



Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia

Newsletter

October 2013 Edition

Promoting National Security and Defence

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YOUR PATRONS, OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE

2013 PROGRAM

OCTOBER	
23 October (Wednesday)	7:00 for 7:30 pm Professor Sarah Percy UWA - " <i>Mercenaries, Private Military Companies, and Private Security Companies</i> "-
NOVEMBER	
28 November	7:00 for 7:30pm Colonel Michael Page, Senior Military Liaison Officer, Directorate of Indigenous Affairs - <i>The Defence Indigenous Development Program</i>
2014 PROGRAM	
JANUARY 2014	
February 2014	In lieu of a Christmas Sundowner, the RUSI will launch 2014 with a special function and lecture in early 2014. Details will be forthcoming.
The next Newsletter will be published on 1 November 2013 Copy Deadline 15 October 2013	

SEPTEMBER LECTURE – MAJOR GENERAL SIMONE WILKIE

Australia's most senior female soldier says gender is no longer an issue and women can get to wherever they want in the defence force. Simone Wilkie, who was promoted to major general in August, says she's gone further than she ever imagined when she joined the army 30 years ago. The promotion places her alongside Rear Admiral Robyn Walker, head of defence health services, as the highest-ranked women in the defence force.

Defence offers plenty of career choices and opportunities and women should make the most of them. Major General Wilkie had two messages for women thinking of a career in the military:

- If you want to serve your country, your gender is not an issue; and
- If you have the capabilities and the merit you can get to wherever you want.

As Commander of the Australian Defence College, she acknowledged the job may possibly be easier than her time in 2011-12 as Australian national commander in Afghanistan. The appointment caps a career entirely comparable with her male peers and includes postings in Cambodia, in Iraq on the staff of US General David Petraeus, and as commandant of the Royal Military College.

Women currently comprise 14 per cent of the defence force. The proportion is highest in the navy (18.5 per cent), followed by the RAAF (17 per cent) and army (10.3 per cent).

Prior to the Lecture, Major General Wilkie toured the Post 1945 and World War One Galleries of the Army Museum of Western Australia with Museum Manager, Major Henry Fijolek.

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BIOGRAPHY – PROFESSOR SARAH PERCY POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Sarah Percy joined UWA in January 2012. Prior to taking up her appointment she was University Lecturer in International Relations at the University of Oxford, and a fellow of Merton College. She remains a research associate at Oxford's Centre for International Studies.

Sarah is originally from Edmonton, Canada, and completed her first degree at Queen's University before completing a master's and doctorate at Balliol College, Oxford, where she was a Commonwealth Scholar.

Sarah is broadly interested in unconventional combatants. She is a leading expert on mercenaries, private military companies, and private security companies and has also published on Somali piracy. Sarah is interested in the way norms influence the use of force and the relationship between international law and international relations.

PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES AND THE OLYMPICS

Professor Percy was part of a panel on ABC Radio National's Rear Vision, August 2012.
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/rearvision/private-military-and-security-companies/4210590>

The program dealt with private military and security companies in light of the scandal over a shortfall in security in the lead up to the recent London Olympic Games. The security problems illustrated the degree to which governments have come to rely on private security companies, even for events as important as the Olympics. How and why has this happened?

READING SUGGESTIONS – THE PRIVATISATION OF WAR *"Mercenaries, Private Military Companies, and Private Security Companies"*

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-privatization-of-war-mercenaries-private-military-and-security-companies-pmsc/21826>

http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/DARA/Our-publications/~/_media/Files/Our%20future/DARA%20Publications/WP/wp138.ashx

<http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/csipubs/kidwell.pdf>

http://www.privatemilitary.org/private_military_companies.html

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DEFENCE INDIGENOUS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM – A QUICK BACKGROUND

The Defence Indigenous Development Program (DIDP) has been developed in order to address the needs of northern Australia's remote indigenous people. The program provides young indigenous adults with the education, training, life skills and confidence - and as a result the opportunities - to secure and sustain continuous employment of their choice and to be role models within their communities.

DIDP is provided through a partnership between the Department of Defence, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training (DET).

