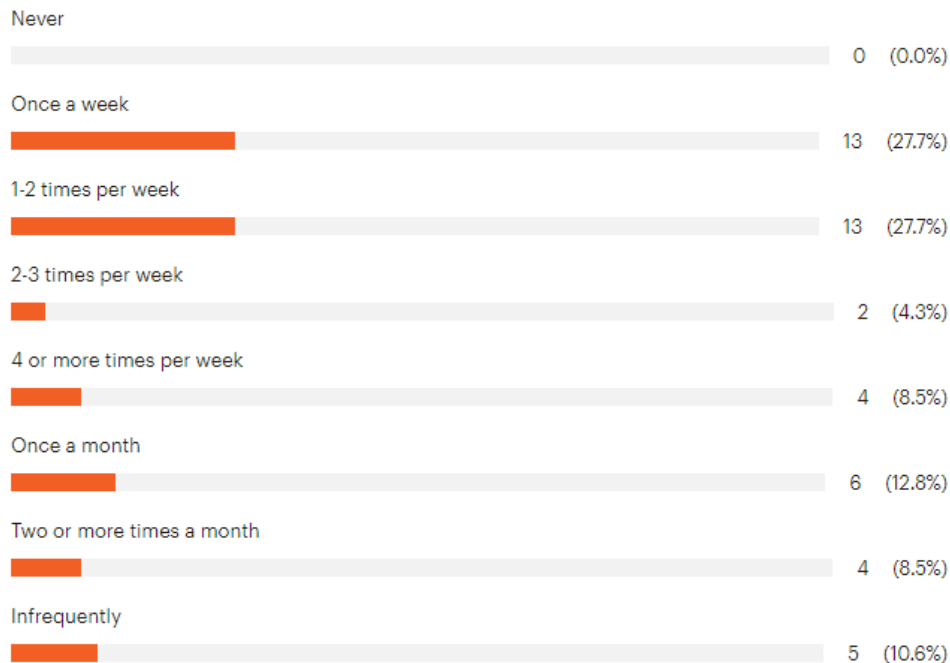


The Cove's 2021 Survey Results

1. **We asked:** How frequently do you use The Cove?

You said:



Our response: We're typically publishing 5-7 times per week, so we've learnt two things from this:

1. What we publish needs to 'linger' on our home page for longer so that those who visit less regularly don't miss out on the articles we publish in between visits. We're releasing 'Cove 3.0', our new website, in November which will help address this.
2. We can opt to publish less and therefore only publish the better content because it appears we are currently publishing more than what you consume.

2. **We asked:** What are the three most positive things about The Cove as it currently operates and why do you engage with The Cove?

You said:

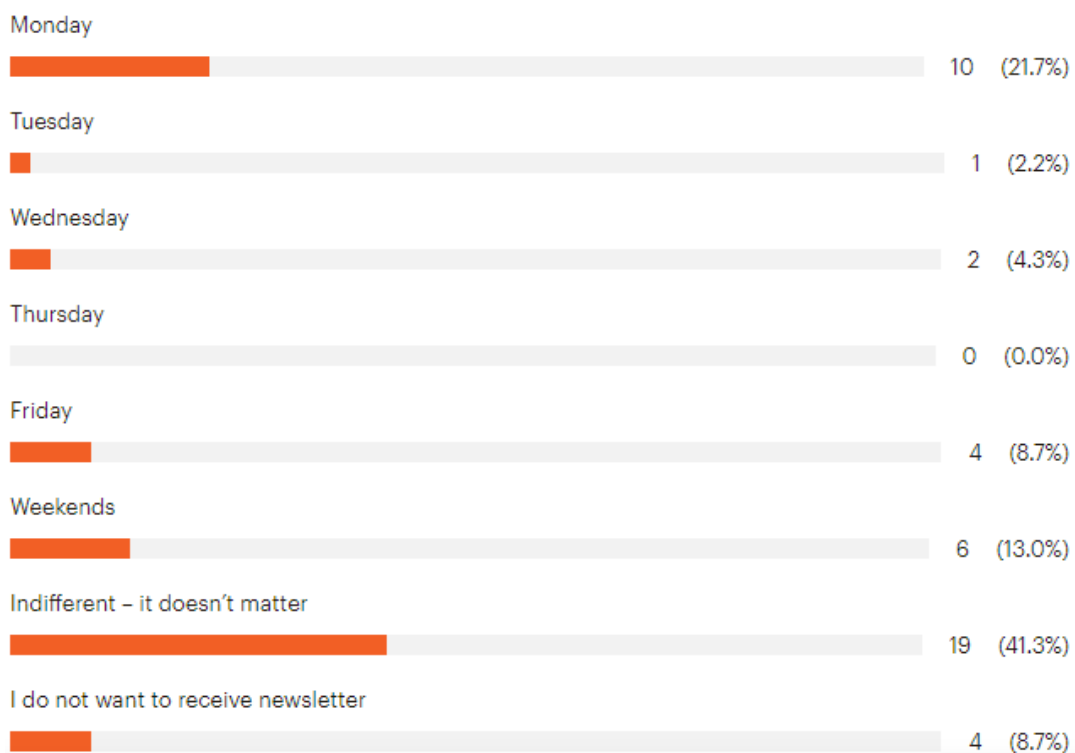
- Accessibility off the DPN.
- A platform to share experiences, new, good and innovative ideas.
- Gives you the ability to research and problem solve.
- Variety.
- Enhances critical thinking.
- Articles from across the rank spectrum.
- Honest articles.
- It's educational, interesting and informative.
- The content is well done.
- Short articles.

