of arc'**

#### **Chris Masters**

Chris Masters' two-part documentary on the Australian mission in Afghanistan, *A Careful War*, was twelve months in the planning. When it was broadcast nationally in July 2010 it opened the eyes of Australians to the complex reality of counterinsurgency warfare's invisible front line. It also adjusted perceptions of the Australian 'embed' experience, which had endured sustained criticism by Australian media. In this address Chris Masters explains how trust and cooperation was obtained and offers insights into further improving Defence/Media relations.

### *Biographical Note*

Chris Masters was the longest serving reporter on Australia's longest running public affairs television program, *Four Corners*. Between 1983 and 2008 he made over 100 reports for the national broadcaster's flagship program, many of them well remembered and some of them nation shaping. He has won the Gold Walkley, the Walkley, a 1987 Penguin award from the television Society of Australia and a Logie award.

He has written three books, *Inside Story* (1991), *Not for Publication* (2002) and *Jonestown* (2006), the latter winning three awards, including Biography of the Year. In 1999 Chris was awarded a Public Service Medal for his anti-corruption work. In 2005 he received an honorary doctorate in Communication from RMIT University. A further honorary doctorate was awarded in 2009 by The University of Queensland where Chris is an Adjunct Professor. Chris is also a member of the board of Swinburne University's Foundation for Public Interest Journalism. Surrendering his permanent position at *Four Corners* in 2008 Chris Masters now works as a contributing editor at Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* and an author.

## SESSION 2

### **'The politicisation of Afghan war coverage in the Australian media'**

**John Martinkus**

The coverage of the conflict in Afghanistan in the Australian press has been to a large extent dominated by journalists and opinion writers in Australia who have consistently adopted pro government positions on the conflict derived from their predominantly government and defence sources. This has at times been sharply at odds with the coverage that has been generated by Australian journalists working in Afghanistan and has led to overly simplified and partisan analysis of the war that has at times been nurtured by sections of defence and government. This paper will examine how this has created both a false representation of the actual realities of the Australian involvement in Afghanistan and a situation where partisan reporters have used their brief facilitated visits to the Australian troops as evidence to support their previously well known pro war positions. The paper will also demonstrate how this approach has failed the Australian public by shielding them from the realities of the conflict and leaving them unprepared for the inevitable Australian casualties resulting from our involvement in this theatre.

#### *Biographical Note*

John Martinkus joined the Journalism, Media and Communications staff at the University of Tasmania in January 2009. Since 1995 John has worked covering conflicts in East Timor, Indonesia, Iraq, Afghanistan and several other countries. He has written three non-fiction books and worked predominantly outside Australia in wire service, newspaper and magazine journalism. For the last four years he has been working for SBS Dateline, filming and reporting stories for that program, mostly in Iraq and Afghanistan.

### **'The media never lose'**

**Tom Hyland**

Australia's military commitment to Afghanistan has been described as the most under-reported engagement by Australian forces ever. This has been attributed to two factors: an extraordinary level of official control over the flow of information on the part of politicians and the Defence Department; and the failure of traditional media organisations to submit Australia's role to proper and consistent scrutiny. An examination of the results of the relationship between the media and the ADF, however, suggests the situation is more complex.

If the ADF exercises unprecedented control over the flow of information, it is unable to dominate the information battlefield in a coalition conflict in which there are multiple alternative sources of information. Nor is the ADF's media operations centre able to control the flow of information from within the armed forces itself. Importantly, if the ADF's media management operation aims to influence public perceptions, it has failed to win the information battle, with opinion polls showing growing public disenchantment with the Afghan commitment.

Secondly, while the traditional media has been at times compliant, and often uncritically accepts official statements, this compliance ends when journalists 'smell blood', in the form of scandal, conflict or internal dissent.

This paper examines these themes by drawing on the author's personal experience as an embedded correspondent, and by looking at media coverage of two recent news 'stories' - the charging of soldiers over civilian casualties; and claims of a lack of support given to troops in the recent so-called 'battle' of Derapet.

In embedding and the two case studies, the ADF is unable to control the narrative. Instead, its centralised media management machine has shown itself to be slow, highly bureaucratic, and unresponsive, leading to media coverage at odds with the official line.

