

Learning from the 21st Century Fight:

Insights from Operations and Training

Mr Nigel Divito and Dr Narelle Biedermann

Centre for Army Lessons

ABSTRACT

(‘the environment’, ‘the culture’, ‘the leaders’, and ‘the process’) within today’s Australian Army. The paper then goes on to outline some of the insights (lessons) gained from operations and training activities, with an emphasis on force protection and urban operations. This is followed by an analysis of the way ahead for the Australian Army and why the Army must institutionalise a learning process and, perhaps more importantly, a true learning culture where all have an openness

Introduction

history, and therefore, assume that there is no point in learning from the past: both distant and immediate. Military history, however, teaches us that the idea that science, new weaponry, and global-isation are not unique nor have they altered the fundamental rules of war.

contemporary take on the catapult versus the stone wall or the musket versus the knight in armour. Therefore, it is imperative that we as an Army continue to look backwards as well as forwards. Learning lessons should not be guided simply by the last action, but by all actions.

from history and recent operations are absorbed quickly. It draws upon some of the lessons from recent operations relating to force protection and urban operations, and concludes by providing an analysis of the way forward to becoming a true learning culture.

publications such as the Centre for Army Lessons' (CAL) '*Smart Soldier*' are regularly distributed along with detailed reports containing focused recommendations; but in concrete terms, is Army changing its doctrine and training as quickly as it should? Our evidence would suggest that this process could be made more effective. The layers of Army governance and their associated approving authorities are making their presence felt.

- **Key Factor – The Environment**

protective culture. But the very hierarchical nature of Defence does not always engender open dialogue within its ranks, particularly in relation to common tasks or missions. The 'after action review' (AAR) process can be an immensely powerful tool in large organisations like Defence, when done well. The AAR provides soldiers of all ranks with an environment in which actions can be reviewed, critiqued, and modified if necessary, without the normal restraints of

- **Key Factor 2 – The Culture**
- **Key Factor 3 – The Leaders**
- **Key Factor 4 – The Process**

Figure 1: The Army Lessons Network

Lessons from Operations and Training

- **Urban Operations**
 - Patrolling
 - Mounted Operations
 - Deterrence
 - Equipment and Force Protection
- **Training and Force Preparation**
 - Relevant and realistic preparation
 - Career training activities
 - Force preparation specific equipment

The Way Ahead

References

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