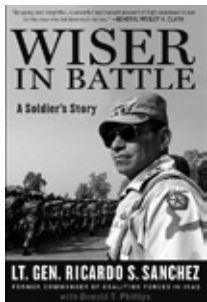


# MR Book Reviews



**WISER IN BATTLE: A Soldier's Story**, Ricardo S. Sanchez with Donald T. Phillips, HarperCollins, New York, 2008, 494 pages, \$26.95.

America's experience in Iraq has inspired dozens of contemporary histories, many critical of the decisions made by American leaders in

the days and weeks after Baghdad fell. With his autobiography, *Wiser in Battle*, retired Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez now adds his perspective to the collection.

Four years after he relinquished command of coalition forces in Iraq, Sanchez remains a controversial figure. A steady performer with considerable experience in joint staff assignments, Sanchez was commanding the 1st Armored Division in April 2003 when Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld hand-picked him to command V Corps in Iraq. Coalition forces had just occupied Baghdad, and the Pentagon was already planning the withdrawal of American ground forces.

Iraqi cities descended into lawlessness, the White House appointed career diplomat L. Paul Bremer III to establish the Coalition Provisional Authority to rebuild Iraq as a free-market democracy. After President George Bush announced the conclusion of all "major combat operations" on 1 May 2003, the U.S. military began redeploying from Iraq. Lieutenant General David McKiernan and the "dream team" of senior American officers who had run the war departed, leaving Sanchez, the Army's youngest and newest three-star general, commanding not only his own corps but also all coalition ground forces in Iraq.

By most published accounts, including his own, Sanchez inherited a no-win situation. Senior policy makers in Washington showed little

interest in Iraq's social problems, instead focusing on mopping up Ba'athist dead-enders and finding Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. To his credit, Sanchez spent the next 13 months fighting to establish security and rebuild Iraqi infrastructure while struggling with Bremer and senior Pentagon officials to obtain the manpower and money necessary to do so. During his tenure, however, coalition forces conducted an often heavy-handed occupation marked by major blunders at Abu Ghraib and Fallujah. By most measures, the coalition's first year in Iraq was a failure.

Spoiler alert: don't blame Sanchez. While he concedes some mistakes, Sanchez argues convincingly that his best efforts were stymied by a well intentioned but misguided Coalition Provisional Authority, by a lack of support from Army and Pentagon headquarters, and by conflicting political priorities at the White House. These obstacles have been widely reported in other publications, and Sanchez does not dwell on them.

Instead, he focuses on his own thoughts and actions as he navigates from crisis to crisis, and the book's primary value derives from this account. As commander of coalition forces, Sanchez interacted on a daily basis with senior officials in Washington and junior leaders in Iraq. That unique, albeit tenuous, position allows Sanchez to convincingly describe sniper fire in Najaf on one page and cheap shots in Congress on the next. The book also provides Sanchez's own version of the controversial events surrounding the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib, along with his response to three official investigations of the incident. Sanchez's most intriguing contribution, however, may be his description of conversations with nearly every senior American official involved with Iraq, including

the president, Rumsfeld, Bremer, General Tommy Franks, and General John Abizaid.

The book is not, however, without significant flaws. The first of these is the decision to devote half of the book recounting Sanchez's life story, starting with his impoverished childhood along the Rio Grande River and progressing through his education and military career. This lengthy and often tedious account portrays Sanchez as a competent officer whose career owed at least some debt to the mentorship of several influential senior leaders.

Additionally, the author insists on drawing important lessons from every anecdote. Recounting his first tour of duty as an Army officer, for example, Sanchez presents a laundry list of valuable observations that presumably shaped his future decisions. Later, during the first Gulf War, Sanchez speaks with a group of Iraqi soldiers captured by his unit: "That conversation proved to me the need to be ruthless in battle, but benevolent in victory . . . once victory is achieved, we must take care of our prisoners and treat them with dignity and respect." These reflections suggest a gratuitous *a priori* defense of the conditions leading to the Abu Ghraib scandal, implying that because he knew better, Sanchez could never have sanctioned such misconduct.

Finally, Sanchez's account of his nomination for a fourth star does more harm than good to his reputation. Regardless of whether Sanchez deserved the promotion senior officials promised him, the Administration's decision to withhold that nomination now appears to have been a calculated political move heavily influenced by the impending 2004 election. Some readers may find, however, that the tone of this account implies a disturbing sense of entitlement.

Despite these drawbacks, Sanchez's memoir constitutes a credible

and important contribution to the history of the war in Iraq. He presents a convincing argument that he accomplished as much as could be expected given the many challenges he inherited. One finishes this account wondering whether a Pershing, Eisenhower, or Marshall would have fared any better given the same conditions. This autobiography will hardly be the last word on the subject.

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

understated. Mansoor's matter-of-fact account does not resort to complaints about his leaders or his subordinates, a circumstance that may initially spur suspicion, since no one seems to write anything other than "kiss and tell" narratives these days. Surprisingly, Mansoor carries this off well by telling what he knew and not what he believed then or now. His training as a historian and his inherent circumspection are evident. He tells his story from his viewpoint without judging others in the absence of unimpeachable evidence, and even then, lets the reader draw his own conclusions.

*Baghdad at Sunrise* presents a panoramic view of one brigade's fight as seen from the top. The isolation of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and to some extent the next higher headquarters' staff influenced how the CPA and the coalition military chain of command interpreted the fight. He clearly but dispassionately illuminates the complexity of problems ranging from sorting out local power networks to obtaining money for mission-critical infrastructure investment while fighting the enemy.

