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SAFE HOME?

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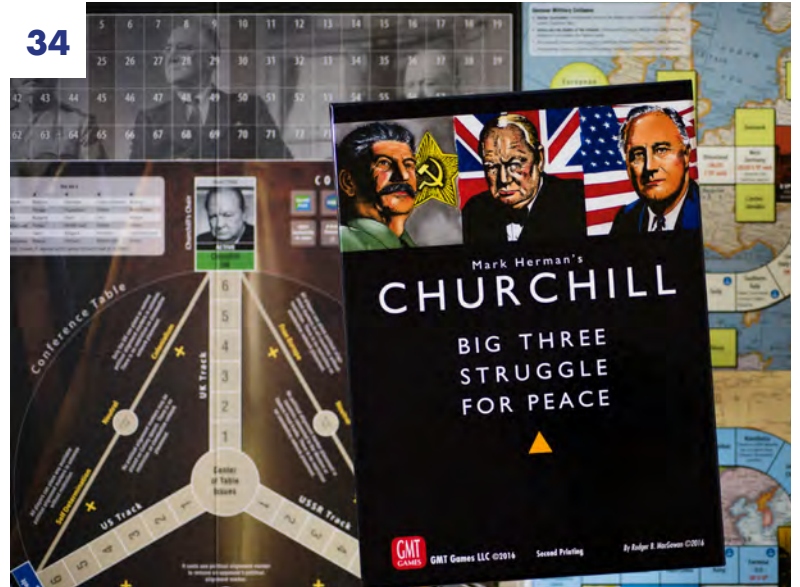
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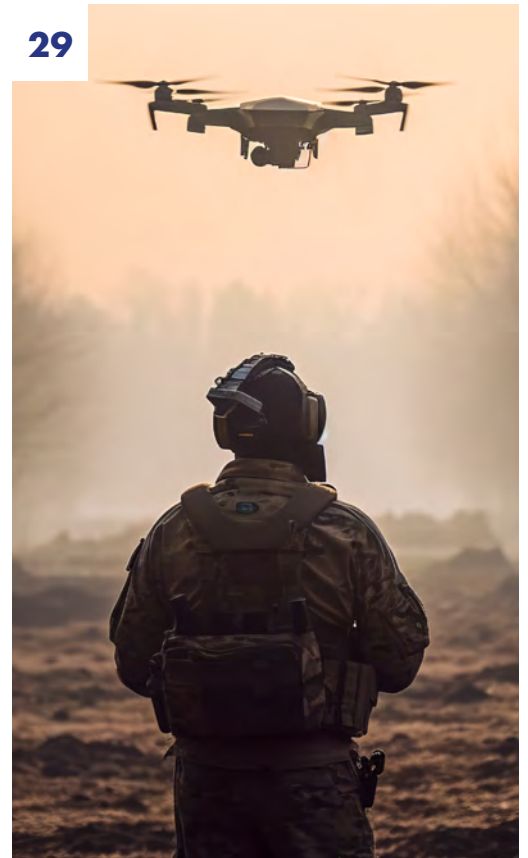
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REFINING RESILIENCE: OUR ROLE IN A NATIONAL ENDEAVOUR

THE first duty of any government is to ensure the safety and security of its people. Outwith terrorism on our shores, we have accepted that security from conventional military threats is delivered through protecting at reach, by deterring through being prepared to fight battles on the continent with allies. In the lee of the end of the Cold War, the peace dividend resulted in a deliberate switch to lean 'just in time' solutions and a reliance on an international military industrial base, privileging value for money over resilience. We are now coming to realise that both these methods must change if we are to counter the threats of today and tomorrow; and that there is a requirement for hard conventional security at home and increased resilience across our capabilities, from workforce to a sovereign industrial base.

In addition, three new factors now stand out. First, our extant NATO obligations under Article 3 (the obligation to develop capabilities to resist attack) are clearer with the current threat, reinforced by the fact that the United Kingdom is part of the new NATO Regional Plan North-West. Second, the threat demands at least enhanced resilience. In other words, to be able to support the civil authorities against current state sub-threshold threats, as well as terrorist threats, industrial action and extreme weather events. Finally, the Strategic Defence Review's call, reinforced by emerging cross-Whitehall policy, for endurance and depth in UK Defence and civil resilience. So, what can we, in the Army and in support of Defence, do about this? Broadly there are two challenges: to ensure the security of the United Kingdom and to provide that strategic depth necessary to sustain any conflict.

The security of the nation is not an exclusively military endeavour. Indeed, it is most likely that the military would remain in support of the civil authorities even in conflict. Nevertheless, there is a need for better military coordination at home, akin to that which the Permanent Joint Headquarters provides to global operations. With the assumption of responsibility for



"There is a requirement for hard conventional security at home and increased resilience across our capabilities, from workforce to a sovereign industrial base."

guarding and physical security, the Standing Joint Command is placed to be the homeland proponent with an intelligence picture and situational awareness of all that concerns defence in and of the UK. Allied to building capability in the eight regional joint military commands, such as the right connectivity, we will be better able to advise the Ministry of Defence on priorities and risk as well as provide operational command and control for

challenges other than 'jabs and sandbags'. In times of crisis and conflict, this would also provide a national communications spine in support of and supported by national and local government, through local resilience fora, and the private sector. Military capability can then be added to this within Defence priorities. Building the right architecture and systems now is the key.

Protecting the homeland assists in our strategic depth although this is much more than geography, particularly for an island nation. The need for a more sovereign industrial base, with assured supply chains, is another requirement that the Land Industrial Strategy seeks to build. The supply of workforce for any crisis or conflict will be a particular challenge and one that the Standing Joint Command is tasked with. First, those former serving regular personnel with a liability, known as the Strategic Reserve, need to be better managed so that their skills and experience can be best matched to a uniformed position in crisis or conflict. The recruiting and training of the second and third echelons, in support of the Field Army, comes next. Concurrently, though, will be the provision of personnel for homeland defence. For the latter requirement, consideration of how much can be done by the private sector must be given in the modern age, as Ukraine is showing us. Training itself will be streamlined, taking the lessons from Interflex and adapting to meet the requirements of the time, whether for the Army or the Integrated Force.

This edition of *The British Army Review* therefore provides some food for thought, ahead of the Strategic Defence Review, on the pressing matter of strategic depth and defence of the UK. This is a cross-government and national effort within which the Standing Joint Command, whose purpose is to sustain the force and protect the homeland, stands by to play its part both for the Army and for the Integrated Force as part of the NATO alliance.

– Lieutenant General Charlie Collins,
Commander Standing Joint Command





'A GATHERING STORM WORTHY OF WORRY'

FROM THE EDITOR

An anecdote, shared by one of the much sharper minds that I endeavour to sponge knowledge from daily at the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, leapt to the fore as the final touches were applied to this latest edition of *The British Army Review*.

The recollection related to the military oracle in question being profoundly struck by an interview with an octogenarian – “the sweetest of old ladies who would be delighted to bring you biscuits and serve you tea in a thin china cup” but, as a former Special Operations Executive, was “not to be messed with and truly hard as nails”.

Speaking with clarity about her wartime escapades, the interviewee repeatedly referred to “this blessed generation” – those ‘young’ enough to genuinely worry about things that are in reality petty; the blessed privileged to fret over how others see them as opposed to whether they are likely to live beyond the day’s end; the blessed for whom such terrors have always been so geographically and emotionally distant.

From a UK perspective, the blessed are certainly plentiful. Wars, and all the horrors they entail, are – in the main – the worries of others. And that extends to this writer, who, despite deploying on repeated reporting

assignments to the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan, is blessed to have experienced only fleeting moments of genuine cause for concern during an enduring career in Defence. Choice certainly played a part in minimising my exposure to things worth worrying about. There were no orders to ‘stand to’ in the darkness or six-month tours away from family for this scribe – logistics willing, getting ‘out of Dodge’ was always an option – and, once distanced from theatre by a long flight, it was relatively easy to slip back into a blessed status of stress being confined to school runs or white goods going on the blink.

World events, however, suggest that the UK’s blessed generation should now be giving some serious thought to their understanding of what it is to worry and accept that the element of ‘choice’ when it comes to contemplating conflict is in peril. Indeed, there is a mounting list of things to feel anxious about – chief among them the bloody war still raging on the European continent, the presence of a war criminal with an expansionist agenda in the Kremlin and a change in personnel at the White House that has seemingly seen America’s long-relied on shield slip from NATO’s side.

There is a creeping unease and it is clear that the UK and its allies can’t just chew their nails from afar. It is not down to blind paranoia, for example, that ‘sabotage’ was the first thought

of many on hearing the news in March that Heathrow – one of the world’s busiest airports – had been brought to a standstill by an off-site fire. Russia, after all, has form for trying to exact “sustained mayhem on British and European streets”, according to the head of MI5 Ken McCallum.

For those already losing sleep about security’s rapid rise up the domestic agenda, this issue should hopefully provide some solace – the articles on the pages that follow demonstrate the British Army is already worrying for others and assessing how best to recalibrate to ensure we are safe at home by – as one reviewer succinctly puts it – thinking the unthinkable.

And for those in uniform losing sleep about the suitability of the UK’s populace for soldiering should greater mass be required, take note of Major Andy Richardson’s *How to Prepare for Invasion* (pages 18-21), which champions the fitness of the oft-derided Generation Z and Generation Alpha. Being historically unburdened by real worries does not necessarily mean the ‘blessed generations’ will not step up if required. ‘For King and country’ may not resonate with wider society as it did in the past but protecting loved ones, communities and even an individual’s right to be preoccupied by the roll call of reality TV shows can be compelling reasons to fight. – **Andrew Simms**

HOMELAND OPERATIONS: A CASE OF BACK TO THE FUTURE?



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DURING the past three decades the Army's support of the civil authority in the UK predominantly focussed on mitigating the impact of industrial action, managing the consequence of extreme weather, countering terrorism and assisting with public health emergencies. The character of the Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) challenge began to evolve with the Russian attack on the Skripals in Salisbury in March 2018. Here Defence capabilities were used over a protracted period in response to the hostile activity of a competing state on UK soil. Whilst a significant departure, this did not appreciably change the Army's posture at home, perhaps because the Russian attack had targeted a dissident rather than the British state per se. Moreover, whilst a competitor, Russia remained integrated within the international community. Indeed, she staged the 2018 football World Cup later that year.¹

The reversion to a business-as-usual approach after the attack reflects the tone of our existing resilience legislation, namely the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.² The Act, which in some regards represents the extremity of the pendulum swing post-Cold War, repealed

various Civil Defence Acts replacing them with an inherently civilianised machinery of government. Accordingly, today's legislative landscape, and its associated machinery, is a peacetime response plan rather than one optimised to face down the challenge presented by competing states.

EVOLVING THREATS

As the Land Operating Concept observes, the UK's support of Ukraine since February 2022 has made the country and its interests a Russian target. The character of the threat presented by Russia to the UK homeland is distinct from that which we faced in the Cold War. Then there was palpable nuclear jeopardy, but a more limited threat from conventional munitions, subversion and sabotage. Today, the range and accuracy of conventional missiles and drones presents a challenge to the homeland, whilst the ease with which an adversary can conduct or sponsor subversion and sabotage at reach has increased by an order of magnitude.

During the Cold War, Russian subversion in the UK was largely reliant either on the printed word – which had limited reach – or on the recruitment of local agents, which was constrained in scale by the

¹England lost in the semi-finals, again.

²HM Government, *Civil Contingencies Act 2004*, chapter 36.



capacity of Soviet intelligence services and the effectiveness of the UK's counter-espionage efforts. Today, the internet has significantly eased the challenge of spreading propaganda and misinformation, and also the recruitment of potential sympathisers and agents. Similarly, sabotage has become more straightforward. First, for the reasons outlined, it is easier to recruit or radicalise potential local saboteurs due to the reach of new media. Second, sabotage of essential services and infrastructure that are digitally integrated – and therefore more vulnerable to cyber-attack – is more straightforward and more impactful than disrupting analogue systems. Moreover, one might conclude that conducting war on everyday life in a society that has privileged just-in-time logistics over redundancy is also easier.³

Unlike a kinetic attack, which is inherently visible and escalatory, subversion and sabotage is sub-threshold and opaque. Subversion is designed to undermine the domestic and international authority of governments and destabilise societies, and its extent is often only fully visible in retrospect. It is worth noting also that strategic bombing tends not to bring about the desired political outcome, historically. Whereas subversion and sabotage, if done deftly, can bring down governments, or at least limit their freedom of action at home and overseas. Indeed, the incremental erosion of a government's credibility through a steady drumbeat of subversion and sabotage could be especially damaging.

“During the Cold War, Russian subversion in the UK was largely reliant either on the printed word... Today, the internet has significantly eased the challenge of spreading propaganda and misinformation, and also the recruitment of potential sympathisers and agents.”

Against this definition, there is now sufficient evidence to conclude we and our NATO partners are already in contact, with many open-source examples of Russia's political warfare and active measures across Europe during the past five years.⁴ Last year we saw saboteurs recruited by Russia act in London and Paris,⁵ whilst two army bases in Germany were also targeted.⁶ Indeed, the Director General of the Security Service warned last October that Russia was trying to create mayhem on the streets of Britain and other European countries.⁷ Similarly, the sub-threshold activities of other competing states, such as Iran, are becoming more sophisticated in the digital age.

NATO DEMAND SIGNAL

Article 3 of NATO's Atlantic Charter obliges members to protect their homelands.⁸ This is non-discretionary and, while important now, it will become even more critical when we are out loading an expeditionary fighting

force during an Article 4 or 5 contingency.⁹ The conversation on Article 3 has gained momentum in NATO during the past decade,

³Richard Barrons, “The nature of warfare is changing. It's time governments caught up”, WIRED, 14 October 2017. [wired.com/story/innovation-will-win-the-coming-cybersecurity-war-richard-barrons-opinion](https://www.wired.com/story/innovation-will-win-the-coming-cybersecurity-war-richard-barrons-opinion) (Accessed 7 March 2025).

⁴Keir Giles, “Russian disruption in Europe points to patterns of future aggression”, Chatham House, 1 May 2024, [chathamhouse.org/2024/05/russian-disruption-europe-points-patterns-future-aggression](https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/05/russian-disruption-europe-points-patterns-future-aggression) (Accessed 7 March 2025).

⁵BBC News, “Russia link suspected in Eiffel Tower coffin mystery”, 3 June 2024, [bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cldd7n97dwro](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cldd7n97dwro) (Accessed 7 March 2025); Sky News, “Two more charged over alleged Russian-linked arson attack on Ukrainian business in London”, 3 August 2024, [news.sky.com/story/two-more-charged-over-alleged-russian-linked-arson-attack-on-ukraine-business-in-london-13189804](https://www.news.sky.com/story/two-more-charged-over-alleged-russian-linked-arson-attack-on-ukraine-business-in-london-13189804) (Accessed 7 March 2025).

⁶The Straits Times, “Germany suspects Russian hand in sabotage at military bases”, 14 Aug 2024, [straitstimes.com/world/europe/german-military-base-sealed-off-due-to-suspected-sabotage-act-reports-spiegel](https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/german-military-base-sealed-off-due-to-suspected-sabotage-act-reports-spiegel) (Accessed 7 March 2025).

⁷Ken McCallum, ‘Annual Threat Update’, 8 October 2024, mi5.gov.uk/director-general-ken-mccallum-gives-latest-threat-update (Accessed 7 March 2025).

⁸“In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist [armed] attack” (The North Atlantic Treaty, Article 3, 1949). The ‘armed’ element of the last clause has long since been overtaken by events and tactics. In common usage Article 3 is judged to include non-kinetic attack.

⁹Interestingly, Sweden assumes that it would be mobilising in the dark and with no comms. That is, amid disruptive attacks on power infrastructure and communications.



Inset pictures: UK MOD © Crown copyright

with renewed commitment to resilience made at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, then again at the 2021 Brussels Summit, and also in 2021 within the NATO 2030 agenda. At the 2023 Vilnius Summit, leaders reiterated the Alliance's commitment to strengthening resilience as an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence. At the 2024 Washington Summit, members pledged to strengthen national resilience by integrating civilian planning into national and collective defence planning in peace, crisis and conflict.

Consequently, NATO's expectations on its members to deliver Article 3 has become more explicit during the past decade. It now defines preparedness under Article 3 as continuity of government, continuity of essential services and civil support to military operations. Moreover, NATO recently set seven baseline requirements for national resilience against which Allies can measure their level of preparedness.¹⁰

- Assured continuity of government and critical government services: for instance, the ability to make decisions and communicate with citizens in a crisis.

- Resilient energy supplies: ensuring a continued supply of energy and having back-up plans to manage disruptions.

- Ability to deal effectively with the uncontrolled movement of people and to deconflict these movements from NATO's military deployments.

- Resilient food and water resources: ensuring resilient supplies that are safe from disruption or sabotage.

- Ability to deal with mass casualties and disruptive health crises: ensuring that civilian health systems can cope and that sufficient medical supplies are stocked and secure.

- Resilient civil communications systems: ensuring that telecommunications and cyber networks can function even under crisis conditions, with sufficient back-up

¹⁰NATO, 'Resilience, civil preparedness and Article 3', 13 November 2024, nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm (Accessed 7 March 2025).

¹¹NATO, *Allied Joint Publication-01: Allied Joint Doctrine*, Edition F Version 1, September 2022, p11.

¹²Ministry of Defence, *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01: UK Defence Doctrine*, sixth edition, November 2022, p45, para 3.14.

¹³Ministry of Defence, *Joint Doctrine Publication 02: UK Operations: the Defence Contribution to Resilience*, fourth edition, November 2021.

"The diagnosis of the current problem offered, specifically the acute demands of Article 3, leads to a clear conclusion: we have a doctrine gap that requires our immediate attention."

capacity. This also includes the need for reliable communications systems including 5G, robust options to restore these systems, priority access to national authorities in times of crisis, and the thorough assessments of all risks to communications systems.

- Resilient transport systems: ensuring that NATO forces can move across Alliance territory rapidly and that civilian services can rely on transportation networks, even in a crisis.

NATO would argue this applies across the continuum of competition.¹¹ That is – to use NATO's terms – not only during armed conflict within the context of Article 5, but also in the grey zone confrontation that precedes it. Indeed, to follow the logic, a Western nation could lose before the threshold of conflict was ever breached given the cumulative impact of subversion and sabotage. Therefore, in Article 3 terms, there is an onus on NATO members to offer value at home as much during confrontation as armed conflict.

THE DOCTRINE GAP

Recent global events and the attendant requirement to hastily refocus on Article 3 challenge the doctrinal foundations on which Defence is built. The most recent version of the United Kingdom's defence doctrine, *Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01* published in November 2022, recognises homeland operations as one of the five operations to be undertaken by Defence (the others being the global foundation, persistent engagement, crisis response and warfighting). But its imagining of the specificity of these operational types defaults to those more typical of the immediate post-Cold War years, rather than the new challenge from state actors. Listed examples of operations in the homeland include: "...military aid to the civil authorities to assist partners across government responding to significant events; counterterrorism and intelligence operations in support of partners across government; and military deterrence activity over the UK's sovereign territory to counter maritime, land, air, and space and cyber incursions..."¹²

Similarly, the subordinate *Joint Doctrine*

*Publication 02 UK Operations: The Defence Contribution to Resilience*¹³ has not aged well and now reads as a homage to what feels like a bygone age. That Russia is mentioned twice, while His Majesty's Treasury is mentioned nine times, tells its own story.

Juxtaposition of this doctrine against the diagnosis of the current problem offered at the beginning of this article, specifically the acute demands of Article 3, leads to a clear conclusion: we have a doctrine gap that requires our immediate attention.

SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

As with all doctrine, a good place to start is the distillation of some fundamental principles, the relevance of which will endure to guide us as the character of the threat evolves over time. The six candidates below can helpfully inform operational design for the homeland:

Simple. The model for homeland operations must be easy to operate and understand. If we cannot brief it to a civilian with ease, then we have failed. If a partner does not immediately understand how to plug in to us – and vice versa – then we have missed our target. This simplicity must extend to the clear alignment of responsibility, accountability and authority within Defence, and between Defence and other partners.

Integrated. Duplications between the domains regarding operational responsibilities and support obligations must be avoided. And so too duplications across Government. They are inefficient, increasingly unaffordable and allow seams to develop within delivery. Accordingly, jointery and integration across Government must be founding design principles.

Disaggregated. To generate tempo, act precisely and leverage local knowledge and relationships, the delivery of operations must be federated with decisions made at the lowest level possible. The opposite – i.e. centralisation – risks overwhelming operational level command and control, and, critically, risks fragility and slowing tempo.

Extrovert. Our mindset must be open and welcoming, our tone inherently collaborative and humble. We must be seen by our partners as a natural integrator, making the very most of our convening power, with licence to operate founded on confidence of non-Ministry of Defence, multi-agency partners.

Resilient. Disaggregation also makes the model more resilient and offers greater redundancy. But given the likely challenge, resilience in the homeland operations context



"The model for homeland operations must be easy to operate and understand. If we cannot brief it to a civilian with ease, then we have failed. If a partner does not immediately understand how to plug in to us – and vice versa – then we have missed our target."

needs to go further. It is not enough to be difficult to break; the model needs to prosper amongst the inevitable chaos of conflict (conforming to the concept of anti-fragility coined by Nassim Taleb). For instance, a command and control design that is able to offer, spontaneously, alternative command and control nodes if the principal headquarters is compromised.

Adaptable. The threat will evolve over time and hence the tactical delivery model needs to possess growth potential and be sufficiently elastic to adapt to new challenges and opportunities. This infers the requirement for inherent levels of redundancy in our systems.

LIKELY FUNCTIONS

From these principles, it is further possible to distil likely generic functions for homeland operations, relevant across the continuum from competition through to crisis, and in preparation for conflict. Although tempting to retrofit functions on our current command and control architecture, they must be agnostic of any current structural form, at least for the time being. It is worth noting how these functions also represent the unique contribution Defence can deliver, or is inherently best placed to deliver, for the nation. Likely homeland operations national level functions include:

Understand. Recognising few do crisis

intelligence at scale as well as the Armed Forces, Defence must lead the creation of an integrated Article 3 focussed common intelligence picture, or Article 3 battle map. Acknowledging the role of the security services and specialist police capabilities, we must go further and develop the Article 3 battle map into Article 3 specific intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, ensuring access to decision-quality situational awareness. This could include (but is not limited to): specific intelligence on the tenets of Article 3, such as transport, food and water; critical national infrastructure; defence industry supply chains; viability of communications systems; etc.

Command and control. Similarly, a robust, secure and scalable command and control capacity, not only as a servant for Defence actors, but to facilitate cross-domain and multi-agency integration, is critical. Defence command and control assets must be always on, enabling them to scale to respond to routine resilience events, as well as commanding and controlling Article 3 missions. Defence must also consider its command and control contribution to in extremis continuity of government options.

Communicate. Defence must deliver resilient secret and above secret communications, allowing the timely flow of intelligence and execution of command and control across the

homeland operations enterprise, on behalf of Defence, His Majesty's Government and the widest spectrum of partners, including our defence industry partners.

Conceptual development. Defence must lead, on behalf of the nation, conceptual planning against the Article 3 demand signal, building a series of contingency plans with the relevant multi-agency public and private sector partners.

Train and test. Defence must design and deliver cross-domain exercises and training in preparation for the likely mission set, including the developing of on-the-shelf training plans for the generation of mass from both the Strategic Reserve and general public. As well as an effect in their own right, such activities also offer the second order benefit of overt deterrent messaging to the adversary.

POSSIBLE TASKS IN CRISIS

These foundations, developed and honed in competition, provide the foundation for our response at the point of existential crisis. Specifically, contingency plans are likely to be required against a series of tasks, including, but almost certainly not limited to, the following:

The Strategic Reserve. Reactivation of the Strategic Reserve through the empowered, local Joint Military Command network. Subordinate

tasks will likely include personnel administration (documents, medical, etc), as well as a pre-determined and pre-costed syllabus of military re-familiarisation training. Onward movement of the Strategic Reserve to the point of military need will also likely be required.

Mass mobilisation. Again, delivered through the local Joint Military Command network, the delivery of a foreshortened, pre-determined, pre-costed syllabus of basic training for civilians at a location close to where they live, prior to their onward movement to the point of need.

Countering subversion and sabotage.

Noting the role of conventional forces will be informed by other actors, such as the Security Service, the emergency services and UK Special Forces, likely tasks for conventional forces will be in the mitigation of the impact of hostile activity. In broad terms our contribution will likely involve: maintenance of essential services and supply chains; guarding of critical national infrastructure; and in extremis, public order support.

Support to the Joint Force. Concurrently, existing Joint Force locations will likely require reinforcement of their existing guarding arrangements, and further support to their enablement, such as the facilitation of

their outload through sea and air ports of disembarkation.

Support to allies. Logistic support to the inflow and subsequent outflow of allies, including: sea and air ports of disembarkation logistic management, feeding, accommodation, transport, security, onward movement, etc.

Response to kinetic attack. However difficult for many to conceive, both His Majesty's Government and, to an extent, the British public will expect Defence to respond in the event of a kinetic attack on the UK. Accordingly, due diligence now requires rudimentary planning for Defence's role in the detection, disruption and mitigation of the impact of such a strike (including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear).

HOMELAND DEFENCE: A CASE OF BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Amidst the tumult, we can take comfort from knowing we have, in some regard, been here before. Compare maps of 1940 and 2025 and you will see the command and control architecture has changed, but the principles offered in this article, along with the likely functions and tasks for Defence, would be familiar to our predecessors. In the Second World War we had home defence regions, and in the Cold War civil defence regions

and military districts, with regional seats of government. And while it is a statement of the blindingly obvious, we must not overlook the immutability of geography and its implications for our organisational design.

