



## Royal United Services Institute of Victoria Inc.

### Promoting National Security and Defence

A Constituent Body of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia

PATRON: The Governor of Victoria,  
Professor David de Kretser AO

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## RUSI-VIC NEWS

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### Office Bearers

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### Dates for your Diary

17 May Council Meeting – Defence Plaza

25 May Lunchtime Speaker – Defence Plaza

29 June Lunchtime Speaker – Defence Plaza

27 July Lunchtime Speaker – Defence Plaza

### RUSI VIC CYBERLINKS

RUSI of Australia (inc Victoria) <http://www.defence.gov.au>

Department of Defence

<http://defence.gov.au>

Rusi for Defence Studies Whitehall <http://www.rusi.org>

Australian Strategic Policy Institute <http://www.aspi.org.au>

Australia Defence Association

<http://www.ada.asn.au>

## Lunchtime Speakers

**\*\* Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2006 \*\***

## Professor Peter Edwards AM

Academic; Military Historian; Author

### “Arthur Tange –The Last of the Mandarins”

Professor Edwards is a highly renowned Military Historian and Academic, whose latest book, “Arthur Tange - The Last of the Mandarins”, has just been released. Peter will explore the Defence phase of Sir Arthur's career, in particular the Defence Reorganisation that remains extant today and his views on Strategic Policy. Peter will also touch on the more controversial side of his career, casting new light on some long held, but perhaps unsubstantiated, views and opinions about this very significant Australian.

**Venue: Defence Plaza; Time: 1130hrs (Tea/Coffee); Address: 1200hrs**

**Admission: Members -\$3-00 Non-Members - \$5-00**

Lunch may be purchased from the adjacent “Armoury Bistro” afterwards

**Please advise the Office on 9282 7498 or 9282 7392 if you or any guests intend to be present, by Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2006.**

**\*\* Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006 \*\***

**Colonel John Mansell  
Headquarters Special Operations - Sydney**

**"Special Operations Today"**

Colonel Mansell, with long and distinguished service in the SAS, will give an up-to-date insight into the structure of HQ Special Operations and the nature of the current role of our Special Forces.

**Venue : Defence Plaza at 1130 hrs(Tea/Coffee)  
1200 hrs - Address**

**Vale** –We record with deep regret the passing of;

**COL G.W.A. Douglas – Hawthorn; LT R.L. Law - Caulfield**

**New Members** – We welcome the following New Members:-

**BRIG N.D. Graham AM – Hampton; CAPT J.P. Rogers – Simpson Barracks, MacLeod**

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**From the Library – Major General Mike O'Brien CSC**

There has not been much progress this year on the cataloguing of the library. The reason for the inactivity is that the Department of Defence is in the throes of deciding on a relocation of our office and its library. The likely outcome is a move to ground floor premises in Victoria Barracks, most probably in the old Defence Signals Division Building. While inevitable inconveniences will arise, the new location will have the particular benefit of being adjacent to the Defence Regional Library (which has also been relocated!).

This planned move does not yet have a definite date, though we expect it to occur within the next few months. When it happens, we will need considerable help to re-set-up our collection. We have asked the Department to ensure that we are moved with a minimum of disruption, but even with their best endeavours, it is inevitable that we will be faced with much tidying up.

When the move happens we will need to call on some voluntary help to reconstitute our collection. After that, we will be able to commence re-cataloguing. To help that process, the Department has given us several computers.

We ask that any members willing to help in the tasks above contact the Secretary so that we can notify you when the job is ready to begin.

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**Book Review**

This edition of the Newsletter features a different and challenging approach to a Book Review, one that seeks your participation! See Page 7

## From the President – Air Commodore Mike Rawlinson

The National Council of RUSI of Australia will meet in Brisbane in mid-June, hosted by the RUSI of Queensland. I anticipate that the Council will progress a number of initiatives that use computers and the Internet to better inform members and promote defence and national security.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the new Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AO has accepted appointment as our Patron. I look forward to briefing the governor on our long history and current activities. He will be invited to be the guest of honour at our annual dinner at the Naval and Military Club in November.

