

Putin's War

Patrick O'Neill discusses how the neo-Tsar of Russia, Vladimir Putin seeks to rewrite history

In 1870 a fleet of eight ships sailed up the Don River in present day Ukraine loaded with equipment to build a steel works. John Hughes, a Welsh miner who made his name by 'iron-cladding' the Royal Navy, led the project.



John Hughes

He was approached by the Russian navy to armour plate a Naval Fortress and while doing so, he re-minded them that as the world moved into the modern industrial age, Russia had no viable steel industry.

With 100 workers from south Wales he set up his steel works in a South eastern corner of the Ukrainian steppes rich in Iron ore from the Krivoi Rog and coal from the Donbas. The coincidence was exquisite. His steel works grew rapidly. Soon a city rose up around it, which was named Yuzovka after Hughes. Within 50 years it was producing nearly 40% of the Russian Empire's steel.

As the Russian Empire morphed into the Soviet Empire, this part of the Donbas attracted much manufacturing industry. Indeed, Ukraine became responsible for 17% of Soviet defence production, and 25% of scientific research. Ukraine built Soviet ICBMs and many armoured vehicles, including tanks, becoming a major technology centre noted for aircraft production – the Antonov aircraft factory, sadly destroyed in the war, built the world's biggest aircraft. They also built ships. The Soviet Union's only aircraft carrier was built in Ukraine. Ironically the *Moskva*, sunk last year by a Ukrainian missile, was Ukraine built. By 2012, Ukraine had become the world's fourth largest arms exporter.

Also, since the early part of the last century the rich soils of the Ukraine's steppes or 'wild fields' had become the granary of Russia, if not Europe. It is still, war-permitting, a massive grain exporter. In 1981 Polish/US political scientist Zbigniew Brzezinski argued to President Jimmy Carter: "Without Ukraine, Russia is not an Empire." While it may explain why Putin wants it back, that's a western view.

To put a more Russian spin on it, when Putin termed the USSR collapse the 'greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century', it was clear he resented Russia's non-super-power status. He bristled at being pushed around by the US, and made it his life's mission to restore Russia's Imperial status as a world nuclear power. Maybe it is Putin who is now invoking the 'Brezhinski doctrine'? And he is doing it in a very Russian way!

Putin's history goes back to 988 AD when 'Saint Volodymyr the Great' ruler of Kievian Rus, converted to Christianity - the first 'Rus' Empire. But Putin's version of history is not always very accurate.

St. Volodymyr was a pagan Viking warlord, indispensable to Byzantine Emperor Basil II. He raised an army of 6000 'Varangians', burly Scandinavian or Russian soldiers, creating a Varangian Guard for Basil II - rather like a Swiss Guard.

Volodymyr was impressed by the pageantry of Byzantine Orthodoxy. When the Emperor offered his sister Anna's, hand in marriage if he would convert, Volodymyr (*Vladimir, in Russian*) became a Christian. So began Kievian Rus, the first 'Rus' Empire. It's from then, that Russian Orthodoxy gets a start date.



The old Empires of Europe

However cracks in Putin's history appeared in November 2016, when he unveiled a colossal statue of St Volodymyr in Moscow. It is doubtful if Moscow even existed at the time of the saint's conversion, yet at 17 metres it's hard to ignore. Putin explains:

"...he laid the moral foundation on which our lives are still based today, solidarity and unity; which helped our ancestors win victories for the glory of the fatherland".

At a glance it could be read as a patriotic 'word salad', but to Ukrainians it was a threat. With this huge pile of ironmongery, Putin was effectively claiming historic rights over Kievan Rus and Ukraine. It seems the man who would be 'Tsar of

all the Russias', felt he was still one 'Russia' short and was plotting a take over bid. In Putin's 'Russian World' (Русский мир) Ukraine is just another part of Russia. "We are one people", he claimed. "Ukraine doesn't exist as a nation. Ukrainian nationality was always part of a 'triune'; Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian."

He even told George W. Bush: "Ukraine isn't a real country." Maybe it is time to look at the map. On the left is: Kievan Rus a Century before the Mongol invasion. We have to wait until until Muscovy appears.

By 1236 – 1242, the Mongol/Tartar invasion would sweep most of Kievan Rus away after which, the map of Eastern Europe looked very different. And as the Rus tribes adjusted to living under the 'Tartar Yoke', we find Moscow, squeezed between the Khanates of Kazan the Golden Horde and Khanate of Krim (Crimea). The Muscovy princes had become the Khan's bagmen, collecting tribute from other Rus principalities for the Tartars. Moscow started as a vassal state.

After the fall of Constantinople, Muscovy princes claimed leadership of the Orthodox world. "Two Romes have fallen. A Third stands and a Fourth there will not be" as the saying went. With that the Grand Princes of Muscovy turned themselves into 'Tsars', claiming imperial and ecclesiastical links to a long-gone Emperor in a long-gone 'Tsargrad'; the Orthodox word for Istanbul. Obviously, the link with Kievan Rus had become tenuous, to say the least.

The 1720's map shows how the lands destined to become Ukraine, were a mish mash; left-overs from multiple empires. To the North west was the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. To the South west, the Austro Hungarian empire, and to the south the Krim Khanate now an Ottoman vassal state. It was usually called 'Tartary'. These were the 'wild fields', or 'pontic steppes', a no-mans land of rebellious Cossacks and Tartar slave raiders, the latter carting off millions of Russians to be sold in the slave markets of Caffa, in Crimea.



