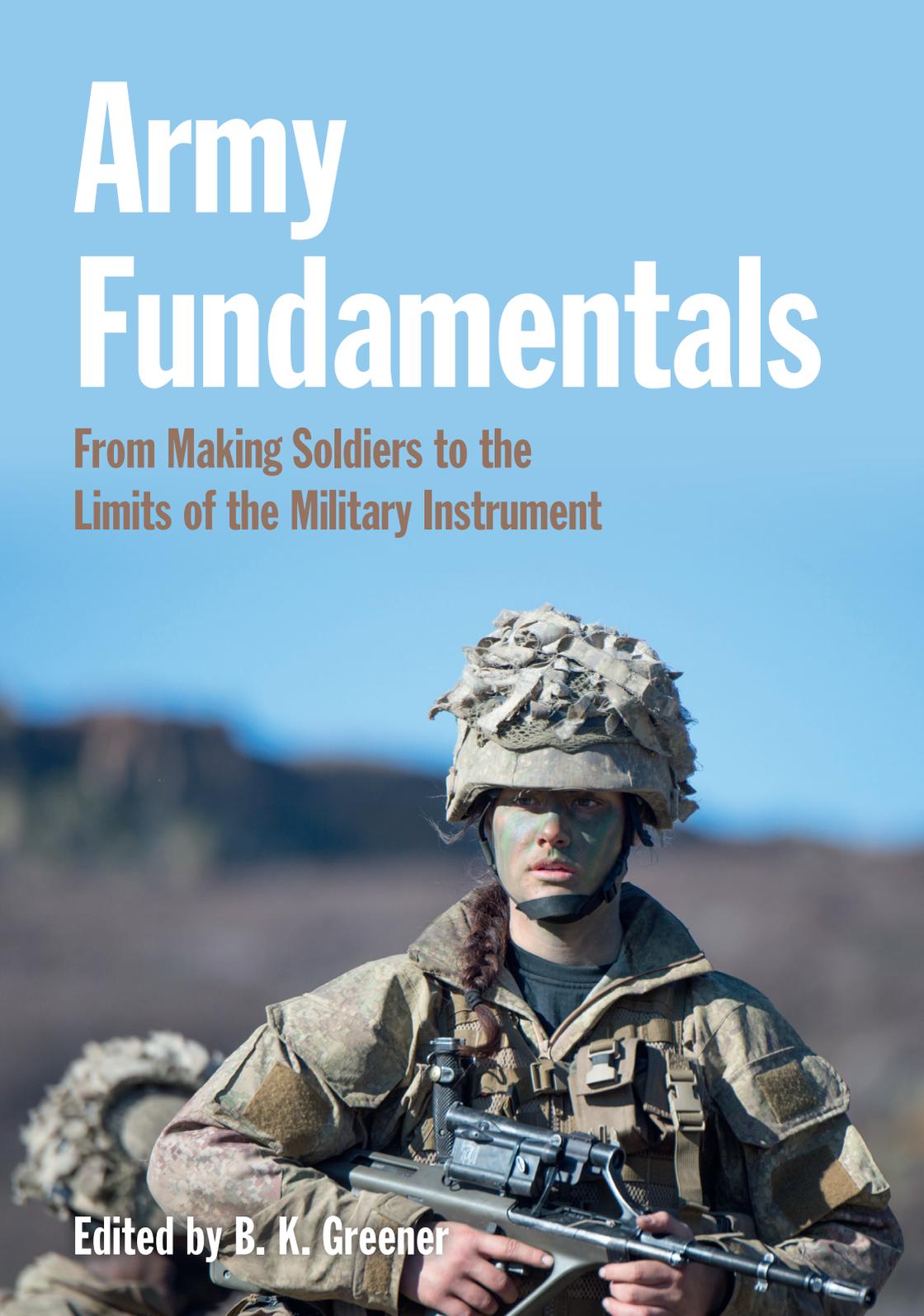


# Army Fundamentals

**From Making Soldiers to the  
Limits of the Military Instrument**

**Edited by B. K. Greener**





How do we understand the functions of militaries of democratic societies? How good soldiers are made, how they behave when posted overseas, the issue of gender and the increased use of military beyond their core functions all demand a closer academic examination.