### *Biographical Note*

Tom Hyland has been *The Sunday Age's* International Editor since 2006. He writes news, features and commentary on foreign, defence and security issues. He's been with *The Age* since 1997, working as state and national news editor and, for five years, international editor. In recent years he has reported from Indonesia, East Timor and Afghanistan. Prior to joining *The Age* he was AAP's Melbourne bureau chief. From 1989 to 1991 he was AAP's Southeast Asia Correspondent, based in Jakarta. He has also worked for Radio Australia and the BBC World Service in London.

### **'Afghanistan: The "good" war? The "quiet" war?'**

**Karen Middleton**

Over many years, Australian public discourse about the Afghanistan conflict has seen it persistently measured in relative terms - always compared with that other war which was building, running and then subsiding alongside it, in Iraq. Afghanistan is now getting the public attention it probably always deserved but the confluence of a sharp rise in the number of Australian casualties and a new Parliament in which dissenting voices are receiving more attention makes it a newly difficult and potentially dangerous political issue for the Government.

The Opposition contributes to this too. Being just a single, random by-election away from seizing power itself creates a clearly irresistible temptation for an antsy Opposition to find points of policy and political difference and seize opportunities to attack - including in portfolio areas which have previously been left pretty much alone. The Afghan commitment falls into that category.

But what might be perceived as a slight shift in the previous bipartisan approach risks impacting on those carrying out the orders. It's a tricky line to tread. This paper will look at the implications of these coincidental strategic and political developments and at how information control has contributed to the void now being filled by the noisy protests of those who just want the troops to come home. The Government faces a mighty PR test. Will it pass?

## *Biographical Note*

Karen Middleton is Chief Political Correspondent for SBS Television, based in the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery. A former Gallery president for four years, Karen spent almost 20 years in newspaper journalism before moving into television in 2005. She writes a Saturday column for *The Canberra Times* and is a regular panelist on ABC TV's political talk show *Insiders*. She is also a political commentator for SBS radio and SBS online, ABC local radio in Canberra, Adelaide and the Illawarra, ABC News radio, ABC radio's nationally broadcast Late Nights program with Tony Delroy and also has a fortnightly commentary spot on Radio New Zealand. She has also been an occasional television commentator for MSNBC and Al Jazeera and has been a freelance contributor to The New York Times. Karen is a founding member and lyricist with the Press Gallery's a'capella satirists, the House Howlers.

## SESSION 3

### **'In the line of fire: Early reportage of the Diggers on Trial story'**

**Jacqui Ewart**

In September 2010 news broke that three Australian Army soldiers were to face legal proceedings over events that took place in south Oruzgan Afghanistan in February 2009. The charges arose from a battle between the Australian Army and a so-called 'insurgent' during which six villagers were killed including two babies, two young children and a teenager. The early reportage of the decision of Australia's Director of Military Prosecutions to charge the three soldiers with a variety of offences, including manslaughter, provides a salutary lesson about the impact of the language used by the media in reporting war. This paper examines News Limited's initial reportage of the story. It explores how the language used in these early news stories set this story up as a kind of heroic parable, which in turn disregarded key issues and questions surrounding the event. The paper highlights the impacts of the lack of a critical framework in the reporting, the use of emotive language and the framing of the story using the ANZAC 'myth'.

## *Biographical Note*

Dr Jacqui Ewart was a journalist and media manager for more than 10 years. She has worked as an academic for 14 years. Her research interests include the media and terrorism, media representations and journalistic cultures. She is the author of *Haneef: A Question of Character* and co-editor of *Islam and the Australian News Media*.

### **'How deadly is the war in Afghanistan?'**

**Michael Gillies-Smith**

Wars kill and the conflict in Afghanistan is no exception. But how deadly is this war? In the first five years, Australia lost just one soldier. In the three years of 2007 to 2009, Australia's tally rose to 11. In three months from June to August this year, this figure almost doubled to 21. The rapid rise in Australian deaths is causing concern, grabbing headlines and prompted last month Australia's first parliamentary debate on our role in this war.