The map of the Russian area in the 1720s

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Editorial

While driving along the northern coast of Eire I came across a chilling memorial at a lookout between the road and the sea. On the sea floor of that coastline sits the wreck of the *SS Athenia* which was sunk by a German U-boat in the first hours of World War Two.

This edition carries that story complete with its political intertwining caused by the revelation within days of which nations lost citizens in that sinking, which was quickly classified as a 'war crime'".

We continue to follow the events in the Ukraine with Patrick O'Neill writing how President Putin is continuing to take on the appearance of a traditional Tsar of Russia in his actions and pronouncements.

Patrick also enlightens us on a long forgotten Royal Visit to New South Wales by the trigger-happy Austrian Archduke, Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination a few years later sparked the start of World War One.

President John Robertson mourns the death of Lieutenant Colonel Harry Arthur Smith, SG, MC who is remembered for his leadership in the Battle of Long Tan in August 1966 during the Vietnam War.

John and Committee Member, Marc Higgins, represented the Club at the Sydney celebration of the centenary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye. The Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr Ali Sevim and Mrs. Nadzija Sevim hosted a reception at the Sydney Consulate for the celebrations.

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Presidents Report Summer 2023

I was unable to prepare a President's Report for the Spring Gazette due to sudden death of a family member in Queensland, I hope you understand. We were supposed to settle with AMP Capital on October 3. Due to matters outside the control of your Board, that did not proceed. As at time of going to press we have still not been transferred the title to our Museum Space. We have however received advice from the City of Sydney Council that they are now happy with the design and our intentions. We have lodged those parts of the Development Application that need owners consent with Dexus (who have taken over from AMP) and have prepared a Complete DA which we will lodge as soon as we own the place.

The 2023 presentation of Gallipoli Scholarships was held at Merrylands RSL Club on May 4, 2023. There were 35 Scholarships awarded this year. The Keynote speaker was Gwen Cherne, the Veteran Family Advocate Commissioner. Our Patron, Major General Arthur Fittock, was also in attendance. Our Bursary Recipient Andrew Fraser, was very pleased with his award.

Your Board received a Delegation from the Çanakkale Wars Gallipoli Historical Site on July 11. It was very informative and well received.

Also, be aware that our Historic Building was used for a light display as part of the Bastille Festival on July 13-16.

The annual commemoration of the Battle of Lone Pine was held on August 8 with Dr Ian McGibbon ONZM - New Zealand historian, as the guest speaker. Again, well attended and very well received. We would like to thank President David Herlihy, and staff at the NSW Commercial Travellers Association for their assistance, hospitality and use of their facilities.

It was with deep sorrow that we were informed of the passing of Lieutenant Colonel Harry Smith on August 20. He was the Commanding Officer of Delta Company (then Major) 6RAR at the Battle of Long Tan; the most iconic Australian battle in the Vietnam War.

On October 11 the Dawn Service Trust held its AGM. Our Director, Marc Higgins, was elected Treasurer of the Trust. Congratulations Marc and good luck.

The Centenary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye was celebrated at the home of the Consul General on October 30. Extremely well attended and a very enjoyable evening. The national anthems were led by an opera singer so a bit hard to join in with, and the speeches went on a bit long, but hey it only happens every hundred years. Congratulations Türkiye and all our Turkish friends.

A commemorative ceremony in memory of the late Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Şarık Arıyak and Attaché Engin Sever, who were assassinated outside the Consul's home in Dover Heights on 17 December 1980, will again be held this year. A number of the board will be attending. The board have also been invited to the Commemoration of the guns falling silent in the ANZAC sector of Gallipoli at the Anzac Memorial Hyde Park on December 20.

We continue to be active within the Strata Management Committee for the Quay Quarter. The board continues to meet regularly via tele-conference and face to face where possible. I will conclude by wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Keep safe, keep well and keep smiling.

John Robertson
President

The first British ship sunk in WW2

Germany never admitted to sinking the SS Athenia in the first days of WW2 until after the war was over

The trans-Atlantic passenger liner *SS Athenia* was the first UK ship to be sunk by Germany with 117 civilian passengers and crew killed. The sinking was condemned as a war crime.

On September 1, 1939 *Athenia*, commanded by Captain James Cook, left Glasgow for Montreal via Liverpool and Belfast carrying 1,103 passengers, including about 500 Jewish refugees, 469 Canadians, 311 US citizens, 72 British subjects and 315 crew.

She sailed from Liverpool at 13:00 hrs on September 2. The following day she was 110 kilometres south of Rockall on the north coast of Ireland when sighted by the German submarine U-30 at about 4.30pm. Three hours later when both vessels were between Rockall and Tory Island, Lemp ordered two torpedoes to be fired. One exploded on *Athenia's* port side in her engine room, and she began to sink stern-first.

Several ships, including the destroyer *HMS Electra* commanded by Sam Buss, responded to the distress signal and oversaw operations that included by other responding vessels, the E-class destroyer, *HMS Escort*, the Swedish yacht, *Southern Cross*, the Norwegian cargo ship *MS Knute Nelson*, and the US cargo ship *City of Flint* (See box following). Between them they rescued 981 passengers and

crew. The *City of Flint* took 223 survivors to Halifax, Canada and the *Knute Nelson* landed 450 at Galway.

