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The Australian Army's 2nd Division: an update



an address to the Institute on 24 September 2013 by
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Brigadier Clay details how the Australian Army's 2nd Division, which contains most of the Australian Army Reserve, has progressed in achieving its force modernisation challenges under Army's Plan Beersheba and outlines the delivery of a multi-role Reserve battle group for Army by the year 2015.

Key words: Plan Beersheba, Total Force, Multi-role Reserve Battle Group, Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre, Army Reserve.

On behalf of Commander 2nd Division, Major General Steve Smith, in this paper I will provide an update on the Division's progress in integrating into the Army's 'Total Force'¹ under Plan Beersheba². I will provide a brief snapshot of the organisation and its commitment to current operations, highlighting significant changes that have occurred since the Division's former commander, Major General Craig Williams, addressed you in July 2011 (Williams 2011). Thereafter, I intend to outline some fundamental elements of the Army's concept of 'Total Force' and its importance for the Division prior to addressing the reorganisation of the Division. I will conclude with some key observations from the Division's latest experience on Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre.

2nd Division

Fully manned, 2nd Division remains an integrated Regular and Reserve organisation of some 13,000 personnel, of whom approximately 800 personnel are Regulars and 200 are Australian Public Service (APS) employees. This is a slight decrease in the total number of Regulars and an increase in the number of APS employees since July 2011. Since July 2011, the Division's Reserve manning establishment has grown by five per cent to approximately 75 per cent of all Active Reservists in Army, primarily due to the transfer of Reserve assets from 7th Brigade to 2nd Division. Other traditionally Reserve niche capabilities also are likely to be transferred under command of the Division to achieve Plan Beersheba standardisation goals across Army. The Division's assets remain split across six brigades with

very little change to their respective organisational manning, with the exception of 11th Brigade, which has inherited the vast majority of 7th Brigade's Reserve assets since 2011. The length of service profiles and average age of Active Reserve personnel have not changed significantly since July 2011 and remain generally aligned to the Regular Army.

Current Operations

Since July 2011, 2nd Division has maintained an operational tempo not matched since its commitment during World War II with individuals, small groups and company plus sized force elements being deployed throughout Australia and overseas to support the achievement of Australia's national interests. At any given time in 2011 and 2012, the Division had almost 300 personnel deployed on active duty overseas with subsequent rotations preparing to deploy or support domestic contingencies.

Today, despite the formal completion of both Operation Anode (Australia's military support to the Regional Assistance Mission in the Solomon Islands), and Operation Astute (Australia's commitment to the International Stabilisation Force in East Timor), 2nd Division continues to contribute individuals and specialist personnel to Operation Slipper in Afghanistan and Operation Aslan with the United Nations in Southern Sudan. The Division also provides Army Transit Security Element contingents to Operation Resolute (Australia's border protection operation). These elements conduct boarding party operations on suspected illegal entry vessels entering Australia's maritime boundaries. Additionally, force elements from across the Division continue to participate in overseas exchanges, exercise abroad in places such as New Zealand and Malaysia and remain postured to support domestic security contingencies and short-notice humanitarian assistance and disaster relief tasks, of which there have been many over the past few years.

¹The 'Total Force' refers to the combined Regular and Reserve components.

²Plan Beersheba is the Australian Army's plan to adjust its organisational structure so as to enable it to conform to government strategic guidance. This guidance requires Army to be able to maintain a brigade group and a separate battalion group deployed on operations continuously (Department of Defence 2009, 2013).

Most importantly, the Army's draw-down from overseas operations has increased Defence's yearly commitment and focus on the Hamel/Talisman Sabre series of exercises. These are large-scale, 'joint' (i.e. tri-service), multinational exercises involving tens of thousands of personnel, in which the Army continues to test, evaluate and validate its future multi-role combat brigades and where 2nd Division's battle groups are fully integrated with their partnered Regular brigades. The Division's involvement in these exercises provides our personnel with the opportunity to exercise alongside our Regular counterparts and train with capabilities not readily available to the Army Reserve such as Abrams tanks, Australian light armoured vehicles, Tiger helicopters, fighter aircraft and various amphibious capabilities. The Division's success on Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre is now a fundamental measure of effectiveness in Army's Total Force construct under Plan Beersheba and will continue to facilitate the improvement of the Division's collective foundation warfighting³ capability. Moreover, 2nd Division's increasing involvement in Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre provides our personnel with an increasing number of new and exciting opportunities to contribute to the Army's Total Force and is more than compensating for the current reduction in service opportunities overseas.