- The Cove seeks to enhance knowledge through interesting topics.
- Articles about platoon level stuff.
- Content that helps you on your courses.
- Relevance.

Our Response: You gave us lots of positive feedback here. It's clear we're broadly on the right path and you value the content we're putting on The Cove to share and contest ideas in the profession of arms. We crowdsource a lot of that content - so keep your submissions coming.

3. We asked: Cove Communique is an emailed newsletter released weekly that provides a summary of the content published on The Cove. When would you prefer to receive this newsletter?

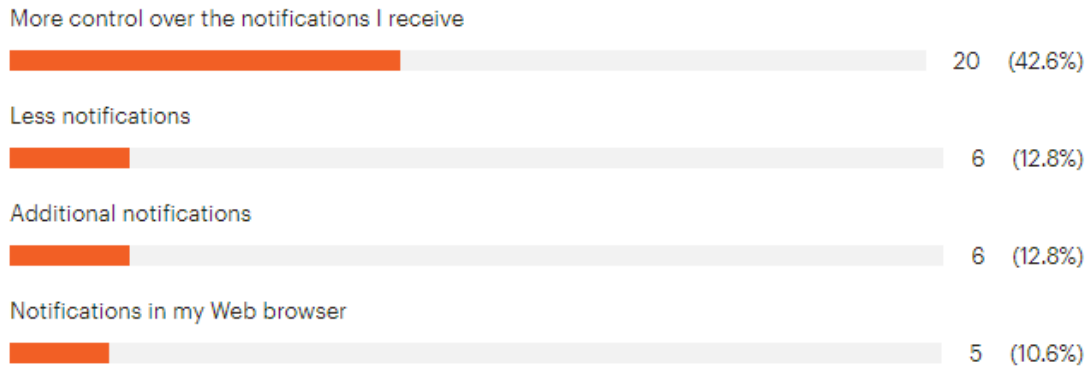
You said:



Our Response: The Cove Communique is automatically distributed at 0800h on a Monday. We thought 0800h on Monday morning, as you were sitting down to a week's work, was the WORST time to send out our newsletter. We were thinking to change to Friday afternoon so you could digest it outside work hours. You have spoken – 0800h Monday it is!

