

AUSTRALIA

You may be surprised to find that Australia didn't start out as a British colony. It was the Dutch who first landed there in 1616, naming the place "New Holland". The British didn't arrive until 1688 under William Dampier. Even then, it wasn't until James Cook's historic voyage of 1770 that Britain actually claimed Australia. Their first formal settlement (Port Jackson) was established in 1788 around "Sidney Cove". The first shiploads of "transported" convict labor arrived in 1788 as well. By the time this practice ended, late in the nineteenth century, 160,000 unwilling immigrant "transportees" had been dumped in the colony. By 1827 there were settlements on both the East and West coasts, and by 1859, the foundations were laid for all six future Australian states. On New Year's Day, 1901 the island became a commonwealth and Canberra was chosen as the federal capital in 1908.

The World Wars

The "Dardanelles Campaign" of 1915, designed to split the Ottoman Turks off from their allies and open a supply route to Russia, was a debacle! The performance of the Australian troops who fought there, however, was first class! Their courage and professionalism through nine months of the most appalling conditions imaginable were nothing less than epic. The charge of their "Light Horsemen" at Beersheba, in Palestine, must stand both as an act of lunatic courage and an example of unbelievable luck. Instead of going down in a welter of broken men and horses, this desperate mounted attack against dug-in Turkish infantry, machineguns, and artillery, across hundreds of yards of open ground, succeeded beyond all expectation. The Turks were routed, and their line turned. The Australian charge had broken the deadlock on that front wide open.

Australia declared war on the Axis the same day as Britain and France did, on September 3rd, 1939. Australian troops, as part of the Allied "Eighth Army", distinguished themselves in the North African Theater, the siege of Tobruk in 1941, being a particular example of their remarkable fighting qualities. Australian performance was exemplary in the fetid jungles of New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific Theater as well, and Australian "Coast Watchers" provided vital information on Japanese movements to Allied naval command. As Britain realized its inability to defend Australia from possible Japanese invasion, it was the US that took up the slack, thereby laying the foundations for the long period of good relations between Australia and the United States that followed.

Foul Weather Friends

After WWII, the Australian government took a sizable part in founding the United Nations, specifically working to secure recognition of the rights of smaller nations within the organization. An Australian even served as president of the General Assembly in 1948 and '49. As the United Kingdom pulled back further and further from international prominence, the alliance between Australia and the US became more and more concrete. Although there were disagreements between the US, the UK, and Australia on various issues, Australia has been a staunch "Foul Weather Friend" to its allies for the last five decades, coming to their assistance whenever called upon.

When North Korea invaded the South in 1950, Australia was quick to send a force led by the 3rd "Royal Australian Regiment" (RAR). The Australians fought their first action near Pyongyang in September of that year. When the Chinese intervened in November of that year, Australians were called on to halt their drive south at the battle of the "Kapyong Valley", where they earned a US "Presidential Unit Citation". They also were instrumental in the five-day battle known as "Operation Commando" in 1951. In all, the toll of Australian losses in the Korean War was 1,263 dead and nearly 5,000 wounded.

Australia made a significant contribution to the "Malayan Emergency" as well. This communist insurgency, mainly among Malay Chinese, first erupted in 1949. The Australian government, working with Britain and New Zealand, supplied Malayan government forces with arms, ammunition, drugs, and food. Initially the terrorists had great success, scoring many victories. In October 1951, they ambushed and killed the British high commissioner in Malaya, Henry Gurney.

In March 1955, Australia agreed to send the 2nd Battalion / 3rd RAR to Malaya. This veteran unit was undergoing jungle warfare training in north Queensland when the deployment was announced. The men were shipped out of Brisbane in October along with the 105th Field Artillery Battery. Australian troops from all three services, some 7,000 in all, were deployed in and around Malaya from 1955 to 1960. By the time the "emergency" was declared over, fifty-one Australians had died, fifteen as a direct result of military action.

Australian participation in the Vietnam War included a "Brigade Task Force". This unit, part of which arrived "in country" in 1965, exhibited considerable courage and reliability under the most difficult conditions. The US command always welcomed the appearance of its Australian allies on any battlefield. The Australian contingent, at its largest, numbered some 8,600 men and women and the total number of Australians sent to Vietnam came to approximately 46,582, of which 508 were killed and 2,400 wounded. When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, 1,800 Australians joined the Gulf War "Coalition" force. Fortunately, there were no Australian fatalities in this short but bloody war.