Australia is one of 48 nations contributing troops to the 130,000-strong NATO/ISAF force in

Afghanistan. Government deployments currently range from Austria's three troops to America's 90,000 troops. Australia's deployment has more than doubled from about 700 in 2007 to some 1,500 this year. More than 2,000 coalition soldiers have been killed. Some countries have lost no or very few soldiers. The US has lost more than 1,200.

Gillies Smith Public Affairs has calculated the number of deaths as a percentage of deployment for each of the 18 nations with 500 or more troops in Afghanistan and, for the first time, ranks the 18 nations according to their death rate for each year of the war since 2001 and overall. GSPA has examined the impact of these deaths on media coverage, public opinion, government policy and election results. GSPA has also calculated and compared Australia's death rate in Afghanistan with Australia's death rate in other conflicts, including the Vietnam War.

### *Biographical Note*

Michael Gillies Smith has 25 years experience as a journalist, media adviser in Federal and Victorian Governments and public affairs adviser to corporate and public sector clients in Australia and overseas.

### **'An Australian Story: Anzac Day coverage interrogated'** **Sharon Mascall Dare**

Media constructions of Anzac Day are problematic. To journalists, Anzac Day ranks among the most Australian of stories. It is a story constructed with strong characters: the diggers venerated for their bravery, mateship and anti-authoritarian larrikin behaviour. It is a story of inspiration and national pride: the scaling of the heights at Anzac Cove often portrayed as a metaphor for Australia's coming of age and its ascendancy to nationhood, born of tragedy, sacrifice, grief and loss.

It is also a story accompanied by rituals. As crowds gather every Anzac Day in the dark just before dawn in country towns, capital cities, Commonwealth War Cemeteries and on the Gallipoli peninsula itself, journalists too have their routines. As hymns are sung and prayers are said, journalists search the crowd for interview prospects and wrestle with words, in speaking of silence. Their job is to inform, interpret and represent.

What, therefore, do Australian journalists tell their audiences to remember and why? This paper draws on interviews with more than thirty Australian journalists, producers and columnists, including war and defence correspondents, who have reported on Anzac Day for print, broadcast and online outlets in the last five years. It explores their fears, apprehensions and recommendations concerning Australian media coverage of the event, particularly important in the lead up to 2015.

### *Biographical Note*

Sharon Mascall-Dare is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster based in Adelaide, South Australia. As a radio documentary presenter and producer for the BBC World Service she has won the Best Radio Broadcaster category twice – in 2007 and 2010 – at the South Australian Media Awards. She presented Radio Australia's news coverage of the bombing of Afghanistan by US forces in 2001 and the outbreak of the Iraq War in 2003.

Ms Mascall-Dare is also a lecturer at the University of South Australia, where she teaches journalism and creative writing off-shore in South East Asia. Now halfway through her PhD candidature, her research, comprising a radio documentary series and accompanying exegesis, is entitled: *An Australian Story: Media and Memory in the Making of Anzac Day*. This paper presents her findings following extensive interviews with representatives of the Australian media before and after Anzac Day 2010.

## **'John Howard as Wartime Leader'** **Frank Cain**

Prime Minister John Howard much admired the Liberal Party leadership of Sir Robert Menzies of nearly four decades previously. Menzies had maintained a strong influence with the media families of that era, the Fairfaxes, Packers, Symes and the ABC. Howard attracted a similar commitment from their successive owners who became engaged with his wartime leadership of the post-nine-eleven era. This paper will discuss the impact of the events in Australia that links the nine-eleven matters with the federal elections of 10 November 2001 and the engagement by Howard of the ADF in the successive wars initiated by President Bush in the Middle East.

The paper will reflect on the style in which Howard advanced the mood of public concern against the 'enemy at the gate' not dissimilar to that of Menzies against communists during his Cold War days. For Howard, the 'enemy' was the less easily defined 'terrorists' fighting in the Middle East and also those resembling them who landed from refugee boats on Australia's coast. 'Stopping the refugee boats' firmed as a Howard initiative and the control of information became another element of Howard's policy. The unexplained involvement of Howard in Bush's war in Iraq and the controls over refugee boat arrivals became landmarks in Howard's commitment of Australia to war in the Middle East and also to his politicization of Australia's intelligence agencies.