This edited collection brings together work by exciting new scholars as well as established academics, and examines the identity and functions of the New Zealand Army from a range of perspectives. Drawing on anthropology, political studies, international relations, development studies, law, and defence and security studies, it provides a multi-faceted view of one military organisation, and helps further our understanding of the character and the challenges of military personnel and institutions in the twenty-first century.

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# Foreword

**NEW ZEALAND IS CURRENTLY RANKED** the fourth most peaceful country in a most truculent, threatening and testing world. As I have often remarked, New Zealand's location is best described as a geostrategic punctuation mark on Antarctica. We have the great fortune of being a strategic irrelevance to most of the tectonic clashes of our age or any other. Looking out at this brutish world, most New Zealanders are often conflicted. On the one hand, colonial and Pacific immigrant roots underpin a culture that sees itself as inevitably and rightly part of the world, reflecting the history of how New Zealanders came to be on these islands. We are a nation that is internationally oriented, with the non-threatening attractiveness of a 'small but useful' power status. But our internationalism also reflects a strongly held sense so well expressed in John Donne's 'Meditation 17':

No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind. And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

On the other hand, the very same smallness of New Zealand's national power; the domestic demands upon a narrow and fragile national

economy; our geostrategic isolation; and a disgust and frustration with the inhumanity, political failures and dismal human and material costs of war have all contributed to a New Zealand that often wants to leave the rest of the world to its own devices, and feels it can.

Military forces (army, navy and air force), as a national instrument of power in New Zealand's relations with the rest of the world, reflect this vacillation: surviving through times of indifference to downright culpable neglect alternates with times of eager and overly generous commitment to the resolution of regional and even global conflicts. National decisions to divert treasure and talent to constructing and maintaining competent, professional and capable military forces reflect a minimalist realism: 'we would rather not, but if and when we have to, we will'.

This on-again, off-again approach to diverting national resources for defence forces only in times when extreme and urgent need is undeniable has never really worked. During the more clearly distinguishable periods of peace and war it stumbled along, justifying extremely small professional forces, almost as a yeast 'starter culture' from which to dramatically expand in the event of an outbreak of war. Since New Zealand's contribution, in and of itself, could never be of a size to make a material difference to the outcome, there would always be time to mobilise and train up citizen armies and, after the event, to demob and return soldiers to their civilian status once more.

However, the contemporary state of international relations, characterised by the persistent violent conflict and continuing instability that characterise this re-emergent era of aspirant great powers, stands quite at odds with outdated mobilisation strategies. The complexities, risks and challenges of today's conflicts, and the sophisticated leader and soldier skill sets demanded by them, make quickly mobilising civilian armies impractical and imprudent. As US Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld is often quoted: 'You go with the army you have — not the army you might want or wish to have at a later time.'

However outdated, mobilisation strategies have allowed New Zealand, in a comparative sense, to maintain exceedingly low levels of national expenditure on defence forces, and to maintain extremely small military forces particularly over the past half-century. For example, using 2014 International Institute for Strategic Studies data for active forces per 1000 capita, New Zealand is ranked 116th out of 170-odd countries. Interestingly, of the three countries higher on the Global Peace Index, only Iceland, a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), has fewer forces, ranked at 168th. By comparison, Fiji is ranked 67th in the world, the United States 50th, Russia 29th, and Singapore 10th.

I use these figures not just to help out with a game of Trivial Pursuit. With only two members of the armed forces for every 1000 people, it is almost inevitable that the overwhelming bulk of New Zealanders have little to no understanding of, or interaction with, their armed forces. As the New Zealand Defence Force has contracted its basing footprint over the last decades, fewer NZDF members are located near or in major concentrations of the population. Moreover, as the Second World War and 1950s generations of veterans pass away, and given that conscripted service ended in the 1960s, there are simply (and, in a way, thankfully) fewer and fewer New Zealanders with experience of military and war service.

