A Slim Barrier: The Defence of Mainland Australia 1939-1945

Author:
Arnold, Anthony

Publication Date:
2013

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.26190/unsworks/16482

A Slim Barrier
The Defence of Mainland Australia 1939-1945

Anthony Peter Arnold

A thesis in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

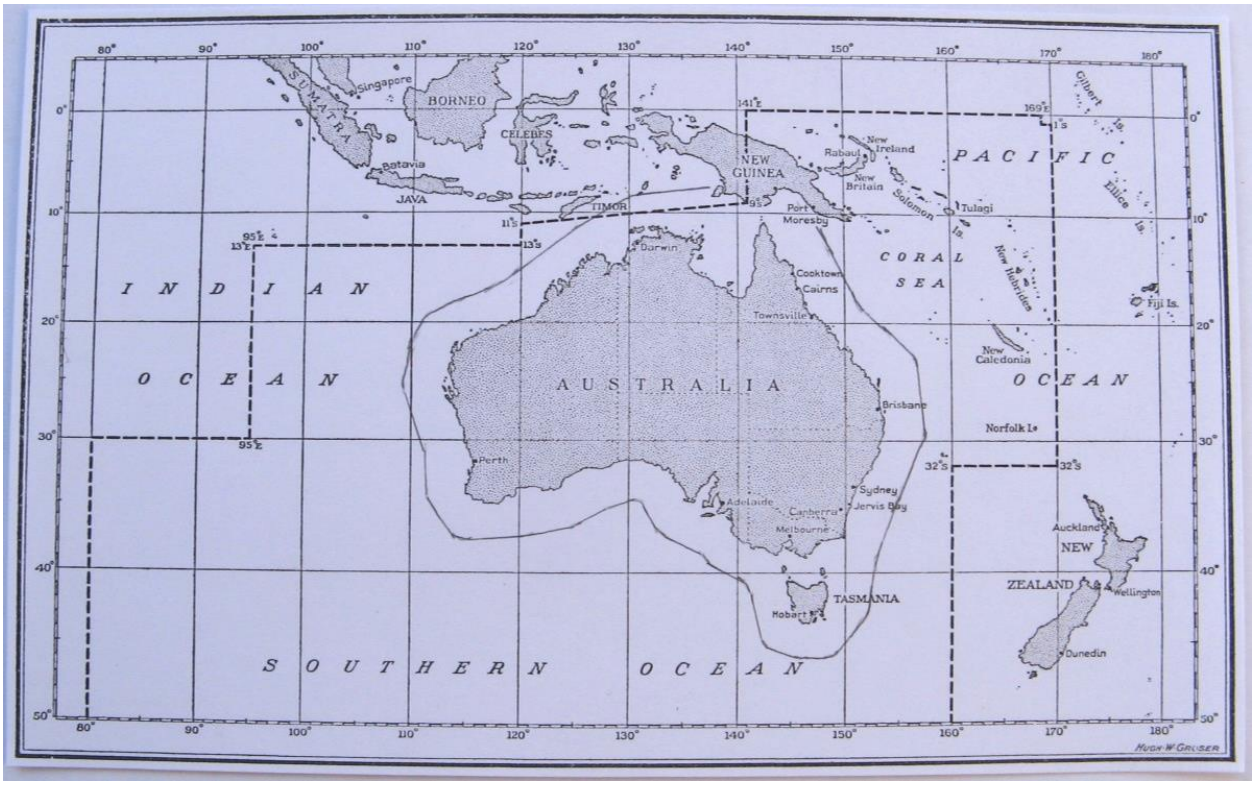
Doctor of Philosophy

UNSW

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

UNSW Canberra at ADFA

August 2013



Mainland Australia and the Australia Station 1939.

Australia Station: Dashed line.

Mainland Australia: Unbroken line around the Australian coast, excluding New Guinea.

PLEASE TYPE

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
Thesis/Dissertation Sheet

Surname or Family name: Arnold

First name: Anthony Other name/s: Peter

Abbreviation for degree as given in the University calendar: PhD

School: Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty: UNSW Canberra at ADFA

Title: **A Slim Barrier: The Defence of Mainland Australia 1939-1945**

Abstract 350 words maximum (PLEASE TYPE)

Two questions apply regarding Australia in World War II: what measures were taken to defend mainland Australia, and were those measures effective in meeting the perceived threat to Australia? Mainland Australia is defined as the mainland, Tasmania and the littoral waters out to 200 nautical miles (excluding New Guinea). Mainland defence is assessed at a systemic level, where the major elements of mainland defence are point defence systems, area defence systems, lines of communication, surveillance and intelligence. The minor elements are production capacity and national will. A qualitative assessment is made in each of six shifts in perceived threat. The fit for purpose test is applied: were the elements of mainland defence at that time appropriate to meet the perceived threat? The outcomes of the analysis follow.

At the start of the European war the perceived threats were German attacks on shipping (minor scale) or, at a medium scale, sustained attack on shipping and concurrent heavy raids if a war started with Japan. Mainland defence was partially fit for purpose.

When France fell and Italy declared war (mid-1940) there were three possible scales of Japanese attack: bombardment, light raids and invasion. Mainland defence was partially fit for purpose.

After the start of the Pacific War, events moved rapidly in the first 100 days. Threats were seen as: air attack; naval bombardment; a sea-borne raid; attack to permanently occupy territory; and invasion of Australia. Mainland defence was not fit for purpose.

When MacArthur arrived (March 1942) threats were: attacks in force against Australia, including invasion; attacks against Australian lines of communication. By then mainland defence was partially fit for purpose.

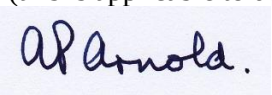
During the 'holding war' (mid-1942 – mid-1943) the Government held that incursion could not be ruled out. However the services saw the threat as sea bombardment, torpedo attack and air attack. By now mainland defence was fit for purpose, with the exception of Anti-Submarine Warfare.

Finally from mid-1943 to mid-1944 there was some residual threat. Mainland defence, despite being reduced, was fit for purpose. From mid-1944 on there was no threat, so the questions do not apply.

Declaration relating to disposition of project thesis/dissertation

I hereby grant to the University of New South Wales or its agents the right to archive and to make available my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in the University libraries in all forms of media, now or here after known, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I retain all property rights, such as patent rights. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

I also authorise University Microfilms to use the 350 word abstract of my thesis in Dissertation Abstracts International (this is applicable to doctoral theses only).

Signature  Witness Date 11 November 2013

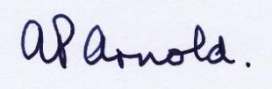
The University recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances requiring restrictions on copying or conditions on use. Requests for restriction for a period of up to 2 years must be made in writing. Requests for a longer period of restriction may be considered in exceptional circumstances and require the approval of the Dean of Graduate Research.

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY Date of completion of requirements for award

[intentionally bank]

ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

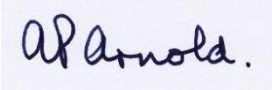
‘I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.’

Signed 

Date 11 November 2013

[intentionally bank]

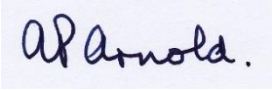
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

Signed 

Date 11 November 2013

AUTHENTICITY STATEMENT

‘I certify that the Library deposit digital copy is a direct equivalent of the final officially approved version of my thesis. No emendation of content has occurred and if there are any minor variations in formatting, they are the result of the conversion to digital format.’

Signed 

Date 11 November 2013

[intentionally bank]

Table of Contents	**Page**

Maps		**Page**
1.1	Mainland Australia and the Australia Station 1939	16
3.1	The Australian Railway System	88
3.2	Civil Aviation Routes, 1940	89
4.1	Fortress Sector Darwin, 27 June 1941	128
4.2	Darwin Area	129
5.1	The Japanese Pacific Perimeter	138
6.1	Darwin Area 1942	186
6.2	Australian Military Force boundaries, 9 April 1942	193
6.3	The South-West Pacific Area and the Extent of the Japanese Advance	196
6.4	Midget Submarine Raid on Sydney Harbour, 31 May – 1 June 1942	205
6.5	Japanese Submarines on the Australian Coast, 1942	212
7.1	North Australia Observer Unit – Company Locations 20 April 1943	236
7.2	The Moultrie Plan area	244
7.3	Japanese Submarine Operations, 1943	251
7.4	NT Force area and Air Bases, April 1943	264
7.5	Sydney Fire Command – Outer Defence	267
7.6	Sydney Fire Command – Inner Defence	268
8.1	Western Australia – Bases	294
8.2	Fixed Coast Defences, 31 August 1944	304

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge the invaluable assistance given to me by my supervisor, Dr John Connor, and I sincerely thank him for his sage advice.

I also acknowledge, with thanks, the assistance given to me by Bernadette McDermott and the staff of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (UNSW Canberra) and the staffs of the Australian Defence Force Academy Library, the Australian War Memorial Research Centre and the National Archives of Australia (Canberra and Melbourne).

Abbreviations

AA	Anti-Aircraft
AAA	Anti-Aircraft Artillery
AASL	Anti-Aircraft Search Light
ABDA	American British Dutch Australian
ACH	Area Combined Headquarters
ACO	Advanced Chain Overseas
AIB	Allied Intelligence Bureau
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
ALP	Australian Labor Party
AMF	Australian Military Forces (PMF and Militia, then 2nd AIF included in March 1942)
AMC	armed merchant cruiser
AMS	Australian minesweeper (‘corvette’)
ANZAC	Anzac area
A/S	anti-submarine
ASW	Anti-Submarine Warfare
ASV	air to surface vessel (radar)
AW	Air Warning
AWAS	Australian Women’s Army Service
AWC	Allied Works Council

AWM	Australian War memorial
Bde	Brigade
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CA	Coast Artillery
CAS	Chief of the Air Staff
CASL	Coast Artillery Searchlight
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CDH	Combined Defence Headquarters
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CHL	Chain Home Low (radar)
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
COIC	Combined Operational Intelligence Centre
COL	Chain Overseas Low Flying
CP	Country Party
CPD	Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CSIR	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
CWR	Central War Room
cwt	hundredweight
DAFP	Documents on Australian Foreign Policy
DEL	Defence Electric Light
DEMS	Defensively Equipped Merchant Shipping
DMOI	Director of Military Operations and Intelligence
DNG	Dutch New Guinea
DOMF	Darwin Overland Maintenance Force
EATS	Empire Air Training Scheme
GCI	Ground Controlled Intercept
GHQ	General Headquarters
GL	Gun Laying
GOC	General Officer Commanding
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
HMS	His Majesty's Ship
HQ	Headquarters
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JPC	Joint Planning Committee
LHQ	Land Force Headquarters

LoC	Lines of Communication
LW	Light Weight
LW/AW	Light Weight Air Warning
MAWD	Modified Air Warning Device
m	mile (statute)
mm	millimetre
MB	Mobile (radar)
MT	motor transport
NAA	National Archives of Australia
NAOU	Northern Australia Observer Unit
NEI	Netherlands East Indies
nm	nautical mile
NSW	New South Wales
NT	Northern Territory
NTF	Northern Territory Force
NZ	New Zealand
pdr	pounder (weight)
PM	Prime Minister
PMF	Permanent Military Forces
POL	Petrol oils and lubricants
PWSS	Port War Signal Station
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RDF	radio direction finding - radar
RN	Royal Navy
RPL	Radio Physics Laboratory
RWG	Canadian manufactured radar equipment Radio Enterprises Limited
2nd AIF	Second Australian Imperial Force
SA	South Australia
7MD	7 Military District (Northern Territory)
ShD	Shore Defence
SSDA	Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs
SWPA	South-West Pacific Area

TRU	possibly Transportable Radar Unit, also called MB (mobile)
UAP	United Australia Party
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
USN	United States Navy
USAAF	United States Army Air Force
USS	United States Ship
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; the formal title, also called Russia in the text
VAOC	Voluntary Air Observers Corps
VDC	Volunteer Defence Corps
WA	Western Australia
WWII	World War II

Units

The thesis uses Imperial units as they are presented in the sources. Nautical miles (nm) are used for air and sea distances and statute miles (m) for land distances. Height is given in feet and volume in gallons. Trucks are described by carrying capacity, in hundredweight (cwt) and tons. Ship displacements and supply weights are given in tons. Artillery is described by projectile or shell weight (pounds), or by calibre in inches or millimetres (mm) depending on the weapon. Artillery ranges are in yards. Small arms ammunition is described by calibre (inches). Money is given in Australian pounds (£).[1]

The conversion factors, to two decimal places, are:[2]

1 nautical mile = 6,080 feet = 1.85 kilometres 1 mile = 5,280 feet = 1.61 kilometres 1 yard = 3 feet = 0.91 metres 1 foot = 12 inches = 0.30 metres 1 inch = 25.4 mm	1 kilometre = 0.54 nautical miles 1 kilometre = 0.62 miles 1 metre = 1.09 yards 1 metre = 3.28 feet
1 pound = 454 grams 1 cwt = 112 pounds = 51 kilograms (kg) 1 ton = 20 cwt = 2,240 pounds 1 ton = 1,016 kg	1 kilogram = 2.21 pounds
1 gallon = 4.55 litres	1 litre = 0.22 gallons
£1 UK = £1.25 A = $4 US	

[1] The exchange rates are for the period 1941-1945. *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne. No 36, 1944-45, pp. 636-637.
[2] *A Dictionary of Units of Measurement*, http://www.unc.edu/~rowlett/units/, accessed 12 July 2009.

1

INTRODUCTION

In 1924 Wing Commander Stanley Goble and Flying Officer Ivor McIntyre left Point Cook in a Fairey IIID seaplane in an attempt to fly around Australia.[1] The main purposes of the flight were to reconnoitre a coastal aircraft defence route to Thursday Island and examine the coastline for possible bases. Such a flight needed considerable preparation, including pre-positioning fuel at 37 locations around the coast, the dispatch of spares and two engines to the north and west and aircraft modifications providing extra fuel and cooling capability. Even with this preparation the flight suffered considerable difficulty with weather, unserviceability and accident taking their toll. Furthermore, between staging bases the aircraft was completely out of touch with its support crew; it could not be tracked as it made its way around Australia. Notwithstanding the problems, the aircraft completed an anti-clockwise circumnavigation of Australia in 44 days, covering 7,400 nautical miles in 90 hours flying time.

This was the era of epic flights and this "epochmaking flight" caught the public imagination; a crowd of thousands met the aircraft on its return to Melbourne.[2] However it also clearly demonstrated a number of major problems involving the defence of mainland Australia: the continent, Tasmania and littoral waters.[3] One was the sheer distance between destinations in remote areas. Another was the lack of infrastructure to support military operations in remote areas. A third was the difficulty (if not impossibility) of tracking vehicles, aircraft and vessels conducting such operations. Finally, there was the issue of detecting attacking forces before they reached their targets.[4] These problems had not been addressed, let alone resolved, when the Pacific War began.

---

[1] For details of the flight see Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921-39*, Allen & Unwin (Royal Australian Air Force), North Sydney, 1991, pp. 385-389.
[2] *The [Melbourne] Argus*, 20 May 1924, p. 11.
[3] Mainland Australia is fully defined below.
[4] The significance of these problems was further emphasised by the work of the North Australian Survey Flight, 1935-1938. See Coulthard-Clark, pp. 428-439 for details.

The measures put in place to surmount the problems constituted a slim barrier against attack on Australia, a barrier that was compromised by a number of issues surrounding Australia's involvement in the global conflict that was the Second World War. This thesis examines the effectiveness of the slim barrier.

Australia entered the Second World War as a Dominion of the British Empire and subscribed to the concepts of Imperial Defence, defined by John McCarthy as "the joint defence of United Kingdom possessions and interests by a combination of United Kingdom, Dominion, and Colonial forces."[5] At the 1937 Imperial Conference Prime Minister Joseph Lyons described Imperial Defence as one of the three 'successive ramparts' of Australian security: the covenant of the League of Nations, the strength of the British Commonwealth, and Australia's own defences.[6]

Few Australians challenged Australia's membership of the Empire, however at the political and military levels there were elements of concern with Imperial Defence. This was particularly the case with the Singapore Strategy, which placed Australia under the umbrella of British sea power. The strategy proposed that a main fleet base would be built at Singapore. Australia would be responsible for its own local defence, which was to be of sufficient strength to contain an attack until the arrival of the British fleet. Despite the concerns with Imperial Defence, at the outbreak of the European war Australia made three major commitments. Elements of the Royal Australian Navy were released to serve with the Royal Navy, as and where directed by the British Admiralty. The Second Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) was raised and eventually sent overseas as an expeditionary force to fight as an element of a British force. Third, Australia agreed to participate in the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS), designed to ensure a regular flow of trained aircrew to the Royal Air Force – predominantly for operations in the European theatre.

---

[5] John McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39: A Study in Air and Sea Power,* University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1976, p. 1.

[6] Speech Mr J.A. Lyons, Prime Minister, First Plenary Session, Imperial Conference, London, 14 May 1937. R.G. Neale (ed), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-194.* Volume I: 1937-1938, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975, p. 67.

These commitments meant that front line manpower and equipment departed overseas. Consequently a major part of the third rampart, the development of defences for mainland Australia, was necessarily relegated to a lower priority even as it became apparent during 1941 that war with Japan was likely.[7] Then with the start of the Pacific War and the perception of imminent threat to Australia, measures were put into place to meet that threat and the whole Australian position in regard to the now global conflict radically shifted.

Two questions apply. What measures were taken to defend mainland Australia? Were those measures effective in meeting the perceived threat to Australia? The questions are simple to ask but, as will be seen, the answers are by no means simple.

This thesis will provide an analytical assessment of these questions. In doing so the thesis will remain situated in the mainstream of Australian military history but consider a topic – mainland defence in the Second World War – that has not yet been addressed in a singular, holistic sense. The thesis will include a systemic analysis at the 'middle' level of war, between strategic and tactical, of the effectiveness of the measures adopted in terms of capability, capacity and timeliness.

A number of arguments may be proposed about Australia's participation in the Second World War. The first argument is that Australia was a part of and committed to a system of Imperial Defence; agreements about that system were in place despite a lack of performance from some participants. This is linked to the 'good war' concept, in that Australia had a moral obligation to contribute to the defeat of Germany, Italy and Japan. The second argument is that Australia should have looked after itself and ensured local defence was adequate, even at the expense of supporting Britain; this is the 'someone else's war' concept or, at its extreme, the isolation argument. Most Australian military historians take a position somewhere between these two arguments. There is a third argument, initially associated with David Day and now largely discredited, of 'British

[7] There are a number of terms used in the literature to describe the defence of mainland Australia: local defence, home defence, coastal defence, fixed defence. The thesis will adhere to the term used by specific writers in describing their work, but the term mainland defence (defined in the Methodology) is used in this work.

betrayal' where Britain let Australia down when Australia faced the prospect of invasion.[8]

The thesis accepts the first argument, while the second argument is untenable in a stand-alone sense (and isolation became impossible in the 1940s as the US found out). The thesis does not accept the third argument. However, the thesis does accept that at times advice and assurances from Britain were disingenuous; the advice and assurances were designed to ensure that purely British interests were met.

The thesis line therefore sits between the first and second arguments. The thesis recognises the Australian commitment to Imperial Defence and argues that Australia did not do enough before and at the start of the war to ensure that the defence of Australia was in accordance with the resolutions of the 1923 Imperial Conference. It will be seen that mainland defence was continually less than that required, the response lagged the need, until the first half of 1943, then it met the requirement with the exception of Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW). The lag is obvious to anyone with a reasonable knowledge of Australia in the Second World War, but the analysis of mainland defence will clearly define the lag and, more importantly, explain how the situation came to be. The thesis will also argue that Australia faced unique pressures: first supporting Britain with men, munitions and food, and then facing a direct threat to the nation while also becoming a base for US operations and providing support for US forces. These pressures meant that Australia had to follow the 'contour of necessity'.

Having set the line, one very important point must be made and it must be kept in mind throughout the thesis. In the inter-war years and throughout the Second World War, Australia was British. Gavin Long, writing in 1952 and closer to that environment than writers in this post-imperial era, made the point clearly. Long said that despite the differences between Australians and the people of the United Kingdom

> "all shared a common culture. In childhood both Englishman and colonial had listened to the same rhymes and legends, read the same books, sung the same songs. The Australian ate plum pudding on Christmas Day, honoured the King, knew the dates of the Norman Conquest, Magna Carta, Trafalgar and Waterloo, and played

[8] David Day, *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1988.

English games. His books and his theatre came mostly from England. Thence was still drawn a strong contingent of his intellectual and spiritual leaders, and his own scholars sought post-graduate training and experience there. Economic interdependence fostered personal and sentimental links. The resentments and jealousies engendered by knowledge of Britain's considerable financial domination of Australian industry, of Australian public indebtedness to Britain and Britain's cultural authority were weak in comparison with the ties of cherished sentiments."[9]

It is true that Australia was bound to Britain economically; Australia was indebted to Britain, most Australian trade was with Britain and Australian industrial development was mainly funded by British loans and reliant on British technology. Were Britain to be defeated in a European war, it would have been disastrous for Australia.

Where does the thesis sit in the literature? The historiography of Australian involvement in the Second World War is huge and it would be impossible in the confines of a thesis introduction to conduct a comprehensive review.[10] To situate the thesis, the literature will be reviewed in the following categories: the official histories, strategic studies, campaign and regional histories, thematic studies, social histories and biographies.[11] The review demonstrates the lack of holistic treatment of mainland defence and the need for this work to be completed.

The Australian military history tradition was set for some decades by the official historian of the First World War, Charles Bean. Bean presented a 'democratic' history of the war, one that celebrated the role of the fighting men but subordinated issues of high command, strategy, logistics and doctrine.[12]

The twenty-two volumes of the official history of Australia in the Second World War may be put into two categories. First are the service histories, the campaign histories,

---

[9] Gavin Long, *To Benghazi*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, pp. 56-57.

[10] For a discussion of Australian military historiography, see Joan Beaumont (ed), *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Volume VI, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, pp. 1-11 and Jeffrey Grey, 'Cuckoo in the Nest? Australian Military Historiography: The State of the Field', *History Compass*, Vol 6, No 2, 2008, pp. 455-468.

[11] A select and annotated bibliography is in Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 3rd ed, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2008, pp. 310-316.

[12] The official histories are discussed in Beaumont, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, pp. 499-507, with a discussion of Bean's work at p. 503.

that continued the democratic history approach; they are supported by the medical series. However the focus is on the expeditionary forces and operations outside Australia. In itself this is not a concern, but war came very close to Australia in the Second World War, with the perception at a number of levels that invasion by Japan could and indeed would occur. Measures were in place for the defence of mainland Australia and frantic efforts were made to ensure that invasion could be repulsed, but the issue of mainland defence is neglected by the service histories. Some issues are addressed but, with one exception, they are only addressed in passing. Further the official history looks at the three services individually, so any treatment of mainland defence is in a single service context. Finally, the official history does not attempt any systemic analysis at the middle level of war, particularly with respect to mainland defence. The service histories have been drawn on where applicable and are useful sources of ancillary information that assist an assessment of the impact of overseas operations on mainland defence.

There is no official volume presenting documents from the war; this gap is partially covered by John Robertson & John McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939-1945 – A Documentary History*.[13] This is supported by the series *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949*, with volumes I to VIII covering the period 1937-1945.[14]

A number of issues are raised in the official histories. In *To Benghazi* Gavin Long examines the Army in the inter-war years and outlines the initial steps to war and the establishment of the 2nd AIF. Long makes the point, applicable to all three services, that "From the beginning of the war a multitude of problems had proceeded from the fact that Australia was unable to equip her armies from her own factories."[15] This was exacerbated when the British army left most of its equipment behind after the fall of France and had to be re-equipped.

Lionel Wigmore, in *The Japanese Thrust*, outlines the road to war in the Far East, with a focus on problems for the Australian army (both the 2nd AIF and the Militia) and the

---

[13] John Robertson & John McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939-1945 – A Documentary History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985.
[14] *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949*, various editors, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975-1989. (*Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*: hereafter *DAFP*).
[15] Long, *To Benghazi*, p 88.

critical months of June and July 1940.[16] The issue of whether the Singapore Strategy could still be met by Britain coloured Australian deliberations in this time. The defence of Australia in the light of both British and Australian Chiefs of Staff appreciations was considered, with the Australian chiefs unable to rule out attack on a medium scale, or even invasion if war eventuated.[17] The period also saw deliberations over the use of the 7th Division and the establishment of the 8th Division. With the onset of the Pacific War, the paper prepared by the Chief of the General Staff (CGS), General Vernon Sturdee, gave full consideration to the use of Australian forces, proposed that Australia was the logical strategic base from which to develop any offensive and stated that "Our immediate problem is how best to assure the security of this country …".[18]

Dudley McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year*, covers the operations of the Australian army in Papua and New Guinea.[19] However, prior to those accounts McCarthy addresses the reinforcement of Australia in the lead up to and early stages of the Pacific war. The establishment and development of the Volunteer Defence Corps is addressed. The discussion covers command arrangements, including the appointment of Lieutenant-General Iven Mackay as Home Forces commander. Mackay's proposals for the defence of Australia are covered in some detail, as are troop dispositions and possible Japanese actions against Australia. The chapter then goes on to examine American strategy, the appointment of General Douglas MacArthur as supreme commander, American command directives and the arrival of American forces (with some discussion of their quality). The appointment of General Thomas Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, the reorganization of the army and aspects of equipment are addressed. This chapter includes some statements about capability; they are more assertions of capability rather than assessment (assertion versus assessment is discussed below). McCarthy then examines the first raid on Darwin, the subsequent investigation and measures taken to improve the Darwin defences, including the appointment of Major-General Edmund Herring as commander. The issues Herring faced are covered in some detail and the situation along the north-west coast of Australia is also addressed.

---

[16] Lionel Wigmore, *The Japanese Thrust*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Vol IV, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957.
[17] Wigmore, p. 25.
[18] Wigmore, pp. 444-447 and Appendix 5 (p. 675).
[19] Dudley McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Vol V, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1959.

The chapter finishes with a discussion of Japanese plans. MacArthur's defence strategy is also discussed later in the history.[20] The two chapters in McCarthy constitute the one significant part of the service histories that focus on mainland defence.

David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, focuses on the 1943 and early 1944 campaigns and does not address mainland defence.[21] However Dexter does note that intelligence of a possible Japanese offensive against northern Australia was received in March 1943, followed by a general strengthening of the Torres Strait area.[22]

G. Hermon Gill wrote the two volumes on the RAN.[23] The first, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, examines naval operations on the Australia Station: strengths and dispositions, trade protection and raider activity, mine laying and sweeping activities, and convoy systems.[24] The coastwatch network is addressed, but the focus is on the system in the islands to the north, not the Australian coast. Submarine activity in Australian waters is covered as is the establishment of Combined Defence Headquarters around the coast – both are pertinent for mainland defence. The second, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, has chapters on coastal raiders and the Australian response, the Australian situation in June 1942 and Australia's ocean communications. There is an appendix on minesweepers that gives dispositions around the Australian coast, but it has no technical details. The work describes Australia Station activities and addresses submarine activity in Australian waters.

Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, addresses the main themes that affected the development of the RAAF between the wars, and recounts the difficulties the service faced in gearing up for war.[25] The Australian commitment to the Empire Air Training Scheme and the concomitant problems of demand versus capacity are covered, as are issues of sea lane protection and aircraft production in the early days

---

[20] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year*, p. 112.
[21] Dexter, David, *The New Guinea Offensives*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Vol VI, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961.
[22] Dexter, p. 811.
[23] G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 2 (Navy), Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957.
G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 2 (Navy), Vol II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1968.
[24] See Map 1.1 for the boundaries of the Australia Station.
[25] Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 3 (Air), Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962.

of the war. RAAF operations against the Japanese in Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) are a large part of the narrative, with the problems of equipment, manpower and environment well covered. The development of an air transport capability, non-existent before the war, is described. Mainland defence is covered throughout the narrative, including the development of air bases and advanced operating bases (AOBs), the formation and expansion of the Women's Australian Auxiliary Air Force (WAAAF), and the development of radar for the Australian environment. The performance of the RAAF in the February 1942 Darwin air raid is honestly addressed, with further detail in an appendix. The disgraceful command problem, which plagued the RAAF for the latter part of the war, is also addressed.

George Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945* continues the narrative, with a focus on the air offensive against the Japanese forces in Papua and New Guinea and to Australia's north.[26] For mainland defence, air operations on the north-western flank as well as anti-submarine operations are covered in specific chapters. The development of radar for Australia operations and the establishment of the radar chain around northern Australia are described.

Allan Walker, *Clinical Problems of War*, describes specific medical issue by type: infectious diseases (including malaria), systemic problems (such as cardio-vascular) and surgical issue (including wounds and injuries).[27] Clinical problems on the Australian mainland are not singled out though they are addressed as part of the overall problems. Both the campaign volumes address the medical issues experienced by Australian Army personnel in Australia.[28] *Middle East and Far East* describes the build-up to the dispatch of the Second AIF and has a specific chapter on medical issues in Australia in 1941-1942. This covers medical coordination, equipment coordination, production of drugs, field hygiene and nutrition issues, as well as addressing the establishment of base hospitals, repatriation of the ill from overseas and conditions in the Northern territory

---

[26] George Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 3 (Air), Vol II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957.
[27] Allan S. Walker, *Clinical Problems of War*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 5 (Medical), Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952.
[28] Allan S. Walker, *Middle East and Far East*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 5 (Medical), Vol II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1953.
Allan S. Walker, *The Island Campaigns*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 5 (Medical), Vol III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957.

(including the Darwin air raid). *The Island Campaigns* has a similar chapter on medical issues in Australia in 1943-1945; it also has specific sections on malaria and medical conditions in the Northern territory. *Medical Services of R.A.N. and R.A.A.F.* covers issues specific to those services, that is associated with war vessels and aircraft.[29]

The second official history category covers political, civil, economic and scientific issues. The two volumes by Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People* (1939-1941 and 1942-1945), cover the political and social history of the period between the wars and the war years themselves.[30] The history is significant since it clearly demonstrates that the Australian government was acutely aware of the danger posed by Japan before the start of the Pacific War and was concerned that resources applied to any military activities outside Australia would deplete resources for mainland defence. Once Japan commenced hostilities and Australia was designated as the base for eventual offensive operations against the Japanese, there remained the problem of what priority should be given to mainland defence; the situation was not helped by MacArthur's regard of Australia only as a base. Overall, the volumes concentrate on the workings of government; the political aspects of mainland defence have to be gleaned from the total work.

SJ Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, and Butlin and CB Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, do not address mainland defence directly.[31] However, the history is pertinent in areas such as production for the fighting services: arms and munitions, equipment and supplies, and bases and facilities. After the arrival of the Americans, the role of the Allied Works Council is also significant. Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, does not directly address mainland defence.[32] However, issues covered such as the aircraft

---

[29] Allan S. Walker, *Medical Services of the R.A.N. and R.A.A.F.*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 5 (Medical), Vol IV, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961.

[30] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952.
Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Vol II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970.

[31] S.J. Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Vol III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1955.
S.J. Butlin and C.B. Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Vol IV, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977.

[32] D.P. Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 4 (Civil), Vol V, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1958.

industry, radar, ship repair, communications and operations research contribute to the analysis of mainland defence systems.

Strategic studies are dominated by the work of David Horner, particularly *High Command*, *Inside the War Cabinet* and *Defence Supremo*.[33] These outline the high level command, strategic and policy issues that were the basis for mainland defence.

Campaign histories tend to focus on a single topic and most address overseas operations. However, some regional histories are pertinent: Alan Powell, *The Shadow's Edge*, is a scholarly account of the war experience in northern Australia (effectively the 7th Military District) covering both 'defensive and offensive conflicts' in that area.[34] The work is comprehensive and contributes much to the examination of mainland defence. This is supported by two works that examine the air war in the north: Bob Alford, *Darwin's Air War*, and James Rorrison, *Nor the Years Contemn*; both contribute to the analysis of mainland defence.[35]

Thematic studies address particular themes, sometimes covering more than the War years. A number offer insight into mainland defence, some examples follow. Albert Palazzo has examined the organisation of the Australian Army 1901-2001 and the history of the 3rd Division 1916-1991.[36] David Horner, *The Gunners*, covers the development of Coast defences in the inter-war period, home defence through 1939-1941, the threat of invasion in 1941-1942 and home defence in 1943-1945. This work comprises the best single source on the army role in fixed mainland defences.[37] John McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire*, examines the Empire Air Training Scheme.[38] David

---

[33] David Horner, *High Command: Australia and Allied Strategy 1939-1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982. Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin in association with Australian Archives, Sydney, 1996. Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000.

[34] Alan Powell, *The Shadow's Edge – Australia's Northern War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988.

[35] Bob Alford, *Darwin's Air War 1942-1945: An Illustrated History*, Aviation Historical Society of the NT and Colemans Printing, Darwin, 1991. James D. Rorrison, *Nor the Years Contemn: Air War on the Australian Front 1941-42*, Palomar Publications, Hamilton Central (Qld), 1992.

[36] Albert Palazzo, *The Australian Army: A History of its Organisation 1901-2001*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. Albert Palazzo, *Defenders of Australia: The 3rd Australian Division, 1916-1991*, Army History Unit (Australian Military History Publications), Canberra, 2002.

[37] David Horner, *The Gunners – A History of Australian Artillery*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995.

[38] John McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire: Australian aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988.

Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, provides a comprehensive account of the submarine threat to Australia in the Second World War.[39] While focusing on naval operations, the work gives valuable insight to the convoy system that was critical to mainland defence. Ian Pfennigwerth, *Missing Pieces*, addresses the development of RAN intelligence in the War.[40] The role of industry, apart from shipbuilding, is described by Andrew Ross.[41] The contribution made by indigenous people is well covered by Bob Hall, *The Black Diggers*.[42]

There are a number of one volume histories that cover Australia in the Second World War; three make some contribution to mainland defence. Gavin Long, *The Six Years War*, provides a single volume synopsis of the official histories. It is well balanced and addresses mainland defence in places, with a concise account of the first six months of the Pacific War.[43] John Robertson, *Australia At War*, gives a comprehensive and balanced account with good coverage of the danger period from the outbreak of the Pacific War and the potential invasion threat to Australia.[44] Joan Beaumont edited a collection of essays, *Australia's War 1939-45*, that cover Australian operations, politics and government, Australian society and the economics of war.[45] Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, contains a good analysis of the services in the inter-war years and Australian involvement in the Singapore Strategy.[46] Operations in the war years are covered, with mainland defence addressed in passing.

The Australian Centenary History of Defence has three volumes dedicated to each of the services, one on the Department of Defence and an atlas.[47] Jeffrey Grey, *The*

---

[39] David Stevens, *A Critical vulnerability: The impact of the submarine threat on Australia's maritime defence 1915-1954*, Sea Power Centre – Australia (Department of Defence), Canberra, 2005.
[40] Ian Pfennigwerth, *Missing Pieces: The Intelligence Jigsaw and RAN Operations from 1939-71*, Sea Power Centre – Australia (Department of Defence), Canberra, 2008.
[41] AT Ross, *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945*, Turton & Armstrong, Sydney, 1995.
[42] Robert A. Hall, *The Black Diggers - Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*. Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1989.
[43] Gavin Long, *The Six Years War – Australia in the 1939-45 War*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973.
[44] John Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1981.
[45] Joan Beaumont (ed), *Australia's War 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996.
[46] Jeffrey Grey (3rd Edition), *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2008.
[47] Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Army*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. David Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. Eric Andrews, *The*

Australian Army, has one chapter on the inter-war period and two chapters on Army operations in the Second World War. These give a good summary of the development of the Army and its use in the war, and address some of the mainland defence issues. Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, addresses the development of the Air Force, the impact of the Empire Air Training Scheme on the service in its operations in the Pacific War and the command issues. The utilization of the RAAF in mainland defence is covered in passing.[48] David Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, covers the development of the Navy, the subordination of the RAN to the RN in the early war years and operations in the Pacific War. Operations on the Australia Station are covered in passing. Eric Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, has chapters on the department in the inter-war years and during the war. The latter examines defence policy, the higher machinery for controlling the Australian war effort and the role of Shedden; all contribute to the analysis of mainland defence. John Coates, *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, provides a number of maps pertinent to mainland defence.

Michael McKernan has written two works that focus on social aspects of the war.[49] *All In!* looks at the lives of everyday Australians and the impact of the war on them, while *The Strength of a Nation* is a history of the whole war – at home and abroad – with an emphasis on the people involved. Kate Darian-Smith has examined Melbourne during the war with a focus on civilian life, including the impact of the American presence. Two other works address similar issues in Western Australia.[50] None of the social studies specifically address mainland defence, but they provide a valuable contribution to the context of the subject.

The same can be said about the large number of biographies. The field is too wide to examine in detail, examples follow. Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, has good detail on his Prime Ministership, which adds to the picture of the Australian government

---

Department of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001. John Coates (2nd Edition), *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2006.

[48] It is unfortunate in light of the debate about the reality of the threat of invasion that one chapter is titled 'The Battle for Australia'.

[49] Michael McKernan, *All In! – Fighting the War at Home*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995. Michael McKernan, *The Strength of a Nation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006.

[50] Kate Darian-Smith (2nd Ed), *On the Home Front: Melbourne in Wartime 1939-1945*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2009. Jenny Gregory (ed), *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1996. Anthony J. Barker, Lisa Jackson, *Fleeting Attraction: A Social History Of American Servicemen In Western Australia During The Second World War*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1996.

in the war.[51] D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, Volume II, 1941-1945*, gives a comprehensive view of the man while Gavin Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, gives an Australian perspective.[52] David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*, gives a balanced view of that controversial figure.[53] Shedden is well covered in David Horner, *Defence Supremo*. There are a range of biographies of senior people, while those without biographies are generally covered by the Australian Dictionary of Biography.[54] Most of the biographies have sections dealing with their protagonists' input to the war; all contribute to the understanding of mainland defence.

The review also consulted a range of personal histories and memoirs; these are listed in the bibliography. Noting the care that must be exercised in utilising such sources and that historical detail must be confirmed, they do provide personal insights and may offer some very cogent thoughts on the way things were for the people involved.

In terms of the extant literature, the thesis is situated in a unique position. The strategic level of war and defence policy are covered by Horner, and addressed in aspects of the official histories (particularly Hasluck for policy). The campaign histories in the official series, specific topic histories, personal memoirs and others are pitched more at the tactical level of war. The thesis however addresses mainland defence at the 'middle' level of war,[55] above tactical but not strategic; no other work appears to be at this level.

---

[51] Lloyd Ross, *John Curtin: A Biography*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1977.

[52] D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, Volume II, 1941-1945*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1975. Gavin Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1969.

[53] David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998.

[54] Examples include Ivan D. Chapman, *Iven G. Mackay: Citizen and Soldier*, Melway Publishing Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1975 and Stuart Sayers, *Ned Herring: A Life of Lieutenant-General the Honourable Sir Edmund Herring*, Hyland House, Melbourne, in association with the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1980. Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm.

[55] The thesis uses the term middle level of war deliberately, to avoid any confusion with the operational level. The ADF definition for Operational level is: *The operational level of war is concerned with the planning and conduct of campaigns. It is at this level that military strategy is implemented by assigning missions, tasks and resources to tactical operations*. Research And Analysis: Newsletter Of The Directorate Of Army Research And Analysis, no.10, October 1996. <http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Dunn.htm>, accessed 8 March 2013. This implies an offensive war fighting role, which was not a role for mainland defence, so the term middle level is more appropriate.

Mainland Defence: Methodology

It is important to explain what the assessment methodology is and what the methodology is not. While recognising the strengths of the democratic history style, this approach would not be appropriate for a systemic analysis of mainland defence. The thesis is also cognizant of a number of problems associated with military history, some of which are pertinent to this thesis. As Jeremy Black states these include: a technological bias in explaining military capability, a focus on dominant military systems, a separation of land from sea conflict, and a lack of focus on political tasking in judging military systems.[56] These may lead to the serious issue where "a definition of capability is asserted rather than discussed".[57] The thesis also attempts to examine mainland defence in the context of Australia at the time, "rethinking the period on its own terms".[58] The thesis is not pitched at the political, economic or social/cultural levels, though all form part of the context.

Consequently, the thesis develops a narrative history to give a holistic approach to the defence of mainland Australia. Each strand of the narrative is then subject to analysis at a systemic level in order to ensure that effectiveness is properly assessed rather than merely asserted. Analysis must be at the systemic level, that is at the level of the major elements of mainland defence, because of the size and complexity of the subject area; given the confines of a thesis, it is not possible to analyse mainland defence in fine detail.

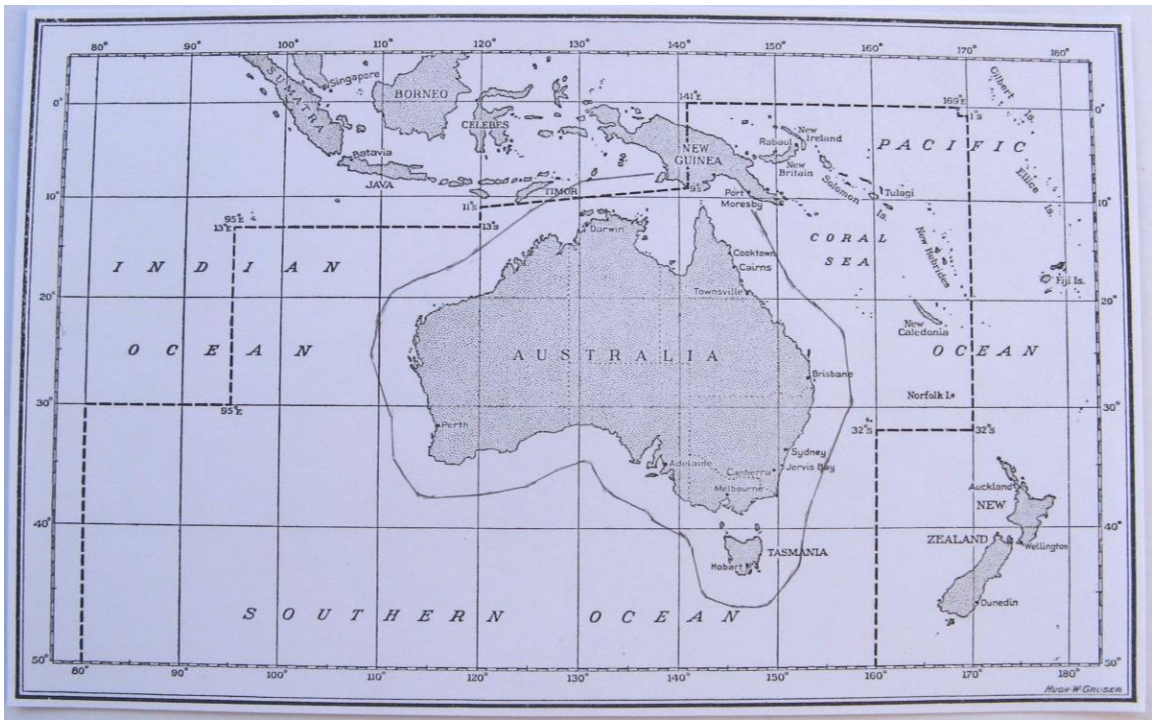
Before describing the methodology the terms used in this thesis need to be defined. For clarity, terms used by other works are also defined.

Defence of Australia in the broadest sense encompasses all measures that were taken to ensure the integrity of the nation. The release of elements of the RAN to the RN, the

[56] Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 2004, p. ix.
[57] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p.160.
[58] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p.182.

commitment to the EATS and sending four divisions of troops overseas were all elements of Australian defence.

Mainland Australia is the continent plus Tasmania and the littoral waters out to approximately 200 nautical miles (nm). The distance 200nm is based on a number of factors. RAAF patrol areas off the south-east coast extended to 200nm, which represented the maximum effective reconnaissance/patrol distance of the Anson aircraft based on its still-air range of 730 nm.[59] This drove other factors. The principle east coast convoy routes went to a maximum of 150 nm off the coast [60] and the convoy system stipulated that inbound and outbound international convoys were to be escorted within 200nm of the coast.[61] This definition is used since none of the terms used by other works properly cover the purpose of this project. Mainland Australia does not include Papua or New Guinea. In most areas Mainland Australia is well within the boundaries of the Australia Station (Map 1.1).



Map 1.1: Mainland Australia and the Australia Station 1939.[62]
Australia Station: Dashed line.
Mainland Australia: Unbroken line around Australian coast, excluding New Guinea.

---

[59] RAAF patrol areas, National Archives of Australia: A1196, 1/501/399. The Anson still air range was 630 nm without any load or 520 nm if carrying 500 lb of ordnance: Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, p. 721. (National Archives of Australia: hereafter NAA).
[60] Routes for coastal convoys, NAA: MP1049/5, 2026/12/600. Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p.196.
[61] Australian Coastal and Mainland - New Guinea Convoys (no date). Australian War Memorial: AWM69, 82. (Australian War Memorial: hereafter AWM).
[62] Map derived from Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, p.52.

Mainland Defence is therefore the defence of Mainland Australia. Clearly, mainland defence was an element of Australian defence.

Point Defence is the defence of a port or place or similar relatively small area, such as Sydney, Darwin, Lithgow, Whyalla or Fremantle.

Area Defence is the defence of a larger area, such as the Newcastle-Sydney-Lithgow-Port Kembla area and the coastal shipping lanes.

Coastal Defence means the defence of vital points on or proximate to the coast, close defence of fortress areas by fixed batteries of artillery, and defence works such as fixed strong points and beach defences.

The term Home Defence is used to mean the defence of the continent and Tasmania, while Local Defence is used for defence measures for specified local areas, generally relatively small. The terms have also been used interchangeably, generally in the sense of defence of a Dominion versus defence of the Empire. This was established by the 1923 Imperial Conference which established the principle of "The primary responsibility of each portion of the Empire represented at the Conference for its own local defence"[63] In this context local defence meant that each Dominion must be prepared to safeguard its interests against aggression, though not depend entirely on its own resources for defence; the Empire as a whole would cooperate in the defence of any threatened part.

A Defended Port is a port with established defences, often including a fortress area with fixed defences. In 1939-1945 they were: Sydney, Newcastle, Port Kembla, Brisbane, Townsville, Darwin, Fremantle, Albany, Adelaide, Melbourne and Hobart.[64]

Fixed Defence has static (not mobile) defences such as fortified artillery and anti-aircraft (AA) batteries and search lights, fortified strong points for observation and firing, and beach defences.

---

[63] *Imperial Conference 1923, Summary of* Proceedings, pp. 16-17. The National Archives, UK: CAB24/164. (The National Archives, UK: hereafter TNA).
[64] Long, *To Benghazi*, p. 28.

A Fortress Area or Fortress Sector is the inner area of a defended place; the inner bastion or final place of defence, generally with fixed defences. The concept is well illustrated by the Darwin Defence Scheme, July 1941, where the fortress sector was the section of the Darwin peninsula that lay south-west of the Narrows, the narrow neck of land that provided a natural defensive line for Darwin town and environs.[65]

A systemic analysis requires mainland defence to be regarded at a systemic level, consequently mainland defence is considered under a number of major and supporting systems or elements. The elements are listed at Table 1.1.

Major elements	Supporting elements
Point defence systems Area defence systems Lines of communication Surveillance and intelligence systems	Production capability and capacity, including manpower National will

Table 1.1: Major and Supporting Elements of Mainland Defence.

With regard to threat it must be recognised that throughout the Second World War mainland defence was always reactionary. That is, mainland defence measures were put in place in reaction to the perceived threat at the time within the limits of resources, availability of weapons and systems, production capability and capacity, manpower, and political/national will. Perceived threat means the threat that the government and military leaders recognised at any one time. This was the threat that drove the Australian response, be it the decision to send forces overseas or the measures taken for mainland defence. In the early stages of the Pacific War there was considerable divergence between real threat and perceived threat; as intelligence systems improved that divergence narrowed to the extent that the perceived threat was close to the real threat.

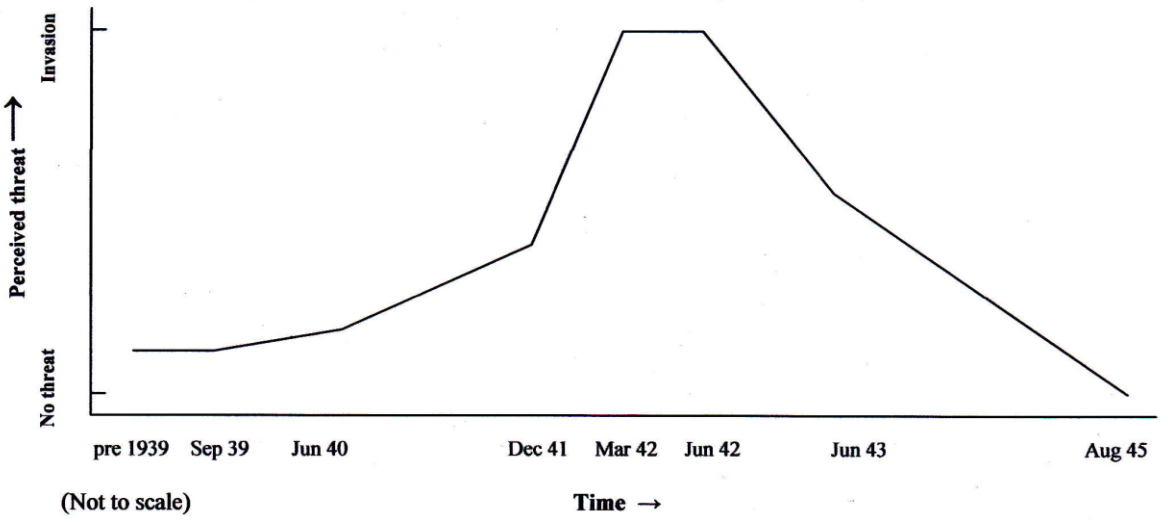
There was also the public perception of threat, which did not necessarily match that of the government, and government statements about threat that were made for public consumption to keep the war effort going.

[65] See Map 4.1, Fortress Sector Darwin, 27 July 1941, p. 128.

The thesis assesses mainland defence in the light of six shifts in the continuum of perceived threat. Prior to the war the threat was perceived to be from the rising fascist regimes in Europe was well as from Japan; the level of threat was low. The first shift came with the war in Europe (September 1939 to June 1940) and concern about the continued efficacy of the Singapore Strategy. The second shift occurred with the declaration of war by Italy and the fall of France (June 1940 to December 1941). This resulted in the recognition that the Singapore Strategy was moribund, while the threat from Japan had increased; consequently there was an increased focus on mainland defence. The period also saw the federal election in September 1940, resulting in a minority United Australia Party (UAP)/ Country Party (CP) government supported by two independents, and the change of government in October 1941.

The third shift occurred after Japan commenced hostilities (December 1941 to March 1942). This was the perceived time of maximum danger, where the possibility of invasion was considered real. The fourth shift (March 1942 to June 1942) came with the arrival of MacArthur and the arrival of US forces in Australia and concluded with MacArthur's statement that the defence of Australia was assured. The fifth shift (June 1942 to June 1943) saw the build-up of US forces in Australia and concluded with Curtin's public acknowledgement that the invasion threat had passed.

The final shift came in June 1943, when the threat from Japan had receded, the need for mainland defence was less and the manpower problem had to be addressed. The shifts in the continuum of perceived threat are conceptualised in Figure 1.1.



Key:

September 1939	Start of European war
June 1940	Italy declares war; fall of France
December 1941	Start of Pacific war
March 1942	Arrival of MacArthur
June 1942	Defence of Australia assured
June 1943	Curtin acknowledges threat of invasion is over
August 1945	Japan defeated (Germany defeated May 1945)

Figure 1.1: Shifts in the Continuum of Perceived Threat to Mainland Australia.

The first three shifts are compatible with the three phases in strategic decision-making that David Horner defined for the period up to the start of the Pacific War.[66] The first phase was from September 1939 to roughly November 1940; here the Australian government decided to raise and deploy forces to fight against Germany and Italy, while British advice was largely accepted. The second phase covered the period November 1940 to May 1941. During this time the Japanese threat increased and it became evident that the Singapore defences were weak; Australian disillusionment with British strategic direction increased. The third phase was from June to December 1941, where the government concentrated more on home defence and urged diplomatic moves to restrict Japan.

Recalling the problem of a definition of capability being asserted rather than assessed, this methodology enables an assessment of the effectiveness of mainland defence systems. Here effectiveness comprises three elements: capability,

[66] Horner, *High Command*, pp.22-23.

capacity and timeliness. These elements may be illustrated by considering the production and use of the British designed Bristol Beaufort aircraft in Australia. Capability covers the ability to produce the Beaufort and the ability of squadron ground and air crews to maintain and operate the aircraft to the standard required for operations. With respect to capacity if ten aircraft were required per month to meet training and operational requirements, but only one aircraft per month was being produced then production capacity was limited. Equally if the maintenance capacity was such that only very low serviceability rates were achieved, or if the training capacity was such that sufficient numbers of ground and air crews could not be provided, then operational capacity was limited. Timeliness is the third element: the Beaufort was needed at the start of the Pacific War but production was delayed by the difficulty in getting drawings, jigs and machine tools from Britain so by the end of December 1941 only ten aircraft had been produced. All three elements of effectiveness are considered in the assessment.

A focus on technology to explain effectiveness only enables a part assessment to be made. Black says: "Instead, fitness for purpose, a key concept in weaponry, force structure and capability, is the major issue for evaluation, with the purpose for the military set not by the capability but by the task required."[67] Further, "Study of the definition and pursuit of objectives also offers a way to join strategic culture to operational planning, and thus to give chronological and analytical depth to military success and failure."[68] Noting that the Australian strategic culture changed with time, the methodology will examine that culture. Initially the strategic culture was expeditionary; Australian forces were to serve overseas. This changed dramatically with the start of the Pacific War and the speed of the Japanese advance towards Australia, the culture rapidly became the defence of Australia. Then as the US/Australian forces built up the culture became offensive – the intent was to take the war to the Japanese. There were also constraints that lasted for the entire war: Australia was a junior partner in a coalition war and global strategic aims were set by others, for instance the 'Germany first' policy set by the US and UK. In view of the aim of this thesis, it is interesting that

[67] Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History*, Ch 5, pp.128-150 addresses the fit for purpose approach.
[68] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p.137.

Black also addresses ‘anti’ or defensive tasking and capability and says that it tends to receive insufficient attention in military history due to a focus on the offensive.[69]

An examination of purpose and tasking enables an assessment of effectiveness to be made in the light of conflicting requirements, driven by the national needs that had to be addressed. The purpose of mainland defence is derived from two sources. First is the advice given to government about enemy intentions and the threat to Australia, the government decisions made in the light of that advice and the policy directions from government with respect to mainland defence. The second is defined by the aims or objectives of the various military plans raised for mainland defence. Fitness is then a measure, necessarily qualitative, of the military capability and capacity to meet the requirements of the tasking.

The issue is complicated by occurrences of political/military tension: the government/War Cabinet had to regard political issues, both at the global strategic level and at the national level. The latter involved issues about the Australian capacity and willingness to accept a move towards a total war footing (never actually achieved) Military planners focussed on the tasks set by the current threat. Tension occurred when political decisions had to be made that over-rode military advice; one example was the government response to Lieutenant-General MacKay’s advice on what areas of Australia he could adequately defend in February 1942.

The methodology utilises a series of descriptive models, one for each period defined by the shift in perceived threat. The inputs to each model comprise the purposes of mainland defence and the plans and measures put in place in terms of the elements and sub-elements of mainland defence. The inputs are processed by an examination of the effectiveness of the plans and measures, assessed against the purposes of mainland defence. Case studies are used to illustrate the analysis. Note that the assessment is not quantitative; the model is descriptive, it is not a mathematical model. The output comprises an assessment of overall fitness for purpose for that period. In some cases the assessment is partially fit for purpose. Here the level of partially fit is not graded; in all

[69] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, p.139.

cases there is insufficient evidence to attempt to quantify the assessment. The model is illustrated at Tables 1.2 and 1.3.

Input	→	Process	→	Output: Assessment of effectiveness
Purpose – government. Purpose – military plans. Plans and measures put in place.	→	Assessment of plans and measures: capability, capacity, timeliness. Case studies.	→	Fit for purpose assessment of mainland defence for that period.

Table 1.2: Descriptive model - for each perceived threat

Element	Sub-element
Point defence systems	Garrison forces; covering forces; artillery; anti-aircraft artillery; anti-raid and anti-incursion measures (fixed defences, wire). Naval defence systems: anti-submarine booms, defensive mining, harbour watch and response forces. Air defence systems: aircraft, anti-aircraft artillery, radar. Case studies: Darwin; Sydney; Whyalla.
Area defence systems	Field forces. Air patrol; sea patrol. Convoy protection; anti-submarine warfare. Case studies: The south-east 'vital area' (Newcastle, Sydney, Lithgow, Port Kembla); the northern area (Torres Strait to Darwin).
Lines of communication	Lines of communication (LoC) bases and troops. Transport systems (road, rail, sea, air). Electronic communications (telephone, telegraph, radio). Case studies: Darwin – road/rail, sea; east coast sea lanes.
Surveillance/ intelligence	Surveillance: air patrol; sea patrol; coastwatch, coastal radar chain. Intelligence: service intelligence systems; Allied Intelligence Bureau. Case studies: Combined Operational Intelligence Centres, the North Australia Observer Unit.
Production	Aircraft, shipbuilding, artillery, munitions, other war material. Food (Britain, US forces, Australian forces, civil). Manpower.
National will	Public commitment to war effort. Industrial issues.

Table 1.3: The Elements, Sub-Elements and Case Studies

A number of the case studies will be a continual theme throughout the thesis, for example the defence of Darwin. The other case studies will be addressed only in the appropriate time frame.

Finally, it must be emphasised that Australia had two tasks during the war: first to ensure the integrity of the mainland, under the perceived threat at the time, and second to meet the requirements to support an offensive off-shore war. The latter is not examined in this thesis however the significance of this must be taken into account. For example, the deterrent effect of the build-up of offensive capability is considered and the dual role (mainland defence and offensive operations) of some service capabilities, especially navy and air force, is recognised in the analysis.

The thesis accepts that mainland defence was never fully tested by invasion or major incursion. That imposes a difficulty in making objective assessments about the effectiveness of mainland defence; the assessments made are necessarily subjective in places.

The thesis follows a chronological narrative in analysing mainland defence. Chapter 2 examines the development of Australian defence in the inter-war years. Chapter 3 covers the Australian commitment to the European war up to the fall of France and the entry of Italy, while Chapter 4 describes the impact of those events on the European war. Chapter 5 examines the 100 days from the start of the Pacific war to the arrival of MacArthur in Australia – the perceived time of maximum danger to mainland Australia. The initial development of Australia as the base for MacArthur's offensives is covered in Chapter 6. The further build-up of forces in Australia, which coincided with mainland defence reaching its peak in early 1943, is examined in Chapter 7. The offensives against Japanese forces north of Australia and the concomitant reduction in mainland defence is covered in Chapter 8. The emphasis throughout is mainland defence though it is examined in the context of the global war. The thesis then concludes with a summary of the effectiveness of mainland defence, lessons from mainland defence in 1939-1945 and possible avenues for further research.

Prior to analysing the elements of mainland defence throughout the shifts in the continuum of perceived threat, the development of Australian defence between the wars and the level of preparedness at the start of the war need to be established. Both were the product of the attitudes and beliefs of the inter-war years, coloured as they were by the experiences of the Great War, the Depression and the commitment to Imperial Defence.

2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE 1919-1939

"the years the locust hath eaten." Joel 2:25.[1]

Australia was in a dichotomy in the inter-war years. On the one hand Australia was a Dominion of the British Empire, on the other Australia was geographically situated south of South-East Asia and west of the Pacific and had to consider its location. This was recognised: as Robert Menzies said soon after becoming Prime Minister in April 1939 "What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north."[2] However the problem of reconciling Australia's location with the more European focus of Great Britain and the concepts of Imperial Defence caused Australian defence planners considerable difficulty in the inter-war years.[3] The issue became a debate between self-reliance, with mainland defence an element of self-reliance, and reliance on Imperial Defence. The outcome was poor; as Jeffrey Grey says, any benefits that may have accrued from Imperial Defence "were squandered by a generation of conservative politicians who used the theory of imperial defence as an excuse for doing little or nothing to maintain and develop Australia's own forces."[4] This included mainland defence.

The debate was also coloured by a deep war weariness. The social cost to Australia of the First World War had been huge. By the end of that war 416,809 men had enlisted, "a staggering effort for a country of approximately 4 million people."[5] The price paid was calamitous: 58,961 dead from all causes, 4,098 missing and prisoners of war, 166,811 battle casualties and 87,865 sick. All the military action had been overseas and most of the graves of the fallen were overseas as well, it had truly been a distant war.

---

[1] The Bible, quoted in Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, title to chapter 3.

[2] Broadcast speech by R.G. Menzies, Prime Minister, 26 April 1939. *DAFP*, Vol. II: 1939, p. 97.

[3] Augustine Meaher IV, *The Australian Road to Singapore : the Myth of British Betrayal*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2010 covers the inter-war period with an emphasis on British-Australian relations.

[4] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 123.

[5] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 118.

The 1919 peace settlements at Versailles saw the victors impose reparations on Germany and consider US President Wilson's Fourteen Points, including the foundation of an international body (the League of Nations) espousing the principle of collective security.

Australia had made a significant contribution to the First World War and expected a say in the 1919 peace settlements at Versailles. The delegation was led by Prime Minister William Hughes, who protested at the lack of consultation over the armistice. Hughes had three concerns: "reparations, the German territories in the Pacific, and the Japanese statement on racial equality."[6] Hughes did not succeed in his bid for reparations as compensation for war costs, nor did he succeed in annexing all the Pacific territories for Australia. New Guinea and Nauru were mandated to Australia; this was a compromise that at least gave Australia control over some potential bases for attack on Australia. However territories north of the equator were mandated to Japan. Hughes did succeed in preventing the Japanese bid for a clause in the Covenant of the League establishing the principle of racial equality. The concern for Australia was control of immigration, an issue over which Hughes was adamant; the White Australia policy remained firm. At the conclusion of the settlements, Australia was a signatory to the Treaty of Versailles and gained full membership of the League of Nations. However, President Wilson faced a hostile and isolationist Congress – the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and the United States did not join the League. Further, the League had no means of enforcing its decisions and events proved it to be a toothless tiger.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century the Australian colonies held various fears of Russia, Germany, France and China which led to the development of some coastal fortifications. The Anglo-Japanese Naval Treaty was agreed in 1902, in response to a perceived Russian threat to British interests in the Far East. Then after Japan's victory over Russia in 1905, Australia came to regard Japan as a threat. Under the Treaty Japan became an ally in the First World War, but post-war Australian concerns were raised over Japanese activity in islands to the north and aspirations in the South

[6] E.M. Andrews, *A History of Australian Foreign Policy: From Dependence to Independence*, Longman Cheshire Pty Limited, Melbourne, 1979, p. 44.

Seas.[7] Contrary to the terms of the mandate Japan started to build a naval base at Truk, which was just 600 nautical miles from the Admiralty Islands, part of New Guinea. Japan's economy was strengthened during the war and it set about developing a powerful navy; this was little checked by the Washington Treaty and later naval limitations talks. "Her growing military might conditioned most Australian defence thinking in the decades after 1918."[8]

During the Great War and later Australian estimates of threat were largely reliant on UK intelligence. The late war years saw Edmund Piesse (Director of Military Intelligence) advocate the development of Japanese linguistic and cultural understanding. In 1919 Piesse became Director of the Pacific Branch of the Prime Minister's Department. The Branch was active for five years and provided the government with good information on Far Eastern affairs. Piesse predicted that Japan would eventually adopt a policy of territorial expansion. Japanese Imperialists were in two schools – Continental (with a focus on China) and Southern/Nanyo, which focused on the East Indies, the Pacific and Australia as sources of raw materials and possible territories for Japanese control.[9]

Australian defence planning between the wars occurred in five main phases:[10] The period 1919-23 saw the government decide on demobilisation, followed by defence cuts. Following the 1923 Imperial Conference a five year defence program (1924-29) was put in place. The Depression and severe defence cuts occurred in 1930-33, followed by the first phase of rearmament in 1933-37. Finally, the second phase of rearmament occurred over 1937-38.

---

[7] Australian threat perceptions in the inter-war period are drawn from: David Horner, 'Australian Estimates of the Japanese Threat, 1905-1941', in Philip Towle, *Estimating Foreign Military Power*, Croom Helm, London, 1982; John McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39*; Henry Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: from the Sixteenth Century to World War II*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1991; and David Horner, 'Australian Army Strategic Planning Between the Wars', in Peter Dennis and Jeffrey Grey (eds), *Serving Vital Interests: Australia's Strategic Planning in Peace and War*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 1996.

[8] Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, p. 5.

[9] See Frei, for a full discussion, particularly Ch. 9 for Nanyo.

[10] John Robertson, 'The Distant War: Australia and Imperial defence, 1919-41', in M. McKernan & M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War & Peace*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1988, p. 224. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 9-108.

In 1919 the Commonwealth Government requested advice from Britain on naval policies.[11] Viscount Jellicoe was given the task, with instructions not to discuss imperial naval defence generally. However the Australian Government requested that he report on the Pacific situation and Jellicoe responded by identifying Japan as the potential threat. Jellicoe proposed that a large Far Eastern Fleet be formed, comprising eight battleships and eight cruisers with supporting elements, based at Singapore. The cost would be shared by Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The report was rejected by the Admiralty, and in any case was beyond the financial capability of the three countries. Nothing came from the report, though elements were involved in the later development of Imperial Defence principles.

Within Australia, attention was also paid to air and land forces. An Air Board was formed in 1919 to consider air defence requirements for Australia, leading to the formation of the Australian Air Force in 1921. There was no policy for the development of the Army and in 1920 Senator George Pearce, Minister for Defence, convened a conference of senior generals to advise on the future organisation of the Army. Chaired by General Henry Chauvel, Inspector-General of the Army, the conference recommendations were based on two assumptions: the need for Australia to provide for its own defence (noting the collective security principles of the League) and that Japan was the only potential enemy that Australia may face. The generals recommended a citizen force with a small regular force for training and staff purposes. The main force would comprise four infantry and two cavalry divisions, with the equivalent of a further division for local defence purposes, the formation of territorial commands and the creation of a munitions supply branch.[12] Though never properly resourced, this structure was adopted and remained through the inter-war period.

Australian reliance on Britain for defence and foreign affairs was reflected at the 1921 Imperial Conference. Australia opposed any change to the structure of the Empire, particularly Dominion status, yet called for closer consultation on Imperial foreign policy. Australia and NZ pressed for the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. While Britain felt that a formal relationship would see Japan act with more restraint, Britain was aware that the United States viewed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty as a threat to their

---

[11] Stevens, *The Royal Australian Navy*, pp. 61-62.
[12] Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp. 73-75.

interests in the Far East and Pacific, believing the alliance would encourage Japan to pursue an aggressive policy in China and Manchuria.[13] Britain felt it best to steer a course between the US and Japan in the Pacific. Overall the 1921 Imperial Conference did not draw any strong conclusions; Britain and the Dominions relied on the Washington Conference to resolve these security issues.

The International Conference on Naval Limitation was held in Washington from November 1921 to February 1922. The United States did not invite the Dominions separately, so Australia attended as part of the British Empire delegation and was thus bound to agree to British decisions.[14] The major proposal came from the United States and negotiations over the following months resulted in the signing of the Five-Power Naval Limitation Treaty for naval reductions on a 5:5:3 ratio for Britain, the US and Japan.[15] This resulted in a 40 per cent reduction of capital ship tonnages for the major powers (this included scuttling the obsolete HMAS *Australia*).[16] No new naval fortifications were to be built on Pacific territories, though Singapore and Hawaii were specifically excluded. With both Britain and the United States having to spread their fleets over more than one ocean, the Japanese were effectively given naval superiority in the Pacific. An important outcome was that the Royal Navy went to a one power standard, consequently if the UK was fighting simultaneous wars without allies deploying a main fleet to Singapore would be doubtful.[17]

For Australian security, the Four-Power Treaty saw Britain, France, Japan and the US agree to submit disputes over Pacific issues to resolution by conference, effectively supplanting the Anglo-Japanese Treaty; however there were no enforcement provisions.

---

[13] Russell Parkin & David Lee, *Great White Fleet to Coral Sea: Naval Strategy and the Development of Australia – United States Relations, 1900-1945*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2008, p. 68.

[14] The Australian delegation was led by the Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce.

[15] The full agreement was for a 10:10:6:3½:3½ ratio for the US, UK, Japan, France and Italy.

[16] Capital ships were those over 10,000 tons. McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39*, pp. 11-12 and T.B. Millar, (2nd Ed), *Australia in Peace and War*, Australian National University press, Sydney, 1991, p. 54.

[17] John Connor, *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2011, p. 150.

Washington gave Australia the desired security 'guarantee', but the potential for future problems existed. In particular, the agreement that the US and Britain would not fortify new bases enhanced Japan's strategic position in Asia.

The issue of Empire consultation rose again during the 1922 Chanak crisis, when British interests were threatened by Turkish nationalists at the Straits of Gallipoli. The British Prime Minister asked the Dominions to commit forces if required but also publicly announced that the appeal had been made for the defence "… of soil hallowed by immortal memories of the Anzacs."[18] This blatant emotional blackmail resulted in Hughes promising support but the Australian government and people were divided over the issue. Hughes protested strongly that "such action gravely imperils the unity of the Empire."[19] The crisis passed but one result was the drafting by the Army of Plan 401 for overseas operations – a revised version was utilised in raising the 2nd AIF in 1939.[20]

Washington and Chanak were followed by the 1923 Imperial Conference, attended by the new Prime Minister, Stanley Bruce. Bruce was determined to secure consultation in the future, remarking that "if Australia is to be part of the Empire, and responsible for some share in its defence, Australia must have every reasonable opportunity to criticise and to help in formulating the foreign policy of the Empire as a whole."[21] The interests of Britain and the Dominions were at variance. Britain could not ignore Europe, particularly since developments in air power made attack from Europe a possibility; Britain was far less interested in the Pacific. Australia, on the other hand, feared involvement in a European war and wanted a strong Empire commitment in the Pacific. The defence arrangements at the 1923 Conference were therefore a compromise; in power terms Australia was a political dependency of Britain so it followed that Britain would act largely in its own interests.[22]

The 1923 Resolutions on Defence gave five principles which defined Imperial Defence. The principles were: each Dominion had primary responsibility for its own local defence; provision had to be made for safeguarding the maritime communications of the

---

[18] Andrews, *A History of Australian Foreign Policy*, p. 50.
[19] Meaney, *Australia and the World*, p. 335.
[20] Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 79.
[21] Andrews, *A History of Australian Foreign Policy*, p. 51.
[22] Australia 'a political dependency', McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39*, p. 14.

Empire; naval bases should be provided to ensure the mobility of the fleet; a minimum standard of naval strength should be maintained to ensure equality with any foreign power; and air forces should be developed by adopting a common system of organisation and training.[23] The primary naval base was to be the main fleet base at Singapore. Under the principles Australia was responsible for its own local defence which was to be of sufficient strength to contain an attack until the arrival of the British fleet. Bruce had told the Council of Defence[24] that the role of the Australian armed forces was to mount a holding operation for no more than six months; what would happen then would depend on Britain "and no-one else".[25] This should have resulted in mainland defence being given an appropriate level of priority, however that did not occur. Finally, "The principles of Anglo-Australian defence policy were decided upon at the 1923 Imperial Conference and they governed the direction of Australian defence planning until Japan entered the war."[26] That policy proved to be flawed.

Status and consultation issues were also addressed at the 1923 Imperial Conference. The concern of other Dominions over their independent status, however, resulted in a significant change. "It was agreed that empire governments could conclude treaties and agreements with foreign powers". Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State promptly did so; Australia and NZ did not. This diplomatic independence was the first step in the granting of independence to the Dominions. The Australian government however was concerned to uphold the United Kingdom commitment to Singapore and Royal Navy support in the Pacific. [27]

The Australian Labor Party (ALP) defence policy differed from that of the Nationalist Party/Country Party government. Since the 1917 split, Labor tended towards isolation,

---

[23] *Imperial Conference 1923, Summary of Proceedings*, TNA: CAB24/164, pp.16-17.
[24] The Council of Defence was first established in 1905. In 1923 it comprised the Prime Minister, the ministers for Navy and Defence and two representatives from the defence departments. Its role was high level coordination of defence activities, including expenditure. In 1939 it was replaced by the War Cabinet. Peter Dennis et al, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd ed, Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne, 2008, p. 163.
[25] McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39*, p.13.
[26] John McCarthy, 'Planning for Future War: The Armed Services and the Imperial Connection', in *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No 72, 1990, p.114.
[27] W.J. Hudson & M.P. Sharp, *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Kingdom*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p.75.

deprecated imperialism, criticised British capitalism and condemned war to the extent that it was hard for Labor to see that war might come again.[28] In 1923

> "The Labor Party's policy is to promote world peace, and, consistently with Australia's goodwill to her kindred overseas, declares its readiness to take full responsibility for Australia's defence, but is opposed to the raising of forces for service outside the commonwealth, or promise of participation in any future overseas, except by a decision of the people."[29]

Labor was not totally pacifist and recognised the need to protect Australia itself. Two proposals were made. First was to promote the use of aircraft and submarines in a plan for home defence, rather "narrowly conceived as the protection of the coast from invasion."[30] The second proposal was for the development of local industry although Labor had not addressed details such as munitions production.

In 1924 a five year defence program commenced under which the navy was the main beneficiary. Naval construction over the period included two cruisers (*Australia* and *Canberra*), two submarines and a seaplane tender. Provision for the army was slight, with little improvement in capability. The air force fared even worse and was justly criticised by a 1928 review by Sir John Salmond RAF, who recommended a nine year program of improvement. However all the real and potential gains of the program were lost in the Depression years.[31]

The 1920s saw the Singapore Strategy become a political issue in Britain.

> "From 1923 to mid-1931 two Conservative and two minority Labor governments alternated between launching work on the base, stopping it altogether, reviving it, then slowing it down again. This delayed completion of the base, annoyed the Dominions and frustrated the services."[32]

A major concern was cost, an issue addressed by Winston Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1924-1929. The full scheme, the Green Scheme, comprised facilities and resources to support a main fleet of a dozen capital ships and supporting escorts.

---

[28] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p.29.
[29] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 20.
[30] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 24.
[31] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 30-31.
[32] Brian P. Farrell, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942*, Tempus Publishing Limited, Stroud, 2005, p. 19. The Conservatives were in power in 1923, replaced by Labor late that year, back in power in late 1924, with Labor returning in 1929 to mid-1931.

This was unacceptable to the Conservative government and was replaced by the Red Scheme, which would support only about 20 per cent of a main fleet and thus be suitable for peace time operations only. This was further reviewed in late 1926, when it was proposed that war with Japan was not likely. The base was reduced by the Truncated Red Scheme to docking and oil storage only; ship repair would rely on the existing commercial harbour.[33]

The issues involved with Imperial Defence resulted in a continuing debate within Australian defence circles. The Australian government adopted and then became fixated with the Singapore Strategy, abetted by the Navy which received the lion's share of defence expenditure until the end of the Depression. Army and Air Force had little input to the development of policy and real divisions developed between the services. The Chief of Air Staff, Wing Commander Richard Williams, produced a comprehensive Memorandum on the Air Defence of Australia in 1925 which discussed Australia's strategic setting, addressed the air threat from Japan, and proposed a costed program to develop air force structure. There is no record of a response by government and the air force continued to be inadequately funded, while its very existence was under pressure from Army and Navy.[34]

A number of Army officers wrote articles and gave lectures that attempted to stimulate debate over defence issues, but their impact on the development of policy was minimal. In April 1927, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Wynter published an article in *The Army Quarterly* in Britain.[35] Wynter challenged the thinking behind the Singapore Strategy with a clear and logical argument. He accepted that naval defence appeared to be the most appropriate form of security for Australia, but stated that Australia could only rely on naval defence if the Royal Navy was strong enough to provide naval defence for Australia as well as simultaneously providing for all other essential Imperial naval interests. Two further conditions were that the Imperial authorities would be prepared, in any eventuality, to detach a sufficient naval force to secure superiority in the Pacific;

---

[33] Farrell, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942*, pp. 20-21, summarises the changes, while the debate is covered in detail in Ian Hamill, *The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand 1919-1942*, National University of Singapore, Singapore, 1981.
[34] Memorandum regarding the Air Defence of Australia, 1925. NAA: A664, 449/401/2A.
[35] LtCol H.D. Wynter, 'The Strategical Inter-Relationship of the Navy, The Army and The Air Force: An Australian View', *The Army Quarterly*, Vol XIV, July 1927, pp. 15-34.

and that such a detachment of naval force could arrive in the Pacific with reasonable speed and operate effectively after its arrival. If any of the conditions could not be met it would be unsound for Australia to rely primarily on naval resources for her protection. Wynter continued that there was no intention to station a force in the Pacific in time of peace, so the strategic centre of gravity of the British Navy did not rest in the Pacific. For Australia the Royal Navy could only be regarded as a potential force.[36] The question of any move of naval force would depend on circumstances at the time, and Wynter suggested that it was reasonable to assume that, if war broke with a Pacific power, it would be at a time when Great Britain was at war in Europe.[37] The article had no impact on government at the time, though it may have been the basis for later criticism of government policy by the Opposition leader, John Curtin.[38]

Significant constitutional change in the empire started at the 1926 Imperial Conference. Bruce wanted the 1926 Conference to concentrate on foreign and defence policy and economic issues; Australia did not want any constitutional discussion to lead to the framing of independence formulae. However other Dominions demanded a constitutional discussion; South Africa took the stand that "continuing South African support for the empire was conditional on utter dominion independence".[39] A committee then produced the Balfour Report, wherein the status of the Dominions was re-defined.

> "They are autonomous Communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown, and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations".[40]

The British Government recognised that the changes were a gamble, in that empire dissolution could result. The Australian government agreed and because it was seen to compromise territorial security and economic well-being, it was a gamble that the government were unwilling to take.

---

[36] For a review of British naval policy in the Far East see Andrew Field, *Royal Navy Strategy in the Far East 1919-1939: Preparing for War against Japan*, Frank Cass, London, 2004.
[37] Wynter, 'The Strategical Inter-Relationship of the Navy, The Army and The Air Force', p. 28.
[38] Long, *To Benghazi*, p. 19.
[39] W.J. Hudson & M.P. Sharp, *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Kingdom*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988, p. 89.
[40] Hudson & Sharp, *Australian Independence*, p. 93.

The Balfour Report and follow-on activity was considered by the 1930 Imperial Conference, which notably did not address defence issues. The Conference agreed that the recommendations should be embodied in the Statute of Westminster, which came into effect in 1931.[41] As a result of internal political pressure, Australia was listed as a Dominion to which the Statute would not apply until adopted by the Australian parliament and as a Dominion whose parliament could repeal such adoption. In the event the Statute was not adopted by Australia; this situation continued throughout the 1930s.[42] There was certainly a lack of public pressure for change, but the major reason was that the government had a strong sense of dependency in defence matters, with reliance on the Singapore Strategy.[43]

Debate over the threat and the appropriate response developed into strong rivalry between Navy and Army, with Navy holding to the Singapore Strategy and Army (with some Air Force support) arguing that Australia should prepare for the possibility of invasion. In 1928 a Defence Committee appreciation concluded that Australia's defence rested on the superiority of the Royal Navy.[44] The appreciation rejected the view that the Japanese could disrupt Australia's sea trade routes, because Japan could not afford to disperse its fleet in anticipation of the Royal Navy arrival in the Far East. The appreciation did concede that Japanese forces could launch raids on Australia's ports and cities and inflict considerable loss. Navy played down the threat, while Army went ahead and prepared war plans to protect the vital south-east area – the Army Plan of Concentration provided two divisions with cavalry support for the defence of Newcastle and one division with elements of another and cavalry support for the defence of Sydney.[45]

In 1929 Frederick Shedden, a senior civilian in the Department of Defence and a graduate of the Imperial Defence College in 1928, prepared a paper titled "An outline of the Principles of Imperial Defence with Special Reference to Australian Defence".[46]

---

[41] Meaher, *The Australian Road to Singapore*, p. 43.
[42] A full discussion of the Statute of Westminster is at Hudson & Sharp, pp. 102-129.
[43] Hudson & Sharp, *Australian Independence*, p. 127.
[44] War in the Pacific, appreciation by the Defence Committee, 1928. NAA: MP1185/8, 1846/4/363.
[45] 'Appreciation - The Concentration of the Australian Land Forces in Time of War', AWM: AWM54, 243/6/6; Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 84.
[46] 'An Outline of the Principles of Imperial Defence with Special Reference to Australian Defence', 20 December 1929. NAA: A5954, 38/2.

The paper was prepared after a discussion with the Minister where it was suggested that, from the political and civil point of view, a statement of the principles of the provision of defence might be prepared. The paper was forwarded to the Secretary on 20 December 1929; Shedden adhered to its principles for years, including after he became Secretary in November 1937. Shedden declared that "Every dictate of security combined with economy points to the essentiality of Singapore so long as there is a Japanese fleet or a possibility of a quarrel with Japan."[47] For some considerable time, this became government policy.

The Scullin Labor government had been elected in October 1929 and, as promised in the election campaign, abolished compulsory military training. This was a reflection of Labor defence policy, rather than an economic act. It was not intended to reduce the scale of the militia, simply change the method of recruitment. The government also foreshadowed a general review of defence, but this was overtaken by events; overall the government continued to support the naval policy.[48]

Shortly after the election the Wall Street crash of 28-29 October precipitated a worldwide depression. The effect of the Depression on Australia was enormous.[49] Australia was highly reliant on exports of primary produce and a radical reduction in export prices led to huge economic problems and massive unemployment. The problem escalated through the early 1930s, with businesses and shops closing, farms abandoned, a decline in manufacturing, rents unpaid and debt mounting. At its worst in mid-1932, unemployment reached 26 per cent of the workforce. Recovery was slow with manufacturing returning to pre-depression levels in 1935 and the recovery of rural industry even slower. The social impacts were serious and were still being felt as war approached.[50]

In 1930 the government reduced defence expenditure by 21 per cent and the Defence Committee was tasked to see where cuts could be made. Shedden circulated his 1929

---

[47] 'An Outline of the Principles of Imperial Defence with Special Reference to Australian Defence', p.47.
[48] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 37-38.
[49] R.M. Younger, *Australia and the Australians: A Concise History*, Hutchinson of Australia, Richmond, 1970, pp. 487-9.
[50] Union statistics say 30 per cent; 26 per cent is based on census data; see David Potts, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2006, p. 10.

paper to support the naval case and Lavarack prepared a memo refuting Shedden's propositions.

> "The dispatch of the British battle fleet to the Far East for the protection of Imperial (including Australian) interests cannot be counted on with sufficient certainty, and the risk that it will be withheld, added to the risk of the non-completion, capture, or neutralisation of Singapore, results in a total risk that no isolated white community such as Australia would be justified in taking."[51]

These polarised views encapsulate the debate at the time. Neither view was balanced. The Navy relied on a promise (not a guarantee) of Royal Navy support at Singapore, while Army (supported by Air Force) tended to have an invasion mentality and focus on protection of the south-east. Neither side considered the defence of the Australian mainland, particularly the remote northern areas.

Overall, the Labor government supported Imperial Defence and Singapore, although only a token commitment was made during the Depression. Expenditure was cut by a further 17 per cent in 1931/32. Cuts continued and defence was not treated any better by the new United Australia Party government, led by the former Labor Treasurer Joseph Lyons, when it presented its budget in 1932.[52]

The first London Naval Treaty had been signed in 1930. The Conference had been called in response to loopholes in the Washington Treaty that had led to competition in the construction of smaller vessels not covered by the treaty. Britain also wanted any agreement that would reduce naval expenditure. The conference agreed to suspend construction of capital vessels until 1937 and to place controls on the use of submarines. The capital ship ratio was changed to 10:10:7 for Britain, the US and Japan; this strengthened Japan's position in the Pacific. Neither France nor Italy signed the agreement.[53]

In Britain, changes were occurring in the management of defence. The Chiefs of Staff report on 'The Situation in the Far East' triggered debate at the Committee of Imperial

---

[51] Parkin & Lee, *Great White Fleet to Coral Sea*, p. 100.
[52] Jason Sears, '1919-1929: An Imperial Service' in Stevens (ed), *The Royal Australian Navy*, pp. 84-87 has a succinct description of the impact of the Depression.
[53] Parkin & Lee, *Great White Fleet to Coral Sea*, p. 100.

Defence (CID) in April 1933. Neville Chamberlain, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, argued that developing the Royal Navy was too expensive and that British defence should focus on the Royal Air Force, while seeking accommodation with Japan in the Far East. After further deliberation this became policy and naval expenditure was reduced. Australia was not consulted about or informed of the change.[54]

By now Germany and Italy were becoming totalitarian states. Mussolini became Prime Minister of Italy in 1922 and his National Fascist Party seized total power in 1926 with Mussolini as dictator. The Weimar Republic in Germany collapsed in March 1930, the Depression had affected domestics politics and the National Socialist Party gained acceptance. Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in 1933. Having been a member since 1926, Germany withdrew from the League of Nations in October 1933.[55]

In 1934, the Secretary of the CID, Sir Maurice Hankey was invited to visit Australia to discuss defence issues with the government.[56] Archdale Parkhill, who had no experience in the portfolio, succeeded Pearce as Defence Minister towards the end of Hankey's visit. Parkhill supported the naval defence policy in the Defence Committee. Hankey attended the Defence Committee and glossed over both the changes proposed in Britain and British deficiencies in the Far East. The Chief of the General Staff (CGS), General Sir Julius Bruche, queried him directly over the dispatch of a fleet to Singapore, but Hankey obfuscated and Bruche did not challenge the response. Further, in his report to the Australian Government, Hankey gave an inaccurate account the defence discussion in Britain, referring to an earlier CID paper but not mentioning the subsequent debate and changed policy. The Australian Government was left in the dark about British intentions.[57]

The period 1931 to 1937 saw the development of a number of crises in Far Eastern affairs, as Japan moved first into Manchuria and then into China. This followed a significant political shift that had started in Japan on 25 December 1926; Emperor

---

[54] Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, p. 78. Farrell, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942*, p. 35.
[55] ICB Dear (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 534-5, 768.
[56] Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, pp. 81-83.
[57] Two views of the Hankey visit are in Connor, *ANZAC and Empire*, pp. 159-163 and Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, pp. 83-85.

Yoshihito died and Crown Prince Hirohito ascended to the throne. A severe economic depression followed in 1927. Ideas of 'democracy' that had been mooted since the Great War foundered as General Tanaka became Prime Minister; the militarisation of Japanese politics had begun.[58] The accession of Tanaka was followed by a shift in national politics towards the imperial course and a more aggressive foreign policy.[59] A shift had also occurred in internal politics, with the army and navy having gained the ability to control the appointment of their ministers and having direct access to Emperor Hirohito. The loss of internal cohesion in Japanese politics was exemplified by the Manchurian incident of September 1931, where a clash with Chinese forces was engineered without authority by the Japanese army in Manchuria. This resulted in a formal acceptance of the action by the Japanese government and a distinct hardening in Japanese policy towards the imperial course and the drive for autarky (economic self-sufficiency), the latter exacerbated by the Depression.[60] Manchuria was quickly over-run and the puppet state of Manchukuo established. The League and the United States had to respond; the former set up a Commission of Inquiry and the US announced that it would not recognise Japanese aggression. The Commission was conducted slowly but the Lytton Report, condemning the Japanese action, was presented to the League in October 1932. The Japanese response was to denounce the Report and withdraw from the League in March 1933. Further unfortunate results in the international arena were the exposure of the weakness of the United States, the impotence of the League and the failure of collective security, and a decline in relations between the US and Britain, with each blaming the other for not resolving the issue.[61]

The Australian position changed after Manchuria, from a position where Japan was not regarded as a major threat to a resurgence of the fear of invasion. Manchuria also occurred at a time when Australia had excellent trade relations with Japan, primarily in wool.[62] To protect trade and reduce the threat, the Australian government felt that it had no choice other than to adopt a policy of appeasement. The position was supported by a

---

[58] Edwin P. Hoyt, *Japan's War: The Great Pacific Conflict*, Guild Publishing, London, 1986, pp. 59-61; Mary L. Hanneman, *Japan Faces the World 1925-1952*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, Essex, 2001, pp. 31-46; Farrell p. 31.

[59] Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia*, pp. 136-142 covers the political shifts within Japan in some detail.

[60] Hoyt, *Japan's War*, pp. 86-145 covers Manchuria and the start of the Sino-Japanese war.

[61] Farrell, *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942*, pp. 31-34.

[62] Pam Oliver, *Raids on Australia: 1942 and Japan's Plans for Australia*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2010, pp. 130-161.

secret report to government by the External Affairs Minister John Latham, who had returned from a diplomatic and trade oriented tour of the Far East in July 1934. The report had a strong bias towards the Japanese position.[63] The Australian position was noted by the US Consul-General Jay Pierrepont Moffat, in October 1935 in a conversation with the new External Affairs Minister Pearce, who told him that without British or US strength in the Far East, Australia had no choice other than to be friendly with Japan. Pearce then commented that Japanese involvement in Manchuria and north China was beneficial to Australia and that, irrespective of the moral aspect, he "hoped her energies would be absorbed there for a generation."[64]

The easing of the worst effects of the Depression enabled an increase in defence expenditure in the 1933-34 Estimates, in what was the first phase of rearmament. The Lyons government defence policy had been announced by Defence Minister Pearce in September 1933. Pearce stated that Australian defence must "dovetail with the Imperial Defence policy"[65] and would remain primarily naval; including the required bases and equipment, fuel, stores and trained personnel. With regard to any naval attack, Pearce made the point that an attack on trade was more likely than an attack on Australia. Pearce also announced improved coastal defences at vital points, the replacement of heavy guns and the provision of anti-aircraft artillery. The 1928 Salmond scheme for the air force was to be resurrected as aircraft became available from Britain.[66]

The government measures were accompanied by a considerable increase in public interest in defence. In 1935 Hughes wrote *Australia and War Today* in which he accepted the value of the navy and Imperial Defence, but expressed concern over the parlous state of defences in Australia and the Far East.[67] He felt that a solution was to improve Australian air power, which was achievable in a shorter term at less cost. Hughes also felt the League was powerless. Piesse also produced *Japan and the Defence of Australia* in 1935, arguing that British naval power had declined and war

---

[63] Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia*, pp. 124-126.
[64] Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia*, p. 126.
[65] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 42.
[66] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 41-47.
[67] W.M. Hughes, *Australia and War Today: The Price of Peace*, Angus & Robertson Limited, Sydney, 1935.

was likely in Europe, so Australia could not rely on Imperial Defence.[68] Australia could not develop an adequate navy and would be better placed to develop land and air forces, supplemented by small naval vessels and submarines. There were a number of other commentators; they all tended to reflect a turn away from war fighting in a coalition environment, be it Imperial Defence or other alliance, to a narrower view of defending Australia. The need for mainland defence was becoming apparent.

