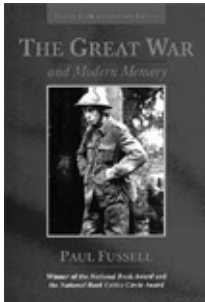


MR Classics Revisited



THE GREAT WAR AND MODERN MEMORY, Paul Fussell, Oxford University Press, 1976.

Ask me to recommend a great piece of war writing and a crowd of works jockey for mention: Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry* stories; Phil

Caputo's *Rumor of War*; the *Sword of Honor* trilogy by Evelyn Waugh; Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*; William Manchester's *Goodbye, Darkness*; *A Farewell to Arms*; *The Forgotten Soldier*; and so on. Only one great work of literary criticism, however, springs to mind: *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell's 1976 prize-winning study of the effects World War One worked on British (and by extension, American) culture. An infantry platoon leader during World War II before becoming a renowned Ivy League professor, Fussell produced a tour-de-force analysis of what war does to those who fight it and the culture that sponsors it. No other study comes close to its trenchancy.

As a title, *The Great War and Modern Memory* is something of a misnomer. The book is less about the war's effect on modern memory than about how it crushed a century's-worth of idealistic English assumptions. Working from what must have been hundreds if not thousands of texts from an array of media—poetry, memoirs, newspaper and magazine pieces, plays, private letters, etc.—Fussell builds a fascinating and thoroughly convincing picture of what happened to Victorian-Georgian optimism when it encountered the massed fires of the Western Front.

In 1914, British men welcomed war. Even poets looked to combat in France as an opportunity to give their lives meaning. For Fussell, Rupert Brooke captured the pre-

war zeitgeist in "Sonnet I: Peace" (1914): "Now God be thanked who has matched us with His Hour, / And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping." Lofty sentiment we might expect in any poetry, but *Modern Memory* cites example upon example of such ingenuous thinking. Brooke's optimism, for example, is corroborated by this personal ad, placed in *The Times* two days before England declared war: "PAULINE—Alas it cannot be. But I will dash into the great venture with all that pride and spirit an ancient race has given me." Fussell interprets this snippet as an amalgam of period ideas and ideals. Its diction is high and poetic ("Alas"), sportish ("venture," "dash"), and mythic ("ancient race").

Brooke and Pauline's lover had been reared in a culture that believed fervently in "Progress and Art." For these men, God still sat in heaven, sports and games mattered, and national myths were stories to live by. Theirs was a literate generation, too, as perhaps none had ever been before and certainly hasn't been since. Spurred on by egregious claims that German soldiers were bayoneting Belgian babies (similar yellow charges were made against Sadaam's troops in Kuwait), the idealistic English poured into training camps eager for a "fight" or a "scrap"—as if combat would be akin to a boxing match.

What they got is well known, and Fussell documents it exhaustively. Consider, for instance, that the British suffered 60,000 casualties (20,000 killed) during the *first day* of the Somme Offensive—and continued to attack for four more months. Much of *Modern Memory's* value lies in its author's detailed exposition of how the profligate bloodletting and squalid horror of trench warfare registered on the soldier. Anecdotes and images are piled high until they coalesce into

a lump-sum depiction of bewilderment, disillusionment, and disgust. For those who require the past to talk to their present condition, one good reason to read this book lies in its suggestion that naïve national beliefs can be altered, if not completely undone, by war.

This might not qualify as an epiphany for a post-Vietnam culture, but the genius of *Modern Memory* lies in Fussell's painstaking and often nuanced tracing of war's effects on ideology. For example, men inculcated with a particular view of the world will not, Fussell tells us, surrender that view without a struggle. Thus the Tommies of the Great War used their old emotional-intellectual vocabulary to make sense of and attenuate the horrors they encountered. Before the war, Nature (capital N) was widely worshipped, its flora and fauna often mused upon as intimations of Beauty (capital B). "A standard way of writing the Georgian poem," Fussell says, "was to get as many flowers into it as possible." Surrounded by death in the trenches, soldiers clung to their flowers, particularly the bright-red poppy, which bloomed all over Flanders. Now, however, flowers invoked a transubstantiation of the blood of dead soldiers into new and beautiful living things. By this move, death lost some of its sting.

Similar semantic gymnastics were used with stand-to, the morning and evening hours when men most feared attack. Pre-war, dawn and dusk figured as times of special significance, as interludes when insight might be gained into the Ineffable. At stand-to, dusk and dawn retained their significance; anticipation, albeit of a distinctly different kind, provided a sense of continuity that must have helped temper the terror of the moment. In a book packed with insights, these explications of intellectual rear-guard actions are among the most telling.

For some Great War soldiers, the old vocabulary somehow survived the slaughterhouse. For most, however, as each “Big Push” succeeded only in killing off men by the tens of thousands, the gap between poetic euphemism and industrialized warfare became unbridgeable. Fussell argues that the latter so explicitly undermined the former that irony became the dominant mode of approaching the world. Again copiously, he records the change from romantic effusions like Brooke’s and Pauline’s lover’s to admonitory proclamations and outright denunciations. Wilfred Owen’s description of a gassed soldier in “Dulce et Decorum Est” is one such well known jeremiad:

If you could hear, at every jolt,
the blood

Come gargling from the froth-
corrupted lungs,

And think how, once, his head
was like a bud,

Fresh as a country rose, and keen,
and young . . .

. . . you would not tell

The old lie: Dulce et Decorum est
Pro Patria Mori.

So went the evolution from idealism to cynicism. Man as a perfectible being and history as an unfolding narrative of Progress were abandoned to the hopelessly naïve.

In addition to bringing myriad sources to life in *Modern Memory*, Fussell analyzes in depth the works of five important Great War writers, among them Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Edmund Blunden, authors of the three best known (and perhaps best) Great War memoirs, respectively: The three-book *Memoirs of George Sherston*, *Goodbye to All That*, and *Undertones of War*. These are seminal texts whose attitudes and tenets continue

to influence the way we think about war. You won’t find a better, more illuminating introduction to them.

Broadly, Fussell reads each work as a consciously literary but no less “true” attempt to point out the ironies present everywhere in the war.

Sassoon’s is a work of “repeated ins and outs”—“binaries”—in which the ghastliness of the trenches contrasts with the comforts of home. Sassoon, who received two Military Crosses for gallantry (he was nominated for four) and was recommended for the Victoria Cross, grew so angry at the government’s apparent indifference to its soldiers’ suffering that he publicly threw his Military Cross ribbon into the Thames.

In an especially well informed reading, Fussell argues that for Graves the war was a colossal bad joke, fit only to be rendered in the slapstick conventions of farce. Accordingly, Graves packed *Goodbye to All That* with “fools and knaves” and leg-pulling anecdotes. Driven by a loathing for the war and the culture that sought it, the book is an early manifestation of black humor.

In tone and orientation, Edmund Blunden couldn’t have been much more different from Graves and Sassoon. Fussell’s “harmless young shepherd” was a nostalgic pastoral poet, celebrant of a rural England and way of life that had been in eclipse since the Industrial Revolution. In *Undertones of War*, Blunden registers everywhere the obliterating impact of industrialized war on the countryside and its innocent inhabitants. Though much subtler than Sassoon’s and Graves’s sardonic tales, Blunden’s undertones are no less ironic, and perhaps more poignant. In fact, Fussell, who is clearly sym-

pathetic with all three writers, seems to favor Blunden’s book.

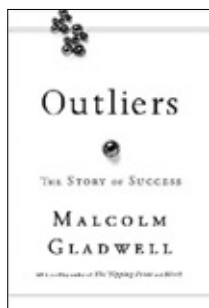
Analyses of homoeroticism in Wilfred Owen’s poetry and the mythic in David Jones’s rambling *In Parenthesis* complete the survey of five of the war’s greatest writers. My only disappointment amid all of Fussell’s astute analysis is the absence of Edwin Campion’s *Some Desperate Glory*. But Campion’s hair-raising account of Passchendaele wasn’t unearthed until 1981—five years after *Modern Memory* had won the National Book Award for criticism.

So what, ultimately, do we learn from *The Great War and Modern Memory*? Why read an aging study of a war almost a hundred years gone by? Because the book presents a high-definition picture of the dangers of unexamined cultural assumptions. Because it’s a terrific study of what happens when a nation enters into war blithely, and how war can change a nation’s core beliefs. Because it cautions against exceptionalism, the crusader mentality, and an overweening sense of national self-righteousness. The book is also stuffed with interesting details, all rendered in vigorous, accomplished prose that carries a reader swiftly from chapter to chapter—it’s a completely absorbing read. And finally, because it offers a fine example of what a soldier-intellectual might achieve, and the methods one might use to shine a bright light on war and those who profess it.

If you are a professional Soldier or just interested in war literature, you really should read Fussell.

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

MR Book Reviews



OUTLIERS: The Story of Success, Malcolm Gladwell, Little, Brown and Company, New York, 2008, 299 pages, \$27.99.

Outliers, Malcolm Gladwell's third national bestseller, following *The Tipping Point* (2000) and

Blink (2005), is a series of "blinding flashes of the obvious" punctuated with logical fallacies and redeemed by interesting stories about dangerous culture. Gladwell's overall thesis is that extraordinarily motivated people (with only above average talent) can succeed in obtaining extraordinary wealth and influence given society's opportunities. Trying to convince the reader with fallacious causal stories about what makes people successful (e.g., natural brilliance and charismatic personality), Gladwell provides these blinding flashes of the obvious: "Successful people don't do it alone. Where they come from matters. They're products of particular places and environments." Okay, at this point in the book, I get it: history demonstrates that success seems largely a culturally contextualized happenstance when these commonalities combine. And yet, the author confuses me later in the book when he states, "Success is not a random act. It arises out of a predictable and powerful set of circumstances and opportunities." Huh? Well, maybe I don't get it.

Having previously read and digested Nicholas Rescher's philosophical treatise, *Luck: The Brilliant Randomness of Everyday Life* (Pittsburgh Press, 1995), the logical inconsistency of *Outliers* becomes clearer. Gladwell's teleological explanations about how past events unfolded is as flawed as a Monday-morning quarterback's causal asser-

tions about why the game was won or lost. Rescher, on the other hand, offers this more compelling and much less romantic view of history: "Our condition on the world's stage is the product of *fate* (what we are), of *fortune* (the conditions and circumstances in which we are placed), and of *luck* (what chances to happen to us)."

Gladwell would not have a national bestseller if he concluded that the successes of Bill Gates and The Beatles were fateful, fortunate, and due to luck. Even John Lennon, one of the less fortunate Beatles, says, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans" (from his song, "Beautiful Boy"). The one redeeming aspect of *Outliers* (which I gave up trying to connect to the book's thesis) is Chapter 7, "The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes," describing the sometimes disastrous aspects of organizational culture and drawing on findings from renowned researcher Geert Hofstede and from NASA's post-airline crash research reported by Ute Ficher and Judith Orasanu. This chapter has tremendous relevance to the military professional who is culturally prone to not challenge the actions and decisions of superiors even if lives are at stake (a function of what Hofstede calls the "Power-Distance" dimension).

My advice to military professionals, then, is to skip Gladwell's blinding flashes of the obvious and conflicting logic, and read only chapter 7 of *Outliers* while standing in the aisle of the bookstore. Then put it back on the shelf, go to the philosophy section and pick up a copy of Rescher's book, *Luck*. Purchase it, read it (while listening to John Lennon), and keep it as a reference.

Christopher R. Paparone,
Fort Lee, Virginia

NORMALIZING JAPAN: Politics, Identity and the Evolution of Security Practice, Andrew L. Oros, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 2009, 282 pages, \$60.00.

For decades, scholars and other Japan watchers have wondered if or when Japan would remove the straitjacket from its security policy. In *Normalizing Japan*, Andrew Oros answers with a resounding—well, as resounding as a political science argument gets—probably not anytime soon.

Oros acknowledges previous takes on Japan's security policy evolution, from realist, liberalist, and constructivist points of view, but finds those analyses lacking and offers his own constructivist theory, focused on Japan's security identity. He defines a state's identity, following the work of Jeffrey Legro, as "a lens through which citizens determine a framework for a state's appropriate response" to the international system. Security identity, a subset of national identity, shapes policy by providing a vocabulary for discourse and "a focal point for public opinion." Once identity institutionalizes into policymaking, the paradigmatic blinds it provides, as well as the aforementioned public opinion, help to ensure the identity's continuity.

The author defines Japan's security identity as domestic antimilitarism, not unqualified antimilitarism, or pacifism, which are labels others often use. Japan currently hosts the largest permanent overseas stationing of U.S. forces and has one of the largest military budgets in the world—hardly the attributes of a purely antimilitarist or pacifist state (though Oros acknowledges a minority of Japanese citizens hold these extreme views). Japan's



Featured Review

Featured Review

domestic antimilitarism strictly proscribes its own military's roles, but does not conceive that other nations should constrain their militaries in the same ways. Oros acknowledges Thomas Berger's descriptions of security norms in countries like Japan and Germany, but explains that his theory of security identity applies to the state as a whole while norms affect individual choices.

After establishing the theoretical framework, Oros explains how Japan's defeat in World War II discredited its previous security identity. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, several versions of a new and appropriate security identity arose and were debated. Domestic antimilitarism was a political compromise with three central tenets: "No traditional armed forces involved in domestic policymaking . . . no use of forces by Japan to resolve international disputes, except in self-defense [and] . . . no Japanese participation in foreign wars." Oros acknowledges other factors, like foreign pressure, changes in the international environment and individual Japanese leaders, and analyzes how they affect the formation of policy, but he convincingly maintains that security identity sets the boundaries for discussion and implementation. He follows his description of the origin of domestic antimilitarism with well-argued case studies of policies concerning arms exports, military satellites, and missile defense. Ending with a look to the future, he says that barring extreme changes to Japan's domestic or international environment, the broad outlines of Japan's domestic antimilitarism security identity are likely to continue.

Most likely to be read by policymakers and Japan studies scholars, this book deserves a wider audience for its lucid, nuanced, and cogent explanation of Japan's role and likely future in the international security environment.

**COL David Hunter-Chester, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

INSIDE HAMAS: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement, Zaki Chehab, Nation Books, New York, 2008, 250 pages, \$15.95.

Throughout his career, journalist Zaki Chehab, a Palestinian refugee from Lebanon, interviewed leaders from the many factions who competed for power among the Palestinians. From his experiences, Chehab writes about Hamas—the controversial, Islamic militant group that shocked the world when it won the 2006 national elections.

Although Chehab supports the Palestinian cause, he is frank in his presentation of the challenges to and failures of Hamas from infancy to the post-election period. Born of the rise of the Islamist movement in the 1960s and influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas was as a rival to the secular Fatah organization. Chehab relies on interviews with founding members to describe the group's initial organizational structure and strategy. He credits Israel's passive endorsement of the organization as a counter to Fatah for allowing Hamas to survive. He provides details of personalities and deeds of the group's founding members and subsequent leaders that only someone with his access could provide. He describes the humble beginnings of the Al Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, and their growth from a few disparate cells into a force estimated at 18,000. Chehab views the conflict through the eyes of common Palestinians, as well as those of martyrs and their families. He describes how Hamas recruits and employs suicide attackers, how the Israel intelligence services and other organizations penetrated Hamas, and how killing informants led to a continuing cycle of violence. Although Hamas' structure has evolved, it refuses to recognize the state of Israel and seeks to reclaim Palestine.

Chehab argues that Hamas out-campaigned Fatah in the 2006 elections and executed a superior strategy that surprised the world by its success. He believes the election results were more of a rejection

of Fatah than an endorsement of Hamas. Fatah's inability to provide adequate social services, its reputation for corruption, and its inability to make progress with Israel are weaknesses Hamas exploited. He points out that Hamas opposed the Oslo Accords that created the Palestinian Authority, only to assume this role because of the election. He says one of the problems with Hamas is the need to balance governance responsibilities with its desire to resist Israel.

Chehab argues the U.S. should negotiate with Hamas and not exclude it from the peace process and suggests that continued attempts to undermine and discredit Hamas will only make it more popular. He believes Hamas's inability to deliver on promises has frustrated the Palestinian people and foresees a widening void that will enable Al-Qaeda and Iranian-backed groups to wield more influence. Because Chehab is unable to define Hamas without referring to the complex web of relationships between it and the other Palestinian factions (Israel and neighboring countries), the reader must have considerable understanding of the Palestinian conflict to fully appreciate Chehab's analysis. However, the author has written a compelling history of Hamas that provides a framework for understanding the unique position the group currently occupies in the Palestinian situation.

**MAJ Stephen J. Kolouch, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

ENGAGING THE MUSLIM WORLD, Juan Cole, Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2009, 282 pages, \$26.95.

In *Engaging the Muslim World*, Juan Cole argues that the West's misplaced fear of Islam and its tendency to reach general conclusions about the Muslim world are responsible for past failures in U.S. foreign policy. No dispassionate observer, Cole, a history professor at the University of Michigan who reads and speaks several Middle Eastern languages, writes

“Informed Comment,” an Internet blog in which he sharply criticizes the Iraq War and Bush Administration’s foreign policy.

Cole cites Senator John McCain as saying that if the United States were to prematurely leave Iraq, the country would become a base for Al-Qaeda. He argues that U.S. politicians and pundits tend to simplify Islam as a monolithic religion. However, he says, the majority of Iraq is Shi’a and would not allow a Sunni terrorist organization like Al-Qaeda to control the country. Cole’s criticism is sound, although he does not satisfactorily explain how the Iraqi government would be able to keep Al-Qaeda’s influence out of the Sunni-dominated part of the country without coalition assistance.

Cole’s recommendation to the Obama administration is to use negotiation as a key. He suggests the United States should engage Iran to stop its nuclear program (he seems to take the Iranian assertion of a peaceful nuclear program at face value). To convince Iran to stop its program, he says the United States should *induce* Israel to give up its arsenal. He advocates an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty to end Hezbollah and Hamas’s threats to Israel. A bit more detail about how the U.S. might accomplish either one of these tasks would be helpful. Cole suggests that more Arabic and Western works of religion and literature should be translated in order to increase understanding on both sides.

Engaging the Muslim World’s extreme criticism of U.S. policy makes it a provocative read. However, the central theme, that we must avoid generalizing what is a very complicated region, is a valuable message to both policymakers and those carrying it out. Cole convincingly argues that misunderstanding and generalizing Islam and the Middle East has contributed to great losses of both blood and treasure in recent years.

LTC Robert E. Friedenber,
Damascus, Syria

OPERATION SNAKE BITE: The Explosive True Story of an Afghan Desert Siege, Stephen Grey, Penguin Books, London, 2009, 367 pages, \$64.69.

Set-piece battles are rare in Afghanistan. One exception was a major fight in the Helmand Province from 2 to 11 December 2007. The place was Musa Qala, which is not far from the Maiwand battlefield where the British lost a brigade in 1880. Coalition forces included some 1,800 British, American, Afghan, Danish, and Dutch soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen. Some famous units included the Coldstream Guards, the Green Howards, the Household Cavalry, the King’s Royal Hussars, the Royal Gurkha Rifles, the Scots Guards, the Royal Marines, and the 82d Airborne Division. The Taliban were badly mauled, but some escaped. The siege of Musa Qala is the story of coalition combat, courage, and the political undertones that color a combatant’s every move. It is also a story of those who paid the ultimate price for their comrades, their units, and their countries.

Stephen Grey, an embedded reporter with B Company, 2d Battalion, the Yorkshire Regiment (The Green Howards), joined the unit prior to the operation and developed close contacts and relationships with the soldiers of the unit. He conducted over 230 interviews with the Green Howards and other involved units. The book’s result is a detailed, well-wrought look at the battle. Operation Snake Bite was a combined arms fight involving armor, artillery, infantry, and aviation. It was fought with a critical political constraint—to not level the village of Musa Qala, even though the Taliban had entrenched in it.

Grey does excellent work in absorbing military culture and practices and uses his knowledge to produce a well-reasoned account of the battle. The book’s maps are detailed and useful; however, Grey does not include an index, which makes it difficult to use the book for research. The serious reader should create his own index of important

points as he reads the book. Further, Grey’s endnotes are minimal, and he has not linked individual interviews to events in the book, which makes it even more difficult to use the book for future reference.

Still this is a useful and significant book about contemporary combat in Afghanistan. Military professionals will want to read it. The book is not yet for sale in the United States, so one should look for it in international airport bookstores.

Lester W. Grau,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

UNFRIENDLY FIRE: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America, Nathaniel Frank, Thomas Dunne Books, 2009, \$25.95, 342 pages.

Nathaniel Frank’s timing of his most recent work, *Unfriendly Fire: How the Gay Ban Undermines the Military and Weakens America*, is uncanny. The book’s release coincides with President Barack Obama’s promise to end discrimination of gays in the military.

Frank examines the 1993 law that bans open homosexual service in the U.S. military, commonly known as the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and provides compelling evidence why the law should be repealed. Frank researched governmental documents, congressional hearings, military service policies, and debates and discussions that led to the law’s signing on 30 November 1993. His research included rarely discussed empirical data, interviews of senior government officials and military leaders (active and retired), visits to military bases, and interviews with former and present military members about their opinions on military service by homosexuals.

Frank believes the current policy has failed to accomplish its original intent. President Bill Clinton’s promise of ending the military’s ban on homosexuals was the genesis of the policy. It was intended to stop harassment, “witch hunts,” and unjustified discharges based on sexual orientation. Instead, the law created an increase in homosexual

discharges, animosity, distrust, and betrayal. In addition, proponents of the ban believe homosexuality in the military would destroy the unit cohesion necessary to military effectiveness. Based on its negative impact, he surmises that the policy was poorly designed and implemented. Frank concludes that it “bred massive confusion about how service members—gay and straight alike—were expected to behave, what their rights and constraints were, and what military commanders were allowed and expected to do to enforce the rules.” Indeed, unit cohesion is a critical component to mission accomplishment and trust is a key element in that cohesion. Frank provides numerous examples of how the policy damages the foundation of our armed forces by creating an atmosphere of distrust.

Unfriendly Fire is recommended reading, especially for those who proudly serve our Nation, because of its well-reasoned insights on how the current ban on homosexuals in the armed forces is currently undermining our military might.

**MAJ Trisha Luiken, USAF,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR, Campbell Craig and Sergey Radchenko, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2008, 201 pages, \$27.00.

The nearly two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union have yielded a spate of new works on the Cold War, most of which exploit the publication of additional documents on the Soviet side to add texture and nuance to well-established scholarly interpretations. That Campbell Craig and Sergey Radchenko’s work falls within that category in no way disparages their careful argumentation or rethinking of familiar questions. What is distinctive about this history of Cold War origins is that it places the atomic bomb at the center of discussion about the widening rift among wartime allies that abruptly morphed into a Cold War after 1945. The authors’ essential argument

is that the existence of the atomic bomb itself so distorted foreign policy of both emerging superpowers as to make an amicable postwar accommodation substantially less likely. Moreover, they assert that atomic secrets and revelations of espionage further undermined trust and all but ensured there would be no *modus vivendi* leading to international controls of atomic weapons.

The book has much to recommend it. Its introduction contains a useful review of major secondary works as well as newly published collections of relevant primary source documents. Chapter One offers a concise exposition of the authors’ main points in the context of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s foreign policy and vision of the postwar world order. Chastened by the example of President Woodrow Wilson’s failure to reshape the global environment in the aftermath of World War I, Roosevelt gave careful thought to the means and methods for implementing his own plans to forge a worldwide free market.

However, like Wilson, Roosevelt faced the challenge of advancing a global agenda that was not fully compatible with those of fellow victorious allies. In Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin, in particular, he confronted men as determined and politically astute as himself. While working with Churchill, whose worldview more closely aligned with Roosevelt’s own and whose country had steadily lost leverage during the exhausting world war, was one thing, dealing with Stalin was quite another.

Churchill placed a premium on defeating Germany at the lowest possible cost to the British Empire and thus favored peripheral offensives in North Africa and southern Europe. Early in the war, when partnership with Britain was indispensable, Roosevelt deferred to British judgment on the matter of the Second Front over the objections of many of his own military strategists. By 1943, as U.S. military might reached gargantuan proportions, the voice of caution resonated less loudly and nothing deterred the U.S.

from an invasion in northern France in 1944.

The Soviet leader, by virtue of personality, ideology, and experience, operated from a sharply different frame of reference. Moreover, his political advantage was as great as Roosevelt’s own—even greater in some respects. After all, the Red Army occupied most of Eastern and Central Europe by late 1944. Accordingly, Stalin would not budge from consolidating his sphere of influence into a series of East European buffer states molded in the Soviet image and under his direct control.

In this context, the authors note, Roosevelt held one clear ace, an edge in the development of atomic weapons. Most interesting is the book’s contention that Roosevelt sought to extract advantage from the bomb project to influence not merely Stalin, but Churchill as well. As events turned out, he had greater success with the latter than the former. Britain’s stake was to preserve its position as the junior partner in the bomb project, a matter over which the Americans had considerable control. With regard to Stalin, Roosevelt hoped mistakenly that compelling evidence of American technological power would moderate Soviet positions concerning the postwar order. In any event, the authors conclude, “By relying on atomic diplomacy, Roosevelt pushed these two allies into positions that made a grand atomic settlement after the war almost impossible to achieve.” This specific point of interpretation will probably foster future academic debate as scholars sift through the multitude of factors that shaped postwar interaction. Nevertheless, Craig and Radchenko are probably safe in asserting that, as so often happens in the arena of international politics, Roosevelt’s diplomatic approach generated unforeseen consequences. Moreover, the authors logically contend that any other leader in possession of such an advantage probably would have behaved similarly under the circumstances. The bomb was Roosevelt’s best source of leverage

in dealing with Joseph Stalin, whose management of the occupation of Poland in 1944 hardly inspired confidence in the benevolence of Soviet intentions.

Craig and Radchenko do justice to the often-revisited controversy over the American detonation of atomic bombs over Japan and the extent to which President Harry Truman might have been intending to intimidate Stalin in so doing. Following a brief conspectus of other studies, the authors contend there is no hard evidence to support the assertion that the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was primarily an act of psychological warfare against the Soviets, even though Truman may have perceived it as an opportunity to close out the war against Japan without the complications of Soviet involvement. Nevertheless, as the authors put it, in terms of effects, “we can regard Hiroshima as the final American strike of the Second World War, and Nagasaki as its first strike in the Cold War.”

Certainly, it seemed so to Stalin who maintained a show of bravado and indifference. Indeed, the authors assert that in response to foreign pressure, Stalin was more likely to prove defiant rather than conciliatory, as in the case of the abrupt American cessation of Lend-Lease aid. Stalin did not fear the United States would take aggressive military action. Consequently, never believing deeply in the possibility of postwar collaboration anyway, he did not substantially revise his own position toward his former allies in reaction to the atomic bomb. In the meantime, the Soviets had begun their own atomic bomb project in earnest in 1943, giving the effort an “unprecedented commitment of resources and exceptional coordination.” In respect to bomb development, he offers a pithy assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet scientific establishment and its interaction with Soviet intelligence. Bureaucratic interference and the ascension of Communist Party hacks to positions of influence diminished the returns on lavish Soviet investment in research.

Finally, with the American bomb a reality and the Soviet bomb on the way, one of the great postwar policy questions was whether the former allies could agree on a mechanism for the international control of these new weapons whose full importance was not yet clear. An examination of policy debate on both sides of the former alliance suggests the dynamics of the incipient Cold War rivalry soon foreclosed any attractive policy options that might have led to atomic cooperation. An atmosphere of mutual suspicion prevailed. On the American side, progressive revelations of Soviet espionage buttressed existing doubt about whether the United States should relinquish what everyone knew would be a short-term monopoly by sharing its technology within the framework of international agreement. Approaches to the problem were equally problematic on the Soviet side given that Stalin was unwilling to empower any representative to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission either to shape Soviet policy or to negotiate on his behalf. Expecting that little of value would come from the Commission, Stalin viewed the body mainly as a forum for Soviet propaganda.

Overall, the *Atomic Bomb and the Origins of the Cold War* offers much in a relatively concise and readable text. The judgments are cautious and reasoned, reflecting solid research and a balanced analysis of the evidence. This work will serve as a useful primer on one of the most important sources of Cold War animosity. Moreover, it may suggest historical insight into the dynamics of foreign policy as the world struggles with nuclear proliferation today.

**Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE WHITE WAR: Life and Death on the Italian Front 1915-1919, Mark Thompson, Basic Books, New York, 2009, 454 pages, \$30.00.

The subtitle of this narrative history should have been “*déjà vu*

repeated 11 times.” In Flanders, the Allied armies were ordered to charge across a flat no-man’s-land into the face of German machine-gun fire. In the 11 offensives centered around the Isonzo River, Italian infantrymen were sent repeatedly up an exhaustingly sheer Alpine wall into the murderous fusillade. A million Soldiers died in northeastern Italy of wounds and disease or as prisoners in the monotonously ineffective Italian offensives. Until the final campaign, the ratio of bloodshed to territory gained was even worse than that of the Western Front.

This narrative of that frostbitten war draws from the work of generations of historians and writers (among them Ernest Hemingway) but gleans vignettes that display the passions of the time and the difficulty of changing a strategy mired in repeated failure. On one occasion, an Austrian officer cried out to his machine-gunners as a third wave of Italians clambered over the corpses of their comrades: “Cease fire! Let them be!” In the silence that ensued, he yelled to the enemy troops clotted in terrified groups: “Go back! We won’t shoot anymore! We don’t want to massacre you.”

Machiavellian politics aimed at the “lost” territories of the south Tyrol and eastern Adriatic set the stage for Italy’s military disaster, and secret treaties during the course of the war fed the political lust. However, it was left to a venerable artilleryman, General Luigi Cadorna, to enforce the blind commitment to a strategy of compact infantry charges, regardless of terrain or enemy firepower. Cadorna’s only published contribution to tactical thought, written a quarter century before World War I’s battles, offered this fallacious insight: “The offensive is profitable and almost always possible, even against mountainous positions that appear impregnable, thanks to [cover] that permits . . . advance [and] deployments toward the flanks or weak points, unseen by the enemy.”

On the other hand, the enormous Italian defeat at Caporetto—immortalized by Hemingway—was a blitzkrieg before the concept existed—a

tactic that “punched through a barrier, then unclenched to spread its fingers.” And an ambitious young German lieutenant by the name of Erwin Rommel, commanding a company of Wuerttemberg mountaineers, was there to witness the strategy and at the same time accept a tactical opportunity of leadership and initiative “that does not come twice in a lifetime.” At a crucial point in the battle, a Bavarian commander attempted to order a halt to Rommel’s troops. In Nelsonian fashion, Rommel turned a figurative “blind eye” to the signal and embarked on a flanking movement that bagged two fully equipped regiments of the Salerno Brigade.

They were demoralized victims of perhaps the first blitzkrieg, but the Italians found a counterweapon that has gained in stature, “strategic communication.” The strident voices of journalist Benito Mussolini and poet Gabriele Albertini D’Annunzio led Rome into the war (“Churchill at his most orotund was prosy beside D’Annunzio,” writes Thompson). Much later, Mussolini as a political leader was in a position to whitewash Caporetto. He advised Italian researchers to treat the era as “a time for myth, not history.”

Yet in a twist that pulled a measure of victory from repeated defeats, having gained so little ground in battle, Italy emerged from the Armistice bloated with gift territory—some of which was later lost through Mussolini’s political miscalculations of World War II.

George Ridge, J.D.,
Tucson, Arizona

COMBATING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: The Future of International Nonproliferation Policy, edited by Nathan E. Busch and Daniel H. Joyner, The University of Georgia Press, Athens, 2009, 395 pages, \$24.95.

Nathan E. Busch and Daniel H. Joyner have produced a well-crafted anthology on combating weapons of mass destruction. The operative word here is *combating*, not *weapons of mass destruction*. The

anthology assumes a rudimentary acquaintance with chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological weapons and focuses on the questions, what is being done, what can be done, what should be done to respond to the weapons of mass destruction threat in the opening years of the 21st century? Busch and Joyner address the needs of two audiences: novices to the world of combating weapons of mass destruction in search of an answer to the anthology’s central questions, and initiates searching for a “one-stop shop” overview of the state of play in combating weapons of mass destruction.

The thoughtful reader should bear in mind that the answer to the anthology’s central question is in the eye of the beholder. Not everyone in the world views the problem of combating weapons of mass destruction through American eyes, or through eyes sympathetic to the American worldview. Indeed, the likes of North Korea, Iran, or Al-Qaeda are unlikely to place their imprimatur on this anthology; and yet, their world view needs most to be understood—although not necessarily embraced—in order to fully address the problem of the weapons. The reader who keeps this in mind can gain a good understanding of the American perspective on this global problem from Busch and Joyner’s compilation. This is particularly so since Busch and Joyner provide an outstanding overview of treaties and issues of international law.

The world of combating weapons of mass destruction is an acronym soup world, and in subsequent editions of this anthology both novices and initiates would undoubtedly appreciate a comprehensive glossary of all acronyms used in the collection. Nevertheless, one who braves the acronyms and willingly accepts that combating weapons of mass destruction is itself a sometimes-elusive subject matter will find time spent with Busch and Joyner’s collection to be time well spent.

COL John Mark Mattox,
Albuquerque, NM

THE GATES OF STALINGRAD: Soviet-German Combat Operations, April-August 1942, The Stalingrad Trilogy, David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2009, 655 pages, \$34.95.

The Gates of Stalingrad is for connoisseurs of operations on the Eastern Front during World War II. David M. Glantz and Jonathan M. House’s level of detail from Red Army general staff journals, the Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs, German Sixth Army, and the Russian 62d Army official records is phenomenal.

After the setbacks in the winter of 1941, the Wehrmacht was on the march again, this time deep into southern Russia to capture the Caucasus oilfields and the Volga River. Hitler hoped this would mean that Russia would begin to experience fuel shortages and large-scale economic disruption and hasten the collapse of Russian military operations.

The Gates of Stalingrad addresses these points, but also delves into the details of the brutal fighting the Wehrmacht endured to push to the outskirts of Stalingrad. Stalin had ordered (under penalty of death) that all Soviet units would stand and fight—no more retreats. This order resulted in a tenacious and fanatical defense.

As Army Group B (Sixth Army) advanced into the great bend (land between the Don and Volga rivers) from mid-July to the end of August, it destroyed some 13 Russian armies. As astonishing as this is, the Russians were still able to dredge up fresh divisions and corps to attrit the Sixth Army. At this point, the Soviets had not learned how to conduct combined operations and would feed divisions and corps in piecemeal attacks. This allowed the Wehrmacht to mass tanks, artillery, and air power to defeat the Soviets in detail. This and the logistical problems the Wehrmacht had to contend with, plus the advance of Army Group A toward the oil fields, all led to the culmination of the Sixth Army on the outskirts of Stalingrad. Most current histories give only a

cursorily note to these battles. This study contributes over 80 maps and 20 tables to cover each facet of attack, counterattack, and advance by both the Soviets and the Germans in dizzying detail.

What sets the book apart is the detail the authors go into when they discuss both the Wehrmacht and Soviet actions (for example, how many men were in a unit on what day and how many functional tanks). This allows the reader to see how combat power was whittled away on a daily basis. The level of detail is critical to allow the reader to understand the campaign's magnitude.

The book's one shortcoming is that some of the maps either are not legible (due to faulty printing) or contain so much information that the unit locations are not clearly identifiable. Even so, *The Gates of Stalingrad* is a valuable addition to the study of the Soviet-German warfare.

**LTC Richard S. Vick Jr., USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

**ENDURING THE GREAT WAR:
Combat, Morale and Collapse in
the German and British Armies,
1914-1918**, Alexander Watson,
Cambridge University Press, Cam-
bridge, UK, 2008, 288 pages, \$78.00.

A wise historian once remarked that the Western Front of World War I was "war distilled." By that, he meant that the conditions of combat between 1914 and 1918 were among the most physically and psychologically demanding ever faced by fighting men. In addition to the miserable day-to-day condition in the trenches, the long, awful history of warfare has rarely seen such sustained, bloody combat as that of Ypres, Verdun, Passchendaele, and the Argonne Forest. How did armies, units, and individuals sustain themselves in such horrific conditions? The question deserves the attention of both historians and military professionals.

Typically, in attempting an answer to the question, one refers either to famous literature of the war (*All Quiet on the Western Front*, *Good-bye to All That*, etc.) or useful but

dated surveys like John Ellis's *Eye-Deep in Hell* or Denis Winter's *Death's Men*. One is gratified, now, to see our understanding expanded through the publication of Alexander Watson's *Enduring the Great War*. Watson is a young research scholar at Cambridge University, and what makes his contribution so important is the original approach he takes to the problem and the extraordinary scope of the sources he uses to support his findings. His approach is a comparative one. Unlike Ellis and Winter, who focused only on the experience of British soldiers, Watson compares the coping strategies of soldiers in two armies, the British and the German. To make his comparisons, Watson draws on an impressive array of letters and memoirs, as well as contemporary surveys of battlefield behavior and soldier psychology.

The results of his remarkable research effort confirm some of our existing beliefs and undermine others. Not surprisingly, he finds that religion, family ties, and camaraderie helped men endure their ordeal at the front. However, far more than other historians, Watson emphasizes the role of junior officers in motivating men and holding units together. The author finds that, although British officers enjoyed better relations with their men than their German counterparts, the young officers of the Kaiser's army performed far better than many previous accounts reported. As a related point, Watson challenges the view offered by Wilhelm Deist that the German army on the Western Front was gripped by a "covert strike" at the time of the armistice. Instead, Watson argues that the collapse of the German army's fighting strength was a result of mass surrenders condoned and often led by officers.

This is an exceptional book. *Enduring the Great War* is well written, superbly researched, and original in its conclusions. It deserves a wider readership than its steep price is likely to allow.

**Scott Stephenson, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE LAST GREAT WAR: British Society and the First World War, Adrian Gregory, Cambridge University Press, New York, 354 pages, 2009, \$81.00.

With the approach of the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, a great many books have been published reevaluating the war. Much of this work has enhanced our understanding of the fighting, the experience of the Soldiers, and the literature of the war. Although there is a body of literature that has focused on attitudes towards the war looking back from the perspective of the 1920s and 1930s, there has been less of a focus on the attitude and response of society, as a whole, during the war itself. Adrian Gregory's new book brilliantly fills that gap and puts several common myths to bed along the way.

The main ideas are arranged thematically, which ties in well with the chronology of the war. The first theme is that of going to war. The British public often has been portrayed as overwhelmingly enthusiastic as well as uneducated about the violence of war. Using a well-researched mix of personal accounts, newspaper reports, and government records, Gregory clearly demonstrates that the reality was not so simple. For example, one of the reasons many people were out on the streets the day before Britain declared war (4 August 1914) was that it was a bank holiday, and there were many families and revelers in the parks in the center of London. Further, people were well aware of what going to war meant, having repeatedly heard about the horrors of war from their newspapers, politicians, and books. Thus, ignorant anti-Germanism and jingoism did not cause Britain to enter the war, although the possibility of war certainly increased those sentiments. Rather, they perceived that they simply had to deal with German militarism and barbarity.

The Last Great War examines the issue of propaganda and German atrocities. Although there was much criticism of British propaganda after the war, the fact is the Germans had

murdered 5,000 Belgian civilians during the invasion. Chapters on the transition from volunteering to conscription, the sacrifice of soldiers, and how this was portrayed through religion and language, explore these themes in a nuanced fashion rather than providing an oversimplified explanation of why things occurred as they did.

An examination of the issues of labor relations and quality of life on the home front largely gives lie to the idea that the war made ordinary working people worse off. The evidence presented makes it clear that full employment and a partial emancipation of women provided a dramatic increase in the living conditions of many on the home front. Gregory also examines the problems caused by the middle and upper classes dying at higher rates than the working classes.

Overall, this is an excellent examination of British society during the Great War, and it clearly debunks a number of persistent myths regarding the conflict. The book is highly recommended.

Nicholas Murray,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

LINCOLN AND THE DECISION FOR WAR: The Northern Response to Secession, Russell McClintock, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2008, 400 pages, \$35.00.

Russell McClintock's book examines why Northerners opposed slavery's westward expansion so strongly that they risked disunion rather than compromise on it, and why almost all Northerners opposed disunion so strongly they went to war to prevent it. McClintock shows that a number of dynamics were in play between Lincoln's election and the firing on Fort Sumter. First, Lincoln, the de facto leader of the six-year old Republican party, had to make sure that his policy decisions did not destroy the fledgling party, just when it was about to assume power. Lincoln felt that any compromise on the expansion of slavery into the territories would likely tear

the new party apart. Second, politics at the state level, especially in Illinois, New York, and Massachusetts, influenced the actions of the leaders at the Federal level. Third, during the secession winter of 1860-1861, William Seward engaged in a careful and increasingly desperate political dance with the president-elect to control federal policy and to try to find a compromise solution. Seward believed a conciliatory policy would keep the Upper South in the Union and cause the Deep South to return to the fold. Seward was willing to compromise on slavery issues, but Lincoln was unwilling to do so for moral as well as partisan political reasons. Fourth, while the people of the United States had their say in selecting political leaders, the leaders ultimately made the decision on war, and Abraham Lincoln was the most important such leader.

Yet Lincoln operated under some debilitating misconceptions. Not having traveled in the South, he miscalculated southern opinion and overestimated the strength of southern unionists. When he realized that the southern unionist movement was dead or ineffectual, he decided to send a relief expedition to Fort Sumter, knowing it would precipitate a shooting war.

McClintock's narrative is engaging and detailed. Sometimes the tales of the byzantine nature of state politics seem tedious, but they are necessary to set the stage for the decisions the leaders made. McClintock updates Ken Stampp's work on the coming of the war. Intriguingly, McClintock also borrows from the work of Philip Foner and the economics of unionist policy. This is the story of how a nation made the decisions it did, knowing they could lead to war. It is worth a read.

D. Jonathan White,
Northport, Alabama

JOHN BROWN'S WAR AGAINST SLAVERY, Robert E. McGlone, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009, 451 pages, \$35.00.

Few figures in American history are as captivating as John Brown. Almost none have received as much scholarly psychoanalysis as the violent abolitionist and mastermind of the 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry. In *John Brown's War Against Slavery*, longtime Brown historian Robert E. McGlone delves deeper than any previous student into the social, spiritual, and psychological minutiae surrounding Brown's evolution from struggling businessman to antislavery zealot and martyr.

To McGlone, the greatest disservice done to the history of John Brown has been the willingness of scholars to attribute his actions to lunacy or "blind faith." McGlone's stated purpose is to dispel popular assumptions about Brown. Far from a raving lunatic, McGlone argues, Brown was methodical and calculating, driven by a bloody pragmatism. The author's argument is strongest in its painstaking scrutiny of Brown's decisions and behavior during the Pottawattamie Massacre in 1856 and aftermath of Harpers Ferry, two underexplored facets of the history. Also to his great credit, McGlone fearlessly takes on the always-stimulating argument about John Brown as a terrorist. In doing so, he provides the most complete examination of this issue to date.

What sets McGlone's work apart from previous studies of John Brown is his commitment to primary sources, and primarily, the writings of Brown himself. Eschewing typical reliance on "aphoristic stories," McGlone sticks to first-hand accounts and applies the appropriate amount of analysis to sift through the personal prejudice when necessary. While some might argue that this approach tends to offer leniency to Brown, McGlone maintains objectivity and keeps his assessment honest throughout.

McGlone's book is brilliantly researched and well written; its greatest flaws lie more in its organization and presentation than in its argument. The author's commendable approach of letting chapters address the various identities and

roles assumed by Brown in his personal war (terrorizer, propagandist, conspirator, etc.) adds an incoherent chronology to the analysis, which can confuse the reader. The book does not include a bibliography, and readers might also be disappointed with its abrupt ending without a standard conclusion; however, the relevance of McGlone's study is threaded throughout the text, making a detailed rehash somewhat unnecessary. In all, these few issues detract little from McGlone's effective pic-

torial of Brown as a figure driven as much by a cold, draconian rationale as by passion and hate.

John Brown's War Against Slavery is strictly analytical, and therefore, not for those readers looking for extensive narrative. For the serious student of "Bleeding Kansas," the abolitionist movement, or the causes of the Civil War, however, this study will prove indispensable. Perhaps the greatest potential impact for this book is in the emerging historiography on terrorism and

irregular warfare in America. This book supplants Stephen B. Oates' landmark biography *To Purge this Land with Blood* as the definitive work on Brown, and McGlone establishes himself as *the* historical authority on the ever-contentious firebrand of Harpers Ferry. For a compelling explanation of who John Brown was and why he did what he did, readers need look no further than this book.

**MAJ Clay Mountcastle, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

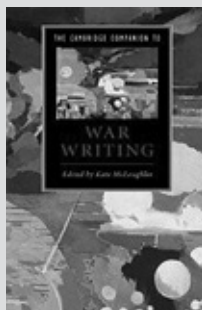
MR We Recommend...



THE LOST HEROES ART QUILT, Julie Feingold, ed. by Nancy Hecker, American Heroes Art Projects Foundation, Boca Raton, FL, 2009, 193 pages, \$34.95.

This is the companion book to the Lost Heroes Art Quilt project, describing in the mothers' own words the lives of 82 Servicemen and Servicewomen depicted on the actual quilt, which honors all those who died in the service of their country since 11 September 2001. The quilt itself was unveiled and dedicated at the Families United Gold Star dinner on 25 September 2009 in Washington, D.C., and began its traveling exhibition two days later at Arlington National Cemetery Visitors Center. The honored heroes are shown as children, dressed in G.I. Joe uniforms of their respective Services, an unusual and poignant technique that drives home the deep, personal losses felt by the family members of those killed in action.

This book also includes a fold-out photo of the Lost Heroes Art Quilt, the story behind its genesis, and letters of tribute from notable persons. After the cost of printing is covered, 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of this book go to Snowball Express, a charitable organization that helps the children of deceased Service Members.—*From MR*



THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO WAR WRITING, ed. By Kate McLoughlin, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2009, 263 pages, \$29.99.

"War writing is an ancient genre that continues to be of vital importance. Times of crisis push literature to its limits, requiring writers to exploit their expressive resources to the maximum in response to extreme events. This *Companion* focuses on British and American war writing, from *Beowulf* and Shakespeare to

bloggers on the 'war on terror.' The *Companion* also explores the latest theoretical thinking on war representation to give access to this developing area and to suggest new directions for research."

—*From the publisher*



THE VIETNAM WAR: A Graphic History, Dwight Jon Zimmerman and Wayne Vansant, Hill and Wang, New York, 2009, 143 pages, \$19.95.

"Through beautifully rendered artwork, *The Vietnam War: A Graphic History* depicts the course of the war, from its initial expansion in the early 1960s through the evacuation of Saigon in 1975, as well as what transpired at home, from the antiwar movement and the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., to the Watergate break-in and the resignation of a president."

—*From the publisher*

A Simple and Effective Way of Dealing with the Media

Don Middleton, *Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*—Since the Vietnam War-era military officers have had good reason to mistrust journalists. In the Vietnam conflict, the American military arguably never lost an important battle. But because Saigon fell to a traditional tank invasion from North Vietnam no more than two years after American combat forces exited the country, U.S. armed forces are still thought of as “losing” the war.

Looking back with all the awareness of the digital age, one could contend that what they lost was the information operations of the war. Which, to be fair, hardly anyone knew was being fought at the time. As the present Combined Arms Center commander, Lieutenant General William B. Caldwell IV, tells visitors when discussing contemporary operations, “When the Taliban plans a military operation, their information operations are an integral part of their planning. When we plan a military operation, we just plan a military operation. That puts us at a huge disadvantage.” In a democracy, relations with the press are an important part of information operations.

Several years ago, Dave Howie (then from the Public Affairs Office) and I were discussing a particular general officer. Howie said, “He [the general officer] has a way of dealing with the press that is very simple, yet incredibly effective. I’ve never seen another military officer do it, although many should.”

I observed this a few days later when I photographed an “office call” between the same general and a journalist from *Time Magazine*. Such meetings usually involve the principals and an aide or two taking

notes; in this case only the general and reporter were present. Since office calls are intended to be private meetings, I snapped a few pictures during the initial meeting and quietly slipped out before anything substantial was discussed. However, I heard and saw just enough to know exactly what Howie meant.

The journalist, who frequently appears on cable news programs as a commentator and the author of several best-selling books, started by assuring the general that he hadn’t come with any agenda, hidden or otherwise, and was not going to try to embarrass him or entrap him in any way. The general nodded and said, “No problem. You may record this or take notes or both. I hope you do. And no question is out-of-bounds. I might ask that a question be put off until the end, when I have had time to think about it, especially if I feel my initial answer might cause some operational problems. But you will not leave here without all your questions being answered. And there are absolutely no restrictions on what you may ask. However, everything I tell you is on background. If you want to quote me, just send me the quote, and ninety-nine times out of a hundred, I will approve it just as it is.”

“Okay,” the journalist said, looking a bit surprised, “who should I contact with these quotes—your executive officer, your aide-de-camp, or your secretary?” The general went around to his desk and returned with his business card. “No,” he said, “just email it to me directly.”

At that point I left the room. But I immediately understood what Howie meant. The journalist gets everything he can expect from the meeting: information, plus what a person in his profession wants the most, access. The more information he has (even if on “background”), the better story he can write, and in

the military’s view, the better chance to get more parts of the story correct.

This general has an agreement that anything that appears with his name attached, such as a quotation, must be sent to him. He can see it in print, mull it over, share it with confidants, and modify it if needed.

Military-Media

Jim Garamone, *American Forces Press Service*—I truly enjoyed the article “The Military-Media Relationship: A Dysfunctional Marriage” (*Military Review*, September-October 2009). The dialogue between Thom Shanker and General Mark Hertling actually gives me hope that the gap between the two institutions can be bridged. Both men understand the value of the other. This comes through loud and clear. At a time when the battlefield is full of blogs, tweets, facebook, and front pages of the world, this type of discussion is needed and welcomed. Hat’s off to *Military Review* for publishing such a great article.

Echo of Battle

Brian McAllister Linn, *College Station, TX*—Greg Fontenot’s review of my book, *The Echo of Battle* (*Military Review*, September-October 2009), asserts, “Linn tosses out a number of canards about Army efforts that lack context.” My dictionary defines a canard as a “false or baseless, usually derogatory story, report, or rumor.” Fontenot only specifies two “canards.” The first is that “Linn depicts the Bradley as a death trap.” *Echo*’s sole reference to the Bradley (p. 205) states, “The Bradley’s difficulties spawned congressional hearings, several books, and a farcical television special.” The second “canard” is that “contrary to what [Linn] suggests, REFORGER . . . was not merely a mobility exercise associated with

a forward deployed Army.” *Echo’s* only mention of Reforger’s mission (p. 216) quotes directly from the Reforger After Action reports of 1979 and 1974 which termed it “a ‘strategic mobility exercise’” . . . “to practice action required to reinforce Europe and fight as part of the NATO team using host nation support.” If Fontenot believes these statements are canards, he should take it up with the Army officers who wrote the reports, not the researcher who quoted them. I hope that the readers of *Military Review* will take the opportunity to compare Fontenot’s review with the book itself and decide for themselves who wrote the “canards.”

Tipping Sacred Cows

Fulton Wilcox, *Colts Neck, NJ*—Tim Challans’ article “Tipping Sacred Cows” (*Military Review*, September-October 2009) makes interesting points, but I would like to offer some criticisms. My concern is that the “official” embodiments of both effects-based operations” (EBO) and “design” (systemic operational design—SOD) pound the creativity out of their respective doctrines and engage in fratricide over what do not seem to be compelling differentiators in the value to their targeted customers—the planners. “Paint by numbers” ideologies and novel names for processes do little to address the significant need, which is to stimulate some spark of genius to the planning of a “campaign.”

The customer for such doctrine is some individual or group that has either figuratively or actually been locked in a room and told to emerge with an assessment and some strategic “plan,” one or more initial concepts of the operation. The customer presumably appreciates

having a “cookbook,” akin to Field Manual 3.0, and perhaps a facilitating set of records-keeping and communications software (e.g., project planning software) as a reminder as to what should be considered and how to keep the essential three ingredients synchronized (the “as is” situation, the mission-defined end state, and one or more concepts of the operation bridging the “as is” and the “desired to be”). The question is what, if anything, do EBO and SOD provide the customer beyond the cookbook?

Overall, the value proposition of EBO carries with it an implication of indirection and finesse through multiplier “effects” as opposed to brute force attrition effects. However, EBO is not always feasible. The obvious constraint on EBO is that suitable “cause and effect” opportunities are hard to come by, or at least we may not have the creativity to discern and shape such opportunities even if they do exist. Also, generating the “cause” of the desired “effects” may depend on the evolution of technology. Recent U.S. and NATO efforts to package EBO as an end-to-end planning doctrine stretch what was born as a doctrine of exceptionalism to apply to the drudgery of attrition.

Regarding SOD, Challans suggests that compared to EBO, SOD is different, somehow better, philosophically more sound and morally more kind. But it is not clear that in the end SOD is in practice different. The easiest criticism to dispose of is the matter of wartime morality. EBO’s proponents (and those we retroactively categorize as EBO practitioners) were almost universally looking for quicker, less bloody campaigns as alternatives to “straight up the middle” brute force solutions. SOD planners will struggle with the same tradeoffs.

Challans also offered criticism of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of EBO. From a practical perspective, any military planning process has to rely on what might be termed courtroom ontology and epistemology. If a gun is in evidence, the jury is going to accept that the gun is real and that pulling the trigger is going to cause a loaded gun to fire and a bullet to emerge. Cause and effect reigns. If the prosecutors have appropriate evidence, the jury is going to accept that the defendant understood that cause and effect and had the intention of killing someone unless he got his way. If the defendant’s victim saved his life by handing the defendant his wallet, the jury is not going to accept a defense that “most philosophers of social science do not see causation as operative in the realm of human activity” and is going to find that the “cause” of waving the gun in the victim’s face had the effect of making the victim pay. EBO is simply the application of courtroom ontology and epistemology to causes and effects on a larger scale.

Challans offers statements that are simply wrong, such as “Evolution has no laws, and laws are necessary for causal analysis.” “Evolution” is merely an umbrella term for the dependent variable “change” produced by the intersection of multiple causative laws, such as the law of gravity or of optics. One can predict evolution based on these laws. EBO is as entitled to defend its method with references to “evolution” as is SOD.

In preparing methodological doctrine, the danger is in getting too far abstracted from operative reality to support the customer. Stretching EBO across the entire campaign planning process probably was a mistake. It may be that SOD’s method is far better, but that advantage is not self-evident.