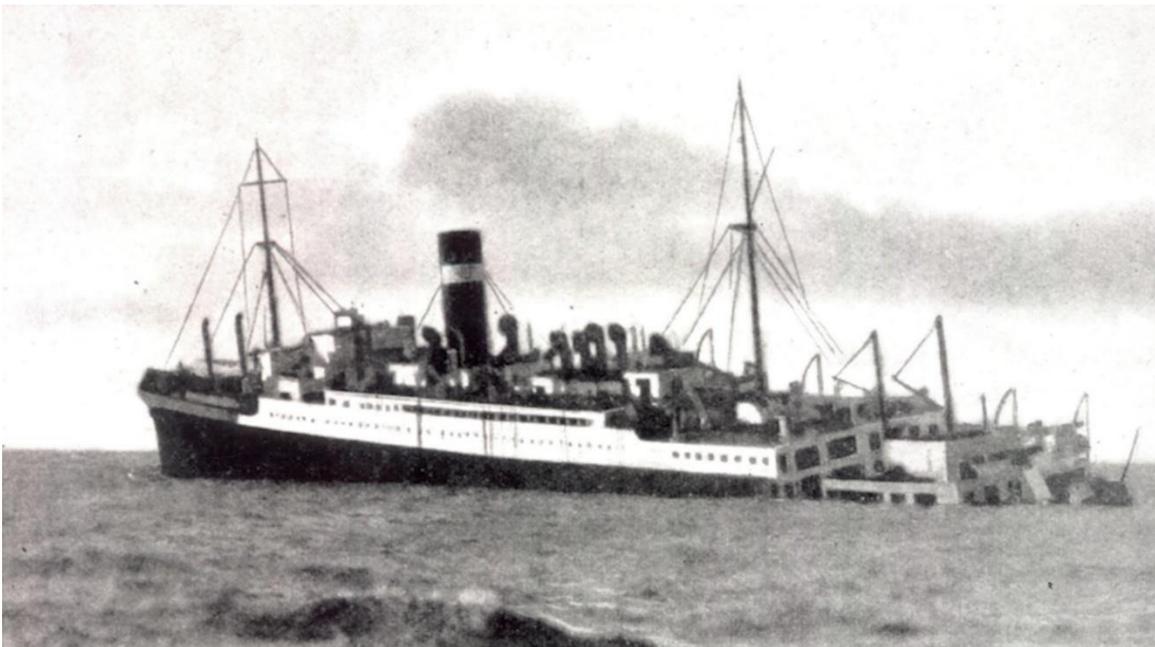
Buss also sent the destroyer *HMS Fame* on an anti-submarine sweep of the area.

The German liner *SS Bremen*, sailing from New York to Murmansk, Russia, also received *Athenia's* distress signal, but ignored it as it was trying to evade capture by the British as a prize of war.

Among those dead were 28 United States citizens. Fearing the US might join the war on the side of the UK and France due to sinking, the German government denied they had sunk the *Athenia*. An admission of responsibility did not come from German authorities until 1946.

She was the second Donaldson line ship of that name to be torpedoed and sunk off Eire by a German submarine. The earlier *SS Athenia* (built 1903) was sunk in 1917. (After the second sinking the company decided to not name a third ship *Athenia*).

The submarine commander, Fritz-Julius Lemp, after the war ended, claimed that the fact that she was a darkened ship steering a zigzag course which seemed to be well off the normal shipping routes, made him believe she was either an armed merchant cruiser or a troopship.



Athena before she sank in 1939

Athenia remained afloat for nearly 15 hours, finally sinking stern first at 10:40 the next day.

Of the 1,418 aboard, 98 passengers and 19 crew members were killed, mainly those positioned near the engine room and aft stairwell, where the torpedo hit,

Sadly, about 50 people died when one of the lifeboats was crushed in the propeller of *Knute Nelson* after a mooring line parted under stress, causing the lifeboat to be pulled back into the revolving propeller. A further 10 died when a lifeboat capsized in a heavy sea while three passengers were crushed to death while trying to transfer from lifeboats to the Royal Navy destroyers and there were further deaths due to people falling overboard from *Athenia* and her lifeboats, or to injuries and exposure.

The full story was not revealed until the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials of 1946.

When the head of the German Navy, Grand Admiral Erich Raeder (1876 – 1960) was informed of the sinking of *Athenia*, he conducted inquiries and was advised that no U-boat was nearer than 120 kilometres to the sinking. He told the US Chargé d'affaires in good faith that the German Navy was not responsible. When *U-30* returned to Germany in September, Lemp reported to the head of the submarine command, Admiral Karl Donitz (1898-1980) that he had sunk *Athenia* in error. Dönitz immediately sent Lemp to Berlin, where he explained the incident to Raeder. Raeder reported to Hitler, who

decided that the incident should be kept secret for political reasons. Lemp was not court martialed because Raeder considered that he had made an understandable mistake, and the log of *U-30*, which was seen by many people, was altered to sustain the official denials. Lemp was killed in action in 1941.

In October, the Nazi Party's official newspaper, blamed the loss of *Athenia* on the UK, accusing, then First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, of sinking the ship to turn neutral opinion against Germany. Raeder claimed not to have known about this previous to publication and said that if he had known about it, he would have prevented it appearing.