Departure from the League had removed most restraints from Japanese ambition and a strong naval expansion program was underway. By 1936 Japanese policy had expanded to include a southward advance, after a series of committees had re-formulated the 'Fundamentals of National Policy'.[69] The Japanese policy was mainly driven by the armed forces, who agreed that expansion was necessary but were divided on the direction the expansion should take. The Army advocated further expansion from Manchuria into China while the Navy favoured southern China, Thailand, Borneo and a general control of the Western Pacific Ocean.

The Labor Party's views on defence had matured by the mid-1930s and the party's focus became more on the defence of Australia by Australian forces rather than relying on the Singapore Strategy. Curtin recognised that "an Eastern first-class power" (Japan) would most likely act when Britain was involved in a European war or threat thereof.[70] Curtin argued that the Army and Air Force should be strengthened, munitions production capacity increased and war stocks (particularly oil) be built up before any conflict started.[71]

The five years between the first and second London Naval Disarmament Conferences saw a radical change in international politics. By 1936 with the Depression easing, the introduction of trade barriers (including the short-lived 1936 Australian Trade Diversion policy), and the rise of nationalism and militarism, the likelihood of achieving real limitations in arms was slight. In June 1935 the Anglo-

---

[68] "Albatross" (E.L. Piesse), *Japan and the Defence of Australia*, Robertson & Mullens Limited, Melbourne, 1935.
[69] Frei, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia*, pp. 135-142 details the development of the southward policy.
[70] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 83.
[71] Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, p. 6.

German Naval Treaty was signed, where Britain accepted a German Navy that would be 35 per cent the size of the Royal Navy (Britain did not consult France or Italy). The London conference started in December 1935 and the Second London Naval Treaty was signed in March 1936 by the US, Britain and France only. Japan had withdrawn in January and Italy refused to sign because of League opposition to its invasion of Abyssinia.

The 1937 Imperial Conference was very significant for Australia and mainland defence. An Australian memorandum prepared for the conference expressed Australian concerns about the 'Japanese situation' and raised a number of issues, including the possibility of Japanese fortifications in the Pacific and the campaign in Japan for the 'Southward advance' policy.[72] Australia also raised a series of questions prior to the conference and requested a strategic appreciation of the danger of invasion and defence against invasion.[73]

The Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) provided a review of Imperial Defence to conference delegates in February 1937.[74] In reviewing factors which may lead to war, the CID recognised that Japan was aiming at hegemony in the East, just as Germany was in Europe. Japan would have increasing difficulty in supporting her rapidly increasing population and was deficient in the raw materials necessary for industrial development. The CID considered that Japan saw the solution to that problem was the creation of a self-sufficient empire in the Far East. The CID also felt that there was little doubt that Japan would seize the opportunity afforded by a European war involving Britain "to further her expansionist schemes in the Far East."[75]

The CID paper also presented a review of the British strategic position in relation to major threats; notably the review looked at each threat in isolation. With respect to Japan, the review stated that in a war with Japan the strategic position would depend upon the presence of the British Fleet in the Far East, however the strength of that fleet

---

[72] 'Memorandum prepared for Delegation to Imperial Conference', 10 March 1937. *DAFP,* Volume I, p. 40.
[73] Summary of Papers and Questions on Defence submitted by Delegation to Imperial Conference, 28 April 1937. *DAFP*, Volume I, p. 56.
[74] CID Paper 1305-B, "Review of Imperial Defence by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee", 25 February 1937. TNA: CAB 24/268.
[75] CID Paper 1305-B, paras. 25-28.

would be governed by consideration of home requirements. The review stated that Britain would never rely on a foreign navy for the entire protection of Britain, but then went on to say that France could undertake some of that responsibility if Britain dispatched a fleet to the Far East. The review felt that Japan would be faced with the certainty of having to fight a fleet action when the British fleet arrived at Singapore, far from Japanese home support, which would require considerable superiority that Japan did not possess. Therefore it was unlikely that Japan would embark on major operations against Singapore, though that possibility could not be definitely excluded. The review considered that Japan could take Hong Kong, and/or operate naval forces from temporary bases in Borneo and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI). Despite that, the arrival of the British Fleet in Singapore would provide trade protection in the East and prevent Japan undertaking any major operation against India, Australia or New Zealand, though raids remained a slight possibility.[76]

The worst case proposed by the Review was war with Germany, followed by attack in Far East by Japan – this meant that Britain would have to partially rely on France, in order to dispatch the Main Fleet to Singapore to deal with the Japanese. The review did not envisage that Germany would defeat France and remove that fall back ability; the real worst case scenario was not addressed. The British did not attempt to deny the potential threat from Japan, but there was consistent denigration of Japanese capability, particularly with respect to Singapore. [77]

The Australian questions covered issues such as relations between Britain and Japan, relations between Britain and the US, and strategic objectives of the Empire in a war with Japan. Australia also asked for a strategic appreciation of the danger of invasion and defence against invasion. A report by the British Chiefs of Staff addressed the questions; the tenor of the answers were reassuring to Australia without committing the British to any concrete action and the continuing reliance on the Singapore Strategy was evident.[78]

---

[76] CID Paper 1305-B, paras. 55-64.
[77] CID Paper 1305-B, paras. 55-64.
[78] *DAFP*, Volume I, pp. 144-157.

Adherence to the Singapore Strategy was also evident at the meetings of 1 June and 21 June. On 1 June, the meeting covered a number of issues, including the possibility of Japan initiating a Far East conflict and the British response to that. The meeting considered Britain also being involved in a European war, and if so the political and strategic factors that would influence the dispatch of a British Main Fleet to Singapore. The defence of Singapore in the period prior to the arrival of the fleet, including the extension of weapons and stores stocks to 70 days, and the need for rapid reinforcement was addressed. The possibility of raids on Australia was also covered. Notably, the meeting glossed over the fact that the Singapore fortifications were not yet complete.[79] On 21 June Parkhill was open about Australian concerns and the Australian debate over the Singapore Strategy versus defence of Australia. He pressed the British to declare how long Singapore could hold out against full scale attack without the presence of a British fleet, stating that if Singapore was not able to resist attack until the Fleet arrived then Australia should put its defence expenditure to the Army and Air Force. Parkhill received further reassurance that British plans were based on the fortress holding out; he expressed satisfaction with that.[80]

The British position was disingenuous at best; the Singapore Strategy was becoming hostage to fortune. As Malcolm Murfett said a number of British delegates "helped to reinforce the impression that the 'Singapore Strategy' remained a viable instrument of British defence policy."[81]

On 14 July 1937, shortly after the Imperial Conference concluded, Japan invaded China. Japan expected a swift victory and pursued peace talks while conducting military operations. However the Chinese Nationalist leader, Chiang Kai-Shek, held out, signing a Sino-Soviet non-aggression pact in August, striking a united front against Japan with the Chinese communists and receiving tacit and some real support from Western democracies – the British agreed to the construction of a road from Burma and

[79] *DAFP*, Volume I, pp. 101-116.
[80] *DAFP*, Volume I, pp. 166-170.
[81] Malcolm H. Murfett, 'Living in the Past: A Critical Re-examination of the Singapore Naval Strategy, 1918-1941', *War & Society*, Vol 11, No 1 (May 1993), p. 87.

the US imposed a 'moral embargo' on aircraft exports to Japan. The Sino-Japanese war continued for a further eight years.[82]

The Australian Government reviewed its Defence Policy in August 1937 "in the light of the Imperial Conference", and in the awareness of the latest Japanese aggression. Naval defence remained predominant, with land and air defence "supplementary". Lyons said that the security of Australia depended ultimately on the command of sea communications; as long as adequate Empire naval forces were in place, the danger of the invasion of Australia was remote. Further, naval forces for the defence of sea-borne trade simultaneously furnished a deterrent against sea-borne raids. Supplementary land defence included artillery, anti-aircraft artillery defences and garrisons, and military forces sufficient to deal with landing parties. Supplementary air defence included air forces adequate for close co-operation with the other services and as a striking force. Practical means of providing these forces were not addressed.[83]

By 1936-37 the annual defence budget had returned to the pre-Depression figure.[84] However the pre-Depression defence force was a nucleus force only and the budget was set at a time of international collective security and disarmament. To return to that level was not to prepare for war. In fact the services on the whole had out-dated arms and equipment and the organisation of rearmament was lacking, while what was occurring was very slow. The 1937-38 budget set a second rearmament program in place, covering the expansion and re-equipment of the three services, munitions supply and the organisation of industry. The program was comprehensive and would be continued by Menzies when he became Prime Minister. However the programmed expenditure could not be met, with the bulk of the lag being in capital equipment. At the end of the first two years of the program, in June 1939, planned expenditure on ships, aircraft, military equipment and munitions was barely one third complete. Works programs in Australia also suffered, with fixed defence installations, munitions factories and other works well behind schedule. With Britain focussed on rearming herself, British equipment was

---

[82] Antony Best et al, *International History of the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2004, pp. 71-73. A good account of the Sino-Japanese war is in Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint & John Pritchard (2nd Ed), *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, Viking, Harmondsworth (Middlesex), 1989, The Greater East Asia and Pacific Conflict, Part I.
[83] Extract from the speech to Parliament by Prime Minister Lyons, 24 August 1937. 1937 Imperial Conference. Summary of Proceedings. NAA: A5954, 1930/7.
[84] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 100-108.

simply not available so delays were inevitable and some inferior equipment, such as reconnaissance aircraft, were acquired as an interim measure. The services had been reduced to a skeleton and did not have the capability to expand in the time frames demanded. Public works had to be negotiated with the States, with employment issues still significant. Added to those factors was the public debate, which was still concerned almost solely with 'home defence' in the sense of resisting invasion and the protection of Australia against raids or blockade.[85]

Advice was sought from Britain on the state of the military forces and the air force. Lieutenant General Ernest Squires was appointed Inspector General of the army to report on the technical development and efficiency of the army. His report lauded the Staff Corps but found much to criticise with the army as a whole. He recommended improvements in the recruiting and training of the militia, and, significantly, the creation of two brigades of permanent forces.[86] Many of his recommendations had already been placed before the government by the Military Board.[87] Marshal of the RAF Sir Edward Ellington reported on the state of the air force. His report was critical; air force aircraft were unsuitable or obsolescent, the accident rate was too high, and the organisation deficient. His report reflected a strong bias, insisting that Australia procure British aircraft only, despite the fact that they were not available.[88] The import of both these officers reflected the Australian Government's lack of trust in Australian senior officers in the inter-war years.

In November 1938 the Department of Defence established a Manpower Committee, chaired by Major-General Thomas Blamey. It was tasked "to prepare allocations of personnel in emergency to the armed forces, munitions factories, key industries and essential services."[89] Its work dovetailed with the development of the Commonwealth War Book which proceeded through 1939, though progress was slow and the work was not complete at the start of the European War. The purpose of the War Book was to provide a concise record of the measures needed to pass from peace to a state of war, to

---

[85] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 108.
[86] Grey, *The Australian Army*, pp. 102-105.
[87] Grey, *The Australian Army*, p. 104.
[88] Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 48-50. Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, pp. 55-57.
[89] Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 7.

ensure all appropriate authorities were aware of the requirements on them and that the actions of the services and departments were properly coordinated. The War Book was in two parts: precautionary measures to be taken when war was imminent, and measures to be taken on the outbreak of war. Though incomplete the book was published in July 1939; it was supported by Service, Departmental and some State War Books.[90]

German expansion in Europe continued throughout 1938. The Anschluss with Austria took place in March, followed by pressure on Czechoslovakia to cede the Sudetenland to Germany. On 30 September 1938, the Munich agreement was signed by Chamberlain, Hitler, Mussolini and Daladier.[91] Debate within Australia was muted and followed the general lines of appeasement. Lyons stated that the British approach was in lines with the principles of the 1937 Imperial Conference. Lyons had already cabled the British Government that the Czechoslovakia question did not warrant war and also cabled to press for intervention by Mussolini.[92] Curtin's response to Munich was that Australia should not get involved in any European war, that Australian resources should be applied to Australian defence and that no Australians should be sent overseas.[93]

In March 1939, the month that Hitler took the rump of Czechoslovakia and appeasement ended, Lyons had a series of discussions with Chamberlain over the international situation and Britain's position with respect to Singapore. In a cablegram to Lyons on 20 March, Chamberlain advised that in the event of war with Germany and Italy, should Japan join in it would still be the British intention to despatch a fleet to Singapore. The size of that fleet would necessarily be dependent on when Japan entered the war and what losses Britain or the enemy had already sustained. The British had three main objects; the prevention of any major operation against Australia, New Zealand or India, to keep open sea communications and to prevent the fall of Singapore.[94] Even at this stage, Britain was insisting that Singapore was viable, though the qualified statement about the size of the fleet to be dispatched should have raised the alarm in Australia.

---

[90] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 122-142; Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 7. War Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, July 1939 (Copy 7). NAA: A11457, 1.
[91] Édouard Daladier, French Prime Minister.
[92] Mr JA Lyons, Prime Minister, to Mr N Chamberlain, UK Prime Minister, cable 96, 26 September 1938, *DAFP*, Volume I, p. 459. Mr JA Lyons, Prime Minister, to Mr N Chamberlain, UK Prime Minister, unnumbered cable, 28 September 1938, *DAFP*, Volume I, p. 469.
[93] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 94,96.
[94] Mr N Chamberlain, UK Prime Minister, to Mr JA Lyons, Prime Minister, unnumbered cable, 20 March 1939. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 75.

Reservations were also held by the British Chiefs of Staff which led them to extend the period before a fleet could reach Singapore to 70 days.[95] That position would change after the start of the European war.

A change in Australian leadership occurred when Lyons died on 7 April 1939. Robert Menzies was elected leader of the UAP, which led to the leader of the CP, Sir Earle Page, taking the party out of coalition. Menzies became Prime Minister on 26 April, with a new all-UAP Cabinet.

In March 1939, the Darwin Mobile Force (DMF) arrived in Darwin. The force had been proposed by the Chiefs of Staff and approved by Cabinet in October 1938. It was the first field force unit in the Permanent Military Forces and comprised a rifle company, machine gun and mortar sections and a troop of 18-pdr guns; because of the provisions of the *Defence Act* the men were enlisted as artillery. It had attracted a large number of very capable men and made a considerable effort to improve Darwin's defences.[96]

The Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed on 23 August 1939. Publicly, the agreement stated that Germany and the Soviet Union would not attack each other; any problems between the two countries would be dealt with amicably. In reality the pact meant that if a German attack on Poland resulted in war against France and/or Great Britain, the Soviets guaranteed that they would not enter the war; thus Germany would not face a second front. In exchange Germany gave the Soviets a free rein in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and eastern Poland. Then on 25 August Britain entered into a defence pact with Poland and war became imminent.[97]

In Australia, on 27 August 1939 the Defence Committee considered the actions to be taken under the provisions of the Commonwealth War Book for the 'Threat of War'.[98] The actions included the promulgation of National Security Regulations under the

---

[95] Murfett, p. 89.
[96] Peter Dennis et al, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, 2nd ed, Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne, 2008, p. 175.
[97] Antony Beevor, *The Second World War*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2012, pp. 18-21.
[98] War Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, July 1939, Chapter I, Sections 1 and 2(A). NAA: A11457, 1.

Defence Act, the preparation of RAN vessels for sea, the manning of reserve vessels, the despatch of defence personnel to Darwin, the provision of armaments at Port Kembla, the guarding of certain vulnerable points, the control and rationing of 'motor spirit' and the placing of munitions factories on a war production basis. These were presented to Cabinet on 28 August, noting that Menzies in consultation with the Defence Minister, Geoffrey Street, had already approved most of the actions.[99]

On the same day, the Cabinet also considered another Agenda on the basis of preparation of the services under the Precautionary Stage.[100] This was significant since the Naval Board had made a submission to the Defence Minister which addressed the situation in the Far East. The Board felt the warning signal from the UK may be for a European war only, in which case the possibility of Japan commencing hostilities shortly after the outbreak of the European War had to be considered. The Board

> "strongly recommended therefore that in the event of any Warning Telegram being received, the Government should adopt the attitude that it is probable that Japan will become involved and thus our preparations should be based on plans prepared to meet this eventuality."[101]

The Board was concerned that preparation for a European War only would result in necessary actions being left undone and time lost. The Defence Committee had considered the recommendation. Air Force agreed with Navy; protection of trade involved Air Force cooperation with Navy, so Air Force preparation needed to be aligned with that of Navy and the manning of coast defences meant that cooperating squadrons would also need to be manned. The recommendation to the Cabinet was that Navy and Air Force should make plans based on Japan commencing hostilities. However Army was concerned about the significantly higher level of mobilisation this would involve: 18,725 personnel at peace strength rising to 29,100 at war strength.[102] Army felt that level of mobilisation would have a major impact on industry and the normal activities of the community and recommended that Army prepare for a European

---

[99] Cabinet Agenda 28 August 1939, noted as Defence 1/1939 and later adopted as War Cabinet Agendum 1/1939. A similar situation applied to all Cabinet Agenda prior to the formation of the War Cabinet; they are cited as War Cabinet Agenda. NAA: A2671, 1/1939.

[100] War Cabinet Agendum 2/1939. Precautionary stage - Basis of preparations for the services. 28 August 1939. NAA: A2671, 2/1939.

[101] War Cabinet Agendum 2/1939.

[102] Defence Committee Minute 76/1939, Preparation of Plans on Basis of Far Eastern War, 27 August 1939, attached to War Cabinet Agendum 2/1939.

War only. The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations. This was a trend that continued in the early years of the war: the Cabinet and the War Cabinet tended to acquiesce to Defence Committee recommendations, unless politically unacceptable.

By 1939, Australia had a small basis upon which to develop the capacity for a modern war.[103] Australia was self-sufficient in food and many key minerals, but was dependent on imports for other minerals such as aluminium, copper and nickel; Australia produced virtually no petroleum. The population was concentrated in the south-east and south-west, but even within the populated areas road, rail and air communications were mediocre. Communications in remote areas were almost non-existent. Australia's industrial capacity had improved, with a small but growing steel industry and a good pool of technical skills. Basic preparations had been completed to orientate the country towards war, with the creation of the Department of Supply and Development. Munitions production had been increasing since 1934. While Australia could not fully equip its forces, some weaponry was being produced and attempts were being made to develop ship and aircraft production capability.

However, the state of the services was poor. The army had about 3,000 Permanent Military Forces and 80,000 Militia, with the latter at various stages of training. The army lacked modern equipment, most weapons were of Great War vintage and mechanisation was only now starting. The army had a basic capability to man point defences, but little else. The air force was even worse off. It had about 3,500 personnel, bolstered by 600 reserves; its aircraft were mainly obsolete and development was slow due to delays in delivery of aircraft from Britain and the US, though one squadron was equipping with modern Sunderland flying boats in Britain. The navy was most ready for war. It had two heavy and four light cruisers, two sloops and five Great War vintage destroyers on loan from Britain. However, the navy was established to contribute to the overall strength of the Royal Navy; it was not big enough or sufficiently balanced to act independently in Australia's defence.

A number of mistakes were made by Australian governments in the inter-war years; the failure to act independently and quickly, and the reliance on a flawed naval strategy

[103] The synopsis is drawn from Robertson, *Australia At War*, pp. 10-13.

stand out. Accepting the financial limitations imposed by the Depression, the one thing that governments could have achieved was the development of a unique Australian defence policy, even if only in principle. As Jeffrey Grey says:

> "For most of the inter-war period, it is clear that little or nothing was done to increase the government's ability to carry out its military responsibilities, and the hurried rearmament measure adopted after 1935, and especially after 1937, in no way make up for the years of neglect. The demands of modern industrial warfare required well-trained, equipped and balanced armed forces, and these are not created overnight."[104]

Australia was about to enter into a global conflict that would stretch the great powers, let alone a medium-size Dominion of the British Empire. How that would unfold and the impact that Australia's response to the conflict had on mainland defence is analysed in subsequent chapters.

[104] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 143.

3

THE DISTANT WAR: AUSTRALIAN COMMITMENT

September 1939 to June 1940

On Sunday 3 September 1939, after Britain declared war on Germany, Robert Menzies performed his melancholy duty and announced that Australia was again at war.

As well as the war in Europe, an issue of immediate concern for the government was possible Japanese action. Japan announced on 4 September that it would remain 'independent', whatever that meant, but that was no guarantee of long term neutrality. Australia sought advice from Britain and was reassured in a series of dispatches that Australia had little to fear from Japan and thus could release forces to support Britain overseas. However the problem remained; the Government had to find a course through a strategic problem of great difficulty – how strike a balance between the provision of early assistance to Britain and what form that assistance would take, against the possible need for the defence of Australia against a nebulous threat.[1] The Australian Government sought a middle road. How they found this road, what it constituted and the impact on mainland defence are examined in this chapter.

The Australian people were not prepared for another war. The Great War was far too close in time for people to feel anything other than dread at the prospect of another blood bath. The price was still being paid at the start of the Second War, with 49,157 veterans in hospital and 70,462 disabled men receiving pensions.[2] All Australian families had been affected by the Great War and many families were still feeling personal loss or suffering in 1939.[3] Further, Australia had suffered severely in the great

---

[1] Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 10.
[2] Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years: Australian Soldiers in the Great War*, Melbourne University Publishing, illustrated edition 2010, p. 289.
[3] Michael McKernan, *The Strength of a Nation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006. The Prologue and Chapter 1 address the social impact of the Great War.

Depression. Hasluck said that both experiences had created "A changing and confused nation, engaged on its domestic problems in the midst of a changing and confused world." Australia was materially and spiritually unprepared for war and this was "aggravated by its uncertainties both as regards itself and as regards its place in the world."[4] This was a powerful determinant of Australian conduct throughout this period.

Parliament unanimously endorsed the British declaration of war on 6 September,[5] though the government and the opposition had quite different attitudes to the war. The UAP saw the Imperial Defence links with the UK, the common background and the strong ties of trade; Australia would have difficulty surviving as a nation if Britain was defeated. The ALP attitude reflected its inter-war stance of collective security, and the need for and the moral right of Australia to resist the use of force in international relations.[6] However, despite the agreement over the declaration of war, there were considerable differences over what commitment Australia should make to the war. The Government stance implied that substantial military aid should be given to Britain, while the Opposition maintained that the defence of Australia came first. Menzies was concerned about aid to Britain and saw that the strategic problems facing Australia were of a different nature to those of 1914. Consequently the Government could not allow the training of the Militia to be held back by the raising of any expeditionary force. Menzies' initial attitude towards an expeditionary force was made clear in a cable to the Australian High Commissioner in London, former Prime Minister Stanley Bruce.[7] Menzies stated that the Australian task for some time would be training forces for Australian defence. He felt that until the position of Japan was clear it would be futile to even discuss an expeditionary force and further there was uncertainty as to how the war would progress and the ultimate use of Australian troops. Menzies could see Australia reinforcing Singapore at some stage or sending garrisons to the Middle East. Menzies tasked Bruce to maintain close contact with the British Government on these issues.

The ALP platform announced by Curtin on 6 September included a number of points: the ALP affirmed its belief that international disputes should be resolved by arbitration,

---

[4] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 7-8.
[5] Australia, unlike Canada and South Africa, did not formally declare war on Germany.
[6] John Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 9.
[7] Cablegram, R.G. Menzies, Prime Minister, to S.M. Bruce, High Commissioner in London, 5 September 1939. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 232.

but believed that resistance to armed aggression was inevitable in the current crisis; the ALP stood for the maintenance of Australia as an integral part of the British Commonwealth, therefore the party would do all that was possible to safeguard Australia and maintain the integrity of the British Commonwealth. Curtin then informed the House that the ALP would "preserve its separate entity" and be an opposition that would scrutinise government decisions. The ALP felt that the civic liberties of the people should be maintained as far as possible. Finally, Curtin saw that there could be two areas of difference with Government policy: conscription, to which the ALP remained opposed, and the raising of an expeditionary force, which Curtin said did not arise since the Government had announced that it was not contemplating such a force.[8]

There were three phases in this period. First there was concern, uncertainty and procrastination; second, though uncertainty remained, there was the initial commitment to major support for Britain; and the third phase was where the commitment gained a momentum that proved difficult to restrain.

Australia was reluctant to go to war but accepted the necessity of having to defeat Germany. At the same time there was concern and uncertainty about the threat from Japan, with the government not fully reassured by UK insistence that the Singapore base would hold Japan at bay. This led to procrastination over the raising of a force for service wherever required, then led to the delay in deciding to send it overseas. However, the Middle East was seen as a strategic priority for Australia. The 1923 Imperial Conference Resolutions had noted "the necessity for the maintenance of safe passage along the great route to the East through the Mediterranean and the Red Sea."[9] This was reinforced by the fact that in 1939 the great majority of Australian trade with the UK went via the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean. Australia had long been concerned with the security of the Mediterranean route and the key to the Suez Canal, Egypt.[10] It was eventually decided to despatch the 2nd AIF to the Middle East; priority swung to the 2nd AIF as part of that commitment.

---

[8] Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates: Senate and House of Representatives*, Session 1937-1939, 6 September 1939 to 8 December 1939, p.37. (Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*: hereafter *CPD*).

[9] Summary of Proceedings: 1923 Imperial Conference and 1923 Imperial Economic Conference, TNA: CAB24/164.

[10] In 1936 a Treaty of Alliance had been agreed between Britain and Egypt by which the security of Empire communications through the Canal was safeguarded, with Britain having the right to station

Two other issues involved the Australian commitment to the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) and the release of RAN vessels to the RN (and away from the Australia Station). The result of the three issues was the development of a political momentum – once the commitment was made to the 2nd AIF, EATS and the RN it was politically and logistically difficult to change course. All three issues had a detrimental effect of mainland defence.[11]

Menzies started discussions with Earle Page on 5 September 1939 about the formation of a coalition UAP/CP government. After Page declined to join a coalition government, Menzies decided on the formation of a War Cabinet on 15 September. The formation was approved by a meeting of the Full Cabinet, which agreed on a flexible arrangement under which the War Cabinet would include such Ministers as the PM directed, together with Ministers co-opted from time to time for pertinent issues and the Chiefs of Staff when military issues were to be discussed. The War Cabinet would deal with all matters in relation to the conduct of the war, other than matters of major policy which remained with the Full Cabinet; this arrangement worked and lasted for the duration of the war, accepting that there were some logistical problems with the Department of Defence still in Melbourne.[12] The first War Cabinet had the following members: Robert Menzies (PM, Chair), William Hughes, Richard Casey, Geoffrey Street, Sir Henry Gullett, Senator George McLeay, Senator Hattil Foll, Sir Frederick Stewart and James Fairbairn. Hughes had been Prime Minister during the First World War and was an experienced politician. Street was a retired Brigadier (AIF service, then Light Horse in the inter-war years), while Casey, Foll and Fairbairn had served in the First World War. Gullett had been a war correspondent in Palestine. The first War Cabinet thus had a good blend of political and military experience.[13]

---

troops in Egypt for canal defence and to use Alexandria as a navy base. Australia had been a strong proponent for the treaty. G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, pp. 45-47. The importance of the Middle East to Britain during this period is examined in John Darwin, *The Empire Project*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009, chapters 11-13.

[11] John Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 17.

[12] David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin in association with Australian Archives, Sydney, 1996, p. 3. Also War Cabinet Agendum 12/1939, NAA: A2671, 12/1939.

[13] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 571-2.

A key person in this machinery was the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Frederick Shedden. A career public servant, Shedden had limited First World War experience in the Pay Corps, had trained at the Imperial Defence College and produced his paper on the principles of imperial defence in 1929. Shedden has a strong influence on Australian strategic decision-making; both Menzies and Curtin often accepted his advice on strategic and policy issues, sometimes over that of the Chiefs of Staff.[14]

There were two bodies to give advice to the War Cabinet. The Defence Committee (formed in 1926) included the service Chiefs, a senior public servant from the Department of Defence and when required the Controller-General of Munitions, the Controller of Civil Aviation and the Chairman of the Principal Supply Officer's Committee. The Defence Committee provided advice on overall defence policy.[15]

The Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC) was formed in September 1939. The CoSC comprised the three service chiefs and advised on operational matters as well as providing military appreciations for the War Cabinet. The CoSC had a major say in the conduct of mainland defence. However in the wider war Australia was a junior partner so the Chiefs did not function as strategic planners; when consultation did occur, strategic debate involving Australia was at a government to government level. Indeed, during the early stages of the war the Australian Government often asked for appreciations from the UK Government and UK Chiefs of Staff rather than the Australian Chiefs, though the Australian Chiefs were often asked to comment on UK appreciations.[16]

On 13 November 1939, in conformity with pre-war planning, the responsibilities of the Defence portfolio were distributed into the Departments of the Navy, Army and Air, each with their own minister. The Prime Minister was Minister for Defence Coordination with Shedden as Secretary (and secretary to the War Cabinet).[17]

---

[14] The role of Shedden is covered by David Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000.
[15] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 439.
[16] Horner, *High Command*, p. 18.
[17] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 571-582 lists the war ministries and innovations in the structure of government.

On 26 September 1939, the War Cabinet considered the Review of the Scale of Preparation of the Services for War. The review stated that the present situation provided two distinct defence problems: first the conduct of the present war which threatened the Empire as a whole, including Australia, and second the preparation for a Far East War which might develop at short notice, and which would constitute a more direct threat to Australia. The review also defined the minor scale of attack resulting from the European war and the medium scale of attack that could result from a war in the Far East.[18]

The minor scale of attack included probable attack on shipping by cruiser, Armed Merchant Cruiser (AMC) or disguised raider; probable attack on shipping by mines; possible (but very improbable) attack on shipping by heavier forces such as pocket battleships; and possible short duration bombardment of the coast by warship or AMC. The medium scale was more significant and involved sustained attack on shipping by cruisers, AMCs, submarines or aircraft carried in such vessels, and concurrent heavy raids in the nature of combined operations by naval, air and land forces, that is troops carried in transports escorted by strong naval forces which could include more than one cruiser squadron, aircraft carriers, and, possibly (but less probably), one or more capital ships. These scales of attack remained the basis for planning throughout this period.[19]

Two activities dominated the early days of the war. Though presented separately it must be remembered that they were concurrent. The first involved the UK raising a number of suggestions about how Australia could cooperate in the war. The suggestions were considered by the War Cabinet on 26 September, discussions then continued with the UK and the War Cabinet considered the final issues on 25 October. The second activity was the consideration by the War Cabinet of the basis of preparations by the services and the decision to raise the 2nd AIF (initially called the Special Force). This commenced with the War Cabinet on 11 September and continued

[18] War Cabinet Agendum No 11/1939, Review of Scale of Preparation of the Services for War, 26 September 1939. NAA: A2670, 11/1939.
[19] War Cabinet Agendum No 11/1939, Review of Scale of Preparation of the Services for War, 26 September 1939.

until the decision was made by the Full Cabinet on 26 November to despatch the 2nd AIF overseas.[20]

On 8 September 1939 the UK government sent a cable with suggestions about possible Australian cooperation in the war based on UK assumptions about Japan: first, that Japan was not only neutral but had a friendly attitude towards the "democratic countries"; and second that Japan was neutral and reserving her attitude towards the democratic countries.[21]

In the case of the Navy a neutral Japan would mean that German submarine attack in Australian waters was unlikely and the most likely danger was attack on shipping by armed raiders. The UK considered that two cruisers and HMAS *Australia* (when recommissioned) would be adequate for that task. The cable noted that HMAS *Perth* (then in the Caribbean) was already under Admiralty orders but suggested that a second cruiser and five RAN destroyers be made available for service "other than on Australian Station".[22] Further suggestions included the provision of trained naval reserves, officers drawn from civil occupations such as pilots (for the Fleet Air Arm) and yachtsmen or merchant marine officers, and a range of skilled tradesmen such as telegraphists and signalmen, artificers of all kind and electricians. The cable presumed that Australia would take up and equip two local AMCs in addition to three currently fitting out in Australia and that manning of these ships would be met locally. It was hoped that Australia would meet the requirements for Defensively Armed Merchant Ships (DEMS) in Australian waters as well as mines and local defence equipment (and provide such material to New Zealand and the eastern parts of the Empire). The cable also canvassed Australian shipbuilding capability for vessels ranging in size from destroyers to trawler-type vessels for local defence.[23]

---

[20] Cablegram 191, A. Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner to Australia, 8 September 1939. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 249. War Cabinet Agendum - No 6/1939 - Australia's war effort - Basis of preparations by the services, 11 September 1939. NAA: A2671, 6/1939.

[21] Cablegram 191. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 249.

[22] Cablegram 191, para. 4.

[23] On 27 August 1939 three British passenger liners currently in Sydney were requisitioned by the Admiralty: *Moreton Bay* and *Arawa* were converted to AMC and *Changte* to a victualling stores issuing ship. The Naval Board requisitioned the coastal liner *Kanimbla* as an AMC. The AMCs each had seven 6inch and two 3inch guns and were a quick means of providing some trade protection. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, p. 61.

With respect to the Army, if Japan was neutral but friendly the cable considered that the UK must prepare for a long war that would call for the utilisation of all available resources. Consequently Australia should exert a full national effort, including the despatch of an expeditionary force (its composition and destination was not defined). Australia was invited to consider whether Australian units could relieve UK formations in places such as Singapore, Burma and India or whether Australia would prefer to delay and despatch complete divisions to a main theatre of operations. If Japan was neutral and reserving her attitude it might be unwise for Australia to despatch an expeditionary force overseas but Australia could assist by holding formations available at short notice for reinforcement of Singapore, New Zealand, or British and French islands in the Western Pacific.[24]

In the case of the Air Force the UK government felt that the current main weakness of the allies was in respect to air strength. Dominion assistance was needed to rectify that situation. The cable proposed three ways to achieve this. The first was by the direct despatch to Britain of complete units of RAAF; the second was by the substitution of Australian for UK squadrons overseas, thus releasing UK squadrons for home service; and the last was by the supply of aircraft, material and trained personnel from Australian resources.[25]

The cable accepted that as a result of production delays in England, squadrons in Australia were still equipped with obsolescent types. Consequently Australia could not reinforce Singapore by air, so the UK did not recommend either of the first two proposals. However the second proposal should be implemented when Australian squadrons had completed re-equipment. The cable then proposed that the Australian Sunderland squadron should remain in England at UK disposal for trade protection.[26] Finally the cable noted that while Australia had in place a programme for the expansion of the air force, this was a long term peace time project; the UK considered that programme should change, assuming that the object was now to assist the UK.[27]

---

[24] Cablegram 191, paras 12-16.
[25] Cablegram 191, paras 17-21.
[26] 10 Squadron RAAF was in Britain at the time, re-equipping with Short Sunderland flying boats.
[27] Cablegram 191, para. 21.

The suggestions had huge implications for mainland defence. The proposals meant that Navy would surrender the majority of its major units to Admiralty control for service in distant waters, leaving a smaller force to protect Australia's littoral seas. Army would put all its effort into the development of an expeditionary force, for service overseas either as divisional forces or as piecemeal units to replace UK forces, in both cases wherever the UK chose. Air Force would surrender its modern maritime capability, send re-equipped units overseas as UK replacements and change its expansion programme to suit UK requirements. All this was based on the UK assessment that Japan would remain neutral if not friendly.

The cable was considered by Menzies, Street, Shedden and the Chiefs of Staff – Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin RN, Major General John Lavarack and Air Vice Marshal Stanley Goble. It was agreed that the Chiefs should submit their observations and recommendations in respect to the suggestions. Their views were presented to the War Cabinet on 26 September with proposed responses to the UK suggestions.[28] It should be noted that the observations and recommendations of the Chiefs reflected the attitudes and debate of the inter-war years, particularly in the case of Navy and Army.

The Navy response reflected the perception of the RAN as a subset of the RN under the principles of Imperial Defence. Navy noted a previous recommendation that one cruiser should be sent overseas and agreed that a second should also go. With two cruisers defending Australian sea lines of communication in distant waters and the rest employed in Australian waters the best distribution of the available force would be achieved. The response agreed that while Japan remained neutral the submarine threat was low and it would be a waste of anti-submarine assets to keep the destroyers in Australian waters, and noted that the five destroyers were actually on loan from the UK. The response went on to note that little assistance could be given with trained personnel, due to the lack of such personnel in Australia, but did offer 50 officers and 20 ratings with anti-submarine (A/S) training. They would be under-utilised in Australia because A/S equipment had not arrived from the United Kingdom. A number of yachtsmen and

[28] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Australian Cooperation in Empire Defence. 26 September 1939. NAA: A2671, 14/1939. The following points and quotations are from the table detailing the Chiefs of Staff responses.

ex-merchant mariners could be expected to be available but there was an acute shortage of telegraphists, signalmen, artificers and electricians. The Navy indicated that manning for the three Imperial AMCs had been met and agreed that two more should be taken up for the RAN. Requirements for DEMS had been and would continue to be met. Production of mines would not commence for over a year but ammunition and other supplies were being produced for New Zealand and the Eastern parts of the Empire. Cockatoo Island had the capacity to build three destroyers or four escort vessels and other yards could build anti-submarine and mine sweeping vessels as well as trawler size vessels.[29]

The Army response also reflected inter-war thinking. The response noted the two assumptions made by the UK, then stated that a further hypothesis, a hostile Japan, had not been mentioned. Army made the point that authoritative information about Japanese intentions was meagre, so it was impossible to draw accurate conclusions about her future attitude to the war in Europe. However it would be unsafe to assume a neutral Japan, and unwise to assume that, when the democratic powers where deeply committed elsewhere, Japan would not take advantage of that commitment to further her designs in the Pacific. This raised the whole question of scale of attack.[30]

With regard to the second assumption, the response agreed that it would be unwise to send an expeditionary force of any size overseas. With respect to the defence of Singapore, New Zealand or the Pacific, Army felt that partially trained units (battalions or brigades) could be supplied by the end of the year. However, until the situation in Australia regarding war material improved, the units would not be equipped to full standard, having only individual weapons and either horse-drawn or motor transport.[31] All other weapons and equipment would need to be provided. With regard to the first assumption, the division would not be capable of operating effectively as a formation until May 1940, but brigades could be used earlier to relieve UK regular units in Singapore, Burma or India on the understanding that they would need to continue training. Army then raised the issue that these units would be relegated to garrison

[29] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Navy.
[30] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Army.
[31] The conversion from horsed to motor transport remained an issue until well into 1942.

duties for an indefinite period, which would be unpopular with the troops and the Australian people. A clear stipulation would be needed that the units would be released when training was completed and reformed with the division to participate in the war. Again, though the need to retain war material in Australia for home defence would not be as great under the "benevolently neutral" assumption, the units would still need to be provided with the majority of their equipment on arrival.[32]

The Army response then addressed the hostile Japan hypothesis, stating that in that case there could be no question of sending troops out of Australia, except possibly to reinforce UK garrisons in the Far East, New Zealand or the Pacific. Even then that would depend on the degree to which Australia was directly threatened.[33]

Looking at Australia's national effort Army concluded that, despite the raising of the Special Force, no reduction in the present establishment could be recommended; indeed in the case of a hostile Japan, an increase may be needed despite the lack of armament. An increase in the establishment of certain units was needed, totalling 15,000 to 20,000 and further periods of training after the first two months were recommended. The response then stated that after the recruitment of the first division, further recruitment for the Special Force should be by way of the Militia. Finally, in regard to technical people and medical officers, the response opined that no such people could be spared but noted the right of individuals to act as they saw fit.[34]

The Air Force response noted that it had always been the Air Staff view that the RAAF would provide complete Australian units that would ultimately be grouped into an Australian contingent. Air Force agreed that the first two proposals could not be adopted at the time, largely because of the training commitment and the difficulty in supply of aircraft. Concern was also expressed that by the time they were acquired, the aircraft may not be up to European standard. The response did say that the RAAF could supply future squadrons without aircraft in the near future. As for the third proposal there was

---

[32] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Army.
[33] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Army.
[34] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Army.

little hope of any assistance from Australia, apart from trained personnel. However, the provision of squadrons without aircraft to areas such as the Middle East would enable RAF units to be withdrawn to England and enable further training for the Australian units.[35]

The response then went on to discuss the UK statement that the RAAF expansion programme should change, assuming that the object was now to assist the UK. The inference appeared to be that the RAAF should reorganise its development programme to support a large air effort overseas, with the immediate aim being to despatch trained personnel to Great Britain. The ultimate aim appeared to be to provide personnel to man new Australian squadrons in Europe and to reinforce squadrons sent overseas to replace RAF units. Noting that air policy was set by government, the Air Force felt that the UK assumption could not be correct, since local defence was the immediate object. The Air Force agreed that the Sunderland squadron should remain in the UK subject to their recall if needed in Australia.[36]

The recommended policy therefore was to place an organised force at the disposal of the UK in the first instance, with the intent of ultimately providing a complete air contingent in the main theatre of operations and to provide appropriate squadrons to RAF overseas commands if the local situation permitted. The air defence of Australia was not addressed.[37]

The War Cabinet approved most of the recommendations, a number of which were subsumed by events, and a reply was sent to the UK on 30 October.[38] This was followed by cables between Australia and the UK about Japanese intentions; the UK advice continued to be reassuring.[39]

---

[35] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Air Force.
[36] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Air Force.
[37] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Table of Observations and Recommendations of Chiefs of Staff – Air Force.
[38] War Cabinet Agendum 14/1939, Approved Responses.
[39] Cablegram 191, Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner to Australia, to Mr A Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 11 September 1939. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 258. Cablegram 200, A. Eden, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner to Australia, 12 September 1939. *DAFP*, Volume II, p. 262.

The concurrent second activity was the consideration by the Cabinet of the preparation by the services and the decision to raise the 2nd AIF. 'The Basis of Preparations by the Services' went to the Cabinet on 11 September 1939.[40] The agendum reiterated that the principles of Imperial Defence were first Local Defence, and second Empire Cooperation. The agendum made the first principle very clear. "Each part of the Empire accepts responsibility for its own local defence, and the adequacy of these preparations is important lest any Dominion should become a burden on the United Kingdom strength in the event of a crisis."[41] Clearly the agendum, while accepting the need for empire cooperation, emphasised the threat from Japan and the need to provide for the defence of Australia.

The agendum accepted the two assumptions made in the 8 September UK cable and proposed two fundamental factors; first the presence of several German raiders in the Pacific and the threat they may pose and second the danger of discounting the possibility of Japanese intervention. The latter point was supported by a cable from the British Ambassador to Tokyo, communicating advice furnished by the Australian Trade Commissioner: "An important feature of Japanese policy is that its attitude approximates neutrality towards each European belligerent only for so long as it considers its China activities unaffected by one or other of those belligerents."[42]

Emphasising that this was on the basis of a European war, the agendum then stated the four scales of German attack against which defence must be provided were probable attack on shipping by cruiser or raider, probable mining attack on shipping, possible (but very improbable) attack on shipping by heavier forces and possible short duration coastal bombardment. The agendum discounted air attack, stating that the only possible form would be a small number of seaplanes launched from vessels off the coast.[43]

---

[40] War Cabinet Agendum - No 6/1939 - Australia's war effort - Basis of preparations by the services, 11 September 1939. NAA: A2671, 6/1939.
[41] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939, para. 1.
[42] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939, para. 3(b). No evidence has been found to indicate whether the Australian Trade Commissioner reported this advice to Australia, noting that there were no direct, secure cable channels between him and the Australian Government.
[43] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939.

Navy reported that naval preparations were so intertwined that it was impractical to separate those for a European war from those for a Far Eastern war, though because of the defined scales of attack some actions to meet the requirements of a Far Eastern war were not complete. These included fitting out 30 local craft as anti-submarine vessels and the provision of full War Base Staff at defended ports. Other measures for a Far Eastern war were being progressed, including boom defence at Darwin and anti-submarine indicator loops at certain defended ports. Longer term measures such as construction of destroyers and construction of a capital ship dock were also proceeding.[44]

Army considered that full mobilisation of the Militia was not necessary, however continuous manning of the coastal defences had to be maintained and troops had to be provided for protection of the coast defences and vulnerable points. The Army appreciation was that in view of the present threat to the Empire, and Australia as part of the Empire, and in view of the possibility of Japanese intervention,

> "immediate steps must be taken to bring the Militia Forces up to the highest possible standard of efficiency. This entails extensive training, not only of the rank and file in the use of their weapons, but also of commanders and staffs and of units of all arms in cooperation; there has been since 1918 no opportunities of gaining experience in training of this nature."[45]

This recognised that mainland defence had been severely neglected between the wars.

Army recommended that the Militia be called out for war service for periods of a month at a time, in such strength that approximately half the Militia peace strength would be under arms at any one time. To achieve this, Army recommended that garrison battalions should be recruited to relieve the Militia of garrison duties. Army also recommended that command schools be established, that Militia staff be called out to enable mobilisation plans to be completed and that mobilisation of war material be expedited. Finally, Army envisaged the need to raise a force for service overseas. Army made the point that in the present situation the primary effort should be directed to

[44] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939.
[45] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939, para 3 (iv) (b).

home defence, but the measures recommended would contribute to the raising of a force for service overseas.[46]

Air Force noted that the maximum rate of effort within the limitation of first line aircraft would be required to meet the known German threat in the Pacific, therefore the question of Japanese intervention had little bearing on the Air Force defensive policy. Air Force stated that at its present stage of development, it was not strong enough to meet the defined scales of attack since the scales were the basis of the development programme. Noting that the formation of squadrons was dependent on the supply of aircraft, Air Force recommended that the development programme be undertaken as an emergency measure, with aircraft obtained from local or overseas sources. Air Force recognised that most civil aircraft that could be impressed would be unsuitable. Finally, the Air Force Training Organisation should be boosted as a temporary war measure in view of the lead time needed for training aircrew.[47]

The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations and noted the need for submission of financial aspects of the recommendations. To that end the Minister for Defence, Geoffrey Street, directed that the services should review their normal programmes to determine what variations were necessary and what amounts could be diverted to additional and more immediate purposes.[48]

A supplement to the agendum was submitted by the Military Board on 13 September. The Board made its position clear in the opening sentence of the report. "In submitting its report the Military Board desires to re-affirm the view … that in the present situation our military effort must primarily be directed towards meeting the requirements of home defence."[49] The Board made it clear that the Militia, fully equipped, trained and mobilised, would be "no stronger than is necessary for the defence of Australia against probable forms of attack." Hence the recommended measures were designed to raise the efficiency of the Militia. However the Board was concerned that the immediate creation of the Special Force in parallel with the Militia

[46] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939.
[47] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939.
[48] War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939.
[49] Report by Military Board on the Raising of a Special Force for Continuous Service either in Australia or Overseas. Supplement to War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939, 13 September 1939..

training would lead to dispersion of effort and resources, at a time when concentration of both would appear essential. It would mean depriving existing units of their best officers and men at a time when their services were most needed and that existing units would have much less equipment to train with. Further "so far as home defence is concerned, there will be no equivalent gain to set against these disadvantages", since the Special Force, even when trained, would not be effective unless properly equipped and that could only be at the expense of the Militia.[50] The Board doubted whether the possible advantage of raising the Special Force at an early date was sufficiently great to justify a measure that might prejudice the safety of Australia.

The Board considered that the creation of the Special Force should be accepted as part of military policy and as a contribution to Empire defence. However, the immediate effort should be to ensure the safety of Australia and the continuous training of the Militia in 50 per cent quotas should be initiated. The Board therefore recommended that the Special Force be postponed until the whole Militia had completed at least one month's continuous training and more equipment and material became available. If the Government decided to raise the Special Force, steps could be put in place for its formation, with some preliminary training and the assembly of complete units by about December 1939. An alternative would be to raise the Special Force at once and defer the training of the Militia; the Board could not advocate that because it would not achieve the immediate objective – the security of Australia.[51]

The decision to raise the Special Force was announced by Menzies in a national broadcast on 15 September. Menzies said

> "We propose to enlist forthwith an Infantry Division with its ancillary units, or a total of approximately 20,000 men. This Force will be specially enlisted for service at home or abroad, as circumstances may permit or require."[52]

The impact of that decision on the training of the Militia was to prove to be detrimental for some time. Even more detrimental was the War Cabinet decision on 10 October:

---

[50] Supplement to War Cabinet Agendum 6/1939, para 1, emphasis in the original.
[51] No evidence has been located of any War Cabinet response to the Supplement, noting that it was subsumed by the announcement on the formation of the 2nd AIF.
[52] Robertson and McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy*, p. 29.

> "Gaps occurring in the Militia forces owing to enlistments for the second AIF, discharges owing to reserved occupations, and other reasons, are not to be filled for the time being."[53]

Though this was later reversed, it demonstrated that the government was losing sight of mainland defence.

The Full Cabinet met on 19 October to consider measures to ensure the viability of the Militia for the defence of Australia. Stated Government policy was to maintain the Militia forces at a strength of no less than 75,000 men and to achieve that the Cabinet approved the re-introduction of universal military training. The Cabinet emphasised that there would be no obligation for service abroad, unless a member volunteered to join the 2nd AIF. Initial call out would be restricted to single men who would turn twenty-one in the year ending 30 June 1940, with training for a period of three months commencing in January 1940. The measures were designed to enable married Militia men to move to the Militia Reserve after the 30 days training period and not be committed to three months training; this had been done to alleviate financial difficulties or cases of personal hardship for such men.[54]

The three services made progress reports on 21 November. The reports shed much light on preparations being made for mainland defence, as well as the impact of commitments to the distant war on mainland defence.[55]

The Army report covered internal security measures, coast and anti-aircraft defences, commonwealth territories, militia training, the 2nd AIF, war material, clothing, general stores, works, the medical service and Army administration. Only those aspects pertinent to mainland defence are covered here.[56]

The report noted the raising of garrison battalions, to relieve the Militia in guarding vulnerable points and for the close defence of fortress areas; recruitment was proceeding

---

[53] War Cabinet Minute 34, Agendum No 11/1939, Review of the Scale of Preparation of the Services for War, 10 October 1939. NAA: A5954, 803/1.
[54] Full Cabinet Minute 2, 19 October 1939. NAA: A5954, 803/1.
[55] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.
[56] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940.

well with 193 officers and 4,164 other ranks enlisted by 17 November. Recruits were Medical Class II standard and the age range was set at 45 to 60 years old, so the garrison battalions could not be regarded as front line troops.[57] Coastal defence works had proceeded well; most were for defended ports while West Head protected the vital Hawkesbury River rail bridge. Three 6-inch batteries were established at South Head (Sydney), Port Kembla and Bribie Island (northern approaches to Moreton Bay, Brisbane). Batteries were being established at Newcastle (9.2-inch), Cape Direction (Hobart, 6-inch) and Pierson Point (Hobart, 4-inch), while preliminary steps had been taken for a 6-inch battery at Henry Head (Botany Bay) and a 4.7-inch battery at West Head.[58]

However there were problems with the training of the Militia. Training commenced on 16 September. The intent was to train two quotas, with each quota set at approximately 40,000 men. There was a considerable short fall in the first quota; 7,362 men were granted exemption, that is over 18 per cent of the total. The object of the first month was to complete individual training, including individual weapon training and the handling of 'mechanical vehicles'. The report then noted that small arms firing training had been limited due to low stocks and the need to conserve the war reserve stock of ammunition. Collective training had also been conducted up to regimental level, but the report noted that the training was sufficient to provide some cohesion in units, "but much further practice is necessary before units can be considered fit to undertake operations on active service."[59] Command Training Schools and Army Training Schools had commenced training, with the report noting that the latter would be used primarily for the 2nd AIF. The re-introduction of universal training, the start of three month training quotas in January 1940 (two quotas of 40,000) and the reorganisation of Militia units was expected to produce a standard "not attempted since 1914", noting that standard would not be achieved before the end of June 1940.[60]

---

[57] Medical Class II was defined as persons fit for the particular duty they were required to perform but not necessarily fit for active service in the field.
[58] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940.
[59] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. Section 3(B) – Progress – Army, para 17. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.
[60] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. Section 3(B) – Progress – Army, para 21. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.

The report addressed the raising of the 2nd AIF, its structure and equipment and the process of enlistment. In the latter case it was originally intended that volunteers would be drawn from the Militia (50 per cent, largely on a state-based quota system), those with previous military service (25 per cent) and those without previous service (25 per cent). The impact of the loss of approximately 10,000 men from the Militia would have been considerable, but in the event the distribution was abandoned in October and about 25 per cent came from the Militia. By 21 November a total of 453 officers and 15,992 other ranks had enlisted in the 2nd AIF.[61]

When it came to war material there were further problems. The Expanded Defence Development Programme had enabled orders to be placed in Australia and overseas. Some equipment had been procured but there were considerable shortfalls in anti-tank guns, artillery stores and light machine guns. Delays had occurred due to Britain's own war preparation; these had been accentuated with the outbreak of war. Some shortfall would be made up by expanded Australian production but this would not occur for some time; it should also be noted that some Australian manufacture was of First World War vintage equipment, such as Lewis guns. The report noted the action taken to rectify equipment issues from Australian sources, including mortars, artillery directors, Vickers machine guns, Lewis guns, artillery parts, conversion of artillery to pneumatic tyres, signal equipment, engineer and survey stores and bridging equipment. The list reveals considerable deficiencies in Army equipment; with priority given to the 2nd AIF the impact would fall largely on the Militia.[62]

The situation with motor transport was also poor.[63] On 22 September, appropriations had been approved for the purchase of vehicles for the Militia and the 2nd AIF and the Militia had acquired a total of 1,525 vehicles. The appropriations for the 2nd AIF were suspended on 2 October.[64] This resulted in a considerable number of Militia vehicles being used for training the 2nd AIF, with concomitant delays for training the Militia until commercial vehicles could be hired. Approval was then given for the full authorisation,

---

[61] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940.
[62] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940.
[63] Mechanical transport included: cars, 12-cwt vans, wireless vans, battery staff vans, 30-cwt trucks, 3-ton trucks, buses and motor ambulances.
[64] Presumably a Treasury decision; the decision is not reflected in War Cabinet minutes.

but a delay of at least one month meant that the first quota of Militia received little or no training on motor transport.[65]

The revised Army Command organisation was introduced on 13 October. The Army was organised into Commands: Northern Command (Queensland), Eastern (NSW), Southern (Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania), Western (Western Australia) and 7 Military District (7MD – Northern Territory). The reorganisation improved the efficiency of the running of the Army, with each Command responsible for the training and operations of forces under its command, thereby reducing the number of units under direct control of Army Headquarters.[66]

The Navy report listed the present strength of the RAN, noting that the fleet had increased by 17 Minesweeping and Anti-submarine vessels, two Armed Merchant Cruisers and an Examination vessel. Vessels under construction included two escort vessels and two boom defence vessels, while authorised construction included three destroyers and seven anti-submarine/minesweeping vessels. Examination Services had been established, communications systems put in place and works commenced.[67] The arming of DEMS was proceeding apace, with 78 British registered and four Australian registered vessels having been fitted out. A Coast Watching Organisation was in place, with 760 civilian volunteers throughout the Australia Station; this included the mandated territories and islands to the north. Navy also reported that trade defence measures were in place, with a central plotting system to track merchant vessels and close cooperation between the Naval Control Service, War Signals Stations and observers. It was further stated that cooperation with the RAAF in sea reconnaissance had made it practicable to cover trade over considerably increased areas; however it must be noted that in November the cover was tracking only, with aircraft such as the Anson having little or no vessel protection capability.[68]

---

[65] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940.
[66] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. Section 3(B) – Progress – Army, para 66. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.
[67] Examination services examined vessels entering a defended port to ensure they were not hostile. They included artillery batteries where appropriate.
[68] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. Section 3(A) – Progress – Naval. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.

The Air Force report stated that mobilisation was complete, with all Active Citizen Air Force and reserve personnel called up. The war training of operational squadrons had been intensified, defence of trade was being undertaken with the Navy and Fleet Cooperation unit detachments were with their RAN vessels. The development programme to bring the service to a strength of 19 squadrons was being accelerated, however British aircraft could not be obtained so orders had been placed in the United States, with the total order for Hudson reconnaissance/bombers increased to 100 aircraft. The preparation of Advanced Operational Bases (AOB) was being accelerated to enable better patrol of coastal areas. The Air Expeditionary Force had been abandoned, while the details of the EATS were in the process of being worked out in Canada. The report had an optimistic tone, disguising the fact that apart from a few Wirraway advanced training aircraft all the operational aircraft were obsolete.[69]

With respect to the despatch of forces overseas, on 14 November the Defence Committee made four recommendations to the War Cabinet. They were quite specific: that the 6th Division should be sent overseas to complete its training in Egypt or Palestine; that a second division be despatched overseas as soon as it could be raised, to form an Australian Corps of two divisions; that, subject to shipping, Headquarters and two brigade groups be despatched in the first half of December and the remainder in January 1940; and that the personnel of one Army Cooperation squadron should be despatched with the 6th Division, equipment to be provided by the UK on arrival overseas, and high priority given to the raising of a second squadron.[70]

The War Cabinet considered the recommendations on 15 and 16 November and deferred any decision for consideration by the Full Cabinet, which met on 26 November and agreed that the 6th Division should be despatched overseas when it had reached a suitable stage of its training, anticipated to be early in 1940. However the Government was "averse to shipment of artillery or any other material needed for the maintenance of the Militia Forces unless it is capable of rapid replacement."[71] In view of the probable

---

[69] Monthly Progress Reports - Australia's Wartime Measures, November 1939, February 1940. Section 3(C) – Progress of Air. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/147.
[70] War Cabinet Agendum - No 34/1939 - Australian co-operation in the war - Despatch of forces overseas. 14 November 1939. NAA: A2671,34/1939.
[71] Full Cabinet Minute No 10, Despatch of 6th Division Overseas, 26 November 1939, p.71. NAA: A5954, 803/1.

commitment to the EATS, the Full Cabinet did not approve the despatch of the Army Cooperation squadron.

The history of the EATS has been examined in detail and will not be covered in depth here.[72] However the impact of the EATS on mainland defence cannot be under-estimated and that impact is the focus of this section. At the start of the war the RAAF strength comprised 82 Anson, 54 Demon, 7 Wirraway, 21 Seagull aircraft and 82 mixed trainers.[73] All bar the Wirraway (a two seat advanced trainer) were obsolete. No 10 Squadron was in the UK re-equipping with Sunderland flying boats, but on 6 October the War Cabinet released the squadron for service with the RAF.[74] Notwithstanding the poor state of the RAAF, at the outbreak of war Australia offered to provide the British Government six Australian squadrons and associated ancillary units for administration and maintenance of the force, with the intent that the force would ultimately be grouped into an Australian contingent. The offer was based on the UK supplying the aircraft for the contingent.[75] Considering that the total strength of the RAAF was 12 squadrons, the offer would have halved the RAAF in one act, with the associated dilution of air force capability in mainland defence.

The offer was overtaken by the UK proposal on 26 September to create a massive training scheme where the Dominions would supply a large proportion of the aircrew that the UK saw as needed for the European war.[76] This was an extension of the UK position that the development of the RAAF should be changed to one of support for the RAF. The concept was based on the real problem that Britain was vulnerable to air attack, lacked sufficient air space for a large training programme and needed more aircrew than could be provided from her own resources. The concept was that the resources of Australia, New Zealand and Canada would be pooled to provide the training of Dominion aircrew who would then serve with the RAF in Dominion

---

[72] McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire*, provides a comprehensive account of the EATS.
[73] Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, p. 57. The Demon was a 1933 vintage biplane fighter.
[74] War Cabinet Minute 17, Sunderland Aircraft and Crews, 6 October 1939. NAA: A5954, 803/1.
[75] Details of the offer were put to government in War Cabinet Agendum 7/1939, Despatch Overseas of an Air Expeditionary Force. NAA: A2671, 7/1939.
[76] Cablegram (unnumbered), Mr A Eden, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Mr RG Menzies, Prime Minister, DAFP, Vol. II, p. 284.

squadrons. The War Cabinet approved the proposal in principle on 5 October.[77] After considerable negotiations, the final agreement was signed on 17 December 1939.

In early 1940 the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Vice Marshal Stanley Goble, was preparing plans for the development of the RAAF for home defence. Having made the assessment that the probability of Japanese intervention as a hostile neutral and the possibility of war with Japan could not be ignored, Goble was concerned about the potential impact of the EATS on RAAF development. He advised that the EATS should be regarded as a long-term project and immediate preference should be given to the development of home defence squadrons. The current strength of the RAAF was 14 squadrons[78] and Goble proposed that five new squadrons should be established, bringing RAAF strength up to nineteen squadrons by June 1940, along with training and maintenance units. The service was to be organised into geographical groups.[79] The expansion proposal was accepted by the government, the advice to give preference to home defence was ignored.

As a result, Goble resigned on 21 December 1939. Menzies went to the RAF for a replacement and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett was appointed CAS on 15 February 1940. The appointment was a disaster for RAAF home defence plans, since Burnett "simply saw the RAAF as a training unit of the Royal Air Force."[80] Australia was training two types of aircrew: aircrew for the RAF via the EATS and aircrew for the RAAF. The former increasingly outnumbered the latter, which meant that, until the outbreak of war with Japan, a greater number of EATS aircrew obtained active-service experience in the RAF than was possible in the RAAF.[81] The latter point was significant; Burnett would not allow any significant posting of RAAF officers overseas to gain experience and those that were posted to the UK were generally placed in training roles; consequently, few senior offices gained good command experience.

---

[77] War Cabinet Minute 13, Australian Contribution to Empire Defence, 5 October 1939. NAA: A5954, 803/1.
[78] Two new squadrons were formed in September and October 1939. Gillison p. 66. RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History*, (10 volumes), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995, Vol 3, Bomber Units, p. 27.
[79] Gillison, pp. 90-91.
[80] John McCarthy, 'The Defence of Australia and the Empire Air Training Scheme: 1939-1942', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XX, No 3, December 1974, p. 330.
[81] J.E. Hewitt, *Adversity In Success*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, 1980, p. 5.

Further, the expansion of the RAAF occurred predominantly to service the EATS. Twelve elementary and eight advanced flying schools and eleven schools for other aircrew were established. A large number of training aircraft were needed for the schools; the UK had agreed to provide 336 Battle, 243 Tiger Moth, 150 Anson and 441 Anson airframes (to be fitted with Australian made wings). The balance was to be provided from Australian production of Tiger Moth and Wirraway. However the promised aircraft were arriving so slowly that the Air Board claimed in April 1940 that delivery problems were placing the Australian part of the EATS in jeopardy.[82]

It was claimed that the Battle and Anson had an operational capability but the Battle failed dismally in France in 1940 and the Anson only had a limited transport and reconnaissance capability. For home defence the Battle was operationally useless, though the Anson gave considerable service in the reconnaissance and patrol role.[83] With the priority on obtaining training aircraft and the difficulties the RAF was experiencing in obtaining its own front line aircraft, it is no wonder that the RAAF was unable to obtain British front line aircraft and had to turn to the United States.

Finally, it has been claimed that the EATS agreement "made such demands on the Australian service and the local aircraft industry that the RAAF almost ceased to exist as a fighting organisation for the first two years of the war."[84] While that may be an exaggeration, the impact of the EATS on mainland defence was considerable and detrimental.

Planning for the raising and despatch of the 2nd AIF occurred in December 1939 with the revision of Plan 401, first raised in 1922. Despite being dedicated to the 2nd AIF, the plan did recognise the needs of the Militia, particularly the officer corps, stating that if an officer volunteered for service his headquarters had the right to determine whether he should be retained for duty with the Militia.[85]

---

[82] McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire*, p. 63.
[83] Details for both are at Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 721-22.
[84] McCarthy, 'The Defence of Australia and the Empire Air Training Scheme: 1939-1942', p. 333.
[85] Overseas Plan 401, para.23. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/146, Part 3.

On 28 February 1940 the War Cabinet approved the formation of the 7th Division and Corps Troops to form an Australian Corps.[86] This followed a review of the Australian war effort.[87] The current strength of the 2nd AIF (6th Division and ancillary troops) was approximately 22,000 all ranks. Reinforcements would total 10,000 up to June 1940, a further 16,800 by June 1941 and a total for the force of 64,665 by June 1942.[88] Including the 7th Division and Corps Troops, with a force of 69,793 by June 1942, this meant the 2nd AIF would require approximately 134,500 men in that time frame. Considering the intent to at least partially recruit from the Militia that meant there would be a continuous drain on trained or partially trained men from the Militia, noting that 25 per cent of 134,500 is approximately 33,600 men.[89]

The replacement of expended ammunition and equipment lost to war wastage also needed to be considered. The Agendum made it quite clear that there would be a major shortfall in armament, ammunition and equipment if it became necessary to mobilise the Army on the recommended scale for the defence of Australia. Requirements included: anti-aircraft defences (including light anti-aircraft guns, searchlights and accommodation); ammunition to complete the reserve to six months war requirement; modern armament (including anti-tank guns and anti-tank rifles, mortars, Bren guns and pistols to complete unit equipment and reserves); armoured fighting and technical vehicles (including machine gun carriers); extra equipment (anti-gas, artillery, engineers, signals, survey and medical); extra personnel for the Permanent Military Forces (PMF); and fixed coast defences including medium defences at Darwin and Port Kembla and additional guns for the existing batteries at Sydney.[90]

Current strength of the Australian Military Forces (AMF), excluding the 2nd AIF, stood at 4,056 PMF, 2,992 Militia called up for full time duty, 4,967 members of Garrison units and 77,857 other members of the Militia. There were 5,664 men yet to be called up under Universal Training. Overall there were 95,536 all ranks and the strength was to be maintained by call out under Part IV of the *Defence Act*. The policy for the training

---

[86] War Cabinet Minute 186, War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Review of Australian war effort in conjunction with Agenda 22/1940 and 31/1940, 28 February 1940. NAA: A2670, 43/1940.
[87] War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Review of Australian war effort. 26 February 1940. NAA: A2670, 43/1940.
[88] War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, Summary in Narrative Form, para. 23.
[89] War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Appendix 1.
[90] War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, paras. 19-20.

of the Militia for 1940/1941 was on the basis of twelve days' camp and corresponding periods of home training for officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks, and a total of ten weeks for personnel called up under Part IV of the *Defence Act*.[91]

Navy reported a total strength of six cruisers, five destroyers and 41 other vessels. Nine vessels were under construction: two destroyers, two escort vessels, four local defence vessels and one boom defence vessel. A further destroyer and three local defence vessels were authorised but not yet started.[92]

The Air Force development programme of 19 squadrons by June 1940 was to result in 212 first line aircraft and 6,256 personnel, noting that this included the Sunderland squadron in the UK (six aircraft and 220 personnel) since it was still counted as a Home Defence squadron.[93] The provision of Army Cooperation squadrons for the Australian Corps would involve a wing of three squadrons (one each for the 6th and 7th Divisions and a Corps squadron) and Wing Headquarters. This would involve 36 first line aircraft (sourced overseas) and 808 personnel.[94] The War Cabinet approved the formation of the squadron for the 6th Division, on the proviso that the Air Board must be satisfied that the despatch of the squadron would not prejudice local defence or the EATS.[95]

What was the state of the national will six months into the war? The different degrees of importance given to expeditionary forces and home defence, to the Middle East and the Far East, to fighting or producing, indicated that opinion in Australia was based on a variety of guesses at what the enemy would do next or what new enemies might appear. The objection in principle to expeditionary forces was still a major influence with some members of the ALP, while the impetus to rally to the Empire influenced conservative groups. However if the nation was still not sure what it would do in the war, it was because it was not sure what the enemy would do. Neither government nor people had found the answer to the question which only Australia could decide: in what way and to what extent would Australia take part in the war? The uncertainty remained to concern the government and the nation, and to play a role in the

---

91 War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, para. 17.
92 War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, paras. 1-3.
93 War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, para. 26.
94 War Cabinet Agendum 43/1940, Statement 1, para. 31.
95 War Cabinet Minute 186. 28 February 1940. NAA: A2670, 43/1940.

issues between the overseas commitment and mainland defence.[96] The flow on effect was considerable: David Horner has stated that the strategic decisions made by government in the Phoney War (September 1939 to May 1940) shaped Australian strategy for the remainder on the war.[97]

On 29 April 1940, Army Headquarters produced the 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia', which provided an examination of "the problem of meeting a sudden Japanese attack during 1940, with the existing resources in men, ammunition and equipment."[98] The memorandum was an honest appraisal of the parlous state of the AMF at this time; mainland defence was weak. The memorandum considered that such an attack would probably involve two Japanese divisions, could occur with little warning (14 days) and would probably focus on one objective, though other minor attacks could occur simultaneously. Consequently Australian defence preparations had to provide for the immediate defence of defended ports and industrial areas and rapid concentration against any Japanese main attack.

The memorandum considered air cooperation but did not address naval cooperation (for no stated reason). The air cooperation section was brief and very optimistic, stating that the 19 squadron expansion would be complete by June 1940 and that a striking force of up to 150 fighters and bombers should then be available, together with reconnaissance and Army Cooperation units. As a result, land forces allotted to defended ports and industrial areas could be reduced and reserves spread over a wider area. Considering the delays that were being experienced in the delivery of aircraft this assumption was a flaw in the paper.[99]

The memorandum suggested that the effective war strength of the AMF would not exceed 115,000 men, with an estimated one third required for defended ports and areas. The field force would therefore not exceed 75,000 men of all arms and would probably be less. The field force was further weakened by deficiencies in equipment, notably armoured vehicles, anti-tank weapons and artillery, a situation that could further

---

[96] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 209.
[97] Horner, *High Command*, p. 34.
[98] 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia', 29 April 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/160.
[99] 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia'.

deteriorate with the allocation of weapons to the AIF. These deficiencies could be partially offset by reallocation of weapons from units in defended areas to the field force. A further vital factor was the lack of reserves of artillery ammunition, small arms ammunition and aircraft bombs, with the paper estimating that one month of war consumption would exhaust stocks, including production in that period.[100]

The disposition of the forces in the four Commands and 7MD was addressed, and the memorandum recommended that there be a permanent allotment of units between defended areas and the field force. Plans should be prepared for completion of mobilisation and initial deployment within 14 days. The paper expressed concerns about relying too much on rail transportation because of the possibility of air attack on gauge terminals when troop trains were concentred there, but acknowledged that a field force of four divisions and one cavalry division would require approximately 10,000 vehicles of all types for first line motor transport (MT) so a mix of transport types would be required.[101]

The memorandum concluded that, with its recommendations accepted and proper plans completed

> "the AMF would have a reasonable chance of securing defended ports in the area Brisbane-Adelaide against an attack by two Japanese divisions and could resist lesser attacks in the defended ports outside this area."[102]

The memorandum was forwarded to the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence on 2 May 1940. In the covering minute, the Lieutenant-Colonel GSOI [General Staff Officer Intelligence] made the following comment: "This directorate is unaware of a Combined services operational plan. If this represents the true state of affairs, it seems to me highly desirable that something should be done in this regard as quickly as possible."[103] No evidence has been found to indicate that the Memorandum was acted on or combined service plans initiated at this time.

---

[100] 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia', paras 7-9 and Appendices B-C.
[101] 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia', paras10-12 and Appendix D.
[102] 'Memorandum on the Employment of the AMF for the Defence of Australia', para. 24.
[103] Minute GSOI Operations to DMO&I, 2 May 1940. AWM: AWM 243/6/160.

By 30 April 1940 a series of cablegrams had passed between Australia and Britain about the likelihood of Italy joining Germany and the possible impact on the situation in the Middle East and Mediterranean. Apart from strategic issues, the Australian Government was concerned about the route and destination of the convoys carrying the second and third elements of the 6th Division.[104] The UK Government suggested sending the convoys to Britain via the Cape of Good Hope, the Red Sea being potentially dangerous.[105] In response, Menzies asked for a further UK appreciation addressing strategic issues and expressed concern about the possibility of the 6th Division being split between the UK and Middle East.[106]

The War Cabinet decided to allow the first convoy to proceed to Colombo and the third to Fremantle while waiting for the new UK appreciation. The Australian Chiefs of Staff were also asked for an appreciation; while they were not in a position to do so due to insufficient information, they did give their view that the Red Sea and Middle East was of high strategic importance, that any Italian threat to shipping in the Indian and Pacific Oceans was small and that if Italy did intervene then Australian assistance in the main theatre should occur as soon as possible.[107] The UK Chiefs of Staff appreciation was received on 4 May, with a revised recommendation that the convoys should proceed as first planned with the situation kept under continual scrutiny. The appreciation also considered Japan; the UK Chiefs felt that Japan's ultimate policy would be decided by the outcome of the war in the west. Early intervention by Japan was unlikely since she was heavily committed in China and was concerned about the United States. The UK Chiefs judged that the possibility of direct attack on Australia or New Zealand was remote.[108] The Australian Chiefs of Staff comments did not address the change in

---

[104] Cablegram 189, Commonwealth Government to A. Eden, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 30 April 1940. *DAFP*, Volume III, p. 237.

[105] Cablegram 129, A. Eden, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Commonwealth Government, 30 April 1940. *DAFP*, Volume III, p. 239. War Cabinet Agendum 96/1940, Strategical Appreciation Consequent Upon Italy's Possible Entry Into the War and Route and Destination of AIF Convoys, Appendix A. NAA: A2670, 96/1940.

[106] Cablegram 192, R.G. Menzies, Prime Minister, to A. Eden, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1 May 1940. *DAFP*, Volume III, p. 240. War Cabinet Agendum 96/1940, Appendix B.

[107] War Cabinet Agenda 96/1940 and 97/1940 (same title); Supplement 1 to 96/1940. NAA: A2670, 96/1940. The Australian appreciation is at Agendum 97/1940.

[108] Cablegram 138, A. Eden, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Commonwealth Government, 4 May 1940. *DAFP*, Volume III, p. 262. Appendix A, Supplement 1 to War Cabinet Agendum 96/1940.

recommendation; they simply agreed and recommended that the convoys proceed as first planned, stressing the advisability of concentrating the Australia forces in the Middle East without delay.[109] The War Cabinet agreed, subject to continual review, and also agreed to diversion of the convoys if that became necessary. The War Cabinet stressed that if diversion became necessary, the reconstitution of the force should occur as soon as possible.[110] In the event the second convoy went to the Middle East, while the third was diverted to the UK in May (and eventually became part of the 9th Division).

This episode demonstrated the confusion and uncertainty that the government and the services had to contend with. Menzies drafted a War Cabinet Agendum on 7 May which contained his notes and observations on the proceedings. Draft Agendum 104/1940 was not circulated to the War Cabinet, the file copy is pen-annotated "Not circulated as an agendum. Copy to PM only".[111] In the conclusion Menzies made a number of general observations: there was a lack of consistency in advice given by the UK Government and Chiefs of Staff and the Australian Chiefs of Staff. Both appreciations were "disappointingly meagre" and not very helpful; and the opinion of the Australian Chiefs that the Dominions Office advice should be "conformed to unreservedly" was too much of a blank cheque. Menzies also made the point that the UK Government could not expect a self-governing Dominion to accept off-hand a change to route and destination of Dominion forces without a proper review of the situation warranting the change and advice on the security of the Dominion convoys.[112]

The uncertainty of the Phoney War led the government to adopt caution in decision making. Gavin Long felt they could have decided for full mobilisation of the services and munitions production; alternately they could have opted for a fully volunteer army, provided for from Australian sources. Instead, the government decided to enlist a small volunteer force while retaining the Militia, let enlistment lapse for three months, decided to send the partially equipped force overseas, cautiously started munitions

---

[109] Appendix B to War Cabinet Agendum 97/1940.
[110] War Cabinet minute 262, Agenda 96/1940 and 97/1940, Strategical Appreciation Consequent Upon Italy's Possible Entry Into the War and Route and Destination of AIF Convoys, 8 May 1940. NAA: A2670, 96/1940.
[111] Draft War Cabinet Agendum 104/1940, Strategical Appreciation Consequent upon Italy's Possible Entry into the War – Notes by minister for Defence Coordination, 7 May 1940. NAA: A5954, 580/8.
[112] Draft War Cabinet Agendum 104/1940.

production and left the Militia un-mobilised. [113] It appeared that the government was contemplating "a war of limited liability."[114]

The Phoney War ended on 9 April 1940 when Germany invaded Denmark and Norway. Then on 10 May the Germans invaded Holland and Belgium; Chamberlain resigned and Churchill became Prime Minister. Holland surrendered on 14 May. Four days later the Germans entered France and the war took a new turn, very much for the worse for the Allies.[115]

In view of the international situation, the War Cabinet called for an examination of measures to expand Australia's war effort and then approved a range of proposals on 22 May 1940. Many were significant for mainland defence.

Naval measures included leaving two RN cruisers at Singapore, rather than having them come to the Australia Station; offering to man ten Local Defence Vessels being built in Australia for the Admiralty; agreeing to the Admiralty proposal that RAN crews on the old loan destroyers in the Mediterranean should be released (with reinforcement) to the RN to serve on new destroyers, while the RAN would continue to man and maintain the old destroyers; and that RAN anti-submarine personnel would be trained for RN service. The cost in personnel to the RAN was 1,040 men. The War Cabinet also approved a fourth boom defence vessel for Darwin.[116]

Army measures included expediting the enlistment and organisation of Corps troops and the 7th Division. The War Cabinet also approved the formation of a third division (the 8th Division) for service overseas. The War Cabinet made the comment that "should the situation require its retention in Australia, it would be a valuable adjunct to the Militia forces for local defence."[117]

---

[113] Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 28.
[114] Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 21.
[115] ICB Dear (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 237.
[116] War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940, The international situation - Australia's war effort - Navy, Army, Air and Supply and Development, 22 May 1940. NAA: A2671, 112/1940.
[117] War Cabinet Minute 285, Agendum 112/1940, The international situation and Australia's war effort, 22 May 1940, in War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940.

At the earlier Defence Committee meeting the CGS, Brudenell White, had "urged the necessity for concentration of further efforts on the raising of forces for service abroad rather than on provision for home defence." Significantly, "The Committee fully agree with the views of the Chief of the General Staff."[118] Colvin and Burnett, both British officers, would be bound to agree but the recommendation was remarkable considering its potential impact on mainland defence. The War Cabinet

> "noted that the military Board may desire to postpone the training of Militia during the remaining half of the calendar year until the first half of the next calendar year, and may also wish to make some slight reduction in the period of training. These would be matters for further consideration."[119]

It can only be concluded that either the War Cabinet did not grasp the significance of the move away from mainland defence or, perhaps more likely, that the War Cabinet continued to adhere to the principles of Imperial Defence and had decided to focus Australian efforts on the European war.

The RAAF was in a parlous state. There were serious delays in the arrival of aircraft from overseas and armaments for the Hudson aircraft had also not arrived (guns, turrets and bomb release equipment were delayed because the US Neutrality Act prohibiting their release was still in force). The EATS was suffering from similar delays in the supply of aircraft from the UK; local Tiger Moth production would be accelerated, while as a last resort Wirraway would be substituted for Battle and Anson for bombing and gunnery training. Civil aircraft would be employed for observer and gunner training, with the concomitant impact on civil aviation in Australia. The War Cabinet could only note the situation, but clearly the priority on EATS was detrimental to mainland defence.[120]

The Department of Supply and Development reported that little could be done other than to increase the current approach, which was a "balanced" approach designed to meet the minor scale of attack.[121] Here "balanced" meant the production of components for complete equipment and munitions rather than accelerating production for the sake

---

[118] Defence Committee minute no 39/1940, Australia's War Effort – Acceleration and Expansion of Approved Programme, 21 May 1940, in War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940.
[119] War Cabinet Minute 285, 22 May 1940, in War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940.
[120] War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940.
[121] War Cabinet Agendum 112/1940.

of it and producing extra components that could not be used in isolation. The problem lay in machine tools and the skilled men needed to produce the tools, jigs and gauges required on the production line to increase output. Further, Supply reported that to move to meet the medium scale of attack and maintain a balanced approach would be a significant undertaking. The War Cabinet had little option other than to approve the recommended measures to meet the current programme, but again it meant that mainland defence would suffer with the priority on the 2nd AIF and EATS.

Mainland Defence

Point Defence can be best understood by examining two case studies: Darwin and Sydney. Darwin defences remained rudimentary, with the exception of artillery and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA). The core of the garrison troops was still the DMF, but the DMF had suffered the depredations of recruitment for the 2nd AIF, having lost 33 NCOs by the end of the period out of its establishment of 244. The artillery comprised four Defence Electric Lights (DEL – searchlights) and four 6-inch guns in two batteries, while the AAA comprised four 3.7-inch guns, six 3-inch guns and 21 anti-aircraft search lights. However neither was fully manned and the shortage of ammunition meant that little training, especially live firing, had taken place.[122] The RAAF had based 12 Squadron at Darwin with the unit fully established by December 1939; aircraft were initially four, then twelve, Wirraway and four, then eleven, Anson. The squadron was responsible for the air defence of northern Australia, a role for which it was manifestly ill-equipped. In actuality, the squadron performed the roles of shipping escort, coastal patrol and seaward reconnaissance. In June 1940, the Anson aircraft were taken to form the nucleus of 13 Squadron.[123] There were no naval combat vessels based at Darwin, though HMAS *Westralia* (AMC) visited for exercises in early 1940. An indicator loop was in place and work on the boom defence had started.

[122] War establishment for both was 34 officers and 989 other ranks, strength was 25 officers and 682 other ranks. David Horner, *The Gunners*, pp. 218-219.
[123] Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, p. 125.

It is more difficult to determine the state of the Sydney garrison, apart from artillery and anti-aircraft artillery. Sydney had six batteries, comprising four 9.2-inch, six 6-inch, two 4.7-inch and one 12-pdr guns and twelve DEL. For anti-air, there were four 3.7-inch and eight 3-inch guns, with 32 anti-aircraft search lights. As with Darwin, the batteries were under establishment and not fully trained.[124] The RAAF had two bases close to Sydney, Richmond and Rathmines. Richmond was home to 3 Squadron (Demon), 6 Squadron (Anson), 9 Squadron (Seagull) and 22 Squadron (Anson, Demon and Wirraway). A number of 9 Squadron detachments were with RAN ships and the unit also operated from Rathmines.[125] Sydney was Fleet Headquarters for the RAN and had a number of fleet units based there at various times during the period, also it was the headquarters for the 29th Minesweeping Flotilla. Most were absent for periods on escort, patrol or anti-submarine and anti-mining duties. The Sydney indicator loop system was in place, but work on the boom had barely begun. As a defended port Sydney was not fully prepared.

The broader defence of the south-east area, regarded as vital to Australia, was an area of concern. The naval and air strength would have been sufficient to deal with a raider, in either case of attack on shipping or short duration bombardment. It would also have been adequate to deal with a minor air attack. The anti-mining capability was developing but could have dealt with the number of mines laid by a submarine or raider. The coastal defences had the capability to defend against a cruiser, but would have been out-gunned by any capital vessel and would have struggled against a heavy combined operations raid.

Jeffrey Grey states that the home army was in a dreadful state:

> "The army did not have enough ammunition 'to resist a major attack upon this country for more than a few days', stocks of transport were unsatisfactory and much transport was still horse-drawn."[126]

Enlistment in the AIF had reduced a number of infantry and artillery units to the stage that they had little operational value. While the home army may have been able to cope with a minor scale attack, it would have struggled against a medium scale attack. The

---

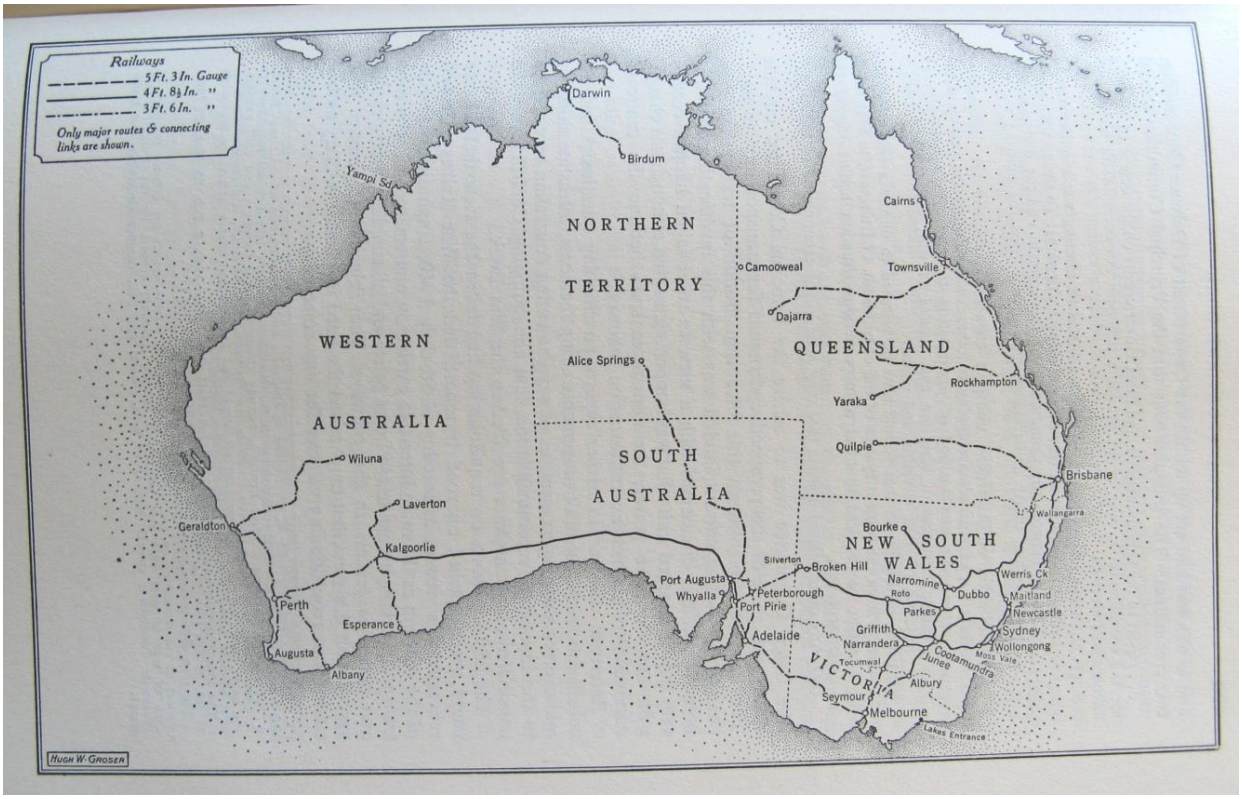
[124] War establishment for both was 96 officers and 2,432 other ranks, strength was 71 officers and 1,143 other ranks. Horner, *The Gunners*, pp. 217-219.
[125] Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, p. 56.
[126] Grey, *The Australian Army*, p.121. Internal quote from 'The State of Preparedness of the AMF for Military Operations, 15 May 1940. NAA: MP729/6, 35/401/760.

state of the RAAF was poor, while it could provide a measure of trade defence it also would have struggled against a medium scale attack. The RAN was adequate for mainland defence; with the exception of possible German raiders there was no real threat to vessels in Australian waters during this period. The two main issues were protection of trade and protection of the 6th Division convoys; neither were a cause for concern.

Lines of communication (LoC) posed particular problems. Australia had a population of approximately seven million in 1939, however the population was not evenly distributed with around six million living in the south-east of the country. This was reflected in the mainland lines of communication: the preponderance of both road and rail systems lay in the south-east. There were concerns with both. The main road system was in place but it was not designed to carry large amounts of traffic and secondary road systems had many unsealed stretches. There was a road link to the west; it was unsealed over most of the Nullarbor Plain.[127]

The rail system suffered from development on a state basis with three gauges in use and gauge breaks in strategically poor places. There were gauge breaks between Sydney and Melbourne, and Sydney and Brisbane. Perth was linked to both Sydney and Melbourne but there were two gauge breaks on both links and traffic capacity was limited (Map 3.1). The gauge breaks were vulnerable points; air attack or sabotage would have severely disrupted rail transport capacity, to the detriment of mainland defence.[128]

[127] S.J. Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, pp. 397-8.
[128] Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, pp. 398-408.



Map 3.1: The Australian Railway System.[129]

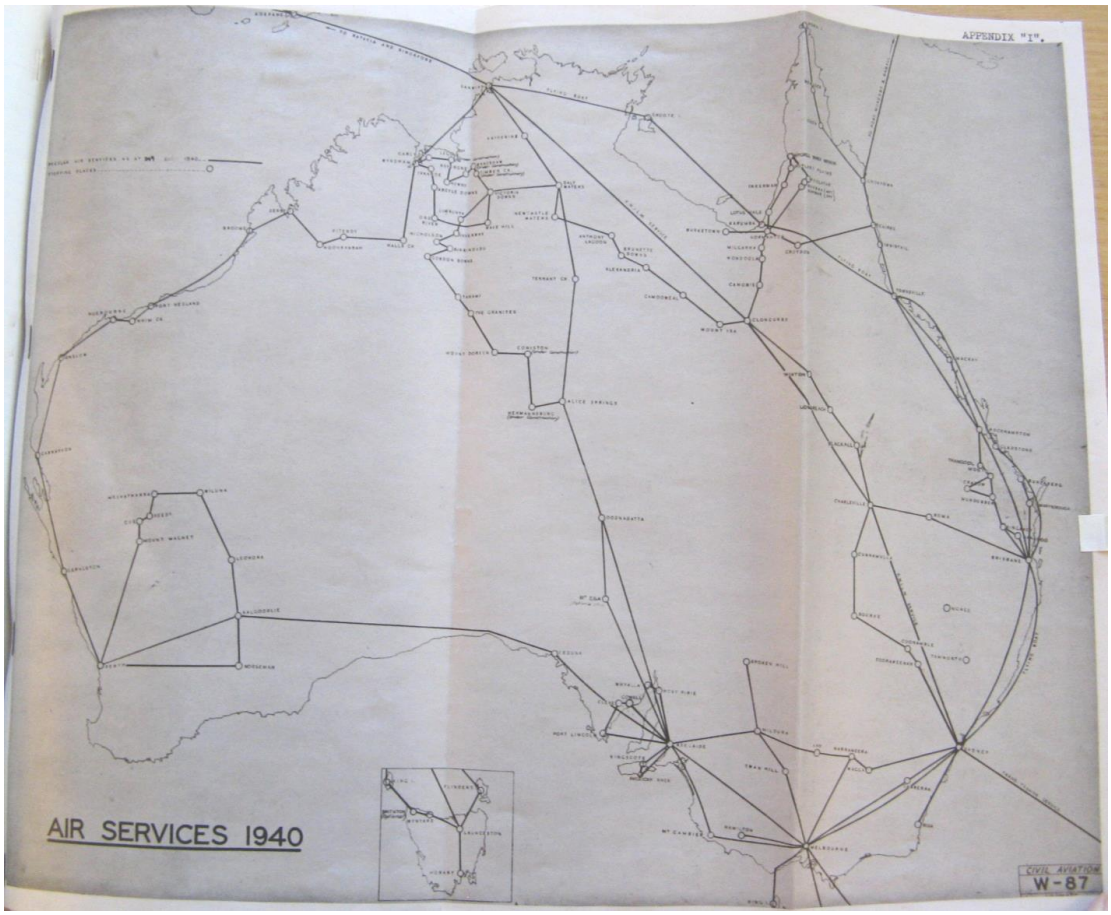
Sea LoC were well established. The majority of international traffic went via Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, then across the Indian Ocean and via the Suez Canal to Britain. There were trans-Tasman and trans-Pacific routes, the latter assumed high importance later in the war. There was also a well-used coastal transport network, focussed on the west and south-east, but with routes north and west through the Torres Strait. The east coast routes were significant for mainland defence as well as the international convoys of the 2nd AIF. All sea lines of communication were vulnerable to attack by mining or submarines.[130]

There was an established civil air system at the start of the war (Map 3.2). It was strongest in the south-east; Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, but for all routes carrying capacity was limited to passengers, mail and very light freight. It made a small but valuable contribution the mainland defence in this period, noting that the

[129] Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, p. 401.
[130] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, map facing p. 46.

