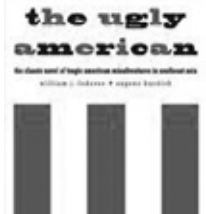


MR Classics Revisited



The Quiet American, The Ugly American

*Counterinsurgency from
the Fifties*

In a recent speech highlighting what might happen if the U.S. should withdraw quickly from Iraq, President George W. Bush alluded to Graham Greene's Vietnam-era novel *The Quiet American* (William Heineman, London). Greene's book is arguably the yin to the yang of William Lederer and Eugene Burdick's *The Ugly American* (Fawcett Crest, New York) in the American counterinsurgency (COIN) Tao. Much noticed at the time

they were published (1955 and 1958 respectively), both novels deserve to be reread for the two diametrically opposed views they offer of the role the U.S. should play in confronting insurgency abroad.

Obviously, the context of insurgency then and now is different. When these novels first arrived on bookstands, the optimism America felt at the end of World War II had evaporated. The U.S. and its former allies, fresh from a near-pyrrhic victory over fascism, immediately split into bi-polar, mutually antagonistic democratic and Communist blocs. Almost immediately, the world was back on the brink of war, and a nuclear one at that. Empires were breaking up, too. France and the U.K., exhausted by World War II, either gave up their colonies or fought losing struggles against nationalist insurgencies. These transitions created battlegrounds for the new war between democracy and communism. Like President Bush would do 40 years later in calling for a global war against Islamic terrorism, President John F. Kennedy declared

Communism a direct threat to U.S. interests in Asia, Europe, Cuba, and South America—an assessment that is even now understandable.

Both *The Ugly American* and *The Quiet American* consider how and whether the U.S. should confront communism in Vietnam, or anywhere else for that matter. *The Ugly American* is not really a novel at all, but a series of vignettes designed to show how the U.S. might fail in Vietnam and what it might do that could work. Lederer and Burdick believed the U.S. could defeat communist insurgents and should attempt to do so. In their view, success would come if the U.S. followed the lead of pioneers in counterinsurgency. Greene, however, turned a jaundiced eye on America's effort in Vietnam, observing that U.S. COIN practitioners were boorish and clumsy and meddled unnecessarily in the host country's affairs. The book's obvious parallels with the initial U.S. stumbling in Iraq, coupled with Greene's overt hostility toward the U.S. and its government minions, may account for why it has been recently republished.

Greene's chief protagonists are a burned-out, alcoholic British reporter named Fowler and a dangerously naïve American named Alden Pyle. Fowler, bitter with loss and yet convinced of his inherent superiority, reeks of the decaying British Empire. Pyle, clearly an Ivy League product, is well heeled and well educated, but ignorant and hopelessly foolish. For Greene, Pyle is post-war America, stupefied by power and righteousness—and therefore dangerous. There are more metaphors, all as obvious and heavy-handed, perhaps none more so than the love interest, Phuong, a sexually exploited beauty whose name means "phoenix" in Vietnamese. But as Fowler observes, "Nothing nowadays is fabulous, and nothing rises from its ashes."

Both Lederer-Burdick and Greene may have modeled their protagonists on Edward Geary Lansdale, an advertising and marketing specialist who joined the Air Corps in World War II and was an early recruit to the OSS. Lansdale epitomized the good and the bad in American COIN efforts. On one hand, he applied his considerable talent in marketing and advertising to support Ramon Mag-saysay's successful effort against the Huk insurgency in the Philippines; on the other, he played a part in some of the more dubious behind-the-scenes machinations in Vietnam and Cuba. Many, however, perceived Lansdale to be the best COIN warrior of the Cold War, either in or out of uniform. Greene denied he modeled Pyle on Lansdale—Lansdale didn't enter Vietnam until 1954 and Greene finished *The Quiet American* in 1952—but the idea that he did has stuck. Lederer and Burdick, however, clearly had Lansdale in mind.

Two biographers, Cecil B. Currey (*Edward Lansdale: The Unquiet American*, 1988) and Jonathan Nashel (*Edward Lansdale's Cold War*, 2005) have examined Lansdale's life as a Cold War operative. Currey found Lansdale to have been an admirable if flawed man. Nashel, who links his subject to Alden Pyle, finds Greene's depiction of "a destructive do-gooder abroad" to be "so accurate and powerful in exposing America's self-deluded mission"—and thus Lansdale's—"that it shadowed Lansdale for the rest of his life." In short, Nashel, like Greene, cannot imagine a role for the U.S. in any counterinsurgency. In his epilogue, Nashel asserts that the many ills plaguing Vietnam today have more to do with the lingering effects of massive U.S. destruction than bad decisions made by Vietnam's leaders. He also argues (convincingly) that Lansdale was a "Cold War liberal"—a predecessor

to Bush's neoconservative interventionists—who believed America had a special mission to spread its democracy and market economics throughout the world. Nashel's characterization doesn't seem to be too far off the mark.

So what might we learn about COIN from rereading Greene's and Lederer-Burdick's novels in 2007? Conditions today are far different than they were 50 years ago, but the threat posed by Islamic fascism is as daunting as communism's ever was. In confronting this threat, the U.S. will likely have to support COIN operations in foreign countries while fighting a battle of ideas internationally; in other words, it will have to wield both military and soft power

judiciously, and with nuance. Above all, it must not be as clumsy and naïve as Alden Pyle.