4. We asked: How could we improve our app notifications?

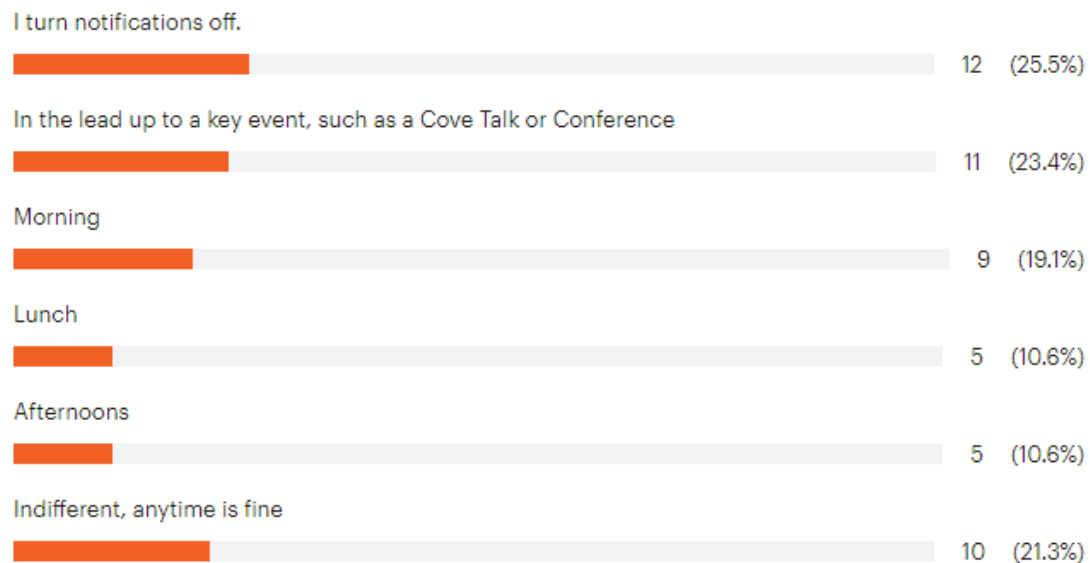
You said:



Our response: Ok, you want control. Cove 3.0 will allow us to better categorise our content (for example, by rank group) on both our website and app so you will be able to control what types of content you get notified of.

5. **We asked:** When would you like to receive notifications from The Cove App mobile app?

You said:



Our response: The results here weren't conclusive. What we've been doing is 'dropping' our content at a time when we think you can get the most out of it. For example, if it's a [long read](#), we'll send it out on the weekend so you can ponder over it while drinking a cup of coffee. Or, if it's an article [on risk management for commanders](#), for example, then we'll post around mornos so you can discuss it throughout the working day and discuss with your colleagues. We'll keep doing it this way, but happy to take further feedback.

6. **We asked:** What do you want to be notified about? Why are these notifications important to you?

You said: We got a bit of everything for this question from: 'I don't use the app and I don't want to' to 'Current notifications are ok as they cover a range of topics'. We really liked this answer: 'It lets me know if I am interested in the daily article. If it is boring I don't bother opening the article. If the notification interests me then I know I want to look at the article. In saying that please don't try to jazz up notifications so that all articles sound good. It's great the way it is.'

Our response: Your answer tells us you use The Cove in different ways. We'll make sure we don't present content as clickbait and give you control over what content you receive with Cove 3.0.

7. **We asked:** Does the Chain of Command encourage you to engage with the cove website?

You said:



Our response: Our challenge is to show your chain of command that The Cove is a resource that can make their job easier and get capability outcomes. Our main effort in 2022 is to produce more content like our [QMEs](#) which are 'off the shelf' PME packs your chain of command can use at with little or no cost to their most precious resource (apart from you) – time!

We will promote these packs so you can spend more time engaged in PME- developing our people, than preparing it. If you're in the chain of command, we ask you to seek out this content and highlight what's important. If your chain isn't promoting these, then let them know it exists.

8. **We asked:** Does your workplace facilitate PME discussions from content hosted on The Cove website?

You said:



Our response: We've got some work to do to get better content on our site so The Cove is your go-to option for PME. We're in the draft program for Pre-command Course this year. Once we can travel again, we'll get back to briefing units on how they can incorporate The Cove into their training programs.

9. **We asked:** What PME topics would you like to talk about the most in your workplace?