Plan Beersheba

Plan Beersheba is Army's response to government direction in the Defence White Paper 2009 (Department of Defence 2009) and was endorsed by government in the 2013 White Paper (Department of Defence 2013). Plan Beersheba directs the restructuring of Army's three Regular former specialist-role brigades into three 'alike' multi-role combat brigades and involves a greater alignment of the Army Reserve into Army's 'force generation cycle'⁴ as an important component of the Total Force. Under this new model, there are three sets of two Reserve brigades within 2nd Division. Each set forms a 'permanent partnership' or supporting relationship with one of the Regular Army multi-role combat brigades. They will be tasked with generating a set of defined capabilities which may augment the multi-role combat brigade during the 'Ready' phase of their force generation cycle.

These permanent partnerships see 4th and 9th Brigades partnered with 1st Brigade, 5th and 8th Brigades partnered with 7th Brigade, and 11th and 13th Brigades partnered with 3rd Brigade. These partnerships significantly enhance Army's ability to generate and deploy

forces from within existing brigade structures by leveraging from geographic synergies and established training relationships. Plan Beersheba, through these partnered brigades, enables the synchronisation of Regular and Reserve foundation warfighting training through the 36-month force generation cycle and will allow the government to mobilise and generate operational capability more effectively and efficiently across the Army's Total Force. 2nd Division's contribution to Plan Beersheba and more importantly to the Army's Total Force have shaped the Division's modernisation efforts to date and will be critical to our success for the foreseeable future.

Total Force and Plan Beersheba Implementation

The Total Force concept describes a single, integrated Army correctly structured, equipped and trained to protect Australia's national interests in a challenging, complex and ambiguous operating environment. This Total Force enables all elements of the Army to contribute to force capability or provide dedicated niche capabilities. Most importantly, it is a Total Force to which 2nd Division provides a credible capability across the entire spectrum of conflict.

Plan Beersheba, coupled with initiatives from the Strategic Reform Programme⁵, provides the platform by which 2nd Division will evolve to provide these capabilities. It is an ambitious but achievable long-term goal affording new opportunities for the Division but also some challenges we have to work through. The Division started its journey towards Total Force under Major General Williams' command and the ongoing organisational development will continue beyond Major General Smith's time as the commander. Despite this, it is the work of the current team that will set the conditions for the Division's success well into the future. The Commander's vision statement for the Division under Plan Beersheba is: *"A Division that is credible, cost effective and sustainable, and which is structured, manned and equipped to provide capabilities in support of operations and directed contingencies"*. This vision statement quantifies the investment the Division has in Plan Beersheba and clearly articulates the essential components necessary for the Division to contribute to the Total Force.

- The force must be credible – This goes to the heart of the Division's centre of gravity, our 'Reputation'. Our hard won reputation ensures the Division is drawn upon by Defence to deliver relevant contributions to Army in support of the achievement of Australia's national interest. A 2nd Division that was not credible in all areas would cease to be relevant.
- The force must be cost effective – Limited resources must be allocated and managed efficiently and effectively to deliver designated capability outputs. We cannot afford to allocate resources to activities or actions that do not contribute directly to Army capability.

³A 'foundation warfighting capability' refers to the basic skills required by all soldiers when engaged in warfighting as opposed to peacekeeping and other lower-level contingencies – the concept being that if one has mastered warfighting, adaption to lower-level tasks is relatively straight forward whereas the reverse adaptation is not.

⁴The 'force generation cycle' is a three-year cycle designed to ensure that there is always one multi-role combat brigade group available for deployment at any time. Each of Army's three combat brigade groups will be in a different year of the cycle. In a brigade's 'Ready' year, it will be ready for deployment or deployed. The following year it will 'Reset' i.e. be reinforced as necessary following any deployment and undertake individual training. The third year it will be 'Readying' for deployment, undergoing collective training and certification for deployment.

⁵A government mandated programme designed to save \$20 billion over a decade.

- The force must be sustainable – A one-off surge solution may achieve the desired outcome in the short term, but is not a sustainable capability generation model. Our force must be able to provide a sustainable and enduring capability.
- The force must be structured, manned and equipped correctly – The Division must meet these requirements to enable it to support Army's strategic capability within current operating environments. The Division must do this while maintaining an inherent flexibility to adapt rapidly and contribute to future operations and challenges.
- The force must provide capabilities in support of operations – This is an essential, enduring task for the Division; and is the Division's main effort in so far as capability outputs are concerned.
- The force must provide support to directed contingencies – The Division must be enabled to exploit known and emerging opportunities, be they exercise or operationally related.