The East Timor Crisis and Its Consequences

East Timor's separation from Indonesia and the manner in which it occurred ended a twenty-five-year campaign by that country to integrate East Timor and other outlying islands into a centrally controlled state. In January 1999, Indonesian President Habibie made a fatal miscalculation by deciding to hold a referendum on autonomy or independence for East Timor. Habibie took a calculated risk that this referendum would remove the East Timor issue as an irritant in Indonesia's international relations and that the pro-integrationist side would win. This, of course, was a reversal of earlier Indonesian policy, which had consistently refused to compromise on the issue of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

The Indonesian government grossly underestimated the strength of pro-independence sentiment. Indonesians apparently believed that a combination of governmental officials and civil servants, their families, some level of support among the populace, and the pro-Indonesian sentiments of settlers from other islands, would produce a close vote in favor of autonomy within Indonesia. The outcome of the referendum, a demand for complete independence, was a major intelligence failure. Neither the government nor the military understood the depth of the discontent with Indonesian rule that had simmered below the surface for decades. A violent rampage by pro-integrationist militia followed the referendum, virtually destroying East Timor's infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands were forced to flee to the mountains or to move to the relative safety of West Timorese refugee camps. Many thousands died. Indonesia's international reputation was severely damaged.

A number of theories have been advanced to explain the violence. Initially, the Indonesian government claimed that it was the natural result of conflict between pro-integrationist and pro-independence East Timorese. In fact, the Indonesians had maintained for years that the East Timorese, fractured into clans and with a history of violence even during the Portuguese colonial era, would set

upon each other if the Indonesian army reduced its presence in the province. But this claim is not consistent with the largely one-sided nature of the killing. The pro-independence "Falintil" guerrillas, for instance, by and large maintained discipline and did not attack the militias, and much evidence has been uncovered showing the violence was carried out with the support of the Indonesian army. In the summer of 1999, the Australian cabinet decided that the human suffering and loss of life in East Timor had gone far enough. Such an explosive situation could not be allowed to continue so close to Australian territory. An expeditionary force was sent to East Timor under UN sponsorship.

Intervention

The "International Force in East Timor" (INTERFET) initially consisted of the Australian Army's 1st Brigade, an Australian naval task force, and Australian air-support in the form of twelve C-130H "Hercules" transports and twelve S70A-9 "Blackhawk" helicopters, for a total of 4,500 personnel. Other countries added the following contingents:

Portugal:	1,000 personnel (two infantry battalions, two frigates, and four helicopters)
Britain:	250 ground personnel (one "Gurkha" company) & the destroyer HMS <i>Glasgow</i>
New Zealand:	1,000 personnel (1st Battalion/RNZIR, an SAS Group, HMNZS <i>Te Kaha</i> , the amphibious ship HMNZS <i>Endeavor</i> , and several UH-1 "Huey" Helicopters)
Italy:	600 personnel (including paratroops & the amphibious ship <i>San Giusto</i>)
South Korea:	One full-strength infantry battalion
Others:	1,500 Thais, 800 Filipinos, 600 Canadians, 500 French, & 250 Singaporeans

On September 21st, the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) went ashore at Dili (the East Timorese capital) and established itself along the Indonesian (West Timor) border. Starting in November, Australian forces were inserted by helicopter and landing craft into the East Timorese enclave at Oecussi, deep inside West Timor. The idea was to protect the local rural population and use them as guides to intercept pro-Indonesian militia units raiding across the border.

These militias consisted of various Indonesian-backed groups armed primarily with bolt action rifles, shotguns, pistols, and machetes, with a sprinkling of Indonesian Army FNs, M16s, and grenades. They possessed little in the way of cohesive command structure, firepower, or discipline. Their mobility was limited and their communications primitive. They almost never operated at night, and seemed much more comfortable and effective in an urban rather than rural setting. Their sense of timing, however, was quite good. They would schedule raids based on the ability of defensive patrols and "quick response" forces to get to the threatened area and would not hang around longer than necessary. Therefore, they seldom penetrated more than a kilometer or two beyond the border.

In the words of Colonel Singh / 3rd RAR, "The biggest challenge to the intervention forces appeared to be the "shoot and scoot" nature of their tactics. They would come across the border, but we couldn't be everywhere all the time. The operational challenge was to actually block where they could come across and then intercept them when they did. On occasion they would infiltrate a village or town, set fire to a dwelling, fire shots in the air, then hide their weapons and other tell-tale items and act like natives. We wouldn't have been able to catch them except for the locals, who would denounce them to us."