Further work is required to understand the resource implications required to service the demand outlined. One dimension of that resource question, the command and control architecture, gives cause for optimism, as the building blocks are already starting to fall into place. In April 2025, when Standing Joint Command takes ownership of Guardian (the police and protective security assets charged with the day-to-day defending of Defence) in one three star pillar, Defence will have started to create a system that can both gear up into other national decision-making bodies, and down through two star commands into local tactical commands that are experts in the ground, people and infrastructure of the place in which they operate.

The next challenge for this command and control architecture is to test and adjust it against the design principles articulated (simple, integrated, disaggregated, extrovert, resilient and adaptable), which in turn will afford the very best chance of delivering the likely functions and tasks that homeland defence in 2025 and beyond may send our way.



"However difficult for many to conceive, both His Majesty's Government and, to an extent, the British public will expect Defence to respond in the event of a kinetic attack on the UK. Accordingly, due diligence now requires rudimentary planning for Defence's role in the detection, disruption and mitigation of the impact of such a strike."



MOBILISATION AND REGENERATION: LESSONS FROM HISTORY



AUTHOR

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"We need an army designed to expand rapidly to enable the first echelon, resource the second echelon, and train and equip the citizen army that must follow. Within the next three years it must be credible to talk of a British Army of 120,000, folding in our reserve and strategic reserve. But this is not enough."
 – *General Sir Patrick Sanders, January 2023*

It is easy to put off the problems of tomorrow to deal with those seemingly more pressing difficulties of today.

However, thinking about mobilising and expanding the British Army for war can no longer be confined to theoretical debate. Mobilisation is defined by NATO as: "The process by which the armed forces or part of them are brought to a state of readiness for war or other national emergency. This includes assembling and organizing personnel, supplies, and material for active military service."¹

Most nations cannot afford to have standing armies filled with the required number of trained

and equipped units ready to mobilise and fight large wars. Peacetime armies are limited in size by national budgets and, as Major General (Retired) Dr Andrew Sharpe – the director of the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research – points out,² must be ready to mobilise and expand to cope with the heavier demands of war. Threats and tasks increase greatly in war, formations suffer attrition, units need to be replaced, areas of operation grow larger, rear areas and lines of communication need securing and prisoners require guarding.

In simple force development terms, depth is attained through the provision of additional capability, such as follow-on echelons. The medium-sized British Army must be ready at the outset to have a plan to mobilise for war, including a regeneration capacity that can provide more formations and more units,

¹NATO Standardisation Office (2020). AAP-06 NATO glossary of terms and definitions. Edition 2020.

²Sharpe, Andrew (2023). Mobilisation: no time to wait. *The British Army Review*, 182, p28-29.

and a plan for ongoing generation, or it risks becoming very small, very quickly.

In the British Army we often consider mobilisation to encompass only reservists but it refers to any and all parts of the Service. To deliver our planned full warfighting capability to NATO would require significant enabling effort by the UK Armed Forces and, for the Army, would require the majority of its currently deployable personnel, regular and reserve, its equipment and stocks. Mobilisation and the outload of sizable force elements for NATO would take place with a potential threat also hanging over the UK homeland. Thus, there would be a concurrent requirement for force generation to a national defence plan, while also mobilising an institutional regeneration capability to sustain and grow the Army for a potentially prolonged conflict

Mobilising the complete British Army of up to 73,000 regulars, 26,000 volunteer reserves and somewhere between 20,000 and 70,000 ex-regulars who have a call out or recall liability for war and then marrying them up with units, vehicles and stocks, deploying most of them abroad and using the remainder to defend the UK and keep the Army going 24/7 would be a gargantuan task. To achieve this mass mobilisation would throw up so many concurrent difficulties of a magnitude and scale that few in our army will have experienced.

To mobilise the Army there would be significant pressure on all front line commands to provide the personnel, regular and reserve, from their

"To deliver our planned full warfighting capability to NATO would require significant enabling effort by the UK Armed Forces and, for the Army, would require the majority of its currently deployable personnel, regular and reserve, its equipment and stocks."

current structures to service the mobilisation process, the base outload functions and to deliver around the clock operating across all HQs. This will place massive concurrent demand on the Army staff, leading to potential friction and delay and, at worst, leaving forces vulnerable to attack before deployment.

It has been said of the Service between the wars that "reliance on the notion that when it came to a crisis the British Army would always be able to improvise a successful solution to any problem was a mainstay of the General Staff's doctrinal thinking".³ It is to be hoped that is not the case today. To leave planning for concurrent mobilisation to 'best effort' (or in other words, have no practiced plan) is not an option that will end well.

THINKING BIG AND STEPPING UP

Many British officers at the start of the World Wars suddenly had to take on command duties well above the scale they had previously been

educated, trained and experienced for, and mistakes were made.⁴ By contrast, retaining a higher tactical level of education and training across the German Army was fundamental to producing leaders able to step up into an expanded 1930s army and who were able to cope with rapid change and the challenge of national scale warfare.⁵ It has been argued that the British Army currently lacks the conceptual framework to 'step up' and 'think big' as part of a nation at war, and urgently expand its armed forces.⁶

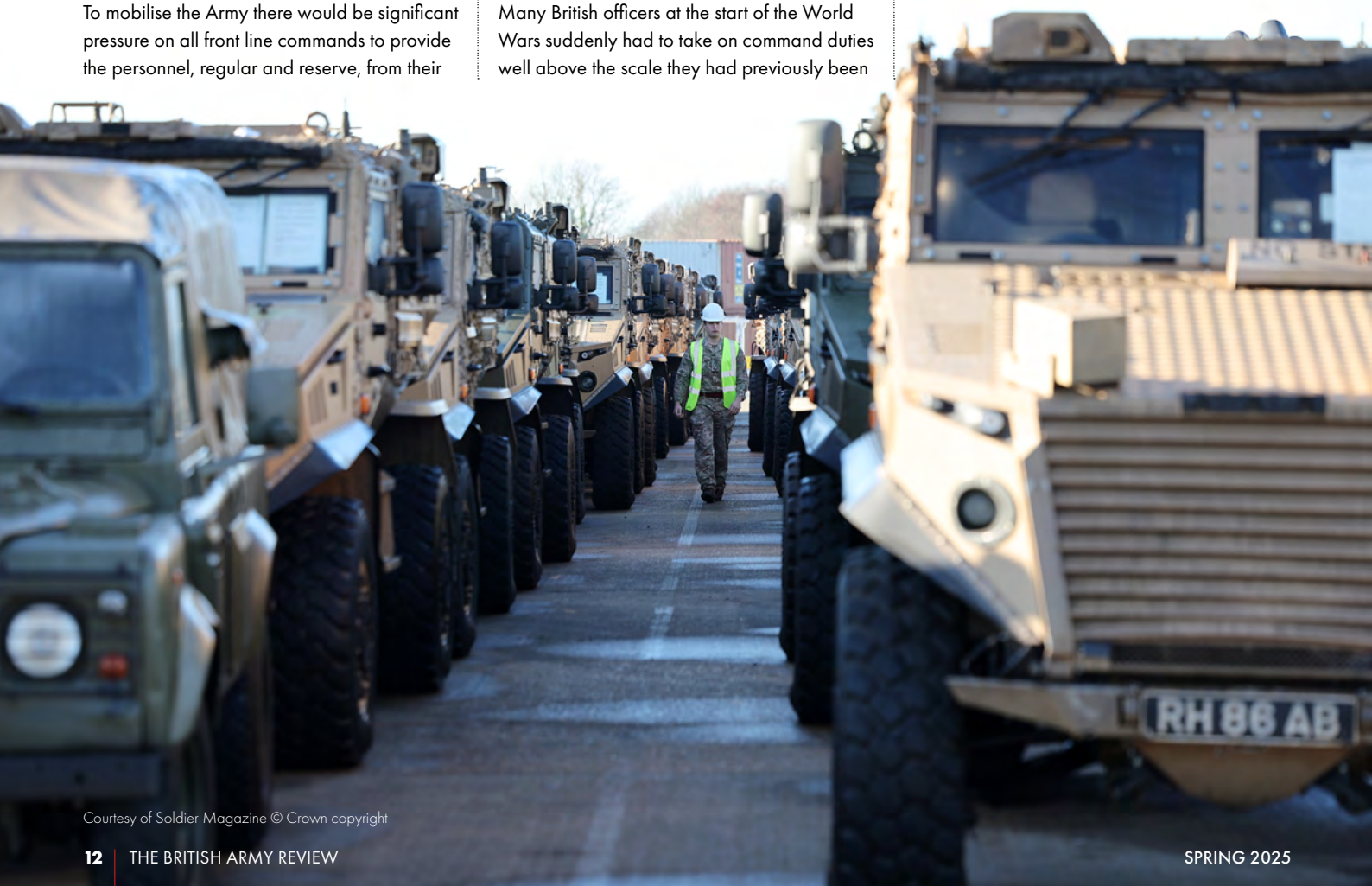
This is understandable as after a long period of downsizing, where senior leaders have experienced an Army that is perpetually getting smaller, it may be difficult to change a career's worth of thinking and prepare for how the Service could mobilise and then expand in a crisis. While the Army have had the advantage of staffing HQ ARRC for many years, the corps

³French, David (2000). *Raising Churchill's Army*. Oxford University Press. Page 47.

⁴See Allport, Alan (2015). *Browned off and bloody-minded: The British soldier goes to war 1939-1945*. Yale University Press.

⁵Strohn, Matthias (2019). *From defeat to rebirth*. In Strohn, Matthias (Ed.) *How armies grow*. Casemate Publishers (pp. 53-67).

⁶⁻⁷See Sharpe, Andrew, (2019) *What are the enduring lessons?* In Strohn, Matthias (Ed.) *How armies grow*. Casemate Publishers (pp. 169-185).



level of warfare seems far from conceptually grounded across the Service as a whole, far less the concept of a nation at war. A nation at war requires the Army to operate at a different level to the scale of conflicts of the last few decades. The linkage between mobilisation, Army expansion and warfighting, as a nation, needs to become embedded again in our education and training so that our conceptual component of fighting power is fully developed.⁷

ORDERS FOR MOBILISATION WILL BE DELIVERED LATE

Wars, large or small, are not usually entered into lightly by UK governments. There is likely to be real political hesitation about taking steps to fully mobilise the Armed Forces. In 1914, at short notice, and in 1939, with longer notice, politicians were understandably nervous about mobilisation and the orders were given very last minute and as very much a last resort.

Late notice and not having a plan for mobilisation of certain force elements can have an impact on deployment times. The Army cannot plan for every contingency, but unexpected deployments can illustrate potential delays that can be factored into worst case contingency planning in defence of the nation. For example, for the Gulf War in 1991, the Army took 22 weeks to deploy its division into theatre, with one brigade present already and no direct air or sea threat.⁸ Part of the reason for this was the time taken to backfill the deploying units with personnel and equipment from more than 70 other regular units.⁹ Lack of co-ordination with allies meant the move of ammunition for the British deployment from Royal Army Ordnance Corps stocks in Germany to the ports had to be mainly done by road since the US forces had hired all the German rail assets first. The Christmas period also impacted on the logistic plan and use of civilian contractors.

For Operation Telic 1 in 2003, some reservists received less than 48 hours' notice to inform employers and put their civilian lives on hold. Regular units and personnel also received last-minute notification due to political nervousness about the conflict and industry contacts were not engaged to ensure all stocks required were available. The British Army also had to fit in with an existing US plan, "which had been fine-tuned over the previous decade" and this led to frictions, but the divisional deployment time was halved from 1991 down to 10 weeks.¹⁰ However, there had been much forewarning and finalising the divisional order of battle in 2002 took 60 different iterations over months and much staff angst. As with 1991, the 2003 deployments were made with no direct UK threat or large-scale mobilisation providing concurrent frictions.



"For Operation Telic 1 in 2003, some reservists received less than 48 hours' notice to inform employers and put their civilian lives on hold. Regular units and personnel also received last-minute notification due to political nervousness about the conflict and industry contacts were not engaged to ensure all stocks required were available."

SCALE AND PACE MOBILISATION REQUIRES A DETAILED AND PRACTICED PLAN IN PLACE

As the British Army entered into the 20th century it was having to rebuild its mobilisation and expansion engine to support any large scale conflict abroad. The defeat of the French Army in 1870 due, in part, to poor mobilisation preparation heightened the awareness of sub-standard planning.¹¹ British Army failures in the Boer War led to external political scrutiny and internal reform that allowed it to 'think big' again after a century of small-scale conflicts. Between 1905 and 1912 the War Minister, Richard Haldane, overhauled the entirety of the Army's reserve forces so that they could provide a first echelon individual reinforcement capability for the British Expeditionary Force, primarily drawn from ex-regulars, and a complete second echelon force for home defence or operation abroad drawn from the volunteer reserve 'Territorial Force'.¹²

The creation of the 'Territorial Associations' to support the administration of Service expansion aligned with the Army's regional structures to ensure the nationwide framework was in place, including the formation of officer training corps. The newly created General Staff, through its Director of Military Training (Douglas Haig) and Director of Military Operations (Henry Wilson), drew up detailed plans for the mobilisation of the British Expeditionary Force, including the reserves, and put in place training and exercises integrating mobilisation with warfighting.¹³ This ensured that the British Expeditionary Force was ready in 1914 and it provided the template for the rest of the 20th century.

In August 1914 these plans, crafted in peace, saw the complete British Army mobilised for war in little over a month, delivering a British Expeditionary Force of 90,000 personnel to France, a substantial home defence force in place across the UK, and the start of an

expanded recruiting and training system.¹⁴

A similar plan in September 1939 was more hastily put together earlier that year but managed to deliver to France, with the assistance of the Royal Navy, a mechanised force of 152,000 personnel, 21,424 vehicles, 36,000 tonnes of ammunition and 25,000 tonnes of petrol in 25 days, with two corps complete after 33 days from mobilisation.¹⁵ These plans worked well and pre-war exercises often included moves from the home base that started with unit mobilisation plans being enacted.

Cold War plans were also developed in detail.¹⁶ In the 1980s detailed mobilisation plans were required from all units in the Army, both deployable and non-deployable. All units also had a good indication of what their

⁸British Army (1993). *The Army Field Manual Volume IV All Arms Tactics in Special Environments Part 3: Desert Historical Supplement*. AC 713346.

⁹See Pearce, Nigel (1992). *The shield and the sabre: The desert rats in the gulf, 1990-91*. HMSO publications.

¹⁰See publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/200304/cmselect/cmpubacc/273/27305.htm

¹¹Chrastil, Rachel (2023). *Bismark's War: the Franco-Prussian war and the making of modern Europe*. Penguin.

¹²See Spiers, Edward, M (1980). *Haldane: An army reformer*. Edinburgh University Press.

¹³Dunlop, John (1938). *The development of the British Army 1899-1914*. Routledge Revivals.

¹⁴Mitchinson, K.W. (2014). *The Territorial Force at war, 1914-1916*. Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁵Ellis, Lionel (1954). *The war in France and Flanders 1939-1940. History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series*. HMSO.

¹⁶See Connelly, Vincent (2024). Annex D: Cold War "Whole Force" planning 1980-1990 in the British Army. In Lalor, S., Gordon, J., Connelly, V., Jameson, S., O'Neill, P., Straughan, G., Hockley, C., Wynne-Jones, G., *The United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team Annual Statutory Report 2024*. The Council of RFCA's, London, UK.).

outline war role would be (NATO facing, home defence, institutional foundation etc.). The non-deployable units would either have a UK war role or would disband. The personnel from the disbanding units contributed to the Redistribution of Regulars Upon Mobilisation (RED RUM) plot providing extra regular army reinforcements. There were plans to scour every opportunity for the supply of personnel. From how to use, in war, the former Territorial Army (TA) soldiers that left each year to deciding that the TA and regular Army recruits in basic training would be deployable when they reached a 60 per cent training standard.

Plans were in place for the setting up of mobilisation centres for reservists, reinforcement drafting units and temporary mounting centres for regional movements to abroad. Plans for units to receive war stocks on mobilisation at appropriate locations were also extant. Strategic base outload would see the UK deliver 140,000 troops comprising a full division plus numerous brigades of reinforcements to the British Army of the Rhine in less than a week.¹⁷ All reservists held basic documentation at home that told them where and who to report to on mobilisation, allowing some measure of pre-planning. While this was happening, the Army would concurrently deploy 100,000 regular and reserve troops for home defence and institutional resilience while also supporting many US reinforcements transiting through the UK.

The lesson for an army that wants to win the first battle is that plans for war must be in place and all our people given some indication of what their war role would be. Plans for

¹⁷These reinforcements comprised 36,000 regulars in 48 units, 55,000 Territorial Army in 80 units and 50,000 individual ex-regulars as backfill for the units and pools of reinforcements to be delivered.

¹⁸This did not mean plans and roles would not change if circumstances required but at least having a practiced and exercised plan allowed for speed. Frequent exercising of a plan allows troops to be familiar enough to also adapt the plan, literally on the move.

¹⁹See Connolly, Vincent (2024). Annex D: Cold War "Whole Force" planning 1980-1990 in the British Army. In Lalor, S., Gordon, J., Connolly, V. Jameson, S., O'Neill, P., Straughan, G. Hockley, C., Wynne-Jones, G., The United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team Annual Statutory Report 2024. The Council of RFCA's, London, UK.

²⁰And was aiming for over 100,000 by 1991.

²¹Exercise Brave Defender 1 in 1985, WINTEX in 1987 and 1989 and the District FTX in Autumn 1988 and planned Exercise Brave Defender 2 in 1993.

²²Clarke, Dale (2016). Britain's final Defence: Arming the Home Guard, 1940-1944. The History Press.

²³Mitchinson, K. W. (2005). Defending Albion: Britain's Home Army 1908-1919. Springer.

Image: IWM (H 5844)



"The much-derided Home Guard have been shown in recent scholarship to have become an effective force by 1941, well organised, large scale and able to free up regular and reserve forces for overseas."

procurement, logistic support and reserves will be most impacted by delays in political orders. Throughout most of the 20th century, the Army had detailed mobilisation plans that were able to be enacted rapidly to try to counteract this potential lag.¹⁸

THE UK NEEDS TO BE SECURE

Politicians will want enough resource committed to home defence so that the UK public are reassured that something is being done to protect them from a direct military threat to the nation. While this will not be possible regarding a nuclear threat there will be pressure to provide defence against conventional attack.

In August 1914 when war with Germany was declared there had been much made in the national press about a 'bolt from the blue' German amphibious invasion threat to the UK. This was despite the Royal Navy being the strongest maritime force in the world, Germany having no actual amphibious capability and a home defence territorial force of 14 divisions available. Nonetheless political pressure over the perceived threat to the UK homeland saw a last-minute change to the British Expeditionary Force and two of the six divisions earmarked for service abroad were held back – one third of the deployed combat power. Furthermore, a large civil and military home defence apparatus was then created leaving more human resource in the UK.

In the Second World War a huge amount of army workforce was dedicated to home defence well after any threat had disappeared. Pre-war the TA had provided a large force of 96,000 troops for ground-based air defence of the UK and were well suited to the task.¹⁹

Towards the end of the Cold War in 1989, the British Army had more than 90,000 troops, regular and reserve, allocated to home defence tasks.²⁰ Cabinet papers from the 1980s show the Prime Minister of the time was most concerned about military home defence capabilities and this led to a substantial growth in the forces allocated to it for war. The dilemma for the British Army was to provide enough forces for political reassurance as much as to provide for defence against a real threat.

It has always been the case that there will simply not be enough military workforce to provide physical defence for every possible UK target. The 20th century solution often saw a mix of regular and reserve units to provide mobile reaction forces, the guarding of some priority sites, ground-based air defence and the enablers for home defence forces such as regional headquarters, communication, logistics and engineering elements. Civilian elements were also co-opted from civil defence into military home defence where required, such as the 1914 coast watchers and the volunteer Royal Observer Corps formed in the 1930s.

In the Cold War there were major home defence exercises²¹ with increasing emphasis on the importance of joint participation by the three Services, US Forces, the civil police and other civil authorities. These supplemented Army-led, regional training serials held between Brave Defender exercises alongside annual command post exercises for regions. The Armed Forces Home Defence Course ran four three-and-a-half-day courses annually for Ministry of Defence and Home Office civilians, the civil police, fire brigades and the US Forces, for OF3 to OF6 ranks.

At times of crisis military home defence ground forces were bolstered by the raising of a specific home defence capability such as the Home Guard in 1940. Such forces when raised in wartime had a mixed record. The much-derided Home Guard have been shown in recent scholarship to have become an effective force by 1941, well organised, large scale and able to free up regular and reserve forces for overseas.²² The equivalent forces in 1914-1918 were not nearly as effective.²³ A key point from the 1940 Home Guard is that most personnel remained part time and continued their civil employment alongside service.

In contrast, schemes to raise military home defence ground forces in peacetime have often met much resistance, primarily due to cost and the duplication of military infrastructure, but also due to competition

for recruits to regular and reserve forces for deployment abroad.²⁴ The 1980s Home Service Force – part of the TA, the Army Reserve of the time but on reduced terms of service – was a compromise and relatively cost effective peacetime solution to preparing for wartime home defence.

RESERVE UNITS ARE REQUIRED

The British Army has traditionally relied on part-time Army Reserve units, that train collectively in peacetime, to generate the additional units for the expansion of the Service at the start of a war. As has been pointed out many times before²⁵ this remains the most cost effective²⁶ and most successful way to expand the British Army for conflict.²⁷ Additional units cannot simply be conjured up at the start of a war from pools of untrained wartime volunteers²⁸ as the poor performance of scratch Ukrainian units has shown.²⁹ The necessity for a funded, equipped and trained Army Reserve in peacetime has also been a key lesson from our own history.

While Army Reserve units are not seen as equivalent in capability to regular units, historical analysis shows they can provide a 'good enough' contingent capability, within a few weeks from mobilisation, for the focussed wartime missions they should be allocated in peacetime.³⁰ These missions often include

'line holding' defensive operations, rear area security, lines of communications duties, additional fires, air defence and combat service support functions that are key to sustaining large formations, such as a corps. They also offer access to complex capabilities such as medical, cyber, logistic or specific engineering capabilities that require skills not available or affordable from the civilian world.

INDIVIDUAL REGULAR RESERVE BACKFILL IS ALSO REQUIRED

Peacetime armies also need many individual reinforcements in wartime. They are needed to fill inevitable peacetime gaps in both regular and reserve units and to bring all units up to a wartime strength, not needed in peace, to ensure units can cope with the rigours of war. Individual reinforcements are also needed to provide formations with a battle casualty replacement pool. The British Army has traditionally called back ex-regulars (the Regular Reserve and those with liability for recall, now termed the Strategic Reserve) to provide most of these individual reinforcements.³¹ These reinforcements by themselves do not expand the Army, since they do not provide additional units, but are vital for making units and formations more resilient.

RESERVISTS WILL TURN UP

History shows that volunteer reservists will

heed the call for a war of no choice and when there is a threat to the homeland. In 2003 more than 95 per cent of volunteer reservists from the TA responded to call out notices for a war of choice and close to 100 per cent did so in 1914 and 1939. Should such a need arise today, there will of course be a small portion of reservists we cannot accept into service for overseas³² operations but who could be deployed in the UK into other vital roles. There will also be a small portion who use the appeal system that is rightly there to support employers and families.³³

Regular reservists will also turn up, if they have been engaged previously, and the Army is clear what it will require from them on mobilisation. Engagement needs to start in their regular service and continue through into civilian life. Money helps.³⁴ In August 1914, a generous financial engagement scheme saw 99 per cent of regular reservists turn out when required.³⁵ In 1989, the Army required all regular reservists to attend an annual briefing and 92 per cent did so and the Service

"Additional units cannot simply be conjured up at the start of a war from pools of untrained wartime volunteers."



²⁴Stein, George (1987) *The Home Service Force. Defence & Security Analysis*, 3(3) 213-223.

²⁵Williams, Richard & Lamb, Graeme (2010). *Upgrading our Armed Forces. Policy Exchange*.

²⁶Defence Science and Technology laboratory (2015). *Cost comparison analysis of army regular and reserve sub-units. MOD*.

²⁷Kaushal, Sidharth & O'Neill, Paul (2024). *Conscription in the UK: A National Disservice? RUSI Commentary*.

²⁸Brazier, Julian (2024). *CGS is Right: The UK Must Urgently Rebuild its Capacity to Expand. RUSI Commentary*.

²⁹Axe, David (2025). *Another Ukrainian Brigade Is Disintegrating As It Deploys To Pokrovsk. Forbes Magazine*.

³⁰Parry, Emma, Dilys Robinson, Vincent Connelly, Zoe Morrison, et al (2023). *Defining and measuring utilisation, productivity and efficiency of the Reserve Forces. Reserve Forces 2030 Review. ASTRID project report*.

³¹See Connelly, Vincent (2021). *Bringing the Regular Reserve Back into the Whole Force. British Army Review*, 181, 82-89.

³²⁻³³publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmdfence/57/57we05.htm

³⁴Haldane Spearman (2006). 20060821 *What will motivate individuals who have left the Services within the last three years to maintain contact? Interim Report*.

³⁵Connelly, Vincent (2021). *Bringing the Regular Reserve Back into the Whole Force. The British Army Review*, 181, 82-89.

estimated it could rely on a minimum of 70 per cent being useable for war.³⁶ A number of studies have demonstrated that individuals, of course, do suffer from skill fade once out of the Army, but previously well-trained individuals can be rapidly brought back to a useful standard.³⁷ In 2003, with little engagement many did not reply to the summons and only 20 per cent were accepted into service.³⁸

CONSCRIPTION IS FAR FROM GUARANTEED

There is much assumption across the Army that conscription will be introduced in a future war. However, historically, the nation does not have a natural inclination for such a measure. At the height of militaristic jingoism and while concurrently fighting its largest ever war it took the UK almost 18 months to bring conscription into law in early 1916. This was even with a large and powerful political lobby for conscription that had been active since 1906.