The consequence of these policy choices and historical circumstances, as the editor and authors of this work so well point out, is that today most New Zealanders — and that includes most national leaders — do not really know their armed forces. Fewer national and local leaders have critical knowledge of national security and military affairs sufficient to guide their interactions with professional military advisors. Despite the sound work of individuals, the country lacks a pluralism of credible, objective, balanced strategic-level national security and military policy advice options to balance those provided by military leaderships. This has led to periods of intensely dependent or alternatively suspicious and

distrusting relationships between political and military leaderships, with poor outcomes for resourcing and developing military forces fitted to mission and to how missions are likely to evolve in the future.

This multi-authored work adds to our national knowledge about New Zealand's armed forces — in this case, the New Zealand Army — in a most timely way, since there is a critical need for other ways, such as this volume, to share understanding about the profession of arms and the demands and challenges of its societally unique mission. A mission that, unlike any other civic task (even those of other first responders, such as police and fire-fighters), involves the taking and sacrificing of life itself to protect and defend the security of the nation.

Greener and her team of researchers and writers delve into some of the seemingly idiosyncratic aspects of the New Zealand Army's culture, value system, enculturation practices and operational learning with vignettes, case studies and observations that help explain military purpose, action and effect. They do so in a rich, multi-perspective approach that draws on multiple social science disciplines. In this way, they help show how the New Zealand Army's traditions, practices and values seek to fit its members to cope, survive and succeed in contemporary operational settings.

They also raise a number of critical issues of military life, such as the preparation for and undertaking of military missions that have been created or exacerbated by limited knowledge and short-sighted strategic policy around our defence forces. Most particularly, for example, the 'No. 8 fencing wire' approach that has for too long relied upon gifted improvisation to compensate for short-changed resourcing. While making improvised grenades from bully-beef tins, gun cotton and nails can be looked back on with a certain measure of pride, it is no recipe for equipping and training military forces for the low-tech and high-tech, moral and legal quagmires that characterise future war.

Equally, the authors place a spotlight on the extent to which the New Zealand Army has, in common with many other Western military forces,

become the convenient go-to force for myriad crises, conflicts and state collapses that run well beyond the scope of traditional war. They recognise the failure to develop national and international strategies for conflict mitigation and reconstruction that integrate, balance and properly resource diplomatic, smart-tech, economic and military governmental and non-governmental contributions. They seek to provide a warning: while New Zealand society and its governmental leaders continue to rely on the adaptability of the New Zealand Army and its sister services to cover the territory, in the absence of compensatory resourcing, this strategy stretches the elasticity of a military force to and beyond a breaking point. And there are inevitable consequences.

*Army Fundamentals* opens the watch-face to show us some of the internal workings of the New Zealand Army. It also offers multiple perspectives on the social, demographic, economic and national cultural factors that are shaping the army's current and future workforce. Its vignettes and case studies highlight the internal conflicts that its leaders must manage adroitly between its proven traditions and practices and the evolving social culture from which it must always draw its legitimacy. Finally, it puts the New Zealand context on the ongoing tensions faced by military leaders. These tensions involve designing and preparing military forces as uniformed, disciplined and armed 'maids of all work', while at the same time preparing for and conducting traditional tactical combat and combat support missions. In this, the authors and editors have done us a great service.

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the US National Defense University, the US Department of Defense, or the US Government.

# **Introducing Army Fundamentals**

**B. K. Greener**

**IN HIS DISCUSSION OF THE** military, the famous Prussian strategist Carl von Clausewitz argued that government must know ‘the instrument it means to use’ (1976: 607). He expected that political leaders would either have direct relevant military experience themselves, or that they would have access to military advice in deciding how this military instrument could potentially be put to use in furthering the political interests of the state. This assumption that policy-makers have access to sound military advice and that, through this advice, they know something about what militaries are and what they can do may hold true. However, outside of such privileged positions, most civilians don’t necessarily have a clear idea about exactly what contemporary militaries are and what they do. Nor do military personnel necessarily comprehend how they are perceived by those outside of the disciplined forces.

