



# Understanding the “dogs of war”

To understand the future, experts tell us to look to the past - and that's a key objective for the Australian Army History Unit.

The Australian Army History Unit (AAHU) is dedicated to promoting the study and understanding of the Army's history and traditions - both within the Army and with the wider community. According to the AAHU, history provides a starting point for new recruits and the public to understand why the Army works the way it does and, equally importantly, helps all of us understand what our Army does both in times of war and of peace. And, as the AAHU points out, given that we taxpayers are paying for it, we do have a right to understand it.

Military history attracts significant interest from military scholars and the general public alike. AAHU has two publishing initiatives in place specifically to cater for these very different audiences, one with Cambridge University Press to produce academic military history publications and another with Big Sky Publishing for the production of specialist military history titles, the bi-annual *Despatches* magazine and the *Brief History of the Australian Army*, which covers the history and heritage of the Australian Army from pre-European settlement to the present day (available free of charge on request).

In the last year the AAHU has published some 20 titles through Big Sky Publishing, ranging from histories of little-known battalions to specific campaigns. These have proven extremely popular with officers and soldiers as well as younger readers and school libraries. The *Australian Campaign Series* draws on personal accounts from those

involved, providing real insight into the personal and emotional experience of war alongside military expert opinion of the strategic issues of battle. (This series is now also available in eBook and mobile phones app formats.)

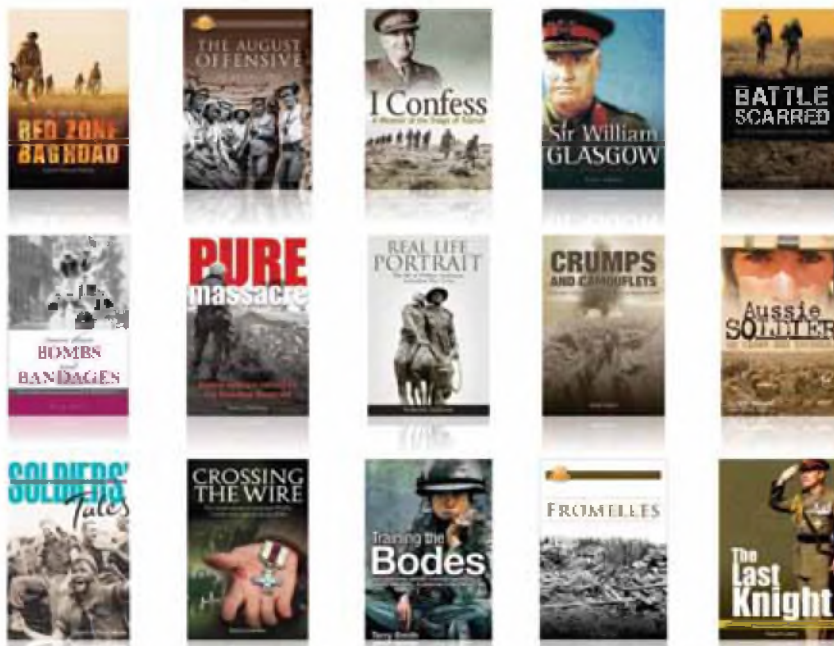
It's a chilling fact that military history also provides the only objective quantitative assessment of tactics and weapons capability. The AAHU's critical contribution to collecting, assessing, recording and publishing this aspect of history puts these publications in the realm of a unique form of technically refereed research.

Along with their publishing programs, the AAHU also presents the Chief of Army's *Military History Conference* in Canberra each year, administers \$80,000 worth of research grants and manages the Army's museum network. Their website ([www.army.gov.au/ahu/](http://www.army.gov.au/ahu/)) is currently being expanded to enable access to key documents in Australia's military history and this will undoubtedly prove popular with both military and family historians through public libraries nationally.



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