

In Memoriam: Jeffrey Guy Grey, 1959–2016

The sudden death of Jeffrey Grey on 26 July 2016 at age 57 has deprived the international military history community of a leading teacher, scholar and advocate.

After studying part-time while working in the Education Branch of the Australian Capital Territory Public Service, Jeff graduated with an Honours degree in History from the Australian National University in 1982. The following year, he applied for a position as a Teaching Fellow in the Department of History, Faculty of Military Studies, University of New South Wales, at RMC Duntroon. He was not the initial preferred candidate—others had far more experience—but his interview was so impressive as he demonstrated an extraordinary knowledge of the military history literature that his appointment was guaranteed. Under the terms of his appointment he was required to enrol in the PhD program, and he chose as his thesis topic a study of the interoperability of Commonwealth Forces in the Korean War. He completed his Ph.D. in 1986, and a revised version of his thesis was published shortly thereafter. He spent the rest of his career at UNSW Canberra, becoming a full professor in 2003. In 2000–02 he held the General Matthew C. Horner Chair of Military Theory at the U.S. Marine Corps University in Quantico, Virginia.

Over the course of 33 years Jeff produced a steady stream of monographs and articles that gave him a world-wide reputation. His *Military History of Australia* (Cambridge University Press) ran to three editions, and continues to be widely used in universities in Australia and overseas. It is a telling comment that no other historian has sought to write a similar volume, so authoritative was Jeff's analytical study. He wrote a volume on the Royal Australian Navy in the *Official History of Australian Involvement in South East Asian Conflicts* and co-authored another volume in the same series on military operations in the Malayan Emergency and Confrontation. Over the years several other biographical studies of leading Australian military figures appeared: they were carefully researched and free of the exaggeration that afflicts so much writing in military history.

Jeff was well aware that Australian military history was a very restricted field in terms of its acceptance in university circles, while in the popular sphere it has tended to be dominated by writers more concerned with pushing a nationalist agenda than engaging in sober, well-informed analysis; but, as he was fond of quoting Australia's official historian of the Second World War, Gavin Long, if small countries don't write their own history, no one else will. It was this realistic assessment combined with a growing awareness of and participation in the international military history community that led him to be the driving force behind two major multi-volume series: 'The Centenary History of Defence' (8 volumes, 2001) which commemorated 100 years of the Department of Defence as one of

the original departments of the new Commonwealth, and 'The Centenary History of Australia and the Great War' (5 volumes, 2013-16). In the first series he wrote the volume on 100 years of the Australian Army; in the second the volume on the war against the Ottomans, in which he sought to place the national obsession with the Gallipoli campaign into a broader context. At the time of his death he was working on a study of the Allied intervention in Russia in the post-1918 Civil War.

As a teacher and graduate advisor Jeff was highly regarded. The faint-hearted students usually fled after his opening lecture, and many graduate students approached him with a degree of trepidation, but once students at any level had shown a willingness to work they came to see that he was devoted to their success. His list of successful supervisions is as long as that of his own publications.

From his first attendance at an SMH conference in 1993 Jeff became a stalwart of the Society, presenting papers, chairing panels or delivering critiques, or simply being there, gradually building up his huge network of international contacts. He also served as a Trustee and Parliamentarian of the Society, and in 2015 became the first non-American president, an honour that he prized above all others. In that final role he worked tirelessly on what he called 'renewal', to ensure that the next generation of military historians was nurtured and brought fully into the fold, and that military history could find its rightful place in the broader historical community.

Jeff's interests were broad and varied. Rugby was not a sport but an obsession, one that occupied an altogether ethereal plane far removed from what he contemptuously dismissed as 'that excrescence of the round-ball variety', i.e. soccer. He eschewed any form of exercise, in particular gardening—'green concrete' was his idea of landscaping; he enjoyed red wine, classic rock, and in particular Bluegrass music, of which he had a huge collection. A generous colleague, he was increasingly out of sorts with the development of the corporate university, and looked forward to an early retirement when he could concentrate on reading and writing, free from the burdens of university bureaucracy.

He is survived by his wife Emma, young son Sebastian, and two stepdaughters Hannah and Sophie, and by his first wife Gina and their adult children Victoria and Duncan.

Peter Dennis

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