How, then, might those interested in national and international politics, military forces, or the use of military force more generally, better come to know this ‘military instrument’, especially given the purposeful separation of professional all-volunteer military forces from society in modern liberal democracies?

This book examines one such military instrument: the New Zealand Army. It aims to disseminate knowledge and ideas about military identity and military functions to help encourage informed debate about defence and security matters. It aims to help bridge the theory–practice

divide in attempting to better understand, explain and critique the nature and work of militaries. This book also seeks to hold up a mirror to military personnel to help increase understanding about how the nature and work of this institution might be understood from a variety of insider and outsider perspectives. It is hoped, too, that this work might help to improve civil–military relations, to potentially boost operational effectiveness, and to increase overall political and social comprehension of such matters in the public sphere. Complementary to the call of the New Zealand Defence White Paper (NZ MoD 2016a: 65) for the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to both be flexible and ‘fit for purpose’, this book seeks to ask just what the New Zealand Army is and what it does.

## **Why a book on the New Zealand Army?**

**THE RESEARCH PRESENTED HERE FIRST** of all seeks to spur increased interest and informed discussion about defence and security matters in the New Zealand setting. Within New Zealand there have long been calls for more robust public debate about security and defence matters. However, with rather small academic, journalistic and NGO communities to call upon, this debate has been somewhat limited both in reach and in sites of participation. Importantly, the undertaking of this endeavour also broadens the national debate by moving beyond the usual suspects. This edited collection brings together work by exciting new scholars, current practitioners and established academics in examining the identity and functions of the New Zealand Army from a wider range of perspectives than has occurred in previous work. Drawing from anthropology, political studies, international relations, development studies, law, education and defence and security studies, as well as from personal anecdotes and experiences, this text provides a multi-faceted view of one military organisation in order to further our understanding about the various components of, and challenges to, the character of military personnel,

institutions and ascribed activities in the twenty-first century. The focus on the army, rather than the NZDF (which also includes the air force and the navy), is predominantly due to the scale both of the institution under scrutiny (the army is the largest — almost twice as large as the air force or navy) and of this project.

For those who are not *au fait* with New Zealand as a country, it is a small island nation whose strategic culture is affected significantly by its isolated location. With no land borders, an ally (Australia) as the closest neighbour, a large maritime estate, interests in Antarctica and significant political, economic and military commitments in the South Pacific in particular, New Zealand exists in a somewhat luxurious security situation. The country is developed, relatively affluent, and export-driven, with a small population of just over four million residents. Recent years have seen a renewed political relationship with the United States through the Washington and Wellington Declarations, alongside an ever-growing trade relationship with China.

It is within this setting — one where consecutive Defence White Papers have said that there is no direct military threat to New Zealand — that the small but professional New Zealand Army originates. Nonetheless, owing in part to the isolation, the importance of export and trade, and previous colonial then US alliance-oriented ties, the New Zealand Army has also been very active in international affairs. Its structures and organisational features mimic those of other Western nations, and indeed New Zealand's defence diplomacy and other relationships with the UK, US, Canada and Australia have remained important through turbulent times.

This brings us to the potential for a broader contribution to be made by this volume. There is a need for further research to help better understand the internal nature of militaries in an era of complexity, the changing identities of soldiers, and the evolving functions of modern volunteer militaries within democratic societies. The rising importance of the issue of gender, the consequences of adopting UNSC resolutions

which centre on the protection of civilians in undertaking peace and stability operations, and the increased use of militaries outside of their core functions when deployed abroad demand a closer examination of just what militaries are and what they do. Moreover, for the present time, sources on these issues are currently limited and are predominantly focused on American experiences. New Zealand therefore provides a ‘similar yet different’ case for consideration.

