

Davidson Electorate Literary Publications (Proof)

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Mr JONATHAN O'DEA (Davidson) [12.31 p.m.]: Today I pay tribute to two recently published authors in my electorate of Davidson. Stuart Pepper lives in St Ives with his wife and three small children and provides consulting advice to small to medium-size businesses. He also teaches a small business course at the Hornsby Ku-Ring-Gai Community College. It was against this backdrop that Stuart co-authored a book aimed at helping improve the business management capabilities of those without the benefit of formal business management training. The book which is titled *It's a Jungle Out There - Unlocking the secrets of starting and growing a successful business* was borne out of frustration with the inability of existing literature to help business owners genuinely make a difference in how they operate. It helps business owners and managers maximise the chances of succeeding, encouraging and challenging the reader with penetrating insights and pointed anecdotes. Reflecting its title, *It's a Jungle Out There*, the book uses animals as a vehicle to help the reader understand the concepts of business formation and growth and helps make the book simple, easy to read and, above all, engaging. Last month it was my pleasure to formally accept a copy of the book on behalf of the New South Wales Parliamentary Library.

The second book is by Michael Hambrook of Roseville, who has brought together an extraordinary collection of personal stories of spying, escaping and surviving war aptly titled *On the Front Line*. The stories include firsthand accounts of common soldiers, prisoners of war, slaves in German work camps, war administrators, undercover spies and ordinary citizens who have witnessed historical events as they happened. One of these amazing stories is told by another of my constituents, Paul Couvret of Belrose, who was the subject of my third private member's statement in 2007 following his naming by the *Manly Daily* as one of the top 100 contributors to the local area in the preceding 100 years. Paul Couvret was put to work in the dockyards of Nagasaki after being captured by the Japanese in World War II. At 11.00 a.m. on 9 August 1945 Paul was working beneath the hull of a ship in dry dock when the second atomic bomb was dropped on Japan. He describes a blinding flash of light that lit up the sky and every corner of the dry dock. He writes:

After that there was a moment of complete silence, but a silence that lasted only long enough for all of us down in the dry dock to realise that something had just occurred that was completely beyond our comprehension. Seconds later the blast of the explosion arrived. It was preceded by a wave of heat that swirled down, into and around all of us, a heat we could feel even though we were 10 metres or so below ground level.

He continues:

The debris was massive and became an avalanche of rubble hurtling towards us, crashing down into the dock. The noise got louder and louder as more and more debris arrived. Individual pieces were bouncing off the walls and ricocheting in all directions, causing panic amongst prisoners and guards alike. There was only one place to hide, beneath the keels of the ships we were building.

The author of *On the Front Line*, Michael Hambrook, spent World War II in England before moving to Southern Rhodesia in 1947. During the 1960s and 1970s he served in a Rhodesian police antiterrorist unit and he was private secretary to the Rhodesian Minister for Commerce and Industry at the time of the Rhodesian Government's 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence. Perhaps not surprisingly one of the stories recounted to Michael and included in his book is entitled, "The Last Days of Rhodesia". Each story in the book helps preserve personal histories as well as reminding us of our collective history. *On the Front Line* is an astounding collection of stories, which I commend Michael Hambrook for gathering together and publishing in a well presented, easy to read, hard-bound book. I look forward to presenting copies of the book to various local community groups in commemoration of Anzac Day this year.

I commend both Stuart Pepper and Michael Hambrook for two outstanding literary works. One looks at our past and the stories of individuals, which contribute to our collective history, while the other looks to the future and at ways of overcoming challenges that face many in the business world. Both books make a valuable contribution either to where we have come from or where we may be heading.