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PROF JEFFREY GREY 1959 - 2016 AUGUST 4 2016

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Professor Jeffrey Grey was one of Australia's foremost war historians

Prof Jeffrey Grey wrote widely and influentially on the Korean and Vietnam wars and was one of Australia's foremost war historians.

Jeff Guy Grey was not only a productive writer and respected scholar, but was an energetic and influential teacher, a patron to a generation of younger historians, and a figure of international renown among historians of war.

He came from a military family (his father, Major-General Ron Grey, survives him) and grew up as an "army brat". The Greys lived in Canberra for much of Jeff's adolescence and he graduated from ANU in 1983.

In the same year he began as a Teaching Fellow in the Faculty of Military Studies at RMC Duntroon and completed his PhD in 1986. After a brief spell in the Historical Section of DFAT, he rejoined the University of NSW at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 1988. There he remained for almost his



Professor Jeffrey Grey was a figure of international renown among historians of war. Photo: CMU, UNSW Canberra

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whole career, becoming Professor in 2003. Grey taught thousands of midshipmen and cadets in the Department of History and later the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. His teaching, always confident and challenging, was informed by a profound grasp of the history of warfare across several centuries and most continents, rigorous and demanding but compassionate and understanding when required. His reputation as a supervisor of higher degrees kept him in constant demand, and he enhanced the School's reputation in Australia and beyond.

A cogent and stylish writer, Grey published 26 books and edited collections, and uncounted articles, reviews and addresses. He wrote widely and influentially: on the Korean and Vietnam wars, biographies, and *A Military History of Australia*, the first such study. Perhaps his most mature work was *A Soldier's Soldier*, a biography of Lieutenant-General Tom Daly, whom he knew and admired, as he knew practically every senior officer in the Army over thirty years.

Grey wrote the official history *Up Top* (on the RAN in SE Asian conflicts) and the official history of Australia's involvement in the *Confrontation with Indonesia*. For the former he made friends of sailors, and for the latter made remarkable connections among Indonesia's senior officers.



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He had a gift for making big projects happen. He and UNSW colleagues edited successive editions of the *Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, and the extensive *Oxford Australian Centenary History of Defence*, published at the turn of the century, for which Jeff wrote the volume on the history of the Army. In May 2016 the final volume appeared of the *Oxford Centenary History of Australia and the Great War*, which Jeff not only instigated but also wrote the volume *The War with the Ottoman Empire*.

Grey had a profound influence on the Australian army's awareness of its history. Besides educating aspiring officers for more than 30 years, he developed a close relationship with the Army History Unit,

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supervising the PhD of its head, Roger Lee. Grey and Emeritus Professor Peter Dennis ran a series of Army history conferences, at which historians from all over the world – many his personal friends – spoke.

An unusual Australian military historian, Grey's reputation transcended Australia: in many ways it was stronger overseas. He called on a wide network of colleagues, and especially in North America and Britain, in editing journals in four nations, including the UNSW-based *War & Society*. In 2000–2002, Grey held the Major-General Matthew C. Horner Chair of Military Theory at the Marine Corps University, Quantico, Virginia, and had long been an active member of the US-based Society for Military History. In 2015 he became the first non-American President of the Society. At its last annual congress, held in Ottawa in April, Grey was greeted warmly, fêted as a respected figure internationally in the field of military history.

At UNSW Canberra he created the Australian Centre for the Study of Armed Conflict and Society, an inter-disciplinary group reflecting his broad scholarly interests, the fruits of which will outlive him. His most important legacy may turn out to be the cohort of graduate students he supervised, inspired and assisted. They will continue his broad interests and high standards in research and publication.

As friends and colleagues agreed at an impromptu tribute at a UNSW Canberra conference days after his death, Grey often projected a testy demeanour, impatient of mediocrity and disgruntled with many developments in academia and beyond; and was prepared to say so. Students (and others) often found him intimidating at first: he did not suffer fools gladly. But those who knew him well also testify to his kindness, humour and generosity as a patron, and his passion for rugby.

Jeff is survived by his first wife, Gina, and their adult children Victoria and Duncan, and his wife Emma, with whom he had a son, Sebastian, aged 5.

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“Those who knew him well also testify to his kindness, humour and generosity as a patron, and his passion for rugby.”

Peter Stanley

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