## Existing work

**RESEARCH ON CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS AND** the place of military force and of military forces is typically military sociology-focused, and often considers the unique case of the US. Leaping off from seminal work by authors such as Samuel Huntington (*The Soldier and the State*), Samuel Finer (*The Man on Horseback*) and Morris Janowitz (*The Professional Soldier*), this body of literature looks at the political and strategic nature of the relationship between political masters and military leadership in liberal democratic societies (see also the more recent work of Cohen 1995 and 2002, Moskos [ed.] et al. 1999, Desch 2001, Feaver 2003, Schiff 2009, and the edited collections by Caforio 2003 and Bruneau and Matei 2013). Other research of this ilk focuses on the likelihood or consequences of military coups in developing states (see, for example, Barany 2012) or the overall militarisation of society and the consequences of militarism (see Enloe 2000; 2007 and Teaiwa 2008). The question of the potential role of military forces in political matters is thus a broad one, and a fundamentally important one too, but there is a disconnect between this macro-level view of how military institutions and personnel — those that have the capacity to use lethal force — ‘fit’ in liberal democratic states, and some of the more micro-level studies that have been done on the actual work that militaries do.

Another type of literature — often to be found in places such as the

journal *Armed Forces and Society* — therefore focuses on specific and often more operational issues. This category of research includes work on topics such as recruitment, retention and attrition rates, addressing post-traumatic stress disorder, the role of reservists, or the consequences of gender integration. This type of literature comes from a variety of fields of study, such as anthropology, defence studies, development studies, economics, gender studies, international relations, leadership studies, management, peace studies, politics, psychology and sociology. Of greatest relevance to this text are those works that consider issues of operational matters in the light of broader strategic objectives and the difficulties in achieving political purposes via military means (see, for example, Egnell 2009 and Reveron 2010). Another particularly relevant research area is that which analyses the changing roles of militaries in providing internal security in contemporary times (see Edmund 2006, Dandeker 2010, and Schnabel and Krupanski 2012).

Caforio's (2007) edited collection *Social Sciences and the Military* comes closest to the aims of this book. It brings together culture, social history, organisational aesthetics, psychology, political science and other approaches to the field in seeking to promote what Caforio calls 'interdisciplinary and cross-national' studies of the military. He argues that such approaches are necessary due to the complexity of issues at play for contemporary military forces. However, no book has yet drawn on such different disciplinary research approaches in examining *one particular* military institution in an attempt to provide a more thorough and multi-faceted account of the nature, form and function of one of these modern military instruments at play in a liberal democracy today. Moreover, Caforio's edited collection is aimed at scholars and is therefore a little impenetrable for some readers. This text seeks a different, albeit complementary, path to that encouraged by Caforio.

In terms of existing sources on the New Zealand case, the closest pieces of research are to be found in the work of Downes (2000), on the

changing roles of military forces in both New Zealand and Australia in the post-cold war era; Ayson (2004), on the potentially cosmopolitan nature of the NZDF; Rolfe (1999), who considers the profile, policy and structures of the New Zealand defence sector and who also provides an overview of the main characteristics of the army in an encyclopaedia entry (2015); [Peter] Greener (2009), on political and bureaucratic decision-making in the NZDF's defence acquisitions; [Bethan] Greener and Fish (2015), on security provision in peace and stability operations, drawing on New Zealand and Australian experiences; and Hoadley (2015), on civil–military relations in New Zealand's deployment to Afghanistan. Additional works that comment on particular operational deployments are to be found in the work of military historians such as Glyn Harper (see, for example, 2011; 2012; 2015; 2016) and John Crawford (see, for example, Crawford 1996; Crawford and Harper 2001), as well as in various defence papers and books by military personnel themselves (such as Hayward 2003; Hall 2010; Dransfield 2016). Room remains, however, for a more comprehensive consideration of this subject.

