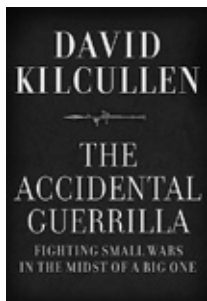


MR Book Reviews



THE ACCIDENTAL GUERRILLA: Fighting Small Wars in the Mist of a Big One, David Kilcullen, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, 384 pages, \$27.95.

Rarely does a book strike such a resonating chord on the emerging character of contemporary conflict. Of all the books written since the advent of the War on Terrorism, few have successfully captured the essence of the evolving threats we face in the 21st century, and none have done so within the context of a global insurgency. That is, until now: David Kilcullen's *The Accidental Guerrilla* accomplishes both and serves as the landmark study of the future of conflict in our time. Drawing on his own vast personal experience and an uncanny ability as a researcher and intellectual, Kilcullen provides a peerless study that redefines our theory of war at a critical time.

With a unique recipe of personal anecdotes and academic rigor, Kilcullen explores emergent conflict through a focused lens of experience and education. *The Accidental Guerrilla* dives deep into current conflicts to paint a vivid portrait of conflicts to come. And in doing so, Kilcullen details our successes and failures, while offering answers to the many questions we have yet to ask ourselves. His analysis of the evolving character of conflict develops a new paradigm—one that effectively captures the fundamental nature of hybrid threats within an era of complex insurgencies. From personal study of tribal culture to professional observations of ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, Kilcullen demonstrates understanding of the roots of conflict and how our own actions are adding momentum to a

global insurgency already on the verge of altering the balance of the international system. The resulting discussion leaves readers asking for more.

Kilcullen, one of our generation's foremost experts on counterinsurgency and guerrilla warfare, is a former Australian Army officer with extensive combat experience in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Since the tragic events of 9/11, he has served in every active theater: as special advisor to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, senior counterinsurgency advisor to General David Petraeus in Iraq, and chief counterterrorism strategist for the Department of State. He holds a doctorate in politics from the University of New South Wales, where he focused on the effects of guerrilla warfare on nonstate political systems in traditional societies.

The Accidental Guerrilla should be read by anyone in a position to influence policy or strategy, as well as by leaders deploying into combat operations. For military and civilian readers alike, *The Accidental Guerrilla* is a reminder that uninformed national policy and strategy cannot be redressed through even the most enlightened military strategy. Readers of political, social, or cultural history will appreciate Kilcullen's insight and analysis—his efforts provide a crisp, concise, and well-written account of conflict that is as refreshing as it is provocative. His understanding and experience are evident on every page, and his observations are well informed and critically sound. *The Accidental Guerrilla* is a worthwhile addition to any military or civilian library and is arguably the definitive analysis of emerging conflict produced to date.

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

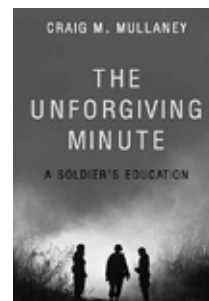
THE UNFORGIVING MINUTE: A Soldier's Education, Craig Mullaney, Penguin Press, New York, 2009, 400 pages, \$28.95.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Military Academy's English Department made plebes write about an experience that had taught them an important lesson. Often this assignment called forth the honorable but excruciating "R-dayer": a three-page, angst-ridden outpouring in which the words "ping," "sweat," and "stench" featured prominently enroute to an epiphany about teamwork, sacrifice, or another cloying abstraction.* Thus it was with no small trepidation that I read the first line of Craig Mullaney's *The Unforgiving Minute*: "Get off my bus!" screamed the cadet in charge." "Oh my God," I thought, "it's an R-dayer. A book-length one!"

But what an R-dayer. Mullaney, a former infantry officer, has managed to write a fresh and compelling memoir about "A Soldier's Education," as his subtitle would have it, in which thrice-told tales about West Point, Ranger School, and the shock of initial combat come alive.

Much of this feat is attributable to our narrator's eminently likeable persona. It would have been easy for him to pontificate. A U.S. Military Academy graduate (second in his class), Ranger School tabber, Rhodes scholar, and combat leader, Mullaney might have pinned his book on the secret-sacred knowledge most folks can't know about unless schooled by those happy few who have done what he has done. *Unforgiving Minute* isn't completely free of such moments, but Mullaney is usually self-deprecating, amusing, often amused. You like this guy. You root for him.

