

## Editorial

GEOFF GINN

Military matters are of perennial interest to historians. If we take a long view across the human fascination with our past, we see that tales of grim combat, soldiers and generals at arms, and preparations for the lethal realities of war have always been at the very essence of our history-making instinct. Thucydides, with his account of Athenians and Spartans at each others' throats, is not known as the father of history without good reason, and the roll call of great military historians in modern times is a grand one, from Edward Creasy and J.F.C. Fuller to Richard Holmes, Antony Beevor, and Peter Stanley. Along with biography, military history is perhaps today the one form of history writing that sells books, and any publisher would be confident that will remain the case.

This year we have seen Russian armour rumble across the Ukrainian border, and a desperate, tragic, and some might think 'old-fashioned' European war has raged. The tragedy of the Ukraine conflict is a reminder that war matters. The waging of wars and the nature of their outcomes shape the range of our possible futures. How different would the world be today if Saddam Hussein had stayed out of Kuwait in 1990, and political and strategic attention had instead been focussed on the opportunities presented by the end of the Cold War? From time to time, similarly, we are reminded that a society's ability to defend its citizens and values matters. Russian President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine's democratic experiment on his doorstep snuffed out. The people of Hong Kong and Taiwan sleep uneasily in that knowledge. Thinking historically, the blood, treasure, and anguish that have been expended in the conflicts of past and present also matter.

Welcome, then, to the first issue of an annual journal dedicated to Queensland's military past, our local corner of this eternal human experience and pressing contemporary reality. The *Queensland Journal of Military History* came out of a fresh burst of energy at the Queensland Military Historical Society, which saw the Society adopt a new strategic direction, with a new management committee and a new home at Fort Lytton. With initial efforts focused on collection management, exhibition development and an online presence, there

was also much thought and talk about stimulating research and reaching new audiences. At this time, an initial proposal to develop a research strategy and journal was made by the late Peter Crossman. Then in 2020-22 we had a number of third-year History students from the University of Queensland access the QMHS collections, as these were sorted and re-located to Fort Lytton. Their enthusiasm and aptitude prompted the beginnings of this journal as a platform to publish original, evidence-based research on aspects of Queensland's military history and heritage.

In this first issue we have aimed to present a tone and diversity that will keep our journal lively, engaging, and distinctive into the future. There are different topics explored here, but importantly different voices as well. Not all our contributors will be professional historians, and not all of them will be military enthusiasts. The Society exists to further interest and discussion on all aspects of Queensland's military history and heritage, from family history, ephemera and historic sites to perhaps more familiar themes of military organisation and past conflicts. Our hope is that the research published in these pages each year opens up that conversation to new audiences, and encourages fresh discussions and insights.

Any publishing endeavour is the work of many hands, and there are a number of people who should be acknowledged and warmly thanked. Firstly, the contributors to this first volume have shown great patience and forbearance as we have worked through the production schedule in the past months and longer. They have all been helpful in responding to a welter of emails and revisions to bring it all together. Every paper published in the journal has been peer-reviewed in an anonymous process of constructive criticism, and so my thanks also go to the reviewers who without exception responded very generously with their time and expertise. On the production side, many thanks go out to Margaret Higgs (formerly of the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*) for her astute advice and assistance on house style, formatting, and layout in this artisanal and labour-intensive mode of publication. Production was ably assisted in the copyediting and proof-reading by Eleanor Ginn and Malcolm Catchpole, and printing and binding were expertly handled by Poll Printing, South Brisbane.

*Geoff Ginn, Editor*