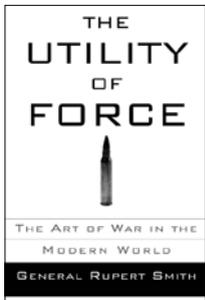


MR Book Reviews



Featured Review

THE UTILITY OF FORCE: The Art of War in the Modern World, General Rupert Smith, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2007, 430 pages, \$45.00.

If British General Rupert Smith is right, the United States and its allies are creating

the wrong forces, arming them with the wrong weapons, and using them in the wrong way. In *The Utility of Force*, Smith, who retired from the British Army in 2002, argues that war as we know it—the armed confrontation between two or more nation states—has become extinct.

In its place, we now engage in wars among the people, frustrating and seemingly interminable confrontations, conflicts, and combat actions in which weak, poorly armed adversaries exploit publicity, fear, and their stronger opponents' penchant for overwhelming force in order to gain sympathy, legitimacy, and power. The difficulties of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan overshadow Smith's ideas, but Smith catalogues a host of such "asymmetric" conflicts, from Spain to Chechnya, to expose the not-so-new realities confronting us.

Smith's thesis is an old one. Since the end of the cold war, Martin van Creveld, Ralph Peters, and other scholars and defense experts have written extensively on the rise of non-state actors, and this discourse has influenced the U.S. Army and Marine Corps' new FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which specifically addresses the challenges of asymmetric warfare. Blogger John Robb's recently published *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization* (Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2007) paints a particularly grim picture of crumbling nation-states incapable of responding quickly and effectively to the decentralized and

rapidly evolving tactics of various criminal and terrorist networks.

Smith's arguments have arrived late to this conversation, but they merit serious attention for several reasons. First, Smith's personal credibility demands respect. Smith has served in the British Ministry of Defense and had extensive command and staff experience in Rhodesia, Iraq (Desert Storm), Bosnia, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland. Just as important, Smith presents his arguments patiently and dispassionately, avoiding the hastily drawn conclusions and breathless fatalism that characterize too much popular military commentary.

Smith also resists the urge to reduce his book to an autobiography. He rarely invokes his own experience to make a point. However, when he does, as in his discussion of UN peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, he convincingly portrays the repeated, systemic failure of UN diplomats and his own British ministers to appreciate the political and military realities that led to the 1995 massacres at Grozny and Srebrenica.

More often, Smith effectively grounds his larger arguments within the context of Western military history. He begins his analysis by crediting the birth of "industrial" warfare to the *levee en masse*, noting that Napoleon successfully combined political idealism and massive conscription to rapidly overwhelm his rivals on the Continent. From Napoleon, Smith briskly summarizes Clausewitz's concept of the triangular relationship between the state, the military, and the people, and employs this concept as a prism through which he illustrates the technological, strategic, and geopolitical developments of the 19th century that led to the slaughter of the western front. Smith concludes with a persuasive argument that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bypassed both the state

and the military, constituting the ultimate form of warfare against the people. The catastrophic implications of nuclear weapons rendered such warfare unthinkable, just as it made the massive formations that characterized it obsolete.

Smith then examines the parallel developments of confrontation and conflict that marked the history of the cold war, noting that many of the period's conflicts, including Korea, Cyprus, and the Falklands, remain unresolved to this day. Interestingly, he credits NATO's strategy of combining a credible nuclear deterrent with relatively hollow forces as a significant economic factor in the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, which maintained overwhelming conventional capabilities, including 200 armor and infantry divisions, to the very end. Smith argues that intervention in Afghanistan cost the Kremlin the support of the Russian people and permanently disrupted the balance of the USSR's Clausewitzian triad. He also dismisses the Weinberger principles, which prescribed a series of preconditions for the commitment of U.S. forces. According to Smith, modern confrontations are and will be unpredictable, and it is unlikely that Weinberger's conditions would ever be met.

Smith saves the best for last, identifying six trends that now characterize war among the people:

- The ends for which we fight are changing.
- We fight among the people, rather than on discrete battlefields.
- Our conflicts now resist quick resolution.
- We fight to preserve the force.
- We routinely find new uses for old weapons and organizations.
- War between alliances or coalitions and non-state actors has largely replaced interstate confrontations.