RAAF had no dedicated transport capability and what transports there were suffered the same limitations.[131]

Roads to Darwin existed both north from Adelaide and west from Townsville but both were unsealed through the Centre and the northern end was unusable in the wet season. The road west from Mt Isa was little more than a track. There was no rail link to Darwin; a limited capacity line went south to Birdum and the line north from Adelaide only went to Alice Springs – and had a gauge break. As yet, there were no assets dedicated to the Darwin land LoC. A number of air routes went to Darwin, but the carrying capacity was limited. The most reliable link to Darwin was by sea, accepting the vulnerability to submarine attack.



Map 3.2: Civil Aviation Routes, 1940.[132]

[131] Royal Australian Air Force Air War Effort, 1 January 1941. NAA: A5954, 618/7, Appendix I.
[132] Royal Australian Air Force Air War Effort, 1 January 1941.

The intelligence arms of the three services were at different stages of development through this period. The RAAF was least well established. At the start of the war the Directorate of Operations and Intelligence had no specific organisation on which an intelligence service could be based. The need was not immediately addressed and RAAF intelligence remained very much in development throughout the period.[133] The Army Directorate of Military Operations and Intelligence had a small specialist capability, some of which went to the 2nd AIF. Navy had the best organisation, having developed an intelligence capability between the wars, the Naval Intelligence Division; the Director of Naval Intelligence was a specialist officer, Commander Rupert Long, who remained in the post for the duration of the war.[134]

There was another limitation in Australian intelligence during this period. David Horner says that "the Australian services relied almost exclusively on information from British sources, and in turn the British passed on what they thought the Australians needed to know."[135] The British advice during this period was on occasion disingenuous, particularly concerning Japanese intentions. Further the government passed British information to the Australian Chiefs of Staff for comment and considered both sets of advice in making decisions, not always with the best results.[136]

During this period, surveillance was conducted around the Australian coast by two means. Airborne reconnaissance/surveillance was conducted where possible, noting the limitations of the RAAF aircraft at this time. Army had a limited surveillance capability through Army units in coastal areas, reporting via the Military Reporting System. Navy had established the coastwatch system between the wars, initially limited to Australia, but later expanding into the northern island chain. It relied on unpaid civilian volunteers, residents in coastal areas. They received some training and a reporting system was established via telegraph and radio in remote areas. Members reported shipping movements, suspicious events and any other information that could be valuable. Accepting that there were holes in the coverage in remote areas, the system

---

133 Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 70, 94.
134 Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, pp. 70-73.
135 Horner, *High Command*, p. 224.
136 Horner, *High Command*, p. 224.

proved valuable during this period; in September 1939 there were 700 coastwatchers in Australia and the islands.[137]

Munitions production started from a low base, having been severely run down during the Depression.[138] Though it had been increasing since the first rearmament programme (1933-1937) it could not adequately supply the armed services. Small arms manufacture was in place, along with ammunition and explosives, but the production rates were initially low and slow to increase. The production of anti-aircraft guns and the Bren light machine gun was only beginning and delays were experienced in getting designs and tools from Britain. A system of industrial annexes had been started, where munitions production was occurring in association with other industry (in annexes to those factories); this helped boost production later in the period.[139]

Cockatoo Island dockyard had a limited shipbuilding capability. It had produced two small sloops of 1,000 tons for the RAN and was working on the first of three destroyers at the start of the war.[140] However larger vessels had to be sourced from Britain and their construction had to fit in with the British shipbuilding programme.

The most significant initiative was the production of aircraft. With Britain having instigated its own major rearmament programme Australian orders were given lower priority. A private consortium formed the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) in 1936 and built a facility in Melbourne. However the British Government opposed any initiatives that may reduce orders with British companies. After a number of attempts to get the necessary plans and tools from Britain, the CAC decided to build a US trainer; the design was modified in Australia and the aircraft became the Wirraway. Thought by some to be a fighter, the Wirraway was in reality an advanced trainer of limited combat capability. Then in March 1939, the government agreed to a British suggestion that Australia should produce the Beaufort bomber. A government factory was established,

---

137 Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, pp. 72-73.
138 Robertson, *Australia At War*, pp. 11-12.
139 D.P. Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1958, pp. 227-45 & 323-67.
140 Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp. 453-4.

but again there were delays in getting plans and tools. The first aircraft was not delivered until mid-1941.[141]

The state of the national will had changed a little by the end of the Phoney War. The ALP's opposition to the expeditionary force had lessened, with Curtin having stated that the Australian cause must be "crowned with victory."[142] However the uncertainty remained about what role and to what extent Australia would commit to the war, while the uncertainty about Japan's intentions had increased. This uncertainty continued to play a role in the issues between the overseas commitment and mainland defence.

With respect to industrial disputes, it should be recognised that Australia had a long history of industrial issues. That continued into the war, with some distinct themes appearing.[143] The majority of disputes occurred in coalmining and manufacturing and the greatest time lost was in NSW, which reflected the predominance of those industries (especially coal) in that state. Also, the occurrence of disputes tended to fall with crisis points in the war and rise at other times; for instance, disputes rose early in 1940, then fell at the end of the Phoney War. Serious effects occurred in transport and loss of production, particularly munitions, and there were periods of crisis related to coal shortages, as occurred in NSW between 11 March and 20 May 1940.[144] A further effect was the effort that was required by government and industry to introduce measures to maintain production, conciliate the workers and deal with the administrative burden that accrued. Finally, the incidence of strikes and their impact was socially divisive at a time when social cohesion was essential. The direct impact on mainland defence is impossible to estimate, particularly in this period of the war. However it would be fair to assume that any loss in munitions production would impact more on the Militia than the 2nd AIF, given the priority being given to the AIF.

---

[141] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp.381-422.
[142] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 370.
[143] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, Appendix 6 gives on overall history of Australian industrial disputes in the war and the general impact of the conduct of the war. Mainland defence is not specifically covered.
[144] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 206-208.

Mainland Defence: Fit For Purpose

The planning basis for mainland defence during this period was to defend Australia against the minor or medium scales of attack. However the commitment to the EATS had turned the RAAF into a training arm for the RAF with only a small operational capability in Australia, while the RAN had been reduced in strength in the Australia Station by the release of vessels to the RN. The home army was in a parlous state as a result of the decision to raise three divisions for the 2nd AIF. Consequently point and area defence had some capability against the minor scale of attack but little capability to defend against a medium scale of attack. Intelligence and surveillance were developing capabilities. Sea lines of communication were adequate but vulnerable to mining or submarine attack, while continental lines of communication had a number of deficiencies. Production was also a developing capability but unable to supply all of Australia's needs at this time.

It can only be concluded that in the period September 1939 to June 1940 mainland defence was only partially fit for purpose.

By late May 1940 it was becoming clear that the military situation in France was extremely serious. Britain decided that the British forces had to be extricated and the evacuation began on 26 May. Then Italy declared war and France signed an armistice. The French fleet had been removed from the Mediterranean equation; consequently Britain had to keep the Mediterranean fleet intact to counter Italy; this constituted the demise of the Singapore Strategy. Japan had far greater scope to manoeuvre so the Far East situation took a severe turn for the worse. How Australia responded to the changed situation is addressed next.

4

THE DISTANT WAR: EUROPEAN DÉBÂCLE

June 1940 to December 1941

The European débâcle, as John Robertson described it, occurred in June 1940 with the declaration of war by Italy and the fall of France.[1] This was a period where events moved quickly, in the Far East as well as Europe. Italy declared war on France and Britain on 10 June. France requested an armistice with Germany, signed on 22 June. The two events radically changed the nature of the war. The western front had gone, allied naval strength had been drastically reduced and Germany had gained Atlantic ports which made blockade more difficult and facilitated attacks on Britain and British shipping. The UK was in danger of invasion; the Battle of Britain began on 10 July. The Middle East situation was bad, with Italian colonies in North and East Africa and the Italian navy in the Mediterranean, while Vichy France controlled Syria. French and Dutch colonies in the Far East and Pacific were left in isolation. On 19 June Japan demanded that Britain withdraw its Shanghai garrison and close both the Hong Kong and Burma frontiers; the Burma Road was closed on 17 July for three months, blocking that supply route to China.[2]

Two major themes emerge during this time: first, the Australian commitment to Britain and the Middle East expanded and, second, the Japanese threat escalated. By June 1940, Australia was committed to supporting the 2nd AIF, to the EATS and to the dispersal of RAN units under Admiralty control outside the Australia Station. The entry of Italy into the war and the fall of France saw Britain facing the likelihood of invasion. Britain was desperate for help and the Australian focus on the European war continued, with the despatch of equipment and munitions to Britain, and the formation of the 9th Division. As the Japanese threat escalated, there was some shift of focus to the Near

---

[1] Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 59.
[2] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, Bloomsbury. London, 1989, pp. 32-41. ICB Dear (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p. 178.

North, but UK reassurances continued. However, Britain was unable to send forces to Malaya/Singapore and Australia had to respond, committing forces to Malaya and Singapore and to Ambon, Timor and Rabaul in what Peter Stanley says "was grandly called the 'Malay barrier'".[3] Mainland defence remained a second priority and continued to suffer.

The British campaign in France culminated with the evacuation from Dunkirk. The Dunkirk myth portrays the evacuation as some kind of moral victory, but in reality the French campaign and the evacuation were an unmitigated disaster for Britain. It is true that between 26 May and 4 June 1940 a total of 335,490 troops had landed in England, but the losses of men, ships, aircraft, equipment and stores was catastrophic.[4]

The BEF lost a total of 68,710 men, equivalent to just over three divisions.[5] Equipment losses included 1,190 guns, 506 anti-aircraft guns, 852 anti-tank guns, 6,400 anti-tank rifles, 11,000 machine guns, and 688 tanks, approximately 20,000 motor cycles, 5,000 cars and 40,000 transport vehicles.[6] Stores losses included 76,697 tons of ammunition, 415,940 tons of supplies and stores and 164,929 tons of petrol; in terms of the amounts taken to France this equated to 32 per cent of ammunition lost, 93 per cent of stores and supplies and 99 per cent of petrol.[7]

For the RAF 1,526 men were killed in action, died of wounds, wounded or taken prisoner; a high proportion were pilots and aircrew.[8] 931 aircraft failed to return from operations, were destroyed on the ground, or irreparably damaged. While it was not practicable to determine Navy casualty figures, vessel losses included six destroyers

---

[3] Peter Stanley, 'The defence of the 'Malay barrier': Rabaul and Ambon, January 1942'. Presented at the Australian War Memorial, Saturday 26 January 2002 (AWM PASU0168). Accessed 12 March 2013, <http://www.awm.gov.au/atwar/remembering1942/ambon/transcript.asp>

[4] The total of 335,490 comprised 224,318 British (211,265 fit and 13,053 wounded) and 111,172 allied (109,942 fit and 1,230 wounded). Weekly Resume (No. 40) of the Naval, Military and Air Situation from 12 noon May 30th to 12 noon June 6th, 1940, 7 June 1940, Appendix I, p. 13. TNA: CAB66/8/25.

[5] 68,111 men were killed in action, died of wounds, were wounded, or taken prisoner and a further 599 died of injury or disease. Major L.F. Ellis, *The War in France and Flanders 1939-1940*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1953, p. 326.

[6] The Munitions Situation, 29 August 1940, p. 3. TNA: CAB66/11/19.

[7] Ellis, *The War in France and Flanders 1939-1940*, pp. 325-327.

[8] Ellis, *The War in France and Flanders 1939-1940*, p. 327.

sunk and 21 damaged, one corvette damaged, and 26 other vessels sunk and 12 damaged.[9]

The figures are presented here to demonstrate the extreme difficulty Britain faced in continuing the war. Two issues ensued: first, there was an urgent call on the Empire for all possible forms of support; second, aircraft, ships and equipment that were to be supplied by Britain would not be available until Britain had recovered the losses. For Australia both issues had a significant impact on mainland defence.

One major impact on mainland defence came with the pressing need to reinforce Britain, recognised in May 1940. In response to a request from Britain, on 28 May the War Cabinet approved the release to the UK of 49 Hudson aircraft, on order in the US for Australia. The aircraft were to be replaced by later production aircraft, though no date was specified. Further, a squadron of Hudsons was to be sent to Singapore, to replace a RAF squadron there; this was described as being "in accordance with the principles of Empire Defence", despite the first principle being the requirement to ensure local defence. Britain had also requested trained air personnel, however the War Cabinet stated that could not be provided, owing to the need to maintain three overseas squadrons. The War Cabinet also noted the advice of the Australian Chiefs of Staff that, "while the proposals will naturally reduce the scale of Australian defence ultimately aimed at, they will not reduce the scale that has been existing up to now". The advice was odd since it seemed to indicate that planning for the scale of Australian defence 'ultimately aimed at' was a low priority, while despatch of a Hudson squadron to Singapore certainly reduced the air component of mainland defence. Noting the advice reflected the War Cabinet tendency to accept advice from the Chiefs unless politically unacceptable.[10]

By late May, considerable resources were being sent to Britain, Table 4.1.

[9] Weekly Resume (No. 40), p. 2.
[10] War Cabinet Minute 289, 28 May 1940, War Cabinet Agendum 114/1940, Australia's air co-operation with the United Kingdom. NAA: A2671, 114/1940. The Australian Chiefs in this period were Colvin and Burnett, both UK officers, and White.

Equipment	AIF and Militia Requirements	Stocks	Comments
Rifles	193,042	253,000	10,000 already despatched to the UK. A further 20,000 to be shipped to the UK
18 pounder gun ammunition	278,480	146,400	June production being diverted to the UK
3-inch mortar bombs	768,000	9,412	231,804 on order, supply being diverted to the UK
Small arms ammunition	395 million rounds	76 million rounds	35 million rounds shipped to UK during May 1940

Table 4.1: Resources Sent to Britain.[11]

A request was also received from New Zealand for the supply of munitions in July 1940.[12] Both requests were partially met; inevitably some resources sent were from areas where there were insufficient stocks to meet Australian requirements. With the emphasis on equipping and training the AIF, the impact of depleted stocks fell heavily on the Militia.

The War Cabinet called for an appreciation on the deteriorating situation in Europe; this was considered on 12 Jun 1940. The appreciation examined what new local problems arose from the military situation; what local military resources were available for offer to the UK; and what new local measures were necessary. New local problems included current and future difficulties in the maintenance and reinforcement of Australian naval, army and air units abroad, the possibility of Italian raiders operating off the Australian coast and the effect of Italian belligerency on the Japanese attitude.[13]

Further decisions were made about committing resources to the UK. Navy recommended that one AMC and one sloop be released immediately with no restrictions on where they were sent, and one sloop for service in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea at the end of July. Air Force recommended one extra Hudson squadron and one Wirraway

[11] War Cabinet Agenda 117/1940, Weekly Progress Report by the Chiefs of Staff, No 20 Week ended 1st June 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/1/15 part 2.
[12] Minutes of Defence Committee : Agenda Numbers 16/1940 and Supplement Number 2, 43/1940 and Supplement Number 1, 44-45/1940. NAA: A2031, 61/1940 - 65/1940. Prior to this time NZ had relied on the UK for munitions; they were cheaper than Australian.
[13] War Cabinet Agendum 136/1940 Strategical appreciation in relation to Empire co-operation and local defence. NAA: A2671, 136/1940.

squadron be released and suggested they replace RAF units in India or Far East, preferably Singapore (one Hudson squadron was already there). Army recommended the formation of a further division for service overseas if the UK government concurred and the equipment position would permit it. The significance for mainland defence is plain: the Australia Station was to be further depleted at a time when raider activity could increase, the loss of two more squadrons reduced the air element of mainland defence and the formation of another AIF division could only be to the detriment of Militia manning and equipment.[14]

Mainland defence was only addressed in the Army report. White recommended that apart from "pressing on with equipment", there should be no change in Home Defence plans. White stated that

> "The forces available for Home Defence, plus those being raised for service overseas, supply Army personnel more than adequate to meet any attack which seems likely under the conditions of the moment, having regard to the equipment position."[15]

This statement seems overly optimistic since, with the exception of rifles, the equipment position was very poor and worsened after Dunkirk with the despatch to the UK of guns and ammunition.

The state of the militia was also poor, as demonstrated by the Eastern Command Appreciation of June 1940.[16] The very broad object was to defend Eastern Command, however with the troops immediately available it would not be possible to secure complete immunity from attack. The aim was to safeguard the vital areas of Sydney and Newcastle; that interpretation was also reflected in Army HQ Operation Instruction No1.[17] Consequently the initial responsibility of Eastern Command was the defence of Sydney and Newcastle and of the land communications from New South Wales to the

---

[14] War Cabinet Agendum 136/1940 Strategical appreciation in relation to Empire co-operation and local defence.

[15] Report by Chief of the General Staff, 12 June 1940. War Cabinet Agendum 136/1940.

[16] Appreciation by GOC Eastern Command at Sydney on 26 Jun 1940 - To Defend Eastern Command. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/71.

[17] Army HQ Operation Instruction No1, 22 June 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/42 Army Headquarters, Operation Instructions (Feb-Dec 1941).

remainder of Australia, particularly those leading to Victoria. This defined the purpose for Eastern Command.[18]

The appreciation assumed three levels of attack and assessed that attacks by cruisers and seaborne aircraft as well as minor landings could be dealt with in coordination with Navy and Air Force. Landings in force constituted the real problem. Based on intelligence of a Japanese landing in China, the appreciation assessed that a maximum effort would see Japan land two divisions. The appreciation then made a detailed assessment of topography and lines of communication before defining the Sydney Fortress and Newcastle Fortress areas. A divisional reserve and an Eastern Command reserve were decided on but disposition of forces was deferred until thorough reconnaissance of the sectors was completed. The troops available were two infantry divisions (less one brigade group), one cavalry division and fortress troops. Elements of the 7th Division AIF were currently in Eastern Command at the time. The appreciation was comprehensive but the problem lay with the troops; the appreciation stated that they were "largely Militia brought up to war strength by comparatively untrained personnel. They will not have had much opportunity for collective training."[19] The appreciation accepted that mainland defence in Eastern Command was weak.

The air defence of the mainland was set back by a British request on 17 June 1940 that some or all of the initial Australian production of 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns be released to the UK. The Defence Committee reported that first four guns were ready and four more would be ready in three weeks but no predictors or ammunition was available; the Committee recommended that the eight guns be sent to the UK. Production capacity was one gun per week, expected to increase to two per week in six months. Predictors were only available from the UK, where an outstanding order for 56

[18] To support the appreciation there were a range of other plans raised by units of Eastern Command during this period. Examples include: Report on the Engineering works required in the preparation of the area - Lake Illawarra Entrance to Port Hacking, for defence against an enemy landing or enemy advance (Includes maps of Kiama, Wollongong, Camden and Port Hacking), 24 Jul 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/72. || Appreciation by Commander, 14 Infantry Brigade, Group Sector, Port Hacking to Port Kembla to Wollongong - Plans for Defence (Aug 1940). AWM: AWM54, 243/6/56. || Department of Defence, Military Board - Beach Defence. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/130. || Appreciation and Operational Plan Strategic Role, 1st Division. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/44. || 1 Division: Appreciation and Operational Plan, Oct40 - Jan 41. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/20.

[19] Appreciation by GOC Eastern Command, para 3(a). AWM: AWM54, 243/6/71.

had been made.[20] The War Cabinet agreed to the release of the guns and directed that the UK be informed of "the vital importance to Australian local defence of the delivery of predictors" and requested to expedite delivery.[21] Four of the guns had been scheduled to be installed at Darwin, so the decision meant a further delay in strengthening the Darwin defences.

The government was aware of the problems. In order to bolster munitions production the Department of Munitions was created on 11 June 1940 and Menzies appointed Essington Lewis as Director-General. The General Manager of Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP), Lewis was recognised as Australia's leading industrialist and had been involved with the formation of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation; his appointment was inspired. Lewis controlled the production of all ordnance, explosives, ammunition, small arms, aircraft and vehicles and all machinery and tools used in producing such munitions. He was on the Defence Committee and had access to the War Cabinet. Lewis was empowered to acquire compulsorily any materials or building which he needed; he could issue contracts with private firms without calling tenders and he could spend up to £250,000 on any project without approval.[22]

On the home front a number of groups of First AIF veterans formed by mid-1940. Past the age for active service, these men felt that they had both the experience to offer something to the war effort and a duty to serve Australia. Some groups started training, but all groups lacked government support and were without uniforms or weapons. With the support of the RSS&AILA,[23] the groups lobbied the government for recognition and the government agreed to establish the Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) on 15 July 1940. The VDC was to "act to preserve law and order, to guard public utilities and to prevent subversive activities by aliens or disaffected persons".[24]

---

[20] An AA gun predictor was an electro-mechanical computing device that computed the future position of a target aircraft, enabling the anti-aircraft gun to be aimed at that point. They were complex precision instruments; Australian production was expected to start in about six months. Mellor, pp. 232-3.

[21] War Cabinet Minute 368, 26 June 1940, Agendum 146/1940, 3.7-inch Anti-Aircraft Equipments, Supply to the United Kingdom. NAA: A2670, 146/1940. The US also sent considerable resources to the UK. See Richard M. Leighton and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1940-1943*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1955, pp. 32-36.

[22] Geoffrey Blainey, Ann G. Smith, 'Lewis, Essington (1881 - 1961)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 10, Melbourne University Press, 1986, pp 87-92.

[23] The Returned Sailors', Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia, precursor to the Returned and Services League (RSL).

[24] McKernan, *All In!*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995, p. 48.

However, under the circumstances of the time the government had no tasks for the VDC and all resources were required by the AIF and Militia. Consequently, there were no uniforms, no equipment or weapons and no activities for the VDC units other than to meet, exercise and drill. The initial enthusiasm understandably began to wane, but the organisation continued. At this time the VDC could not contribute to mainland defence.[25]

For the services the perceived threat was changing. On 10 July 1940 the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Colvin wrote to his fellow Chiefs. Colvin had considered various plans for defence coordination and was concerned that the planning basis of the minor, or 'raids', scale of attack was no longer appropriate. Colvin suggested that "the heaviest scale of attack should be envisaged and plans for defence should be made to make the utmost use of all forces available now, or likely to be made available".[26] The other Chiefs agreed and the revised scale was passed to the senior officers in charge of defended ports on 5 August.

August and September 1940 saw significant decisions made by the Australian Government. Indeed Hasluck claimed that "the decisions of September 1940 were of exceptional significance and are likely to be a matter of speculation and controversy in Australian history". [27] While this has not occurred, the decisions require explaining since they had a major impact on the development of mainland defence.

It must be recognised that the Australian perception at the time was that the survival of Britain was vital to the survival of the Empire. It was therefore natural that, despite the increased threat from Japan, the Australian focus was largely on Britain's war, particularly at a time of real peril. This was also a logical follow-on from the principles of Imperial Defence, still active in the minds of the Australian Government and service planners.

---

[25] That situation changed as the war progressed; the VDC formally became part of the defence force in May 1941.

[26] 'Joint Operational Planning Machinery: (1) Organization for the Control of Trade Defence (2) Organization for the Control of Operations and Intelligence (3) Organization for co-ordinated plans for the defence of Australia'. July 1940-August 1943. NAA: A816, 31/301/121.

[27] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 226.

There were three pertinent aspects to the decision making process. First, Germany and Italy were the actual and real enemies that Britain was fighting and Australia was committed to assist in that fight. Second, Australia recognised that there were significant interests outside the Far East (Near North), particularly the Mediterranean and Suez line of communication between Britain and Australia. Third, Australia had made it clear that its contribution to the war would include a concentrated Army force under Australian command, thereby giving Australia a stronger say in the direction of the war.[28] The fact that the force was in the Middle East reflected Australian interest in that area and the desire for concentration of a national force had by this time gained considerable political momentum. To further complicate the process, Britain continued to offer reassurances about Japan, prompting the Australian Government to take a chance with regard to the threat from Japan and continue to neglect mainland defence. Finally, British requests for assistance changed for little apparent reason, typified by the debate about the destination of the 7th Division.

The process is well illustrated by the flow of communications between Britain and Australia during this period. The first intimation that Singapore would not be reinforced came in a cable on 13 June 1940, which reviewed the British situation if France fell, including the possibility of invasion. With regard to Japan becoming hostile, Australia was informed that it was "most unlikely that we could send adequate reinforcements to the Far East".[29] This was reinforced on 28 June in a cable with the UK Chiefs of Staff strategic review of the Far East. The review held that war with Japan was not necessarily imminent, but Britain had to hold sufficient naval forces in Europe to check Germany and Italy and "we cannot do this and send a fleet to the Far East".[30] The UK Chiefs proposed that Australia urgently despatch one division and two squadrons to Malaya as a deterrent, with the division equipped as fully as possible "drawing if necessary on your Militia pool of equipment".[31] The initial response said that two

---

[28] For an expansion of these points see Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 224-228; Ian Hamill, 'An Expeditionary Force Mentality? The Despatch of Australian Troops to the Middle East, 1939-1940', *Australian Outlook*, Vol 31, No2, August 1977; and John Dedman 'Defence Policy Decisions Before Pearl Harbor', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XIII, No 3, December 1967.

[29] Cable Z106, Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner in Australia, 13 June 1940, para 8. *DAFP*, Volume III, p. 424.

[30] Cable 228, Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Commonwealth Government, 28 June 1940, para. 2. War Cabinet Agendum No 156/1940, Employment of Australian land and air forces in Malaya. 2 July 1940. NAA: A2670, 156/1940.

[31] Cable 228, para 5.

squadrons would go but Australia was unable to agree, on the information provided, to the despatch of the division since "the force could not be provided with equipment other than small arms without gravely impairing home defence and the training of the AIF".[32] A further appreciation was requested.

On 3 July 1940 another cable described the importance of the Middle East to Britain's war effort, stating that

> "The retention of our position in the Middle East remains of the utmost importance to the successful prosecution of the war, particularly in view of our policy of an economic blockade of Europe. It is also important to secure the Anglo-Iranian oil fields."[33]

The cable went on to describe the elements of Middle East security, the need for the British policy to be defensive while Britain faced attack from Germany and the need to bolster defence forces in the Middle East. The War Cabinet noted that advice and decided to defer a decision until the further appreciation was received. The advice was received in four cables on 11-12 August.[34] The Churchill cable was particularly significant; he gave his view that a Japanese attack on Australia was most unlikely but then said

> "If however contrary to prudence and self-interest Japan set about invading Australia or New Zealand on a large scale I have explicit authority of Cabinet to assure you that we should then cut our losses in the Mediterranean and proceed to your aid sacrificing every interest except only defence position of this island on which all depends."[35]

---

[32] War Cabinet Minute 394, Agendum No 156/1940, Employment of Australian Land and Air Forces in Malaya, 3 July 1940. NAA: A5954, 804/1.

[33] Cable Z168, Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner in Australia, 3 July 1940. *DAFP*, Volume IV, p. 11. Also War Cabinet Agendum No 156/1940.

[34] Cable 262, 11 August 1940; Cable 263, 11 August 1940; Cable 267, 10 August 1940; and Cable Z214, 11 August 1940. All were from Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, UK High Commissioner in Australia. All were for Prime Minister Menzies. Cable 262 was from Prime Minister Churchill, *DAFP*, Volume IV, pp. 84, 87, 81 and 89 respectively.

[35] Cable 262, para. 4.

This was quoted in full in both the Australian Chiefs report on 23 August and the War Cabinet minute resulting from the meeting.[36] Clearly it had a bearing on War Cabinet decisions.

The UK appreciation reviewed the political situation in the Far East and examined four possible courses of action by Japan. These were direct attack on British possessions, penetration of French Indo-China or Thailand, attack on the NEI and attack on the Philippines. The UK Chiefs felt that Japan would avoid war with Britain and the United States, so the more likely moves would involve Indo-China and Thailand and/or the NEI. With regard to Australia and NZ, the scale of attack was likely to be limited to cruiser raids possibly combined with a light scale of seaborne air attack on ports. The UK Chiefs felt that the defence of Malaya was critical and military cooperation with the NEI was important.

The Australian Chiefs of Staff accepted the UK appreciation, with the exception of the scale of attack.[37] Reflecting their 10 July position, the Chiefs felt that a medium scale of attack involving capital ships and aircraft carriers was possible and that invasion, though unlikely, could not be ruled out. The defence of Singapore therefore remained very important since the possibility of a main fleet there would determine the forces the Japanese may use against the NEI or Australia. Indeed the Chiefs stated that in view of Churchill's assurance Australia should make every effort to assist in the defence of the area and that strategically, Singapore had assumed "greater ultimate importance than the Middle East". In terms of assistance the Chiefs recommended that the 7th Division should be sent to Malaya, but that no RAAF or Naval assistance could be given above that already in place. The 7th Division could be equipped on a modified scale, including field artillery and light machine guns. These could not be replaced before March 1941, but the Chiefs felt that was acceptable in the existing circumstances. Anti-aircraft equipment, anti-tank guns and heavy machine guns could not be provided. The first elements of the 7th Division would depart in October 1940 and the remainder in December. The Chiefs also stated that if the force was to be maintained from Australia,

[36] War Cabinet Agendum No 186/1940, Strategical appreciation in relation to Empire co-operation and local defence. Employment of Australian forces in Malaya. War Cabinet Minute 459, [same title], 28 August 194. Both in NAA: A2671, 186/1940 PART 1.
[37] Report by the Australian Chiefs of Staff, 23 August 1940. War Cabinet Agendum No 186/1940.

then the AIF in the Middle East could not also be maintained with weaponry. The War Cabinet accepted the recommendations and Menzies cabled the decisions to the UK on 29 August.[38]

It is significant that the Australian Chiefs did not indicate what impact their recommendations about the 7th Division would have on AIF and Militia training and war stocks. However the inability to replace weapons for three to five months would have been a severe detriment to the development of mainland defence.

Hasluck has suggested that, during this period, "home defence merged into the defence of Singapore",[39] meaning if the defence of Singapore could be assured and sufficient forces existed in or close to Australia then 'home defence' was assured. This was true in that any external defence measures assisted in the defence of Australia, but at this time a simpler situation was more likely. In Australia, there was a growing understanding of British weakness in Malaya, a weakness that Britain could not address without dominion assistance. While the momentum to support the Middle East continued, Australia also had to commit some forces to Malaya. The defence of Malaya was seen as the first line in the defence of Australia and Malaya's natural resources (rubber and tin) had to be protected. This was achieved at a cost to mainland defence. Clearly, Australia still had not found the solution to the dilemma seen earlier: in what way and to what extent would Australia take part in the war?[40]

Despite a re-focus to the Near North, the Australian Government continued to have a strategic focus on the Middle East; this was stated in a cable on 7 September 1940. Menzies recognised that the first consideration was to ensure the impregnability of Britain, but opined that the "whole Empire position would be endangered should our forces be driven from Middle East and control lost in Mediterranean". The loss of Egypt and Palestine would probably see the fleet withdraw from the eastern Mediterranean, reduce the western blockade to ineffectiveness, allow the enemy access to Iranian oil and open the door to the conquest of East Africa. Notably, Menzies also considered that

---

[38] Cable 457, RG Menzies, Prime Minister to Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 29 August 1940. *DAFP, Volume IV*, p.119.
[39] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 222.
[40] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 222.

Japan would be encouraged "in any fresh adventure". Menzies urged "that a maximum effort should be made there compatible with the safety of the United Kingdom".[41]

The UK Government responded on 18 September.[42] The UK had reviewed the position in the Far East and Middle East and now considered that the 7th Division should be sent to the Middle East, where the UK were doing their utmost to maintain their military position. After a review by the Australian Chiefs of Staff the government accepted the change.[43]

Events in the Far East moved on in this period. Japan applied considerable pressure on the Vichy French government of Indo-China with a number of results. The passage of material to China through Indo-China was stopped; Japanese forces entered northern Indo-China on 29 August and Japan occupied bases in southern Indo-China on 22-23 September. Japan formally joined the fascist states when the Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy and Japan was signed on 27 September. Australia had made moves to establish diplomatic posts in the region with Sir John Latham appointed as the first Australian representative to Japan in August.[44] Latham was not able to establish a strong link with the Japanese government in the time available. Later, Sir Frederick Eggleston was appointed Australian Minister to China (July 1941).[45]

On 13 August 1940 Sir Henry Gullett (Vice-President of the Executive Council), Geoffrey Street (Minister for the Army), James Fairbairn (Minister for Air) and General Sir Brudenell White (CGS) and six others were killed in an air crash at Canberra. As Gavin Long noted, the accident deprived the government of three Ministers "whose knowledge of warfare was practical and wide" and the Army's most senior soldier. Gullett had been a soldier and war correspondent in the First War; Street had served as an infantry officer in Gallipoli and France and continued to serve with senior militia appointments between the wars; Fairbairn had served as an Air Force pilot

---

[41] Cable 471, Commonwealth Government to Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 7 September 1940. *DAFP*, Volume IV, p. 146.
[42] Cable 346, Lord Caldecote, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Commonwealth Government, 18 September 1940. *DAFP*, Volume IV, p. 168.
[43] War Cabinet Agendum 186/1940 - Supplements 1 and 2 - Despatch of 7th Division to Middle East. 21 September & 9 October 1940. NAA: A2671, 186/1940 Part 2.
[44] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 525.
[45] Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 541.

and had strong experience in civil aviation. Significantly, Menzies lost three ministers who were his political supporters as well as personal friends. Earlier, Richard Casey had been appointed the first Australian Minister to the United States and presented his credentials in Washington on 5 March 1940. While he was an excellent choice for the post, his departure meant Menzies lost an experienced Minister with military service and a personal supporter. Consequently, "A Ministry which in 1939, when Richard Casey was also a member, had been exceptionally rich in leaders with military experience became unusually weak in such men."[46]

Australia faced an election in 1940. In view of the international situation, there was some debate about whether the Parliament should be extended, but it was decided to proceed with the election in September (as had been done in the First World War). The main issue in the election was simpler than previous ones – should the responsibility for directing the national war effort be entrusted to the Menzies government or to Curtin and the ALP. The Menzies government had been weakened with Casey in the US and by the loss of Street, Gullett and Fairbairn. This and voter uncertainty was reflected in the inconclusive outcome, where the government and opposition had an equal number of seats and Menzies retained power with the support of two Independents.[47]

After considerable debate throughout 1940 over the merits of forming a National Government, the ALP made a final decision on 23 October not to participate and again suggested an Australian war council as a means of ensuring cooperation between the Government and Opposition. Menzies acquiesced and the Advisory War Council was constituted under the National Security Regulations on 28 October. Initial composition was four Government Ministers and four members of the Opposition.[48]

A major political problem associated with the increasing war effort was labour control, a sensitive issue in Australia. The country had a long history of trade unions, industrial disputes and the political organisation of labour. Issues such as 'industrial conscription', the impact of loss of labour by small business and primary producers and the residual

---

[46] Long, *To Benghazi*, p. 89.
[47] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 244 & 256.
[48] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 269.

feelings after the Depression were significant. The Department of Labour and National Service was created in October 1940 with the objective of making the most effective use of manpower and resources. The department was tasked to examine manpower priorities, supply and demand of labour, placement, technical training, industrial welfare and industrial relations.[49] The Advisory War Council also helped. At its second meeting on 30 October, the Council issued a joint statement that machinery for the adjudication of industrial disputes should be made adequate for the prompt settlement of grievances and that stoppages in industry could not be justified as they were "helpful to the enemy and a grave hindrance of the industrial part of Australia's war effort."[50] The issue was significant: in 1940 1,507,252 working days were lost through industrial disputes. Of these 1,371,382 were in the coal mining industry, mostly in NSW (the major coal producing state). The production of coal was 1,800,000 tons below that of 1939.[51] The impact on the overall war effort and consequently mainland defence is obvious.

On 5 September 1940 the Defence Committee made a number of recommendations about the overland lines of communication with Darwin, should the sea route be closed. The Committee recommended that three months stock of essential and warlike stores should be provided and maintained and coal reserves held at 7,000 tons. Based on personnel strengths of 2,200 Army, 800 Air Force, 700 Navy and 3,000 civilians the estimated daily requirements of petrol, oils and lubricants (POL), munitions, war stores and rations were: Army 32½ tons, Air Force 42½ tons, Navy 14 tons and civilian 2 tons – a total of 91 tons per day. To move that amount a motor transport fleet of 300 3-ton trucks would be required. The Committee recommended that the Army be the responsible service for maintaining the overland lines of communication, that a review of rolling stock and motor transport was needed and that planning for overland supply should be commenced immediately. Menzies approved the recommendations.[52]

The Army had already formed the Darwin Overland Maintenance Force (DOMF) in August for operations between Alice Springs and Darwin, but the road was unsealed

---

[49] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 288.
[50] Advisory War Council Minute 13, The Industrial War Effort, 30 October 1940. NAA: A5954, 812/1.
[51] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, p. 291.
[52] Defence Committee Agendum 46/1940 Darwin Lines of communication, 5 September 1940. NAA: A816, 34/301/77.

and stretches were practically impassable during the wet season. The first upgrade was between Tennant Creek and Larrimah (310 miles), a "lightly metalled road" was finished with the help of the NSW, Queensland and South Australian governments before the wet began in December 1940.[53] Operations from Mt Isa to Darwin also began with the convoys running in December 1940.[54]

The decision to create the 9th Division was made on 23 September 1940 and Australian elements left for the Middle East in the period October to November 1940. They were joined by the two Brigades which had been in Britain since June 1940, however the Division was reorganised in the Middle East prior to the Greek campaign.[55] A fourth AIF division increased the demand for resources with the concomitant impact on mainland defence.

Supply was an issue in the Far East and Australia attended the Eastern Group Supply conference in October 1940. The intent was to improve the provision of war supplies to Empire forces in the Middle East, Far East and India by coordinating the industrial capacity of Australia, NZ, South Africa, India and the eastern colonies. Australia accepted some commitments for war production however it was not an open-ended commitment. Prior to the Conference, the War Cabinet, reiterating the principles of Imperial Defence, stated that Australia's first responsibility was to provide for its own defence and provision of assistance to other parts of the Empire was contingent on that; excess production would be offered.[56] Further, Australia was determined to be as self-sufficient as possible for war material.[57] The conference led to the establishment of a permanent Eastern Group Supply Council based in Delhi and Australia provided a representative.[58] Despite its qualified support, as Australian production capability

---

[53] Alan Smith, *Outback Corridor: World War II Lines of Communication across Australia from Adelaide and Mt Isa to Darwin*, Alan C. Smith, Adelaide, 2002, pp. 65-71.
[54] Notes on 147 Australian General Transport Coy and Darwin Overland Maintenance Force Including Report of First Military Convoy from North South Road to Mount Isa, December 1940. AWM: AWM54, 65/3/1.
[55] Barton Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, Gavin Long (ed), *Australia In The War Of 1939-1945*, Series 1 (Army), Vol III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1966, pp. 6-8.
[56] War Cabinet Minute 545, Eastern Group Conference – Australian Policy (Agendum No 217/1940), 2 October 1940. NAA: A5954, 804/2.
[57] War Cabinet Minute 565, Eastern Group Conference, 17 October 1940. NAA: A5954, 804/2.
[58] War Cabinet Minute 602, Supplement 1 to Agendum No 217/1940, Eastern Group Conference, Coordination of Supply to Forces in Middle East and East of Red Sea, 31 October 1940. NAA: A5954, 804/2.

increased Australia did accept production commitments. In February 1941 the Director-General of Munitions told the War Cabinet that the recommendations of the Eastern Group Supply Council could be undertaken without "unduly straining" Australian resources, though inclusion in the Australian production programme would put Australia close to "maximum productive capacity". The figures were indeed considerable: an annual production of 100,000 rifles and 100,000,000 rounds of .303-inch small arms ammunition, and production of 600 guns and mountings, 1,000,000 rounds of gun ammunition and 350,000 bombs.[59] Some of these targets were achieved, others were not.[60]

A conference between senior military officers from Britain, Australia and New Zealand took place at Singapore on 22-31 October 1940. The outcomes of the conference had significant ramifications for Australian strategic thinking and mainland defence.

The Australian Deputy Chiefs attended and a senior United States Navy officer was present as an observer.[61] The conference operated under a number of assumptions: disposition of forces remained unchanged; the United States was neutral but intervention was possible; Dutch intervention was probable; and if Japan went to war dominion ships would return and a capital ship and aircraft carrier force would be sent to the Indian Ocean "in accordance with the Prime Minister's telegram". The conference did not specifically consider Australian mainland defence, but it did note that while a major expedition against Australia and/or New Zealand could be ruled out initially, forces must be maintained to deal with raids, protect trade and maintain local defence. [62]

---

[59] War Cabinet Minute 777, Agendum No 63/1941, Eastern Group Conference, Munitions Production Programme, 12 February 1941. NAA: A5954, 805/1

[60] A.T. Ross, *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945*, Turton & Armstrong, Sydney, 1995. Chapter 9 has details.

[61] The delegates were Major-General J. Northcott, Deputy CGS; Air Commodore W. Bostock, Deputy CAS; and Captain J. Burnett RAN, Assistant CNS.

[62] War Cabinet Minute 632, Agendum 254/1940, Report on Singapore Defence Conference 1940, Review by Chiefs of Staff, 26 November 1940. The 'Prime Minister's telegram' is referenced above: Cable 262, 11 August 1940, para. 4.

The report of the conference went to the War Cabinet on 18 November 1940.[63] The War Cabinet expressed grave concern at the "serious position revealed in regard to the defence of Malaya and Singapore, which are so vital to the security of Australia".[64] The deficiencies were clearly spelled out and included 12 infantry battalions, six artillery regiments, eight anti-tank batteries, over 200 anti-aircraft guns and three tank companies. Existing formations were described as deficient in Bren guns and carriers, mortars, anti-tank rifles and motor transport, while there was a serious shortage of rifles. The Indian Army provided the bulk of the garrison. In terms of air assets, the deficiency was 534 modern aircraft (Malaya and Burma).[65] The situation was indeed poor.

The War Cabinet approved the offer of a brigade group to Malaya with supporting elements, approximately 6,000 men. The group would be on a modified scale of equipment and would not have Bren guns, anti-tank weapons or anti-aircraft guns, but it would have 24 18-pounder guns or 4.5-inch howitzers. The offer was not actioned until 1941 when one brigade and part of the 8th Division Headquarters arrived in Singapore on 18 February; a second brigade arrived on 15 August 1941 and the last brigade provided battalions to garrison Ambon, Timor and Rabaul. A range of munitions was also offered, including 2,000 rifles, 5 million rounds of small arms ammunition, grenades and wireless sets.[66] Again, and despite the conference noting the need to maintain local defence, the despatch of troops and equipment overseas was to the detriment of mainland defence.

With three squadrons already in Singapore, no further RAAF aircraft could be offered, but the War Cabinet approved work to commence on facilities to assist in rapid air reinforcement throughout the region. Naval assets were not included in the list of deficiencies, but two 8-inch cruisers, three 6-inch cruisers and five destroyers were needed in Australian waters in case of war with Japan; these could be provided by the return of RAN assets from the Mediterranean.[67]

---

[63] War Cabinet Agendum 254/1940, Singapore Defence Conference 1940, 18 November 1940. NAA: A2671, 254/1940 and A1308, 730/1/99.
[64] War Cabinet Minute 632, 26 November 1940, in War Cabinet Agendum 254/1940.
[65] War Cabinet Agendum 254/1940.
[66] War Cabinet Minute 632. 26 November 1940.
[67] War Cabinet Minute 632.

Planning began in August 1940 for systems to be put in place for coordinated control of operations and intelligence in Australia. Machinery for the development of coordinated defence plans had been in existence for some time before the outbreak of war, but it needed review in light of the experience of war so far.[68] The War Cabinet approved the new organisation in February and March 1941.[69]

The hub of the machinery was the Central War Room (CWR) and Combined Operational Intelligence Centre (COIC). Both were to be established at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. The function of the CWR was the control of military operations on the highest military plane, by direct meetings between the Chiefs of Staff or their deputies. The purpose of the COIC was to provide intelligence appreciations on strategic and important questions for the Chiefs of Staff and the collection and assessment of intelligence for distribution to the Services, the CWR, New Zealand and Singapore.[70]

Area Combined Headquarters (ACH) were to be established for Naval and Air cooperation in trade defence in the focal areas: Melbourne for south-east Australia; Townsville for north-east Australia; Fremantle for south-west Australia and Darwin for north-west Australia.[71]

Combined Defence Headquarters (CDH) were to be established to coordinate the operations of Naval, Military and Air forces allotted to areas including a defended port. The localities were Melbourne, Townsville, Fremantle, Darwin, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide, Hobart, Newcastle, Thursday Island and Port Moresby. At Melbourne, Townsville, Fremantle and Darwin separate ACH and CDH were to be established, but

---

[68] The evolution of the process is detailed in 'Joint Operational Planning Machinery'. NAA: A816, 31/301/121. For notes on COIC see 'Combined Operational Intelligence Centre'. AWM: AWM69, 23/62.

[69] War Cabinet Minute 847, War Cabinet Agendum 74/1941, Organisation for Coordinated Control of Operations and Intelligence. 27 February 1941. NAA: A5954, 805/1. War Cabinet Minute 881, Supplement 1 to Agendum 74/1941. 5 March 1941. NAA: A5954, 805/2.

[70] 'Joint Operational Planning Machinery'. NAA: A816, 31/301/121. 'Combined Operational Intelligence Centre'. AWM: AWM69, 23/62.

[71] 'Joint Operational Planning Machinery'. NAA: A816, 31/301/121. 'Combined Operational Intelligence Centre'. AWM: AWM69, 23/62.

supported by a single COIC. The formation of a COIC at the other locations was left to the discretion of the local authorities.[72]

While it could be argued that these establishments were slow in coming, the reality was that the military build-up in Australia needed to be reasonably well advanced and the political decisions made about forces for overseas service before such processes could be put in place. Once established the establishments gave good service to mainland defence, despite early inadequacies in manpower, training and equipment.

On 26 June 1940 the government of New Caledonia had passed a resolution affirming that the French colony would continue the fight against Germany though there were elements of support on the island for the Vichy government. Australia advised the UK Government not to intervene to ensure the island remained allied. However, in August the Vichy Government sent a sloop from Indo-China to the island. Diplomatic manoeuvres ensued, but it became clear that the Governor would be swayed by Vichy pressure so the decision was made to replace him. The French Resident Commissioner in the New Hebrides, M. Sautot, went to New Caledonia on a Norwegian vessel, while HMAS *Adelaide* also arrived to add moral pressure. A bloodless coup saw Suatot become Governor of New Caledonia on 19 September.

The outcome was significant for Australia. There were fears that New Caledonia was vulnerable to takeover by the Japanese under the guise of restoring Vichy rule, giving Japan access to New Caledonia's nickel and possession of an island on the Pacific sea lines of communication linking Australia and the US.[73]

Turning to mainland defence, a plan for the employment of the RAAF in the defence of Australia was completed in October 1940. The aim was a broad statement without much substance: "The aim of the RAAF acting in concert with Naval and Military forces is to attack and defeat enemy forces which threaten or attack

---

[72] 'Joint Operational Planning Machinery'. NAA: A816, 31/301/121. 'Combined Operational Intelligence Centre'. AWM: AWM69, 23/62.

[73] David Stevens, ''Send for a naval officer': HMAS *Adelaide* at Noumea in 1940', David Stevens (ed), *Maritime Power in the Twentieth Century: The Australian Experience*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998. Gill, Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942, pp. 262-266. Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 303-312.

Australian territories or communications."[74] The plan examined possible enemy courses of action and air strength associated with each. Attacks on trade by cruisers would involve two aircraft per cruiser; light raids would be accompanied by four cruisers with three aircraft each; while a landing in force would see two carriers with a minimum of 40 aircraft each plus reconnaissance aircraft in other vessels. The plan then examined the need to concentrate air assets to mount any attack, but stated that preliminary concentration was not possible since the enemy point of attack would not be known in sufficient time. The selected course of action was to keep units at their current war stations and concentrate forces only when there was evidence of the enemy point of attack. To meet the plan front line air strength comprised 42 Hudson, 36 Wirraway and four ex-Qantas Empire flying boats. Reserve strength was to be drawn from Service Flying Training Schools and comprised 42 Anson and 28 Battle. The Hudson had some strike capability over a reasonable range, as did the flying boats. The Wirraway was an advanced trainer, further limited by short range; the Anson was a trainer and reconnaissance aircraft and the Battle light bomber was obsolescent, neither aircraft had any real combat capability. The plan offered a severely limited asset for mainland defence, but it stated the purpose for the RAAF in this period.

At the Advisory War Council on 25 November 1940, Menzies described the alarming position in the defence of Singapore revealed by the October conference. He went on to say he saw the need to visit Britain for a personal meeting with Churchill; the Council agreed with the proposal.[75] At further meetings of the Council, the list of issues for discussion was agreed.[76] These included the Far East position and the defence of Singapore, the Middle East position, British policy towards France, aircraft construction and shipbuilding, and British war aims. Menzies departed Australia on 24 January 1941; Arthur Fadden acted as PM in his absence. Menzies visited Batavia, Singapore and North Africa on the way. He argued Australia's case in the British War Cabinet as well as he could and had numerous meetings with British ministers and staff, however he knew "his advocacy had had slight influence on

[74] Appreciation on the Employment of the RAAF in the Defence of Australia, October 1940. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/66.
[75] AWC Minute 39, Singapore Conference, 25 November 1940. NAA: A5954, 812/1.
[76] AWC Minute 79, Prime Minister's Visit to United Kingdom, 1941, 8 January 1941, AWC Minute 82, 9 January. Both in NAA: A5954, 812/1.

Britain's strategy."[77] He returned via Canada and the US, arriving in Australia on 24 May. His four month absence did not help his political fortunes at home.[78]

German raider activity caused some concern in late 1940. Mines were laid off the south and east coasts of Australia. The raiders sank five ships off Nauru in three days from 6-8 December and the phosphate factory on Nauru was shelled on 27 December. With the major units of the RAN having left the Australia Station to join the RN, there was little Australia could do about the raiders.

The Advisory War Council met on 5 February 1941. At the request of non-government members, a discussion took place on Japan and the international situation. Percy Spender (Minister for the Army) had recently returned from Singapore; he felt that Japan could make a move in the next three months. There was doubt about US reaction unless US territory was involved and while it was doubtful Australia would be invaded the immediate effect would be on trade which was largely dependent on sea traffic. Curtin agreed and felt that the RAN should be reinforced on the Australia Station. He felt it was essential that all sections of the community should support the war effort, that Parliament and state premiers should be given all information possible and that the defence program should be expanded. The main danger was from the sea, second from the air and the army was the last defence. The Chiefs of Staff then joined the meeting. Curtin reiterated his views and the CNS replied that the loss of the French Fleet had stretched the RN to the utmost. The RAN could not meet a Japanese major force but if reinforced should be able to maintain trade. The CNS further remarked that a major problem was industrial unrest in shipyards and docks, which was currently showing a 25 per cent lag in output over earlier months.[79]

The Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) agreed that the slowing of aircraft manufacture due the labour difficulties was causing problems. However the CAS stated that local defence requirements were not being sacrificed to the EATS, which should be kept going at full effort. The required pilots for the defence scheme of 32 squadrons and the reserve crews

---

[77] Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 66.
[78] Allan W Martin, *Robert Menzies: A Life: Volume 1, 1894-1943*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993 covers the trip. Menzies' own diary is at AW Martin and Patsy Hardy (ed), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1993.
[79] AWC Minute 119, Japan and the International Situation, 5 February 1941. NAA: A5954, 812/1.

for local defence were being maintained from schools. Curtin asked if there would be any change to meet Japanese intervention and the CAS was disingenuous, stating that the home defence scheme had been planned to meet that contingency. When further queried he said Japan would have to consider the British "stronghold" at Singapore and possible assistance from the NEI. In view of the earlier discussion the Council should not have accepted this advice.[80]

The Commander-in-Chief Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham visited Australia in February 1941. He advised the Australian Chiefs of Staff during their preparation of a Far East Appreciation and had discussions with the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council on 14 February.[81] A number of Brooke-Popham's remarks are worth examining. He stated that his greatest need was munitions, especially 3-inch mortars and ammunition, .303-inch ammunition and Bren guns. He felt that the air defence of Malaya would be strengthened by the imminent arrival of 67 Brewster Buffalo aircraft from the US.[82] He stated that Hong Kong would put up a "good defence" and that while the mainland territories may be lost the island could be held for four months. Brooke-Popham held that Singapore could be held for six months or nine months on reduced rations. If Johore fell the northern facilities of the island may be lost but the island would hold out. In discussing aircraft Brooke-Popham said the Wirraway would be a good platform for attacking ships over short distances though they were not equal to more up-to-date machines. In his opinion Japanese aircraft were not highly efficient. Japanese fighters were not as good as the Buffaloes being obtained. British and Australian pilots were considerably superior, being better trained and in his opinion the Japanese were not "air-minded, particularly against determined fighter opposition." Brooke-Popham thought that the Malayan Air Force would inflict losses to the Japanese Air Force sufficient to prevent it from putting allied forces out of action in Singapore or Malaya. Brooke-Popham had access to British intelligence, with some Joint Intelligence Committee reports showing remarkable accuracy in assessing Japanese intentions and capabilities.[83] In view of this Brooke-Popham's remarks must

---

[80] AWC Minute 119, Japan and the International Situation, 5 February 1941.
[81] War Cabinet Minute 802, Combined Far Eastern Appreciation of the Australian Chiefs of Staff, February 1941 (Agendum No 64/1941), 14 February 1941. NAA: A5954, 805/1.
[82] The Buffalo was a fighter; it was obsolete and inferior to the Japanese Zero in all respects.
[83] Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp.52-65.

be regarded as disingenuous if not worse. In John Robertson's view "It seems that Brooke-Popham knowingly misled the Australians and concealed private doubts about Singapore's strength."[84]

At the same meeting the CGS (General Vernon Sturdee) said it was not necessary to increase the AIF for local defence. He noted that the 7th and 9th Divisions were not fully equipped and if the AMF was called up it would not be possible to equip both the AMF and AIF.[85] Though not stated, it was apparent that the AMF would bear the brunt of equipment shortfalls.

The Far East Appreciation of 14 February was prepared by the Australian Chiefs of Staff for the next Anglo-Dutch-Australian conference. The Chiefs identified Australia's vital interests as Australia and New Zealand; the Singapore base and Malaya; the NEI; and the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific sea routes. The Chiefs further declared that the defence of these interests constituted a single strategic problem but went on to say that the responsibility of each Government concerned for the defence of its own and common interests must be clearly defined. The War Cabinet accepted this assessment and approved the establishment of advanced operational air bases and garrisons at localities to be worked out in consultation with the governments concerned. The War Cabinet also approved the Australian area of responsibility suggested by the Chiefs. The area was considerable and included Timor, the Tanimbar and Aru islands, across to the NEI border in New Guinea (including Merauke) and the mandated territory islands, the Solomon Islands and New Hebrides.[86]

British, Dutch and Australian staff met in Singapore in February 1941, with Australia representing New Zealand.[87] The conference had significant implications for mainland defence.

---

[84] Robertson, 'The Distant War: Australia and Imperial defence, 1919-41', p. 235.
[85] War Cabinet Minute 802. 14 February 1941.
[86] War Cabinet Agendum No 64/1941, Combined Far Eastern Appreciation of the Australian Chiefs of Staff, 14 February 1941. NAA: A5954, 805/1.
[87] The Australian delegates were Rear Admiral RG Crace RN, Major General J Northcott and Air Commodore WD Bostock, with supporting staff. The meetings were chaired by the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. Four US officers attended as observers.

In considering the current situation, the conference judged that Japan was not likely to make a major move against Australia and NZ while the base at Singapore was held; invasion could be ruled out initially. The conference also considered it improbable that Japan could mount simultaneous major attacks on Malaya and the NEI. The more probable Japanese course was a consolidation of Japanese bases in Indo-China and possibly Thailand, followed by an attack on Malaya with the intent of taking Singapore. The influence of the United States position was such that if Japan thought the US would intervene to support Britain or the NEI then the chance of war was slight, however the allies could not rely on that and plans for mutual support were necessary. A Japanese agreement with the USSR, which would free Japanese forces for a move south was thought to be improbable, so Japan was unlikely to lessen the commitments in China and Manchuria.[88]

The War Cabinet considered the report of the conference and the views of the Australian Chiefs of Staff on 22 March 1941. The major decisions included the approval of the provision of AIF battalions to reinforce Ambon and Koepang (Dutch Timor), supported by an "air striking force" to be based at Darwin and operate from advanced operational bases to be established by the Dutch. Each garrison would comprise approximately 1,200 troops. The air element would be two bomber squadrons and a reinforcing squadron, though one of the bomber squadrons would be operating Wirraway aircraft. This created a problem due to the limited range of that aircraft requiring an additional staging base for the aircraft to reach Ambon. The troops would not leave Australia until war broke out, in case of provoking Japan, however equipment would be pre-positioned; this included communications, motor vehicles, general stores, bombs and POL. Other issues considered by the War Cabinet included the reinforcement of Port Moresby and Rabaul, including the installation of two 6-inch guns at Rabaul.[89]

Concern was expressed that the conference had not completed a coordinated naval plan for the Far East and the UK was to be asked to convene a conference to prepare a plan as a matter of urgency. The War Cabinet also discussed the return of naval assets to

---

[88] Report of the Anglo-Dutch-Australian Conference, Singapore, 22-25 February 1941, paras. 2-5. NAA: A5954, 565/4.
[89] War Cabinet Agendum No 109/1941, Anglo-Dutch-Australian Conference, Singapore, February 1941.

Australia in the event of war; Australian and NZ cruisers would return to their stations, but the War Cabinet agreed that the lighter vessels would be more effectively employed in support of the Australian and empire forces in the Middle East with the situation to be reviewed when necessary. The decision was made in the light of a cable from Menzies, then in the UK, detailing difficulties for Britain involved in returning troops to Australia and in reinforcing Singapore.[90] The War Cabinet noted that the conference proposals for the disposition of naval forces did not provide for any forces to operate from Darwin and directed the Chiefs of Staff to prepare a report on the strategic importance of Darwin.

There were obvious implications for mainland defence. The provision of 2,400 odd AIF troops for Ambon and Koepang kept the emphasis on raising, equipping and training the AIF, while the pre-positioning of equipment would deplete stocks in Australia. The provision of two squadrons for deployment into the NEI would further sap the RAAF strength in Australia. On a positive note, the call for an examination of the strategic importance of Darwin kept some focus on Australia's doorway to the north-west.

The War Cabinet decisions after the Conference led to the reinforcement of Port Moresby by a militia battalion in April 1941. Rabaul was garrisoned in March and April by a battalion group (8th Division), which included an artillery battery, with two 6-inch guns installed at the outer entrance of the harbour.[91]

Staff conversations (ABC-1) were held in Washington on 21-27 March 1941 between a US Staff Committee representing the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff of the Army and a United Kingdom delegation representing the Chiefs of Staff. Representatives of the Chiefs of Staff of Canada, Australia and New Zealand were part of the UK delegation but were not present at the meetings. This reflected the US position that it would deal with the British Commonwealth only through Britain.[92]

---

[90] Cable M20, 13 March 1941, quoted in War Cabinet Minute 909, Anglo-Dutch-Australian Conference, Singapore, February 1941. In War Cabinet Agendum 109/1941.
[91] War Cabinet Minute 909, 22 March 1941. NAA: A5954, 565/4.
[92] Report of the United States-British Staff Conversations, March 1941, para 13(a). In War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1 - Singapore Conference 1941 - Washington staff conversation. NAA: A2671, 135/1941 Part 3. War Cabinet Minute 1073, 15 May 1941 records the decisions. Cable traffic is at US British Commonwealth Defence 'Staff Talks' Part 1. NAA: A3300,123.

ABC-1 established the general strategic principles for the military collaboration of the US and British Commonwealth should the US enter the war. The conversations covered the establishment of military missions in the US and UK, joint war planning in the Far East, and the allocation of military material from the US (later formalised by the Lend-Lease agreements). No political commitments were made but the conversations recommended that machinery for the higher direction of the war needed to be addressed. The focus was strongly on the European war and the conversations presaged the 'Germany First' policy: "Since Germany is the predominant member of the Axis Powers, the Atlantic and European area is considered to be the decisive area."[93]

In addressing the Far East, the conversations recommended that a joint meeting of Far East commanders should be convened to prepare plans for operations in the Far East. It should be noted here that one provision was that "If Japan does enter the war, the Military strategy in the Far East will be defensive."[94] The Conference used the term "Associated Powers", defined as the United States and the British Commonwealth and, where appropriate, the associates and allies of either power. By April 1941 that included the NEI.[95]

The recommendations and provisions of the ABC-1 report formed the basis for the American Dutch British (ADB) conversations in Singapore, April 1941. The Australian delegation was led by the CNS, Admiral Colvin; the ADB meetings were chaired by Air Chief Marshal Brooke-Popham. While the defence of mainland Australia was not directly addressed, the outcomes of the conversations were significant.[96]

A range of meetings took place: Australia and New Zealand informally met on 19 April, a meeting of all British delegations was held on 20 April, the formal ADB conversations started on 21 April, two committees (Naval and Military/Air) completed the planning

[93] The grand strategy of 'Germany First' was formally established by Churchill and Roosevelt in Washington in late December 1941 (covered below).
[94] Report of the United States-British Staff Conversations, March 1941, para 13(d).
[95] Report of the United States-British Staff Conversations, March 1941, para 7.
[96] The following points are from American Dutch British (ADB) Conversations, April 1941, in War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations. NAA: A2671, 135/1941 Part 3.

process and a British-Dutch meeting was held on 27 April to discuss cooperative action in the case of US neutrality (US observers attended).[97]

The conversations reiterated the US views presented at ABC-1. The US regarded Europe and the north American Atlantic seaboard were the vital areas; the loss of Singapore could be accepted (the British delegation did not accept that point); the US would transfer elements of the Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic if needed; the US Pacific Fleet would operate against Japan and Japanese sea lines of communication; the US Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines would not be reinforced; the US expected to be forced to withdraw from the Philippines; and the US was prepared to provide capital ships to the Atlantic and Gibraltar to enable the British to reinforce the Far East.[98]

The conversations assumed that Japan's object would be to secure complete political and economic domination of South-East Asia and the islands of the Far East to secure control of their resources. To achieve that, Japan had a number of possible courses of action involving attacks on the Philippines and/or Hong Kong; Malaya; Burma; Borneo or the northern line of the NEI; and sea communications in all areas. Any attacks on the southern line of the NEI (Java-Sumatra) or Australia and New Zealand were ruled out as initial operations.[99]

The ability of Japan to launch two simultaneous attacks was considered to be contingent on Japan having established bases in Indo-China or Thailand. The conversations concluded that if Japan was aware that any aggression would be met by the combined forces of the British Empire, the United States and the Netherlands, Japan's immediate intervention in the war was unlikely. However should the situation in Europe deteriorate to the extent that Britain and the US were fully committed in that area, then Japan may decide to act. Further, "such is the national psychology of the Japanese that acts of

[97] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.
[98] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.
[99] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.

hysteria which might lead to the plunging of Japan into war must be faced."[100] To that end combined plans for the Associated Powers were needed to meet short notice threats.

The conversations reiterated the principle from ABC-1 that "To ensure that we are not diverted from the major object of the defeat of Germany and Italy, our main strategy in the Far East at the present time must be defensive." [101] The 'Germany First' policy was already quite clear.

Notably, the Commander-in-Chief Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, informed the conference that the reinforcement of Malaya by land and air forces since October 1940 had strengthened the British position to the extent that he was sure that Singapore could be defended and be able to operate as a fleet base. Brooke-Popham continued to ignore his own intelligence.[102]

Two broad plans were drawn up at the conversations: naval and land/air. The naval plan proposed two phases, the first phase was before Britain could reinforce the Far East and the second was after the arrival of the Far East Fleet. The US Pacific Fleet, US Asiatic Fleet, British forces and NEI forces were all considered for both offensive and defence actions. Australian forces included a 6-inch cruiser operating as an escort for Australian troops moving to Ambon and Koepang, before being placed under control of the RN. Land defences were constrained to Malaya and Burma since all other attacks would have to be by sea. The air plan addressed reconnaissance of Japanese movements and areas of responsibility for operations. The plans were broad, so broad that they should be regarded as concepts of operations.[103]

The British-Dutch (BD) conversations were held on 27 April 1941. The conversations reiterated most of the points raised during the ADB conversations and focussed on coordinated plans assuming US neutrality. The naval plan reiterated the two phases of the ADB plan but did not address US naval forces. The plan included defence of sea

---

[100] American Dutch British (ADB) Conversations, April 1941, para 25, in War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1.
[101] ADB Conversations, April 1941 para 28.
[102] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.
[103] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.

communications and troop convoys. The land and air plans paralleled the ADB plan without the US forces.[104]

The outcomes were reported to the War Cabinet on 15 May with recommendations for Australian action; the Chiefs of Staff were present.[105] Invasion of Australia was ruled out initially. Attacks on Australia by capital ships were unlikely and, provided Singapore and the NEI were held, the most that could be expected was intermittent attacks by cruisers, armed merchant cruisers and submarines. A raid on the vital area was possible, comprising a force of about 100 men. In reply to the Minister for the Army, Percy Spender, Admiral Colvin stated that

> "a land army on the present basis contemplated by the Government would not be required in Australia in the initial stages of a war, except for training as a contingency against the fall of Singapore and the Netherlands East Indies."[106]

This discounted a significant aspect of preparation for mainland defence.

The War Cabinet noted the US views and expressed concern about the potential move of elements of the US Pacific Fleet to the Atlantic. The use of an Australian cruiser operating to the north of Australia in support of Australian forces in the NEI was approved and the view of the Commander-in-Chief Far East on the recent reinforcement of Singapore was noted.

In all of these appreciations and conversations what became of mainland defence? Apart from the impossibility of equipping both the AMF and AIF, the War Cabinet decisions in February, March and May 1941 took little account of mainland defence, to the extent that mainland defence could be described as missing.[107] At the level of Government and the Chiefs of Staff perhaps it was, after all they had to consider the total war. However broad statements about the purpose of mainland defence were made

---

[104] War Cabinet Agendum No 135/1941 Supplement 1, Singapore Conference April 1941, Washington Staff Conversations.

[105] War Cabinet Minute 1073, Singapore Conference April 1941 - Washington staff conversation March 1941 (Supplement 1 to Agendum No 135/1941), 15 May 1941 records the decisions. NAA: A2671, 135/1941 Part 3.

[106] War Cabinet Minute 1073, para 3(v). Colvin led the chiefs in discussion having been the delegation leader at Singapore.

[107] War Cabinet Minute 802, 14 February 1941, NAA: A5954, 805/1. War Cabinet Minute 909, 15 May 1941, NAA: A5954, 805/2. War Cabinet Minute 1073, 15 May 1941, NAA: A5954, 806/1.

and 1941 saw a considerable effort being put to plans for the defence of Australia at command levels; these will be described later in this chapter.

Turning to the Mediterranean and Middle East, a summary of the war provides the context for the impact on mainland defence. On 13 September 1940 Italy invaded Egypt and advanced to Sidi Barrani, just inside the Egyptian border. Then in December 1940 the North African campaign began with British forces pushing the Italians back over 500 miles to beyond Benghazi in under two months. The Australian 6th Division was involved in the victories at Bardia on 5 January, Tobruk on 22 January and Benghazi on 6 February. However on 12 February German forces, under General Erwin Rommel, arrived at Triploi. On 31 March the Axis counter-attacked; the British were pushed back to the Egyptian border and Tobruk was besieged.[108]

The Greek campaign began when Italy invaded Greece on 28 October 1940 and Britain decided to send a force to Greece. On 26 February 1941 the Australian Cabinet agreed to the use of the 6th and 7th Divisions in Greece, though in the event only the 6th went. The 6th Division arrived in Greece in March. Then Germany invaded Greece on 6 April and the Greek and British forces were unable to halt the German advance. On 22 April the evacuation from Greece to Crete began. Crete could not be held either; German troops attacked Crete on 20 May and by 1 June the Allies had withdrawn from Crete.[109]

The siege of Tobruk began on 11 April 1941, with the Australian 9th Division and a brigade of the 7th Division major elements of the garrison. The defence was determined and held Tobruk. In general the standard of health remained high, but General Blamey wanted to maintain the cohesion of the AIF; he argued that the physical state of the force had deteriorated and the Division (bar one brigade) was relieved by 19 August.[110]

Britain decided in May 1941 to overthrow the Vichy French government in Syria, thereby denying that country to Germany. War Cabinet was concerned about North Africa but agreed to the use of the 7th Division and on 8 June two brigades of the 7th

[108] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 48-55.
[109] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 58-59.
[110] This argument is proposed by Walker, *Middle East and Far East*, p. 210.

Division entered Syria. The campaign was hard but successful and an armistice was declared on 12 July.[111]

A positive outcome for Australia from these campaigns was the development of a professional and experienced army, under professional and experienced leaders at both commissioned and non-commissioned level.[112] This would prove invaluable in the Pacific War and for mainland defence as the AIF returned to Australia.

However, a negative outcome of these campaigns was the cost in men, equipment and supplies. The Australian casualties follow, Table 4.2:

Campaign	Killed	Wounded	Prisoner	Sick
North Africa: 6th Division [1]	256	861	21	n/a
Greece: 6th Division [2]	320	507	2,030	n/a
Crete: 6th Division [3]	274	507	3,102	n/a
Tobruk: 9th Division [4]	749	1,996	604	n/a
Syria: 7th Division [5]	416	1,136	nil [6]	3,150 (350 with malaria)
Total	2,015	5,007	5,757	n/a

[1] Long, *To Benghazi*, p.272. Killed includes died from wounds.
[2] Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, p.183.
[3] Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, pp. 315-6.
[4] Maughan, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, p.401.
[5] Long, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, p.526.
[6] 176 soldiers were captured during the Syrian campaign; they were released after the armistice. Wray Vamplew (ed), *Australian Historical Statistics*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Sydney, 1987, p. 416.

Table 4.2 Australian Casualties.

The figures are significant. The killed and prisoners total 7,772 men permanently lost to the army; they would have to be replaced. A portion of the wounded would return to service when recovered, but in the short term they would have to be replaced. In effect the campaigns resulted in the loss of over half a division. The Greece and Crete

[111] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, p. 61.
[112] Garth Pratten, *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009. Chapter 3 covers the training and experience gained in these campaigns.

campaigns resulted in the loss of considerable amounts of equipment and supplies, much of it British. It had to be replaced which put further pressure on Australia to assist and which meant more delays on the delivery of equipment from Britain that could not yet be produced in Australia. The priority given to the AIF remained. These two factors deepened the impact on mainland defence manpower, training, equipment and supplies.

A further factor was Operation Barbarossa, the German invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941. One impact was the need to supply Russia with war equipment from Britain and the US. That affected the supply of equipment to other allies, including Australia, though the impact on mainland defence is impossible to estimate. In the Far East, Barbarossa freed Japan from the threat of Soviet attack, which had existed since the Nomonhan incident in 1939 despite the Japan-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of April 1941, and was a factor in the decision to strike south. On 2 July 1941, Emporer Hirohito approved the "Outline of National Policies", which included the southward offensive. The Japanese moved quickly; the first forces landed in Vichy French Southern Indo-China on 24 July 1941.

On the home front, the Australian component of the EATS developed slowly, largely due to the difficulty in providing sufficient aircraft. In the period up to June 1941 a total of 525 airmen went to Britain. However, despite some continuing equipment problems, the scheme became fully functional in 1941 and the output increased considerably; from July to December 2,504 airmen went to Britain.[113] The aircraft difficulty was partly alleviated by the Australian manufactured Wackett trainer which helped keep Australia's contribution to EATS going.

In a change of leadership for the RAN Admiral Colvin RN retired on 3 March 1941 and Admiral Sir Guy Royle RN was appointed CNS on 18 July 1941. English leadership of the RAN was maintained.

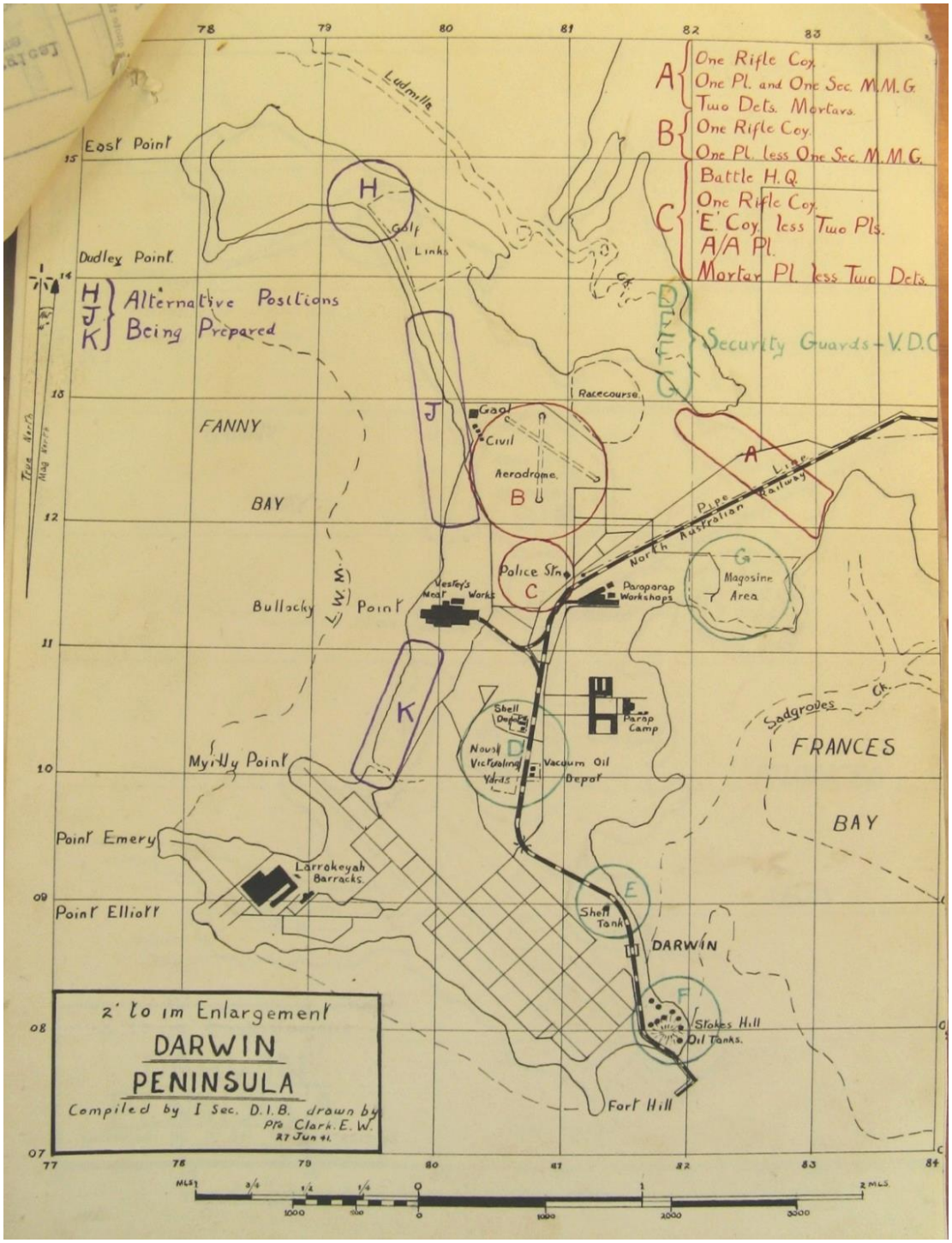
[113] Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, Appendix 2, p. 221.

A major plan for the defence of Darwin was compiled in July 1941. The Darwin Defence Scheme was a comprehensive combined services plan down to the unit level; the broad considerations are presented here.[114]

The area to be defended, working outwards, comprised Darwin town and suburbs inside the Narrows, the narrow neck of land that provided a natural defensive line for the south-western extremity of the Darwin peninsula (Map 4.1). Second was the area from the Narrows to approximately 11 miles along the Darwin to Birdum road, bounded north and south by the shore line. The outer defence area extended from Shoal Bay in the east to Bynoe Bay in the west (Map 4.2). The whole area was divided into four sectors. Fortress sector covered the inner area and contained military headquarters, units and facilities, fixed defences, the civil airfield, the oil storage facilities and communications facilities. Lee Point sector was outside the Narrows north to Lee point and contained some fixed defences, the RAAF airfield, navy and RAAF communications, magazines, the power station and the water pipeline. Shoal Bay sector was north-east of Lee Point, encompassing the bay. Bynoe Harbour sector encompassed the Cox Peninsula and Bynoe Harbour.

The plan was a layered plan for point defence. The general plan of defence was formulated to counter a major scale of attack, comprising attack by aircraft, bombardment and troops landed from transports. It covered internal communications and detailed Naval, Military and Air Force plans. The service plans addressed command, dispositions of forces, inter-service cooperation, supply requirements and the like.

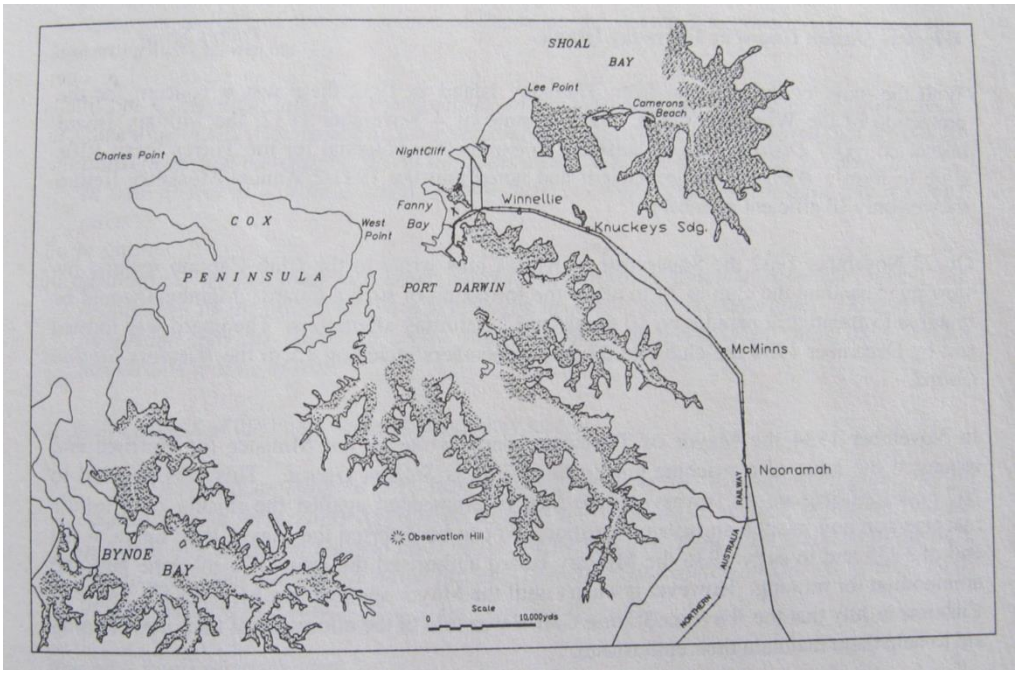
[114] Fortress Combined Operational HQ, Darwin (Darwin Defence Co-ordinating Committee) Part II. NAA: A1196, 15/501/107 Part 2.



Map 4.1: Fortress Sector Darwin, 27 June 1941[115]

(The Narrows is at Point A)

[115] Darwin - Fixed Defences, the installation and disposition, 1941. AWM: AWM54, 625/7/4.



Map 4.2: Darwin Area[116]

The plan was tested by a large scale exercise on 5-7 August 1941.[117] The exercise was designed to simulate an attack by three cruisers, a brigade group (in transports) and 24 aircraft. The enemy intent was to strike Wyndham and then capture and hold Darwin. The exercise appeared to be fully scripted and was of limited use, though some lessons were valuable.[118] Wyndham was unprotected and vulnerable; reconnaissance of the approaching force was inadequate; the air and naval defences of Darwin were judged too small to stop the scale of attack; and, significantly, internal communications were poor. Unfortunately, no further exercises were conducted and the Defence Scheme was not reviewed prior to the start of war.

In mid-1941 the Militia was in a mess.[119] Training was fragmentary and discontinuous, too many good officers and men had joined the AIF, equipment was lacking and efficiency was down. Other elements of mainland defence were in place. By

[116] Graham McKenzie-Smith, *Australia's Forgotten Army: Volume 2. Defending the Northern Gateways: Northern Territory & Torres Strait - 1938 to 1945*, Grimwade Publications, Canberra, 1995. p. 5.
[117] Lessons on Darwin Defence Exercise, 5 to 7 August 1941. AWM: AWM54, 625/7/5.
[118] A scripted exercise has both attacking and defending forces operating to a set plan, with umpires ensuring that the plan is followed. This enables systems and processes to be tested but only limited initiative is allowed. Free play exercises allow commanders to react to events as they occur.
[119] Palazzo, *The Australian Army*, pp. 147-51.

August 1941 there were over 5,000 men in the Permanent Military Forces and 12,000 men in the Garrison Battalions. The VDC had been formed though it was not yet a real military force. Also, the two army issue was developing with increasing friction between the AIF and the Militia. In order to pull together this partly trained and partly equipped force, Major-General Iven Mackay was recalled from command of the 6th Division to become General Officer Commanding (GOC) Home Forces, effective 1 September 1941. The position had been debated for some time before it was confirmed on 5 August 1941. As GOC Mackay would be superior to the General Officers commanding Commands for operations, equal in rank to the Chief of the General Staff, but subordinate to the Military Board. However the authority to be delegated to him had not been decided, he had no authority for the Northern Territory or New Guinea and he was not responsible for the defence of Australia, which remained with the CGS. Overall the arrangement proved to be an unsatisfactory compromise, but Mackay and Sturdee made it work as well as they could.[120]

On the international scene, Churchill and Roosevelt met in Placentia Bay, Newfoundland, in the period 9-14 August 1941. The Atlantic Conference saw discussions on war aims, a reaffirmation of the Germany first policy and the drafting of the Atlantic Charter. Churchill had hoped to draw the US into the war but did not succeed. Australia and the other dominions were not consulted about the conference, but all signed the Charter in January 1942. Australia had been informed that the UK was advocating the Germany first policy as early as February 1941 but its import apparently "had not seeped through the governmental structure until 1942."[121] Any war against Japan was to be a holding war until the European war was decided. The implications for mainland defence were profound.

A combined appreciation on the defence of Eastern Command was raised on 1 September 1941. The object was to defend New South Wales but, as in June 1940, it was accepted that could not be achieved and the focus would be on the Sydney-Newcastle-Kembla region. Estimates of the scale of attack had increased; it comprised heavy cruisers, aircraft carriers and submarines (the use of capital ships was not considered likely, but could not be discounted); a force of from two to four divisions;

---

[120] Long, *Six Years War*, pp. 117-6. Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 168.
[121] Cable Watt to External Affairs, 7 February 1941, A3300/7, 123. Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 64.

and up to two aircraft carriers with approximately 100 aircraft, growing to a further 650 aircraft if a land base was taken.[122]

Naval forces available in NSW were parlous, with no cruisers available due to commitments elsewhere. Eight corvettes had been commissioned by the end of August 1941, but they were not mentioned in the plan so presumably they had wider commitments. Local defence units available were 15 minesweepers, four anti-submarine vessels and six patrol boats. There were three Air Force squadrons available in Eastern Command, two could be sent from Southern Command (leaving Southern Command without air assets) and five reserve squadrons in the case of a threat of invasion, noting they were not fully trained and could take a week to be deployed for operations. Army elements included the Sydney, Kembla and Newcastle Covering Forces, one cavalry division and one infantry division and VDC units when armed, equipped and trained.[123]

The appreciation made a number of deductions. For Army, there were sufficient forces to meet seaborne raiding parties, however available Eastern Command forces might be insufficient to defeat an invasion on the scale considered possible. Reinforcements from other Commands may therefore be necessary to achieve the object. For Air Force, "sufficient forces of the right type did not exist to prevent air raids";[124] what forces were not specified, presumably they included fighters and anti-aircraft defences. Further, there were insufficient forces to oppose raids on territory or sea communications and that would remain the case until the development programme was complete, and available forces were insufficient for the defence of seas communications as well as providing adequate support to the Army in the event of invasion. No deductions were made in the case of the Navy.[125]

The appreciation therefore concluded that mainland defence was adequate for lower levels of threat, coastal bombardment and raiding parties, but not adequate to defeat an invasion on the scale considered possible.[126]

---

[122] Combined Appreciation on the Defence of Eastern Command, by Combined Staff, for Command Planning Committee, Eastern Command, 1 Sep 1941 - To defend New South Wales. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/86.
[123] Combined Appreciation on the Defence of Eastern Command, 1 Sep 1941.
[124] Combined Appreciation on the Defence of Eastern Command, 1 Sep 1941, para. 4(b).
[125] Combined Appreciation on the Defence of Eastern Command, 1 Sep 1941.
[126] Combined Appreciation on the Defence of Eastern Command, 1 Sep 1941.

While these plans were being made a political crisis occurred. Menzies had returned from the UK with extensive reports on the war effort and the conviction of growing danger. He announced that the war effort must intensify and restructured the War Cabinet on 26 June 1941. However, by mid-July he was facing considerable dissension within the UAP. By 28 August Menzies could see no way to hold the Prime Ministership and stepped down in favour of the CP leader, Arthur Fadden. Fadden did not make any Cabinet changes, with Menzies remaining Minister for Defence Coordination, and it was apparent his government would not last. Fadden prepared a new war budget and, during the budget debate, both independents who had kept Menzies in power shifted their support to Curtin. Fadden had no choice but to resign and John Curtin became Prime Minister on 7 October 1941. His War Cabinet was Curtin (PM and Defence Coordination); Frank Forde (Army); Ben Chifley (Treasurer); Herbert Evatt (Attorney-General and External Affairs); John Beasley (Supply and Development); John Makin (Navy and Munitions); Arthur Drakeford (Air) and John Dedman (War Organisation of Industry, from 11 December). A number had been on the Advisory War Council, so a measure of continuity was in place, but it lacked any military experience.[127]

Mainland Defence

Considering point defence, the Darwin Defence Scheme of July 1941 at least saw a truly coordinated approach to the defence of Darwin, though the exercise demonstrated that defences were not adequate in certain areas and internal communications were not good. The combined appreciation on the defence of Eastern Command of September 1941 enabled a realistic appraisal of the defence of Sydney. The naval and air forces were inadequate for most tasks, but overall the appreciation concluded that mainland defence was adequate for lower levels of threat, coastal bombardment and raiding parties, but not adequate to defeat an invasion on the scale considered possible.

[127] See Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 491-523 and Appendix 2, for a detailed examination.

For area defence, there was some capability in aerial and sea reconnaissance, but, while naval and air resources remained poor, there was little ability to protect the coastal routes and little capability against raiders laying mines or conducting attacks on trade.

The sea lines of communication were in use during this period and remained vulnerable to mining, submarines or surface raiders. There was no improvement to the rail system, the break of gauge situation remained. The civil air system continued to make a small contribution to air movements and the RAAF remained without any air transport capability. The land link to Darwin was improved by the end of 1941 and the DOMF was established to improve Darwin lines of communication. Overall, Australian lines of communication remained poor in terms of mainland defence.

The service intelligence systems continued to develop, with Army and Air Force coming from a low base. The decision to establish COICs would deliver better intelligence when they were established and operational. The reliance on British advice continued, though both the Australian government and the services became more aware of the disingenuous reporting of Japanese activities and intentions. The Australian coastwatch system continued to function well.

The Department of Munitions had been formed in June 1940 with Essington Lewis as Director-General. The period saw a considerable increase in munitions production. By March 1941 the number of Small Arms factories had increased from three to ten, Small Arms Ammunition factories from three to seven and Explosives factories from two to five. [128] The results were clear as seen by the following production figures:

[128] Ross, *Armed and Ready*, p. 255.

Item	Production June 1940	Total Production June 1940 to Dec 1941
25-pdr Field Gun	-	267
25-pdr ammunition	-	191,527
3.7-inch AA Gun	8	178
3.7-inch AA ammunition	-	56,088
3-inch Mortar	-	1,144
3-inch Mortar ammunition	-	432,632
Rifles	1,260	69,780
Vickers MG	120	3,651
Bren Gun	-	1,087
0.303-inch Red Label ammunition	9,300,000	468,000,000

Table 4.3: Production Figures.[129]

Aircraft production continued to develop, helped by the creation of the Department of Aircraft Production in June 1941. By December 1940, 204 Wirraway had been made; by the end of 1941 491 were completed. Wackett trainer production had started in March 1941 with 96 completed by December.[130] The Wackett made a valuable contribution to RAAF training and kept Australia's contribution to EATS going. After long delays, Beaufort production had also started in August 1941 with 10 delivered by December 1941.[131]

Shipbuilding also grew. Cockatoo Island was the only capability at the start of the war, but six other yards developed their capability. Whyalla was built from scratch in 1940; four slipways were developed (which grew to five) with four corvettes laid down in 1940. All were commissioned during 1941.[132] The need for larger vessels was heightened with the loss of *Waterhen* (destroyer) in the Mediterranean on 30 June 1941,

[129] Ross, *Armed and Ready*, pp. 277-278.
[130] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 410. The total production of 200 Wackett was complete by April 1942.
[131] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 413.
[132] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 456.

followed by the loss of *Sydney* (cruiser) off the WA coast on 19 November and *Parramatta* (sloop) in the Mediterranean on 27 November.