A significant foreign affairs and immigration issue with long-term defence implications has been the granting of protection visas to 42 asylum seekers from Papua (Indonesian West New Guinea). The asylum seekers have caused a dilemma for the Federal government – a clash of principle and practicality. On the one hand has been the need to uphold our humanitarian duty to those who come to our shores in genuine fear of persecution in their own country, and the other our desire and long-term interest in supporting the democratically elected and reforming Indonesian government of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Australia strongly supports the sovereignty of Indonesia, but not human rights abuses by the Indonesian military. Notwithstanding genuine abuse, the thinly disguised intention of the 'student activist' asylum seekers appears to be to establish a West Papua freedom movement in Australia. We do not want to be a base for a Papuan separatist organisation, as our interests lie with a stable and prosperous Indonesian democracy. Australia certainly does not need another basket-case mini-State in our immediate region.

The government has probably made the best of an extremely difficult situation. It must be remembered that statements of the Australian and Indonesian governments are directed at both international and domestic audiences. A recent development has been the Indonesian government's boycott of Deakin University because of the views of international relations

academics Dr Damien Kingsbury and Dr Scott Birchill, both of whom have addressed RUSI VIC's lunchtime lectures. (Damien Kingsbury had a prominent role in broking the autonomy arrangements for Indonesia's Aceh province.)

The Government's May Budget appears to treat defence fairly well. Aside from all the possibly misleading percentages in either real or monetary terms and billions of dollars over different periods of years, 1.9 percent of GDP will be allocated to defence. Not enough, RUSI VIC has previously argued. For all its high technology and professionalism, the Army is undersized relative to the tasks that might be reasonably expected of it, in particular the sustained deployment of a brigade sized force.

A measure that goes some way to addressing this situation is the budget announcement of a new category of 'High Readiness Reserve' (HRR) of 2800 Army and 1400 RAAF personnel who will be on 28 days notice of overseas deployment. Attractive financial conditions will be attached to membership of the HRR, but it remains to be seen whether service in the HRR will be popular.

The Budget will carry-on the funding of the published capability plan (tanks, ships and aircraft) including the recently announced intention to purchase four C-17 Globemaster II heavy transport aircraft. Additionally, Army strength will be increased by almost 1,500 full-time soldiers over four years and there will be retention and recruitment incentives for both full-time and reserve personnel. A long-overdue innovation is for Active reserves to receive an annual health support allowance to contribute towards their expenses in maintaining medical fitness.

RUSI VIC has already had some outstanding presentations at its lunchtime lectures this year, and I look forward to seeing you at the May lecture. Bring along a friend and sign them up for RUSI membership. Our influence in promoting Australia's defence and national security is in many ways proportional to our membership base.

## From The Secretary - Martin Holme

I commence with an apology. The more alert will have noticed that Councillor Emeritus Stuart Bryan's remarks at his induction Lunch, failed to appear, as advertised, on page 7 of the last issue. They do, however (I hope!), appear on page 5 of this issue.

Also in this issue, Chairman of the Library Committee, Mike O'Brien, invites your participation in a survey on the merits or otherwise of classics of Australia (& New Zealand) military writing, both fiction and non-fiction. Please give us your views – the outcome will be published later in the year.

You will also find a most interesting and thought-provoking article submitted by Major Michael Van Assche concerning the lot of the ordinary soldier in the British Army in mid-Victorian times.

The major news at the moment concerns the resurrection of our move to Victoria Barracks. We are in the final negotiation stage regarding our new premises on the ground floor of 'H' Block, with the move likely to take place in June. We hope that disruption will be kept to a minimum. You will be kept informed as events progress.

There have been two excellent Lunchtime Speaker occasions since the March newsletter. As predicted, Brigadier Tony Smith gave a fascinating talk on Defence support for the Commonwealth Games. One questioner asked if there had been a plethora of hoax threats. The intriguing response

was that they were way down on the normal number received.

In April, Brigadier David O'Brien, Program Manager for "Project Overlander", gave an excellent illustrated talk on the future fleet of Field Vehicles and Trailers. With Tenders about to be sought, much interest was shown by companies keen to compete. We invited those interested parties to attend the lecture and hope to gain some new Members from the initiative.

Professor Peter Edwards, one of our foremost Military Historians, will talk about his latest book on Sir Arthur Tange, at the end of May and as forecast on the cover of the Newsletter some of the issues surrounding this distinguished and sometimes controversial Civil Servant will be addressed. An occasion not to be missed.

Our June speaker, Colonel John Mansell will give us an insight into the structure of HQ Special Operations and while safeguarding operational niceties, comment on the current role of our Special Forces.