In the US, a Gallup Poll showed that 60 per cent of respondents believed the Germans were responsible, despite their initial claims that *Athenia* had been sunk by the UK for propaganda purposes, with only nine per cent believing otherwise. Some anti-interventionists called for restraint while at the same time expressing their abhorrence of the sinking.

It was not until January 1946, during the War Trial of Admiral Raeder that a statement by Admiral Dönitz was read in which he finally admitted that *Athenia* had been torpedoed by *U-30* and that every effort had been made to cover it up. Lemp, who claimed he had mistaken her for an armed merchant cruiser, took the first steps to conceal the facts by omitting to make an entry in the submarine's log, and swearing his crew to secrecy.



Passengers and crew in a lifeboat next to cargo ship, "City of Flint"

City of Flint

In October 1939, *City of Flint* was carrying a cargo of tractors, grain and fruit to Britain when the German pocket battleship *Deutschland* seized the *City of Flint*, declaring her cargo to be contraband and the ship a prize of war. A German prize crew was put on board to sail her back to Germany.

To avoid Royal Navy ships and obtain water, the ship headed for Tromsø in neutral Norway, but the government refused because of the German sinking of the Norwegian merchant ship, *Lorentz W. Hansen* and gave them 24 hours to leave.

The ship sailed for Murmansk in Russia and claimed *havarie* (the privilege of sanctuary for damage caused at sea) but was soon forced to leave by the Soviet Union, stating that if the Germans claimed *havarie*, the American crew could not be prisoners of war as claimed.

The Soviets interned the German prize crew on October 24 for three days but restored them to control and the ship sailed for Norway under German control.

In the several weeks that elapsed, the United States ordered many US merchant ships to register with other countries, so as to continue supporting the Allies without violating US neutrality. Meanwhile, the Royal Navy began closing on the captured ship.

The prize crew then tried Norway again, but the Norwegian government again refused entry, describing the German crew as kidnappers. The approaching Royal Navy left the prize crew no choice. On November 3 the *City of Flint* anchored in a Norwegian harbour. The Norwegian Admiralty dispatched a minelayer and boarded the *City of Flint* and restored control to the US crew. The German sailors were interned.

City of Flint continued in service in the Atlantic until she was sunk on January 23, 1943 by a German U-boat.

**On behalf of our Patron and Directors, I extend
our sincere best wishes to all of our Members
for a Happy and Merry Christmas and
good luck for the coming year.**

**John Robertson
President**



Celebration of Turkish centenary

On the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye, The Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Ali Sevim and Mrs. Nadzija Sevim invited distinguished guests, and the broader community including two Gallipoli Memorial Club Committee members, President John Robertson and Marc Higgins, to the Centenary Reception on Monday, 30th October 2023 at the Sydney Consul General's Residence.

Renowned historian Dr. Darren Mitchell OAM, who is well known to Club members due to his expertise on the Gallipoli conflict, gave an insightful opening speech adding a layer of historical significance to the evening's proceedings.

President John Robertson expressed the Gallipoli Memorial Club's dedication to upholding the long-standing relationship, highlighting the shared history between Australia and Türkiye. He remarked, "In remembering the sacrifices made at Gallipoli, we also celebrate the enduring friendship between our nations."

Consul General Ali Sevim echoed this sentiment, emphasising the importance of the relationship and spirit of unity and understanding. "As we commemorate Türkiye's centennial, we also strengthen the bonds of friendship with Australia," he stated.

"The event served as a testament to the enduring friendship between Australia and Türkiye, marked by cultural exchanges, heartfelt conversations, and a shared appreciation for the historical ties that bind the two nations," Mr Higgins said.

"The evening will long be remembered as an evening that solidified the enduring friendship between the Gallipoli Memorial Club and the Republic of Türkiye," he said.



Darren Mitchell, John Robertson, Mr. Ali Sevim, Mrs. Nadzija Sevim and Marc Higgins at the Sydney celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye.

Vale, Harry “The Ratcatcher” Smith, July 1933 – August 2023

Lieutenant Colonel Harry Arthur Smith, SG, MC was born in Hobart, Tasmania on July 25, 1933. He attended Hobart High School where he was active in School Cadets attaining the rank of Cadet Under Officer. He was called into National Service in 1952 where was promoted to Corporal. He then enlisted in the Australian Regular Army and graduated from the Officer Cadet School, Portsea as Second Lieutenant.

He was posted to Korea and Malaya between 1954 and 1957.

He was heavily involved in the training of Delta Company 6 Royal Australian Regiment at the Jungle Warfare Training Centre, Canungra prior to their deployment to Vietnam. When they completed their training in April 1966 the Commanding Officer, Colonel Stuart Graham, commented that they were the best company that had gone through since World War II.

Smith, then Major, was appointed Officer Commanding Delta Coy, 6 RAR on June 8, 1966.

The night of August 17, 1966 saw the Australian base at Nui Dat come under heavy mortar



shelling. The following morning, a number of companies from 6 RAR were sent out to locate the Units responsible. As they left camp, Colin Jacobson (Col Joy) and his band and a young Patricia Amphlett (Little Patty) were rehearsing for a concert they were to perform later that afternoon.

