

CHAPTER 4

LEADERS AND MEN

THE army which had now entered upon its final campaigns, and whose leadership and equipment were the subject of such keen debate at home, was at this time, in many respects, at the peak of its efficiency. More than two years earlier it had established a tactical superiority over the Japanese, and since then it had gained in skill and confidence, and, in particular, in the art of living healthily and cheerfully in tropical bush. Its experience included warfare in many kinds of terrain and climate, and in Africa, Europe, Asia and the South Seas. Its system of training schools was comprehensive and their methods severe. There were 40 schools of various kinds for officers and N.C.O's, and from 1942 to 1945 96,000 courses of one kind or another, varying from four months to a few weeks, had been completed (some individuals doing more than one course). The L.H.Q. Schools ranged from the Officer Cadet Training Unit through which, by August 1945, 7,887 had passed, the Staff School (to produce 1,007), the School of Artillery (14,212) and the Guerilla Warfare School (3,792), to the Cooking and Catering School (3,740), School of Military Law (205), School of Movement and Transport (382) and so on. The training of new recruits, described in an earlier volume, was long and exacting, culminating for young infantrymen in a jungle training course at Canungra in south Queensland so rigorous that life at the front, except for the moments of danger, was often reckoned less trying. The Canungra School was now turning out 4,000 reinforcements a month.

A majority of the senior field commanders were citizen officers. The Commander-in-Chief was a soldier by profession, as were his two chiefs of staff and the commander of the First Army, General Sturdee. The two corps commanders—Generals Morshead and Savige—were citizen soldiers. Each had left Australia in 1940 as a brigadier in the 6th Division. Of the commanders of the six divisions of the striking force four were or had been regulars; all six had served as young officers in 1914-18; the oldest, Wootten, was 51, the youngest, Stevens, 48. Among the twenty-one commanders of infantry or armoured brigades at 1st January 1945 only four had served in the earlier war. The youngest, Sandover,¹ was 34; only two were regulars. Nine had gone overseas in 1940 as battalion commanders. The extent to which the corps that had served in the Middle East, and particularly the division first formed, had inherited the command of the army as a whole was illustrated by the fact that all but one brigade commander had served in the Middle East, and 13 of the 21 had sailed with the 6th Division (then of 12 battalions).

The same trend was evident in the appointment of commanding officers. Of the 59 infantry battalions (on 1st January), 31 were commanded by

¹ Brig R. L. Sandover, DSO, ED, WX5, CO 2/11 Bn 1941-43; Comd 6 Bde 1943-45. Accountant and company director; of Perth; b. Richmond, Surrey, England, 28 Mar 1910.

officers who had gone overseas with the 6th Division or its early reinforcements and only five by officers who had served neither in the Middle East nor with the 8th Division.² Only two infantry C.O.'s—T. J. Daly and J. L. A. Kelly—were regular soldiers.

It was certain that in an army with a relatively small regular officer corps—450 strong in 1945, not including quartermasters and officers of some small specialist corps—and one with so strong a citizen-soldier tradition a majority of the commands would be held by non-regulars. At this stage, however, there was no great shortage of non-regulars qualified to fill staff appointments at least up to the divisional level, and there were good reasons for making an effort to ensure that the post-war regular officer corps contained a due proportion of men who had commanded troops in the field. In the event the Chifley Government's epochal decision soon after the war to establish a small regular army, as distinct from a cadre of regulars within a basically citizen army, led to the appointment to the regular army of a big contingent of regimental officers trained in the A.I.F. with a consequent large increase in the proportion of regular officers with long regimental service in the field.³

The senior general staff and administrative officers on Army and Corps staffs were mostly regulars, but years of active service and strenuous study at the staff schools had brought forward a strong team of non-professional staff officers, so that on 1st January 1945 the G.S.O.1's in each A.I.F. division and nearly all G.S.O.2's of divisions or brigade majors were citizen soldiers.⁴ Unfortunately, this did not mean that a corresponding number of regular officers were freed from staff appointments and were gaining regimental experience. Of the Staff Corps officers commissioned from 1940 to October 1944 and thus mostly aged 20 to 24 just half were already in staff appointments.

Some senior soldiers, both regular and citizen, considered that this was unfortunate from the point of view both of the young officers concerned and of the future of the army generally. In the 9th Division in 1942 and 1943 General Morshead had tried to correct the tendency but without great success. Throughout the army numbers of those young staff officers who had so far had little or no regimental service in the field were striving for transfers to combat units and were willing to drop a step in their war-time rank in order to join the battalion or regiment from which they had been seconded.

Lack of regimental experience reduced not only their general qualifications but their value as staff officers. One citizen soldier who had served

² The youngest were four men of 30—P. E. Rhoden, J. D. Carstairs, J. R. Broadbent and W. B. Caldwell—though later in the year C. H. Green was appointed to command a battalion at 25. (In the old A.I.F., with its heavier casualties and rapid expansion, it was not unusual for officers to command battalions at 25 or younger.)

³ At the same time, as a result of the creation of the regular army and of the growing influence of the regular officer corps the proportion of senior ranks held by citizen soldiers was radically reduced. Whereas in 1939 the ratio of regular to citizen generals holding substantive rank on the active list had been 7:7, in 1950 it was 11:0.