Again, none of these ideas are new, but Smith's well-reasoned arguments lend them considerable

urgency, particularly when one considers how America formulates and spends its annual defense budget. He observes, for example, that the most effective weapon of the past 15 years has been the machete, which was used to kill nearly a million Rwandans in 1994.

Still, Smith believes in both the future of the nation-state and the importance of military power. He predicts, however, that industrial war as a single, massive culminating event will be replaced by “a series of events which may serve to deliver the desired political outcome.” To gain this outcome, Smith urges national (and multinational) leaders to widen their horizons, better appreciate and anticipate the inevitable connections between military and political action, and to tailor the various elements of national power, including diplomatic, humanitarian, economic, military, and intelligence agencies, to cope with the new paradigm.

The Utility of Force is a disturbing and important examination of how and why we fight, and it makes a significant contribution to the national discussion about our future security strategy. Its arguments deserve the attention of American strategists, scholars, Soldiers, and taxpayers.

**LTC Bill Latham, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES: Successes and Failures of Six Nations, Yonah Alexander, ed., Potomac Books, Dulles, VA, 2006, 216 pages, \$48.00.

Yonah Alexander has compiled a series of essays into a book, *Counterterrorism Strategies: Successes and Failures of Six Nations*, for use by those charged with determining counterterrorism strategy. Unfortunately, while Alexander’s contributors sport impressive résumés full of experience and scholarship on the subject of terrorism, the book falls short of Alexander’s objectives.

In his introduction, Alexander defines terrorism, describes his research guidance, and frames four questions he wants answered: What are the governmental and public per-

ceptions of the terrorist threat? How successful have the government’s policies and actions been in combating domestic and international terrorism? What factors have influenced the government’s willingness and ability to cooperate with other nations in combating terrorism? How well have particular countries performed in counterterrorism?

Alexander himself distills the U.S. experience since 1970 to this: combating terrorism shifted from reactive law enforcement to application of all instruments of national power proactively. Paraphrasing his words, the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism is to defeat terrorist organizations, deny them sponsorship, diminish the conditions leading to terrorism, and defend the United States.

The only other essayist to address the subject of terrorism so completely is Dr. Ulrich Schneckener, who details how Germany is organized to combat terrorism and why. He concludes with a frank discussion of strengths, shortcomings, and open policy questions to be resolved. Judging from Schneckener’s contribution here, we in the United States can learn from Germany’s experience in dealing with transnational terrorism.

The rest of the contributors fall short of the standard set by Alexander and Schneckener. France’s contribution boils down to “terrorism is a criminal act, not an act of war.” The French combat terrorism by employing specialized police and judicial organizations. Operations are coordinated at the ministerial and national level, but the police and magistrate functions for counterterrorism are centralized, with the Ministry of the Interior taking the lead for policy and strategy. The author merely describes France’s organizational and bureaucratic approach to counterterrorism; he does not adequately answer Alexander’s four questions.

In the remaining essays we find a legal discussion from the Egyptian contributor, who is an international-law professor; a history of negotiations, conferences, and talks by a former Sri Lankan ambassador who directs his country’s diplomatic training institute; and a description

of Italy’s legalistic and law-enforcement approach to counterterrorism by two writers who discuss a strategy built on plea bargaining, the freezing of financial assets, infiltration of groups, changes to criminal law, and increases in internal security.

Alexander summarizes the experiences of his contributing nations in order to offer “selected examples of what worked and did not work for the purpose of considering a ‘best practices’ framework.” Because his primary questions are for the most part poorly answered, he does not achieve his intent, and I cannot recommend this book to the readers of *Military Review*.

**LTC Stephen V. Tennant,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY IN IRAQ, Ahmed S. Hashim, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2006, 389 pages, \$29.95.

Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq is a candid, balanced insight into the complex challenges in Iraq from 2003 to 2005. Discussing motives, tactics, and the evolutionary nature of the insurgency, author Ahmed Hashim is adroit at drawing intricate strands into an understandable whole. Complementary chapters address the insurgents’ way of warfare and the challenges of competing national identities. However, it is Hashim’s matter-of-fact evaluation of U.S. counterinsurgency that many will find enlightening and on occasion disconcerting.

