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OPINION...

LETTER

The role of the Army in a maritime strategy

I very much enjoyed Lieutenant General Morrison's article in the Spring issue of your excellent journal [*United Service* **64** (3), 9 – 14]. However, I must take issue with his contention that the air raids across Australia's north 71 years ago were the direct result of the defeat in detail of our ill-prepared land forces on Ambon, Timor and the Dutch East Indies; that they attacked us on land, from land; and that Australia was saved not by the battle of the Arafura Sea, but by the land effects generated by joint forces throughout the South-West Pacific Area.

Your readers should be aware that the initial raids on Darwin were carried out from the sea by the Japanese fast carrier force which bombed Pearl Harbour a few weeks before. Furthermore, at the Battle of the Coral Sea on 7 May 1942, the Japanese escort carrier *Shoho* was sunk by aircraft from the USS *Yorktown* and USS *Lexington*. In response, the Japanese invasion fleet from Rabaul, which was heading to Port Moresby, was ordered to return. A month later at the Battle of Midway, most of the Japanese fast carrier force was destroyed. The Japanese then abandoned their plans to invade Australia; and concentrated instead on establishing a barrier between the United States and Australia on the islands to the north and north east of Australia.

Vice Admiral Ian Knox AC RAN (Ret'd)

Lavender Bay, 23 October 2013