⁴ Another citizen soldier, Lieut-Colonel W. T. Robertson, was GSO1 of the 51st Highland Division in Western Europe. He was one of 13 officers who had been lent to the British Army in March 1944 and took part in the operations in Europe. The senior of this group was Lieut-Colonel R. R. McNicoll, a regular, who was a GSO1 at S.H.A.E.F.

on the staff, and later had commanded battalions and brigades in action, wrote after the war:

As the A.I.F. increased in size from a small expeditionary force to one of many divisions both abroad and in Australia, with expansion and establishment of larger headquarters, ancillary formations, etc., there came an urgent need for skilled staff officers. In the main these officers had to be drawn from existing units. Most of them were civilians in peacetime with no previous staff training. Once again C.O's and higher commanders played fair and made available some of their most promising young officers as students to the Staff College at Haifa and later at Duntroon. In every case the successful graduate was lost to the unit.

From my personal experience I found this type of staff officer, in general, extremely capable, flexible in mind, logical and reasoned in approach, with the added invaluable advantage of having had a good grounding in regimental duties and often experience in command of troops in operations. Unfortunately these essential qualities were not always apparent—partly through lack of opportunity and experience—in the regular staff officer of similar age and rank. Because of this deficiency his approach to his duties was often either timid and uncertain or overbearing and patronising.

In 1944 a committee comprising Major-Generals Vasey and Robertson and Brigadier Combes⁵ was appointed by General Blamey to make recommendations on the future organisation and curriculum of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, to meet post-war needs. One recommendation was that graduates entering the permanent army should be appointed regimental officers of permanent units and that they should serve normally for four years before being eligible for secondment to staff or extra-regimental employment; and that, as far as practicable, an officer below the rank of lieutenant-colonel should not be employed wholly on the staff but should be returned periodically to regimental duty.

The committee recommended also that the name of the Australian Staff Corps be changed to "Australian Command and Staff Corps".

In a large-scale war all armies must be officered largely by non-professional officers, at least in the junior ranks, and some friction is likely to occur between the two groups. In the Australian Army a blunder had been made in 1920 when the regular officer corps had been labelled the "Staff Corps". It was easy to infer from this title that in war the regulars would fill the staff posts and the citizen soldiers would do the fighting. As mentioned earlier in this history the regulars were naturally disgruntled by the slowness of promotion in their own corps and the rapid promotion of citizen officers between the wars, and by the fact that few commands were given to regulars in the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th Divisions at the outset. (At one stage this injustice was largely rectified when a high proportion of commands in the 1st Armoured Division was given to regulars, but the division was disbanded without having seen action.)

The war provided an opportunity of reducing the isolation of the regular officer corps but, instead, short-sighted administration tended to make it more than ever a "Staff Corps" engaged in instructional and staff work within an army which, from brigade level downwards, was led almost

⁵ Brig B. Combes, CBE, VP7440. (1st AIF: Lt 14 Bn.) DMO & I AHQ 1939-40; Asst CGS 1940-41; BGS Home Forces 1941-42; Comdt RMC and SS 1942-44, Comdt RMC 1944-45. Regular soldier; b. Goulburn, NSW, 13 Apr 1894. He was the first graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, to become its Commandant.

entirely by citizen officers. However, when the six-year war ended, the Staff Corps contained a large number of officers in their early and middle twenties who had seen much hard service with fighting units in action.

Observation of the relations between regular and citizen officers in both the British and the Australian Armies suggests that those relations might have been greatly improved if the regulars, from the beginning of their training, had been taught two axioms: first that in a total war citizen officers are bound to comprise the great majority and one of the main tasks of the regular is to ensure that this expansion of the officer corps is accomplished smoothly and efficiently; second, that the keen and intelligent citizen officer often brings to his military job valuable civilian experience and after a few years of war may equal the regular in military knowledge and ability.

The dispersal of officers from the corps of three divisions that had served in the Middle East throughout an army that had once been four times as large as that force and even now was more than twice as large (leaving out of account the populous base and training organisations) had entailed the loss to the veteran units of most of their junior leaders of 1941 and 1942, but in each there was still a cadre of specially durable "originals" among the officers and in the ranks. For example, in a battalion of the 6th Division in action east of Aitape, of the 36 officers who had helped to form this battalion in 1939 one was now commanding a division, 3 were commanding brigades, 3 commanding battalions, and 7 were first-grade or second-grade staff officers. Eight had been killed in action, 6 taken prisoner, and the others were widely distributed. There remained with the battalion only two of the original officers, and a sprinkling of original other ranks. Sixteen of its present officers had joined after its return from New Guinea to Australia in 1943. But, although the battalion itself had not been in action since early in 1943, in the previous years it had fought in Africa, Europe and New Guinea, and it now contained also a few veterans transferred from units with different histories, so that in it were men whose experience included service in England in 1940, in Libya in January 1941, in Greece, in Tobruk, on New Britain in 1942, in the early fighting round Kokoda, the subsequent advance through the Owen Stanleys and the long, costly fight at Buna, Gona and Sanananda. Probably only five or six of the subalterns had not been in action before. In this as in other units the tendency was to promote to commissioned rank tried sergeants aged about 25 or more: in four classes graduating from O.C.T.U's in the last half of 1944 40 per cent were aged 28 or over. Thus the new officers coming from the Officer Cadet Training Units were generally considerably older than the regulars of 19 or 20 arriving in smaller numbers from the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

What of the "militia" battalions—many of them now veterans of long campaigns—with their different history? As has been pointed out, a majority of the commanders of these battalions had been drawn from A.I.F. units. Among the majors and captains of a militia battalion there might be one or two young A.I.F. majors or captains, and one or two

officers, fairly senior in their ranks, who had been too old to be commissioned in the A.I.F.; the remainder were generally somewhat younger than their opposite numbers in the A.I.F. As a rule they had been commissioned in their battalions in 1940 as youths of 19 or 20, and promoted since. The general view of the officers now leading militia battalions seems to have been that there was little difference between the men of their old units and their new ones, but that the old A.I.F. units contained a higher proportion of forceful leaders both in the ranks and among the officers, and there was probably a greater dash and aggressiveness in the A.I.F. units.