You said:

There were a whole range of great responses here including:

- 'Mentoring and developing subordinates - strategies for how to do this better and following a proven process.
- Irregular Warfare - theory and practice.
- I would like my chain to foster more of an environment to encourage people of all ranks to read.
- Personal development.
- Future war, adaptability, resilience, history, competition and adversity.
- Leadership and teamwork.
- Capability and doctrine.
- Future war, adaptability, resilience, history, competition and adversity.
- Tactics.
- Military History.
- PHQ relationship.
- Core values / training development.
- Tactical/Technical scenarios.
- Presentation skills Tactics New tech.
- Electronic Warfare, Cyber, information Warfare.
- Art and Science of War learning cluster content.
- Different for different ranks. Tactics and ethical dilemmas for ranks below Major, operations and strategy for those above Major.
- While it seems there is a good attempt to pinpoint JNCOs a lot of the articles are still really for Officers.
- Actual more challenging discussions and more pushing the thinking. The "safe" articles that make up a lot of the cove feel like career tick a box posts rather than actually pushing thinking.

Our response: We hear you loud and clear that you want content relevant to your professions; mostly related to the Art and Science of War and Leadership. We received the same feedback in our Cove+ survey conducted recently. That's a broad range and there's currently plenty on The Cove that covers these areas so improving the search function for 3.0 is part of the plan.

We're working closely with the Centre for Australian Army Leadership and sharing their content with you; particularly their awesome podcast series and Cranlana webinars.

For the history buffs, just wait, there's something HUGE coming your way! We're working closely with Australian Army History Unit and CTC-Live to bring an exciting project to you soon.

The last three points made us think a lot. Firstly, The Cove can't be all things to all people; there's just too much content out there. We're really focussing on the CPL – MAJ level at the moment. We know we haven't rounded out our content for JNCOs yet, and traditionally The Cove has been the domain of officers, but we're working to change that with the launch of our new site in November.

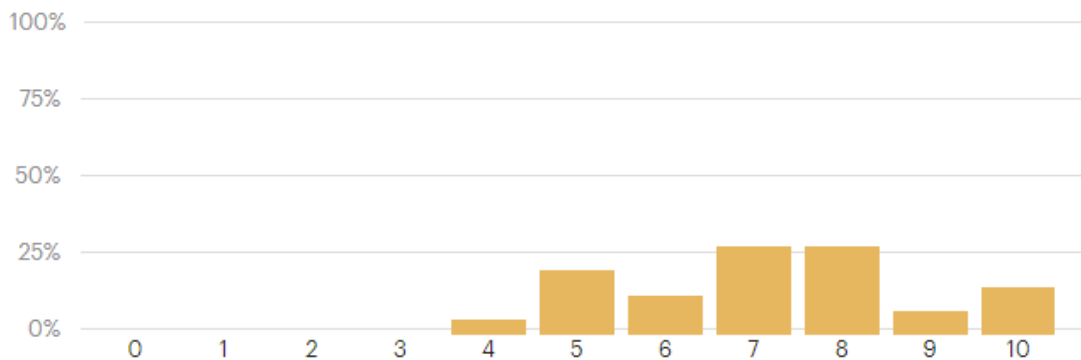
For those above MAJ, there's The Forge, The Australian Army Research Centre and the Land Power Forum. For soldiers, there's also our good friends at Smart Soldier who have great content.

On the 'safe' articles comment, don't forget that we crowdsource our content that challenges the status quo, so this may be a great prompt for people who are thinking about writing something on those topics. There's a couple of topics we tread carefully around; and they're strategic in nature, but we censor very little and our chain of command supports those challenging articles, so if you have a view – write to us and we'll work with you to say what you want to say in a constructive way.

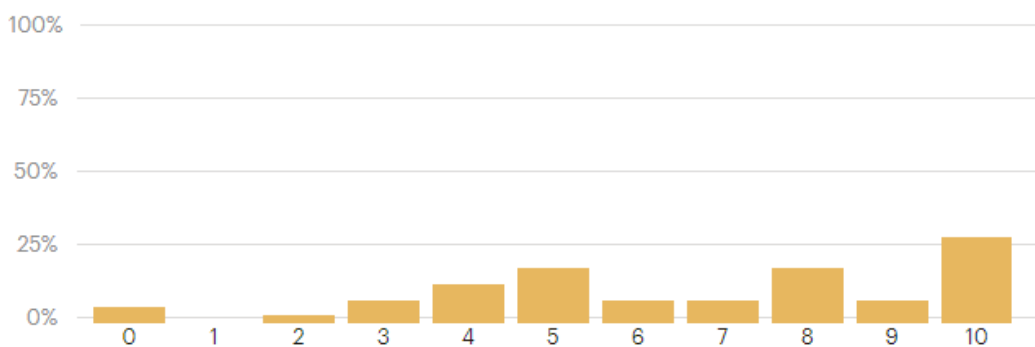
10. We asked: How much do you value written articles on The Cove? How much do you value podcasts content on The Cove? How much do you value video content on The Cove?