³⁶ Connelly, Vincent (2024). Annex D: Cold War “Whole Force” planning 1980-1990 in the British Army. In Lalor, S., Gordon, J., Connelly, V., Jameson, S., O'Neill, P., Straughan, G., Hockley, C., Wynne-Jones, G., *The United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team Annual Statutory Report 2024. The Council of RFCAs, London, UK.*

³⁷ See data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/defence-committee/sdsr-2015-and-the-army/written/40139.html; Q3 response. Wider work in industry does demonstrate that starting from a faded, but experienced base, can see individuals recover to a useful skill level rather more quickly than expected.

³⁸ Ministry of Defence (2018). 20180504 Historical Branch (Army) Paper 02/18 Reservists in the British Army 1945-2018.

³⁹ Strachan, Hew. (2000) *Liberalism and Conscription 1789-1919*. In Strachan, H (Ed) *The British Army, Manpower and Society into the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge pp. 3-15.

⁴⁰ Dennis, Peter, (1972). *Decision by default: Peacetime conscription and British defence 1919-1939*. Routledge.

⁴¹ Ball, S.J. (2000). *A rejected strategy: the army and national service 1946-1960*. In Strachan, H (Ed) *The British Army, Manpower and Society into the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge pp. 36-48.

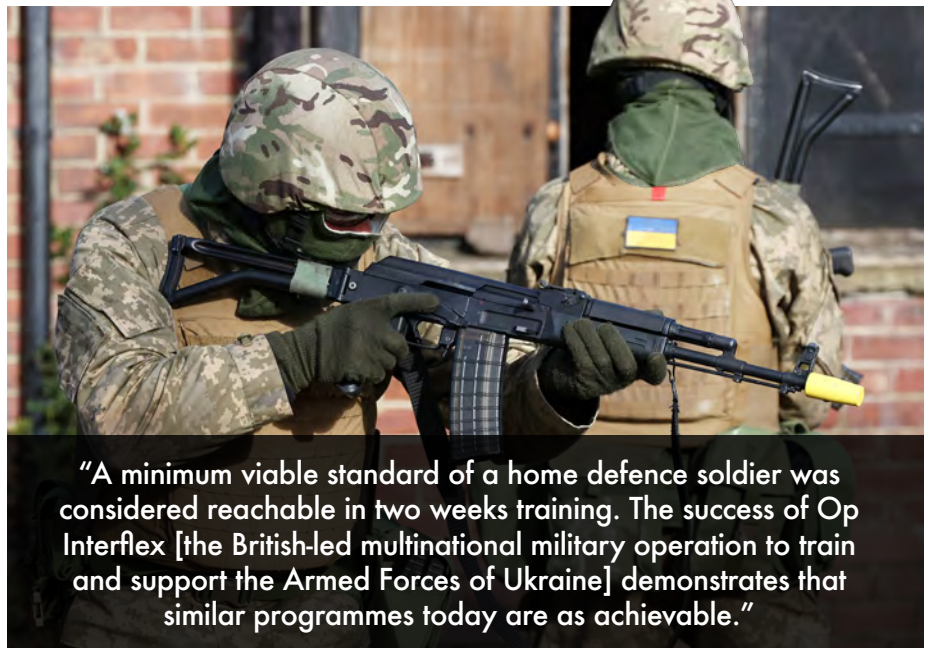
⁴² See legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/36/section/23

⁴³ More recently, negative headlines arose when 750,000 people volunteered for the COVID NHS Volunteer Responders programme and many became frustrated at the time taken to get onto the system. See *Royal Volunteer Service* (2021). *Volunteering, COVID and integrated case.*

⁴⁴ Lavery, Brian (2004). *Hostilities only: Training the wartime Royal Navy*. Conway Press.

⁴⁵ See Connelly, Vincent (2024). Annex D: Cold War “Whole Force” planning 1980-1990 in the British Army. In Lalor, S., Gordon, J., Connelly, V., Jameson, S., O'Neill, P., Straughan, G., Hockley, C., Wynne-Jones, G., *The United Kingdom Reserve Forces External Scrutiny Team Annual Statutory Report 2024. The Council of RFCAs, London, UK.*

⁴⁶ Murray, William. (1992). *German military effectiveness*. Baltimore, MD: Nautical and Aviation Publishing.



“A minimum viable standard of a home defence soldier was considered reachable in two weeks training. The success of Op Interflex [the British-led multinational military operation to train and support the Armed Forces of Ukraine] demonstrates that similar programmes today are as achievable.”

Conscription was not popular and more than 200,000 demonstrated against it in Trafalgar Square. As a consequence, the UK was the first nation to apply the right of conscientious objection into law.³⁹

In 1939, with the memory of conscription fresh, and war imminent, conscription was only introduced at the last minute before the outbreak of war, leading to chaos for the Army. The Service was expected to plan and equip itself for war while simultaneously absorbing thousands of new recruits almost overnight. However, this time there were no mass protests and public opinion did shift quickly behind the UK's first peacetime conscription.⁴⁰

Post war, the UK was the first of the NATO nations to abandon conscription in the late 1950s. The decision was led by politicians and the Army failed to make a convincing case for the usefulness of conscription for a long war.⁴¹ Even today, Section 23(3) of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004⁴² precludes the government from using the law to make emergency regulations that would “require a person, or enable a person to be required, to provide military service”. Fresh legislation would be required and so is not guaranteed.

VOLUNTEERS WILL BE AVAILABLE BUT PRE-PLANNING IS REQUIRED

History also shows that volunteers, veterans and civilians will make themselves available in large numbers in a crisis to serve the nation. However, volunteers come with an expectation that their offer will be valued, that they will be processed efficiently and they will be adequately trained and equipped. Volunteers will not be backward in coming forward with complaints if these expectations are not met. There was a national outcry in

1939 when the Army was not ready to expand with civilian volunteers.⁴³

Having enough instructors, schools, training areas and training stocks will be vital to both bringing reserve units up to scratch and readying those volunteers who will be needed to reinforce the Army in the longer term. The Royal Navy used commercial properties, including hotels and holiday camps, for training bases in the Second World War.⁴⁴ Plans for expansion also need to include pre-prepared stockpiles or access/agreements to source equipment from industry at short notice. Such agreements were distilled into the UK ‘war book’ system from 1945 onwards.

Cold War 1980s planning also included the creation of a ‘General Reserve after Mobilisation’ where ten regional training facilities, 1,200 instructors and basic equipment from obsolete holdings, other training establishments, civil stocks, defence sales stock and new production were identified in peacetime to facilitate the requirement.⁴⁵ A minimum viable standard of a home defence soldier was considered reachable in two weeks training. The success of Op Interflex demonstrates that similar programmes today are as achievable. However, in order to provide more than individuals there needs to be plans to train the leaders of new units and train these units collectively before deployment. The German Army maintained a complete training system throughout the Second World War that contributed much to their continued resilience as an army.⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

To reduce the frictions, speed up process and deliver all the required force elements to the right place, in time and in good order, ready

for the fight, requires planning, organisation, training and exercising well before any such mobilisation is required. You cannot be 'first to the fight' without this. Historically, our army prepared throughout most of the 20th century with this in mind. In fact, being seen to plan, organise, train and exercise for mobilisation for war will likely contribute to deterring against the need for mobilisation in the first place, as the Cold war demonstrated.

The Army needs to get very serious about this planning, very quickly. To bring back a 'mobilisation culture' into the Army will be difficult. Small overworked staff, busy with the problems of today have a tendency to push such planning into the 'it will be alright on the night' category. This will not be good enough. The genesis of the large scale deployment and reinforcement exercises of the 1980s, such as Exercise Crusader and Lionheart, was the realisation that field exercises practicing warfighting were not enough. The process of

mobilising the Army for war also needed large scale practice.

The Army cannot do all this alone. Army planning and exercising does not remove the imperative for Defence, His Majesty's Government, UK industry and the wider nation to also consider prudent preparations, including the interconnectivity of the Service with such preparations, to make a success of national mobilisation. However, there is a lot we can do from 'the bottom up' to begin to make sure we can be ready.

The Kirke Report on the lessons of the Great War, published in 1932, reflected on all of the issues above and was clear in the requirement to properly plan for war, even in a time of severe economic difficulty for the Army.

"One of the most important lessons to be learnt should be how we are to expand our small army for the purposes of war... Another is to

realise, when we have expanded it, what a new army of the kind is capable of achieving. There is a tendency to aim at a very high standard of training for our small nucleus of a regular army; to load it with complicated armament, to train it in the use of wide formations, which need skilled leadership and expert personnel, and to think in terms of rapid and accurate manoeuvre.

"If too high a standard is aimed at, there is a danger that a veneer may be cultivated at the expense of sound and thorough training, and that tactical theories may be adopted which the less highly trained armies of war time may be incapable of putting into execution... We need to ask – what are our present, or contemplated arrangements, for raising and training troops for another war?"⁴⁷

⁴⁷*British Army Review* (2001). *Special Edition. Report of the committee on the lessons of the great war (the Kirke Report)*. MOD. Page 79.

"The Army cannot do this all alone. Army planning and exercising does not remove the imperative for Defence, His Majesty's Government, UK industry and the wider nation to also consider prudent preparations, including the interconnectivity of the Service with such preparations, to make a success of national mobilisation."

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At the time of writing, I can conceitedly confirm that I serve, with the rest of the UK Armed Forces, unconquered. And why not? Victory is never in doubt for the British! We can recount the triumphs at Trafalgar, Waterloo and even over the skies of Blighty with one virtue in common: resilience. Good old British grit and refusal to surrender. Despite being outnumbered, outgunned and often underestimated, we always pull through. Why is this important? Well, as Bill Gates said in 1996: "Success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they cannot lose."

Can we lose? Yes we can – we cannot rely solely on the English Channel (or maybe even our closest allies) for homeland defence in the modern era. I hope to argue that, at the very least, the UK is vulnerable. Our historical over-reliance on professional expeditionary forces and other deterrents has led to vulnerabilities, so a shift toward resilient and society driven homeland defence is necessary.

We will explore the threat and the paradox of homeland defence further. Specifically, how investing in defence helps prevent the very threats that would otherwise justify the need for such spending. To address this issue, we must first examine historical examples of homeland

defence – successes, failures and instances of over-reliance on allies. Next, we will explore how other nations effectively manage their defence today and why their approaches work. Finally, we will assess how the UK can apply these lessons to build a society that is self-reliant, resourceful and prepared for mobilisation in times of war.

The UK should prepare now by establishing home contingency plans to allow the British people to keep calm and carry on.

It is noted that the top third will jump at the chance to list the numerous failings within British defensive operations overseas that I have seemingly skipped past in my opening. A good challenge, but as they do not relate to the defence of the realm (or feature on regimental colours), they will be discounted from this article.

HOW TO INVADE

If one is going to defend, one must know how to invade. I will briefly summarise this epic topic in an attempt to present two models that have worked recently. Firstly, be bold, obvious and concentrate overwhelming force to bring about a quick political solution. Examples include the invasion of Iraq (both times) and the liberation of the Falkland Islands. Mandates were provided to the enemy with deadlines

before consequences were delivered. The second model is surprise through speed and momentum, which often seeks to destroy the will and cohesion of the opposing military to bring about a surrender. Perhaps the best known example is Israel's brutally effective pre-emptive airstrikes in the appropriately named Six-Day War against Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

Why is this important? The biggest threat to the UK is the latter, through the shadows and dead ground with speed. By the very design, we, as the target, would be unsighted until it is too late. There is something almost British about this approach, drawing on the long line of British deception from Allenby in Palestine to Operation Mincemeat in the Mediterranean Sea. Remember that our enemies do read our history (and watch our movies). The Israelis learnt this the hard way some six years later when they themselves became the victims of the surprise attack that started the Yom Kippur War against the very same foes they first fooled.

What are the warning signs before the invasion of a European country? The correlations between the invasions of Poland (in 1939) and Ukraine (in 2022) are quite stark despite being decades apart. Poland lacked powerful allies capable of immediate intervention and Ukraine was unable to join NATO. Both made political miscalculations that caused

them to underestimate their aggressors. There were clear warning signs, but these were wrapped in misleading propaganda and political rhetoric to mask invading intentions. Poland was the victim of a 'false flag attack' during the Gleiwitz Incident when German operatives staged an assault on a radio station to fabricate an excuse for war. In Ukraine, Russia still claims that Ukraine attacked Russian-controlled areas to justify the 'special operation'. The lessons from both invasions highlight the importance of pre-emptive defences, strategic alliances and political robustness to deter possible invaders.

Hang on, what about the big red button I hear you cry? It is true that the UK nuclear deterrent is a formidable obstacle for even the most deceptive and cunning of invasion plans – rightly so. However, this is currently the only layer of strategic defence aside from alliances.

This may seem unlikely, but consider a scenario where the UK's nuclear deterrent is rendered ineffective. While an extreme possibility, if an adversary were to achieve this, they could swiftly neutralise strategic naval and air capabilities through targeted strikes. The expeditionary force would be unable to deploy, effectively trapped by the very geographical barriers that have historically safeguarded the nation. In such a situation,

the UK would be forced to rely on political negotiations, leaving the Prime Minister with difficult, Churchillian decisions – but with little leverage to negotiate. And how could this happen? That is precisely the dilemma – by the time we realise the threat, it would already be too late. As Seneca so eloquently proffers, "the delusion of superiority blinds the arrogant man more than any darkness".

Do not fear; there is a solution. Quite simply, enhance the resilience of the homeland with a multi-layered defence system. This is easier said than done and unquestionably more expensive than doing nothing. Let us look back and learn how we defended the UK before the era of weapons of mass destruction but more recently than castles, walls and Lord Nelson.

"When the axe came into the woods, the trees whispered, 'The handle is one of us'."
– Turkish proverb.

HOW TO DEFEND

Rule one: do not be too obvious. It would be remiss of me not to take the opportunity for a friendly jab towards the French given the topic at hand. The posturing and messaging surrounding the Maginot Line were extensive, intended to present it as the ultimate deterrent. However, it actually informed the very planning cycle that the Germans used to circumvent the impressive but quickly irrelevant

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"Consider a scenario where the UK's nuclear deterrent is rendered ineffective. While an extreme possibility, if an adversary were to achieve this, they could swiftly neutralise strategic naval and air capabilities through targeted strikes."



obstacle. A costly reminder that if one publicly states the deterrence and advertises the ground that is to be denied, a clever foe will mark, avoid and bypass with ease.

"With the benefit of hindsight, everything seems obvious." – Barney Stinson

As an island nation, the UK tends to forget that even in the modern day, geography remains a significant factor when developing strategic defence plans. Others cannot neglect this factor, and many landlocked nations that lack topographical obstacles and barriers, such as mountain ranges or rivers, seek alternative means of security. Most turn to mutual alliances and treaties to deter hostile acts, thus compensating for terrain that favours the aggressor. However, Poland and Ukraine both learnt that alliances are difficult to achieve, especially if you have little to offer in return. The Franco-Belgium Treaty in 1920 was one example that was successfully established and ensured mutual defence. Well, almost. Belgium declared neutrality in 1936, and both countries became exposed and were subsequently invaded – again, evidence that treaties are not infallible.

Another method would be to find a larger, more powerful sponsor for security, but that requires expensive compromises such as becoming a proxy in a larger statecraft game. The Mutual Defence Treaty between the US and South Korea – agreed after the Korean War to address geographic vulnerabilities – is but one example. Looking bigger, NATO grew from 12 founding members to comprise 32 member countries and has achieved a grand deterrence for invasions through collective defence since 1949. All good for those in the tent, but this can isolate nations left on the outside, such as Ukraine, and aggravate nations that feel threatened, such as Russia. Therefore, there are two points of view: (1) it is working, so no more money is required, or, (2) we have never been closer to World War Three and must invest.

Recent Russian activity, albeit sub-threshold threats, should be cause for concern. Away from Novichok and Ukraine, Russia has threatened the security of energy supplies, developed a shadow fleet of vessels to circumnavigate economic sanctions and was accused of deploying a spy ship to map the UK's critical underwater infrastructure.¹ We live in a world where securing capital flows is as important as securing beaches.

The difficult truth is that democratic systems often make long-term strategic planning for homeland defence challenging. This

"Despite the reputation for doom scrolling and brain rot, in the UK, Gen Z (and soon to be Gen Alpha) are trending to be fitter and more active compared to millennials."



complexity increases when decisions must be coordinated across alliances with multiple member nations, adding further uncertainty and unpredictability. With every new administration comes new ambitions, and maybe even new tariffs, that can make or break alliances.

The UK failed to establish such an alliance when invasion threatened our windswept shores. The US was neutral and had no obligation to come to the aid of the UK during the Battle of Britain. At the time, the US was bound by its policy of isolationism, codified in the Neutrality Acts of the 1930s, which explicitly aimed to prevent the US from being drawn into foreign wars. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, though sympathetic to the Allied cause, faced domestic political resistance and widespread public opposition to direct involvement in the European war. As a result, the UK stood alone in 1940 during its darkest hour. The lesson: invest in independent homeland defence plans.

So what? The value of preparedness before the war cannot be underestimated. A homeland defence plan should be an independent venture to set the foundations with alliances to enhance the plan. We would do well not to forget the lessons from the last time the UK was on its own. Imports were disrupted, and industry relied on organic means to produce material quickly and on mass. British society adapted to be self-sufficient, self-trained and resourceful. The government introduced legislation to mobilise national resources independently, ensuring support for both the military and civilian population while safeguarding critical national infrastructure. How can the Army help now and what can we learn from other armies that are closer to war?

HOW TO BE READY

Israel has an interesting framework to review when considering the 'soft' mobilisation and

preparedness of a society. They, of course, have a much clearer and apparent threat to their people but still have a budget to balance and a country to run. Following the attacks on 7th October 2023, the rate of volunteerism among the Arab Israeli population reached 29 per cent for organisations supporting the Israeli Government. This is a notable rise from the 19 per cent recorded during the pandemic.² This engagement operates on multiple levels, drawing on historical, social and cultural dynamics to rally public support, ensure societal resilience, and provide necessary support systems during times of crisis. So, how does the UK compare?

Are young people in the UK fit enough and willing to mobilise? Recent research conducted by *The Times* and YouGov indicates that only 11 per cent of Gen Z would fight for Britain.³ It is impossible to say for sure, but the following indications may surprise you (warning if you are easily triggered, Boomers). Despite the reputation for doom scrolling and brain rot, in the UK, Gen Z (and soon to be Gen Alpha) are trending to be fitter and more active compared to millennials.⁴ Indeed, 70 per cent of Gen Z individuals own a fitness tracker compared to 51 per cent of millennials.⁵ A whopping 11.8 million people routinely play for

¹ *The Royal Navy monitored the Russian vessel 'Yantar' with 40 more incidents of a copular nature since the outbreak of War in Ukraine.* Emma Yeomans, 23 Jan 25: [thetimes.com](#)

² *Study: Nearly 50% of Israeli citizens volunteered during the first weeks of war.* Gavriel Fiske, 3 Nov 23: [timesofisrael.com](#)

³ *And 41% said there was no circumstances in which they would take up arms for their country.* Oliver Wright, 13 Feb 25: [thetimes.com](#)

⁴ *7 Quick Health & Fitness Trends That Lead Among Gen Z* – Danielle Commisso, 20 Sep 22: [civicscience.com](#)

⁵ *Wearable Fitness Tracker Statistics: Sales, Sizes, and Software* – Brenton Baker, 15 Jan 25: [muscleandbrain.com](#)

⁶ *The Football Association* – [thefa.com](#).

football teams in England⁶ and 66 per cent of women in this age group are involved in sports compared to 49 per cent from the previous generation. I am not suggesting every football player would enlist, but there is cause to be optimistic given traits that are linked to sport: fitness, teamwork and discipline. The missing ingredient is the right cause with a system and capacity to train and mobilise at mass and in haste. Other than national service, it is interesting to review how the Israelis shape their youngsters.

It should not be a surprise that military engagement with society is a critical component for preparing the Israeli society for war. This starts with youth engagement during Civil Defence Education in schools and via public campaigns in partnership with Home Front Command to teach about safety measures, finding shelter, air raid sirens and using gas masks. The UK Armed Forces integrates with this audience through the sponsored community cadets (circa 139,000 cadets and 26,000 adult volunteers). These organisations have recorded the clear benefits for social mobility, education, wellbeing and support to local communities. In addition,

research from Professor Simon Denny at the University of Northampton has shown that expenditure on Cadet Forces results in a minimum of five times return on investment, an excellent use of taxpayers' money. If money is an issue, then the growth of Cadets is a sensible investment.

Israel also offers public training for society, which includes first-aid training, emergency preparedness workshops, and education on how civilians can contribute during wartime. Over a thousand civil initiatives have been active across Israel since the outbreak of the war but were established before the latest conflict. The organisations draw upon the expertise of military and police veterans to provide physical assistance in rescuing civilians. The UK would benefit by adopting similar structures and initiatives. Much of our engagement of this nature is focused on children, but could organisations such as Royal British Legions and other social clubs do more for the rest of society? They will be the ones to join the Dads' Army.

CONCLUSION

The reality is the United Kingdom is protected,

wrapped in an international system that is further enhanced through a series of enduring alliances and treaties. The fail-safe is the significant nuclear deterrent that the UK can bring to bear and reap revenge on the King's enemies at a moment's notice. History proves these defences work, but they are not invincible, no matter how secure we believe them to be.

We must not let our history of success breed complacency and lull the UK into a false sense of security. We cannot be certain of the intentions of our allies or enemies alike. The enemy will move fast, at night, without warning with a plan to bypass or neutralise our publicly declared deterrence. Relying solely on alliances is a risk we cannot afford — our homeland defence must be built on independence. History teaches us the importance of self-sufficiency in industry, resourcefulness and protecting critical national infrastructure.

The British Army should review how to enhance society through civil and military initiatives, many of which have a positive return of investment.

“Research has shown that expenditure on Cadet Forces results in a minimum of five times return on investment, an excellent use of taxpayers' money. If money is an issue, then the growth of Cadets is a sensible investment.”



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CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: ALL HAPPY ON THE HOME FRONT?

AUTHOR

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THIS article examines the relationships between civil authorities and the military across three phases: pre-war, war and post-war, and will analyse what lessons can be learnt from homeland defence actors' perceptions of the military. Civil-military relations are dynamic and context dependent, and effective collaboration requires balancing distinct roles, mutual respect and clear communication.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN HOMELAND DEFENCE

Civil authorities in the UK may call upon the British military for a variety of reasons: from national security, civil unrest and disaster relief, through to search operations, major public events and training and expertise.¹

The Army is the primary provider of homeland military assistance to the Government. Defence's joint integrator in the homeland is the Standing Joint Command (UK), with its network of Joint Military Commanders across

the UK. The headquarters provides support to the aforementioned tasks under Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) and defends critical national infrastructure.²

Legal and constitutional arrangements in the UK mean that Defence and the civil authorities operate under different principles and have distinct command and control structures. Two strategic principles affect the relationship between Defence and the civil power.³ The first is that of lead government department, which places a specific Whitehall-based department in charge of the response to an event in the UK. Secondly, the principle of civil primacy means civil authorities have responsibility for their areas of expertise. His Majesty's Armed

¹lordslibrary.parliament.uk/uk-defence-policy-and-the-role-of-the-armed-forces

²gov.uk/government/groups/headquarters-standing-joint-command-united-kingdom-hq-sjc-uk

³Garton-Grimwood, G, *Dealing with civil contingencies: emergency planning in the UK*, dated 11 Jul 17, researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8016/CBP-8016.pdf

Forces are not a civil body and, therefore, can only operate in a supporting role.⁴

Understandably, there is considerable political tension surrounding the execution of homeland security and resilience operations. The military's role in domestic issues can be a sensitive matter. Due to this potential backlash, civil authorities are generally careful about military involvement in domestic matters and will only utilise the military when they lack the necessary resources or capabilities.⁵⁻⁶ Strict legal restrictions govern MACA, which indubitably reflects the views of Whitehall and wider UK society on the use of the military for domestic purposes.⁷ Ultimately, the military's domestic role is to support civil authorities, ensuring national stability, security and public safety when required.

WHAT CIVIL AUTHORITIES WANT

Professionalism, expertise and dependability: civil authorities want to utilise highly trained, disciplined and capable personnel with specialised skills⁸ during emergencies, crises and national defence matters. They also want a resource that can deploy quickly and efficiently, as the military does.⁹

Supporting role: The British military is more regularly being seen, and relied upon, as a support agency for civil authorities.¹⁰ During emergencies, civil authorities want to rely on the military's resources of logistical, medical and security capabilities.

Oversight: Civil authorities are mindful of the need to maintain civilian primacy over the military to preserve democratic principles and prevent overreach. There is a balance where civil authorities have a degree of management over the military's deployment, i.e.

numbers, locations, equipment, thereby ensuring it serves the public interest without infringing on civil liberties.

HOW THE MILITARY IS PERCEIVED

Civil authorities in the UK perceive the military as a crucial support system with immense capabilities. Often, civil authorities expect the military to have more training or greater capabilities than they do, or be cheaper than commercial alternatives, which is not always the case. These realities can be disappointing to civil authorities, that may see the military as the prime candidate for assisting in a homeland task. However, they also recognise the importance of maintaining civilian oversight and avoiding excessive reliance on the military for routine domestic matters. Naturally, these perceptions are context specific and vary depending on the circumstances.

HOW PERCEPTION CHANGES OVER PHASES

Peacetime: In peacetime, civil authorities view the military as a highly skilled and professional institution, capable of responding at pace and scale, providing its strategic, logistical and technical expertise.

There is often a clear distinction between civilian governance and military operations. Traditionally, there is little use of the military for domestic matters in peacetime, except for ceremonial duties or specialised tasks like bomb disposal and search and rescue. Civil authorities usually prefer to rely on law enforcement and emergency services for domestic matters because they are more appropriately equipped, trained and empowered.

Since the end of the Cold War, the military's focus has been on 'discretionary' expeditionary operations (Iraq, Afghanistan, etc), and not on those of 'national survival'.¹¹

Fifteen years ago, the military stated that the "Armed Forces provide the 'last resort' for emergencies within the UK".¹² Consequently, until recently, the military was perceived as being reluctant to engage in domestic situations and looked to private contractors to take the lead in such emergencies.¹³

Pre-war – war: As periods of competition morph into crisis, the balance in the civil-military relationship shifts and, to meet the UK's obligations under Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty,¹⁴ civil preparedness¹⁵ must complement military efforts to defend NATO territory "to reduce potential vulnerabilities and the risk of attack in peacetime, crisis and conflict".¹⁶

In conflict, civil authorities increasingly view the military as the central institution for national survival and defence. The collaboration

⁴lordslibrary.parliament.uk/uk-defence-policy-and-the-role-of-the-armed-forces

⁵Indeed, this is one of the MACA principles: 'the civil authority lacks the necessary capability to fulfil the task and it is unreasonable or prohibitively expensive to expect it to develop one'.

⁶Joint Doctrine Publication 02, UK Operations: the Defence Contribution to Resilience.

⁷Gearson, J., & A. Berry, P. (2021). *British Troops on British Streets: Defence's Counter-Terrorism Journey from 9/11 to Operation Temperer*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 46(10), 1984–2010. doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1902604

⁸In areas like logistics, engineering, cyber security, intelligence, and combat.

⁹Gearson, J., & A. Berry, P. (2021). *British Troops on British Streets: Defence's Counter-Terrorism Journey from 9/11 to Operation Temperer*. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 46(10), 1984–2010. doi.org/10.1080/1057610X.2021.1902604

¹⁰Rod, T., & Miron, M. (2022). *Learning the lessons of COVID-19: homeland resilience in the United Kingdom - is it now time for both a dedicated civil defense organization and a paramilitary force?* *Defence Studies*, 23(1), 105–125. doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2110481

¹¹Davis, Air Marshal Leo. 2017. "Our Mindsets are Geared to 'Discretionary Wars' and Not Wars of 'National Survival.'" in *Op Art in the 5th Generation War*. *Pathfinder* 6 (April): 286.

¹²publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmdfence/121/12104.htm

¹³UK Parliament, 2009. "The Defence Contribution." *Publications and Records*, UK Parliament, May 18.

¹⁴Article 3 states: 'In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.' nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm

¹⁵Civil preparedness has three core functions: continuity of government, continuity of essential services to the population and civil support to military operations.

¹⁶nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm



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between civil authorities and the military becomes even more integrated. Civilian and military leaders work closely to make strategic decisions, and the military may take on more direct control of certain aspects of governance.¹⁷ Whilst the military's expertise in strategy, combat operations and logistics is vital, the deployed armed forces will depend heavily on the civilian and commercial sectors for transport, communications and energy to fulfil their missions.¹⁸

The lines between the roles of civilian authorities and the military may blur during wartime; clear delineations are essential to ensure the military does not become engaged in political affairs and to maintain public confidence in the civil authorities.¹⁹

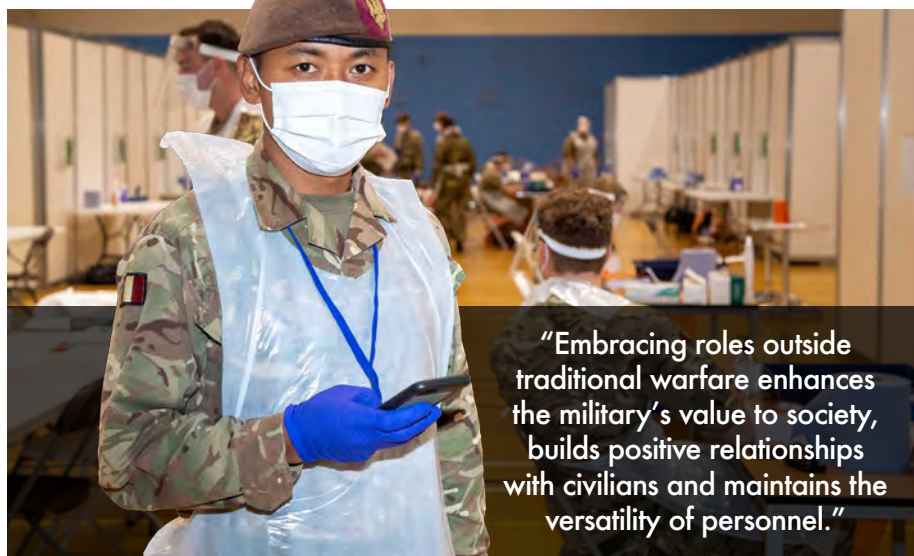
Post-war: Following a major conflict, the public's perception of the military often shifts. While many hold the military in high regard for its contributions to national security, there is typically a desire to shift focus away from militarisation and towards peace-building and diplomacy.²⁰ Civil authorities are tasked with managing the demobilisation process, which involves returning military personnel to civilian roles and gradually reducing the military's size and scope. However, during the period of demobilisation and transitioning back to a peacetime economy, civil authorities may continue to rely on the military for technical expertise, economic stabilisation and even political advice.

LESSONS TO BE LEARNT

Communication. As with everything in life, one of the most significant aspects of the relationship is the importance of clear and effective communication between the military and civil authorities. A perennial lesson is that reliance on our own vernaculars, and an assumption that everyone speaks ours, leads to misunderstandings and unclear communication, causing operational inefficiencies or loss of public trust. Further, a lack of early communication about the objectives and aims causes misalignments in goals. This leads to uncoordinated military actions, resulting in both operational failures and significant loss of civilian trust in the government.²¹

Early integration, plus the establishment of joint crisis management frameworks,²² lead to cohesive, timely responses to crises.

Utilising the vast network maintained and nourished by the Joint Military Commanders fosters a deep understanding of the roles and priorities of civil authorities. These strong relationships with key civilian agencies and other governmental bodies are essential to



"Embracing roles outside traditional warfare enhances the military's value to society, builds positive relationships with civilians and maintains the versatility of personnel."

ensure coordinated efforts during operations, both in peace and conflict situations.

Plan for the end! At the outset, agree the conditions for the end of operations. If further support is to be provided beyond the end of the operation, outline the parameters of this clearly, taking into account budgetary, personnel, equipment and resourcing constraints, and stick to these as rigidly as possible.

Think about the inquiry, and reintegration of personnel, and work backwards. This is all-encompassing and includes a commitment to ethical standards, accountability, cultural sensitivities, mental health of personnel and public perception, all of which can affect the success of operations and can impact public trust. It is incumbent upon all Service personnel to maintain awareness of ethical standards, to ensure operations reflect the values and needs of the population, and ensure they are conducted within the law. Appreciating that the military's actions are subject to oversight is vital, as this makes it more likely personnel will both act within the law and accurately document actions taken.

Change in mindset. The military has not been purely a combat force for over a century and plays an increasingly versatile role in domestic affairs.²³ Embracing roles outside traditional warfare²⁴ enhances the military's value to society,²⁵ builds positive relationships with civilians and maintains the versatility of personnel. Overall, this collaboration helps build a cohesive national security strategy.²⁶

Sense of realism. Whilst there is merit in changing one's mindset and 'getting on board' with conducting MACA tasks (certainly for those at mid-level command and below), those at the strategic and political levels need to remember the Armed

Forces are a finite resource. As such, those at the higher levels should decide what they want the Forces' *raison d'être* to be. Thus, instead of eroding our capacity to deliver on operations, and to avoid overloading the workforce – thereby decreasing retention – we would excel within our given province. This would be achieved through funding us accordingly and by providing clear direction when changing between phases, so resources could be reallocated, thereby meeting the expectations of the Forces, the civil authorities and society.

¹⁷Kettler, D., *Prepare for the Spectrum of Competition and Warfighting*, Center for International Maritime Security, dated 2 Nov 23.

¹⁸*Understanding Civil-Military Relations: Key Concepts and Dynamics - Military Saga*, dated 19 Sep 24.

¹⁹*As happened in the Vietnam War, where military leaders perceived the conflict through a lens of military strategy, while civilian policymakers focused on broader geopolitical objectives.*

²⁰*After the Falklands War, the military's actions were celebrated as a success, but the UK government sought to avoid future conflicts. The public and civil authorities expressed both admiration for the military's effectiveness and relief that the conflict had ended. While the military remained highly respected, the UK government shifted its focus to diplomacy and conflict prevention in the postwar era.*

²¹*Understanding Civil-Military Relations: Key Concepts and Dynamics - Military Saga.*

²²*Principles for joint working - JESIP Website.*

²³*Siege of Sidney Street*, historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/The-Siege-of-Sidney-Street

²⁴*Including non-traditional threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, and environmental challenges.*

²⁵Griffith, R. L., Dostal, C., Moon, N. A., & Fedele, D. (2023). *The COVID-19 pandemic and the military: Lessons learned for readiness and resilience*. *Military Psychology*, 35(5), 377–382. doi.org/10.1080/08995605.2023.2237392

²⁶Lee, C. and Margulies, M. (2023) *Rethinking Civil-Military Relations for Modern Strategy - Modern War Institute.*

RUSSIAN RESERVES: A CASE STUDY IN GETTING BIG QUICKLY

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¹Garrett, P. (2023) *Manoeuvre Warfare Is Not Dead, But It Must Evolve*, Proceedings - November 2023 Vol. 149/11/1, 449. usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2023/november/maneuver-warfare-not-dead-it-must-evolve

²Stratfor. (2017, June 15). *The age of modern warfare*. forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2017/06/15/the-age-of-modern-warfare

³Maneuver Warfare: Can Modern Military Strategy Lead You to Victory? (2002, April 1). *Harvard Business Review*. hbr.org/2002/04/maneuver-warfare-can-modern-military-strategy-lead-you-to-victory

⁴Simpson, J. (2014, March 19). *Russia's Crimea plan detailed, secret and successful*. *BBC News*. bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-26644082

⁵The Economist. (2025, March 6). *How do Ukrainian soldier fatalities compare with Russia's?* economist.com/graphic-detail/2025/03/06/how-do-ukrainian-soldier-fatalities-compare-with-russias

⁶The Economist. (2024, February 8). *Killer drones pioneered in Ukraine are the weapons of the future*. economist.com/leaders/2024/02/08/killer-drones-pioneered-in-ukraine-are-the-weapons-of-the-future

⁷Jensen, R. W., & Tingle, A. L. (2024). *Ukraine: The case for urgency*. *Parameters*, 54(1), 5-15. Retrieved from proquest.com/scholarly-journals/ukraine-case-urgency/docview/2967581310/se-2

⁸Kaplan, L. (2022, June 27). *The Other Big Lessons That the U.S. Army Should Learn from Ukraine - War on the Rocks*. warontherocks.com/2022/06/the-other-big-lessons-that-the-u-s-army-should-learn-from-ukraine

⁹Without a strong volunteer reserve, the UK military cannot hope to compete. (n.d.). *Royal United Services Institute*. rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/without-strong-volunteer-reserve-uk-military-cannot-hope-compete

ARMIES began to turn away from mass towards the end of the First World War, where developments in technology offered the potential to replace mass with manoeuvre.¹ This trend accelerated with the development of modern precision weapons in the 1960s, and even Russia, the last holdout of the mass army, moved toward smaller and more intelligent forces in the 2000s.² The modern era has seen precision technology and manoeuvre deliver a series of decisive victories, such as Operation Desert Storm in 1991.³ Examples like this have led many to believe that mass was no longer necessary to achieve victory in war.⁴ Yet, the binary choice between mass and precision appears to be collapsing. It is estimated that 150,000-172,000 Russian and 70,000-120,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine since 2021,⁵ many by new, low-cost, precision weapons.⁶

This trend is not limited to the Ukraine theatre, an increasing number of actors demonstrate the capability to field inexpensive uncrewed systems, missiles and commercial technology at a scale which makes victory through manoeuvre harder to achieve. The lethality, range and accuracy of fires have dramatically increased, and drone-enabled intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance

makes movement on the battlefield perilous.⁷ The expected widespread adoption of artificial intelligence to track and target promises to accelerate this trend.⁸ Western armies that have relied on precision capabilities to make up for ever shrinking headcounts are now faced with the question of how to get big quickly, without degrading their technological advantage.⁹

Reservists will play a major part in solving this problem. While it is difficult to draw easy comparisons between the Russian and Western armed forces, the recent Russian experience of mobilising and integrating large numbers of reservists provides us with a useful case study to help us understand the challenges that entails. This article will focus on the Russian experience of mobilising, training and equipping reservists, and will not seek to address wider issues of national mobilisation.

RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 at peacetime strength levels, with most of the force consisting of regular soldiers. Applying classic manoeuvre doctrine, Russia aimed to



¹⁰Stein, A. (2023, August 12). *The battle of Hostomel Airport: a key moment in Russia's defeat in Kyiv - War on the Rocks*. warontherocks.com/2023/08/the-battle-of-hostomel-airport-a-key-moment-in-russias-defeat-in-kyiv

¹¹Kaplan, L. (2022, June 2). *Not built for purpose: the Russian military's Ill-Fated Force design*. War on the Rocks. warontherocks.com/2022/06/not-built-for-purpose-the-russian-militarys-ill-fated-force-design

¹²Kofman, M. (2023) *Assessing Russian Military Adaptation in 2023*, Carnegie Endowment Foundation, carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/assessing-russian-military-adaptation-in-2023?lang=en

¹³Jazeera, A. (2022, September 30). *Putin says Russia's mobilisation mistakes must be 'corrected.'* Al Jazeera. aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/29/putin-says-russias-mobilisation-mistakes-must-be-corrected

¹⁴Monaghan, Andrew Dr. "MOBILIZATSIYA!" *British Army Review*, Spring (2023).

¹⁵Cancian, M. F. (2024, October 11). *What does Russia's 'Partial mobilization' mean?* CSIS. csis.org/analysis/what-does-russias-partial-mobilization-mean

¹⁶Spiret, T. (2023, September 21). *Russia is barely training its troops, probably rendering them incapable of going on the offensive, UK intel says*. Business Insider. businessinsider.com/russia-not-training-troops-likely-incapable-of-offense-uk-intel-2023-9

¹⁷Monaghan, Andrew Dr. "MOBILIZATSIYA!" *British Army Review*, Spring (2023).

¹⁸Massicot, D. (2023, Mar). *What Russia got wrong: Can Moscow learn from its failures in Ukraine?* Foreign Affairs, 102, 78-93. proquest.com/magazines/what-russia-got-wrong-can-moscow-learn-failures/docview/2778388910/se-2

¹⁹*Preliminary Lessons from Ukraine's Offensive Operations, 2022-23*. (n.d.). Royal United Services Institute. rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/special-resources/preliminary-lessons-ukraines-offensive-operations-2022-23

²⁰Spiret, T. (2023, September 21). *Russia is barely training its troops, probably rendering them incapable of going on the offensive, UK intel says*. Business Insider. businessinsider.com/russia-not-training-troops-likely-incapable-of-offense-uk-intel-2023-9

²¹Pike, J. (n.d.). *ResErves - BARS Special Combat Army Reserve*. globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/reserves-bars.htm

²²Institute for the Study of War. *understandingwar.org/background/explainer-russian-conscription-reserve-and-mobilization*

²³Seddon, M., & Ivanova, P. (2022, September 21). *Why Vladimir Putin is raising the stakes in Ukraine war*. Financial Times. ft.com/content/015b5115-e602-4f4d-b1cd-864a95fd37ff

²⁴Schwartz, P., Gorenburg, D., & Olga Thomas. (2024). *Russian military mobilization during the Ukraine War*. cna.org/reports/2024/10/Russian-Military-Mobilization-During-the-Ukraine-War.pdf

²⁵Schwartz, P., Gorenburg, D., & Olga Thomas. (2024). *Russian military mobilization during the Ukraine War*. cna.org/reports/2024/10/Russian-Military-Mobilization-During-the-Ukraine-War.pdf

²⁶Radin, A., Davis, L. E., Geist, E., Han, E., Massicot, D., Povolock, M., Reach, C., Boston, S., Charaf, S., Mackenzie, W., Migacheva, K., Johnston, T., & Long, A. (2019, June 18). *The future of the Russian military: Russia's ground combat capabilities and implications for U.S.-Russia competition*. RAND. rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3099.html

take control of Kyiv within days, believing that a lightning assault on the capital would force the capitulation of the Ukrainian government. However, this high-risk strategy was poorly executed, and within two months Russia had given up their goal of winning the war quickly, having lost considerable numbers of their best soldiers in the process.¹⁰ By mid-2022, the Russian army was severely depleted, especially the infantry,¹¹ and was forced to turn to reserve mobilisation to sustain the campaign.¹²

In September 2022, the Russian government declared a partial mobilisation, pulling 300,000 reserves into service. Russia had no intention of doing this at the beginning of the war and had not prepared accordingly. The mobilisation was chaotic.¹³ Able volunteers were turned away, exempt people drafted, technical specialists sent to the infantry, poor equipment issued, and inadequate pre-deployment training provided.¹⁴⁻¹⁵ Given the heavy losses of professional soldiers and the nature of the mobilisation to replace them, it was unsurprising that Russia was unable to mount complex offensive operations throughout 2023.¹⁶ However, the reserve mobilisation appears effective in terms of generating the mass Russia needed to stabilise the front and defeat the Ukraine counter-offensive in 2023.¹⁷⁻¹⁹ So, what can we learn from the Russian experience?

As part of the Russian army modernisation efforts from the late 2000s, Russia attempted to develop volunteer reserve forces.²⁰ After several false starts, a more professional system started to take shape in 2021 under the National Army Combat Reserve (BARS). BARS soldiers were expected to form reserve units, complete one two-to-three-day training event per month and one two-week exercise per year,²¹ while maintaining their civilian jobs.²² Russia hoped to recruit between 80,000-100,000 BARS personnel in 2021, which would have represented a significant increase from a total strength of 5,000 in 2019.²³ However, recruitment fell short, and only 30,000 personnel were recruited that year.²⁴

During the initial phase of the war, 10,000 BARS soldiers were mobilised. By 2023, at least 20 BARS units were operating in Ukraine, forming a patchwork of regular and irregular forces.²⁵ While this represented a modest contribution compared to Russia's one-million active-duty personnel,²⁶ BARS provided a useful system to mobilise already trained and motivated personnel quickly. In 2022, the Ukrainian Army captured a memory card which contained four hours of

combat footage filmed by a BARS infantry soldier. The footage is insightful. While the video shows the soldiers were inadequately equipped and badly organised, the video provides a clear demonstration of the BARS soldiers' will to fight. The reservists in the video knew they were facing a superior enemy force, and did not have artillery or armoured support, but continued to hold their position and fight regardless.²⁷

However, in terms of mass generation, BARS might be considered too little, too late to have made a significant difference between 2022-2024.²⁸ Instead, when mobilisation was called, Russia relied on their more established regular reserve system, i.e. lists of former personnel who could be called back into service, most of whom had not received any training since leaving the regular forces. Mobilising huge numbers of regular reserves proved challenging in late 2022. Firstly, Russia's mobilisation system relied on individual combat units to complete mobilisation training. By then many of these units had deployed or lost their training cadres.²⁹ Consequently, reservists suffered high casualty rates in 2023,³⁰ and when used offensively, were often thrown into combat like Second World War conscripts.³¹ Secondly, Russia experienced the kind of logistic issues one might expect when an army suddenly needs a lot of resources and has nowhere to procure them from. This resulted in reservists buying, borrowing or going without personal equipment, and being issued with outdated vehicles and weapons, such as T-62 tanks and BMP-1 infantry fighting vehicles.³²

The outcome could have been different if Russia had mobilised their regular reserves earlier, which they first considered doing as early as March 2022.³³ This would have allowed Russia to train their reservists at unit level, as per their established mobilisation plans. Russia could have even mobilised its regular reserves before the invasion and at least brought their combat units up to full strength. As it happened, the Russian infantry units invading Ukraine were so under-strength that many were only able to operate their vehicles and not provide dismounts,³⁴ leaving Russian armoured forces vulnerable to short-range anti-tank weapons.³⁵

There are signs that Russia is taking steps to learn from its experiences and improve the reservist system. Before the invasion, BARS units were predominantly light infantry,³⁶ but soon began to receive new equipment, such as cross-country vehicles, drones, anti-drone electronic warfare systems and heavier



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weapons.³⁷ By 2023, BARS units were employing FPV [first-person view] drones in Ukraine,³⁸ and by 2024 had begun to receive professional training from defence contractors on more advanced drones.³⁹ By 2025, the training of volunteer reservists has greatly increased in scale and scope,⁴⁰ and BARS were actively seeking volunteers with a wider set of skills, such as programmers and IT specialists.⁴¹

Russia has also taken steps to improve the regular reserve system. Russia established professional mobilisation training regiments along the Ukraine border in the summer of 2023,⁴² introduced the digitisation of reserve personnel records in 2024, and geared up defence production to equip further waves of mobilisation.⁴³ It is likely that any future Russia reserve mobilisation will be better organised and more effective in terms of generating offensive mass.

CONCLUSION

The binary choice between mass and precision appears to be collapsing, and Western armies

that have relied on precision capabilities to make up for shrinking headcounts are now faced with the question of how to get big quickly, without degrading their technological advantage. Reservists will play a major part in solving this problem, and the recent experience of Russia provides us with useful insights into what this might entail.

From the Russian experience, we can see that mobilising large numbers of former regular personnel can be chaotic, but an effective means of generating mass quickly. This could have worked out better for Russia if they had planned in reserve contributions pre-conflict. Likewise, Russia had begun serious attempts to create a volunteer reserve a year before the invasion. These personnel were more capable, but their contribution was limited due to their small number. Russia is learning from this experience and has made improvements to the systems and training of the regular reserve and is expanding their voluntary reserve significantly in terms of head-count, equipment, and scale and scope of training.

²⁷Thomas, N., Tsvetkova, M., & Zverev, A. (2024, February 24). How Russia’s military uses volunteer fighters to plug gaps in Ukraine. Reuters. reuters.com/world/europe/how-russias-military-uses-volunteer-fighters-plug-gaps-ukraine-2024-02-24

²⁸Thomas, N., Tsvetkova, M., & Zverev, A. (2024, February 25). How Russia’s military uses volunteer fighters to plug gaps in Ukraine. The Japan Times. japantimes.co.jp/news/2024/02/25/world/politics/russia-volunteer-fighters

²⁹Spirlet, T. (2023, September 21). Business Insider.

³⁰Monaghan, A. “MOBILIZATSIIA!” British Army Review, Spring (2023).

³¹Aron, L. (2023, January 25). Putin is embracing Stalin’s way of war. Washington Post. [washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/26/putin-stalin-war-ukraine-soldiers](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/01/26/putin-stalin-war-ukraine-soldiers)

³²Gendelman, D. (2022, October 13). Enough cannon fodder, not enough cannons: Russia struggling to equip its mobilized troops. The Insider. theinsider.ru/en/opinion/david-gendelman/255985

³³Time is the Hidden Flank in Assessing Russia’s Mobilisation. (n.d.). Royal United Services Institute. rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/time-hidden-flank-assessing-russias-mobilisation

³⁴Kaplan, L. (2022a, June 2). Not built for purpose: the Russian military’s Ill-Fated Force design - War on the Rocks. warontherocks.com/2022/06/not-built-for-purpose-the-russian-militarys-ill-fated-force-design

³⁵Why have Ukrainian ATGMs destroyed so many Russian tanks? (n.d.). Imperial War Museums. [iwm.org.uk/history/why-have-ukrainian-atgms-destroyed-so-many-russian-tanks](https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/why-have-ukrainian-atgms-destroyed-so-many-russian-tanks)

³⁶nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/russias-new-soldiers-headed-kursk-dont-have-artillery-support-212548

³⁷Iz.RU. (2024, December 25). More than 200 units of weapons and equipment were handed over to volunteer BARS detachments. en.iz.ru/en/1813389/2024-12-25/more-200-units-weapons-and-equipment-were-handed-over-volunteer-bars-detachments

³⁸Felden, E., Pineda, J., Werkhäuser, N., & Burdya, I. (2025, February 27). Russia: Targeting civilians in Ukraine with drones. [dv.com/en/russias-drone-attacks-target-civilians-in-ukraine/a-70043788](https://www.dv.com/en/russias-drone-attacks-target-civilians-in-ukraine/a-70043788)

³⁹Tass. (2024, November 14). Kalashnikov concern trains first group of operators for Bars-Sarmat UAV unit. tass.com/defense/1872499

⁴⁰Strelnikov, A. (2025, January 31). Could Russia’s military exercises mean a new mobilization? [dv.com/en/could-russias-military-exercises-mean-a-new-mobilization/a-71460443](https://www.dv.com/en/could-russias-military-exercises-mean-a-new-mobilization/a-71460443)

⁴¹Отряд Б.А.Р.С. “Сармат” ВДВ России. (2025, March 3). Отряд Б.А.Р.С. “Сармат” ВДВ России. Отряд Б.А.Р.С. “Сармат” ВДВ России - Отряд Б.А.Р.С. “Сармат” ВДВ России Первый В России Добровольческий Отряд Роботизированных Электронных Комплексов И Систем Боевого Армейского Резерва Страны. bars-sarmat.ru

⁴²Russian military objectives and capacity in Ukraine through 2024. (n.d.). Royal United Services Institute. rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/russian-military-objectives-and-capacity-ukraine-through-2024

⁴³Insider. (2024, January 29). Mobilize this: How Russia and Ukraine are addressing personnel shortages at the front. theinsider.ru/en/politics/268703



KNIVES TO A GUNFIGHT: LESSONS FROM THE WAR IN UKRAINE



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MICK Ryan's fictitious foretelling of a war for Taiwan warns that being slow to implement the lessons of contemporary conflict risks taking knives to a gunfight in the next war.¹ The Armenians learnt this to their cost when they were defeated by a modernised Azerbaijani army in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War in 2020. The third anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine [a milestone marked as this issue of *The British Army Review* was being produced] is an opportunity to take stock and ensure that we are learning the right lessons from a contemporary war in which a million people have now been killed or seriously injured. This article sets out five statements which are deliberately land-centric, focused at the tactical level, and designed to help the British Army meet the Chief of the General Staff's intent to double fighting power by 2027 and triple it by the end of the decade.² Ukraine offers a salutary reminder that the most important lessons are often the most uncomfortable and two distinct themes pervade the paragraphs that follow. First, the proliferation of sensors and precision weapons is shifting the emphasis from mass and manoeuvre towards surveillance and strike (or find and fires³) on the contemporary battlefield. Second, and perhaps self-evidently, survivability is fundamental to lethality because it's hard to kill if you're already dead.