In the militia units the men also tended to be younger than in the A.I.F. This, added to their generally briefer battle experience, caused them, as a group, to be less "browned off" than the veterans in 1945. Many of the men of the 6th Division round Aitape and in the Torricellis had now had about enough of campaigning, but to most of the younger men in II Corps on Bougainville the campaign of 1945 was to be their most telling experience, and they were anxious to prove themselves.

The political and military leaders had long been worried by the existence within their army of two contingents—the volunteer and veteran A.I.F. on the one hand, and the part-volunteer and part-conscript, and less experienced, militia on the other. They had taken measures to erase the differences between the two. One distinction that remained was that the Australian conscript might not be sent north of the equator—a frontier that possessed no military significance. He might die in Dutch New Guinea but not in American Luzon, in Portuguese Timor but not in British Borneo. In any reshaping of the army the military leaders had to take this peculiar political compromise into account.⁶

Measures to bring both A.I.F. and militia to a common standard included sending reinforcements forward to all units from a common pool, except that all non-volunteers went to militia units. In addition lieutenants graduating from the Officer Cadet Training Unit were not as a rule sent back to their own units but were allotted the first appointment that fell vacant. The sweeping manner in which this policy was carried out was deplored by A.I.F. unit commanders.⁷ They did not grudge the loss of some of their capable young leaders to the militia, where they could pass on their experience and possibly gain more rapid promotion, but many objected to a policy that made it virtually a rule that a veteran N.C.O. when graduated from the O.C.T.U. would not rejoin his own unit. In the first A.I.F. the opposite policy—generally to return a newly-commissioned officer to his old unit—had been considered a main factor in producing an outstanding fighting force. On the other hand, anything less than a rule to which very few exceptions were permitted⁸ would probably not

⁶ By the end of July 1945 205,000 had transferred from the C.M.F. to the A.I.F.

⁷ This and other opinions quoted in this chapter are drawn from numerous interviews recorded in Australia, New Guinea and Borneo mainly in 1944 and 1945.

⁸ There were exceptions. For example, Lieutenant T. C. Derrick, VC, DCM, returned from the OCTU to his old battalion, the 2/48th; and Lieutenant R. W. Saunders, an aborigine, returned to the 2/7th, with which he had served in the Middle East and New Guinea. And in 1945 numbers of senior NCO's were commissioned in the field.

have achieved the very desirable result of ensuring that the subalterns joining both A.I.F. and militia units were of even quality. The strength which the young A.I.F. leaders were contributing to the militia will become evident to those who watch the biographical footnotes in the chapters concerning Bougainville and notice how often outstanding company and platoon leaders were men drawn from the veteran divisions. It may be argued, too, that in this sixth year of war it was preferable for men with long service as N.C.O's to begin their life as officers in a new unit, no matter how welcome they would have been in their old one.

On the other hand the fact that A.I.F. units were regarded as being senior and superior to militia ones was not concealed. For example, promising commanding officers who had led militia battalions for a year or more were transferred to A.I.F. battalions as though such a transfer were a promotion.⁹ This was a slight that could not fail to be felt by the members of the militia unit concerned. In January 1945 one brigadier on Bougainville wrote a vigorous protest when such a transfer was ordered on the eve of battle, but without effect.

New officers were appointed and recruits sent forward to a unit regardless of whether they came from the State in which it had originally been raised. These practices made life easier for the staff but were widely deplored in the units themselves. Sentiment apart, they imposed practical handicaps. For example, if men of a Queensland battalion were given leave from Atherton and all were Queenslanders they would return from leave more or less at the same time, but if there were West Australians in the unit they would not return until weeks later with consequent disruption of training. Officers who had been transferred to a unit raised in another State said that it was a disadvantage to have relatively little in common with the men of the new unit. (On the other hand some members of regiments that from the time of their formation had contained quotas from several States often considered that it did them good to mix with men from many parts of Australia.) A unit association, supported by wives and mothers in the unit's home State, tended to grow weaker as the proportion of men from that State decreased. This not only tended to lessen the quantity of comforts that the association sent forward but reduced the chances that a wife would be able to join an association where she would meet and exchange news with wives of other men in her husband's unit.

The degree to which units were losing their territorial character is illustrated by the fact that, for example, of 125 men killed or wounded in the 31st/51st (Queensland) Battalion in January and February, 65 were Queenslanders, 24 New South Welshmen, 14 Victorians, and the remainder from the smaller States. (The army numbers of all but eighteen contained "X", indicating that they had volunteered for service in the A.I.F.)

⁹ For example, P. K. Parbury from the 31st/51st Battalion to the 2/7th; G. R. Warfe from the 58th/59th Battalion to the 2/24th.

A proportion of the men of the militia were now taking a perverse pride in not volunteering.

The term "Chocko" has been changed from a term of opprobrium to a title to be proud of, like the "Rats of Tobruk" or the "Old Contemptibles" (wrote a diarist in 1945). The men call each other "Chocko" as they might say "Mate" or "Digger". They are determined to remain "Chockos" just to show that here was one matter on which the army couldn't order them about. Not even the Commander-in-Chief could make them volunteer and they were going to revel in this freedom.

A reason why some chose not to volunteer was that there was a widespread (and, as it turned out, a very erroneous) belief that the "Chockos" would be sent home as soon as the war ended but that "X numbers" might be retained for garrison duties. It was generally agreed that, as a rule, in mixed units the volunteers were the better soldiers.¹

In some veteran A.I.F. units the feeling of self-sufficiency that had been born in the Middle East had now developed into an unhappy sense of isolation and neglect. Two or three years overseas, several arduous campaigns, and the multitude of individual problems and frustrations that such a life bred, had combined to convince many that Australia was a "bludgers' paradise", that Australians at home (their own wives and families excepted) were enjoying an easy and profitable time, and cared too little about the war in general and the army in particular, and that the politicians were up to no good.

The fact that even when resting or re-training in Australia most of the fighting soldiers lived on the remote Atherton Tableland, with rare and brief visits south on leave, increased the feeling of isolation. More and more, when he was on leave, the soldier tended not to stay at home and forget the army, but to seek out comrades in arms with whom to talk about old adventures or (grimly congenial topic) the rapid promotion and good pay being won in a manpower-starved country by civilian contemporaries. Some of the soldier's hard feelings towards civilians at this time

¹ Australians may be interested in the question whether particular States of the Commonwealth produced disproportionately large quotas of the army's leaders. The following table was compiled from the Staff and Command List for March 1945:

State	Corps, Div, Inf and Arm'd Bde Comds (excluding regulars)	Comds of Inf, Pnr, MG Bns, Cav and Arm'd Regts (excluding regulars)	Population 1941 00,000
New South Wales	11	22	28
Victoria	6	25	19
Queensland	1	6	10
South Australia	1	10	6
Western Australia	3	11	4.6
Tasmania	1	2	2.4
Papua	—	1	—
Total	23	77	70

Commanders of artillery and technical units have not been included because a disproportionately large number belonged to New South Wales and Victoria; and regulars because their State of enlistment often was not the place where they had been schooled and spent most of their lives. It will be seen that Western Australia provided more than double its quota of senior infantry leaders, but Queensland only about half. Perhaps these figures may be related to (but not entirely explained by) the fact that before the war Western Australia spent more money in proportion to population on secondary education than any other State, and Queensland (and Tasmania) spent less than other States. The relatively low figures for New South Wales may partly be a result of the fact that the senior officers lost in Malaya came chiefly from that State.

were probably due to his own sense of frustration during the long periods of re-training and waiting. For example, in October 1944, one brigade of the 6th Division had not been in action since Crete in May 1941, and the other brigades had been out of battle for eighteen months or more; the 7th and 9th Divisions were in the middle of their longest periods of inaction since 1941.²

For most of the men who had in 1941 eagerly joined the armoured division—it was to be a *corps d'élite*, they believed—the succeeding years had been disappointing. Some armoured units had been disbanded, others were idle in Queensland. Thousands of highly-trained men of the armoured corps had succeeded in “getting a guernsey” by transferring to any units that would take them out of Australia—many went to the army water transport companies. Indeed 1944 and 1945 were years of anti-climax for a big proportion of the men who had enlisted in the first two years of the war. By early 1944 the “second world war” had lasted longer than the first; the Americans had now taken the lead in the South-West Pacific; the Australians were in the background.³

Another source of the soldier's resentment towards the civilian world were the sordid conditions of travel, and the often poor quarters and the

² The following list shows the Middle East campaigns in which each A.I.F. brigade had fought and the approximate number of months served in New Guinea up to August 1944 by all infantry brigades.

Brigade	Middle East	Months in New Guinea
16	Libya, Greece	4
17	Libya, Greece, Syria	12
18	Libya, Siege of Tobruk	6 plus 10
19	Libya, Greece, Crete	nil
20	Siege of Tobruk, El Alamein	8
21	Syria	5 plus 6
24	Siege of Tobruk, El Alamein	7
25	Syria	5 plus 6
26	Siege of Tobruk, El Alamein	7
4		17
6		14
7		17
8		7
11		13
15		16
23		3
29		18

Two brigades—14th and 30th—that had fought in New Guinea no longer existed. Parts of the 16th Brigade served in Crete and Syria, and parts of the 17th in Crete. Some units were in New Guinea longer than the periods here credited to the brigades they belonged to.

³ The total strength of the army was now 307,000 volunteers of the AIF plus 91,000 compulsorily-enlisted militiamen.

These figures do not include 5,010 men of the AIF and 4,473 of the militia who at the end of 1944 were absent without leave or serving sentences in civil gaols. Throughout the period covered in this volume the number of absentees remained fairly constant. Those from the AIF fluctuated between 4,800 and 5,400; from the militia between 3,900 and 4,500. In July 1945 when all divisions were in action the total was only 400 less than October 1944. It seems that the number absent from fighting formations at any time did not exceed a few hundreds. For example, when, in October 1944, the 15th Brigade was sent to Atherton en route to Bougainville after two months in Victoria, which had followed 18 months service in New Guinea, fewer than 30 men out of 2,200 were absent without leave. From one AIF infantry brigade only three were absent without leave for more than one day in the last quarter of 1944.

The number of AWL's from the divisions fluctuated, probably reaching its maximum at Christmas. “This year the percentage of AWL's from units stationed in Australia should be fairly high,” wrote a soldier in December 1944. “In a compartment intended for eight that would have allowed ample seating room from Townsville to Brisbane there were fifteen, seven of whom were AWL. As one absentee said jestingly to a licensed traveller: ‘It's bastards like you that make it tough for good fellows like us.’ I was surprised to find that the majority of AWL's were not original members or early enlistments who might have had four Christmases away from home, but reinforcements of perhaps one campaign. Only one of the seven AWL's in our carriage wore the Africa Star.”

delays on the long journey from New Guinea or Atherton to his home when he went on leave. The camps of fighting formations, when they were resting or re-training in Australia or New Guinea, had become increasingly neat and comfortable, ceremonial had become more elaborate, and standards of dress more exacting. Gardens were planted, roads and paths improved, club rooms built, sports grounds cleared, comfortable furniture cunningly contrived from the most unpromising material. But the soldier's home leave opened with a long and wearisome journey in a crowded train, with meals at railway stations where no eating utensils were provided and the bar was often deliberately closed just before the train arrived. There were delays at uncomfortable leave and transit depots. At the end of the journey hours were sometimes wasted while the man on leave went through formalities that seemed to him unnecessary—and certainly could have been completed in a fraction of the time in the orderly room of his own highly-efficient unit.

