A Long-Dead German

Lt Col Jim Storr PhD
• Introduction
• Military Thought
• Trafalgar, 21 October 1805
• The Analogy
• The Human Element
• Command, Leadership and Management
• Summary and Conclusions
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HMS President?

- 5 ships of that name
- 3rd, French Président, taken 1806
- 4th, USS President, taken 1 June 1813
Chesapeake vs Shannon

- Massachusetts Bay
- 11 minutes
- More casualties on Chesapeake than on Victory at Trafalgar

Drama!
Introduction

• Aim
  – Rigour

• Terminology
  – Strategy or Strategic
  – Operational, Theatre or Campaign
  – Tactics or Tactical
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Military Thought

- Clausewitz
- Observations
  - ‘P’ words
- War is:
- Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking
Military Thought

• Clausewitz
• Observations
  – ‘P’ words
• War is:
• Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking
Clausewitz

• 1780-1831
• Language
• Hegelian Dialectic
• Differences in Interpretation
• Use as authority
• ‘..in which other discipline so vital to man’s existence do we grant almost divine reverence to one long-dead German?’
Military Thought

- Clausewitz
- Observations
  - ‘P’ words
- War is:
- Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking

Philosophy:
- Poorly-defined Phenomena
- Prevalence of Paradox
- Paradigm
- Paper thin
- (& more Pamphlets than we know what to do with)
Military Thought

- Clausewitz
- Observations

"War is:

Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking"

Buy my book!
Military Thought

- Clausewitz
- Observations
  - ‘P’ words
- War is:
- Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking
War is:

Combat, and to that extent conflict:

- Adversarial
- Highly Dynamic
- Complex
- Lethal
- Uncertain
- Evolutionary
- Fundamentally Human
Military Thought

- Clausewitz
- Observations
  - ‘P’ words
- War is:
- Aside: Naval and Air Force Thinking

- Naval: Far fewer, far more complex platforms in a highly complex physical environment

- Air Power:
  - An end in itself?
  - Riddled with unsupportable assertion
  - Defensive self-justification
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Trafalgar

- 27 ships vs 33
- RN took 17 ships for no loss
- Casualties:
  - British 449 dead; French and Spanish about 8 times as many
  - HMS Colossus: fought 3 ships; highest casualties of any British ship; but still inflicted 3 ½ times her own losses
  - HMS Royal Sovereign: fought 8 ships; of which Santa Ana alone suffered double her losses
- All over in 4 hours and 40 minutes
- Outcome:
Trafalgar

Outcome:
- Britain defeated the two next most powerful navies in the world
- France could not invade Britain
- Spain would never again control her colonies in Latin America
- No fleet sailed against the Royal Navy for over 100 years
Why?

- Training
- Selection
- Seamanship
- Teamwork
  - Gunnery
  - Working sails
  - Tactics
- Health
- Not just one admiral
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• Summary and Conclusions
The Analogy (1)

War is:
- Adversarial
- Highly Dynamic
- Complex
- Lethal
- Uncertain
- Evolutionary
- Fundamentally Human

Business is:
- Adversarial
- Highly Dynamic
- Complex
- Lethal
- Uncertain
- Evolutionary
- Fundamentally Human
The Analogy (2)

• Which bit of business are we discussing?
  – Commerce or trade?
  – Manufacturing?
  – The service sector?
  – Financial trading?

• In war, the exchange is violence.
• In business, it is money
• The details are fundamentally different; therefore the analogy is not exact
The Analogy: The Service Sector?

War is:
- Adversarial
- Highly Dynamic
- Complex
- Lethal
- Uncertain
- Evolutionary
- Fundamentally Human

Business is:
- Adversarial
- Highly Dynamic
- Complex
- Lethal
- Uncertain
- Evolutionary
- Fundamentally Human
The Analogy: Financial Trading?

War is:
• Adversarial
• Highly Dynamic
• Complex
• Lethal
• Uncertain
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Business is:
• Adversarial
• Highly Dynamic
• Complex
• ~ ‘Lethal’
• Uncertain
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The Human Element

- Collingwood
- Personnel selection; training; pay; terms and conditions
- Investment decisions; design; planning; marketing; sales; productivity;
- ‘The moral is to the physical as three is to one’ (Napoleon)
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Command, Leadership & Management

• Terminology
• Differentiate:
• ‘Initiative’
  – Doctrine: important; or absent?
  – Why important?
• Mission Command
Mission Command (1)

- Decentralised style appropriate to situations which are complex, dynamic and adversarial

- Principles:
  - Unity of Effort
  - Trust
  - Freedom of Action
  - Mutual Understanding
Mission Command (2)

• ‘Mission Command is A Good Thing’
  – Or is it?

• Is this appropriate?
  – The shop floor: Quality Circles
  – The Law of Unintended Consequences
Three Axes:

Eight Command Styles

(after Stephen Bungay and Martin Samuels)

<table>
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The Axes:

1. Knowledge
2. Alignment
3. Effects

(on the following slides, the axes are exploded in order to generate the faces of a cube in 3D)
1. Knowledge

- Knows More
- Knows Less
2. Alignment

- Subordinates display initiative
- Subordinates act as instructed
3. Effects
Mission
Command

- Subordinates display initiative
- Won’t Intervene
- Knows Less
- Will Intervene
- Subordinates act as instructed
Issues (1)

• Knowledge:
  – Hubris
  – Render unto Caesar

• Alignment:
  – Initiative is (generally) empowering

• Effects:
  – Intervention is (generally) a strong demotivator

• So something like Mission Command is a Good Thing
• However:
  – The devil is in the detail
  – Remember the Law of Unintended Consequences
  – Tolerance of well-intentioned mistake?
    • Learning (from experience) is a second- or third-order effect
    • Reinforces trust
    • Mistake as threat or opportunity?
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• Clausewitz
• Relevance: Analogy
• The analogy is not exact
• Managing complex, adaptive, socio-technical systems
  – Be rigorous
  – Get to the human behaviour beneath the Snake Oil
  – Look after your people
Questions?

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