The Production Executive was formed on 6 November 1941 to deal with "the mass of detail on the economic and industrial side." Initial membership comprised the Ministers for Munitions, Supply, Labour and War Organisation of Industry and it was later expanded to include the Treasurer and the ministers for Aircraft Production, Trade and Customs, Commerce and Social Services, and Health. The Production Executive tasks were economic organisation and the implementation of economic policy. It freed the War Cabinet to deal with major questions of war policy, defence and the services.[133]

With the worsening situation in June 1941 it was clear that the Australian war effort had to escalate, so Menzies called for an unlimited war effort and the ensuing period saw an ever increasing swing of resources from civilian needs to the war effort.[134] This caused some public disquiet and it certainly did not influence the unions, with industrial disputes continuing. The formation of the AWC and the Trade Union Advisory Panel on 26 July 1941 did little to alleviate the problem.

Mainland Defence: Fit For Purpose

The planning basis for mainland defence during this period was to meet the requirements of defending against three scales of attack; bombardment, light raids and invasion. However the commitment to the EATS meant the RAAF continued to have a limited operational capability in Australia, while the RAN remained below strength on the Australia Station. The decision had been made to raise a fourth AIF division, the 9th Division, so the Militia continued to have a low priority for equipment and its training remained disjointed and fragmentary. The appointment of Mackay as GOC Home Forces was intended to alleviate that problem but it was too early to see any results. Consequently point and area defence had some capability against bombardment and light raids but little capability to defend against an invasion; Air Force and Navy

[133] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 429-433.
[134] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 363-371.

continued to lack capability. Intelligence and surveillance were still developing capabilities. Sea lines of communication were adequate but vulnerable to mining or submarine attack. Work had been completed on the Darwin overland lines of communication, while other continental lines of communication still had a number of deficiencies. Production was also a strongly developing capability and it was starting to meet Australia's needs by the end of 1941.

It must be concluded that in the period June 1940 to December 1941 mainland defence remained only partially fit for purpose.

Tension between the US and Japan was rising and US–Japanese negotiations continued throughout 1941. By April the US was adamant that there could not be a rapprochement between the two countries until Japan withdrew its forces from China. The German invasion of Russia led to Japan deciding in July on a southward advance, accepting that it meant war with the US and Britain. Japanese policy was then based on the hope that Germany would be at least partially successful against Britain and Russia, diverting attention from the Far East. On 24 July Japanese troops moved into southern Indo-China; on 26 July Roosevelt froze Japanese assets, followed by Britain and the NEI. Australia was not well informed of affairs and continued to pressure Britain and the US to make guarantees they were not prepared to make. In November Casey, in Washington, began to receive more concrete information on the negotiations and it became clear to Australia that war was imminent.[135]

On 7/8 December 1941 Japanese troops landed at Kota Bharu and attacked Pearl Harbor, the Philippines, Guam, Wake Island and Hong Kong. Australia was not ready in any sense and the defence of the mainland was particularly lacking. How Australia reacted to this war, in the context of mainland defence, is examined next.

[135] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, pp. 527-28.

5

ONE HUNDRED DAYS

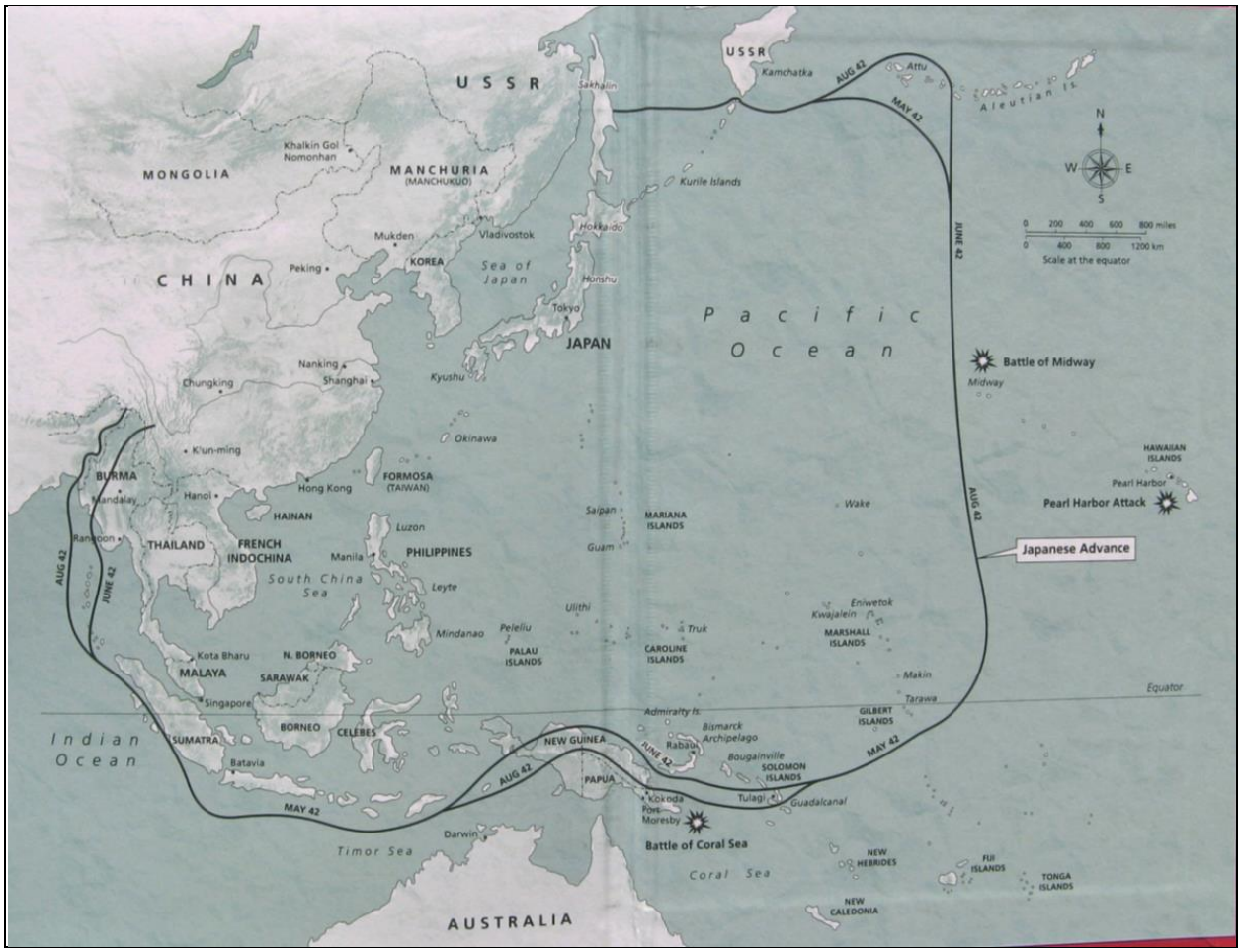
8 December 1941 to 17 March 1942

On 7/8 December 1941 Australia's worst fears were realised. This chapter examines the period when the perceived threat was at its highest, invasion was considered possible, and mainland defence was stretched to its limit. It was a period of precisely one hundred days – from the Japanese attacks on Monday 8 December 1941 (Australian time) to the arrival of General Douglas MacArthur in Australia on Tuesday 17 March 1942.

The one hundred days were characterised by the speed of the Japanese advances and the ensuing chaos, the fog of war, which kept the Allied forces continually on the back foot. It was truly a blitzkrieg. On 7/8 December 1941 the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, landed in Malaya and the Philippines and bombed Singapore. The *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* were sunk on 10 December, Guam was taken on the same day. The Japanese landed in British Borneo on 16 December. Hong Kong was attacked on 18 December and surrendered on 25 December. Manila surrendered on 2 January 1942 and British Borneo surrendered on 19 January. Rabaul was taken on 23 January and Ambon fell on 30 January. The first air attacks on Port Moresby occurred on 3 February. Singapore surrendered on 15 February. The first air attacks on Darwin occurred on 19 February; the attacks were made by the same carrier force that attacked Pearl Harbor (4,660 nautical miles distant). On 20 February the Japanese invaded Timor. The battles of the Java Sea and Sunda Strait occurred on 27 and 28 February and the Japanese landed on Java on 28 February. The Japanese took Lae and Salamaua, and entered Rangoon, on 8 March. Then Java was taken on 9 March. Considering the distances involved, it was a remarkable military achievement by Japan.[1]

[1] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 74-75, 78-81, 102-103.

More significantly, the one hundred days saw the Japanese establish their outer defence perimeter (Map 5.1).[2] It stretched from Burma and the Andaman Islands in the west to Kwajalein and Wake Islands in the east; from the Kurile Islands in the north to Java and the Solomon Islands in the south. It was an immense area – to its south lay Australia and to its east was the vital US-Australia air and sea lines of communication across the Pacific.



Map 5.1: The Japanese Pacific Perimeter.[3]

(Shown at its fullest extent)

[2] The US forces on Corregidor surrendered on 6 May 1942, Allied forces withdrew from Burma on 20 May and the Japanese landed in the Aleutian Islands on 7 June. The perimeter slightly expanded in 1942.
[3] Antony Beevor, *The Second World War*, endpaper.

In this short period, the Australian Government had to deal with significant problems at different levels in a situation where the flow of the war changed on a daily basis and the threat continually escalated. Australian society had to be directed towards a total war, with the associated changes in social life, acceleration in war industry and direction of financial systems to supporting the war. In strategic terms there was the global strategy for the conduct of the war in Europe as well as the Pacific and the issue of Australian representation and consultation. There were also the problems of the defence of Australia under the greatly increased direct threat, and how best to organise and equip the Australian forces needed to implement government policy. Australian defence planners found themselves directly involved with allied strategy, though not involved in establishing allied policy. The defence of Australia was no longer a local matter.[4]

Throughout this period Australia's relationship with the United States was awkward in that the US dealt exclusively with Britain on strategic issues; the US saw Australia and NZ only as elements of the British Commonwealth. This view did not start to change until mid-1942, at which time the US began to regard Australia as an independent, albeit minor, state.[5] Despite this change Australia was neither involved in nor consulted about the higher direction of the war. Churchill and Roosevelt were determined to keep the strategic direction of the war in Europe and the Pacific firmly in their grasp and Australia was expected to comply with the decisions made; these decisions were often contrary to the needs of mainland defence.

The Pacific War started at 2:40am,[6] Monday 8 December, when the Japanese shelled Kota Bharu, then landed at 3:05am. The attacks on Pearl Harbor commenced at 3:48am (7:48am 7 December, Hawaii time). At 5:25am the 24-hour monitoring service of the Department of Information heard a radio report from Washington that Pearl Harbor was being attacked by air. Curtin was informed and the War Cabinet met later in the day. The record of the meeting is simple: "Note was taken of the following Admiralty message dated 8th December:- 'Commence hostilities

[4] Horner, *High Command*, p. 141.
[5] Bell, Roger J., *Unequal Allies – Australian-American Relations and the Pacific War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977, p. 43.
[6] All times are Australian Eastern Standard Time.

against Japan repetition Japan at once.'"[7] The War Cabinet accepted that the situation meant that a state of war existed with Japan.

The outbreak of hostilities with Japan may not have come as a complete surprise to the Australian Government, but it certainly came as a shock. This reflected the pre-emptive nature of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the simultaneous major foci of attack (Malaya and Pearl Harbor) and the loss of the *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*. The shock was intense and led to the realisation that, within a few days of the outbreak of war in the Pacific, Australia itself was vulnerable to attack.

Throughout this period the Australian Government make a number of refinements to the perceived threat; these reflected the speed of events that occurred in that time. The refinements are covered by a number of War Cabinet Agenda covering appreciations and reports from the Chiefs of Staff and the UK Government. The salient points are described, along with the events that drove them, to give a chronology of the fluid and rapidly changing situation. The actions initiated by the War Cabinet form the basis of the analysis of the major elements of mainland defence.

During this time the Australian Government based its decisions on information from two sources. Between December 1941 and February 1942 the Australian Chiefs of Staff were tasked to prepare a number of appreciations and reports. However, on a number of occasions the Government also requested the UK Government to provide appreciations. These requests reflected the Australian Government's traditional reliance on Britain for such advice, however the Australian COIC was established before the start of the Pacific war, so the government should have been prepared to take advice from its own sources. Once a UK appreciation was received the Australian Government then tasked the Australian Chiefs of Staff to comment on the UK appreciations and on occasion passed that comment back to the United Kingdom. This situation was bound to create some confusion and it would have contributed to the occasional tension between military recommendations and government decisions.

[7] War Cabinet Minute 1557, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan, 8 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.

It must also be noted that Britain and the NEI continued to request Australia to provide troops and equipment for overseas service, to the detriment to mainland defence.

The War Cabinet met on 8 and 9 December, followed on 9 December by an Advisory War Council meeting. The meetings considered a range of issues surrounding the outbreak of hostilities with Japan. Naval measures included the introduction of convoys, a temporary hold on overseas departures, the extinction of coastal lights and the alerting of coastwatchers. The disposition of vessels was described, noting that the cruiser *Hobart* and two destroyers were in the Mediterranean and the sloop *Yarra* and two corvettes were in the Red Sea – well removed from mainland Australia. Partial mobilisation of the AMF was discussed. Significant equipment problems existed: artillery stocks were low with sufficient guns for 16 gun regiments rather than 24 guns; anti-tank regiments would have 24 guns instead of 48; there was a shortage of light machine guns with a need to rely on First World War vintage Vickers guns until the Bren gun production line was functioning fully; and there were insufficient stocks of rifles so only combat units would be fully equipped. Reinforcement of Port Moresby and Rabaul by a battalion at each place was considered. The dispatch of troops to Koepang was agreed and the possibility of troops going to neutral Portuguese Timor was discussed. There were some concerns with this because of the potential need to conserve manpower for the defence of Australia. Air Force issues included the disposition of forces and the paucity of air strength, with one squadron in the UK and another in the Middle East as well as four squadrons in Malaya and Singapore. The EATS was to be reviewed and the dispatch of aircrew trainees overseas reconsidered.[8]

The War Cabinet saw a need for a strategic appreciation with respect to the Far East and local defence. On 8 December the UK Government was asked to provide an appreciation of the situation regarding the war with Japan "to which the Commonwealth Government's plan for local defence could be related",[9] and tasked the Australian

[8] War Cabinet Minutes 1557 and 1558, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan, 8 and 9 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9. Advisory War Council Minute 586, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan, 9 December 1941. NAA: A5954, 813/1. For the disposition of Australian forces on 8 December 1941, see Coates, *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, map 72, p. 203.
[9] War Cabinet Minute 1557, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan, Strategical Appreciation (a) Far East.

Chiefs of Staff to prepare an appreciation covering the defence of Australia and adjacent areas.

The Advisory War Council met on 9 December and was informed that war had commenced; Council had no issue with the decision and the meeting focused on measures necessary to the conduct of the war. In discussing the extent of Australian overseas commitments and the assistance Australia was providing for the defence of islands to Australia's north, Curtin spoke of the dispersion of Australian forces and thought that "we would shortly have to consider whether we should not hold our manpower for the defence of Australia".[10] Parliament approved the declaration of war on 16 December.

The War Cabinet met on 11 and 12 December 1941 and again considered a wide range of issues. Trans-Pacific air services were addressed (potential civil air routes had been discussed between the wars without any result), the Admiralty was requested to return RAN vessels *Hobart* and *Yarra* to the Australia Station and it was decided to allow RAAF squadrons overseas to remain there but to request replacement aircraft. Approval was given for the call up of an additional 114,000 men for the AMF and for the call up of a total of 5,000 VDC personnel for full time duty for aerodrome defence and coastwatch. The War Cabinet approved the recommendation from the Advisory War Council for the creation of a supreme authority for the higher direction and coordination of allied activities and strategy in the Pacific war, probably along the lines of a War Council in Singapore. The War Cabinet also revised the rules and procedures for both the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council to avoid duplication of work and agreed that since five of the eight War Cabinet Ministers were also members of the Advisory War Council the decisions of the Advisory War Council would be accepted as War Cabinet decisions.[11]

The War Cabinet gave a financial delegation to Ministers for the approval of urgent defence measures by War Cabinet Minute 1573, which became the financial authority

[10] Advisory War Council Minute 586, 9 December 1941, para. 14.
[11] War Cabinet Minutes 1559 to 1577, 11 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.

for Ministers.[12] The delegation was put in place as an efficiency measure, noting that Treasury had been tardy in handling some financial matters. Smaller delegations were also given to General Officers Commanding and District Commandants.[13] The decision enabled subsequent improvements in the implementation of mainland defence measures.

The War Cabinet authorised "the Proclamation under Section 60 (3) of the *Defence Act* in respect of Classes II and III" thereby calling up an additional 114,000 men for training.[14] Class II comprised all men in the age range 35 to under 45 who were unmarried or widowers without children. Class III comprised all men in the age range 18 to under 35 who were married or widowers with children. The authorisation specifically included 18 year olds; clearly the need for manpower for mainland defence was recognised.

The major business on 12 December concerned the appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff.[15] It must be understood that the Chiefs were tasked to provide a military appreciation of forces required and their disposition. The War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council took a political view, which involved a consideration of Australia and its people, and the Australian commitment to the total war; there were personal political considerations as well, such as consideration of members' electorates. This dichotomy of interests would cause some tension between the Chiefs of Staff and the government for the remainder of the war.

The Chiefs of Staff had been tasked to provide an appreciation covering Australia and adjacent areas showing the possible forms of attack; the degree of probability of various forms of attack; the scales of defence necessary to meet such attacks; the strength and disposition of the forces available to meet such attacks; the preparedness of the forces in terms of training, initial equipment and reserves of equipment; and the first priority

---

[12] War Cabinet Minute 1573, War Cabinet Agendum 417/1941, Approval of urgent defence measures - Delegation to Ministers. 11 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[13] War Cabinet Minute 1574, War Cabinet Agendum 416/1941, Approval of urgent defence measures - Delegation to General Officers Commanding and District Commandants. 11 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[14] War Cabinet Minute 1577, War Cabinet Agendum 419/1941, Calling up of additional classes under the Defence Act Part IV, 11 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[15] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 and Supplement 1, Defence of Australia and adjacent area, Chiefs of Staff appreciation, 11 December 1941. NAA: A2671, 418/1941.

measures to be put in hand in terms of personnel, training, equipment and other requirements.

When the appreciation was tabled the Pacific War was just three days old; the Japanese had landed in Malaya but Singapore was still in British hands and the NEI had not yet been invaded. The Chiefs of Staff were cognisant that the time factor had become all important:

> "If Japan keeps to the step by step progression …, whether and when it will become Australia's time will depend on the outcomes of operations in Malaya and possibly the Netherlands East Indies. On the other hand, Japan has shown a bold aggression against America … The possibility of a direct move on Australia via the islands to the North and North-East must now be considered."[16]

The Chiefs were aware that a number of contingencies were possible and must be considered in future planning.

The Chiefs of Staff considered that there were five possible forms of attack: air attack by carrier borne aircraft; naval bombardment against objectives proximate to the coast; a sea-borne raid by combined naval, military and air forces against a land objective, followed by withdrawal of the raiding force; attack with the objective of permanent or semi-permanent occupation of territory and outlying bases with a view to invasion at a later date; and finally, invasion of Australia. The Chiefs thought that multiple forms of attack could occur, in that the first two forms could be combined, while the first two forms would probably accompany any of the last three. The Chiefs also felt that attack on Australia's sea lines of communications must be expected.[17]

In considering possible courses of Japanese action the Chiefs of Staff looked at three geographic areas: outlying island bases, specifically New Guinea, Papua, New Caledonia and Timor; Darwin; and the mainland of Australia. With respect to the island bases the Chiefs of Staff considered that a probable initial Japanese course of action would be an attempt to occupy Rabaul, Port Moresby and New Caledonia.[18] The occupation of Rabaul and Port Moresby would deny bases for operations against the

---

[16] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, covering note by Chiefs of Staff, para. 6.
[17] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, paras. 1-3.
[18] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, paras. 5-6.

Japanese mandated islands, while the occupation of New Caledonia could cut the Pacific line of communications. Rabaul was within range of land based aircraft so an attack on Rabaul was a likely first step, but the possibility of a simultaneous attack on some or all of the places and any islands in the Australian sphere could not be excluded. The capture of any of the outlying islands would provide the enemy with bases for attacks against the Australian mainland at a later stage.

The Chiefs described Darwin as the only fleet operating base for allied naval forces operating in the eastern end of the Malay barrier. Some 100,000 tons of naval fuel oil were stored there and there was an air base. Darwin was an attractive target and an attack by bombers or carrier-borne aircraft was a strong possibility. The capture of Timor would greatly facilitate air attack. Sea-borne raids were thought unlikely at the time in view of the garrison strength, but an attempt to seize Darwin would become a strong possibility in the event of the defeat of the allied naval forces or the capture of Singapore or the NEI.[19]

The most probable form of attack on the mainland of Australia was naval and air bombardment of important objectives, such as industry at Sydney, Newcastle or Port Kembla, by major surface vessels with or without carrier support. Sea-borne raids against selected land objectives were a possibility, but the Chiefs felt those vulnerable points could be protected by considerable Army forces.[20]

The defeat of the allied naval forces or the capture of Singapore and the NEI leading to occupation of bases to the north-east of Australia would enable the Japanese to invade Australia. The Chiefs of Staff felt that these events were possible and since the time factor could not be estimated, it was necessary to establish and train now the forces that would be required to prevent and meet an invasion – hardly a timely recommendation.[21]

The appreciation described the minimum scales of defence considered necessary to meet varying scales of attack in the interval ahead.[22] For the most part the scales were

[19] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, para. 7.
[20] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, para. 8.
[21] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, para. 9.
[22] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Part III.

defined very broadly and in the case of Navy were not clearly defined at all: for all scales of attack on Darwin and mainland Australia the Navy requirement was given as "Strong balanced naval forces including capital ships and submarines" (the RAN had neither). Army and Air Force also verged on the undefined with some requirements listed as "Strong coastal and anti-aircraft defences" and "Strong air forces including …". No definition of 'strong' was offered by any of the three services. Air Force was more definitive in addressing Darwin, listing the four units required to stop an attempt to occupy Darwin, as well as the need for them to be reinforced. When it came to the requirement to prevent invasion of the mainland, Navy remained the same while Army required "Strong coastal and anti-aircraft defences and an army of 500,000 men fully armed and equipped with the addition of 50,000 Volunteer Defence Corps" and Air Force required "Strong air forces including torpedo bombers, fighters and Army Co-operation Squadrons (approximately 60 squadrons in all)". The impossibility of raising such forces in the time frame under consideration was understood by the Chiefs and was addressed when they proposed the "matters of first degree of priority recommended to be put in hand now".[23]

The forces available in Australia were listed by strength and disposition and details of equipment and munitions deficiencies and levels of preparedness were stated in appendices to the appreciation.[24] However, the Chiefs did not give any overall statement of what mainland defence capability existed. In fact, as the following analysis of data from Agendum 418/1941 indicates, Australia was in a dire situation.

Navy had three cruisers on the Australia Station, with a fourth due to return in some days, and three armed merchant cruisers. One cruiser and one sloop were in the Mediterranean; the government requested their return. Of four destroyers, two were in refit in Australia and one on refit in Singapore, with the earliest completion in February 1942, while one was on the China Station. The eleven anti-submarine escorts (corvettes) were in Sydney or Fremantle, and had been ordered to war stations. Navy reported all ships ready for war, except for a minesweeping flotilla. In personnel Navy was short of telegraphist ratings. With respect to equipment, Navy was experiencing delays in procuring engines for 17 new vessels, and also had problems with anti-aircraft

[23] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendices D1, D2 and D3.
[24] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendices A1, A2 and A3.

armament for merchant vessels, degaussing equipment and some wireless communications. Navy also needed a range of shore facilities at Darwin.[25] In summary, Navy was well placed in terms of being on a war footing with the fleet it had. However Navy was structured to act as an element of the Royal Navy. As a stand-alone force it was unbalanced, lacking capital ships and submarines.

Considering the Militia and a small number of AIF in Darwin, Army had approximately 130,500 men on full time duty against a strength of over 198,000.[26] Army strength was deficient in point defence by over 5,600 men, while area defence and lines of communication were short by 62,100 men. The deficiency was worse if mapped against the war establishment of over 261,000. Army reported that approximately 60,000 men had been "recently in camp 90 days, completed some advanced training". With respect to equipment Army had paid the price of sending a range of weapons to Britain after Dunkirk; Table 5.1 indicates the problem. In summary, Army was short on numbers, short on training and short on equipment and munitions.

Percentage of items in hand against items required		
Rifles	73 per cent	
Rifle ammunition	74 per cent	
Pistols	21 per cent	
Pistol ammunition	24 per cent	
Light machine guns	49 per cent	Including First World War stock
Artillery	112 per cent	Including First World War stock
Anti-Aircraft Artillery	52 per cent	20 per cent of those without fire control instruments
Field gun ammunition	25 per cent	
Motor cycles	16 per cent	
15-cwt trucks	48 per cent	
30-cwt trucks	47 per cent	
Tracked carriers	57 per cent	

Table 5.1: Items in Hand against Items Required[27]

[25] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendices A1, B1 and C1.
[26] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendices A2, B2 and C2.
[27] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendix C2.

Air Force was in a very poor state, with two squadrons in the UK and Middle East, four squadrons in Singapore and two squadrons in Port Moresby. Other squadrons or part-squadrons had been ordered to Rabaul, Koepang and Ambon. First line aircraft comprised 101 Wirraway, 53 Hudson, 12 Catalina (in Port Moresby) and nine Seagull and Walrus aircraft. Second line aircraft were 108 Wirraway, 72 Battle and 126 Anson aircraft; a percentage of Wirraway and Battle carried armament deficiencies. The aircraft were either obsolete or incorrectly utilised; the latter was the case with the Wirraway, a two seat trainer that would be tasked to counter superior Japanese aircraft. The state of training was equally poor: 40 crews fully trained for 53 Hudson, 45 crews fully trained for 101 Wirraway, 14 crews for 12 Catalina and three crews fully trained for nine Seagull and Walrus. Air Force aircraft were short by 13 Wirraway, 31 Hudson (both of which could be rectified in the short term) and 10 Seagull. However to complete the 32 squadron programme, Air Force needed a massive boost in aircraft: 107 Hudson, 300 Vengeance, 54 Beaufighter, 90 Beaufort and 27 Dakota aircraft. Air Force was also very short of munitions requirements for the 32 squadron programme needing, for example, over 46,000 250lb bombs and over 12.7 million rounds of armour piercing, incendiary and tracer ammunition (only the stock of ball ammunition was adequate).[28] In summary, with squadrons overseas, inadequate training and the lack of appropriate aircraft, the Air Force in Australia could not be considered to be a fighting force. The commitment to the Empire Air Training Scheme had exacerbated the situation, particularly with respect to aircrew.

The Chiefs of Staff recommended a range of first priority measures in terms of personnel, training, equipment and other requirements. All reflected the deficiencies described above and most were approved by War Cabinet.[29] All recommendations were pertinent to mainland defence. Navy had little anti-submarine capability, significant for both point and area defence. Army was short of men, lacked basic weaponry and was short of ammunition, lacked motor transport, and was short of wireless equipment. Army even recommended production of .310 inch ammunition for the 84,000 obsolete

[28] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, Appendices A3, B3 and C3.
[29] Statement of Decisions, attached to War Cabinet Minute 1579, War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941, 12 December 1941. NAA: A2671, 418/1941.

cadet rifles in Australia.[30] All Army issues were significant for point and area defence and lines of communication. Air Force lacked appropriate aircraft, trained personnel, bombs and ammunition, and was inadequate for point and area defence and protection of lines of communication. An intelligence organisation existed, though it was small, but surveillance resources were scant apart from the coastwatch system.

The overall paucity of the state of mainland defence was obviously a concern for the War Cabinet. Hand-written notes from the meeting indicated that the GOC Home Forces was not confident about the state of the AMF: "GOC said not one Division could be put in the field as a good fighting force".[31] The views expressed by the other chiefs are not known.

One example of the problems experienced by Army was in the 3rd Division, a Militia unit based in Victoria in December 1941. On paper, the 3rd Division appeared complete, but its actual strength was barely 50 per cent of its war establishment, it lacked its establishment in rifles and its light machine guns were all First World War vintage. Lastly, the division's "lack of motor transport was seriously handicapping its training program." When Major General Stanley Savige took command of the Division in January 1942, he was disturbed by "the quality of the formation's officers and the atmosphere of peacetime lassitude pervading training efforts". In fairness, Savige recognised that the 3rd Division, like many militia units, had provided hundreds of officers and men to the Second AIF, and was "wasted away from the constant removal of its most skilled soldiers."[32]

Overall, the measures in place for mainland defence must be judged as inadequate at this time.

The Advisory War Council meeting on 12 December noted the interim Far East appreciation from Britain. The appreciation indicated that Britain was examining

---

[30] These were single shot Martini-Henry cadet rifles, issued to the States by the Commonwealth Government in 1910 under a system of universal cadet training in schools. They were withdrawn from service in 1921, but plans were made to issue them to VDC and some militia units in 1942.
[31] Quealy notebooks, War Cabinet Meeting, 8 December 1941. NAA: A9240, set 2, volume 4.
[32] Albert Palazzo, *Defenders of Australia: The 3rd Australian Division, 1916-1991*, Army History Unit (Australian Military History Publications), Canberra, 2002, pp 101-103.

the position and reconsidering naval dispositions and reinforcements for the Far East. The appreciation did not consider that there was any immediate large scale threat to Australia, though there was the possibility of raids by enemy cruisers possibly combined with light scales of seaborne air attack against ports. The appreciation stated clearly that, to the UK Government, Germany remained the main enemy. Australian mainland defence did not appear to feature in UK Government thinking, accepting that Britain had no resources to do anything about the defence of Australia at this time.[33]

The Full Cabinet met on 15 December and approved "… the principle of the extensive employment of women in industries where men are not available in sufficient numbers to attain the scale of production approved as a war objective." Women so employed were only to be employed for the duration of the war or until they could be replaced by men. The move was essential for mainland defence. The call up of additional classes of men indicated that manpower issues were becoming evident early in the Pacific war and the use of women in the services and industry was an obvious measure to address that issue.[34]

The Advisory War Council meeting on 16 December received a briefing from the CNS who had just returned from Singapore. Admiral Royle reported that naval dispositions had been discussed with the Commander-in-Chief United States Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines. The major issue for Australia was the US view that Australia should have strong naval forces at Darwin to contribute to the defence of the Malay Barrier. US and Dutch vessels would also be involved. Royle felt that the proposal was attractive; it made use of the strategic position of Darwin which would be used at times by combined striking forces and would also enable Australian warships to contribute to strategic control while operating from an Australian base. Though not explicitly stated at the Advisory War Council the proposed disposition would also contribute to mainland defence.[35]

---

[33] Cablegram 817, Lord Cranborne, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister. *DAFP: Volume V*, p. 303.
[34] Full Cabinet Minute 42, Employment of Women, 15 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[35] AWC Minute 597, Chief of the Naval Staff's Discussions at Singapore, 16 December 1941. NAA: A5954, 813/2.

Royle described the circumstances surrounding the loss of *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse* on 10 December, saying that there was no answer to aircraft attack on naval ships except by the use of covering aircraft. The action illustrated that, in terms of mainland defence, the poor state of the RAAF was a concern – the service was not capable of mounting a serious attack on any Japanese incursion into Australian littoral waters.

A supplementary appreciation went before the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council on 18 December.[36] The appreciation examined the defence of the vital area of Newcastle, Sydney, Kembla and Lithgow; Darwin; and islands to the north-east of Australia. The Chiefs of Staff regarded the vital area as the most important industrial area in Australia, including the BHP steel works and other companies upon which munitions production was reliant, munitions and aircraft production factories and a large portion of Australia's coal mines. Sydney was the main naval base and dockyard and an important link in the sea and air lines of communication. The Chiefs of Staff considered

> "this area of such importance that its defence, to the limit of our capacity, must not be compromised by detachments which we can not subsequently concentrate. Having this in view, we have given the highest degree of priority to the forces allotted to the defence of the vital area and to those designated for its reinforcement."[37]

Concentration of force versus the need to defend all of Australia was an issue that would continue to cause political-military tension in this period.

Darwin was again described as the main fleet operating base for allied naval forces at the eastern end of the Malay Barrier, an important air force station and the main centre for sea and air communication through the NEI to Malaya and the Middle East. The importance of Darwin's defence and reinforcement was emphasised. However, the Chiefs of Staff felt that Darwin's anti-aircraft defences were relatively strong, and that reinforcement could only be achieved at the expense of the vital area. While that was true, in fact the anti-aircraft defences were inadequate with guns intended for Darwin having been sent to Britain; Darwin paid the price on 19 February 1942.[38]

---

[36] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 Supplement 1. NAA: A2671, 418/1941.
[37] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 Supplement 1, para. 4.
[38] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 Supplement 1, para. 5.

The Chiefs felt that the islands to the north-east could afford the Japanese an operational base that would "enable him to bring a greater scale of attack against our Coastal and Overseas trade, particularly that routed via the Pacific." It would also "deny us an essential link in our proposed chain of air bases across the Pacific."[39] The island bases considered were Port Moresby, Rabaul, New Caledonia and Suva (in the New Zealand area). Port Moresby was an important naval and air base for the operations in Torres Strait and the Coral Sea. The Chiefs recommended that Port Moresby be reinforced to one brigade group and air support to the operating capacity of the airfields. Rabaul was a different issue. The Chiefs felt that reinforcement and maintenance of a larger force would be beyond Australia's current means, however they felt that the garrison should not be withdrawn. Consequently, the recommendation was to maintain the garrison at current strength, recognising that it would be beyond the capacity of the garrison to resist attack. It was considered "essential to maintain a forward air observation line as long as possible and to make the enemy fight for this line rather than abandon it at the first threat."[40] However, the men and equipment committed to Rabaul would have been a useful addition to mainland defence. Either a small stay-behind party or "coastwatchers with radio sets" could have acted as a forward air observation line.[41] The decision by the Chiefs to leave the garrison there was wrong and resulted in unnecessary loss of life and equipment.

Parliament sat on 16 December to consider the declaration of war and despite political differences over conscription and the conduct of the war, both chambers approved the declaration of war.[42] In his speech Curtin said that three things were paramount. First was the need for joint action with Australia's allies. Second was that, despite having to import some war items that Australia could not produce, there was the need for the greatest degree of Australian self-reliance in production. Curtin's third point was that Australia had never been invaded and "in the months ahead that tradition will remain with us."[43] Curtin's second point was significant: Australian industry had to produce as much as possible, as much for mainland defence as for overseas commitments.

---

[39] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 Supplement 1, para. 8.
[40] War Cabinet Agendum 418/1941 Supplement 1, para. 15.
[41] Coates, *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, p. 218.
[42] *CPD*, Volume 169, p.1068.
[43] *CPD*, Volume 169, pp.1073-74.

In a significant US move the US Army Chief of Staff tasked Brigadier Dwight Eisenhower to consider the problem of US Far Eastern strategy. [44] One of Eisenhower's recommendations was that the US must keep open the Pacific line of communication to Australia. For that to be ensured, the US must establish a military base in Australia. This was approved on 17 December; that base was to be primarily an air base and General George Brett was appointed to its command. The establishment of this command indicated a more comprehensive strategy in the south-west Pacific than the defence of the Philippines. The US made no commitment to the defence of Australia: it was designated to be a US base. Despite this, the decision was obviously of benefit to mainland defence.

The War Cabinet met on 22 and 23 December. A major issue involved the supply of small arms ammunition to Malaya and the NEI. [45] It was decided to send 48 million rounds of ball ammunition to Malaya and a monthly allocation of 3 million rounds of ball (but no armour-piercing) ammunition to the NEI. The Defence Committee was directed to review the allocation of output of small arms ammunition; clearly the dispatch of this amount of ammunition would impact on already the depleted stocks available for mainland defence. The manpower issue was discussed and machinery for recruiting for the services approved but the War Cabinet directed that

> "… in view of the changed situation arising from the outbreak of war with Japan increasing the manpower requirements for Home Defence, aircraft and munitions production and essential industry, the Ministers for the Army and Air are to take steps to regulate the flow of their requirements."[46]

With regard to the defence of Malaya, the War Cabinet decided to approve the dispatch of 1,800 AIF reinforcements, an AIF machine gun battalion from Darwin and 400 men from the Armoured Brigade. The machine gun battalion would take its Vickers and

---

[44] Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1953, p.87.
[45] War Cabinet Minute 1616, Agendum No 429/1941, Supply of Small Arms Ammunition to Malaya and the NEI, 22 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[46] War Cabinet Minute 1621, Agendum No 162/1941, Supplement No 2, National Recruiting Campaign and Co-ordination of Recruiting for the Services, 22 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.

Bren guns, but not anti-tank rifles.[47] This was in spite of advice from the Australian representative in Singapore, Vivian Bowden, who reported his concern with the state of the defences and said "I feel strongly that before further Australian troops are committed every possible guarantee should be taken that they will not be abandoned with those already here."[48] The dispatch of these reinforcements would impact on mainland defence, particularly at Darwin, though the War Cabinet did direct that replacement troops should be sent to Darwin and arrive before the AIF troops left, if possible.

Churchill arrived in Washington and met Roosevelt on 23 December 1941. The conference set the grand strategy of 'beat Germany first', and also made the decision to form the American British Dutch Australian (ABDA) Command to direct the war against Japan. From Washington, Churchill replied to earlier cables from Curtin saying that "we do not share the view … that there is any danger of reduction of Singapore fortress which we are determined to defend with the utmost tenacity."[49] This was in conflict with advice from the Bowden and the Australian Chiefs of Staff; the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council had to make vital national judgments based on their assessment of what the conflicting advice actually meant. Churchill also cabled Curtin on 29 December with the proposal to form ABDA Command. The boundaries were to be decided but Churchill felt they would include "… necessary supply bases, principally Port Darwin, and (*corrupt group*) supply line in Northern Australia." Curtin was asked to provide "… the assent of your Cabinet to these arrangements designed largely for your interest and safety."[50] The latter phrase was again disingenuous. Curtin responded in the affirmative.

Hong Kong fell on 25 December. Combined with Australian frustration over the conflicting advice about the defence of Singapore, this would have contributed to Curtin's article in the Melbourne *Herald* on 27 December where he made the much-quoted statement that "Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our

---

[47] War Cabinet Minute 1629, Despatch of Additional Australian Troops to Malaya, 23 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[48] Cablegram 63, Mr V.G. Bowden, Official Representative in Singapore, to Dr H.V. Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, 19 December 1941. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 328.
[49] Cablegram Winch 12, Mr Winston Churchill, UK Prime Minister (in the United States), to Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister, 25 December 1941. *DAFP:* Volume V, p. 371.
[50] Cablegrams Winch 13 and 14, Churchill to Curtin, 29 December 1941. *DAFP:* Volume V, p. 387.

traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom".[51] The article raised the wrath of Churchill and the disapproval of Roosevelt, but it was a simple statement of reality; the Singapore Strategy had failed and the United States was the only alternative. However, there was more to the article. Curtin stated that Australian Government policy was based on two facts. First, the war with Japan was a new war and required a new direction in external policy in Australia's dealings with its allies, including Russia, and in the higher direction of the Pacific war. In this respect Curtin stated that

> "The Australian Government, therefore, regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan."[52]

Having made that point, he then stated that "Australia looks to America …".

Curtin's second point was that Australia had to go onto a war footing. It was a clarion call; Curtin said that "Australians must realise that to place the nation on a war footing every citizen must place himself, his private and business affairs, his entire mode of living, on a war footing." and he further said that "I demand that Australians everywhere realise that Australia is now inside the firing lines."[53] Mainland defence was as important as offensive operations against the Japanese. Curtin was to repeat this call for some time. Both points demonstrate Curtin's understanding of Australia's precarious position and the need for every effort to be put to mainland defence.

The War Cabinet met again on the last two days of 1941. The preliminary report on the war situation by the UK Defence Committee, received on 23 December, had been passed to the Australian Chiefs of Staff for their views.[54] In the Indian Ocean, the report stated that Burma and Ceylon must be held, while in the East Indies Singapore and southern Malaya, Java and southern Sumatra, and Timor must also be held. In the next paragraph the report accepted that, without a balanced fleet, the position in Malaya was very serious, however Singapore was to be held at all costs. The report discussed the importance of the Atlantic (first priority) and Indian Ocean (second priority) sea lines of communication, with particular emphasis on keeping the Sunda Strait open (the

---

[51] John Curtin, 'The Task Ahead', Melbourne *Herald*, 27 December 1941.
[52] John Curtin, 'The Task Ahead'.
[53] John Curtin, 'The Task Ahead'.
[54] Cablegram M476, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister Curtin, 23 December 1941. NAA: A2670, 445/1941; also *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 342.

sea route Suez/Ceylon to Singapore).[55] Future naval strategy was addressed, with the report concluding that there was no single base acceptable to both the US and UK that would afford sufficient protection to the interests of each at which a combined naval force equal or superior to the Japanese could be assembled. The RN would form a small fleet for the Indian Ocean but it would be inferior to Japanese forces. The report stated that US naval support would be available in the Atlantic and from the Asiatic Fleet, but did not address the US Pacific Fleet. Reinforcements for Burma and Malaya were covered in some detail. With respect to air forces, the report considered it essential to maintain the flow of air trainees from Australia and New Zealand. Noting probable enemy courses of action, the report felt that the Japanese were focused on the capture of Singapore and Manila with the aim of capturing the NEI. Japanese raids by cruisers and mine-laying in ports and approaches in Australia, New Zealand, Pacific Islands and India could also be carried out.

The Australian Chiefs of Staff were forthright in their assessment, stating "The situation disclosed in this appreciation is most unsatisfactory."[56] They had concerns about an unbalanced RN fleet in the Indian Ocean, the lack of action by the US Pacific Fleet and the inability of the US and UK to decide on a single base for operations. The Chiefs observed that Japanese landings in Borneo had already made the Sunda Strait vulnerable to aircraft. The Chiefs felt that the UK could replace some US losses at Pearl Harbor without overly depleting the Atlantic and Mediterranean fleets, thereby creating a more favourable situation in the Pacific and enable offensive operations against the Japanese. Offensive action would provide a more effective protection to Australia than an inferior fleet in the Indian Ocean. Such action would support the Pacific lines of communication, as well as bolster mainland defence. The Chiefs made a number of recommendations, including supporting the continuation of EATS. The War Cabinet supported the recommendations by the Chiefs, with the exception of the EATS proposal which would be subject to a complete re-examination "of the whole position in relation to the Empire Air Training Scheme and its effects on the new problems confronting

[55] The report did not address the Pacific sea lines of communication, however it would be reasonable to assume that the UK would see the Pacific as a United States responsibility.
[56] War Cabinet Agendum No 445/1941 – Far Eastern Situation – Appreciation by United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff, 30 December 1941. NAA: A2670, 445/1941.

Australia …"[57] A review of the EATS had the potential for significant change to RAAF capability.

The War Cabinet also considered the maintenance of existing forces in the Middle East, to the extent the Far Eastern situation and availability of shipping permitted, with the objective of maintaining a reinforcement pool at a minimum of approximately 11,000. In the discussion, Curtin referred to a cable from Churchill which suggested the recall of one Australian division from the Middle East, to be sent to either India or Singapore. Bruce was tasked to ascertain more detail and the Middle East proposal was held over. Other approvals included the maintenance of existing commitments to the NEI, Rabaul and New Caledonia, subject to shipping and provision of naval escorts; the continuation of the authorised programme of raising an armoured division; and the raising and training of No 4 Independent Company as a reserve for special service.[58]

These AIF measures had considerable bearing on mainland defence. The transfer of an AIF division to the Far East would assist in the fight against Japan, while the commitments to the NEI, Rabaul and New Caledonia had the potential to deplete mainland defence forces. Equally an armoured force and an Independent Company would be a major boost to mainland defence while they remained in Australia, whereas their dispatch overseas would be a depletion of mainland defence.[59]

The War Cabinet agreed to send a range of equipment to New Zealand to strengthen the defence of Fiji. The equipment comprised small arms and ancillary equipment which could be made available without detriment to the equipment of Australian forces; the War Cabinet decided that any equipment needed by Australian forces would not be sent. Clearly, the War Cabinet was finally considering the needs of mainland defence.[60] The War Cabinet also approved the establishment of an Air Observer organisation for the purpose of sighting and reporting enemy air activity over Australia. The organisation was to be staffed by volunteers, with a small service staff to

---

[57] War Cabinet Minute 1632, 30 December 1941 in War Cabinet Agendum No 445/1941.
[58] War Cabinet Minute 1636, Agendum No 197/1941, Supplement No 5, Future Policy of AIF, 30 December 1941. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[59] War Cabinet Minute 1636, Future Policy of AIF, 30 December 1941.
[60] War Cabinet Minute 1657, Agendum No 450/1941, Assistance for New Zealand in the Defence of Fiji, 31 December 1941. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

control the scheme; the organisation added to the surveillance system around the coast of Australia.[61]

Australian representation on the proposed high level machinery to direct activities in the ADBA area was subject to considerable discussion in both the Advisory War Council and the War Cabinet, the outcome being a cable to Churchill 6 January 1942 in which Curtin stated

> "… we hold strongly in view of the large forces that Australia will have in the South Western Pacific theatre, the use that will be made of the Commonwealth as a base, and our responsibilities for its local defence, that our voice be heard in the Councils on Pacific strategy."[62]

A number of representations were made to Britain on this issue, but nothing was achieved and, like other small Allies, Australia was barred from the strategic direction of the war.

On 5 January 1942 the War Cabinet also agreed to a request from the UK Government to move the 6th and 7th Divisions to the NEI. The ramifications for mainland defence of having two AIF Divisions move closer to Australia were clear.

Other issues affecting mainland defence were considered at this time. An earlier decision by the War Cabinet to provide 84 locomotives and 835 trucks to Iran was reviewed and the War Cabinet decided that, in view of Australia's changed situation, the locomotives and trucks could not be released.[63] The impact on rail lines of communication capability is obvious. In approving urgent defence measures, the War Cabinet approved the acquisition of a range of equipment for the AMF, including impressment of 5,375 motor vehicles, the construction of 132 light armoured cars and approval for the purchase of 8,650 remounts for Light Horse units.[64] The latter was

---

[61] War Cabinet Minute 1650, Agendum No 439/1941, Proposed Formation of Air Observer Organisation, 31 December 1941. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

[62] Cablegram Johcu 15, Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister toMr Winston Churchill, UK Prime Minister (in the United States), 6 January 1942. *DAFP:* Volume V, p. 417.

[63] War Cabinet Minute 1662, Agendum No 381/1941, Supplement No 1, Supply of Locomotives and Trucks for Iran, 5 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2. The trans-Iranian railway carried 23.8 per cent of the total Allied aid delivered to Russia; ICB Dear (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p. 874.

[64] War Cabinet Minute 1661, War Cabinet Agendum 417/1941, Supplement No 1, Approval of Urgent Defence Measures. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

significant; it indicated that the transition of Light Horse units from mounted to motorised units was not complete. While the transition continued, the combat capability of the units was debatable.

On 9 January 1942 Shedden recommended to Curtin that the AIF should be concentrated in the Pacific. Shedden felt that the transfer to the Pacific theatre would mean shorter lines of communication for reinforcement and supplies, and reduce the demand for shipping and escorts. It would also strengthen mainland defence. Shedden also anticipated the worst: "In the last resort, should fortune still further favour the Japanese, it gives a line of withdrawal to Australia for our Forces, which we do not possess at present with the AIF in the Middle East."[65] Curtin endorsed the submission as a whole and passed it to the Chiefs of Staff.

Churchill – still in Washington – responded to Curtin's cable on the same day. Churchill stated that the organisation of ABDA had not yet been decided and the United States would communicate directly with Australia. Churchill also believed that the United States would be quite willing "to reinforce your home defence troops with 40 or 50 thousand Americans", the limiting factor being shipping. Churchill also asked Curtin whether he believed Australia was in "imminent danger of invasion in force?"[66] Again, Curtin tasked the Chiefs of Staff to raise an appreciation to consider both invasion and reinforcement.

The War Cabinet meeting on 13 January reviewed an earlier proposal for the provision of 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft weapons. The local manufacture of 1,030 complete guns, maintenance spares for those guns and 2,559 spare barrels was approved. Strong representation was to be made to both the UK and the US suppliers in respect to earlier orders that were not yet filled. The situation reflected the concern over the provision of modern equipment for mainland defence as well as AIF commitments.[67] The meeting also approved a request from Singapore for provision of logistics personnel for service

---

[65] Minute "Location of the AIF", Frederick Shedden, Secretary Department of Defence Coordination to Prime Minister, 9 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 573/1.
[66] Cablegram Winch 6, the Prime Minister of Great Britain to Prime Minister Curtin, 9 January 1942 in War Cabinet Agendum 32/1942. NAA: A5954, 554/4.
[67] War Cabinet Minute 1680, Agendum No 423/1941, Supplement No 2, Provision of 40MM (Bofors) Anti-Aircraft Weapons, 13 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

in Malaya; a Dock Operating Company of 436 personnel was to be raised from the AIF. This decision again demonstrated the willingness of the War Cabinet to approve piecemeal distribution of AIF units for service overseas at a time when concentration of force in mainland Australia was needed.[68]

The War Cabinet met on 19 and 20 January. The draft National Security (Manpower) Regulations were considered; manpower was already a concern for government.[69] The War Cabinet then considered the Chiefs of Staff appreciation on the immediate danger of invasion, which also addressed the reinforcement of Australia by United States troops. The Chiefs reviewed the events of the previous weeks: the fall of Hong Kong, Japanese advances in the Philippines, North Borneo and Malaya, the loss of the UK capital ships, and the US fleet adopting a defensive attitude. However the Chiefs felt that retention of Malaya and the islands of the Malay Barrier would preclude a major attack against Australia. A more probable tactic would be a step-wise approach via bases in New Guinea, New Hebrides and/or New Caledonia. The Chiefs considered that could only follow a decisive action with the US Pacific fleet and subsequent loss of allied control of the Pacific. Australian safety from invasion depended on those two factors. The Chiefs welcomed any US reinforcements, with the qualifier that they would need to come fully equipped, and assumed that they would be under Australian command. Clearly invasion was regarded as a possibility, and the Australian Government was concerned about the paucity of equipment. It would have been a practical impossibility to equip US troops.[70]

The allocation of the monthly production of 200 Vickers guns was approved, noting that one quarter of the allocation went to the NEI and India.[71] The provision of equipment to the NEI was approved, but not signals equipment bound for Malaya. The impact on Australian needs was noted, and both the ABDA command and the UK government notified that the Australian Government was "meeting this demand at the expense of its

---

[68] War Cabinet Minute 1682, Dock Operating Company for Malaya, 13 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[69] War Cabinet Minute 1695, Agendum No 446/1941, Supplement No 1, Manpower, 19 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[70] War Cabinet Agendum 32/1942: Defence of Australia – Appreciation of Immediate Danger of Invasion in Force – Reinforcements of Home Defence Force by US Troops – 17 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 554/4.
[71] War Cabinet Minute 1707, Agendum No 25/1942, Allocation of Output of Vickers Guns, 20 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

own needs, that it is doing its utmost to give very possible assistance consistent with imperative commitments for local defence."[72]

A further meeting on 23 January 1942 considered the serious deterioration of the position in Malaya, as reported by both GOC 8th Division, Major-General Gordon Bennett, and Bowden; the latter reported the situation for the British forces as "desperate" and that hopes of substantial air reinforcement were proving "largely illusory".[73] All the War Cabinet could do at this juncture was cable Churchill with a strong representation to increase air reinforcement and support for the AIF. More significant for mainland defence was the discussion over emergency measures resulting from the Japanese landing at Rabaul. The Chiefs held the view that the Japanese aim was to take Rabaul, then commence operations against New Guinea "designed to obtain control of the Torres Straits."[74] Denial of passage through the Straits would seriously affect the flow of supplies to Darwin and the NEI. It had to be recognised that invasion was possible, though the Japanese were occupied with their current operations. The War Cabinet then addressed the allocation of US aircraft for Australian defence; discussions had taken place with General Brett about the possibility of attaching US fighter aircraft, being assembled in Townsville, to the defence of Australia. Brett had recommended to Wavell that a squadron of Kittyhawk aircraft with US aircrew be made available when ready on 27 January; a reply was awaited. The War Cabinet also considered the need for more fighter aircraft and the need for a force of submarines to be positioned at Port Moresby as a deterrent to the landing of troops. All the issues were to be represented to Churchill and, where appropriate, through him to Roosevelt. Whether the Australian request for these reinforcements was realistic under the circumstances of the total Pacific war is debatable. However, the concerns were valid and the War Cabinet had every reason to be concerned for the safety of Australia as the situation to the north deteriorated even further: Rabaul fell on 23 January, Ambon fell on 30 January and the first Japanese air raid on Port Moresby occurred on 3 February 1942.[75]

---

[72] War Cabinet Minute 1706, Agendum No 26/1942, Supply of Munitions to the NEI, 20 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[73] Cablegram 66, Mr VG Bowden, Official Representative in Singapore to Dr HV Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, 23 January 1942. *DAFP:* Volume V, p. 462.
[74] War Cabinet Minute 1742, Emergency Measures Arising out of Japanese Attack on Rabaul, 23 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[75] War Cabinet Minute 1742, Emergency Measures Arising out of Japanese Attack on Rabaul, 23 January 1942.

The ABDA Command had been established on 15 January 1942, under General Archibald Wavell (then C-in-C India) initially in Singapore.[76] Wavell was to report to the newly constituted Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) in Washington; the CCS comprised the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and senior officers of the three UK services. After representations from Australia, the ABDA area was extended on 24 January to include the area of Australia north of the line Normanton to Onslow; this placed Darwin in ABDA.[77] The War Cabinet agreed that the Army force (14,050 men) should be placed at Wavell's disposal, noting that his directive stipulated that none of the force could be deployed outside Australia without the agreement of the Australian Government. The War Cabinet further agreed that the two RAAF squadrons in Darwin should remain there.[78] In a bid to release the squadrons for service elsewhere in Australia, thereby bolstering mainland defence, the War Cabinet requested that they be replaced by units from Wavell's command; this did not occur.

These moves were accompanied on 27 January by the War Cabinet accepting the proposed creation of the ANZAC naval area, which included eastern Australia, New Zealand, and the south-west Pacific islands. Commanded by US Admiral Herbert Leary, the initial assignment of ships included British, US and NZ vessels and the Australian cruisers *Australia*, *Canberra* and *Adelaide*, three AMCs, two destroyers and eight anti-submarine vessels, with the remainder of the Australian forces assigned to ABDA Command. Tasks included covering the north and north-east approaches to Australia and NZ, the protection of shipping and convoys and the defence of islands in the area.[79]

The Advisory War Council held an expanded meeting on 4 February 1942 with the State Premiers, co-opted Australian Government Ministers and the Chiefs of Staff present. The meeting received a review of operations by the Chiefs and considered for the first time the possibility of evacuation of the civilian population and industry from threatened areas. With respect to the population the meeting decided that no emphasis would be placed on evacuation, though moving young children may be considered and

---

[76] Wigmore, *The Japanese Thrust*, pp. 200-202.
[77] War Cabinet Minute 1771, Agendum 35/1942, Supplement No1, Darwin, Inclusion in the ABDA Area, 26 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[78] No 2 General Reconnaissance Squadron (Hudson) and No 12 General Purpose Squadron (Wirraway).
[79] War Cabinet Minute 1776, ANZAC Area, 27 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

that evacuation would only be to a safer area in the same metropolis. With industry, the meeting agreed that evacuation of existing industry was not practicable, but that vital industries in coastal areas should be duplicated where possible and new industry should be established inland. Clearly major raids, if not invasion, were possible.[80]

The defence of Darwin was further reduced, as well the area defence of north-western Australia when the War Cabinet acceded on 5 February to the request from Wavell for the dispatch of the 2nd AIF Pioneer Battalion at Darwin to Koepang to accompany a US Artillery Regiment. The War Cabinet directed that it be emphasised to Wavell that the defences at Darwin were the minimum necessary and reinforcement of Koepang would seriously weaken Darwin. Further, Darwin was a key point in the lines of communication in the north-west approaches and of equal importance to Koepang; in agreeing to the request the Commonwealth expected that every step possible would be taken to ensure Darwin was adequately reinforced. How this was to be achieved was not addressed, but the War Cabinet also directed that the US Government be informed of the decision and that Australia could not reinforce the area and would look for US aid for Darwin should the situation deteriorate.[81]

Also on 5 February the possibility of Australian-Canadian cooperation in the Pacific was considered by the War Cabinet; there had been some earlier discussions, but it had soon become apparent that Canada would not be able to assist in any material way.[82] However an appreciation had been prepared for Canada on the problems involved in the defence of Australia and adjacent islands. A significant aspect of the appreciation lay in the revised view of the war situation by the Chiefs of Staff. In considering the probability and likely scale of attack, the Chiefs felt that the Japanese would "concentrate on the capture of Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies and on the interruption of supplies into China and Rangoon before attempting full scale operations against the Australian mainland." However the Chiefs also considered that the Japanese would move south from Rabaul to secure bases for further operations. The Chiefs felt

---

[80] War Cabinet Minute 1850, Agendum No 56/1942, Supplement No 1, Evacuation of Essential Industry and Civilian Population from Vulnerable Areas, 4 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[81] War Cabinet Minute 1873, Reinforcement of Koepang, 5 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[82] For a full account of the potential cooperation with Canada in the Pacific see Ronald G. Haycock, 'The 'Myth' of Imperial Defence: Australian-Canadian Bilateral Military Co-operation, 1942', *War & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (May 1984), pp. 65-84.

that while "the Malay Barrier holds and the U.S.A. fleet remains as a threat to the Japanese sea lines of communication to the South", the Australian mainland would only be subjected to "sporadic raids by Naval Forces and ship borne aircraft, possible accompanied by small landing parties for raiding activities." The Chiefs then stated that they could not assume that the barrier would hold or the US fleet would secure supremacy in the Pacific and therefore they had to plan for the maximum scale of attack. The New Guinea territories (particularly Papua) were vital to the security of Torres Strait, while New Caledonia occupied a strategic position on the sea and air lines of communication with the United States. With regard to the northern islands, Timor and Ambon were on the approaches to Darwin. All could be easily attacked if the Japanese so chose.[83]

The situation worsened when the Japanese landed on Singapore on 8 February 1942. Bowden sent a cable on 9 February, in which he said that an assault was expected and he could see no hope that it could be held.[84] Singapore fell on 15 February 1942 and most of the 8th division went into captivity.

The Australian Government now faced some serious decisions, particularly with regard to mainland defence. The War Cabinet had already authorized the expansion of the AMF to 306,000 on 10 February. The question became what to do about the AIF. Lieutenant-General John Lavarack and advance elements of I Australian Corps had reached Batavia in late January and on 17 February a further 3,400 troops arrived in Batavia. Wavell had received orders to defend Java; in the event most of the 7th Division advance party ended up in captivity (Lavarack had returned to Australia).[85]

On 18 February the War Cabinet met to consider the future employment of the AIF and considered a number of cables and papers.[86] This meeting and the ensuing events were

---

[83] War Cabinet Agendum No 31/1942, Australian-Canadian co-operation in the Pacific, Supplements 2 and 4 February 1942. NAA: A2671, 31/1942

[84] Cablegram 125, Mr VG Bowden, Official Representative in Singapore, to Department of External Affairs, 9 February 1942. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 502. Bowden also said that he may have a chance to escape but was told he should "stick to your post". Cable 82, Department of External Affairs to Mr VG Bowden, Official Representative in Singapore, 10 February 1942. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 503. Bowden stuck to his post; he was captured and executed by the Japanese.

[85] Wigmore, *The Japanese Thrust*, pp. 442-459.

[86] War Cabinet Agendum 106/1942, Future Employment of the AIF, 17 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 573/2.

crucial to mainland defence. Wavell sent an appreciation on 14 February in which he accepted that southern Sumatra and Java would probably fall and that the two Australian divisions could not be put to use before mid to late March, therefore consideration should be given to diverting them to Burma or Australia. Lavarack also sent a cable to the CGS, General Vernon Sturdee, and the Prime Minister (also 14 February) in which he opined that if Singapore fell the insertion of I Australia Corps into the NEI would probable result in their loss. Lavarack felt that if Singapore fell, "very earnest consideration [is] needed regarding future role 1 Aust Corps". General Sturdee had also prepared a paper for Curtin on the future employment of the AIF (15 February), in which he reviewed the present situation and concluded that the most suitable strategic base for future allied operations was Australia.[87] Sturdee recommended the diversion to Australia of AIF troops then at Bombay and enroute to Java and the remaining two AIF convoys (yet to leave), with the 9th Division to be recalled at an early date. A British Armoured Brigade was in the same convoy and Sturdee felt that should also be diverted to Australia. As a result of this accumulated advice, Curtin sent a cable to Churchill (15 February), reviewing the whole situation and suggesting that "it is a matter for urgent consideration whether the AIF should not proceed to the Netherlands East Indies but return to Australia".[88] Curtin told Churchill that the defence of Australia in the short-term must be the responsibility of Australian forces, with some supplementation by US forces and equipment, but no assistance could be given as quickly as the return of the AIF.

The Chiefs of Staff reviewed the papers and cables and considered that Australia or Burma were the only bases that could be considered for operations against the Japanese.[89] The Chiefs felt that all Australian forces proceeding to the Far East should be diverted to Australia – these forces were the 64,000 men of the 6th and 7th Divisions and Corps and lines of communication troops. The Chiefs were mindful that the strategic position of Burma may necessitate some reinforcement until other troops became available. The Chiefs stated that Darwin should be the first place reinforced by the returning forces. The Chiefs felt that consideration should be given to the return of the 9th Division.

---

[87] War Cabinet Agendum No 106/1942, Appendix D.
[88] War Cabinet Agendum No 106/1942, Appendix A.
[89] War Cabinet Agendum No 106/1942, Appendix E.

Curtin informed the War Cabinet that, in view of the urgency, he had already sent a cable to Churchill. The cable summarised the views of the Chiefs of Staff and requested the urgent arrangements be made for the diversion to Australia of the AIF formations at Bombay and enroute to Java, and the remaining AIF elements with the 9th Division to be recalled at an early date. Curtin also asked whether it would also be possible to send the Armoured Brigade to Australia (it went to Burma). War Cabinet also decided to query Wavell about the 3,400 advance party at Batavia, in view of Lavarack's opinion that they could not be used to advantage in the NEI.[90]

The issue demonstrated that political differences between the Government and the Opposition over the conduct of the war continued. The Advisory War Council met on 19 February and the Opposition members recorded their view that the Government should agree to the recommendation of the Pacific War Council (via Page) that the 7th Division should go to Burma.[91] The War Cabinet considered that recommendation on 19 February and the requests from Churchill and Roosevelt on 21 February and held to the decision to return the AIF to Australia.[92]

Considerable debate ensued between Curtin and Churchill over the return of the AIF; this has been addressed in detail by a number of authors and it will only be summarised here.[93] Churchill and Roosevelt pressed for the diversion of the 7th Division to Burma, but Curtin replied that it must return to Australia. Churchill sent an appeal to Curtin, as did Roosevelt. Churchill assumed that Curtin would acquiesce and, on his own authority, ordered the convoy to divert to Burma, though his cable was silent on that. Curtin cabled Churchill and reiterated that the 7th must return to Australia. Churchill replied that the diversion had begun and to re-route the convoy would mean a refuel stop, so the Australian Government had time to reconsider. Finally Curtin cabled Churchill stating

---

[90] Quoted in War Cabinet Minute 1896, Agendum No 106/1942, Future Employment of the AIF, 18 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[91] Advisory War Council Minute 777, War Cabinet Agendum No 106/1942, Future Employment of the AIF, 19 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 813/2.
[92] War Cabinet Minute 1915, Future Employment of the AIF, 21 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[93] David Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, chapter 10, describes the events. *DAFP*, Volume V, has the pertinent cablegrams.

> "Australia's outer defences are now quickly vanishing and our vulnerability is completely exposed. … We feel a primary obligation to save Australia not only for itself but to preserve it as a base for the development of the war against Japan. In the circumstances it is quite impossible to reverse a decision which we made with the utmost care and which we have affirmed and re-affirmed."[94]

Churchill had no option but to agree and the convoy proceeded to Australia.

A further issue revolved around the defence of Ceylon, which was a source of rubber, strategically placed for the defence of India and initially the base for the RN Eastern Fleet. A compromise was reached and approval given for two brigades of the 6th Division (still in Suez) to proceed to Ceylon as a temporary reinforcement, under the condition that they be relieved as soon as possible.[95] AIF Ceylon was formed on 25 March 1942, the brigades returned to Australia in August.

The War Cabinet meeting on 18 February 1942 also considered a number of issues significant for mainland defence. Advice was received from the United States that three US squadrons were to be allocated to Australia in March.[96] Agreement in principle was given for the expansion of the RAAF 'Home Defence Force' to 73 squadrons, to enable planning to proceed.[97] Approval was given for the extension of the Volunteer Air Observers organisation.[98]

Darwin suffered its first air raids on 19 February 1942. The raids were not a prelude to an invasion or the occupation of the Darwin, though Australia was not to know that at the time. The raids were mounted to give the Japanese control of the Arafura Sea.[99] They have been comprehensively covered in the official histories and numerous other works have addressed them.[100] The raids were a test of mainland

---

[94] Cablegram 139, Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister, to Mr Clement Atlee, UK Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs [for Churchill], 23 February 1942. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 564.
[95] War Cabinet Minute 1934, Agendum No 106/1942, Supplement Nos 1 and 2, Future Employment of AIF, Proposal for Diversion of 7th Division to Ceylon, 2 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/1.
[96] War Cabinet Minute 1899, Fighter Aircraft for Port Moresby, A5957, 808/1.
[97] War Cabinet Minute 1900, Expansion of RAAF, A5957, 808/1.
[98] War Cabinet Minute 1905, Agendum No 439/1941, Supplement No 1, Extension of Volunteer Air Observers Organisation, A5957, 808/1.
[99] Tanaka Hiromi, 'The Japanese Navy's operations against Australia in the Second World War, with a commentary on Japanese sources', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 30, April 1997.
[100] An even-handed account is Peter Grose, *An Awkward Truth: The Bombing of Darwin February 1942*, Allan & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2009. A good summary of the attacking force, the defences and shipping

defence: the following summary provides a clear picture of the inadequacy of the defences.

Darwin was not devoid of defences. Army had a reasonable force: three infantry battalions, one pioneer battalion, one machine gun regiment and one field artillery regiment. Three coastal artillery batteries were in place. Anti-aircraft (AA) artillery comprised one heavy and two light AA batteries, having 16 3.7-inch and two 3-inch guns. However, they were inexperienced, Army headquarters in Melbourne having refused practice or calibration firing because of the cost of ammunition.[101] A troop of 10 Lewis guns were sited at the oil storage tanks. The RAAF base had no anti-aircraft defence bar a small number of machine guns. The anti-aircraft capability of a number of naval vessels also contributed to the defences. Air defence was provided by 10 US Kittyhawk (airborne at the time), three Hudson and five Wirraway.[102]

There were two raids. The first started at 9:58am: the Japanese force comprised 188 Navy aircraft (152 bombers and 36 fighters) from the same task force that attacked Pearl Harbor. Its objectives were the port facilities, oil storage and shipping. The attack was successful apart from the oil storage, saved by the determination of the machine gun crews. The town also suffered severe damage. The second raid commenced at 11:57am: the attackers were 54 Army aircraft from the Celebes and Ambon. The raid was directed at the RAAF base and civil airfield which also suffered severe damage. Total losses were 243 killed (service and civilian), over 350 injured, ten ships sunk and 30 RAAF and US aircraft destroyed.[103]

Clearly, the defence of Darwin in February 1942 was inadequate. There were far too few anti-aircraft guns for an area the size of Darwin and the fighter defence at the time was virtually non-existent. The use of Darwin as a naval and air base was temporarily denied the allies and considerable effort would be required to return Darwin to that use.

---

involved is in Christopher Fagg, 'Darwin – 19 February 1942'**,** *Sabretache*, Volume XXVIII, July/September 1987, pp. 29-36.

[101] Horner, *The Gunners*, pp. 301-304.

[102] Details are in McKenzie-Smith, *Australia's Forgotten Army: Volume 2. Defending the Northern Gateways*, Appendix B-2. Also see George Vazenry, 'Attacks on the Australian Mainland: World War II', *Sabretache*, Vol XXV, July/September 1984.

[103] Fagg, pp. 32, 34.

The Japanese blitzkrieg continued. Timor was invaded on 20 February and the situation in the NEI had deteriorated to the extent that ABDA Command was disestablished on 25 February. The Java Sea battle took place on 27 February, followed by the Japanese landing on Java on 28 February. Naval action continued with the Australian cruiser *Perth* lost in the Sunda Strait on 1 March; *Perth* was a major naval asset and her loss was a serious blow to the defence of Australia.[104]

The War Cabinet modified the EATS on 24 February; the modifications reflected a long overdue recognition of the needs of mainland defence and Pacific operations. War Cabinet decided that Australia would continue to provide its quota, subject to certain modifications to the arrangements. These included an increase in advanced training in Australia; development of an operational training capability to the greatest extent possible, including aircraft and equipment for that purpose; return to Australia of aircrew with war experience to bolster Australian squadrons; and retention of trained aircrew in Australia in sufficient numbers to man Australian squadrons in Australia and the Pacific.[105]

Three days after the fall of Singapore the War Cabinet re-examined mainland defence.[106] The agendum covered a memorandum from the GOC Home Forces, Lieutenant General Mackay, in which he proposed that the Home Forces concentrate (in the military sense of not being dispersed in smaller units) on the 'vital area', covering Melbourne to Brisbane and the essential industrial areas in the region Newcastle to Port Kembla. Western Australia, Darwin, Queensland north of Brisbane and Tasmania would be defended by the forces currently in place. The proposal was generally supported by the CGS, Lieutenant General Sturdee, who also considered the problem of how to deal with an attack at the flanks. The proposal concerned the Minister for the Army, Frank Forde, who took it to the War Cabinet with the recommendation that government policy should be defined as "a determination to defend the whole of the populated areas of Australia to the utmost of our ability…"[107] Forde's concerns were

---

[104] In actions in the Java Sea and Sunda Strait over the period 28 February to 1 March, the Allies lost five cruisers and eight destroyers. AWC Minute 816, Reports on Operations, 11 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/1.

[105] War Cabinet Minute 1919, Agendum No 440/1941, Supplement 2, Empire Air Training Scheme, 24 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2

[106] War Cabinet Agendum No 96/1942, Defence of Australia, 17 February 1942. NAA: A2671, 96/1942.

[107] War Cabinet Agendum No 96/1942, para.5.

valid, though it must also be noted that his electorate was in Rockhampton. The tension that could exist between military and political views was again demonstrated.

The War Cabinet called for a supplementary appreciation, which was considered on 27 February. In the review, the Chiefs of Staff stated that

> "we have lost Singapore and Sumatra on the west of the Malay Barrier, while the Eastern end has been cut by the Japanese occupation of Bali and Timor. Java has now been isolated. We have, so far, not succeeded in seriously weakened Japanese Naval supremacy with the result that Japan is now at liberty to attempt an invasion of Australia, should she so desire."

The Chiefs then said: "the fall of the Malay Barrier cannot now be long delayed …"[108]

The Chiefs considered that the possible courses of action open to Japan included: consolidating the territories in their possession, offensive operations against India after the capture of Burma, and try to take Australia and New Zealand to prevent the use of either as a base for future US operations. Objectives for an attack on Australia would include the capture of the vital area, capture of key points to cut the lines of communication to the vital area, or capture of a forward base that could provide a base for future offensive operations (Darwin). Lines of approach were described as southwards from Rabaul (including the capture of Port Moresby), south-eastward from the NEI on northern Australia, or southwards from the NEI on south-western Australia. The Chiefs defined in considerable detail the Australian resources available to meet the threat. All were inadequate to meet the scales of attack that could be made against them. For instance, Darwin was untenable as a naval base until adequate air cover could be provided, however the size of any garrison was limited by the ability to maintain it over the central Australia lines of communication. The improvement of the overland lines of communication and resumption of sea supply was regarded as urgent.[109]

The appreciation and its supplement reflected the uncertainty that existed in the first two months of 1942. The War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council continued to be concerned about these issues. The Advisory War Council noted the appreciation on 5 March, but complained of the inadequate treatment of "strategical probabilities and the

---

[108] War Cabinet Agendum 96/1942, Supplement 1, para.3 and Summary para.54.
[109] War Cabinet Agendum No 96/1942, Defence of Australia, 17 February 1942.

disposition of our existing forces to the greatest advantage". It decided that the issues needed to be further discussed with the Chiefs of Staff.[110] It is hard to see what more the Chiefs could have done; they recognised the uncertainty and addressed the possibilities comprehensively. The political-military tension continued.

Events continued to unfurl rapidly as the Japanese continued to strike southwards. Broome and Wyndham were attacked on 3 March 1942, after which the War Cabinet decided on the compulsory evacuation of women and children from both places. On 4 March another naval loss occurred when the sloop HMAS *Yarra* was sunk by aircraft south of Java while on convoy protection. On 8 March the allied forces in Java surrendered and the Japanese took Lae and Salamaua, and entered Rangoon. The Japanese now in control of all the NEI except the southern part of Dutch New Guinea (DNG).[111] However there was some relief for Australia on the same day with the arrival in Adelaide of the first two brigades of the 7th Division.

On 5 March 1942 the War Cabinet considered the interim report raised by Justice Lowe after the bombing of Darwin. The report resulted in significant decisions for mainland defence. War Cabinet decided that the area north of Alice Springs, including the Alice Springs-Birdum road, was to be placed under military control; Alice Springs was to remain under civil control; and the Minister for the Army was to consider whether any change should be made in the existing appointment of Commandant, 7th Military District. The last demonstrates the continuing tension between the military and the government; the government may have wanted a scapegoat.[112]

Representatives from the New Zealand Government met with the Advisory War Council on 28 February 1942 to consider future policy for the conduct of the war in the Pacific.[113] The appreciation, prepared by the Australian Chiefs and the NZ Chiefs

---

[110] Advisory War Council Minute 812, War Cabinet Agendum No 96/1942, Supplement 1, Defence of Australia, 5 March 1942, para.1. NAA: A2671, 96/1942.
[111] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 80-81, 102-103.
[112] War Cabinet Agendum 116/1942, Supplement 1, Air Raids on Darwin – Interim Report by Mr Justice Lowe, 9 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 524/4.
[113] War Cabinet Agendum 118/1942 and supplements 1-4, Future Policy and Strategy for Conduct of War in the Pacific - Appreciation by Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff, 27 February 1942. NAA: A2671/1, 118/1942.

of Navy and Air, had a strong trans-Tasman flavour. A draft cable summarised the present military position:

> "Japanese successes place Australia and New Zealand in danger of attack. Darwin, Port Moresby, New Caledonia and Fiji are immediately threatened. The Japanese have decisive air superiority and control in the seas in the areas in which they are operating, especially as there seems to be no present prospect of such a concentration as would enable the main Japanese fleet to be defeated."[114]

The cable went on to say that the loss of Australia and New Zealand would mean the loss of the only bases that would enable offensive action against the Japanese from the ANZAC area, therefore the planning basis must ensure the security of these bases. Urgent problems to be resolved were to secure the sea lines of communication with the United States and to prevent any further southward movement by Japan.

The meeting discussed the expansion of the current ANZAC area to include all of Australia and areas north and south. The higher machinery of the war was also discussed, with agreement on the appointment of a United States officer as Supreme Commander. The outcomes of the meeting were subsumed by the creation of the South-West Pacific Area, however the meeting was the first indication of Australia and New Zealand attitudes firming over their desire to have a voice in the Pacific.[115]

On 11 March, the Advisory War Council noted the appreciation on probable Japanese movements raised by the Chiefs of Staff for General Brett.[116] The Chiefs considered that the Japanese would be able to attack Darwin from the NEI and either Port Moresby, New Caledonia or Fiji from New Britain. The Chiefs saw Darwin as vital; it would be the base for the future launch of combined offensive operations against the Japanese. Therefore the object for the Japanese in attacking Darwin would be to deny Darwin to the allies, rather than use it as a base for the invasion of Australia. The object for the Japanese in the Rabaul/Truk area was to sever the lines of communication between Australia and the US. This could be achieved by occupying New Caledonia and Fiji, but to achieve that the Japanese would have to take or

---

[114] Advisory War Council minute 801, War Cabinet Agendum 118/1942, Supplement Nos 1 and 2, Future Policy and Strategy for Conduct of War in the Pacific, 28 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 813/2.
[115] Advisory War Council minute 801, 28 February 1942.
[116] War Cabinet Agendum 143/1942 - Probable immediate Japanese moves in proposed new ANZAC area, 9 March 1942. NAA: A2671, 43/1942.

neutralise Port Moresby. If the Japanese took New Caledonia, the Chiefs considered that the next Japanese action might be to attack the east coast of Australia. The appreciation then examined time scales and the means of defending Darwin, Port Moresby and the islands, making the point that US forces would have to be involved.

A UK Chiefs of Staff appreciation on the military situation in Far East was also considered by the Advisory War Council on 11 March.[117] The immediate Japanese objectives were to complete the conquest of the Philippines and NEI and to utilize the invasion of Burma to cut the supply line to China. An assault on Darwin and/or Ceylon was also possible. The occupation of Ceylon would be a serious threat to the Indian Ocean lines of communication. To the east, the occupation of New Caledonia and Fiji would threaten Australia and New Zealand and make the build-up of US forces in those countries most difficult. The appreciation then looked at measures in hand to deal with the threats. In regard to Australia the UK Chiefs said that "Darwin is of principal value while we retain any hold on the Malay Barrier but is not strategically essential for eventual offensive."[118] The south-east of Australia was essential, as the main base from which the offensive against Japan would be launched. The UK Chiefs also admitted there were no British forces available to assist, so the security of Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Fiji would be the responsibility of the United States.

The contrasting advice given to the Advisory War Council, about Darwin in particular, illustrated the problem of UK advice (Agendum 146/1942) that differed from the Australian Chiefs of Staff advice (Agendum 143/1942). On this occasion the outcome was poor – delay:

> "As the Australian Chiefs of Staff are to examine and report on the United Kingdom appreciation, further consideration of the question of defence measures at Darwin was deferred pending submission of the Chiefs of Staff report."[119]

The Australian Chiefs did dissent from aspects of the UK appreciation and made the point that the loss of the NEI did not make Darwin unimportant. Properly defended and

---

[117] War Cabinet Agendum 146/1942 - Appreciation of military situation in Far East, 10 March 1942. NAA: A2670, 146/1942 PART 1.
[118] War Cabinet Agendum 146/1942, para. 16.
[119] Advisory War Council Minute 834. Darwin Defence Measures, 11 March 1942, para. 3. NAA: A5954, 813/2.

with assets such as bombers and submarines, attacks could be launched that would contain the Japanese in the NEI. Darwin was 1,500 miles closer than any base in the south-east and could be the base for an offensive into the NEI.[120] It is worth noting that later in the war Darwin was used for air attacks into the NEI. Finally, the War Cabinet endorsed the comments by the Australian Chiefs and sent the comments to the UK Government for consideration. No evidence has been found of any British response.

The Advisory War Council had discussed the ongoing problems in aircraft production on 18 December 1941 and, after considerable debate, made a number of recommendations that were adopted by the War Cabinet on the same day. As a result the Aircraft Production Commission was abolished and a Director-General of Aircraft Production was appointed, with overall responsibility for the production of service aircraft of all types and with the necessary powers to exercise that authority. Essington Lewis was appointed Director-General; he retained Munitions. A Coordination Committee was established with representatives from the RAAF, Treasury, the aircraft industry, and, later, a union representative. A General Manager of that committee was appointed to assist the Director-General in his functions. A General Manager of Beaufort production was also appointed.[121]

The Advisory War Council also established a production policy: to ensure the production of 91 Beaufort by June 1942, continue production of the Wirraway and continue development of the prototype Wackett bomber. This policy was reviewed and expanded by the War Cabinet on 2 February 1942; the War Cabinet also approved the development of a fighter aircraft based on the Wirraway, later named the Boomerang.[122]

The Australian Government had moved to take greater control of the Australian economy at the War Cabinet meeting on 10 February 1942. The War Cabinet released a statement by the Prime Minister in which he said that the Government had decided on a policy of economic control that would place the full resources of the

---

[120] War Cabinet Agendum 146/1942, Comments by the Chiefs of Staff, para. 3.
[121] War Cabinet Minute 1584, Aircraft Production Policy and Administrative Machinery for the Direction of the Aircraft Industry, 18 December 1941. NAA: A5954, 813/2. Also see Ross, *Armed and Ready*, chapter 11.
[122] War Cabinet Minute 1845, Agendum 46/1942, Aircraft Production Policy, 2 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.

country in men and material at the disposal of the Government, thereby promoting the greatest unity of effort. The policy was about the control of industry, profits, prices and wages, labour and investment of capital.[123] It would have a beneficial impact on the development of mainland defence.

Lines of communication continued to concern the War Cabinet, particularly with the build-up of US forces in Australia. At its meeting on 12 March 1942, the War Cabinet approved the purchase of 428 trucks and semi-trailers to increase the capacity of the Army transport service from Mt Isa to Darwin.[124]

Two aspects of national will need to be considered in the period after the start of the war with Japan. First is the general mood of the people and second is the response of workers to the increased level of threat.

The general mood of the people is difficult to judge. Hasluck said that conclusive evidence on public opinion could not be obtained since there was no scientific testing of it at the time. "At most, there are opinions on the state of opinion."[125] Hasluck suggested that there was a common approach in published comment that Australians would not back away from any need to fight and beat the Japanese. However it seemed the Curtin Government expected the population to be frightened and acted accordingly, for instance by concealing the full details of the raids on Darwin, particularly the death toll. Comment in letters to newspapers was along the lines of wanting to be treated as grown people who understood the seriousness of the situation. On the other hand, Horner suggests that "an air of panic or desperation hung over some quarters of the Australian population", with some Government Ministers concerned about the lowering of public morale.[126] The issue is further complicated by the different experiences of the war in different parts of the country. People in the Northern Territory, northern Queensland and Western Australia felt they were exposed to the enemy and knew that defences were

---

[123] War Cabinet Minute 1876, Control of Industry, Profits, Prices and Wages, Labour and Investment of Capital, 10 February 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[124] War Cabinet Minute 1993, Agendum No 130/1942, Financial Provision for Australian-American Project, Motor Transport for Central Australian Lines of Communication, 12 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/1.
[125] Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p.129.
[126] David Horner, *Crisis of Command – Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978., p.50.

poor at this time. Western Australia was also exposed to an influx of refugees from the NEI and Singapore; 7,000-8,000 were estimated to have passed through Broome.[127] Southern Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria had stronger defences so there was a better prospect of some success in the case of invasion.[128] Accepting these differences, the national mood probably lay somewhere between confidence and fear.

Industrial disputes continued after the start of the Pacific war and impacted on all aspects of the Australian war, including mainland defence. Darwin labour was a particular problem. The problem of delays in unloading vessels at Darwin was considered by War Cabinet on the first day of the Pacific war; the delays were described as "seriously prejudicing" defence measures.[129] The Minister for Labour and National Service, Eddie Ward, went to Darwin to try to resolve the union issues, but the situation continued to be poor. The problems were again addressed by the Advisory War Council on 12 January 1942.[130] The SS *Holbrook* had arrived at Darwin with US artillery and had waited for three weeks before unloading was completed. While Commonwealth Government policy was not to use military resources until civilian labour had been utilised, Army felt that a serious position had arisen due to the delay in unloading ships, and suggested that, as a fortress area and subject to possible attack, Darwin should be brought under military control (noting that this happened after 19 February). The Advisory War Council felt that the problems could be resolved "if arrangements were made in conjunction with the unions." Ward visited Darwin again and additional wharf labour was sent to Darwin.[131]

The War Cabinet considered two industrial disputes on 21 January 1942. One was a continuing dispute in the NSW coalfields. The Central Council of the Miners' Federation had produced a programme in February 1942, under which miners pledged that they would produce all the coal needed for a maximum war effort and avoid stoppages. However, even the Federation leaders were unable to prevent all activity on the part of their members.[132] Further government action was needed. The War Cabinet

---

[127] Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p. 145.
[128] Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p.132.
[129] War Cabinet Minute 1557, Outbreak of Hostilities with Japan, 8 December 1942. NAA: A2673, Volume 9.
[130] AWC Minute 669, Labor at Darwin, 12 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 813/2.
[131] Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p.139.
[132] Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942-1945*, p 252.

considered three disputes on 12 March 1942 and decided that, in all industrial disputes, awards and agreements must be observed and the work carried on. Consequently the National Security (Mobilisation of Services and Property) regulations would be enforced. If this failed the works involved would be declared Allied works and the persons concerned called up under the provisions of the *Defence Act* and organised into Civilian Labour Corps.[133] This had some effect but coal remained a simmering issue.

With the second dispute, Curtin reported the action he had taken to ensure the unloading of an allied supply vessel which had been held up in Sydney for some days. Curtin had instructed the CNS to requisition the vessel and use naval personnel to unload it. The direction was held for one day, whereupon the union decided to supply necessary labour. The War Cabinet approved that action.[134]

On 17 March, Curtin announced to the War Cabinet that General Douglas MacArthur had arrived in Australia from the Philippines and had assumed command of all US forces in the country. In his communication through General Brett, President Roosevelt had indicated that it would acceptable to him if the Australian Government were to nominate MacArthur as the Supreme Commander of all forces in the south-west Pacific. The War Cabinet agreed and the appointment was announced on 18 March.[135]

Mainland Defence

In terms of point defence, Darwin was severely damaged by the air attacks on 19 February, therefore the defence of Darwin must be judged as inadequate. Sydney had adequate defences though the forces involved were inexperienced, poorly equipped and not fully trained. The other capitals and vital locations were not well defended.

[133] War Cabinet Minute 1991, Industrial Stoppages, 12 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/1.
[134] War Cabinet Minute 1736, Industrial Position, 21 January 1942. NAA: A5954, 807/2.
[135] Hasluck, *The Government and the People1942-1945*, p. 110.

The vital area of Brisbane to Melbourne was adequately covered though the forces involved were inexperienced, poorly equipped and not fully trained. The north-east and north-west areas of the country were virtually defenceless.

Lines of communication in the south-east were adequate though still hampered by rail gauge differences. Sea lines of communication to the north were vulnerable and the routes through the Torres Strait to Darwin had been closed at the start of the Pacific war. The central Australia lines of communication remained very poor and subject to the vagaries of climate; the road west from Mt Isa did not really exist. The decision to purchase trucks for the overland supply of Darwin did help the situation.

The COIC was the primary Australian intelligence source, but the government continued to seek advice from the UK; the differences that often existed between the sources caused confusion and delay in decision making. Mainland defence surveillance assets were few, the VDC contributed to the mainland coastwatch system and RAN vessels patrolled some areas, but a lack of aircraft meant aerial surveillance was scant.

Aircraft production had been brought under a single controlling agency. Munitions production was increasing and shipbuilding was developing. However Australia remained unable to provide all its needs and continued to be reliant on supply from the UK and US, with all the problems of delay and inadequacy of certain items, particularly aircraft.

The national will of the general population is hard to judge and was variable depending on location, but it would appear that Australians overall were aware of the seriousness of the situation in this time. However, industrial disputes continued with particular problems in the coal industry and on the waterfront. The disputes had an impact on all military developments, including mainland defence.

Mainland Defence: Fit For Purpose

The purpose of mainland defence throughout this period was to maintain the integrity of the mainland, noting that the Chiefs of Staff had determined that the objectives for an

attack on Australia would include the capture of the vital area, capture of key points to cut the lines of communication to the vital area, or the capture of a forward base that could provide a base for future offensive operations (Darwin). Darwin was not captured but was severely damaged in an attack that had not been foreseen; at Darwin the integrity of the mainland had not been maintained. As well, the GOC Home Forces had concluded that no AMF division could be put into the field as a good fighting force. The RAAF was inadequate and some RAN units had yet to return to the Australia Station.

Overall, mainland defence must be judged as not fit for purpose during the One Hundred Days.

With the arrival of MacArthur a new phase in the Pacific war had begun. The Advisory War Council discussed the defence of Australia on 18 March 1942.[136] The Council affirmed that Darwin and Port Moresby should be defended to the fullest possible extent; affirmed the movement of troops from Victoria to southern Queensland; decided that the defence of Fremantle should be strengthened with its development as a naval base; affirmed that continual (but unspecified) pressure should be exerted to build up naval and air forces to the extent determined by the Chiefs of Staff; and decided that Navy should provide sea communications with Darwin to ensure the maintenance of adequate supplies.

These decisions reflected the desire by the Australian Government to increase the Australian commitment to war. How this was achieved for mainland defence will be analysed in the succeeding chapters.

[136] Advisory War Council Minute 842, Reports by Chiefs of Staff on Operations, 18 March 1942, paras. 11-12. NAA: A5954, 813/2.

6

MACARTHUR

17 March 1942 to 17 June 1942

Between March and June 1942, Australia moved to a closer partnership with the United States and continued to increase the Australian commitment to war. Australian commitments were considerable: Australian food was still being sent to Britain and munitions to the Eastern Supply Council; as US forces built up in Australia food and services had to be provided for those forces; and men and women had to be found for the armed services, war material production and agriculture. With RAN units operating under RN or MacArthur's control, the commitment to the EATS and with two Australian divisions returning from the Middle East, one remaining there and one lost in Malaya and the Malay Barrier, Australia was stretched.

In this period mainland defence improved overall, though there were still problems that needed to be addressed. Point defence gained with the provision of more weapons in the fixed defences and the development of radar for air defence and gun control. Area defence gained with the return of the 7th Division, a brigade of the 6th Division and the arrival of the US 32nd and 41st Divisions. The development of air bases in the north also added to area defence. Lines of communication (LoC) remained an issue and the sea LoC to Darwin was at risk. The forerunners of the Allied Intelligence Bureau were established and there were further developments in the Australian service intelligence agencies. Curtin continued to call for a maximum effort and production began to achieve maximum output, so the paucity of essentials such as ammunition began to ease. With the fear of invasion easing national will improved, though industrial issues continued.

In these three months, the Japanese consolidated and slightly expanded the perimeter of their vast area of conquest. On 23 March 1942, the Japanese took the Andaman Islands in the Indian Ocean. On 9 April US forces on Bataan surrendered. On the same

day HMAS *Vampire* was sunk near Ceylon. The Japanese took Mandalay on 1 May, which was followed by the complete withdrawal of Allied forces from Burma by 20 May. Corregidor surrendered on 6 May. Then on 7 June the Japanese landed in the Aleutian Islands.

However the Japanese made one error. Their occupation of Lae and Salamaua on 8 March was not quickly followed by a move on Port Moresby. Instead the Japanese decided to send their carrier strike force into the Indian Ocean with the intent of destroying the British fleet based in Ceylon. The force of five carriers left the Celebes on 24 March and raided Colombo and Trincomalee on 5 and 9 April respectively. They did not catch the British fleet though they did destroy some fleet elements and sunk a number of merchantmen. The raid was over by mid-April and part of the force returned to Japan, while two carriers were tasked to support the Port Moresby invasion force. US official historian, Samuel Milner, described the delay caused by the Indian Ocean raid a "fatal mistake."[1] The subsequent build-up of air and naval forces alerted the Allies and the Coral Sea battle (7-8 May) resulted in the invasion force returning to Rabaul.

The decisive action in this period was the defeat of the Japanese navy at Midway (4-7 June), with the loss of four aircraft carriers. The Coral Sea and Midway actions secured the defence of Australia.

The European war continued as well. The German offensive in the Western Desert began on 26 May 1942, advancing as far as El Alamein by 30 June. The first 1,000 bomber raid on Germany took place on the night of 30 May; the tide was turning in favour of the Allies in the air war. The RAN continued to serve in the Mediterranean; the Australian destroyer, HMAS *Nestor*, was sunk while on convoy duty on 16 June.[2]

MacArthur arrived in Australia on 17 March and was met in Melbourne by Curtin on 21 March. Just five days later, and before his formal appointment as Supreme Commander, MacArthur held discussions with the Advisory War Council. The

---

[1] Samuel Milner, *Victory in Papua*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1957, pp. 33-39.
[2] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 92, 100. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 93-96.

brief was understandably light in places but in others he showed aspects of his thoughts. MacArthur felt that the Japanese Navy and Army had worked as one machine and he was impressed by their coordination. The Japanese were formidable fighters; the majority of common soldiers "were only one degree removed from savages,"[3] but they were very effective as an organised fighting machine. However the Japanese had weaknesses and could be beaten. Considering their strategy, MacArthur felt that the Japanese were engaged on a very audacious strategic concept, but they had committed all they had and were over-extended. The Japanese were gambling on gaining quick and decisive results while the democracies were still unprepared.[4]

Regarding his own strategy MacArthur said that sufficient data was not available to make an appreciation, however once data was obtained he would give the Government a general strategic concept. The first step was to make Australia secure – a significant statement for mainland defence. Once that was achieved, Australia should be organised as a base for a counter-stroke toward the Philippines; to the US Australia was a base only.[5]

MacArthur doubted that Japan would invade Australia, as the spoils were not sufficient to warrant the risk. From a strategic point of view invasion would be a blunder but Japan might look to conquer Australia to demonstrate their superiority over the white races.[6] His opinion was that the major threat was from raids. He also thought the Japanese would attempt to secure air bases in Australia. Anti-aircraft defences were very weak and the provision of anti-aircraft defences for the main cities and air stations was essential.

With regard to the Australian Government, MacArthur proposed that he should deal only with the Prime Minister; they would not confer over details but would consider proposals such as general strategic concepts, the framework of supply and the like.

---

[3] Advisory War Council Minute 869, Discussions with General MacArthur, 26 March 1942, para. (c). NAA: A5954, 813/2.
[4] Advisory War Council Minute 869, Discussions with General MacArthur, 26 March 1942.
[5] Advisory War Council Minute 869, Discussions with General MacArthur, 26 March 1942.
[6] J. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Faber & Faber, 1986 examines the racial issues involved in the Pacific War. Douglas Ford, *The Pacific War*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2012, pp. 118-133, examines both racial and psychological issues. For an Australian perspective see Mark Johnston, *Fighting the Enemy: Australian Soldiers and their Adversaries in World War II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

MacArthur had not yet received his directive, but a number of his points anticipated the directive. One that did not was his proposal to deal with the Prime Minister only; this reflected his determination to control the strategic direction of the theatre without input from the Australian Government. The conduit between MacArthur and Curtin was the Prime Minister's War Conference, which first met on 8 April 1942; it comprised Curtin and MacArthur with Shedden as secretary and other officers co-opted as required.[7]

The AIF started to return to Australia in March. Two brigades of the 7th Division landed on 9 March and the rest of the division returned on 27 March. Headquarters 6th Division and one brigade returned on 28 March.[8] Blamey returned on 26 March and was appointed Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces (now comprising the 2nd AIF, PMF and the Militia). The return of a division and a brigade, experienced and with most of their equipment, was a huge boost to the field army in Australia. Both point and area defence benefited. The 7th Division was earmarked for field operations in Australia and New Guinea, while HQ 6th Division and the brigade were sent to Darwin. However the situation would have been even better had all of the 6th Division returned; again a political compromise impacted on mainland defence.

The situation in Darwin was regarded as critical in March 1942.[9] The raids on 19 February had suggested that Japanese landings may follow and the loss of Darwin would be a severe blow to allied efforts to mount an offensive into the NEI. On 9 March the War Cabinet had decided that the area north of Alice Springs was to be placed under military control.[10] Then on 24 March Major-General Herring, GOC 6th Division, who had returned from the Middle East only a few days earlier, was appointed to command the forces in the Darwin area. The War Cabinet initially gave Herring operational control over all Darwin forces in the event of a Japanese landing or imminent landing; this was later expanded to permanent operational control of all US and Australian forces, approved by MacArthur on 21 April.[11]

---

[7] Advisory War Council Minute 869, Discussions with General MacArthur, 26 March 1942.
[8] Two brigades of the 6th Division had been left in Ceylon to boost local defence; they remained there until August 1942.
[9] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 71-77.
[10] War Cabinet Minute 1961, Air Raids on Darwin – Interim Report by Mr Justice Lowe (War Cabinet Agendum 116/1942, Supplement No 1), 9 March 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/1.
[11] Unified Command of Defence Forces at Darwin. NAA: A5954, 581/20.

Herring faced a problem with elements of the army in 7MD. Some units who fought on 19 February had acquitted themselves well and there were some other units with good resolve and training. But some troops in the Darwin area had become discontented. Dudley McCarthy described this as

> "a result of the general effects of tropical service; of a feeling among some officers and men that Darwin was being used as an Australian military Siberia; of a policy of placing two different classes of soldiers – AIF and militia – side by side for a common task, in trying and monotonous circumstances, under different conditions of service, and of retaining in what they regarded as a backwater soldiers who had enlisted for service overseas; and of certain deficiencies in leadership."

McCarthy felt that "Herring found to some extent a dejected force."[12]

McCarthy's views are supported by the case of the 1/54 Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company, commanded by Major Colin Harper. The unit had been sent piecemeal to Darwin, with the militia element arriving in June 1940. The cadre element (administration, quartermasters, transport and some technical staff) should have been sent first but were still undergoing recruit training; they arrived five months after the first group. There was no accommodation and the unit was employed as construction workers, while also establishing searchlight positions in the bush and on the coast around Darwin. In November 1940 the unit lost 105 men from a complement of 288, posted south for a variety of reasons, and a draft of 144 replacements arrived. Harper was blunt: "This was a bad draft, containing a Civil Criminal element, and was largely made up of AIF rejects from various ITBs [Initial Training Battalions] in Eastern Command". The restructured unit remained employed on construction work and Harper was unable to develop a training program. In April 1941, Harper having been temporarily absent on other duties, serious disciplinary troubles occurred in the unit. Harper found that 14 men were on mutiny charges, there was general disaffection throughout the unit and no internal organisation whatever. He "cleared the air" by removing a "Communist" and two men with criminal records. Harper described the unit as being in three groups: first, the cadre, young, good discipline and fair technical training; second, the November draft, totally undisciplined, no military training and no knowledge of anti-aircraft work; and third a group of 80 men who arrived overland and

[12] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 73.

without notice, badly led and some under-age, but with fair discipline. By June 1941 Harper was able to start a training programme, basic for some members (50 per cent had never fired their rifle), and the unit gradually took shape, over a year after the first elements arrived.[13]

At the Military District level, the 6th Division staff replaced the headquarters staff almost completely and was augmented by more officers from the returning AIF, while a number of officers were replaced by AIF veterans. The wholesale replacement of officers was ruthless, indeed harsh in some cases, but the effect was a dramatic improvement in quality.[14]

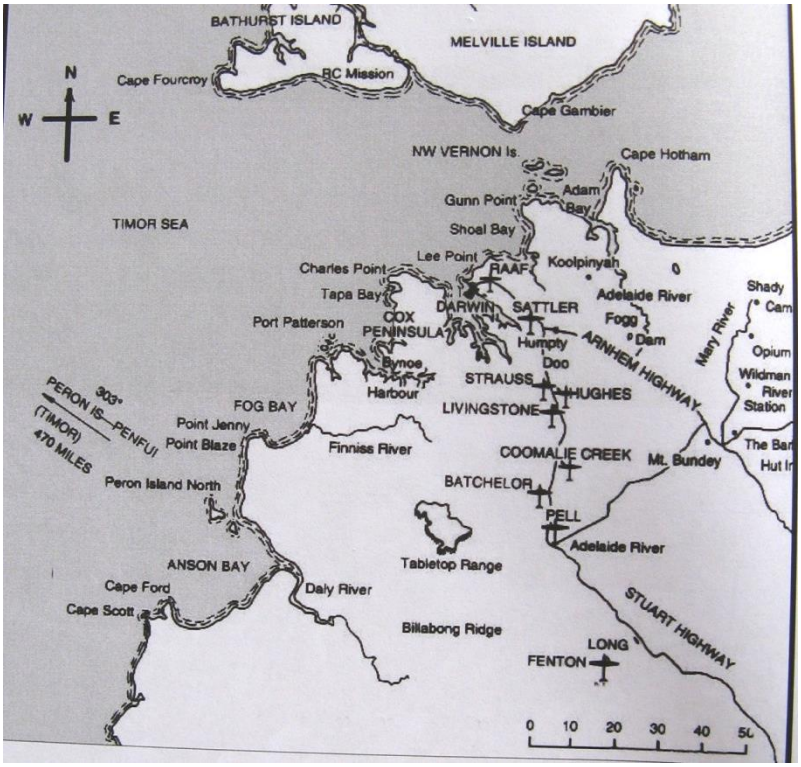
A period of intense training, re-organisation, planning, reconnaissance, and construction began. The new commanders drove the units hard, concentrating first on physical hardening, then on revised tactics and consolidation of elementary training as a basis for later intensive exercises in swift movement. Deployment of larger units followed and finally deployment as a force. By the beginning of May, the work was beginning to show results. Operationally the force was more efficient and far readier to meet invasion. The force was to be further bolstered as the 19th Brigade and 2/6th Cavalry prepared to move north, along with engineer and ordnance units. These moves had been delayed by the supply problems at Darwin.[15]

Lines of possible Japanese approach were explored and mapped and plans for the area were revised. The 1941 Darwin Defence Scheme had focussed on the coastal defence of the Darwin Fortress. Now the centre of gravity of the force shifted farther south and units were positioned to meet the most likely lines of approach from the Bynoe Bay/Harbour and the Anson Bay-Daly River areas (Map 6.1). Herring realised that he could not protect the whole of the coastline within striking distance east and west of Darwin, therefore he had to deploy his field force in a locality from which he could effectively deploy to any area where the enemy might land, and to the assistance of the force in the Darwin Fortress. To this end Herring disposed the 3rd and 23rd Brigades

---

[13] Handwritten letter to HQ 7MD from Major Colin Harper, OC 1/54 AASL. No evidence has been found of a response from 7MD. AWM: AWM54, 625/7/4.
[14] Herring's initial steps are from McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 74-75.
[15] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 74-75.

along the main road south of Darwin; these would be joined by the 19th Brigade when it arrived.



Map 6.1: Darwin Area 1942.[16]

Throughout March further steps were taken to build up Darwin strength. A stronger concentration of anti-aircraft artillery was planned, including batteries of the 2/1st Anti-Aircraft Regiment back from the Middle East, and the American 102nd Coast Artillery Battalion armed with heavy machine-guns. By 19 March a US Kittyhawk fighter squadron was on its way and two more squadrons were scheduled to move north. By 28 March the total strength in the area was: Australian Navy 1,002; Australian Army 14,082 ; RAAF 857; United States forces 3,200; and it was planned to increase the Australian Army figures by 10,000 and those of the United States Forces by 3,000.[17]

Darwin's supply problem was acute. Supply by sea was hazardous and regular supply by air was not yet practicable, while there were numerous problems with overland supply. Despite this the army had to use both the overland and sea routes. Road capacity

[16] Rex Ruwoldt, *Darwin's Battle for Australia*, Darwin Defenders 1942-45 Inc, Clifton, 2005, p.100.
[17] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 73.

had been 150 tons a day which provided only the daily requirement of rations, petrol, aviation fuel and road material. After the first raids an additional 385 lorries and 40 trailers were made available in order to increase the road-carrying capacity to 250 tons a day. To support this load the arterial roads from the south and from Mount Isa were improved and a number of short parallel roads were developed. On 19 March a sum of £1.5 million was allotted to increase the capacity of the Central and North Australian railways. For the sea LoC, a service was started on 9 March using small vessels, each of a carrying capacity of 400-500 tons, to carry cargo from Cairns to Darwin. Nine vessels were planned for this route. Airfield construction proceeded day and night and air services were augmented as far as possible.[18]

Air raids continued, with 17 raids between 4 March and 16 June, however they caused few casualties and generally only minor damage. A list of air attacks on Australia is at Attachment One. The RAAF station was attacked a number of times and the first night raid occurred 31 March. On 2 April the town was damaged and 60,000 gallons of aviation fuel were lost from a holed storage tank. Further raids occurred in early and late April, followed by a quiet period until mid-June with intrusions by Japanese reconnaissance aircraft only.[19]

Meanwhile plans were being developed to improve the surveillance of the area between Wyndham and Burketown. Efforts had been made to coordinate the pedal wireless sets of north Australia into a reporting net-work. An anthropologist, Squadron Leader Donald Thomson had for some months been operating among the Yolngu people between Groote Eylandt and Milingimbi.[20] The 2/4th Independent Company, based in Katherine, was tasked to keep in contact with Thomson and to fulfil a guerrilla-reconnaissance role in the triangle Birdum-Groote Eylandt-Anson Bay.

---

[18] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 72.
[19] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 76.
[20] Thomson formed the Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit in 1942, comprising himself and 51 Yolngu men. The roles were reconnaissance and guerilla war using traditional weapons in the area between Groote Eylandt and Milingimbi. There is no record of what the unit actually achieved and its capability against any major Japanese incursion would have been minimal. See Donald Thomson, *Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit*, (text from the report of Squadron Leader Donald Thomson), Yirrkala Literature Production Unit, Yirrkala, 1992. Also see Noah Riseman, *Defending Whose Country? Indigenous Soldiers in the Pacific War*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2012.

Finally, the North Australia Observer Unit was established under Major William Stanner, also an anthropologist.[21]

The north of Western Australia was remote and vulnerable. There was no defence when Japanese aircraft attacked Broome on the morning of 3 March. There were numerous small craft in the harbour, along with fourteen flying-boats. Most of these aircraft had just arrived from the NEI carrying refugees who were still aboard them. There were also aircraft on the near-by aerodrome. All the flying-boats and six large aircraft ashore (including two Flying Fortresses and two Liberators) were destroyed. Women and children were among those killed and wounded; an estimated 100 people died.[22]

Wyndham was also attacked on 3 March with some damage to the town; Broome was raided again on the 20 March, as was Derby; on 23 March Wyndham was raided for the second time. The Chiefs of Staff then decided that Broome was important only as an RAAF refuelling station and that Wyndham could not be effectively linked into any defence plans; therefore they would concentrate their forces at Darwin and make it the centre for both the north and north-west of Australia. Broome and Wyndham were then left undefended except for small numbers of VDC at each place, a section of the coastwatch service at Wyndham, and small detachments of engineers stationed at each place to carry out demolitions in the event of invasion. If the Japanese decided to occupy the north of Western Australia there was nothing to prevent them.[23]

However a plan for a special VDC unit was proposed, involving white staff on the remote stations and the pedal radio service. The concept was raised by Army Headquarters in March 1942 and letters were sent from Darwin to the stations proposing the unit and asking for lists of staff. The letter stated that Army would supply arms, ammunition and equipment (unspecified). The roles of the unit were described as evacuation of women and children, "rendering unserviceable" airfields and landing grounds, delaying and harassing tactics, passing information to Darwin and destruction

[21] North Australia Observer Unit. NAA: MP729/6, 29/401/596.
[22] Mervyn W. Prime, *Broome's One Day War: The story of the Japanese Raid on Broome 3rd March 1942*, Broome Historical Society Inc, Broome, 2007
[23] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 76.

of supplies including water. No evidence has been found that the unit was actually formed, but it is an example of the lengths Army was prepared to go to.[24]

The External Affairs Minister, Herbert Evatt, visited the United States, Canada and Britain between March and June 1942; the mission concentrated on attempting to increase all forms of equipment and reinforcement for the forces in Australia. Evatt arrived in Washington on 19 March, held meetings with Roosevelt and other government officials, attended the opening meeting of the Pacific War Council, sent Curtin the directives for the Pacific and South-West Pacific Areas and held discussions on Australian involvement in the Reciprocal Lend-Lease scheme. He took every opportunity to seek recognition of Australia's needs and pressed the need for aircraft carriers in MacArthur's command. Evatt went on to London in early May and attempted to negotiate increased aid with Churchill. He was not successful; Churchill cultivated Evatt but promised nothing except an offer of three Spitfire squadrons at some future date. Evatt cabled Curtin that the UK Chiefs of Staff thought that an attempt at invasion of Australia was unlikely, and said that UK awareness of Australian needs was better than it had been but still fell short of what it should be.[25] In a later memorandum Evatt stated that the 'beat Hitler first' strategy was a surprise to him; it should not have been, the strategy had been openly aired as already seen.[26] In terms on mainland defence, Evatt's mission did not achieve a great deal. In fairness to Evatt, he was aware of the difficulty; in a discussion with Bruce, Evatt said that Roosevelt and Churchill "are rather regarding the running of the war as a private and personal matter between them…"[27] In reality, this exemplified the difficulty of a very small partner in a very large coalition.

An appreciation was completed on 4 April 1942 by the Australian Chiefs of Staff and General Brett, a copy was sent to Evatt in Washington. The appreciation examined resource needs and Australia as a base for operations against Japanese forces, but equally it had direct ramifications for mainland defence. The appreciation

---

[24] Raising of Special VDC Units NT and Wyndham Hinterland, March 1942. AWM: AWM54, 1008/2/16.
[25] Cable 4501, Dr HV Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, to Mr John Curtin, Prime Minister, 17 May 1942. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 764.
[26] Memorandum by Dr HV Evatt, Minister for External Affairs, 26 May 1942. *DAFP*, Vol. V, p. 782.
[27] Note by Mr SM Bruce, High Commissioner in the United Kingdom, of Conversation with Dr HV Evatt, Minster for External Affairs, 3 May 1942. *DAFP*, Volume V, p. 745.

considered that attacks in force against Australia and Australian lines of communication were likely at an early date. The appreciation reiterated that the Australian vital area was the east and south-east, between Brisbane and Melbourne. Port Moresby was identified as the key; the loss of Port Moresby would endanger both the vital area and the lines of communication between Australia and the United States. An early attack on Darwin was expected but holding Darwin was critical. It would enable attacks on Japanese forces in the NEI which could contain the enemy in that area, prevent reinforcement elsewhere and prepare the way for an eventual offensive. As well, there was a risk of sporadic raids on Fremantle by carrier-borne aircraft.[28]

The appreciation stated that there were insufficient forces available to defend the front line areas, much less take the offensive. The greatest requirement was for increased naval and air forces to defend the areas; the influence of MacArthur is clear, the appreciation was an ambit bid for resources. The minimum naval force required for operations to the north-east of Australia was the Anzac squadron reinforced by two task forces which should include two or three aircraft carriers, based in the area; a squadron of submarines was also necessary. The first air priority was for aircraft to equip the trained RAAF and US squadrons. Taking into account the aircraft based in Australia and en route, the required aircraft (including 25 per cent wastage) were:
70 B-17 Fortress heavy bombers, 106 B-26 Marauder medium bombers, 99 Hudson maritime patrol and medium bombers, 19 Catalina flying boats, 187 Vengeance dive bombers and 195 P-40 Kittyhawk fighters. The heavy bombers were the most urgent of the aircraft and "the importance of the immediate supply of these cannot be over-emphasised."[29]

With these forces, the appreciation said it would be possible to undertake initial offensive operations against enemy bases, particularly Rabaul. Also emphasised was the need for combining initial offensive operations with the build-up of forces required to undertake a major offensive, and in particular the need to build up an Allied naval force of sufficient strength to challenge the Japanese fleet. The appreciation urged that the provision of the proposed naval forces and aircraft were the minimum needed. Evatt

[28] Cable PM21, Curtin to Evatt, in Washington, 4 April 1942. NAA: A5954, 474/6
[29] Cable PM21, Curtin to Evatt, in Washington, 4 April 1942.

would have used the appreciation in his efforts to obtain resources; even a fraction of the resources would have had a positive impact on mainland defence.

A highly significant action for Australia and mainland defence occurred in early May – the Coral Sea battle. By early April the Japanese had completed their plan to cut the Pacific lines of communication by taking Port Moresby. The covering force, based on three aircraft carriers, left from Truk while the invasion force sailed from Rabaul on 4 May; the Allies were aware of the movements. The Allied force was based on two aircraft carriers, with supporting reconnaissance and bomber forces from the Australian mainland. The battle took place over 5-8 May; it has been covered in detail in other works.[30] Coral Sea was the first naval engagement where the fleets did not sight each other and all engagements were by aircraft; it was the first time a Japanese fleet was turned back from its objective.

In tactical terms there was no clear outcome though the Allied forces suffered heavier losses, but the strategic result was significant for mainland defence. Port Moresby was spared an attack which may have resulted in Japan taking the port. Further, after supporting the landing the Japanese plan included air attacks on Australian airfields between Townsville and Horn Island, so airfields vital to both point and area defence were not attacked.[31]

On 9 April 1942, Blamey completed a major re-organisation of the land forces in Australia. The reorganisation was significant for mainland defence; it clarified command arrangements, established a more efficient structure for the defence of Australia and the Operation Instructions that were issued clearly stated the purpose of the forces.[32]

Under the reorganisation Army Headquarters became General Headquarters (Australia), being re-designated Allied Land Forces Headquarters in late May. The Military Board was abolished. The forces were organised into the field army and lines of communication forces, the latter replacing the Military Districts (Map 6.2). The First

---

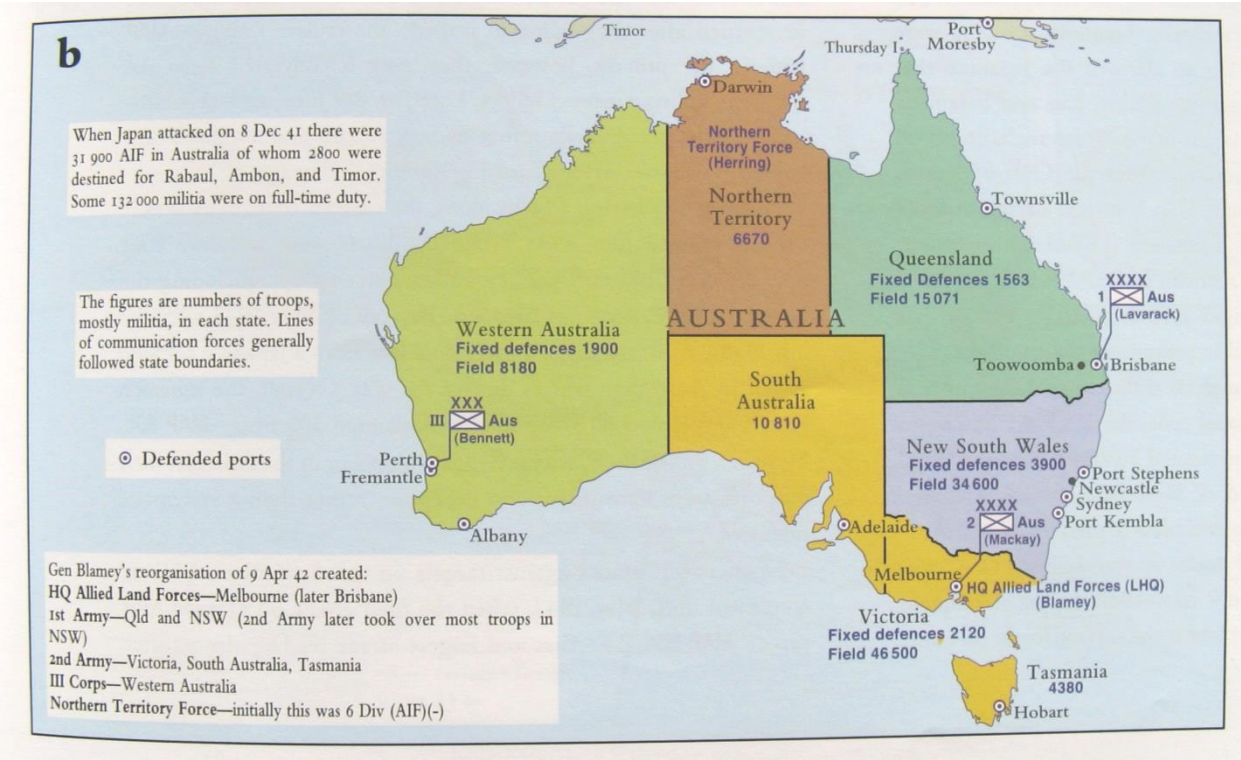
[30] A comprehensive account is in Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 39-57.
[31] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, p. 39.
[32] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year*, pp. 25-26.

Army was located in Queensland and New South Wales (absorbing Northern and Eastern Commands). The Second Army was located in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania (absorbing Southern Command), though the Second Army took over most of the forces in NSW on 1 August 1942. The field troops in Western Australia came under III Corps. Headquarters 6th Division and some units went to the Northern Territory and absorbed the 7th Military District, recalling that two brigades of the 6th Division were still in Ceylon. This force became the Northern Territory Force. Troops in Papua and New Guinea became the New Guinea Force. With the exception of those in New Guinea and the NT, garrison battalions, fixed coastal defences and anti-aircraft units were placed under the lines of communication areas. The reorganisation covered ten Australian divisions: seven infantry, two motor (ex-cavalry) and one armoured. As well there were the NT and New Guinea Forces (each roughly a division in size) and the incomplete US 41st Division. This may appear to be a strong force, but a number of the Australian divisions were under-strength, under-trained and under-equipped.[33]

The First Army included the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 7th infantry divisions and the 1st Motor Division. The Army was divided into I Corps and II Corps. The second Army included the 2nd Motor Division, the US 41st Division and 12 Brigade Group; the US 32nd Division was to join the Second Army on arrival in May. In WA, III Corps comprised the 4th Division and a number of unallocated units. Blamey retained the Armoured Division and 19 Brigade (6th Division) but soon the latter went to the NT and Blamey decided to add the Armoured Division and an infantry division to III Corps.[34]

The reorganisation saw the 7th Division and a number of militia divisions positioned where they could best deal with a threat from the north-east. Darwin was reinforced with an experienced AIF unit and the west was boosted by an infantry division. Units requiring further training, including the two US infantry divisions were retained in the south.

[33] LHQ Operation Instruction No25, 14 July 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/121.
[34] LHQ Operation Instruction No25, 14 July 1942.



Map 6.2: Australian Military Force boundaries, 9 April 1942.[35]

Blamey concurrently issued a number of Operation Instructions (OpInst) that clearly defined the purpose of the forces. These are examined in the context of mainland defence.

The First Army was the front line of mainland defence and its tasks were set out in OpInst 1 (10 April 1942). The OpInst reiterated that the area Newcastle-Melbourne remained the vital area, however the probability of a direct attack on a major scale was not high. The most probable course would be for Japan to attempt to take Port Moresby, followed by a landing on the north-east coast and progressive moves south covered by land based aircraft. Apart from its intrinsic importance as a port and base, Brisbane was important to the defence of the vital area, since occupation of Brisbane would put Newcastle and Sydney within range of Japanese aircraft. The instruction also regarded Townsville as important; it was a base and port, it was on the alternate LoC to Darwin and it guarded the southern entrance to the Barrier Reef sea lanes. It was therefore 'most desirable' to hold Townsville. However the Instruction recognised that limited resources meant that the whole line Townsville-Brisbane could not be held, though it

[35] Coates, *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, p. 229.

was intended to hold progressively north from Brisbane as resources became available. The First Army tasks were then defined: defence of Thursday Island with the existing garrison; defence of Townsville by a garrison which was to be built up to one division as soon as possible; and defence of the east coast from Brisbane to the First Army southern border (the NSW-Victoria border).[36] The air distances involved give an indication for the enormity of the area to be defended. Thursday Island is 586 nautical miles (nm) north from Townsville, Townsville to Brisbane is 599nm, while Brisbane to the First Army southern border is 622nm. First Army was responsible for the defence of a total of 1,807nm of coast.[37]

OpInst 3 (17 April) gave direction to the Second Army. A direct attack in strength on the south-east and south coasts (including Tasmania) was considered unlikely, though a sea-borne raid by land forces on Melbourne, Hobart or Launceston was possible. The Second Army tasks were to organise local defence of the three areas; to supervise the training of all army units and any US units allocated to the Second Army; and to train army headquarters and ancillary units that may be used for operations. Second Army thus had responsibility for defending the rear and a major training role.[38]

The directives for NT Force were set out by OpInst No4 (20 April) and OpInst No7 (28 April). The instruction stated that Darwin was the most vulnerable area in Australia, however it was essential to hold it as a base for future operations and to prevent Japan gaining complete control of the sea area north of Australia. An attack on Darwin itself was not considered likely but attempts could be made on one or both flanks. The instruction accepted that the force available at Darwin was not capable of preventing a landing on the coast east or west of Darwin. The task for NT Force was to prevent the seizure and occupation of Darwin. To achieve this the available forces were to be positioned to prevent an invasion, but not in a place that could result in them being immobilised in Darwin. Finally, should the force be unable to prevent the Japanese taking Darwin, all stores, equipment and items useful to the enemy were to be

---

[36] GHQ Operation Instruction No1, 10 April 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/51.

[37] Distances are Great Circle, calculated using the latitude and longitude of the locations and the standard navigation formula: $D = 60 \cos^{-1} [\sin N_1 \sin N_2 + \cos N_1 \cos N_2 \cos(E_2 - E_1)]$ where N_1 and E_1 are the departure latitude and longitude and N_2 and E_2 are the destination latitude and longitude (N and E are positive).

[38] GHQ Operation Instruction No3, 17 April 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/51.

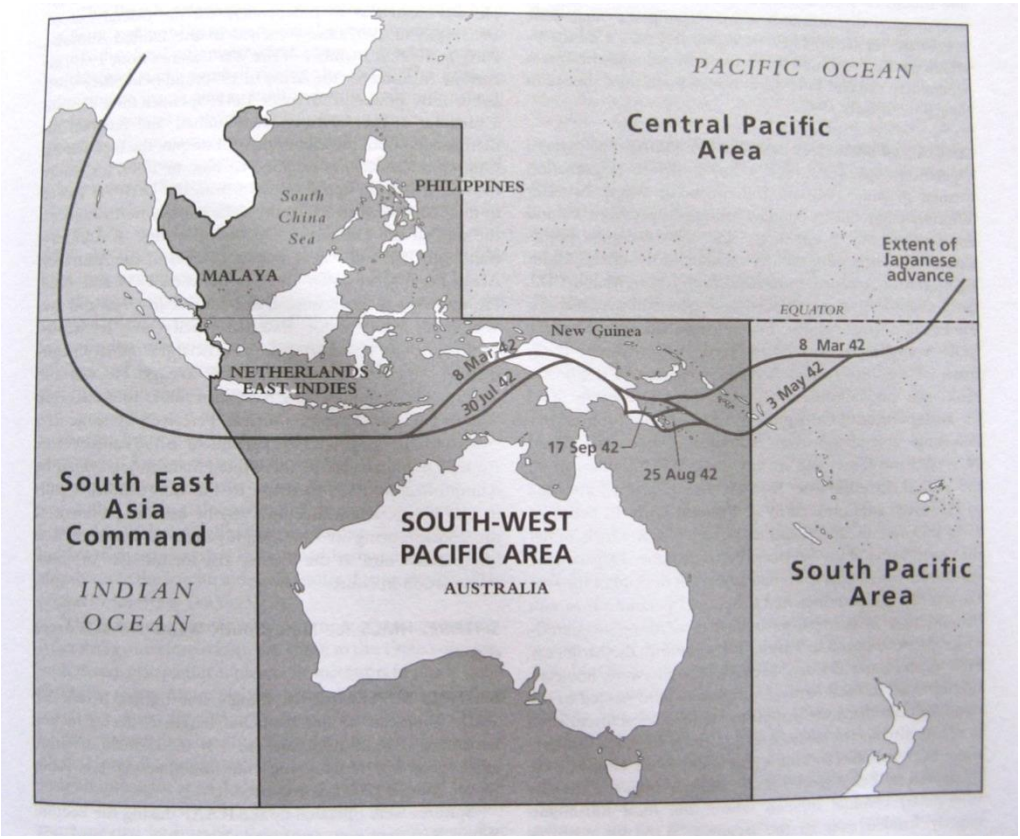
destroyed. The GOC was given partial command of all forces, later expanded to full command. Initially, NT Force was responsible for an intelligence organisation that would report any enemy landing between Normanton and Wyndham and track its subsequent movements, a task that remained until September 1943.[39] Some aspects of the directives would have been difficult to achieve, perhaps inevitable when a small force is given a wide range of tasks over a large area. For instance: a landing cannot be prevented but an invasion must be defeated and the force must not be bottled up. Also the concept of gathering such intelligence in the defined area was almost impossible, even using air reconnaissance. The air distance Normanton-Darwin-Wyndham is 917nm.

The defence of Western Australia was covered by OpInst No10 (2 May 1942). The instruction defined the Fremantle-Albany area as the focus for defence and considered that any attack on this area would be by progressive occupation of airfields from the north towards Fremantle. The III Corps task was to prevent any attempted landing or invasion that threatened the Fremantle-Perth area. III Corps was to maintain an intelligence organisation that covered the coast north to Wyndham. The instruction accepted that force limitation meant that a strong attack in the northern part of WA could not be prevented. The instruction then went on to direct that III Corps arrange, as far as possible, for the local defence of airfields in north-west Australia against minor attack; however no elements of the field force were to be used for this purpose. Finally, in the event of enemy action in north-west Australia proving too strong for local forces then airfields were to be demolished and all stores, equipment and items useful to the enemy were to be destroyed.[40] Again, aspects of the instruction would have been difficult to achieve: defend airfields but do not use any of the field force; and the intelligence task was close to impossible; even with air reconnaissance and coastwatch. The air distance Perth-Broome-Wyndham is 1,287nm.

The South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) was formally established on 18 April 1942, as part of a global system of areas (Map 6.3). MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander under the Directive issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. His three primary

[39] GHQ Operation Instruction No4, 20 April 1942. Amendment 1 to OpInst 4, 8 May 1942. GHQ Operation Instruction No7, 28 April 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/51.
[40] GHQ Operation Instruction No10, 2 May 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/51.

roles were to hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan; to check the enemy advance toward Australia and its essential lines of communication; and to prepare to take the offensive. Australia's position as a base was clearly stated; MacArthur was not tasked with the defence of Australia as a whole. The directive was also clear that MacArthur's staff was to "include officers assigned by the respective governments concerned" (US, Australia and NEI).[41]



Map 6.3: The South-West Pacific Area and the Extent of the Japanese Advance.[42]

General Headquarters SWPA was established in Melbourne, co-located with the Australian Department of Defence. MacArthur announced his senior staff on 19 April; despite the directive, all were American. Dudley McCarthy argued that it would be reasonable to expect that some Australian staff would be involved, since the majority of MacArthur's force was Australian. McCarthy also described the difference in staff experience. Blamey was more experienced than MacArthur in war and staff work; while of the 17 Australian army, corps, divisional and Force commanders, 11 had Middle East

[41] Cable S22, Evatt to Curtin, 3 April 1942. NAA: A5954, 47/6.
[42] Dennis et al, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 507.

experience and one Malaya experience.[43] Blamey was appointed Commander-in-Chief Land Forces, but his headquarters remained with the Australian Army HQ, separate from General Headquarters (GHQ) SWPA. In Washington, General Marshall pressed MacArthur on the staffing issue but MacArthur was disingenuous, saying that the Australians did not have enough staff officers to meet their expanding needs. "There is no prospect … of obtaining qualified senior staff officers from the Australians."[44]

MacArthur both disobeyed his directive and was disrespectful to his host country. In time it became clear that MacArthur had no intention of utilising the Australian forces properly or allowing any credit to come to the Australian forces under his command. The deliberate spurning of the experience and ability available to him must redound badly on his leadership and military ability; MacArthur's staff work would surely have been better with a number of the experienced Australians in his Headquarters.

However, MacArthur's decision had significant implications for mainland defence. By not using Australian staff, MacArthur left the Australian structures for all services intact. Blamey had his own headquarters and was in command of all land forces, including the US forces. He was therefore in a better position to conduct the land elements of mainland defence than if he had been in MacArthur's headquarters with his staff split between the two headquarters. The Australian Chiefs of Staff were able to conduct their business in isolation from MacArthur's headquarters and with the Australian Chiefs of Staff and Defence Committee arrangements still in place, the ability to plan and provide advice to the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council also remained. While not ideal for the prosecution of the war against Japan, this was certainly to the advantage of mainland defence.

The Prime Minister's War Conference met on 11 May and discussed the strategic policy for the South-West Pacific Area. MacArthur held the view that the Coral Sea action had stopped the Japanese move south and that the next move should be to provide the SWPA with sufficient air, land and sea forces to make it secure and then enable an offensive to be mounted. MacArthur said he had cabled Roosevelt and Marshall to that effect and detailed the forces required for the defence of Australia.

---

[43] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area First Year*, p. 28.
[44] Milner, *Victory in Papua*, p. 23.

Curtin requested an appreciation on the matter, which MacArthur provided on 12 May. The appreciation dismissed a Japanese move against India as unlikely and proposed that a further move south was more likely. The appreciation reiterated the need to reinforce the SWPA to enable a second front "for which the Russians are clamouring" to be opened in the Pacific.[45] It claimed a second front could be achieved more quickly and easily in the SWPA than anywhere else. MacArthur wanted a doubling in air forces, one corps of troops and two aircraft carriers.[46] This was passed to Evatt in London. It was another ambit bid by MacArthur, supported by the Curtin, and it did not lead to any immediate response. But again, a fraction of the resources would have been invaluable for mainland defence.

What was the state of the military forces available for mainland defence towards mid-1942? The core was the returned AIF units, well trained and experienced. They were supported by the Militia, which a number of reports reveal was of variable quality.

In December 1941 the state of training had varied widely and unit strengths were low and fluctuating. Equipment states in late February 1942 had areas of deficiency, with some 18-pounder guns not yet replaced by 25-pounders, old machine guns not yet replaced by Bren guns and some shortages of technical gear and ammunition. However production was starting to achieve maximum levels so deficiencies would be made up.[47]

Prior to the reorganisation, Eastern Command raised a report on 18 March 1942 that detailed the preparedness of forces for war. The report addressed personnel in general and also looked at the units under command. The commanding officers and senior regimental officers had been culled of officers over the retiring age and replaced by the promotion of younger officers. A considerable number of those officers, up to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, had gone through training courses and gained experience in handling units and were described as "considerably improved". The NCOs had also considerably improved for the same reasons, while the standard of the rank and file was

---

[45] This was disingenuous if not mendacious; the only second front the Russians were 'clamouring for' was in Europe.
[46] Prime Minister's War Conference Minutes. NAA: A5954, 1/1. 'Strategical Policy in Southwest Pacific Area'. NAA: A5954, 569/1.
[47] McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 29-32.

described as "fair" due to longer service, additional weaponry and intensive training. The report considered that in view of the reorganisation of 1st Cavalry Division to a motorised division and the shortage of equipment and motor transport (MT), the division was not fit for a mobile role or counter attack role but was only fit for a static role in its concentration area. The Division was expected to meet the standards for the other roles by June provided MT was acquired rapidly. 1st Division (infantry) had completed three months training and was regarded as fit for a static role in its present concentration area but not fit for a mobile or counter attack role outside that area. The same remarks applied to the Newcastle Covering Force (NCF). For the 2nd Division, 8th Infantry Brigade had completed 5½ months continuous training and was regarded as fit for a mobile or counter attack role outside its concentration area, but the rest of the division had just 2½ months training and was only fit for a static role in its concentration area. 1st and 2nd Divisions and the NCF were described as "reasonably well equipped" with arms and MT, but there were still "many deficiencies". Command and other units were considerably improved due to additional training and equipment.[48]

The report stated that the role of the VDC was becoming clear and emphasised the need for a limited number of VDC units for operational defensive role at places such as Jervis Bay and Coffs Harbour. Equipment remained a problem with all units being equipped with single shot .310 rifles, apart from certain units in forward areas with .303 rifles. A limited scale of other arms, light machine guns and mortars had been issued to certain VDC units.[49]

Eastern Command was responsible for the defence of the vital area Newcastle-Sydney-Kembla. In terms of point and area defence the Command could not be considered fully fit for purpose in March 1942.

After the Blamey reorganisation, Major-General Stan Savige had command of 3rd Division in First Army. Savige raised an appreciation on 26 May 1942 to examine the situation. The Division was tasked with a number of roles which the appreciation grouped into two broad tasks: to cover Brisbane from the south (Tweed

[48] HQ Eastern Command. 'Report on Preparedness of forces for war', 18 March 1942. AWM: AWM54, 943/22/1.
[49] HQ Eastern Command. 'Report on Preparedness of forces for war', 18 March 1942.

Heads/Southport, about 60 miles) and to delay an enemy advance in the Northern Rivers area (the road and rail link from Grafton north to the Queensland border, about 90 miles). Savige's force comprised 3rd Division, 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, VDC units and LoC troops. He anticipated facing an enemy of two divisions in the Northern Rivers and one division south of Brisbane.[50]

Savige painted a succinct picture of the quality of 3rd Division. He reported that 25 per cent of his troops had served for a "considerable time", 50 per cent had 3-4 months training and 25 per cent were raw recruits. His officers from battalion command and up were competent, those over-age or not competent had been "eliminated". Young officers were "enthusiastic and reasonably competent" though lacking experience and polish. NCOs were "fair to good". Staff work was reported as reaching a reasonable degree of efficiency. With regard to particular arms, the gunners were keen, hard working and "academically reasonably good", but their efficiency was low due to an inadequate supply of practice ammunition. The engineers had the largest percentage of recruits, some had poor physique and their training and general suitability for operations was unsatisfactory. Signals, workshop and medical troops were reasonably well trained. The infantry were proficient with their small arms, good at night work and capable of carrying out operations in rough timbered country by day or night. Savige felt "They can fend for themselves." The troops, other than recruits, were hard and fit. In personnel terms, the force was reasonably efficient.[51]

However, Savige reported that his lack of equipment and armament constituted "a grave menace to successful ops." Artillery was equipped with 25-pounder guns and 2-pounder anti-tank guns, but lacked MT and technical equipment. Engineers and Signals also lacked MT and technical equipment. The infantry had only 40 per cent of MT establishment and were deficient in Bren carriers, light and medium machine guns and other vital equipment. The reconnaissance battalion was "short of every type of equipment."[52]

---

[50] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/99.
[51] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942.
[52] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942.

The role of the VDC was not clear and Savige did not have complete information about the VDC units in his command. However he did set the policy for use of the VDC. The small proportion of full time VDC would be employed on coastwatch duties. Part time VDC would occupy static defence roles, mostly in their home area, thereby releasing 3rd Division from that task. Some VDC would be available for local commands and demolition parties.[53]

Savige appreciated that while defences would have to be prepared, training could not be neglected. He felt that he could retain sufficient concentration to achieve appropriate training up to battalion level and develop defensive works by rotating companies in and out of training. He recognised that specialist training was imperative: range practice for gunners; rifle, grenade and mortar for infantry; and night operations for all troops.[54]

Savige's force was quite capable in terms of personnel, but its equipment problems and the distances it had to cover were such that it must be judged as partially fit for purpose. However, a comparison of 3rd Division in late May 1942 with the Eastern Command divisions in mid-March 1942 demonstrates that considerable improvements had taken place in the forces for mainland defence.

By this time US forces were arriving in Australia. The bulk of the US 41st Division had arrived in Australia on 6 April, the US 32nd Division, plus the remainder of the 41st, on 14 May. Both were allocated to Second Australian Army. Both Divisions were formations of the National Guard and their initial lack of effectiveness reflected the rapid build-up of the US Army.

To put this in context a digression is necessary. At the start of the war the US forces were in a parlous situation – isolationism and lack of funding had taken a toll on inter-war development. In June 1940 the authorised strength of the Regular Army had been expanded to 375,000. On 16 September 1940 the Selective Service Bill, conscripting citizens for one year's service, became law and National Guard units began active service; by November 278,000 men had been enlisted. The worsening international situation required the retention of these men and the Selective Service Extension Act

[53] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942.
[54] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942.

was passed in August 1941. At this time the US Army consisted of a partially equipped force of 28 infantry divisions, a newly created armoured force of 4 divisions, 2 cavalry divisions, US harbour defences and an air force of 209 incomplete squadrons: a total strength of approximately 1,600,000 men. On 31 December 1941, the entire strength of the United States Army was 1,657,000 men. By the end of April 1942 the total was about 2,500,000. In such a rapid mobilisation it is understandable that training and provision of equipment had not been completed.[55]

A further problem was that the United States lacked any long experience in the First War and therefore the reserve of experienced officers with practical knowledge produced by that experience. American participation in 1917 and 1918 had been brief, particularly for the National Guard divisions. The result was a lack of realism in training, impractical training methods and poor staff work. US formations tended to be over-supplied with unnecessary paraphernalia; this exacerbated the difference between life in camp and life in the field so that exposure to field and battle conditions was a severe shock.[56] This may seem a harsh judgement but Samuel Milner's descriptions in the official history of the initial experiences of the US 32nd Division in Papua support the above points.[57]

Their equipment was adequate – partly First War and partly modern types. They were equipped with field artillery on a lighter scale than the Australian divisions, the divisional reconnaissance troop was smaller than the Australian equivalent, and the American division lacked the pioneer and machine-gun battalion normally with an Australian division. The rearming of the American Army with new weapons was at that time far from complete; indeed the historian of the 41st Division recorded that in peacetime exercises in August 1941 the division was using wooden machine-guns and trucks labelled tanks.[58]

Lieutenant-General Robert Eichelberger arrived in late August 1942 as the American Corps commander. He was blunt about the state of training – "our troops in training

---

55 McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area First Year*, pp. 32-33.
56 McCarthy, pp.32-33.
57 Samuel Milner, *Victory in Papua*, pp. 132-135.
58 Quoted in McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area First Year*, p. 33.

were just being given more of the same thing they had had back home". Eichelberger initially gave the 32nd Division a "barely satisfactory" rating in combat efficiency.[59]

This may seem to paint a gloomy picture for mainland defence. However the fact remains that there were two US Divisions in Australia by mid-May 1942 and no matter how poorly trained and equipped, they would have fought if necessary.

Further, the deterrent effect of the US presence cannot be discounted. Examining Japanese intelligence in World War II, Ken Kotani says that the Japanese Army entered the war with little knowledge of the US forces. Indeed the South Area Army closed its intelligence section because it was not providing the necessary operational information. The situation was not rectified until after 1943.[60] The Japanese Navy was better informed, having used both human and signals intelligence to gather information about the US Pacific Fleet.[61] There was little intelligence cooperation between the services. In terms of assessing the enemy the Army relied on subjective assessment, with too much focus on intangible elements such as the "martial spirit" and poor morale in Indian and Malayan troops.[62] The Navy however attempted objective and numerical assessment of their opponents, with some success early in the war.[63] Overall, the Japanese would have known that the US divisions were in Australia but any impact on their planning cannot be estimated.

Turning to the RAAF, a major change occurred when Air Chief Marshal Burnett's term as CAS finished on 4 April 1942. Prior to that Burnett had proposed that the Air Board be abolished, the RAAF should merge with the US Army Air Force in the SWPA and Air Commodore Bostock should succeed him as CAS. None of this was acceptable to the Minister, Arthur Drakeford, who protested to Curtin that the Air Board should be retained, administrative control of the RAAF should remain with RAAF HQ, Air Commodore Jones should be appointed CAS and Bostock should be appointed Chief of Staff at Allied Air Forces HQ. The imbroglio that followed resulted in a fractured command, with Jones appointed CAS on 5 May and responsible for provision

---

59 McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area First Year*, p. 33.
60 Ken Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, Osprey Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2009, pp. 56-57.
61 Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, pp. 69-86.
62 Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, pp. 114-118.
63 Kotani, *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, pp. 118-119.

and maintenance of aircraft, personnel, training, supply and equipment, and works. Bostock went to Allied Air Forces HQ. Operational control of service squadrons was vested in the Commander Allied Air Forces, effectively giving Bostock operational command of the RAAF.[64] The system could have worked if Jones and Bostock cooperated but there was a deep personal rift between the two which neither made any effort to overcome. The fractured command diminished the effectiveness of the RAAF for the rest of the war; MacArthur made no effort to resolve the issue.[65] Obviously, the diminished effectiveness of the RAAF had a detrimental impact on mainland defence as well as overseas operations.

A case study in point defence will now be considered: the raid on Sydney Harbour by three Japanese midget submarines on the night of 31 May-1 June 1942. The raid has been extensively analysed.[66] It is examined here to determine the effectiveness of the point defence of Sydney at that time.

On the night of 29 May 1942, five Japanese submarines were positioned 30nm north-east of Sydney Heads. At 3:00am the next day one of the submarines launched a reconnaissance aircraft which circled Sydney Harbour. The aircraft was sighted but no action was taken. The aircraft reported that there were 'battleships and cruisers' moored in the harbour and the decision was made to attack the harbour with midget submarines. The next day the five submarines re-positioned about 6nm off Sydney Heads and at about 4:30pm released three midget submarines. The first submarine, *M14*, entered the harbour at about 8:00pm. It was detected but not identified until it became entangled in the boom net at the entrance of the southern harbour. It was not engaged but the two crew members detonated demolition charges destroying the *M14* and themselves. The second submarine, *M24*, entered the harbour at about 9:48pm and headed west towards the Harbour Bridge; it was sighted and a general alarm was issued. About 200 metres from Garden Island the *M24* was fired on by the heavy cruiser USS *Chicago*. The *M24*

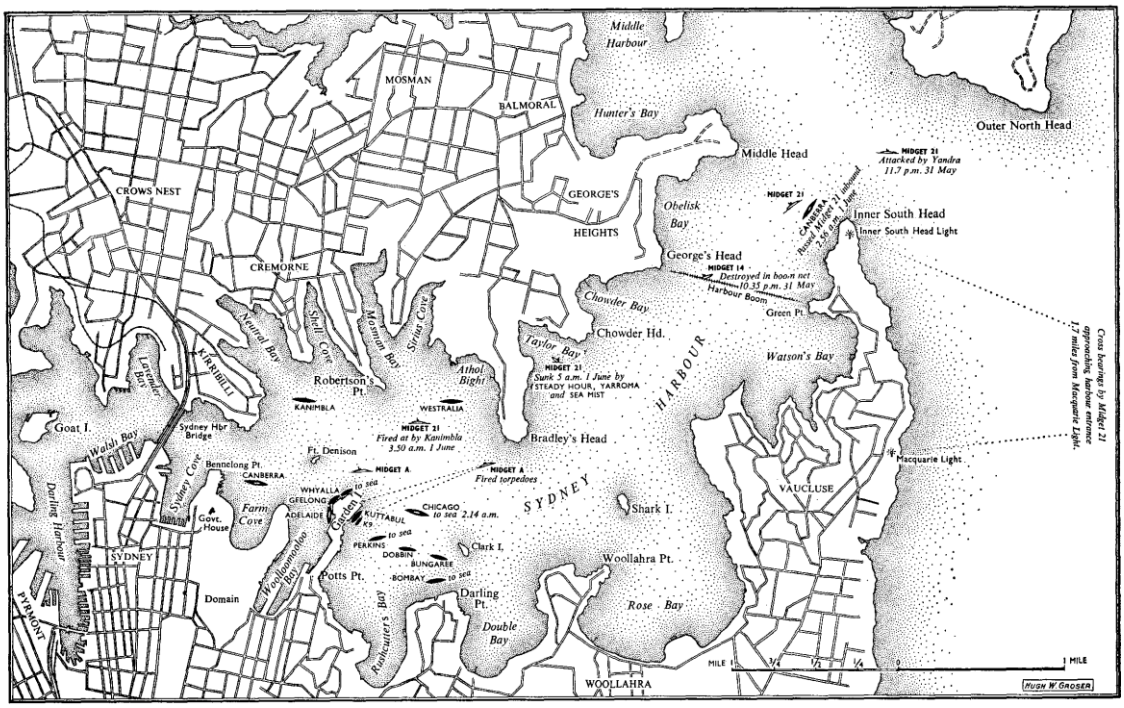
---

[64] Details are at Gillison, pp. 474-479.

[65] Alan Stephens, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, pp. 109-125. Also Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude: Ideas, Strategy and Doctrine in the Royal Australian Air Force, 1921-1991*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, pp. 62-68. Both sections are titled 'The RAAF Command Scandal'.

[66] Among others: G. Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 63-74. David Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 191-194. Peter Grose, *A Very Rude Awakening: the night the Japanese midget subs came to Sydney*, Allan & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007. David Jenkins, *Battle Surface! Japan's Submarine War Against Australia 1942-44*, Random House Australia, Milsons Point, 1992.

then fired its two torpedoes at the cruiser. One torpedo ran ashore on Garden Island but failed to explode. The other passed under the Dutch submarine *K9* and exploded when it struck the harbour bed beneath the depot ship HMAS *Kuttabul*, killing 21 sailors. The *M24* then left the harbour. The third submarine, *M21*, was sighted by HMAS *Yandra* at the entrance to the harbour and was depth-charged. The *M21* was damaged but some four hours later it entered the harbour and was subsequently attacked with depth charges and sunk in Taylor Bay (Map 6.4).



Map 6.4: Midget Submarine Raid on Sydney Harbour, 31 May – 1 June 1942.[67]

Sydney Harbour defences were three-fold. The fixed defences comprised two arrays of indicator loops,[68] six loops outside the heads and two inside, and a partially completed anti-submarine anti-torpedo boom net across the entrance to the southern harbour. The available harbour defence craft were the anti-submarine vessels *Yandra* (one 4-inch gun and 31 depth-charges) and *Bingera*. *Yandra* was patrolling within the indicator loop

67 Gill, Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945, p. 69.

68 An anti-submarine indicator loop was a submerged loop of cable laid on the sea bed, used to detect the passage of enemy submarines. They worked as induction loops – the submarine's magnetism induced a current in the cable as the submarine passed across it; even if the submarine was 'degaussed' (de-magnetised), sufficient magnetism remained for the system to work. Australian loops were at Sydney, Darwin, Fremantle, Broken Bay, Newcastle, Port Kembla, Moreton Bay, and Brisbane River. Richard Walding, 'Indicator Loops and Anti-submarine Harbour Defence in Australia in WWII', Journal of Australian Naval History, Vol 3, No 1, March 2006, pp.1-2 (technology) and pp. 29-30 (Sydney raid).

area while *Bingera* was at the Naval Anchorage. Minesweepers *Goonambee* and *Samuel Benbow* were in Watson's Bay. There were also six channel patrol boats (each armed with two .303 machine guns and four to six depth-charges): *Yarroma* and *Lolita* on duty near the boom gates, and *Steady Hour*, *Sea Mist*, *Marlean* and *Toomaree* at Farm Cove. There were also four unarmed naval auxiliary patrol vessels.[69]

The conditions at the time were normal; the harbour was open to traffic, ferries were running and ships arriving and departing. Sunset was just before 5:00pm and the weather overcast and blustery. There was a full moon but it was initially obscured by clouds.

Before attempting to analyse how the defences performed, it must be noted that the fixed and mobile defences destroyed one submarine each while it is probable that the fire from USS *Chicago* so damaged the *M24* that it did not survive.[70] All three submarines were therefore detected and sunk. However there were a number of mistakes made and equipment problems that detracted from this response.

In his report on the raid Rear-Admiral Muirhead-Gould, Naval Officer-in-Charge Sydney, made the following points. They are all valid and constitute deficiencies in the point defence of Sydney. Two of the outer loops were not working and no crossings of the outer loops were detected. Two crossings of the inner loops were not recognised and no action was taken. HMAS *Yarroma* did not immediately engage the *M14* caught in the boom net but requested permission to fire. Depth charges could not explode in shallow water. Communications channels were overloaded and in some areas non-existent, all communications were slow. The auxiliary vessels were not armed. Finally the boom net was incomplete, with 400 metre gaps at each end. Remedies to the problems were also proposed.[71]

Gill made the overall assessment that the human response was poor with inactivity and indecision during the early stages of the raid; over two hours elapsed between the initial

---

[69] G Hermon Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, p. 64.
[70] The wreck of the *M24* was found in 2006 about 2½nm off Sydney's northern beaches. The wreck was described as having "bullet holes" in the hull.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Attack_on_Sydney_Harbour>, accessed 7 April 2011.
[71] Midget submarine attack on Sydney Harbour. NAA: MP1049/5, 2026/21/79.

sighting of the *M14* in the net (8:15pm) and the raising of the first general alarm (10:27pm). Gill balanced that with the "good performance" put up by the defending craft once they got into action.[72] Finally, had the torpedo fired at the Chicago found its mark the aim of the raid would have succeeded, so it must be recognised that the defence was lucky, though that was not the case for the men killed on the *Kuttabul*.

Clearly, the purpose of the anti-submarine defences in Sydney was to prevent such a raid occurring. It must therefore be concluded that the point defence of Sydney at this time was only partially fit for purpose.

A further case study involves coastal shelling. In the early hours on 8 June 1942, Sydney and Newcastle were shelled by Japanese submarines. The small scale shelling was not a true bombardment, however it was a test of mainland defence, specifically the counter-bombardment capability at both ports.[73]

Shelling at Sydney started at 12:14am and lasted approximately two minutes. Ten shells were fired, most falling in the proximity of Rose Bay. Only three detonated, damage was slight and there were no serious casualties. Three Observer Posts saw the gun flashes and determined that the submarine's position was 16,000 yards south-east of Dover Heights. Searchlights were activated and the submarine ceased firing. The gun defences did not return fire. The COIC in Melbourne was informed of the shelling at 12:22am and advised the Area Command Headquarters (ACH) at 12:25am. The ACH took no action until 12:47am when they advised it was too dark for an air search and they were not "sending any ships out at present".[74] At 1:04am the ACH advised that a Catalina was departing to investigate.

The shelling of Newcastle commenced at 2:15am. The Fort Scratchley battery was on watch and estimated the submarine's position from the gun flashes, initially at a range of 4,000 yards. The Battery Commander then contacted the Fire Commander to report the battery was ready to engage; after a short delay the fire command was given at

---

[72] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 72-74.
[73] A detailed description of the shelling, with very little analysis of the response, is at Terry Jones & Steven Carruthers, *A Parting Shot: Shelling of Australia by Japanese Submarines 1942*, Casper Publications Pty Ltd, Narrabeen (Sydney), 2013.
[74] Collation Sheets – Air [*sic*] attacks on Sydney 8/6/1942. AWM: AWM54, 812/3/4.

2:20am. However Fort Scratchley did not immediately fire since the searchlights could not illuminate the target and smoke from a returning examination vessel obscured the target. Based on gun flashes, fire commenced at 2:26am and four rounds were fired. At this point the submarine ceased firing. At 2:31am one the guns suffered a breech fault and was out of action.

How effective was the response? At Sydney, the Observer Posts reacted quickly and determined the submarine's position, which gave the searchlights an aim point; this may well have shortened the bombardment. The gun defences did not have time to return fire, and would have had to fire blind to the estimated position if they had. Last, the ACH does not appear to have reacted with any urgency.

At Newcastle there appears to have been considerable confusion, which resulted in Fort Scratchley not returning fire until 11 minutes after the shelling started. This is supported by the Fortress duty officer, who made the log entry "Requests for information being made continually, unable to keep efficient log until 0250 [2:50am]", when extra staff arrived.[75] The Battery Commander could have acted independently; simple inexperience is probably why he did not. The guns were old ex-navy weapons, so the malfunction is not surprising.

The submarines were not detected by radar at either Sydney or Newcastle. However a report on the radars stated that English data indicated the maximum detection range for these radars of a partially-surfaced submarine would be around 4,000 yards from 250 feet above sea level for these radars.[76] Clearly the radars were not up to the task.

Were the counter-bombardment capabilities of Sydney and Newcastle fit for purpose? The response did stop the bombardments, but the points raised about the response indicate that the counter-bombardment capabilities were partially fit for purpose.

A third case study is the point defence of Whyalla. Whyalla was a BHP town, constructed to serve the iron ore workings inland at Iron Knob; it produced

[75] Operational Log Books, Newcastle Fortress, 8 June 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/18/15 Pt1.
[76] Operation Research - Report No 6 – 'Performance of shore disperse [*sic*] station at Sydney and Newcastle during the submarine attack on June 8th 1942'. AWM: AWM54, 810/8/5.

2,000,000 tons of ore annually. This made Whyalla a place of strategic importance, initially because its iron ore jetty and its power plant constituted a fragile link in the transport of ore from Whyalla to the steel mills in NSW, which directly linked Whyalla to the vital area, and later because of the shipbuilding facility and shell manufacturing facilities.[77]

Despite initial recommendations in 1940 for a comprehensive defence system, the only defence until late 1941 was provided by a small VDC group of about 60 men. The importance of Whyalla was re-examined in October 1941 and its vulnerability to attack by carrier-borne aircraft recognised. Consequently, it was decided that four 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns would be installed at Whyalla.[78] The 26th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery (AIF) was raised in January 1942 and by 23 March the guns and associated equipment had been installed and tested; however the gunners were not ready. The battery was commanded by Captain R.L. Moorfoot. Moorfoot had had the advantage of being able to hand-pick his 88 odd gunners and selected a core of experienced gunners and the best inexperienced men he could find, most with reasonable education; overall they were high quality men. Training was initiated and by the end of March 1942 two guns could be operationally manned. However the first practice shoot with live ammunition was not possible until May 1942 and the unit did not attain reasonable proficiency until mid-1942.

From 28 February the defence was boosted by the allocation of a guard ship. HMAS *Moresby* was positioned four nm east of the battery. Her role was to defend Whyalla against attack, but as a former survey vessel she was more an observation platform. Notwithstanding, *Moresby* added to the defence of Whyalla. She was replaced by HMAS *Bermagui* (Auxiliary Minesweeper) in July 1942, in turn replaced by HMAS *Wongala* (Examination Vessel), which remained on duty until 1944.[79]

---

[77] For the full history of the defence of Whyalla see Peter Stanley, 'The Soldiers on the Hill: the defence of Whyalla 1939-45', *Sabretache*, Part 1, Vol XXV Oct-Dec 1984 to Part 9, Vol XXIV, Jan-Mar 1988; and Peter Stanley, *Whyalla at War 1939-45*, The Corporation of the City of Whyalla, Whyalla, 2004.
[78] War Cabinet Agendum 344/1941, Defence of Port Pirie and Whyalla, 20 October 1941. NAA: A5954, 459/6.
[79] Stanley, 'The Soldiers on the Hill', Part 3, p. 33.

Though the guns were in place and the gunners proficient, Moorfoot was aware that four guns could not provide proper cover for Whyalla town, the industrial area and the jetty. He was also made responsible for coastal defence but did not have the correct ammunition for use against raider or submarine attack. He reported these issues to SA LoC Area however no further defence assets were immediately available.

It must be concluded that at this time the defence of Whyalla was partially fit for purpose.

In considering area defence the first Japanese submarine campaign is significant.[80] The Japanese submarine threat was taken seriously by the RAN from the start of the Pacific War. Initially the threat was regarded as being most significant on the routes to New Guinea and convoys, with maximum possible protection, were used from January 1942 on those routes. Coastal convoys were not introduced until a real threat emerged.

By early April 1942 two RAN destroyers, *Stuart* and *Voyager*, were available for escort duties and had been joined by eight USN destroyers. These enabled a better distribution of assets (Table 6.1).

[80] David Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 179-216 gives a comprehensive account.

Port	Craft
Fremantle	4 USN destroyers 4 AMS
Adelaide	1 AMS
Melbourne	1 AMS (refit)
Sydney	2 RAN destroyers 4 USN destroyers 1 Sloop (refit) 3 AMS (1 refit) 3 Auxiliary A/S (1 refit)
Brisbane	1 Sloop 2 AMS (1 refit) 1 Auxiliary A/S
Townsville & NE Area	1 US gunboat 2 AMS
Darwin	4 AMS
Total	34 craft (4 refit)

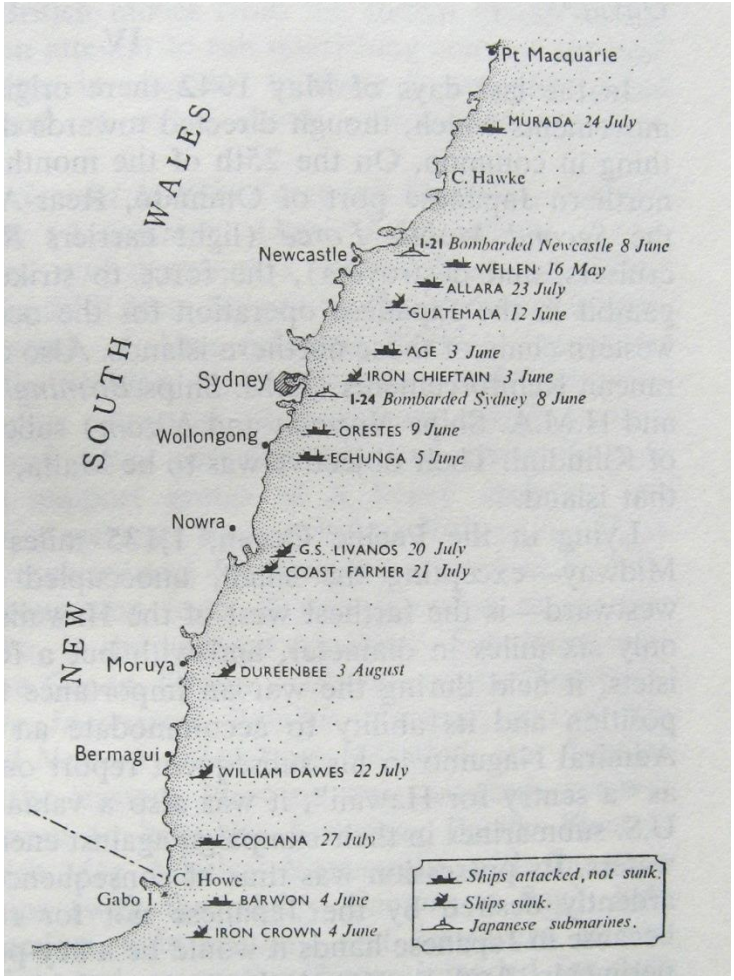
AMS: Australia Minesweeper, *Bathurst* class corvette
A/S: Anti-submarine

Table 6.1: Disposition of Anti-Submarine Craft, 8 April 1942.[81]

The arrival of US forces enabled RAAF aircraft to exercise against US submarines. One such exercise took place on 20 April 1942, off Sydney Heads. It was primarily a recognition exercise and it demonstrated both the difficulty of sighting a submarine and the inexperience of the aircraft crews.[82]

The first attack by Japanese submarine took place on 3 and 4 March, when two British merchantmen were shelled off Fremantle; both vessels escaped. [83] Then, after a number of RAAF sightings, probably erroneous, the first attack off the south-east coast came on 16 May when the *I-29* shelled the *Wellen*, a Russian merchant vessel, off Newcastle; the *Wellen* escaped. The *Iron Chieftain* was not so lucky, torpedoed 27nm east of Sydney with the loss of 12 crew.[84] Other attacks followed (Map 6.5).

[81] Derived from Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 190.
[82] GHQ Operations Instructions Nos 1-42 - The Defence of Australia (Apr 1942 - Mar 1943). AWM: AWM54, 505/6/3. Also Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 191.
[83] Japanese Campaign Against Australian Coastwise Shipping. AWM: AWM54, 622/5/9.
[84] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 195. Also 'Japanese Campaign Against Australia Coastwise Shipping, 1942-1945'. AWM: AWM54, 622/5/9.



Map 6.5. Japanese Submarines on the Australian Coast, 1942.[85]

On 4 June the Naval Board suspended all merchant vessel sailings from any port between Adelaide and Brisbane, pending the introduction of coastal convoys. As well trans-Tasman sailings, both east-bound and west-bound, were to be escorted within 200nm of the Australia coast. The first coastal convoy sailed on 8 June and an interlocking system of routes was then established. Coastal convoys ran on a regular basis so regular escorts were also required. In May only one escort was available for coastal convoys but on 3 June extra A/S vessels were allocated to Melbourne (one), Sydney (nine) and Brisbane (two), causing considerable strain on naval resources and escort crews.

[85] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, p. 79.

In assessing Australian anti-submarine capability, David Stevens argues that in 1942 there was a poor understanding of the threat on the part of many personnel, particularly merchant crews, RAAF aircrew and coastal defence personnel. Many erroneous sighting claims made the coordination of action extremely difficult.[86] RAN patrols had not positively detected any submarines in the coastal convoy zone, and no submarine had been successfully engaged by the RAN after the submarine had made an attack. The RAAF also had problems, despite many claims of sightings and a number of claims made and accepted that a submarine had been sunk; in fact no RAAF aircraft sank a submarine off the Australian coast. As well as inexperience there were a number of reasons for the poor results: the number of escorts was always limited, evasive routing was virtually impossible for coastal routes and the RAAF was chronically short of aircraft and lacked much of the needed equipment, particularly radar. However a major problem that could have been resolved was the lack of coordination between the RAAF and RAN, with separate operational headquarters exacerbating the problem.[87]

From the above it must be concluded that the response to the first Japanese submarine campaign was inadequate.

Throughout this period, lines of communication remained important. Sea LoC were hazardous in light of the submarine threat, but had to be persevered with. Coastal shipping and the convoy system has been addressed, as has the small ship resupply from Cairns to Darwin. A boost to shipping came from the *Koninklijke Paktevaart Maatschappi*, the KPM line, which had operated an inter-island service in the NEI before the war. After the fall of Java, 29 ships of between 500 and 6,000 tons reached Australia. The ships, with Dutch crews, were under charter to the British Ministry of Transport which allocated them to the US Army, not the US or Australian Navy.[88] They played a major role in the support of overseas forces in the SWPA. While they were not part of mainland defence sea LoC, their presence eased the general shipping problem in Australia.

---

[86] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 194-200.
[87] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 208-210. Also Headquarters 1 Australian Corps, Weekly Intelligence Summaries, June 1942. AWM: AWM54, 423/11/132.
[88] Milner, *Victory in Papua*, p. 26. Initial discussions about the release of the vessels are at NAA: A981, SHI 6 Part 1.

With regard to intelligence, on 25 May 1942 Blamey wrote to MacArthur suggesting the establishment of a controlling headquarters for the three intelligence organisations; the Inter-Allied Services Department (a Special Operations organisation), the coastwatch organisation and a branch of British Secret Intelligence Service. MacArthur agreed and the Allied Intelligence Bureau was established on 6 July.[89] This became the hub for intelligence activities in Australia and made a significant contribution to mainland defence.

An additional and important element of the slim barrier began to play a part during this time; that element was radar. The development of radar in Australia during the Second World War deserves a history in its own right; what follows is a broad background.[90]

The concepts behind RDF (radio direction finding), or radar (radio direction and ranging) as it became known, had been studied in Britain since the mid-1930s and Australia became involved in 1939. After consultation with Britain, the Radiophysics Laboratory (RPL) was formed in November 1939; it became a division of Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research. The RPL had the directive to design and construct equipment for Shore Defence (ShD), Gun Laying (GL) and Air to Surface Vessel (ASV) detection. Initially the air threat was not considered to be high, but as the threat from Japan increased the RPL also investigated equipment to deliver Air Warning (AW) against aircraft. As part of the program, specialist recruiting and training for the services was initiated and high level radio-physics education began at Sydney University. A radar school was established at RAAF Richmond with the first course starting in August 1941. At this stage there was no policy about which service would control the air warning system, with army (anti-aircraft guns) and air force (air defence) both involved. After deliberation by the War Cabinet the RAAF took the lead in November 1941.[91]

---

[89] Horner, *High Command*, p. 230.
[90] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp. 423-452; *Units of the RAAF*, Volume 5, pp. 1-24.
[91] Defence Committee Minute 159/1941, 7 November 1941. NAA: A705, 201/28/22 PART 1

At the request of army the first work was directed at ShD and GL, partly due to the shortage of optical rangefinders. Air force initially intended to source the AW equipment from Britain, but the equipment was not available so Australia had to develop an AW radar. The operational requirements for ShD and AW equipment were quite different; the first had to detect the approach of surface vessels at 20-30nm range, with GL to assist range finding, while AW had to detect aircraft at about 100nm, to enable fighter defence time to assemble – the Battle of Britain had clearly demonstrated the efficacy of radar in air defence.

From the start a problem for Australia was sourcing certain parts, especially high power valves, which resulted in some innovative approaches. The first ShD system was installed at Dover Heights, Sydney in late 1940. Though based on a British set, it differed in an important aspect. The British Chain Home system used fixed large aerial arrays, with one aerial for transmission and another for reception, and the radio wave was propagated in a broad beam. The Australian system used a rotating aerial that both transmitted and received a narrow beam of pulses, with savings in both cost of construction and power requirements. This became a common feature of Australian systems; it was adopted in Britain for ship radars, the technology was improved and returned to Australia. A successful radar-directed artillery test from North Head against a target at sea was conducted in February 1941.

When the Pacific War began, there was an immediate need for an AW set and the RPL made a set from components that they had at hand.[92] It was a remarkable piece of improvisation: the receiver was taken from an ASV set, the aerial developed for the first ShD was used and lower powered valves had to be utilised. The set was effectively a much modified ShD. The extra range was achieved by putting the available power into a longer pulse, at the cost of some accuracy and the ability to differentiate between close targets. The modifications meant considerable skill was needed on the part of the operator. The prototype was successfully tested and six sets ordered; the first three sets were completed by 4 February 1942 and were installed at Darwin, Port Moresby and Port Kembla. The next three were completed two months later and production continued as components became available.

[92] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp. 434-435.

The Darwin AW set reached Darwin on 5 February 1942 but was not operational by the time of the first raids on 19 February; the greatest problem was erecting the aerial, which weighed several tons. The set was operational in time to be utilised in the next raid on 22 March. The raid was detected 84 miles east of Darwin; height and speed were estimated with sufficient time for US P-40 fighters to intercept the raid 20 miles east of the town. The AW set had certainly proved its worth and continued to provide cover for Darwin as the defences built up.[93]

At this time nearly all sets were either prototypes, pre-production prototypes or modified imported equipment. Nomenclature in the sources is confusing; Table 6.2 relates specific equipment to radar type.

Radar Type	**Specific Equipment**	**Characteristics**
Shore Defence (ShD)	271	Ships only. Range 30-40 miles.
Air Warning (AW)	CHL (Chain Home Low)	Range 70 to 90 miles. Low and high flying aircraft and ships (20 miles). Could not give heights.
	TRU; also called MB (mobile)	Range 120 miles. High flying aircraft only. Could give heights.
	AW	As for CHL but range 70 miles
	US/RAAF Type 268	Modified by RAAF to give medium range warning; mobile
	US Type 270	Long range warning; mobile (with US forces)
Ground Controlled Intercept (GCI)	GCI	Range 40-60 miles. Could give heights. Used to direct fighters to their targets.

Table 6.2: Initial RDF Equipment Types.[94]

The proposed Australian radar system was an inter-related system with three components: a series of ShD and GL equipment to cover the Newcastle-Sydney-Port Kembla area; a series of CHL for ship detection on the Whyalla-Newcastle sea route and two CHL at Cairns and Fraser Island to cover the entrances to the Great Barrier Reef sea routes; and a prioritised list of 26 (later 32) CHL, TRU or AW at coastal points to provide early warning of air attack. The early warning net was to cover from the

[93] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 436. Alford, *Darwin's Air War*, p. 25.
[94] 'A Summary of the Early Warning System, 26 May 1942'. NAA: A705, 201/28/22 PART 1.

southern east coast to Fraser Island, Townsville to Cairns, Perth to Albany, Tasmania (Bass Strait), Darwin and Port Moresby.[95]

By mid-May 1942 a number of early warning sites were operational. Fixed sites (CHL or MB) were at Port Stephens, Broken Bay, Kiama to cover the vital area, Darwin, Hammond Island (Torres Strait) and Port Moresby. RAAF mobile sites (US/RAAF Type 268) were at Collaroy, Coolangatta, Stradbroke Island, Townsville and Darwin. US Mobile sites were at Townsville (two), Brisbane and Perth (two).[96]

It must be emphasised that these were the early days of radar, with numerous teething problems and personnel still learning to operate the equipment. However the addition of this new technology to Australian and US forces in Australia greatly added to point and area defence systems, as well as surveillance in certain areas.

Considering production, Dudley McCarthy has noted that the scale of equipment for the militia had improved as the munitions program began to reach full production.[97] Andrew Ross has also shown that a number of programmes were near or had reached full capacity in February 1942.[98] There were still shortfalls, but the situation was not as dire as it had been.

Shipbuilding continued to develop. *Bathurst* Class corvettes were being commissioned; despite being a compromise between size and speed of construction they proved to be a useful asset. The first *Tribal* class destroyer. HMAS *Arunta*, was commissioned on 30 April 1942.[99]

Aircraft production continued to be a problem. By June 1942, 76 Beaufort bombers had been produced and the rate was up to 20 per month; Wirraway production had closed with 620 made and the Boomerang was close to production.[100] However Australia

---

95 'A Summary of the Early Warning System, 26 May 1942'.
96 'A Summary of the Early Warning System, 26 May 1942'.
97 McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, p. 30.
98 Andrew Ross, *Armed and Ready*, p. 240.
99 Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp. 456-457.
100 Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 410 & 413.

remained dependent on overseas supply for the numbers and types needed for the RAAF expansion program.

One innovation was the decision to resurrect and re-calibre German machine guns, trophies from the First War. A directive was issued on 12 January 1942 that the machine guns were to be collected and held at ordnance stores pending instructions about modifications to be carried out on the weapons.[101] By 9 February Southern Command had collected 1,200 guns, made 50 guns 'serviceable' and expected that a further 200 would soon be serviceable (it is presumed that serviceable meant converted to fire .303-inch ammunition). On 23 February the Military Board directed that all guns be sent to Melbourne for modification, regardless of condition (poor guns may have had serviceable parts). Central conversion was necessary since most weapons would need individual treatment and therefore drawings could not be provided. The conversion proceeded and on 2 May 1942 the Army reported that out of some 2,000 German machine guns in Australia 600 had been converted and were being issued to coast defence units, garrison battalions and POW guards.[102] An ammunition directive specified that each gun be provided with 1,000 rounds of ammunition and stipulated that the ammunition was for operational purposes only and was not to be used for practice.[103] The ban on practice firing is inexplicable since ammunition was more readily available; no practice could only result in less efficient use of the weapons.

Returning to the progress of the war, the four days 4-7 June 1942 saw the most decisive single action in the Pacific War – Midway. Japanese plans had to change in May after the Coral Sea battle. On 18 May Japanese plans had been issued for the attack on New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa, after the US fleet had been defeated in the long desired 'decisive' battle and Midway Island and the Aleutians had been seized. Then Port Moresby would be taken, the Pacific sea lines of communication cut and Australia isolated from the United States. Clearly the operations depended on success at Midway and a strong force was assembled around the four large carriers *Kaga*, *Akagi*, *Soryu* and *Hiryu*.[104] However US intelligence had learned of the Japanese plans; the US

---

[101] Impressment of German Machine Guns. AWM: AWM60, 787.
[102] Cable O11795 to SSDA, 2 May 1942; AWM: AWM54, 243/6/154 Part 3. Reported to the UK Cabinet; TNA: CAB68/9/26.
[103] Ammunition for converted German machine guns. AWM: AWM61, 406/2/2604.
[104] A comprehensive account of the battle is at Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 81-86.

fleet with three carriers and the Midway garrison were ready. On 4 June Japanese aircraft launched a massive attack on the island but US dive bombers attacked and sank the *Kaga*, *Akagi* and *Soryu*. Aircraft from the *Hiryu* sank the *Yorktown*, but the *Hiryu* was then sunk in turn. The action seriously damaged the Japanese fleet; it never fully recovered.

The implications for Australia were significant. Most importantly Japanese plans to take New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa were indefinitely postponed, the lines of communication with the US remained open and the allied ability to develop Australia as a base was unimpeded. The Japanese intent to take Port Moresby could only be actioned by an overland approach since the fleet could not risk another engagement in a sea approach.

MacArthur met with the Advisory War Council on 17 June. MacArthur presented a number of sweeping statements and a bid for more resources. The discussion in the meeting remains pertinent in considering mainland defence. MacArthur felt there had been a tremendous development in Australia, not only with the services but also with the war effort generally. From a degree of confusion there had evolved a precise programme and Australia was now making a maximum effort. The development of the Army had been extraordinarily good.

> "It had been transformed from a non-organised Militia, only partly trained and ill-equipped, to a sound and efficient force. In three months' time it would be ready for any test, defensive or offensive, that it might be called upon to undertake." [105]

The Air Force was reliant on outside help for material and equipment. It had an ambitious programme which would require a great deal of aircraft and this programme would not be realised before June 1943, with incremental improvements before then. The Navy was small but excellent. However it lacked air cover and two aircraft carriers were required to deliver that; they were not available and until they were navy potential could not be realised.

In regard to external factors, Australia had had a great deal of good fortune. Three months previously Japan was progressing with the object of severing the lines of

[105] Advisory War Council Minute 967, Discussions with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 17 June 1942. NAA: A5954, 814/1.

communication with the United States and securing Japanese-occupied bases. The Allies were able to ascertain their plans for attacking Port Moresby; they attempted this without having control of the air and failed. The war had been a battle for land bases for aircraft and the Australian and US air forces have done very well by harassing the enemy by bombing attacks and preventing him from gaining a foothold. The cause of Allied defeats in the Pacific had been the failure to challenge Japanese sea power. The Allies must concentrate the strength to enable them to challenge Japanese sea power. In considering Coral Sea and Midway, MacArthur felt that the two actions had not measured the fighting capacity of the US and Japanese fleets, the outcomes were due to knowing the Japanese plans in advance. "Therefore it cannot be said that we have challenged Japanese sea power and the position in the Pacific is still fluid."[106]

Significantly, MacArthur said that Australia was in grave danger up to the time of the Coral Sea action. The results of that action and the successes gained at Midway Island had assured the defensive position of Australia. MacArthur felt that from the strategic point of view, the Allies should take the initiative and not await results in other theatres. The aim should be to strike at Japanese bases in the islands to the north and "throw the enemy bomber line back 700 miles."[107] The great weakness of the present setup was too much strategic control in London and Washington. MacArthur stated that there was a need to open a second front in the Pacific, despite London and Washington's focus on Europe.

To undertake offensive operations in the islands to the north MacArthur envisaged training the Australian 7th Division and the 32nd and 41st US Divisions for amphibious operations. The aim would be to retake New Guinea and Rabaul, then thrust to the Philippines or Malaya. Additional troops, aircraft and naval units would be required, including two aircraft carriers.[108]

There were a number of odd points in the discussion. MacArthur talked about offensive operations to the north and the need for resources to achieve that, and he spoke of a second front and the political reasons for that including "the maintenance of the prestige

[106] Advisory War Council Minute 967, 17 June 1942. NAA: A5954, 814/1.
[107] Advisory War Council Minute 967, 17 June 1942.
[108] Advisory War Council Minute 967, 17 June 1942.

of the white races."[109] He spoke glowingly about the Australian Army but really only addressed the Militia, and the tenor of the comment was that the Australian army could defeat a major incursion if not an invasion. He was critical of the Air Force and used his remarks on the Navy to push for two aircraft carriers. In terms of mainland defence these were ambiguous remarks. MacArthur almost denigrated the successes at Coral Sea and Midway, perhaps because they did not involve any of his forces. However MacArthur claimed the success of these actions assured the defence of Australia. This was a statement to both sides of government and it must have resulted in a shift in the perception of threat by the Australian Government.

Mainland Defence

Blamey's Army re-organisation in April was significant. The land forces were organised along functional lines which were more efficient for mainland defence, while the directives gave a clear purpose to the forces concerned. MacArthur's decision to staff his GHQ with US officers was not sensible for the prosecution of the war against Japan, but with the Australian staff structures left in place it was to the advantage of mainland defence.

In terms of point defence, Darwin, Sydney, the Sydney/Newcastle shelling and Whyalla have been examined. After the midget submarine raid the defence of Sydney was assessed as partially fit for purpose. The situation in Darwin following the February bombing was more complicated. Personnel had been disaffected but by May, with training, equipment and better leadership both morale and capability were much improved. The defences were much improved but air raids continued to have a minor impact; the defence of Darwin was partially fit for purpose. The response to the Sydney/Newcastle shelling indicated those coastal defences were partially fit for purpose, while the defence of Whyalla had been established but also was partially fit for purpose.

[109] This reflected thinking in the US and Australia at the time. J. Dower, *War Without Mercy*, Douglas Ford, *The Pacific War* and Mark Johnston, *Fighting the Enemy*; see note 4 this chapter.

Considering area defence, the Eastern Command report and the Savige appreciation demonstrate that improvements had certainly been made but the forces remained partially fit for purpose. The US 41st and 32nd Divisions were regarded by their own commander as ineffective. The first Japanese submarine campaign exposed inadequacies anti-submarine capabilities. Though it is difficult to come to a balanced conclusion, area defence can only be regarded as partially fit for purpose.

Sea lines of communication were hazardous but the introduction of coastal convoys, improved availability of escorts (including US Navy vessels) and the introduction of the small ship resupply to Darwin all kept the sea LoC going, albeit at reduced capacity. The shipping problem was partially alleviated by the use of NEI vessels. There were improvements to the overland LoC to Darwin, with a considerable increase in daily tonnage. Finally, air bases were established in the north-east for the New Guinea LoC; these assisted internal LoC as well as contributing to point and area defence in that area.

Intelligence and surveillance saw the establishment of the forerunners to the Allied Intelligence Bureau and the development of the COIC and service agencies. The Australian coastwatch system continued to function, though gaps remained. The development of radar contributed to point and area defence and in certain areas contributed to surveillance.

Production improved throughout the period, with a number of munitions factories reaching near or full capacity. Aircraft and ship production also improved, though sufficient ability to meet Australian needs was beyond Australian capability.

In terms of national will, on the home front the initial fears of invasion eased with the arrival of MacArthur and US forces, though public concern remained that Australia needed resources and military aid. Despite MacArthur’s assurance on 17 June, Curtin maintained the position that Australia could still fall; this was probably rhetoric to keep the war effort going. Throughout the period, industrial issues continued predominantly in the coal industry and the waterfront.

Mainland Defence: Fit For Purpose

For the Australian government, the purpose of mainland defence throughout this period continued to be to maintain the integrity of the mainland. For MacArthur the purpose was set by his directive; he was to hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan. The purposes were aligned however the ability to effectively achieve the purpose had not yet been fully achieved. Though considerable improvements were made, mainland defence remained partially fit for purpose.

At a Command, Divisional or Fortress level, the purpose was to deny any Japanese incursion into or attack on a defined area or place. Again, the forces allocated to the tasks had improved but remained partially fit for purpose.

In this period, the South-West Pacific Area was established, MacArthur organised his headquarters and US forces began to build up in Australia. The position was initially defensive but the intent to move to an offensive position was clear.

In two important developments, the Coral Sea action stopped Japanese move south, while Midway seriously damaged the Japanese Navy. As a result the danger of invasion of Australia was removed, though Japanese submarine and air attacks continued.

With the arrival of MacArthur, Curtin looked to MacArthur for advice, too much so. MacArthur's influence was dominant, to the extent that some authors have claimed that Curtin made a partial surrender of sovereignty.[110] However, as David Horner has said, MacArthur caused no substantial alteration in Australian policy. He was not able to change plans for the defence of Australia and he did not cause the government to change its determination to influence global strategy; those policies were in place before MacArthur's arrival.[111]

[110] Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, pp. 115-120; Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 181.
[111] David Horner, *High Command*, p. 187.

In this period, Australia moved away from Imperial defence and into a closer partnership with the United States. How this evolved and what it would mean for mainland defence is addressed in the next chapter.

7

MAINLAND DEFENCE DURING THE HOLDING WAR

17 June 1942 to 10 June 1943

The holding war saw the development of mainland defence reach its zenith, indeed the watershed occurred towards the end of the period. By then the need for some elements of mainland defence had receded; reduction of these elements commenced while some deficiencies remained which Australia was simply not capable of resolving. During the holding war US and Australian forces were being prepared for offensive operations against Japanese forces. While in Australia, the US and Australian forces constituted part of mainland defence; appropriate elements of these forces would have been used had a major raid or incursion occurred.

The holding war saw Australia move firmly into partnership with the United States. Imperial ties remained and Australia still wanted British aircraft, arms and equipment – and continued to supply munitions and food to Britain – but the strategic direction of the Pacific war was increasingly in the hands of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. Australia had no say in the grand strategic direction of the war, set by Roosevelt and Churchill in Casablanca in January 1943. Indeed, in a broadcast that month, Curtin publicly protested to the UK and US about the low priority attached to the South-West Pacific and described this period as the "holding war".[1]

Initially the Allies still had concerns about Japanese intentions, demonstrated by an Australian Chiefs of Staff appreciation in September 1942 and the Petersburg Plan for the withdrawal of SWPA forces to Australia if the Japanese took the Solomon Islands. Concerns were still evident in early 1943, but then Curtin stated publicly in June that he did not think Japan could now invade Australia.[2] What caused the change? It was partly

---

[1] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 January 1943, p. 7; *The Canberra Times*, 27 January 1943, p. 1.
[2] Digest of Decisions and Announcements, No59, 13 May – 2 [*sic*] June 1943, pp. 23-4. NAA: B5459, 59. The statement was reported substantially verbatim in the press on 11 June – see *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 June 1943, p. 5 and *The Argus*, 11 June, p. 1.

based on revised intelligence and advice from MacArthur in June 1943 but it was also in response to the pressing need to manage the Australian manpower issue.

Before examining mainland defence, a review of the war in the second half of 1942 will set the context for Australia. In Europe the battle for Stalingrad started on 13 September and continued for over two months. Axis forces took Tobruk on 21 June, then the Axis advance was halted at Alam el Halfa on 31 August. The second battle of El Alamein began on 23-24 October; the 9th Division played a major role in the battle. After the break out the Eighth Army recaptured Tobruk on 12 November. US and British troops landed in Morocco and Algeria on 7-8 November.

In the Pacific and SWPA Nimitz and MacArthur received the Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive of 2 July 1942.[3] The Directive set three tasks. The first was an assault under Nimitz on Tulagi, north of Guadalcanal on the southeast border of the Japanese perimeter. The second was the seizure of Lae and Salamaua and the control of the northeast coast of New Guinea, followed by the capture of the remainder of the Solomon Islands. The third was an assault on Rabaul. Tasks two and three would be under MacArthur.

In Australia, MacArthur began moving forces north from July 1942. Early in the month the 41st US Division moved from Melbourne to Rockhampton and the 32nd from Adelaide to Brisbane; they were to form an Army corps under Major General Eichelberger, who arrived in Australia in late August. On 15 July MacArthur issued an outline plan for a force of approximately 3,200 to be established at Buna early in August. Fighter and bomber airfields and a disembarkation point for sea LoC were to be rapidly developed.[4]

On 2 August MacArthur explained his plans to Marshall. Before the defence of New Guinea could be improved, it had first been necessary to construct a number of airfields in the Townsville-Cloncurry area and develop Port Moresby as an advanced air base.

---

[3] There had been significant debate throughout June between the Navy and Army over which service would have command of operations, resolved after careful negotiation by Marshall, prior to the 2 July Directive. Morton, *Strategy and Command*, pp. 294-304.
[4] Dudley McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 121,140.

The airfields in northern Queensland were a material step that improved mainland defence in that area. As a second step the garrison of Moresby had been increased to two brigades with engineer and anti-aircraft units in support. Airfields were to be built at Milne Bay and Merauke to secure the flanks and infantry moved forward to secure Kokoda. The 7th Division would begin moving to New Guinea within a week. However, MacArthur's plans did not unfold as he wanted.[5]

As the plans developed, the Pacific War continued. The Japanese had occupied Tulagi in May 1942 and a small force was constructing an airfield on Guadalcanal. The Japanese still wanted to cut the Pacific LoC by capturing Port Moresby; Coral Sea had prevented their plan for a seaborne assault on Port Moresby so an overland assault was planned. On 21 July Japanese forces landed at Gona and advanced towards Kokoda, defended by the 39th Militia Battalion; Kokoda fell on 29 July.[6] The Australians attempted to re-capture Kokoda but were repelled and withdrew to Isurava. Reinforcements from the recently returned 7th Division joined the force; however the Australians were forced to withdraw from Isurava on 1 September. Then followed a fighting withdrawal until 17 September when the Japanese were stopped at Imita Ridge. The Australians began their counter-offensive on 25 September but the withdrawal had caused consternation at high levels, military and political. The commander in Papua, General Rowell, was dismissed by Blamey on 28 September.[7] Weeks of bitter fighting saw the Japanese pushed back and Kokoda was re-captured on 2 November. There was further bitter fighting to come as the Japanese withdrew to the north coast of Papua.

GHQ SWPA had decided in June to establish an airfield at Milne Bay to expand air cover over Papua. Three airfields were built in July and early August. The 18th Brigade arrived at Milne Bay on 21 August 1942 along with 75 Squadron Kittyhawks and US engineers but the force was not well established when Japanese forces landed at Milne Bay on 25-26 August. After ten days of bitter fighting the Japanese evacuated Milne Bay on 4 September.[8]

---

[5] Dudley McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area – First Year*, pp. 140.
[6] Full accounts of the Kokoda operations are in McCarthy, *South-West Pacific Area: First Year* and Brune, *A Bastard of a Place*.
[7] David Horner, *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, ch. 8 analyses the command crisis.
[8] Full accounts of Milne Bay are in McCarthy and Brune.

In the Solomon Islands, US forces landed at Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942 and an arduous campaign ensued. On 9 August the Australian cruiser HMAS *Canberra* and a number of US ships, were sunk in a night action off Savo Island. The US forces held on in the face of determined Japanese attempts to dislodge them, with further naval engagements occurring including a series of major engagements on 12-15 November.[9]

Australia saw a number of naval losses and victories in the latter half of 1942. HMAS *Arunta* sank the Japanese submarine *RO33* off Papua on 29 August 1942. Then HMAS *Voyager* was grounded on the south coast of Timor and destroyed on 24 September, and HMAS *Armidale* was sunk south of Timor on 1 December. These losses reduced the naval capability in the Australia Station, with concomitant impact on mainland defence.

Despite MacArthur's 17 June 1942 statement that the Coral Sea and Midway actions had assured the defensive position of Australia the government still had concerns. What then was the threat perception in the latter half of 1942 and what did this mean for mainland defence?

After a series of representations to the US and UK concerning air and naval strengths in the SWPA the War Cabinet tasked the Australian Chiefs to prepare a new appreciation on the defence of Australia. The Chiefs responded on 30 September 1942, with the caveat that they were not aware of all the intelligence on US and Japanese forces, they were not aware of allied strategic plans and they were not fully aware of MacArthur's operational plans.[10]

The appreciation reviewed the current position stating that there was an increased Japanese concentration in the South-West Pacific Area, though the naval situation had improved since Midway and Allied naval strength was approximately equal to the Japanese. New Caledonia and New Hebrides were held by US forces. US forces had occupied certain islands in the Solomons which had caused the Japanese to send a large naval force to that area, considerably extending their line of communication. Port

[9] A full account is in John Miller Jr., *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1949.
[10] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, Defence of Australia, 30 September 1942. NAA: A2671, 404/1942.

Moresby had been reinforced and Milne Bay occupied. The Japanese had occupied areas on the north coast of Papua and advanced through the Owen Stanley Ranges, but had been held about 40 miles from Port Moresby. The 6th and 7th Divisions had returned to Australia; the 7th and part of the 6th, with two Militia Brigade Groups, had moved to Papua. Two United States divisions had continued training in Australia and one of them was also moving to Papua. The 9th Division was engaged in active operations at El Alamein in the Western Desert.[11]

The appreciation proposed that the Army in Australia had become a more effective fighting force due to increases in equipment and further training. The strength of the Allied Air Forces in Australia had been increased, with plans for a strength of 1,100 operational aircraft by April 1943 (though this included about 200 obsolescent types). The relative air position in relation to the enemy was more favourable than in June, due to additional aircraft, development of more advanced bases and improved means of long range warning and fighter control. Japan was estimated to have about 500 aircraft in the arc of islands to the north.[12]

The appreciation considered possible Japanese moves. The Japanese aim was to 'encircle' Australia, thus cutting lines of communication with America and possibly the Middle East. Operations in the Solomons had checked that intent and the Japanese could be expected to make an attempt to regain that area. Concurrently the Japanese could be expected to continue operations in New Guinea with a view to capturing Port Moresby. The possibility of a diversionary attack on the north-west coast of Australia could not be ignored though offensive action in the New Guinea-Solomon Islands area could contain those forces. The appreciation further stated that as long as the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Port Moresby were held, an invasion of the east coast of Australia was unlikely.[13]

As the forces available were not sufficient to enable major offensive operations to be undertaken, there were only two Allied courses of action: first to secure the mainland by defensive measures within Australia which, without adequate naval and air strength,

---

[11] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, paras. 2 (a)-(f).
[12] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, paras. 2 (g)-(h).
[13] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, paras. 3-6.

would require an Army force of 25 divisions and second to undertake limited offensive operations to clear the enemy out of bases from which attacks could be launched against Australia and Australian lines of communication.[14]

In regard to current operations, the appreciation considered that the forces in New Guinea were operating under extreme tropical conditions which would result in high personnel wastage. Further, the Army was facing increasing commitments in Australia for coast defence and anti-aircraft personnel for the protection of additional naval and air bases in the west and north-east.[15]

An army force of five divisions could be needed in Papua. It was not possible to send any further Australian formations to Papua, because of the depleted strength of the forces available for the defence of the mainland. Army manpower resources would be severely taxed to maintain the formations in Papua. Reinforcements for the 9th Division would not be available in the numbers required and unless the Division returned to Australia it could not be maintained, whereas it could be built up in Australia by personnel from other formations being disbanded.[16]

In regard to the EATS, the appreciation stated that some saving in manpower could be achieved by not sending personnel overseas. However that would result in the waste of a large training organisation and seriously interrupt the output of trained aircrew for overseas operations. The consequences of that were too serious to recommend discontinuance of the EATS.[17]

The appreciation considered that the main Allied objectives should be to hold Port Moresby and Milne Bay and then drive the Japanese from Papua by taking the enemy bases on the north coast; to drive the Japanese out of the Solomon Islands; to maintain attacks on the enemy lines of communication between Japan and the Papua/New Guinea/Solomon Islands area; and to attack Japanese Naval forces whenever a favourable opportunity occurs. Such operations would contribute directly to the defence

[14] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, paras. 7-9.
[15] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, para. 16.
[16] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, para. 17.
[17] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, para. 20.

of Australia by preventing the Japanese from securing further bases for attacks on the lines of communication to the United States or on the Australian mainland. These operations would also secure suitable bases for the eventual major offensive operations.[18]

The War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council considered the appreciation on 14 and 15 October 1942.[19] It was decided to request the return of the 9th Division and continue the EATS commitment; in the event the 9th Division fought at El Alamein in late October 1942 and returned to Australia in February 1943.

The War Cabinet also called for another appreciation addressing the minimum forces needed for the defence of vital areas in Australia "to meet all possible contingencies of the strategical situation."[20] That appreciation went to War Cabinet on 7 November 1942.[21] The Chiefs considered that for Japan to invade Australia, Japan would have to achieve a decisive naval victory, recapture the Solomon Islands, capture New Caledonia and the New Hebrides, and possibly capture New Guinea. Then the invading force would comprise three to four divisions; this would require 40-50 ships supported by 100,000 tons of shipping per month. The force would take 5-6 days to reach Brisbane which would give 36-48 hours warning of the likely assault area. Allied forces, including submarines, should be able to intercept the force with land based air attacking the convoy en-route and the point of disembarkation. Consequently, the Japanese force would be at risk and would suffer severe losses.[22] Clearly, the Chiefs did not consider that an invasion was viable.

In considering the minimum forces needed for the defence of vital areas in Australia to meet all possible contingencies the appreciation concluded that 25 Divisions and 71 squadrons would be needed. The current strength was nowhere near that (Tables 7.1 and 7.2).

---

[18] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, paras. 21-22.
[19] War Cabinet Minute 2428, 14 October 1942 and War Cabinet Minute 2446, 15 October 1942. Both titled Agendum No 404/1942, Defence of Australia, Appreciation by Australian Chiefs of Staff, September 1942. NAA: A5954, 808/2.
[20] War Cabinet Minute 2428.
[21] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, Defence of Australia, Supplement 1, 7 November 1942. NAA: A2671, 404/1942.
[22] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, Supplement 1, paras. 2(2)-2(3).

Army Forces

	Strength
Papua (or moving to Papua)	
6th Division (less Brigade Group)	3 Divisions
7th Division	2 Brigade Groups
3 Brigade Groups	
1 United States Division	
Queensland	
Townsville – Cape York – Torres Strait	1 Division
Brisbane Area	1 Division
Rockhampton Area	1 United States Division
New South Wales	
Newcastle – Sydney Area	1 Division
Tasmania	1 Brigade Group
Western Australia	2 Divisions
Northern Territory	1 Division
LHQ Reserve	3 Armoured Divisions (elements of)
Total Available	11 Infantry Divisions 3 Armoured Divisions (forming)

Table 7.1: Strength and Disposition of Allied Field Army in South-west Pacific Area, 7 November 1942.[23]

[23] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, Supplement 1, Appendix A.

Air Forces

	Interceptor fighters	Long Range Fighters	Bombers	Dive and Torpedo Bombers and Intruders	Flying Boats	Transport Aircraft	Total
Western Area	20	-	10	13	5? (US Sqn)	3	51
North-western Area	19	22	18	10		2	71
Eastern Australia and New Guinea							
RAAF	37	22	31	83	13	17	203
Fifth Air Force	260	-	171	35	-	?	466
Total	336	44	230	141	18	22	791

Table 7.2: Strength and Disposition of Allied Air Forces in South-west Pacific Area, 7 November 1942.[24]

MacArthur had serious reservations about the Guadalcanal campaign, commanded by Nimitz, and raised the Petersburg Plan on 31 October 1942 for the redistribution of Allied forces in the SWPA in the event of Japanese success in the Solomon Islands. Petersburg was a worst case plan, catering for complete Japanese success in the Solomon Islands, followed by an Allied "all-out withdrawal and preparation to withstand a major effort to knock Australia out of the war."[25]

The plan does not appear to have been distributed outside General Headquarters SWPA and no copy has been found in Australian archives. However, Gavin Long refers to it in his biography of MacArthur:

[24] War Cabinet Agendum 404/1942, Supplement 1, Appendix A.
[25] 'Petersburg Plan: redistribution of Allied forces, SWPA, in event of Japanese success in the Solomon Islands', 31 October 1942. US Army Heritage Collection, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: D767.8.P47 1942a.

> "so great were MacArthur's misgivings that on 31 October he prepared a plan for withdrawal from the north coast and perhaps from all Papua in the event of the Japanese securing Guadalcanal and concentrating against New Guinea."[26]

MacArthur also obliquely referred to the plan in discussions with Shedden in October 1942 when he said that if the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia and Fiji fell "he anticipated no difficulty in being able to re-transfer forces from New Guinea to the mainland of Australia should such become necessary."[27]

The plan's five objectives were to protect the vital area of Australia south and east of a line Brisbane-Broken Hill-Adelaide; as far as possible protect the supply routes to the US and to the UK; protect Port Moresby to prevent Japanese penetration of the north-east coast of Australia; protect the Darwin area as an advanced base and to deny its use to the Japanese; and protect the Perth-Albany area as a naval base.[28] Finally, the plan envisaged "As a last resort, to hold the vicinity of Sydney to the limit of resistance".[29]

In the event the plan was not needed. However it demonstrated two points. First, MacArthur did not have a purely offensive mind-set in late 1942, despite his subsequent claims to that effect in 1943. Second and significant for mainland defence, the plan demonstrated MacArthur's resolve to defend Australia as a base, even in the worst case scenario of surrendering much of the country and defending the vital south-east area.

The war with Japan may have been a holding war, but developments within Australia continued. Allied Land HQ authorised the raising of eight 155mm coast artillery (CA) batteries on 6 July 1942 – the first of the 'Letter' batteries. On 20 July 1942 MacArthur moved GHQ SWPA from Melbourne to Brisbane, presaging the build-up of offensive forces in Queensland. On 4 August 1942 General George Kenney replaced General Brett as commander of the US Air Force in Australia. On the political front the Australia-United States Lend-Lease agreement was signed on 3 September,

---

[26] Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, p. 111.
[27] Notes of discussions with General MacArthur, 26th March - 26th October 1942. Paper 11, 20-26 October. NAA: A5954, 3/5
[28] Petersburg Plan, para. 3(b).
[29] Petersburg Plan, para. 3(c)f.

while the Minister for Labour and National Service, Eddie Ward, first publicly raised the 'Brisbane Line' issue on 27 October.[30]

The two brigades of the 6th Division that had garrisoned Ceylon arrived in Australia in early August 1942, further augmenting the AIF and mainland defence.

Darwin and the Darwin area suffered 30 air raids in the latter half of 1942. Most were nuisance raids, comprising a small number of unescorted bombers at night, inflicting little damage and few casualties. Some night intercepts were attempted but with little success – only one bomber was destroyed. Two more substantial daylight raids occurred on 31 July and 23 August; both were intercepted and a total of 11 fighters and 13 bombers were destroyed for the loss of two Kittyhawks. Other coastal towns were also attacked: Horn Island (four raids), Broome (one) and Townsville (three), in all cases there were no casualties and minimal damage. Port Hedland was raided once with the aerodrome damaged and one soldier killed. Details of air raids on Australia are at Attachment 1.

The North Australia Observer Unit (NAOU) was raised in late 1942 to meet the need for surveillance of northern Australia.[31] The area encompassed some of the most remote and little known areas of Australia where coastwatch and radar were not available. The unit was mounted since horses could continue to operate during the wet; it provided a unique approach to a major problem at a relatively small cost.

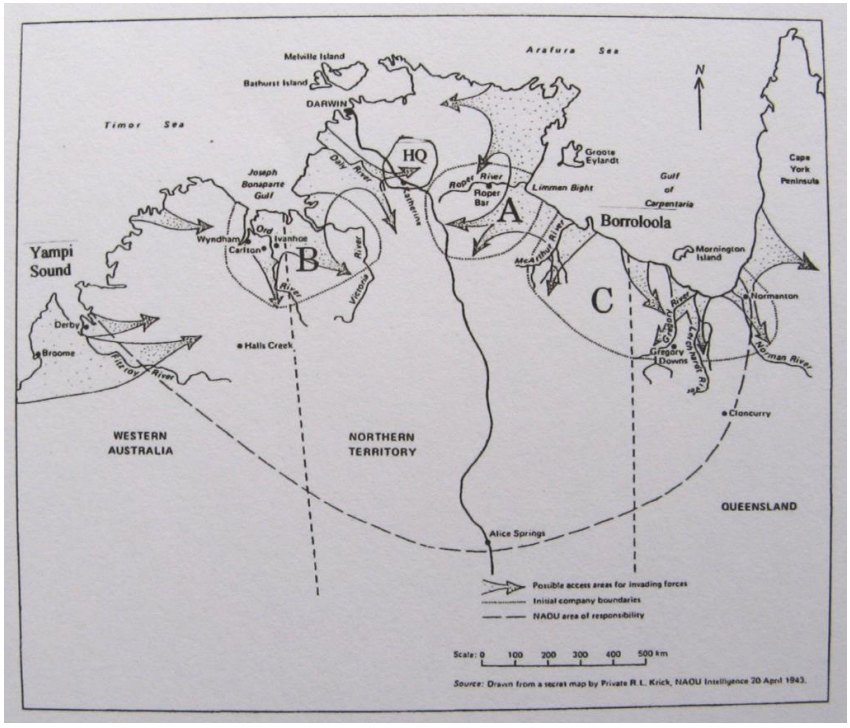
Special qualifications were sought. The men had to be medically fit Class 1; they should have had bush experience; horsemanship; and initiative, reserve and intelligence. The men would be undertaking "duties requiring a high degree of endurance and ability to act independently." [32] The unit comprised 450 all ranks, 15 NT Police were attached and approximately 70 Aborigines were used as guides, interpreters and horse handlers. The war establishment (WE) was for 1,500 riding and pack horses with 39 vehicles and some small vessels in support.[33] It was a small unit to cover a huge area.

---

[30] See Paul Burns, *The Brisbane Line Controversy*, for a full account.
[31] Dr Armoury Vane, *North Australia Observer Unit: The History of a Surveillance Unit*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2000 gives a comprehensive history of the NAOU.
[32] North Australia Observer Unit. NAA: MP729/6, 29/401/596.
[33] Vane, p. 17.

The NAOU had two primary roles. First was to watch for and report to NT Force any enemy landing on the Australian coast between Normanton and Yampi Sound, and any subsequent enemy movement. Second was to collect all topographic information of operational value and forward to NT Force. The NAOU did not have a guerrilla role; their role was surveillance and shadowing. Indeed, the NAOU had no responsibility in regard to the evacuation of civilians, though discretion was granted to assist civilians "without prejudice to the operational role of the NAOU".[34]

The NAOU was widely dispersed, relying on horse and water transport for its patrols and relaying gathered information to HQ by wireless and written reports. Administration and supply was difficult due to the extreme distances and remote locations of the NAOU elements.[35] The disposition is shown in Map 7.1.



Map 7.1: North Australia Observer Unit – Company Locations 20 April 1943.[36]
Also showing possible Japanese invasion routes

[34] Northern Territory Operation Instructions, Administrative Maintenance problems North Australia Observation Unit (NAOU), 1942. NT Force OpInst No42, 13 October 42. AWM: AWM54, 625/6/4.
[35] North Australia Observation Unit (NAOU) Movement Supply and maintenance, 1942. AWM: AWM54, 511/2/1.
[36] Derived from Vane, p. 4.

Medical issues for the unit were typical for tropical operations, with dengue fever, tinea, foot disabilities and ear infections. The major problems were rashes (some infected) from 'prickly heat' and infected sores from horse riding.[37] However, medical issues did not adversely affect NAOU operations.

Horses were a continuing problem.[38] The WE was for 1,500 horses but the NAOU rarely had more than 1,000 mounts; stations were only prepared to sell animals they did not need. That number was just adequate for topographic survey operations, but if the unit as a whole went into action the required ratio of two riding and one pack horse per man, that is 1,500 horses, would be essential. Quality was variable, many horses were relatively old (six-eight years) and many were on the small side, therefore less suitable as pack animals. There were some disease and tropical issues to contend with but these were manageable.

Wireless communications were also a problem, particularly during the wet. One report described communications as intermittent with no contact between HQ, the three companies and Alice Springs for periods of some hours – this was typical. Overall wireless communications were unreliable, a message would eventually get through but operational timeliness was an issue.[39]

Two reports indicate the effectiveness of the NAOU. [40] The first detailed a reconnaissance mission from Ivanhoe (near Wyndham) to Forrest River, 2-15 December 1942. The aim was to obtain knowledge of the type of country passed through, a distance of approximately 132 miles. The party comprised a corporal, two other ranks and one Aborigine. The aim was achieved, with a clear report prepared covering the route, the topography of the country traversed, the state of river crossings and weather experienced, accompanied by a scaled sketch map. The second report covered a company exercise in May 1943. The aim was to exercise the mobility of the Company HQ as a self-contained unit and to test communications. The outcomes indicated that

---

[37] 2/1 North Australia Observer Unit, NAOU - Includes separate reconnaissance reports and sketch maps. Medical report January 1943. AWM: AWM52, 25/1/2.
[38] Report on the General Horse Position, 30 July 1943. AWM: AWM54, 511/2/1.
[39] 2/1 North Australia Observer Unit, NAOU. AWM: AWM52, 25/1/2.
[40] 2/1 North Australia Observer Unit, NAOU. AWM: AWM52, 25/1/2.

the mobility had been achieved and communications proved to be consistently good (noting that the wet was over). Some limitations included the low number of horses available and the poor ratio of men to pack animals. Both limitations were significant.

Was the NAOU fit for its purpose? In its role of collecting topographic information, the reports indicate that it was fit for purpose. However for its role to shadow and report on the enemy after landing it suffered from poor communications and a paucity of horses. Therefore it must be assessed as partially fit for purpose.

The strategy for the SWPA was dictated by Allies' global strategy. Roosevelt and Churchill met at Casablanca in January 1943 to determine the global strategy to be followed in 1943 and 1944. Stalin did not attend. The Australian government was aware of the meeting, and Curtin sent a cable to both leaders (the language of the cable indicates it was probably at MacArthur's behest) with a bid for resources but no minor power had any influence on the discussions. There were differences between (and within) the allies but a workable compromise was achieved, though the strategy remained at a high strategic level.[41]

Curtin was notified of the five outcomes by cable on 29 January 1943. The first two were that defeat of U-boats must be the top priority and that Russia must be sustained by the greatest possible volume of supplies. These two decisions carried the imperative 'must' and may be regarded as the top priorities identified at the conference.[42]

Both David Dexter and David Horner identify these three secondary theatres as being in descending order of priority, with the Pacific fifth priority. However the cable does not clearly indicate that being the case; the last three may justifiably be grouped as equal. They were operations in the Mediterranean with the object of forcing Italy out of the war, then operations from the UK so as the make the best use of US and British forces,

---

[41] The Casablanca Conference was from 13 to 24 January 1943. For details of the Conference see Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy Volume IV, August 1942 – September 1943,* Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1972, Chapters XIII, XIV. The American view is given in Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1958, Chapter 1. The whole issue of US/UK relations in the war against Japan is covered in Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War against Japan, 1941-1945,* Hamish Hamilton, London, 1978.

[42] Cable Z10, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to UK High Commissioner Canberra, 29 January 1943. AWM: AWM123, 245.

which included the combined heavy bomber offensive and the build-up of US forces in Britain. For the Pacific, operations were to continue to maintain pressure on Japan, retain the initiative and achieve a state of readiness such that a full scale offensive could commence when Germany was defeated.[43]

A further cable clarified the Pacific objectives. For the South-West Pacific four objectives were given: keep Japan from further expansion and consolidation of her present position; maintain the security of the Midway-Hawaii line and communications to Australia and New Zealand; block Japanese approaches to Australia either from Rabaul or from the north-west; and secure positions from which to threaten Japanese communications with the NEI, Philippines and the South China Sea. The cable then made it clear that forces available for these objectives would be limited by the need to concentrate maximum force against Germany, "but there will be sufficient to ensure that we retain initiative against Japanese."[44]

The last statement was more than a little bland. The implication for mainland defence was that the necessity to retain Australia as a base was recognised but the US and UK accepted a level of risk for Australia in order to meet the 'Germany First' strategy.

The coalition global strategy was further refined at a meeting in May 1943 between Roosevelt and Churchill in Washington.[45] Curtin was informed of the meeting but, after discussion with MacArthur, decided not to make any submission to the meeting and cabled Evatt (then in Washington) to that effect.[46] The outcomes of the Washington conference reaffirmed the Casablanca decisions, but were more specific and the US succeeded in placing more emphasis on the Pacific. The outcomes were cabled to Curtin on 5 June. The over-all objective was to bring about at the earliest possible date the unconditional surrender of Axis powers. This was to be achieved by three strategic concepts, all in co-operation with Russia and other allies,: first, to secure the

---

[43] Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p, 4; Horner, *High Command*, p. 249.
[44] Cable 154, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to UK High Commissioner Canberra, 29 January 1943. AWM: AWM123, 245.
[45] The Conference was from 11 to 26 May 1943. For details see Michael Howard, *Grand Strategy Volume IV, August 1942 – September 1943*, Chapters XXII, XXIII and Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944*, Chapter 6.
[46] MacArthur to Curtin, teleprinter message BXM343, 13 May 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p. 367. Curtin to Evatt, cablegram PW96, 13 May 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p. 368.

unconditional surrender of the Axis in Europe; second and simultaneously, to maintain and extend pressure against Japan to reduce her military power and secure positions from which her ultimate surrender could be forced; and third, upon defeat of the Axis in Europe, to direct the full resources of the United States and Great Britain to secure at the earliest possible date the unconditional surrender of Japan. For the South and South-West Pacific the intent was to undertake operations with the following objectives: seizure of the Marshall and Caroline Islands; seizure of the Solomon Islands, Bismarck Archipelago and Japanese held New Guinea; and intensification of operations against enemy lines of communication.[47] Seizure of Japanese held New Guinea and operations against enemy lines of communication were directly applicable to the SWPA and had ramifications for mainland defence.

The Australian Government's perception of threat heightened in early 1943, based on intelligence given to the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council. On 1 January 1943, Advanced Headquarters Allied Land Forces reported that the total enemy strength on Timor was 20,000 (up from 8,000 in November 1942). There was no evidence to indicate that the enemy contemplated offensive operations against north-west Australia but it appeared that the Japanese intended to remove the Australian troops from Timor.[48] A total of 129 Japanese aircraft were reported in the Japanese western sector.[49] One week later it was reported that several divisions were moving south into the western area, some at Ambon. "This is the first indication that the enemy may have offensive intentions in NW sector" though the activity could be defensive measures to prevent an attack from Australia.[50] The Advisory War Council became concerned that a Japanese air base at Merauke in Dutch New Guinea (DNG) would give the Japanese control over the Torres Strait, provide a base for attack on Horn and Thursday Islands and threaten the position in Port Moresby.[51]

---

[47] Atlee to Cross [for Curtin], Circular cablegram Z65, 5 June 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p. 401.
[48] Advanced Headquarters Allied Land Forces, Intelligence Summary No 22, 1 January 1943. All the Intelligence Summaries are from AWM: AWM54, 423/11/63 Pt 4.
[49] The Japanese western sector was the area to the north and north-west of Australia, bounded by the Celebes, Timor and DNG (Map 7.2). The Japanese eastern sector was the area to the north and north-east of Australia, bounded by New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. The terms are used to avoid any confusion with Australian areas of operations.
[50] Intelligence Summary No 23, 8 January 1943.
[51] Advisory War Council Minute 1113, Reports by Chiefs of Staff on Operations, 12 January 1943. NAA: A2684, 1215.

On 15 January there was evidence that the tempo of preparations in the Japanese western sector was increasing. However there was no sign of an immediate threat, with no major naval units or first line troops yet in the area.[52] This was supported by a major build-up in air strength to 200 aircraft in the Japanese western area and an airfield was being established near Kokenau (DNG, Map 7.2). By 29 January evidence existed that Ambon was being developed as a forward base and convoys may have brought combat troops.[53] Japanese strength in the western sector was reported as over 30,000. The 5 February summary reported that a base was being developed at Timika, south-west of Kokenau, indicating the development of a strong forward base in the sector.[54]

These developments explain Curtin's concern about any threat to north-west Australia when he wrote to MacArthur about the Casablanca outcomes and SWPA activity on 8 February.[55] MacArthur advised Curtin of his perceptions by phone on 16 March 1943.[56] These points must be regarded with some circumspection; MacArthur could be disingenuous, with advice tailored to suit his drive to obtain more resources. MacArthur said that the enemy was attempting to exert more influence over the Torres Strait, but would not have the strength to make a serious attack for two to four months. The enemy was developing airfields in the island chain though there was no evidence of any concentration of air forces. There was evidence of concentration of ground troops; MacArthur said that eight divisions were involved, though he did not give details. MacArthur said he did not have the strength to cover the north-west as well as the north-east and east axes of approach. The advice then became a resource bid: three cruisers, nine destroyers, 1,000-1,500 aircraft and an army corps.

Public concerns were raised by newspaper reports on 29 January 1943 about the Japanese build-up to the NW, with *The Canberra Times* raising the possibility of invasion.[57] Concern was expressed at the Advisory War Council on 2 February, with Curtin stating that he was not aware of the source of the reports but there was evidence

---

[52] Intelligence Summary No 25, 22 January 1943.
[53] Intelligence Summary No 26, 29 January 1943.
[54] Intelligence Summary No 27, 5 February 1943.
[55] Curtin to MacArthur, letter, Casablanca Conference, 8 February 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p. 258.
[56] Advisory War Council Minute 1153, Situation in the Southwest Pacific Area, 18 March 1943. NAA: A5954, 814/2.
[57] 29 January 1943: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, pp. 1, 4, 5; *The Argus*, p. 12; and *The Canberra Times*, p. 1.

of increased Japanese strength.[58] The perceptions were further fuelled in April when Blamey was reported as saying that the Japanese had 200,000 troops in the archipelago to the north as well as a "powerful force of combat planes."[59] Equivocal statements by Curtin and MacArthur, and dismissive remarks in US newspapers, did nothing to allay public concerns.[60]

The concerns of early 1943 led to a focus on the Torres Strait area and three bases: Thursday Island, Darwin and Merauke. The concept of developing a base at Merauke was part of the third step of MacArthur's plan of 2 August 1942. MacArthur however decided on 20 August that construction of the airfield at Merauke should be suspended.[61] The work was in fact only 10 days away from completion and the base was already occupied by US engineers and RAAF radar and signals personnel.[62] Then MacArthur decided in January 1943 to proceed with the development of the base.[63] Thus there was a three month delay in the development of a key element in the defence of Torres Strait and the sea LoC to Darwin. No clear reason for MacArthur's decision has been identified, but he had other priorities in preparing for the New Guinea offensive.

Blamey had also foreseen the need to strengthen the forces in the Torres Strait area and an AIF battalion arrived at Merauke between December 1942 and February 1943.[64] RAAF support comprised daily patrols by Boomerangs from Horn Island.

Merauke was the best place for a base in very poor country; southern DNG had vast areas of swamp and potable water was a problem in the dry season. The airfield had to be made of steel planking on a prepared sub-surface and the base developed from scratch. Two reports in April and July 1943 describe the problems.[65] Supply for the base

---

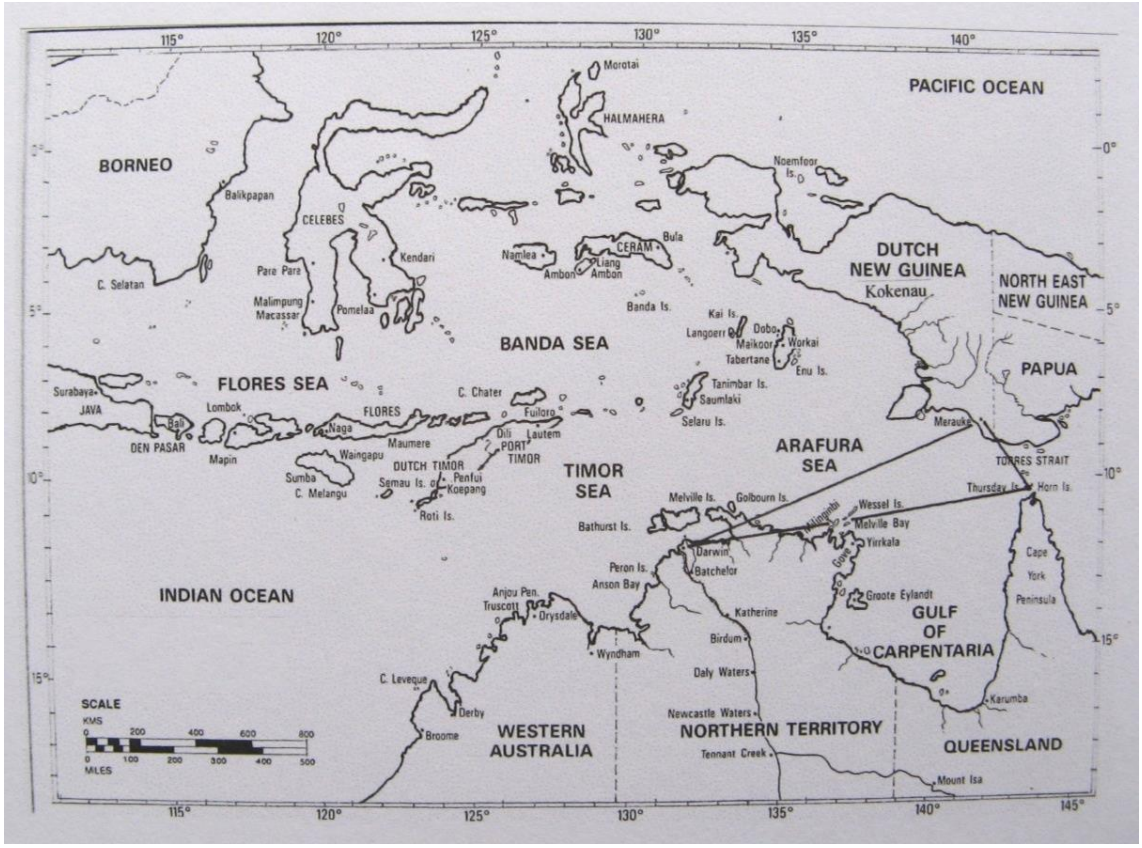
[58] Advisory War Council Minute 1131, Newspaper Reports of Concentration of Japanese Forces against Australia, 2 February 1943. NAA: A5954, 814/2. Advisory War Council Minute 1132, Reports by Chiefs of Staff on Operations, 2 February 1943. NAA: A5954, 814/2.
[59] *The Argus*, 15 April 1943, p. 2.
[60] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 April 1943, Editorial, p. 4.
[61] GHQ SWPA Memorandum to Commander Allied Air Forces, 20 August 1943. NAA: A9695, 496.
[62] Merauke – Early Development. NAA: A9695, 493.
[63] Exchange of letters GHQ and Admiral Coster (NEI), 21 October 1942 to 5 January 1943. NAA: A9695, 505.
[64] Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p. 17.
[65] Extract from report on visits to Karumba, Groote Eylandt, Merauke. NAA: A9695, 501. No 72 (Composite) Wing - Merauke landing ground. NAA: A11253, 3003/1/W

was dependent on the jetty, which was not very strong, and strong tidal flows impeded loading and unloading. Roads were poor and boggy; jeeps were needed, since normal vehicles were inadequate. Rain impeded progress (there were 9.3 inches in July) and drainage was a continual problem, especially for the airfield.[66] There were the usual medical problems, including malaria and dysentery.

With the build-up of Japanese forces in the NW sector, GHQ SWPA concluded that the enemy had the potential to attack the Torres Strait area.[67] In response MacArthur issued the Moultrie Plan on 22 March 1943 (Map 7.2). The plan's two tasks were to secure the north-western entrance to the Coral Sea and to maintain the use of the sea route Cairns–Torres Strait–Darwin.[68] The defence of the Strait was boosted, while a brigade headquarters, another infantry battalion and engineers were ordered to Merauke. A further infantry company arrived in May. Merauke Force had a wide range of tasks including the construction of airfields and wharves and the facilities needed for a substantial base.[69] The air base was occupied in April, with one fighter squadron in place by 3 July while the dive bomber squadron came later.[70] Total strength on 8 July 1943 was 3,500 AMF, 700 RAAF, a detachment of US engineers and a NEI infantry company.[71]

---

[66] Merauke - No 72 Wing. NAA: A9695, 500.
[67] GHQ SWPA Operation Instruction No 32, 12 April 1943. AWM: AWM 628/2/5 Part 1.
[68] "Moultrie" Plan for the Defence of the Torres Strait Area, 22 March 1943. AWM: AWM 628/2/5 Part 1.
[69] Dexter, p. 810.
[70] Survey of operations from Merauke. NAA: A9695, 494.
[71] Defence of Merauke - Dutch New Guinea. NAA: A2684, 1215.



Map 7.2: The Moultrie Plan area.[72]

Merauke was under intermittent air attack during 1943; the development of air defence was slow so it was fortunate that most raids were light. Eight Bofors anti-aircraft guns arrived in May 1943.[73] A radar station had been in place since July 1942; another arrived in May 1943 and was established at Cape Kombies (120 miles west of Merauke) in July. A Mobile Ground Controlled Intercept (GCI) radar arrived in December. These gave long range warning against Japanese raids and better fighter control; prior to that Kittyhawks were unable to get sufficient height for a successful intercept.[74] The radar facilities were described as working "efficiently".[75] The base achieved full operational status despite the problems and 86 Sqn reports after September 1943 indicate air superiority had been achieved in the Merauke area.[76]

---

72 Derived from Alford, p. 37.
73 North Eastern Area Headquarters - Reports on Merauke. NAA: A11083, 24/71/AIR.
74 Survey of operations from Merauke. NAA: A9695, 494.
75 North Eastern Area Headquarters - Reports on Merauke. NAA: A11083, 24/71/AIR.
76 Merauke - No 86 Squadron combat reports. NAA: A9695, 983.

How then to judge the Moultrie Plan and Merauke? The purpose of Merauke was to prevent any Japanese movement along the south coast of DNG and the Moultrie Plan was designed to keep control of Torres Strait. Overall the plan was fit for purpose, but Merauke was a weak link. In late 1942 Merauke could have been taken by a moderate Japanese force so the base must be judged as not fit for purpose then. By February 1943 the base was relatively secure against a landing, but there was no ability to prevent Japanese air attacks; the base was partially fit for purpose. By mid-1943 Merauke was fit for purpose but the threat had lessened. With Merauke, it is clear that the response lagged the need.

Turning to the progress of the war, operations in the Middle East and Europe continued throughout the first half of 1943. The Germans surrendered at Stalingrad on 31 January. The Allies took Tripoli on 29 January and moved against Tunisia on 20 March; the campaign in North Africa ended on 13 May. The bombing campaign against Germany escalated, with the programmed offensive against the Ruhr industries completed in early July.[77]

The war in Papua also continued. Gona was captured on 9 December 1942, followed by the capture of Buna by US and Australian troops on 2 January 1943. The Australians then took Sanananda on 23 January, ending organised Japanese resistance in Papua. In New Guinea the Japanese attacked Wau on 29 January, but were held off, while in Timor Australian forces were evacuated on 9 January. Guadalcanal was secured by US marines on 9 February.[78]

The Bismark Sea battle occurred in the period 2-4 March 1943. Intelligence had warned that the Japanese would attempt to reinforce the Lae area by sea and the allied air forces prepared to meet the threat. The convoy of eight destroyers and eight transports was sighted and shadowed. A series of air strikes resulted in the convoy being decimated; all transports and four destroyers were sunk. The survivors retreated and for some days allied aircraft patrolled the Huon Gulf seeking out and destroying all barges, rafts and

---

[77] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 92, 100. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 130, 134.
[78] Charles Messenger, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, pp. 92, 100. Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 112-115, 124.

survivors in the water. Approximately 3,000 Japanese were killed in the battle. This was the last attempt by the Japanese to reinforce garrisons in New Guinea and was a watershed in Japanese fortunes in that area.[79]

The first elements of the 9th Division arrived at Fremantle on 18 February 1943. The Division reformed on the Atherton Tableland in April.

The campaign in Papua had seen a large increase in casualties caused by tropical disease and conditions. At roughly the same time MacArthur told Curtin the division between the AIF and Militia was 'undesirable'.[80] The two factors were part of Curtin's revised policy to introduce conscription for overseas service in a defined zone, noting that the Militia was already serving in the Australian territories of Papua and New Guinea. Sentiment against conscription was "strongly embedded" in the Australian community, following the bitter campaigns in 1916-17; Labor orthodoxy opposed it. Curtin announced the proposal at a special conference of the ALP in November 1942. The Bill was introduced on 29 January 1943 and was opposed by Labor men "who thought it went too far, and from the non-Labor parties who thought it did not go far enough."[81] The proposal was modified and set a South-West Pacific Zone which encompassed the South-West Pacific Area barring west Java, north Borneo and the Philippines.[82] The Bill amended the Defence Act and became law on 19 February 1943.

MacArthur dispatched a delegation of his senior American officers (including Kenney and Sutherland) to Washington to attend the Pacific Military Conference, which opened on 12 March 1943. They took with them a plan (Elkton) for a simultaneous advance on Rabaul through New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, but they were unable to obtain the forces necessary to carry it out in full. After much debate between the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on 29 March MacArthur was issued with a new directive, setting out his objectives: first, the establishment of airfields on Kiriwina and Woodlark Islands; second, the seizure of Lae, Salamaua, Finschhafen, Madang and western New Britain; and third the seizure of the remainder of the Solomon Islands, including the southern

---

[79] Gill, Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945, pp. 270-273.
[80] The following discussion draws on John Robertson, *Australia At War*, pp. 146-148.
[81] Robertson, *Australia At War*, p. 147.
[82] The South-West Pacific Zone borders were longitude 110 East, the Equator and longitude 159 East. Dennis et al, *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p. 157.

portion of Bougainville.[83] Other than stating that forces would be provided, there was no statement about resources in the directive.

Difficulties in the expansion of the RAAF continued throughout this period due to continuing shortages in the supply of aircraft and other equipment.[84] In March 1942 the War Cabinet had approved the 73-squadron plan; two months later, the plan was reduced to 45 squadrons by the end of 1943; then in September, the Air Board had decided that planning should be restricted to a total of 35 squadrons by April 1943. This was approved by the War Cabinet in October 1942, with the direction that the plan should be reviewed in six months or earlier if additional aircraft should become available.[85] Two months later there were indications that during 1943 the RAAF might receive sufficient aircraft for a further six squadrons and a further plan for 51 squadrons was proposed. Further indications from Washington in January 1943 that aircraft for nine squadrons may become available resulted in a submission seeking War Cabinet approval for a two-fold plan (Table 7.3):

Type of Sqn	**No at Jan 1943**	**No at Dec 1943**	**No at Dec 1944**
G/R bomber	6	5	9
Torpedo	1	4	4
G/R flying-boat	2	4	4
Dive bomber	5	8	8
Interceptor fighter	6	12	12
Long-range fighter	2	4	6
Army cooperation	2	2	2
Fleet cooperation	1	1	1
Transport	5	5	5
	30	45	51

Table 7.3: RAAF Expansion Plan, January 1943. [86]

[83] Louis Morton, *The War in the Pacific. Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*, Department of the Army, Washington, 1962, ch. XIX.
[84] The following summary is based on Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, pp. 703-707.
[85] War Cabinet Agendum 420/1942, 2 October 1942 and War Cabinet Minute 2423, 5 October 1942. NAA: A2671, 420/1942.
[86] War Cabinet Agendum 420/1942, Supplement 1. 23 February 1943. NAA: A2671, 420/1942.

The plan was based on definite allocations and local orders for the stage to December 1943; the last stage would be re-evaluated on the basis of the manufacturers' capacity in 1943 and 1944. The submission recognised difficulties in two areas. The expansion meant that manpower would be an issue. There was also the difficulty that unless appropriate orders were made immediately, there was a risk that the RAAF would be unable to put aircraft into operation for lack of essential facilities and equipment; hence War Cabinet approval was sought for the needed ancillary elements.

Japanese submarines returned to Australian east coast waters in the period January to June 1943. This was significant for Australia; the loss of one iron ore carrier had a real impact on steel production with a flow on effect on munitions, shipbuilding and production and a concomitant impact on mainland defence as well as the conduct of any offensive to the north.

The first incursion was by the *I-21*, tasked to reconnoitre Sydney. The *I-21* arrived on 18 January, sinking the merchant ship *Kalingo* and damaging the US tanker *Mobilube* some hours later (Map 7.3). A later attack (22 January) damaged the Liberty ship *Peter H Burnett*. On 8 February *I-21* sank the iron ore carrier *Iron Knight*. The last victim of the *I-21* was the Liberty ship *Starr King* on 10 February.[87]

A number of issues emerged for the RAAF. January 1943 had been a period of intense activity with anti-submarine patrols, searches and routine patrols from 10 bases from Bundaberg to Moruya. A total of 190 operations were performed. The number appears impressive but in fact the RAAF was plagued by chronic aircraft shortages in this period, with many operations limited by the number of aircraft available. An example was an anti-submarine patrol out of Coffs Harbour in January to cover a convoy from dawn to dusk. Only one Anson was available so the aircraft flew three sorties, returning to base to refuel; this left the convoy without air cover for two periods of about 1½ hours each.[88] Another issue was experience; few RAAF aircrew had any experience in Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW). The lack of allied submarines to provide training meant that many attacks were made on spurious targets (and sometimes friendly targets)

[87] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 218-220.
[88] RAAF Maritime Trade Protection [compiled post-war], p. 108. AWM: AWM54, 81/4/141.

– dubious experience at best.[89] With the exception of the Catalina (a high-wing flying boat) RAAF aircraft were not suitable for search duties; the Beaufort, Hudson and Anson were all twin-engine low-wing aircraft with poor downward visibility from the body of the aircraft due to the wing and engines, so the pilot, bomb-aimer and gunner positions had to be utilised as well.[90] Odgers also made the point that very few of the hundreds of airmen involved had ever seen a submarine, but were committed to thousands of hours of search and escort duties. Losses were inevitable, particularly in bad weather.[91] These issues were never properly resolved.

The Japanese submarine presence continued with two submarines patrolling the area between Brisbane and Sydney in February and March 1943. The *Iron Knight* was sunk on 8 February and a convoy was attacked on 17 March, without damage. The attacks caused considerable disruption to the already overstretched coastal transport system, particularly the carriage of coal and iron ore. The issue was discussed by the Advisory War Council on 9 February with members concerned about the increased enemy submarine activity. Admiral Royle told the Council that the *Iron Knight* was in a convoy of ten ships with two corvettes as escort, which was "considered reasonable" (but the escorts were unable to locate the submarine). Royle went on to state

> "With the resources at present available, the only method of increasing surface escort would be to reduce the number of convoys, and if the position became acute, this would have to be considered."[92]

The problem was exacerbated by a lack of priority. MacArthur was building up forces in New Guinea and those convoys received the priority.[93] All corvettes commissioned in this period remained on the Australia Station, though many were operating in New Guinea waters; only the bare minimum number of escorts could be spared for Australian coastal convoys.[94] This was only made possible by the increased number of corvettes; by March 1943 over 30 corvettes had been commissioned. Table 7.4 gives the

---

[89] Tactical Bulletin, 29 June 1943 in RAAF Maritime Trade Protection, p. 219. AWM: AWM54, 81/4/141.
[90] The assessment is based on the author's experience of 14 years flying as a RAAF navigator and four years as a Search and Rescue Officer.
[91] George Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p. 145.
[92] Advisory War Council Minute 1140, Submarine Warfare, 9 February 1943. NAA: A5954, 814/2.
[93] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 225.
[94] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 227.

disposition of naval assets, however a comparison with the disposition of anti-submarine vessels in April 1942 (Table 6.1, p. 207) demonstrates that the number of vessels had not increased and the destroyer component had reduced.

Port	**December 1942**	**March 1943**
Sydney	Eight AMS HMAS *Moresby* One Auxiliary A/S One RNethN M/S-A/S	Seven AMS HMAS *Moresby* One Auxiliary A/S One RNethN M/S-A/S
Brisbane	Two AMS	Five AMS
Townsville & NE Area [a]	One RAN DD Two Sloops Seven AMS	Twelve AMS
Darwin	Two AMS	Three AMS
Fremantle & Exmouth Gulf	Two RNethN DD Three AMS	Three AMS
Melbourne	One Auxiliary A/S	One Auxiliary A/S
Total	Thirty-one craft	Thirty-four craft

[a] The requirements of Port Moresby, Milne Bay & forward bases were included in the allocation to Townsville, then re-allocated forward.
AMS: Australia Minesweeper, *Bathurst* class corvette
M/S: Minesweeper
A/S: Anti-submarine
RNethN: Royal Netherlands Navy
DD: Destroyer

Table 7.4: Disposition of RAN Anti-Submarine Craft, December 1942 – March 1943[95]

The peak of the Japanese offensive occurred in the period April to June 1943, with four submarines operating off the east coast in one period. There were a number of attacks, with eleven vessels sunk or damaged in just over two months (Map 7.3).

Enemy attacks on convoys in the period April to June exposed a number of concerns. Convoys were very visible in daylight due to excessive smoke, the escorts were attacking 'non-submarine' echoes and there were doubts about personnel efficiency.

[95] Derived from Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 228.

The radar on escorting aircraft was prone to failure and there were considerable difficulties in aircraft-ship communications.[96]

1943	Name	Nationality	Gross Tonnage	Attacked by	Result
18 Jan	MOBILUBE tanker	U.S.A.	9,860	Torpedo	Badly damaged
18 Jan	KALINGO	Australian	2,047	Torpedoes	Sunk
22 Jan	PETER H. BURNETT	U.S.A.	7,176	Torpedoes	Damaged
8 Feb	IRON KNIGHT	Australian	4,812	Torpedoes	Sunk
10 Feb	STARR KING	U.S.A.	7,176	Torpedoes	Sunk
18 Mar	CHARLES S. JONES	U.S.A.	8,111	Torpedoes	Undamaged
11 Apr	RECINA	Yugoslavia	4,732	Torpedoes	Sunk
24 Apr	KOWARRA	Australian	2,125	Torpedoes	Sunk
26 Apr	LIMERICK	British	8,724	Torpedoes	Sunk
27 Apr	LYDIA M.CHILDS	U.S.A.	7,176	Torpedoes	Sunk
29 Apr	WOLLONGBAR	Australian	2,239	Torpedoes	Sunk
5 May	FINGAL	Norwegian	2,137	Torpedoes	Sunk
12 May	ORMISTON	Australian	5,832	Torpedoes	Damaged
12 May	CARADALE	Australian	1,881	Torpedo	Minor damage
14 May	H.S. CENTAUR	British	3,222	Torpedoes	Sunk
29 May	SHELDON JACKSON	U.S.A.	7,176	Torpedoes	Undamaged
1 Jun	POINT SAN PEDRO	U.S.A.	3,303	Torpedoes	Undamaged
4 Jun	EDWARD CHAMBERS	U.S.A.	4,113	Gun fire	Undamaged
6 Jun	JOHN BARTRAM	U.S.A.	7,176	Torpedo	Undamaged
16 Jun	PORTMAR	U.S.A.	5,551	Torpedoes	Sunk
16 Jun	L.S.T. 469	U.S.A.	5,000	Torpedoes	Badly damaged

Map 7.3: Japanese Submarine Operations, 1943.[97]

[96] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 231-235 analyses the difficulties.
[97] Derived from Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p. 143.

There were difficulties with cooperative operations in the areas of communications, intelligence and coordination of assets and tactics. The RAAF preferred offensive sweeps that actively sought out enemy submarines to the defensive escort of a convoy, while RAN doctrine was based on contemporary Atlantic doctrine which emphasised that the focus of the escorts should be the convoy itself. [98] These problems were recognised and by the end of June 1943 an Anti-Submarine Division had been formed with three naval A/S officers and a RAAF officer co-located in Melbourne. By July, the A/S Division had produced draft combined procedures, which enabled better training for RAN and USN ships. However the RAAF would not release operational control of air assets to a naval commander; issues of operational control of air and sea forces were never properly resolved.[99]

The impact of the Japanese submarine campaign on the Australian war effort was considerable, with cargoes disrupted or lost. This included the import of overseas materials as well as domestic material, in the latter case iron and coal transport was most vulnerable. As Stevens wrote "In essence, the overburdened transportation system retained no slack, and the loss of even one ship could have severe repercussions for particular industries."[100] A number of convoys were delayed after attacks were made, with essential cargoes stalled in port. In May, as Royle had predicted, the number of convoys was halved (double convoys resulted) so that the number of escorts could be increased to at least four; this imposed further delays to cargoes.[101] The loss of shipping capacity could not be sustained and bi-weekly convoys had to resume; the guidelines for independent sailings were also relaxed.[102] The situation remained poor until the submarine campaign ceased in July and shipping capacity had improved by the end of 1943. One severe loss was the hospital ship *Centaur*, which was sunk by the *I-177* off the Queensland coast on 14 May with the loss of 268 lives.

In judging the east coast ASW capability the fit for purpose test is pertinent. In the context of area defence the purpose of ASW was convoy protection, however in both the European war and the Pacific War it was never possible to guarantee that no

---

[98] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 241-2.
[99] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, pp. 242-246 covers the A/S Division.
[100] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 238.
[101] Advisory War Council Minute 1186, 13 May 1943. NAA: A5954, 814/2.
[102] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 236.

submarine would ever get close to a convoy. The purpose was therefore containment, keeping the loss of vessels, cargo and life to a minimum; to achieve that was resource intensive and required optimum use of technology. Containment was achieved in the Atlantic in the second half of 1943, but only partial containment was achieved on the East Coast sea lanes at the time it was needed. Consequently the East Coast ASW capability must be judged as partially fit for purpose.

Evatt made his second overseas trip in the period April to June 1943; the primary purpose of the trip was to procure aircraft for the proposed expansion of the RAAF. He arrived in Washington on 10 Apr 1943 and was there when the Washington Conference took place; as stated earlier, Curtin cabled Evatt that Australia would not make a submission to the conference. Evatt faced a difficult task in arguing for an additional allocation of aircraft since Kenney had said that the RAAF would not be able to man the additional squadrons.[103] Evatt canvassed Churchill who did support the request and Roosevelt agreed to supply approximately 475 aircraft by the end of 1944. However, only 132 were delivered and they were mainly types being superseded, such as the Vultee Vengeance dive-bomber.[104] Evatt arrived in London in June and had little success, though he managed to obtain a promise of two more RAF Spitfire squadrons for service in Australia; 548 and 549 Squadrons arrived one year later, in July 1944.[105]

The development of coast and air defences saw mainland defence reach its zenith towards the end of this period. By November 1942 there were two 9.2-inch guns at Newcastle and Rottnest Island and four at Sydney. More were in country but they had to be sited in fixed concrete emplacements; it took up to 12 months to mount and prove the guns.[106] On 6 July 1942 Land Headquarters authorised the formation of eight 155mm Heavy Batteries (Coast) and associated Coast Artillery Searchlight (CASL) sections.[107] A further three batteries were authorised in October 1942. The 155mm guns and CASL equipment were supplied by the US; each battery had two guns and fire control equipment and two 150mm searchlights with mobile generators. The guns were a US modified French design and were either mobile or fixed, while the US fire control

---

[103] Horner, *High Command*, p. 260.
[104] Horner, *High Command*, p. 261.
[105] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p. 245.
[106] Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 318.
[107] Reg Kidd & Ray Neal, *The 'Letter' Batteries*, published by authors, Castle Crag, 1998, p. 27.

system was replaced by a British-Australian system which increased the rate of fire from four to six rounds per minute.[108] The 155mm batteries were an effective coast defence system. By end November 1942 three batteries were in New Guinea, 'H' Battery was near Cairns, 'C' and 'F' were at Townsville, 'D' and 'G' were at Bribie Island on the northern channel to Moreton Bay, 'L' was at Lytton on the Brisbane River, and 'J' and 'K' were at Fremantle.[109]

The Anti-Aircraft (AA) Artillery organisation reached its peak in this period. Seventeen AA batteries had been authorised by January 1942 and 156 3.7-inch guns were installed by April, with plans to increase this number to 300. Six US AA battalions were in Australia by April, equipped with 3-inch AA guns and .5-inch medium machine guns; they had been deployed to Fremantle, Darwin, Townsville, and Brisbane. By June 1942 five Militia AA regiments had been formed and allotted to the Lines of Communication Areas. Two AIF Light AA (LAA) regiments had returned from the Middle East, been split up and given static roles. Two Heavy AA (HAA) regiments, one AIF and one Militia, had been formed in Queensland and NSW Lines of Communication Areas.

Development continued and by the end of 1942 the AA organisation comprised two HAA regiments, 32 static HAA batteries each with between two and sixteen guns, eleven LAA regiments, sixteen independent LAA batteries, three AA training regiments and one AA training battery. Six elements of this organisation were with New Guinea Force. It came at a cost, the manpower bill was high at 32,000 men.[110] Many of the batteries had dual roles. The LAA Bofors gunners also trained in an anti-tank role and HAA batteries on the coast had a secondary role of coast artillery.[111] The latter posed some problems, recalling that Whyalla had problems obtaining anti-ship ammunition. Overall, the Army AA artillery was an effective force. David Horner makes the point that "From a very small base of knowledge and experience the Australia AA defences expanded at a remarkable rate and played a key role in the defence of Australia."[112]

---

[108] Kidd & Neal. p. 90.
[109] Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 319.
[110] Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 315-318.
[111] Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 317.
[112] Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 318.

Horner's point is valid for the Army, however the air defence system had a number of elements. The CAS, Air Vice Marshal George Jones, raised a memorandum in July 1942 describing the fighter defence organisation; it included the radar warning system, the Voluntary Air Observers' Corps (VAOC) and Fighter Sector Control. The CAS requested that the Defence Committee set up a sub-committee to consider the AA plans of the three services and recommend measures to ensure effective coordination of those plans. The Defence Committee approved the request on 13 November 1942; no reason for the delay has been identified.[113] The sub-committee addressed issues such as the provision of direct communications between the elements of the anti-aircraft system and giving the fighter sector controller negative control over army and navy anti-aircraft weapons (including US AA batteries).[114]

At the same time the Defence Committee was considering the reduction in manning of elements of coastal defence and anti-aircraft artillery and the issues became inter-twined.[115] The sub-committee made recommendations to the Defence Committee; these were endorsed but a full system did not come into service as reductions began to be made; the direct threat to Australia had diminished by mid-1943.

The Defence Committee met on 14 October 1942 to consider the fixed coast and anti-aircraft defences and future equipment requirements. The committee considered the issue in three parts: protection against sea bombardment; protection against torpedo attack and anti-aircraft protection. Clearly the Defence Committee considered that invasion was no longer likely.

The committee considered that all ports liable to sea bombardment were adequately protected with the exception of Fremantle, Darwin and Port Moresby. It recommended that 9.2-inch batteries be installed at those ports. Ports liable to torpedo attack either had

---

[113] Defence Committee Minute156/1942, Coordination of development of anti-aircraft defences, 13 November 1942. NAA: A7942, Z86, Part 1.

[114] Negative control was the authority to order cease fire if a successful air interception appeared possible. Defence Committee Minute 49/1943, Coordination of development of anti-aircraft defences, 22 March 1943. NAA: A7942, Z86, Part 1.

[115] Defence Committee 50/1943 : Reduction of war establishments - Coast and Anti-Aircraft Defences, 22 March 1943. NAA: A2031, 50/1943. Also Defence Committee 110/1943 : Reduction of war establishments - Coast and anti-aircraft defences, 10 Jun 1943. NAA: A2031, 110/1943.

boom nets or they were being installed, but further gun defences were required. The committee recommended that eight twin 6-pounder guns be installed and a further seven sets be ordered from the UK; a prioritised list of installations was included. In considering anti-aircraft protection, the committee looked at sites where 3.7-inch guns could not be sited far enough forward to give adequate protection to seaward and recommended the acquisition of 5.25-inch combined role guns; these had greater range and both anti-aircraft and anti-ship capability. Nine sites were listed for batteries of three guns each, however the committee acknowledged that these guns would not be available for some time.

On 18 January 1943, War Cabinet considered the proposal to increase the coast artillery defences at Fremantle, Darwin and Port Moresby.[116] The proposal included the requirement for an additional 2,750 personnel to be made up of approximately 750 Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS), the substitution of 1,500 AWAS for men in existing units and the release of 500 men from units which would no longer be required when the proposed 9.2-inch guns were in place. The agendum also noted that action had been taken to reduce the WE of all static coast and anti-aircraft units from Cairns to Fremantle and the introduction of AWAS wherever possible. The reduction from full time manning of certain units was also being considered. War Cabinet approved the proposal and noted that a separate agendum was to be submitted on the reduction in full scale manning.[117]

The submission was considered by War Cabinet on 9 April 1943.[118] A total reduction of 3,630 personnel had been implemented in units in Australia and New Guinea. A further reduction of over 8,600 was possible in the ensuing 12 months subject to the availability of suitable VDC and AWAS to replace them. This was approved by War Cabinet. Further submissions were made and approved later in 1943, involving reduction of personnel to 50-70 per cent of establishment; they were replaced by trained VDC on call-out.

---

[116] War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Coast and anti-aircraft defences, 11 January 1943. NAA: A2670, 30/1943

[117] War Cabinet Minute 2605, Coast and anti-aircraft defences, Agendum No 30/1943, 30 January 1943. NAA: A2670, 30/1943

[118] War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Supplement 1, 9 April 1943. NAA: A2670, 30/1943

This sequence of reductions and substitutions indicate the War Cabinet's recognition of a reduced threat, despite being coincident with vacillating threat perceptions, as well as the manpower problem (addressed below).

By Mid-1943 Army had established standardised training to ensure that properly trained units went to fight in New Guinea.[119] The Atherton Tableland, south-west of Cairns, was developed in late 1942 to support three divisions plus hospitals and convalescent depots. This placed troops closer to New Guinea and provided rugged jungle country suitable for training. In time accommodation was provided for more than 70,000 troops. From early 1943 when the 7th Division and 16th Brigade began to arrive at Atherton, nearly all malaria-infected units returning from service in New Guinea went there for anti-malaria treatment before going on leave, and then usually returned for further training.

Training of new recruits was conducted at Canungra in the Macpherson Ranges (south of Brisbane), where jungle conditions were also available. The LHQ Training Centre (Jungle Warfare) was formed on 3 November 1942. By May 1943 Canungra consisted of an infantry training centre for jungle warfare and a Commando Training Battalion for the seven Independent Companies. The centre was established for 2,000 reinforcements in training, with 500 completing training each week.

Canungra training was hard and realistic; the concept was that the men should live and train under conditions similar to those of active service. The reinforcements were put through a stringent physical fitness test and given confidence in themselves and their weapons. With practically no amenities and little leave, the men were rigorously trained for six days and nights per week for three weeks. On the fourth week they were sent into the rough Macpherson bush on a six-day exercise in which they carried all their own supplies. If the men passed this final test they were qualified as fit for jungle warfare. The training for the Independent Companies was even more stringent over a period of eight weeks.

[119] The description of training is from David Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, pp. 228-229.

The result was the formation of professional and skilled field formations. Their purpose was to take the offensive against the Japanese but the presence of these units in Queensland augmented mainland defence in the north-eastern area of Australia.

The organisation of Australian Army formations in April 1943 is shown in Table 7.5 and reflects a better disposition of the force summarised in Table 7.1. Dexter made the point that Australia, with a population of 7 million had an army of 12 divisions, nearly 500,000 men or around 7 per cent of the population. The number of divisions was greater in proportion to the population than in Britain or the US. Even though a number of units were under-strength, some reduction was inevitable.[120]

Army/Corps/Force	Formations	Units
First Army: Toowoomba, Qld	4th Division 3rd Armoured Division Torres Strait Force	6th, 11th, 12th, 14th Brigades 2nd Armoured and 1st Motor Brigades
II Corps: Barrine (E of Atherton), Qld	6th Division 7th Division 9th Division	16th, 30th Brigades 18th, 21st, 25th Brigades 20th, 24th, 26th Brigades
Second Army: Parramatta, NSW	1st Division 3rd Army Tank Brigade	1st, 9th, 28th Brigades
III Corps: Mount Lawley, WA	2nd Division 1st Armoured Division	2nd, 5th, 8th Brigades 1st Armoured Brigade, 3rd Motor Brigade
Northern Territory Force: Darwin	NT Force	13th, 19th, 23rd Brigades
New Guinea Force: Port Moresby	3rd Division (Bulolo) 5th Division (Milne Bay) 11th Division (Port Moresby)	17th Brigade 4th, 29th Brigades 7th, 15th Brigades
L.H.Q. Reserve :	3rd Brigade 4th Armoured Brigade	Adelaide Singleton, NSW

Table 7.5: Australian Army Formations, April 1943.[121]

The need for a light-weight air transportable radar became evident as the war progressed. The Radio Physics Laboratory was given the task and modified the current AW system which was in full production in Australia. A new aerial was developed by the NSW Government Railways, the aerial was turned manually and

[120] Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p. 15.
[121] Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p. 16.

power was provided by a small air-cooled generator (adapted from the Howard rotary hoe). The LW/AW radar was very successful and 151 were produced for both the Australian and US air forces. There were problems: the generator was not reliable and required a lot of maintenance and the set suffered from the tropical problems experienced by all electronic equipment, condensation and mould in particular, but it worked. The LW/AW was a useful addition to the Australian radar chain, boosting the slim barrier.[122]

The Australian radar chain developed steadily throughout the period (Table 7.6). The chain was always fluid, particularly with the mobile stations; details of radar stations and dispositions are at Attachment Two.

Date	Area	Number	Radar Types
30 June 1942	North: Exmouth to Townsville	7 stations:	5 AW/ COL; 2 MAWD
	South: Geraldton to Brisbane	10 stations:	9 AW/ COL; 1 MAWD
31 December 1942	North: Exmouth to Townsville	16 stations:	12 AW/ COL; 3 MAWD; 1 Mobile GCI
	South: Geraldton to Brisbane	15 stations:	10 AW/ COL; 3 MAWD; 1 Mobile GCI; 1 ACO
10 June 1943	North: Exmouth to Townsville	36 stations:	18 AW/ COL; 3 MAWD; 1 Mobile GCI; 12 LW/AW
	South: Geraldton to Brisbane	27 stations:	19 AW/ COL; 2 MAWD; 3 Mobile GCI; 3 ACO

ACO	Advanced Chain Overseas	GCI	Ground Control Intercept
AW	Air Warning	LW/AW	Light Weight Air Warning
COL	Chain Overseas Low Flying	MAWD	Modified Air Warning Device

Table 7.6: Development of the Australian Radar System, 1942-43.[123]

With respect to intelligence and surveillance the AIB was established by the end of this period, supported by the COIC system and the individual service intelligence arms. Intelligence was becoming more reliable as seen by the summaries available to the War Cabinet.

[122] Development of the LW/AW Radar. NAA: A9695, 214. Also, RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Vol 5, Radar Units, pp. 15-7.
[123] RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Vol. 5, Radar Units, pp. 76-152.

By 1943 the coastwatch organisation comprised the Navy coastwatchers, while the Army had Coast Observation Posts and Air Force the VAOC. The development of the RAAF radar network also contributed.

The Army system of Coast Observation Posts, Military Reporting Officers and the NAOU comprised a total of 1,780 personnel at 171 posts around Australia, predominantly along the east and north-east coasts, the Darwin area and the NT north coast, and west and north-west coasts. The information was passed to the COICs in each state for processing. It must be noted that there were gaps in the remote areas and the system in the Gulf of Carpentaria was reported as unsatisfactory.[124]

An ancillary service of considerable value to mainland defence was the VAOC.[125] Inaugurated in 1941, it had developed rapidly. The system comprised a section at Fighter Sector Control, linked to main control posts with a number of control posts which were in turn linked to the observation posts. Communications between observation and control posts used the telephone system and teleradio sets were installed at control posts for communication with the main control posts. In north-western Australia, between Darwin and Port Hedland, communications used the pedal radio sets that had been installed as part of the Flying Doctor Service network. The system ranged from Cairns down the eastern seaboard and west to Ceduna. In WA it extended from Albany north to Geraldton. Port Hedland to Darwin was also covered. After the formation of Allied Air Headquarters, the VAOC system was expanded. By May 1943 the corps comprised Darwin, six capital city and 36 other control posts and 2,639 observation posts, and had a membership of 38,000. Although primarily a land warning system for tracking the movements of enemy aircraft, the VAOC contributed to the coastwatch system and gave valuable aid to Allied aircraft in difficulty.

Turning to lines of communication, by March 1943 the road from Alice Springs to Birdum (the southern terminus of the North Australia railway) had been sealed. The improvement was significant with Army reporting that vehicle breakdowns were only about half that of five months previously and the breakdowns were generally less

---

[124] Coast Observation Posts – Summary, 13 May 1943. NAA: MP729/6, 37/401/2145.
[125] Douglas Gillison, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, pp. 492-3.

serious.[126] Initially, the 'road' from Mt Isa to the North-South road was under the control of the Australian Army. It was really a track and in poor condition, but some convoys had been run before the road was assigned to the US Army.[127] The US Motor Transport Command No1 arrived in Mt Isa in June 1942, with 5,000 personnel and 1,482 vehicles. The first convoy left on 28 June. Conditions were as bad as the early days of the north-south road, with the men having similar problems and the vehicles needing continuous maintenance. However the road was gradually improved and the convoys continued until 25 April 1943 when the work devolved back to the Australian Army. The US unit had run 173 convoys, carrying over 30,000 tons of cargo. They left behind a bitumen road, a series of wells and a telephone line.[128]

The RAAF transport capability remained slight throughout this period.[129] The first transport squadron (No 34) had been formed at Darwin in February 1942, relocated to Parafield, near Adelaide, in December and commenced a scheduled service between Parafield and the NT in 1942. The squadron first operated two ex-commercial DH-84 Dragon aircraft but these proved unreliable and were replaced by two Anson in May. Further squadrons formed at Townsville in February 1942, operating ex-Qantas Empire Flying Boats and a mixed variety of land aircraft, Pearce in March with light land aircraft, Laverton in March with three ex-commercial Douglas DC-2 and a variety of smaller aircraft, and Townsville in August 1942 with flying boats (Empire and ex-NEI Dornier). The flying boats operated a number of regular schedules in Australia and New Guinea and had an air-sea rescue role.

The early land transport aircraft were mostly British De Havilland types. Their cruising speeds were slow, the range short and the payload low. The aircraft were unsuitable for long range flying in outback Australian conditions, being wood and fabric construction and easily damaged. Utilisation rates were low due to mechanical problems and damage. Lack of air and ground navigation aids meant the flights were in daylight only. Weather conditions could be severe, ranging from strong winds and storms in the south,

---

[126] Minutes of Meeting, Allied Works Council, 4 March 1943. NAA: A431, 1946/424.
[127] Alan Smith, *Outback Corridor*, pp. 87-101.
[128] Alan Smith, *Outback Corridor*, Appendix 8.
[129] Information derived from RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Vol. 4, Maritime and Transport Units. Also Robert H. Kelly, *Allied Air Transport Operations: South West Pacific Area in WWII, Volume One: Development of Air Transport 1903-1943*, published by author, 2003.

high temperatures and resulting severe mechanical turbulence in the outback and tropical weather in the north, particularly during the wet season.[130] Clearly these aircraft were not fit for purpose.

The first three US-made all-metal C-47 Dakota entered service in May 1943 and further aircraft arrived by the end of the year. The new aircraft was robust and reliable; it provided a real transport capability, with a payload of up to 12,000 pounds and a range of up to 1,170nm.[131] However the numbers operating in Australia were never sufficient for the need, Darwin for instance continued to rely on road and sea LoC.

The rail system remained cumbersome. The problem of the different gauges could not be resolved and most of the work done on the rail systems was to improve carrying capacity. The movement of troops north was therefore slow with two gauge changes between South Australia/Victoria and NSW/Queensland. However there was never a need for rapid mass movement of troops; the movement of forces north to Queensland commenced in July 1942 and was achieved without major problems, so the rail system did meet its purpose.

By June 1943 the defences at Darwin had reached their peak and dispositions were stable. Plans were in place to meet a Japanese assault from the likely approaches and the plans had been exercised. NT Force had two elements: the Darwin Fortress and the NT Field Force (Table 7.7).

[130] Kelly, *Allied Air Transport Operations*, p. 272.
[131] Kenneth Munson, *Aircraft of World War II*, Ian Allen, London, 1962, p. 64.

Unit	Location [a]	Details
HQ NT Force	Adelaide River	(73 miles [a])
Darwin Fortress		
East Battery Emery Battery West Battery	East Point Emery Point West Point	two 6-inch guns two 6-inch guns two 4-inch guns, twin 6-pdr guns
21, 22, 61 Field Batteries	Darwin area	18 or 25 pounder guns
7 Infantry Battalion	Darwin area	
AAA	Darwin area	Twenty 3.7-inch guns and five Bofors
NT Field Force		
23 Infantry Brigade (Bde)	30.0 – 41.0	19 MG Battalion; 10/48 and 8 Infantry Battalions; 42 Field Battery
13 Infantry Bde	49.5 – 53.5	11, 16 and 28 Infantry Battalions; 43 Field Battery
19 Infantry Bde	63.0 – 68.0	23/21, 2/8 and 40 Infantry Battalions; 41 Field Battery
AAA	various	43 Bofors, six 3-inch guns and eight static 3.7-inch guns; airfield protection at Strauss, Hughes, Livingstone, Batchelor, Coomalie and Fenton.
2/8 Independent Coy	67.0	
2/6 Cavalry Regt	98.0	
2/1 NAOU	Katherine (HQ)	A Coy Roper River area (NT); B Coy Wyndham area (WA); C Coy Burketown area (Qld)

[a] For locations without a name the location is the road distance to Darwin (miles).

Table 7.7: Major Army Units, NT Force, May 1943.[132]

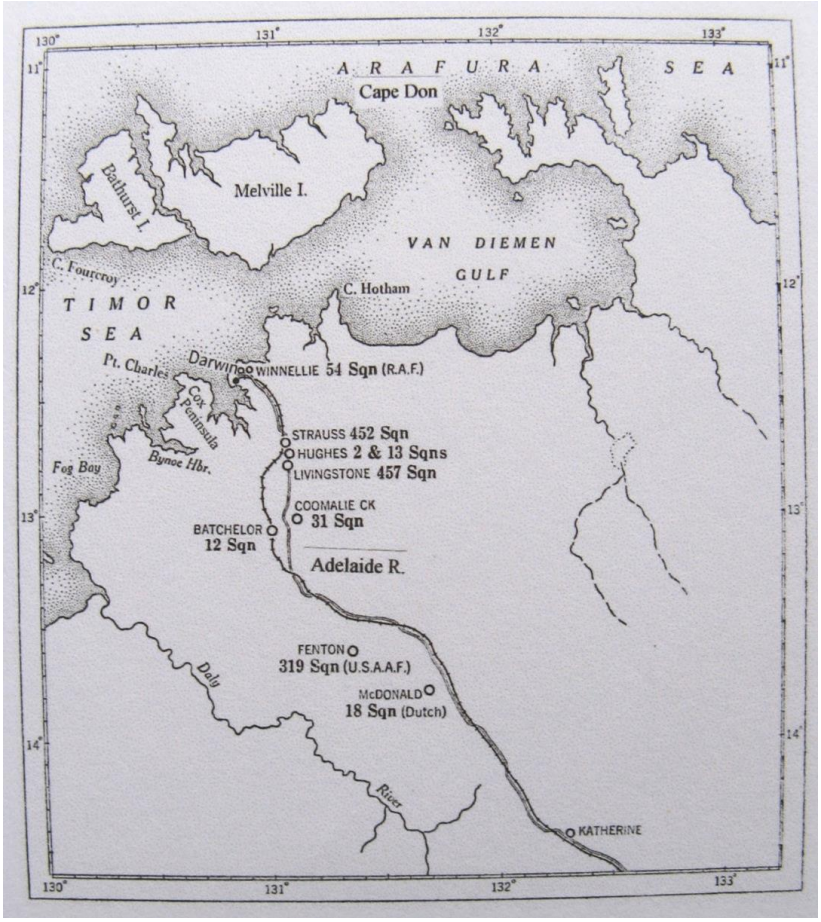
The air force at Darwin was a balanced force (Table 7.8, Map 7.4), with fighters, strike and bomber aircraft, accepting that by 1943 the Hudson and Vengeance aircraft were becoming obsolescent. The air defence was effective against daylight raids, with good radar cover (Table 7.9) and a strong fighter force. Darwin and the Darwin area had a total of five air raids in the first half of 1943 (Attachment One). The first two in January were night raids by a small numbers of bombers; intercepts were attempted with little success and there were no casualties and little damage. Two in March and one in May were more substantial daylight raids, all were intercepted by Spitfires with a total of 12

[132] Graham McKenzie Smith, *Australia's Forgotten Army*, Volume 2, p. 144. AAA data: Horner, *The Gunners*, p. 380.

fighters and seven bombers destroyed for the loss of 16 Spitfires. The raid on 15 March caused considerable damage to Darwin's oil tanks.

Squadron	Aircraft	Base
No 2 General-Reconnaissance Bomber	Hudson	Hughes
No 12 Dive Bomber	Vengeance	Batchelor
No 13 General-Reconnaissance Bomber	Hudson	Hughes
No 31 Long-Range Fighter	Beaufighter	Coomalie
No 452 Fighter	Spitfire	Strauss
No 457 Fighter	Spitfire	Livingstone
No 54 Fighter (RAF)	Spitfire	Darwin
319th Heavy Bomber (USAAF)	Liberator	Fenton
No 18 NEI Medium Bomber	Mitchell	McDonald, Fenton

Table 7.8: Air Forces at Darwin – April 1943.[133]



Map 7.4: NT Force area and Air Bases, April 1943.[134]

[133] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, pp. 40-1.
[134] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p.40.

Darwin and area (listed in order of arrival date; a second date is departure date)			
	44 Radar Wing, Adelaide River	14 Dec 1942 - 22 Aug 1944	
31/310	Dripstone Caves, Fenton, Sattler	22 Mar 1942 - 16 Jan 1945	AW/ COL
105	Point Charles	1 Jun 1942	MAWD
38	Darwin	25 Jun 1942 - 14 Aug 1942	AW/ COL
109	Mount Woods, Adelaide River, Nightcliff	29 Jul 1942	MAWD
132	Knuckey's Lagoon	9 Nov 1942	Mobile GCI
308	Darwin, Batchelor	1 Jan 1943 - 1 Apr 1943	LW/AW
309	Darwin, Fenton	12 Jan 1943 - 3 May 1943	LW/AW
224	Old Southport Road	24 May 1943	ACO
318	Batchelor	4 Jun 1943 - 21 Aug 1943	LW/AW
38	Cape Fourcroy	14 Aug 1942	AW/ COL
318	Cape Don	21 Aug 1943 - 7 Apr 1945	LW/AW
46	Cape Don	28 Mar 1943	AW/ COL

Table 7.9: RAAF Radar Units, Darwin Area, May 1943.[135]

As long as the Japanese maintained air superiority in the Darwin area, no major RAN vessels could be based at Darwin, though they did come to Darwin for specific operations. For example, a number of vessels were deployed to Darwin after the decision was made on 28 November 1942 to withdraw the 2/2 Independent Company from Timor. During this operation HMAS *Armidale* was sunk on 1 December. The Dutch destroyer *Tjerk Hiddes* collected more personnel in the period 10-19 December, then returned to Fremantle. HMAS *Arunta* picked up the rest on 10 January 1943, then returned to Cairns.[136]

By mid-1943 the permanent naval forces in Darwin comprised the Boom Defence system, the indicator loops about three miles north of the harbour entrance and the Port

[135] RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History*, Vol. 5 – Radar Units, pp.7 6-152.
[136] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 211-224.

War Signal Station. The Boom Defence had two vessels for maintenance and gate-keeping duties.[137]

The defence of Sydney also reached its peak by mid-1943. The coast defence system is depicted at Table 7.10 and Maps 7.5 and 7.6.

Place (Battery, Section)	**Gun**	**Range** (yards)	**Role**	**Date**
Middle Head (Middle)	Two 6-inch Mk7	14,000	CD	1912
North Head (North)	Two 9.2-inch	28,800	CB, CD	1938
Cape Banks (Banks)	Two 9.2-inch	28,800	CB, CD	1938
Signal Hill (Signal)	Two 6-inch Mk11	19,000	CB, CD	1938
South Head (Hornby)	Two 6-inch Mk7	14,000	CD, Ex	1939
Manly (Shelly Section)	One 12-pdr QF	6,000	CD	1940
Henry Head (Henry)	Two 18-pdr QF	10,000	AMTB, CD	1942
Long Bay (Malabar)	Two 6-inch Mk12	22,300	CB, CD	1942
Green Point (Green Section)	Twin 6-pdr QF	note 1	AMTB	1943
Georges Head (Casemate Section)	Twin 6-pdr QF	note 1	AMTB	1943
Obelisk Bay (Obelisk Section)	Twin 6-pdr QF	note 1	AMTB	1943

[1] Not applicable, internal waters so range restricted by distance to opposite shore

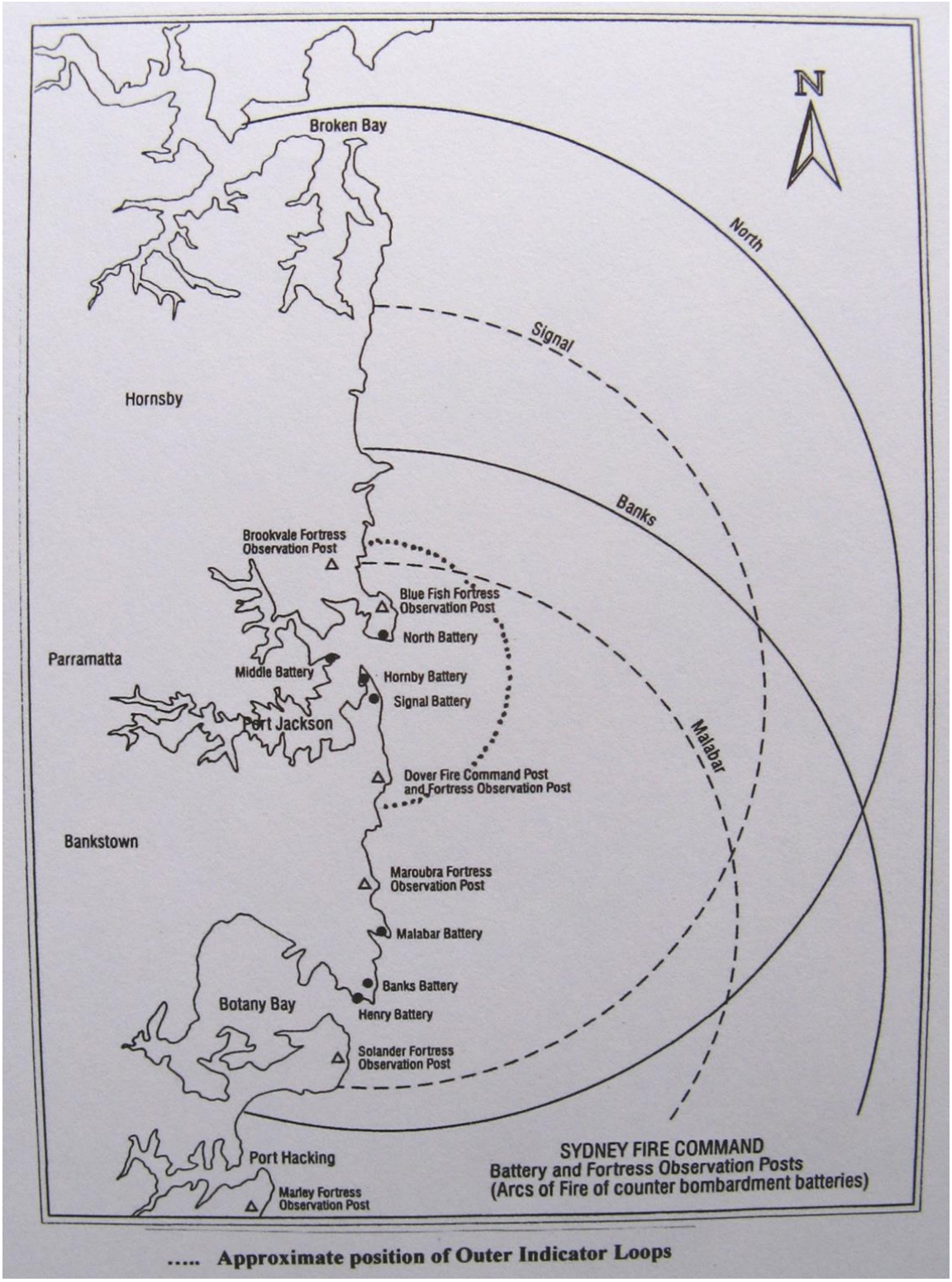
AMTB	Anti-Motor Torpedo Boat	Ex	Examination
CB	Counter-bombardment	pdr	pounder
CD	Close Defence	QF	Quick Firing

Observation and Control, Searchlights and Radars

Fire Command Post	Dover Heights
Night Fire Command Post	South Head
Fortress Observation Posts	Marley, Solander, Maroubra, Dover Heights, Bluefish, Brookvale
Each battery	Observation Post, Plotting Room
Each section	Observation Post
Searchlights	Banks, Malabar, Signal Hill, Hornby, Middle, North
Gun-Laying Radars	Marley, Solander, Dover Heights, Bluefish, Brookvale

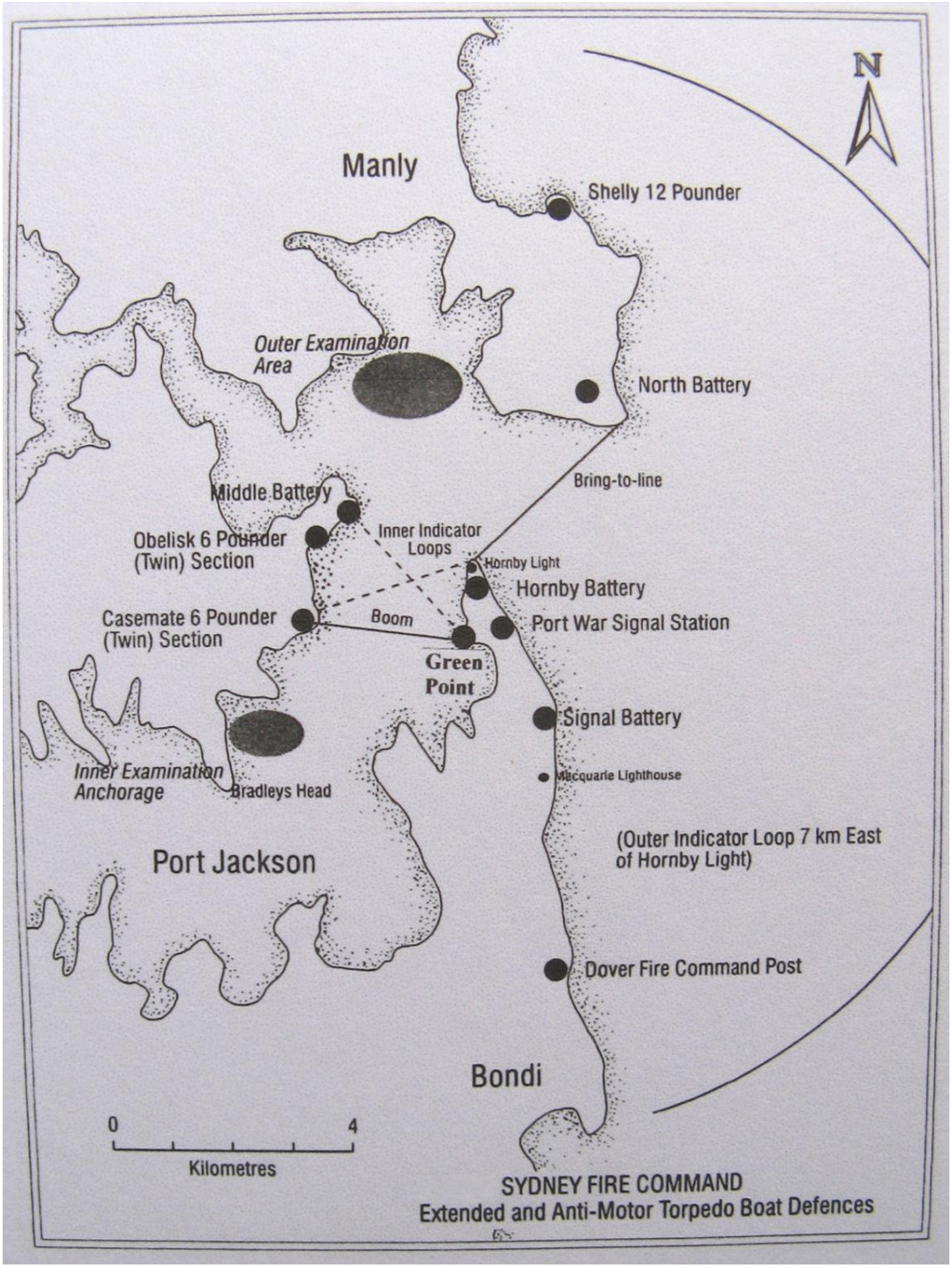
Table 7.10: Sydney Batteries 1943.[138]

[137] Pat Forster, 'Fixed Naval Defences in Darwin Harbour 1939 – 1945', *Sea Power Centre – Australia*, <http://www.navy.gov.au>, accessed 29 August 2009.
[138] RK Fullford, *We stood and waited: Sydney's anti-ship defences, 1939-1945*, Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society, Manly, 1994, pp. 223-231.



Map 7.5: Sydney Fire Command – Outer Defence.[139]

[139] Fullford, *We stood and waited*, p. 14.



Map 7.6: Sydney Fire Command – Inner Defence.[140]

[140] Fullford, p. 16.

Considering air defence, Sydney was not well served by the RAAF in terms of aircraft with just seven squadrons of inadequate types (Table 7.11). However there was good radar coverage (Table 7.12). There were 28 3.7-inch anti-aircraft guns in place.[141] Light AA guns (40mm Bofors) were being received from the UK and a number had been installed by June 1943.