Lessons Learned

Combat in East Timor showed the Australians capable of quick reactions and skillful counter-attacks. It was quickly realized that this success was due primarily to the quality of their platoon level officers and NCO corps. Tactics remained simple and clear-cut. There was a strict observance of the "rules of engagement" and discipline (especially "fire" discipline) remained strong. The result was an ability to act effectively with few casualties either among the Australians themselves or innocent civilian non-combatants.

Australian armor provided their infantry with heavy mobile firepower for use in escort, search, and "force presence" operations, as well as providing security at vehicle checkpoints. The principle weaknesses concerning the use of armor were their limited numbers early on due to the limitations of C-130 transport aircraft, and the lack of repair facilities, replacement vehicles, and parts. Two months after D-Day, less than four-percent of armored supply requirements had been met! The use of M113s also brought criticism because of their age. Power trains, brakes, and steering mechanisms required constant maintenance. Communications equipment was not homogenous. Old and new gear was often incompatible. The M113's one-man turret possessed no effective wide-angle night-vision equipment and there was no provision for shading the vehicles from the sun during stifling tropical weather.

The most important difficulties, however, emerged as the mission wore on. Operating a single brigade only a few hundred miles from Australia itself stretched the country's resources almost to the breaking point. Australian military officials admitted that if they were forced to mount a second operation anywhere at all at the same time, it would have been completely beyond their capacity. Therefore, the operation in East Timor came as a wake-up call to the country's military and political leadership. The time had come to consider a complete military overhaul.

Australia's Peacekeeping Record

Since 1945 Australia has made valuable contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping endeavors. From military observation, through medical assistance; election and police supervision; training, engineering and communications; humanitarian aid and mine clearance; Australian troops have successfully fulfilled many of the duties set out in the United Nations Charter.

1947 - 1951	Indonesia	1989	Cambodia	1949 - 2001	Korea
1989 - 1990	Namibia	1950 - 1985	India/Pakistan	1989 - 1993	Afghanistan/Pakistan
1956 - 2001	Israel/Mid-East	1990 - 1993	Persian Gulf/Red Sea	1960 - 1964	Israel and the Middle East
1991	Kurdistan	1962	Congo	1991 - 1992	Cambodia
1963	West Irian/New Guinea	1991 - 1994	Western Sahara	1964 - 2001	Yemen
1991 - 1999	Iraq	1965 - 1966	Cyprus	1992 - 1993	Cambodia
1974 - 2001	India/Pakistan	1992 - 1993	Balkans	1976 - 1979	Syria
1992 - 1995	Somalia	1978	Sinai	1993 - 2001	Sinai
1978	Lebanon	1994 - 1995	Mozambique	1979 - 1980	Zimbabwe
1994 - 1995	Haiti	1982 - 1984	Uganda	1994 - 2001	Rwanda
1982 - 1986	Sinai	1994 - 2001	Bougainville/Solomon Is.	1988 - 1990	Iraq - Iran
		1999 - 2001	East Timor		

FOREIGN WEAPONS

Leopard MBT - GE; 105mm "Light Gun", Centurion MBT - UK; 90mm M67 RcR, 106mm M40 RcR, 105mm M101, 155mm M198, FIM43A "Redeye", M113, M125, M577, UH-1/B "Huey" - US

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT AUSTRALIAN BRIGADE TASK FORCE: 1965-1970 (VIETNAM)

Generation: II, Air Superiority Rating: 60, Class: Professionals, Base Determination Factor: 30%

Infantry Company: 3xTL2 Infantry(A)
Support Company: 1x81mm L16 Mortar(3), 1x106mm M40 RcR/Jeep
Engineer Squadron: 3xTL2 Engineer Infantry/Truck
SAS Squadron: 3xTL2 Infantry(S)
Air Assault Squadron: 2xUH-1B "Huey"

Infantry Battalion: 1xTL2 Infantry(A) HQ, 4xInfantry Company, 1xSupport Company, 2x90mm M67 RcR/Jeep, 2xTL2 Infantry Support, 1xTL2 Engineer Infantry, 1xTL2 Infantry(R)
Armored Transport Squadron: 1xM-577, 9xM-113, 1x81mm M125(3), 1xM113/FSV, 1xM113A1[R]
Artillery Regiment: 3x105mm M101(3)/Truck
Tank Squadron: 4xCenturion Mk13, 1xCenturion AVLB

Brigade: 1xTL2 Infantry (GHQ)/M-577, 3xInfantry Battalion, 1xSAS Squadron, 1xTank Squadron, 1xArtillery Regiment, 1xArmored Transport Squadron, 1xAir Assault Squadron, 1xEngineer Squadron, 1xSAS Squadron

Notes: 1) Two infantry companies and one 105mm battery in this brigade were manned by New Zealand Army troops.
2) The use of AVLBs is explained in Rule 10.07.06.