### *Biographical Note*

Dr Frank Cain is Visiting Fellow at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of NSW at ADFA. His most recent book *Terrorism and Intelligence in Australia* was published in 2009 and he is at present working on a book length manuscript *How the Americans Became Involved in the Vietnam War*.

PLENARY 3
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## **'Creating a Master Narrative: How Anzac Homogenised Australian War Experiences'** **Marilyn Lake**

In a recent interview, the leading British and media historian Simon Schama drew attention to the importance of history in shaping informed and effective public policy, including policy on engagement in war. He believed, for example, that a proper sense of history would have indicated the impossibility of winning a war in the tribal world of Afghanistan. His colleague

and expert on the Indian sub-continent, William Dalrymple, agrees with him. History teaches us, he has written, the foolishness of Anglo-American military ambitions in Afghanistan.

It used to be the case that Australians' participation in foreign wars – from the Boer War through to Iraq – was understood in terms of the historical specificity of those wars and historical lessons were often drawn from those experiences. See, for example, HB Higgins' booklet critiquing Australian engagement in the Boer War.

Many books between World Wars 1 and 2 drew attention to the consequences of imperial ambition and the historically unprecedented explosion in armaments production; and in the 1960s and 1970s, 'teach-ins' about the long history of anti-colonial resistance in Indo-China were characteristic of the response to Australia's participation in the Vietnam War.

During the last ten years we have been presented with an unsettling paradox: the promotion by DVA and other agencies of the federal government of a profoundly historicist reading of Australia's involvement in the wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan even as the historically specific nature of those wars has been obscured through an ANZAC mythology which casts all wars as a seamless whole in which Australians display their ahistorical values of courage, mateship and endurance. This has been allowed to occur, in part, because of the lack of daily reporting of the facts of the war in Afghanistan on television as happened during Vietnam and the lack of media scrutiny and public debate about the meaning of the war itself.

### *Biographical Note*

Professor Marilyn Lake holds a Chair in History at La Trobe University, where she is also Associate Dean (Research) in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. She has published extensively on Australians' experience of war including *The Limits of Hope: Soldier Settlement in Victoria* (OUP, 1987) and 'The Power of Anzac' in Michael McKernan ed *Two Centuries of War and Peace* (Australian War Memorial/A&U, 1988). Recent publications include *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the Question of Racial Equality* (CUP/MUP, 2008) which won the Prime Minister's Prize for Non-Fiction and *What's Wrong with Anzac?* published by UNSW Press in 2010. She is a Fellow of both the Academies of Humanities and Social Sciences and President of the Australian Historical Association.

## SESSION 4

### **'They Only Want the Best Version Put Forward to the Public: Australian War Correspondents and Censorship in the Pacific War, 1941-1945'** **Richard Trembath**

In the Great War Australian war correspondents experienced rigid layers of political and military censorship. They also practiced self-censorship to a great extent, limiting their ability to report accurately on the progress of the conflict. During the Pacific War a much greater number of Australian journalists worked under a series of censorship arrangements

and systems. Many of these reporters considered that the American leadership in the South West Pacific Area was more liberal in its control of the press than its British or Australian counterparts. In contrast, the Australian political and military authorities were often suspicious of the press and attempted as much as possible to constrain their activities. The foundation of the Army's Directorate of Public Relations improved the relationship between correspondents in the field and the military, but, too often, the Directorate saw war reporting as an arm of public relations. In the end, as in the Great War, most Australian war correspondents adhered to the system without complaint believing that they too were serving their country in a morally justified conflict against despised and evil enemies.

It is my argument that the attitude of the Australian military authorities towards the press during the Pacific War established a pattern for Defence Force/media relations in subsequent conflicts in which this country has been engaged.