Mansoor admits he made mistakes in misinterpreting events or allowing himself to be misled by Iraqis using him and his troops against their rivals. He makes no claim of prescience in seeing that the transition would fail, but does seem to subscribe to the "end of history" view regarding the nature of warfare. He describes big battles in which his tanks played decisive roles, while musing on the irony that his first big operation as tank brigade commander involved no tanks. (This may be because the current taxonomy of warfare parses combat operations with unhelpful terms that suggest big fights will not occur in the future.)

Mansoor suggests that no one will fight the United States conventionally and most operations will be counterinsurgency operations, but he should also acknowledge that we cannot win a counterinsurgency by "unconventional" means alone. He may be right about the future

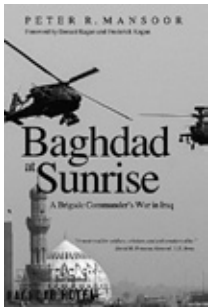
of warfare, but why would the U.S. concede any advantage in the conventional realm when doing so invites challenges? He claims the U.S. will have to wage more fights like those in Afghanistan and Iraq, but his implication that the U.S. should optimize for counterinsurgency is not convincing. The tanks Mansoor used with great effect in 2003-2004 were old even then, and we are likely to need them well into the future. Why not build and train "general purpose" forces to fight major combat operations *and* conduct stability operations? The two types of conflict have common attributes. General-purpose forces, by definition, are able to fight along the spectrum from major combat operations to stability operations. Moreover organizing the army around brigade combat teams facilitates building general purpose forces that with some task organization can operate anywhere on the continuum of military operations. Perhaps, our decades-long focus on the Soviet Union has diminished our capacity to understand the operational environment in useful theoretical terms.

These small criticisms aside, *Baghdad at Sunrise* suggests that Peter Mansoor is a proven historian and a proven Soldier who will further develop the ideas he has so thoughtfully introduced here. As the General Raymond Mason Chair of Military History at Ohio State University, he has the bully pulpit and the opportunity to do so. We have not heard the last from Peter Mansoor; hopefully, there will be much more of his work to consider.

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

**THE STRONGEST TRIBE: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq,** Bing West, Random House, New York, 2008, 411 pages, \$28.00.

The publication of Bing West's historical and political treatise, *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq*, comes at an opportune time, as the presidential election draws near. A



**BAGHDAD AT SUNRISE: A Brigade Commander's War in Iraq,** Peter R. Mansoor, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2008, 365 pages, \$28.00.

Memoirs written by Soldiers are usually either self-serving and badly written or merely self-serving. Occasionally, some efforts transcend these two broad categories. Ulysses S. Grant and Porter Alexander are two whose civil war memoirs are readable and consequently still read. Winston Churchill's recollections are well told stories. Dwight Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* is good and *At Ease* is very good.

Today, another Soldier-author is on the scene. Arriving in May 2003, while "victory" lingered in the air, Colonel Peter Mansoor assumed command of the Ready First Combat Team (1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division) in Iraq. *Baghdad at Sunrise* chronicles his time in command of the Ready First Combat Team in Iraq. *Baghdad at Sunrise* is both good literature and good history, and thus Mansoor's memoir merits mention in the same paragraph as those of Grant, Alexander, Churchill, and Eisenhower.

Mansoor, already the winner of a Society of Military History award for *GI Offensive: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-1945*, should be in the hunt for an award for *Baghdad at Sunrise* as well. His style is crisp, clear, and



well-respected author, journalist, and former assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs during the Reagan administration, West effectively argues that the United States is prevailing on the battlefield. He posits that this fact sets conditions for our next presi-

dent's political choice of staying the course in Iraq or pulling out.

West provides the reader with an understanding of the early inertia in Iraq after the invasion, the broad changes occurring since 2006, and the impetus behind those events. He combines eye-witness accounts at the tactical level with access to officials at the highest levels and expansive research to provide substantial foundation for his arguments. West's extensive travels throughout Iraq between 2004 and 2008 enable him to effectively compare progress in a particular area over time and grasp the causes and effects.

West emphasizes how ineffectual strategic decision-making hampered our military efforts, highlights coalition force frustrations with the sectarian-minded Iraqi government and security forces, and lauds the incredible spirit, professionalism, and determination of the American military. He discusses strategic and operational context and their efforts and obstacles at the tactical level. He examines how political and strategic decisions by our senior government and military leaders led to mistakes and lost opportunities to prevent or mitigate the rise of the insurgency. West describes how our Soldiers and Marines are successfully applying counterinsurgency principles to regain the support of Iraqis and sustain military momentum. He also illustrates how, with a fresh strategy and energized leaders, the military surge leveraged the Anbar Awakening to turn the tide of conflict and set conditions for a political decision in Iraq. He underscores how these U.S. military efforts are succeeding even though a sectarian-based Iraqi government and police force are

inhibiting efforts towards stability and national reconciliation.

However, despite well-researched material and relevant content, the author's style of writing detracts from his argument and leaves the reader confused at times. While the book follows a rough chronological sequence, the author indiscriminately jumps back and forth in time and between topics, resulting in disjointed discussions. Pointed comments and assertions clearly demonstrate a bias against early U.S. leaders such as Ambassador Paul Bremer, General John Abizaid, and retired Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, among others. Conversely, he generously praises Stephen Hadley, Ambassador Ryan Crocker, General David Petraeus, Lieutenant General Raymond Odierno, and the "American ground warriors," in devising and executing the surge strategy.

Nonetheless, I recommend this book to the defense community. The author provides the reader with a compelling view of military success in Iraq and a framework for deciding whether we should stay the course in Iraq or not. *The Strongest Tribe: War, Politics, and the Endgame in Iraq* is well worth adding to a professional's library.

**MAJ(P) Greg Penfield, USA,  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**LOOKING FOR TROUBLE:  
Adventures in a Broken World,**  
Ralph Peters, Stackpole Books,  
Mechanicsburg, PA, 2008, 339  
pages, \$27.95.

Those familiar with Ralph Peters' work would not expect his new book *Looking for Trouble* to fall into the travel/current affairs category, but that is where his publisher places it. A more precise definition would be memoir. This collection of Peters' travels from the early to mid-90s chronicles a few of his many travel adventures and shares some of his "you-won't-believe-this" stories of the road. The book covers adventures across the globe: trips to several South American countries where Peters researched and analyzed counterdrug opera-

tions at General Barry McCaffrey's request; his visit to the Kremlin as part of task force investigating the claim that American Soldiers from as many as four wars were imprisoned in the USSR; and a personally funded reconnaissance to Armenia to witness the 1993 war between Armenians and Azerbaijanis over the Nagorno-Karabagh region. This book is well worth reading for the author's in-depth appreciation of history and understanding of human nature.

Peters is without doubt a skilled writer. Although the book has neither maps nor pictures (save for two on the cover), Peters' descriptions throughout the book are quite vivid. The author knows how to tell a story, and he is quite adept in the art of transition. Who would not want to continue reading when a section ends with "that drinking bout came just before we flew down to check on the Mennonites growing dope."

The book's best sections include Peters' assessment of the likelihood that American POWs from World War II, Korea, or Vietnam may have been taken to the Soviet Union. His assessments in this chapter alone make the book worth the cost. He describes how Saudi Arabia leverages its international charity work to convert those in misery to extremist Islam (Wahhabi Puritanism, he calls it). His observations are both disturbing and fascinating. According to Peters, the Saudis abandon those in need when the sought-after conversion is not forthcoming. As to the treatment of women in Pakistan, he observes that a society devoted to misogyny loses half its potential productivity.

For all its strengths, *Looking for Trouble* has its weaknesses. Peters makes a bizarre claim that General McCaffrey, whom he describes as a friend, was "the only division commander with true fighting spirit" in Desert Storm. One cannot help but wonder if this isn't a superficial analysis affected by personal bias, in this case friendship. At times, Peters' tone is problematic, particularly in his caustic treatment of fellow officers. He describes colleagues

at the Pentagon as “self-serving, their analysis superficial, the results negligible.” On the other hand, his exuberant praise for close friends from his unit who travelled with him is almost comical. There are two kinds of people in this book—the author’s friends, who are capable and gifted, and the rest of the officer corps, who are content as long as they can cycle oxygen.

Peters ends his memoir by explaining the reasons for his unexpected retirement: he was tired of “serving at the mercy of fools” and having his on-the-ground intelligence assessments ignored by those far away from the action (only to be proved correct later). In Greek mythology, the gods blessed Cassandra with the gift of prophesy but cursed her so that no one would ever believe her predictions. Ralph Peters seems to think he has suffered a similar fate. He believes he is blessed with brilliance but cursed because only a few people listen to him.

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

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**RUMSFELD’S WARS: The Arrogance of Power**, Dale Herspring, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2008, 247 pages, \$34.95.

*Rumsfeld’s Wars: The Arrogance of Power*, by Dale Herspring, is provocative to the point of being incendiary, but I don’t think I would recommend it to the readers of *Military Review*. The author has drawn heavily on widely publicized secondary sources (mostly selective newspaper reports and other anti-Rumsfeld books) and stitched those accounts together with a disturbing number of undocumented suppositions, insinuations, and inferences that make the piece read more like a prosecutor’s brief than a scholarly exposition.

In his own preface, the author reports his disturbing conclusion that Iraq’s possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction “was an idea manufactured by the civilian leadership in the Pentagon to justify the war” and that Donald Rumsfeld

and subordinates “manipulated data and convinced the President of the United States of the necessity of invading Iraq.” In the opening section of chapter 4, which specifically pursues these accusations, he asserts that Rumsfeld’s civilian assistants “vowed to remove Saddam Hussein from power and set the Iraqi populace free,” “believed that democracy was the preferred form of government throughout the world,” and, as members of the “Iraq Hawks,” were responsible for pressuring the Congress into passing the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act—all without benefit of footnotes or other documentation. This rhetorical style persists throughout other chapters, which address DOD’s perceived blunders during the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars as well as its general ineptitude in pursuing modernization through military transformation.

The possibility that DOD leadership might have been responsible for any positive accomplishments is acknowledged only begrudgingly in rare terse paragraphs that are scarce indeed. In short, it is a hatchet job. There are many Rumsfeld haters who have already cheered the book, and they will probably be joined by many like-minded future readers. In truth, the former secretary of defense was highly unpopular and probably deserves much of the scorn heaped upon him. I am certainly not a fan of his. However, I do think his legacy deserves a fairer assessment than Herspring offers; the professional officers who read *Military Review* deserve a more balanced and objective analysis of his tenure. Making Rumsfeld and his minions the scapegoats for everything that went wrong in the Defense Department from 2001 to 2006 is just far too easy a way out.

The problems and challenges that Secretary Rumsfeld and the DOD staff faced during that period were unprecedented and extraordinarily complex. Their efforts need to be evaluated with more objectivity and insight than this book provides. To ensure that history does not repeat itself, senior military leaders also need to step up to the plate and take

responsibility for letting some of DOD’s missteps happen. But that is not a message that is going to be well-received, and I definitely don’t think that anyone other than the generals themselves are qualified or possess the requisite credentials to deliver that message.

Someone like General (Retired) Ric Shinseki (to whom the author coincidentally dedicated this book) might better provide a more balanced picture of Rumsfeld’s tenure and legacy. Despite his shameful treatment at the hands of Mr. Rumsfeld and his assistants while serving as the Army Chief of Staff, I am quite confident that General Shinseki would render a more balanced and thoughtful assessment than Dale Herspring has provided.

**LTC Michael P. Shaver,  
USA, Retired,  
La Crosse, Wisconsin**

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**SECURING THE STATE: Reforming the National Security Decisionmaking Process at the Civil-Military Nexus**, Christopher P. Gibson, Ashgate, Hampshire, UK, and Burlington, VT, 2008, 162 pages, \$89.95.

A basic tenet of American government holds that the armed forces subordinate themselves to the president, the Constitution, and the will of the people. In *Securing the State*, Colonel Chris Gibson asserts that this broadly understood concept does not specify the relationship of elected leaders, appointed officials, and senior military officers in enough detail, especially in a time of crisis. As war with Iraq loomed, for example, Gibson claims that the Joint Chiefs of Staff found themselves in such a subordinate and deferential position vis-à-vis Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld that they were unable to communicate wise military advice, unfiltered by the Secretary’s political and personal biases, to the president and the Congress, the nation’s elected leaders. Nor were military leaders allowed to develop plans as prudent, detailed, or as fully resourced as required for success in Iraq.



Many place the blame for this at the door of an impulsive, arrogant secretary, or a reckless, mysteriously motivated president. Gibson, to his credit, moves beyond easy personal judgments to trace the historical evolution and theoretical basis of a national military command dynamic that failed to generate courses of action likely to produce victory.

Colonel Gibson argues that the U.S. government lacks sufficient institutional structures and protocols to ensure that its “civil-military nexus” functions efficiently and effectively. He identifies a pendulum-like oscillation between opposing concepts and practices during the post-World War II era. At times appointed civilian leaders, especially aggressive secretaries of defense such as Robert McNamara and Donald Rumsfeld dominated the civil-military nexus. In other periods, the military has so strongly asserted its prerogatives that its perceived usefulness to elected leaders has been negligible. Colonel Gibson cites the mid-1990s, during the ascendancy of the powerful and charismatic General Colin Powell, as a period in which the military possessed an overdeveloped sense of its own importance and independence. The result, intentional or not, was that President Bill Clinton could not count on the military’s support, and consequently stopped asking military leaders to do things they didn’t already want to do anyway.

To counter these dysfunctional extremes, Gibson proposes a “Madisonian approach,” named in honor of founding father and fourth president James Madison. The Madisonian approach seeks to guarantee that both his senior military officer and his senior appointed official can present the president with courses of action, with both leaders accorded an equal stature within the administration. In Gibson’s eyes, the current practice, that the senior officer and senior appointed official adopt a unified position when advising the president, is a recipe for stifling good ideas and ensuring that an unseemly jockeying for dominance takes place.

Other ideological assumptions of a Madisonian approach include the notions that—

- The military owes its allegiance to elected, not appointed, leaders. Specifically this means the president, as opposed to the secretary of defense.

- The military is obligated to work closely with Congress, especially concerning force structure, budget, and other resource issues.

- The opinions and options offered by military leaders, minimally tainted by political considerations, are central to the decision-making process.

In practice, Gibson offers specific rearrangements of the national command structure:

- A readjustment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act to limit the power of the secretary of defense and enhance the importance of the nation’s senior military officer. Gibson would not have combatant commanders report to or through the secretary. Instead, they would work directly for the nation’s senior military officer. The holder of this position would neither defer to nor work for the secretary of defense. Instead, he would speak directly and in his own voice to the commander in chief, and the president would have the benefit of the most prudent military analysis and recommendations for action.

- The creation of a commanding general position to replace the current chairman, joint chiefs of staff billet. The commanding general of the military would exercise the powers outlined above, not as a senior staff officer and advisor, but as a leader in the chain-of-command.

- A wholesale revision of the joint strategic planning system into a more streamlined, productive process.

- Much more professional preparation of military and civilian leaders to function capably at the highest levels. For military personnel, this goal entails more advanced academic training and experience in Pentagon and joint positions. For civilians, Gibson recommends more education in military capabilities and decision-making processes.

Gibson’s recommendations would greatly increase the stature of the Pentagon’s ranking military officer. Adopting them would begin with a wholesale review of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. By and large, critics of the current administration’s prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism have not identified Goldwater-Nichols as a culprit for the rocky course of events in Iraq and Afghanistan, so *Securing the State*, unwittingly or not, opens up another avenue of attack for administration opponents. However, Goldwater-Nichols will eventually merit close scrutiny for its efficacy in helping the nation win the War on Terrorism; Gibson helps define the terms the debate will take.

Written while Gibson served a fellowship at the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, and for scholars and policy wonks as well as serving military officers, *Securing the State* has a blizzard of footnotes that might bore military professionals and sometimes turgid recaps of historical precedents and theoretical positions. However, those who persevere to the end will have much to contemplate, for Gibson has constructed a complex argument leading to a bold position. Although the book ultimately seeks to enhance the influence of the military, Gibson is not afraid to criticize many of its most visible leaders of the past two decades. He maintains a respectful, objective tone, but his disappointment with both specific individuals and military officer culture in general is palpable.

In its fullest dimension, then, *Securing the State* tests the limits to which serving officers can go in criticizing national and military affairs for the sake of professional and academic debate. Currently the commander of 2d Brigade Combat Team in the 82d Airborne Division, Colonel Gibson’s warfighting prowess should help him steer through whatever flak he generates. He may well get a chance to implement reforms as he rises through the ranks or becomes part of the civil-military nexus he has so closely studied. For most officers, who will never be players at the strategic

level, *Securing the State's* primary lesson lies in the model of military professionalism that Gibson values and embodies. Key components of this model include intellectual vigor and courage, combined with a commitment to critique and debate, focused to best serve the Nation's elected leaders and the American people. Anything less, in Gibson's eyes, cheapens the notion of military integrity and substitutes a weak sense of loyalty for a stronger one.

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

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**VIOLENT POLITICS: A History of Insurgency, Terrorism, and Guerrilla War, from the American Revolution to Iraq**, William R. Polk, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2007, 273 pages, \$23.95.

Dr. William R. Polk is an accomplished academic who has taught at Harvard University and the University of Chicago and served on the State Department's Policy Planning Council, which was responsible for the Middle East and North Africa during President John F. Kennedy's administration. His book, *Violent Politics*, is a historical meta-narrative of 11 insurgencies beginning with the American Revolution and ending with the current war in Iraq. The book's central thesis is that the nature of an insurgency is xenophobic; that is, the "heart of insurgency is essentially anti-foreign." To prove this, Polk uses the concept of a "climate of insurgency" to describe how collaborationist government forces lose legitimacy to smaller, less-organized native associations. The author uses a four-phase model of insurgency to describe how local fighter-politicians combat American, French, British, and German invading or occupation force armies. Polk suggests cultural differences between a foreign army and the native population doomed any locally contested occupation.

I recommend the book for those who want a quick primer on the history of insurgency and guerrilla warfare. Polk's large-scale analysis

of insurgency is well written and researched. Officers who read *Violent Politics* will benefit from its scant coverage of tactics and more trenchant descriptions of the social, cultural, and economic contests that accompany an insurgent's use of guerrilla and terrorist tactics. A far more authoritative book on the subject of insurgencies is Robert B. Asprey's *War in the Shadows: The Guerrilla in History* (Doubleday, New York, 1975). However, if you do not have the time or will to read that work, which is over 1,600 pages long, Polk's book is a welcome addition to a growing body of academic work.

**MAJ James F. Chastain,  
USA, West Point, New York**

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**THE SON TAY RAID: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten**, John Gargus, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX, 2007, 352 pages, \$29.95.

With *The Son Tay Raid*, John Gargus has produced one of the finest military history works of 2007 on the Vietnam War, a splendid and thorough account of the 20 November 1970 Son Tay raid that goes well beyond previous works such as Benjamin Schemmer's *The Raid: The Son Tay Prison Rescue Mission* (Ballantine Books, New York, 2002). Through meticulous research of newly declassified documents, unpublished sources, and his own comprehensive interviewing of the participants, Gargus captures the spirit of this unique mission in special operations history, including the emotional denouement when no U.S. prisoners were found.

Gargus, an Air Force planner and lead navigator for the strike force, provides personal insight into the mission, avoids over-emphasizing his own participation by maintaining a historian's objectivity and detachment, highlights the roles of each service in the planning and execution of the raid, and illustrates the challenge of disseminating intelligence, all the while maintaining strict operational security. The book is less about foreign policy

and strategic considerations for the foray, than its operational and tactical aspects, which even include the North Vietnamese perspective on the raid. His research is impeccable, and the book is essentially flawless.

Particularly interesting are the accounts of the little-known naval component of the raid and the Air Forces' challenges in flight-route selection and planning. Here the author renders the sections understandable for the non-aviation reader. The book has extensive notes, clear charts, interesting pictures, a glossary, informative appendices, and is a pleasure to read. I recommended it for all special operators, joint planners, historians, and aficionados of the Vietnam War. The book should be a mandatory part of the Command and General Staff College course curriculum for special operations planning and execution.

**Kevin D. Stringer, Ph.D.,  
Zurich, Switzerland**

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**NOTHING LESS THAN FULL VICTORY: Americans at War in Europe 1944-1945**, Edward Miller, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2007, 346 pages, \$32.95.

Edward Miller's latest work, *Nothing Less than Full Victory*, produces a unique and fresh look at the U.S. Army's campaign in Europe by focusing on logistics, organization, training, and deployment, areas of the war historians have for the most part neglected.

*Nothing Less than Full Victory* shows how in 1939 America's Army had obsolete weapons and antiquated beliefs about warfare, even though scholars and the general public assumed that success in Europe was preordained. Miller argues that the Army received little credit for a tremendous and successful undertaking, its remarkable self-transformation during global conflict. Miller challenges the conclusions of many historians, journalists, and other authorities concerning the Army's performance, saying that many works have ignored or underestimated the impact mobilization, organization, training, and logistics

had on operations. Examples from various operations illustrate how American Soldiers were matched far more evenly with the Germans than some histories would lead people to believe. Victory, in fact, was not secured through material superiority but through the will and courage of the Soldiers who succeeded despite the odds against them. Their ability to adapt and overcome brought victory.

Problems on the home front affected the fighting forces in Europe. American industry was beset with labor, contracting, production, and even racial problems—a far cry from the united effort portrayed in many histories. American industry never let the war interfere with its self-interest—a problem the Army was forced to contend with.

The author sets the record straight regarding the American Soldier's performance in World War II and sheds light on the impact mobilization, organization, training, and logistics had on operations. The Army successfully recruited, organized, trained, employed, and sustained its forces while it simultaneously developed new processes and procedures, paralleling what the modern Army is trying to achieve today. This well-researched, easy-to-read book provides readers much to consider about World War II. I recommend it to all readers.

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

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**OMAHABEACHANDBEYOND:  
The Long March of Sergeant  
Slaughter**, John Robert Slaughter,  
Zenith Press, St. Paul, MN, 2007,  
288 pages, \$26.95.

Sixteen-year-old John Slaughter joined the 116th Infantry Regiment to escape the Great Depression. A few months later, he was engaged in the serious business of preparing for a conventional, high-intensity world war. *Omaha Beach and Beyond* is a record of his experiences.

Slaughter advanced from private to staff sergeant squad leader; his Army service ended when he was only 20 years old but by then, he

had done it all. He was also one of the first Army Rangers in World War II, experienced the war “up front,” lived in the dirt, squalor, weather, and spent days on the line, in a time when there was no forward support base for him to return to. The stress was phenomenal and some of his friends succumbed to what we now call post traumatic stress syndrome.

Slaughter became involved in veterans affairs after the war and was the driving force behind locating and building the World War II D-Day monument in Bedford, Virginia. The location was not arbitrary—the 116th Infantry Regiment suffered horrendous losses on D-Day, landing in one of the most heavily defended sections of Normandy. Soldiers were recruited to National Guard units from locales around their armories. The unfortunate by-product of this system was a very high number of casualties in the towns from which the units were drawn. Bedford, Virginia, had the highest per capita loss of any town in the United States for D-Day. Nineteen sons of this town died on the French shores.

Slaughter was one of three D-Day veterans to escort the president and other officials during the 1994 50th anniversary commemoration along Omaha Beach, where his regiment suffered and distinguished itself. It was fitting that Slaughter was selected to lead the 2004 60th Anniversary march of the 29th “Blue and Gray” Infantry Division in France.

Many of the 2,000 casualties suffered by the 29th and 1st Infantry Divisions on Omaha Beach never came home and now lie in the beautiful cemeteries in France. John Slaughter's book reminds us of the sacrifice his friends and comrades made.

**LTC Edwin L. Kennedy Jr.,  
USA, Retired,  
Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**RETRIBUTION: The Battle for  
Japan, 1944-45**, Max Hastings,  
Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2008,  
615 pages, \$35.00.

Veteran newsman and military historian Max Hastings has written

another gripping book, *Retribution*. One of Hastings's previous books, *Armageddon: The Battle for Germany, 1944-1945* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2004), told the story of the last years of World War II in the European Theater. *Retribution* covers the same time, the bloodiest year of the war in the Pacific/Asia Theater. It included the British battles in Burma, the invasions of the Philippines, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, the strategic bombing of Japan, and the last military operation, the Soviet invasion of Manchuria and Korea.

Hastings, a former editor of Britain's *Evening Standard* and *The Daily Telegraph*, tells his story from the theater war point of view as well as from personal experience. He described the war from the point of view of the high command, enlisted personnel, and civilians caught up in the war. Former news people have a particular gift for this, as Rick Atkinson did for World War II in Europe (*The Day of Battle*) and David Halberstam for the Korean War (*The Coldest Winter*.)

Hastings does not hesitate to lace his writing with editorial opinions. For example, in his discussion of the U.S. decision to drop the atomic bomb he asks: “Why should the United States have endured prevarication from the sponsors of Pearl Harbor and the Bataan death march?” The book is aptly titled *Retribution*. While some readers may prefer more footnotes and a bibliography to trace the source of the data cited, they will nonetheless be hard pressed to find a more readable history of the final year of the Pacific War.

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

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**THE DAY OF BATTLE: The War  
in Sicily and Italy, 1943-1944**, Rick  
Atkinson, Henry Holt and Company,  
NY, 2007, 791 pages, \$35.00.

*The Day of Battle* is the second volume in Rick Atkinson's planned *Liberation Trilogy*, which follows the U.S. Army as it assumes the principal combat role in the European Theater in World War II. In this

hefty volume, the author provides a grand narrative of what is now viewed as one of the epic war sagas of the U.S. Army.

The bloody Italian campaign, which many strategists at the time, as well as many historians today, condemned as unnecessary, was the brainchild of the redoubtable Winston Churchill, who doggedly bullied and cajoled the allies to attack what he viewed as “the soft underbelly” of the Axis up the Italian Peninsula. Unfortunately, Churchill’s sunny predictions turned into a bloody nightmare.

Numerous personality conflicts plagued the Italian campaign. Generals George Patton, Bernard Montgomery, Mark Clarke, and Harold Alexander are only some of the egos that competed for pre-eminence in the land of the Caesars. On the Axis side, Albert Kesselring, a former artillery officer who became a Luftwaffe general, led the campaign. Kesselring showed a mastery of operational defense using the rugged Italian terrain to make the Allies pay dearly for each foot of ground.

The tragedies, triumphs, and ethical dilemmas posed to Soldiers and commanders are described vividly as befits the author’s journalistic background. Letters, diaries, press releases, and even oral recollections are all combed for pertinent material. From his rich sources, Atkins crafts a vivid narrative that probes the complexities of multi-national command while at the same time paying attention to the perspective of the GIs and “Tommys,” who marched under the burning Italian sun in summer and slogged up the wind-swept mountains in winter along with French, Polish, Australian, New Zealander, and other comrades. The legends, too, are given their share of coverage. Audie Murphy, William Darby, and Bill Mauldin show the impact of extraordinary individuals on the course of events. The text is complemented by a careful selection of photographs and maps illustrating such well-known operations as the “race to Messina,” the battles for the

Anzio beachhead, and the siege of Monte Cassino.

*The Day of Battle* is fine narrative history for the thoughtful reader. It is not a definitive history in the scholarly sense because, although the author marshals an impressive bibliography, the subject is just too complex for one book. The text is referenced in an odd sort of way that avoids footnotes, presumably so as not to scare away a “popular” readership. In short, the book provides an excellent introduction and richly textured overview of one of the most bitterly contested campaigns of World War II. I highly recommend the book.

**LTC Prisco R. Hernández, Ph.D.**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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**EMPIRES OF THE SEA: The Siege of Malta, the Battle of Lepanto, and the Contest for the Center of the World**, Roger Crowley, The Random House Publishing Group, New York, 2008, 291 pages, \$30.00.

Roger Crowley’s *Empires of the Sea* deserves a wide readership. It covers a broad span of dynamic, colorful history from the 16th century that features a clash of civilizations with relevance to our own day—with the major roles reversed.

Here is the master narrative: a super-power with hegemony at sea and an almost unbeatable army is advancing on all fronts. Although it has multiple security challenges and conflicts throughout its vast territories and areas of influence, its most vexing problems come from a loose confederation of religious fanatics who fight among themselves as much as against the superpower. Nevertheless, within almost 50 years, the superpower’s apparently inexorable advance is not only stopped but decisively defeated in the realm in which it thought it was all-powerful—at sea. The superpower in this case is Ottoman Turkey. The opponents, the polyglot mess that was Europe before the modern era, the Hapsburg-led Holy

Roman Empire and Spain, an independent group of warrior-monks, the Papacy, Venetian oligarchs, Genoese mercenary admirals, and frightened Protestant princes newly separated from the Catholic universe.

Crowley has written a compelling history of this little-known but important chapter in military history. He makes it all come alive with unflinching portraits of Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent, the Knights of St. John, Admiral Andrea Doria, Don Juan of Austria, and the fearsome Islamic corsair brothers, Oruch and Hayrettin. Nor does he neglect those doing the fighting and dying or the innocent (and not-so-innocent) civilians caught in the crossfire. Crowley deftly uses the writing of men who witnessed the events to give the book the feel of a novel. From the epic siege of Rhodes in 1522 to the disaster that befell the Ottoman fleet in 1571 at Lepanto near modern-day Greece, the book describes the maritime conflict that led to the apogee and then the slow decline of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly commendable is Crowley’s care in retelling the story of Lepanto, which was the bloodiest day in modern history at the time, with over 40,000 people killed in a day of unimaginable carnage on 7 October 1571.

Crowley takes special pains to ensure his readers know that things could have gone differently, that the real significance of the event remained shrouded at the time. In doing so, he captures for the reader the contingent and even tragic nature of those times. The illustrations add value. They are almost uniformly contemporary prints, carvings, and even coin facsimiles that match the faces and geography with the fast-moving text. I strongly recommend this book to as wide an audience as possible. It achieves the rare combination of being entertaining, informative, and sobering—all at the same time.

**John T. Kuehn, Commander,**  
**U.S. Navy, Retired,**  
**Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**



## Money as a Force Multiplier in COIN

LTC Thomas D. Morgan, *USA, Retired, Steilacoom, WA*—I was disgusted with an article in your May-June 2008 issue entitled “Money as a Force Multiplier in COIN.” As a taxpayer, I resent Soldiers giving all this money to basically people on the street. I believe that giving away \$6.6M dollars to 33,000 Iraqis in Fallujah was one of the examples given. That is my money that is being given away and I did not authorize it. It is one thing to spend large amounts of appropriated money to fight a war (i.e., to pay for beans, bullets, gasoline, spare parts, and medical supplies), but quite another to bribe Iraqi citizens to do their civic duty. Sure they accepted the money and will act nicely as long as we keep paying. But, as soon as we stop the payments, they will go back to their old ways. This is not a way to fight a war. If we have to bribe them, then we should leave.

Iraq sits on a lake of oil and they can pay their citizens from that great source of wealth. The Iraq government only charges \$1.15 for a gallon of gasoline. They should be paying us to fight this war, not the other way around. Last year the U.S. Army did not have enough money to properly run its Stateside military bases because the Installation Management Agency was underfunded to support the war effort. It is ridiculous for Soldiers to give money away when it is in short supply at home. If it is so important to pay the Iraqi civilians, why not levy every Soldier’s salary for a few hundred dollars to do it. NOT! I don’t think so, but that would make more sense.

Giving large sums of money away is a dangerous habit. It only feeds greed and corruption. I remember the stories of CIA and Special Ops Agents giving warlords in Afghanistan \$1000 dollar bills when they first arrived in that backward country. What did that get us? The place is a mess now and the terrorists have made a comeback. Some of those very warlords who bought SUVs, cell phones, and fancy weapons from bootleggers with our money have now turned on us. It was not money well spent.

We have enough trouble with bogus contracts being given for faulty goods and services that have cost us billions! KBR, Custer-Battles, and the Miami-based storefront that sold \$300M of worthless ammunition to the Afghans, engineering companies that built defective buildings, and a host of other incredibly stupid and wasteful actions have cost us billions with little or no return. Our money has just made those people more greedy and dishonest. They are learning it in spades from us.

Don’t publish anymore of those deceptive, feel-good articles about money being a combat multiplier. It is pure bunk and has no place in a professional military magazine. Money is not a force multiplier unless it buys things that are going to win the war. Bribing civilians will not.

## MR Response

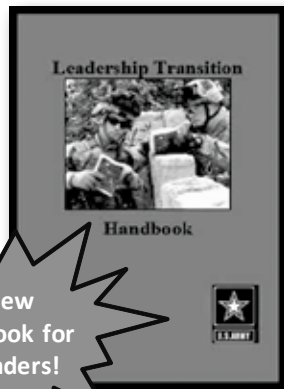
Your perspective presents one side of a legitimate debate. In theory, judicious cash outlays are an economy of force measure. They have always been and always will be used as a moderating influence during a conflict—a force multiplier.

Military forces have used money rather than the lives of troops to pacify countries full of recalcitrant insurgents throughout history. There is a correlation between economic hardship and insurgency. Easing society’s economically straitened conditions may do more for peace and chances of lasting stability than multiples of times the equivalent cost in war materiel.

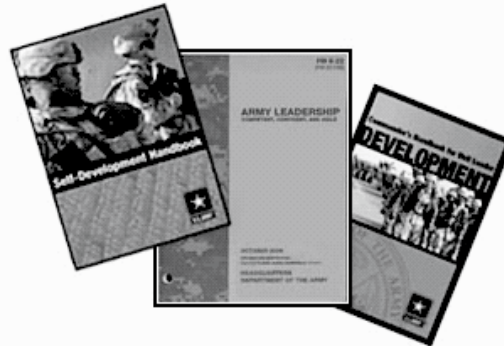
In a perfect world only those who are innocent and deserving would benefit from such money and there would be not a penny wasted—all contractors would be honest and careful. But the reality is that when military forces use cash to better society as a whole, bad people will benefit as well. Facing that reality does not mean we condone it; on the contrary, it means that zealous efforts have to be made to prosecute those who let others down through malfeasance, criminal mismanagement, negligence, fraud, or corruption.

A watchword for good stewardship should be the phrase “command responsibility.” If a commander wields his forces irresponsibly in an indiscriminate and disproportionate way, and ends up carelessly killing noncombatants he is there to protect, he should face the consequences for that failure even if he attains a battlefield victory. If he is judicious and disciplined, failure in his military mission will not be a failure of trust and honor. Likewise, the commander who uses money carefully as a weapon can save many lives. Money thus used in helping people who have suffered from the war is hardly a bribe. Even if the effort fails, we cannot say the money was wasted anymore than we can say the lives of Soldiers were wasted.

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**2008 General William E. DePuy  
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**★ RESULTS ★**

The Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth is pleased to announce the winners of the 2008 General William E. DePuy Writing Competition. Thirty-five manuscripts were received and judged by a distinguished panel of invited experts.

- 1st Place** “The Ethical Challenges in Stability Operations and Nation-Building,” by SGT Jared Tracy, \$1000
- 2nd Place** “To the Victor Go the Sores: Learning from Moderate Muslim Governments: Approaches to Islamist Militant Activism,” by MAJ Erik A. Claessen, Belgian Army, \$750
- 3rd Place** “Counterinsurgency Operations (COIN) in Baghdad—The Action of 1-4 Cavalry in 2007/2008 East Rashid Security District,” by MAJ Thomas J. Sills, \$500
- 4th Place** “Making Use of What is Already There: Leveraging Liminality in Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform,” by MAJ Louis P. Melacon, \$250

**Honorable Mention**

- “Building the Team: The Continuing Evolution of Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Task Force Marne and Beyond,” by SFC Jesse P. Pruett, \$100
- “Investing in Stability: The Need for Intelligence Preparation for Economic Operations,” by James E. Shircliffe Jr., \$100
- “It Ain’t Over Till It’s Over: The Things America Should Do When Combat Ends,” by MAJ E. Paul Flowers, \$100
- “Legitimacy: The Supreme Principle of Irregular Warfare,” by MAJ John W. Bauer, \$100
- “The Role of Detainee Healthcare as Part of the Information Instrument of Power,” by LTC Beverly D. Patton, \$100

**Members of the panel who reviewed this year’s contest submissions are:**

Lieutenant General David W. Barno, USA, Retired, Director, Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University, Washington, DC

Steven Metz, Ph.D., Chairman of the Regional Strategy and Planning Department and Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, PA

Michael W. Mosser, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of International Relations, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College’s School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), Fort Leavenworth, KS

Colonel Timothy R. Reese, Director, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS

The winning manuscripts will be published in upcoming editions of *Military Review*, the Professional Journal of the U.S. Army. Honorable Mentions and distinguished submissions that were not formally recognized will be given preferential consideration for publication subject to space constraints and the continuing relevance of the topic.