A character in *The Ugly American* says, "You don't know the power of an idea." This is perhaps Lederer-Burdick's main lesson for our current COIN situation. As Lansdale himself said, "Those who would wage counterinsurgency must be able to address both the idea and the narrative of the insurgent." There is much more to confronting insurgency than winning tactical engagements. To be successful, the counterinsurgent must understand the insurgency he is facing. Like Homer Atkins, a U.S. field engineer in *The Ugly American*, the successful counterinsurgent must also bend

his back alongside the people his country wishes to help. Counterinsurgency cannot be fought from afar, as Lansdale noted on the last page of his 1972 autobiography, *In the Midst of War: An American's Mission to Southeast Asia*. "The poorest view of an insurgency," he opined, "is from an office desk." I would argue that he may be right, but that we can at least prepare ourselves for what we must do by reading and studying back here, before we go, thoughtful and relevant works on the difficulties of COIN and nation-building abroad.

Colonel Gregory Fontenot, USA, Retired, served as chief of the Commander's Planning Group, TRADOC; Director of SAMS, and Commander, BCTP. He is currently director of the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

MR Book Reviews



HOUSE TO HOUSE: An Epic Memoir of War, Staff Sergeant David Bellavia with John R. Bruning, Free Press, New York, 2007, 321 pages, \$26.00.

When searching for one word to describe this book, "raw" comes to mind. The language is raw, the descriptions

are raw, and the judgments passed by the author on those who did not share his experience are raw. In the first chapter, David Bellavia gives the reader an indication of what is in store when he describes pressing his boot onto the skull of an Iraqi insurgent. Bellavia had just shot the man in the head at close range. This is not a book for the squeamish.

Instead, it is a book about war up close. The author served as an infantry squad leader in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. He and his men fought in what, to date, has been the biggest and bloodiest battle of the long Iraq War, the assault on Fallujah in November 2004. During that battle, Bellavia's squad saw house-

to-house combat as intense as any experienced by American fighting men since the Battle of Hue, against enemies as suicidally tenacious as any Americans have encountered since Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The cost was high. Both the commander and executive officer of Bellavia's company died in Fallujah. So did the battalion sergeant major. Bellavia himself came out of the battle with a Silver Star, a recommendation for a Medal of Honor, and a story that is impossible for a reader to put down.

Bellavia's account has the immediacy of today's newspaper or Internet accounts, yet it reflects the experiences and outlook common to Soldiers since Greek hoplites marched to battle in close-ordered phalanxes. Like most combat leaders, the author is desperately protective of his men and contemptuous of clean-shaven staff officers with no experience of intimate combat. Bellavia respects the bravery of his enemies but feels no remorse in killing them as efficiently as possible. The sergeant and his comrades ride into battle in Bradleys, some of the

most sophisticated combat vehicles in military history, yet the clearing of Fallujah draws Bellavia into hand-to-hand fighting that is primitive and brutal.

The Army does not expect sergeants to write books, but we can be thankful that Bellavia collaborated with historian John Bruning to produce this Soldier's-eye view of combat. At times, Bellavia's story of his own heroic actions may seem self-serving, yet one can find corroborating accounts of the sergeant's heroism in the battle by the Australian journalist David Ware, who accompanied Bellavia's squad into the inferno of Fallujah (see <www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/insurgency/interviews/ware.html>).

One imagines that the publisher appended the gratuitous subtitle, "An Epic Memoir of War," to Bellavia's book to boost sales. Such a subtitle suggests that, in the future, literary critics will mention Bellavia's book on a short list of combat memoirs like E.B. Sledge's *With the Old Breed* and Guy Sajer's *The Forgotten Soldier*. Perhaps. Time will tell. For now, it is the most graphic

and gripping account of front-line Soldiers on the “sharp end” of the war in Iraq. The book is intensely recommended.

**LTC Scott Stephenson, USA,
Retired, Fort Leavenworth,
Kansas**

TERRORISM FINANCING AND STATE RESPONSES: A Comparative Perspective, Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2007, 365 pages, \$24.95.

Where do terrorists get their money? Have we done all we can in the global War on Terrorism to deny our enemies’ financial solvency and the ability to maneuver? What role does the U.S. military play in counterterrorism financing? These are questions prompted by *Terrorism Financing and State Responses: A Comparative Perspective*, a collection of essays first presented as papers at a 2004 conference at the Naval Postgraduate School. The book attempts, in the editors’ words, a “comprehensive assessment of the state of our knowledge about the nature of terrorism financing, the evolution of terrorist strategies and government responses, and the effectiveness of both.” Unfortunately, none of the essays directly addresses the large-scale sectarian insurgencies that confront the military today in Iraq and Afghanistan. The book does, however, plumb the murky financial infrastructures and processes of such terrorist organizations as Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Herein lies the book’s value.

Terrorism Financing and State Responses is not a manual for teaching Soldiers in the field how to target enemy financial lines of support, although it does provide terms, concepts, and historical examples for those interested in such a potentially useful activity. Editors Jeanne K. Giraldo and Harold A. Trinkunas are both associated with the National Security Affairs Department at the Naval Postgraduate School. Contributors include terrorism, criminal finance, and foreign policy experts affiliated with think tanks located in

both academia and the government. The first five essays constitute an overview labeled “The Nature of the Problem and the Response.” The last 11 essays are case studies of specific efforts to attack regional and ideologically based terrorist finance networks. Giraldo and Trinkunas provide introductory and concluding essays that define broad themes and offer cautious recommendations.

Essays on Islamic terrorist finances downplay crime and state sponsorship as sources of operational funds and debunk the idea that ideologically driven terrorists operate without financial constraints. They suggest that personal vices and limitations sometimes degrade the terrorist’s religious idealism.

Several authors describe the flow of money into terrorist hands through the channels of *haalwa* (informal money transfer networks) and *zakat* (charitable giving practices prescribed by the Qur’an). Because *haalwa* and *zakat* practices are virtually unmonitored by state and international agencies, they enable the relatively easy movement of money from law-abiding citizens to violent extremists. Suppressing such unregulated money movement is difficult. Several authors recommend allowing the networks to survive, but putting them under close observation in order to gain information about key players, processes, and planned attacks. As one contributor writes, observation and analysis of *haalwa* and *zakat* networks can “illuminate and crystallize what had hitherto been uncertain.” The suggestion is that terrorist financial operations are untapped sources of intelligence and areas of vulnerability that organizations at many levels might exploit.

**LTC Peter Molin, USA,
West Point, New York**

UNGOVERNED TERRITORIES, Angel Rabasa, Steven Boraz, Peter Chalk, Kim Cragin, Theodore W. Karasik, Jennifer D.P. Moroney, Kevin A. O’Brien, and John E. Peters, RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 2007, 384 pages, \$44.00.

“Since the end of the Cold War, failed or failing states and ungoverned territories within otherwise viable states have become a more common international phenomenon. The collapse or absence of state authority produced many of the crises that have required intervention by U.S. or international forces. These ungoverned territories generate all manner of security problems, such as civil conflict and humanitarian crises, arms and drug smuggling, piracy, and refugee flows.”

Such is the world that we live in, according to the authors of *Ungoverned Territories*, a RAND study commissioned by the U.S. Air Force to explain “the conditions that give rise to ungoverned territories and their effects on U.S. security interests” and to develop “strategies to allow the U.S. to mitigate the effects—specifically to reduce the threat posed by terrorists operating from these territories.”

Ungoverned territories are “areas in which a state faces significant challenges in establishing control.” The book covers eight such areas: the Pakistani-Afghan border, Arabian Peninsula, Sulawesi-Mindanao arc, East African corridor, West Africa, North Caucasus, the Colombia-Venezuela border, and the Guatemala-Chiapas border. In most of these territories, fundamentalist Muslims want to establish a caliphate. A secondary issue is drugs. If left unchecked, the combination of militant religious extremism and drugs will destroy our way of life.

The first five chapters analyze the areas and how they affect U.S. interests. The authors evaluate “indicators of ungovernability” and “indicators of conduciveness to terrorist presence,” give them scores, and then evaluate the scores. They finish by recommending actions to defeat or mitigate the problems they describe.

So why is the book relevant? The areas it examines affect the U.S. in general and they are, or will be, battlefields for the U.S. military in the future. Each of the services can draw its own conclusions on how to counteract the problems identified in the eight territories.

Ungoverned Territories is not for the faint of heart. Case studies like these with detailed analyses are tough to read and digest, but those who stick with the book will discover a mine of information. Clearly, *Ungoverned Territories* is a worthwhile read for planners and those trying to figure out where the next conflict will be fought.

**LTC John E. Taylor, USA,
Woodbridge, Virginia**

**MAKING SENSE OF WAR:
Strategy for the 21st Century,**
Alan Stephens and Nicola Baker,
Cambridge University Press, New
York, 2006, 306 pages, \$45.00.

Utilizing their military, academic, and defense-industry experience, Alan Stephens and Nicola Baker provide a concise but insightful overview of how past and present wars have been waged. In the process, they introduce the reader to emerging theory and strategy and to concepts in political-military thought that have endured for the past 2,500 years. This carefully crafted and well-researched book draws on Clausewitz, Jomini, Machiavelli, and Sun Tzu and uses relevant historical events as examples. The authors skillfully articulate military concepts while linking the levels of war and ends, ways, and means to the national instruments of power (diplomatic, information, military, and economic) and grand strategy.

The book's breadth far exceeds its depth, which limits its utility for the military professional who has other reading material at his disposal. I was particularly disappointed in the superficial treatment of "War in the 21st Century," the book's short (13 pages) last chapter. Overall, however, *Making Sense of War* would be an excellent text for an undergraduate or even graduate course on the military as political instrument, or for the military novice interested in a thoughtful, "wave-top" understanding of military strategy and its implications.

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

THE END OF IRAQ: How American Incompetence Created a War without End, Peter W. Galbraith, Simon and Schuster, New York, 2006, 260 pages, \$26.00.

Of all the books written on the war in Iraq this year, *The End of Iraq* is one of the few to actually chart a way ahead for what is arguably the world's most prominent failing state. A former ambassador with nation-building experience, Peter Galbraith concludes his landmark study of a nation on the edge of collapse with a definitive solution: separate Iraq into ethnically centric, semi-autonomous regions governed by a central, broad-based confederation.

According to Galbraith, our efforts to hold the Iraqi state together by force are themselves destabilizing. Our policies in Iraq fail to acknowledge a national history rife with massive armies, repressive governments, internal genocide, and unrequited aggression throughout the region. America's efforts to unify a fundamentally fractured society have merely served to spawn an insurgent training ground and a Shi'ite theocracy. The only solution, in the author's opinion, is partition: partition brought stability to Kurdistan, partition will ease sectarian violence, and partition will allow the majority of coalition forces to withdraw having succeeded in their mission. Partitioning the country will also allow the force to focus military strength appropriately, and it will increase the options available to address other threats in the region. The alternative is a prolonged and potentially disastrous presence in an attempt to preserve a society that has no vested interest in unity.

Before presenting this conclusion, however, Galbraith provides the reader with a superb analysis of political, cultural, and ethnic conflict in the region. He then describes a U.S. national policy and strategy "undone by arrogance, ignorance, and political cowardice." The result, according to the author, is what we see today: insurgency, civil war, Iranian strategic triumph, the implosion of Iraq, an independent Kurdistan, and a deepening military quagmire.

Iraq is now the first Shi'ite-ruled Arab state, the heart of a Shi'a crescent that spans from southeastern Iran to the gulf coast of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain—and rests atop the most strategically vital oil reserves in the world today.

Galbraith places the blame for this reshaping of the Middle East firmly on the shoulders of the Bush administration and its myopic, misguided neoconservative mentors. He describes the strategic failure in Iraq as the "outcome of a disorganized policy-making process where ideology counted for more than analysis and where a speechwriter had more influence than the secretary of state did." By failing to set effective policy and strategy for post-conflict Iraq, the administration created the environment of chaos that breeds the very terrorists we went to war to stop.

For military readers, *The End of Iraq* offers a stark reminder that even the best military strategy cannot overcome inherently flawed policy. National policy and strategy inform and guide the development of strategic objectives and military strategy; in the absence of a clear, focused, and feasible policy, success is virtually unrealizable. Readers of political, social, or cultural history will find Galbraith's work a crisp, concise, and well-written study with rich analysis and insightful conclusions. His understanding and experience are evident on every page, and his observations, like his conclusions, are well informed and critically sound. Although *The End of Iraq* does not present the level of detail found in *Cobra II*, *Hubris*, or *State of Denial*, it emerges with a superior utility, providing meaningful answers offered by no other author.

Arguably the definitive analysis of the war in Iraq produced to date, Galbraith's book will be a worthwhile addition to any military or civilian library.

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

TAKE DOWN: The 3rd Infantry Division's Twenty-One Day Assault on Baghdad, Jim Lacey,

Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2007, 267 pages.

According to author Jim Lacey, “What the soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division collectively accomplished [during Operation Iraqi Freedom] should be ranked as one of the greatest military achievements of all time,” and his combat narrative, *Take Down*, sets out to prove his point. Lacey convincingly demonstrates that, far from achieving easy victories against a poorly trained, overmatched enemy, the 3d ID had a difficult time fighting and defeating fanatical and even suicidal Iraqi forces.

The book relies on interviews, after-action reports, and many first-person accounts to describe the complex fighting. Despite overwhelming U.S. intelligence capabilities, not all went smoothly and according to plan during many of the battles, which came as a surprise to the U.S. forces involved. The division’s units did not expect to fight much until they reached the Republican Guard, and they never expected resistance all along the line of advance. In the end, Lacey concludes that 3ID succeeded by simply outfighting the Iraqis.

Lacey also provides a detailed look at the battle from Iraq’s perspective, shedding light on the reasons behind Iraqi plans, the effects of operations on Iraqi forces, and the actions of Iraqi commanders.

Take Down shows how a well-trained division overcomes numerous obstacles and adjusts to changing conditions to defeat a fanatical enemy in close combat. An easy-to-read story of leadership, battle command, ingenuity, and determination, it provides excellent descriptions of the fighting in the words of the participants. I highly recommend it to all readers.

**LTC Robert Rielly, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

UNHOLY TERROR: Bosnia, Al-Qa’ida, and the Rise of Global Jihad, John R. Schindler, Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN, 2007, 368 pages, \$27.95.

Former intelligence analyst John Schindler has written the book about

the Bosnian war that other analysts only talked about writing. Schindler’s detailed exposé recounts the tragedy of the Muslim-dominated Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and highlights its links with the world of terrorism.

Many analysts were frustrated by a perceived anti-Serb bias in the upper ranks of President Bill Clinton’s administration. From my vantage point, I could see the disparity between the reporting being sent to U.S. leaders and how they described the war to the American public. Even when situations were murky at best, they would often point at the Serbs to keep the story simple. In fairness to Richard Holbrooke and others, keeping the narrative simple helped to maintain an interest in the subject, which was a peripheral concern for most Americans. Still, analysts often remarked that there were few good people among the parties involved and plenty of blood on everyone’s hands.

Unholy Terror challenges those who support the idea that Bosniacs were only innocent victims of religious hatred stirred by Slobodan Milosevic. Schindler describes the beliefs and actions of SDA leader Alija Izetbegovic, beginning with Izetbegovic’s membership in the Young Muslims. When Izetbegovic declared Bosnian independence in 1992, he was a gambler desperate for support. He dredged the depths to find Al-Qaeda, Iran, and Saudi extremists willing to help with arms, funding, and mujahideen fighters. These beginnings have left a residue of extremism in Bosnia and Bosnian threads to terrorist activities around the world.

Schindler is at times heavy-handed, writing in the style of a prosecutor from the Rush Limbaugh school of conservatism, calling witness after witness to make his case against Izetbegovic, “Clintonistas,” and the liberal media. In contrast, Richard Holbrooke, General Wesley Clark, and David Halberstam downplayed Islamic support in their books. However, Holbrooke, demonstrating his awareness, ensured the Dayton Accords stipulated that freedom fighters and volunteers should be

withdrawn from Bosnia because he was aware of this external threat.

Schindler does acknowledge that Bosniacs are generally secular and other Muslims consider them lax in their faith. Xavier Bougarel, a leading expert Schindler cites, comments it would be unjustified and dangerous to present Balkan Islam and its current evolutions as a threat to Europe. So although this book offers a significant contribution to an underdeveloped perspective in the West concerning Bosniacs, it is too one-sided to stand alone.

**James Cricks,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

BEHIND THE LINES: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront since 1941, Philip Metres, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City, 2007, 282 pages, \$39.95.

They have made war till we were dead from weeping.

—The goddess Iris to Helen, *The Iliad*

In *Behind the Lines: War Resistance Poetry on the American Homefront since 1941*, English professor and poet Philip Metres discusses how war-resistance poetry on America’s home front in wartime made the moral ambiguities of war and its detrimental effects historically discernible. Metres rightly credits the contributions of both the American Soldier-poet (as first-person witness) and the poetry of war’s other tragic victims, including all “who live at the end of the missile trajectory.”

Why is war-resistance poetry relevant? Situated in what has been known loosely as the peace movement, it contributes to society’s broader pattern of literary and journalistic expression, deconstructing the official narrative of our wartime presidential administrations to offer a “collective subjectivity other than the nation-state” with its state-sanctioned patriotic lyric. Moreover, “No other literary genre has been as conducive [to] a performative, immediate, and often homespun symbolic” medium. It thus becomes poetry not only of published anthologies, but of

the street and the subway as well. Metres clarifies how the poetry of the past is useful as “a vital resource for social change.”