Hashim’s thesis in a section titled “Ideology, Politics, and Failure to Execute” is that U.S. policy and the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign have played a central role in the outbreak and perpetuation of the insurgency. The author deftly articulates three reasons why the U.S. stumbled so badly: it adopted a rigid and inflexibly ideological approach; it failed to implement the basics of state rebuilding in the immediate aftermath of war; and its military had no counterinsurgency strategy going into the war. Such criticism will undoubtedly ruffle some feathers, but Hashim’s

arguments are cogent and balanced. They deserve to be aired.

Hashim draws on history to improve our understanding of today's challenges. He highlights the fact that it was the British in 1921 who institutionalized Sunni political domination in Iraq, and, in a comparison of the U.S. counterinsurgency in Iraq to the British effort in Malaya (1948-1960), he argues that neoconservatives who point to Malaya as a model for success in Iraq fail to understand obvious differences between the two insurgencies; consequently, their analysis is misleading and their prescription erroneous.

Hashim concludes that the Iraqi insurgency has been motivated at least in part by concerns about national identity: "Put simply, often states and people act not only to win things or to prevent the loss of things, 'but also in order to defend a certain conception of who they are.'" According to Hashim, such bone-deep motivation, coupled with a growing gap between U.S. pragmatists and ideologues in the policy arena, makes the "managed partition" of Iraq seem like the only possible solution.

Like so many accounts written while events are still unfolding, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* must wait on the future before it can be judged a tour de force. In the short term, however, Hashim's work enlightens the current debate on Iraq by providing a measured, carefully researched, and nuanced explanation of events up to 2005. For those deploying to Iraq, the book is necessary professional reading. Civilians wishing to gain a greater understanding of the Iraqi conundrum will appreciate the work, too.

MAJ Andrew M. Roe, British Army, Bulford, United Kingdom

MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SMALLER-SCALE CONTINGENCIES: A Comparative Approach, Kevin D. Stringer, Praeger Security International, Westport, CT, 2006, 222 pages, \$49.95.

Based on recent threats to the U.S. homeland and global threats to U.S.

interests, there seems to be a surge in missions involving homeland defense and expeditionary operations, all of which fall under the umbrella of "operations other than war." It is often said that the military must prepare for future threats in terms of training, doctrine, and force structure, and our Army has always adapted, albeit mostly reactively, to changes in the threat environment.

In *Military Organizations for Homeland Defense and Smaller-Scale Contingencies*, Kevin D. Stringer provides a proactive solution to the new security requirements by suggesting that the U.S. Army should focus on developing specific kinds of brigade-size units, not general types, to conduct stability operations. Toward that end, Stringer combines Colonel (Retired) Douglas MacGregor's concept of joint task forces/brigades and Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Hooker's proposal of educating leaders in accordance with career tracks and unit missions. Stringer's "specialty brigades" would be assigned key stability missions such as domestic authority support, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-drug operations, arms control, noncombatant evacuation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, show of force, counterinsurgency support, and even the more traditional attacks and raids.

To arrive at his optimum brigade model for stability operations, Stringer compares units from nine countries (Sweden, Norway, Israel, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Rhodesia, Soviet Union, and Colombia). This is where his analysis seems strongest.

Stringer also calls for a clear delineation of duties between active-duty and Guard/Reserve brigades, with the active concentrating on external threats and the Guard/Reserve focusing on domestic ones. Although somewhat controversial, this proposal falls at least partly in line with recommendations by the Hart-Rudman Commission and the Gilmore Panel, both of which urged that the National Guard be assigned homeland security as a primary mission.

On the debit side, Stringer does not fully address the issue of trans-

forming while conducting combat operations, nor does he consider the political or financial impacts of restructuring and retraining. However, placed against the book's fresh and innovative recommendations, these shortcomings seem more like quibbles than qualms. Ultimately, and most important, Stringer erects a strong foundation for future decisions about how we should transform our Army to face domestic emergencies and emerging threats. His book could become the benchmark for future publications addressing these issues.

MAJ John M. Hinck, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

RUMSFELD: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy, Andrew Cockburn, Scribner Press, New York, 2007, 247 pages, \$25.00.