1. MANOEUVRE IS RARELY DECISIVE

The war in Ukraine began with manoeuvre as the Russian Army sought to seize vast tracts of territory and decapitate the Government in Kyiv with a campaign of destructive firepower and disruptive manoeuvre. Thanks to a combination of Russian ineptitude and Ukrainian bravery, President Putin lost the war he set out to fight. In late 2022 Russian forces began digging trenches and both sides became locked in a positional war of ruthless and relentless attrition.

Despite significant materiel support, 12 Ukrainian brigades were unable to break through the Russian lines in Zaporizhzhia in the summer of 2023 and Russian will and cohesion remained largely intact. It is too easy to point to an absence of air support or the limits of Ukraine's combat engineering and declare that the 2023 counter-offensive represents a failure in combined arms execution rather than a flawed approach. Even if the Ukrainians had breached the Russian defences, it is highly unlikely that it would have accelerated the end of the war. We should not be surprised that Ukrainian manoeuvre

¹Mick Ryan, *White Sun War* (Casemate Fiction, 2023).

²The Chief of the General Staff, 'Pulling the Future into the Present', *RUSI Land Warfare Conference*, 23 July 2024.

³*The Land Operating Concept, A New Way of Winning*, British Army, June 2023.

failed to deliver a knock-out punch, history is replete with similar examples. The real lesson of the counter-offensive, and perhaps of the whole conflict, is not new: wars between major powers are fundamentally attritional and manoeuvre rarely decisive.

Our Western military culture is understandably focused on manoeuvre. At Staff College we study Montgomery's success at El Alamein and MacArthur's landings at Inchon, rather than the situations in which they couldn't manoeuvre. Similarly, little attention is paid to Haig or Foch's command of the allied armies on the Western Front. Since the end of the Cold War, Western strategic culture has cultivated small but well trained, educated and equipped land forces designed to win quickly through decisive manoeuvre. This approach is entirely explicable in liberal democracies benefiting from the 1991 peace dividend, but it risks what some have referred to as a cult of manoeuvre⁴ and Cathal Nolan calls a short war illusion.⁵ In *The Allure of Battle* Nolan argues compellingly that moral and materiel attrition have been the main determinants in the outcome of wars throughout history, not genius generals, sweeping manoeuvre or decisive battles.

The war in Ukraine offers a stark and uncomfortable reminder that all war is attritional, and manoeuvre is a method by which to accelerate attrition rather than decide the outcome of conflict. Wars between

major powers generally 'go long' and are decided by economies not armies, and in factories and forges rather than on the battlefield. Unchecked, a cult of manoeuvre risks preventing us from identifying the kind of wars on which we are likely to embark. Worse still, an exclusive focus on manoeuvre could encourage us to try and turn future fights into something alien to their nature. Ukraine indicates that the application of manoeuvre is dictated by the conditions and context of each conflict. Our aspiration to rely on manoeuvre to win short wars could therefore be a dangerous fallacy. While we might try and shatter Russian will and cohesion through manoeuvre and being manoeuvrist, the Russians have a remarkable capacity to absorb and administer attrition. Should we find ourselves at war with Russia, the Western way of multi-domain war may well succeed, but possibly not as fast as we would like. A small army like ours will still need sizeable stockpiles and deep pockets. Manoeuvre wins battles, but rarely wars; Ukraine should encourage us to think carefully about how to preserve our force in battle and be ready to replace people and equipment when subject to inevitable attrition.

2. PARTNERING IS HARD (AND WE'RE NOT VERY GOOD AT IT)

Clausewitz describes the ability to identify the kind of war on which we embark as the "first, the supreme, the most far-reaching

act of judgement that the statesman and commander have to make".⁶ Having failed to subjugate Ukraine in the opening months of the war, the Russians quickly recognised the attritional character of the war in which they were embroiled. In October 2022 President Putin appointed General Sergey Surovikin to command Russian forces in Ukraine and Surovikin oversaw the construction of more than a thousand kilometres of fortifications from Kharkiv to Kherson. The Surovikin line was the most extensive set of fortifications created in Europe since the end of the Second World War.

Meanwhile, Ukraine, supported by its international partners, continued to prepare for the 2023 counter-offensive. Ammunition and armoured vehicles arrived from across Europe and Western instructors taught Ukraine's citizen army to concentrate force, combine arms and harness the power of mission command. The plan was to break through the Russian defences then breakout and exploit all the way to the Black Sea coast, almost 100 miles behind the Russian front. It didn't work.

⁴Ren Hongpeng, 'The Misuse of Sun Tzu and the Cult of Manoeuvre', *Military Strategy Magazine*, Volume 9, Issue 4, Summer 2024.

⁵Cathal J. Nolan, *The Allure of Battle* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁶Clausewitz, *On War*, translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton University Press, 1984).

"The war in Ukraine offers a stark and uncomfortable reminder that all war is attritional, and manoeuvre is a method by which to accelerate attrition rather than decide the outcome of conflict."



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A more cautious and attritional approach may not have been politically viable in mid-2023, but neither was manoeuvre.

Whether it was time, tactics or tools that led to the failure of the counter-offensive is moot, but two lessons stand out. First, we failed to recognise that the construction of the Surovkin line shifted the character of the fight from manoeuvre to attrition and the 2023 counter-offensive was too little and too late to get Ukrainian forces moving again. Second, and much more fundamentally, Western encouragement of a combined arms approach might have been misplaced. The acme of partnering is understanding and enabling a partners' way of war; combined arms manoeuvre works for us but may not be a panacea for our partners. In a stinging critique of our approach to supporting Ukraine, Robert Rose argues that we wrongly encouraged Ukraine to conduct a high-risk form of warfare in the hope of a spectacular victory.⁷ Ukraine's citizen army faced a continuous defence in depth and were expected to fight with limited ammunition and an ugly mélange of different vehicle and equipment types. Furthermore, they had less than 30 per cent of the obstacle breaching capability they needed.⁸ In this context, Rose argues that manoeuvre was an unaffordable luxury that risked reducing Ukraine's capacity for combined arms attrition – a term that neatly characterises the Ukrainian way of war. A multi-domain, combined arms

⁷Robert Rose, 'Biting off what it can chew: Ukraine understands its attritional context'. *War on the Rocks*, 26 September 2023.

⁸Ukrainian General Staff.

⁹The Chief of the General Staff, 'Pulling the Future into the Present', *RUSI Land Warfare Conference*, 23 July 2024.

¹⁰Ukrainian General Staff.

¹¹Anthony King, *Command* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

manoeuvre approach might have worked for Western forces, but it wasn't an option for Ukraine which lacked the necessary doctrine, equipment and expertise, as well as a viable air force.

Even a cursory review of our efforts to partner Iraqi and Afghan forces in the last two decades and to provide remote support to the Ukrainian Armed Forces raises uncomfortable questions. We tend to mould partners in our image and often fail to grasp their way of war. The UK began partnering the Ukrainians in 2015 (Operation Orbital) and, although having to provide support from outside Ukraine after Russia's 'full-scale' invasion, we still didn't fully understand the Ukrainian way of war in 2023. The French writer and poet Antoine de Saint-Exupéry wrote that love does not consist of two people gazing at each other, but two people looking outwardly in the same direction together. The same was true of partnering the Ukrainians in 2023. Instead of gazing inwardly at combined arms manoeuvre tactics we could have been looking outwardly together recognising the character, context and conditions of the fight facing the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Understanding the full context – military, societal and economic – is key to being a good partner, and we have a habit of getting it wrong.

The British Army's development of Land Special Operations Forces is an opportunity to professionalise partnering with a persistently engaged advance force. As the early years of the Cold War demonstrated in both Korea and Vietnam, the sharp end of Great Power competition has historically seen combat between proxies and partners rather than the Great Powers themselves. Truly understanding, enabling and enhancing a partner's way of war offers an invaluable opportunity to gain advantage on a future battlefield and will help meet the

Chief of the General Staff's aspiration to set the joint force up for the unfair fight.⁹ When you're too small to go it alone, successful partnering must be a cornerstone of our way of war. Ukraine offers some sobering lessons on judging context and conditions and being the best partner we can be.

3. DRONES ARE NOW THE MAIN KILLER ON THE BATTLEFIELD (IN UKRAINE AT LEAST)

Ukrainian drones were responsible for approximately 15 per cent of the Russian armoured vehicles immobilised or destroyed in the first quarter of 2023. In the first quarter of 2024 this had risen to 55 per cent and drones had become the main killer on the battlefield.¹⁰ This may not have been the case if Ukraine had more artillery ammunition or the Russians better counter-drone technology. Nonetheless, Ukraine indicates that if the British Army is to increase lethality at pace, uncrewed ground and air systems must become a much more central part of how we fight on and from the land and how we survive on the battlefield.

The Ukrainian General Staff estimates that there are up to 10,000 drones in the sky above Ukraine every day. Of these, up to 1,500 are Russian medium and long-range surveillance drones. In mid-2023, Ukrainian forces reported between 900 and 1,100 first-person view (FPV) drone strikes against front-line soldiers and equipment every day. Considering that Ukraine is conducting a similar number of FPV strikes on Russian forces and only one in five FPVs reach their target, it is easy to see how 10,000 could be an accurate estimate of daily drone density in Ukraine.

The introduction of such a significant capability at such scale raises force structure and force employment questions of all land forces. The modern division was born in the trenches of the First World War to



unify manoeuvre and indirect fire units under a single commander;¹¹ the war in Ukraine has reinforced the value of the divisional level of command, but neither concentrating uncrewed systems at the divisional level, nor sprinkling them at every echelon is likely to suffice. The Ukrainian experience shows that adding significant numbers of uncrewed systems to existing tactical formations reduces efficiency and detracts from other tactical functions. Similarly, Justin Bronk and Jack Watling report that the efficiency of uncrewed aerial vehicle operations can increase from 10 to up to 70 per cent when conducted by a dedicated drone formation.¹² The benefits of concentrating drones in the hands of experts led directly to the ongoing establishment of Ukraine's 12,000-strong Unmanned Systems Force.

It is too soon to consider such significant structural changes to the British Army, but more drones will accelerate the Army's journey to enhanced lethality. The British Army's Land Operating Concept¹³ and its application in Army Futures' Velocity concept¹⁴ offer a clear and compelling vision of how the British Army could prevail against Russia. Achieving this ambition will require a substantial investment in uncrewed systems to generate a recce-strike capability at every echelon. Bronk and Watling recommend a mix of systems to achieve a tactical recce-strike capability and thereby dominate the find and fires battle.

First, a close intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance system light enough to be carried by dismounted personnel and cheap enough to be treated like a disposable munition. The Ukrainian armed forces use a mixture of largely rotary systems with approximately 40 minutes endurance and a 10 kilometre range. This system would provide an infantry company or armoured squadron with the situational awareness required to kill and survive on the contemporary battlefield.

Second, the basic FPV. An infantry weapon capable of being launched from cover and finding and killing an enemy in cover over 10 kilometres away. The basic FPV is already the twenty-first century hand grenade and putting FPVs in the hands of our soldiers will begin a cultural and tactical journey towards fighting differently in the uncrewed-systems age. FPVs should be held in small numbers by individual rifle sections, much like today's portable anti-tank weapons, and in larger numbers by dedicated FPV teams, possibly as part of a battlegroup's support company.

Third, a longer-range surveillance capability capable of loitering up to 70 kilometres beyond a frontline. Such systems are likely to



be the backbone of the brigade and divisional recce-strike complex and will need to be able to operate in a GPS-denied environment with gyro-stabilised electro-optical and infrared cameras. Bronk and Watling warn against the tendency to combine surveillance and strike capabilities in a single platform. They argue correctly that a relatively cheap platform (circa £200,000 per air frame) would compare favourably with the kind of air defence munitions likely to try and shoot these drones down and enable sufficient volume of stock to have a meaningful capability in the British Army.

Fourth, a loitering munition able to strike out to circa 35 kilometres. In late 2023 the Ukrainian General Staff attributed 42 per cent of successful Russian strikes against Ukrainian armour to the Lancet-3M. Realising their utility on the battlefield, Russian production of the Lancet-3M rose to more than 1,000 per month by early 2024.¹⁵ A similar munition in the UK arsenal would enable a meaningful recce-strike complex at the company and battlegroup level and supplement artillery support from the brigade and division. Loitering munitions are large enough to be hardened against jamming and they can be concentrated in time and space for devastating physical and psychological effects. Loitering munitions offer the added benefit of supplementing close air support in the absence of sufficient aircraft. They can also enable the suppression and defeat of enemy air defence (SEAD and DEAD) from the land in an era of proliferating air defence and electronic warfare systems. Today's air defence systems are not only more numerous but also more mobile and more lethal: the air component is therefore likely to need help from land forces in any future peer-on-peer fight.

4. NO PROTECTION, NO MANOEUVRE: YOU CAN'T MOVE (OR KILL) IF YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD

In both the 1991 and 2003 invasions of Iraq,

depth provided protection due to the limited range and capacity of enemy weapons. According to General Rupert Smith, the relative sanctuary of his division's rear area in 1991 afforded him the freedom of action he required to orchestrate manoeuvre out of range of enemy artillery.¹⁶ The Ukrainians enjoy no such sanctuary and the proliferation of sensors and long-range precision fires have created such jeopardy in rear areas that Ukrainian forces rarely mass more than a company of soldiers at once, and some commentators have suggested that manoeuvre could be dead.¹⁷ In the second half of 2023 and throughout most of 2024 Russia fired an average of 120 cruise or ballistic missiles and between 400-500 long-range drones deep into Ukraine every month.¹⁸ By the end of 2024 these numbers were steadily climbing and, on a single night on 25-26 November, 188 attack drones entered Ukrainian airspace. The scale of Russia's missile and drone attacks is dwarfed by the glide bomb – an air-launched munition fitted with wing kits and satellite-aided navigation to extend their range and precision. Russia launched an average of 3,000 glide-bombs into Ukraine every month in 2024.¹⁹

¹²Justin Bronk and Jack Watling, 'Mass Precision Strike, Designing UAV Complexes for Land Forces,' RUSI Occasional Paper, 2024.

¹³'The Land Operating Concept, A New Way of Winning', British Army, June 2023.

¹⁴'Velocity, Prevailing Against Russian Recce-Strike Complexes in a Changing Battlespace'. Draft 1, Army Futures, November 2024.

¹⁵Ukrainian General Staff.

¹⁶Rupert Smith, 'The Division', *The British Army Review* 144, 1990.

¹⁷Amos Fox, 'Manoeuvre is Dead? Understanding the Conditions and Components of Warfighting'. *The RUSI Journal*, April 2022.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹Ukrainian General Staff.

Long-range fires are not new, but the volume and persistence of enemy observation is. Up to 1,500 Russian surveillance drones in the sky above Ukraine every day have accelerated the speed and accuracy of Russia's recce-strike complex. The Ukrainian General Staff report that Iskander ballistic missiles [pictured] can strike deep inside Ukraine within 15 minutes of a target being identified by a Russian surveillance drone. Russian production of long-range missiles has increased by 50 per cent from 2023 to 2024. The proliferation of sensors and long-range effectors makes the concentration of forces more dangerous and manoeuvre

more difficult. Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence from Ukraine that manoeuvre is far from dead, and the British Army's Velocity Concept²⁰ sensibly distinguishes between a highly transparent and lethal close battlespace in which manoeuvre remains fiercely contested, and a less transparent and lethal deep in which manoeuvre, deception and surprise remain possible. The experience of the Ukrainians indicates that wherever a force is on the battlefield, physical and electronic protection from air and missile attack will be the critical precursor to successful manoeuvre.

The relationship between protection and manoeuvre is also not new, but the increasing persistence of enemy observation, the proliferation of precision weapons and the prevalence of electronic warfare systems give protection ever greater significance. Every manoeuvre brigade commander in the British Army is used to being flanked by the commanding officers of his or her artillery and engineer regiments

and together they plan and execute fire and manoeuvre. On tomorrow's battlefield, their vehicles and people may not move if they haven't given protection sufficient consideration first. Put simply, freedom of manoeuvre, and even freedom of action, will increasingly become a function of protection when an adversary can see, shoot and kill at ever greater ranges. Brigade commanders should consider pulling their air defenders and electronic warfare personnel into their inner circle.

Albeit in a positional and defensive fight, Ukrainian commanders privilege protection above manoeuvre in their planning. Air defence and electronic warfare considerations feature more prominently than mobility corridors, physical objectives and killing areas. Concentration of force and disruptive manoeuvre remain key tenets of any attack, but in an era of persistent observation Ukrainian commanders are rarely able to rely on a concealed approach to



achieve surprise. Instead, they seek to blind their adversary in a counter recce-strike battle before moving, and they prefer deception to concealment as a foil to persistent observation. Ukraine reminds us that forces must survive if they are going to be lethal and the proliferation of uncrewed systems makes staying alive ever harder.

5. ADAPT OR DIE: EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT

In July 2023 a Ukrainian section was attacked by 27 FPV drones in quick succession. The drones approached from multiple directions killing all but one of the Ukrainian soldiers.²¹ Cheap uncrewed systems may not have changed the face of war, but they have made an indelible mark. In 2023 drones overtook artillery as the main killer on the battlefield in Ukraine and sunk several Russian ships in the Black Sea. It is not the systems themselves that herald the most profound change, but the scale, cost and speed at which they are being produced and the pace of technological evolution.



“There will be a next fight, there always has been. Although hackneyed, the idiom that cautions against preparing for the last war remains true. We will fight very differently to the Ukrainians, but some things will not change, especially on land.”

The first commercially produced FPVs were used in combat in Ukraine in March 2023 and within 18 months Ukraine sought to manufacture one million FPVs, and Russia 1.5 million. A basic FPV costs a Ukrainian manufacturer approximately \$400 and there is now almost no commonality of parts from the original 2023 design. FPV production now outstrips assault rifles in Ukraine and commanders speak openly about how their experience of manoeuvre war is no longer relevant for the positional and increasingly uncrewed fight they find themselves in today.

The next war won't be like the last but there will be echoes of Ukraine. Although we will seek to fight very differently from our Ukrainian allies, General Oleksandr Syrskyi's observation that the synchronisation of electronic warfare, uncrewed systems and fires has the single greatest impact on the battlefield is still likely to ring true in future fights. Achieving this synchronisation and staying ahead of adversary counter-measures demands rapid technological adaptation both on the frontline and in factories and software houses. Up to 30 per cent of Ukraine's military capabilities come directly from the civilian sector without recourse to Ukraine's Byzantine procurement system or its general staff logistics chain. This democratised approach is perhaps unique to a nation facing an existential threat, but Ukraine's success in resisting Russian aggression and killing or wounding up to three-quarters-of-a-million Russians is due to the speed at which they have adopted and then adapted commercially available technologies, particularly air and maritime uncrewed systems.

The six to 12 week obsolescence cycle of uncrewed and electronic warfare systems in Ukraine has been widely reported,²² but some software updates are being conducted daily, including in-flight in a matter of minutes. The secret to Ukraine's success in rapid iterative adaptation has been cooperation between those who make military systems and those who fight with them. Software engineers can be found next to tacticians in the trenches, and soldiers work alongside scientists and manufacturers in Ukraine's factories. Data analysts who once

drove Kyiv's financial services now use their expertise to move data between electronic warfare and air defence systems.

Combining technological and military expertise in the development and adaptation of equipment, both at the point of need in the field and at the point of manufacture, has given Ukraine a tactical edge and could be the death knell of the traditional procurement system. In Ukraine individual platforms and weapon systems are judged as much on how adaptable they are as what they actually do. Designing and building ships, crewed aircraft and armoured vehicles will always require time and carefully drafted contracts, but to survive and remain relevant the systems on those platforms will need to be subject to constant adaptation and upgrade. A new paradigm of procurement should look more like continuous buying and adaptation – a cyclical subscription service with constant feedback between user and manufacturer. A far cry from today's linear acquisition arrangements. The alternative is obsolescence or death, or both.

There will be a next fight, there always has been. Although hackneyed, the idiom that cautions against preparing for the last war remains true. We will fight very differently to the Ukrainians, but some things will not change, especially on land. Three years of war in Ukraine offers a chance to identify, learn and implement key lessons. The lessons identified in this article are by no means the only ones and possibly not even the most profound. Nonetheless, if the British Army can address a deficit in find and fires capabilities while maintaining the ability to manoeuvre by enhancing survivability then we will be a better army and a more effective deterrent. Sharpening our knives for a knife fight may not be enough, the war in Ukraine has offered a glimpse of how a truly modern land force could take a gun instead.

²⁰Velocity, *Prevailing Against Russian Recce-Strike Complexes in a Changing Battlespace*. Draft 1, Army Futures, November 2024.

²¹Ukrainian General Staff.

²²Justin Bronk and Jack Watling, *Mass Precision Strike, Designing UAV Complexes for Land Forces*, RUSI Occasional Paper, 2024.



EDUCATIONAL WARGAMING: DEVELOPING NATURAL INTELLIGENCE



AUTHOR

Ranauld Shepherd served in the British Army for 34 years and his operational service extended from the Gulf War to Afghanistan. He is now a professional wargaming consultant and battlefield guide.

"AI [artificial intelligence] is a special kind of teammate, one that comes with an alluring sense of technological wizardry. Senior leaders need to take great care not to put too much faith in it, a cognitive bias known as automation bias.

This teammate, just like a human one, needs leaders to train it, get to know it and question the answers it produces."¹ – Michael S. Neiberg

AS AI develops at pace it's exact impact – both good and bad – remains opaque. Professor Neiberg advises senior leaders to be cognisant of automation bias and to question what AI produces. Wise advice when facing uncertainty. However, how easy will this be to do? As AI becomes omnipresent, how will leaders retain enough distance from the influence of AI to be able to question objectively? In essence, how do they achieve balance between natural intelligence (NI) and AI?

For the Army, achieving the right NI/AI balance will become key to the effective provision of the conceptual component of fighting power. The forthcoming ubiquity of AI will impact on how people learn. Human intelligence as it is developed now, with minimal AI input, is likely to become redundant. In the face of this change retaining and

developing NI will be challenging and entail a conscious effort. The rapidity of AI development and incorporation demands that this challenge be addressed now. How then can NI be retained and developed for the military professional? One possible solution is to exploit the educational benefits of wargaming.²

War games encompass both digital and analogue formats. Analogue war games, with physical components, minimise the barriers to human interaction and provide a real-time, active learning environment. This learning space minimises direct AI input. Participants have to make a conscious mental effort to



¹Neiberg, Michael: *Artificial Intelligence and 21st Century Generalship*, Aries & Athena, August 2024, p13.

²See *Developments, Concepts and Doctrine Centre: The Wargaming Handbook*, MOD, 2017, p8.



understand and execute the war game system and consequently how the war game models warfare. This process maximises the opportunity for NI development. Creating bespoke war games is time consuming in both production of components and development of a credible and reliable game model. However, there is a long established war games industry – commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) products – that can be exploited by the military professional.

There are many, and varied, versions of these war games that focus on potential campaigns of the near future and these do have utility. For example, the US Marine Corps War College has used the *Next War* series to enable students to learn about a possible great power conflict.³ As with any medium purporting to predict future events, war games covering potential conflicts can be prone to cognitive bias based on the projection of present assumptions. Using war games based on historical conflicts, where accurate information is more certain, removes this possible bias. In addition, study of past warfare enables reinforcement of the doctrinal foundation that the nature of war is enduring.⁴ Reinforcing this foundation is, arguably, essential when developing the NI of military professionals. With AI providing information based on historical interpretation, possibly from sources

unknown, the military professional must have enough knowledge of past conflict to enable effective critical questioning.

The range of COTS war games that could be used to foster NI development is extensive. To maximise the learning benefits it is necessary to have a clear learning focus. With the forthcoming 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, a pertinent focus would be to use war games to develop an understanding of the conflict. The war retains its relevance on a number of levels. It shaped the rules-based international order that NATO continues to uphold⁵ and it provides examples of fighting a multinational war requiring an integrated approach. For the military professional it also gives an opportunity to deepen their understanding of combined arms manoeuvre.⁶ To illustrate the utility of COTS war games in enabling an understanding of the Second World War, this article will examine titles spanning the strategic, operational and tactical levels of conflict.

THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

The board game *Churchill*⁷ examines the Second World War through the lens of war time leaders Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin – known collectively as the ‘Big Three’.⁸ The game system reveals their strategic differences

while underscoring the necessity to achieve common purpose to defeat a mutual enemy. The core game mechanics of *Churchill* reflect the doctrinal definition of strategy as the integration of policy ends, with ways and means.⁹ The Allied strategic end state in the game is the defeat of the Axis powers; however success is judged on which of the ‘Big Three’ is best placed to influence the post-war world. This mechanism forces participants in the game to consider the strategic tensions Allied leaders and their staffs had to face. If too much emphasis is placed on national post-war influence, then there is a real risk the

³See *Developments, Concepts and Doctrine Centre: Joint Doctrine Publication 0-01 (6th Edition) UK Defence Doctrine, MOD, 2022, p3.*

⁴See *NATO Heads of State: Washington Summit Declaration, NATO, 10 July 2024, para 1 [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227678.htm], 03.01.2025.*

⁵See *Land Warfare Centre, Army Field Manual- Conventional Warfare, MOD, p1-1.*

⁶Herman, Mark: *Churchill, GMT Games, 2015. The designer was a US War College academic and employed by the Pentagon during the 1991 Gulf War.*

⁷For a recent publication emphasising the importance of leader personality and WW2 strategy see O’Brian, Phillips: *The Strategists, Viking, 2024.*

⁸*op. cit., UK Defence Doctrine, p11*

Axis will not be defeated and the players will lose. The game board includes theatre tracks and an A-Bomb research track. These provide players with the ways to defeat the Axis. There is no mandate to follow a historical choice but the implications of not doing so are born out through game play. Markers for production, land offensive support and naval assets represent the means available to players. Where to allocate, and in what strength, are key decisions for each player, every turn. Success will only be achieved if players master effective use of these game elements; in effect balancing ends, ways and means.

Central to *Churchill* is the representation of the key Allied conferences which saw the 'Big Three' formulate strategy. The game allows participants to decide which issues¹⁰ to include on the conference agenda and thus help shape their view of how the war should be won and the post-war world. The conference is then played out with participants debating the issues through the use of cards. The cards represent the leader and the key members of their staff, both military and civilian. Each card includes a key attribute which can impact positively on an issue being debated. This mechanism reflects the knowledge, skills and experience of each leader and staff personality. Players must ensure they

'maximise the talent' of their leader and staff to ensure they win the issues debated.

Once the conference is complete, the issues debated and won will influence how the Allies prosecute the war. Progress on each front is then played out, with Allied success more likely where they have maximised effort through the effect of issues debated and won. The game also enables the 'Big Three' to influence the resistance movements in occupied countries to ensure they align with their post-war vision. Playing *Churchill* enables participants to gain an understanding of the motivations of the three key Allied powers in the Second World War, how they had to cooperate to ensure success, and how this influenced the post-war world. In addition, through interactive learning, participants have an opportunity to try and balance ends, ways and means to achieve strategic success.

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

In *Churchill* the Western theatre is a key route for the UK and US to defeat German forces. This reflects its importance to Allied strategy in the Second World War. To gain a deeper understanding of operations in this theatre the military professional can exploit the learning potential of *Race To The Rhine*.¹¹ This game encompasses the post-

Normandy period when the Allies attempted to exploit German disorganisation and gain a swift crossing of the Rhine. Players represent the Allied Army/Army Group commanders – Montgomery, Bradley, Paton and Devers. Success is predicated on which command will be first to cross the river, before the Germans regenerate their combat power. If the Allies fail to cross the Rhine, the player who has captured the most key locations and destroyed the most German units will be judged the winner. For participants, this mechanism recreates the choice Allied commanders faced; invest all in a drive to cross the Rhine or take on a more methodical approach that will set the conditions for success at a later stage.

Race To The Rhine focuses on the importance of planning and logistics to achieve operational success. The map shows the key urban locations and manoeuvre corridors. Units represent corps and they have an associated off-map card with supplies of fuel, ammunition and rations. These are expended as corps are advanced and encounter German forces. To sustain their advance, players have an initial allocation of transport lift that can move supplies from established logistic nodes. As



The Big Three: A monument to Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin at Livadia Palace in Yalta, Crimea.

lines of communications lengthen and supplies are consumed, players will have to consider when to implement an operational pause to reorganise their transport lift and establish forward logistic nodes. Thus, they are faced with the choice between pushing an advance to keep an enemy off balance against the risk of logistics paralysis and failure. This was the operational challenge faced by Allied Commanders during the campaign.¹²

At game start no German forces are on the map. Each turn German reserves deploy to secure key locations and counter-attack where Allied forces present open flanks and unsecured rear areas. This represents the ability the Germans displayed in recovering from defeat in Normandy. Exact German unit strength is unknown until the Allies attack or expend time and resources on reconnaissance. The fortifications of the Siegfried Line, on the German border, and at the Channel ports are included and enhance German strength. Air power and airborne forces are available to assist players in defeating German strength and securing a Rhine crossing. As the Allies advance, they will liberate local population groups who can either provide help or will require food to prevent starvation. All these variables create challenges and opportunities for players. Achieving success will require adept planning along with a willingness to accept risk. Playing *Race To The Rhine* enables the military professional to develop their understanding of the operational level of war through interactive learning.

THE TACTICAL LEVEL

The Soviet Union's importance to Allied victory in the Second World War is made clear in playing *Churchill*. A key stage in the Soviet victory on the Eastern Front was the Battle of Stalingrad, fought between September 1942 and February 1943. The battle was characterised by tactical actions in the streets, buildings and sewers of the city. The war game *Pavlov's House*¹³ encapsulates one of the best known of these tactical actions.¹⁴ The game focuses on the Soviet defence and success hinges on control of the house. The board is divided into three sections. One section shows the house named after Junior-Sergeant Yakov Pavlov, the next section places the house in the immediate surrounding area of 9 January Square and the final section locates the house in the context of the wider city and the River Volga. The interaction between these map sections is central to how the game represents the fight for Pavlov's House. In particular, it demonstrates to players the important linkage between operational support and tactical success.



Courtesy of Soldier Magazine

“As lines of communications lengthen and supplies are consumed, players will have to consider when to implement an operational pause to reorganise their transport lift and establish forward logistic nodes. Thus, they are faced with the choice between pushing an advance to keep an enemy off balance against the risk of logistics paralysis and failure. This was the operational challenge faced by Allied Commanders.”

The game commences just after a Soviet storm group has retaken an apartment building in central Stalingrad. The Soviet player must then position the individual members of the storm group for defence as German attacks mount. The house is vulnerable to attack from three sides and will face indirect and direct fire attacks as well as assaults. The Soviet defenders will be quickly overwhelmed without reinforcement and the assistance of divisional and army assets. The game models this wider operational context through a card deck which represents essential combat support, command support and combat service support capabilities. These capabilities are at a premium and the Soviet player is forced to prioritise and accept risk accordingly. Of critical importance is maintenance of a line of communications via the Volga Military Flotilla. If this fails the defenders of Pavlov's House risk being overrun as a consequence of a lack of rations, ammunition and medical supplies.

The German air force dominated the daytime skies over Stalingrad. The game shows this dominance through German air attacks targeting and degrading Soviet operational capabilities. To preserve these capabilities, in particular the essential command and control provided by 62nd Army, the Soviet player must ensure some investment in ground-based air defence. How and when to employ ground-based air defence is an ongoing dilemma for the Soviet player. Offensive action was integral to the Soviet

defensive concept and based on small-scale storm-group assaults, rather than company or battalion actions. These assaults kept the Germans unbalanced and the Soviet player will only achieve success by maintaining enough combat power to launch selective storm-group attacks. Playing *Pavlov's House* presents the Soviet player with difficult choices and it openly illustrates, through interactive learning, the critical linkage between tactical success and operational support. There is also a more nuanced learning benefit. For Russians, success in the Second World War is most often memorialised through victory at Stalingrad and epitomised through the story of the defence of Pavlov's House. Learning about the detail of this tactical battle helps the military professional gain insight into this

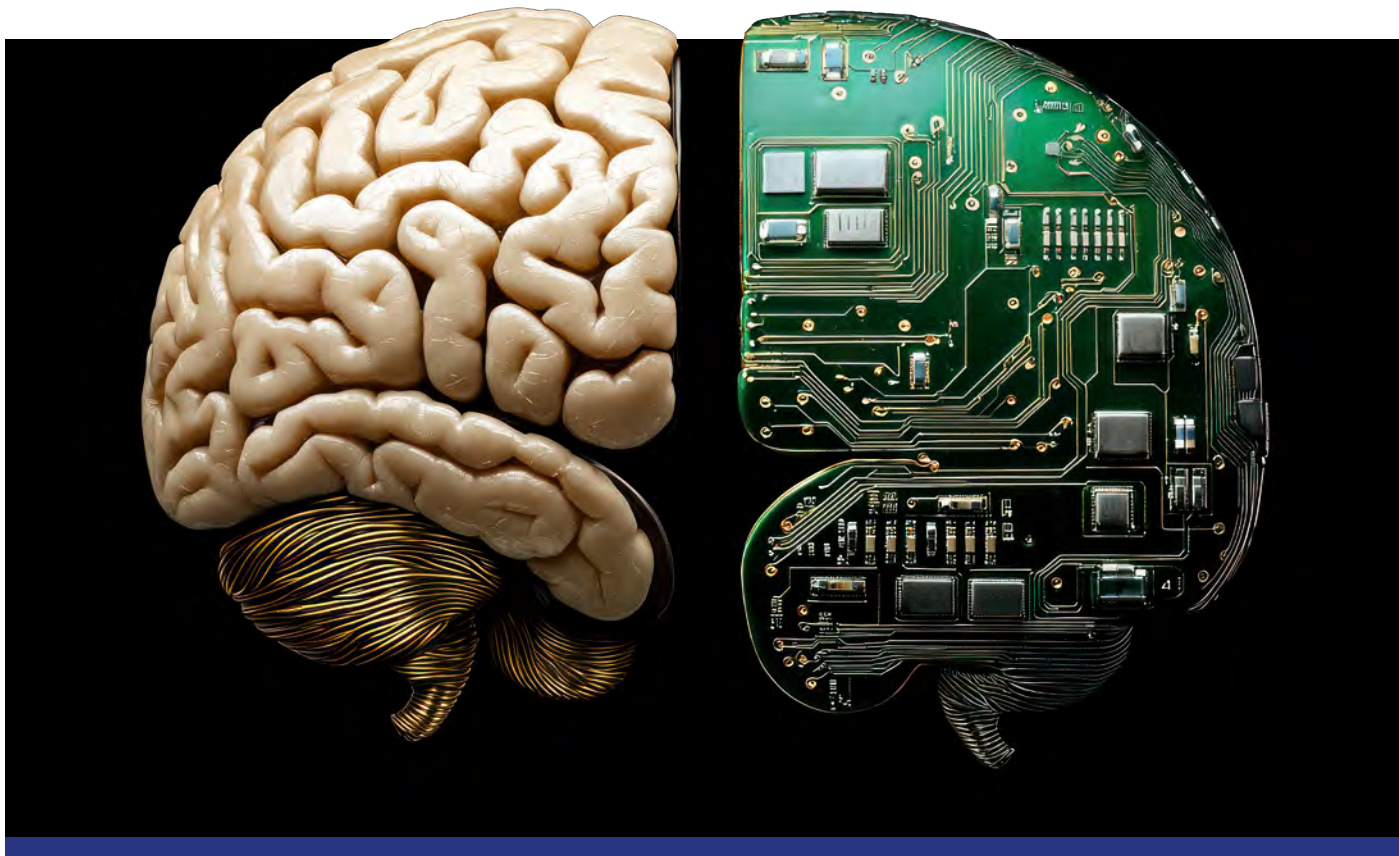
¹⁰Issues represent a wide variety of political/military subjects including: *Theatre Leadership, Production, Directed Offensives, Second Front, Clandestine Networks and A-Bomb Research.*

¹¹Waldek, Gumienny; Andruszkiewicz, Jaro; Roig, Yves; Crespel, Valentin and Dufourneau, Remi: *Keep 'Em Rolling! Race To The Rhine*, Phalanx Games, 2023.

¹²For a discussion of the operational challenge facing Allied commanders see Crefeld, Martin: *Supplying War-Logistics From Wallenstein To Patton*, Cambridge University Press, 2013, Chapter 7.

¹³Thompson, David: *Pavlov's House-The Battle Of Stalingrad*, Dan Verssen Games, 2018.

¹⁴For the importance of Pavlov's House within the Battle of Stalingrad see MacGregor, Iain: *The Lighthouse Of Stalingrad*, Constable, 2022.



“By developing military professional natural intelligence through educational wargaming senior leaders can help ensure the Army directs and informs artificial intelligence, rather than become a passive recipient of the unknown.”

Russian perspective and how it was shaped by a selective understanding of events.

EXPLOITING ANALOGUE WARGAMES

The prime benefit of using war games for education is the interactive nature of learning. Participants have agency to test their knowledge and theories, witness the consequences and adapt accordingly. Analogue war games allow participants direct interaction with physical components and the system is fully accessible – anyone can look at the game manual. Face-to-face human interaction encourages discussion and enhances the learning experience. Participants can be paired in teams, rather than just as individual players, thus enabling collaborative working. At root, we are social beings, and analogue war games maximise the opportunity for learning with, and from, other people. Conversely, artificially generated input is minimised. For the military professional, playing analogue war games can deepen their knowledge of warfare in a more direct way than passive learning.¹⁵ This development of NI could prove critical in avoiding automation bias through the use of AI in military decision making.

Exploiting the NI development potential of analogue war games requires interest and support at senior levels, a point stressed in the

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff’s foreword to the Ministry of Defence’s *Wargaming Handbook*.¹⁶ Time needs to be made available and clear direction given. To maximise the time available for learning, a facilitator needs to be appointed to undertake essential preparation and to deliver the game. Two options are available for provision of a facilitator. Firstly, a member of the unit or headquarters staff could be nominated. Board gaming is a thriving industry that continues to grow.¹⁷ Many universities have board game societies that enable students to participate in and enjoy complex analogue games. There will be a cadre of serving members who have experience of these games. As an institution, the British Army has possibly not considered the utility of this experience. However, a senior leader who values diversity in knowledge, skills and experience can seek out individuals with analogue gaming experience and then support them to facilitate educational wargaming. Where serving individuals with the commensurate knowledge, skills and experience are not available, veterans can be engaged. A number of veterans have extensive experience of educational war game facilitation and they may have more time to focus on delivering the required learning outputs.

On the forthcoming impact of AI, Professor Yuval Harari states: “In coming years, all

networks – from armies to religions – will gain millions of new AI members, which will process data differently than humans do. These new members will make alien decisions and generate alien ideas – that is decisions that are unlikely to occur to humans.”¹⁸ He then goes on to conclude: “The decisions we all make in the coming years will determine whether summoning this alien intelligence proves to be a terminal error or the beginning of a hopeful new chapter in the evolution of life.”¹⁹ By developing military professional NI through educational wargaming senior leaders can help ensure the Army directs and informs AI, rather than become a passive recipient of the unknown.

¹⁵Bae, Sebastian (Ed): *Forging Wargamers - A Framework for Wargaming Education*, Marine Corps University Press, 2022, pvi.

¹⁶Op. cit. *The Wargaming Handbook*, piii.

¹⁷See *Board Games Are Back And More Popular Than Ever*, *The Times*, 26 December 2023 [https://www.thetimes.com/uk/article/board-games-are-back-times-luxury-j5pxqrbcc] and *All Consuming*, BBC Radio 4, 31 August 2023, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/cMg1ZjLL2klSgZn704LZ3Z/why-do-we-still-love-playing-board-games-so-much], 03.01.2025.

¹⁸Harari, Yuval Noah: *Nexus – A Brief History of Information Networks from the Stone Age to AI*, Penguin Random House, 2024, p399.

¹⁹Ibid, p404.



DIVISIONAL DRIVER: MIRROR, SIGNAL MANOEUVRE

AUTHOR

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THE following examines the need to enhance divisional manoeuvre, why doing so matters, and the conditions or existing contexts that suggest it should evolve to meet certain requirements. These are general observations about the UK discussion as it has existed over the past decade – they are not a commentary or criticism of extant doctrine, and are intended to be generally agnostic of equipment capability issues.

SIZE AND SHAPE

In terms of the UK, today's division is distinct from past times. 3rd UK Division currently consists of 1st Deep Recce Strike Brigade; 12th Armoured Brigade; 20th Armoured Brigade; 25 Engineer Group; 7 Signals Group; and 101 Operational Sustainment Brigade. There is little to suggest that this organisation is wrong or fundamentally flawed as it currently exists, but it is noticeably different from what the proposed UK division looked like in the Army 2020 documents of 2013 or even those of *Future Soldier*.

In 1940, a British armoured division comprised two tank brigades and a support group. This meant, in broad terms, a reconnaissance regiment (armoured cars), six tank regiments, three infantry battalions, one Royal Artillery close support regiment and an anti-tank

regiment. By 1944, this had evolved into an armoured brigade, an infantry brigade and an artillery group. There were now just three tank regiments and four infantry battalions, and the Royal Artillery had got another close support regiment. How the UK armoured division changed between 1940 and 1944 is well documented with little to no source discrepancy. Why it changed is open to debate. This author argues that the Royal Armoured Corps struggled to replicate the utility of a cavalry division as it had come to exist from 1906-1923. As the Palestine campaign showed, Commonwealth Yeomanry and cavalry forces were uniquely flexible and could take on various missions. This is a controversial view, but in terms of general organisation rather than equipment, the infantry division remained remarkably consistent and did not alter much between 1939 and 1945. It generally consisted of nine infantry battalions in three brigades, each supported by a close support regiment with an anti-tank regiment to supplement battalion anti-tank platoons.

As of 1943 and repeated in 1950, the armoured division's roles were those demanding mobility and hitting power, very much like cavalry. However, critically, the armoured division was "not" to be used in the assault on the main defensive position or to

break in and seek a chance to break out. Such missions were best left to infantry divisions, which independent armoured brigades might support. This was explicit in UK doctrine – *The Tactical Handling of the Armoured Division and its Components (Training Pamphlet 41, July 1943)* and *The Armoured Division in Battle 1952 (WO Code 8715)*.

Today, and in a complete departure from the past, many want the armoured division to be a break-in, break-out and exploit, 'one-size-fits-all' organisation. Based on what we know of modern warfare, this makes little sense.

Very soon after the Second World War, the distinction between infantry and armoured division seemed to evaporate, and the resulting 'division' began to evolve in line with the defensive role that the British Army of the Rhine considered applicable. Armoured brigades, infantry brigades and later even airmobile brigades all existed within generic divisional structures which pulsed in size and morphed over time. All of this was done within the context of the corps, which had its own dedicated assets, as had been the case in the First and Second World Wars.

The 1st UK Armoured Division that deployed in Gulf War One in 1991 was made up of two armoured brigades, one with two main battle tank regiments and one Warrior battalion, while the other had one main battle tank regiment and two Warrior battalions. Each brigade had a close support regiment and an engineer regiment. There was one divisional reconnaissance regiment and three artillery regiments (one 203mm self-propelled, one multiple launch rocket system and one 155mm self-propelled) in the Divisional Artillery Group.

"The more divergent the divisional structures are from proven roles, the greater the risk that problems may lie unrealised."

All that has been written so far demonstrates that the idea of what British divisions look like is far from fixed or that all agree on what 'good' looks like. Unless hard constraints are applied, the division is more likely a product of budget and bureaucracy than actual military science. Even if equipped with current unit capabilities, the 1st Armoured Division of 1991 differs in size and shape from the 3rd Division today. Arguably, the historic delineation between the armoured and infantry divisions gave the same clarity and direction as that of the cavalry and infantry divisions. Notably, the more divergent the divisional structures are from proven roles, the greater the risk that problems may lie unrealised. The confusion and ultimate failure of the novel divisional structure tested on Exercise Wide Horizon in 1975 and the next year on Exercise Spearpoint strongly indicate this.

DIVISIONAL MANOEUVRE

In what follows, 'manoeuvre' will mean gaining a positional advantage over an adversary.

A dispassionate discussion of the divisional force structure is exceedingly difficult and, thus, largely impractical if linked to the present realities of the UK budget, staffing and even regimental culture. The UK has one deployable division, and it is expected to meet every reasonable military objective that might be set for it. It could be suggested that the 1st Division is also deployable. Few would argue that this circumstance is

acceptable or ideal, but it is the existing position. Assuming that a division is an assembly of units and that performance is, to a degree, measurable does aid debate and discussion. Those unit performances and capabilities should coalesce into measurable performance indicators for the division. For example, a close support regiment should be able to generate the effects desired by the weight of fire tables. A unit or brigade should be able to sustain a certain distance of road marching per 24-hour period. A logistics unit should be able to consistently move x tonnes of supply over x distance per 24 hours. No formation or unit can disperse or control fires outside communications planning ranges. These are all long-established, and all of these things are what staff planning and data are based on. Suppose you have validated data and measurable performance levels for units. In that case, any collection of units is possible, given that coherent and effective manoeuvre, combat support and combat service support can be shown to work. Obvious misalignments between ambition and resources would demonstrate a lack of coherence and, thus, an inability to create the desired effect. Units need to be equipped, trained and organised to leverage the advantages inherent to synergy. Thus, the description of 'combined arms' can, in the wrong context, fail to recognise additional aspects of combat and combat service support. All of this will define how the division should fight and operate.

ENHANCING MANOEUVRE

Enhancing the divisional manoeuvre seems to be a requirement created by a division that operates in isolation for a corps and corps supporting assets. We can examine this using three basic assumptions:

Divisional intervention: Challenger main battle tanks crewed by personnel from C Squadron, The Life Guards manoeuvre across the desert in Saudi Arabia in the days immediately before Gulf War One.

Courtesy of Soldier Magazine

- A need to operate on greater frontages and depths than normally thought (for example, 100km by 60km);
- To use reconnaissance target acquisition to control fires to degrade the enemy before direct fire engagements (recce strike);
- To remain mobile and lethal, as in more mobile than the enemy and, at least, as lethal.

It could be suggested that these are desirable characteristics for all division types. Still, enhanced mobility and lethality might burden the division with those things that, in most other circumstances, would normally reside at the corps or army level of command. The division can be aided by other national or allied formations such as a 16 Air Assault or 1st Aviation Brigade in the case of the UK. However, that is not a traditional corps or two or three divisions with corps enablers.

In 1940-41, Operation Compass, conducted by the Western Desert Force, later redesignated XIII Corps, comprising an armoured and infantry division, destroyed the Italian 10th Army in about 12 weeks. The Royal Air Force and Royal Navy greatly assisted this force, which consisted of only about 31,000 men, 120 guns, 275 tanks and 60 armoured cars. The division of labour between an armoured and an infantry division was clear-cut and largely conformed to the First World War model of infantry and cavalry. The insight here may be that having another division is the best way to enhance an existing division or two small divisions may be better than one big one, providing each has a distinct role such as infantry and armour. That being the case, how would they fight and operate?

Updating the Western Desert Force model may provide some bones to grow the concept of employment and derive a training needs analysis from that. The problem for the division operating in isolation is usually the over-tasking of combat and combat service support. There may simply not be enough fire platforms to resource both the close support and counter-battery missions. If we accept that the divisional deep battle is a counter-battery mission, then this is a challenge.

DEEP BATTLE AND RECCE STRIKE

It is important to recognise that, as with the 'operational level of war', both the terms 'deep battle' and 'reconnaissance strike' are plagiarised from Soviet doctrine. Thus, in my view, all are widely misunderstood. The operational level of war and indeed even the existence or requirement for such an idea is a debate best left to other articles and staff college presentations. Still, deep battle



“Essentially, using air, fires and the manoeuvre of detachments aims to render the enemy so unbalanced, out of position and ill-supported that any decisive engagement is catastrophic. Like pole dancing, it is very hard to do well and requires far more training than many assume.”

and recce strike are relevant to enhancing divisional manoeuvre.

Deep battle and reconnaissance strikes for the British Army did not exist in *ADP Land Operations* in 2005. However, reconnaissance strikes were mentioned in *BG Tactics (Army Code 71648)* in 2007, as were “deep operations”. The entire purpose of deep battle is to make the enemy less prepared and thus disadvantaged when battles and engagements occur. It is primarily temporal and sequential, not geographic. This is not opinion. The doctrinal underpinnings stretch back to the 19th century. Essentially, using air, fires and the manoeuvre of detachments aims to render the enemy so unbalanced, out of position and ill-supported that any decisive engagement is catastrophic. Like pole dancing, it is very hard to do well and requires far more training than many assume.

Deep battle and ‘Air Land Battle’ are different. Air Land Battle was entirely predicated on the platform attrition of the Soviet ‘follow on forces’, thus it is a more useful description of follow-on forces attack.

Reconnaissance strike is a tool of deep battle but is also separate and distinct from it. In its modern iteration, reconnaissance strike uses sensor data to enable precision weapons. This

is often reframed or arguably dumbed down to a ‘kill chain’ or ‘sensor to shooter loop’, which merely describes the technical process, not its purpose. Precision requires knowledge. Without that knowledge, ignorance must use mass. Reconnaissance strike uses information to leverage the economy of force precision creates. Reconnaissance strike applies as much to the close battle as it does to the deep, but these are usually separate sets of systems. For example, an infantry company can attack an enemy platoon position using unmanned aerial systems to laser designate every trench or bunker on the position and then strike those bunkers or trenches with 120mm mortar bombs, so expending 8-10 rounds and not the 80-160 normally required. That can be a completely discrete and separate set of systems from those fighting the divisional counter-battery fight or the suppression/destruction of enemy air defence. Deep battle can employ mass instead of precision and often has. 1st British Corps use of two M107 regiments cued by special depth fire ‘stay behind’ observation posts in the 1980s is a good example.