### *Biographical Note*

Richard Trembath has published *All Care and Responsibility: A History of Nursing in Victoria 1850-1934* and *A Different Sort of War: Australians in Korea 1950-53*. Together with Colin Holden he has also published a major study of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, one of Australia's most significant welfare organizations, which appeared in 2008. Currently, he is working with Fay Anderson at the Australian Centre, University of Melbourne on a history of Australian war correspondents which will be published by MUP later this year or early in 2011.

### **“Duplication, rivalry and friction”: the Australian Army, the government, and the press during the Second World War’**

**Ian Jackson**

By the standards of the Allied democracies Australia during the Second World War experienced unusually poor government-press relations and a relatively ineffective government publicity effort, despite the deployment of considerable manpower and resources.

The paper, presenting results from a study of the Australian Army's Directorate of Public Relations and its relationship with the Department of Information, seeks to explain this failure by considering the relationship between the three major actors: the government, the Australian Army, and the press. Each acted in its own interests, following different and often conflicting agendas.

It is argued that the establishment by the government of a civilian-led Department of Information (DoI) responsible both for news dissemination and for censorship created a conflict of interest, leading to a constant stream of press criticism. At the same time, the operations of the DoI were opposed by the Army, and Thomas Blamey in particular, who, deeply distrustful of the press, was unwilling to allow control of censorship to pass to civilians outside the military chain of command.

The paper delineates how successive governments failed to resolve, and indeed worsened, these tensions, by allowing the establishment of rival and warring publicity organisations. These organisations used hostile leaks, playing into the press's existing sense of dissatisfaction, to inflict damage on each other. The result was to the detriment of the government's reputation, fuelling political criticism of the government's handling of the war, while contributing to the creation of a lingering legacy of mutual mistrust between the Army, the government, and the press.

### *Biographical note*

In 2003 Ian Jackson completed a doctorate in cultural history, focusing on the evolution of newspapers and transmission of news in eighteenth century England, at the University of Oxford. Since 2004 he has worked for the Australian War Memorial in a variety of capacities including as a Curator working on the Memorial's extensive photographic collections. In 2007 he completed a research project on the origins, evolution and operation of the Australian Army's Directorate of Public Relations.

### **'Standard Operating Procedure: how the Australian media was muffled in Vietnam' Chelsea Mannix**

The Vietnam War is often referred to as a golden age for war correspondents, a time without censorship; of open access and media freedoms never experienced before or since. While this may have been the case for those reporters following the Americans, it was not the experience of those covering the Australian troops in Vietnam. The coverage of the war by the Australian media was influenced by a military reluctant to follow the American example, as well as the selective construction of news by editors in Australia.

Based on a study of newspaper reports and television coverage from 1962 until 1972, this paper will examine how the war was presented to the Australian audience and whether the widely accepted notion of a negative bias in the press has grounds. The Vietnam experience influenced great change in the way the American military has interacted with the media in subsequent conflicts, the Australian experience however appears to have adapted, becoming even more guarded, based on a lesson learned second hand.

### *Biographical Note*

After completing her Honours thesis at Monash University looking at the historical relationship between the Australia media and the military, Chelsea Mannix commenced her PhD at the University of Melbourne in 2010, and will be investigating the experience of the Australian media in Vietnam.

## **'Australian war reporting and the legacy of Balibo'**

**Ross Tapsell**

On October 16, 1975, five Australian-based newsmen were killed by Indonesian soldiers in the town of Balibo, East Timor. The event has been cemented in Australian public consciousness ever since. The Balibo Five story has consistently raised more questions than it gives answers, but the issues resulting from it are crucial to how Australians view the role of war correspondents. Should the journalists have gone to Balibo in the first place? Should the Australian Government have done more for the journalists then, and afterwards?

What is the role of the news organisations, Channel 7 and 9, in this story? Phillip Knightley wrote: 'For journalists, Balibo's significance in 1975 was that it marked what must have seemed like open season for killing war correspondents.' Would prosecuting those responsible lead to greater safety for war journalists in the future, or merely create an unnecessary diplomatic row today? With the film *Balibo* (2009) appearing recently in Australia and banned in Indonesia, the story has taken on even greater meaning.

