



A History of the Australian Defence College

In 1967, the Chiefs of Staff Committee confirmed an urgent need for the establishment of a Joint Services Staff College and for integration of the existing single Service Staff Colleges. The proposal that subsequently evolved was that an Australian Services Staff College (ASSC) should be created by bringing together the existing Staff Colleges and including a Joint Services Wing (JSW). The whole would be under the command of a Commandant filled on rotation by each of the Services.

It was recognised that it would be some years before a comprehensive facility could be developed to house the ASSC – 34 years as it turned out - so priority was given to finding a temporary site for the Joint Services Wing. In 1968 the Western Creek site was recommended as a *temporary* location, with the first course commencing in 1970. By agreement, Army was to sponsor the fledgling establishment. The proposal was approved by the Minister for Defence (The Hon Malcolm Fraser) in January 1969. Brigadier Ian Geddes (who, as founding Commandant, had been instrumental in the success of the Army's Officer Training Unit at Scheyville near Windsor in NSW) was appointed founding Director to set up the JSW at the Weston Creek site later that year.

The first course commenced in January 1970 with 23 Australian and New Zealand Service and civilian students. It quickly established a reputation for excellence and, in July 1972, with the induction of the first students from other countries, was renamed the Australian Joint Services Staff College (JSSC). The College conducted 57 courses between January 1970 and its closure in June 1998 and produced 2321 graduates (660 of whom were from 23 overseas countries). Since January 1988, those who met the required standard were also awarded a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies. Many graduates have risen to command their Service and, in several instances, their national Defence Force. The last Commandant of JSSC was Commodore Geoff Earley, AM, RAN.

In 1994 the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies (ACDSS) was established. The ACDSS became the senior institution within the Australian Defence Force's system of professional military education for officers, providing a year-long program of studies for staff at the senior Colonel/Brigadier (or equivalent) levels in strategy, leadership, defence planning, organisation and management. Like the JSSC it quickly established an impressive reputation and, during the four years of its existence 148 participants, of whom 57 were from 17 overseas countries, passed through it. Air Marshal Ray Funnell, AC (Retd), (a former Chief of the Air Staff) served as Principal of the College throughout its life.

The current Australian Defence College (ADC) has its origins in the report of the Defence Efficiency Review (DER) that was issued in May 1997. That report recommended sweeping changes to officer education in the Australian Defence Force - recommendations which were remarkably similar to the intentions of the late 1960s. Implementation of the DER recommendations led to the replacement of the JSSC and the ACDSS by the ADC in its initial form. The founding Principal was Air Vice Marshal Brendan O'Loughlin, AO (Retd).

The ADC was officially opened on 18 January 1999 by the Hon Bruce Scott, MP, Minister Assisting the Minister of Defence. The founding Commander of the ADC in its current form was Rear Admiral Raydon Gates, CSM, RAN (a graduate of JSSC 37/88). The Commander, ADC (COMADC) is a serving two star military officer and is responsible for the command of the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies (CDSS), the Australian Command and Staff College (ACSC) and the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA).

RADM Gates was succeeded as Commander, ADC by Major General Jim Molan, AO (a graduate of ACDSS 1997) on 22 August 2002. Major General Molan remained in this position until April 2004 when he was posted to Iraq as the deputy chief of staff for operations at the coalition headquarters in Baghdad. MAJGEN Molan was succeeded by Rear Admiral Mark Bonser AO, CSC, RAN, a graduate of JSSC 44/91. RADM Bonser was Commander ADC from 3 May 2004 until 16 January 2006. Major General David Morrison, AM, a graduate of CDSS 2002 was posted as COMADC from 16 January 2006 to 2 April 2007. Following his departure, the role was performed temporarily by BRIG Brian Dawson until the arrival of the current Commander, RADM Davyd Thomas AM, CSC, RAN on 13 August 2007.

The arrival of RADM Thomas marked a significant change in the history of the ADC. On 1 October 2007, the Australian Defence Force Warfare Centre (ADFWC) and the Australian Defence College merged under command of the Commander ADC as part of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) Group. In establishing this new organisation VCDF approved the new Command, the Joint Education, Training and Warfare Command (JETW COMD) with effect 14 January 2008. The Commander JETW (RADM Thomas) was now responsible for courses delivered by:

- The Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies;
- The Australian Command and Staff College;
- The Australian Defence Force Academy; and
- The ADFWC.

The ADFWC and ADC learning centres have different roles and are stand alone entities within the Command. Consequently, from a command perspective, Commander JETW oversees command issues and exercises a dual role as Commander ADC for issues associated specifically with the ADC learning centres.

The first two courses that were run at the ADC in 1999 were the Defence Staff Course (DSC) and the Defence and Strategic Studies Course (DSSC). In 2000, these two courses were merged to form one course, the Defence and Strategic Studies Course, which is run by the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies (CDSS). The founding Principal of the CDSS was Mr Paul Varsanyi (a Fellow of the ACDSS - Course 3/97). Paul Varsanyi retired from the APS in January 2005. Ms Myra Rowling (JSSC 25/82) assumed the position of Principal on 6 January 2005 until she retired from the APS on 8 December 2005. Her successor was Mr Maurice Hermann who was Principal from 5 January 2006 to 30 December 06. The current Principal is Dr Alan Ryan, who commenced on 4 December 06.

On 14 March 2001 the then Governor-General Sir William Deane commemorated the establishment of the ADC and officially opened the Australian Command and Staff College (ACSC). The opening of the ACSC marked a new chapter in the history of officer education in the Australian Defence Force. The founding Commandant of the ACSC was Air

Commodore Peter McDermott, AM, CSC (a graduate of the USAF Air War College and the Japanese National Institute for Defence Studies). Air Commodore McDermott was succeeded by Commodore Campbell (Cam) Darby, AM, RAN (a graduate of CDSS 2002) on 20 December 2002. CDRE Darby was succeeded by Brigadier Michael Clifford, CSC (JSSC 57/98) in January 2005. His successor was Brigadier Wayne Bowen, SC, AM (CDSS 2002) who was commandant from 15 July 2005 until 18 September 06. The next incumbent was Brigadier Chris Appleton, CSC, a graduate of CDSS 2001, who was posted to the position from 20 February 07 until 14 December 2007. The current Commandant of ACSC is BRIG Wayne Goodman, AM (CDSS 2007 and former member of the ACSC Directing Staff). BRIG Goodman was posted to the position with effect from January 2008, however, he is currently acting Commandant ADFA and the interim Commandant ACSC is CAPT Richard McMillan, CSC, RAN.

Prior to the establishment of the Australian Command and Staff College in 2001 middle management officer Command and Staff training (at the MAJ (E) level) was conducted at separate single Service staff colleges. The Army Command and Staff Course was conducted at Fort Queenscliff in Victoria, the RAAF Staff Course at RAAF Fairbairn in the ACT and the RAN Staff Course at HMAS PENGUIN in Sydney NSW.

Today, the Australian Defence College, through its three primary institutions, promotes learning and growth of leaders and managers who have professional interest in national and international defence and security issues, be they military or civilian, from Australia or overseas.