AUSTRALIAN FORCES: 1980+

Generation: III, Air Superiority Rating: 50, Class: Professionals, Base Determination Factor: 30%

Cavalry Squadron: 1xTL3 Infantry(R)/M113/FSV, 3xTL3 Infantry(R)/M113A1, 1xTL3 Infantry(B)/M113A1, 1x81mm M125(1)
Mechanized Infantry Company: 3xTL3 Infantry(B)/M113A1, 1x81mm M125(1), 1xLandover/Milan
Tank Squadron: 5xLeopard IA3
Artillery Battery: 1x105mm "Light Gun"/Truck or 1x155mm M198(3)/Truck

Cavalry Regiment: 1xTL3 Infantry (B) HQ/M577, 3xCavalry Squadron, 0-1xMechanized Infantry Company, 0-1xTank Squadron, 1-3xArtillery Battery
Tank Regiment: 1xLeopard IA3 (HQ), 3xTank Company, 1xLeopard AVLB, 1xLeopard ARV
Artillery Battalion: 2x105mm "Light Gun"/Truck, 1x155mm M198(3)/Truck

Notes: 1) One stand per Cavalry Regiment may contain an attached FIM43A "Redeye" (MP).
2) Individual Tank Squadrons and Artillery Batteries are generally attached to (reinforced) Cavalry Regiments as needed.
3) No tanks were included in the Australian "INTERFET" force.
4) The use of AVLBs is explained in Rule 10.07.06.

TACTICAL NOTES

The Australian "Vietnam Task Force" may be used either independently or in conjunction with US forces. The Australians performed all types of operations in Vietnam, but were especially good at long-duration security missions. Australian troops usually arrived "in country" already acclimated to the sweltering heat and dense tropical forests of Vietnam as a result of intensive training at their Queensland "jungle warfare" facility. This, combined with high professional standards and considerable esprit-de-corps, made them formidable opponents for the Vietcong. The role of the Australian "INTERFET" force in East Timor was similar in many ways to that of their Vietnam forces, the main difference being the quality (or lack of it!) of the opposition.

Scenarios depicting Australian combat operations in any post-WWII conflict should stress light infantry tactics and not be dependent on large amounts of heavy armor, artillery, or airpower. Australian cohesion should generally be high and individual initiative by small unit leaders should be fairly commonplace. Australia's current modernization programs are aimed primarily at maintaining and amplifying these qualities. As new weapons, vehicles, and other equipment come on-line, the main effort will be to integrate them into the country's long-successful combat philosophy.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 1996, Australian Prime Minister John Howard appeared the sort of leader Asia would embrace, a deeply conservative, graying, former lawyer. But under Howard, relations between Australia and Asia have soured and he has shown little inclination to repair them. Howard has been a stalwart US ally in the war against terror and would likely commit Australian troops to an attack on Iraq. The United States, after all, is a crucial Australian export market and critics often accuse Howard of neglecting Asia in his push for a free-trade pact with Washington. A political survivor, Howard has won three successive elections as of December 2002, making him one of Australia's most successful prime ministers. His key strength seems to be an ability to shrewdly read, and shape, domestic public opinion. But policies popular at home, notably his hard-line stance on locking up all asylum seekers caught sneaking into Australia, have angered neighbors, human rights groups, and the United Nations.

In December 2002, he shocked these neighbors by saying he was prepared to act against terrorists in neighboring Asian countries and the UN charter should be changed to allow pre-emptive strikes against terrorist groups across international borders.

Since the October 12th bombings in Bali, resulting in nearly two hundred deaths, including almost a hundred Australians, Howard gives the impression of a man bent on punishing those responsible, regardless of consequences.

"Jemaah Islamiyah", an Indonesian Muslim terrorist group, has taken credit for the attack. Many of its members have been jailed. But, since many others are still at large, Australia has boosted security at its embassies overseas, closed its mission in the Philippines, and warned that terrorists may also attack within Australia. In his words, "It stands to reason that if you believe that somebody was going to launch an attack on your country, either of a conventional kind or a terrorist kind, and you had a capacity to stop it and there was no alternative other than to use that capacity, then of course you would have to use it."