In Part I, Metres covers the wartime internment and poetic activities of major American poets Robert Lowell, William Stafford, and William Everson—all conscientious objectors during World War II. These men used their poetry to extend ethical and artistic principles of the suffering individual and give voice and expression beyond dissent as they worked out their resistance to war “in their own idiosyncratic ways.”

The focus of Part II is the Vietnam War era, and Metres redresses the belief that antiwar poetry produced during that era was somehow unmemorable. On the contrary, he writes, it confronted “the increasingly technological and bureaucratic formation of modern war itself.” Poetry readings made concrete the abstract and bureaucratic language of the U.S. Government and military.

Part III opens with the Gulf War. Of special interest to current readers is Metres’ discussion of book-length poems on the Gulf War, especially Barrett Watten’s odd but telling work, *Bad History*. Separate chapters on the war-resistance contributions of poets Denise Levertov (1923-1997) and June Jordan (1936-2002) enhance Metres’ thesis, arcing the timeline between the Vietnam War and the Gulf War. Today’s readers will take special note of Metres’ study of the post-9/11 poetry of grief and conspiracy, writing that continues apace today. In 2003 alone, the Iraq war saw the publication of four war-resistance anthologies. Organizations such as Poets Against the War were born, giving common Americans a venue for war resistance.

To be most effective, war-resistance poems should be joined, when and where possible, with “placard writing, media press releases, writing to government officials, and song writing,” along with various modes of theatrical expressions. War-resistance poetry is, above all, a populist movement. For the current reviewer, its most vital purpose is

to render “the poem as an instant memorial against the hegemonic version of a clean war.”

Metres culled hundreds of sources and includes excerpts of dozens of poems to illustrate that war-resistance poetry serves American society by producing “counter narratives, images, and linguistic play in ways that create afterimages as powerful as the photographs that alter public opinion” about the morality of war. Metres does not encourage uncritical acceptance of all such poetry, for some of it “seems too often shrill and veers into a circular address.” In the end, he goes beyond giving us a chronology and description of America’s war-resistance poetry: he offers an incisive cultural critique. I highly recommend his book to those interested in poetry and to students of literary and sociological studies of war and peace.

**MAJ Jeffrey C. Alfier, USAF,
Retired, Ramstein, Germany**

**THE WARRI ALWAYS WANTED:
The Illusion of Glory and the Reality of War: A Screaming Eagle in Afghanistan and Iraq**, Brandon Friedman, Zenith Press, MBI Publishing Company, St. Paul, MN, 2007, 255 pages, \$24.95.

Only weeks after 9/11, Brandon Friedman, a rifle platoon leader and a heavy weapons company executive officer with the U.S. Army’s 101st Airborne Division, deployed first to Pakistan, then Afghanistan, where he engaged Al-Qaeda fighters. Later, he found himself in Iraq fighting Al-Qaeda foot soldiers.

A Louisiana State University graduate with a degree in history, Friedman was a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army. His tragically compelling memoirs of Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan in 2002 and the invasion of Iraq and subsequent insurgency in 2003 begin as a quest for glory. However, he proceeds to give an honest account of his combat experiences, specifically the terrors and disillusionment of war as the insurgency in Iraq continues to mount. Combat, Friedman finds, falls far short of the fantasies

he had deployed with. This is a “coming-of-age” book, a lieutenant’s transition from having illusions about war to genuine knowledge. He writes: “Man, I spent over two years dealing with those fucking wars, and I never saw any real combat—not the way I always envisioned it as a kid at least.” His work is fresh, angry, cynical, and riveting.

Before his departure from Iraq, Friedman’s valor emerges under fire. His raw, honest account of his fears, lack of knowledge, and his mental road to recovery brings laughter and tears to the reader. The Army’s doctrinal manual, FM 6-22, *Leadership*, defines personal courage as “overcoming fears of bodily harm and doing one’s duty.” Friedman’s story personifies personal courage. The “war he always wanted” sends him home from the front lines to begin a struggle for recovery.

This book will particularly appeal to those experiencing post-traumatic stress, offering encouragement and consolation. No matter what one believes about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, this work is something any veteran can relate to and learn from. “The idea that war changes people is cliché, but it’s true. Going into it, I always thought I’d be above that—immune to it, too well trained for it to affect me, too professional. I thought we were beyond all that Vietnam/post traumatic stress shit. But now I’m in on it. I have been enlightened.”

This book is highly educational for all who have not experienced combat. Soldiers have to come to terms with their experiences; once they do, they are, in Friedman’s words, “enlightened.” In short, this book is pretty darn good and well worth the read.

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

THE RISING TIDE, Jeff Shaara, Ballantine Books, New York, 2007, 536 pages, \$15.95.

The Rising Tide is the first of three historical novels Jeff Shaara intends to write about the North African and European campaigns of

World War II. As both a novel and a history, the book is a compromise, and as with most compromises, it ends with acceptable but not memorable results. The history is superficial, and the novel does little to develop characters of interest. Shaara advances the story by focusing on his primary characters, some of them famous and others composites of several Soldiers. Generals Dwight Eisenhower, George Patton, and Erwin Rommel represent the former, and Private Jack Logan and Sergeant Jesse Adams the latter.

Quite heavy-handed at times, Shaara never misses a chance to mention General Bernard Montgomery's tendency to be hesitant and cautious. Since Shaara tells much of the story through Patton's experiences, there is no shortage of commentary regarding Montgomery's timidity, but the author piles on by having Rommel make the same observations regarding "Monty's" lack of audacity.

