The #BreakIn is the Cove’s channel dedicated to the professional development of Small Unit Leadership Teams and those wishing to invest in their professional military education. The concepts in the #BreakIn can be complex, so to help we have designed a series of ‘introductory courses' that are designed to help you ‘break in’ to the subject matter.

Here we present ‘Breaking In’ to Operational Art which has been reviewed by a number of subject-matter experts and key stakeholders. The pathway of questions and resources below is designed to introduce you to the concept of operational art and joint operations as one of the seven pillars of professional mastery.

By the end of this short intro you should better understand what operational art is, and how it is done. You should also have a better understanding of joint operations doctrine.

What is Operational Art?

“In industrial conditions, the dual dimensions of tactics and strategy had to be intellectually connected by an ‘intermediate member’—or operational level of war. Only at the operational level could combat actions be forged into an ensemble and so provide the creative tactical material for extensive operations united by strategy.” Dr Michael Evans, 2004

According to ADDP 5.0.1, Operational art links available resources (means) and tactical actions (ways) to the attainment of national and military strategic end states and objectives (ends), while taking into account possible costs (risk).

Operational art is the skilful employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organisation, sequencing and direction of campaigns and operations.

1. **Operational art translates strategic into operational and ultimately tactical actions.**

2. It requires a commander to:
   a. identify the military conditions or end state that constitute the strategic objective
   b. decide the operational objectives that must be achieved to reach the desired end state
   c. order a sequence of actions that lead to fulfilment of the operational objectives
   d. apply the military resources allocated to sustain the desired sequence of actions.

The key elements of operational art constitute a collection of ideas about how best to link discrete tactical actions to achieve overarching strategic objectives.

US Air War College [Overview of Operational Art](#) (Briefing Script). This overview introduces the fundamental elements of operational art: synergy, simultaneity and depth, anticipation, balance, leverage, timing and
tempo, operational reach and approach, forces and functions, arranging operations, centres of gravity, direct vs. indirect approach, decisive points, culmination and finally termination.

Operational Art by Encyclopaedia.com describes Operational Art as the bridge between strategy (defining the political aims of war) and tactics (fighting the battles of war).

Griffin, S., 2015 Operational Art and the Operational Level: the Case for the Defence. Provides the counter argument to several other authors who believe the operational level of war and operational art are no longer relevant.

English, A. Gosselin D. et al, 2005 The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives, Context and Concepts Chapter 1 ‘Operational Art’ (pp1-61) Canadian Defence Academy Press Ontario. Whilst this book offers the Canadian perspective, many of the concepts and theories described are equally applicable to Australia and provide a good introduction and explanation to those less familiar with the topic.

How did the theory of Operational Art develop?

Matheny, M. The Roots of Modern Operational Art. Explains the history of how operational art has developed and who have been its key influences.

Platt, W., 1999 What is Operational Art?, Command and General Staff College, Port Leavenworth. Discusses the origin and evolution of operational art, as well as the essential elements and a framework for application.

What are the levels of war and how do they interact?

Maxwell AFB, AL., 1997 Three levels of War (excerpt) USAF College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education. Provides a brief summary of the levels of war and their focus.

Dunn, M., 1996 Levels of War: Just a Set of Labels? Published by the Land Warfare Studies Centre. A discussion of Clausewitz’s three levels of war and whether or not strategic, operational and tactical levels remain an important distinction.

Davies, H. & Foley, R., 2014 The Operational Level of War and the Operational Art. An article from two military historians which talks to the relevance of the tactical, operational and strategic levels of war and how they interact using different periods of military history.

Eikmeier, D., 2015 Operational Art and the Operational War, are They Synonymous? Well it Depends Discusses whether or not there are key differences between the two concepts.

How does the ADF conduct joint operations?

Evans, M., 2008 The Closing of the Australian Military Mind: the ADF and Operational Art. Argues that the ADF has failed to keep abreast of conceptual developments and debates regarding operational art that have occurred in other countries

ADF Strategic Policy Division, 2007, Joint Operations in the 21st Century. A presentation which outlines the CDFs vision and joint operations into 2030.