In August 1942 the Australian Army, 476,000 strong, had included 14 divisions or their equivalent (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 1st Armoured, 1st Motor, 2nd Motor and Northern Territory Force). That is, it then required about 34,000 men to maintain a division in the field. In August 1945, when there were six divisions and an armoured brigade, it required some 60,000 men to maintain a division in the field. These figures illustrate the way in which, in this as in other armies, the "tail" of the army tended to grow—a development which, as mentioned earlier, was troubling the Australian Ministers in 1945. In 1942 the men in infantry, cavalry and armour in the Australian Army totalled 137,236, in August 1945 they totalled only 62,097; in 1942 the ordnance corps, on the other hand, totalled 29,079, whereas in 1945 ordnance and its offshoot, the electrical and mechanical engineers, totalled 42,835. In the same period, the artillery had decreased to about half its former strength, but the engineers, signals and the medical corps had remained at about the same strength, though in a smaller army, and a number of ancillary services had been created or enlarged.

For example, in the last six months of 1944 52 officers were promoted to the substantive rank of lieutenant-colonel: of these only five were infantrymen, two were engineers, and the other arms were not represented. The remaining 45 were in various of the ancillary services.

Similarly in the fourth quarter of 1944 the numbers of lieutenants appointed to various corps were:

Infantry	54	Intelligence	8
Armour	4	Pay	19
Artillery	16	Legal	1
Engineers	27	Provost and Military Prisons	9
Signals	39	Canteens	10
A.S.C.	16	Movement Control	1
Ordnance	4	Audit	7
E.M.E.	42	Angau	34
Medical	33	Special List	13
Survey	2		

At this stage the following separate corps existed in addition to those named above, each with its own officers' list:

Amenities Service	Catering Corps
Chaplains' Department	Dental Corps
Education Service	War Graves Service
Hirings	Labour Service
Postal Service	Printing and Stationery Service
Psychology Service	Records Staff
Recruiting Staff	Remounts Service
Salvage Service	Veterinary Corps
Women's Army Service	

In the period covered in this volume members of the Australian Women's Army Service began to serve in New Guinea. As early as 8th September 1943 Blamey had informed the Government that plans had been made to send 200 A.W.A.S. to New Guinea to relieve signalmen at New Guinea Force headquarters and the Moresby base. Nurses and A.A.M.W.S. (Australian Army Medical Women's Service) were already serving in these areas. Blamey had just learnt that, in 1941, when the A.W.A.S. was formed, the War Cabinet directed that none of its members be sent abroad without Cabinet approval. He asked that permission be given. The War Cabinet, however, reaffirmed that A.W.A.S. should not go overseas without its permission and asked whether men were not available. At length the War Cabinet on 15th November 1944 approved of the posting of A.W.A.S. for service in New Guinea provided they volunteered for such service, that they were between the ages of 21 and 35 (40 for officers), and (a curious compromise) that the number of postings did not exceed 500.

In General Blamey's plan an increasingly important role was to be given to native battalions. Indeed, beside the two Australian armies—A.I.F. and militia—a small New Guinea army was now growing up. In October 1944 there were two native battalions—the veteran Papuan Infantry, which had first seen action in 1942, and the 1st New Guinea Battalion, formed in April and May 1944. In October Blamey decided to group these native battalions into a Pacific Islands Regiment, and decided also that a second New Guinea battalion should be raised, and a depot battalion formed. In the event a third New Guinea battalion was constituted in March, and in May the formation of a fourth was ordered. These went most of the way towards replacing the Australian battalions disbanded in the last year of the war.

The New Guinea natives had long since proved that they made splendid troops for bush warfare. They quickly mastered their weapons, being instructed by sight and touch rather than by words; formal drill delighted them—ritual played an important part in their everyday life and military ritual was therefore accepted as being right and proper. They could move in the bush with such stealth and alertness that the risk of being outwitted by Japanese was slight. Their casualties were always relatively low: in

about three years of fighting a total of 85 native infantrymen were killed in action and 201 wounded.⁴

The new regiment was attracting enterprising officers and N.C.O's, some with civil experience in New Guinea but most with none. The commanding officers were men who had proved themselves outstanding infantry leaders: T. F. B. MacAdie from the 2/7th Independent Company, for example, Murchison⁵ from the 2/3rd Battalion, J. S. Jones from the 2/6th, and C. W. Macfarlane from the 2/7th and 37th/52nd.

At this stage the burden of war was weighing heavily on the New Guinea native—more heavily, man for man, than on the general run of Australian citizens. At the end of 1944 35,387 natives were working as labourers under contract to the forces, the Pacific Islands Regiment would eventually reach a total of 4,700 (of whom perhaps 700 would be Australians), and the Royal Papuan Constabulary had a strength of 2,560 natives.⁶ Thousands more were employed as guerillas and locally-recruited carriers. At the peak perhaps 55,000 were serving from a people who, before the war, had been believed to number fewer than 1,000,000; and at this time natives in the thickly-settled areas of eastern New Britain and eastern Bougainville were still under Japanese control and out of reach of the Australian recruiting officer. Angau (the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit) had placed limits on the percentage of men that might be recruited in an area, and none under 18 might be sent into action. Nevertheless the loss of able-bodied men to these peasant communities, where all food-growing was done with primitive hand tools, caused grave hardships, particularly in areas where houses and gardens had been destroyed as the battle swept over them.