There are some strengths to the book. Shaara makes the point that Rommel would have won his North African campaign had he received the ammunition and gasoline he requested, suggesting that what a commander wants to do and what he can do are limited by fuel, ammunition, and equipment, an obvious point often forgotten by armchair generals.

Like Wikipedia, *The Rising Tide* is a decent place to start, but not a good place to finish. Someone who knows almost nothing about the early stages of World War II might find the book adequate as an overview of significant events. A person who likes fiction will likely find the book's thin character development frustrating.

The most exciting sections of the book are the chapters detailing the battles fought by Logan and Adams, but the people involved seem like strangers. Shaara spends so little time introducing the reader to members of Logan's team that the death of a tank crewmember seems more like the death of a stranger than that of a friend. A good novel should lead one to lament the loss of a character, but this does not happen here. It is possible that Shaara is making

some sort of statement about the anonymity of death in combat, but if so, he has certainly been discreet about it.

**LTC James E. Varner,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**SEA CHANGE AT ANNAPOLIS:
The United States Naval Academy,
1949-2000**, H. Michael Gelfand,
University of North Carolina Press,
Chapel Hill, 2006, \$34.95.

The key to H. Michael Gelfand's book on the U.S. Naval Academy lies in the double-entendre in the book's title, not in its misleading subtitle. The work is not a history of Annapolis over the past half-century, but rather focuses on just a handful of key social transitions within the Brigade of Midshipman. Gelfand argues that the Academy, while steeped in tradition and convention, has acted as an institution of social progress through its integration of racial minorities, enrollment of women, and elimination of mandatory religious service.

Using a wealth of sources, including several hundred oral histories, this study chronicles the cultural transitions' highs—the successes of recruiting African-American candidates and eliminating mandatory chapel services—and the lows—the awkward integration of female midshipmen. Gelfand also compiles a unique "catch-all" chapter on such facets of Academy culture as the honor code, student pranks, and instances of midshipmen engaging in liberal social protests—all of them tied to the volatile social changes occurring beyond the Academy walls.

While Gelfand connects the changes in Annapolis to the broader social movements in America (civil rights, women's rights), his argument might be better served within cultural contexts closer to the Academy such as the armed forces or the nation's university system. Juxtaposing Annapolis's transitions with those of broader American society may be a bridge too far. To be sure, a more inclusive admissions policy and elimination of compulsory

church attendance can be identified as "progressive," given the rigid traditionalism of the Academy, yet they were implemented under political duress and decades after they occurred in the broader military and in other colleges. In actuality, they might represent institutional backwardness rather than enlightenment. However, this book provides a much-needed study of how the values of the federal service academies compare to those of broader American society and the obstacles that potentially separate them from national, social, and ethical mores.

**Bradford A. Wineman, Ph.D.,
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**800 DAYS ON THE EASTERN
FRONT**, Nikolai Litvin, Stuart Britton trans. and ed., University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2007, 159 pages, \$24.95. **RED PARTISAN:
The Memoir of a Soviet Resistance
Fighter on the Eastern Front**, Nikolai I. Obryn'ba, Potomac Books, Dulles, VA, 2007, 256 pages, \$26.95.

When studying the struggle between the Soviets and the Germans on the Eastern Front, it is all too easy to get lost in the titanic size and scope of the conflict. Personal and individual experiences of the war tend to be lost in the sweep of fronts and army groups. In the Soviet case, this submersion of first-hand accounts has been exacerbated by language barriers, state censorship, and Cold War tensions. Fortunately, two recently translated Soviet memoirs, *800 Days on the Eastern Front* and *Red Partisan*, help to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of the Russian experience in the Great Patriotic War.

In *800 Days*, Nikolai Litvin chronicles his service as an antitank-gun crewman, machine gunner, and commander's jeep driver in such crucial clashes as the Battle of Kursk, Operation Bagration, and the capture of the German fortress city of Stettin. Litvin's lively narrative offers a fascinating window into the life of the common Soviet soldier, and his honesty and eye for detail make the book a quick and

captivating read. His description of his service in a penal battalion after being convicted for failing to obtain a proper written order before transferring himself to a new unit is one of the more interesting parts of the work. The Soviets established penal battalions to punish soldiers who were guilty of crimes or offenses against military order and discipline. These units were assigned the deadliest missions, and the Red Army expected wrongdoers like Litvin to “redeem” their honor and status by blood sacrifice or conspicuous bravery on the battlefield. Given the high casualties in these units, Litvin’s account is indeed rare and enlightening.

Equally rare are English-language narratives of Soviet partisans. In *Red Partisan*, Nikolai I. Obryn’ba recounts his fighting during the chaotic first months of the war, his time as a prisoner of the Germans, and his eventual escape and ensuing service with a band of Soviet guerrillas. A student at the Moscow Arts Institute when the war started in June 1941, Obryn’ba volunteered for military duty only to be captured by the Germans shortly after he reached the front. In captivity, Obryn’ba’s artistic skills proved to be the key to his survival. He painted portraits of his jailors to gain extra food, better shelter, and medical care. His descriptions of life in a German POW camp offer unique insights into a little-discussed aspect of the Eastern Front.

Obryn’ba’s account of fighting with the partisans comprises the most thought-provoking part of the book. His depiction of the realities of the partisan war—the no-quarters aspects of the combat, the efforts to gain and maintain the support of the local population, and the use of terror by both sides to further their political and military goals—offer current military leaders a provocative historical perspective on the nature of insurgencies. Unfortunately, Obryn’ba chose to end his narrative in October of 1943. Because the Soviet state doubted the political reliability of returning POWs and all too often sent them to labor camps,

it would have been interesting to know how well Obryn’ba fared in the postwar Soviet Union. Litvin spent four years in the Gulag after the war for possessing a captured German pistol. Was Obryn’ba also incarcerated?

