



CHACR TAKE AWAY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14, JUNE 22 - JUNE 26, 2020

INTRODUCTION

This is the weekly CHACR Take Away newsletter, which we will issue regularly from now on. In these newsletters, you will find links to latest products by the CHACR, but also links to key reports and studies by external experts and institutions which we think you should pay attention to. The aim is to continue advancing the mandate of CHACR to enhance the conceptual component of warfighting for the British Army personnel. **The views expressed or studies shared in this document in no way represent the official views of the British Army, Ministry of Defence or any components thereof, but only that of its authors and are shared to stimulate thinking and discussions.**

GOOD IDEAS DON'T HAVE RANK

With the Integrated Review once again gathering pace in Whitehall, the CHACR would like to ask its full range of interested followers what topics, issues, conclusions and analysis you would like to see in the IR. What does the British Army need to concentrate on in order to maintain its competitiveness for the next decade? Please send your thoughts and ideas to ArmyStrat-CHACR-OMailbox@mod.gov.uk with your contact details attached. We'll ensure that they get seen by the people shaping the Review. Closing date is Friday 10 July.

LATEST FROM THE CHACR

The first **CHACR Webinar** was a great success. 300 people joined us and Angus Lapsley (DG Strat & Int'l MoD) and some Units and offices all over the world watched it together. Look out for more webinars coming soon! Our latest **CHACR Take Interview** features [a discussion on Indian foreign policy](#), covering latest China-India escalation and other related issues. You need a non-ModNet platform to watch it, or you can listen to it as [podcast here which works](#) on ModNet. This week we will release a new **CHACR Commentary** article, written by David Patrikarakos, on 'Infodemic' that sees Russia and China pursuing misinformation games. Check out our website or follow us on Twitter @CHACR_Camberley

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

There is a human tendency to put off the tough or difficult things that you know that you need to do and fill your time with the easier things, or more apparently pressing things, that allow you to procrastinate while convincing yourself that you are horribly busy. That's why busy people make 'to do' lists, whereas sensible busy people make 'to do' lists that they regularly review for priority order, and balance urgency against importance. And that's one of the reasons why the Army has the concept of 'Main Effort' in its doctrine. It's not only a tool for enabling mission command and facilitating an understanding of the concept of operations - it's also about reminding people that they need to concentrate on the things that really matter, especially when chaos abounds (as it does so often in a military setting) and one is tempted to switch one's attention away from what one ought to be doing. As COVID 19 has, rightly and understandably, drawn our attention into sorting out a present issue, the world has carried on turning with all of those strategic issues that will affect us all continuing to unfold. Whether it's murder in the guise of terrorism in a Berkshire park, or adventurism resulting in a clash of Indian and Chinese soldiers in the Himalayas causing multiple deaths and casualties, or the US Marines formally returning to a Pacific Focus (where, after all, so much of their Corps and Regimental history naturally pulls them in any case), or continuing events in Syria and Iraq, the strategic world keeps turning. And the Army needs to be ready, when the nation calls upon it, as it inevitably does and will continue to do, to address those strategic issues as they unfold to affect our interests. That's why, despite the distractions of the last few months, the Army has needed to keep its focus on the demands of the strategic context, on appropriate force and posture development to meet that context, and thus also on its contribution, alongside the rest of Defence and wider Whitehall, to the Integrated Review. Hence our 'call to arms' to all those of you who have, over the last few months, been mulling over thoughts about how the Army may best contribute, over the coming years, to the evolving strategic context. Please do contribute. Good ideas don't have a rank.

Maj Gen (Ret) Dr Andrew Sharpe

GLOBAL ANALYSIS

Notes from the Global Analysis stream, lead by Dr Ziya Meral

NIGERIA

On June 9, Boko Haram massacred more than eighty unarmed villagers after requesting them to partake in a religious service as a trick to gather them. The following week two attacks claimed by Islamic State in West Africa took lives of thirty civilians and more than twenty soldiers. The attacks also marked a break from their stand on not attacking Muslims, unlike Boko Haram. [This briefing does a good job](#) putting these attacks in context, and observes worrying patterns which do signal a new fatal phase we are entering in activities of ISIS related groups in West Africa.