Deep battles and close battles require a separation of effort, but they concentrate on the single objective of defeating the enemy. Given good planning and training, the mantra of ‘any sensor, any shooter’

is functionally redundant because the sensors and shooters aligned in the fire plan should be consistent with their mission. Fire plans exist to match resources to missions. Battlespace should render the need for 'any sensor, any shooter' unlikely. That is not to deny the obvious utility of redundancy and flexibility. Still, a non-line-of-sight anti-tank system in an infantry battalion (not a UK capability) should only engage and kill any platform or system within its battlespace. It may have the range and target data to do more, but this demands coordination and deconfliction, thus additional information and decision-making. In this regard, it should be noted that the recognition training burden for anyone associated with a non-line-of-sight or unmanned aerial system is substantially increased from what might have been the case in the Cold War, and hoping that shape recognition and machine automation will somehow solve this problem may be wishful thinking.

Correctly and ideally understood, the twin mechanisms of reconnaissance strike and deep battle should mean that every enemy platform is detected and killed before being subject to direct fire engagement, either in defence or attack. This is the ideal, not the reality. Also, a reality is that neither deep battle or recce strike are functional without secure and reliable communications.

COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE

In the same way language gives songs meaning, communication enables precision in fires and manoeuvres. For a manoeuvre to be advantageous, it must be relative to an enemy and thus be based on some awareness of where the enemy is or intends to be; otherwise, it can only be movement. Reconnaissance seeks information and therefore the ability to create an advantage. Information without communication is nearly useless. In war, communications might be fragile and temporary – yet so essential that maintaining it should occupy the full attention of every headquarters and commander. At the heart of every high-profile special forces failure of the last 30 years, from Bravo Two Zero through Blackhawk Down, Operation Anaconda and Operation Red Wings, lies some aspect of communications failure. This is nothing new. During most of the Vietnam War, the United States Air Force maintained specially equipped communications aircraft flying every night over Laos and Cambodia just to maintain communications with US Special Forces teams interdicting the Ho Chi Minh trails.



"Access to data as in that which can be stored, searched and exploited by machine automation, is not the same as that which needs to be transmitted. The entire *Babylonian Talmud* or the 1973 edition of the *Britannica Encyclopaedia* can be held on a small, cheap thumb drive."

The problem is that giving communications and information their due recognition creates a paradox of some monumental proportions. Communication needs to be simple and robust. Communications should not need to move vast amounts of data, and sensors should not harvest data in large quantities.

In plain text, Carl Von Clausewitz's *On War* is just over one megabyte. What is it that an HQ must transmit or receive that contains more information than *On War* given that it has to be read or listened to? The idea that warfare requires huge amounts of 'data' is extremely questionable, given that time and comprehension are limited. Access to data as in that which can be stored, searched and exploited by machine automation, is not the same as that which needs to be transmitted. The entire *Babylonian Talmud* or the 1973 edition of the *Britannica Encyclopaedia* can be held on a small, cheap thumb drive.

Given 12 hours from receipt of orders to H-hour, a division needs to generate orders within three hours for brigades and battlegroups to have adequate time to prepare. An HQ needs to be able transmit orders in minutes or ideally in less than a minute. It must still be doable if your safety

net or electronic signature control measures mean you only have digital high frequency. This is why command post exercises, which are done outside of field conditions with subordinate HQs at probable communication distances and intervening terrain, lack a degree of rigour. Suppose your divisional main has an electronic signature bigger than a sub-unit HQ. In that case, you will almost certainly be targeted or be forced to relocate after every short period of high signature transmission. It is not a technical challenge for the divisional main to have a small electronic signature, but it is a cultural and doctrinal challenge. Suppose you don't believe the information demands of divisional operations, sustainment and administration are fundamentally simple and coherent. In that case, what critical information requirements decide success and failure? No stressful decision is made using perfect information, so why strive for perfect information? Most of the demands for information seem to be predicated on a need to predict enemy action rather than to understand the current situation.

SO WHAT ABOUT ENHANCING DIVISIONAL MANOEUVRE?

If you have one division, get another one. You need to develop a solid idea so everyone can understand how the divisions intend to fight. You then make sure everyone can effectively and efficiently communicate with everyone else. Otherwise, all the equipment, training and organisation will be irrelevant.

The key point here is that enhancing divisional manoeuvre is not just about improving one's ability to move to an advantageous position but about the most basic form of advantage. That advantage is 'command'. Command is everything, so much so that you may want to refer to it as command, control, communications and intelligence. Still, 'command' can only live as actions realisable via the correctly organised, trained and equipped force. If that force can plan, execute and recover faster than an opponent using the precision available from better target acquisition and better mobility, it will find, fix, strike and exploit faster than an adversary might be able to counter, or rather, it should seek to do so. This is most likely achievable by commanders making simple decisions based on good enough information and not seeking more information from more sensors or information feeds to make better but less risky decisions.

Enhancing divisional manoeuvre means knowing what is and is not possible and that what is possible is impossible for the enemy. People might want to consider this and then tell me where this article was wrong or right.



MY ENEMY'S ENEMY: POLICING SECTARIAN UNREST



AUTHOR

Lieutenant Tim Chattell graduated from the London School of Economics in 2022. He commissioned into the Army Reserve in 2018, and into the Regular Army in 2023. He is currently a troop commander at 16 Medical Regiment.

WHILST Cyprus is most likely best known by those in the Army today for the 1974 invasion, the legacy of Britain's involvement runs much deeper. The original conflict [the Cyprus Emergency, 1955-1959, and specific to this article the period from 1954-1958] involved attempting to hand over greater sovereignty to the local populace, whilst balancing the competing desires of each community for their own goals. Just over 70 years later, there are clear lessons to be learned from Britain's first foray into Cyprus regarding working with groups and communities that are (at least partially) 'pro-British'. Britain's relationships with the Turkish Cypriots and their political structures offer cautionary lessons, by way of how easily sectarian violence can be whipped up (even without anyone's express intention of doing so), and with regards to political involvement by outside actors, through the proxy of 'community leaders'. Any force looking to engage with 'host nation security forces', particularly in a sectarian environment, should beware such pitfalls.

Prior to the 1974 invasion, Cyprus was both a segregated but geographically mixed society. The Turkish and Greek speaking Cypriots lived in relative proximity but maintained

distinctly different cultures, under Ottoman and later British colonial rule. Whilst there were few mixed marriages, and educational systems were split along religious lines, the communities lived in distinct but neighbouring areas. The development of nationalism in both Greek and Turkish populations in the early 20th century further solidified these identities. Whilst Greek Cypriot nationalists aimed for Enosis (union with Greece), Turkish Cypriot identity was shaped by the rise of Turkish nationalism in Anatolia following the War of Independence. Consequently, the Turkish community found itself with a degree of common cause with the British authorities, as both opposed the demands for independence led by the Greek community. As a representative of the Cyprus-Turkish national party stated in 1954: "The Turkish community in Cyprus... have been loyal subjects and have been co-operating with the British Government for the last 76 years. The Turks of the island are well pleased with the present administration."¹

Equally, the British ambassador in Athens recognised the potential shared interest with the minority Turkish community, describing how "the Turkish card is a tricky one... but

¹FO 371/112870/1081/859 (1954), KEW, p. 7.

useful in the pass to which we have come".²

Despite this shared interest, the British relationship with the Turkish Cypriot community proved to become more 'tricky' to manage as time went on.

One way in which this was clearly demonstrated was in the make up of the Cyprus Police Force and other auxiliary units. The British, in keeping with counter-insurgency doctrine, sought to develop and support this force rather than rely on the Army, and thereby sought to equip, train and effectively staff the Force. Initially, Greek Cypriots made up the majority of the police (as they did the population), but as the Greek-nationalist paramilitary EOKA [Organosis Kyprian Agoniston/National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters] specifically targeted Greek officers for assassination, Turkish Cypriots filled the void. At the end of 1954, Greek Orthodox members made up just over 61 per cent of the police force, to 37 per cent of Muslims.³ Exactly a year later the ratio had reached 55 per cent to 40 per cent, and by December 1956 the ratio had effectively become reversed, either out of intimidation or sympathy for the insurgents.⁴ By 1958, the problem had become such that the Army had been forced to assume policing duties, due to the rate of Greek Cypriots becoming intimidated through terror: "The Army had taken over from the law and was in process of taking over from the police, not only because of its manpower and firepower but because elements of the police had become intimidated and ineffective."⁵

Consequently, by the late 1950s the police were largely dominated by Turkish Cypriots. Initially EOKA was forbidden from targeting Turks, for fear of provoking an inter-communal conflict.⁶ Nevertheless, in June 1955 EOKA made the decision to begin targeting Turkish officers, their leader George Grivas recalling: "...certain [Turkish Cypriots] in the police worked energetically against the Organization particularly in Paphos, and the area commander there... decided one must be executed."⁷

EOKA's switch in tactics was distinctly noticeable. Having previously attempted to avoid antagonising the Turkish community, the deliberate attempt to provoke such quarters of the security forces was noticed by British intelligence reports.⁸ Inter-communal violence immediately broke out following the assassination, which Grivas attempted to blame solely on the British. He accused them of seeking: "...to cause communal disturbances in Cyprus and thus to be able to declare before the court of public opinion that its presence in Cyprus is necessary for imposing normality and for preventing more serious incidents in future."⁹

That Grivas sought to pass over responsibility for inter-ethnic tensions and prevent the Turkish minority from feeling further aggrieved, as opposed to ramping up the inter-communal aspects of the war at this stage, had little effect later.

Instead, what came to mark Turkish involvement in policing operations was a particular willingness to use violence and brutality, to the extent that it was picked up on by British troops working alongside the Cypriot security forces. One such account, by Intelligence Corps National Serviceman Adrian Walker, recounts vividly: "...there is no doubt that torture of suspects was endemic... But the Turkish Special Branch with whom my unit worked were something else. They were filled with a profound hatred of anything

Greek and quite ready to frame suspects. To prevent this each team contained a Greek speaking NCO to ensure 'fair play'. These were NSM who had studied Classical Greek and thus the sort of people temperamentally unsuited to work of this nature."¹⁰

Such a report was corroborated by other servicemen later in the campaign. Martin Bailey served with the Royal Air Force Police in the later stages of the campaign and further testified to the brutality given to the predominantly Turkish force: "Interrogations were often carried out by the Special Branch of the Cyprus Police, who were almost invariably Turkish Cypriots with a vested interest in obtaining a 'confession'. To prevent this a Greek speaking soldier, often a [National Serviceman] would be attached to each interrogation team to ensure 'fair play'. Nonetheless on occasion the interrogators would let their enthusiasm run away with them with calamitous results. Walker remembers 'a friend of mine was a member of a team that reportedly killed a prisoner...'"¹¹

Such distrust on the part of the reliability of the Turkish dominated police for security duties was noted by other members. National Serviceman Robert Whittle remarked that he wasn't sure

²R. Holland, *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954 – 1959* (Oxford, 2011), p. 43.

³Novo, 'Friend or Foe?', p. 421.

⁴Novo, 'Friend or Foe?', p. 422.

⁵Bell, M., *The End of Empire: The Cyprus Emergency* (Barnsley, 2015), p. 45.

⁶Holland, R., *Britain and the Revolt in Cyprus, 1954 – 1959* (Oxford, 2011), p. 68.

⁷Novo, 'Friend or Foe', p. 423.

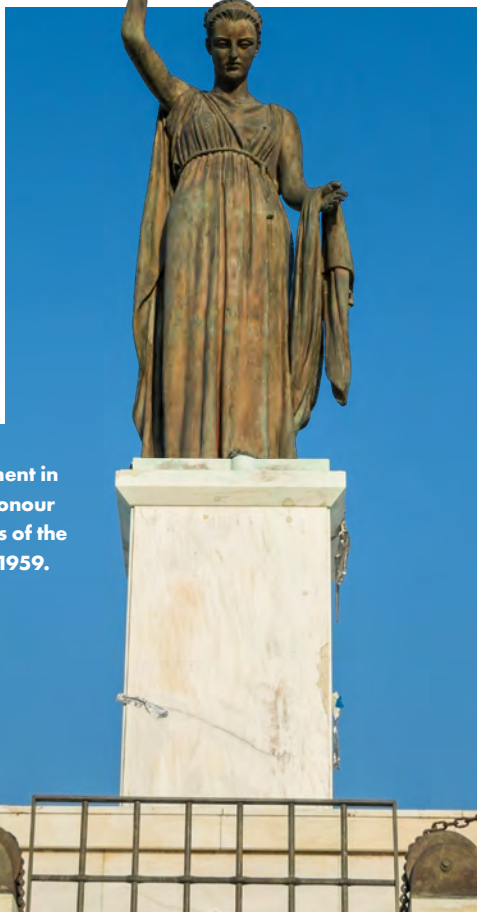
⁸FCO 371/123897/1081/1169A (1956), KEW, p. 2.

⁹D. French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency on Cyprus, 1955 – 1959* (Oxford, 2015). p. 152.

¹⁰2002-07-365 (N.D.), NAM, p. 20.

¹¹2002-07-365 (N.D.), NAM, p. 36.

Statue of The Liberty Monument in Nicosia, erected in 1973 to honour the anti-British EOKA fighters of the Cyprus Emergency of 1955–1959.



"The impetus for organising Turkish Cypriot political groups had very much been 'grassroots' in the initial stages, but over time the leadership became increasingly subservient to the policies of the Turkish government. By the late 1950s, it was clear that Ankara had taken a dominant role in shaping the political direction of the Turkish Cypriot community."



"in retrospect" that leaving the guard of their camp to the Turkish police "was terribly wise", given the local Greeks employed.¹² The inter-communal crisis of 1958 saw the relationship between the Turkish security forces and the British descend from one of mutual collaboration, if wariness, to outright distrust. It was at this point that the collaboration began to cease, as Turkish Cypriots were pressured to cease working with the British (as in the civil service) or use their position to actively incite inter-communal violence. Several regular Turkish policemen were found to be senior members of the TMT [Turkish Resistance Organisation], and the Governor Sir Hugh Foot reported in 1958 that: "Turkish police, particularly the auxiliaries had not been consistently reliable, although they are still carrying out their basic duties. They are particularly subject to incitement and agitation..."¹³

So serious was the perceived threat that there were significant concerns over the potential danger posed by the Turkish members of the police to the British, should a Turkish invasion take place: "...our lords and masters did have doubts about the loyalty of the Turkish police and there we were locked into a fortified compound with hundreds of the buggers. We were told to sleep with our pistols tied to our wrists and this we did for some three or four weeks, until the problem resolved itself."¹⁴

Despite the problems a de facto Turkish Cypriot force resulted in, the British authorities saw Turkish participation in the police as a means by which further sectarian devolution could be avoided. Turkish Cypriot leaders Fazıl Küçük and Rauf Denktaş had made repeated calls for an exclusively "Turkish Home

Guard", commanded "by a British officer or sergeant".¹⁵ The British, fearful of further inflaming inter-communal tensions, instead sought to keep the Turkish Cypriots within the existing colonial security structures. However, this strategy became increasingly untenable as the Emergency progressed, with British officials acknowledging that many Turkish Cypriots, especially those in the police, had shifted their loyalties and were increasingly seen as part of the problem.

Such a breakdown in trust was exacerbated by an understanding within the British forces that the Turkish Cypriots might be prone to take direction from the Turkish Government in Ankara. The impetus for organising Turkish Cypriot political groups had very much been 'grassroots' in the initial stages, but over time the leadership became increasingly subservient to the policies of the Turkish government. By the late 1950s, it was clear that Ankara had taken a dominant role in shaping the political direction of the Turkish Cypriot community. Reports from British officials noted that the Turkish government had significant influence over the actions and attitudes of Turkish Cypriot leaders. As early as in September 1956, Governor Sir John Harding had assessed that: "The attitude of Dr Küçük and his followers to the constitution when published, will I feel sure, be very largely if not entirely governed by the attitude of the Turkish Government."¹⁶

The concern around the possibility of external involvement was also manifested in the British response to Turkish Cypriot protest, and Turkish Cypriot paramilitary action. One of the key dynamics of their riots was the apparent

orchestration behind what might have seemed, at first glance, spontaneous demonstrations. When rioting against the British and Greeks first began in January 1958, Foot suspected that action was taken on behalf of the Turkish government.¹⁷ The organisation and efficiency behind Turkish Cypriot protests was not just hinted at by their seeming spontaneity, but also their effectiveness in creating visceral scenes demanding the attention of the authorities. One such demonstration involved the use of women, in an attempt to discourage the authorities from dispersing the protest using the usual violent means to avoid appearing heavy-handed: "The Turks have a flair for the spectacular that the Greeks haven't... Dashing out on to the balcony of the police station, I saw some 300 frenzied females approaching up the street. They put on a most interesting demonstration/riot, tearing about in all directions. Screaming and yelling 'Taksim' in a most unladylike manner. The Army rose to the occasion well. It carried out one or two small baton charges – the normal method prescribed for male riots – but dispersed the women in the most effective way by spraying them with orange dye. The street was clear in next to no time, which shows how clothes-conscious the Turks are."¹⁸

¹²2002-07-365 (N.D.), NAM, p. 25.

¹³French, *Fighting EOKA*, p. 263.

¹⁴2002-07-365 (N.D.), NAM, p. 15.

¹⁵Bell, M., *The End of Empire: The Cyprus Emergency* (Barnsley, 2015), p. 100.

¹⁶FO 371/123924/1081/1975 (1956), KEW, p. 1

¹⁷French, *Fighting EOKA*, p. 259.

¹⁸Bell, *The End of Empire*, p. 101.

Such protests were exploited to the widest possible effect by media based in Turkey, and Turkish cultural organisations across the world. Whereas the reaction of the Turkish Cypriot community to the January rioting was mixed, the case abroad was different. In London, 2,000 Turkish Cypriots orchestrated a rally and march on Downing Street, distributing leaflets sympathetic to their position. They drew attention to the marches that had taken place in Nicosia which had led to the "outrageous and brutal killings by British Troops of eight innocent Turkish Cypriots, including a boy of seven, and a woman of 67", going on to accuse the British of pro-Greek bias. Their petition to Prime Minister Harold Macmillan restated the demand for taksim along with protests regarding the deaths of Turks involved in the rioting.¹⁹ The slogans chanted by those supporting were particularly revealing. They warned of civil war, accused the Labour Party (the force of anti-colonial sentiment) of betraying them, and even threatened Turkish military intervention: cries of 'if forced, Turkey will step in', 'Turks are the real owners of Cyprus' and 'Foot out, Menderes in', illustrate viscerally how protests in Nicosia were exploited elsewhere for maximum effect.²⁰ One leaflet distributed by the National Turkish Student's Union claimed that Cyprus was "in the heart of 27 million", the crescent and star of the Turkish flag pointing downwards towards Cyprus from the heart of Anatolia.²¹ Such exploitation of local troubles beyond the island itself came to represent a consistent problem for the British, as such organisations' demands would far exceed the requests of the Turkish Cypriot community in Cyprus proper.

Reactions from the community in Cyprus were far more balanced. For instance, some Turkish Cypriots, particularly in urban areas like Limassol, were reported to have shown little adverse reaction to British actions, suggesting that the unrest was not representative of the community's sentiments. This complexity is reflected in the accounts of British soldiers, such as Martin Bell, who reported that their relationship with the Turkish Cypriots would fluctuate: "...our relationship with the Turks was variable. Depending on the prevailing political weather, which blew hot and cold, sometimes we baton charged them and sometimes we fraternised with them. I noted that on some days the Turks waged war in the morning, cooled off in the afternoon, and offered us coffee and cakes in the evening."²²

The British faced the ongoing problem of distinguishing between genuine grassroots sentiment and political manoeuvring orchestrated by the Turkish Cypriot leadership.

"Although Turkish political actors within and external to Cyprus shared much of the same goals as the British, their pushing for a maximalist position through using external media pressure and internal Cypriot groups could hardly be described as benign. Writing some 70 years on from the beginning of the Emergency, such problems have not ceased to be relevant, and serve as a cautionary tale to any who work with host nation security forces in sectarian style scenarios."

The influence of external actors, particularly the Turkish government, made the situation even more complicated.

This external pressure led the British to tread carefully in their dealings with the TMT. The TMT was a paramilitary group which was closely linked to political leaders, enforced loyalty to the leadership's stance through intimidation, violence and the suppression of dissent. The TMT's activities paralleled those of EOKA in their brutal methods of coercion, targeting left-wing Turkish Cypriots, 'collaborators' within the security forces such as policemen, and those who favoured inter-communal cooperation, and with a similar degree of 'viciousness' despite being smaller.²³ 'Punishments' included communal denunciation and boycott, mutilation, threats of assassination and open violence.²⁴ By the end of May 1958, the TMT had applied its grip on the community in order to control the reactions of Turkish Cypriots to any peace arrangement that was proposed, and used this grip to disrupt the workings of the Cypriot government: "...there is of course a considerable element of political pressure in the demands from the Turkish Civil Servants. They are under even greater intimidation from violent elements in their own community than are the Greek Officials. Even in the case of C.B.S. (where it is clearly in the interest of the Turkish community to keep the Turkish News Service going) there have been persistent efforts to interfere with the Turkish staff and dissuade them from attending."²⁵



Although the British were aware of the TMT's violent activities, they were hesitant to take firm action against them. The TMT was tied too closely to the Turkish Cypriot leadership, including figures like Rauf Denktaş, to be easily isolated without risking further alienating the community. Moreover, the British were concerned about the potential fallout from Ankara, whose support they still needed in the negotiations surrounding Cyprus' future. The British also feared that cracking down too harshly on the TMT could alienate the Turkish Cypriot community, further destabilising the situation and pushing more Turkish Cypriots into the arms of violent paramilitary groups. This was compounded by the fact that the TMT was not as large or as well-resourced as EOKA, and thus did not present the same kind



Divided island: The 'green line' will be familiar to those in the British Army who have served as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus.

Pictures courtesy of Soldier Magazine © Crown copyright and UN Photo (Yutaka Nagata/Eskinder Debebe)



of immediate military threat to the British. The TMT's role in inciting inter-communal violence and its complicity in undermining British efforts for a peaceful resolution meant that effectively proscribing the organisation without producing a backlash proved hard to achieve.

The lessons for a future counterinsurgency operation, and potentially the parallels to modern-day conflicts, are clear. Despite originally sharing a common objective, the relationship between the Turkish Cypriot community and the British authorities became marked by distrust by the conclusion of the

campaign. Although no actor sought to stir up a sectarian bloodbath, the consequence of a homogeneous police force known for unreliability and violence made such an outcome inevitable. Although Turkish political actors within and external to Cyprus shared much of the same goals as the British, their pushing for a maximalist position through using external media pressure and internal Cypriot groups could hardly be described as benign. Writing some 70 years on from the beginning of the Emergency, such problems have not ceased to be relevant, and serve as a cautionary tale to any who work with

host nation security forces in sectarian style scenarios.

¹⁹FCO 141/3845/1015/8, (1958), KEW, p. 4

²⁰FCO 141/3845/1015/8, (1958), KEW, p. 5.

²¹FCO 141/3845/1015/8, (1958), KEW, p. 7.

²²Bell, *The End of Empire*, p. 100.

²³Dodd, C., *The History and Politics of the Cyprus Conflict*, (Basingstoke, 2011), p. 3.

²⁴FCO 141/3845/1015/91, (1958), KEW, p. 1.

²⁵FCO 141/3845/1015/74, (1958), KEW, p. 2.

'IT'S A LOTTA TREE'... LIFTING THE LID ON GRADINGS

AUTHOR

The Boxer is a serving British Army officer who floats around the Service like a butterfly and whose words *can* sting like a bee.



WEEVES had been adjutant of the 3rd Battalion for one year, five months, 13 days and 18 hours, and thought that he understood WO2 'Tony' Stark. But, courtesy of the warrant officer's 'inventive' use of English, it was impossible to ever be completely certain about the meaning of his musings.

"Hopefully, this might shed sunlight on the problem, sir," offered Tony, demonstrating his flair for linguistic freestyling. "It's the detail, of which I have an unrifled insight, that helps

to sort the sheep from the ghosts. For example, I've got a stinking suspicion Lance Corporals Taylor and Griffiths have been conjugating in the tattoo shop during work time. I think Griff is going for a Michael Wossisname painting the Sixteenth Chapel look with all that ink – it must have cost 'im an arm and an egg." Weeves, bemused, bit back an "and so...?" and felt it best just to nod sagely.

That morning, Weeves had to convene the Regimental Grading Conference and Tony's 'unrifled insights' were considered invaluable in helping to 'rank' the Battalion's men and women against their peers and, ultimately, determine promotions. Having never served with any other unit during his 20 years in uniform, he knew the character and culture of the Battalion better than anyone. Despite being something of a living legend, Tony's own professional ceiling had looked destined to be sergeant, but, having been fortunate enough, a few years earlier, to have taken possession of an encrypted British Army radio that had been for sale at a local car boot sale, he had finally 'earned' his crown and cemented his niche in the Mortar Platoon.

So, on a stiflingly hot Tuesday, straight after a punishing PT session, the Battalion sub-unit commanders, warrant officers and the second-in-command sat with Lieutenant Colonel Jooster, the CO, to decide on the career fate of the soldiers and non-commissioned officers.

"I've got an important meeting with the Brigadier in an hour, and I need to get changed first, so let's get this cracked quickly," said the commanding officer, setting the tone for what was to follow. "I've pretty much made up my mind on where people are going to be placed, so I only want comments by exception please."

Weeves had come to realise that the path to greatness was built on the standing of the person who represented you at a grading board. Some soldiers, for example, were blessed to have Major Trimsdale in their corner – he was competent, articulate and compelling in his recommendations, and



the CO liked him. Consequently, his people generally promoted quickly.

On the other hand, Major Peter Foretonne-Bedford, a man Weeves considered 'untroubled by self-doubt', who commanded D Company, was generally less successful at grading boards. Major Effing-B, as he was known by some, or 'the upside-down swan' by most, was on exercise at the other end of the country and had subsequently joined online. He'd applied for a car to drive himself back to camp, but it had been refused by the civil servant in Brigade HQ because he could technically dial in. Distance, poor Wi-Fi and the caprices of Teams meant that he kept accidentally interjecting.