At 3:15pm D Coy were ambushed by an estimated 2,500 strong Viet Cong and North Vietnamese regiment advancing toward the base. Six Australians were killed instantly. The battle lasted until 6:55pm when D Coy was reinforced by B and A companies in Armoured Personnel Carriers. Overall, 18 Australians were killed and 24 wounded. The Australians counted 245 Vietnamese killed and an estimated 500 wounded.

Vietnamese records listed 800 killed or died from their wounds. Gallantry awards were given to nine D Coy men including the Military Cross for Smith. He also received gallantry awards from Vietnam, and the unit received Unit Citations from the Australian, USA and Vietnamese Governments.

Following his service in Vietnam he commanded 1 Commando Company, 1 Commando Regiment and later trained with the British SAS and American Special Forces. He served as the first Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor of the Australian Army's first Parachute Training School. A parachute accident in 1976 forced him to resign from the Army.

For more than 40 years Ltd Col. Smith fought to have his men's gallantry awards upgraded. This was 90% successful in 2008 when his men's medals were upgraded and his own was upgraded to the Star of Gallantry. However he was not successful in getting a posthumous Victoria Cross for Company Sergeant Major Jack Kirby "due to lack of living witnesses".

Harry retired to Buderim, Queensland where he was a keen sailor. He died on August 20, 2023, two days after the 57th anniversary of Long Tan. A fine officer and a great leader of men.

The Trigger Happy Archduke who triggered WW1

New South Wales hosted a little-known Royal tour 130 years ago. This was a visit by the heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian Empire who was trying to travel largely incognito. In May 1893 the Austrian Cruiser SMS *Kaiserin Elizabeth* dropped anchor in Port Jackson after a round-the-world voyage, delivering Archduke Franz Ferdinand to Australia for a hunting trip.

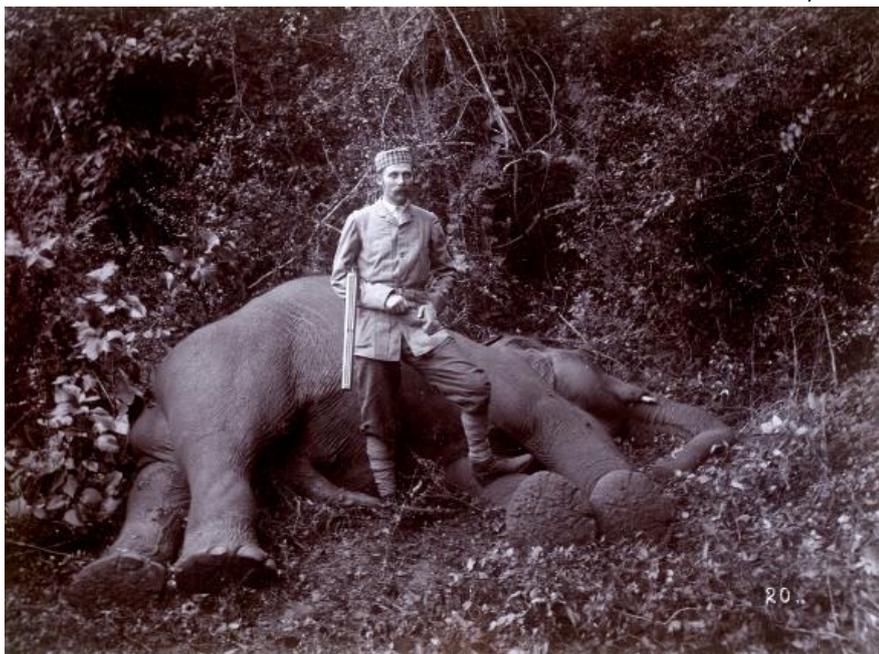


Franz Ferdinand

Franz Ferdinand had never expected to be heir to the Hapsburg throne. Four years earlier his first cousin Crown Prince Rudolph, had committed suicide, depriving the Emperor Franz Joseph and

his wife Elizabeth (Sissi) of a natural son and heir. Franz Ferdinand was next-in-line.

It was known that the Emperor and his nephew had a fractious relationship, so Franz Joseph was determined his new heir presumptive should go out and see the world.



Elephant shooting in Sri Lanka

Archduke Franz Ferdinand had an “aura of strangeness” about him, wrote the German Historian Michael Freund. He was “a man of un-inspired energydark in appearance and emotion, he cast a shadow of violence and recklessness. A true personality amidst the amiable inanity characterising Austrian society at the time”.

He was also stubborn. Indeed, the audiences with his uncle the Emperor usually deteriorated into shouting matches, but there was one thing that made Franz Ferdinand exceptional: his marksmanship. He was passionate about shooting and it was said that during his life



Emperor Franz Joseph

he killed nearly half a million animals. The Natural History museums of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were full of his taxidermist stuffed victims. He seemed to think animals were there to be shot! Also, he was obsessed with guns, including machine guns. There were reports that he organised mass-drives of forest game in Europe so he could machine-gun them. In one day he dispatched 2333 animals, and their rarity was not an issue.

Indeed during a shoot in Poland he was credited with almost bringing the then endangered European Bison to the brink of extinction. This was a time when blood-sports were commonplace amongst European land-owners and royalty. Edward VII's and George V's passion for pheasant shooting was legendary. But even by their standards, Franz Ferdinand was considered a 'serial killer'.

The bigger the game, the more he wanted to shoot it, such as this elephant he shot in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). He also shot tigers in India and panthers in SE Asia.