An anthropologist and a district officer, who at this time were assessing war damage suffered by natives, estimated that in the many villages that they had recently visited half the males were absent on military or labour service, and the women, children and older males who remained were gravely underfed as a result of the loss of able-bodied workers. In such communities the absence of even 5 per cent of the men may have ill effects. The birthrate had fallen, with the result that a shortage of workers was likely in future years.

During the war the Australian Army made increasing efforts to educate the troops in non-military subjects and to keep them informed about what was going on in the world.

⁴ The Royal Papuan Constabulary lost 28 killed in action, the Papuan and New Guinea Battalions 57; 46 indentured labourers were killed in action. Natives serving in the Pacific Islands Regiment and Royal Papuan Constabulary were awarded the following decorations: DCM, 4; G.M., 2; MM, 15; BEM, 8; Long Service Medallion, 297; PNG Native Police Valour Badge, 28. Seven were mentioned in dispatches. One was awarded the American Bronze Star.

⁵ Brig A. C. Murchison, MC, ED, NX326. 2/3 Bn; CO 2 NG Inf Bn 1945. Bank officer; of Rose Bay, NSW; b. Newcastle, NSW, 27 Oct 1917.

⁶ Apart from the Papuan and New Guinea Battalions, 700 island soldiers served in the Torres Strait Light Infantry Battalion. These were rehabilitated in the pearling industry after the war by the Queensland Government. From their earnings they bought their own pearling vessels, and the fleet began to operate at the beginning of 1946. See *Queensland Year Book*, No. 15 (1954), p. 77.

An Australian Army Education scheme, inspired by a similar Canadian project, had been undertaken in the A.I.F. in France and England from May 1918 onwards, and later in the Middle East. The historian of the First A.I.F., Dr C. E. W. Bean, has written that "no part of the A.I.F.'s war effort more richly repaid the nation";⁷ and it was Bean who, on 6th September 1939, wrote to the Minister for the Army pointing out the disabilities the First A.I.F.'s scheme had suffered through its late start and urging that immediate steps be taken to provide for the physical and mental recreation of the troops. Nothing effective was done at that stage to provide an education scheme, but Bean persisted, other people and organisations became interested, and, in December 1940, the Adjutant-General, Major-General Stantke,⁸ in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney, Professor R. S. Wallace⁹ (who had been an officer in the First A.I.F.'s education service), Dr Madgwick¹ and Mr Conlon,² also of Sydney University, produced a detailed plan. The War Cabinet approved the scheme on 5th March 1941. A few days earlier Madgwick had been appointed to Army Headquarters with the rank of lieutenant-colonel to administer the scheme, which "began operating seriously in June 1941".³

The education service of the First A.I.F. differed in two important respects from the new service. Its officers were inevitably drawn mainly from fighting units whereas the officers of the new service came largely from outside the army; and the first batches of officers of the first service, before beginning work, attended schools at which principles and methods were thrashed out. Perhaps some of the early difficulties which the A.E.S. of 1941-1946 has recorded would have been smaller if it had been possible to develop it to a larger extent from within the army. As it was

Education officers found that they spent a great deal of their time [in 1941-42] converting those who were openly hostile, instilling enthusiasm into the apathetic, and, by example, demonstrating that the Education Service was not something devised by the Government, or the Army, to keep men quiet or convert them to some political dogma.⁴

The enthusiasm and hard work of the officers and men of the service, however, overcame prejudice and apathy, and this vast experiment in adult education achieved great results. At its peak in October 1945 the service contained 210 officers and 753 other ranks. Up to that time it had been responsible for some 141,000 lectures to aggregate attendances of

⁷ *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*, Vol VI (1942), p. 1072. The development of the scheme is described in pp. 1062-1072.

⁸ Maj-Gen V. P. H. Stantke, CBE, VP7591. (1st AIF: 29 Bn.) AG 1940-43; Comd Qld L of C Area 1943-45. Regular soldier; b. Fitzroy, Vic, 15 Aug 1886.

⁹ Sir Robert Wallace, Kt. Vice-Chancellor, University of Sydney 1928-47. B. Scotland, 1 Aug 1882. Died 5 Sep 1961.

¹ Col R. B. Madgwick, VX89012. Director of Education LHQ 1941-46. Vice-Chancellor, University of New England since 1954. University lecturer; of Sydney; b. North Sydney, 10 May 1905.

² Col A. A. Conlon, NX191031. Director of Research LHQ 1943-45. Student; of North Sydney; b. Sydney, 7 Oct 1908. Died 21 Sep 1961.

³ War History of the Australian Army Education Service 1939-1945. This 116-page typescript report is the source of most of the facts and figures in this brief sketch, but not of some of the opinions it contains.

⁴ War History of the A.E.S., p. 6.

8,898,000. It had shown 32,000 film programs (not including the "entertainment" films which were shown by the separate Amenities Service) and provided 31,000 musical recitals. It had enrolled 64,000 students for correspondence courses, and 280 discussion groups and 888 craft groups were at work. By the end of 1945 it had circulated 620,000 books.

The cease-fire in 1945, as in 1918, naturally led to an increase in the opportunities of the service, particularly in the islands. In the First Army area three "Formation Colleges" were soon at work. In II Corps, for example, soldiers wishing to concentrate on education were freed from other duty for 20 hours a week except in certain units, and by September on Bougainville the custom was to devote each morning to education. At the Torokina Rehabilitation Training Centre there was a full-time staff of 36 and, at the peak, 1,700 students, and "the atmosphere of study and industry . . . had to be experienced to be believed".