On the heels of Bob Woodward's *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006), Michael Isikoff and David Corn's *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End* (Three Rivers Press, New York, 2007), and Peter W. Galbraith's *The End of Iraq* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2007), Andrew Cockburn offers readers what is undoubtedly the harshest critique of the former Secretary of Defense to date. With *Rumsfeld: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy*, Cockburn uses the literary equivalent of a broadsword to explore his subject, striking deeply and often at Rumsfeld as a politician, a business leader, a Washington insider, and a defense secretary. The resulting blunt-force trauma is at times informative, but ultimately exhausting.

Cockburn introduces Rumsfeld as a young congressional hopeful from Chicago, noting his early tendency to leave dissatisfaction in his wake. He follows Rumsfeld through his steady rise within the administrations of presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford, detailing his orchestration of the "Halloween massacre" of 31 October 1975, the political

coup de grace that thrust him into the Defense Department at 43, the youngest man to serve as secretary. Cockburn then explores Rumsfeld's ventures into the business world, first in pharmaceuticals with G.D. Seale (where he successfully lobbied for FDA approval of the artificial sweetener aspartame, a suspected carcinogen), then later in technology with General Instrument Corporation and in construction with the Swiss company ABB (where, as a member of the board of directors, he approved the sale of light-water nuclear reactors to North Korea in 1991).

When Cockburn returns with Rumsfeld to the Defense Department in 2001, readers may begin to wonder if the secretary himself is a member of President George W. Bush's infamous "Axis of Evil." While the facts surrounding Rumsfeld's ascendance to political influence may not be in question, Cockburn's subjective approach to the former secretary is eventually wearying. Aside from a short, albeit informative, analysis of his subject's personality early in the book, Cockburn swings his literary broadsword with anything but surgical precision, hacking away at Rumsfeld with an approach more befitting Attila. Although other authors have already addressed many of Cockburn's conclusions concerning the former secretary, the portrait painted here borders on cancerous.

Cockburn is a well-respected writer and journalist, having published five nonfiction books, including the prescient *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (Random House, New York, 1983), which revealed the dire state of the Warsaw Pact military capability at the height of the cold war. Some readers will find in *Rumsfeld* a firm validation of their own personal opinions, but those in search of an unbiased examination of the life of the man may want to read elsewhere. Nevertheless, despite its seemingly barbaric approach, *Rumsfeld* is well-written, captivating, and thoroughly entertaining.

**LTC Steve Leonard, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

TRANSFORMING EUROPEAN MILITARIES: Coalition Operations and the Technology Gap, Gordon Adams and Guy Ben-Ari, Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, 2006, 176 pages, \$120.00.

In *Transforming European Militaries*, Gordon Adams and Guy Ben-Ari argue comprehensively and compellingly that NATO's greatest capability challenge going forward is to create a networked, interoperable C4ISR architecture. The authors outline, in great detail, all the major C4ISR initiatives going on among NATO nations that have been significant capability providers for NATO-led operations, and in Sweden, a leading Partnership for Peace nation.

What becomes strikingly clear is that NATO faces a number of challenges to building a C4ISR capability that will satisfy its ambitious requirements. Many of the programs and initiatives are being developed disjointedly and, in many cases, in competition with each other. Furthermore, competing national defense priorities among NATO members, shrinking defense budgets, and restrictive dual-purpose usage requirements, technology transfer regulations, and interoperability concerns are complicating the challenge of synchronizing and synergizing collaborative research, technology investments, and capability and systems procurement.

Making matters even more difficult is the emerging competition between an expanding European Union (EU) and its strategic military ambitions relative to EU NATO members and U.S. defense ambitions and priorities. Having served with NATO's Allied Command for Transformation, where I developed capability requirements through NATO's Defense Requirements Review and endured the challenges of getting nations to commit to capability development/requirements via force goals, I have a special appreciation for the authors' comprehensive, well-articulated assessment of the problems inherent in developing interoperable C4ISR

capabilities within NATO. Adams and Ben-Ari clearly demonstrate their understanding of these challenges and propose viable ways to meet them successfully.

Transforming European Militaries contains a wealth of knowledge for those interested in what the most prominent countries in the most capable and respected military alliance extant are doing in the realm of C4ISR. It also gives valuable insight into member-nation national defense strategies, philosophies, and priorities, as well as approaches each nation takes to meeting its national objectives while working toward collective EU and NATO objectives. The book is particularly valuable to those working at the strategic or joint/combined operational levels of military planning, especially those involved with C4ISR functions or operational planning within NATO.