Lest it be thought that the Army is receiving undue attention, Naval and Airforce issues will be tackled later in the year!

You will be concerned to hear that Marj Minns had a nasty fall a few weeks ago and broke her wrist. With remarkable courage, determination and stoicism, she is already back at work – a wonderful effort.

The following letter written by RUSI Member Angus Bartlett-Bragg, concerning the Beaconsfield rescue, was published in *The Australian* on 10<sup>th</sup> May. It sums up very aptly what so many of us thought.

**"In a world of political frailty and uncertainty, we search for the true meaning of what is meant by the frequent reference to Australian values. Yesterday, May 9, a date that will always be remembered, the people of Beaconsfield showed us those values by their true grit and unflinching spirit. We respect, honour, salute and love them for it."**

## Reflections of a Councillor Emeritus

### *Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Bryan MBE at his induction Luncheon – March 2006:-*

Mr President, Council Members and Ladies. Thank you for conferring on me the rank of Councillor Emeritus. It is an honour I shall cherish.

I have been a member of the RUSI since 1951, give or take one or two years.

For me it is a very worthwhile membership. At various times, due to location in Australia or overseas, it was not possible to be present at lectures or functions. However, one continued to pay dues and to transfer to other state RUSI's on each change of location.

The journal of the RUSI was, and is, always of interest and value. In earlier days, and for many years, one also subscribed to the RUSI in London in order to receive its Journal, which contained many papers and addresses, and always had a good "question and answer" section at the end of the address. I now also can scan and read the journal of the RUSI of India – it is interesting, at times, on places like China and the Indian Ocean. We are now indebted to our Secretary for a good newsletter. However, our web page seems, at various times, for some reason, to be unable to be found by my ISP.

A young officer, or person, always views anyone five years older than himself as "old", and anyone much above that as "ancient". At lectures one did not know these "oldies" unless they were a prominent person – nor what, or how, they contributed. Over the years we became aware some had outstanding war service and, later on, discovered that some were well connected with the community, with business, or were senior officers with the reserve forces of the time. They kept themselves up to date in matters of defence and therefore the community benefited from this. Sadly, this group is now very small. We are indebted to John Monash and Tom Blamey for taking the lead in their day, and to our Past Presidents in more recent times.

The Library, on first sighting, seems to hold a lot of old well-used books on a great coverage of past campaigns of WW1 and WW2, and of the Navy and Airforce. A closer look can yield much

of value, and there are also shiny covered new books of current topics, *Kitchener's Biography*, for example. Kitchener was a Brit who commanded the latter half of the Boer war, and later became Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India, and at the time acknowledged as the foremost soldier in the world.

He was the first person to be briefed on the actual operational site by the Japanese on the Russo Japanese War. He had considerable respect for the ability of the Japanese soldier. From Japan, he continued on his trip to Australia to inspect, at the request of the new Federal Government, the forces in each state, and then to forward a report to the Australian Federal Government on defence requirements needed for and by Australia. Much of the early defence requirements were supported by his report and were promptly provided. He did the same for New Zealand.

I always maintain that had the staff of the MGO taken the trouble to read the Russo Japanese War report the Third Battalion RAR in Korea may have got winter clothing a good deal earlier than they did. Similarly, had the battle of Hamel been read by early defence planners, we may have had better and more adequate Air supply in the early days in Australia and New Guinea. General Stewart Graham often said "it has all been written – if people would only read it".

The *Biography of General R L Hopkins* should be recommended reading for officers posted to reserve units as illustrating what can be achieved in a lean time. The RUSI is not the only library with books of Defence subjects – the State Library has a reference section, the Baillieu library at Melbourne University is also very good, as are other universities; and there are some good, but not all, suburban libraries. Generally, the classic references for WW1 (Dr Bean) and WW2 have disappeared and books are tending to contain more of pictures.

I have been fortunate in the quality of the speakers at our monthly luncheons and we are all indebted to our Presidents and particular councillors who assist in selecting subjects and obtaining speakers. The time taken by speakers

to prepare their addresses is a measure of the respect they hold for the Institute and for Australian defence and security. Many speakers are outstanding, some dynamic. The success of seminars, of course, speaks for itself, and these will probably increase in the future.