In striving to achieve this vision for 2nd Division, I wish to highlight three fundamental questions which have underpinned our modernisation effort and planning to date. These are:

- *'What can we achieve with the assets that we have, or, that we will have?'*
- *'What does the Army expect of the 2nd Division?'*
- *'What can we actually afford to deliver within the current and future resource constraints?'*

In light of this, I will now review the reorganisation that has taken place within 2nd Division to date.

2nd Division Artillery Modernisation

In 2009, 2nd Division had 15 Artillery units and sub-units across Australia, all of which operated with differing organisational structures, held inconsistent equipment and demonstrated a manning hollowness across the board. This model was inefficient, unsustainable and generated limited capability for the Division.

Today, we have six homogenous, well-equipped, well-trained and well-manned mortar batteries each under the command of an Infantry battalion headquarters. Each mortar battery continues to develop its respective joint fires cell and teams to enable the provision of intimate, close offensive support to its organic 'battle group'⁶ and has the ability to augment a Regular Army multi-role combat brigade. This restructure has simplified and supported career progression within units, aligned capability generation to the force generation cycle, reduced unit manning hollowness and corporate governance liabilities, while at the same time has yielded resource efficiencies of some \$3 million per year; funds which have been re-invested into 2nd Division and Army. This reorganisation has also ensured the relationship between the Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery and the Division will remain strong into the future.

⁶'Battle group' is a term used to connote a unit-sized (infantry battalion or equivalent) force, incorporating the integral combat, combat support and logistic support elements needed to sustain it.

2nd Division University Regiments

The Division's university regiments have also undergone a significant reorganisation resulting in the amalgamation of Monash and Melbourne University Regiments. In addition to the personnel savings that the review of all university regiments has harvested, the reorganisation has also seen the re-focus and re-alignment of the university regiments' training regimes to deliver capability more aligned to our Regular Army partners. Training management programmes across the regiments have been under continuous review to ensure Reserve soldiers and officers are best prepared to contribute to Army's foundation warfighting capability.

A visit by Major General Smith to Sydney University Regiment's officer cadet training earlier this year confirmed the success of a centralised officer-training model within 2nd Division. Although there is more work to be done on this, the relationship Sydney University Regiment has developed with the Royal Military College has not only achieved significant training and resource efficiencies but, more importantly, has ensured that our next generation of officers are aware of, and prepared for, the demands of integrated exercises and operations which are a hallmark of Plan Beersheba.

2nd Division Engineer and Civil Military Cooperation Modernisation

With effect from January 2014, the Reserve Engineer capabilities will amalgamate under command of their respective brigade combat engineer regiments. This change will see Engineer construction units become sub-units of the combat engineer regiments, with a new regiment formed within 11th Brigade, while 9th and 13th Brigades retain their Engineer field squadrons. This restructure has simplified and standardised the combat engineer regiments. The result is the creation of resource, manning, training, corporate governance, career progression and importantly capability generation efficiencies and benefits for Army.

Civil military cooperation (CIMIC) and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief command nodes are critical niche capabilities that 2nd Division has historically provided with great success. In January 2014, the Division will take command of Army's CIMIC capability. The Commander sees the formal transfer of this capability to the Division as a measure of our recent operational success domestically and abroad, and further highlights the growing trust that the Army has in the Division's ability to contribute desirable niche capabilities to the Total Force.

It is the Commander's intent for the Division to raise, train and sustain this capability utilising a decentralised model with technical support teams established under 4th, 5th and 11th Brigades and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief command nodes established under each brigade headquarters. This model ensures integration into the Army's 36-month force generation cycle; allows for the retention of local subject matter expertise during domestic tasks; and enables the Division to draw from a pool of CIMIC talent from across its subordinate units. The successful generation of this niche capability for Army will be critical to maintaining the Division's credibility and

hard-earned reputation as a partner within the Total Force.

2nd Division Future Modernisation

As Army's modernisation main effort until 2015, the reorganisation of the remaining capabilities across 2nd Division is occurring at a rapid rate. Detailed analysis, working groups and rehearsals led by the staff from within headquarters, supported by numerous internal and external stakeholders, are planning the future 2nd Division.

This year alone, unit establishment reviews will be occurring for the brigade and Divisional headquarters, 8th Signals Regiment, our Infantry units, Health capabilities, combat service support battalions, administrative support units and our Armoured Corps units. Although the outcomes of these capability reviews vary, they will all support the Division's management, generation and sustainment of credible capability for Army's Total Force and enable the Division to field a Reserve multi-role battle group as part of a Regular multi-role combat brigade by 2015.

The conduct of unit establishment reviews across the Division is also being integrated with our equipment and facilities modernisation programmes. Some of our critical modernisation projects include the transition from analogue to digital radio equipment within the Signals Corps and the roll-out of protected mobility vehicles (PMVs)⁷ across our Royal Australian Armoured Corps units. These projects will enable the Division to field three highly capable multi-role battle groups, each able to integrate fully with its partner multi-role combat brigade. These programmes, however, are subject to constraints that the Division has limited ability to influence. For example, the introduction of PMVs across 2nd Division is intimately linked to Army's draw-down from operations and the Regular Army's vehicle requirements within the multi-role combat brigades under Plan Beersheba. This programme is still under development, the details remain fluid, and the flow-on effect to the Division is not finalised.

In the shorter term, work is well underway in the Division to progressively introduce a small number of PMVs. Our priority for roll-out will be 5th and 8th Brigades and thereafter 9th and 4th Brigades, facilitating their ability to generate the required protected mobility lift capability for the Reserve multi-role battle group on Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre in 2015 and 2016, respectively. In all modernisation within the Division, complexity remains the only constant, presenting many challenges as we move forward to achieve Plan Beersheba outcomes.

The Reserve Multi-role Battle Group

Under Plan Beersheba, the capabilities required from 2nd Division in the 'Ready' year of the force generation cycle for Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre are a battle group based on a modernised infantry battalion structure supported by combat engineers, artillery-based mortars

and a protected mobility lift capability, as well as the enabling signals and combat service support elements.

The Exercise Hamel requirement in 2013 was for the provision of two infantry-based combat teams,⁸ a logistical support element and signals support. In addition, the Division provided additional personnel to enable 'White Force' elements, observer/trainers and niche capabilities outside of Plan Beersheba expectations. This saw the deployment of over 730 personnel from the Division to the exercise which was a number that exceeded our expectations. By all accounts, 2nd Division's performance on the exercise was of a high standard with personnel at all rank levels demonstrating a high degree of adaptability, flexibility and tactical aptitude in the conduct of rear area security operations in a complex and challenging tactical environment.

Tasks conducted by our personnel included key point and vital asset protection, battle group reserve functions, anti-armoured ambushing tasks, penetration and counter-penetration tasks in area defence, and the conduct of mounted and dismounted clearance patrols; as well as representational duties during the conduct of key leadership engagements. It is important to note also that all of these tasks were conducted within a warfighting environment not previously experienced by the majority of 2nd Division personnel deployed on this exercise.

Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre Lessons

As a part of the exercise review and analysis that the command team has undertaken, a number of key observations have been made. The first is that the allocation of rear area security operations for 2nd Division's Reserve battle group is 'about right'. The demands imposed on our personnel within a conventional yet complex warfighting environment challenged their abilities, forced them to perform to a higher standard and developed their capability as a combined arms team integrated within their Regular Army partner organisations.

When you consider the tasks conducted by our personnel on this exercise, it becomes evident that, to provide a relevant and credible capability to the multi-role combat brigades, our combat skill sets must be higher than the All-Corps standard. Just as importantly, it is evident that we cannot provide a capability that matches the Regular infantry battalion standard. This observation is critical in identifying the standards required of 2nd Division's multi-role battle group and promotes valuable discussion within the Division on the future battle group construct. More precisely, it goes in part to answering: *"What does success look like for 2nd Division's multi-role battle group on Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre?"*

The second key observation is that the establishment and maintenance of habitual relationships between Regular and Reserve partnered brigades is critical in the development of the Reserve multi-role battle group. The ideal solution for the Division would be to conduct all lead up training activities alongside our partnered brigades and under the command relationships that will exist on exercise or future operations. The achievable reality is something in-between, where command integration

⁷Protected mobility vehicles' are lightly armoured, wheeled, troop-carrying trucks (e.g. the Bushmaster).

⁸A combat team is essentially a rifle company group.

occurs relatively early within the force generation cycle and joint exercises are conducted only when personnel, resources and asset availability is synchronised, usually a number of months prior to the conduct of Exercise Hamel/Talisman Sabre itself. Without these relationships, it is clear that the Reserve multi-role battle group will not be able to develop all of the required skill sets and experience that will allow seamless integration into our partner Regular brigades and limit 2nd Division's ability to contribute to Army's Total Force.

The final key observation is to highlight the sheer number of personnel required by the Division to produce a two-combat-team plus capability in the field as was the case in 2013. If over 700 personnel are required to produce two infantry-based combat teams and supporting assets, how many personnel will be required to produce the Reserve multi-role battle group and supporting assets in 2015 and beyond? Questions that have been asked and which require further investigation include: Do we have the rank and trade-qualified assets to produce this number? Can we sustain this force generation requirement over time? Can we afford to deliver this capability every year if we consider such a capability would likely require some 1200-plus personnel in the field?

Placing our Divisional attendance figures at Exercise Hamel 2013 into context, approximately 20 per cent of the 700-plus 2nd Division attendees rotated in and out of the exercise during the course of the activity. It is essential that we reduce this 'churn' to a lower level so that we can deliver a credible, capable and sustainable Reserve multi-role battle group under Plan Beersheba. To achieve this, we must align our soldiers' perceptions of service with Army's expectations. Ultimately, we must create a Divisional culture of 'readiness' and manage our personnel in a way that focuses their service commitment to the delivery of capability to the Reserve multi-role battle group and the Total Force.

With all the organisational change that has occurred across the Reserve thus far and the inevitable changes that are yet to occur in the future, there are undoubtedly many challenges ahead – challenges which can only be overcome by a strong commitment to each other and Army. In saying this, I also believe that the future holds equally as many new opportunities and I have every confidence that soldiers of 2nd Division remain hungry to seize these.

Conclusion

I have shared some insights into where 2nd Division is moving as a part of Army's Total Force. Within this changing and evolving landscape, the people who are required within the Army Reserve are those who are qualified by rank and trade, who understand the Army's contemporary needs and expectations, and who are willing to provide effective service to support mission success. Personnel who meet these conditions will always find a position waiting for them in the Division.

These are evolutionary and exciting times for the Army. Such a period also brings both challenges and opportunities for its Reserve members as we also move

down the evolutionary pathway. But this has always been the case. The key to overcoming these challenges is to ensure that we are all acting in the best interests of all of the component parts of Army's 'Total Force'.

When Major General Smith assumed command of 2nd Division, he stated that: "We are justifiably proud of where the Division has been. We should be equally proud of where it is going." I believe this statement still rings true and have every confidence that the Division's fine soldiers will lead us proudly into the future under Army's concept of Total Force.

The Author: Major General Steve Smith enlisted in the Australian Army Reserve in 1976 and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps in 1979. He saw regimental service with 40th Independent Rifle Company, Royal Tasmania Regiment; 4th Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment; and 12th/40th Battalion, Royal Tasmania Regiment, for his command of which (1997–2000) he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross. On promotion to brigadier in 2006, he became Assistant Commander, 1st Division. In Iraq in 2007, he commanded the Joint Headquarters Transition Team within the Multinational Security Transition Command, and was awarded the United States Legion of Merit (Officer). From 2008 to 2010, he was Commander 9th Brigade and became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2010. On promotion to major general in January 2012, he assumed command of 2nd Division. In civil life, he is Tasmanian Government coordinator of strategic-level emergency management issues; and Deputy Chairman of the Board of St John Ambulance Tasmania. [Photo of General Smith: Department of Defence]

The Presenter: Brigadier Peter Clay graduated from the Officer Cadet School Portsea in 1983 into the Royal Australian Engineers and subsequently commanded 2 Troop (Para), 1st Field Squadron (Mech and Para); and 1st Combat Engineer Regiment (Mech), for which he was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross. He has seen operational service in Mozambique (1994), Iraq (2007) and Afghanistan (2009 and 2010-11). He was awarded the United States Bronze Star Medal for service in Iraq and the United States Meritorious Service Medal for service in Afghanistan. On promotion to brigadier in 2008, he was appointed Commander, Land Combat Readiness Centre, and Deputy Commander 1st Division; and later Head of Corps for the Royal Australian Engineers. He became Deputy Commander 2nd Division in July 2012. [Photo of Brigadier Clay: Department of Defence].

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