**LTC David A. Anderson,
USMC, Retired, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

WHAT WAS ASKED OF US: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It, Trish Wood, Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group, NY, 2006, 309 pages, \$25.99.

Trish Wood, a Canadian reporter working with Iraqi war veterans, asserts that the media, the military, the White House, and political biases are filtering the facts about the war. According to Wood, we really know very little about the experiences of front-line American Soldiers. Wood's publisher boasts that her book, *What Was Asked of Us: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It*, is an unvarnished, unfiltered, uncensored history of the Iraq war straight from the mouths of the men and women who are fighting it. Although roughly one million Soldiers have deployed to Iraq, the author interviewed only 29, thus providing a very narrow and limited perspective. Moreover, Wood doesn't give us the actual transcripts of her interviews; she takes the Soldiers' heartfelt experiences and presents them as stories.

The evidence presented is therefore anecdotal in nature and filtered through Wood, two facts that ought to make us question the objectivity of Wood's findings.

From the first suicide bombing of Operation Iraqi Freedom to the anti-climactic Iraqi elections, Wood's biases become apparent. Her book's true value rests in the common experiences shared by the interviewees. Stories appropriately titled "I didn't pray for the Iraqis" to "We just killed a bunch of dudes who were on our side" will appeal to most veterans. They also speak volumes about the horrors of combat and the origins of post traumatic stress. Gory and traumatic, the book focuses an inordinate amount of attention on mortuary affairs, with one officer contributing five such stories. Another interviewee describes his combat experience as "gruesome to just beyond the realm of a horror film."

It is not this reviewer's intention to dismiss *What Was Asked of Us*; although it has problems, Wood's book also has merit. Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics*, states that "understanding the human dimension—the effects of combat on Soldiers," is part of the art of tactics. Stories like the ones presented here can help us understand the magnitude of combat effects. At the same time, reading them may help our combat veterans achieve catharsis.

**LTC Michele Miller, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

ARMY 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War, David Axe, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 2007, 111 pages, \$24.95.

Recently, a Medal of Honor recipient whose acquaintance I made reminded me that, 40 years ago, the American public could not separate people in uniform from the decisions made by their civilian elected leader, and as a result they made Soldiers in uniform a target. Many who made that error are now ashamed of it. Reading *Army 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War* reminded me of that error.

In *Army 101*, author David Axe describes the experiences of several cadets enrolled in the Army ROTC program at the University of South Carolina. Axe hinges his narrative on events before and after 9/11 and organizes his book in two distinct sections of eight short chapters, implying both national and local shifts in attitude about the War on Terror and its effect on those wearing the nation's uniform. The opening vignette describes ROTC cadets waiting in ambush during a training exercise. Axe perfectly captures that moment by focusing on the experiences of the cadet squad leader in charge.

Unfortunately, the book struggles after that first success. The next-to-last chapter takes the reader to Iraq for five pages to describe the experiences of a few officers who were commissioned via ROTC. The connection appears to be that the officers are from South Carolina and either served in the South Carolina National Guard or were commissioned from an ROTC program in South Carolina. But none of them were part of the ROTC program at South Carolina during the time span of this book. The chapter mainly serves as a platform to condemn, for the last of many times, American intervention in Iraq. (I should also note that the chapter has another possible *raison d'être*: it features a picture of Axe in a helicopter riding into Iraq.)

Axe's limited omniscient point of view veers off in a prose style that depends largely on polarizing hyperbole to hold the reader's attention. More damaging, it divorces the narrator from the limits of fact or reasonable logic. For example, just because a noncommissioned officer at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, wears the patch of the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment on his right shoulder, he must have "massacred Iraqi soldiers in the Kuwaiti desert." The book is filled with similar sensational yet nonsensical claims.

The reader might conclude that Axe adopts this hyperbolic style to emphasize the gravity of the situation he describes. That may be, but his tone is too smug to bring dignity to that gravity. Moreover, his book is

replete with niggling errors of fact, as he repeatedly mislabels or misidentifies military units, programs, and practices. Axe confuses the uniformed chiefs of the armed services with the civilian service secretaries. He insists that the Army executes "forced enlistments," a clear misinterpretation of the terms of a cadet's enlistment contract. He claims that an ROTC cadet technically outranks a noncommissioned officer. He describes the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as "the official college of the U.S. Army," as if the Army assigned corporate sponsorship to the Academy. Little by little, Axe spends the currency he earned with his readers in Chapter 1.