Of course, while touring the world on the *Kaiserin Elizabeth*, for much of his time he was at sea. But that didn't dampen the spirits of the trigger-happy Archduke, who was fascinated by the ship's heavy armaments. He longed to fire its 9.4 inch cannons. Fortunately the Captain refused to let him to try and shoot whales, using the ship's main armament!

The Archduke's voyage would take him from Trieste through the Suez canal to Ceylon, India, Malaya and Indonesia. He shot extensively the whole way, carefully documenting his kills. By May 16, 1893 The *Kaiserin Elizabeth* reached Australia.

On arrival at Sydney, the Archduke was met by the Lieutenant Governor, Sir Fredrick Darley. It was just as well as the Governor Lord Carrington, had been recalled to London. Darley as it turned out could speak some German. Most fortunate; as the Franz Ferdinand's English was very limited.

A train was put at Franz Ferdinand's disposal that took him out to Narromine, beyond Dubbo where he had arranged to go kangaroo shooting. This would be no ordinary train. The Archduke needed a carriage to sleep in, another carriage for his attendants and equipment and a further carriage for his taxidermist who would process the animal carcasses, preparing them for stuffing and mounting. A luxurious carriage like that of the Governor, was made available to him.



Australian cruiser SMS Kaiserin Elizabeth which took Franz Ferdinand around the world



At Narromine, the Archduke would meet up with Fredrick and George Mack who had arranged the kangaroo shoot on their property, not far from the railway line and provided carts, dogs, horses and beaters. On May 18, Franz Ferdinand shot his first kangaroo. Many followed including: Pelicans, ducks, black swans and an emu, all sent to the taxidermist for mounting.

Franz Ferdinand wrote in his diary of the emus: *“they were of a rare beauty, and large specimens whose collection was even more welcome as it is said that this mighty bird species is on the way to becoming extinct”*. Bustards, cockatoos and many colourful parrots, were also recorded meticulously in his diary.

We will never know how many animals the Archduke dispatched, as much of the hunting was done with dogs and other hunters. Many wounded animals no doubt ran off wounded or lay dead, or dying in the bush.

On May 23 the Archduke was in the Southern Highlands of NSW where he went to shoot Koalas. This he records was one of the best places to find “the Australian Bear”. Their pelts were already becoming well known in Europe and he was particularly eager to ‘bag’ a specimen for his taxidermist collection.

The Archducal train now took him to Moss Vale railway station where he dined in the Governor’s waiting room. He was also given access to the Governor’s Southern Highlands retreat at *Hillview*.

The following day the Koala hunt started at Badgery’s Station, Sutton Forest. One of the few photographs of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s visit to Australia survives.

There he records: *“...we eagerly watched out for Australian bears that are not easy to spot as they are difficult to identify as the tree colouring almost completely matches their fur. Still, I managed to bag seven. I was surprised at the passivity of these animals. One hits the lazy fellow with the first shot. But often a number of shots is required until the dead bear still holding on with its arms, tumbles out of the tree.”*

The next day he went down to the Wollondilly river and shot a platypus. Then it was back to Sydney and the *Kaiserin Elizabeth*. Next stop Noumea.

So ended his Australian shoot. During his round-the world trip, he had dispatched 274,889 animals, many ‘bagged’ specimens ending up in museums, while his guns still adorn the walls of his palace at Konopiste in Bohemia.

But the shooting continued. He shot grouse, deer, and game with the aristocracy and royalty of Europe. There was a near miss in 1913 when his loader slipped, discharging his shot-gun and narrowly missing the Archduke. And in May 1914 Franz Ferdinand shot his last animal. A black cat!

It was a bad omen. A month later in Sarajevo, nearly 3000 dead Australian wild animals finally got their revenge when the Archduke was himself shot by a Serb nationalist. It was the

death of a ‘trigger-happy’ Archduke that brought about the Austria-Serbia ultimatum, which in turn ‘triggered’ the First World War.



Continued from page 2. (*Putins War*)

After 300 years these lands are still disputed and Putin is just the most recent claimant, but his claim is a very 'Russian' claim.

Ukrainians and Russians are 'One People', says Putin. In truth Russia has always disparagingly termed Ukrainians 'Little Russians' (*Малороссияне*). Even the word 'Ukraine' implies an insult. It means 'borderlands', or 'on the edge'. So, if Putin wants to renew a Russian Empire, this now-independent Ukraine is in the way. One way to fix that is to make Ukraine irrelevant, but in terms of 'Russian-ness' a new reinvigorated Russia may need an inspirational leader. Maybe a new Tsar?

There's a Russian joke: what is the difference between Rasputin and Putin? Answer: one controlled the Tsar the other is the Tsar.

On this former matter, former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, is instructive. He once wrote on his state visit to Russia; particularly to the ballet at the Mariinski Theatre in St Petersburg. Expecting a 'meet and greet' with members of Russian society, he instead found himself with Putin, walking past a silent, respectful crowd; some nodding, some bowing - a few even genuflecting. He quickly sensed that he wasn't walking with the President of Russia. He was walking with the Tsar!

Thinking of Vladimir Putin as a Tsar is perhaps a better way of trying to understand him – and of understanding Russia. "The phenomenon of the role of Tsar is very important in Russian History at least for 500 years," says Andrei Zorin Professor of Russian at Oxford University.

"The word 'Tsar' naturally raises comparisons with an idea of heritable Monarchy. But in Russia while Tsardom is deeply personalistic, it was never monarchical" he says. The confusion lies in the last three Tsars, all with father-to-son successions, but they were exceptions.

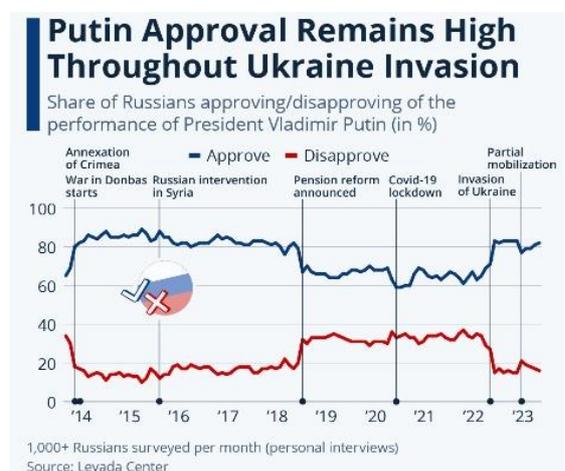
Most were not; their tsardoms defined by personality; never by position. "Putin has proved

himself to be a true Tsar in a deeply Russian manner; largely through charisma." says Zorin.

Interestingly, Putin likes to be associated with Tsars. He has a portrait of Peter the Great in his office and often refers to Catherine the Great who conquered Crimea. Interestingly he doesn't compare himself with the Tsar he is most like: Nicholas the first. "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality" was the motto of Nicholas I. It sums up Putin perfectly! As with Nicholas, he is terrified of democracy invading his autocratic, orthodox, national Russian world.

Putin, as with the Tsars, rules through his elites. He allowed them to keep their wealth following the collapse of the Soviet Union, provided they toe the Kremlin line. Something he enforces. He also chooses them for loyalty, more than competence. He maybe ensures there is a bit of rivalry between them, and thanks to his KGB training, he may have some 'compromat', just in case he needs to apply a bit of blackmail. So, Putin needs them, and they need Putin, as he has what none of them have - popularity.

Putin is seen by most Russians, as the man who stabilised Russia after the chaotic post-soviet years. It was he too who restored its economic integrity, culture and importantly, orthodoxy. Most Tsars have traditionally kept close to the Russian Orthodox Church. By doing so Putin has revived Russia's sense of 'Russian-ness', and exceptionalism. He is seen as the one who restored Russia's self-respect.



The Levada Centre's opinion poll puts his approval rating at 70% - and it is considered the most trustworthy polling organisation in Russia. The Kremlin's approval was over 60%. Most western nations would kill for those figures.

In March 2022, a couple of months after the Ukraine invasion, his approval rate shot up to 80% - figures Putin really did kill for! All of which suggests that most Russians approve of Putin's war. He faces an election next year on March 17th (St Patrick's Day). It will almost certainly be rigged. It will involve the usual ballot stuffing, intimidation and fraud. Even if he were to let Alexie Navalny out of gaol, or invite international supervision, given his popularity, I suspect Putin would win.

Also, the sanctions aren't working! The unemployment rate in Russia dropped to 3.10% in June this year. The inflation rate in Russia is 5.33%. While the war may have some effect on prices and what's on supermarket shelves, it isn't really hurting Mr or Mrs Russian Average that much. Of course, with FSB repression, and those who fail to toe the Kremlin line getting long gaol sentences, Mr and Mrs Russian Average may never hear the full story about the war, but that doesn't mean they believe everything they're being told.

Putin leaves much of his concocted Kremlin war-

commentary to his propagandists. Day in and day out they pushed the Kremlin line that 'Ukraine is full of Nazis'. In June 2022 one propagandist, Alexandr Terebilov, was pushing the line in Russia's Far East. As he stumbled over the words 'denazification', the audience started laughing. It went viral!

Russians were no longer 'buying it' so the focus was changed. Soon Ukraine no longer needed 'denazification', it was now a proxy war Russia v. NATO. Ukrainians were no longer 'fascists', they were 'traitors' - deviants from Mother Russia. So, do Russians really want to hear any alternative to the Kremlin line?

Graeme Gill, Professor of Government at Sydney University, thinks that on the whole they do not. He saw a poll showing that while Russians didn't like the war, they didn't want to lose the war either! So, as the body bags come back from the front - some figures suggest the dead have now reached the 50,000 mark (Afghanistan was less than 15,000), Putin's recruiters have ensured the majority go to the poorer regions, Siberia, Chechnya and the Far East; not so much to Russian heartland cities such as St Petersburg, Tula, Moscow or Nizhnie Novgorod. (*Note the Islamic head stones in the picture* Putin is still frightened the 'Russian Mums' will rebel, as they did over the Afghan war.



Cemetery for dead soldiers in the Islamic section of Russia with Islamic headstones

So Putin may have been a capable Tsar, but he has been a very bad General. Paranoia is a problem with autocrats. Not only do they not like being told what they don't want to hear, they are obsessed by their own health and security. So, they tend to sit at the end of very long tables and not trust Generals. As Lawrence Freedman says in his book 'Command', that's how they make big mistakes.

So much did Stalin fear his Generals that he had many of them executed on trumped up charges, prior to the German invasion of Russia. He didn't want any of them to become too powerful.