You said:

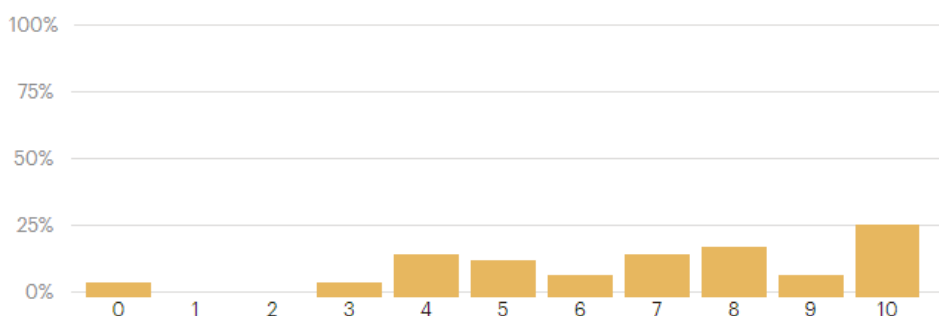
Articles:



Podcasts:



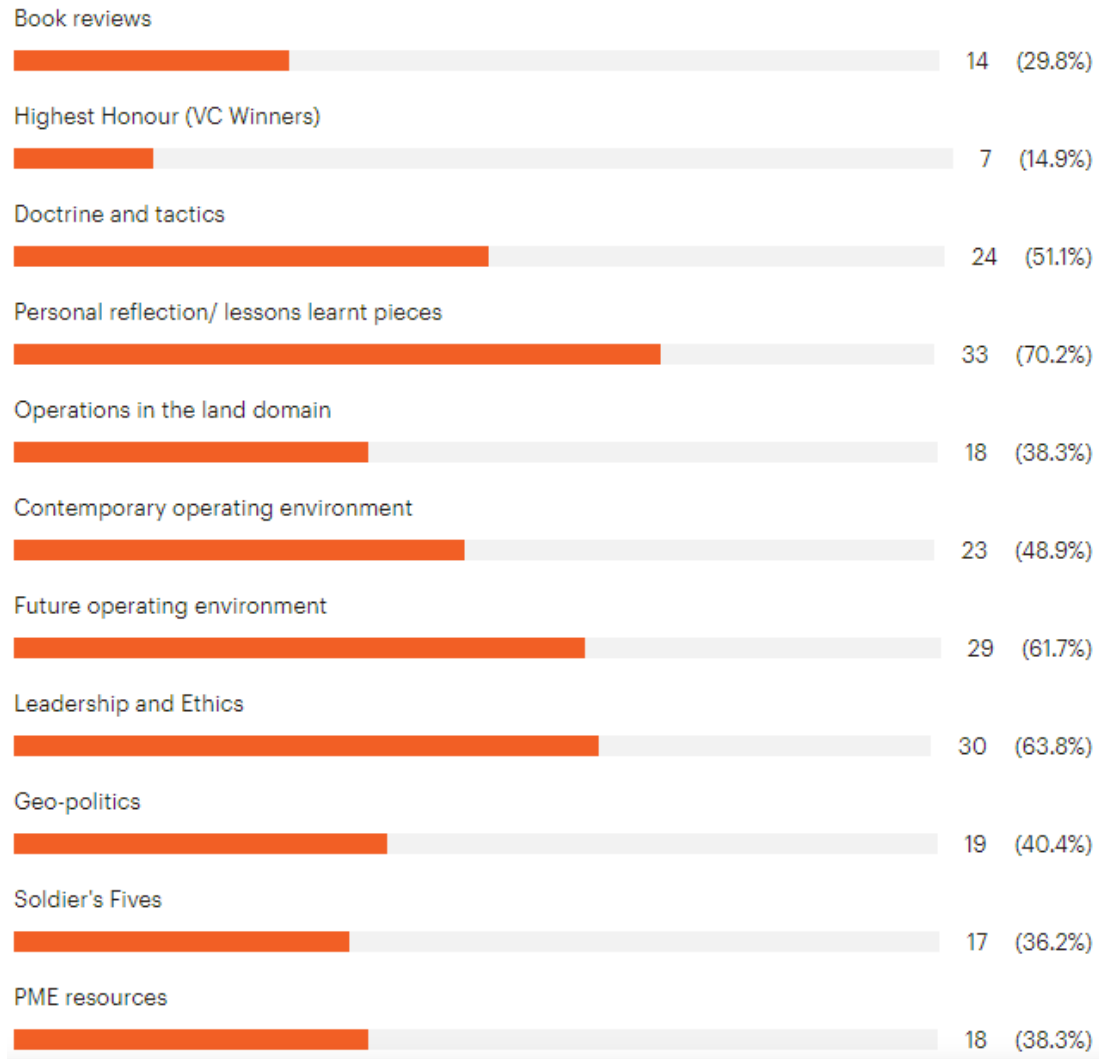
Video:



Our response: What's most important to us, to meet your response, is to ensure the quality of our content hits the mark. Good content is good content regardless of what media type it is. This conclusion is also backed by our analytics that we track weekly.

11. We asked: What current Cove content is appealing to you?

You said:



Our response. This was really interesting for us, but it drove home that you want content that directly relates to your profession in the Army. Two things we're looking to do less of in 2022 are book reviews and content similar to the Highest Honour. What did surprise us was the really strong support for personal reflections. We source this content from you and everyone has a story worth telling. So share what you know, think and feel with us so we can pay it forward to others- people out there want to read it.

12. We asked: What is your impression of the content available from The Cove on Spotify?

You said:

- It's outdated and needs a refresh.
- No clear purpose.
- Good, relevant and interesting content.
- It is of a high quality and accessible to all members of the Australian Army.
- Good for commuting.
- Fantastic. Is there any chance all articles can be converted to voice, especially the longer ones so they can be listened to?

Our response: Amongst the other responses not included above was the fact that overwhelmingly you're indicating 'what Spotify?!', which means we need to promote this better. We're also going to archive old content and take your advice and turn appropriate articles in voice recordings. This is because our analytics indicate, just as you have, that this media is perfect for commuting. We know this because when lockdown hit podcast listens dropped significantly.

13. **We asked:** Know Your Region is an initiative aimed at providing personnel a foundation knowledge of the countries and issues in the Indo-Pacific region. Is this content appealing to you? Why or why not?

You said:

- There's too much and I don't have time to look at it all.
- I have to keep searching for it which is annoying.
- What's the difference between that and just looking up Wikipedia? Or googling?
- Yes, but it's not interactive enough. The US Army's odin.tradoc.army.mil DATE website provides a high level of interactivity. The KYR could benefit from being either a WIKI or more interactive format rather than long prose intel briefs.
- Articles are too big. Way too much information.
- Great concept but way too much information and way too many links. Due to the amount of information I generally no longer read these articles.
- Yes - but pages are very crowded, could be more concise. Videos are generally good.

Our response:

Overwhelmingly, we saw that it's a good idea and you see value in knowing our region better. We hear you that it's a bit crowded and there's too much information. Moving forward we'll make it more concise, but you should know that you have control to pick out the parts that are most interesting to you. In terms of finding it, we'll make sure initiatives like this are easy to find with the launch of Cove 3.0. In the meantime, know that it's available from the slider on our homepage or searchable by typing 'Know Your Region'. [KYR also has an index page](#)

14. **We asked:** Quick Military Education (QME) packs have been designed to enable unit PME discussions on pertinent issues. What is your impression of the QMEs? Are they useful and appealing – why or why not?

You said: Overwhelmingly positive things, in particular:

- It's good that they are so brief and can be used 'on the fly'.
- Please keep including the short videos as a part of it.
- The unit doesn't have to do the work to set it up which is time consuming.
- It is a vital aspect of team bonding, I believe engages everyone to communicate more and identify their intellectual levels and also enhances on it.
- It's great that we have something so quickly available when we have spare time with our sections.
- I had developed a program prior to QME being available.