The future of the RUSI is important and I think we are very indebted to our current President for the developments in recent years. Uniform servicemen are now few in number in Victoria and this has contributed to a marked decline in attendance. However, the President has widened the field of membership to other defence interested groups such as ASPI, and taken our lecture venues to Victoria Barracks and to the Naval and Military Club.

We have also seen the complete revision of our constitution and rules to meet current needs, the conversion of the library index to the computer and a full review of our library holdings. In regard to this we were fortunate to have on the library sub-committee Major General Mike O'Brien, who has an extensive knowledge of books and libraries.

I also recall the work of previous Presidents who had the problems of the decline of WW1 and WW2 memberships, due to ageing, the effect of relocation of regular units from Victoria to northern Australia, the civilianization of most remaining units and appointments, and repeated relocations of the Victorian RUSI.

In due course, the introduction of video conferencing to places like Puckapunyal, or our sub-branches, and connected to wide screens (home movie size), will enable our activities and lectures to reach a wider audience.

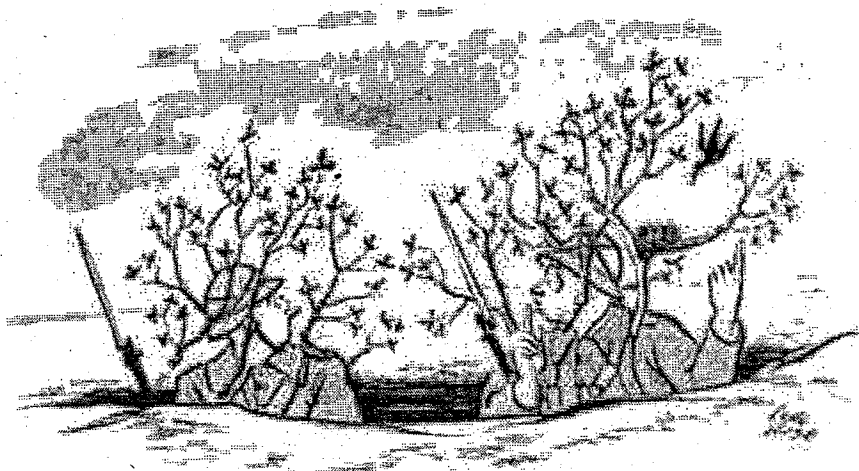
My computer, a standard computer, can video conference up to four people if I add the camera, and I could connect it to receive on a large screen. The Universities have been video conferencing for years and companies are doing the same.

The support of the Lecture panel for basic information will, I believe, become more important in our world. We are now faced with the problem that comes with a long period of absence. When committed to operations, our numbers are small and troops are regulars, excepting for some specialists, and in the case of Vietnam, National Servicemen – thus people in the community have little knowledge of the various services and how they operate.

This is not to say they (the people) are ignorant, they do read newspapers, listen to radio and view television. But that is NOT enough – you only have to read what local mayors and public people were saying in 1914. It will make you shudder – they just did not know – the long reign of Queen Victoria never saw a campaign where actual elements in contact exceeded a brigade at any one time – there were larger forces, but almost all actions never got beyond a battalion. From the Australian aspect, the operations were far off.

Today the challenge is not only to inform those interested in defence and security, but also to bring to notice defence aspects to the wider community. I ask myself what contribution can I make.

Mr President and Councillors, I thank you for this honour and also for friendship, good debate, and good humour of our office bearers. I look forward to continuing with the advancement of the RUSI Victoria in the years ahead.



## Book Review

Instead of a book review in this newsletter, we seek your views on the classics of Australian (& New Zealand) military writing, whether fiction or non-fiction. Here is your chance to put forward your favourites. Why not respond to us with your list of titles and a short justification for each. To prompt debate, here is a starter list:

### Fiction

- Frederic Manning *Her Privates We*  
Originally published in a limited edition as *The Middle Parts of Fortune*, this controversial account of the First World War has been recognized as one of the great international works of fiction written about the war.

### Non -Fiction

- C.E.W. Bean (editor), *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918*  
Deserved classic in all its 12 + 3 volumes, but probably less read than it deserves.
- Paul Brickhill, *The Dam Busters*  
A deserved best-sell when released in 1951.
- Bernard Callinan, *Independent Company*  
Surely one of the best written regimental histories of the Second World War.
- W.H. Downing, *To the Last Ridge*  
*The Examiner* said 'if you read nothing else about Australians in war, read this.  
Tom Frame, *Pacific Partners: a History of American-Australian Naval Relations*  
While it is difficult to pick the best book from this productive naval author (and bishop), this is an important treatment of a neglected aspect of our defence history.
- Raymond Paull, *Retreat from Kokoda*  
A great book about fighting soldiers, their leaders, and the importance of logistics.
- Peter Ryan, *Fear Drive my Feet*  
A book written with singular clarity of language about life behind the Japanese lines in New Guinea. No wonder he became the general manager of Melbourne University Press.
- W.B. 'Sandy' Thomas, *Dare to be Free*  
An NZ escape story and a fine one at that.

**We would welcome your additions or subtractions!**

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## Lord de Grey's Attempts to Improve the Lot of the Common Soldier in Mid-Victorian England

*An edited version, supplied by Major Michael Van Assche, of a 1982 address given to RUSI South Australia by Mr Tony Denholm, then Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Adelaide. It is a fascinating if somewhat chilling tale.*

What was the lot of the common soldier in the middle of the nineteenth century in Britain? In two words – pretty awful. Conditions of life for the soldier had changed very little between the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century, and the Crimean War from 1854 to 1856. Barrack accommodation, for example, was really an innovation of the Napoleonic Wars, and this was

supposed to be an improvement. Before that the soldiery had been billeted out on unsuspecting civilians, where they may or may not get a good deal. But from the Napoleonic Wars there was an increasing tendency to put soldiers together in barracks of the most primitive kind, like prisons – grim, gaunt and forbidding. For most of the early part of the nineteenth century, eight soldiers usually shared one small room, not a barrack room. (I think that eight is rather traditional for

barracks, although I don't know whether that's a hangover from that time). Certainly, we are not talking about a barrack room, but a cell. Eight soldiers usually shared this sort of room well into the century, and two or even four soldiers would share a bed, or sometimes if they were lucky, a crib, which was like a bunk-bed.

They were issued with palliasses, two blankets and a bolster in most barracks, but they had no wash rooms and certainly not a bathroom. Ablutions were done in open barrack yards in all weathers (you know what Pommie weather can be like), and the soldier then, having washed himself, went back to his room to dry himself on the one roller towel provided for the eight men for the whole week. Not only were they housed in this cramped accommodation, but rations had to be cooked and eaten there. Each soldier also received a meagre ration of coal for heating the room, and candles for lighting it.

Breaches of discipline were severely punished and official attitudes seemed to have been based on those of the Iron Duke himself, The Duke of Wellington, who said sarcastically that almost all rank and file were 'he salt of the earth - fellows who enlisted for drink'. In fact, soldiers were treated much like convicts. Parallel studies between Home Office and War Office records would show a great similarity in the way in which convict and soldier were in fact housed and treated. Even in later years, Wellington poured scorn on the alleged patriotic motives for men joining the Army. 'People', he said, "talk of their enlisting from fine military feeling. All stuff! No such thing. Some of our men enlist from having got bastard children; some for minor offences, most for drink'. Punishment frequently involved the lash, especially for drunkenness, looting, or, even worse, for selling one's blankets. The one hundred lashes by cat-o'-nine-tails was common during the Napoleonic Wars, but had given way to, leniency of all leniencies, eighty lashes, by the 1850's. In fact, by that time, many officers refused to order flogging as being too brutal and degrading. Increasingly, the belief grew that this form of punishment was unacceptable.

Attempts were also made to divert soldiers, to introduce sporting activities, partly for reasons of fitness and from 1840s, cricket, football, leapfrog, quoits and the vaulting horse were introduced to keep soldiers away from the ale and whorehouses, although until the 1870s one should remember, all British garrison towns had licence-inspected brothels.

In war time, these sorts of conditions were exacerbated. Sanitary arrangements, for example, in field hospitals were primitive as Florence Nightingale discovered at Scutari. Frequently there was no soap, basins nor towels or even chamber pots. One soldier, seeing a colleague go off to hospital, after being wounded, said, 'Ah, poor fellow. We shall see thee no more for thou art under orders for the shambles'. The shambles being the meat works. There were no medical orderlies, and few qualified surgeons. In battle it was usually the regimental bandsmen, or buglers, who had the task of collecting the wounded in blankets from the battlefield. There were never enough of these buglers or bandsmen. Most wounded had to crawl back to their own lines or to a nearby village for assistance. Soldiers were not taught first aid nor were they issued with field dressings. Amputation was the most common remedy for wounded limbs, chiefly because of gangrene.

One private described what happened to him after he had an amputation. 'They prepared to bind me, and had men to hold me, but I told them there was no need' (an early example of stiff upper lip). 'The operation was tedious, painful, but I was able to bear it pretty well. I had it dressed and went to bed. They brought me some mulled wine and I drank it. The stump of my arm soon healed. Three days later I was able to play a game of fives for a quart of rum (They were tough!)

Until the Crimean war this was the lot of the private soldier. His conditions of life stemmed from the belief that he was little better than a criminal, and as one said, 'Go where we would as soldiers, we were hated and despised, insulted and hooted with the foulest epithets. Looked upon and received as if we carried pestilence, robbery, rape and pillage with us. We were viewed as the off-scourings of the inhabitants of Britain'. This goal bird image was only partly true. Offenders were often allowed to commute their sentences by joining the colours. But mostly, in the words of one recent historian of the British Army, 'The majority of soldiers were docile country lads, or men who were to be relied upon most of the time'. One Parisienne during the occupation in 1815 rather surprisingly gave this attribute - 'Love of country', she says, 'glory of old Albion, that is what has to suffice for British troops to make them fight with such admirable courage.' Though what occasion she had to observe them fight is open to conjecture.



It was in fact the recognition of these attitudes, these facts, these conditions, that spurred a journalist, William Russell, to describe the dreadful conditions for the soldier during the Crimean War which may or may not survive the old 'Thunderer', *The Times*, which prompted Florence Nightingale to set about sanitary reform in the army. It also led a number of reforming politicians, notably the subject of this talk, Earl de Grey, to take up these issues, and eventually, when in office, to bring about substantial improvements in the lot of the common soldier.

By 1859 Lord de Grey was still a young man in his thirties, who had built for himself a parliamentary career as a radical, indeed one could almost say a 'rat-bag' radical, but something of an expert on Army affairs. His father, Earl Rippon, had twice been Secretary of State for War, and both father and son had a number of military friends, including General Mansfield. De Grey, himself, had thought of a military career at one time, but his small stature (he was only about five feet two inches) was a problem. More importantly, as the only son of an aristocratic household, he was expected to remain in charge of the family line. It was the younger sons who got pushed off into the Army or navy, or indeed the Church. De Grey, however, was inordinately proud of his descent from Oliver Cromwell, and his reforms of the Army and he constantly had in mind the democratic organisation as well as the undisputed efficiency of Cromwell's New Model Army of the middle of the seventeenth century, which, of course, so utterly destroyed the forces of the King.

William Russell's horrendous reports from the Crimea were the catalyst for action to rectify this dreadful state of affairs. The ineptitude of the officers, both in battle and in administration, was attributed to the purchase of commissions by the younger sons of the nobility without any consideration of training, aptitude or leadership qualities. If you want to read a lovely account of how one young man attempted to get a commission, I would refer you to Boswell's *London Journal*. In 1762, James Boswell came down from Edinburgh to London in search of a commission in the Guards, and he goes to incredible lengths, even to sleeping with a lady, in order to get his commission, which in fact he failed to achieve.

At this time, the people who were attempting to get rid of the purchase of commissions argued that the system was like a caste system, with the

aristocratic playboy adventurers separated by a huge social chasm from the men they led. De Grey argued for proper training, for the recruitment of officers from among the ranks of NCOs, and indeed that every soldier should be given an education so that, like Napoleon's army, he should have a marshal's baton in his knapsack.

Merit, he argued, should be the sole criterion for promotion. Only if this were done would the time come when 'the British soldier would no longer fight under the cold shade of aristocracy, which should no longer be permitted to cast its shadow over the brilliant deeds of the British soldier'. And, indeed, at the time there was some justification for this view, because by all accounts the conduct of the British soldier in the field of the Crimea was really exemplary, and what mistakes or indeed disasters that occurred, were largely attributable to poor leadership.

At any rate, at this time, 1855-56, de Grey, along with others forced the Government to set up a Commission of Enquiry into the purchase of commissions, but vested interest in the form of the Queen, the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Cambridge, - the original Colonel Blimp, I think - and the conservatism of the Horse Guards prevented the abolition of purchase, and even when de Grey became Secretary of State for War in 1863, he was unable to abolish the practice during his term of office.

However, de Grey's knowledge and expertise during these debates served him in good stead, for in 1859 he first joined the Government as Under Secretary of State for War, before his later promotion. In these high offices, he successfully introduced some reforms to military organisation, and most importantly, launched the Volunteer movement. This was a Volunteer Force which eventually numbered 150,000 men, organised on a local basis. These were part-time soldiers and they later formed the model for the County Militia. They were called into being because of the fear of invasion from France in 1859. It is interesting that the Volunteers squared with his idea of a citizen army like Cromwell's was supposed to have been. However this talk is much more concerned with de Grey's efforts to improve the lot of the soldier, and here he was very successful.

To combat the problems of ignorance and to fit the private soldier for higher rank, and especially to help remove the stigma of the criminal, which was the real stumbling block, de Grey vastly expanded educational services for the soldier. He

increased for example, the number of army school teachers by two thirds in six years. He intended to make the occupation of the soldier a worthy one. The whole structure of army education was reorganised and upgraded, and a proper and complete elementary educational programme was introduced into the training of recruits. 'Well, so what?', you may say, 'It's a matter of every day occurrence now'. But I would ask you to remember that this was introduced into British Army recruit training ten years before the British nation had an elementary educational system for their children. So it was really quite a substantial innovation.

But de Grey's chief interest lay in what was called sanitary reform, and in alliance with Florence Nightingale, permanent changes were made in the conditions of life for the private soldier. A number of Commissions were established to report on conditions in barracks; the need to provide recreation rooms, and the situation in military prisons, as well as more uplifting things like the desire to provide libraries, and more fundamental ones about discipline and rations, and so on, but especially with the decision to set up military hospitals. During de Grey's administration, two military hospitals were established, one at Woolwich and one at Netley. This was against a great deal of opposition from those on the other side of the parliamentary arena. The Duke of Richmond got up in the House of Lords to oppose the introduction of surgical instruments in the hospital at Netley, claiming that they were 'knick-knacks'. All you really needed was a sort of saw, you didn't need the sophisticated instruments of the surgeons bag.

What de Grey did by launching these Commissions of Enquiry, was to provide the Government with a wealth of data about conditions in the Army, and this was essential before reform could be introduced.

Medical officers were granted improvements in status and pay. They were admitted to commissioned rank, and in 1863, an Army Medical School was set up to train surgeons. Not surprisingly, the cost of medical services rose by 250% during de Grey's administration. Florence

Nightingale, a lady who for fifty years had showed an interest in the well-being of the soldier, was never closer to power than at this time. It was during this period that she inundated the Government with recommendations ranging from reading rooms for soldiers to solutions to the problems of prostitution and venereal disease.

Enquiries launched by de Grey set the scene for the introduction of new terms of service, both long and short service periods. He introduced for example, the twenty-one year enlistment period which was followed by a pension. He launched investigations into military punishment which, at first, led to a more humane modification of the existing regulations, and finally, though after he ceased to be Secretary of State, to the abolition of flogging in 1871. In that same year, the purchase of commissions were also abolished, chiefly as a result of his earlier initiatives which were acted upon by subsequent Governments.

Recent researches have clearly established that the most significant changes in the British Army administration and reform occurred in the period from 1854 to 1865. In this period a highly centralised organisation for the Army was created by under the Secretary of State for War. The Army became, in the words of the historian Hamer, 'the instrument of parliamentary rather than monarchical government' – a crucial change. Before 1854 the Army was subject to eleven different kinds of Departments and jurisdiction – Ordnance, the Horse Guards, the War Office, and so on. Some were larger and more important than others, but nevertheless you can imagine the problems created by this kind of bureaucracy. In de Grey's period this over-duplication was reduced.

Subtle changes, too, were introduced in the way of life, customs and traditions of regimental life, both for officers and men, and not the least important part of this transformation was the improvement in the lot of the common soldier, whose valour and courage in the service of his country in battle was now finally rewarded with decent, humane, civilised conditions of service. Much of the credit for this lies at the feet of Lord de Grey.

*(Your Editor commenced Army life in a freezingly cold barrack room in Scotland, with 25 others in it. There was hot water and basins for ablutions – but no plugs! How I wished for a Lord de Grey equivalent to emerge.)*