In this new text, then, it is hoped that we not only give an in-depth view of a particular case study in examining the New Zealand Army, but also that we might provide some insight into broader international issues. Moreover, in keeping with the aims of increasing participation in this discussion, the authors have attempted to minimise jargon while retaining a robust academic approach.

## **Structure of the book**

**ARMY FUNDAMENTALS FOCUSES ON TWO** main themes: identity and function. The early chapters focus predominantly on identity, though these demonstrate that military identities are also tied up with core institutional functions.

Harding's chapter opens this volume with a discussion about how

soldiers are made. Focusing on one particular incident — the ‘incident with the door’ — Harding demonstrates how soldiers are trained to internalise a certain set of ‘dispositions’ such that leaving a door unsecured would be seen to warrant — indeed demand — a form of punishment. These dispositions are taken on by recruits as they physically act out certain tasks, and, in doing so, take on guiding principles that become second nature. Having identified the army’s official emphasis on the four values of Courage, Comradeship, Commitment and Integrity, Harding formulates that there are (at least) four dispositions which soldiers take on in responding to these values: *security*, *attention to detail*, *sense of urgency*, and *get over it*. She explores these dispositions, as well as the overarching emphasis on being ‘switched on’, in coming to the conclusion that soldiering emphasises the ability to ‘do’ and to be ready for action, before finally reminding us that failing to secure a door demonstrates a failure to internalise these dispositions properly.

Guesgen’s chapter dovetails neatly into Harding’s work and is similar in its anthropological focus which emphasises the importance of culture. Instead of considering how soldiers are made, however, Guesgen looks at the *unmaking* of officer cadets. That is, she demonstrates how a particular cohort of officer cadets — known as ‘Kippenbergers’, or ‘Kipps’ — had not undergone the same sorts of processes that soldier recruits had, such that an individual officer was outraged, rather than resigned, at being punished for leaving a door unsecured (hence ‘the incident with the door’). As part of an attempt to attract a certain sort of recruit into the officer corps, the army had instituted a scheme whereby it would pay for university fees and in return (or so went the thinking) receive educated and committed officers. Guesgen’s chapter suggests, however, that this was always going to be difficult. The social setting for these cadets was a neoliberal environment that emphasised ‘user pays’, the rolling back of the state, and the primacy of the marketplace. It was also an environment in which a new generation was experiencing high levels of individual

autonomy, high rates of individual responsibility and a strong economy, which meant that the army had to compete with a range of employers who often offered experiences more in keeping with generational expectations. Given these contextual influences, and the confusion created by exposure to both university culture and military culture at the same time, some Kipps struggled to adapt when castigated for leaving a door unsecured.

A strong capacity for adaptation is, however, a vital part of modern military forces. Morris's chapter brings together these key themes of identity and function in discussing how military personnel deployed to the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Bamiyan province, Afghanistan, coped with undertaking non-core tasks. Adding to the literature on the military's role in development, Morris asks how personnel coped with being tasked with performing developmental rather than security roles. She suggests that, being less able to adopt a more traditional form of 'Anzac' identity, these personnel instead drew on a military identity with the more recent emphasis on 'professionalism'. As professionals, these personnel were aware of the need to know more about the development field in which they found themselves working. This augurs well in signalling a willingness to adapt and improve, but also signals caution in that — as later chapters show — moving away from 'core business' is a complicated matter.

Developing her theme of identity, Morris emphasises that the professed professionalism of the New Zealand Army is something in which its personnel take pride. Peter Greener's chapter evaluates this further, suggesting that the view may have some merit outside of popular opinion. Drawing on interviews with other military and civilian personnel who have served alongside New Zealand troops, Greener demonstrates that, overall, Kiwi peacekeepers may deserve at least some of the laurels thrown their way. Personnel from other countries confirm the professionalism, humility and general attitude of New Zealand personnel. However, certain areas for improvement are highlighted — there is, after

all, a difference between cultural appreciation (which most Kiwis seem to have) and cultural competence (which is a learned skill that requires additional input). One way of fostering cultural competence might be to ensure that military personnel do not have to add *other* tasks to their training manuals and 'to do' lists.