The Indonesian Foreign Ministry said Australia did not have the right to launch military strikes in other countries. An Indonesian legislator termed Howard's statement "very dangerous" and said the Australian leader "should learn to control himself." The Thai government said, "Nobody does anything like this. Each country has its own sovereignty, that must be protected." Philippine National Security Adviser, Roilo Golez, said Howard's comments were "not wise," adding that they did not "follow ... the doctrine of peacekeeping and sovereignty."

Australia has proposed a deal with the Philippines that may allow joint anti-terrorist operations and training in the two countries. But a Philippine foreign affairs official, who asked not to be named, said the deal would not allow Australia to launch anti-terror operations in the Philippines. Following Howard's pre-emptive strike comments, both Malaysia and the Philippines threatened to suspend cooperation with Australia on fighting terrorism. But one respected Australian commentator, Paul Kelly, said the problem was not all Howard's. In his words, "An artificial and absurd reaction is now under way within a xenophobic region..."

Upgrade Programs

In November 2000, the Australian Department of Defense announced its intention to enhance both the quality and modernity of its current arsenal. The planned enhancements include:

- 1) The procurement of 350 "Bushmaster" wheeled AFVs to equip two motorized battalion groups ("Project Bushranger").
- 2) An order for an additional 150 ASLAVs to re-equip two armored recon battalions. These will be delivered starting in late 2003.
- 3) 350 M113s to be upgraded to M113-AS3 standards, (new power train, armor, turret, suspension etc.) to be delivered in 2005.
- 4) 120mm mortars to be mounted in light armored vehicles starting in 2006.
- 5) A number of new air-defense missile systems to replace current weapons between 2005 and 2009.
- 6) Tactical UAVs and a new "thermal" surveillance system to enter service in 2003.
- 7) New infantry body armor, small arms, night-vision gear, and communications systems to enter service in 2003.
- 8) New recon and heavy-lift helicopters to be delivered beginning in 2007.
- 9) All Australian F-111s and F/A-18s to be replaced by 2012. In the interim many F/A-18s will be upgraded.

There are also plans to procure new AH-1Z "Viper", AH-64 "Apache", Agusta "Scorpion", or Eurocopter "Tigre" attack helicopters. Australia's Leopard AS1s are to be upgraded by the addition of new turrets and thermal imaging equipment. Pretty much everything from communications gear to sniper rifles may be replaced or upgraded in the next few years. In addition to all this new equipment, the basic structure of the army itself is in the middle of a complete overhaul.

The operation in East Timor revealed considerable deficiencies in both manpower and equipment in the Australian armed forces. Beginning in January 2000, the country has begun increasing the number of full-readiness battalion groups from four to six. This is to be accomplished through the enlistment of 3,000 additional troops to bring understrength units to full manning levels and bringing these units to full combat readiness. The long-standing Australian divisional structure is being abandoned in favor of developing independent brigade-sized task forces, capable of rapid deployment throughout the Pacific. The cost of all this reached A\$200 million in 1999 alone, increasing to A\$500 million in 2001, and A\$1 billion in 2002. Where Australia will get the money to pay for all this, in a period of severe economic uncertainty, is anybody's guess!

2002 AUSTRALIAN ARSENAL

Vehicles: 103xLeopard IA3 Tanks, 484xM113A1, 100xM548, 58xM577, 41xM113A1F, 19xM806A1/M113 FSV, & 111xVarious Mowag/Piranha "LAV" 8x8 vehicles (including 47xLAV-25 IFVs)

AT Weapons: 10xMilan, 80x106mm M42 RcR

Artillery: 134x105mm M2A2, 36x155mm M198, & 59x105mm L5 Howitzers, 104x105mm L118 (Hamel) "Light Guns", 300x81mm L16 & 22x81mm M125A1 Mortars

Anti-Aircraft: 18x"Rapier" AAGMs, 19x"Bofors" RBS-70

Combat Aircraft: 35xF111, 71xF/A-18,

Helicopters: 36xSA-70 "Blackhawks", 43xOH-53 "Kiowas", 6xCH-47 "Chinooks", & 25xUH-1 "Hueys"

Small arms: 9mm FN35 & F1 Pistols, 5.56mm AUG F88, 7.62mm FN FAL & "Parker Hale" 82 Rifles, 5.56mm F89, 7.62mm "Bren" L4, M60, FN MAG, & .50 cal "Browning" M2HB Machineguns, 40mm M79 & M203 Grenade Launchers, 66mm LAW & 591x84mm "Carl Gustav" ATGLs

- Notes:
- 1) All Australian Army AS350 helicopters have been transferred to the navy.
 - 2) No more than twenty-one Australian F-111s are operational at any given time.

POINTS OF CONTACT

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