There's also a lurking irony to the subtitle that tells you there's



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more going on here than in the usual combat memoir. While Army doings comprise the bulk of the narrative, Mullaney's voice grows noticeably more animated when describing his Rhodes stint. Oxford is like the first day after Ranger School, only it goes on for two years. Lively friends, beery debates, a beautiful girlfriend, the freedom to travel and indulge his intellectual curiosity—as he recounts his experiences you can hear the former Catholic schoolboy and hard-charging cadet take flight.

He doesn't slough off his old training altogether; it's what got him to Oxford, and it will serve him well during trying times in Afghanistan. But there's a keen sense of intellectual and emotional expansion in the Rhodes writing. This Soldier's education, you begin to think, is an evolution out of soldiering. In fact, Mullaney, having dispatched his obligation with honor, will leave the Army after his five years are up.

Before that, however, he will undergo the unforgiving minute of combat in Afghanistan toward which his young life had been bending. His descriptions of the fine men in his platoon and the trials they endure—chief among them the death of a fellow Soldier—will be familiar to anyone who has worn a uniform. Again, this is old ground, but Mullaney's sensitive nature and vivid prose give his war stories sandblown texture and immediacy.

That said, I confess to being just a bit disappointed in some of the takeaways: ineffable camaraderie, the privilege of leading a platoon into combat, the macho posturing of rear-echelon Soldiers. In a book this good, such judgments seem conventional, almost mechanical. I'd love to hear what Mullaney has to say in 10 or 20 years, when time has granted him a wider perspective.

Actually, I'd love to read what he has to say in a year, or two, or five, or whenever his next book might come out. Altogether, *The Unforgiving Minute* is a terrific memoir from a young writer with a ton of talent. If there's even the ghost of a chance that this book had its germ

in an R-Day essay, that old plebe assignment is exonerated.

*R-Day refers to West Point freshman registration day.

**LTC Arthur Bilodeau,
USA, Retired,
Louisville, Kentucky**

PERFORMANCE UNDER STRESS, edited by Peter A. Hancock and James L. Szalma, Ashgate Publishing Company, Burlington, VT, 2008, 389 pages, \$99.95.

Stress is an integral part of the human condition, and it can influence our performance significantly. Peter A. Hancock and James L. Szalma introduce a collection of 17 essays written by leading researchers that explore how stress influences human performance in the contemporary operating environment. Sharing a common research framework, the authors use different methodological and conceptual approaches to provide unambiguous and concise answers on their respective topics. Although the book deals with Soldier performance, the information can be applied to stressful environments in general.

While the book's focus is on the diverse stressors and coping mechanisms, additional insights are provided on fatigue, cognitive readiness, information processing, decision making, team dynamics, and conditioning. Some traditional myths are refuted with empirical data. For example, a study of the effects of sleep deprivation on modern Soldiers during long-term operations demonstrates that "four hours of sleep for leaders and six for soldiers" is insufficient and potentially dangerous.

The essays are mutually supportive and build upon each other, which helps the reader progress through the wide range of topics and reveals the complex nature of this field of study. The data supporting the assertions of the authors is generally based on scientific research, which gives considerable credibility to the volume, but may also overwhelm the reader. The authors gather large and thorough bibliographies on their respective topics, which aids in the

understanding of this field of study. The book is useful to anyone who desires a better understanding of stress and its ability to influence human performance. It is particularly relevant to the military community given the nonconventional challenges in today's battlefields and their increasing complexity. *Performance Under Stress* addresses the subject in a pragmatic way and also offers a detailed and perceptive account of the current limited understanding and prospective future directions of this field of study.

**MAJ Dave Abboud,
Canadian Forces,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

SIX-LEGGED SOLDIERS: Using Insects as Weapons of War, Jeffrey A. Lockwood, Oxford University Press, New York, 2008, 377 pages, \$27.95.

Bees trained to locate landmines? Housefly-sized spybots? Insects are the villains and heroes of the past and future in this intriguing history of the use of insects in warfare. Relevant, engaging, and at times humorous, Lockwood not only shows how six-legged soldiers have been used in past conflicts but provides his readers with a fascinating look at their future employment. In the process of demonstrating how our military might leverage insects as offensive and defensive weapons, Lockwood also points out America's current vulnerability to bioterrorism and exhorts the government to take action.

Stinging insects have always been our nemeses, and Lockwood shows how tacticians throughout the ages have used them in creative ways. The Tiv people of Nigeria developed a bee cannon—a long horn that could be filled with bees or wasps and then released in the direction of the enemy. The Mayans constructed mannequins and filled them with bees and left them for the enemy to play with or break open (think Trojan Piñata). Lockwood surmises that the Mayans may have even developed bee grenades—pottery filled with bees that could be thrown at their enemies.

Lockwood examines some interesting insect characteristics that scientists are attempting either to mimic or to exploit for both peaceful and violent means. A couple of noteworthy examples are bees that can be trained to smell individual landmines (this would be particularly useful in countries like Moçambique where much of the farmable land is still unusable due to landmines), and beetles that can sense heat sources at a distance of 40 miles. Scientists are modeling the locomotion of cockroaches to develop robots (and potentially vehicles) that can traverse uneven surfaces at greater speeds. According to Lockwood, a human-sized cockroach would be able to run the high-hurdles at 200 miles per hour! Perhaps the Army's future combat system will be "legged" instead of wheeled or tracked.

Finally, Lockwood points out America's vulnerability to vector-borne diseases and claims that although the Department of Homeland Security is doing its part to thwart other types of terrorist attacks, it is ill-prepared to fight entomological warfare. According to Lockwood, insects are a cheap vehicle for the transmission of diseases. A suicidal terrorist could theoretically infect himself with a disease, create a reproduction room filled with a particular insect (mosquitoes, fleas, or other carriers) and turn them loose on an unsuspecting populace. Terrorists could also target livestock in similar fashion. Lockwood surmises that perhaps the most crippling blow to our nation would be the introduction of pesticide-resistant, crop-destroying pests. The United States is already dealing with several insect threats such as the Mediterranean fruit fly. The deliberate introduction of more destructive non-native insects could cripple the economy.

While some might argue that Lockwood's work is a primer for the terrorist on a tight budget, I believe that it well serves its primary role of alerting the government and the public to the dangers that exist, so that the risk to the United States

can be mitigated. In terms of its significance to the Army, Lockwood's book has some value at the tactical level in terms of the creative use of one's environment. However, its real value is at the strategic level and is definitely more geared toward the Department of Homeland Security. Nevertheless, I freely recommend it as an interesting and entertaining look at an otherwise mundane subject.

**LTC Shane Baker, USA,
West Point, New York**

THE ECHO OF BATTLE: The Army's Way of War, Brian McAllister Linn, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2007, 320 pages, \$27.95.

Brian McAllister Linn's *The Echo of Battle* is a provocative essay that uses the history of coastal defense as its primary lens in understanding today's Army—an idea that might not be as unreasonable as it seems. Linn argues that the nation's vulnerability and fear of attack from the sea stems from U.S. geography and its experiences in both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. In these conflicts British fleets controlled the sea and landed troops anywhere they liked. They descended on and generally seized U.S. cities at will. Obviously, burning Washington drove home the point convincingly.

Linn argues that for most of the hundred years following the War of 1812 the Army focused its efforts on building an ever-better coastal defense to deter attack, limit penetration in the event of an attack, and enable the mobilization of a citizen army to defeat invasion. The efforts produced three traditions (or intellectual currents) in the Army—guardians, heroes, and managers. The guardians argue that war is both an art and a science and that officers must master both. The heroes argue that war is more of an art than a science because it is more dependent on "will," both personal and national, than on science. The managers stem from the development of industrial-age warfare and

the scale of effort required in the Civil War. They emphasize war's logistical underpinning, linking successful operations to scientific calculation.

Linn's model is interesting, but it is too neatly done and holds together best in the context of the 19th century. This might be because Linn is at his best when he is analyzing that period. His understanding of how the Army operated in the 20th century is not as strong and seems uninformed. Much of what has driven the three traditions has more to do with policy than internal debate in the Army. What Soldiers think is best, culturally, does not seem to have motivated policy makers, at least not since the end of World War II.

"No more Vietnams," was not the mantra of the Army as much as it was the mantra of the country. Yes, the Army turned away from unconventional warfare partly in revulsion, but also because the country and the country's civilian leaders wanted to avoid a recurrence of Vietnam. Perhaps the Army should have kept studying counterinsurgency and expending resources, but there was no interest in the Army and no stimulus from policy makers to do so. Conventional threats dominated thinking.

Linn tosses out a number of canards about Army efforts that lack context. For example, contrary to what he suggests, REFORGER (Return of Forces to Germany) was not merely a mobility exercise associated with a forward deployed Army. It reflected an agreement the United States made with Germany to balance forces that had withdrawn from Germany. When Linn asserts that the Army (which was mostly forward deployed) was drawing down, it was not because the threat had declined but because the policy-makers demanded it.

He is right when he argues that the Army used REFORGER to draw conclusions about capabilities based on unrealistic conditions, but he then praises General Donn Starry for drawing conclusions from exercises conducted in the same way in V Corps. The REFORGER

exercises ran the gamut for pretty good to very good with regard to command and control of large formations, but revealed little about tactical acumen, no matter who drew the conclusions.

When Linn depicts the Bradley as a death trap, he misses several important points, not the least of which is that the Bradley replaced the M113, a vehicle that everything but pistol bullets would penetrate and (originally) carried a rubber-bladder fuel cell filled with gasoline. The Bradley is a product of genius when compared to the system it replaced. It remains safer than most of its counterparts in the world today.

The Echo of Battle is not as compelling as Linn's first book, *The US Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902*, but it should still be read. Linn's arguments will irritate some but will also resonate. Soldiers need the irritation that comes from arguments that offer insight into how they confront the world in which they operate while trying to anticipate what they might confront in an uncertain future.

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

SURVIVOR'S SONGS: From Maldon to the Somme, Jon Stallworthy, Cambridge University Press, New York and Cambridge, 2008, 226 pages, \$28.00.

Jon Stallworthy is a poet and British literary scholar, perhaps best known as the biographer of British World War I poet Wilfred Owen. In *Survivor's Songs*, Stallworthy "explores a series of poetic encounters with war" through several essays. Throughout, he elucidates key texts drawn from the deep wells of British literary history. His specific subject is poetry, which, as he says, can fill many roles from "educating and energizing" freedom fighters to "kindling anti-war fury" when there ceased to be a distinction between combatant and civilian.

The first chapter forms an introductory lecture to the wide range of powerful feelings war evokes.

Tracing the dying-out of the heroic tradition, value systems came into sharp demarcation, particularly between the ancient and the modern eras. For instance, Walt Whitman saw in Civil War battlefields what British World War I poets Siegfried Sassoon, Herbert Reid, David Jones, and Owen saw in the trenches of World War I. That is, poetry's evolution marches with society's. By 1914, war was being seen "through literary spectacles," the distant past a deep reservoir of allusions. But in the horrors of incipient industrial warfare, chivalric traditions paled for emergent poets.

Stallworthy rightly devotes a considerable amount of space to Siegfried Sassoon, offering an excellent introduction to the psychology of the poet, a man of tremendous dramatic force with his brutal and bitter ironies. As is often the case, an explication of Sassoon comes with a counterpart one for Owen. Owen's influence on generations of poets to come after him is greater than Sassoon's. "Owen's readiness to express his feelings—of grief, tenderness, delight, as well as indignation—is a significant part of his appeal." Stallworthy skillfully lays to rest the argument that these and other "trench poets" lived sheltered and unrealistically effete lives that caused them to distort the horrors of the war. Indeed, as he shows, the Soldier-poets were right to show "trench mouth as the mouth of hell."

Stallworthy also shows how the poetry of the First World War resounded with that of the Second in poets such as Britain's Keith Douglas, a tanker in North Africa, and America's Louis Simpson, who fought with the 101st Airborne Division, and James Dickey, who served in the Air Corps in the Pacific.

Stallworthy's most important chapter for its appeal to a wider audience, is on the legacy of the Somme, the World War I battle that swallowed lives by the tens of thousands. Perhaps no battle in modern history shows more the stupidity and waste of warfare. Stallworthy notes the importance of the impres-

sive numbers of literary witnesses to the battle.

Fortunately, he does not forget the aerial warfare in his discussion. Evolving away from classical allusions, "the image of the aviator begins to acquire other associations," his image becoming complicated through applications of total warfare that included the bombing of civilian populations. These include the vital poetic legacies of Hilda Doolittle and Edith Sitwell, as well as the poetic contributions of American airmen-poets such as Dickey and Randall Jarrell, especially the latter's monumental poem, "The Firebombing," and Jarrell's stark, "Death of the Ball Turret Gunner."

Stallworthy does American readers a service by discussing Louis Simpson, who, like Owen of the world war before him, also suffered from shell shock from his time in combat. He is careful to point out that "second witness" poetry can often be better than "first witness" poetry. He insightfully concludes, "What do these and other war poems achieve? In that their subject is tragedy, they can—when made with passion and precision—move us (as Aristotle said) to pity and terror; also, I suggest, to a measure of fury." Stallworthy's book comes highly recommended, but with the caveat that it's not a beginner's study. The book has the tenor of a series of advanced ongoing literary essays, an issue of a scholarly journal, of forays into literary hinterlands. Still, there is much of value here for both the general and specialist reader.

**MAJ Jeffrey Alfier, USAF,
Retired, Tucson, Arizona**

IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets, A.R. Oppenheimer, Irish Academic Press, Portland, OR, 2009, 387 pages, \$32.95.

The old adage cautions that you should never judge a book by its cover. This is arguably true of A.R. Oppenheimer's new insight into the troubles in Northern Ireland—*IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets*. Despite a needlessly simplistic cover

design—which has the potential to discourage some readers—Oppenheimer’s detailed investigation and comprehensive account is more than just another polished analysis of the Irish Republican Army’s (IRA) history, motivation, and strategy. Oppenheimer’s original contribution lies in his skillful explanation of the rapid evolution of the terrorist group’s arsenal, from simplistic improvised explosive devices made of gelignite, to advanced homemade Mark 15 “barrackbuster” mortars. In so doing, Oppenheimer deftly highlights the inventiveness, resourcefulness, and intensity of the group’s campaign, played against a complex and dangerous cat-and-mouse game with the security forces. Equally significant, he also uncovers the terrible human effect of the bombing campaign and underscores the reality of how little post-conflict Northern Ireland turned out to resemble the IRA’s demands.

Oppenheimer is undoubtedly a gifted and able narrator. His style is compelling, balanced, and lucid. Few readers will be disappointed by his objective methodology of answering four straightforward questions: How, when, and where did the IRA carry out its bombing campaign? What was the extent of misery and devastation it caused? Why did the IRA not use certain weapons and, significantly, which types of weapons were more successful than others? Why did the IRA not use more of its Semtex explosive store rather than go to the trouble of using homemade explosives? In answering these questions successfully and with great dexterity, Oppenheimer highlights how the IRA improvised their way around complex engineering challenges and evolved into one of the world’s most advanced and lethal insurgencies.

To achieve his objective and place his accounts within the wider political context, Oppenheimer takes the reader on a logical journey covering more than 150 years of Irish republican history. He does this through 11 well-written chapters, but agreeably, breaks each section further into a

number of bite-sized and digestible chunks. However, it is arguably not until chapter 5, “Explosives: From Gunpowder to Magic Marble,” that Oppenheimer starts to make his original contribution on how the IRA’s bomb technologies were created, tested, and used to great effect (frustratingly, almost halfway through the book). Despite the previous chapters having been essential background reading, Oppenheimer can be guilty of repetition, superfluous footnoting, and on occasion, some frustrations with the chronology of his work. That said, his detailed account of the men behind the bombs and those who, under great danger, had to disarm them, more than makes up for these trifling irritations and will keep the reader engaged. Few will be disappointed with his teasingly titled “Is This the End?”

IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets is an enjoyable, engaging, and absorbing study. At a time when both the Real and Continuity IRA have rocked the peace process with the murder of two off-duty soldiers and one police officer in Northern Ireland, Oppenheimer’s insights have unquestionable utility in helping to understand and provide context to today’s political problems. But equally importantly, *IRA: The Bombs and the Bullets* highlights the complex and ever-mutating relationship between state and insurgent, and sheds new light on how the IRA’s doctrine, targeting, and acquisition of new weapons evolved to overcome repeated attempts to deal with the threat. This is a welcome addition for those interested in how a terrorist group works and a must read for those who follow the troubles in Northern Ireland closely.

**MAJ Andrew M. Roe, Ph.D.,
British Army, Weeton,
Lancashire, United Kingdom**

THE MINIMUM MEANS OF REPRISAL: China’s Search for Security in the Nuclear Age, Jeffrey G. Lewis, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2007, 262 pages, \$23.00.

During the Cold War, American strategic planners focused on the Soviet Union and largely ignored the small forces of the other nuclear powers. While the growth in recent decades of China’s economy has fueled a concurrent modernization of China’s conventional military, China’s nuclear force has remained small, with an estimated 200 warheads.

Jeffrey G. Lewis thinks that even this number is too high and believes the true size is about 80. The warheads are kept in storage bunkers rather than atop missiles or in bomber bays. China apparently maintains no tactical nuclear weapons. Lewis bases his estimates of Chinese nuclear force on patterns of Chinese behavior regarding nuclear weapons and declassified U.S. intelligence estimates, admitting a lack of transparency from the Chinese government. While the limited nature of China’s nuclear force was understandable given the poverty and instability of the nation in the 1960s and 1970s, the force has remained small, indicating a conscious decision by China’s leaders not to expand their nuclear capabilities.

China apparently has taken the stance that possession of a small number of nuclear weapons is important for deterring aggression and achieving great power status, but little is to be gained by deployment or increasing their numbers. The Chinese government maintains total control of nuclear weapons, making insignificant the chance of accidental use. United States intelligence fears of an expanded Chinese nuclear force have not come to fruition, and Lewis indicates that such an expansion is unlikely given deep-seated attitudes about any potential use of nuclear weapons by Chinese leaders. Lewis believes that aggressive posturing of nuclear weapons by the United States or development of space-based weapons could cause China to abandon its current nuclear posture for something far more threatening.

The book is not so much a history of China’s nuclear force as an argument for American policy

planners to recognize the true size and nature of the force. Lewis has made an important step in a greater understanding of official Chinese concepts of the role of nuclear weapons. Not all readers will be convinced by the apparently benign nature of Chinese thinking on the use of nuclear weapons. Comments by General Zhu Chenghu on 14 July 2005 (not mentioned in the book) indicate that not all in China envision such a passive role for nuclear weapons. With mixed statements coming from the People's Liberation Army regarding the potential use for nuclear weapons in a conflict with the United States, the actual state of China's nuclear force takes on special importance for contingency planning.

**Barry M. Stentiford,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

INVENTING VIETNAM: The United States and State Building, 1954-1968, James M. Carter, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2008, 276 pages, \$22.99.

In *Inventing Vietnam*, James M. Carter covers U.S. nation-building efforts in Vietnam from the initiation of the Michigan State Advisory Group in the mid-1950s through 1968. The author, a history professor at Texas A&M University, chronicles the American attempt to create a new, independent, modern state below the 17th parallel in South Vietnam. In doing so, he draws on a wide array of published and archival sources to assert that the American advisors "invented" South Vietnam's post-1954 institutions and infrastructure—essentially building a nation where none existed before.

The author asserts it was the failure of this "American invention" and the refusal to recognize the failure that ultimately led to the large-scale war. The war devastated the countryside, generated a flood of refugees, and brought about catastrophic economic distortions, which further undermined the larger U.S. goal of building a viable state. According to the author, by the time of the Tet Offensive in January 1968,

the nation-building campaign in southern Vietnam had completely failed. Furthermore, the program contained the seeds of its own failure from the beginning of the effort in the mid-1950s.

The book is provocative and provides a good look at some of the difficulties American officials experienced in their nation-building efforts. It also provides new information on how some of President Ngo Dinh Diem's allies made private fortunes on his commodity import program. The author addresses how the role of private contractors in their rapid build-up of airfields, ports, and highways disrupted the economic landscape in southern Vietnam.

Despite its contributions to the literature on Vietnam, the book has some shortcomings. Carter's argument that South Vietnam was an American "invention" is difficult to accept. Many of the state-building programs that the author describes were really continuations of earlier programs that dated back as early as 1950. It is also difficult to accept the author's assertion that the war was entirely a direct result of failed American nation-building efforts. The narrative, as cogent and eloquently laid out as it is, fails to address the Vietnamese role in all of this. The Vietnamese on both sides were key players in the events addressed in the book, but little is heard from them; it goes without saying that they were active participants in the events as they unfolded.

That being said, the author provides unique contributions to the discussion of American nation-building campaign in Southeast Asia that are worthy of consideration, especially as our contemporary nation-building efforts and stability operations continue in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**LTC James H. Willbanks, USA,
Retired, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

LAST MAN STANDING: The 1st Marine Regiment on Peleliu, September 15-21 1944, Dick Camp, Zenith Press, Osceola, WI, 2008, 308 pages, \$28.00.

In *Last Man Standing*, author Dick Camp narrates the epic World War II struggle of the 1st Marine Regiment during the first six days of the battle of Peleliu. Led by the legendary Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, the unit suffered fearsome casualties as it assaulted almost impregnable Japanese defenses. Camp writes the book as a tribute to the unit and its legacy. He succeeds in vividly portraying the difficulties of the battle and the odds the marines had to overcome.

Peleliu was a battle that should not have happened. Prior to the assault, Admiral William Halsey recommended the operation be cancelled but was over-ruled by Admiral Chester Nimitz. Major General William Rupertus, commander of the 1st Marine Division, predicted a short battle. Unfortunately, the planners underestimated the Japanese defenses, which were dug into the island's coral terrain. The 1st Marine Regiment landed as part of the division and in six days of heavy fighting suffered 50 percent casualties. Despite the casualties, the division was finally pulled off the line over the objections of Rupertus. The author argues the frontal assaults against the Japanese defenses tarnished the reputations of the senior commanders while enhancing the fighting reputation of the individual Marine.

The book is well written and provides an excellent overview of the operations conducted by the battalions assigned to the regiment. The author describes U.S. and Japanese plans, the commanders, the Japanese defenses, and the Marine assaults. The chaos of the landing is described in detail with personal accounts. Camp draws on personal interviews and a close association with two of the battalion commanders to provide a firsthand-account of the challenges facing the units while fighting in extreme heat and in difficult terrain.

The first half of the book is its strength. The chapters describing the preparations and the landings are rich in detail. The subsequent chapters, which describe the remaining five days of fighting, are not as detailed and many of the eyewitness

accounts are taken from Medal of Honor and Navy Cross citations and other non-first-person accounts. This may leave the reader wanting more information or perspectives.

Camp, a retired Marine colonel, has written extensively on the Marine Corps and is the author of the acclaimed *Lima-6*, a memoir of his time as a Marine company commander in Vietnam. His latest work provides another resource to the literature of the Pacific War. It sheds light on the operation of a storied regiment during a difficult battle. The book is well illustrated with photographs and maps. I recommend it to readers interested in World War II.

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

TRUMAN AND MACARTHUR: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown, Michael D. Pearlman, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2008, 352 pages, \$29.95.

Truman and MacArthur focuses on relationships—between people, between institutions of the government, and between nations. In this engaging narrative of the collision of President Harry Truman with General Douglas MacArthur, author Michael D. Pearlman uses Truman and MacArthur's relationship to highlight the larger relationship between civil and military institutions in U.S. polity and the tension that naturally results. Pearlman shows how the Cold War intensified this tension and, in part, led to the most famous civil-military conflict in American history when Truman fired MacArthur in 1951. The author also makes a good case that the wonder of MacArthur's relief has more to do with why it did not happen much earlier.

Pearlman's life-long research encompasses a comprehensive array of primary and secondary sources. Information from official documents and personal memoirs adds value when interwoven with the ongoing political commentary in the U.S.

national news media. Pearlman includes judgments in just about every sentence along with his facts. For example, "MacArthur trusted no one loyal to someone in the White House. . . ." Far too many historians these days shy away from these kinds of useful judgments. Although primarily about Truman and MacArthur, some of the cameos that Pearlman tosses out, almost casually, are worth their weight in gold. Among the most fascinating is the story of General Frank Lowe, a true citizen-soldier who tried to bridge the gap between the two men. Lowe was sent by Truman to fulfill this function on a short fact-finding trip and ended up staying eight months and transferring much of his loyalty from the president to MacArthur.

Pearlman is an equal opportunity critic. For example, he criticizes Mao Zedong for missing a golden opportunity to invade Taiwan in the summer of 1950 when the Taiwan strait became poorly guarded as the Seventh Fleet steamed north to provide MacArthur's embattled forces naval gunfire and air support. Instead Mao repositioned his forces to Manchuria. Pearlman regards Mao's actions as something he need not have done, suggesting Taiwan's fall to a communist amphibious assault as an event that would have halted the American offensive in Korea. The book also makes points that have gone out of vogue in many historical circles: individuals are important, politics is important, and institutions are important. There is a larger argument here that military history, diplomatic history, and political history—which are elegantly synthesized in the book—are a valid scholarly means of understanding the past and gaining insight for the present.

If the book has a weakness it is that sometimes Pearlman is too clever. His often oblique and biting judgments kept this reviewer on his toes, but others may find the constant "pinging" asides tedious. Editorially the book has its fair share of typos. These minor complaints aside, the book is among the best civil military histories to come out in the last

10 years, exceeding Eliot Cohen's *Supreme Command* by offering more detail while being more accessible to a broader audience. It deserves a wide, adult readership and has my highest recommendation for military and civilian professionals of all stripes.

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BUFFALO SOLDIERS: African American Troops in the US Forces 1866-1945, Ron Field and Alexander Bielakowski, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, United Kingdom, 2008, 232 pages, \$25.95.

Buffalo Soldiers provides an illustrated narrative history of the contributions made by African American troops to the U.S. military—from the post-Civil War era to the racial integration of the services shortly after World War II. Originally, the name Buffalo Soldiers was applied by Plains Indians to the black cavalry and infantry Soldiers that fought so doggedly against them in the plains and southwest because, to the native warriors, they resembled the shaggy beasts they hunted both in their physical appearance and in their stubborn courage. However the book extends this moniker to all African-American troops that served, not only in the Army, but in the other services too.

The authors are well-known military historians who have written on this and related subjects. Ron Field wrote *Buffalo Soldiers 1866-91* for Osprey Publications and Alexander Bielakowski authored another Osprey book—*African American Troops in WWII*. The present book is good, solid, and very readable. It is intended for the general reader as well as military history enthusiasts—although academic historians will also find pleasure in it.

In true Osprey fashion, *Buffalo Soldiers* is lavishly illustrated with period photographs, drawings, and impeccably detailed illustrations of Soldiers and their equipment that are an Osprey signature specialty. It also includes first-person accounts

from the experiences of African American servicemen. Curiously, the book suffers from an absence of maps to illustrate the campaigns. On the other hand, it does include a detailed chronology of salient events in the history of black service members.

The book follows the Buffalo Soldiers, not only in their legendary campaigns throughout the western frontier, but also during the Spanish-American War in the Caribbean and the Philippines, the Philippine Insur-

rection, the Pancho Villa Expedition, and both world wars. Their story is a quintessentially American story; the rise from adversity through valor, sheer willpower, and faith.

It is also a story of frustration and human failure, as in the unfortunate case of Lieutenant Henry O. Flipper—the first African American West Point graduate—and a story of enlightened white leaders such as Colonel Benjamin Grierson—who gallantly and proudly led his Buffalo Soldiers on numerous hard

campaigns—and President Harry Truman—who ended segregation in the military.

Although ethnic-based histories have proliferated in both academia and the popular press, and although there are quite a few books written on the Buffalo Soldier, for this reviewer, as for most military historians and “enthusiasts,” there is always room on the bookshelf for another Osprey book—recommended.

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



CALL FOR PAPERS

The *Military Review* and the Army Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethics (ACPME) are pleased to announce a call for papers for a *Military Review* special edition titled

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~ Deadline for submissions: 30 November 2009 ~

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The Army Chief of Staff designated West Point as the Army’s Center of Excellence for the Professional Military Ethics to increase Army-wide understanding, ownership, and sustained development of Professional Military Ethics through research, education, and publication. As part of this mission, ACPME is partnering with *Military Review* to sponsor a special edition dedicated to advancing the study, practice, and development of military ethics at the individual, unit, and institutional levels.

Papers should be original research from primary sources or those stemming from lessons learned via firsthand experience. The preferred length for submissions is 3,000 to 5,000 words. Due to the wide-ranging audience of *Military Review*, submissions should endeavor to maintain high academic standards, yet be accessible to a varied audience.

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