Clichéd diction abounds, much of it issuing from Axe's post-Vietnam-era sensibility, and cadet perceptions are reported as facts, a logical fallacy that stems from Axe's obvious empathy with his subjects. Thus the dialogue is replete with F-bombs, the training events are clarified with allusions to Jean-Claude Van Damme movies, and the central thesis is a recurring conclusion: the chain of command, from the senior cadets learning to lead their peers to the noncommissioned officers running the rappel tower to the president of the United States of America, is all screwed up. If we believe Axe, the Abu Ghraib prison scandal symbolizes this thesis. In fact, if Abu Ghraib had never happened, this book would be 20 or 30 pages shorter. That makes all the more reason to lament those crimes.

**LTC Robert Gibson, USA,
Retired, U.S. Military Academy,
New York**

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Volume 5, The McNamara Ascendancy, 1961-1965, Lawrence S. Kaplan, Ronald D. Landa, and Edward J. Drea, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC, 2006, 664 pages, \$49.00.

Writing the history of a large government institution is always a challenging task, but the challenge is increased when the head of the

institution is a controversial figure whose dramatic actions are difficult to assess outside the organizational context in which they occurred. Seen in this light, *The McNamara Ascendancy*, the official history of the Office of the Secretary of Defense during the first four years of Robert S. McNamara's tenure, is a remarkable achievement.

The authors begin with a mundane but necessary discussion of McNamara's organizational changes, to include the creation of various joint organizations (Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Logistics Agency, et al.) and the implementation of the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, McNamara's attempt to eliminate duplication between the military services by budgeting along functional lines—general war offensive forces, general purpose forces, sealift, and airlift forces, etc. Inevitably, these changes produced conflict between a defense secretary with strongly held ideas and the military and congressional leaders whose opinions he disregarded. This portion of the study almost demands that the reader draw comparisons to Donald Rumsfeld's second stint as secretary of defense. The authors conclude that although these clashes cost McNamara politically, he (like Rumsfeld for more than five years) was able to prevail because of strong presidential support and his own enormous pragmatism and ability.

Thereafter, the bulk of the book focuses on McNamara's role in the issues of the day, including the Berlin Wall and attendant partial mobilization, the two crises over Cuba, the continuing issue of Laotian neutrality, and the inexorable U.S. slide toward involvement in Vietnam. Again, the historical parallels to Rumsfeld are unavoidable, as McNamara remained confident that the Vietnamese Communists would be defeated even as he tried (although vainly) to minimize and reduce U.S. troop commitments in the war zone.

This is a remarkably lucid book that contains much of value about civil-military relations and institutional change in a time of great military stress. Despite its neces-

sary bulk, it is highly readable and deserves the attention of all professional Soldiers and politicians.

**COL Jonathan M. House,
USAR, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE TET OFFENSIVE: A Concise History, James H. Willbanks, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, \$29.50.

In this short, well-written, and helpful reference, James Willbanks traces the origins, conduct, and aftermath of the Communist Tet Offensive in 1968, during the Vietnam War. He highlights conflicting interpretations of the campaign's success and significance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Willbanks includes a brief chronology of major Tet-related events from January 1967 to December 1968; a pithy encyclopedia of Tet-related vocabulary; reproductions of 10 important primary documents; and a reference guide to primary sources, significant secondary works, archival collections, and other resources concerning the Vietnam War in 1968.

Within his narrative, Willbanks ably encapsulates the campaign's most salient features for those unfamiliar with Tet 1968 in particular, and the Vietnam War in general. However, his treatment of the continuing historiographical debate over Tet betrays a vein of institutional bias that runs throughout the work. Given his position as a military historian on the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College faculty, it is not surprising that Willbanks effectively condemns what he deems slanted and overzealous American media coverage for translating a major tactical defeat of Communist forces into ultimate strategic victory for North Vietnam. It must be noted, though, that Willbanks does devote relatively extensive and favorable text to *Washington Post* reporter Peter Braestrup's work.

Elsewhere, Willbanks glosses over the genesis and moment of fundamental reappraisals by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford

and the "Wise Men," President Lyndon Johnson's nine-man panel of retired presidential advisors. He also affords precious bibliographic text to a chapter by Victor Davis Hanson in an otherwise tight selection of important secondary works. Perhaps the text devoted to the Hanson entry could instead have been used to acknowledge Record Group 472 of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, as one of the premier archival sources for scholars researching the Vietnam War.

Despite these minor and understandable shortcomings, Willbanks has succeeded admirably in his stated mission "to provide information and resources for further study of the 1968 Tet Offensive." As a primer, his work will launch many undergraduate and graduate students well forward on their paths to scholarly success. *The Tet Offensive* is enjoyable reading and an important new addition to the large body of scholarship concerning the Vietnam War.

**MAJ John M. Hawkins,
West Point, New York**

HITLER'S SOLDIER IN THE U.S. ARMY: An Unlikely Memoir of WW II, Werner H. Von Rosenstiel, The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 2006, 294 pages, \$22.50.

Memoirs provide much of the grist we have for understanding the grand events of history. Not surprisingly, memoirs are among the oldest forms of historical writing and range from Caesar's *Commentaries* to Sam Watkins' *Company Aych: A Confederate Memoir of the Civil War* (Touchstone, New York, 2003) to today's blog entries written by Soldiers deployed to Kabul and Baghdad. We are nearing the end of new memoirs of World War II, so Werner Von Rosenstiel's *Hitler's Soldier in the U.S. Army* is a welcome, even wonderful, addition to the stories the "greatest generation" is seeking to tell before it is too late. Von Rosenstiel writes clearly and with wit and appreciation about how ironic his personal experience was.

Von Rosenstiel's story is, as he asserts, unlikely. The son of a petty Prussian nobleman-cum-bureaucrat, the author studied law and was admitted to the bar in Germany, met the deposed Kaiser, and cheered the news of Hitler's rise to power. While working to pay his way, he studied political science and traveled in the United States and the Pacific from 1935 to 1937. He arrived home in January 1937, where he received notice for military service. Now disillusioned by what he saw in Germany, Von Rosenstiel applied for 30 days' leave in the United States, ostensibly to improve his English prior to assuming a post in the German judicial administration.

Von Rosenstiel returned to the United States in April 1939. He married an American girl he met when studying at the University of Cincinnati, and they moved to Detroit, Michigan, in August 1939, where he worked for a German pharmaceutical company. Things became surreal for Von Rosenstiel after 7 December 1941. First the U.S. identified him as an enemy alien and then, in March of 1943, he received notice that New York had admitted him to the bar and that he was drafted again—this time by the U.S. Army. After Rosenstiel completed basic training, the Army consigned him to aimless duty in a labor service company while determining whether he could be trusted. Von Rosenstiel's service in the U.S. Foreign Legion proved frustrating. He understood why he was not to be trusted, but he found it difficult to understand why some of his American-born colleagues, who spoke only English and, more important, clearly held "American" views, could be seen as threats.

Army counterintelligence reluctantly and provisionally cleared Von Rosenstiel in the summer of 1943. In August, he became a U.S. citizen. Not long after, he joined the XVIII Airborne Corps, where he served as a legal assistant until he accepted a commission in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. After V-E Day, Von Rosenstiel joined the staff of the Nuremberg tribunal, for which he worked until he departed for home and separated from service in December 1946. Von Rosenstiel's story is well told and is as truly amazing as it is unlikely.

**COL Gregory Fontenot USA,
Retired, Lansing, Kansas**

PORTRAIT OF WAR: The U.S. Army's First Combat Artists and the Doughboys' Experience in WWI, Peter Krass, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, 2007, 342 pages, \$30.00.

Written in an accessible style, *Portrait of War* is the story of eight U.S. Army Soldier-artists recruited as captains to accompany the combat troops of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I. Both the French and American high commands gave them passes to allow maximum access to occupied zones, battlefields, and trenches. These men found themselves amid the fiercest combat that American troops participated in, including campaigns in the Marne, Belleau Wood, and Meuse Argonne. By using "their heightened powers of observation, the artists not only recorded but also exposed history as it unfolded."

The pre-war artistic histories of these men are impressive: for

example, Wallace Morgan had an artist's studio for 10 years prior to the war; George Harding was teaching art at the University of Pennsylvania; Harry Townsend had studied under Howard Pyle and been an illustrator for major journals; and Harvey Dunn was an associate of N.C. Wyeth. The only one who had had military training was J. Andre Smith, but the training was minimal. Throughout their wartime experiences, the eight artists successfully fought off pressure to act as propagandists for the U.S. war effort. What they did produce was a curious mix of propaganda and realism. As the war went on, unsettling images began to appear on the artists' tablets. In many drawings and sketches, we see AEF soldiers subsumed into the slaughter fields that were World War I.

Krass's book contains dozens of examples of the artists' works, and those who are familiar with their European counterparts' drawings—such as Max Beckmann's or Luc-Albert Moreau's—will appreciate the Americans' various interpretive styles. Krass also includes a very helpful afterword with biographies of the men. The book is not without superfluous anecdote, but that notwithstanding, this is an outstanding work that fills gaps in our knowledge of how war is perceived and received through artistic interpretation, especially as it relates to the American experience. Krass skillfully weaves the wartime experience of the artists into the campaigns they followed, and reminds us of the vital contributions of American combat artists to our military history.

**MAJ Jeff Alfier,
USAF, Retired,
Ramstein, Germany**

MR Letters

Army IO is PSYOP

Lieutenant Colonel Carmine Cicalese, USA, Assistant Chief of Staff, G7, MultiNational Division—Baghdad(MND-B), Iraq—As an

information operations (IO) officer, I appreciated Colonel Curtis D. Boyd's May-June 2007 *Military Review* article "Army IO is PSYOP—Influencing More with Less."

COL Boyd is correct that IO is often confused with psychological operations (PSYOP) . . . but mainly because we do not understand our own doctrine, recent changes to the

doctrine, or emerging doctrine. . . .

In MND-B, we conduct full-spectrum IO by planning, coordinating, and synchronizing IO, public affairs (PA), civil affairs, and related special programs. We focus on disrupting the enemy's decision-making cycle as it relates to the division commander's high-priority target list. PSYOP is not alone in this effort The division also plans and coordinates the communications line of operation (LOO) The communications LOO informs and influences key audiences through PA, select IO (mostly PSYOP), video images, and Soldier and leader engagements. PSYOP is an important part of shaping the information environment and then exploiting key events . . . however, it is not the only means of exploitation and consequence management. . . .

The greatest growth in information is in the PA arena. By engaging Iraqi and Arab media outlets . . . [w]e do not have to wait for PSYOP's produc-

tion and approval—PA is not limited to domestic audiences whatsoever.

COL Boyd is also correct that more PSYOP personnel are needed. Although the PSYOP personnel work for me, I believe a PSYOP lieutenant colonel at division level would better serve the commander. The PSYOP and PA communities have not reached a common understanding in support of IO or of the importance of a communications approach; as a result, they have defaulted the process to the IO generalist.

COL Boyd's recommendation to develop strategic communications experts from the PA and PSYOP communities is sound. However, we cannot forget the importance of coordinating Soldier and leader engagements at all levels in order to tie the strategic communications message down to the tactical level. Thus, the strategic communications specialist has to be more than just PSYOP or PA. The Army should develop field-grade specialists to

serve at the brigade combat team level and above. This calls for a commitment to increase information personnel.

I concur that we need to reallocate information billets, but with a subtle change, PSYOP and PA personnel can be strategic communications specialists. The IO generalist becomes an IO specialist who coordinates the core capabilities to affect the enemy's cognitive and technical decision-making cycle.

The Army is losing sight of its IO capability because of the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight. However, the joint-IO approach is still required in COIN and even more so in high-intensity conflicts. As co-author of the original Combined Forces Land Component Command IO plan for the ousting of the regime, I can vouch that the IO plan was much more than PSYOP. If we don't remember the origins of IO, we will retreat to our capabilities circa 1990.



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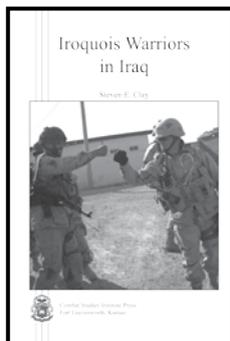
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