A big achievement of the service was to reduce the grave degree of illiteracy that existed in Australia. In 1943 the service gave publicity to a conclusion it had reached that 4 per cent of the men of the army were illiterate.⁵ The Director-General of Public Relations, Colonel Rasmussen, wrote to Colonel Madgwick on 19th July objecting to the publication of this estimate and pointing out that Tokyo radio had used it for propaganda purposes. He said that "the extremely critical attitude of the public toward the Army . . . can only be encouraged by the publication of material of this kind". Madgwick's contention appears to have been the reasonable one that the discussion of educational standards in the army would encourage outside support for the Education Service; and it seems unlikely that the public would have blamed the army for the illiteracy of its recruits.

The A.E.S. was at times also in conflict with the Directorate of Public Relations concerning a weekly journal named *Salt* which the service published from September 1941 until April 1946. It was digest-size, and the number of its pages increased from 32 at the outset to 64 in June 1944. Its circulation ranged from 55,000 to 180,000. Among its aims were to give uncoloured information about current affairs, to provide a form in which servicemen might express their opinions, and to encourage creative expression by servicemen.

In 1942 *Salt* was subjected to much criticism and its future was discussed by the War Cabinet, which decided, on 31st August, that it was to be continued as a fortnightly, and an air force magazine was to be produced, both under the management of "an editor with journalistic experience, service in the present war, and a knowledge of the psychology of the troops". A senior journalist, Massey Stanley,⁶ was appointed, and with Stanley as Managing Editor and Mungo MacCallum⁷ as Editor *Salt* went from strength to strength. Stanley won support from the Press by circulating to it summaries and extracts of quotable material in each

⁵ From 4 to 5 per cent of 68,000 recruits had been found to be illiterate.

⁶ Maj M. Stanley, NX58006. 2/4 Fd Amb; Managing Editor *Salt* 1942-44; War correspondent 1945. Journalist; of Canberra; b. Dunedin, NZ, 27 Aug 1902.

⁷ Maj M. B. MacCallum, NX139824. Army Education Service (Editor *Salt* 1941-44, Managing Editor 1944-46). Journalist; of Sydney; b. Sydney, 11 Dec 1913.

forthcoming issue of *Salt*, and the War Cabinet agreed to an increase in the size of the journal to 64 pages.

The liberal policies of the group of newspapermen who were producing *Salt* led to conflict with the Director-General of Public Relations. From June 1943 *Salt* was made subject to censorship by the Director-General.

No statement of DGPR's censorial jurisdiction was ever furnished in writing (says the War History of the A.E.S.), with the result that throughout its operation there was considerable difference of opinion between the [Managing] Editor and the DGPR. In July 1942 a reference to Low's creation "Colonel Blimp" was deleted from an article on wartime cartoonists, on the ground that it stimulated "ideas which may be damaging to discipline". In August a Cinesound newsreel of the production of a special election issue was banned, no reason being given. In September the word "bastard" was deleted from a brilliantly written contribution describing a conversation between two soldiers at an advanced dressing station in the heat of battle. In an effort to clarify the DGPR's jurisdiction, the [Managing] Editor restored the word and it appeared in *Salt*. Subsequently paraded to the Adjutant-General, the [Managing] Editor submitted that the DGPR was exceeding his jurisdiction which was that his censorship was confined to security, and conformity with the C-in-C's high policy; and that the residue of authority over *Salt's* contents, including questions of taste and literary standards, remained with the Editor. He stated also that he did not agree with censorship powers being given to an officer hostile to *Salt*—i.e. DGPR; that DGPR had undertaken to write explanations of his deletions, but this had not always been done; and that the Editor had received no verbal or written instructions on the C-in-C's wishes, or the "ethical standards" required. In printing the word "bastard" he had been guided by modern practice—concurrently, the British Minister for Information had condemned objections to it as "spinsterish squeamishness"; the RN sanctioned it in the semi-official documentary film "In Which We Serve", the RAF in the documentary film "Alert" and the AMF in the book "New Guinea Diary".

The Adjutant-General, however, instructed that in future all deletions by DGPR were to be observed.

In the following months, many deletions were made in *Salt* material, partly because no written policy was ever forthcoming for guidance; partly because many items which the Editor thought would obviously be acceptable, were not so; and partly because DGPR and the members of his staff to whom he frequently delegated this duty often appeared to think differently on what was or was not censorable. . . .

In addition to imposing what would generally be called a political censorship, as indicated by the above examples, DGPR censored on grounds of artistic taste, deleting words and phrases from contributed verse of a high standard, and banning contributed drawings on grounds such as "the humour is too grim". An example which subsequently became notorious was the rejection *in toto* of a series of brilliant sketches of soldiers under the shower, showing typical attitudes. None was indecent and all were facing away from the artist.

In addition to *Salt* the Education Service produced from April 1942 onwards what soon was entitled the *Current Affairs Bulletin*. It was published fortnightly, the distribution being one copy to each officer. This journal was intended to form the basis of talks to the troops on current affairs, and a Military Board Instruction of 15th March 1942 laid down that at least 30 minutes a week were to be spent on such work—not as an amenity but as a part of military training. The bulletins were edited by Dr Duncan,⁸ Director of Tutorial Classes in the University of Sydney.

⁸ Professor W. G. K. Duncan, Director of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney 1934-50; Professor of History and Political Science, University of Adelaide, since 1951. Of Sydney; b. Sydney, 11 Jul 1903.

After the war publication of the *Current Affairs Bulletin* was continued by the Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, and thus the wartime Education Service lived on not only in a peacetime Army Educational Corps (which in 1961 had 44 officers on its strength, 13 of whom were employed on public relations duties or newspaper production) but in a periodical widely used in the education of civilians both at school and afterwards.

The task of encouraging creative expression was performed also by the Australian War Memorial, which published each year from 1941 onwards a cloth-bound "Christmas book" written and lavishly illustrated by members of the army including the official war artists. From 1942 onwards it published also naval and air force "Christmas books". The army books contained writings by such authors as Gunner Tom Ronan,⁹ Trooper Peter Pinney, Captain David McNicoll,¹ Sergeant Lawson Glassop,² Lieutenant Shawn O'Leary,³ Lieutenant Jon Cleary⁴ and other writers who were to become well known, or better known, after the war.

While the A.E.S. was helping to inform and educate the soldiers, the Directorate of Public Relations was performing a supplementary task by producing newspapers in the field. In the first volume of this series the prompt and successful establishment in Palestine of *A.I.F. News* was described. In October 1941 a companion newspaper, *Army News*, was established in the Northern Territory, and in November 1942 *Guinea Gold* began publication in New Guinea. When the 9th Division returned from the Middle East the staff of *A.I.F. News* came with it and established a newspaper named *Table Tops* on the Atherton Tableland, where it began publication on 23rd May 1943. Each of these newspapers continued until 1946.

From the outset General Blamey was resolved that the army newspapers should contain no editorial comment. The strength of this resolution was shown, for example, in November 1943, when *Guinea Gold* was a year old. Writing to General Morshead on the 16th of that month Blamey had mentioned a recent article in *Guinea Gold* that was "in the nature of an editorial dealing with pilfering". "It was excellent and, I believe, timely, but it is contrary to my policy to use an Army newspaper for propaganda of any kind. In the first place, troops readily become suspicious of a paper if it contains 'pills'; secondly, this paper is . . . sent to America by a great many American soldiers; thirdly, I do not believe in allowing editors of Army papers to do anything that fashions the outlook of the troops—I

⁹ Gnr T. M. Ronan, NX52513; 2/3 Anti-Tank Regt. Stockman and drover; b. Perth, 11 Nov 1907. Author of *Strangers on the Ophir* (1946), *Moleskin Midas* (1956) and other works.

¹ Capt D. R. McNicoll, NX52009. 7 Cav Regt, Mil Hist Section, HQ NT Force; War Correspondent 1944-45. Journalist; of Rose Bay, NSW; b. Geelong, Vic, 1 Dec 1914.

² S-Sgt L. Glassop, NX24087. 7 Div HQ; First Army Press Unit (*A.I.F. News* and *Table Tops*). Journalist; of Newcastle, NSW; b. Lawson, NSW, 30 Jan 1913. Author of *We Were the Rats* (1944) and other works.

³ Lt S. H. O'Leary, QX6905. 6 Cav Regt; PRO LHQ. Journalist and broadcaster; of Brisbane; b. Ipswich, Qld, 3 Sep 1916. Author of *Spikenard and Bayonet*.

⁴ Lt J. S. Cleary, NX15943. 2/1 Survey Regt; Mil Hist Section. Commercial artist; of Sydney; b. Sydney, 22 Nov 1917. Author of *These Small Glories* (1946), *The Sundowners* (1952), *The Climate of Courage* (1954) and other works.

do not think they are the proper people to do it." He had instructed, he concluded, that no editorial comments were to appear in army newspapers except where the G.O.C. on the spot instructed otherwise.

It would have been wise to have given the Education Service responsibility for providing the army newspapers, confining Public Relations to field censorship, publicity (publications being channelled through the Department of Information) and care of war correspondents; and to have required the editors of army journals and newspapers to be their own censors—all of them seem to have been well qualified to bear this responsibility.

The Amenities Service was complementary to but entirely separate from Army Education. Its tasks included the coordination of the philanthropic organisations working within the army, provision of sports and other entertainment. Amenities officers had been appointed to the A.I.F. when it was overseas, and in the S.W.P.A. General Blamey was prompt in establishing a firmly-founded amenities service. On 3rd July 1942 he wrote to Mr Forde to say that, the actions in the Coral Sea and near Midway Island having removed at least temporarily the menace of immediate invasion, it became necessary for him to make plans to ensure that the considerable forces throughout Australia did not "go stale over a long period of training and preparation". He had therefore established an Amenities Service with Colonel Cohen,⁵ formerly Red Cross Commissioner in the Middle East, as director. Blamey considered that the cost of amenities should be met, as in the Middle East, from the profits of the Canteens Service, "a vast cooperative business instituted for the benefit of the troops", the profits of which had always been held to be the property of the troops. He explained to the Minister that it had been customary to return these profits to the troops either by allocation to regimental funds or by paying for entertainment. A "special amenities account" had been established in the Middle East and operated by a committee appointed by the G.O.C. A.I.F. He recommended that, two-thirds of the A.I.F. having returned to Australia, two-thirds of the £35,000 held in this account should be transferred to a Special Amenities Fund to be established in Australia and placed under the control of the Commander-in-Chief.

As a result the War Cabinet agreed to a proposal that 3½ per cent of the turnover of the canteens should be distributed among unit trust funds; 1½ per cent to special amenities, to be spent at the discretion of army or certain other formation commanders; and 1½ per cent to the Special Amenities Fund to which would be added the money from the Middle East Fund and which would be distributed by the Commander-in-Chief.

⁵ Brig H. E. Cohen, CMG, CBE, DSO, VD. (1st AIF: Comd 6 AFA Bde 1915-18.) Red Cross Commissioner for ME 1940-42; DAG in charge Amenities and Education 1942-44. Solicitor; of Melbourne; b. St Kilda, Vic, 25 Nov 1881. Died 29 Oct 1946.