Our response: QME is the brainchild of our WO PME who has rounded out the series at 10 editions which will all be available in the next month or two. We think they're great and exactly the kind of product that we want to develop and deliver more of to you so units can get more utility. If you're developing something similar for your unit please flick them our way, we are very keen to put your products on The Cove so everyone can use it. This kind of sharing can reduce tempo across our Army.

15. **We asked:** What PME content is most important to a JNCO? What content should The Cove team focus on creating for them?

You said:

- Getting the opinion of a senior member of Army is really valuable. It's not getting filtered by the chain of command.
- Focus on tactics, techniques and procedures in their corps. Small team leadership and training.
- For all non-combat arms it should be on foundational warfighting skills and for combat arms being able to relate situations with historical events to have a better understanding of how to react.
- Junior leadership. Provide them with the confidence to lead their soldiers.
- Tactical/Technical team oriented PME.
- Small team leadership.
- Leadership. Lessons Learnt from higher ranks. I wish I had of know that was a great campaign. Perhaps more at lower levels.
- Leaderships, tactics, logistic, life of modern soldier in the complex highly diversified society.
- IMAP.

Our response: All great responses. As we look at developing more off-the-shelf PME and activities we'll take this feedback on board. We need to be careful that we keep our content education not training, but a big thank you for your suggestions.

16. **We asked:** In your opinion, what would increase engagement with The Cove website? Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

You said: You gave us lots of good feedback here. Our responses are in italics below each comment:

- If there was more time allocated in units to PME. Usually PME is the first thing dropped if something more time sensitive needs to be done. I think the FORCOMD PME Directive from way back needs to be updated and reissued.
 - *Our #1 piece of feedback is people want to spend time on professional development, but don't have the time. We're conscious of that with the content we're creating and the Future Ready Training System knows this and is adapting.*
 - *The FORCOMD PME Directive was updated last year, the ATI is out of date. We're proposing a decision on the future of Cove+ which may change that directive and ATI.*
- Push The Cove as a more OR/ JNCO friendly place, I have recently moved into the ARES and almost guarantee 70%+ of my unit doesn't know what COVE or even PME is.
 - *Ack, we're working on it.*
- Short completions. 100 words on ???
 - *We did ['I Wish I Had Known That...'](#) this year which was a great success and specifically targeted to JNCO. Ack, we'll do more short content competitions.*
- The Cove competes with a lot of other sites and there is no clear direction for the site ... just a mix of information ... the channels are confusing ... maybe a clearer purpose and focus on the most important information rather than just publishing everything.
 - *In Cove 3.0 we'll change the channels titles. TBH we can't remember what they all are either. 😊*
 - *We will soon get the PME community together to try to agree on who does what. We'd like The Cove to be land focussed at the ranks of CPL – MAJ.*
- OFFICIAL so we can openly comment and discuss. Public facing opens up individuals to public controversy when discussing/ debating things. While it's public I don't think we will ever push thinking that will help us adapt to fight the next wars. Discussions in unit is only a partial fix. We need to interact across the wider organisation to get the critical thinking and new thinking we need.
 - *We really want to crack this nut too. We'd like a Cove (P) on the DPN; Unfortunately, that would need to be on SharePoint which isn't as good as our website and far less accessible. ForceNet is our other option but that's not popular amongst the ARA as it is the reserve.*
- Cove is far too censored. It is not true user generated content. No opportunities for collaboration.
 - *We mentioned above that we don't sensor a lot of content. There are some topics where we soften language with the author to ensure that The Cove doesn't become a media headline, and some topics that are off-limits for strategic reasons, but we feel that there isn't enough challenging content coming through.*
- Stories of personal combat experience.
 - *That'd be great. If you're out there and have a story to share and would like to write to us then please do. If you'd like to tell your story in a podcast or short video then we can facilitate that.*
- Easier way to find topics on the website.

