

MR Review Essay

Influencing a Soldier, Lessons Learned

Steve McGregor

Australian Army officer and anthropologist David Kilcullen describes counterinsurgency as “armed social work.”* After spending 14 months as an Army officer in Iraq, I wholeheartedly agree. Yet how does a Soldier prepare for this challenge? Military service academies produce engineers—not social scientists. And the U.S. Army Chief of Staff reading list, something of an institutional barometer, is dominated by works such as *We Were Soldiers Once . . .*, *The Face of Battle*, and *Patton*. These books explain the mind of a Western Soldier, not that of an Eastern Muslim. Yet, in my experience, *Among the Believers: An Islamic Journey*, by V.S. Naipaul, prepared me for the social challenges of counterinsurgency in Iraq more than any other book.

Among the Believers is a kind of travelogue, recording Naipaul’s mealtime conversations and personal encounters in several predominantly Islamic countries. Although he wrote it immediately after the Iranian revolution in 1979, Naipaul’s book describing his three-year foray through Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia is remarkably prescient and a valuable read for anyone wanting to better understand Islam, politics in Asia, and the challenges facing Iraq today.

I read *Among the Believers*, while I was a platoon leader stationed in Yusufiya, Iraq. My unit operated out of a dilapidated Russian thermal power plant along the Euphrates River, and we conducted daily patrols to talk with Army commanders and influential Iraqis in the area. Most often, our “meeting engagements” with Iraqis took the form of leisurely lunches—meals outside in the shade where local tribesmen would share rice, sheep, cucumbers, unleavened bread, and

oranges with American and Iraqi soldiers. We stood while eating and used our hands to scoop white rice into our mouths and pull mutton off the bone. The host would often tear pieces of the choicest meat with his hands and give them to us to eat. Those afternoons were almost familial and seemed intimate in ways that sometimes felt awkward. After all, we were wearing Army uniforms and there was always the “business” of the war: taking advantage of relationships to inquire about terrorist leaders and weapons caches.

I soon realized that what felt odd about these lunches with Iraqi locals was my tendency to categorize each Iraqi as a “friend” or an “enemy,” a military habit that prevented me from appreciating Iraqi life and the influence of history, architecture, art, clothing, food, religion, and family. I felt convicted by Naipaul, who derived insight from his approach to Iraq. During a conversation, a reclusive ayatollah once asked Naipaul about his religion. “I am still a seeker,” Naipaul replied. Naipaul always tried to understand the character of the people he met—not convert them or argue with them. Therefore, before meeting an Iranian religious judge responsible for thousands of death sentences during Khomeini’s revolution, Naipaul confessed a desire “to enter his mind, to see the world as he saw it.”

Once I asked a local sheik how long he had lived in Yusufiya. When the interpreter finished translating my question to him, the sheik looked confused. “I have always lived here,” he said, explaining that he and his family had lived in the same house for five generations. We were eating lunch on the lawn beside his home. Around the table were his brothers, sons, and cousins. What would be a family reunion for me

was a typical meal at home for the sheik. Understanding the strength of family became essential to my understanding of the Awakening movement, in which thousands of Sunni tribesmen allied themselves with U.S. and Iraqi soldiers. I have often heard the Awakening and the U.S. troop surge discussed in juxtaposition to each other—with the assertion that one or the other contributed the Soldiers who brought security to Iraq. But I came to understand the Awakening as chiefly a social event, one that occurred when the American and Iraqi armies demonstrated their support of Arabic tribal culture.

One example of this is the capture of a local Iraqi wanted in connection with insurgent activity—I’ll call Jasim. In typical Army fashion, a Special Forces team descended into Yusufiya one night and raided Jasim’s house. He was conveniently absent and no one seemed to know his whereabouts. The next day our unit met with the tribe. After apologizing for the disrespect of the raid, the American company commander explained the situation and asked that the tribe hand Jasim over to them. This was presented as a test of the tribe’s power. By the end of the week, the tribe turned Jasim in at the nearest American patrol base. When the Special Forces tried to assert their power over the tribe, the tribe resisted. However, by supporting the sheik and explaining our position, we found our man. The use of pre-existing social networks enabled military success and improved safety.

Naipaul’s *Among the Believers* also drew my attention to history because Naipaul framed his observations with history. He interrupts his experiences in the Muslim areas with descriptions of relevant wars

and political events, such as the 8th century Muslim conquest of Sind (now Pakistan and Southern Afghanistan) and Dutch followed by Japanese rule in Indonesia. Naipaul relates the significance of these events, but he also uses the local understanding of what took place. "History, in the Pakistan school-books I looked at," writes Naipaul, "begins with Arabia and Islam."

As it happened, the history of Yusufiya posed one of our greatest challenges. Generations of centralized authoritarian rule instilled a tradition of government by petition rather than planning. When I asked a ministry of education representative for Yusufiya what his goals were for improving education in the area, he insisted that new schools were needed in Qarghuli—a relatively wealthy area where the U.S. Army had already built two new schools. When I pointed this out, he was unfazed; the Qarghulis were a noisy tribe who frequently pestered the ministry for more assistance, and they must have new schools. Without a strong centralized government handing down orders, the local council in Yusufiya was unable to prioritize its constituents' needs. However, as much as Yusufiya needed security, it also needed representative democracy. Toward this end, my unit facilitated meetings between the government council and local tribes. We also helped the council set goals and draft the first locally prioritized budget in recent history.

Among the Believers also deals with the nature and influence of the West. Naipaul writes of sitting on the verandah of an old British hotel in Penang, an island off Malaysia, speaking with two local Muslim converts and asking them if "in an old colonial hotel like this, half desired, half rejected, a village Malay might feel that he had become a stranger in his own country?" They enthusiastically agreed. The West is

somehow everywhere in these societies, and often something to eschew or hold in contempt. One of the Malays, a schoolteacher, shared with Naipaul a paper he authored titled, "The Bankruptcy of the West." It was a treatise against consumption, promiscuity, and temptation.

Such contempt for the West burst forth in Yusufiya when, soon after the occupation, American soldiers raped an Iraqi girl. In retaliation, insurgents kidnapped, tortured, and killed American Soldiers. The kidnappings occurred before my unit arrived in Yusufiya, and the bodies had not been recovered. We spent a great amount of energy searching for the lost Soldiers—though certain of their fate because of videos seen on the cell phones of average Iraqi citizens.

Farmers, schoolteachers, poets, students, and religious disciples are the people that interested Naipaul in his travels in Muslim area. More than ever, ideas of such people about the West are influencing the world. Chicken farmers were members of an insurgency that fought against the American infantry. One of our more significant detainees was captured for having thousands of pounds of munitions buried under a chicken coop. The ideas about America and the West held by impoverished farmers were influencing the stability of Yusufiya, Iraq, and the Middle East.

"The West," observes Naipaul, "or the universal civilization it leads, is emotionally rejected... but at the same time it is needed, for its machines, goods, medicines, warplanes, the remittances from the emigrants, the hospitals that might have a cure for calcium deficiency..." This rejection, which Naipaul decides is not an "absolute rejection," leads one to ask if the source of the trouble is their ideology or our presumptuousness. Naipaul frequently encountered sentiment that the West is an imperial force instead of a liberating

one. People debate this issue now throughout Iraq.

Among the Believers examines the nature and the practice of Islam. For some of the people Naipaul met, especially in Pakistan, Islam was "more than personal salvation, more than a body of belief; it had become country, culture, identity, [and] it had to be served, at whatever the cost to the individual or the state itself." Naipaul talked with an Indian journalist in Tehran, who emigrated to be part of "the society of believers." From Naipaul's perspective, this social force, Islam, is at the heart of the Iranian revolution, Pakistan's succession from India.

As a mentor to the local government council in Yusufiya, I helped strengthen the government's social influence as support for the insurgents waned. Often my battalion facilitated meetings between the government and local tribal sheiks. One afternoon, during the first of many visits, the government council leader appealed to the tribes in the language of family, saying, "I am a government official, but today I come as your brother." That meeting, and the lunch that followed, signified the new bond developing between government and tribes. It reminded me of a moment from *Among the Believers* where Naipaul ate with two Iranians, squatting and "eating as it were from the same dish." Naipaul noticed that one Iranian "liked the moment of serving and sharing. It could be said that it was a Muslim moment; it was the kind of sharing Muslims practiced."

In Yusufiya, peace and stability came when the military, the government, and the tribes began to share burdens. Though battle drills and the fundamentals of marksmanship remain important, it's time the Army also began preparing its leaders for such relationships.

* David Kilcullen, "Twenty-Eight Articles," *Small Wars Journal*, (*Military Review*, March-April 2006).

MR Classics Revisited



THE FORGOTTEN SOLDIER: Guy Sajer, Brassey's, Washington, DC, 1990, 465 pages, \$15.95.

There has been much debate about Guy Sajer's *The Forgotten Soldier* since it first appeared in 1967. Many historians have cited inconsisten-

cies in equipment and weapons, improper display of patches on uniforms, and an inability to find various names on unit rolls as reasons to dismiss the author's claim that this work is autobiographical. Still, Sajer appears to have supporters as well as detractors. Though this debate has been exhausted if not resolved, there is no need to spend a great deal of time questioning whether the book is autobiography or fiction. Instead, a close examination of the text alone and how it might impact Soldiers of today's Army may be of greater value than continuing the debate regarding the book's appropriate genre.

Books are written for a purpose, and Sajer is blunt in explaining his reason for sharing his experiences: "to reanimate, with all the intensity I can summon, those distant cries from the slaughterhouse." He succeeds in doing just that. Sajer's descriptions often focus on fear, hunger, filth, and isolation. He only rarely makes death noble, and even then the courageous soldier who sacrifices himself defending his native Prussia is killed by being run over by a tank—can one think of a more gruesome, less romantic end? Another fellow soldier, whom he refers to as "the veteran," sacrificed himself because he "had had enough of fighting and retreating" and realized there was nothing left for him after the war. A nation needs wholly committed soldiers, but what happens to these warriors when they realize that what they fought for is gone?

The Forgotten Soldier describes war on the Eastern front from 1942-1945 as seen by a young German soldier. Though from Alsace, Guy Sajer was half-German, born of a German mother and French father. He originally joined the service in hopes of flying, but after failing the *Luftwaffe* tests, he was sent to infantry basic training and then initially assigned as a truck driver in a transportation unit. He served in that capacity from the fall of 1942 until the spring of 1943 when he volunteered for duty as an infantryman and joined the *Wehrmacht's* elite *Gross Deutschland* division. After initial training with the division, whose camp entrance sign bore the words "We are Born to Die," Sajer served with the *Gross Deutschland* through several major engagements until he was captured in 1945. The book's value lies in its descriptions of the challenges Sajer and his fellow soldiers faced as the Eastern Front crumbled and the division fought both conventional forces as well as partisans in its retrograde.

The author is an inconsistent and sometimes awkward narrator, often stating that he can remember nothing about certain time periods. At other times, he offers exceptionally vivid descriptions of events. This inconsistency makes a great deal of sense because a young soldier, in intense combat though still in his teens, would not have seen the entire battlefield. His world would be himself, his squad, and at most his company. Perhaps the most heavy-handed moments come when the author forewarns of the death of comrades—rarely does the death of any unit member come as a surprise. This approach does not contribute to suspense, which is one of the few weaknesses of the text (assuming Sajer intended to use such a literary device).

An autobiography is often an exercise in rationalization as the

author explains why he was right and the rest of the world was wrong. To his credit, Sajer is candid in assessing his shortcomings and in doing so gains great credibility. He admits failure in his first test as a leader. After being promoted to *obergefreiter* (roughly equivalent to corporal), he led his anti-tank squad in a defense against a Russian attack. Almost overrun and believing he was about to be captured by Russians, Sajer ordered one of his soldiers to kill him. The soldier refused. As Sajer assessed the situation, he froze in front of his squad, unable to make a decision and, in his own words, "incapable of leading." Clearly his is not a story of self-aggrandizement. He questions his competence and courage throughout the book, revealing a sense of personal uncertainty that captures the reflections of a soldier at war.

Sajer effectively depicts the growing sense of defeat in an army. Initially the expectation was that the German Army would roll to victory. When that became unachievable, the goal shifted to retaining territory. From there, each established defense became essentially a no-penetration line with an ultimate goal that "no Bolshevik will ever tread on German soil." In the end, the Bolsheviks most definitely reached Germany as did all the other allies in theatre, culminating in Sajer's capture by the British in 1945. The author's treatment of the psychology of defeat is instructive even for those who cannot imagine the possibility of losing in battle. The *Gross Deutschland* is encircled and conducts a breakout, is penetrated and launches counterattacks, and is threatened and executes spoiling attacks. In short, this book addresses major combat operations between large units, a type of warfare many would like to view as anachronistic.

Of significant interest is Sajer's description of the partisan effort

against the retreating German Army. Imagine the German plight, retreating from the Russian Army while being picked apart along the way by partisans who were, in Sajer's words, terrorists. The fight was bloody and characterized by atrocities, evisceration and emasculation only two partisan methods of many cited. The partisans employed raids and ambushes, and even killed the

unit's revered company commander. In fact, the partisan threat was so significant that one-fourth of Sajer's unit was on guard duty at all times. Such constant pressure would surely drain an army, and many methods employed to reduce the partisan threat proved ineffective. One can learn much from Sajer's narrative.

Sajer explains why men join elite units as well as what makes those

units fight as one when there seems to be no reason to continue. In the end, his memoir is just that, an account of his personal experiences. That it is not a thoroughly researched history makes it no less significant. This book will remain relevant because it explores the psychology of the soldier at war.

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***MR* Book Reviews**



SOLDIER'S HEART: Reading Literature Through Peace and War at West Point, Elizabeth Samet, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, New York, 2007, 259 pages, \$15.00.

When I was a cadet at West Point over 30 years ago, there was much

ado about the *scholar-warrior*. By the time I finished my tours teaching in the English Department, the *scholar* part dropped off and the phrase was shortened simply to *warrior*. Elizabeth Samet demonstrates why when she recounts the story of Colonel David Hackworth, whose contempt for “perfumed princes” (i.e., academics) oozed out onto the page whenever he exercised his pen. Hackworth unwittingly (irony is the soul of wit) was ripping-off Shakespeare when “steeling his soldiers’ hearts.” In contrast, Samet—unafraid of the virtues of learning—gives the Bard due credit for inspiring her title.

Instead of being *literary*, the American military is far too *literal*, missing the subtleties, nuances, and ambiguities of language—and the mind—that would enable us to more meaningfully and creatively relate to each other and the world. Samet’s book is a story of one civilian professor’s experience at West Point, teaching in the one department that attempts fundamentally to make cadets aware of their language,

and, by doing so, help them to better interpret their own experiences. Her book importantly demonstrates how sorely we need an officer corps with a greater literary consciousness.

One wonders how much more enlightened our war-making practices could have been if only West Point had forged a philosophical, literary culture for our military institution rather than an engineering culture. Philosophical thought processes facilitate reflection, not just problem-solving. I still remember a former department head’s entreaty to consider our experience in Vietnam as one in which we had solved all the technical problems through our vaunted engineering processes, yet we had failed overall there because none of the human challenges faced then, as now, can be engineered.

The military institution at large constantly talks of critical thought and creativity, but it is bereft of any literary or poetic or philosophical imagination that would enable true critical and creative thought. Aristotle says in his *Poetics* that poetry is more important than history. And his ancient view may be even more relevant today, as understanding a peoples’ literature, poetry, and mythology may go further to explain why they act than the histories that pretend at objectivity and the sciences that reduce human action into behavioral constants and formulas.

Throughout the book, Samet relates her personal experiences at West Point to literary analogs. She

presents an array of insights about the formation of moral ideas, especially the influence impressed on young people through the world’s most popular *literary* works, taken by many millions to be sacred texts. But how does one, for example, reconcile an admiration for Grant through reading his memoirs with the questionable moral worthiness of Grant’s legacy? Samet fails to address such questions, the answers to which would have been the valuable link to military reflection.

Soldier’s Heart is a great book to read if one is looking for a reading list of important literary books. At times, it felt like an extended bibliographic essay, wandering through a labyrinth of ideas, encountering several authors and their works before turning every page. This labyrinthine quality may partially explain why the book does not have an index; it would have been too much. It reveals much about the author as a person, and makes one want to sit in on her classes. It gives one an appreciation for the value of having civilian professors who have first-rate academic minds teaching at the academy.

Samet’s been dealt a stronger hand than she plays, folding too often with the humility card, admiring perhaps too much the bluff of those in power while lamenting too often her lack of military experience cards. She perhaps undervalues her outside perspective. Admirably, she admits of getting too closely cloistered within a military community

that exists as a virtual reality, so it was refreshing to read about her moving to New York City, where she no doubt regains her independent perspective—which is her greatest asset as a teacher who is valued by her students. Her book would be the perfect addition to the CSA's reading list to re-introduce the warrior to the scholar.

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DROWNING IN THE DESERT: A JAG's Search for Justice in Iraq, Vivian H. Gembarra with Deborah A. Gembara, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008, 320 pages, \$26.95.

Those interested in the life of an army lawyer in combat will enjoy this personal narrative. Cap-

tain Vivian Gembarra goes to Iraq as the attorney for the 3d Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division in 2003. Her tale reveals a decent Soldier carrying considerable intellectual and human burdens. Gembarra's main difficulty lay in trying to get gung-ho infantry commanders to pay due attention to both the rules of war and of civility.

The book centers around a drowning incident presented by 1-8 Infantry Battalion commanded by the princely Nathan Sassaman. Sassaman's Soldiers pushed two Iraqi citizens off of a bridge and killed at least one other civilian in the adolescent style nurtured by Sassaman himself. The search for justice invoked by the title is unrealized when a particular military tendency to close ranks holds sway over the more important but difficult notion of abstract justice.

The case sits at the nexus of important issues—the laws of war, battle tension, the death of a beloved comrade, fighting spirit, respect for civilians, and a general's exercise of military command. Gembarra sets out the main threads in a sensitive and compelling fashion that, perhaps, tends too much toward John Grisham and not enough toward,

say, John Marshall. While the book does get to big points about justice, it will seem to some that these points don't emerge until midway through the book, thus missing the chance for a more substantial discussion.

This intimate and at times charming personal story pursues justice in the style of a legal thriller, which will engage many readers. But the book implies a greater aim that will leave other readers, this one for example, frustrated.

The chief military officer is then-Major General Raymond Odierno. Gembarra sets out what is at least a circumstantial case for the general's poor judgment owing perhaps, to his too-great affection for the person Nate Sassaman as well as his too-great sympathy for infantry Soldiers who lost their bearings. The punishments he oversaw, and the punishments he did not pursue, leave room to wonder about his commitment to the rules of land warfare and about his respect for human rights.

I came to respect Gembarra, and it is easy to understand why an author might choose to set out the facts leaving readers to draw their own conclusions, but a book with the words "Search for Justice" in its title might have pushed harder.

LTC Al Bishop, USA, Retired, Arnold, Nebraska

WIRED FOR WAR: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century, P.W. Singer, Penguin, NY, 2009, 499 pages, \$29.95.

"In the blink of an eye," observes P.W. Singer, "things that were just fodder for science fiction are creeping, crawling, flying, swimming, and shooting on today's battlefields."

In *Wired for War*, that blinking eye belongs to Singer himself, a prominent military analyst and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute. Singer's previous two books, on the rise of military contractors and the proliferation of child warriors, anticipated and illuminated emerging issues within military culture, just as military and political leaders were beginning to

take notice. Singer's latest work repeats that feat, but his new topic, robotic weaponry, poses far greater challenges—and threats—to our national security.

That warning may sound more like science fiction than sober analysis, but in the world of military technology, life seems to be imitating art. From *Star Trek's* "communicators" to the robotic spiders in *Minority Report*, Singer illustrates that what we can imagine, we can invent. Indeed, Singer's constant references to popular culture serve to demonstrate the power of imagination while illustrating various technical and ethical dilemmas that will confront policy makers in the near future.

For example, how will armed robots change military culture? Singer explains how scientists, after nearly a century of toying with the idea, have now turned the concept of unmanned weapons systems into reality. From tracked vehicles bristling with machine guns to airborne drones launching Hellfires from 30,000 feet, the American military is steadily expanding its ability to kill our enemies by remote control. Will unmanned weapons create a bloodless battlefield in the future, or will such long-distance warfare simply dehumanize both the victims and those pulling the trigger (or clicking the mouse)?

Not every change involves lethal weapons. New surveillance systems, for example, can see through walls and eavesdrop on calls, but the systems designed to hunt terrorists can also track the movements, record the phone calls, and monitor the web surfing habits of American citizens. Who will draw the line between national security and personal privacy? According to Singer, it won't be the scientists, many of whom seem far more concerned with reliability and performance than with the ethical implications of their work.

These are among the many challenges Singer examines. More preview than polemic, *Wired for War* offers a peripatetic, 360-degree examination of the current and

future state of robotic weaponry, while citing the viewpoint of philosophers, scientists, theorists, bloggers, terrorists, journalists, and generals. Detailed endnotes provide useful additional information.

One of the most ominous trends discussed in the book is the steady progress toward machines and weapons systems with “artificial intelligence,” the ability to think and learn for themselves. The prospect of such “self-aware” robots seizing control plays a central role in science fiction, and some of Singer’s experts take the threat very seriously.

Singer acknowledges the inherent glitches in Microsoft software and the probability that scientists will always incorporate safeguards, but otherwise offers little comfort. In a sub-chapter titled “When Should We Salute Our Robot Masters?” the author concludes that “we’re embedded in a matrix of technology that increasingly shapes how we live, work, communicate, and now fight. We are dependent on technology that most of us do not even understand. Why would machines ever need to plot a takeover when we already can’t do anything without them?”

The scariest challenge may be Singer’s forecast for the seemingly inevitable proliferation of robotic weapons among America’s enemies, while the Pentagon continues to buy expensive, manned systems, such as the Joint Strike Fighter, designed to win 20th-century wars. Even though America has led the way in developing military robots, Singer notes that creators of revolutionary weapons rarely enjoy any long-term advantage. Rivals have traditionally been quick to develop effective countermeasures, or they borrow, steal, or simply rent the new technology.

In an effort to raise public awareness, for example, three well-intentioned undergrads at Swarthmore College recently tried to hire an unarmed drone to film war crimes being committed in Darfur. Singer reports they found a willing contractor, but the price tag proved too rich for the students’ resources. Other non-governmental agencies may have deeper pockets—and

more dubious intentions. Since the modern, global economy now makes technology more transferable than ever, there is little doubt whether America’s rivals will develop their own unmanned weapons systems. Rather, there is only the question of when.

While proliferation may be inevitable, American policy makers need not stand by and wait for the worst. In the book’s most important chapter, the author traces the history of Just War theory and international agreements on the conduct of war. Citing precedents such as the banning of dum-dum bullets, Singer eloquently argues for new laws that will restrict the future development and employment of unmanned systems. Independent military analysis plays the important role in American society of providing voters and policy makers with critical assessments that frequently challenge the official party line. In the past decade, however, the field has become overcrowded, with too many retired generals simply regurgitating official talking points on cable news networks. Amidst this fog of war, P.W. Singer’s omnivorous curiosity offers an occasionally chilling breath of fresh air.

**LTC William C. Latham,
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**INFORMATION STRATEGY
AND WARFARE: A Guide to
Theory and Practice**, edited by
John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer,
Routledge, New York, 2007, 248
pages, \$150.00.

John Arquilla and Douglas A. Borer have assembled a collection of essays on the frequently misunderstood relationship between the management, planning, content, utilization, and dissemination of information, the basic components of information operations (IO), and military strategy. The work’s thesis is that technology and interconnectedness brought about by the arrival of the Information Age and Globalization enabled the development of IO and the information domain.

The rise of a new domain and tools by which national objectives can be achieved requires a unique and distinct strategy—information strategy. Information strategy represents a new measure of power and is an equal, not subordinate, partner with military strategy.

Arquilla’s intellectually strong and insightful introduction sets the tone for the rest of the book and sets up the three themes the volume explores. The first theme makes the case for information strategy based upon the irregular nature of modern conflicts. The second theme discusses the organizational implications of information strategy for U.S. institutions, particularly the Department of State. The third theme examines several of the tools in the IO toolkit, such as psychological operations, deception, and cyber operations. A strong conclusion by Borer caps off the work with an honest look at the difficulties of developing and operationalizing an information strategy.

I will not say the book is a classic that will be referred to for all time, but it is an academically solid work relevant to modern conflict. The conceptual groundwork for information strategy is not new. A careful reader can detect the intellectual strains of Thomas C. Schelling, Robert Jervis, Yaacov Vertzberger, and Stephen J. Cimbala. What this work does is make the work of past political theorists relevant to the modern military commander, strategist, and foreign policy planner by placing it within the context of the challenges they face on a daily basis. This is no small task.

This book is not for the casual reader. However, it most certainly deserves a place in military libraries and should be required reading for IO practitioners, senior staff officers, and policy makers responsible for putting troops in harm’s way.

**James E. Shircliffe Jr.,
Waldorf, MD**

**BAD STRATEGIES: How Major
Powers Fail in Counterinsur-
gency**, James S. Corum, Zenith

Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2008, 304 pages, \$28.00.

James S. Corum's *Bad Strategies* is a well-written, coherent argument that adaptive, flexible military organizations are necessary but insufficient to win against insurgents. Corum argues that the key to winning against insurgents is to have the right strategy in place. He further argues that democracies tend not be particularly effective in developing effective counterinsurgency strategies and in persevering to execute the strategies, at least in the case of insurgencies.

His conclusions are both cautionary and a prescription for actions democratic governments might take to preclude developing bad strategies and avoiding defeat. Perhaps the most useful of these is to avoid insurgency where possible by effective long-term strategic thinking in the first place and by seeking political accommodation when it appears that an insurgency will develop. Corum raises more questions than he answers in his conclusion, but this book is a worthy effort that contemporary officers and policy makers should read.

Corum considers four cases in developing his thesis—France in Algeria, Britain in Cyprus, and the United States in Vietnam and Iraq. Given the current American infatuation with David Galula, Corum's chapter on France is, in some ways, the most interesting. He asserts that France, including its political elite at the time, viewed losing Algeria as emotionally intolerable because Algeria was technically part of metropolitan France. That, along with the loss of Indochina, made the potential for losing Algeria unbearable. Thus, emotion, not cold-blooded strategic thinking, drove France's policy in Algeria.

French policy makers, the Algerian French, the *pied noirs*, the French Army, and the French Colonial Army found themselves at odds with international public opinion and their American allies in particular in the first two decades after VE Day. France's policy makers were unable to think long-term about the

essential conundrum of Algeria—that indigenous Algerians dominated a large European minority. Ultimately, the *pied noirs*, more than the Algerian insurgents, precluded a reasonable political accommodation. Corum also argues that the French Colonial Army fighting in Algeria adapted rapidly and well to the challenge confronting it. Nonetheless, the French Colonial Army failed in the end, because the strategy of maintaining the status quo ante could not hold. It took quintessential French Nationalist Charles De Gaulle to release the Algerians from their colonial bondage.

In other cases such as Cyprus, Vietnam, and Iraq, the Great Powers, like the French before them, suffered from false analogies, short-term views, flawed objectives, and a lack of perseverance that made military innovation irrelevant. In short, in the absence of carefully considered political and strategic objectives, Armies cannot win, however well they are organized. The moral for the U.S. Army, simply stated, is that neither FM 3-24 nor a brigade-based Army tailored for counterinsurgency will overcome flawed strategy.

**COL Gregory Fontenot,
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THE FOREVER WAR, Dexter Filkins, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2008, 373 pages, \$25.00.

While the topic of this remarkable book is war, specifically the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the *leitmotif*—the thematic link that runs through it—is running. Over a period of years, *New York Times* correspondent Dexter Filkins made a regular practice of running at dusk through the streets of Baghdad. Even as the violence increased, Filkins found ways to run several miles through the streets, past razor-wire and past amused Iraqis, all while observing the changes endured by that tortured city and its inhabitants. The author ignored the hazards that went with his routine, proving himself something of an adrenaline junkie, the kind of

man who seeks danger rather than avoiding it.

Filkins is a journalist with both an urge and a knack for being in places where mayhem and tragedy abound. An angry crowd of Tikritis chase him at the burial of Saddam's sons, Uday and Qusay. He accompanies a Marine company as it is decimated in the fighting for Fallujah. He interviews an American-hating insurgent leader in a shadowy room in Baghdad. At times, the book seems like a succession of narrow escapes and near misses.

It is not a book of tightly argued analysis. As an award-winning reporter, Filkins uses vignettes that serve as snapshot views of the war. Some are as well crafted as a fine short story. Some are very sad, like his description of the death of a Marine ambushed while escorting Filkins into a minaret in Fallujah. Some accounts read like *Catch-22*, such as the story an army captain tells him of using a female soldier—an attractive blonde—as the prize at an auction. While part of the U.S. unit pretended to accept bids for her from agitated Iraqi males, the rest of the unit used the distraction to execute a house-to-house search behind the backs of the inhabitants. The topics of the various vignettes are diverse, but Filkins emphasizes how inscrutable Americans have found Iraq and its people to be.

In the flyleaf picture in the back of the book, Filkins looks both jaded and exhausted. Indeed, Filkins admits his time in Iraq led him to an emotional numbness. Describing a now burned-over park built by Americans, he writes, "Everything was like that in Iraq: anything anyone ever tried burned to black." The author's powerful writing will enable readers to understand some of his feelings. Perhaps those who have been to Iraq and Afghanistan will understand too much.

**LTC Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**ACHIEVING VICTORY IN
IRAQ: Countering an Insurgency,**

Dominic J. Caraccilo and Andrea L. Thompson, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2008, 240 pages, \$24.95.

Two Army combat veterans of the Iraq War, Colonel Dominic J. Caraccilo and Lieutenant Colonel Andrea L. Thompson, wrote *Achieving Victory in Iraq: Countering an Insurgency*. Armed with real-life experiences as staff officers assigned to the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq, Caraccilo and Thompson provide a doctrinally sound and thorough analysis of the current situation in Iraq. Detailing the complexity of counterinsurgency operations, they lay the groundwork for victory for Iraqi forces. Their work is well researched, compelling, and timely.

The authors consider inadequate civil policing to be the “greatest error in judgment” of the war: “The lack of a capable manned, trained, and equipped police force is clearly a major issue in Iraq, and it is perhaps the single most important problem that must be solved today.” They make a strong case for Iraqi forces standing their ground against an insurgency. Advocating the use of Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, Caraccilo and Thompson meticulously detail doctrine, providing a thorough analysis of its early origins: “We concur with so many others in believing that if there is a Clausewitz of counterinsurgency, Galula is it.” They recommend “bottom line” solutions in keeping with the concepts of FM 3-24 and the current *Multi-National Forces Iraq Commanders Guidance*. The authors applaud U.S. post-surge efforts and confirm the current U.S. strategy for success is to train Iraqi forces to fight and win on their own. Current, fresh, and thought provoking, this book is a must read for military professionals concerned with theory and practice of contemporary counterinsurgency operations. The book is a worthwhile contribution to the ever-expanding literature on irregular warfare.

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

SHIELD OF DREAMS: Missile Defense and U.S.-Russian Nuclear Strategy, Stephen J. Cimbala, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2008, 193 pages, \$24.00.

The phrase “shield of dreams” is sufficient to invite the question, “If we build it, will they come?” Cimbala’s answer is a resounding, “That depends.” For starters, it depends on who *they* are. The bipolar world of the Cold War is rapidly receding in the rear-view mirror, and a new, multipolar world of both state and nonstate actors and of heretofore-unrealized threats has emerged. These actors possess or could obtain nuclear weapons and may be willing to use them in ways that defy the old Cold War calculus. Thus, as one considers the complexities of life in what Cimbala calls the “second nuclear age,” the proposition that a ballistic missile shield could, by itself, make nuclear weapons obsolete seems indeed to be a dream.

What, then, is to be done? In response, Cimbala suggests that ballistic missile defenses can be an important component of a security strategy that continues to include nuclear weapons. Cimbala is not unduly fixated on numbers; he believes that the whole matter is far more nuanced than the numbers alone reveal.

Perhaps the greatest service provided by *Shield of Dreams* is the occasion it affords to reflect upon what it means to shield against a percentage of incoming nuclear missiles. What does it mean to shield against 50 percent, 20 percent, or 10 percent of a nuclear attack? What percentage defines an effective ballistic missile shield? If every incoming nuclear weapon represents the equivalent of the destruction of Hiroshima (in fact, modern nuclear weapons are substantially more destructive than that), how many “Hiroshimas” can a nation experience before a ballistic missile shield becomes a moot point? As Cimbala points out, ballistic missile defense is no panacea; but if nations carefully consider the role that such defenses can play in a much more comprehensive security scheme,

then to that extent, it turns out that such a shield—its sometimes dreamy and elusive qualities notwithstanding—may indeed be an idea whose time has come.

COL John Mark Mattox,
Kirtland AFB, New Mexico

STALKING THE RED BEAR: The True Story of a U.S. Cold War Submarine’s Covert Operations Against the Soviet Union, Peter Sasgen, Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin’s Press, New York, 2009, 297 pages, \$25.95.

Of the many “non-combat” aspects of the Cold War, few were more dangerous than submarine patrols. In addition to the inherent risks of submerged operations, Cold War submariners had to deal with the possibilities of collisions, nuclear reactor malfunctions, and (for the Soviets) liquid rocket fuel accidents. These risks were particularly acute for the U.S. attack submarines sent to prowl the northern waters of the Soviet Union collecting intelligence under the “Holystone” program. The Navy has kept such operations so tightly compartmentalized that only a handful of historical accounts have been published.

To circumvent security restrictions, Peter Sasgen, author of a number of works on World War II submarine warfare, wrote *Stalking the Red Bear* as fiction, presenting the experiences of an actual *Sturgeon*-class submarine captain under the pseudonym of “Roy Hunter” in the imaginary “*USS Blackfin*.” Set in the early 1970s, this account purports to tell the reader both the U.S. and Soviet sides of an intelligence patrol in the Barents Sea, near the bases of the Soviet Northern Fleet.

Before describing the actual mission, Sasgen provides an excellent summary of the U.S. submarine program of that time, including the infamous procedures established by Admiral Hyman Rickover to select and train nuclear submarine officers. The story includes every aspect of preparation from training to family issues to mess hall menus. The author also attempts to describe

the equivalent environment aboard Soviet submarines, where over-aged officers had to motivate and train Soviet draftees in a vain effort to equal American capabilities.

Stalking the Red Bear is an evocative portrait of the nuclear submarine world of the mid-Cold War, and as such makes excellent reading. However, the fictional nature of this story, while allowing Sasgen to discuss a host of otherwise classified matters, also makes the book difficult to compare to the few conventional studies of the problem, such as Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew's *Blind Man's Bluff*.

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

**ONCE UPON A TIME IN WAR:
The 99th Division in World War II,** Robert E. Humphrey, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK, 2008, 366 pages, \$24.95.

Robert E. Humphrey has written a well-researched account of young men seeking to fulfill their obligations to their homeland by enlisting into the infantry and becoming members of the 99th Division, which was destined to fight in World War II. Humphrey uses extensive primary sources, which include 350 personal veteran accounts and interviews. He also traveled to the areas in which these accounts originated. The result is a gripping tale of emotions from moments of deep serenity to absolute sheer terror, each portrayed in such vivid detail that it seems the reader is sitting in the next foxhole watching the scenes unfold.

The book has three parts: the transition from civilian to Soldier, the 99th Division's campaign trail, and the transition from Soldier to civilian. The transition from civilian to Soldier was fraught with the frustrations of young boys maturing into men and their exposure to the army organizational caste system. Humphrey, unfortunately, tries to tell too many stories of the civilian-to-military transition, which does overwhelm the reader at times, unintentionally confusing

who's who throughout the rest of the book.

The story develops as the 99th Division begins its trek eastward from Belgium through the Battle of the Bulge over the Rhine River and into Bavaria. The account splits into two different views: that of the conquerors and that of the prisoner of war. The conqueror's view is rife with harrowing details of carnage and tests of morality. The POW point of view, which is the most depressing part of the book, depicts how American Soldiers were cruelly treated by Germans. Initially as the troops arrived home, they received wild fanfare; however, as more troops trickled home these Soldiers received only the acknowledgement of their neighbors and the love of their families.

I recommend this book to any person who strives to understand the impact of wars upon nations, particularly the youth, who transitioned from citizens to Soldiers and back again with extraordinary effect placed upon their lives. It highlights their expectations to be able to revert to a civilian life amidst a society that did not understand or condone combat fatigue/post-traumatic stress disorder, nor was it equipped to handle the Soldiers affected by it.

Major Joseph E. O'Hanlon III,
USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

BECTON: Autobiography of a Soldier and Public Servant, Julius W. Becton Jr., Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2008, 279 pages, \$29.95.

Lieutenant General Julius Becton's well-written autobiography details his early life, outlines his notably successful military career, and continues with his equally successful service in a variety of challenging civilian government positions.

He reveals his life as a young black American growing up in a middle class Pennsylvania town, the son of hardworking parents. From that background, he entered military service during World War II, attended Officer Candidate School,

served in combat during World War II, the Korean War, and eventually as a battalion commander in South Vietnam, commanding the 2d Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 101st Airborne Division.

His perspective and level of detail provides readers with a clear window of how the Army treated even the most successful black officers during its years of segregation and not always smooth transition through integration of the U.S. Army. While the integration of the Department of Defense is often held up as glowing example of this social effort, it is clear from his description that it was a challenging period requiring patience among minority officers. Becton describes a large institution that was still feeling the effects of racism through the 1970s and into the 1980s, effects he saw and felt even as a division and corps commander.

Becton went on to successfully command the 1st Cavalry Division, and later, the Army's largest corps, VII Corps, in southern Germany at the height of the Cold War. He was adept in media relations, and when he spoke to members of the media, he meant exactly what he said. Some of his comments, made when leaving corps command, may well have cost him a final promotion, but he didn't retract them.

In retirement, he served as the Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, United States Agency for International Development; Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency; president, Prairie View A&M University, and finally, superintendent of Washington, D.C.'s troubled public school system. He never shied away from the tough jobs, and in each job, he provided stellar leadership.

COL Neal H. Bralley,
USA, Retired,
Lansing, Kansas

BRADLEY, Alan Axelrod, Palgrave Macmillan, New York and England, 2008, 204 pages, \$21.95.

In the latest addition to Palgrave Macmillan's *Great Generals Series*,

Alan Axelrod examines the career of General of the Army Omar Bradley. The author's aim is to offer "an objective narrative" and "just evaluation" of Bradley's life and enduring significance, from his early childhood in Missouri through his tenure as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The author argues that Bradley's fate, starting at an early age, seemed tied to chance: a decision to apply to West Point after a suggestion from his Sunday school superintendent, orders for duty in Siberia after World War I subsequently revoked by the War Department, and the CEO of Pan American World Airways helping him find a way to transport cargo from Southeast Asia to Brazil. Axelrod demonstrates that chance affected Bradley's life as he progressed from a division to an army group commander during World War II, but so too did the steady hand of General George Marshall, a mentor who assigned Bradley to key positions of responsibility within the Army.

Nearly half of the biography assesses Bradley's decisions and actions during World War II. The reader learns of the general's evolving respect for General Dwight D. Eisenhower's leadership and Bradley's simmering dissatisfaction with Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's generalship. Axelrod also devotes considerable attention to General George Patton, about whom he wrote in an earlier edition of the *Great Generals Series*. Bradley, who before the cross-channel attack would have preferred keeping Patton out of the European theater, used the flamboyant general to transform Operation COBRA and thwart Hitler's Ardennes counteroffensive in 1944.

While one learns much about the Bradley-Patton connection, the reader is left wanting more detail about Bradley's post-World War II assignment as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and chair of the NATO military committee. Bradley served at the pinnacle of the military hierarchy from the early years of the Cold War through the turbulence

of Korea. While Axelrod highlights this period when assessing Bradley's legacy, he does not offer analysis commensurate to the general's impact on the direction of military policy in this era.

To make his case about Bradley, Axelrod relies on published sources—particularly biography and autobiography. He depends extensively on *A General's Life* by Bradley and Clay Blair. Many details of Bradley's life are taken from this work, published two years after the general's death in 1981. Axelrod states that "no full-length biography" of the general exists, and he makes no claim that *Bradley* fills that void. We still await a comprehensive biography of the general's life.

**Stephen D. Coats, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE OTTOMAN ROAD TO WAR IN 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War, Mustafa Aksakal, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, 232 pages, \$99.00.

This book has the look and feel of a dissertation that converted for publication as a book—illumination of relatively obscure sources, a scholarly approach to those sources, thoroughly documented references, and attention to detail. Just the same, it is surprisingly readable.

The core question in Aksakal's book addresses why the Ottoman Empire entered the conflict in World War I on the side of the Central Powers and the Central Powers allied themselves with the Ottomans. His primary effort is to place the Ottoman decision for war in context, examining both the internal and external political landscapes facing the Ottomans, in the process largely debunking the widely accepted perception that Ottoman leadership was either incompetent or mesmerized by German influence.

A fundamental question for those not already intimately familiar with the Great War is why the Turks chose to participate in the first place, and why they chose to align them-

selves with the Central Powers. The answer is European encroachment: geographic, military, political, and financial encroachment, primarily by Great Britain, France, and Italy.

Aksakal lays out quite clearly the view of the world from the Ottoman perspective. Aggressive, expansionist European powers bent on imperial goals surrounded the Ottoman Empire. The maps provided by the author make the situation abundantly clear—the European powers, especially the Triple Entente members, had been biting off chunks of the Ottoman Empire for years. If the trend continued, partition of the Empire was the likely outcome.

At the same time, the Russians clearly had designs on Armenia, the Bosphorus Straits, the Dardanelles, and even Istanbul. The humiliation of the First and Second Balkan Wars, in which the Ottomans lost major European territory to Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania—all former territories of the Empire as recently as 1878, made the squeeze even more acute. From the Ottoman perspective, it was time to stand firm or be partitioned into pieces of European empires.

The environment was equally complex internally. The author illuminates the internal friction of the Sublime Porte and the populist ground swell prompted largely by the tales of Muslim refugees pouring in from annexed former territories. This examination is both thorough and thoroughly documented, but would have benefited immensely from some simple visual aids. The maps that show the losses of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century provide excellent aids to situational understanding, but they are the only such illustration in the entire book.

Similar graphic explanations or illustrations of the relationships between ministries of the Sublime Porte would have been helpful, as would diagrams showing both the official relationships between the key personalities (title, office, office hierarchy) and familial relationships if they existed—there were at least nine

Pashas in this story. Photographs of the principals would also help readers who find visual enhancements key aids to understanding.

This is a worthwhile book, but it is not an “easy read.” It does an excellent job of illuminating a relatively dim corner of history. In doing so, the book not only shines light on the events leading up to World War I, it provides superb understanding of context in the Balkan region that assists comprehension of events there in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

**Thomas E. Ward, II, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

NEXUS: Strategic Communications and American Security in World War I, Jonathan Reed Winkler, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2008, 346 pages, \$55.00.

In the midnight darkness of 4 August 1914, a British post office barge crept into the English Channel. War was imminent. The Germans had ignored London’s final ultimatum. The barge proceeded to a patch of ocean totally unremarkable in every geographical aspect but one: directly below lay Germany’s communication link to much of the globe. Before daylight broke, grappling hooks slithered into the depths to pull up a length of enemy transoceanic cable, and axe-wielding crewmembers enthusiastically hacked it to bits.

As a historical footnote, this could be the first case in which the current term “hacking” would apply.

Strategic communications has come a long way on a nine-decade-long trail into cyberspace.

The British had a pretty good handle on the breadth of strategic communications by the time the Great War started. When an Allied agent learned that a German team was headed for the coast of Mexico with radio parts, the British spread the rumor that they were carrying diamonds. Local thugs picked up this talk of riches, and the radio team simply disappeared. Sure sounds like PSYOP, which is still a part of strategic communications.

Responding to the need to read a potential enemy’s mail, so to speak, came the successful U.S. intelligence operation nicknamed the “Black Chamber,” which later evolved into the National Security Agency.

With the coming of World War I, U.S. officials—mainly naval officers—realized the strategic necessity of a secure signal net. Whether a neutral nation, as the United States was in 1914, or a belligerent, as it later became, the potential was there for communications isolation. Eavesdropping (by friend or foe!) in matters of military, commercial, or political significance loomed. This period of bureaucratic and technological war for signal independence is the subject matter for author-historian Winkler.

Winkler’s is a formidable (and somewhat expensive) volume that can blend quaintly archaic terms like “gutta-percha”* with tales of large-scale bureaucratic intrigue. No U.S. central authority capable of consolidating the nation’s interests into a strategic cable and radio policy would surface until 1934, when the former assistant secretary of the Navy, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, established the Federal Communications Commission.

Winkler’s research and clarity of presentation provide an important book for those interested in signal communications, and offer a good historical read for the technologically challenged. The book’s plentiful illustrations prove pleasing and frustrating: rewarding in their abundance (pinpointing Guantanamo as the linchpin of the proposed 1916 West Indies hemispheric radio net) but devilishly hard to follow with confusingly intertwined and ill-defined dotted lines.

In addition, page 347, which should have completed my index, was lost somewhere in 21st century typographical cyberspace. My index listings end with “Western Union,” leading me to thumb endlessly for the numerous references to Yardley, Herbert O. (father of the Black Chamber), or Zimmermann, Arthur, who sent a secret telegram (ultimately read by everybody) that

precipitated American entry into the 1914-1918 war. Gutta-percha, however, was high enough in the alphabet to fill up a largish index entry.

*A strategically scarce tree sap that insulated the nexus of copper thread making up the vital message wire of underwater cable as early as 1851.

**George Ridge, J.D.,
Tucson, Arizona**

LINCOLN AND HIS ADMIRALS, Craig L. Symonds, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, 430 pages, \$27.95.

Distinguished author and historian Craig Symonds has written a gripping and insightful book about President Abraham Lincoln, his Department of the Navy, and the Union admirals who won the Civil War. While highlighting the Union naval strategy and key personalities of the war, the book is really an intensive examination of Lincoln—his role as commander-in-chief, his decision-making processes, and his exercise of civilian control and management of the military in time of war.

By his own admission, Lincoln knew little of ships, but over four years, he evolved into a wartime commander-in-chief who was able to effectively manage the Navy and coerce and cajole its chiefs into action, either alone or in joint operations with the Army. Despite possessing a coterie of strong-willed naval advisors with divergent opinions, Lincoln often had to make some subtle and difficult decisions alone. Symonds illustrates this with the famous *Trent* affair, which risked war with Great Britain over the controversial seizure of a British ship on the high seas.

Symonds is highly qualified to write this story. As Professor Emeritus at the U.S. Naval Academy, he has written a number of books on sea power, including *Decision at Sea* and *Confederate Admiral: The Life and Wars of Franklin Buchanan*. Symonds is a talented author who keeps the reader engrossed from the first page. I particularly appreciated his ability to show Lincoln’s strong

interest in technology, ranging from ironclads to new weapons. The book is superbly researched with a portfolio of primary and secondary sources. I recommend this book to all officers attending professional military institutions for the insights it offers to the Civil War period at sea and Lincoln as commander-in-chief.
Kevin D. Stringer, Ph.D.,
Zurich, Switzerland

SOUTHERN STORM: Sherman's March to the Sea, Noah Andre Trudeau, Harper/Collins Publishers, New York, 2008, 704 pages, \$35.00.

The picture of Sherman's March to the Sea as an American epic and an episode of total war has governed popular memory and Civil War historiography since 1865. Drawing on numerous primary sources (official records, memoirs, and diaries, Union and Confederate, Soldier and civilian), Trudeau tries to determine exactly what happened on the march. In the course of his research, he found that each day of the five-week march was recounted in at least 50 journals.

Trudeau has illustrated each day's progress with a small map that included weather data. He notes most people assume the march occurred in mild sunny weather, but he shows that mild weather turned to rain and cold, something Sherman had not anticipated. He confirmed that the campaign was well organized, carefully planned, but left room to improvise; reporting the army carried a 20-day supply of bread, a 40-day supply of sugar, coffee, and salt, and three days of animal feed with it as well as a 40-day beef supply on the hoof. These supplies were almost untouched because of the army's foraging.

While Sherman promised to "make Georgia howl" and his army was not gentle, Trudeau's account concerns military prowess and survival, not rampant destruction. Union soldiers burned homes, confiscated crops, and crippled railroads as they marched from Atlanta to Savannah but few Confederate or Union soldiers were killed and north-

east Georgia quickly recovered. The mythology suggests a much grimmer story, but Trudeau writes the march may "forever be best remembered for everything it wasn't."

His day-by-day, mile-by-mile narrative of the march sometimes becomes tedious (one wearies of reading about the availability of sweet potatoes) but the march was dangerous because small groups of foragers risked constant enemy sniping and outraged citizens as Sherman abandoned his supply base and his communication with the outside world. While the cities in the army's path bore the brunt of the army's anger and war industry was destroyed, civilians' homes were usually protected if they did not interfere with the army's passage.

Sherman avoided major confrontations with the Confederate forces by dividing his army into two columns, the Army of the Tennessee (led by General O.O. Howard) and the Army of Georgia (led by General Henry Slocum). This allowed him to threaten the maximum number of targets and thin out Southern defenses. Neither general was noted for imagination and independence, but both were hard-driving, capable commanders who Sherman relied on to execute his plans without question.

The Confederate response was hampered by a divided command structure that gave similar responsibilities to three generals and the governor of Georgia. Each general remained ignorant of the other's plans and actions, defining their own roles without consulting each other; each operated independently according to his own interpretation of his responsibilities. Trudeau blames this divided command structure on Jefferson Davis, but fails to note the fissiparous nature of a nation founded on the doctrine of states' rights. In fact, the various commanders did not have sufficient force to do any more than sting Sherman's army, and civilians did not answer the call for 10,000 volunteers.

Sherman punished the South. His beliefs about war's hellish nature and cruelty are amply demonstrated. His purpose was to rend

the Southern social fabric, make civilians lose faith in their leaders' ability to protect them, thus hastening the end of the war. This process included taking food, destroying war industry, and most importantly, liberating slaves. Trudeau portrays some of their thoughts, fears, and hopes. Often slaves who left their homes to free themselves and follow the army were told to return because the army could not and would not provide for them.

At times, the army pulled up its bridges immediately after crossing rivers, leaving the freed slaves on the opposite bank unable to cross. Nevertheless, many found ways to stay with the army, which employed them as laborers. Trudeau argues that the conservative Sherman wanted to postpone the question of the freed slaves' fate until the war ended, but liberating them destroyed the old social structures. The physical and psychological destruction wrought by the army made restoring the old order impossible.

Finally, Trudeau illustrates that both Union boasting and Confederate memories have exaggerated the amount of damage that actually occurred. He examines the impact of the march on the war. In areas through which the troops passed (a 60-mile wide swath through central Georgia) there was extensive damage: animals killed, foodstuff confiscated, fences cut down to build campfires, all crippling the already rudimentary Confederate logistical system. However, more fences than houses were destroyed. Many antebellum homes in the march's path can be toured today.

The biggest property loss was the slaves, most of whom followed their liberators. The march raised Union morale, disrupted Confederate logistics, and set the stage for the war's final campaigns in the Carolinas and Virginia. Trudeau shows that the march never reached the level of total war, but he also shows that when societies are mobilized, the line between combatants and non-combatants becomes blurred.

Lewis Bernstein, Ph.D.,
Seoul, Korea

Imitation of Horace, Book iii, Ode 29, Line 65

**Happy the man, and happy he alone,
he who can call today his own:
he who, secure within, can say,
Tomorrow do thy worst, for I have lived today.**

**Be fair or foul, or rain or shine
the joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself, upon the past has power,
but what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.**

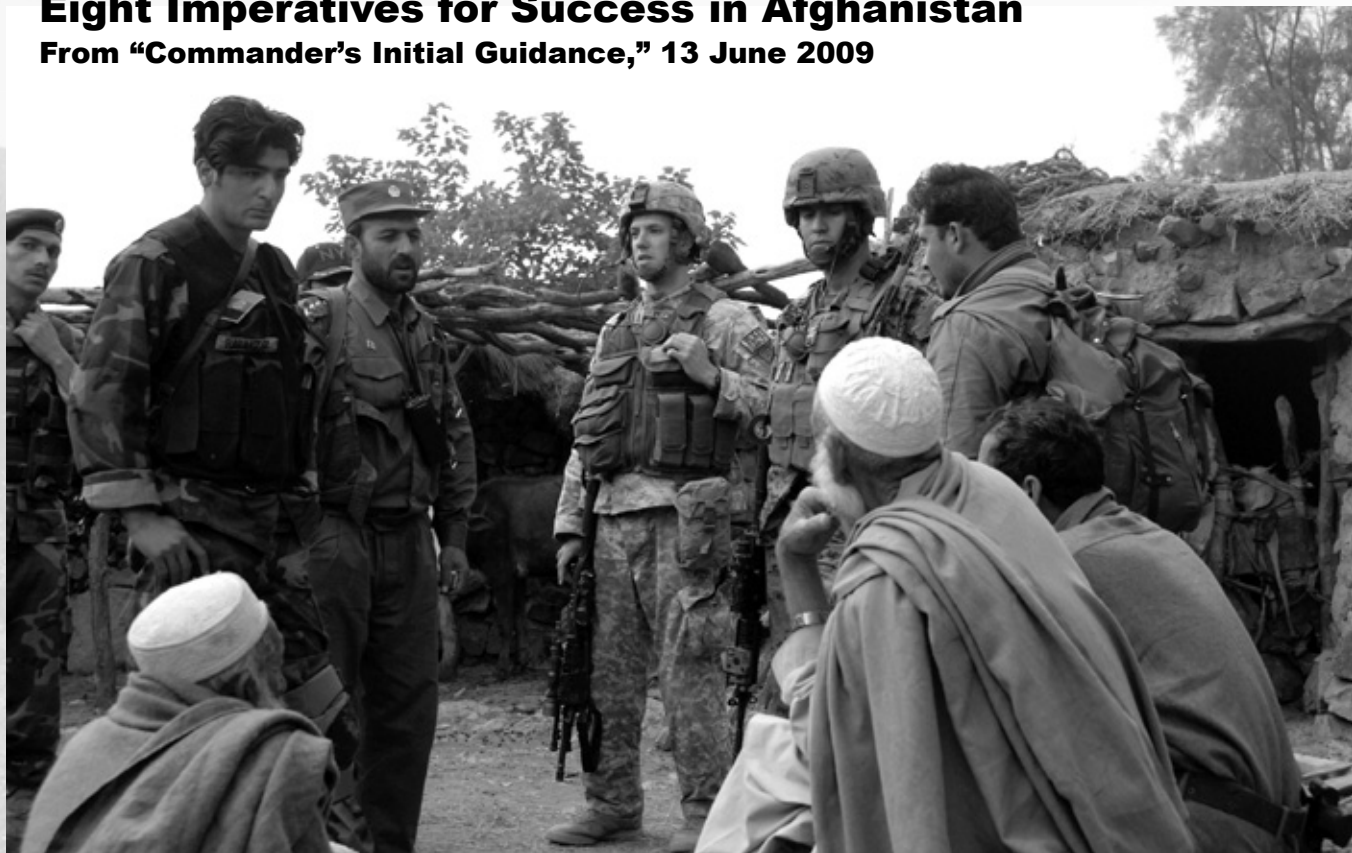
—John Dryden (1631–1700)



A U.S. Soldier provides security during combat operations near Forward Operating Base Herrera, Afghanistan, 18 April 2009. (U.S. Air Force, SSGT Shawn Weismiller)

Eight Imperatives for Success in Afghanistan

From “Commander’s Initial Guidance,” 13 June 2009



1. **Protect and Partner with the People.** We are fighting for the Afghan people—not against them. Our focus on their welfare will build the trust and support necessary for success.
2. **Conduct a Comprehensive Counterinsurgency Campaign.** Insurgencies fail when root causes disappear. Security is essential, but I believe our ultimate success lies in partnering with the Afghan Government, partner nations, NGOs, and others to build the foundations of good government and economic development.
3. **Understand the Environment.** We must understand in detail the situation, however complex, and be able to explain it to others. Our ability to act effectively demands a real appreciation for the positive and negative impact of everything we do—or fail to do. Understanding is a prerequisite for success.
4. **Ensure Values Underpin our Effort.** We must demonstrate through our words and actions our commitment to fair play, our respect and sensitivity for the cultures and traditions of others, and an understanding that rules of law and humanity do not end when fighting starts. Both our goals and conduct must be admired.
5. **Listen Closely—Speak Clearly.** We must listen to understand—and speak clearly to be understood. Communicating our intentions and accurately reflecting our actions to all audiences is a critical responsibility—and necessity.
6. **Act as One Team.** We are an alliance of nations with different histories, cultures, and national objectives—united in our support for Afghanistan. We must be unified in purpose, forthright in communication, and committed to each other.
7. **Constantly Adapt.** This war is unique, and our ability to respond to even subtle changes in conditions will be decisive. I ask you to challenge conventional wisdom and abandon practices that are ingrained into many military cultures. And I ask you to push me to do the same.
8. **Act with Courage and Resolve.** Hard fighting, difficult decisions, and inevitable losses will mark the days ahead. Each of us, from our most junior personnel to our senior leaders, must display physical, mental, and moral courage. Our partners must trust our commitment; enemies must not question our resolve.

GEN Stanley A. McChrystal, U.S. Army
Commander, U.S. Forces-Afghanistan

Commander, International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan