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Future of command and control: Analysis or crystal ball?

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Topics

- Project Lions' Leap
- Historical view of C3
- Emerging technologies
- Conclusions
- Questions?

Project Lions' Leap



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Future tactical C3

- Part of wider Army Development and Transformation
 - Dstl worked with Army HQ to think about future of C3
 - “Every good project starts in the library”
 - 2030+ timeframe
- Tactical HQ sizes and organizations
- Ways of working ... not radio technology

Study modules

- Facilitated a study day with Army HQ
- Essay on current C2 thinking (NEC, etc.)
- Historical review of C3
 - the subject of much of this paper
- Piece on possible ‘disruptive technologies’
 - and how they might affect the HQ user
 - but not an exercise in predicting future ICT

Historical analysis of C3

Pre-history of warfare

- 64 species exhibit ‘war-like’ behaviours
 - including meerkats, dolphins and one bird
 - mostly primates, and all great apes except the bonobo*
- Most studied in chimps
- In primates it’s all in a gene:
 - MAOA
 - the ‘warrior gene’



*Van der Dennen (1995)

Pre-human warrior C3

- All warrior species are social
 - and all have hierarchies or ‘pecking orders’
- Chimpanzees conduct sustained campaigns
 - ‘total war’, aiming to kill or drive off rival groups
- Some apes appear to hold ‘O-groups’ before a raid
- Meerkats move in column, but fight in line ...
 - therefore do they ‘deploy’ for a battle?
- Note: not *all* species exhibit *all* behaviours

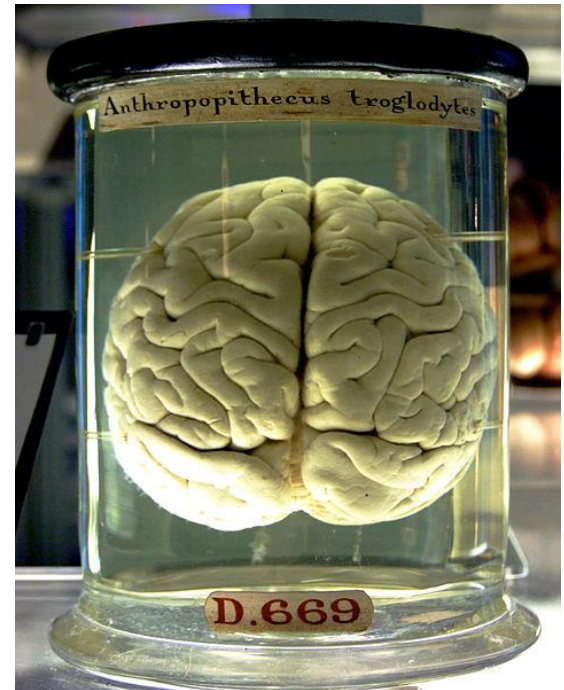
What non-human warriors do

- Chimpanzees may *use* sticks and stones
 - but not seen to modify or carry weapons
 - one amassed stones before visitors came to the zoo ...
 - the start of tactical logistics?
- Basic warfare is pre-human
 - because it works, it survives ...
 - co-evolved with ape brains
 - we inherit it from the apes



Brain size and group size

- Primate group size related to neocortex volume
 - Dunbar (1992): the ‘Dunbar number’
- Humans: 80–200, mean 150
 - mean numbers of friends on SNS
 - and the size of a company ...
- Actually a hierarchy of groups
 - starts with ‘clique’ of 4 ‘best friends’ ...
 - or a fire-team?
 - some apes follow a ‘rule of threes’



Ancient C2

- Or, “What have the Romans ever done for us?”
- Hierarchy of force, contubernium to legion
 - some ‘rule of threes’, some of tens ...
 - an intermediate command level inserted on campaign
- Century HQ was a small team ...
- Legion HQ was a ‘team of teams’
 - specialist branches for personnel and pay, security, supply ...
 - is anything new?

(G1)

(G2)

(G4)

Ancient communication

- Mesopotamia: as fast as a man could run ...
 - and as much as a man could remember
 - then writing increased bandwidth
- Egypt: as fast as a horse could run
 - and as many papyri as a horse could carry
- Simple messages using smoke and beacons ...
 - speed now limited (theoretically) to the speed of light ...
 - content (bandwidth) highly constrained ...
 - but did the Romans use the optical telegraph?

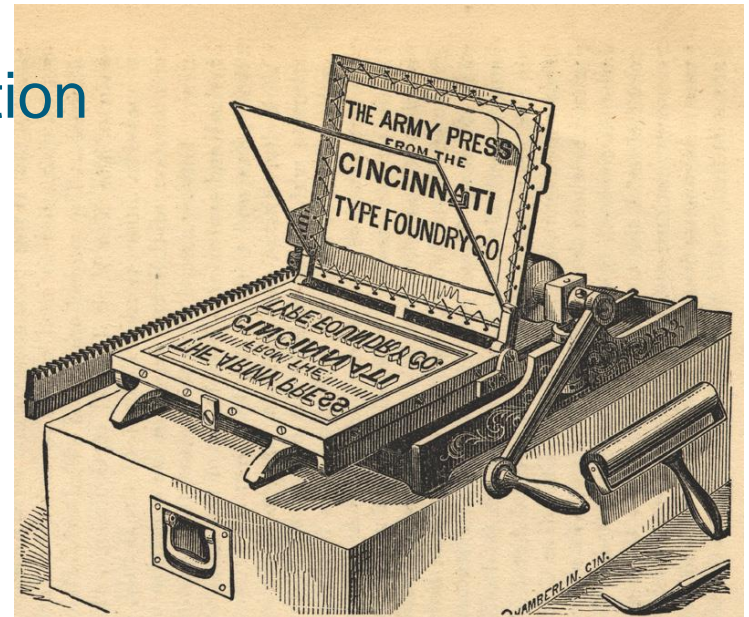
Modern communication

- Telescopes enabled effective optical telegraphy
 - England, France and Sweden, 1790s
- Electric telegraph, 1840s
 - efficient Morse code soon followed
- 1850s, Crimean War ...
 - dawn of the ‘long screwdriver’
- 1900s, first WT in the Boer War
 - 1914: one radio per division ...
 - 2014: one radio per man!



Military office technology

- Wax tablets drove the Roman military bureaucracy
- Paper maps from China
- Renaissance printing revolution
 - standing orders, drill books
- Industrial technology, 1800s
 - but civilians led the field
- Computers from the 1950s
 - now civilian ICT in every HQ



But does ICT buy efficiency?

- Found little evidence ICT wins battles
 - though GPS improved Coalition speed in Gulf War
 - US Stryker Brigade performance improved on exercise*
- Project explored civilian analogies ...
 - again, little evidence of efficiency
 - *“You can see the computer age everywhere but in the productivity statistics”* – Robert Solow (1987)

*Gonzales *et al.*, 2005

The 'King Canute effect'

- The Army cannot hold back the ICT tide
- Needs comms with government ...
 - NGOs, CIMIC, 'Green'
- All require and produce Excel, PDFs, JPGs ...
 - And *everyone* expects PowerPoint briefs

Culture – the forgotten piece

- C2 changes must be culturally acceptable
 - disaster of French combined arms regiments in 1950s
 - and US 'Pentomic divisions' in same period
- History and pride improves fighting effectiveness
- Changes that ignore culture *will* fail

Culture – the forgotten piece



Emerging technologies



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Emerging technologies

- Human context presents challenges
 - information overload, merging of voice and data
- New sources of information
 - automated filtering, crowd sourcing, autonomous vehicles
- New ways of processing information
 - pattern and language recognition, 'big data', game theory
- New ICT aids to decision-making
- Disruptive C3 threats ...

Conclusions

- HA reminds us of the roots of C3
 - not simply a modern thing ...
 - but rooted in our DNA, psychology and culture
 - technology will change rapidly, but the users won't
- We must use ICT intelligently
 - to enable, not to overload
 - requires thoughtful experimentation and integration
- We ignore social and military culture at our peril!

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Questions?

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