- Working on it for Cove 3.0. We want to categorise content by rank and corps, learning cluster at least so you can find content you want to see faster.
- A higher percentage of articles seemed to be aimed at a higher level. More articles aimed at the Junior Leaders and Soldiers.
 - Ack. Working on it.
- A lot more articles aimed at lower ranks, written by lower ranks.
 - *Please write to us and encourage your junior ranks to write to us, we'll work with you to ensure your article gets up.*
- More interactive media.
 - *Ack. Interactive media is expensive and time consuming to develop. We're using some Future Ready Training System funding to develop some of this and it's in the pipeline now. You'll hear about it when it comes out ... promise.*
- Some greater vetting of material - some is pretty low quality.
 - *We'd love to hear what you think is low quality; as we said in an earlier question, we've got enough crowdsourced content to not publish the lower impact stuff. We also don't want to stifle enthusiastic writers.*
- You don't need to publish everyday. It makes PME annoying rather than something that peaks my interest when there is something relevant I should pay attention to.
 - *We think the solution is giving you the power to tailor what you receive as mentioned in previous questions.*
- Put the equivalent of COVE on an OFFICIAL network (like forcenet) so we can actually have some serious discussions and have more articles that push our thinking.
 - *We're on ForceNet now. We do get most of our conversations on Facebook because it's so accessible. If you want to have a more candid discussion then please use our ForceNet page.*
- Content - downloadable AAR gaming ideas, rules and counters to enhance tactical decision games as QDEs.
 - *We want to work with the ADF Wargaming Association to bring you some gaming content in 2022.*
- Keep the content flowing. Enlist a person at each rank to be a staff "blogger" for a year long rotation who uses the blog like a war diary. Chose them based on being in an innovative role. Weekly or twice monthly blogs about their project or role. Like reflective journals for all to read and learn from.
 - *Good idea.*
- Like or vote content so can determine what is popular.
 - *Coming in Cove 3.0!*

- As a reservist, I struggle to access the library resources for books reviewed, etc. It would be good if it could build the relationship with the Army Library to facilitate easy access. Often there is a book or item I am interested in but have no way of accessing it.
 - *Probably head over to a Defence Librarian and have this conversation with them. The service from those Defence Librarians is nothing short of outstanding and after that conversation we are confident that you'll be able to get whatever you need.*
- I only visit The Cove when there is something interesting in the newsletter I receive. Currently that is about every third newsletter I will follow up and read an article. Every piece I read has been quality content.
 - *That's exactly how we've designed it for you to use.*
- The Cove hasn't mastered the basics. It is so busy trying to run webinars and launch Cove+ etc. that it doesn't know how to treat writers. Its editorial process is broken. Writers receive an acknowledgement of receipt and then several weeks later the article is published without notice. The editor hasn't worked with the writer to help them improve and understand the edits made. They also haven't sought permission for the edits prior to publication. They never bother to tag the author's social media account in their post to help boost their online profile. It is a lazy editorial process, likely a product of lack of staffing, and is markedly different from the editorial process offered by Grounded Curiosity. Their team help develop/encourage you. They improve my writing and make it a pleasant experience.
 - *The Cove is much more than a writing platform and we need to spread our work across different mediums. There's no doubt that the process that our friends at Grounded Curiosity use to nurture new authors is outstanding and we can learn a thing or two from how they do it.*
- Unless it is done already, some sort of peer review process would be useful so that, innovative ideas and concepts can be assessed before promulgation. This will enhance the value of any paper and act as a 'long stop' ... as in cricket.
 - *Cricket analogies are always welcome! We do check that the content we publish isn't going to result in 4 byes for either Army or the author, but we want the conversation to really be in the comments once publication is complete.*
- Updating of the IMAP videos intro and training videos reference Date Pacific.
 - *Good feedback, thanks, we'll look at those! We just need to make sure we're in the education, not training space.*
- More Podcasts and voice articles. Controversial topics are also good. Why is nobody speaking about the SF allegations?
 - *More podcasts and voice articles are coming! We love the controversial content as well, as long as it's professional and constructive. On the Afghanistan SF allegations; nobody's written to us on that topic. There's topics within that we need to talk about and we'd love to hear from Army on that topic.*
- Why can't I view videos on the Defence system?

- *Our videos are hosted on a private YouTube channel, and that's blocked by the HAIGS gateway on the DPN. We want our content to be accessible off the DPN not on it. Cove 3.0 will have that functionality on and off DPN.*
- New website design. Better search function. Better browse function.
 - *The Cove 3.0 is coming and we can't wait for you to see it.*