Neither Litvin nor Obryn’ba shrinks from showing their readers the brutality of war on the Eastern Front. Both men freely admit to having shot prisoners and observed or participated in brutal acts against civilians. They remind us that while war can bring out such admirable traits as resourcefulness, courage, and selfless sacrifice, it can also lead good, honorable, and ordinary men to explore the darker recesses of the human soul. As events at Abu Ghraib and Haditha demonstrate, this reality of war transcends time, place, and nationality. Anyone interested in World War II on the Eastern Front or in the human dynamics of warfare should read these books.

**LTC Richard S. Faulkner,
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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

BOY SOLDIER: Budapest, 1944-1945, by Ervin V. Galántay, Budapest: Militaria, Second Edition, 2007, 319 pages, \$76.50.

Oh, to be fourteen again! This book is about being a fourteen-year-old male in urban combat in Hungary during fall and winter. It is about fighting against overwhelming odds and about being sick, wounded, dirty, and a reluctant virgin. Many combat memoirs of World War II were written by ordinary people with much the same tale to tell, but *Boy Soldier* is a unique and extraordinary story.

Ervin Galántay was a junior cadet in the aristocratic Royal Hungarian Army’s military school in Közeg in October 1944 when the Red Army advanced on Budapest. The adolescent Ervin kept a detailed diary that survived the war and the Soviet occupation. Today’s Ervin has recreated that diary backed by vivid memories and knowledge of the bigger political and military situation that

the boy only vaguely comprehended. Galántay has written not just a personal history but also a history of the Vannay Battalion—a pick-up force of Hungarian patriots and off-the-street conscripts. Ervin was the battalion runner and translator, a position appropriate to a boy with a remarkable command of German. Thirsting for glory and fame, he found comradeship and endured hardship in a partially trained but well-led unit that doggedly fought and refought the Red Army over the same piece of ground—but was eventually destroyed.

The 102-day battle of Budapest is not that well known to American readers. The German and Hungarian resistance to the Red Army advance is not studied like the other great city battles of World War II—Aachen, Berlin, Eindhoven, Leningrad, Manila, and Stalingrad. Yet, Budapest was a remarkable contest that decided the fate of the countries on the Danube for the next five decades. The book provides a look into certain aspects of a major urban fight: the care of the trapped civilian population; the collapse of social and city services with resultant disease and starvation; the recruitment and training of irregular forces and militias; the coordination and cooperation problems between irregular forces and foreign military forces; the control of movement and supplies within a beleaguered city; the tactics of urban combat; and the attempt to maintain normalcy in the midst of chaos and carnage. It is the story of a boy, his family, his battalion, and his city at war. This second edition has benefitted by the addition of many photographs and maps as well as some additions and corrections to the original text.

For those studying urban combat and the human condition in war, *Boy Soldier* is a good introduction. For those studying the history of World War II, it is a welcome addition to the collection of histories of the Battle for Budapest.

**LTC Lester W. Grau,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

15 STARS: Eisenhower, MacArthur, Marshall: Three Generals Who Saved the American Century, Stanley Weintraub, Free Press, New York, 2007, 541 pages. \$30.00

This very readable book is a collective biography of three five-star generals identified in the subtitle. It concentrates on World War II, when they jointly acquired those fifteen stars, although it also covers the generals' prewar backgrounds and postwar careers. *15 Stars* mixes portraits of the men and a cast of surrounding characters with discussions of high strategy: the cross-channel invasion into Normandy vs. Mediterranean operations, and the central Pacific pathway towards Japan vs. the New Guinea road through the Philippines. George Marshall comes off the best because he was selfless. According to author Stanley Weintraub, Marshall was virtually a martyr, refusing to ask for his heart-felt desire to command the Northwest Europe Theater. Douglas MacArthur comes off the worst, relentlessly pursuing his personal agenda for military glory. Dwight Eisenhower falls somewhere between these extremes. While praised for being what MacArthur was not, "genial and unpretentious," Ike spends too much time in luxurious quarters in rear areas and pays too much attention to Kay Summersby, his beautiful chauffeur. One could think that Weintraub also pays too much attention to her (eight lines in his index), if this were not a book on personalities as well as matters of policy.

Truth be told, Weintraub slams a host of Anglo-American figures: Franklin Roosevelt is manipulative; Winston Churchill is duplicitous and stubbornly resentful when his power ebbs vis-à-vis Roosevelt; Alan Brooke, Mark Clark, Bernard Montgomery, and George Patton can seem as self-centered as MacArthur; and Omar Bradley and Courtney Hodges, despite their purported modesty, often don't come off a great deal better. According to the author, "cronyism, corruption, and incompetence" ran rampant while

common Soldiers suffered at the front. One might wonder if the Allies won only because they were a larger force or, bad as they were, the axis was even worse, were there not an alternative explanation: even deeply flawed individuals can make substantial contributions to victory.

Whatever motivated MacArthur, he conducted a brilliant campaign between Buna and Manila, minimizing casualties by bypassing Japanese strongpoints. Weintraub himself, midway through this book, quotes a trenchant observation about MacArthur from two newspapermen who "agreed we had never met a more egotistical man, nor one more aware of his egotism, and more able and determined to back it up with deeds."

Many general officers and politicians recorded derogatory remarks about associates in their diaries, staff journals, and memoirs, but they were not publically revealing information that could endanger the endeavor to defeat the enemy. They were simply venting frustrations inevitable in a stress-filled war. In the final analysis, the generals proved their worth. The enemy was formidable, but the Allies won the war.

15 Stars also proves its worth as a lively chronicle of the senior leadership that will appeal to a broad base of readers interested in what can drive those holding key positions at key moments in history.