Squadron	Aircraft	Base
Eastern Area		
No 5 Army Cooperation	Wirraway	Kingaroy, Qld
No 23 Dive Bomber	Wirraway	Lowood, Qld
No 24 Dive Bomber	Wirraway	Bankstown, NSW
No 32 General-Reconnaissance Bomber	Hudson	Camden, NSW
No 71 Reconnaissance and Submarine Patrol	Anson	Lowood, Qld
No 73 Reconnaissance and Submarine Patrol	Anson	Nowra, NSW
No 83 Fighter	Wirraway	Strathpine, Qld

Table 7.11: RAAF Squadrons – Eastern Area – April 1943.[142]

Sydney & area (listed in order of arrival date; a second date is departure date)			
101/54	Collaroy	14 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
207	Croydon, Lilli Pilli	24 Aug 1942	ACO
136	Bunnerong Park	12 Apr 1943 - 7 Jun 1943	Mobile GCI
134	Maroubra, Beverley Hills	28 Apr 1943	Mobile GCI
Broken Bay			
19	Bombi	19 Apr 1942	AW/ COL

Table 7.12: RAAF Radar Stations – Sydney – April 1943.[143]

[141] Summary of the Australian War Effort, May 1942. A5954, 314/2
[142] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p.141.
[143] RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History*, Volume 5 – Radar Units, pp.76-152.

Production of small arms and machine-guns continued to improve during the period (Table 7.13).

Production of Small Arms and Machine-Guns				
	1940	1941	1942	1943
Rifles 0.303-in	3,480	35,040	82,098	136,232
Vickers Machine-Guns 0.303-in	735	1,791	2,748	2,679
Bren Guns 0.303-in	-	186	3,081	6,848

Table 7.13: Production of Small Arms and Machine-Guns.[144]

Despite this there were still areas of shortfall, particularly with rifles and Vickers machine guns. In October 1942 Army had a shortfall of over 190,000 rifles, Navy was short 3,500 and Air Force short by over 67,000, the latter partly due to a changed airfield defence policy.[145] The problem was addressed by getting 40,000 rifles from the UK and increasing production to 3,000 per month. There was a similar problem with the Vickers MG: Army had a shortfall of over 2,900, Navy was short over 600 and Air Force by over 2,000. With production limited to 70 per week the solution was more problematic.[146]

The situation was different with some heavier weapons. In November 1942 the Defence Committee recommended the release of munitions for reassignment by the London Munitions Board (Table 7.14). The War Cabinet became concerned about over-production, expressing the view that despite "repeated directions over a prolonged period" it appeared that the Defence Committee and service departments (particularly Army) failed to realise the gravity of the manpower problem and the need to divert surplus productive capacity to more urgent needs.[147] The over-production was not great, however the War Cabinet was dealing with the move to a total war footing and its direction that the Defence Committee expedite a review of service requirements, including manpower, was appropriate. The Defence Committee reviewed weapons

[144] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 324.
[145] Defence Committee Minute 142/1942 Allocation of supply of rifles, 9 October 1942. NAA: A2031.
[146] Defence Committee Minute 141/1942 Allocation of Vickers Guns. NAA: 141/1942.
[147] War Cabinet Minute 2714, 23 March 1943. NAA: A5954, 809/1.

production and War Cabinet approved recommendations for some reduction of production.[148]

	Requirements	Stock	Surplus	Released	Assigned to
3.7 inch Anti-Aircraft Guns	423	479	56	50	India 42, NZ 8
25 pounder Field Guns	1,166	1,184	18	50	New Zealand
3 inch Mortars	1,512	1,576	64	50	New Zealand

Table 7.14: Munitions Released for Assignment by London Munitions Board, November 1942.[149]

Shipbuilding capability and capacity continued to improve. The second Tribal class destroyer, HMAS *Arunta*, was commissioned on 23 November 1942 and 14 Bathurst class corvettes were commissioned during the holding war.[150] BHP had commenced shipbuilding and two iron ore carriers were under construction with the *Iron Monarch* commissioned on 12 April 1943.[151]

Aircraft construction also continued. The Wirraway program was completed in June 1942, with 620 aircraft produced. The Boomerang program started in July 1942, with 105 aircraft produced by June 1943. The Beaufort program continued; 305 aircraft were produced by June 1943.[152]

On 19 August 1942, Curtin called on all Australians to reconcile themselves to "a season of austerity". Curtin wanted a united, determined and self-sacrificing nation: "The civil population can learn to discipline itself, it can learn to go without."[153] Further, on 24 August Curtin announced a "Loan and Austerity Campaign" with the intent of raising £100 million. The two measures were designed to muster to the fullest the national capability to wage war.

---

[148] A number of Defence Committee meetings were held to establish the Consolidated Programmes of War Materials; examples are NAA: A2031, 53/1943 and 62/1943. War Cabinet Minute 2771, Review of Services Consolidated Programmes of War Materials, Agendum 169/1943, 14 April 1943. NAA: A5954, 809/1.

[149] Defence Committee Minute 158/1942, Assignment to United Kingdom of Surplus Stocks of 3.7 inch Anti-Aircraft Guns, 25 Pounder Field Guns and 3 Inch Mortars, 17 November 1942. NAA: A2031, 158/1942.

[150] HT Lenton & J.J. Colledge, *Warships of World War II*, Ian Allen, London, 1964, pp. 107-8, 186-9.

[151] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, p. 462.

[152] Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, pp. 410-3.

[153] Digest of Decisions No38, 15 August – 1 September 1942, pp. 8-9. NAA: B5459, 38.

Despite Curtin's call industrial problems continued, particularly in the coal mines. Amendments to the National Security (Coal Control) Regulations were made on 5 July 1942 that enabled prosecution in certain cases.[154] The strikes mostly originated on the shop floor; the Miners' Federation supported the regulations and attempted to control strikes, albeit with little success. Problems continued however, mostly in NSW. It was not just coal; in all industries in the March quarter of 1942, when the threat to Australia was at its peak, there were 123 disputes in Australia (114 in NSW). In the June quarter of 1943, this had climbed to 212 disputes in Australia (192 in NSW). In the period January 1942 to June 1943 there were 1,032 disputes in Australia totalling 939,433 working days lost.[155] Further, as working hours grew longer and overcrowding meant working conditions worsened in all industries, absenteeism became a significant issue. It is impossible to quantify how much production was lost, but the impact on the Australian war effort was considerable.

One government response was to change the National Security Regulations in May and June 1943; any worker in essential industry who refused to work would "be deemed not to be employed in a protected undertaking" and be either subject to military call up or directed to provide work or services under the Manpower regulations.[156]

There was one issue that was to plague Australia for the rest of the war – manpower. Hasluck said

> "Early in 1943 there were clear signs that the Australian war effort was in danger of getting out of hand. The anxieties and the energy of the Government had led the nation into more commitments than it could discharge."[157]

The issue has been well covered in a range of secondary sources; this section will provide a broad outline in the context of the impact on mainland defence. [158]

---

[154] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 248-270 examines the issues in detail.
[155] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p. 262.
[156] Digest of Decisions No59, 13 May – 2 June 1942, p. 38. NAA: B5459, 59.
[157] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p. 283.
[158] In government terms see Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, ch. 9,14 and *Defence Supremo* ch. 8; Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, ch.10 and *The Government and the People 1942-1945* ch. 5,7; and Robertson, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, ch. 21. In military terms see Long, *The Final Campaigns*, ch. 2, and *The Six Years War*, *passim*. In economic terms see S.J. Butlin, *War Economy 1939-1942*, ch. 7; S.J. Butlin and C.B. Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, ch. 14; and E. Ronald Walker, *The Australian Economy in War and Reconstruction*, Oxford University Press, New York 1947, ch. 12. In industrial terms see Mellor, *The Role of Science and Industry*, ch. 9.

Control of manpower had begun under the Menzies government, but had been in abeyance with the change of government and the rapid series of disasters that followed the start of the Pacific War. The Manpower Directorate was formed on 29 January 1942, with wide-ranging powers to control male labour. During this time the government's focus was on the protection of Australia from invasion or major incursion, while trying to organise the nation for total war. Initially the fear of invasion meant that the needs of the services were paramount, but the arrival of US forces gave pause for reconsideration.

On 8 April 1942 the War Cabinet was presented with an estimate by the Director-General of Manpower that at least 291,000 additional men and 24,000 additional women would be required for the fighting services, munitions, shipbuilding, aircraft production, and works. Consequently it was necessary to review Australian war commitments as a whole, including the services, essential industries and munitions projects.[159] An inter-departmental committee reported to the War Cabinet on 12 May. The additional requirements, up to the end of 1942, were about 318,000 men and women and these could be met only by a "great increase" in the employment of women and by a drastic reduction in the production of goods and services for the civilian population. Plans for expansion of the forces and war industries should continue, but the commitments should be kept under review. The War Cabinet approved, or approved in principle, the recommendations.[160]

The committee reported again on 20 August 1942; it presented a grim situation. In the three months to 30 June 105,100 persons (90,500 men and 14,600 women) had been provided towards requirements, around one third of the estimated 318,000. However the requirements for the remainder of 1942 had been revised downwards to 153,100 persons (119,100 men and 34,000 women). This was for the services, Munitions, Aircraft Production and the Allied Works Council (AWC). A late revision by the AWC added 10,000 persons (presumably mostly men) to their requirement. The figures did not

---

[159] War Cabinet Agendum 197/1942, Review of War Commitments in the light of Altered Conditions and Establishment, 8 April 1942. NAA: A5954, 469/1.

[160] War Cabinet Agendum 197/1942, Supplement 1, 20 August 1942. NAA: A9816, 1944/155 Part 4. The committee comprised the Ministers for Army, Navy, Air, Munitions, Supply and Development, War Organization of Industry, Labour and National Service, and Commerce.

include an estimated 20,000 men and 10,000 women required for the private sector. Finally, in the event of troops in Australia being "engaged in hostilities", Army estimated an additional 40,000 men would be required as reinforcements. In the worst case scenario the requirement by the end of 1942 amounted to 233,100 persons (189,100 men and 44,000 women), in addition to the 105,100 already found. The committee felt that only draconian measures could resolve the situation but even then little could be achieved in 1942, by the end of which the manpower deficiency would be serious.[161]

The situation was taken to the Full Cabinet on 22 September which established the War Commitments Committee to review the implications of the delay. This committee met in early 1943 and examined the whole manpower situation; it found that the pool of men classed as suitable for military service was virtually empty outside the war industries and essential services. Consequently the current service programmes could only be met by withdrawing men from those industries and replacing them by other men and women, and even then those industries would lose manpower. In short the services and war industries wanted 24,000 men and 11,000 women a month. Against this the supply was estimated at no more than 5,000 men and 5,000 women a month. Clearly, some drastic measures were required.[162]

The Full Cabinet approved a range of measures in late January 1943, including amendment of the Manpower Regulations to give the Director-General power to direct labour.[163] Then on 30 January the War Cabinet directed the Production Executive to establish the restrictive measures needed to resolve the gap between supply and demand for manpower.[164]

The situation reflected the changed war environment for Australia. In early 1942 the war aim was simple: protect Australia from invasion or major incursion – mainland defence. As the Allied strength in Australia increased the war effort became

---

[161] Second Report of the Departmental Committee, 20 August 1942. NAA: A9816, 1944/155 Part 4.
[162] Review of War Commitments in Terms of Full Cabinet Agendum 327/1942, 6 January 1943. NAA: A9816, 1944/155 Part 4.
[163] Full Cabinet Memorandum to Minister for War Organisation of Industry, 27 January 1943. NAA: A9816, 1944/155 Part 4.
[164] War Cabinet Minute 2616, Review of War Commitments, 30 January 1943 in War Cabinet Agendum 197/1942, Supplement 4, 20 August 1942. NAA: A9816, 1944/155 Part 4.

multi-faceted, with new demands for Australian manpower. These included maintenance of the Australian armed forces, the requirements for support of the US forces, the production of war material and the provision of food for Britain. Adjustments to meet the demands took some time but by the end of April 1943 the government had put in place a range of measures to meet them, particularly the production of foodstuffs. Indeed Curtin declared on 13 July 1943 that "production of essential foods is to be regarded as a war activity".[165] At this time, as Hasluck put it, "The claims of the services against the claims of industry brought the sharpest conflicts in the whole struggle to obtain manpower."[166]

In February 1943 Curtin told Blamey that Australia had reached "the maximum of her manpower, material and financial resources" and that a review of commitments was necessary.[167] Blamey was further tasked by the War Cabinet in March.[168] Blamey was aware that the army already had insufficient men to man its war establishment. The monthly intake was about half that required, while the impact of tropical diseases, particularly malaria, contributed to a high wastage rate in New Guinea.[169]

Blamey reported to War Cabinet in late April. Blamey proposed that, in view of the improved strategic situation, it was now "a justifiable and indeed an unavoidable risk" to reduce mainland forces in areas remote from the enemy, that is reduce mainland defence, and concentrate forces where they were most needed. [170] Blamey stated that the re-organisation was driven by the need to provide three infantry divisions for offensive operations in the SWPA in accordance with MacArthur's plans and provision of an adequate force for the defence of Australia and New Guinea and for relief of New Guinea units. To achieve those aims the Army needed nine infantry divisions (three in New Guinea), two armoured divisions, one armoured brigade and one Army tank brigade. David Dexter later wrote that the forces required for purely defensive roles in

---

[165] Digest of Decisions and Announcements, No 61, p.9. NAA: B5459, 61.
[166] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, p. 293.
[167] War Cabinet Minute 2649, Agendum No 68/1943, Defence and War Expenditure, Review as at 31st December 1942, 15 February 1943. NAA: A5954, 808/2.
[168] War Cabinet Minute 2715, Agendum No 106/1943, Incidence of Malaria and other Tropical Diseases in the Forces in New Guinea, 23 March 1943. NAA: A5954, 809/1.
[169] Allan S. Walker, *Clinical Problems of War*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, pp. 81-114 examines the malaria problem in New Guinea in 1942-43. In December 1942/ January 1943 the New Guinea incidence peaked at 104 hospital admissions per 1,000 men per month.
[170] War Cabinet Agendum 106/1943, Supplement 1, Re-Organisation of the AMF, 12 April 1943. NAA: A2671, 106/1943.

Australia and New Guinea seemed "to have been estimated on a lavish scale"; in view of the Japanese naval and air losses by April 1943 the point is hard to refute.[171]

Some reductions had been made in the Order of Battle (OoB) by disbanding the Second Armoured Division and some other units, thereby reducing the OoB by 20,000 (to 513,000). Allowing for the reductions there was still a deficiency of 55,000 and current intake was insufficient to make up wastage. Once operations began the monthly wastage would be 11,800; the monthly intake was 4,000, leaving a deficiency of 7,800 per month. Blamey therefore made two recommendations. First that further releases from industry should be made to meet the deficiency, and second, if that could not be achieved and it became necessary to disband further field formations then the force being prepared for offensive operations should be reduced by one division since the New Guinea and mainland defence components had been reduced to the barest minimum. Whether this was true or rhetoric in the manpower debate is questionable.[172]

The War Cabinet referred the report to the Defence Committee for urgent review of service, munitions and works programs. The War Cabinet decided to refer the issue of reducing the offensive force to MacArthur.[173] The Defence Committee met on 10 June 1943; its report went to the War Cabinet in July.

In considering the manpower issue the government did not address the use of women as far as it could have. There were a range of concerns. The union movement was against utilising women in certain industries on the grounds of women's strength and capability, as well as possible unemployment of men after the war. There were a range of issues involving equal pay and there was concern that skilled women in civilian employment, such as nurses, were paid less than unskilled women in war industry, with a subsequent drift of women toward higher paid work. These concerns were reflected in conflicting arguments within Government over the issues.[174] The result was a lower utilisation of women in the war effort than occurred in Britain, where after December 1941 single women were liable to conscription (though they had the option of serving instead in

---

[171] Dexter, *The New Guinea Offensives*, p. 14.
[172] War Cabinet Agendum 106/1943, Supplement 1, Re-Organisation of the AMF, 12 April 1943.
[173] War Cabinet Minute 2810, 30 April 1943. NAA: A2671, 106/1943.
[174] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 265-70.

civil defence, industry or the Land Army).[175] The manpower issue continued to plague the government, with major decisions yet to be made.

At this stage the Australian Government needed to make a major decision on the nature of the Australian war effort. As well as the manpower issue considerations included: concern for Australian security, the importance of munitions and aircraft, the need for provision of war material from overseas, and obligations to support US forces. Hasluck saw this period as one where the War Cabinet dealt with a range of small issues that cleared the way ahead, but did not attempt to answer the strategic question "in the present situation and having regard to our present resources and obligations what can Australia best do to help win the war?". However, Hasluck questions whether any government, in the circumstances that Australia faced in late 1942 and early 1943, could be anything other than reactive and credits the government for "the degree of promptness with which the response was made and the exactness and efficiency with which the adjustment was planned."[176]

Mainland Defence

The threat in the second half of 1942 was that Japan would continue to attempt to isolate Australia; an incursion was not ruled out. The government's perception of threat was raised in early 1943 as a Japanese build-up occurred, then eased by mid-year. The Defence Committee regarded the three issues to be protection against sea bombardment, torpedo attack and air attack. The Defence Committee issues define the purpose of mainland defence during this period.

In terms of point defence, there were considerable improvements in coast defence, anti-aircraft artillery and early warning radar as seen by the case studies for Darwin and Sydney. Point defence reached its zenith and is assessed as fit for purpose.

[175] Dear, I.C.B. (ed), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p. 1277.
[176] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 296-8.

Considering area defence, north-east Australia became well covered as the Army build-up continued and the second US division moved north. The Australian Army training was considerably improved and the force became highly professional and efficient in terms of offensive and defensive operations, though some equipment shortfalls remained. Area defence here was fit for purpose. The Moultrie Plan covered the Torres Strait area, though implementation at Merauke was late so initially that force was partially fit for purpose.

Sea lines of communication remained hazardous, the second Japanese submarine campaign demonstrated that Australia's anti-submarine capability in littoral waters remained partially fit for purpose. The overland routes to Darwin from Adelaide and Townsville improved considerably and may be assessed as fit for purpose.

Intelligence systems were developed, with the AIB established. The product was more reliable as demonstrated by the Intelligence Summaries provided to War Cabinet. The Australian coastwatch system was also fully developed. Noting that no intelligence/surveillance system will ever be perfect, intelligence and surveillance may be assessed as fit for purpose.

Production of munitions reached full capacity during this period and may be assessed as fit for purpose despite some shortfalls in small arms. Noting the limitations of the Australian manufacturing capability, the production of aircraft and ships may be assessed as partially fit for purpose.

Considering national will, most people accepted the restrictions made necessary by the war. However industrial problems continued, particularly with coal.

Mainland Defence: Fit for Purpose

For the Australian government, the purpose of mainland defence continued to be to maintain the integrity of the mainland. MacArthur now had three directives, all were offensive operations against the Japanese to the north; however to achieve them he had

to hold Australia as his base, so the purposes remained aligned throughout this period. With the improvements achieved in this period, the government would have regarded mainland defence as fit for purpose.

However for the Defence Committee, the purposes of mainland defence were protection against sea bombardment; protection against torpedo attack and anti-aircraft protection. Noting the shortfall in the ASW capability, mainland defence must be assessed as fit for purpose with exception.

During the holding war the Japanese were expelled from Papua, MacArthur established his command and planning and training for offensive operations began, and the Bismarck Sea battle prevented the last Japanese attempt to reinforce New Guinea.

By June 1943, it was apparent that Japanese strategy seemed more directed towards a general defensive strengthening of bases and installations in anticipation of Allied offensives. Japanese reconnaissance had been stepped up and fighter aircraft were reinforced in the Japanese western area. The air communications route between the Japanese western and eastern areas had been developed via airfields on the north coast of New Guinea, which would allow a rapid re-deployment of aircraft to a threatened area (at a cost to the losing area). An Allied Air Forces Intelligence Summary stated "All these and other factors point to the enemy having for the present abandoned any definite plan of aggression."[177]

On 30 May 1943 MacArthur was sent a memorandum which detailed the issues facing Australia. Shedden then wrote to MacArthur on 4 June saying that if MacArthur could indicate that a 'small reduction' could be made in Australian land forces it would help ease the manpower problem.[178] Curtin met with MacArthur on 7 June; MacArthur informed Curtin that the threat of invasion had been removed.[179] As a result Curtin issued a statement on 10 June 1943, stating that he felt that the pressure was to be

---

[177] HQ Allied Air Forces Intelligence Summary 112, 16 June 1943. NAA: A5954, 560/5.
[178] Notes on discussions with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area. Brisbane, 25th to 31st May 1943. NAA: A5954, 2/3.
[179] Notes on discussions with Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, 7th June 1943. NAA: A5954, 2/5.

turned back on Japan; "The holding war imposed on us under circumstances of great difficulty has been an obligation under global strategy which has been discharged." Curtin described Coral Sea as a "great deliverance" and the return of the AIF was in time to stop the Japanese advance in New Guinea [Papua]. Curtin went on to claim

> "I do not think the enemy can now invade this country."
>
> "We are not yet immune from marauding raids which may cause much damage and loss. I believe, however, that we can hold Australia as a base from which to launch both limited and major offensives against Japan."[180]

This would be the basis for the nature and extent of Australia's war effort.

Curtin met with the state premiers on 14 July and briefed them on the changes that were occurring in global strategy and the progress of the whole war. He concluded by saying that Germany had to be defeated before the full strength of the United Nations could be turned on Japan and quoted MacArthur as stating that it was a question of stamina. Curtin felt this would impose "a great strain on Australia to sustain the war effort which she has undertaken, both in respect of the fighting services and the production of munitions, aircraft and other needs such as foodstuffs."[181]

The 'great strain' and its effect on mainland defence are examined next.

---

[180] Digest of Decisions and Announcements, No59, 13 May – 2 [*sic*] June 1943, pp. 23-4. NAA: B5459, 59. The statement was reported in the press on 11 June – see *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 June 1943, p. 5 and *The Argus*, 11 June, p. 1.

[181] PWC (Prime Minister's War Conference) minutes, Melbourne - 14 Jul 1943. NAA: A5954, 2312/5.

8

THE REDUCTION OF MAINLAND DEFENCE

10 June 1943 to VJ Day

The last two years of the war in Europe saw the impetus turn inexorably to Russia in the east and the US and Britain in the west. The battle of Kursk in July 1943 was Hitler's last major offensive on the Eastern Front, thereafter German forces were on the defensive. Kiev was re-captured in November 1943, the Leningrad siege ended in January 1944, Sevastopol was taken in May and Brest-Litovsk in July, while Riga was captured in October. Soviet forces then entered Poland and let the Warsaw uprising fail before capturing Warsaw in January 1945. In the west the Allies invaded Sicily in July 1943 and Italy in September. Italy surrendered shortly thereafter though German and some Italian fascist forces continued to fight until April 1945. The landing at Anzio in January 1944 was followed by heavy fighting before the US forces entered Rome in June. The strategic bombing campaign against Germany continued to develop with the priorities for the USAAF and RAF set in June 1943; in descending order they were: U-boat construction, aircraft industry, transportation, oil plants and war industry generally. The Normandy landings were achieved on 6 June 1944. After the Allies broke out of the beach head, Paris was liberated on 25 August 1944. The major port at Antwerp was captured and the Scheldt River cleared by November 1944, easing the Allied supply line. The attempt to force the Rhine in September by airborne assault failed but the German counter-offensive in the Ardennes in December also failed. The Allies crossed the Rhine in March 1945. The end was inevitable; Hitler committed suicide on 30 April and Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945.

In Burma Japanese offensives continued in late 1943 and culminated in the attack on Kohima in India in April 1944. The failure of that attack saw the Allies turn to the offensive though heavy fighting continued. The Chinese also commenced an advance from the north. Fighting continued through 1945 until the war ended in early August.

In the Central Pacific, Nimitz began the westward thrust from Hawaii, taking the Gilbert Islands in November 1943 and the Marshall Islands by February 1944. This enabled the attacks on the Marianas (Saipan and Guam) in June and July, opening the eastern approaches to the Philippines.

Major operations in the SWPA commenced in August 1943 with the bombing of the Wewak airfields, greatly reducing Japanese air power in New Guinea. This was followed by Australian and US landings near Lae in September, with Salamaua and Finschhafen taken in September and October. The leap frog strategy then commenced, with Rabaul isolated but not attacked. US landings were made on New Britain and Bougainville in December. Madang was occupied in April 1944 and the advance along the north coast continued until the occupation of the Vogelkop Peninsula at the western end of the island in July. The approach to the Philippines continued with Morotai taken in September; this enabled air operations against the southern Philippines. The invasion of Leyte and the naval battle of Leyte Gulf, where the Japanese lost three battleships and the last of their aircraft carriers, followed in October. The long-range bombing of Japan, initially from the Mariana Islands, followed in November. US forces landed on Luzon in January 1945 and Manila was re-captured. Iwo Jima was attacked in February and Okinawa in April. The Australian campaigns in New Guinea, Bougainville and Borneo took place in June and July 1945. Preparations for the invasion of Japan were started, but were not required after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Russian invasion of Manchuria on 9 August led to the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945.

As the war moved away from Australia the need to defend Australia became far less, so for mainland defence the period was anticlimactic. The period coincided with the second and third phases of campaign strategy in the US/Australian campaigns against Japan, as described by John Robertson. The second phase started with MacArthur's offensive on the Huon Peninsula in September 1943 in a move to bypass Rabaul; MacArthur had to use Australian troops since he had few effective US forces. The third phase started from April 1944; here the divergence between Australia's aspiration for a

significant role in the final overthrow of Japan and MacArthur's plans became all too evident.[1]

Throughout this period the Australian manpower problem continued. Australia faced a dichotomous problem: first to maintain a field force of six divisions and two armoured brigades for offensive operations, an air force command and a naval task force; and second to produce the necessary munitions, aircraft, ships, military works and food. Clearly mainland defence would have to contribute to the solution of this dilemma. The major impact was on the coastal fixed defences, with AMF personnel moved to northern areas still at some risk of attack, while VDC and AWAS were trained to operate the defences and some elements were placed in care and maintenance. The situation for the RAN and RAAF was different; while significant elements were assigned to offensive operations both had operational capabilities that could apply equally to offensive operations and mainland defence and which had the flexibility to change from one type of operation to the other in a relatively short time. In the case of the RAAF this was demonstrated by the March 1944 Japanese naval raid scare.

As 1943 progressed, a range of measures were introduced to improve the sources of manpower, or labour units as manpower came to be called. The power to "direct any person to engage in specified employment" had been introduced in January 1943 but was handled carefully since it was close to industrial conscription, "an acknowledged infringement of the right of personal choice of employment."[2] Other measures were used to "help break down the formidable political and social barriers preventing a larger number of women entering the work force or enlisting in the Women's Auxiliaries." However women could not be directed into the women's auxiliary services, married women with dependents were exempt from direction and other married women were not to be directed except in special circumstances.[3] The impediments discussed earlier still stood in the way of the full utilisation of women.

---

[1] The first phase saw an almost exact "community of interest" between MacArthur' plans and Australia's aspirations. John Robertson, 'Australian War Policy 1939-1945', *Historical Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 69, October 1977, p. 499.
[2] Butlin & Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, p. 367.
[3] Butlin & Schedvin, *War Economy 1942-1945*, pp. 366-8.

In September 1943 the perceived threat was first that large-scale enemy operations on the eastern coast of Australia were extremely unlikely. It remained essential, however, to be prepared for such operations in the event of reversals in the main theatre of operations. Nuisance raids, by sea or air, were regarded as possible at any time along the north-east coast. Further, since the coastline north from Townsville was within range of enemy bases, large scale air raids could still occur. For both the primary defence was provided by the Allied air forces. The retention of port facilities on the north Queensland coast was essential to supply forces stationed or likely to be stationed in First Australian Army area and as bases for supply and reinforcement of operational areas in New Guinea.[4] The focus was on First Army's area of operations but the perception remained that northern Australia still faced some threat; this became clearer as the period progressed.

The Defence Committee considered mainland defence in June 1943 and recommended that reductions in War Establishment (WE) be made and that some defences be placed on a care and maintenance basis.[5] These changes were approved by the War Cabinet in August.[6] Semi-operational and non-operational areas were defined as Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania and NSW – Sydney, Newcastle and Kembla, and for anti-aircraft artillery also the Hawkesbury Bridge and Lithgow. Comparative manning states are at Table 8.1.

---

[4] First Aust Army Operation Instruction No 37, Defence of North Queensland, 5 September 1943. para 2; AWM: AWM54, 243/6/133 PART 2. Also, First Aust Army Operation Instruction No 39, Defence of Cairns, 5 September 1943, para 2. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/81.

[5] Coast Defence and Anti-Aircraft details are from Defence Committee, 10 Jun 1943. Reduction of War Establishment, Coast and anti-aircraft defences. NAA: A2031, 110/1943.

[6] War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Supplement 2, Reduction of War Establishment, 26 August 1943. NAA: A2670, 30/1943.

Coast Artillery: Semi-operational and Non-operational Areas, Comparative States of Manning	
Examination Batteries	100 per cent manning provided for one gun and one CASL to be fully manned at all times. 50 per cent manning provided for the gun or battery to be manned at immediate call.
Counter-Bombardment and Close Defence Batteries	66 per cent manning provided sufficient personnel for full manning for a limited period – 48 to 72 hours. After this time batteries would require reinforcement and relief by the VDC component.
Batteries on Maintenance	Batteries on maintenance were provided with a detachment of one officer and seven other ranks who carry out VDC training and the maintenance of the equipment. Sections of minor equipment were placed under major batteries for maintenance for maintenance without additional personnel (with some exceptions).
Anti-Aircraft Artillery: Semi-operational and Non-operational Areas, Comparative States of Manning	
66 per cent Manning	Provided for manning of two 3.7inch guns in each four gun station at all times with VDC component in training to bring defences to full scale manning. VDC when trained would be at six hours call.
Nucleus Manning	Provided for the equipment being brought into action at any time with VDC to complete manning at short notice.
VDC Manning	Provided only a small training and maintenance party for training VDC personnel. Equipments were not manned until VDC were called up for full time duty. When trained VDC would be at six hours call.
Maintenance	Provided for the equipment to be maintained but no provision for manning until such time as VDC were fully trained at other stations and capable of providing full manning.

CASL: Coast Artillery Searchlight

Table 8.1: Comparative states of manning.[7]

The reduction in WE for specific defences is summarised in Attachment Three. For Coast Artillery, reductions were balanced at each place, with the Examination Service a mix of partially and fully manned states and other batteries reduced or placed in maintenance. For Anti-Aircraft Artillery, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania were all reduced or placed in maintenance, while on the east coast Sydney, Newcastle and Port Kembla kept elements at 66 per cent manning and all others were further reduced.

[7] Appendices A and B to War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Supplement 2, Reduction of War Establishment, 26 August 1943. NAA: A2670, 30/1943.

The significance of these reductions for mainland defence cannot be accurately assessed. In principle they were logical measures for the southern areas which faced no current threat, with the defences maintained at reduced strength in case the strategic situation changed. However the effectiveness of the measures was dependent on the availability of trained VDC, and later AWAS as well, so there must have been some transition period where the defences were not at peak efficiency; which defences and when has proved impossible to determine. Despite that qualification the defences may be assessed as fit for purpose.

The need to achieve a balanced war effort was recognised by the War Cabinet and a number of reviews were conducted in the period June to September 1943. A new major step was made in July when the War Cabinet approved a set of principles that all concerned were to follow in planning the Australian War Effort.[8] The overarching strategic principle was that the nature and extent of the Australian war effort would primarily be governed by the Commander-in-Chief's strategic plan of operations as approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Proposals should be within Australia's capability and should be provided in the appropriate timeframe, and every proposal should contribute to the overall SWPA effort except where justified in another theatre, as with food for Britain. For the services, a qualifying principle was that the strength of the forces was to be governed by the available manpower. Navy was to maintain its current strength and provide for approved additions, Army was to provide an offensive force of three divisions and provide for the defence of Australia and New Guinea, while Air Force was to be maintained at the strength approved under the 72 squadron plan, subject to provision of aircraft, and was to continue to provide for the EATS. Other principles applied to Munitions, War Production, Works, supplies for the civil population and essential services. Curtin sent the principles to MacArthur on 13 July and requested that MacArthur consider the Defence Committee review of the strength of the services when it was completed. MacArthur concurred with the principles in general and agreed to consider the review when completed.[9] With the strength of forces being governed by manpower, the principles confirmed that mainland defence would have to be reduced.

---

[8] War Cabinet Minute 2968, War Cabinet Agendum 311/1943, The Australian War Effort, 13 July 1943. NAA: A5954, 809/1.

[9] War Cabinet Agendum 311/1943, The Australian War Effort, 10 July 1943. NAA: A816, 30/302/50.

In July 1943 War Cabinet made a range of manpower decisions, some were significant for mainland defence.[10] The allocation of 14,000 persons a month was approved as a temporary measure; the allocation was to be reviewed monthly. By Department, the allocation was: Navy 500 men only, Army 4,000 men and 1,000 women, Air Force 3,000 men and 1,000 women, Munitions and Aircraft Production 500 men and 2,000 women, and Allied Works 2,000 men only.[11] In accompanying impact statements Navy stated that existing strength would be maintained. However Army stated that strength of forces on the mainland would need to be reduced by the equivalent of one division within six months and if 2 Australian Corps (the offensive force) was employed in an offensive role for 12 months by the equivalent of a further division. Air Force stated that the RAAF could expand to 45 squadrons by the end of 1943 but further expansion would be delayed; the EATS would not be affected. Clearly, there would be an impact on mainland defence if the Army reduced and the Air Force did not meet the planned expansion.

Decisions made in October 1943 would establish the path of the Australian war effort for the rest of the war; they also drove the path of mainland defence. As David Horner says the government had to decide

> "whether the armed forces should be maintained at their existing strengths, whether production of munitions should continue at its present intensity, whether food production should be maintained at a level that ensured Britain and US forces in Australia were supplied, whether other services should be provided to the US forces in Australia, and whether, if all these drains on Australian manpower were to continue, it could allow the standard of living in Australia to decline."[12]

After a range of departmental reviews were conducted in September, Shedden prepared a memorandum for Curtin's signature that endeavoured to bring the results together.[13] The memorandum covered the coordination of manpower reviews, the strength of the

---

[10] War Cabinet Minute 2969, War Cabinet Agendum 272/1943, Review of Personnel Programmes of the Services, Allocation of Manpower Resources between the Services and War Production departments, 13 July 1943. NAA: A5954, 549/6.
[11] War Cabinet Agendum 272/1943, 28 June 1943. NAA: A5954, 549/6.
[12] Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 150.
[13] 'A Review of the Nature, Extent and Balance of the War Effort in the Light of the Manpower Position', 30 September 1943. NAA: A5954, 306/1.

services and war production departments, and the production of food; it also proposed a range of suggested decisions.[14] The memorandum was sent to the War Cabinet which considered the reviews on 1 October 1943. Aspects of the memorandum appeared verbatim in the outcomes of the meeting; Shedden's influence is clear.

War Cabinet Minute 3065, 'Review of the Nature, Extent and Balance of the War Effort in the Light of the Manpower Situation', 1 October 1943, was in five parts and comprised approximately 30 decisions and commitments.[15] Most were to do with the manpower problem and, as stated earlier, have been discussed in depth in the existing literature. The focus here is on those decisions affected mainland defence.

At the strategic level the War Cabinet affirmed two principles. First,

> "It is of vital importance to the future of Australia and her status at the peace table in regard to the settlement in the Pacific that her military effort should be concentrated as far as possible in the Pacific and that it should be on a scale to guarantee her an effective voice in the peace settlement."[16]

Second, the extent of that effort should be maintained, if necessary, at the expense of commitments in other theatres. The principles were to be communicated to the UK. Hasluck correctly saw the principles as a shift away from the security of Australia to the concept of the war effort as an admission ticket to a peace conference, though he felt that "it would almost seem as though the admission ticket was being confused with the currency with which it had to be purchased."[17] The inference is that SWPA operations had to be kept going without regard to mainland defence; it could be argued that that was acceptable because of the reduced risk.

In terms of manpower the Army was to release 20,000 men by June 1944, additional to routine and special releases, while Munitions and Aircraft Production were also to

---

[14] War Cabinet Agendum - No 379/1943 - General co-ordination of manpower reviews (A review of the manpower position by the War Commitments Committee), 15th September 1943. NAA: A2670, 379/1943. War Cabinet Agendum 389/1943, Review by Defence Committee of the Strength and Composition of the Services and the Munitions and Works Programmes, 15th September 1943. NAA: A2670, 389/1943. Full Cabinet Agendum 356, Australia's Programme for the Production and Distribution of Food, 22 September 1943. NAA: A5954, 306/1.

[15] War Cabinet Minute 3065, Review of the Nature, Extent and Balance of the War Effort in the Light of the Manpower Position, 1 October 1943. NAA: A5954. 306/1.

[16] War Cabinet Minute 3065, Part II, para.1. NAA: A5954, 306/1. Emphasis in the original.

[17] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 301-02.

release a total of 20,000 men by June 1944. In both releases priority was to be given to providing 15,000 men to the rural industry.[18]

The monthly intake to the services was to be limited to 3,000 men and 2,000 women (not the 14,000 per month approved in July). Navy was to maintain its strength by the return of some 3,400 persons serving overseas. Army was to receive 1,500 (550 men and 950 women), while Air Force was to take 3,500 (2,450 men and 1,050 women) and continue its commitment to the EATS at a reduced level (monthly intake 1,000, reduced from 1,400). Air Force was to be stabilised at the current number of 48 squadrons plus any addition from overseas or the monthly intake.[19]

Curtin cabled Churchill on 8 October 1943. He laid out very frankly and clearly the problem:

> "we have overreached ourselves in some of the commitments into which we have entered, and have not the capacity to fulfil them and at the same time meet certain other demands with which we have been confronted."[20]

He stated the two principles covered above and detailed Australia's overseas commitments and internal problems in light of the manpower problem. Curtin requested Churchill's views, but no evidence has been found that Churchill did reply.

What did all this mean for mainland defence? With Navy strength limited to its current structure and an increasing commitment to overseas operations as the war moved away from Australia, the naval component of mainland defence would inevitably decrease. For Army to continue to field an offensive force of three divisions with a severely limited monthly intake meant that reinforcements would have to be found within the current Army strength, which meant further reductions in the AMF component of mainland defence. With Air Force stabilised at 48 squadrons and continuing the commitment to the EATS, at best the Air Force component of mainland defence would remain steady. Whether that situation meant that mainland defence would not remain fit for purpose would become clear at a later time.

---

[18] War Cabinet Minute 3065, Part I, para. 1.
[19] War Cabinet Minute 3065, Part I, para. 2.
[20] Curtin to Churchill, Cablegram 267, 8 October 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p. 534.

Curtin wrote to MacArthur on 1 November 1943, enclosing a major paper that clearly enunciated the issues facing the Australian Government, decisions that had been made to help resolve those issues and delineating where consideration would need to be given to limiting aspects of support for the US forces in Australia. These included provision of services, some munitions and food. Curtin assured MacArthur that any decisions made would be communicated to him for consideration.[21] MacArthur replied on 6 November, stating that he had read the report "with some anxiety" and requested that Curtin review the decisions with respect to services and food; he expressed concern that food was being sent to the UK in preference to Allied forces in the SWPA. Curtin sent a firm response on 13 November, answering MacArthur's concerns. They then met on 29 November and MacArthur reiterated his concerns about food, however he had no choice other than to agree and stated that he "accepted absolutely" that it was for the Australian Government to determine the nature and extent of the Australian war effort.[22]

Roosevelt, Churchill and Chiang Kai-shek met at Cairo on 22-25 November 1943 to determine the future strategy in the war with Japan. Australia was not consulted and, more significantly in view of Australia's Pacific interests, was not given any opportunity to consider the communiqué released after the conference. The communiqué stated that future military operations had been agreed on and then went on to say that "Japan shall be stripped of all the islands which she has seized or occupied since the beginning of the First World War in 1914".[23] This increased Australian concerns about US intentions regarding the islands in the post-war Pacific.[24]

The three leaders then met with Stalin in Teheran, where it was agreed that a second front would be opened in Western Europe in May 1944 and that Russia would join the war against Japan after the defeat of Germany. Then further discussions between

---

[21] The communications are all from: Decisions on nature, extent and balance of the Australian war effort in the light of the manpower position. Limits of material commitments acceptable in respect of United States Forces - Approach to General MacArthur on matters arising from War Cabinets review in Minute No. (3065) File No. 2. NAA: A5954, 306/2.

[22] Notes of discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area Brisbane, 29 November to 1 December, 1943. NAA: A5954, 2/6.

[23] Cranbourne to Curtin, Circular cablegram D1046, 1 December 1943. *DAFP*, Volume VI, p.606.

[24] Horner, *High Command*, pp. 304, 409; Trevor Reese, *Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations 1941-1968*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969, p. 33.

Roosevelt and Churchill in Cairo in early December settled the broad strategic concept for the war against Japan. The main decision was that the principal effort would be made in the Pacific, while other theatres would be complementary but subsidiary. The main axes would be New Guinea-NEI-Philippines and operations against New Britain and Bougainville.[25]

After a number of meetings, the Australia-New Zealand Agreement was signed in January 1944.[26] The Agreement was partly a response to the Cairo Conference decision to strip Japan of her Pacific possessions and partly reflected Australian and New Zealand concerns about the future of the Pacific. The Agreement stated Dominion interest in a regional defence zone, claimed the right to a say in the disposition of Japanese territory and asserted that the wartime construction of bases did not constitute the basis for a territorial claim after the war. The Agreement also recommended a regional organisation to advise on a common policy for the social, economic and political development of native peoples. The Agreement was made without consulting Britain or America; it caused some upset in the US, less in the UK.[27] The major concern in the US was that a proposed international conference of countries with Pacific interests should not take place in the near future. The UK wanted consultation at the forthcoming Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference. However, the Agreement marked Australian recognition that Australian security would be in Australia's hands in the future – a secure Pacific would be an element of post-war mainland defence.

The reduced need for mainland defence in the southern areas led to some projects being reconsidered in early 1944. These included the provision of combined role 5.2-inch gun batteries at Port Kembla, Newcastle, Sydney, Whyalla and Adelaide; it was being investigated whether these guns could be provided with mobile mountings and used in northern Australia and New Guinea.[28] A parallel agendum examined coast and anti-aircraft (AA) defences that had been authorised but not yet completed or

---

[25] Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, pp. 373-375.
[26] Millar, *Australia in Peace and War - External Relations Since 1788*, pp. 113-116 discusses the Australia-NZ Agreement.
[27] For UK views, see Australia-New Zealand Agreement, TNA: CAB66/46/20, 2 February 1944 and TNA: CAB66/48/19, 23 March 1944. Cable US Secretary of State to Curtin, 3 February 1944. *DAFP*, Volume VII, p. 101. Letter Evatt to Johnson (US Minister to Australia), 24 February 1944. *DAFP*, Volume VII, p. 124.
[28] War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Supplement 3, Coast and Anti-Aircraft Defences, 13 January 1944. NAA: A2670, 30/1943.

commenced.[29] Recommendations were made that a range of projects were "not now required". These included two 16-pdr guns at Geelong, two 40mm guns at Whyalla, two 6-pdr twin guns at Port Phillip Heads, two 18-pdr guns at Fremantle and Garden Island and one 6-pdr twin gun at Townsville. War Cabinet approved both sets of recommendations. Clearly, some aspects of mainland defence were no longer required.

The scales of manning were revised for AA defences as well (Table 8.2).[30]

Scale	Manning	State of Readiness
Full scale	AMF and AWAS	Immediate readiness of all equipment and weapons
Reduced scale	AMF and AWAS	Immediate readiness 50 per cent gun equipment and all searchlights
VDC scale	VDC	VDC at six hours notice

Table 8.2: Revised Manning Scales for Anti-Aircraft Defences, January 1944.

VDC personnel manned AA defences in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. Reduced scale manning was in Queensland (south of Townsville), NSW and Western Australia. Within those areas there were defended ports, namely Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Port Kembla and Fremantle, and in January 1944 Army proposed that Brisbane, Newcastle and Port Kembla be reduced to VDC manning – Sydney and Fremantle were major naval bases and could not be reduced further. The proposal was based on a three layered threat: attack by carrier-borne aircraft which may be heavy but could not be sustained, attack by aircraft launched by cruisers and attack by aircraft launched from submarines, neither could be heavy nor sustained. The first two were not considered possible in the current strategic circumstances, while the latter would more likely be reconnaissance than an attack. The reduction was expected to release 26 officers and approximately 1,276 other ranks.[31]

[29] War Cabinet Agendum 30/1943, Supplement 4, 13 January 1944.
[30] Defence Committee Agendum 3/1944: Reduction in scale of manning of anti-aircraft defences in Southern areas, 11 Jan 1944. NAA: A5799, 3/1944.
[31] Defence Committee Agendum 3/1944.

Mainland defence was tested in February 1944 and despite some problems it performed creditably.[32] The Japanese Combined Fleet had been based at Truk for some months in the hope of a decisive engagement with the US fleet. When this failed to eventuate, the Japanese withdrew to Palau and Singapore in February 1944. British estimates on 3 March were that the Japanese may have been considering a raid on LoC between Calcutta and Ceylon, but that no serious danger to India or Western Australia was likely.[33] On 4 March intelligence was received that two Japanese battleships had left Singapore and were heading towards Surabaya; this was partially confirmed by a US submarine on 7 March. The information raised the possibility that Fremantle may be the objective and plans were made to bolster the defences in the west, primarily with land based aircraft.

By March 1944 the Perth field force (which in 1942 had been a Corps) had been considerably reduced, comprising the remnants of the 2nd Division and 1st Armoured Brigade Group. Coast and AA defences had a core of soldiers, supplemented by the VDC on call out. On 4 March the VDC were put on six hours' notice; and five US submarines from Fremantle formed a patrol line to seaward. Plans were made to clear Fremantle harbour and two ships gave AA protection to eight loaded merchantmen until they could be moved on 11 March.[34] The limited field force had been in training but re-assembled to meet the threat.[35]

Air reinforcements were deployed to reinforce the west coast. The US 380th Bombardment Group returned from New Guinea to Darwin, and planned a further move to Geraldton or Cunderdin if the threat developed. RAAF squadrons, supported by USAAF transports, deployed as shown (Table 8.3, Map 8.1):

---

[32] The following account is from Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, pp. 134-9; Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 388-91; Graham R. McKenzie-Smith, *Defending Fremantle Albany and Bunbury 1939 to 1945*, Grimwade Publications, Canberra, 2009, pp. 28-9; and RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Volumes 2 – Fighter Units, 3 – Bomber Units and 4 – Maritime and Transport Units.

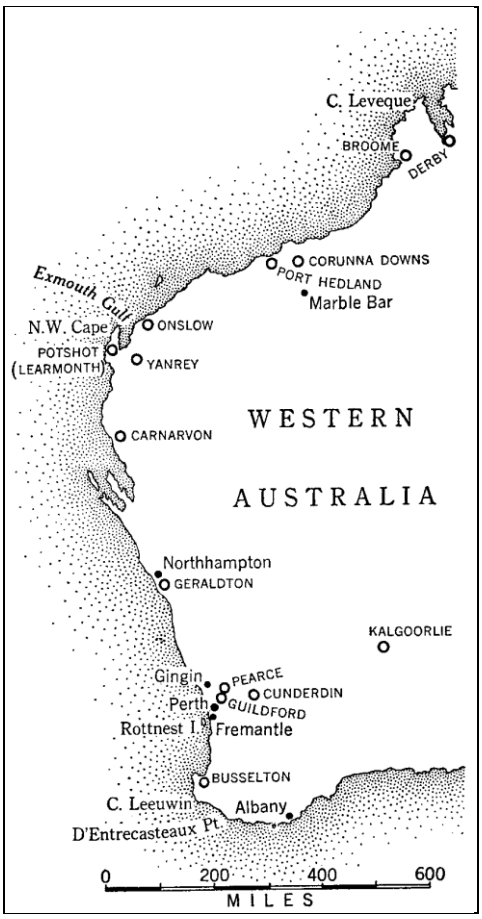
[33] Cablegram 59, Secretary of State Dominion Affairs to Commonwealth Government, 3 March 1044. NAA: A5954, 535/4.

[34] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, p. 390.

[35] McKenzie-Smith, *Defending Fremantle Albany and Bunbury 1939 to 1945*, p. 28.

	Aircraft	Deployed from	To	Role
452 Squadron	Spitfire	Darwin	Guildford	Fighter defence
457 Squadron	Spitfire	Darwin	Guildford	Fighter defence
25 Squadron	Vengeance	Pearce	Guildford	Dive bomber
14 Squadron	Beaufort	Pearce, *no move*	*home base*	Medium bomber
31 Squadron	Beaufighter	Darwin	Potshot	Long range strike
18 (NEI) Squadron	Mitchell	Darwin	Potshot	Medium bomber
120 (NEI) Squadron	Kittyhawk	Canberra	Potshot	Fighter defence
85 Squadron	Boomerang	Guildford	Derby	Fighter defence
84 Squadron	Kittyhawk	Horn Is	Darwin	Fighter defence
43 Squadron	Catalina	Kurumba	Darwin	Reconnaissance

Table 8.3: Deployment of RAAF Squadrons.[36]



Map 8.1: Western Australia – Bases.[37]

[36] 'Disposition of Air Force.' NAA: A5954,535/4.
[37] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, p. 137.

The deployments did strike problems. The bases through which the squadrons staged did not have sufficient men or adequate refuelling equipment for such a major move, which resulted in delays. The two Spitfire squadrons left Darwin on 9 March and were supposed to be operational in Perth by 10 March, but the delays and bad weather meant they became operational on 12 March. One aircraft was lost at Carnarvon. The Kittyhawks came across the Nullarbor through Ceduna, Forrest and Kalgoorlie without major problems. Potshot suffered atrocious weather with cyclonic storms leaving the airfield partially under water; operations were barely possible. The Kittyhawks from Horn Island initially had to turn back because of weather and one was lost.[38] However, despite the problems the deployment was successful and Perth/Fremantle was reinforced.

Seaward reconnaissance patrols were flown from Perth (RAAF Beaufort and USN Catalina) and Darwin (Catalina) but no sign of an enemy naval force was found; the patrols were hampered by the bad weather off the north-west coast. On 10 March the radar station at Geraldton reported an unidentified aircraft approaching. There was sufficient concern for air raid sirens to be sounded in Perth/Fremantle; the fighter squadrons were warned and defences stood to, but no raid developed. Concerns continued with further radar reports but the weather began to clear on 11 March; better reconnaissance resulted in no sightings. The opportunity was taken for a practice callout of VDC on the night of 11/12 March, which apparently worked well.[39] Army and Navy units returned to normal duties on 14 March and on 20 March air force squadrons commenced redeployment to their home bases.

In actuality the operation was unnecessary. The Japanese Fleet had left Truk to avoid any risk of destruction from American carrier aircraft as there was virtually no air support at Truk. Three cruisers did make a sortie into the Indian Ocean and sank a British steamer, but having lost any chance of surprise they returned to Singapore.[40]

The potential raid provided some valuable experience. The VDC demonstrated it could man the defences at relatively short notice. The field elements also re-assembled at short

---

[38] Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, pp. 137-9.
[39] McKenzie-Smith, *Defending Fremantle Albany and Bunbury 1939 to 1945*, p. 29.
[40] Gill, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, pp. 388-9.

notice. For the RAAF and USAAF the operation provided valuable experience in the rapid deployment of squadrons, despite delays caused by weather and inadequate facilities.

Mainland defence underwent a significant review in April 1944. The review was to distinguish between what was necessary for operations in the SWPA, what was required for mainland defence and what was common and essential to both. The review was to consider Allied naval and air strength in the Pacific and the contribution to "local defence" made by land and air forces on the mainland that were intended for operations overseas.[41]

The review concluded that in the Pacific and SWPA, US naval and air forces were considerably stronger than those of the Japanese.[42] Therefore "it is justifiable to regard Australia as well past any reasonable risk of invasion or serious attack."[43] The RN Eastern Fleet was growing in strength however the Japanese still had the ability to concentrate a superior force in the Indian Ocean. The Japanese were experiencing difficulty in supporting their forces in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands. Timor and the islands to the north-west were the closest occupied territory to Australia and considerable facilities for Japanese forces were in the Singapore-Surabaya area. However, the Indian Ocean risk meant that defence measures for Darwin and Perth must be maintained, while attacks on shipping and raids by submarines could occur at any part of the coast.

The review then considered the Australian coast in three sections.[44] For the east coast south of 20º latitude (Bowen) the possibility of any landing or attack by surface forces could be discounted and there was no danger of air attack. For the west coast south of 20º latitude (Port Hedland) the chance of a Japanese landing without first achieving a decisive naval victory could be discounted, however sporadic raids by carrier borne

[41] War Cabinet Minute 3334, Review of the war effort of the services in the light of the present strategical position with particular reference to the provision being made for the defence of the mainland, 22 February 1944. NAA: A5954, 810/1.
[42] War Cabinet Agendum - No 215/1944 - Review of the war effort of the services in the light of the present strategical position with particular reference to the provision being made for the defence of the mainland, 15 April 1944. NAA: A2671/1, 215/1944.
[43] War Cabinet Agendum 215/1944, Part A.
[44] War Cabinet Agendum 215/1944, Part A.

aircraft or naval bombardment remained a possibility (at considerable risk to the Japanese force).

The coast north of Bowen, past Darwin and to Port Hedland remained vulnerable to attack, particularly by long range bombers based in the NEI, and there remained a very slight possibility of a naval bombardment and landing at Darwin. The security of the northern coast was important since it contained the bases from which forces in New Guinea were being maintained and it provided a base for future operations in the NEI.

With respect to the forces required for mainland defence and for SWPA operations, each service provided its own statement.[45] Navy forces were described as an integral part of the Allied fleet in the Pacific and the British Eastern Fleet and therefore could not be separated into offensive and defensive units. However the Defence Committee appendix that covered naval dispositions clearly divided Australian naval units into those allotted to specific task forces and those in the South-West Pacific Sea Frontiers. The latter were under the CNS, Admiral Royle, who had the authority to deploy them for defensive operations if the situation changed. The force comprised two destroyers, two frigates, two sloops, six auxiliary anti-submarine vessels (one Dutch) and 36 corvettes (plus 42 US light escort and mine-sweeping vessels).[46]

The Army structure was in three groups: forces for the defence of the mainland, forces required overseas and supporting units for both other groupings. Forces required overseas included the offensive force of three divisions and ancillary units (total of 88,700), the New Guinea force of three divisions (including the relief for the offensive force, total of 66,800) and minor elements. Other units, including training, supply, workshops and the necessary activities required to service a field army, had a total of 108,500 persons (a large proportion was Class B males and females). Six months reinforcements totalled 28,500 and there were 33,000 currently ineffective, giving a total force of approximately 432,000. For mainland defence the Army element comprised (Table 8.4):

---

[45] War Cabinet Agendum 215/1944, Part B.

[46] Defence Committee Minute 89/1944: Review of the war effort of the Services in the light of the present strategical situation with particular reference to the provision being made for the defence of the mainland: Agendum Number - 44/1944, 24 March 1944, Appendix A. NAA: A2031, 89/1944.

Area	Forces required	WE
Eastern Australia including South Australia but excluding North Queensland	Field Army	nil
	Coast and AA Artillery, and internal security	15,000
Northern Australia		
North Queensland and Merauke	One brigade group; Coast and AA Artillery; Army, Base and LoC troops	15,600
Northern Territory	One division (three brigades); Coast and AA Artillery; Force, Base and LoC troops	44,800
Western Australia	Two brigade groups; Coast and AA Artillery; Corps, Base and LoC troops	30,900
	Total	**106,300**

Table 8.4: Army Element of Mainland Defence, March 1944.[47]

In addition it was proposed to use the VDC for manning coast and AA defences, close protection of certain fixed defences and coastwatch in areas such as North Queensland and WA. The VDC currently had a total of 84,000 to be reduced to 40,000 on a voluntary part-time training basis in their home areas, to be called up in an emergency.

The CAS, Air Marshal Jones, stated it was not possible to distinguish between operational needs and the defence of the mainland and that any definition of what proportion of the Air Force was deployed for mainland defence would be determined by the circumstance of the time. The statement then proposed that the air force infrastructure within Australia should be maintained, with reduced numbers of personnel where possible, to ensure that "the total strength of the force can be swung from offensive to defensive operations in the minimum possible time."[48] Jones was clearly referring to the flexibility demonstrated by the RAAF in the March raid scare. The strength of the RAAF in February 1944 was 145,174 (including 17,739 females, but not including 22,019 serving overseas). RAAF developments in 1944 were to be limited to 53 RAAF squadrons, plus three RAF and two NEI squadrons.[49]

[47] Defence Committee 89/1944, para. 36(a).
[48] War Cabinet Agendum 215/1944, Part B.
[49] War Cabinet Agendum 215/1944, Part B.

Overall, considering the greatly reduced threat, mainland defence in April 1944 was fit for purpose.

Mainland defence was further reduced in July 1944 when Headquarters Australian Military Forces issued a new instruction – "As a result of the improved strategical position the policy regarding manning of static anti-aircraft and coast defences has been changed."[50] Considerable reductions in scales were put in place, excepting the Northern Territory and Torres Strait areas. The new scales for the AMF (noting that the AMF included the AWAS) and full-time duty VDC, were:

Full Scale Manning	Complete manning by AMF personnel to the full extent of War Establishment (WE).
Scale A Manning	Partial manning of equipment by AMF personnel, but to the full extent of the WE.
Scale B Manning	Nucleus manning by AMF personnel sufficient to maintain equipment.
Scale C Manning	Nucleus manning by full-time duty VDC personnel sufficient to maintain equipment.

Table 8.5: Revised Scales – Anti-Aircraft and Coast Defences, July 1944.

Where the VDC were employed in static anti-aircraft and coast defence units, part-time VDC were to be raised for Headquarters, Anti-Aircraft Operations Rooms, Heavy Anti-Aircraft Units, Light Anti-Aircraft Units (other than industry protection), Searchlight Units and Coast Artillery units to the full extent of WE including duplication of any AMF manning, plus 50 per cent to cover wastage. Light Anti-Aircraft Units sited for the close defence of industrial installations were to be manned to the full extent of WE including duplication of any AMF manning, plus 50 per cent of the officers and 200 per cent of the other ranks from the employees of the industrial installation concerned to ensure continuous availability at short call for manning of equipment. Part-time VDC were on 24 hour callout.

Again, it is difficult to assess the impact of these changes on mainland defence. No records have been found to show whether there were sufficient numbers of VDC, let

[50] Re-organization of Static Anti-Aircraft and Coast Defence 1944, 12 Jul 1944. AWM: AWM54, 721/5/11 PART 1.

alone trained VDC, to ensure that these scales could be applied though anecdotal evidence indicates the numbers were probably available. At Whyalla, for example, reduced manning was introduced in September 1943, with the unit comprising one Heavy AA/CA Section and one Light AA Troop at 50 per cent manning, and one SL Troop at nucleus manning (Attachment Three). By February 1944, the establishment was five officers and 78 men of the AIF and 11 officers and 226 men from the VDC.[51] By May, training had progressed to the stage of live firing exercises and by October the crews were judged as competent with the equipment but needed more control in their firing. On the other hand, by the end of 1944 VDC numbers were beginning to reduce as any threat was perceived to be gone; the VDC component had reduced to 170 men.[52]

One element of mainland defence continued with less change to the end of the war – the RAAF radar system. For the north coast (Exmouth to Townsville) from early 1942 to mid-1944, 73 radar stations were installed. Of these 36 re-deployed, mostly from mid-1944 onward, so the chain had 37 radars that remained in the area until the end of the war (Attachment Two). Similarly for the south coast (Geraldton to Brisbane) 46 stations were installed and seven re-deployed, so 39 stations remained in place to VJ day.

On 5 April 1944, Curtin departed Australia with Shedden and Blamey to attend the Dominion Prime Ministers meeting in London (1-16 May). The meeting covered a range of issues including the war against Germany, the war against Japan, post-war settlements and the future world organisation. Curtin stated:

> "Australians wished to have a say in how the Pacific area was to be managed, and they realised that the extent of their say would be in proportion, not to the amount of wheat, meat or clothes they produced to support the forces of other nations, but to the amount of fighting they did. There was, therefore, a minimum fighting strength below which the Australians would not go. There was also a maximum strength of Australian armed forces beyond which they could not go, and it was the balance between these limits which the Australian Government sought to fix."[53]

---

[51] Peter Stanley, *The Soldiers on the Hill*, Part 9. Sabretache, Vol XXIX, p. 3.
[52] Stanley, *The Soldiers on the Hill*, Part 9. pp. 3-4.
[53] Meeting of Prime Ministers, May 1944. Full Record of Minutes of Meetings and Memoranda. PMM(44), 5th Meeting, 3 May 1944, p.2. NAA: A5954, 6/3.

Curtin made the point that for Australia the military and supply aspects of the war could not be separated; the three essential points were that there should be a reasonable balance in the Australian war effort, that Australia should satisfy the needs of forces of any nationality which had to be serviced from Australia, and that Australia should meet the essential requirements of food for the UK.[54] The points were agreed and Churchill offered support in dealing with the demands of the US.

Curtin returned via Washington and met with the Combined Chiefs of Staff where he repeated the three points and described the manpower problem for Australia. He also made the point that he had consulted with the Commander-in-Chief SWPA and that MacArthur had concurred in the action that the Australian Government had to take. Blamey stated the Australian Army currently comprised seven divisions, two garrison divisions and three armoured brigades and that it was proposed to reduce the Australian Army to six divisions and two armoured brigades, thereby releasing approximately 90,000 men – the loss of three divisions had obvious implications for mainland defence. The Combined Chiefs accepted the paper and agreed to the proposal to reduce the army. Curtin returned to Australia on 26 June.[55]

The government's war aims for the remainder of hostilities were made clear in Curtin's statement to the Prime Minister's Conference in May 1944. Striking the balance would prove to be a problem and had a major impact on mainland defence. On his return to Australia, Curtin went to the War Cabinet in early July with a proposal for the basing of UK forces on Australia after the end of the European war.[56] In view of their significance, the recommendations were sent to the Advisory War Council, approved and then issued as a War Cabinet directive to the Defence Committee.[57] The Defence Committee was to review, for each service, present strength appropriately classified, prospective figures to maintain that strength and certain approved programs, monthly wastage, and both approved monthly intake and the intake required to reach the prospective figures. The initial report brought a rebuke from Curtin, who was

---

[54] PMM(44), 5th Meeting, 3 May 1944, p.4.
[55] Australian war effort and British Commonwealth forces for the Far East. File No 4 June 1944. Discussions in Washington. NAA: A5954, 5/6.
[56] War Cabinet Agendum 342/1944, The Australian War Effort, 4 July 1944. NAA: A5954, 310/1.
[57] Advisory War Council Minute 1403, Agendum No 17/1944, The Australian War Effort, 5 July 1944; War Cabinet Minute 3655, Agendum No 342/1944, The Australian War Effort, 5 July 1944. NAA: A5954, 310/1.

“disappointed with the report” which proposed increases in the intake of men, a decreased intake of women and did not propose any releases of either. Curtin had information from the War Commitments Committee that there was a gap of 39,000 men for high priority industry in the period to the end of 1944. Consequently, Curtin directed the Defence Committee to make an immediate further review on the basis of a reduction of 30,000 men in the AMF and 15,000 men in the RAAF; 20,000 to be released by 31 December 1944 and 25,000 by 30 June 1945; the reductions were to be additional to normal wastage; the release of men to the dairy industry was to be reviewed; and the monthly intake for the three services was to remain at 3,000 per month. War Cabinet approved the direction.[58]

The revised Defence Committee review revealed the impact on mainland defence. Army estimated that by 30 June 1945 reinforcement depots would be depleted and there would still be a deficiency of over 6,000 men. The only source would be Australian mainland forces, that is Coast, AA and Services, principally Perth and Darwin, and in that respect some operational risk was entailed. To achieve this Army proposed reductions in existing mobile AA units at airfields and industries; further reductions in AA and harbour defences at all Australian ports including Sydney, Darwin and Fremantle; withdrawal of Army personnel from north-west Australia; and maintenance of Darwin by sea (except personnel and vehicles) to reduce Central Australia LoC troops.[59]

Air Force considered a range of factors including the technical nature of the service, with 80 per cent of ground crew in skilled musterings; the balance in manning of the musterings would be easily upset; it was impractical to enlist personnel unsuitable for skilled training; wastage rate of aircrew was lower than expected so training and the EATS were being reduced. The substitution of women had not had a significant impact since the achieved monthly intake was only around 380 instead of over 1,000. Air Force estimated that it would only achieve a 48 squadron force; clearly mainland defence would bear the brunt of the reduction.[60]

---

[58] War Cabinet Minute 3691, Agendum 342/1944, Supplement 1, The Australian War Effort, 4 August 1944. NAA: A5954, 810/2.
[59] Defence Committee Minute 268/1944, The Australian War Effort, 18 August 1944. NAA: A2031, 268/1944.
[60] Defence Committee Minute 268/1944, The Australian War Effort, 18 August 1944.

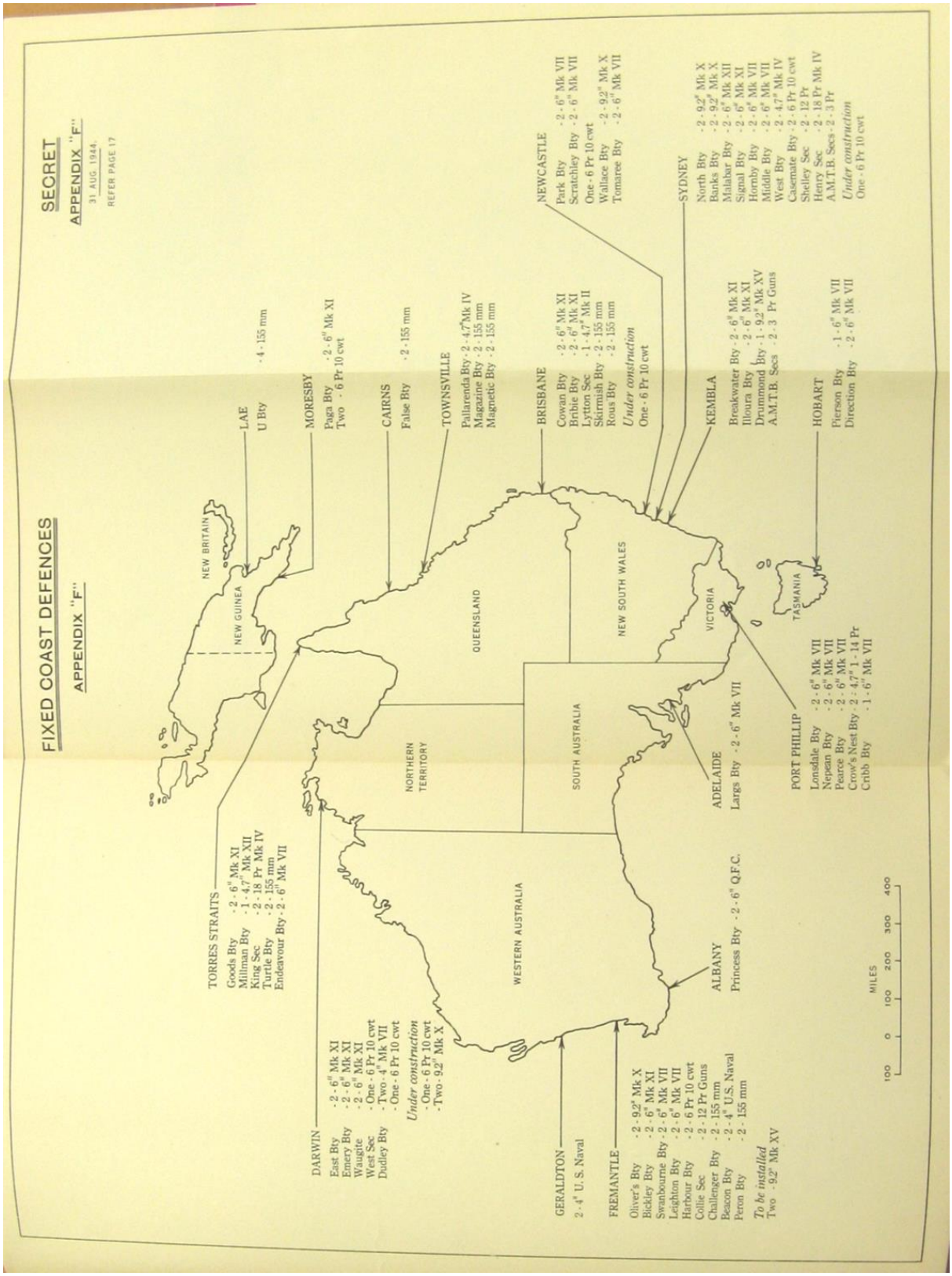
The Navy position had not changed since the initial review; that is Navy could preserve its current strength and meet the requirements for new vessels or transferred RN vessels with modest increases in manpower. As stated, the major navy effort remained with or in support of MacArthur's forces.

War Cabinet considered the review on 23 August 1944.[61] Air Force was directed to re-assess its base without weakening the apex of its striking power, while the other reductions were confirmed, thereby accepting the impact on coast and AA defences,.

MacArthur met with Curtin for the last time on 30 September 1944, then on 14 October he left Australia for GHQ SWPA which had moved from Brisbane to Hollandia, DNG.[62] US forces also progressively moved north and the SWPA LoC increasingly became direct to the US rather than using Australia as a base. The war continued to move steadily away from Australia.

In August 1944 mainland defence remained strong as demonstrated by the fixed coast defences, Map 8.2. Then from late August 1944 until the end of the war a series of decisions were made that wound down mainland defence. Ports were progressively removed from the list of defended ports, NT Force was reduced and equipment progressively placed in care and maintenance, or storage.

[61] War Cabinet Minute 3740, The Australian War Effort, 23 August 1944. NAA: A5954, 810/2.
[62] James, *The Years of MacArthur, Volume II*, p. 550.



Map 8.2: Fixed Coast Defences, 31 August 1944.[63]

[63] Australian Military Forces: The Army War Effort, 31 Aug 1944, Appendix F. AWM: AWM54, 243/2/1 Part 20

The Defence Committee recommended in August 1944 that Melbourne, Hobart and Adelaide should be removed from the category of defended port. The recommendation was significant. A defended port had clearly defined requirements: permanently manned guns covering the port entrance, an Examination Service and/or Port War Signal Station, and a system to communicate vessel status to the defences.[64] Reduction to undefended status meant that those systems were removed, noting that a considerable saving in manpower ensued. The Committee also recommended that other defended ports should be examined with a similar view. This was done and the Committee recommended that Port Kembla, Newcastle, Townsville and Cairns be added to the list.[65] Further, other ports with fixed defences should have the defences reduced to care and maintenance or placed in storage, and the remaining defended ports, Sydney, Brisbane, Torres Strait, Darwin and Fremantle should have a reduced scale of defence (Table 8.6):

Defended Port	Coast defence	AA Defence
Darwin	two 6-inch, three 6-pdr, two 3-inch, 10 CASL	10 3.7-inch, 36 40mm, 16 AASL
Torres Strait	two 6-inch, four CASL	nil
Fremantle	three 6-inch, two 6-pdr, eight CASL	eight 3.7-inch, nine AASL
Sydney	one 6-inch, three 6-pdr, four CASL	four 3.7-inch, eight 40mm, six AASL
Brisbane	one 6-inch, one 6-pdr, two CASL	nil

When 5.25-inch combined role guns became available they would replace 6-inch and 3.7-inch guns.
Key: CASL Coast Artillery Searchlight AASL Anti-Aircraft Searchlight

Table 8.6: Defended Ports – Reduced Scale of Defence, October 1944.[66]

[64] Defence Committee Minute 274/1944, Defended Ports – Australia Station, 25 August 1944. AWM: AWM113, MH 1/120.
[65] Defence Committee Minute 308/1944, Defended Ports – Australia Station, 25 October 1944. AWM: AWM113, MH 1/120.
[66] Defence Committee Minute 308/1944, 25 October 1944, Appendix A.

These proposals were approved by the War Cabinet in January 1945.[67] The Defence Committee continued to review requirements and further reductions were made, with retrospective War Cabinet approval given after the cessation of hostilities.[68]

In November 1943, Navy had proposed that the convoy system south of Brisbane should be discontinued. There had been no attacks since 16 June, after successful operations against Rabaul the submarine threat was slight, escorts were needed for convoys supporting the offensives in New Guinea and the flow of trade would return to normal (20 per cent higher than under the convoy system). The Advisory War Council considered the proposal and expressed concern but did agree to the cessation of convoys south of Newcastle (11 November).[69] The proposal was approved by Curtin on 30 November.[70] The decision resulted in industrial action by the Seamen's Union who claimed they were not being given appropriate protection. The government threatened to remove protected industry status for strikers and the issue was resolved.[71]

In January 1944, Navy again proposed that the convoy system cease for shipping south of Brisbane. War Cabinet approved the proposal on 4 February. This time the maritime unions were informed prior to the approval being put in place.[72] This was later extended to routes between Brisbane and Gladstone. The war continued to move north and convoys ceased between Townsville and New Guinea on 24 March 1944.[73] Then in 1945, as Australian operations commenced against Tarakan (Dutch Borneo), convoys ceased south of the equator and east of 130ºE.[74]

There was one last episode in the anti-submarine war in Australian waters. In 1944 a number of German long-range U-boats were sent to the north-west Indian Ocean and operations were conducted with some success. In September 1944, three

---

[67] War Cabinet Minute 4002, Agendum 3/1945, Defended Ports – Australia Station, 9 January 1945. NAA: A5954, 811/1.
[68] War Cabinet Minute 4374, Agendum 337/1945, Reduction of Defences at Sydney, Darwin and Fremantle, 18 August 1945. NAA: A2670, 337/1945.
[69] Advisory War Council Minute 1249, Reports of Chiefs of Staff on Operations, 11 November 1943. NAA: A2684, 1588 Part 1.
[70] Memorandum to Minister for the Navy, 30 November 1943. NAA: A2684, 1588 Part 1.
[71] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 247.
[72] War Cabinet Minute 3321, Agendum No 55/1944, Convoys, 4 February 1944. NAA: A2684, 1588 Part 1.
[73] Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, p. 247.
[74] Report by CNS, 25 May 1945. NAA: A2684, 1588 Part 1.

submarines sailed into Australian waters. However the German and Japanese codes were not secure and the Allies were aware of the preparations although the mission was not clear. Fremantle was a logical target and a small naval ASW group was formed there, however air assets were few – in particular the US Navy Catalinas had moved north. Ship routing to the west was revised. In the event one U-boat sailed on 5 October 1944, was tracked and sunk by US submarines. Another sailed for the Darwin area in November, it was also tracked and sunk. The third, *U862*, sailed in November for the south-west coast with the intent of attacking merchant shipping. Traffic was scant so *U862* headed east and attacked without success a merchant vessel off the south Australian coast on 9 December. A large but unsuccessful search followed. A further attack on a tanker south of Tasmania on 15 December was thwarted by weather and the arrival of an aircraft. The RAAF was searching off the east coast with intelligence indicating the submarine could be as far north as Brisbane. Finally *U862* was successful on 24 December, attacking and sinking the Liberty ship *Robert J Walker* off the Sydney approaches at the southern border of the RAAF search area. The RAN had also mounted a major search until 26 December with mine-sweeping continuing for some days more. The *U862* was not found. The submarine returned to Batavia; while enroute the *U862* came across and sank a US Liberty ship *Peter Silvester* on 6 February 1945.[75]

This episode demonstrated a number of issues. Good intelligence enabled the first two boats to be intercepted and sunk. Intelligence on the *U862* was not specific enough to enable tracking, so an air and surface search was necessary. However, the lack of capable surveillance aircraft and the reduction of the ASW capability off the Australian coast, both part of the reduction of mainland defence, meant the lack of success against *U862* was almost inevitable. Accepting that the available assets were far better than in the early days of the Pacific War, the episode did illustrate the potential cost of the reduction of mainland defence.

Australia's war continued throughout 1945, but not as part of the major offensives. Despite statements to the contrary, MacArthur had no intention of using Australian air or ground forces in his return to the Philippines; his ego was such that his return had to be seen as a US operation. Australia's role in land operations was steadily

[75] For full details see Stevens, *A Critical Vulnerability*, chapter 9, pp. 257-286.

reduced until, with the formation of Army Task Forces under American commanders, it was sidelined. MacArthur did however retain Task Force 74, with the bulk of the RAN combat capability.

Australian forces were committed to operations in bypassed territories. These final campaigns were in the mandated territories of New Guinea, New Britain and Bougainville and also in Borneo. While these operations were consistent with the government's position, there was criticism over the use of Australian troops in mopping-up operations. The operations in the mandated territories were left to Australia while operations in Borneo were on MacArthur's orders. The commitment to these operations were as much a factor in the reduction of mainland defence as was the diminution of threat.

Jeffrey Grey makes the point that militarily "these final campaigns made no difference to the outcome of the war and did nothing to hasten the defeat of the Japanese."[76] However, there were pertinent reasons for the campaigns; these centred around Australian national interests and status at the peace settlements, the government's desire to restore the Australian role in New Guinea and the compassionate need to free prisoners of war.

Mainland Defence

The initial reduction of mainland defence took place in the reduced threat areas, defined in April 1944 as south of 20° latitude (Bowen and Port Hedland). The reductions applied to point defence systems, that is Coast Artillery and Anti-Aircraft Artillery. War establishments were changed and the use of VDC and AWAS introduced, while some equipment was placed in care and maintenance. While reduced manning such as VDC on six hour callout would have been of little use against a no-notice raid, the risk taken was minor since the intelligence capability had improved to the extent that it provided

[76] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p. 190.

an early warning system. As the war moved away from Australia, the defended ports were phased out.

Area defence was also reduced as forces were deployed north. The convoy system was gradually phased out and RAAF patrols became irregular and utilised lesser capability aircraft.

Sea lines of communication were no longer at real risk inside the 200nm limit, though shipping constraints continued to be a problem. With rail, significant effort had gone into boosting the carrying capacity, with sidings for crossing traffic introduced to major lines thereby enabling more trains to run in a given timeframe; the gauge problem of course remained. The Darwin roads continued to be improved, to the extent they could take semi-trailer loads, and while never completely proofed against the wet season they were considerably better.

The intelligence capability reached its zenith with signals intelligence having access to the major Japanese code systems apart from occasional blackouts when keys or code books changed. The interpretation of deciphered intelligence remained a human activity with successes and failures. For mainland defence intelligence was an early warning system. Surveillance continued, though the mainland coastwatch system was reduced and placed under the RAAF, which continued the radar system and VAOC. As the defended ports reduced their defences, the Gun Laying radars assisted with surface surveillance.

Australian production was at its height by this period and indeed had to help resolve the manpower problems by the release of people. The problems in the primary industries became acute however and were addressed. The national will on the whole remained firm, although industrial issues remained until the end of the war.

Mainland Defence: Fit for Purpose

It is difficult to apply the fit for purpose test to mainland defence in this period; the question becomes whether the test is pertinent in view of the reduced threat and the

move of the war away from Australia. To enable some assessment the period may be sub-divided into two; mid-1943 to mid-1944, then mid-1944 onward. In the first sub-period there was some residual threat and mainland defence may be assessed as fit for purpose, as demonstrated by the response to the possible raid on Perth. For the second, the fit for purpose test is not really appropriate, despite the one-off incident with the *U862*.

After mid-1943 the manpower issue was the driving force for decision making about Australia's war effort. The decisions of October 1943 and the review in April 1944 set the path for the country for the rest of the war. Mainland defence was reduced and remained fit for purpose until mid-1944, after which the threat had gone and reductions continued to the end of the war.

What then are the overall assessments that may be made about the defence of mainland Australia 1939 to 1945? These and other conclusions to this work are examined next.

9

CONCLUSION

There are parallels and differences between the Australian experience of World War II and that of Britain. To many in Australia, Britain was the 'Mother Country', while as a member of the British Commonwealth there were economic and military ties of long standing. In the military sense the structure of the services was similar to the British services, at the start of the war most war material was British or of British design, and Australia largely relied on Britain for intelligence. The parallels are understandable. The differences however were profound. The UK had a population 47.0 million to protect an area of approximately 94,000 square miles (slightly larger than Victoria); Australia's population was 7.1 million to defend 3 million square miles (slightly smaller than the continental US). Britain was under attack from the end of the Phoney War (May 1940) to virtually the end of the war in Europe. With a high population density, particularly in the cities, British civilian casualties were large, with 60,595 killed and 86,182 hospitalised.[1] Attacks on Australia were slight in comparison and Australian civilian casualties were less than 500. Britain went to a total war footing, including the mobilisation of the civilian population to a degree never envisaged in Australia. Nonetheless, Australia's military achievement in the war was significant; an Army of 12 Divisions at its peak, a strong fleet and an Air Force of 53 squadrons. This was Australia's greatest military power ever, and indeed ever likely.

In the inter-war years the Singapore Strategy became Australia's de facto defence policy, while the Depression resulted in Australian defence being severely depleted. The Singapore Strategy also became a victim of the Depression and indeed became an impossibility as the Royal Navy slipped from a two power navy to a single power capability. Throughout the inter-war years the threat from Japan escalated, with Japan expanding into Manchuria in 1931 and going to war in China in 1937.

[1] *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, p. 1136.

It has been claimed that Britain deliberately misled Australia over the Singapore Strategy.[2] The claim is not viable and has been discredited.[3] Indeed it can be claimed that Australia was guilty of self-betrayal in that evidence existed to enable a correct assessment of the impossibility of Britain being able to meet its Singapore obligations; work ceased in 1924 and the plan was revised and the scale reduced several times over subsequent years. As early as November 1939 it was apparent that Britain would have severe difficulty in providing any fleet for Singapore.[4] However British assurances continued and were accepted by Australia, albeit with some misgivings. Overall the British Government was disingenuous and the Australian Government was too trusting. There is a lesson here for Australian involvement with any security relationship.

As the war progressed there were a number of shifts in Australian political thinking, reflected in changing perceptions of the level of threat to Australia. Australia's initial response was as part of Imperial Defence: an expeditionary force was provided, naval assets were released and a massive air training programme agreed to. Britain was supplied with Australian weapons and munitions after Dunkirk. At the same time the looming Japanese threat raised concerns for Australian security, these concerns were realised with the start of the Pacific war. Then there was a significant change to a partnership with the US; however the US regarded Australia as a subsidiary part of the British Empire. With the other junior coalition partners, Australia was not consulted as the grand strategy of the Allies developed. Australia was developed as a base for MacArthur's offensive, and with that development the security of Australia was assured.

What then of the two questions: what measures were taken to defend mainland Australia, and were those measures effective in meeting the perceived threat to Australia? The thesis has examined the elements of mainland defence and assessed the fitness for purpose of the elements under the changing levels of perceived threat. To present the outcomes in a narrative form would be repetitive so for clarity a tabulated

---

[2] David Day, *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1988.
[3] For example John McCarthy, 'The 'Great Betrayal' Reconsidered: An Australian Perspective', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 48, No 1, May 1994.
[4] Bruce Notes, Meeting of Ministers, 20 November 1939. NAA: M100, November 1939.

summary of the conclusions with respect to the major elements of mainland defence follows.

Distant War: Australian Commitment – September 1939 to June 1940

Perceived Threat	Minor scale of attack: attacks on shipping by vessels or mining (Germany) Medium scale: sustained attack on shipping and concurrent heavy raids by combined operations (if a Far Eastern war started with Japan)
	Fit for Purpose
Point Defence	Minor scale: some capability Medium scale: little capability
Area Defence	Minor scale: some capability Medium scale: little capability
Intelligence/ Surveillance	Developing capabilities only
Lines of Communication	Sea lines were vulnerable; land lines had a number of deficiencies; air transport capability poor.
Assessment	Partially fit for purpose.

Distant War: European Débâcle – June 1940 to December 1941

Perceived Threat	Three scales of attack: bombardment, light raids, invasion (Japan)
	Fit for Purpose
Point Defence	Some capability against bombardment and light raids, but little capability against invasion
Area Defence	As for Point Defence
Intelligence/ Surveillance	Remained developing capabilities only
Lines of Communication	Sea lines remained vulnerable; land lines had a number of deficiencies, though LoC to Darwin had improved; air transport capability poor.
Assessment	Partially fit for purpose.

One Hundred Days – December 1941 to March 1942

Perceived Threat	At the start of the Pacific War, five possible forms of attack: air attack by carrier borne aircraft; naval bombardment; a sea-borne raid by combined forces against a land objective, followed by withdrawal of the raiding force; attack with the objective of permanent or semi-permanent occupation of territory with a view to invasion at a later date; and invasion of Australia. After the fall of Singapore: capture of the vital area (Brisbane to Melbourne), capture of key points to isolate the vital area, capture of a forward base for future offensive operations.
	Fit for Purpose
Point Defence	Sydney defences had improved, Darwin defence was inadequate when tested on 19 February, other defended ports were poorly defended
Area Defence	Vital area had adequate defence though equipment was poor and training incomplete
Intelligence/ Surveillance	COIC were in place, intelligence still largely relied on the UK. Mainland surveillance assets few, largely relied on Army and VDC.
Lines of Communication	Sea lines remained vulnerable; land lines had a number of deficiencies, Darwin had improved but was still poor in the wet; air transport capability was poor.
Assessment	Not fit for purpose

MacArthur – March 1942 to June 1942

Perceived Threat	Attacks in force against Australia, including invasion; attacks against Australian lines of communication
	Fit for Purpose
Point Defence	Darwin, Sydney, Whyalla were all partially fit for purpose
Area Defence	Some force elements remained ineffective but most were partially fit for purpose

Intelligence/ Surveillance	Forerunners of the AIB were in place and service intelligence arms improved. Coastwatch in place (with some gaps), radar helped where it was in place.
Lines of Communication	The first Japanese submarine campaign showed sea lines were hazardous, despite the introduction of convoys; land line deficiencies remained, though Darwin had improved; air transport capability was poor.
Assessment	Partially fit for purpose.

Mainland Defence During the Holding War – June 1942 to June 1943

Perceived Threat	The Government perception was that incursion could not be ruled out, that perception eased as the situation improved. The Defence Committee saw the purpose as protection against sea bombardment, torpedo attack and air attack.
	Fit for Purpose
Point Defence	Considerable improvement – fit for purpose
Area Defence	NE Australia fit for purpose; Torres to Darwin remained partially fit.
Intelligence/ Surveillance	Both fully developed and fit for purpose.
Lines of Communication	The Australian ASW system remained inadequate so sea lines remained partially fit. Land lines were fit for purpose and the air transport system had considerably improved.
Assessment	Fit for purpose with exception (ASW).

The Reduction of Mainland Defence – June 1943 to VJ Day

Perceived Threat	From mid-1943 to mid-1944 there was some residual threat; from mid-1944 on there was no real threat
	Fit for Purpose

Assessment	All elements were fit for purpose in the first period; in the second period the test does not apply.

With respect to manpower Australia committed to the build-up of the services and by the middle of the war struggled to meet the conflicting demands of the services, war industry, and the rural and civil industries. As well Australia provided the US forces in Australia with food, base works and equipment servicing; provided food for Britain; and provided some war material for other Empire forces. It became inevitable that the Australian services had to be reduced to maintain industry and the rural sector. Equally, with the commitment to maintain an offensive force of three divisions and supporting elements, it was inevitable that mainland defence would suffer a significant impact.

Production capability developed steadily, albeit unevenly, as the war progressed. Australia developed the capability to produce most munitions and war supplies and the capability to construct medium vessels and warships up to destroyer size. The aircraft industry developed the capability to produce twin engine aircraft. Australia took part in the development of radar and produced the capable LW/AW set. Production capacity improved as the war progressed.

In terms of national will the public remained committed to the war effort but a total war footing in the civilian population was only partially achieved. A major problem that was never properly resolved involved the industrial issues that continued throughout the war, particularly on the coal fields and the waterside. While these lessened at times of threat they never went away.

As seen (Figure 1.1, p. 20), there were a number of shifts in perceived threat in Australia, noting that perceived and real threat converged as intelligence systems improved. This work has examined those shifts in the light of mainland defence. It is clear that until about the end of 1942, the mainland defence response to the perceived threat was inadequate; after that the momentum in mainland defence development resulted in defences that met the need. However the manpower problem forced a considerable reduction in mainland defence prior to the war's end. To summarise the response versus threat situation for mainland defence it is clear that the response lagged the need. That was not unique – for all the Allied nations in World War II the initial response lagged the need in one way or another.

However the thesis shows that Australia was a unique example. Australia was a country near the size of the continental United States with a population of just seven million, concentrated in the east and south-west, with a huge coastline and some extremely remote areas, and with a relatively low industrial base at the start of the war. Under such circumstances it is little wonder that mainland defence was a major problem.

An assessment of the methodology used in this work may be made in two areas. First the fit for purpose test enables a qualitative assessment to be made of mainland defence, in terms of capability, capacity and timeliness. As Jeremy Black argues, the alternative is not assessment but assertion, with little to ensure the assertion is correct. [5] Further this approach ensures a degree of rigor that otherwise may be missed. However two issues with the methodology were encountered in the thesis. The first was the problem of defining the purpose – fit for what, precisely? This was answered by determining the perceived threat but that had its own issues, such as the perceived threat at government level against the perceived threat at the military level; both had a part. There was also the issue of determining the fitness for purpose of the elements of mainland defence; often there was no single answer. This could become a problem as one probed into the systems. An example is General Savige's report on 3 Division in May 1942 where he concluded that 25 per cent of his men had considerable service, 50 per cent had 3-4 months training and 25 per cent were raw recruits; what then was the capability of the Division?[6] It became clear in many cases that the assessment had to be partially fit for purpose. That may seem to be a non-answer, but the methodology gives a clear picture of where the elements were fit for purpose and where they were not.

What then has been achieved by the thesis? First, it has taken a holistic approach to a subject that is only partially addressed in previous works. In doing so it has developed a methodology and demonstrated its efficacy; the methodology could be applied in similar assessments in the future. Finally the thesis has answered the two questions posed in the Introduction: what measures were taken to defend mainland

[5] Black, *Rethinking Military History*, pp.128-150.
[6] Appreciation of the Situation, Maj-Gen SG Savige, Commanding 3 Australian Division, 26 May 1942. AWM: AWM54, 243/6/99.

Australia and were those measures effective in meeting the perceived threat to Australia?

The thesis has addressed a very large topic and it is appropriate to consider some viable directions for future research. The thesis took a systemic approach and analysed the two questions in terms of the elements of mainland defence, but in order to provide an overall assessment each element could not be analysed in depth. Further studies that examine these elements both holistically and in depth would be of benefit. Examples include an analysis of the defended ports, especially Perth; an analysis of the Australian coastal surveillance system, and an analysis of Australian lines of communication. Also, Australian aircraft production, Australian shipbuilding and the development of radar in Australia are prime subjects for further study.