The DIDP is a residential program which is conducted over seven months out of Charles Darwin University's Katherine Rural Campus (KRC), 20 kilometres north of Katherine, where trainees spend approximately four weeks training at a time, followed by a one week break at home in their communities. Some periods of dedicated military training with NORFORCE are conducted from Larrakeyah Barracks in Darwin.

Prospective participants have to meet the following entry requirements:

- be of good character and over the age of 17;
- be physically and medically fit;
- have an education level of Year 8 equivalency; and
- be available to attend the residential course from approximately April to November.

The program curriculum includes:

Vocational education and training (VET). DET provides the VET component of the DIDP. Trainees have an opportunity to gain training that will assist their employment prospects such as competencies in land care management, construction and rural operations. DET has engaged Charles Darwin University at KRC to deliver the training. The range of skills provided by these courses can be utilised to optimise employment and other opportunities in local communities.

Military. Trainees attend the NORFORCE Induction course, followed by the Patrolman's Course later in the year. By the end of the course DIDP participants are fully qualified to participate in NORFORCE patrolling activities.

English LLN/Personal development. DEEWR has contracted Mulga Gidgee Pty Ltd to deliver Workplace English Literacy and Numeracy (WELL) and personal and professional development (PD) for the program's trainees. The program provides young indigenous adults with improved literacy and numeracy as well as mentoring which includes personal development, leadership, self esteem, work-ready skills and cross cultural training.

The DIDP provides remote indigenous people with the opportunity to improve their skills to gain full time employment either within their community or elsewhere in society. It provides them with the skills to make informed decisions in regards to their future. The DIDP operates in a supportive environment in a central location suitable to enable the students to maintain cultural, family and social connections.

The DIDP provides opportunities to close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. This program is employment-focused, and it addresses cross-cultural issues which are pivotal to the success of any initiative aimed at the Australian indigenous population. All training through DIDP aims to increase self-confidence and pride in culture and helps develop skills necessary for employment within Defence or the wider civilian community.

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CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention)

The CWC aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties. States Parties, in turn, must take the steps necessary to enforce that prohibition in respect of persons (natural or legal) within their jurisdiction.

All States Parties have agreed to chemically disarm by destroying any stockpiles of chemical weapons they may hold and any facilities which produced them, as well as any chemical weapons they abandoned on the territory of other States Parties in the past. States Parties have also agreed to create a verification regime for certain toxic chemicals and their precursors (listed in Schedules 1, 2 and 3 in the Annex on Chemicals to the CWC) in order to ensure that such chemicals are only used for purposes not prohibited.

A unique feature of the CWC is its incorporation of the 'challenge inspection', whereby any State Party in doubt about another State Party's compliance can request the Director-General to send an inspection team. Under the CWC's 'challenge inspection' procedure, States Parties have committed themselves to the principle of 'any time, anywhere' inspections with no right of refusal.

<http://www.opcw.org/chemical-weapons-convention/>

SARIN NERVE GAS

Sarin, or GB, is an organophosphorus compound with the formula $[(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{CHO}]\text{CH}_3\text{P}(\text{O})\text{F}$. It is a colorless, odorless liquid, used as a chemical weapon owing to its extreme potency as a nerve agent. It has been classified as a weapon of mass destruction in UN Resolution 687. Production and stockpiling of sarin was outlawed by the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1993.

Sarin can be lethal even at very low concentrations, with death following within one minute after direct ingestion due to suffocation from lung muscle paralysis, unless some antidotes, typically atropine or Biperiden and pralidoxime, are quickly administered to a person. People who absorb a non-lethal dose, but do not receive immediate medical treatment, may suffer permanent neurological damage.

Like other nerve agents, sarin attacks the nervous system by stopping nerve endings in muscles from switching off. Death will usually occur as a result of asphyxia due to the inability to control the muscles involved in breathing function.

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BOOK REVIEW – CHEMICAL WARFARE IN AUSTRALIA

Geoff Plunkett, *Chemical Warfare in Australia: Australia's Involvement in Chemical Warfare 1914-1945*, Australian Military History Publications, Canberra, 2007, 734pp.