General Georgy Zhukov

So it wasn't until Stalin was on the brink of losing the war, that he gave control to General Georgy Zhukov. Another General was Konstantin Rokassovsky, who almost had to be retrieved from death row where he faced execution! And when the war was over, he got rid of them. That point hasn't yet been reached by Putin.

It is not news that Putin has bungled this war. Mark Galeotti who writes extensively on Putin, says he can be indecisive. No one should see him as a chess player always thinking four moves ahead. He's a judo player; an opportunist who capitalises on his enemy's weakness.

His invasion of Crimea in 2014 was a classic case of Putin opportunism. He made his move when Ukraine was distracted by the Maidan revolution. He made a lightning strike with his 'Little Green Men' into Crimea, and got away with it!

His windfall was western weakness. He never thought President Obama would slap him on the wrist with a few sanctions and ignore such a flagrant heist. And it was at this point that Putin became convinced the west was weak.

So, every time he read stories of squabbling Prime Ministers, gay pride marches and NATO's

Obsession with Gender Neutral toilets, it re-inforced his view that Russia faces a decadent, dithering and divided west, rent by woke politics and street unrest. He reckoned that if he sits tight, he can out-last us all.

But his mistakes kept coming: Too many fronts. Too many Generals. Too little planning and co-ordination. Seriously poor intelligence. A weak Chief of General Staff and a totally inexperienced defence minister, both chosen for their loyalty not their skills.

And he totally underestimated Ukraine. He also underestimated NATO's training and equipment of Ukraine and he overestimated his own army.

I have some experience of this. On May 15 1988 I was in Afghanistan as part of the first group of international journalists allowed into the Soviet Union to cover the withdrawal of Russian troops from Afghanistan. I saw a perfectly good army. Their ability to resupply their troops was outstanding. Led by Boris Gromov an experienced General, he was no challenge to his masters in Moscow, and clearly didn't feel challenged by them. So well did he plan his withdrawal that Gromov himself was the last Russian soldier to leave Afghanistan - in stark contrast to the shambolic American withdrawal in 2021.

The Russian army that invaded Ukraine seems inferior to the one I saw in Afghanistan forty years ago.

So, in summary:

- If you don't give your generals enough notice of your intention, of course they are not going to be able to set up supply echelons in time.
- If you don't resupply your tanks with fuel and ammunition, of course they will run out of fuel and be abandoned.
- If you don't recruit enough infantry to protect your tanks, of course they are going to be destroyed by anti-tank rockets.

The only leadership the Russians had was from Evgenie Prigozhin and General Sergei Surovikin. Prigozhin fell out with his chief of staff and was probably murdered when his aircraft ‘fell out of the sky’.

While Surovikin, the man who built the ‘Surovikin line’, a defensive mine field which is holding up the Ukrainian advance at the moment, was sacked. He was last reported hiding in Algeria.

The biggest ally the Russians could have is a weak, dithering West. So far President Biden has probably acted shrewdly. He has balanced weapon supply against trying not to provoke Putin into pressing the nuclear button. But after Biden – whom? The facts are simple. We supply Ukraine with just enough fire power to keep Russia at bay but never enough to defeat Russia on the battlefield.

As for the west, there is unfinished business. If we really stand up for our rules-based order, should we not make a stand? Should we not send a message to the Russians that it’s time they learned to live within their 58,000 Km long borders and cease their anti-west paranoia?

I doubt the West would dare. It’s worth reading this quote from *The Economist* - not the one you might be thinking of. This one was written in *The Economist* during the Crimean war of 1854!

“(Russia) is in great measure composed of spoils which she has torn from surrounding nations. Her frontier provinces are filled with injured, discoloured hostile populations ... many of whom wait, with patience and desire, the blessed day of emancipation and revenge.”



After 170 years, they are still waiting.



Putin and Surovikin

"Pride In Our Heritage"



"The Landing" 25th April, 1915

THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN THE BEGINNING – "THE LANDING"

Men of the 1st Australian Division A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Force) landing under heavy Turkish fire at ARI BURNU, 4.30am on 25th April, 1915. The beach was later named ANZAC COVE.

The name "ANZAC" originated in Egypt early in 1915 where the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps were training. The Corps Commander, Lieut. Gen. William Birdwood, used the abbreviated title of the Corps, A.N.Z.A.C., as the code word for the Corps in preparation for the Gallipoli Campaign – a word that was to make history and be revered by Australians and New Zealanders for all time. An "ANZAC" was an Australian or New Zealand soldier who served in the Gallipoli Campaign. The term "an Original ANZAC" identified those men who participated in the initial landing on the 25th April, 1915 – the 1st Australian Division, A.I.F.

The Campaign ended on the 18th December, 1915, following the evacuation of all Allied troops from the Peninsula.

In the 8 months period of the Campaign, Australian casualties were:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Killed in action and died of wounds | 8,079 |
| Wounded in action and missing | 17,924 |
| Total | 26,003 |

Our Club was originally "The Gallipoli Legion Club" until November, 1967 when it became "The Gallipoli Memorial Club" – a memorial where the legend of GALLIPOLI would be firmly entrenched as an inspiration to future generations of Australians.

It was founded and developed by the GALLIPOLI LEGIONS OF ANZACS, those "ANZACS" who survived the Gallipoli Campaign and following that, the Campaigns of France and Belgium until the Armistice on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918.