The public perception of Australia's role in World War II tends to focus on the military campaigns against the Germans, Italians, Vichy French and Japanese, and indeed that is the focus of many of the histories of the war. These struggles against the enemy, often in difficult and dangerous circumstances, should of course be remembered. As well, servicemen in training for overseas operations contributed to mainland defence when in Australia. However there were many others who served only in Australia. To mention a few there were the 'soldiers on the hill' at Whyalla; they were AIF and could have served overseas but spent their war in a remote Australian town. There were the radar operators, often serving in remote and uncomfortable locations; the women who entered the services and released men for combat duties; the Volunteer Defence Corps; the Voluntary Air Observers Corps and a host of others. These people, and their often-inadequate equipment, were the slim barrier that did its part to defend Australia in World War II; they should also be remembered and honoured for their role.

Attachment One

Air Raids on Australia

Darwin

The raids do not include a number of fighter escorted reconnaissance sorties.[1]

Key: dest – destroyed dam – damaged
prob – probably destroyed poss – possibly destroyed

Raid No.	Date & Time	No. of Enemy Aircraft	Target	No. & Type of Defenders	Own Losses	Enemy Losses
1	19.2.42 0958	36 Fighters 71 Dive Bombers 81 Level Bombers	Darwin Town, Shipping, RAAF Airfield	11 P-40 Kittyhawks	10 P-40 Kittyhawks	2 fighters dest 2 dive bombers prob
2	19.2.42 1158	54 Heavy Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	No records, probably nil
3	4.3.42 1400	8 Fighters	RAAF Airfield	Nil	1 on ground	Nil
4	16.3.42 0130	14 Heavy Bombers	RAAF Airfield and AA Bty - Bagot	Nil	1 dam on ground	Nil
5	19.3.42 1140	7 Heavy Bombers	Darwin Town, Myilly Point, Larrakeyah	Nil	Nil	Ni1
6	22.3.42 1021	3 Fighters	Katherine	Unspecified no. of P-40s	Nil	1 dest
7	28.3.42 1143	7 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	As above	1 prob	1 dest 1 dam
8	30.3.42 1510	5 Fighters 7 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	As above	1 dest	1 bomber dam
9	31.3.42 1320	l2/15 Fighters	RAAF Airfield	As above	Nil	1 fighter dest

[1] Derived from Bob Alford, *Darwin's Air War 1942-1945: An Illustrated History*, Aviation Historical Society of the NT and Colemans Printing, Darwin, 1991, pp. 78-79. George Vazenry, 'Attacks on the Australian Mainland: World War II', *Sabretache*, Vol XXV, July/September 1984. Broome casualty figures are from Mervyn W. Prime, *Broome's One Day War: The story of the Japanese Raid on Broome 3rd March 1942*, Broome Historical Society Inc, Broome, 2007, p. 25.

		7 Bombers				1 bomber poss
10	31.3.42 2219	3 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil
11	2.4.42 1530	3 Fighters 7 Bombers	Darwin Town, Oil Tanks	Nil	Nil	Nil
12	4.4.42 1348	6 Fighters 6 Bombers	Civil Airfield, Parap Hotel	14 P-40s	2 dest	1 fighter dest 4 bomber dest
13	5.4.42 1229	7 Fighters 7 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil
14	25.4.42 1400	12 Fighters 24 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Approx. 50 P-40s	Nil	1 fighter dest 8 bomber dest, 1 dam
15	27.4.42 1207	21 Fighters 17 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Approx. 50 P-40s	2 dest 1 crashed	4 fighter dest 3 bomber dest
16	13.6.42 1152	12 Fighters 27 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	36 P-40s	3 dest 1 crashed	1 fighter dest
17	14.6.42 1314	18 Fighters	Darwin Town area Strafed	Unknown no. of P-40s	1 dest	4 dest
18	15.6.42 1220	15 Fighters 27 Bombers	Larrakeyah to Stokes Hill	28 P-40s	2 dest	6 fighter dest 1 fighter dam
19	16.6.42 1201	25 Fighters 27 Bombers	Darwin Town area	12 P-40s	3 dest 2 crashed	l fighter dest 1 bomber dest
20	25.7.42 2050	3 Bombers	Darwin Town area	Nil	Nil	Nil
21	26.7.42 2139/2254	2 Flights of 3 Bombers	Darwin, Vestevs	Nil	Nil	Nil
22	27.7.42 2227	Est. 3 Bombers	Knuckeys Lagoon RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil

23	28.7.42 0045	3 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
24	29.7.42 0059	2 Flights of 3 Bombers	Darwin Town area Knuckeys Lagoon	Nil	Nil	Nil
25	30.7.42 0358	3 Bombers	Darwin Town area RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil
26	31.7.42	15-20 Fighters 27 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	34 P-40s	1 dest 2 dam	3 fighter dest 6 bomber dest
27	23.8.42 1212	12-15 Fighters 27 Bombers	Hughes Field	24 P-40s	1 Crashed	8 fighter dest 7 bomber dest
28	24.8.42 2124	2 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil
29	24.8.42 2214	1 Bomber	Noonamah	Nil	Nil	Nil
30	25.8.41 0005	2 Bombers	Darwin, Parap	Nil	Nil	Nil
31	27.8.42 0345-0537	Est. 6 Bombers	Cox Peninsula, Botanical Gardens	Nil	Nil	Nil
32	28.8.42 0335	3 Bombers	Darwin Railway Yards, Port Patterson	Nil	Nil	Nil
33	30.8.42 0239	6 Bombers	Darwin Town	Nil	Nil	Nil
34	31.8.42 0514	3 Bombers	Darwin Town, Cox Peninsula	Nil	Nil	Nil
35	25.9.42 0341	2 Bombers	Darwin Town, Knuckeys Lagoon	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
36	25.9.42 0548	2 Bombers	Darwin Town, Daly Street Bridge	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
37	26.9.42 0522	3 Bombers	Livingstone Field	3 P-40s	Nil	-
38	27.9.42 0456	2 Bombers	Bynoe Harbour	2 P-40s	Nil	Nil

39	27.9.42 0544	2 Bombers	Darwin Town (Frances Bay)	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
40	24.10.42 0442	3 Bombers	Batchelor	2 P-40s	Nil	Nil
41	24.10.42 0452	3 Bombers	Pell	2 P-40s	Nil	Nil
42	24.10.42 0457	3 Bombers	Cox Peninsula	2 P-40s	Nil	Nil
43	24.10.42 0512	3 Bombers	RAAF Airfield	2 P-40s	Nil	Nil
44	25.10.42 0530	3 Bombers	Darwin Town, RAAF Airfield	4 P-40s	Nil	Nil
45	26.10.42 0454	3 Bombers	Darwin Town, RAAF Airfield	Nil	Nil	Nil
46	27.10.42 0220	6 Flights of 3 Bombers each	Darwin Town, RAAF Airfield	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
47	23.11.42 0300/0439	6 Flights of 3 Bombers each	Darwin Town, RAAF Airfield	1 P-40	Nil	1 bomber dest
48	26.11.42	4 Flights of 3 Bombers each	Darwin Town, Strauss, Hughes	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
49	27.11.42 0356-0446	4 Flights of 3 Bombers each	Hughes, Coomalie, Strauss	1 P-40	Nil	Nil
50	20.1.43 2244-0015	7 Bombers	AWC Camp, S/L Station, Ironstone	4 P-40s	Nil	1 poss
51	21.1.43 2154	2 Bombers	Darwin Area (Frances Bay)	4 P-40s	Nil	Nil
52	2.3.43 1434	? fighters l5 Bombers	Coomalie	26 Spitfires	Nil	2 fighter dest 1 bomber dest 1 dam
53	15.3.43 1120	25 Fighters 24 Bombers	Darwin Oil Tanks	27 Spitfires	4 dest	6 fighter dest ? prob/dam 2 bomber

						dest ? prob/dam
54	2.5.43 1015	20 Fighters 2l Bombers	RAAF Airfield, Floating Dock	49 Spitfires	12 dest, 2 dam (9 lost due engine/fuel)	4 fighter dest 2 bomber dest
55	20.6.43 1043	21 Fighters 21 ‘Sally’ Bombers	Winnellie (High Level), RAAF (Low Level)	46 Spitfires	2 dest, 1 dam	5 fighter dest 2 fighter dam 9? bomber dest
56	28.6.43 1107	9 Fighters 9 Bombers	Vesteys	42 Spitfires	1 dest, 2 dam	4 fighter dest 2 bomber prob
57	30.6.43 1230	21 Fighters 27 Bombers	Fenton Field	38 Spitfires	7 dest, 4 dest on ground	3 fighter dest 1 dam 2 bomber prob
58	6.7.43 1202	21 Fighters 27 Bombers	Fenton Field	33 Spitfires	7 dest	2 fighter dest 1 fighter dam
59	13.8.43 2145	9 Bombers	Fenton Field	7 Spitfires	Nil	Nil
60	13.8.43 2312	9 Bombers	Fenton Field, Coomalie	l0 Spitfires	Nil	Nil
61	21.8.43 0307	18 Bombers	Fenton Field, Coomalie	10 Spitfires	Nil	Nil
62	15.9.43 0025	9 Bombers	Fenton and Long Fields	Nil	Nil	Nil
63	18.9.43 0350	9 Bombers	Fenton and Long Fields	Nil	Nil	Nil
64	12.11.43 0353/0539	9 Bombers	Parap, Adelaide River, Batchelor	11 Spitfires	Nil	2 dest

Other Locations

Place	Date	Dead	Injured	Remarks
Horn Island	14.3.42 29.5.42 30.5.42 12.6.42 7.7.42 30.7.42 1.8.42 25.8.42 18.6.43			 Date unsure, may have been 29.4.42 Date unsure, may have been 30.4.42
Broome	3.3.42 20.3.42 27.8.42 16.8.43	85 1	?	casualty figures uncertain, 23 aircraft dest. 1 aircraft destroyed, some property damage. l bomber; 3 bombs dropped.
Wyndham	3.3.42 23.3.42			1 aircraft damaged, some property damage. Damage to aerodrome.
Port Hedland	30.7.42 17.8.43	1		Damage to aerodrome, one soldier killed.
Derby	20.3.42			No damage, only machine gun fire.
Townsville	25.7.42 28.7.42 29.7.42			Bombs dropped at sea.
Millingimbi	9.5.42 10.5.42	12		1 Army, 10 RAAF, 1 Aborigine killed. ‘Maroubra’sunk.
Katherine	22.3.42	1	1	Damage to aerodrome.
Wessel Island	11.5.42			
Exmouth Gulf	20.5.43 21.5.43 24.9.43			2 planes; 1 bomb dropped in Gulf . 2 planes; 9 bombs dropped in Gulf . False alarm. Birds on radar.

Attachment Two

Location of Australian Radar Stations[1]

The stations are grouped by area, with the coast divided into north and south to reflect the areas more liable to air attack (north) and more at risk from submarine operations (south). A single date indicates the unit arrived at the place and was in situ for the duration. Two numbers indicate a change in station number; two or more locations indicate a move in the same area. Location and date of formation are generally not included to reduce extraneous detail. Location dates of less than about one month are not included since the unit would not have been operational long enough to contribute to the location's defence.

Radar Stations and Equipment[2]

Radar Station	Description	Range [a]
7-49 & 51, 52, 54-59	Fixed stations, on the mainland or islands close to the mainland – using Australian AW or English Mk V COL	AW: 80 COL: 150
101-109	MAWD – American SCR268 GL sets which were classified as being transportable	100
131-168	Mobile GCI – three types were in this grouping: UK Mk V, Canadian RWG/GCI and Australian LW/GCI Mk 1 and Mk 2	UK: 80 RWG: 60 LW/GCI: 95
207-228	Fixed stations, wholly on the mainland using English ACO equipment	160
251-257	LW/LFC (Light Weight Low Flying Cover) – only two sets 'almost' in operation at the end of the war – it was a special 10cm set with Australian-designed and constructed aerials and huts using the English 500 kW Type 277 equipment	n/k
50, 53 & 61, 301-355	Australian air transportable equipment: LW/AW Mk 1, Mk 1A, Mk 2 and Mk 5	Mk 1/1A: 100 Mk2: 130

[1] RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History*, Volume 5 – Radar Units, pp. 76-152.
[2] RAAF Historical Section, Radar Units, p. 9.

[a] Range is maximum normal range in miles under optimum conditions. Radar altitude, target altitude and radar cross-section, and weather conditions would all have an impact on the range achieved at any particular time.[3]

ACO	Advanced Chain Overseas [4]	LW	Light Weight
AW	Air Warning	LW/AW	Light Weight Air Warning
COL	Chain Overseas Low Flying	MAWD	Modified Air Warning Device
GCI	Ground Control Intercept	RWG	Canadian manufactured equipment
GL	Gun Laying		Radio Enterprises Limited

North: Exmouth to Townsville

Station	Location	Arrived – Departed	Equipment
Exmouth to Broome			
310/31	North West Cape	12 Jan 1943 – 1 Jul 1944	AW/ COL
155	Exmouth Gulf	8 Aug 1944	Mobile GCI
314	Onslow	15 Feb 1943	LW/AW
329	Port Hedland	3 Oct 1943	LW/AW
325	Corunna Downs	26 Jul 1943 - 1 Jan 1945	LW/AW
328	Wallal Downs	11 Oct 1943	LW/AW
324	Noonkanbah	25 Jul 1943 - 8 Jul 1944	LW/AW
327	Broome	8 Sep 1943	LW/AW
Broome to Wyndham			
326	Cape Leveque	10 Sep 1943	LW/AW
324	Yampi Sound	8 Jul 1944 - 3 Feb 1945	LW/AW
344	West Montalivet Island	27 Mar 1944	LW/AW
317	Sir Grahame Moore Island	11 Apr 1944	LW/AW
154	Truscott Air Base, Anjo Peninsula	2 Nov 1943	Mobile GCI
161	Anjo Peninsula	30 Apr 1944 - 13 Jun 1944	Mobile GCI
319	Drysdale, Anjo Peninsula	30 Mar 1944	LW/AW
Wyndham to Darwin			
39	Port Keats	17 Aug 1942	AW/ COL
307/61	Peron Island	19 Mar 1943	LW/AW

[3] Ed Simmonds and Norm Smith, *Echoes Over The Pacific*. E.W. & E. Simmonds, Banora Point (NSW), 1995, Appendix 1.
[4] RAAF Historical Section, Radar Units, p. xiii.

Darwin and area (listed in order of arrival date)			
31/310	Dripstone Caves, Fenton, Sattler	22 Mar 1942 - 16 Jan 1945	AW/ COL
105	Point Charles	1 Jun 1942	MAWD
38	Darwin	25 Jun 1942 - 14 Aug 1942	AW/ COL
109	Mount Woods, Adelaide River, Nightcliff	29 Jul 1942	MAWD
132	Knuckey's Lagoon	9 Nov 1942	Mobile GCI
308	Darwin, Batchelor	1 Jan 1943 - 1 Apr 1943	LW/AW
309	Darwin, Fenton	12 Jan 1943 - 3 May 1943	LW/AW
224	Old Southport Road	24 May 1943	ACO
318	Batchelor	4 Jun 1943 - 21 Aug 1943	LW/AW
59	Lee Point	20 Oct 1943	AW/ COL
60	'59 Mile' (from Darwin)	20 Oct 1943 - 7 Feb 1944	n/k
150	Knuckey's Lagoon, Adelaide River, Darwin	19 Nov 1943 - 27 Jun 44	Mobile GCI
161	Adelaide River, *(Anjo Peninsula, 30 Apr - 13 Jun 44)*, '58 Mile', Sattler	10 Feb 1944 -16 Jan 45	Mobile GCI
343	Strauss	11 Aug 1944 - 1 Feb 1945	LW/AW
302	Darwin	28 Aug 1944 - 31 Jan 1945	LW/AW
351	Darwin	28 Aug 1944 - 31 Jan 1945	LW/AW
162	Knuckey's Lagoon	29 Aug 1944 - 16 Jan 1945	Mobile GCI
352	Sattler	2 Sep 1944 - 16 Jan 45	LW/AW
Bathurst and Melville Islands			
38	Cape Fourcroy	14 Aug 1942	AW/ COL
60	Cape Van Diemen	7 Feb 1944	n/k
318	Cape Van Diemen	7 Apr 1945 - 13 Aug 1945	LW/AW
Cape Don to Gove			
318	Cape Don	21 Aug 1943 - 7 Apr 1945	LW/AW
46	Cape Don	28 Mar 1943	AW/ COL
309	North Goulburn Island	3 May 1943 - 21 Feb 1945	LW/AW
308	Millingimbi	1 Apr 1943 - 5 Feb 1945	LW/AW
312	Wessel Island	23 Apr 1943 - 6 Feb 1945	LW/AW
321	Cape Arnhem	27 Jul 1943	LW/AW
Gulf of Carpentaria			
313	Mornington Island	25 Mar 1943 - 3 Sept 1944	LW/AW

320	Mitchell River	9 Jun 1943 - 14 Sept 1944	LW/AW
311	Archer Bay	16 Mar 1943 - 2 Sept 1943	LW/AW
Torres Strait			
36	Hammond Island, Horn Island	20 Mar 1942	AW/ COL
52	Mutee Head	29 Mar 1943	AW/ COL
Merauke and area (listed in order of arrival date)			
40	Merauke	6 Jul 1942	AW/ COL
316	Merauke, Cape Kombies	28 May 1943 - 18 May 1945	LW/AW
151	Merauke	27 Dec 1943	Mobile GCI
322	Tanahmerah	27 Apr 1944 - 19 Jun 1945	LW/AW
342	Post 6 (Eilanden River)	20 May 1944 - 7 Feb 1945	LW/AW
323	Mapi Post, Boepel	23 Jun 1944 - 25 Jan 1945	LW/AW
Torres Strait to Cairns			
43	Portland Roads	8 Oct 1942	AW/ COL
45	Stanley Island	4 Nov 1942 - 2 Apr 45	AW/ COL
44/56	Cooktown	1 Apr 1943	AW/ COL
28	Fitzroy Island (Cairns)	21 Oct 1942	AW/ COL
220	Bones Knob	26 Sep 1943	ACO
Cairns to Townsville			
53	Mount Surprise	11 Aug 1943 - 2 Jun 1945	LW/AW
27	Dunk Island	7 Nov 1942	AW/ COL
58	Paluma	19 Oct 1943	AW/ COL
104/57	Townsville, Castle Hill	1 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
26	Cape Cleveland	1 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
44/56	Townsville	24 Aug 1942 - 1 Apr 1943	AW/ COL
311	Garbutt	2 Sep 1943 - 1 Jan 1945	LW/AW
313	Townsville	3 Sep 1943 - 5 Jan 1945	LW/AW
343	Townsville	23 Dec 1943 - 14 Jun 44	LW/AW
Townsville area			
136	Alligator River	7 Jun 1943	Mobile GCI
211	Home Hill	23 Sep 1943	ACO
42/55	Bowen	5 Mar 1943	AW/ COL
Cloncurry			
107	Quamby	1 Jun 1942	MAWD

South: Geraldton to Brisbane

Geraldton to Perth			
47	Geraldton	17 Feb 1943	AW/ COL
48	Jurien Bay	14 Aug 1943	AW/ COL
Perth & area (listed in order of arrival date)			
32	Rottnest Island	5 Nov 1942	AW/ COL
47	Kalamunda	16 Nov 1942 - 17 Feb 1943	AW/ COL
228	Subiaco, Rockingham	24 May 1943	ACO
144	Cannington	16 Sep 1943	Mobile GCI
227	Yanchep	30 Oct 1943	ACO
Busselton			
33	Cape Naturaliste	16 Nov 1942	AW/ COL
Albany			
35	Stony Ridge	28 Apr 1943	AW/ COL
Adelaide area			
7	Wedge Island	30 Apr 1943	AW/ COL
10	Cape Jervis	6 Mar 1943	AW/ COL
Melbourne			
163	Melbourne	30 Nov 1944 - 18 Jan 1945	Mobile GCI
Victorian Coast			
13	Cape Otway	28 May 1942	AW/ COL
14	Wilson’s Promontory	17 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
15	Metung	25 May 1943	AW/ COL
16	Gabo Island	17 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
NSW South Coast			
-	Port Kembla (*became 18RS*)	14 Feb 1942	n/k
17	Moruya	12 Apr 1943	AW/ COL
18	Kiama	1 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
Sydney & area (listed in order of arrival date)			
101/54	Collaroy	14 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
207	Croydon, Lilli Pilli	24 Aug 1942	ACO
136	Bunnerong Park	12 Apr 1943 - 7 Jun 1943	Mobile GCI
134	Maroubra, Beverley Hills	28 Apr 1943	Mobile GCI
152	Mascot, Sydney	18 Oct 1943 - 31 Mar 1944	Mobile GCI
164	Bankstown, Bargo, Menangle	22 Aug 1944	Mobile GCI

165	Bargo, Quaker's Hill	15 Jan 1945	Mobile GCI
257	Croydon	1 Jul 1945	LW/LFC – n/k
169	Marsden Park	22 Jun 1945	Mobile GCI ?
170	Marsden Park	24 Jul 1945	Mobile GCI ?
251	Collaroy	26 Jul 1945	LW/LFC – n/k
Broken Bay			
19	*(Shepherd's Hill (Newcastle)* Bombi	*10 Jan 1942)* 19 Apr 1942	AW/ COL
Newcastle & area (listed in order of arrival date)			
20	Nelson Bay	1 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
131	Ash Island (Newcastle)	7 Sep 1942	Mobile GCI
208	Swansea	10 Feb 1943	ACO
155	Ash Island	1 May 1944 - 2 Aug 1944	Mobile GCI
Brisbane & area (listed in order of arrival date)			
102	Coolangatta	1 Jun 1942	MAWD
103	Stradbroke Island	1 Jun 1942	MAWD
23	Lytton	12 Jun 1942	AW/ COL
24	Caloundra	13 Feb 1943	AW/ COL
51	Coolangatta	15 Jun 1943	AW/ COL
135	Pinkenba	28 Jun 1943	Mobile GCI
49	Point Lookout	29 Aug 1943	AW/ COL
210	Toorbul Point	27 Oct 1943	ACO
209	Benowa	23 Dec 1943	ACO
163	Sandgate, Brisbane	18 Jan 1945 - 16 May 1945	Mobile GCI
Fraser Island			
25	Sandy Cape	3 Jan 1943 - 27 Jan 1945	AW/ COL

Attachment Three

Reduction in Coast Artillery and Anti-Aircraft Artillery War Establishment September 1943 [1]

Coast Artillery

CASL	Coast Artillery Searchlight
QF	Quick Firing
Examination	Examination Service
Counter B	Counter Bombardment

		Victoria	
Examination	Nepean	One 6 inch, one CASL One 6 inch, one CASL	100% 50% VDC to bring to full manning
Close Defence	Lonsdale	Two 6 inch, one CASL One twin 6 pdr, one CASL	50% VDC to bring to full manning 66% VDC to bring to full manning
	Crows Nest	Two QF 4.7 inch, one 14 pdr, four CASL	Maintenance
	Nepean	One twin 6 pdr, one CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
	Pearce	Two 6 inch, three CASL	Maintenance
	Western Port	Two 6 inch, two CASL	Maintenance
		South Australia	
Examination	Largs	One 6 inch One 6 inch, two CASL	100% 50% VDC to bring to full manning
Examination	Whyalla	Provided by Heavy AA Gun section	Heavy AA in combined AA/CA role (see AA table)
		Tasmania	
Examination	Pierson	One QF 4 inch, one CASL	100%
Close Defence	Direction	Two 6 inch, two CASL	50% VDC to bring to full manning

[1] Coast Defence and Anti-Aircraft details are from Defence Committee, 10 Jun 1943. Reduction of War Establishment, Coast and anti-aircraft defences. NAA: A2031, 110/1943.

		NSW – Sydney	
Examination	Hornby	One 6 inch, one CASL One 6 inch, one CASL	100% 50% VDC to bring to full manning
Counter B	Banks	Two 9.2 inch, two CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
	Malabar	Two 6 inch, two CASL	Maintenance
	Signal	Two 6 inch, two CASL	Maintenance
	North	Two 9.2 inch, three CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
Close Defence	Green Point	One twin 6 pdr, one CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
	Casemate	One twin 6 pdr, two CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
	Middle	Two 6 inch, three CASL	Maintenance
	Henry, Shelley,	Various lighter guns, CASL	Maintenance
	Cronulla, Bare	Various lighter guns, CASL	Maintenance
		NSW – Broken Bay	
Close Defence	West	Two QF 4.7 inch, three QF 18 pdr, five CASL	Maintenance
		NSW – Newcastle	
Examination	Scratchley	One 6 inch, one CASL One 6 inch, one CASL	100% 50% VDC to bring to full manning
Counter B	Wallace	Two 9.2 inch, two CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
Close Defence	Park	Two 6 inch, two CASL	Maintenance
	Scratchley	One twin 6 pdr, one CASL Lighter guns, CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning Maintenance
	Tomaree	Two 6 inch, two CASL Lighter guns, CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning Maintenance
		NSW – Port Kembla	
Examination	Illoura	One 6 inch, one CASL One 6 inch, one CASL	100% 50% VDC to bring to full manning
Counter B	Breakwater	Two 6 inch, two CASL	Maintenance
	Drummond	Two 9.2 inch, two CASL	66% VDC to bring to full manning
Close Defence	Breakwater	Two QF 3 pdr	100%

Anti-Aircraft Artillery

AA	Anti-Aircraft
AASL	Anti-Aircraft Searchlight
SL	Searchlight

	Victoria	
Melbourne	Five Heavy AA Sections Two Heavy AA Sections Two AASL Batteries One Light AA Battery	VDC manning Maintenance (Laverton, Pt Cook) VDC manning Nucleus manning
Yallourn	Two Heavy AA Sections One Light AA Troop	VDC manning Nucleus manning
	South Australia	
Adelaide	One Heavy AA Section (3.7 inch) One AASL Battery	VDC manning VDC manning
Whyalla	One Heavy AA/CA Section (3.7 in) One SL Troop One Light AA Troop	50% manning – performs dual AA/CA role, VDC to complete manning 50% manning Nucleus manning
	Tasmania	
Hobart	Two Heavy AA Sections (3.7 inch) One AASL Battery One Light AA Troop	VDC manning VDC manning Nucleus manning
	New South Wales	
Sydney	Eleven Heavy AA Sections (3.7 inch) Six Heavy AA Sections (3.7 inch) Three Light AA Batteries Three AASL Batteries	66% manning, Sydney proper Maintenance, Sydney outskirts Nucleus manning Nucleus manning
Hawkesbury Bridge	One Light AA Troop	Nucleus manning
Lithgow	Two Heavy AA Sections One Light AA Troop	VDC manning Nucleus manning
Newcastle	Six Heavy AA Sections (3.7 inch) One Heavy AA Section (3.7 inch) Two AASL Batteries One Light AA Battery	66% manning Maintenance Nucleus manning Nucleus manning
Port Kembla	Three Heavy AA Sections (3.7 inch) Two AASL Batteries One Light AA Battery	66% manning Nucleus manning Nucleus manning

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The bibliography has been organised as follows:

A. Primary Sources

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

National Archives of Australia, Canberra and Melbourne

The National Archives, London

US Army Heritage & Education Center

Published Official Documents:

- Australia
- Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

Newspapers

B. Secondary Sources

Official Histories:

- Australia in the War of 1939-1945
- History of the Second World War: United Kingdom
- Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45
- United States Army in World War II: The War Department
- United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific
- United States Strategic Bombing Survey

Reference Works

Articles

Books and Book Chapters

Speeches and Lectures

Japanese Sources and Translated Documents

Short Monographs and Personal Memoirs

Theses and Unpublished Manuscripts

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

AWM49	Inter-war Army records
AWM51	Confidential and security classified records originally maintained by the Australian War Memorial Library
AWM52	2nd AIF (Australian Imperial Force) and CMF (Citizen Military Forces) unit war diaries, 1939-45 War
AWM54	Written records, 1939-45 War
AWM55	Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ATIS) publications
AWM56	Advanced Allied Translator and Interpreter Section (ADVATIS) publications
AWM60	Northern Command registry files
AWM61	Eastern Command registry files
AWM64	RAAF formation and unit records
AWM66	RAAF miscellaneous records
AWM67	Official History, 1939-45 War: Records of Gavin Long, General Editor
AWM68	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 4 (Civil) Volumes I & II: Records of Paul Hasluck
AWM69	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 2 (Navy): Records of G. Hermon Gill
AWM71	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 3 (Air) Volume III and IV – Records of John Herington
AWM73	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 1 (Army) Volume IV: Records of Lionel Wigmore
AWM74	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 4 (Civil) Volume V: Records of D P Mellor
AWM75	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 5 (Medical): Records of Allan S. Walker
AWM78	Reports of Proceedings, HMA Ships and Establishments

AWM79	Records of HMAS RUSHCUTTER Radar School
AWM 80	Department of Information broadcast transcripts and press releases
AWM81	Department of Home Security circulars and bulletins
AWM92	Private records
AWM94	Records of the Far Eastern Liaison Office, Special Division, Melbourne
AWM110	Written records, 1939-1945 War, subject classified control cards
AWM111	Written records, 1939-45 War, subject classified alphabetical control listing
AWM113	Records of the Military History Section (Army)
AWM123	"Special Collection II" Defence Committee Records
AWM124	Naval historical collection
AWM132	Order of Battle/Location Statement cards, 1939-45 War
AWM157	Private records accession register
AWM173	RAAF War History Section briefs, narratives and related source material
AWM188	Naval Historical Section research files
AWM193	Eastern Command 'G' Branch registry files
AWM220	Air Historical Branch (RAF) narratives and monographs
AWM227	Army historical collection, 1939-45 War
AWM229	Official History, 1939-45 War, Series 1 (Army) Vol V: Records of Dudley McCarthy
AWM242	Organisation of Transport for an Emergency, Principal Committee records
AWM246	Australian port defence charts
AWM254	Written records, 1939-45 War, second series
AWM347	Directorate of Military Intelligence - Collection of historical war records

National Archives of Australia, Canberra and Melbourne

A461	Correspondence files, multiple number series (third system)
A571	Correspondence files, annual single number series
A649	Correspondence files, multiple number series, Classes 600-602 (unclassified)
A663	Correspondence files, multiple number series with 'O' prefix (primary numbers 1-224)
A664	Correspondence files, multiple number series (Class 401)
A705	Correspondence files, multiple number (Melbourne) series (Primary numbers 1-323)
A816	Correspondence files, multiple number series [Classified 301]
A981	Correspondence files, alphabetical series
A1196	Correspondence files, multiple number series [Class 501] [501-539]
A1308	Correspondence files, multiple number series, primary numbers 702-790 (classified)
A1608	Correspondence files, multiple number series with variable alphabetical prefix and general prefix 'SC' (fourth system)
A2031	Defence Committee minutes
A2408	Subject Registration Booklets for Correspondence Files, multiple number (Melbourne) series, (Primary numbers 1-323)
A2653	Volumes of Military Board Proceedings
A2670	Reference set of War Cabinet Agenda with Minutes, annual single number series, 28 Aug 1939 - 19 Jan 1946
A2671	War Cabinet Agenda files, annual single number series, 28 Aug 1939 - 19 Jan 1946
A2673	War Cabinet Minutes (carbon copies), chronological series
A2679	Advisory War Council Agenda, 29 Oct 1940 - 30 Aug 1945
A2680	Advisory War Council Agenda Files, 29 Oct 1940 - 30 Aug 1945

A2682	Advisory War Council Minutes (carbon copies), 29 Oct 1940 - 30 Aug 1945
A2684	Advisory War Council Minutes Files, 29 Oct 1940 - 30 Aug 1945
A2697	Menzies and Fadden Ministries. Folders of minutes and submissions (not complete)
A2700	Curtin, Forde and Chifley Ministries - folders of Cabinet minutes and agenda
A2703	Curtin, Forde and Chifley Ministries - folders of Cabinet Minutes (with Indexes)
A2908	Correspondence files, classified single number series with alphabetical prefix
A2937	Correspondence files, alphabetical series
A3300	Correspondence files, annual alphabetical series (Washington)
A4181	Authenticated copies of Air Board agenda
A4398	File registration booklets (L14's) for CRS A816, Correspondence files, multiple number series (Classified 301)
A4764	Secret and Top Secret cables to and from Dr HV Evatt overseas as Minister of External Affairs, single number series
A5799	Defence Committee agenda, annual single number series
A5954	'The Shedden Collection', Records accumulated by Sir Frederick Shedden, Secretary of the Department of Defence, 1937 to 1958
A6388	War Book Office - correspondence folders
A6828	Chief of the General Staff's (Australia) periodical letters to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff
A6923	Army Headquarters/Army Office record sets [of potential researcher interest]
A7941	Internal CAS files dealing with involvement in DFDC, COSC and COSC SEATO meetings
A7942	Defence Committee Papers
A8736	Agenda of meetings of the Joint Planning Committee

A8737	Minutes of meetings of the Joint Planning Committee
A8738	Reports of meetings of the Joint Planning Committee
A9186	RAAF Unit History Sheets (Form A50) [Operations Record Books - Forms A50 and A51]
A9240	War Cabinet/Advisory War Council Note Books, chronological series
A9695	Folders of historical documents World War II, RAAF series I, single number series
A9786	Council of Defence notebooks: handwritten notes of meetings of the Council of Defence [with some others recorded by V W Quealy] single number series
A9787	Council of Defence minutes and agenda papers, single number series
A10857	Establishment records, two number series with roman numeral prefix and occasional alphabetic suffix
A11093	Correspondence files, multiple number system with activity suffixes
A11225	Correspondence files, multiple number system with activity suffixes
A11457	War Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, July 1939
A11778	Master sheets (used stencils) of outward cables belonging to 'Special' cables series with various alphabetical prefixes, single number series
A12193	General correspondence relating to raw materials, trade and industry
AA1966/5	Records collected by the Historical Section of the Department of Air
AA1969/100	RAAF Unit records
B1535	Correspondence files, multiple number series
B3476	Coastwatching files, single number series
B5459	Miscellaneous Library Material
B5555	Translations of cypher messages
B6121	Naval historical files, single number series with alphabetical suffixes
B6410	Miscellaneous papers relating to secondary industries, including Cabinet Sub-Committee on Secondary Industries and International Trade Organisation

C3825	Correspondence files of the Radiophysics Advisory Board, alpha-numeric series
CP7/1	Secret correspondence (residue)
CP80/1	Secret Correspondence (S Series)
CP183/1	Agenda of War Cabinet (copies of the Minister for War Organisation of Industry)
CP290/6	Miscellaneous cables
CP290/7	Cables from the Prime Minister of Great Britain and the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs
CP290/16	Papers relating to wartime policy
M100	[Personal Papers of Prime Minister Bruce] November 1939 [indexed monthly war file]
M1416	Correspondence of John Curtin as Prime Minister, special subject series
MP1/1	General correspondence of War Organisation of Industry and Post War Reconstruction
MP60/1	Secret and Confidential files
MP70/1	Correspondence files, multiple number, security classified series
MP138/1	Correspondence files, multiple number series (‘201’ series)
MP150/1	Correspondence files, multiple number series (‘201’ series)
MP151/1	Correspondence files, multiple number series (‘201’ series)
MP385/3	General correspondence, multiple number series
MP508/1	General correspondence files, multiple number series
MP729/6	Secret correspondence files, multiple number series with ‘401’ infix.
MP729/7	Secret correspondence files, multiple number series with ‘421’ infix
MP729/8	Secret correspondence files, multiple number series
MP730/10	Draft of chapter 11 (“The Development of Productive capacity during 1940 and 1941”) and related papers

MP742/1	General and civil staff correspondence files and Army personnel files, multiple number series
MP826/1	Defence Schemes
MP981/1	Correspondence files, multiple number series (‘201’ series)
MP1049/5	Correspondence files (general)
MP1049/9	Correspondence files (general)
MP1185/8	Secret and confidential correspondence files, multiple number series
MP1185/9	Correspondence files, multiple number series (‘201’ series)

The National Archives, London

Digitised files, accessed on various dates 2008-2013 via <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/>

CAB 23	War Cabinet and Cabinet: Minutes
CAB 24	War Cabinet and Cabinet: Memoranda (WP and CP Series)
CAB 65	War Cabinet and Cabinet: Minutes (WM and CM Series)
CAB 66	War Cabinet: Memoranda (WP(R) Series)
CAB 67	War Cabinet: Memoranda (WP(G) Series)
CAB 68	War Cabinet: Memoranda (WP(R) Series)

US Army Heritage & Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania

‘Petersburg Plan: redistribution of Allied forces, SWPA, in event of Japanese success in the Solomon Islands’, 31 October 1942. US Army Heritage Collection, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: D767.8.P47 1942a.

Published Official Documents

Australia

Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates: Senate and House of Representatives*, 1933-1945

Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne. No 31, 1938; No 32, 1939; No 33, 1940; No 34, 1941; No 35, 1942-43; No 36, 1944-45

Robertson, John & John McCarthy (ed.), *Australian War Strategy 1939-1945 – A Documentary History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1985

Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949 (in chronological order):

Neale, R.G. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume I: 1937-1938*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975

Neale, R.G. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume II: 1939*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1976

Kenway H., Stokes H.J.W & Edwards, P.G. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume III: January – June 1940*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1979

Hudson W.J. & Stokes H.J.W. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume IV: July 1940 - June 1941*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1980

Hudson W.J. & Stokes H.J.W. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume V: July 1941 - June 1942*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1982

Hudson W.J. & Stokes H.J.W. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume VI: July 1942 - December 1943*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1983

W.J. Hudson, W.J. (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume VII: 1944*. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988

W.J. Hudson W.J. & Wendy Way (ed.), *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949. Volume VIII: 1945*. Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1989

United Kingdom

Medlicott, W.N., Douglas Dakin, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, Second Series, Volume XVIII, European Affairs, January 2 – June 30, 1937*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1980

United States of America

United States Department of State, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1943

Newspapers

The Age (Melbourne)
The Argus (Melbourne)
The Canberra Times
The Melbourne Herald
The Sydney Morning Herald
Lyons, Joseph, Prime Minister, 'Policy Launch Speech', Deloraine Town Hall, 28 September 1937, from edited transcripts compiled from *The Canberra Times* 29 September 1937, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Melbourne Herald* and *The Tasmanian Mercury*

B. Secondary Sources

Official Histories

AUSTRALIA IN THE WAR OF 1939-1945

Series 1 (Army)

I. Long, Gavin, *To Benghazi*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952

II. Long, Gavin, *Greece, Crete and Syria*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1953

III. Maughan, Barton, *Tobruk and El Alamein*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1966

IV. Wigmore, Lionel, *The Japanese Thrust*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957

V. McCarthy, Dudley, *South-West Pacific Area - First Year*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1959

VI. Dexter, David, *The New Guinea Offensives*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961

VII. Long, Gavin, *The Final Campaigns*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963

Series 2 (Navy)

I. Gill, G. Hermon, *Royal Australian Navy 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957

II. Gill, G. Hermon, *Royal Australian Navy 1942-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1968

Series 3 (Air)

I. Gillison, Douglas, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962

II. Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan 1943-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957

III. John Herington, *Air War Against Germany and Italy*, 1939-43, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1954

IV. John Herington, *Air Power Over Europe, 1944-45*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1963

Series 4 (Civil)

I. Hasluck, Paul, *The Government and the People 1939-1941*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952

II. Hasluck, Paul, *The Government and the People 1942-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970

III. Butlin S.J., *War Economy 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1955

IV. Butlin S.J. and Schedvin C.B., *War Economy 1942-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977

V. Mellor D.P., *The Role of Science and Industry*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1958

Series 5 (Medical)

I. Walker, Allan S., *Clinical Problems of War*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952

II. Walker, Allan S., *Middle East and Far East*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1953

III. Walker, Allan S., *The Island Campaigns*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957

IV. Walker, Allan S., *Medical Services of R .A.N. and R .A .A .F.*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961

History of the Second World War: United Kingdom

Butler, J.R.M., *Grand Strategy Volume III, June 1941 – August 1942, Part II*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964

Collier, Basil, *The Defence of the United Kingdom*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1957

Ellis, Major L.F., *The War in France and Flanders 1939-1940*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1953

Gwyer, J.M.A., *Grand Strategy Volume III, June 1941 – August 1942, Part I*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1964

Howard, Michael, *Grand Strategy Volume IV, August 1942 – September 1943, Part II*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1972

Kirby, Major-General S. Woodburn, *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1957

Kirby, Major-General S. Woodburn, *The War Against Japan, Volume II, India's Most Dangerous Hour*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1958

Kirby, Major-General S. Woodburn, *The War Against Japan, Volume III, The Decisive Battles*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1961

Woodward, Sir Llewellyn, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1962

Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45

Gillespie, Oliver A., *The Pacific*, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1952

United States Army in World War II: The War Department

Coakley, Robert W. and Richard M. Leighton, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1943-1945*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1968

Leighton, Richard M. and Robert W. Coakley, *Global Logistics and Strategy 1940-1943*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1955

Matloff, Maurice and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1941-1942*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1953

Matloff, Maurice, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-1944*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1958

Watson, Mark Skinner, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington, 1950

United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific

Miller Jr., John, *Guadalcanal: The First Offensive*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1949

Milner, Samuel, *Victory in Papua*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1957

Morton, Louis, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1962

Morton, Louis, *The Fall of the Philippines*, Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington DC, 1953

United States Strategic Bombing Survey

United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Summary Report (Pacific War)*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1946. http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/USSBS/PTO-Summary.html, accessed 21 August 2011

United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Campaigns of the Pacific War*, United States Government Printing Office, Washington, 1946. http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/USSBS/PTO-Campaigns/index.html, accessed 21 August 2011

Reference Works

Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/adbonline.htm>

Beaumont, Joan, *et al*, *Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Volume VI, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

Cantwell, John D., *The Second World War: A Guide to Documents in the Public Record Office*, Public Record Office, Kew, 1998

Dear, I.C.B. (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Second World War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995

Dennis, Peter, Jeffrey Grey, Ewan Morris, Robin Prior, with Jean Bou (ed.) (2nd Ed), *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, Oxford University Press Australia, Melbourne, 2008

Meaney, Neville (ed.), *Australia and the World: A Documentary History from the 1870s to the 1970s*, Longman Cheshire Pty Limited, Melbourne, 1985

Messenger, Charles, *World War Two Chronological Atlas*, Bloomsbury. London, 1989

RAAF Historical Section, *Units of the Royal Australian Air Force: A Concise History*, (10 volumes), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995
Volume 1 – Introduction, Bases, Supporting Organisations; 2 – Fighter Units; 3 – Bomber Units; 4 – Maritime and Transport Units; 5 – Radar Units; 6 – Logistical Units; 7 – Maintenance Units; 8 – Training Units; 9 – Ancillary Units; 10 – Chiefs of Air Staff, Aircraft, Bibliography

Swanston, Alexander & Malcolm Swanston, *The Historical Atlas of World War II*, Pier 9 (Murdoch Books), Millers Point, 2011

Vamplew, Wray (ed.), *Australian Historical Statistics*, Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, Sydney, 1987

ARTICLES

Alexander, Fred., 'Inter-Imperial Consultation', *The Australian Quarterly*, Vol X, No 3, September 1938

Andrews, E.M., 'The Broken Promise: Britain's Failure to Consult its Commonwealth on Defence in 1934, and the Implications for Australian Foreign and defence Policy', *The Australian Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol 2, No 2, November 1978

———, 'The Australian Government and Appeasement', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XIII, No 1, May 1967

Ball, Desmond, 'Allied Intelligence Cooperation Involving Australia During World War II', *Australian Outlook*, Vol 32, No 3, December 1978

Bailey, K.H., 'The Statute of Westminster', *The Australian Quarterly*, No 12, 14 December 1931

Ballard, Geoffrey, 'Keeping an ear to the Japanese airwaves', *Canberra Times*, 22 June 1995

Barclay, Glen St J., 'Australian Historians and the Study of War', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Volume 41, 1995.

Black, David, 'The Art of the Possible: Creating an independent Australian foreign policy 1901–1945', *John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library*, Perth, 2004. (http://john.curtin.edu.au/artofthepossible/essay(printversion).html – accessed 7 Dec 2008)

———, 'R.G. Casey, Australia's First Washington Legation and the Origins of the Pacific War, 1940-42', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XXVIII, 1982

Bridge, Carl, ‘Appeasement and After: Towards a Re-assessment of the Lyons and Menzies Governments’ Defence and Foreign policies, 1931-41’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 51, Number 3, 2005

Burley, Kevin H., ‘The Imperial Shipping Committee’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol II, No 2, January 1974

Burton, Herbert, ‘The ‘Trade Diversion’ Episode of the ‘Thirties’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 22,No 1, April 1968

Casey, R.G., ‘Some Notes on Post-War Imperial Evolution’, *The Australian Quarterly*, No 11, 14 September 1931

Charrier, Philip, ‘The Evolution of a Stereotype: The Royal Navy and the Japanese ‘Martial Type’’, *War & Society*, Vol 19, No 1, May 2001

Clayton, Mark, ‘The north Australian air war, 1942-44’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 8, April 1986

Crawford, Robert, ‘Nothing to Sell? – Australia’s Advertising at War, 1939-1945’, *War & Society*, Vol 20, No 1, May 2002

Curtin, John, ‘The Task Ahead’, *Melbourne Herald*, 27 December 1941

Dedman J.J., ‘The Return of the A.I.F. From the Middle East’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 21, No 2, August 1967

———, ‘Defence Policy Decisions Before Pearl Harbor’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XIII, No 3, December 1967

Drea, Edward J., ‘‘Great Patience is needed’: America Encounters Australia, 1942’, *War & Society*, Vol 11, No 1, May 1993

Edwards, P.G., ‘R.G. Menzies’s Appeals to the United States May-June, 1940’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 28, No 1, April 1974

———, ‘S.M. Bruce, R.G. Menzies and Australia’s War Aims and Peace Aims, 1939-40’, *Historical Studies*, Vol 17, No 66, April 1976

———, ‘Evatt and the Americans’, *Historical Studies*, Vol 18, No 73, October 1979

Elias Ann, ‘The organisation of camouflage in Australia in the Second World War’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 38, 2003

Fagg, Christopher M., ‘Darwin: 19 February 1942’, *Sabretache*, Volume XXVIII, July/September 1987

Fairbanks, George, ‘Isolationism vs Imperialism: The 1937 Election’, *Journal of the Australian Political Studies Association*, Vol II, No 2, November 1967

Fleming N.C., ‘Cabinet Government, British Imperial Security and the World Disarmament Conference, 1932-1934’, *War In History*, Volume 18, Number 1, January 2011.

Forbes, Joseph, ‘General Douglas MacArthur and the Implementation of American and Australian Civilian Policy Decisions in 1944 and 1945’, *Military Affairs*, Vol XLIX, No 1, January 1985

Ford, Jonathan, ‘The first Japanese air raid on Broome’, *Sabretache*, Part 1, Vol XXVI July/September 1985

Forster, Pat, ‘Fixed Naval Defences in Darwin Harbour 1939 – 1945’, *Sea Power Centre – Australia*, <http://www.navy.gov.au/Fixed_Naval_Defences_in_Darwin_Harbour_1939_-_1945>, accessed 29 August 2009

Gooch, John, ‘The Politics of Strategy: Great Britain, Australia and the War against Japan, 1939-1945’, *War In History*, Vol 10, No 4, November 2003

Grey, Jeffrey, ‘Cuckoo in the Nest? Australian Military Historiography: The State of the Field’, *History Compass*, Vol 6, No 2, 2008

Hamill, Ian, ‘An Expeditionary Force Mentality? The Despatch of Australian Troops to the Middle East, 1939-1940’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 31, No2, August 1977

Harper, Glyn, ‘Threat perception and politics: the deployment of Australian and New Zealand ground forces in the second world war’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 20, October 1993

Haycock, Ronald G., ‘The ‘Myth’ of Imperial Defence: Australian-Canadian Bilateral Military Co-operation, 1942’, *War & Society*, Vol 2, No 1 (May 1984)

Haycock, R.G. and A.T. Ross, ‘The Australian Owen Gun Scandal, 1940-45’, *War & Society*, Vol 5, No 2, September 1987

Horner, David M., ‘Special Intelligence in the South-West Pacific Area in World War II’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 23, No 3, December 1978

———, ‘Staff Corps Versus Militia: The Australian Experience in World War II’, *Defence Force Journal*, No 26, January/February 1981

———, ‘Defending Australia in 1942’, *War & Society*, Vol 11, No 1, May 1993

———, ‘The Chinese liaison officer in Australia, 1942-1945’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 25, October 1994

Johnston, Mark, ‘The civilians who joined up 1939-1945’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 29, November 1996

Kelly, Paul, ‘Labor at War’, *The Weekend Australian*, 18 June 2005

Kennedy, Arthur, ‘Early history of anti-aircraft units in Australia’, *Sabretache*, Vol XXVII, April/June 1986

Kennedy, Paul, ‘History from the Middle: The Case of the Second World War’, *The Journal of Military History*, Vol 74, No 1, January 2010

Lavarack, Colonel J.D., ‘The Defence of the British Empire, With Special Reference to the Far East and Australia’, *The Army Quarterly*, Vol XXV, No 2, January 1933

Love, Peter, ‘Curtin, MacArthur and conscription 1942-42’, *Historical Studies*, Vol 17, No 69, October 1977

Mackinolty, Judy, ‘Wake up Australia! Australia’s home front propaganda during the second world war’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 1, October 1982

McCarthy, John, ‘Australia and Imperial Defence: Cooperation and Conflict 1918-1939’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 17, Issue 1, April 1971

———, ‘Singapore and Australian Defence 1921-1942, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 25, No 2, August 1971

———, ‘Australia: A View from Whitehall 1939-1945’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 28, No 3, December 1974

———, ‘The Defence of Australia and the Empire Air Training Scheme: 1939-1942’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol XX, No 3, December 1974

———, ‘Australian Responses to the European War, 1939-41’, *Australian Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol 1, No2, October 1977

———, ‘The Imperial Commitment, 1939-1941, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 23, No2, August 1977

———, ‘The ‘Great Betrayal’ Reconsidered: An Australian Perspective’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 48, No 1, May 1994

Meaney, Neville, ‘Frederic Eggleston on International Relations and Australia’s Role in the World’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 51, No 3, 2005

Menzies, Robert G., ‘The Relations Between the British Dominions’, *The Australian Quarterly*, No 28, December 1935

Mort, Lieutenant Colonel R.S., ‘The Fort Scratchley Military Museum’, *Sabretache*, Vol XXVI, January/March 1985

Murfett, Malcolm H., ‘Living in the Past: A Critical Re-examination of the Singapore Naval Strategy, 1918-1941’, *War & Society*, Vol 11, No 1 (May 1993)

Neilson, Keith, ‘The Royal Navy, Japan, and British Strategic Foreign Policy, 1932-1934’, *The Journal of Military History*, Volume 75, Number 2, April 2011.

Quinault, Roland, ‘Churchill and Australia: the Military Relationship, 1899-1945’, *War & Society*, Vol 6, No 1, May 1988

Reynolds, David, ‘Churchill’s Memoirs and Australia’s War: Imperial Defence and ‘Inexcusable Betrayal’’, *War & Society*, Vol 24, No 2, November 2005

Rigley, Tony, ‘The Civil Constructional Corps’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 25, October 1994

Robertson, Major H.C.H., ‘The Defence of Australia’, *Army Quarterly*, Vol 30, No1, April 1935

Robertson, John, ‘Australian War Policy 1939-1945’, *Historical Studies*, Vol 17, No 69, October 1977

———, ‘Australia and the ‘Beat Hitler First’ Strategy, 1941-1942: A Problem In Wartime Consultation’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol XI, No 3, May 1983

Rosenzweig, Paul A., ‘Matthius Ulungura and the capture of Toyoshima Haijame’, *Sabretache*, Vol XXVIII, April/June 1987

Ross, Andrew, ‘The economics of rearmament 1933-39’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 7, October 1985

———, ‘Australian Overseas Trade and National Development Policy 1932-1939: a story of colonial larrikins or Australian statesmen?’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 36, No 2, 1990

Simington, Margot, ‘Australia 1939-45: The Official Histories and the Home Front’, *The Australian Journal of Defence Studies*, Vol 1, No 1, March 1977

Sissons, D.C.S., ‘Manchester v. Japan: The Imperial Background of the Australian Trade Diversion Dispute with Japan, 1936’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 30, No 3, December 1976

Skaggs, David Curtis, ‘Michael Howard and the Dimensions of Military History’, *Military Affairs*, Vol XLVIV, No 4, October 1985

Stanley, Peter, ‘The Soldiers on the Hill: the defence of Whyalla 1939-45’, *Sabretache*, Part 1, Vol XXV Oct-Dec 1984 to Part 9, Vol XXIV, Jan-Mar 1988. Reprinted as Peter Stanley, *Whyalla at War 1939-45*, The Corporation of the City of Whyalla, Whyalla, 2004

Stevens, David, ‘I-174: The last Japanese submarine off Australia’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 22, October 1993

———, ‘The role of radio intelligence in the anti-submarine war around Australia, 1942-45’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 25, October 1994

Stockings, Craig, ‘The ANZAC Legend and the Battle of Bardia’, *War in History*, Vol 17, No 1, January 2010

Tamchina, Rainer, ‘In Search of Common Causes: The Imperial Conference of 1937’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol I, No 1, October 1972

Tanaka Hiromi, ‘The Japanese Navy’s operations against Australia in the Second World War, with a commentary on Japanese sources’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 30, April 1997

Thorne, Christopher, ‘MacArthur, Australia and the British, 1942-43: The Secret Journal of MacArthur’s British Liaison Officer’, *Australian Outlook*, (Part I) Vol 29, No1, April 1975, (Part II) Vol 29, No2, August 1975

Thornton, Robert, ‘The Semblance of Security: Australia and the Washington Conference 1921-22’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol 32, No 1, April 1978

———, ‘Invaluable Ally or Imminent Aggressor: Australia and Japanese Naval Assistance 1914-48’, *Journal of Australian Studies*, No12, June 1983

Toh Boon Ho and Toh Boon Kwan, ‘Poor Military Leadership or Flawed Military Organisation?: The British army and the Malayan Campaign’, *Pointer: The Journal of the Singapore Armed Services*, Vol 29 No 1, Jan-Mar 2003

Trotter, Ann, ‘The Dominions and Imperial Defence: Hankey’s Tour in 1934’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol II, No 3, May 1974

Tsokhas, Kosmas, ‘The Wool Industry and the 1936 Trade Diversion Dispute with Japan’, *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol 23, No 93, October 1989

Twomey, Paul, ‘Small Power Security through Great Power Arms Control? – Australian Perceptions of Disarmament, 1919-1930’, *War & Society*, Vol 8, No 1, May 1990

Vazenry, George, ‘Attacks on the Australian Mainland: World War II’, *Sabretache*, Vol XXV, July/September 1984

Vincent, David, ‘Quest for a bomber: the RAAF’s supply problems, 1934-41’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No 9, October 1986

Walding, Richard, ‘Indicator Loops and Anti-submarine Harbour Defence in Australia in WWII’, *Journal of Australian Naval History*, Vol 3, No 1, March 2006.

Waters, Christopher, ‘Australia, the British Empire and the Second World War’, *War & Society*, Vol 19, No 1, May 2001

———, ‘The Menzies Government and the Grand Alliance during 1939’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol 56, No 4, 2010

Watt, Sir Alan, ‘Australia and the Munich Agreement: Underlying Assumptions and operative methods of Australian Foreign Policy (1938)’, *Australian Outlook*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, April 1963.

Wigley, Philip, ‘Whitehall and the 1923 Imperial Conference’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol I, No 2, January 1973

Wynter, LtCol H.D., ‘The Strategical Inter-Relationship of the Navy, The Army and The Air Force: An Australian View’, *The Army Quarterly*, Vol XIV, July 1927

Books and Book Chapters

Alcorta, Frank, *Australia's Frontline: The Northern territory's War*, Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1991

Alford, Bob, *Darwin's Air War 1942-1945: An Illustrated History*, Aviation Historical Society of the NT and Colemans Printing, Darwin, 1991

Alsop, Brian, *Australian Army Watercraft: The unknown fleet, from the Second World War to the present day*, Australian Water Transport Association, Marrickville, NSW, 1996

Andrews, E.M., *A History of Australian Foreign Policy: From Dependence to Independence*, Longman Cheshire Pty Limited, Melbourne, 1979.

Andrews, Eric, *The Department of Defence*, Volume V, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

Australian War Memorial (Mark Johnston), *Australia's Home Defence 1939-1945*, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Canberra, 2006

Babij, Orest, 'The Royal Navy and the Defence of the British Empire, 1928-1934', Greg Kennedy and Keith Neilson, *Far-Flung Lines: Essays on Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman*, Frank Cass & Co Ltd, London, 1997

Bailey, Mark, 'The Australian role in the development of a worldwide Imperial trade control and naval intelligence system 1919-39', David Stevens (ed.), *Maritime Power in the Twentieth Century: The Australian Experience*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998

Baker, Nicola, 'A Higher Plane: Land/Air Operations in the South West Pacific 1942-1945', Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey (ed.), *From Past to Future: The Australian Experience of Land/Air Operations, The 1995 Chief of Army's Military History Conference*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 1995

Balfe, J.D., *War Without Glory: Australians in the air war with Japan 1941-45*, The Macmillan Company of Australia Pty Ltd, South Melbourne, 1984

Ball, Reg A., *Torres Strait Force 1942 to 1945: The Defence of Cape York–Torres Strait and Merauke in Dutch New Guinea*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 1996

Ballard, Geoffrey St. Vincent, *On Ultra active service: the story of Australia's signals intelligence operations in World War II*, Spectrum Publications Pty Ltd, Richmond, 1991

Barber, Laurie and Ken Henshall, *The Last War of Empires: Japan and the Pacific War*, David Bateman, Auckland, 1999

Barker, Anthony J., Lisa Jackson, *Fleeting Attraction: A Social History Of American Servicemen In Western Australia During The Second World War*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1996

Beasey, John & Carol, *Truscott: The Diary of Australia's Secret Wartime Kimberley Airbase 1943-1946*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus (NSW), 1995

Beaumont, Joan (ed.), *Australia's War 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996

Beevor, Antony, *The Second World War*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2012

Bell, Coral, *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1988

Bell, Roger J., *Unequal Allies: Australian-American Relations and the Pacific War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977

Bennett, John, *Highest Traditions: The History of No2 Squadron, RAAF*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995

Bergamini, David, *Japan's Imperial Conspiracy*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1971

Best, Antony, Jussi M Hanhimäki, Joseph A Maiolo and Kirsten E Schulze, *International History of the Twentieth Century*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2004

Black, Jeremy and Donald M. Macraild (2nd Ed), *Studying History*, Palgrave, London, 2000

Black, Jeremy, *World War Two: A Military History*, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), London, 2003

———, *Rethinking Military History*, Routledge (Taylor and Francis Group), Abingdon, Oxfordshire, 2004

———, *War: A Short History*, Continuum UK. London, 2009

Bleakley, Jack, *The Eavesdroppers*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992

Bobbit, Philip, *The Shield of Achilles: War, Peace and the Course of History*, Penguin, New York, 2002

Boycott, A.G., *The Elements of Imperial Defence: A Study of the Geographical Features, Material Resources, Communications and Organization of the British Empire*, Gale and Polden Ltd, Aldershot, 1938

Boyd, Carl, 'Japanese Military Effectiveness: The Interwar Period', Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray, *Military Effectiveness, Volume II: The Interwar Period*, Allen & Unwin, Boston, 1988

Bridge, Carl (ed.), *Munich to Vietnam: Australia's Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1991

———, *A Delicate Mission: The Washington Diaries of R.G. Casey, 1940-42*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2008

Bridge, Carl, and Attard, Bernard (ed,), *Between Empire and Nation: Australia's External Relations from Federation to the Second World War*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2000

Budiansky, Stephen, *Battle of Wits: The complete story of codebreaking in World War II*, Viking, London, 2000

Burns, Paul, *The Brisbane Line Controversy*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998

Cain, Frank, 'The Pacific War: Why Did the Menzies Government Not See it Coming', Frank Cain (ed.), *Menzies in War and Peace*, Allen & Unwin with the Australian Defence Studies Centre, 1997

Calvocoressi, Peter, Guy Wint & John Pritchard (2nd Ed), *Total War: The Causes and Courses of the Second World War*, Viking, Harmondsworth (Middlesex), 1989

Chapman, Ivan D., *Iven G. Mackay: Citizen and Soldier*, Melway Publishing Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1975

Coates, John (2nd Ed), *An Atlas of Australian Wars*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2006

Cochrane, Peter, *Australians At War*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2001

Collier, Basil, *The War in the Far East 1941-1945*, William Heinemann Ltd, London, 1969

———, *The Lion and the Eagle: British and Anglo-American Strategy 1900-1950*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1972

Collingham, Lizzie, *The Taste of War: World War Two and the Battle for Food*, Allen Lane (Penguin Group), London, 2011

Connor, John, *Anzac and Empire: George Foster Pearce and the Foundations of Australian Defence*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2011

Connors, Libby, Linette Finch, Kay Saunders and Helen Taylor, *Australia's Frontline: Remembering the 1939-45 War*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992

Converse, Alan, *Armies of Empire: The 9th Australian and 50th British Divisions in battle 1939-1945*, Cambridge University Press, 2011

Coox Alvin D., 'The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Air Forces', in A.F. Hurley & R.C. Erhardt (eds), *Air Power and Warfare: Proceedings of the Eighth Military History Symposium, USAF Academy 1978*. Washington, 1979

———, 'The Effectiveness of the Japanese Military Establishment in the Second World War', Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (ed.), *Military Effectiveness: Volume III, The Second World War*. Boston: Allen & Unwin Inc., 1988

Coulthard-Clark, C.D., *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921-39*, Allen & Unwin (Royal Australian Air Force), North Sydney, 1991

Cumpston, I.M., *History of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1991*, (two volumes), published by author, Canberra, 1995

Daily Telegraph Special Research Staff, *Daily Telegraph War Book No.1: You, Me – and This War*, The Consolidated Press, Sydney, 26 October 1941

Darian-Smith, Kate (2nd Ed), *On the Home Front: Melbourne in Wartime 1939-1945*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2009

Darwin, John, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System 1830-1970*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009

Day, David, *The Great Betrayal: Britain, Australia and the Onset of the Pacific War*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1988.

Day, David, *The Politics of War*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 2003

Dean, Peter J., *The Architect of Victory: The Military Career of Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Horton Berryman*, Cambridge University Press (The Australian Army History Series), 2011

Dean, Peter J. (ed.), *Australia 1942: In the Shadow of War*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013

Dower, J., *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Faber & Faber, London, 1986

Drea, Edward J., *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War Against Japan*, University press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1992

Durrant, Lawrence, *The Seawatchers: The Story of Australia's Coast Radio Service*, Angus & Robertson Publishers, North Ryde, 1986

Dull, Paul S., *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)*, United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, 1978

Duus, Peter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 6, The Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988

Edwards, John, *Curtin's Gift: Reinterpreting Australia's Greatest Prime Minister*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005

Edwards, P.G. (ed.), *Australia Through American Eyes 1935-1945: Observations by American Diplomats*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1979

———, 'Menzies and the Imperial connection 1939-1941', Cameron Hazlehurst (ed.), *Australian Conservatism: Essays in Twentieth Century Political History*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979

Elphick, Peter, *Far Eastern File: The Intelligence War in the Far East, 1930-1945*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1997

Evans, Michael, 'From Deakin to Dibb: The Army and the Making of Australian Strategy in the Twentieth Century', Peter Dennis & Jeffrey Grey (ed.), *A Century Of Service: The 2001 Chief of Army's Military History Conference*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2001

Ewer, Dr Peter, *Wounded Eagle: The bombing of Darwin and Australia's air defence scandal*, New Holland Publishers (Australia) Pty Ltd, Chatswood, 2009

Fairclough, Colonel H. (Retd), *Equal to the Task: Par Oneri – The History of the Royal Australian Army Service Corps*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, 1962

Farrell, Brian P., *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942*, Tempus Publishing Limited, Stroud, 2005

Field, Andrew, *Royal Navy Strategy in the Far East 1919-1939: Preparing for War against Japan*, Frank Cass, London, 2004

Ferguson, Niall, *The War of the World*, Penguin Books, London, 2006

Ford, Douglas, *Britain's Secret War Against Japan, 1937-1945*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2006

———, *The Pacific War*, Continuum International Publishing Group, London, 2012

Frei, Henry, *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia: from the Sixteenth Century to World War II*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1991

Freudenberg, Graham, *Churchill and Australia*, Pan Macmillan Australia Pty Limited, Sydney, 2008

Fullford, R. K., *We stood and waited: Sydney's anti-ship defences, 1939-1945*, Royal Australian Artillery Historical Society, Manly, 1994

Gallaway, Jack, *The Odd Couple: Blamey and MacArthur At War*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2000

Goldsworthy, David, *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia, Volume 1, 1901 to the 1970s*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2001

Gordon, Andrew, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2003

Gregory, Jenny (ed.), *On the Homefront: Western Australia and World War II*, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, 1996

Grey, Jeffrey (3rd Ed), *A Military History of Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 2008

———, *The Australian Army*, Volume I, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

Grose, Peter, *A Very Rude Awakening: the night the Japanese midget subs came to Sydney*, Allan & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007

———, *An Awkward Truth: The Bombing of Darwin February 1942*, Allan & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2009

Haggie, Paul, *Britannia At Bay: The Defence of the British Empire against Japan 1931-1941*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981

Hall Robert A., *The Black Diggers: Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the Second World War*. Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1989

Hamill, Ian, *The Strategic Illusion: The Singapore Strategy and the Defence of Australia and New Zealand 1919-1942*, National University of Singapore, Singapore, 1981

Hanneman, Mary L., *Japan Faces the World 1925-1952*, Pearson Education Limited, Harlow, Essex, 2001

Haynes, Jim, *On All Fronts: Australia's World War II*, HarperCollins*Publishers* Australia Pty Limited, Pymble, 2010

Hewitt, J.E., *Adversity In Success*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, 1980

Hill, Noel F., *Expose! A History of Searchlights in WWII*, Boolarong Publications, Brisbane, 1993

Hirst, John, *Looking For Australia*, Black Inc., Melbourne, 2010

Hopkins, William B., *The Pacific War: The Strategy, Politics, and Players That Won the War*, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, 2008

Horner, David M., *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978.

———, *Australia and Allied Intelligence in the Pacific in the Second World War*, Australian National University, Working Paper No 28, Canberra, 1980

———, *High Command: Australia and Allied Strategy 1939-1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982

———, ‘Australian Estimates of the Japanese Threat, 1905-1941’, in Towle, Philip, *Estimating Foreign Military Power*, Croom Helm, London, 1982

——— (ed.), *The Commanders: Australian military leadership in the twentieth century*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, 1984

———, ‘Australia under threat of invasion’, in M. McKernan & M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War & Peace*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1988

———, ‘Strategic Policy Making, 1943-45’, in M. McKernan & M. Browne (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War & Peace*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1988

———, *General Vasey’s War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1992

——— (ed.), *The Battles That Shaped Australia*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1994

———, *The Gunners: A History of Australian Artillery*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995

———, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia’s War Effort 1939-45*, Allen & Unwin in association with Australian Archives, Sydney, 1996

———, ‘Australian Army Strategic Planning Between the Wars’, in Dennis, Peter and Grey, Jeffrey (ed.), *Serving Vital Interests: Australia’s Strategic Planning in Peace and War*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 1996

———, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998

———, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2000

Hotta, Eri, *Pan-Asianism and Japan’s War 1931-1945*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007

Hoyt, Edwin P., *Japan’s War: The Great Pacific Conflict*, Guild Publishing, London, 1986

Hudson, W.J. & Sharp, M.P., *Australian Independence: Colony to Reluctant Kingdom*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988.

Ind, Allison, *Spy Ring Pacific: the story of the Allied Intelligence Bureau in Southeast Asia*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1958

Hughes, W.M., *Australia and War Today: The Price of Peace*, Angus & Robertson Limited, Sydney, 1935

James, D. Clayton, *The Years of MacArthur, Volume II, 1941-1945*, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1975

———, 'American and Japanese Strategies in the Pacific War', in Paret, Peter *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986

Jenkins, David, *Battle Surface! Japan's Submarine War Against Australia 1942-44*, Random House Australia, Milsons Point, 1992

Jenkins, David, *Hitting Home: The Japanese Attack on Sydney 1942*, Random House Australia Pty Ltd, Milsons Point, 2002

Johnston, Mark, *Fighting the Enemy: Australian Soldiers and their Adversaries in World War II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000

———, *The Magnificent 9th: An Illustrated History of the 9th Australian Division 1940-46*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002

———, *The Silent 7th: An Illustrated History of the 7th Australian Division 1940-46*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005

———, *The Australian Army in World War II*, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, 2007

———, *The Proud 6th: An Illustrated History of the 6th Australian Division 1939-45*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2008

———, *Whispering Death: Australian Airmen in the Pacific War*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2011

Jones, Terry & Steven Carruthers, *A Parting Shot: Shelling of Australia by Japanese Submarines 1942*, Casper Publications Pty Ltd, Narrabeen (Sydney), 2013

Keegan, John, *The Battle for History: Re-Fighting World War II*, Vintage Books, New York, 1996

———, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda*, Pimlico, London, 2003

Kelly, Robert H., *Allied Air Transport Operations: South West Pacific Area in WWII, Volume One: Development of Air Transport 1903-1943*, published by author, 2003

Kennedy, Greg, '1935: A Snapshot of British Imperial Defence in the Far East', Greg Kennedy and Keith Neilson, *Far-Flung Lines: Essays on Imperial Defence in Honour of Donald Mackenzie Schurman*, Frank Cass & Co Ltd, London, 1997

Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, Unwin Hyman Limited, London, 1988

Kidd, Reg and Ray Neal, *The History of the 'Letter' Batteries in World War II*, published by authors, Castle Crag, 1998

Krebs, Gerhard, 'The Japanese Air Forces', in Horst Boog (ed.) *The Conduct of the Air War in the Second World War*, Berg Publishers Limited, Oxford, 1992

Lee, David, *Australia and the World in the Twentieth Century*, Circa (Melbourne Publishing group), Beaconsfield, 2006

Lenton H.T. & J.J. Colledge, *Warships of World War II*, Ian Allen, London, 1964

Lewis, Tom (2nd Ed), *Darwin's Submarine I-124*, Avonmore Books, Kent Town (SA), 2010

Lind, Lew, *Toku-Tai: Japanese Submarine Operations in Australian Waters*, Kangaroo Press, Melbourne, 1992

Lloyd, Clem & Hall, Richard, *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's War*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997

Lockwood, Douglas, *Australia's Pearl Harbour: Darwin 1942*, Rigby, Adelaide, 1972

Long, Gavin, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1969

———, *The Six Years War: Australia in the 1939-45 War*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973

Lundstrom, John B., *The First South Pacific Campaign: Pacific Fleet Strategy December 1941 – June 1942*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1976

MacFarling, Ian, 'People in Support in the Southwest Pacific', *The Home Front: Mainland Australia and the Southwest Pacific Area 1939-1945*. Proceedings of the 1995 RAAF History Conference, RAAF Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1995

Martin A.W. and Patsy Hardy (ed.), *Dark and Hurrying Days: Menzies' 1941 Diary*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1993

Martin, Allan W., *Robert Menzies: A Life: Volume 1, 1894-1943*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1993

———, 'The Politics of the Depression', in Manne, Robert (ed.), *The Australian Century*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1999

McCarthy, John, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918-39: A Study in Air and Sea Power*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1976

———, *A Last Call of Empire: Australian aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988

———, 'Planning for Future War: The Armed Services and the Imperial Connection', in *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No 72, 1990

——— (ed.), *Australia and the Threat of Japan 1919-1945*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1992

McKenzie-Smith, Graham R., *Australia's Forgotten Army: Volume 1. The Ebb and Flow of the Australian Army in Western Australia – 1941 to 1945*, Grimwade Publications, Canberra, 1994

———, *Australia's Forgotten Army: Volume 2. Defending the Northern Gateways: Northern Territory & Torres Strait - 1938 to 1945*, Grimwade Publications, Canberra, 1995

———, *Defending Fremantle Albany and Bunbury 1939 to 1945*, Grimwade Publications, Canberra, 2009

McKernan, Michael, *All In! Fighting the War at Home*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1995

———, *The Strength of a Nation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2006

McKinley, Brian, *Australia 1942: End of Innocence*, William Collins Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1985

McMillan, Neil R., with Charles C. Bolton, *A Synopsis of American History*, Eighth Edition, Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, Chicago, 1997

Meaher IV, Augustine, *The Australian Road to Singapore : the Myth of British betrayal*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2010

Millar, T.B. (2nd Ed), *Australia in Peace and War*, Australian National University press, Sydney, 1991

Munson, Kenneth, *Aircraft of World War II*, Ian Allen, London, 1962

Neidpath, James, *The Singapore Naval Base and the Defence of Britain's Eastern Empire*, 1919-1941, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1981

Nielsen, Peter, *Diary of WWII North Queensland*, Nielsen Publishing, Smithfield (Qld), 1993

———, *North Queensland At War (Day by Day), Volume 1, Naval and Merchant Shipping Movements (1939-1942)*, Nielsen Publishing, Townsville, 2004

———, *North Queensland At War (Day by Day), Volume 2, Naval and Merchant Shipping Movements (1943)*, Nielsen Publishing, Townsville, 2007

O'Lincoln, Tom, *Australia's Pacific War: Challenging a National Myth*, Interventions Publishers, Melbourne, 2011

Oliver, Pam, *Raids on Australia: 1942 and Japan's Plans for Australia*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2010

Overy, R.J., *The Air War 1939-1945*, Papermac (Macmillan), London, 1987

———, *Why the Allies Won*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1995

———, *The Twilight Years: The Paradox of Britain Between the Wars*, Viking, London, 2009

Palazzo, Albert, *The Australian Army: A History of its Organisation 1901-2001*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

———, *Defenders of Australia: The 3rd Australian Division, 1916-1991*, Army History Unit (Australian Military History Publications), Canberra, 2002

———, 'The myth that Australia 'punches above its weight'', in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Anzac's Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History*, New South, Sydney, 2012

Parillo, Mark P., 'The Imperial Japanese Navy in World War II', James J. Sadkovich (ed.) *Reevaluating Major Naval Combatants of World War II*. Greenwood Press Inc, Westport, Connecticut, 1990

Parkin, Russell & David Lee, *Great White Fleet to Coral Sea: Naval Strategy and the Development of Australia – United States Relations, 1900-1945*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2008

Pelvin, Richard, 'Japanese Air Power 1919-1945: A Case Study in Military Dysfunction', *Air Power Studies Centre*, Paper Number 31, April 1995

Pfennigwerth, Ian, *A Man of Intelligence: The Life of Captain Eric Nave*, Rosenberg, Sydney, 2006

———, *Missing Pieces: The Intelligence Jigsaw and RAN Operations from 1939-71*, Sea Power Centre – Australia (Department of Defence), Canberra, 2008

———, *The Royal Australian Navy and MacArthur*, Rosenberg Publishing Pty Ltd, Dural (NSW), 2009

[Piesse, E.L.] "Albatross", *Japan and the Defence of Australia*, Robertson & Mullens Limited, Melbourne, 1935

Potts, David, *The Myth of the Great Depression*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2006

Potts, E. Daniel and Annette Potts, *Yanks Down Under 1941-45: The American Impact on Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1985

Powell, Alan, *The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1988

———, *War By Stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau 1942-1945*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1996

Pratten, Garth, *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009

Rayner, Harry, *Scherger: A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger, KBE, CB, DSO, AFC*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1984

Rayner, Robert J., *The Army and the Defence of Darwin Fortress: Exploding the Myths during the Critical Phase 'til September 1942*, Rudder Press, Plumpton (NSW), 1995

———, *Darwin and the Northern Territory Force*, Rudder Press, Plumpton (NSW), 2001

———, *Darwin Detachment: A Military and Social History*, Rudder Press, Plumpton (NSW), 2002

Reese, Trevor R., *Australia, New Zealand and the United States: A Survey of International Relations 1941-1968*, Oxford University Press, London, 1969

Reeve, John, 'The Development of Naval Strategy in the Asia-Pacific Region 1500-2000', *Sea Power Centre- Australia*, Working Paper No4, Canberra, 2000

———, ‘Maritime Strategy and Defence of the Archipelagic Inner Arc’, *Sea Power Centre – Australia*, Working Paper No5, Canberra, 2001

Reynolds, David, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-1941: A Study in Competitive Cooperation*, Europa Publications Limited, London, 1981

Riseman, Noah, *Defending Whose Country? Indigenous Soldiers in the Pacific War*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2012

Roberts, Andrew, *Masters and Commanders: The Military Geniuses Who Led the West to Victory in World War II*, Penguin Books Ltd, London, 2008

———, *The Storm of War*, Penguin Books, London, 2009

Robertson, John, *Australia At War 1939-1945*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1981

———, ‘The Distant War: Australia and Imperial defence, 1919-41’, in McKernan, M. & Browne M. (eds), *Australia: Two Centuries of War & Peace*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1988

Rorrison, James D., *Nor the Years Contemn: Air War on the Australian Front 1941-42*, Palomar Publications, Hamilton Central (Qld), 1992

Ross, Andrew (ed.), *Combat history & Analysis*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1992

Ross, A.T., *Armed and Ready: The Industrial Development and Defence of Australia 1900-1945*, Turton & Armstrong, Sydney, 1995

Ross, Lloyd, *John Curtin: A Biography*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1977

Salisbury, Jean (ed.), *War Cabinet Notebooks: World War II*, (Shedden notebooks transcribed), privately printed, Canberra, 2005

Sayers, Stuart, *Ned Herring: A Life of Lieutenant-General the Honourable Sir Edmund Herring*, Hyland House, Melbourne, in association with the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1980

Shen, Peijian, *The Age of Appeasement: The Evolution of British Foreign Policy in the 1930s*, Sutton Publishing Limited, Stroud (Gloucestershire), 1999

Shores, Christopher, Brian Cull & Yasuho Izawa, *Bloody Shambles: Air Operations Over South-East Asia December 1941-April 1942, Volume One, The Drift to War to the Fall of Singapore*, Grub Street, London, 1992

———, *Bloody Shambles: Air Operations Over South-East Asia December 1941-April 1942, Volume Two, The Defence of Sumatra to the Fall of Burma*, Grub Street, London, 1993

Simmonds, Ed and Smith Norm, *Echoes Over The Pacific*. E.W. and E. Simmonds, Banora Point (NSW), 1995

Smith, Alan, *Convoys Up The Track: A History of 121st Australian General Transport Company 1941-1946*, Alan C. Smith, Adelaide, 1991

———, *Outback Corridor: World War II Lines of Communication across Australia from Adelaide and Mt Isa to Darwin*, Alan C. Smith, Adelaide, 2002

Smith, Michael, *The Emperor's Codes: Bletchley Park and the Breaking of Japan's Secret Ciphers*, Bantam Press, London, 2000

Smith, Peter C., *Vengeance! The Vultee Vengeance Dive Bomber*, Airlife Publishing Ltd, Shrewsbury, 1986

Southall, Colin Spencer, *The Defence of Lithgow: Under Threat of Invasion and Air Attack During the Second World War*, The Greater Lithgow City Council, Lithgow, 1995

Stanley, Peter, *Invading Australia: Japan and the Battle for Australia, 1942*, Viking (Penguin Group), Camberwell, Vic, 2008

———, 'Dramatic myth and dull truth: Invasion by Japan in 1942', in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*, New South, Sydney, 2010

———, 'Monumental mistake: Is war the most important thing in Australian history?', in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Anzac's Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History*, New South, Sydney, 2012

Stephens, Alan, *The Royal Australian Air Force*, Volume II, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

———, *Power Plus Attitude: Ideas, Strategy and Doctrine in the Royal Australian Air Force, 1921-1991*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992

Stevens, David (ed.), *The Royal Australian Navy in World War II*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996

———, ‘‘Send for a naval officer’: HMAS *Adelaide* at Noumea in 1940’, David Stevens (ed.), *Maritime Power in the Twentieth Century: The Australian Experience*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1998

———, *The Royal Australian Navy*, Volume III, The Australian Centenary History of Defence, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001

———, *A Critical Vulnerability: The impact of the submarine threat on Australia’s maritime defence 1915-1954*, Sea Power Centre – Australia (Department of Defence), Canberra, 2005

———, ‘‘Australia’s Thermopylae’? The Kokoda Trail’, in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Zombie Myths of Australian Military History*, New South, Sydney, 2010

Stockings, Craig, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2009

———, ‘Other People’s Wars’, in Craig Stockings (ed.), *Anzac’s Dirty Dozen: 12 Myths of Australian Military History*, New South, Sydney, 2012

Tarling, Nicholas, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Pacific War*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996

Taylor, A.J.P., *The Origins of the Second World War*, Hamish Hamilton Ltd, London, 1961

Thomson, Donald, *Northern Territory Special Reconnaissance Unit*, (text from the report of Squadron Leader Donald Thomson), Yirrkala Literature Production Unit, Yirrkala, 1992

Thomson, Judy, *Winning with Intelligence: A Biography of Brigadier John David Rogers, CBE, MC 1895-1978*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2000

Thorne, Christopher, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the War against Japan, 1941-1945*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1978

———, *The Issue of War: States, Societies, and the Far Eastern Conflict of 1941-1945*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1985

Tohmatsu, Haruo and H.P. Willmott, *A Gathering Darkness: The Coming of War to the Far East and the Pacific, 1921-1942*, SR Books, Lanham MD, 2004

Vane, Dr Armoury, *North Australia Observer Unit: The History of a Surveillance Unit*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2000

Walker, E. Ronald, *The Australian Economy in War and Reconstruction*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1947

Wallace, Robert, *The secret battle, 1942-1944: the convoy battle off the East Coast of Australia during World War II*, Lamont Publishing, Ringwood, 1995

Walsh, Frank, *Great Southern Land: A New History of Australia*, Allen Lane (Penguin), London, 2004

Weinberg, Gerhard L. (2nd Ed), *A World At Arms: A Global History of World War II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005

White, Richard, 'War and Australian Society', in M. McKernan & M. Browne (ed.), *Australia: Two Centuries of War & Peace*, Canberra, Australian War Memorial, 1988

Williams, Richard, *These Are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977

Willmott, H.P., *Empires In The Balance: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies February to April 1942*, Orbis, London, 1982

———, *The Barrier and the Javelin: Japanese and Allied Pacific Strategies February to June 1942*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1983

———, *Grave of a Dozen Schemes: British Naval Planning and the War Against Japan 1943-1945*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1996

———, *The War With Japan: The period of Balance May 1942 – October 1943*, Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, 2002

Winterbotham, Frederick William, *The Ultra Secret*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1974

Wurth, Bob, *1942: Australia's Greatest Peril*, Pan Macmillan Australia, Sydney, 2008

Wyatt, Ray A., *A Yank Down Under: From America's Heartland to Australia's Outback*, Sunflower University Press, Manhattan (Kansas), 1999

Younger, R.M., *Australia and the Australians: A Concise History*, Hutchinson of Australia, Richmond, 1970

Speeches and Lectures

Braisted, William, 'On the General Board of the Navy, Admiral Hilary Jones, and Naval Arms Limitation, 1921-1931', *The Dwight D. Eisenhower Lectures in War & Peace No 4*, Department of History, Kansas State University, 1991

Cooper, Alastair, 'Raiders and the Defence of Trade: The Royal Australian Navy in 1941', paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1941*, Canberra, 8 December 2001

Edwards, P.G., 'Another look at Curtin and MacArthur', paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1942*, Canberra, 2002

Horner, David M., 'High command and the Kokoda campaign', paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1942*, Canberra, 2002

———, ‘Strategy and Generalship: Strategic and Operational Planning for the 1943 Offensives’, *The Foundations of Victory: The Pacific War 1943-1944, Proceedings of the 2003 Chief of Army’s Military History Conference*, Canberra 2003.

———, ‘John Curtin as war leader and Defence Minister’, Public lecture, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library, Perth, 5 October 2006

Howard, Michael, ‘The Use and Abuse of Military History’, RUSI lecture, 18 October 1961.

Menzies, R.G., *“To the People of Britain at War” From the Prime minister of Australia*, Longmans Green and Co., London, 1941

Morton, Louis, *Pacific Command: A Study in Interservice Relations*, Harmon Memorial Lectures, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado, 1961

‘Prime Minister Winston Churchill Debate in the House of Commons, January 27, 1942’, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons Official Report, Jan. 27, 1942 <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1942/420127a.html>, accessed 20 July 2011

Roosevelt, Franklin Delano, ‘The “Four Freedoms” Speech’, Annual Message to Congress, 6 January 1941, <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/4free.html>, accessed 23 July 2009

Stanley, Peter, ‘“He’s (not) Coming South”: the invasion that wasn’t’, paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1942*, Canberra, 2002

———, ‘The defence of the ‘Malay barrier’: Rabaul and Ambon, January 1942’, paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1942*, Canberra, 2002

———, ‘Was there a Battle for Australia?’, *Australian War Memorial Anniversary Oration*, 10 November 2006

Stephens, Alan, ‘The Royal Australian Air Force in 1941’, paper presented at *Australian War Memorial Conference: Remembering 1941*, Canberra, December 2001

Japanese Sources and Translated Documents

Bullard, Stephen (trans.), *Japanese Army Operations in the South Pacific Area, New Britain and Papua campaigns, 1942-43*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 2007

Detwiler, Donald S. and Burdick, Charles B. (ed.), *War in Asia and the Pacific (The Japanese Monograph Program): Vol 6, Operation Records of the Southern Army*, Garland Publishing Inc, New York, 1980 [Report dated July 1946]

Ienaga, Saburō, (trans. Frank Baldwin), *Japan's Last War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1979

Ike, Nobutaka (trans., ed.), *Japan's Decision for War: Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1967

The Japanese Air Forces in World War II (The Organisation of the Japanese Army & Naval Air Forces, 1945). Arms and Armour Press, London, 1979. [Reprint of an intelligence study, dated 1945]

Japanese Monograph No. 97 Pearl Harbor Operations: General Outline of Orders and Plans, Military History Section, Headquarters Army Forces Far East, Office of the Chief of Military History
<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/myths/jm-097.html>, accessed 27 August 2011

Kotani, Ken, (translated Chiharu Kotani), *Japanese Intelligence in World War II*, Osprey Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2009

Reports of General MacArthur: Japanese Operations in the Southwest Pacific Area, Volume II – Part 1, Center for Military History, 1994 (Facsimile reprint)

Tanaka, Hiromi, 'The Japanese Navy's operations against Australia in the Second World War', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 30, April 1997

Yamamoto, Isoroku, *Japanese Combined Fleet Top Secret Operation Order #1, 5 November 1941*, The Joint Congressional Investigation Of The Attack On Pearl Harbor, Exhibit #8, undated <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/pha/pt_12/x12-p431.html>, accessed 27 August 2011

Short Monographs and Personal Memoirs

Buttery, Ray, *Legion of the Lost: "Home Defence"*, Ray Buttery, Marden SA, 1992

Callaghan, Peter, *With the RAAF at Gove: Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, 1943-1945*, P. Callaghan, Gove, 1988

Fenton, Morrie (ed.), *154 Radar Truscott 1944-45*, M.E. Fenton, Lockleys (SA), 1990

Fenton, Morrie (ed.), *327 Radar, Broome*, M.E. Fenton, Lockleys (SA), 1992

Fenton, Morrie (ed.), *The Exmouth Radar Story: 310 RS, 31RS, 161RS, 115RS*, M.E. Fenton, Lockleys (SA), 1994

Fenton, Morrie (ed.), *131 Radar Ash Island 1942-46*, M.E. Fenton, Lockleys (SA), 1995

Fenton, Morrie (ed.), *Tracks Around Truscott*, M.E. Fenton, Lockleys (SA), 1995

Ferguson, Allan, *The Story of 319 Radar*, A.J. Ferguson, Ringwood (Vic), date unknown (ca 1994)

Freeman, Brett, *Lake Boga at War*, Catalina Publications, Swan Hill, 1995

Harris, Joe, *Sweat Saves Blood*. Jogeoff Publications, Perth, 1991

Haughton-James, Jean & Sheila Manley, *Wings at War: RAAF at Evans Head 1939-1945*, Australia Remembers, 1995

McColl, Maureen, *A Salute to Quorn*, Maureen McColl, Quorn, 1993

Prime, Mervyn W., *Broome's One Day War: The story of the Japanese Raid on Broome 3rd March 1942*, Broome Historical Society Inc, Broome, 2007

Ruwoldt, Rex, *Darwin's Battle for Australia*, Darwin Defenders 1942-45 Inc, Clifton (Vic), 2005

Simmonds, Ed and Smith Norm (eds), *Radar Yarns*. Forster Tuncurry Printing Service, Forster, 1991

Simmonds Ed (ed.), *More Radar Yarns*. Forster Tuncurry Printing Service, Forster, 1992

Smith, Norm & Coghlan, Frank, *Secret Action of 305*. RAAF Museum, Point Cook, 1989

Tunny, Noel, *Gateway to Victory: The Establishment of the First US Armed Forces in Australia 1941-42*, Myla Graphics, Toowong (Qld), 1991

Tunny, Noel, *Fight Back From the North*, Myla Graphics, Toowong (Qld), 1992

Wallace, Gordon, *Are You There Don R?*, Gordon Wallace, Surrey Hills (Vic), 1983

Woodgate, Fred, *Lions and Swans: the continuing story of No 54 Fighter Squadron, Royal Air Force*. F. Woodgate, Collaroy Beach (NSW), 1992

Woodward, Jack, *Under It Down Under*, Woodward, Rosebery (NSW), 1996

Theses and Unpublished Manuscripts

Arnold, Peter, 'The Role of Advanced Operational Bases in Northwest Area Operations 1942-1945: A Cost-Benefit Analysis', Master of Defence Studies sub-thesis, University College, University of New South Wales, 1996

Helson, Peter, 'The Forgotten Air Force: The Establishment and Employment of Australian Air Power in the North-Western Area 1941-1945', MA (Hon) thesis, University College, *University of New South Wales*, 1997

Horner, David M., 'Australia and Allied Strategy in the Pacific 1941-1946', PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1980

Griffiths, Phil, 'The roots and consequences of Australia's fear of Japan', Honours essay, Macquarie University, 1998

Rigley, Anthony K., 'The Civil Constructional Corps: 1942-1945', Master of Arts thesis, University of Sydney, 1992

MacLeod, A.N., ‘The History of RAEME in South Australia until 1965’, <http://www.raeme.net/history.php?resource=gen-raeme&item=1&part=ww2>, accessed 9 June 2009