Reviewed by John Donovan. This Review originally appeared in the Australian Army Journal Volume 6 Number 3

Somewhere in these 734 pages there is an interesting book (about 300 pages long) struggling to be found. Unfortunately, it is so buried by repetition and lack of focus that only the most determined are likely to plough their way through to the end. The principal cause of the lack of focus seems to be that the author attempted to fulfill the spirit of his title, when his real interest seems actually to be the experiences of the RAAF chemical warfare armourers during the Second World War. However, even within that narrower focus, there is too much repetition. For example, similar descriptions of the daily work of those armourers were often provided by several of them.

Such limited reference as there is to the First World War is largely contained in the first chapter, which includes the reminiscences of some armourers about gassed First World War soldiers they knew while they were growing up, and an appendix (the last of 18) that briefly covers some incidents during the war, the post-war effects on three individuals, the effects on animals, and some chemical warfare proposals submitted by the public during the war.

The focus on the RAAF experience is demonstrated by the different treatment of the trials conducted in Australia. The experimental stations and the Brook Island trials of air delivery in Queensland, where there was significant RAAF involvement, are covered in the main text. However, most of the 25-pounder trials, which principally involved Army personnel, are covered in an appendix.

Once Plunkett gets to his main interest, however, the story is comprehensive. There is much that will (or certainly should) cause eyebrows to rise. The idea of walking into to a mustard gas store and detecting the presence of leaking containers by sniffing for a garlic smell, or entering a phosgene store with a hand pumped spray full of ammonia solution looking for a reaction on the sprayed ammonia to detect leakers there, is the stuff of nightmares.

So, too, are the many photos of casually dressed armourers sitting on containers of mustard, or (with the addition of gas masks) venting unwanted phosgene after the war by shooting holes in the containers. Burning large stocks of mustard in open areas after the war might have been effective, but even in the rush to demobilise there must surely have been some senior personnel who questioned such an approach. At least with sea dumping there was reasonable prospect that leakages would react with seawater to produce safer by-products.

Disposal was not comprehensive, as some areas later had to be decontaminated, and at least one individual died around 1960, when he found a drum of mustard in the Adelaide Rover area and rubbed onto his skin, having mistaken it for liniment.

What is clear in this book is that preparations were made, starting between the wars, for Australia to use chemical warfare. However, this use would only have been in response to enemy (principally Japanese, as far as Australia was concerned) first use. Plunkett suggests that Macarthur, who had experienced gas during the First World War, might even then have refused to authorise its use. However, the preparations were comprehensive, training was conducted, and the stocks of chemical

weapons held were significant.

The book sheds some light on little known incidents during the war. The reluctance of some wharf labourers to handle ammunition ships, for example, might have been increased by the fear of mixed loads, when at least one wharfie died after mustard contamination. The bureaucratic use of euphemisms is also prominent. 'Smoke Curtain Installations' (for aircraft) sound so much less threatening than mustard gas spray tanks! Perhaps this title even deluded enemy intelligence.

The casual attitude of many of the RAAF armourers (who were not specifically volunteers for chemical warfare duties, but 'detailed' to that speciality) to the material they handled has already been mentioned. The limited supervision provided of their work is rather surprising. For example, junior non-commissioned officers supervised long distance movements, while a leading aircraftman organised the clean up after a fully loaded Smoke Curtain Installation dropped off an aircraft taking off at Cairns, spreading mustard along the edge of the runway. Their authority on these occasions seemed to come more from the fear induced by them telling higher authority exactly what they were handling than their actual rank.

The extremely basic facilities provided for maintenance of chemical filled weapons are described fully. While ventilation was obviously important, the open sheds provided often gave limited protection from the elements, leaving work that surely demanded some care to be conducted in less than ideal conditions. For the gourmets among readers, the thought that the disused railway tunnel at Glenbrook reverted after the war to its previous use as a mushroom farm might put a sharp taste on the tongue!

On the (darkly) humorous side, some Queensland farmers had to be warned not to steal drums of mustard, which they apparently hoped would contain something useful as tractor fuel. Also, a stationmaster who declined to provide an engine for a trainload of chemicals stuck in the middle of Rockhampton had to be 'encouraged' by the police to provide one. Another trainload of chemicals was delayed at the main platform at Townsville, until the corporal in charge gave the stationmaster a letter informing him of the contents of the load. This letter rapidly increased the priority for movement of that particular train!

Despite its deficiencies, this book tells an important story, to those with the perseverance to find it.

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