MAX PRESSURE ON IRAN

Trump administration's maximum pressure on Iran policy has not produced the false promise of altering Iran's enrichment ambitions and leading to some sort of regime change. On the contrary, both the nuclear enrichment portfolio and domestic politics have gone another direction, which has been warned by pretty much all experts on the country. [This report by ECFR](#) raises some key points: maximum pressure policy has emboldened groups in the country who are not willing to seek normalised relations with Europe and US and contain enrichment ambitions. Impact of domestic politics on Iran's posture is often missing in conversations on the country. This report fills the gap.

CLIMATE CHANGE

DCDC has just released an excellent report provided by the Global Strategic Partnership on the implications of the changes in climate for UK defence and security. Click on the picture below to read the study, which is set to be an important topic.



THINGS TO KEEP ON YOUR RADAR SCREENS

Arms flow from the Balkans

A [great report on how weapons made in Balkans](#) end up in conflict zones in the Middle East

Russian Disinformation Ops

A [podcast on how a long running Russian disinformation](#) operation was unearthed by researchers.

Strange Terrorism

A [strange story of a US soldier](#) planning to attack his own unit in cooperation with a British neo-Nazi occultist group.

Is Cairo going to War in Libya?

Egypt has signaled reactions towards developments in Libya, but can it follow up on them? [A good analysis on it here.](#)

Mozambique

[Analysis on increasing activities of ISIS](#) related groups in Northern Mozambique.

Naval Arms Race in the Med

Contentions over Libya are pushing on [a new naval arms race](#) between stakeholders.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Notes from Historical Analysis stream, lead by Dr Matthias Strohn

PARTNER ARMIES

The British Army has got a long history of partnering and mentoring of allied armies. It could be argued that the importance of these tasks will increase for the Army in the future, as these offer an efficient (and cost-effective) way to ensure that British strategic aims are met overseas. Naturally, the British Army has not been the only army to work in this arena and the historical and current examples of mentoring and partnering are legion. [In this short article](#), James Fargher draws attention to a widely unknown episode, the mentoring of the Egyptian Army by former Confederate officers in the Egyptian-Ethiopian War of 1874-1876.

HISTORY IN TODAY

The toppling of statues that we have seen in recent weeks in Britain and the US are an expression of a changing view of history. Iconoclasm is nothing new in history and the current events and debates stand in a long tradition of (re-) interpretation of history. Usually, a monument says more about the established views of those who erected the monument (and those who want to tear it down) than the people presented in marble or stone. [In this highly interesting podcast](#), a group of historians discuss current events and place them in the context of wider questions of iconoclasm and the general interpretation of history. This is an important discussion and one that should not be overlooked by the Army, because this general debate of the nation's history will have repercussions for the wider population's view on and understanding of Army traditions.

ENDS, WAYS AND MEANS

[This article](#) looks at two examples of past US conflicts as part of wider 'Great Power Competition' and considers the balance of Ends, Ways and Means in each. "The Korean War is an example of successful warfare because the means and ways applied were balanced with the political end state within the context of the strategic situation. The Vietnam War is an example where those three factors were not balanced and the political objectives were not met. Understanding political objectives and their relationship to ends, ways, and means will have even more gravity as the world returns to great power competition between nuclear-armed nations, especially with the advent of increased technology and the potential for anonymous belligerents and non-state actors, further complicating an already strategically complex world."

TODAY IN HISTORY

21 June 1854: the first Victoria Cross was won:

Mate Charles Davis Lucas onboard HMS Hecla performed the act which was to earn him the honour as the first winner of the Victoria Cross on 21st June 1854. Whilst attacking the great gun batteries of the Russian fortress at Bomarsund in the Aland Islands, a live shell landed on the deck of the Hecla. Disregarding orders to take cover, Lucas picked up the shell with its fuse still burning and calmly walked to the edge of the ship before dropping it over the side; the shell exploded as it hit the water. The Victoria Cross was awarded to Lucas in the first public ceremony, which was held on 26 June 1857. At the ceremony, Queen Victoria invested 62 of the 111 Crimean recipients in Hyde Park. This took place before a crowd of 100,000 people and an impressive military array, some 4,000 strong, which included life guards and cavalry under Lord Cardigan, three battalions of foot guards, a troop of artillery, a detachment of sailors and a battalion of the Rifle Brigade. Queen Victoria took a keen interest in the decoration which bore her name and it was she who suggested the words 'For Valour' beneath the medal's bronze Maltese cross – rather than 'For the Brave', which she pointed out could be taken to imply that other people were not. The crosses were made of metal from Russian cannon captured at Sebastopol. It was a crucial innovation that the medal was awarded completely regardless of rank and on no consideration other than a signal act of valour or devotion in the presence of the enemy. The Victoria Cross has been awarded 1,358 times to 1,355 individual recipients. The largest number of recipients for one campaign is the First World War, for which 628 medals were awarded to 627 recipients.

MYTHS OF ARMOUR IN WWII

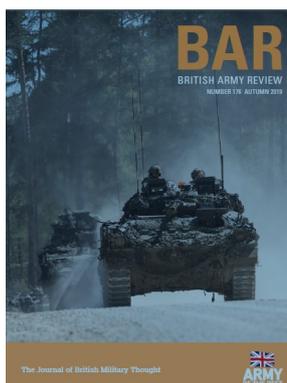
In [this video](#) Nicholas Moran explores myths about US WWII Armour that have become "truth by common knowledge". Were Sherman tank really nicknamed 'Ronsons' because they 'light first time every time'? Was the Sherman Firefly the best version of the Sherman? Did it take at least 5 Shermans to tackle a Tiger or Panther? Were Shermans death traps to their crews? Nicholas Moran goes back to original source materials to bring historical facts to bear to counter many oft repeated myths.

CHACR TEAM RECOMMENDS

Ann Clayton. *Chavasse. Double VC.*

Many heroes emerged during the First World War, but only one man was twice awarded the Victoria Cross during that conflict. This was Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps as Medical Officer to the 10th Battalion, the King's (Liverpool Regiment) - the Liverpool Scottish. In "Chavasse. Double VC" the author Ann Clayton has unearthed a forgotten archive of his letters from the Front and been allowed access to the Chavasse family correspondence, photographs and other documents. The result is a fascinating study of a man who, while typical in almost every way of the Victorian/Edwardian middle class stands out for his simple courage and unflinching devotion to duty. This is a deeply moving story about a modest but heroic man seen against the background of his devoted family and the grim realities of the First World War.

BAR PICK



The British Army Review (BAR) is now publicly available and can easily be [accessed on the Army's public platform](#). In the [current issue of BAR](#) (177; pages 94-101), Brig (Ret.) Richard Toomey has written a fascinating article on how the British Army managed its relations with the media during the Battle for Rome in 1944. The case study is a good example of news emerging from a battlefield is

not simply about the narrative on the actual fight, but the home domain and their understanding and experiences. It is a helpful analysis of the need to imagine information both as shaping the narrative on the ground and challenging the adversary's narratives, as well as how we relate to 'audience at home'.

Rebecca Rideal. *1666: Plague, War and Hell Fire.*

If we think 2020 has been a tough year, compare it to 1666. That year, plague broke out, the second Anglo-Dutch war raged, and much of London was destroyed in the Great Fire. The losses of the fire and an outbreak the plague, and the lavish spending of Charles II's court, created an atmosphere of protest and rebellion in London. While it stands out in history as a year of death, despair and destruction, 1666 was also a year of remarkable progress and achievement in the sciences and in literature: Robert Hooke published his discoveries on microscopy, Isaac Newton discovered the law of gravity, John Milton completed his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*. The modern city of London began to rise from the ashes of the Great Fire as architect Christopher Wren began designs for a new, stately stone buildings to replace those that had burned, including a striking cathedral for the city. *1666: Plague, War and Hell Fire* is a timely read as we emerge from Covid-19 lockdown, a reminder that previous challenges have often been accompanied by significant progress and discoveries.

Sam Dagher. *Assad or We burn the Country: How One Family's Lust for Power Destroyed Syria*

The war in Syria rages on, with myriad of stakeholders pursuing whatever gives them concern or chances to fulfil long held ambitions and visions. Meanwhile, there are already talks on new approaches towards Syria in aid and development as a way of gaining influence over the Assad family. This book is probably one of the best recent books on Syria, and unlike common discussions on jihadis vs foreign actors, it focuses on the Assad family and grounds why and how initial protests for democratic rights escalated into war crimes and crimes against humanity. It implies serious problems with naïve hopes on Assad regime.

ABOUT THE CHACR

You can learn more about the CHACR at www.chacr.org.uk

This document can not be republished, cited in part or full, distributed or posted in any forum or media without permission from the CHACR.

CHACR is an independent think-tank established by the British Army. The views expressed in the content of this newsletter and studies and reports it signposts are those of individual authors and in no way represent the official views of the British Army, Ministry of Defence or any components thereof. They are shared to stimulate thinking and discussion, and exposure to different views.