This brings us back to the case of Afghanistan. Lauren's chapter draws on observations and interviews conducted during a visit to the Kiwi PRT. It brings together some of the themes raised by Morris and Greener in a more conversational piece that considers some of the operating environments, tasks and ways in which personnel were viewed by others. Lauren voices concerns about requiring personnel to undertake a range of tasks that they do not feel fully equipped to do, as well as confirming the notion that — on the whole — NZDF personnel are viewed positively. However, he also asks how such commitments can be successfully concluded, and highlights some of the consequences of deploying armed military personnel.

The impact of using armed personnel is a theme that resurfaces in the following chapter, by Stevens and Beth Greener, which explores how military personnel themselves, as well as those they interact with in operational settings, understand their work, its impacts, and their identity and motivating values. Focusing on the deployment to the Solomon Islands, the authors draw on another aspect that contributes to military identity: gender. As noted above, some of the existing literature on military forces emphasises militarisation — particularly with respect to a perceived 'hyper-masculinity' of military forces (see Whitworth 2004; 2005; and Sjoberg 2013). This body of work helps us to begin to understand what is valued by personnel and how some of those more militarised values may be unhelpful in attempts to undertake conflict resolution. Stevens and Greener also raise the broader question of how militaries and masculinity intersect to place value on armed responses to security situations.

Derbyshire's chapter also discusses gender, albeit in a different way. It begins with a personal reflection demonstrating the more nuanced form of gender discrimination that occurs within military settings — discrimination stemming from the society that houses the military institution in question. Noting that New Zealand has a relatively strong track record in terms of gender equality and equity, Derbyshire outlines additional moves undertaken in response to external initiatives (such as UNSC Resolution 1325), to increasing recognition of the importance of female personnel, and to rising retention problems within the army itself. Derbyshire suggests areas for improvement, beginning with the notion of rethinking and reconstituting what we understand to be the epitome of a 'modern warrior'.

The chapter by Wineera continues this theme of improvement. That is, he considers both how and why New Zealand has sought to engage in Building Partner Capacity programmes to help improve others' military capabilities (such as in the current BPC programme under way in Iraq), as well as considering how the army has sought to improve its own delivery of such training and mentoring programmes. Drawing on literature on security sector reform (SSR) as well as that from adult education, Wineera outlines how New Zealand personnel have recently sought to adapt their own learning and teaching practices. Speaking again to the themes of adaptability and professionalism, he notes some interesting recent developments regarding the uptake of new approaches to understanding the work of the army when engaged in capacity building.

The final chapter is a collaborative effort in which Fish, Beth Greener, Harding and Sigley conclude some of the themes raised earlier by considering the limits of military action. Leaping off from a philosophical approach, they address some commonly expressed assumptions about military personnel. Certain sacred cows such as 'the best warfighters make the best peacekeepers' and 'you can always ramp down but you can't always ramp up' contribute to the notion that military personnel

'can' undertake a wide range of tasks, from combat all the way down the spectrum of operations. But can they?

Having opened with von Clausewitz, the book returns in this final chapter to that demi-god of strategic thought in noting that one of the important roles of senior military personnel is to provide advice to political masters. In particular, the authors assert that such advice must increasingly emphasise when the capacity and reach of the military instrument has been exhausted, or will be exhausted should a suggested act be undertaken. Yet, to do this, senior military personnel must follow the injunction to 'know thyself', understand the nature of their own institution, and be able to communicate the limits of this 'military instrument' to those who make policy in order to mitigate risk and to increase chances of military and political success.

This book sets out to engage and inform insiders and outsiders on military personnel, culture, institutions and the use of military force in general. It aims to introduce the reader to a variety of views about what the New Zealand Army is and does. Readers may or may not agree with its conclusions; but if it helps to increase levels of understanding, interest and information about the topic across a range of individuals and institutions, then, we believe, this book has achieved its primary goal.