Doctrine

ADDP 5.0 Joint Planning Provides guidance for the planning of ADF campaigns and operations in joint, multinational and multiagency environments.
**ADDP 5.0.1 Joint Military Appreciation Process** This publication is for use by commanders and staff at the operational level and is designed to provide guidance for planning ADF campaigns and operations.

**ADDP 3.0 Campaigns and Operations** This document is focused on joint warfighting, defined as government directed use of military force to pursue specific national objectives.

**ADDP 3.2 Amphibious Operations** Provides broad guidance on the nature and scope of amphibious warfare within the ADF.

**ADDP 3.9 Airborne Operations** Provides the philosophical doctrine on airborne operations as well as the nature and scope to inform operational planning and effective command and control of airborne operations.

**The lost Operational Art: Invigorating Campaigning into the ADF** by LTCOL Trent Scott. A critique of the ADFs approach to operational art and campaigning.

**Design and planning of campaigns and operations in the twenty-first century** Smith, Christopher R. 2011. Land Warfare Studies Centre (Australia)

**How do our allies view Operational Art?**

Dickson, R., 2004 *Operational Art in a Middle-Power Context: A Canadian Perspective*. This book considers whether operational art is a viable construct for Canada or other middle-powers. Like most of America’s close allies, Canada quickly followed the US lead by adopting these operational concepts into its service and joint doctrine. However, the concepts presented by the US are framed in a great-power context of large-force, large-theatre, high-intensity operations that is of questionable relevance to middle-powers, and their small, tactically focused militaries.


English, A. Gosselin D. et al, 2005 *The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives: Context and Concepts*, Canadian Defence Academy Press. This book offers the Canadian perspective, which is equally applicable to Australia and the material provides a good introduction and explanation to operational art.

**If people were only going to read one book on the Operational Art**, they should read ‘The Evolution of the Operational Art’ by Olsen, J. A. & Creveld, M. (Eds) 2010. The book describes how the concepts that underpin operational art originated, how they received practical expression in various campaigns, and how they developed over time.

**Additional Resources**

*The remainder of the resources will expand your knowledge for those with a keen interest in understanding the operational art.*

Some of the links won’t work on the Defence Protected Network, so the best thing to do is forward the list to a civilian email address or tablet. At that stage you should be able to access everything. Many books are available to be delivered to your work address via the Defence Library Service (email: askalibrarian@defence.gov.au) or on Kindle.
Web Resources, Videos, Articles, Books and Case Studies:

Introduction to Joint Operations (available on Defence Protected Network). A series of presentations by ADFWC introducing people to Joint operations and a series of other joint concepts.

Video ‘Operational Art, Design and the Centre of Gravity’ a 4-part youtube series presented by Assistant Professor Dale Eikmeier, US Command and General Staff College.

Hardy, B., Striking a Balance Between Operational Art and Operational Craftsmanship. A critique of the amount of ‘art’ in ‘Operational Art.’

B. Mc Kercher & M. Hennessy, 2006 The Operational Art: Development in the Theories of War published by Encounter Books, New York. This work considers the modern antecedents and evolution of the operational art in military thought and practice in both peace and wartime. This study situates the current operational art in its historical context.


English, A. Gosselin D. et al, 2005 The Operational Art: Canadian Perspectives, Context and Concepts. Chapter 11 ‘Reuniting Operational Art with Strategy’: A New Model of Campaign Design for the 21st Century (pp 331-358), Canadian Defence Academy Press Ontario. Discusses the ends, ways and means of campaign design and the author’s belief that there is an over-reliance on ill-defined concepts such as ‘Centre of Gravity’.

An advanced look at Operational Art

Vego, Milan N., 2009 Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice, An advanced look at operational art by one of the world’s leading authors on the subject.

Evans, M., 2005 The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia’s Strategic Culture and Way of War, 1901-2005, Study Paper No. 306, published by the Land Warfare Studies Centre. Examines Australia’s Strategic culture and way of war over the course of a century, analysing the evolution of strategic behaviour in regard to ideas, practice, policy, geography, politics and history.