This paper will discuss how the Balibo Five story has been a key historical experience in shaping Australia's war reporting history, and how the story has often been politicised. It will discuss Balibo's enduring legacy on Australian journalists, politicians and the general public as to how they view the role of the war correspondent, and what they expect from the Australian government when journalists are sent to cover war.

### *Biographical Note*

Dr Ross Tapsell teaches 'Reporting War- A History' in the School of History and Politics at the University of Wollongong. His completed PhD, 'A History of Australian Journalism in Indonesia', discusses the event of the five Australian-based journalists who were killed at Balibo in 1975 and its legacy to Australian journalism. In 2009, Ross was awarded an Australian Government Post-doctorate Endeavour Award to conduct research on the current nature of journalism in Indonesia. During his six months in the archipelago, he gave many lectures on the Balibo story, at a time when the Indonesian Government banned the Australian-made film, *Balibo* (2009) because they felt it was 'biased' and 'misrepresented history'.

PLENARY 4
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## **'Radical ideas of openness in wartime: The emerging digital media landscape'**

**Donald Matheson**

Digital, networked media are often hailed for the way they can open up new spaces of global communication. When it comes to military conflict, however, the redistribution of the power to tell the story of war appears to lead less often to spaces in which conflict can be talked through, and more often to spaces that are contested and antagonistic, in which ideas of truth and political values clash violently, and in which military operational and public information become entangled. As journalists negotiate these media, they are at times challenged, subverted, silenced and at times put at greater physical risk by those

producing these media and those seeking to control them. Drawing on examples from WikiLeaks to TamilNet to the Helmand blog, the paper charts the multiple consequences of radical ideas of openness for the mediation of contemporary conflicts.

### *Biographical Note*

Donald Matheson is program coordinator of Media and Communication at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. He worked at the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies before joining the University of Canterbury in 2004. Before that he was a tutor at the Scottish Centre for Journalism Studies, Glasgow, while studying for his PhD on newswriting practices at Strathclyde University. He's also worked as an education reporter at the Evening Post and NZ Education Review in Wellington.

## SESSION 5

### **'Old Stories, New Media'**

**Prakash Mirchandani**

Where have all the traditional storytellers of Australians at War gone? The war correspondents are a dwindling tribe, corralled by the straitjackets of their insurance companies, the tight bonds of embedding, and the certainty that if they venture out on their own, their bodies will be found the following day.

The ADF, hamstrung by the continuing cautions of Government, permits only a keyhole narrative of combat, with military leaders coming forward only at the sad and growing ramp ceremonies of fallen soldiers.

The other traditional icons of storytelling – the War Memorial, the RSL, the USI, the Think Tanks, all dip very cautious toes in the water.

The insurgents and opponents are much wiler than the coalition and understand the full spectrum of 'strategic communications' and are courted by journalists.

In the middle are the new arbiters of information – the 'fixers' and the anonymous soldier-bloggers of the Australian military. And we are also seeing the tight control of the ADF being broken on YouTube. It will take new technologies used in innovative ways which will break the silence and lead to a new understanding of the narrative of Australians at war – and they already showing the way.

### *Biographical Note*

Prakash Mirchandani has been a communications consultant and media executive who has worked in India, with the BBC in the United Kingdom and in Australia, where he has advised on a number of critical issues in the Government and NGO sectors. He was a senior ABC executive who set up the news division of the Australia Television satellite service to Asia. Prior to that he was a correspondent for the BBC in India and in London, where he reported widely for Television News on major events, including from Northern Ireland and on major terrorist incidents. He has worked in every area of journalism from reporting through to

being Foreign Editor, News Editor, News Producer and documentary film maker. He is a Visiting Fellow in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the ANU.

## **“A little help from our friends”: Learning from Dutch/Canadian military-media relations in Afghanistan’**

**Kevin Foster**

This paper will examine the media management regimes that dictated Dutch and Canadian media coverage of their militaries in Afghanistan. It will consider the extent to which either or both might provide a model for Australian military practice. In doing so it will explore the specific historical and cultural circumstances that shaped these information policies and identify some of the central obstacles to the adoption of a more open media policy by the ADF.

### *Biographical Note*

Dr Kevin Foster is an Associate Professor in the School of English, Communications and Performance Studies at Monash University where he teaches Media Studies. He is the author of a study of the media and cultural production of the Falklands War, *Fighting Fictions: War, Narrative and National Identity* (London: Pluto, 1999), *Lost Worlds: Latin America and the Imagining of Empire* (London: Pluto, 2009), and the editor of *What are we doing in Afghanistan? The Military and the Media at War* (Melbourne: ASP, 2009).

## **‘Understanding Australians in Peace and War within Defence: Researching the Past, Present and the Future Australian Defence Force’**

**Chris Clark and Gregory P. Gilbert**

From their inception, the Royal Australian Navy, the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force have conducted historical research and analysis on the Australian involvement in peace, conflict and war. Such work has helped to inform the policy debate within Defence, has influenced the development of Defence doctrine, and has guided the Australian armed forces into the future. This effort has been largely prepared for an internal Defence audience, but since the late 1980s it has been recognised that it also could be made available publically to enhance the community's understanding of Australia's armed forces in peace and war.

Over the last twenty years or so, the three Services have operated specialist studies centres (or think-tanks) with associated Service history units to guide the Australian Defence Force into the future and to help shape the public understanding of past, present and future operations.

Many defence specialists and professional historians are aware of the three Service studies centres but it would seem that many in the media and in the general community are unaware of the large amount of information that is now available. Such information may

not meet the day to day or hour to hour focus of modern media outlets but it often provides essential material that supports informed debate on Australian defence matters. This paper will highlight the role of the three Service studies centres, using the RAAF's Air Power Development Centre and Office of Air Force History as an example.

### *Biographical Note*

Dr Chris Clark has been the RAAF Historian and head of the Office of Air Force History since 2004. A graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, he left the Army and worked as a policy analyst in several Commonwealth government departments before receiving a PhD from the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1991. He has written widely on Australian defence history, with many previous books appearing under the name Coultard-Clark, including the Australian official history *The RAAF in Vietnam*.

### *Biographical Note*

Dr Gregory P. Gilbert, is the Deputy RAAF Historian in the Office of Air Force History. Until recently he was the Senior Research Officer in the RAN's Sea Power Centre - Australia. He started his career as a naval design engineer within the Department of Defence, 1985-96, and subsequently worked as a Defence contractor until 2002. He received a PhD from Macquarie University in 2004. He has broad research interests including; the archaeology, anthropology and history of warfare, Egyptology, Middle East history, as well as military strategy.

### **'Culture of Secrecy? The ADF and Transparency since 1999'** **Damian Dwyer**

The complaint is often made that the Australian Defence Force and Department of Defence operate within a culture of secrecy and seek to ensure that all information that reaches the Australian public is tightly controlled, if not generated by, the military and government. This paper compares the quantity and quality of material available in the public domain in regards to Special Operations Forces (SOF) from Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The conclusion reached is that Australia is more secretive than both the United States and the United Kingdom. The ADF has long maintained that information about its SOF units would compromise operational security, a term that has become a byword for censorship. The reality is that the ADF restricts information about almost *all* ADF operations on the basis of operational security.

It will be argued that Australia could learn from the United States whose military culture is more transparent in matters such as dealing with problematic issues that potentially might embarrass the ADF and in allowing soldiers and bureaucrats to engage in a conversation with the media.

### *Biographical Note*

Damian Dwyer is an Honours Student at the University of Wollongong.

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ROUND TABLE
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**'Hitting the reset button'**

**Professor Peter Leahy**

*Biographical Note*

Peter Leahy retired from the Army in July 2008 after a 37 year career as a soldier. He concluded his career in the Army with the rank of Lieutenant General in the appointment of the Chief of Army. During his tenure as Chief of Army he was responsible for the rapid expansion and development of the Army to enable it to cope with the many changing demands of modern conflict. Since leaving the Army Peter has joined the University of Canberra as a Professor and the foundation Director of the National Security Institute. He is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has been appointed to the Boards of Codan Limited and Electro Optic Systems Holdings Limited. He is a member of the Defence South Australia Advisory Board and is a Director of the Kokoda Foundation.