"For Pete's sake, Peter, stop interrupting," shouted the colonel, who was acutely aware of the time (given that his meeting with the Brigadier was to discuss his own promotion prospects).

'Tony' Stark seized the moment of embarrassed silence to make his pitch for a D Company favourite. "It's probably a mute question and we're sort of walking on uncharted water here, but I assume Lance Corporal Fleet will be graded near the top?"

"Hmm," came the response from the upside-down swan. "He's quite junior and it's not really his turn to promote – he can wait a bit."

Weeves looked incredulously at the CO and the RSM. "I agree that Lance Corporal Fleet is quite junior," Weeves acknowledged, "but he was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for storming a machine gun only six months ago. Surely that's got to be a sign of some potential for the future?"

Major Foretonne-Bedford was not to be denied. "If I've read your pre-meeting brief properly, Weeves, it seems that I've only got one promotion place guaranteed in my company, and Lance Corporal Gutt has done a cracking job looking after the regimental goat, so he's my man. Fleet can wait until next year. He's got time."

A wave of the hand from the CO indicated the matter was settled and it was time to move on. Weeves made a note to speak to Fleet to reassure him that he was valued by the Battalion, but he would have to wait to do so, given that the overlooked soldier in question was having tea with the King at Buckingham Palace that week.

"So, all done then?," asked the colonel,

WO2 'Tony' Stark shedding sunlight.....



glancing at his watch, in what sounded more like a statement.

"I'm afraid not, sir," interjected Weeves, "we need to discuss Corporal Cornell. He's nearing his last few years in the Army and if we don't recognise his loyalty, steadiness and hard work it'll have a lasting effect on his pension."

"Totally," said Tony, "the stuff 'e done looking at those Russian high philosophy missiles is unpresidented. He's condor-ed up some amazing stuff that's gone up to London and I'm not precluding the possibility it'll save fowzens of lives."

Colonel Jooster, somewhat distracted by the distance = speed x time calculation of how he was going to get home, changed and to the Brigadier's office, wasn't so sure. "He's done some good work, but to be honest, he doesn't

really look the part, and I don't think it would send the right message to promote him to sergeant."

Tony raised his hand and cleared his throat in a tone that silenced the room. The RSM closed his eyes. "Sir... with permission, I've gotta speak up. Everyone respects him and I don't think that the troops care what he looks like. He's a legend. I'm not going to let him fade into Bolivian. He's given his heart and soles to this Battalion for years, he's cleverer than Alfred Einstein, he's a mentor, an inspiration, he's been overlooked for too long, and nobody is more deserving of a place in the Sergeants' Mess. That's what I think anyway."

Nobody could argue with the truth of Tony's statement. Corporal Cornell, with many years of loyal and steady service in Headquarters Company behind him, had long demonstrated the ability to be a sergeant. Initially the view that 'he had time' prevailed, and then later, with a new commanding officer, that his skills and talents (and waistline) didn't correspond with the Battalion's mission – "a round peg amongst square holes". And now there was the danger he'd never receive the recognition that the Battalion's 'influencers' believed that he'd long deserved. Colonel Jooster looked at Tony, the self-appointed custodian of the 3rd Battalion, and realised that the warrant officer had nothing to gain and everything to lose by challenging him in public. He was doing it because it was the right thing to do.

The colonel looked down at his watch and then up at Tony. Collecting his papers together and rising from his chair he said: "Okay, put him top. Now I really must go."

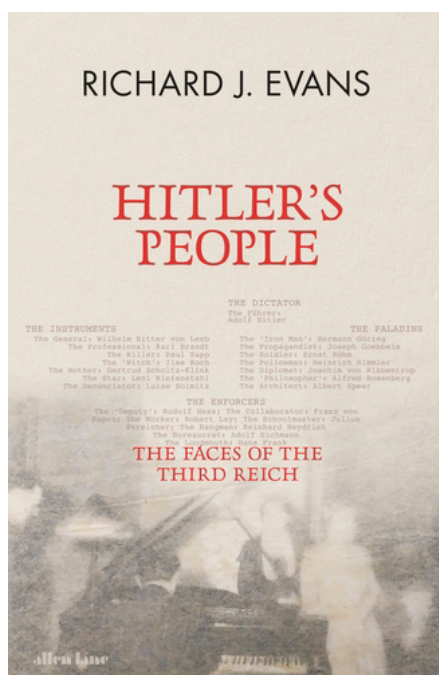
As Weeves packed up the conference room he reflected that, regardless of the Army's efforts to ensure that a meticulous process was followed, with 'transparency' and 'fairness' as its watchwords, careers were still, as they always have been, decided in a precarious setting where triumph and disaster were only a well-phrased comment by the right (or wrong) person apart.

"Good result in the end, Tony," he commented as he locked the door.

"In the end, sir, but it's hardly a lightbulb moment when you remember that you work for an organisation that drives with its lights on during the day and turns them off at night."

The Boxer will be back in the next issue of The British Army Review...





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TITLE

Hitler's People: The Faces of the Third Reich

AUTHOR

Richard J. Evans

REVIEWER

Professor Matthias Strohn,
Head of Historical Analysis, CHACR

INVESTIGATION OF THE MOTIVES OF THE USUAL (AND UNUSUAL) NAZI SUSPECTS

How could a civilised people such as the Germans commit the crimes and atrocities of the Nazi regime? How and why did they follow Hitler all the way to the end and to total destruction of Germany? These questions have kept generations of people occupied. Hannah Arendt famously spoke of the 'banality of evil' when she attended the trial of Adolf Eichmann, one of the main organisers of the Holocaust, in Jerusalem in 1961. Were the followers of Hitler and the Nazi regime all psychopaths and criminals or was there more to it that turned ordinary men and women into followers of this ideology? This is the main question that Richard J. Evans sets out to answer in his book.

In order to achieve this, the author provides biographical portraits of 22 individuals, grouped into four different categories. The first is reserved for Hitler himself. Part two, called 'The Paladins', and part three, entitled 'The Enforcers', offer overviews of the Führer's principal followers. The list here includes the usual suspects, such as Göring, Goebbels and Hess. In many ways, the last part, 'The Instruments', is the most fascinating, because it moves away from the 'Nazi A-list' and provides insights into lesser-known individuals. The seven people portrayed here came from all sorts of different backgrounds and had very different roles in the Third Reich. The list includes, amongst others, the Field Marshal Ritter von Leeb; Hitler's medic (and mass murderer) Karl Brandt; the film director Leni Riefenstahl; and the 'Denunciator' Luise Solmitz, a 'silent supporter' – as Evans describes her – of the regime.

Much ink has been spilt about most of these

subjects (with the exception of some in the concluding part of the book), and so the reader will not find a lot of ground-breaking new stories or evidence. Having said this, the wider and deeper knowledge of the individuals portrayed is usually kept within the walls of the academic ivory tower or between the covers of dense academic writing.

Hitler's People chooses a different path: adhering to academic principles (including a wealth of references), the vignettes are long enough to paint vivid pictures of the eponymous 'people' and to explain their roles and behaviour in the Third Reich, but they are short enough to make them accessible for the general reader. In addition, the text is written in an engaging manner, which makes it easy to follow the author's arguments and to bring to life the personal stories of the individuals discussed.

Some of the more general points that Evans makes can be debated, for example, his elaborations on the German Army's view on 'Total War' and the annihilation of not only the enemy forces, but 'the enemy nation as well'. Also, German geography does not seem to be the author's strong point. For instance, he confuses the major city of Nuremberg with a small town more than 400 kilometres away, and the Buchenwald concentration camp was not close to Dresden as Evans states, but to the city of Weimar.

Despite these glitches, this is a book worth reading. It is recommended to anybody with an interest in human behaviour, the Third Reich, and the role that individuals played in it, be they the paladins of the regime or 'ordinary people'.





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TITLE

War, Technology and the State

AUTHOR

Warren Chin

REVIEWER

Professor Andrew Stewart,
Head of Conflict Research, CHACR

A TIMELY TAKE ON TECH-TONIC SHIFTS AND TOMORROW'S WARS

In July 2024, the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Roly Walker, delivered the concluding keynote speech to the annual Land Warfare Conference. Within this he alluded to the importance of the conceptual and intellectual contribution to preparing for any coming battle, warning of “the paradox of how we think about the future but fight in the past” and highlighting a “gap of 20 years between what is thought and what is taught”. His emphasis, however, was on what he accepted was now a medium-sized army and how its lethality could be increased to such a level that any adversary “would be decisively defeated in the first battle and would be denied a strategy of a quick war”. Critical to accomplishing this is technological change and how it is applied to the British Army as it prepares to fight on the modern battlefield.

Warren Chin has provided a timely and most valuable contribution to the subsequent debate, one which has expanded beyond the defence community into more mainstream discussion with the rapidly evolving geopolitical dislocation caused by the change of political leadership in the United States. How military organisations make sure they are best equipped to fight has always been of paramount importance, not least as this can often prove the difference between victory and defeat. The author raises numerous questions about how technology has, historically, acted as a driver of change and what impact and consequences this will have for the future conduct of war. And without seeking to abridge what is an often deeply reflective and

nuanced argument, this can be consolidated in his conclusion that “technology will exert a profound impact on the conduct of war” but – and it is an important caveat – “not necessarily in the way Western militaries had assumed”.

Completed in 2022, only a few months after Russia had expanded its war against Ukraine, and with its foundations as a piece of research-led teaching and a course developed at the UK Defence Academy, *War, Technology and the State* is a book with multiple strands. The opening section incorporates a brief but sophisticated literature review which points to a deep intellectual base. In this, two schools of thinking are identified, which the author labels as ‘traditional’ and ‘revisionist’ and are riven with diverging approaches (and views). Within these, there are a range of contributors from writers and thinkers who have focused on weapons and capabilities through to those whose work has been infused more with a study of cultural and societal drivers. The writer is quick to highlight “the interaction between society and technology” and it forms an important part of the study along with the repeated references to and discussions of the war-state relationship. This is in addition to a wide-ranging and often fascinating condensed historical survey which provides valuable context and the basis for the ‘big’ discussions that are put forward as it builds into a more contemporary study, central to which is Klaus Schwab’s ‘fourth industrial revolution’ and its fusion of the physical, biological and digital domains.



This survey is tightly organised into five chapters based broadly around specific periods in the evolution of war and technology, spanning from the early modern to the near future. It is an impressively agile historical examination, moving at pace from the pre-Napoleonic to the battlefields of Crimea, then on through the trenches of the First World War to Bletchley Park and the work of Colossus and passing through to Vietnam, in each case demonstrating the role and impact of technology. Discussing the years following the end of the Cold War, it is explained how the United States looked to exploit a technological advantage it had developed and the conceptual framework of the AirLand Battle. The subsequent 'Revolution in Military Affairs' ensured the perceived advantages gained from the last two decades would act as the default setting, one which the American military has sought to maintain ever since. Chin notes that such were the changes taking place that this period even generated novel descriptions and grammar to describe the character of conflict – such as 'spectator sports warfare' and 'virtual war' – which the 1999 air campaign in Kosovo and the war against the Taliban a few years later seemed to confirm as being the new norms.

The writer's inspiration for producing the book is especially obvious in the fifth chapter – *The Western Military Vision of Future War* – which is presumably now required reading at the Staff College. This provides an excellent overview of debates that were at the forefront of thinking very recently – racing through multi-domain integration, great power competition, grey zone conflict and deterrence

“Technological advancement will not necessarily form part of a ‘bright shiny future’ but, instead, something ‘darker and more dystopian’.”

– before offering some insightful views on the future battle space. In some ways confirming one of the key challenges identified within the book, this section opens with reference to the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre's 2021 offering, *The Orchestration of Military Effects*, which is now already perhaps a victim of rapidly evolving events and a significantly altered strategic environment. While doctrine may struggle to keep pace with the speed of current events, for those without the time to read *War, Technology and the State*, the chapter should nonetheless hopefully be sufficient to stimulate some meaningful reflection, not least in terms of what the battlefield looked like only a few years ago.

The sixth chapter adds further to the discussion looking specifically at the 2022 invasion of Ukraine and what the then early stages of the conflict meant for future warfare. Basing the analysis at the operational and tactical levels, five significant developments are identified relating to the character of the key war-state relationship which, taken together, “reinforce the traditional role of the state in the orchestration and conduct of war”. Reviewing them now, there seems no reason to reject this conclusion and the significance of these developments. Without the conflict in Ukraine,

much more detailed study would likely have been made of the renewed fighting two years before between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region. The use of Turkish drones by the Azeri military proved key to their rapid and ultimately decisive victory (a final peace settlement has just been signed between the two countries ending an apparently 'forever war' that had begun in 1988). Again, from the increasingly distant vantage point of 2022, the writer uses this as an example to discuss in detail the role played by drones and correctly anticipates the impact they might have – and have had – on the battlefield.

For a reasonably short book, the final section is lengthy and provides more than just a typical synthesis of key themes and ideas. Within this, there is an important concluding argument, the degree to which the emergence of technology and the resulting introduction of increasingly novel and exotic weapon systems might well be taking place against a backdrop of fragmentation and decline of the global system of states. As Chin questions, there may be doubts about “whether the military can rely on a functioning state apparatus and the provision of legitimate government”. This reminds the reader of the degree to which, alongside everything else, the book is also a social commentary with its sombre warning that technological advancement will not necessarily form part of a “bright shiny future” but, instead, something “darker and more dystopian”. An intellectually stimulating and thought-provoking read which both answers questions and sets plenty more, it is one that hopefully goes some way to meeting the Chief of the General Staff's clarion call.





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and available in paperback
and ebook formats

TITLE

The October 7 War: Israel's Battle for Security in Gaza

AUTHOR

Seth J. Frantzman

REVIEWER

Staff Sergeant Rosie Constantine
Intelligence Corps

'TO THINK THE UNTHINKABLE'

This is something of a rare find – a book-length summary of the eponymous 'October 7 War', penned in English by a defence correspondent living in Israel (himself an Hebrew and Arabic speaker) and featuring first-hand interviews with Israeli military personnel. By and large, media have not been permitted to enter the Gaza Strip but the author, Seth J. Frantzman, was invited to do so in December 2023 by the Israeli military (an indication of his trusted status). The product of this access is an in-depth look at Israel Defense Forces (IDF) units and capabilities, with a particular spotlight on land forces. Unlike the militaries fighting in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the IDF is comparable to a NATO force in respect of training and equipment, so this book's observations offer some key takeaways on fires, civil-military cooperation, multi-domain operations and urban warfare for the British Army. Like many Western militaries, Israel has recently focused on special forces, new units and technology and Frantzman considers the impact of these elements on efforts to defeat Hamas.

The opening pages clearly state that the title is chiefly concerned about the first eight months of the war from a military perspective. Therefore, this is not a book about Gazan civilians, the Palestinian experience of the conflict or political viewpoints. The crux of Frantzman's analysis is that the attack of 7th October 2023 was a "black swan event" that illustrates "what happens when an unlikely scenario that has the chance of changing historical trajectories is unleashed". He compares this type of inflection point to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand, 9/11 and the dropping of the atomic bomb. It is hard to disagree – if a black swan event is defined as an incident that comes as a major surprise, with extreme impact, which then triggers rationalising in hindsight, then the attacks of 7th October fall into this category. Regardless of the fact that Hamas had previously and repeatedly articulated its intent to cause harm, Israel and regional analysts were undoubtedly caught off-guard by the scale and sophistication of the assault (described as a divisional level attack by Colonel (Retd) John Spencer of the Modern War Institute at West Point). As for the impact, the grotesque violence perpetrated on the 7th October echoed, for many, the type of antisemitic pogroms that were supposed to have been relegated to the pages of history. Finally, the rationalising in hindsight has been

immense – the events of the day brought the question of Palestine back into the global spotlight in a way it had not been since the peace process of the 1990s.

Frantzman is well aware of how Israel's enemies and critics view this war: unprecedented destruction and loss of civilian life in Gaza. By way of a contrast, he proffers "the IDF's and Israeli defense establishment's assessment is that the campaign exceeded expectations in its first several months: relatively few Israeli soldiers were killed while destroying most Hamas battalions and taking incredibly complex urban areas that are festooned with tunnels". The author sheds light on why the Israelis judged the second battle of Shifa to be one of its most successful of the campaign, and relays the lessons the IDF drew from attempting to balance the evacuation of civilians with speed of operations (while managing the complexities that come with bedding in new units and technologies).

The book's second chapter, *Momentum: Israel's New Way of War*, provides a fascinating and important overview of changes in the IDF. By the time of Hamas' surprise attack, Israel's 'Momentum Plan' (that intended to bring intelligence and technology to frontline troops to make warfare more efficient) was nearing full implementation, meaning that: "A lot of new equipment and technology were primed – but now it was time to see if it would all work smoothly together." The author notes that paradoxically the Momentum Plan had sought a faster, more efficient, war, but what unfolded was a "relatively slow war, moving systematically from one community to the next... as the new technology knitted all the elements together."

Chilling and excruciating in equal measure, Frantzman then traces the 'road to October 7'. The IDF were not the only ones interested in innovative systems – Hamas had studied Israel's use of technology and believed it could be overcome. How right they were. The "smart fence" and the Iron Dome contributed to a false sense of security and both were overwhelmed on 7th October. Frantzman underlines that as at 2023 Israeli airspace was the most defended, per capita, in the world, but is forced to conclude that "air defence is not a substitute for strategy".

And so in Part II, the book deals with the events of 7th October. The author was in Jerusalem that day and upon being woken by rocket

sirens, headed south to investigate. In addition to covering the horrors of what unfolded in the hours that followed, he has chronicled tales of heroism, such as several incidences of civilians commandeering tanks to fight back against the invaders, among them revellers at the Nova festival who – despite no prior experience – used machine guns to save others.

For this reviewer, the book contributes to the body of knowledge on this conflict in respect to two arenas: the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and continuity of military leadership. Frantzman slams the former for their alleged complicity – turning a blind eye to actions such as storing weapons in, or the building of tunnels nearby, their locations. He describes as “symbiotic” the relationship between Hamas and NGOs, and believes the latter are “profiting” from the suffering in Gaza. There are observations to be drawn relevant to civil military cooperation, especially in cases where foreign peacekeeping troops are brought into the mix to interact with aid agencies in environments where passions and hatreds run so deep that said organisations are moved to support one side or the other.

A subtle detail teased out by Frantzman is the fact that Israel chose not to remove the military leadership in charge at the time of the Hamas breach and subsequent massacre, or to conduct an immediate internal investigation into any security failures. Consequently, the top brass remained in post, affording the individuals in question the opportunity to

atone for any mistakes made. This ‘driver’ – conscious or subconscious – combined with military careers having been spent predominantly conducting “mowing the grass”-type operations and a clear signal from the body politic to remove Hamas from power presents an interesting psychological dimension to the conduct of the war.

Criticisms levelled at the IDF are not explored in any real depth, but –in fairness – that is not the book that Frantzman set out to write, and critical first-hand accounts by Israeli Service personnel are now appearing should one seek to read them. Instead the author joins experts such as John Spencer in arguing that the IDF has set new standards in aspects of war during the Gaza conflict, and such voices should also be heard.

The title of this book, *The October 7 War*, is significant because the naming of wars is significant. As noted by an Israeli father whose daughter was a Nova festival-goer that was tortured and her corpse paraded around Gaza, this war should not be known by any other name (such as the most commonly used ‘Gaza War’). This has implications for Israel in terms of ‘winning the narrative’ when you consider that we know the events of October 1973 as the ‘Yom Kippur War’ not the ‘October war’, or those of 1967 as the ‘Six Day War’ not the ‘war in June’. In the words of Bernard-Henri Levi, “October 7, though historic in scope, became, within weeks, a ‘detail’ in the global consciousness”.

Nowhere does Frantzman state that Israel is facing an existential war against Hamas in Gaza, noting: “Israel had invested heavily in advanced technology and platforms, but in the end they were used against Hamas terrorists holed up in a hospital whose only weapons were AK-47s and mortars, weapons that were common in the 1960s. This meant that a fifth-generation army with F-35s was essentially fighting armed gangs.” My own opinion is that losing the propaganda war is the existential element at play.

Finally, there are enlightening, albeit brief descriptions of alternative courses of action Israel could have taken instead of ground operations in Gaza. Perhaps they are brief because they are now only a footnote to history, and this most grave of wars may yet continue (following the brief respite afforded by a two-month ceasefire earlier this year) until Israel ‘wins’ militarily, yes, but plays right into the hands of Hamas in terms of losing the propaganda war.

Dwelling on the events of the 7th October 2023 is not only a waking nightmare (particularly for someone who serves in military intelligence) but also prompts thinking about UK military vulnerabilities. To think of our own thinly defended fronts, as the enemy bides its time, emboldened not only by events in Ukraine but also the way the West was ‘tested’ in its response to the attacks of 7th October.

To think the unthinkable.

COMING SOON...

The world is less safe than it has been for more than half a century – there is a storm coming. The first duty of any nation’s government is to secure the safety of its people, and therefore the first duty of any nation’s army is to be ready to fight and win the nation’s wars. It would be both naive and irresponsible to assume that anyone can accurately predict the nature, scale or timing of the security problems that are approaching, and war has been (mercifully) distant from the capitals of western officialdom. Economic circumstance combined with social demands have meant that increasingly little resource has found its way into nations’ security preparations. But there are too many indicators and warnings that simply can no longer be ignored. So, what is being done to be ready for the coming storm?

Storm Proofing, edited by the team at the British Army’s Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research, offers the collected thoughts of 15 experts – respected practitioners and academics from the UK, US and Europe. They consider what is being done, whether that is sufficient, and how we might think differently about our preparations for 21st century war on land. This is not a book about numbers of troops and equipment, it is rather more human than that. So, it is about how we approach war, how armies might structure themselves and align themselves to modern contexts, how soldiers should think and might feel and, how all of those very human things relate to the march of technology and artificial intelligence.

Storm Proofing is being published by Helion & Company and is due for release on 7th May. Register your interest for a copy at helion.co.uk/military-history-books/storm-proofing-preparing-armies-for-a-future-war.php





Doctrine publications are to guide military operations and inform professional military education as you progress through your career. Since the last issue of *The British Army Review* was published, one allied joint doctrine publication has been promulgated.

Allied Joint Publication-2.4, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Signals Intelligence (Edition B, Version 1)* was published in February 2025. The publication provides NATO agreed guidance and a general framework for conducting signals intelligence (SIGINT) activities in support of NATO operations, primarily at the joint operational level. The publication can be accessed on the Defence Gateway.

Under Strategic Command's transformation programme the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC) has undergone major changes, with part of the former organisation evolving into Defence Futures and the Joint Doctrine team moving under the command of the newly redesignated Integrated Warfare Centre (formerly Joint Warfare). This move has the purpose of 'integrating support to campaigns and Joint Commanders' in a more direct and interoperable way. The former DCDC Doctrine team has been renamed the IWC Joint Doctrine team, but has remained at MoD Shrivenham and is still located in the same location to enable synergy and collaboration with the Defence Futures Concepts and Strategic Foresight teams. All former DCDC publications and associated products will remain accessible via the existing digital platforms on defnet, GOV.UK and Defence Gateway.



The Land Warfare Centre Warfare Branch recently published the following media.

Doctrine Note: *Deep Operations*

This doctrine note positions land deep operations within the full orchestra of war available at national and allied levels and codifies the Army's current land deep operations doctrine: it articulates how the Army currently thinks about land deep operations. It represents a distillation of the current land deep operations doctrinal approach, based on lessons learned from military history, observation of contemporary conflicts as well as training and experimentation. Much of the doctrine note's contents will inform the rewrites of corps and divisional tactics and fires handbooks, currently scheduled for 2025. This doctrine acknowledges that deep operations methodologies apply in subthreshold activities, and focuses on articulating current doctrinal thinking on land deep operations in large-scale combat operations.

Army Field Manual: *Forest Operations*

Forest Operations provides specific and contemporary guidance for the conduct of land operations in a forest environment. It replaces *Doctrine Note 19/03, Operations in Forests*. With a focus on conventional warfighting operations against a peer or peer+ adversary, the definitions, descriptions and characterisations in this Army Field Manual are entirely coherent with the NATO *Allied Tactical Publication (ATP)-3.2.1.4, Conduct of Land Tactical Operations in Forest Environments*. It extends ATP-3.2.1.4 to include aspects pertinent to UK force elements and capabilities. It is not a standalone document, but complements the wider Army Field Manual portfolio, addressing the nuances posed by the forest environment.



Reconnaissance-Strike Primer

Reconnaissance-strike (recce-strike) sees the combination of sensors with strike effectors to find and understand the enemy at increased stand-off from one's own forces and, in combination with fluid, high-tempo close manoeuvre, shape and destroy them. The *Reconnaissance-Strike Primer* aims to further explain the land operating concept of recce-strike and set out how it can be implemented at every level of the Field Army.



How Russia Fights

A set of two films commissioned by the Land Intelligence Fusion Centre to give an introduction to Russian assault detachments based on information taken from Russian doctrine. The first film introduces and explains the assault detachments and their role and capabilities within Russian ground forces. The second film looks at how Russian assault detachments fight, including their doctrine and assault or 'storm' tactics in both the urban and forest environments.

Cold Weather Operations

A set of nine films building on the understanding of *Army Field Manual: Cold Weather Operations*. The films cover the environment and its impact on operations, implications for combined arms manoeuvre, planning considerations and other factors effecting operations.

"THE PURPOSE OF THE BRITISH
ARMY IS TO PROTECT THE UNITED
KINGDOM BY BEING READY TO
FIGHT AND WIN WARS ON LAND."



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