**Michael Pearlman, Ph.D.,
Lawrence, Kansas**

CIVIL WAR LEADERSHIP AND MEXICAN WAR EXPERIENCE, Kevin Dougherty, University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 2007, 193 pages, \$50.00.

Kevin Dougherty's *Civil War Leadership and Mexican War Experience* analyzes several of the Civil War's controversial command decisions by framing them within the Mexican-American War experiences of the men who made them. A balanced work, the book provides brief snapshots of 26 leaders divided evenly between Confederate and Union officers at all levels of command. Along the way, it reprises

many well-known anecdotes about the experiences and educations of such officers as Pope, Kearny, Halleck, Beauregard, Bragg, and Armistead, but it does so in stylish, engaging prose.

As a scholarly analysis of command decisions, however, Dougherty's work is dubious at best. While he provides abundant source citations for his anecdotes, they are almost entirely derived from secondary works that do not cite their own sources. For example, Dougherty relies heavily on Bruce Catton's popular histories and the *Time-Life* Civil War series, neither of which cites primary sources. A critic would be perfectly correct in asking why a historian doesn't go to primary sources when he quotes officers' observations. It's not just the scholarship that's questionable: the book contains some errors and inconsistencies. Dougherty, for instance, incorrectly states that Lincoln placed John Pope in field command of the Army of the Potomac for the second battle of Bull Run (p. 54), and yet in a later chapter correctly designates Pope's command as the Army of Virginia.

These criticisms, however, pale in comparison to the book's greatest fault. Dougherty's central thesis links the Civil War actions of senior commanders with their junior experiences in the Mexican War, and this leaves much open to question. Besides not taking into account other events that may also have helped form the leaders' Civil War personas, such as the 12 years of interwar experience spent protecting the Overland Routes or attempting to quell sectional bloodlettings in Kansas, Dougherty makes some incredible leaps to conclude that Mexican War events were relevant to Civil War operations. Case in point: he links future Union general Jefferson C. Davis's witnessing of a confrontation between his Mexican War regimental and brigade commanders to Davis's shooting of General "Bull" Nelson during Bragg's 1862 Kentucky invasion. Dougherty produces no source, either primary or secondary, that

speaks to how the junior Davis felt about the Mexican War incident. Given his lack of source material, the connection seems to be merely supposed.

While *Civil War Leadership* is quite readable and recounts a wide

variety of tales in its brief chapters, Dougherty's work falls a bit flat. Given the book's hefty price tag of \$50 and its failure to provide anything original to the field, serious students of Civil War history would be better served to stick to James

McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*, Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants*, or Ezra Warner's biographical contributions in *Generals in Gray* and *Generals in Blue*.

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MR Letters

After Fidel

Colonel Eduardo Gomez, USAR, *Miami, Florida*—Dr. Waltraud Morales' article "After Fidel: What Future for U.S.-Cuban Relations?" (September-October 2007, *Military Review*) presents a distorted picture of Cuba, its relations with the U.S., and how [the island] impacts Latin America. Her biased observations and analysis have led to a set of policy recommendations that could prove disastrous to U.S. national objectives for the hemisphere. By attacking U.S. policy as "mired in the past," Dr. Morales trots out the worn out argument that basically says "if you can't beat them, join them." Her recommendations will provide mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a brutal, totalitarian, anti-U.S. regime that is once again teetering on collapse due to its almost 49 years of failed economic and political policies. The policy recommendations run counter to stated U.S. goals supporting democratization efforts in the hemisphere, as codified by the mission statement and strategy of the regional Combatant Command, U.S. Southern Command. USSOUTHCOM's strategy articulates support to "political values rooted in a common commitment to democracy, freedom, justice and respect for human dignity, human rights, and human values." none of which are present in Cuba. Devel-

oping policies that achieve those objectives can not be founded on Dr. Morales' obvious disdain for U.S. policy worldwide.

For Dr. Morales, the U.S. appears to be the root of all evil. Among other accusations, she claims the U.S.'s anti-Cuba policy is the cause of the region's current radicalization and that it conducts an undemocratic foreign policy. The historical truth is that the "Gringo" has always been the bogeyman whenever things go sour in the region. Leftwing radicalism was evident in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, much of it supported by the Cuban government. Thus, the allure of the Marxist/Socialist utopian vision has always resonated in the hemisphere because of its endemic poverty and inequality, not because of U.S. policies. Stating that U.S. foreign policy is undemocratic flies in the face of over 20 years of quiet, but relentless, diplomatic and economic pressure to transform the hemisphere from authoritarian regimes into representative governments, the only exception being Cuba. Therefore, a clear-eyed approach to encourage democratization in Cuba should reflect not on our "tortuous" historical relationship, but on pre-Castro ties that helped Cuba become one of the most progressive and developed countries in Latin America. Neither should it be based on misinformed and exaggerated claims that the

Revolution has brought "important educational, health benefits, reduced corruption . . ." Time has proven much of that "conventional wisdom" to have been outright lies or distortions repeatedly regurgitated in order to condone the continued existence of a wholly undemocratic system.

The U.S. needs to remain firm and focused on its goals. The embargo is a negotiating tool that needs to be retained, not unconditionally dropped; to do so would be wholly nonsensical when dealing with such an intransigent regime. Furthermore, instead of walking away from the brave pro-democracy movement on the island, we should be encouraging, defending, and supporting them. Lastly, the Cuban exiles in the U.S. will serve as the bridge to help rebuild a free Cuba. They are a prosperous, educated, and after almost three generations, a "democratized" community that will help achieve U.S. goals for the island.

As Dr. Morales states, how we treat Cuba after Fidel Castro's death will impact our credibility. That credibility will be fortified if we commit to a policy that reinforces our democratic goals for the hemisphere, not by cuddling a dictatorship that is anathema to the democratic principles that are "essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas."