

OPERATION DARK HEART, Anthony Shaffer, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2010, 299 pages, \$25.99.

St. Martin's Press has printed two versions of Anthony Shaffer's *Operation Dark Heart*: the original and a redacted version acceptable for public release. The Department of Defense (DOD) contacted the publisher only days before the planned release of the book, maintaining that Shaffer's memoir posed a threat to national security. Shortly after that contact, DOD bought 10,000 copies of the book, its entire first run, and burned them all. The author then met with government officials and agreed to remove material deemed classified. The end result was a redacted version complete with distractingly large blocks of text blacked out. Still, several copies of the original version escaped the flames; in fact, at the time of this writing a couple of eBay "buy it now" prices are near \$6,000 for the original version, which one could compare to the redacted version and gain insight regarding the type of information the government considers potentially compromising.

Anyone who has ever read a redacted investigation report has a great start toward understanding the frustrations of sorting through this version of *Operation Dark Heart*. At most, this book only hints at the story Shaffer would like to tell. For example, he provides some basic biographical information with a particular focus on where he had trained and with which organizations he had served, all obscured. Thus, it is next to impossible to really appreciate either. The redacted text compromises the narrative's flow and essentially prevents one from understanding Shaffer's ascent in

the world of counterterrorism intelligence. So goes the entire book. As an aside, what was not redacted sometimes should have been, in particular Shaffer's need to share details of his love life in a combat zone. These scenes add nothing to the story, constituting at most failed voyeurism.

Shaffer gained some notoriety for his 2006 testimony before Congress that he was part of the SOCOM-led Able Danger task force. This effort purportedly identified two of the 9/11 cells as well as Mohamed Atta over a year before the world learned of them. The author discusses some of the task force's data mining efforts, but only in general terms. Shaffer fails to support his claim regarding Atta and the cells; in contrast, the DOD inspector general maintains as part of the public record that Able Danger identified neither prior to 9/11. Who does one believe?

The author admits that he is either loved or hated, but his claim before Congress that he was considered a "rock star" within his profession suggests, at a minimum, that he has no self-worth issues. The book's title comes from a cross-border operation that Shaffer was developing as a member of the Leadership Targeting Cell. After identifying a hotel in Wada, Pakistan, that served as a major Al-Qaeda headquarters, Shaffer was working to orchestrate an attack using precision strikes and assassinations to destroy the hotel and kill its inhabitants. The beauty of the plan was that the violence would appear to be the work of rival tribes rather than American special operators.

Unfortunately, the new commanding general, unlike his predecessor, disapproved of cross-border operations, and Operation Dark Heart never occurred. Much of Shaffer's narrative reads like a made-for-TV movie script: the hardened, no-nonsense intelligence professional is

punished by several careerist senior officers, who live only for promotion and personal advancement. The author never considers the possibility that operators work tactically while those above them may see a situation from the strategic perspective. Shaffer's story has made him a cult hero within conspiracy theory circles, so finding videos of his testimony before Congress is both easy and informative.

Shaffer ends his book by offering a recipe for success in a chapter titled "How to Win in Afghanistan." He offers such helpful observations as "appoint a leader who is a combination of Grant and Eisenhower." If only it were that easy. Add to this perfect leader the ability to control the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and success is imminent. In fairness, Shaffer's recipe would probably work, but the ingredients are harder to obtain than he implies. A tone of oversimplifying the challenge permeates this effort.

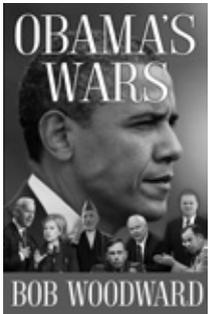
This book is a quick read, more so from the redactions than from the elegance of the prose. For example, Shaffer in one mere paragraph mentions shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic, and then defines insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting to achieve different results." Granted, inventing new metaphors, like transmission repair, is best left to professionals, but Shaffer writes almost ponderously. One must assume that he analyzes intelligence with greater skill than he can turn a phrase. That said, more is missing than just redacted information from this version of *Operation Dark Heart*. Spend your money instead on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, the book that inspired Shaffer.

LTC Jim Varner, USA, Retired, Platte City, Missouri

Editor's Note: Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Shaffer maintains that his book does not disclose classified

information and has recently filed a lawsuit against the Pentagon, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the Central Intelligence Agency, claiming violations of his First Amendment rights.

OBAMA'S WARS, Bob Woodward, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2010, 464 pages, \$30.00.



From the outset, the title of veteran *Washington Post* journalist Bob Woodward's latest entry into the annals of national security fare is somewhat deceiving. *Obama's Wars* actually focuses

on President Barack Obama's war—the fight for security, stable governance, and dignified withdrawal from Afghanistan. Through most of *Obama's Wars*, Iraq is an afterthought, a conflict more his predecessor's than his. Woodward takes his readers into a new White House with a decidedly different focus than the one he illustrated in *The War Within*, in which President George W. Bush struggled to exploit the surging success in Iraq.

Obama's Wars begins in the early days following the 2008 presidential election, with Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell briefing the president-elect. In typical Woodward fashion, this serves as the grand stage-setter, with McConnell guiding Obama through the complexities of the American involvement in Central and Southwest Asia, evolving threat scenarios, and the “sources and methods” at his disposal within the intelligence community to contend with those threats. From ongoing military operations in Afghanistan to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan, Obama was inheriting an extremely delicate and volatile political situation that was very likely to define his presidency.

As Woodward gains momentum, his narrative builds on three distinct themes: reaffirming civilian control of the military, forging a new

regional strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, and managing the sensitive political and military situation within Pakistan. At the same time, Woodward lays bare the myth of the reputed “team of rivals” that formed Obama's cabinet and inner circle of advisors and explores the disparate and often conflicting personalities that surround the new president.

Woodward is a master storyteller, and *Obama's Wars* continues his penchant for taking readers deep within the Nation's political landscape. He dedicates a significant portion of the book to Obama's efforts to establish his role as the commander in chief. Throughout, there is a sense that the Department of Defense held sway over policy during the Bush administration, exerting an incalculable influence through Secretary Rumsfeld and Vice President Cheney, himself a former defense secretary. In increasingly candid moments, members of Obama's inner circle express a growing frustration with what they see as the militarization of foreign policy.

According to Woodward, no one seems more determined to reassert the power of the Executive Branch than former Marine Corps commandant General James Jones, Obama's national security advisor. The tension between Jones and the Pentagon is often palpable, but no more so than among the core of Obama's most trusted advisors—Deputy National Security Advisor Thomas Donilon; the president's advisor for counterterrorism, John Brennan; National Security Council Chief of Staff Denis McDonough; and White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel.

Along with Jones, each of them attempted to advise the president on national security policy, and each of them ultimately contributed to the growing bifurcation of the policy and strategy development process. All believed the Pentagon was purposely trying to force the president's hand in Central Asia and made no secret of their disdain for the military leadership. At one point, they even suggested that Secretary Gates had assumed the former vice president's role, “whispering confidentially in

the ear of an inexperienced commander in chief.” The leverage that they assumed this gave the Defense secretary made them all the more determined to reinforce civilian control of the military within their inner circle.

At the core of this tension was the evolution of a new strategy in Central Asia. Much of the book recounts the internal strife over the assessment of newly appointed International Security Assistance Force commander General Stanley McChrystal. Even with significant troop-level increases already in place, the former commander of the Joint Special Operations Command believed another 40,000 forces were essential to countering a country-wide insurgency in Afghanistan. Thus began a series of private—and oftentimes public—debates over the ends, ways, and means that would define success in Central Asia.

Many key uniformed leaders agreed with McChrystal's assessment, including the commander of U.S. Central Command, General David Petraeus, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen. Vice President Joseph Biden, among others, fostered a “counterterrorism plus” strategy that required an increase of only 20,000 troops. General James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Mullen's deputy, believed “the president was by law entitled to a full range of options” and posited a hybrid option that proposed a strategy that combined counterterrorism with an increased focus on the training of Afghan security forces.

Throughout *Obama's Wars*, Woodward weaves together these first two themes while at the same time exposing widening rifts between and among agencies and departments, cabinet members and key advisors, and the leaders within the military establishment. These rifts underpin and accentuate the broader story, drawing out the personalities at play and the underlying agendas so common to the Washington political scene. Rather than a contemporary “team

of rivals,” in many ways the new president surrounded himself with like-thinking individuals incapable of forging any kind of team. Finding balance in the volatile political and military landscape of Central Asia appeared to present a much less daunting task.

Through a series of senior level engagements and open dialogue, the Obama administration was able to secure the Pakistani political will to extend military reach into border province tribal areas and contain and degrade Taliban and Al-Qaeda forces, limiting their ability to influence events within Afghanistan. However, defining our relationship with Pakistan in the future proved elusive.

Obama's Wars is an exceptional book. No other writer maneuvers through our government's national security apparatus quite so deftly as Woodward. His writing is without par—no other writer can convey the complexities of politics so effortlessly. His investigative methods and his conclusions are as insightful as they are important. *Obama's Wars* is an essential resource for understanding the realities of American politics and the challenges of defining strategy in the current era.

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

**INSURGENTS, TERRORISTS,
AND MILITIAS: The Warriors of
Contemporary Combat**, Richard H. Shultz and Andrew J. Drew, Columbia University Press, New York, 328 pages, \$24.50.

With the exception of Operation Desert Storm and the initial stage of Operation Iraqi Freedom, war since 1990 has not followed the Western model of armed conflict. This is the claim made and supported by Richard H. Schultz, Jr., and Andrea J. Dew who provide some superb insights into the methods by which we can come to understand why and how nonstate actors fight. If you are interested in either irregular warfare or counterinsurgency, you should add this book to your reading list.

The book's focus is on anthro-

pological study and analysis. One of the first points it makes is that, unlike the West, many cultures view conflict positively. Rather than seeing it as immoral or abnormal, they view warfare as a normal state of affairs, one that is often desirable. To fully understand why this is the case and the ramifications that follow, one must study our foes' history, culture, norms, and values. The study of culture is just as important as intelligence work focused on enemy numbers, location, and capabilities. Unless we focus on the cultural aspects of the conflict, we run the risk of not only failing to understand our enemy's motivation and methods, but also of losing, despite our advantages in technology and conventional capability.

As part of their anthropological analysis, the authors focus on tribes and clans. Until the recent past, both of these terms have been viewed by the West as anachronistic. While much of the world has long focused on states as the key actors on the international stage, the fact is that large numbers of the world's population identify far more with their clan and tribe than they do with the state they live in. In this model of social organization, loyalty is first and foremost to the clan and blood line. Decentralization and autonomy are the norm and, partially because of this, conflicts with outside groups are likely to occur. The relatively small size of clans and tribes necessitates that all male members take on the role of warriors to protect their clan and tribe's interests. In such a system, martial ability is prized.

In order to illustrate how a cultural approach to understanding contemporary combat against nonstate actors works, the authors focus on four case studies: Somalia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Each of these sections provides a succinct account of the history of these areas. After the historical account, each case study is examined using the following format:

- Concept of warfare.
- Organization and command and control.
- Area of operation.

- Targeting and constraints on the use of force.

- Role of outside actors.

The book ends with a short chapter on lessons learned which can be summed up in the authors' exhortation to remember Sun Tzu's advice to "know your enemy." The book offers an excellent model for doing this.

**LTC Brian Imiola,
West Point, New York**

**DO GOOD FENCES MAKE
GOOD NEIGHBORS?
What History Teaches Us
about Strategic Barriers and
International Security**, Brent L. Sterling, Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, 2009, 354 pages, \$32.95.

This book takes a thoughtful and analytical approach to an often overlooked element of security—the use of strategic barriers in national defense. Sterling compares six major historical fortification projects ranging from Athens's Long Walls in the 5th century BCE, to the 20th century's fabled Maginot Line. He derives useful lessons for present-day policymakers and military leaders from these and other examples.

Particularly interesting are the author's discussions of the Israeli Bar-Lev Line from 1968 to 1973 and the Great Wall of the Chinese Emperors in the 15th and 16th centuries. The former example provides useful insights into Israeli strategic culture and doctrine, relevant themes when thinking about the security dilemmas of Israel's borders today. The latter example highlights Ming attitudes towards "barbarians" and the importance of symbolism in Chinese security policy. This historical case has implications when considering security engagement with modern China.

The author distills a number of valuable points from the selected case study portfolio with his "structured focus" approach. First, he shows that strategic barriers usually serve more than one purpose. They are instruments of deterrence, frontier defense and control, power

projection, and symbolic greatness. Quite often, though, they are used to “muddle through” and avoid more difficult policy decisions. He illustrates the tension that exists between the resource investment for large-scale strategic defenses and the reality that their benefits are often not maximized as part of a more multifunctional strategy.

Specifically, exclusively defense-based strategies formed around a project like the Maginot Line have limitations against a highly motivated and mobile adversary like the German military. Finally, the dual offensive-defensive nature of fortification systems generally causes a classic security dilemma by creating a heightened subjective sense of security for the defender, while alarming and catalyzing potential enemies to action.

The author’s methodological approach works, but his analytical style makes for a dense lecture in some sections. The book’s bibliography is comprehensive, and clear maps are used to support overall understanding. Given the uniqueness of the subject and the author’s approach, I highly recommend this book for any course on general military history or defense studies and commend it to those focused on border security issues.

**MAJ Kevin D. Stringer, Ph.D.,
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ONCE A WARRIOR—ALWAYS A WARRIOR: Navigating the Transition from Combat to Home—Including Combat Stress, PTSD, and mTBI, Charles W. Hoge, Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, CT, 2010, 303 pages, \$18.95.

Preparing for operations is a lengthy, structured, and comprehensive process. Soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines arrive in a combat zone carefully geared up for the role they will fulfill and the conditions they will face. However, during deployment, the reality of combat can take its toll no matter what the level of prior preparation, and prolonged stress can change the way the body responds to everyday

events. Paradoxically, these changes are often necessary adaptations for survival and success in combat. These adjustments unavoidably travel home with a warrior at the end of his or her tour of duty and can prove problematic. As Hoge expertly highlights in *Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior*, these skills are not always easy to “dial down,” and returning home from a combat zone can be just as difficult as serving in it for some. Returning to “normal” can be an elusive concept for many.

Acknowledging from the start that everyone changes during deployment, Hoge’s timely study tackles the physiology of stress and explains in easy-to-understand language Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)—a catchall label used to describe many normal and confusing reactions to combat—and mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), or concussion in layman’s terms. In addition, Hoge highlights specific skills to help with the transition process in a series of so-called self-help chapters. These assist a warrior in contextualizing his experience and identifying a transition pathway, avoiding the perils and pitfalls along the way. However, the author clearly notes that *Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior* is not intended to serve as a substitute for therapy or treatment of any specific disorder. The book includes information and advice for consideration only; it is no substitute for professional help when it is required.

Hoge’s book stands out from the crowd for many reasons. Written in straightforward and comprehensible English, the language is unmistakably clear and resonant despite the composite nature of the subject. Also, the book deftly bridges the divide that exists between combat veterans, society, and mental health professionals in understanding combat stress, particularly PTSD and mTBI. The book was written by someone who genuinely gets it; Hoge is a 20-year active-duty mental health professional who has been at the cutting edge of psychological and neurological research. Another of the book’s virtues is that Hoge

avoids lists of symptoms and medical descriptions. Instead, he explains postwar reactions in warrior terms, rather than the impenetrable vocabulary used by medical establishments. Finally, as a survival guide, it provides essential information on what it means to be a warrior and the difficulties of transitioning home from war, a reality that must not be underestimated.

Once a Warrior—Always a Warrior is a must-read for all commanders, medics, welfare staff, families, and, of course, those struggling to transition to home life. Moreover, given the complexity of current operations, repeat tours, and the difficulty of reintegration into wider society, those who associate with returning veterans would also benefit from Hoge’s insights. Put simply, Hoge’s book cleverly de-stigmatizes mental health and provides essential information on what it means to be a warrior and how to transition home. It offers easy-to-follow coping strategies for navigating the transition no matter how much time has passed since leaving the war zone, proving that it can be a journey of hope and growth.

**LTC Andrew M. Roc, Ph.D.,
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THE ENEMY IN OUR HANDS: America’s Treatment of Enemy Prisoners of War from the Revolution to the War on Terror, Robert C. Doyle, University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, 2010, 468 pages, \$34.95.

Prisoners of war receive relatively little attention from military historians, and American treatment of enemy combatants receives even less. With his new work, *The Enemy in Our Hands*, historian Robert Doyle successfully fills this vacuum. From the American Revolution to the War on Terror, Doyle’s narrative provides a clear, well-researched history of American policy toward enemy prisoners.

For the most part, America’s treatment of prisoners of war has

been fair and humane, even when the enemy failed to reciprocate. George Washington, for example, took great pains to ensure that captured British soldiers received adequate food and shelter, and Winfield Scott offered parole to several thousand Mexican soldiers on the condition that they cease to fight against American forces. American treatment of prisoners proved remarkably humane during the major conflicts of the 20th century, and that reputation induced millions of enemy soldiers to surrender on the battlefields of Europe, Korea, and Iraq.

Despite the record of civilized conduct, American history includes its share of brutal misconduct toward its enemies, both real and perceived. Doyle does not flinch from this topic. Instead, he illustrates how the passions of war have repeatedly undermined America's good intentions, from the seizure of Loyalist property during the Revolutionary War to recent controversy regarding the CIA's "enhanced interrogation techniques." Those who assume America's moral exceptionalism would do well to review the contradictory evidence in these chapters.

While Doyle's work includes a comprehensive summary of each major American conflict, his chronological approach may not suit those readers more interested in controversy than scholarship. Nevertheless, Doyle strikes a fair balance between historical developments and individual examples, such as his biographical sketch of Brigadier General Richard Henry Pratt, a 19th-century officer who sought to educate rather than exterminate captured Native Americans. Doyle is at his best in clarifying the technical details of such complex topics as Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus, voluntary repatriation, and the ideological and violent resistance of prisoners in American custody.

With more than 30 illustrations, a dozen appendixes, and 43 pages of end notes, *The Enemy in Our Hands* represents a significant contribution to the study of American military history and a superb starting point

for scholars interested in America's treatment of its enemies.

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

**THE END OF INFLUENCE:
What Happens When Other
Countries Have the Money,**
Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford
Delong, Basic Books, New York,
2010, 177 pages, \$22.00.

Stephen S. Cohen and J. Bradford Delong, both University of California, Berkeley, professors, have written a timely and intellectually intriguing book about the impending loss of U.S. influence around the world. The authors assert the increasing debt burden carried by the Nation will ultimately undermine U.S. soft and hard power around the world. They attribute the burden to excessive government spending and a willful trade imbalance in support of export-oriented economic development models. Such models are embraced by developing countries such as China.

The authors believe that debtor nations lose "freedom of action." In support of their argument, Cohen and Delong demonstrate the waning of the neoliberal trade model long embraced and promoted by the United States around the world and the evolving movement of nations toward "zero-global-sum industrial policies" (e.g., protectionism, undervaluing one's currency, subsidizing production outputs, and creating Sovereign Wealth Funds) that weaken the U.S. global economic position.

The authors believe that even though U.S. debt is denominated in its own currency and is not the problem many pundits would have you believe, neoliberal order does require a willing global hegemony, a position the United States can ill-afford to fill (under current conditions) going forward. In other words, global prosperity can no longer be fueled by a U.S. trade deficit without ultimately undermining the U.S. dollar, U.S. international clout, and the general health of the global economy.

Cohen and Delong detail the economic interdependence between China and the United States to explain how China, as the largest exporter to America, has become wedded to U.S. debt to fuel its growth policy by recycling dollar-denominated export revenue supplies into U.S.-denominated debt to preserve U.S. discretionary income and the ability to continue to buy imports. They identify this arrangement as highly problematic. However, they fall short in addressing the long-term consequences of the redistributed wealth accruing among export-oriented developing countries other than to conclude that the United States needs to "produce more, save more, and spend less," while export-oriented developing countries such as China need to spend more and produce relatively less for export.

The End of Influence is a thought-provoking book, but it is certainly not conclusive. The authors would have been better served by extending this short work. The book's brevity and lack of substantive depth suggests a cursory analysis short on evidence, lacking good scholarship, and devoid of a well-founded conclusion. Furthermore, the book does not contain any notes for the reader. Peculiarly, it refers readers to a website to access them. Those seeking a general understanding of the possible problems and consequences associated with the U.S. national debt and its persistent trade imbalance, articulated in blog-type dialogue, may be the main audience for this book.

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

**SIMPLE GESTURES: A Cultural
Journey into the Middle East,**
Andrea B. Rugh, Potomac Books,
Inc., Dulles, VA, 2009, 368 pages,
\$29.95.

Andrea Rugh's memoir is an account of her experiences living and working abroad in Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, and Afghanistan from 1964 to 2002. As a woman, a trained anthropologist, a United States Agency for

International Development (USAID) adviser for development projects in the Middle East, and the wife of a diplomat, Rugh was situated uniquely to observe firsthand the social and cultural interactions of populations of varied ethnicities, religious beliefs, and tribal affiliations.

Written in response to the increasing demand for “personal, everyday account[s] of the peoples of the region” in a post-9/11 world, *Simple Gestures* reveals the kindness, generosity, sensitivity, patience, and conciliatory and sympathetic nature of the individuals encountered by the author. Experiences recounted in this narrative are memorable for their dramatic, nearly cinematic quality, including Rugh’s being kept under surveillance by Egyptian and Russian intelligence in mid-1960s Cairo, being entertained at lavish Saudi palaces, being honored ceremoniously by Pakistan’s notorious Marri Baluch tribe, and visiting secret girls’ schools while undercover in Afghanistan during Taliban rule.

Rugh’s formal training as an anthropologist informs her account. The chronological and geographical organization of the book help to reinforce the inevitable fact that its verbal snapshots represent only fragments of a nation’s culture, as they existed at a particular historical moment and as they appeared to a single observer. Nevertheless, the author’s social science background leads her to infer from observable behavioral patterns several distinguishing characteristics that polarize Western and Middle Eastern cultures, including their divergent views on communalism versus individualism, social and personal obligations versus personal rights, and religious morality versus secularism.

Rugh’s extensive travels in Egypt, Yemen, Pakistan, and Afghanistan in an advisory capacity for USAID and UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) projects allowed her a firsthand look at the educational systems in these countries and the obstacles that impeded their improvement.

The book’s most sobering aspect, and perhaps its most historically

important one, is its documentation of the obstructionist role played by local and international governments and organizations in implementing international aid projects. The book’s final chapters are particularly powerful in their unflinching condemnation of the American government’s decision to withdraw aid from Pakistan in the mid-1990s and to reconstruct a post-Taliban Afghanistan in ways consistent with its own agenda and interests. By demonstrating the practical impact of these diplomatic decisions on local conditions and opportunities, her account succeeds at making visible the connection between global politics and daily existence at the local level.

**Rebecca Wisor, Ph.D.,
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KILLER ROBOTS: Legality and Ethicality of Autonomous Weapons, Armin Krishnan, Ashgate Publishing, Surrey, England, 2009, 204 pages, \$99.00.

What is it about a killer robot that scares us? Is it just the idea that the robot could kill a human? Man already developed this capacity centuries ago with the mine, or explosive device, a weapon that continues to find application in both Iraq and Afghanistan. So what is it that frightens us? According to Armin Krishnan, in his book *Killer Robots*, it is the ability of the robot to make the decision to kill independently, instead of a human.

Krishnan addresses the development of killer robots, or autonomous weapons, with an emphasis on the legal and ethical issues they raise. The underlying theme he explores is the idea that autonomous weapons represent both a progress toward humanizing warfare and an unprecedented danger to humanity. In the end, the result will depend on mankind confronting the legal and moral issues raised by the inevitable development of these weapon systems and the rules or constraints implemented to address these concerns.

An examination of current international law and the law of armed conflict reveals that definitions for

the terms robots and autonomous weapons are lacking, and that these systems are not illegal. Krishnan argues that autonomous weapons do not fit easily into this legal framework and raises the issue that, even if legal, the use of killer robots will still pose a variety of ethical dilemmas.

He examines the impact of autonomous weapons on the military profession. With technology providing the military the means to do more with less, will the eventual creation of killer robots humanize war by limiting the exposure of humans to the inevitable death and destruction that war brings? While Krishnan concludes that war waged only by machines is unrealistic, more important is his exploration of the ethical and moral issues involved in the distancing of the future warrior from combat and the potential negative repercussions on the military profession.

The book provides military and civilian readers alike with an easy-to-understand examination of issues and concerns arising from the technological reality of autonomous weapon systems. By providing a historical background and analysis of technological development, the reader understands what is reality today, coming tomorrow, and probable or possible in the future. The bibliography contains numerous sources for the interested reader to delve further into related areas surrounding autonomous weapons discussed in *Killer Robots*.

The real value of Krishnan’s work comes from asking the questions raised by an inevitable future of killer robots. Like P.W. Singer’s *Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century*, Krishnan helps initiate the dialog that must take place among politicians, military leaders, scientists, and the public. It is not a question of if, but when killer robots will arrive on the battlefield and what that future should look like.

**MAJ James D. Levine, II,
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AMERICA IN VIETNAM: The War That Couldn't Be Won, Herbert Y. Schandler, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York, 2009, 209 pages, \$39.95.

Herbert Schandler's latest work on the Vietnam War is essentially a reprise of mainstream historical works critical of the war, but it nevertheless constitutes a competent summary of principal arguments holding that the United States embarked on a futile and misguided quest in Vietnam. Distilled to its essence, this account takes its cue from the early observation that the Republic of South Vietnam was an "invention" of the 1956 Geneva Conference, hence not much of a foundation on which to found a strong anticommunist base in Southeast Asia. Even so, the U.S. government was gripped by a mistaken impression that the communist world was monolithic and that South Vietnam was an important "domino," and it felt obliged to defend a regime that enjoyed too little legitimacy ever to stand on its own.

Schandler, a veteran of the war, does not entirely dismiss the possibility that South Vietnam might in time have formed a cohesive polity. He notes, for example, that North Vietnam had only a weak claim on the loyalties of residents in the South, among whom there was no general clamor for unification. However, ineffective and shortsighted political leadership in the South, particularly when pitted against the resolve of Ho Chi Minh's government in the North, created a mismatch that a formidable American military assistance could not overcome.

Schandler does not contend that the United States bore no responsibility for an enormous policy failure in Southeast Asia. On the contrary, an amorphous and shifting strategy, critical dissonance between civilian and military points of view, general cultural and historical ignorance, disunity of effort, conflicting priorities, and a dim understanding of the enemy's motivation all constituted self-inflicted wounds that undermined America's effort. Schandler

succinctly outlines the U.S. dilemma and provides enough detail to substantiate his analysis. His critique is never shrill and gives little credence to more strident interpretations of the war.

Still, Schandler's work might have been considerably more interesting had he offered substantive discussion of competing, less fatalistic scholarship about the war and its outcome. Since he does not, the reader is left to speculate about how the author would respond to recent works maintaining the United States had not yet lost the war when it threw in the towel.

In summary, the book is both highly readable and thoughtfully argued. As a concise exposition on the inexorable logic of failure in Vietnam, it fulfills the author's intent and provides a good foundation for a nonspecialist seeking a basic explanation of America's withdrawal from Vietnam.

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

COMBAT READY? The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War, Thomas E. Hanson, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 2010, 158 pages, \$45.00.

Conventional wisdom often describes the Army's soldiers and leaders during the opening stages of the Korean War as unready and unprepared. Thomas Hanson's *Combat Ready?* questions this paradigm. He contends it is "unfair to condemn the troops of the Eighth Army for the reverses of the summer of 1950," and his goal is to "redress the imbalance that exists between fact and interpretation." Hanson intends to renew the debate on the performance of the soldiers and leaders and shift it from assigning blame to understanding readiness. The book accomplishes the goal and all future works on Korea will have to account for Hanson's conclusions.

Far from the picture often portrayed in history books of slovenly troops who focused more on enjoying the perks of occupation duty

than training for the harsh realities of combat, the author proves through unit records and reports as well as first person accounts that the Eighth Army was well on its way to combat readiness and in some cases was well ahead of the army at large.

Hanson directly confronts the assessments of previous Korean War histories including T.R. Fehrenbach's *This Kind of War*, a book that has been a cornerstone for military professionals for decades. He calls into question former Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan's "No More Task Force Smiths" metaphor, which he concludes has harmed the reputations of the Eighth Army soldiers and leaders. He even takes to task the official Army history, which he concludes did not do in-depth research into training and preparation. Hanson's conclusions regarding these previous histories are illuminating and will cause readers to reevaluate their previous knowledge of Korea.

Hanson's book is the first history to examine the readiness status of the infantry regiments in detail. He uses case studies of four regiments and shows through logical and clear analysis that although there were some deficiencies, the infantry regiments were trained and ready according to the standards of the day and higher headquarters evaluations. The case studies are very effective in illustrating the unit's training strategy, their plans to develop leaders, and the problems each had to overcome. Their success holding the Pusan Perimeter was not based on luck but on hard training.

The author's writing style is straightforward and direct. He questions assumptions and paradigms in a logical, easy-to-follow way. The author is blunt in his assessment and places blame where he sees it. For example, after discussing the Army G1's policy of rotating more officers for versatility and rounding, he writes, it "must be seen as one of the single most damaging policies implemented by the U.S. Army between 1945 and 1950."

This book is a significant and thoughtful analysis that will achieve

the author's goal of spurring debate on the Army of 1950. Future authors will have to account for the facts Hanson brings to light. His research fills a historical gap and provides context in which to reevaluate this period of history and the Army's performance. His conclusions and examples are applicable today as the Army begins drawing down its deployed forces; they will be faced with the same policy decisions in regard to readiness and training. I recommend this book for those interested in the Korean War and readiness issues.

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

**DEATHLY DECEPTION:
The Real Story of Operation
Mincemeat**, Denis Smyth, Oxford
University Press, Oxford, 2010, 384
pages, \$29.95.

Denis Smyth's *Deathly Deception: The Real Story of Operation Mincemeat* is a captivating book that utilizes previously inaccessible material to recount an audacious operation by the British military during World War II. Concocted by Flight Lieutenant Charles Chomondeley, the plan strategically positioned a corpse off Spanish shores to deceive German rivals. The deceased was a Welsh laborer clad in uniform to impersonate Royal Marine Major Martin whose pockets and briefcase were stuffed with misleading documentation to delude the enemy of a future invasion of Sicily. Smyth narrates the story of the operation in its entirety while simultaneously describing the essential role that British intelligence played in scrutinizing the particulars of the plan before implementation by members of the "Twenty Committee."

Smyth details the deceptive evidence placed in German hands as well as the manner in which the Nazi regime interpreted the false information. British cover planners employed strategic deception methods to exploit already existing Nazi worries. The author explains that such a tactic was far more

practical than attempting to plant pristine fears into the minds of the enemy High Command. By playing into scenarios that the Nazis had already considered, the British could persuade Hitler that because of logistical and strategic reasons, Allied forces would invade in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans well before they would attack Sicily.

Smyth portrays the complicated means by which the British measured the progress of Operation Mincemeat. British postal censor service teams closely examined the documents upon their return and found signs of tampering. In addition, military intelligence painstakingly monitored enemy radio communications for any indication that the Germans believed Major Martin's documents were authentic. Code breakers of the organization called "Bletchley Park" conveyed the first conclusive proof that the Germans had indeed accepted the documentation as genuine. British experts also learned that the scrupulous medical and logistical details taken to prepare the body as a deception had not been wasted.

Surprisingly, the author devotes almost an entire chapter to "Pam," the fictional lover created to make Martin appear realistic. Deception planners believed the floating man would appear more credible to German examiners if they employed the use of love letters to develop a personality for the deceased. Enclosed in his wallet was a photo of a young woman and two letters written by a female assistant in the Naval Intelligence Division who precisely captured the perspective of a young woman in love.

Smyth essentially credits Operation Mincemeat as a success. It influenced the German High Command to divert military forces away from Sicily to an alternative target. This allowed Allied troops to move effectively on Sicily, resulting in the success of the Allied invasion.

**Siobhan E. Ausberry,
Fort McNair, Virginia**

**KUT 1916: Courage and Failure
in Iraq**, Patrick Crowley, The
History Press, Stroud, UK, 2009,
320 pages, \$25.00.

Between Yorktown in 1781 and Singapore in 1942, the fall of Kut in 1916 stands as perhaps the single most significant setback to British arms. Though overshadowed that year by the mammoth contests at Verdun and the Somme, the surrender of 9,000 British and Indian troops in a squalid town on the Tigris River sent shock waves through the British Empire. Coming on the heels of the debacle at Gallipoli, the surrender of the Kut garrison stunned leaders in London who feared the double defeats at the hands of the Ottoman Turks would undermine Britain's imperial rule over millions of Muslims. And, though largely unknown to Americans, the siege of Kut remains a dark, unhappy episode in the proud record of the British army.

In reexamining this chapter of British military history, Patrick Crowley brings special qualifications. He is a serving infantry officer and the deputy regimental colonel of the Princess of Wales' Royal Regiment, a unit that includes World War I service in Mesopotamia as part of its proud heritage. Crowley himself has seen combat first hand in a variety of places, including modern day Iraq. Perhaps that is why his chief focus is on the decisions of tactical leaders like Sir Charles Townshend who commanded the 6th Indian Division defending Kut, and the experience of Townshend's men as well as the relief forces that suffered 23,000 casualties in the several failed efforts to rescue them. The author understands the miserable conditions that surrounded the campaign and the unhappy consequences of trying to march to Baghdad on a logistical shoestring. He gives a brief discussion of the strategic backdrop and the Turkish side of the campaign, but his emphasis is on the stubborn determination of the soldiers defending Kut and the sacrificial bravery of the relief columns.

Along with its tactical focus, Crowley's book distinguishes itself from other accounts of the siege in

three conspicuous ways. First, his narrative is generously supported by an abundance of period maps, sketches, and photographs. Second, fully a third of Crowley's account is devoted to the unhappy fate of the Kut garrison after it fell into Turkish captivity (less than half of the enlisted soldiers survived the war), a depressing but important story. Third, Crowley is remarkably blunt in his assessment of the command dysfunction that led to tragedy at Kut. He judges the Indian army—which contributed the bulk of the troops committed to Mesopotamia operations—as singularly ill-suited for expeditionary fighting.

This unpreparedness was reflected in the virtual collapse of the flimsy British logistics structure that supported the campaign. However, the most damning verdict is left to Lieutenant General Sir Graeme Lamb, current commander of the British Field Army. Lamb finds that Townshend's failure to either resign or challenge the orders that sent him on the ill-conceived march to Baghdad was inexcusable. The Kut disaster came as a result. For that, writes Lamb, Townshend will be "damned for all time." Blunt assessment: good book.

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

**IN THE COMPANY OF
GENERALS: The World War I
Diary of Pierpoint L. Stackpole,**
edited by Robert H. Ferrell,
University of Missouri Press,
Columbia, 2009, 224 pages, \$34.95.

The First World War was a seminal event in the history of warfare. The conflict's scale, its voracious appetite for men and materiel, and its encouragement of breakneck military innovation continue to influence the profession of arms to this day. One of the Great War's lasting legacies is its influence on senior level command, control, and leadership.

The war was a culmination of a trend that started in the last years of the American Civil War. No longer could a general be the "great man on

horseback" commanding his army through direct leadership on the battlefield. As Lieutenant General Hunter Liggett's aide during all of the American Expeditionary Force's (AEF's) major campaigns, Pierpoint Stackpole was in the unique position to witness this seismic shift in battle command. Stackpole's diary offers a rare perspective of the inner workings of the AEF and also provides the reader with an intimate view of the challenges of generalship in combat.

Pierpoint Stackpole was a Harvard-educated lawyer who volunteered for service soon after the United States entered World War I. His education and administrative talents secured his posting as Liggett's aide in January 1918. Although Liggett and many of the AEF's other senior officers later wrote of their wartime experiences, they often tended to mute their criticism of their fellow Regular Army officers who had failed to meet the AEF's exacting standards of senior leadership. Stackpole's diary is an uncensored window into the tensions and personality clashes that embroiled the AEF's senior ranks. Stackpole was an acerbic critic of some of the generals that he encountered in his day-to-day duties. He offered particularly harsh assessments of the leadership, abilities, and character of Major General Clarence Edwards and Brigadier General William "Billy" Mitchell.

The diary also chronicles the difficulties that Liggett faced as both a corps and army commander in directing the operations of his units. Although some historians of the Great War have derided the senior leaders of the conflict as detached "château generals," Stackpole makes clear that incomplete reports and poor communications constantly hobbled Liggett's efforts to "see" the battle, minimize command errors, and take advantage of battlefield opportunities. *In the Company of Generals* is an excellent work for anyone interested in the history of World War I and the timeless dilemmas and challenges of senior battle command. Robert

Ferrell's editing of the diary is judicious and his comments aid the reader in placing Stackpole's observations into the larger history of the AEF and its personalities.

**LTC Richard S. Faulkner,
Ph.D., USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

CHURCHILL'S BUNKER,
Richard Holmes, Yale University
Press, New Haven CN, 2010, 256
pages, \$27.50.

Seventy years ago, with France and the Low Countries under German control and the Battle of Britain raging, Britain was forced to endure the reality of aerial bombardment. The prewar idea that the bomber would always get through had prompted the government to begin construction of a protected underground nerve center, from which to run the war. That nerve center was the Cabinet War Rooms along with the offices immediately above ground (No. 10 Annex). Holmes' book is not just about the war rooms, rather it is an informative, interesting look at the development and operation of the rooms, along with an examination of the way Churchill ran the war from them.

Following the anticipation after the Great War that heavy air attacks on London would make impossible the effective running of the country, a series of studies were planned for the evacuation of government offices. Although a move to the suburbs was possible, the complete dispersal of government would have caused significant logistical difficulties. In addition, the government could not completely abandon London because of the risk to public morale. In May 1939, it was decided the Cabinet would be accommodated in the planned Central War Room, which the Office of Works was constructing under Whitehall. It was during the Blitz of the autumn and winter of 1940-1941 when the war rooms were most often used, and later as the V1 (doodlebug) and V2 attacks got underway in 1944. Interestingly, the war rooms were

never strong enough to protect against bombs heavier than 1,100 pounds. Despite the war room occupants knowing that, no decision was taken to move away.

One of the most enlightening parts of the book is the examination of Churchill and his key aides' roles. Hastings "Pug" Ismay was probably the most important member of Churchill's staff, and his role is often overlooked when Churchill's premiership during the war is examined. Ismay's main role was as Churchill's "agent," although he also acted as an important "buffer between Churchill and the chiefs of staff." It was in this role that Ismay's immense tact and excellent social skills made him the perfect choice, serving to calm the choppy waters often left by Churchill's passing. Thus, Ismay served to smooth the workings of government to the overall benefit of the war effort.

Churchill's Bunker is worth reading for anyone interested in Churchill's running of the war and in British history during the 1939 to 1945 conflict. There is a good selection of plans and photographs, which are well chosen to illustrate the topic. This well-written, enjoyable book provides insight into the way Churchill ran the war.

**Nicholas Murray, D.Phil.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE LAST STAND: CUSTER, SITTING BULL, AND THE BATTLE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN, Nathaniel Philbrick, Penguin Group, New York, 2010, 466 pages, \$30.00.

Some stories endure despite or perhaps because they are shrouded in myth. The Battle of the Little Big Horn has yet to reveal all of the secrets of the confrontation in June of 1876 between Lakota Sioux warriors and the U.S. 7th Cavalry.

Nathan Philbrick's *The Last Stand* sheds more light on the episode but is unlikely to resolve the debate over the battle because, as Philbrick admits, Michael Elliott's Custerology "deeply influenced my own thinking about (the battle)."

This admission may explain why Philbrick accepts the contemporary narrative myth of America. Succinctly, the current narrative is that the United States was an imperial power hell-bent on aggrandizement at the expense of others. In Custerology, Elliott goes so far as to compare the invasion of Iraq to the expansion of the United States into the west while failing to mention that if the Nation was an imperial power in the west, so too were the Sioux and Cheyenne.

The Sioux seized the Black Hills from other tribes in the late 18th century. The Arikira and Crow scouts, who served with the 7th, did so for good and cogent reasons now forgotten or at least overlooked. The myth of the Lakota as kind and peaceful pastoralists as portrayed in *Dances With Wolves* is just that—myth. Moreover, troopers fighting with the portion of the 7th Cavalry that lost at the Little Big Horn died to the last man, massacred at the hands of the Sioux who mutilated the soldiers' corpses thoroughly besides. Though the Battle of Wounded Knee is generally portrayed now as a massacre, that view does not fit the facts. In any case, Philbrick gets beyond the mythology on both sides. He concedes to both sides their good and bad points, genuinely attempting to illuminate what happened despite his apparent bias. He tells a captivating story filled with interesting, compelling protagonists and brings to light characters beyond Custer and Sitting Bull.

Philbrick took advantage of a bountiful supply of information including some recent Native American sources. He also makes use of recent archaeological evidence suggesting that Custer's wing of the 7th Cavalry fought longer and more effectively than others have argued. Philbrick suggests that the Sioux and their allies may have been close to breaking themselves.

This is an important book for serving soldiers, both to understand that what we know about any fight, or for that matter any campaign, is extraordinarily limited. It reminds us that eyewitness accounts are as

likely to confuse as to enlighten because each perspective differs.

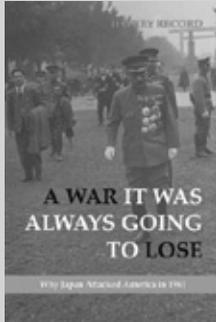
In the case of the Little Big Horn, little is known about what Custer intended to do or what he actually did that day. Benteen, Reno, and the 7th's survivors had reason to wonder just what had happened. To the extent they knew, they had reason to dissemble to protect their reputations.

The Last Stand is also useful to serving soldiers because of the implications for decentralized operations and mission command. Philbrick points out that the 7th Cavalry was part of a force of "about five thousand soldiers . . . expected to patrol a territory of a million square miles . . . and home to two hundred or three hundred thousand Indians." Obviously the Army operated in small packets of troops without rapid communications. Individual initiative was the only means to operate. That is just what Custer did in June of 1876—he acted on his initiative. He and more than 200 cavalymen died as a result.

Mission command and initiative are good things except when bad things happen. Philbrick's history of Custer and the 7th at the Little Big Horn provides food for considerable and careful thought about our current emphasis on decentralized operations. It should suggest to all soldiers who read it that they should believe nothing they hear or read without considering the source, the conditions, and what can be known about the protagonists in any action.

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

MR We Recommend

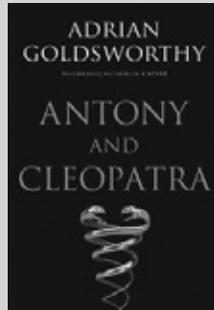


A WAR IT WAS ALWAYS GOING TO LOSE: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941, Jeffrey Record, Potomac Books, Washington, DC, 2011, 184 pages, \$24.95.

Jeffrey Record has specialized in investigating the causes of wars. He incorporates the lessons of his earlier books in his latest, *A War It Was Always Going to Lose: Why Japan Attacked America in 1941*. The attack on Pearl Harbor is one of the most perplexing cases in living memory of a weaker power seeming to believe that it could vanquish a clearly superior force. On closer inspection, however, Record finds that Japan did not believe it could win, yet the Japanese imperial command decided to attack the United States anyway.

Record argues, the Japanese were driven by an insatiable appetite for national glory and economic security via the conquest of East Asia. The scope of their ambitions and their fear of economic destruction overwhelmed their knowledge that the likelihood of winning was slim and propelled them into war with the United States.

From the Publisher.

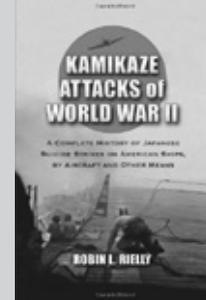


ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, Adrian Goldsworthy, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2010, 420 pages, \$35.00.

Drawing on his vast knowledge of the ancient world, distinguished historian Adrian Goldsworthy transcends myth to create a nuanced, historically acute portrayal of Antony and Cleopatra, the politically entwined lovers who remain a subject of fascination more than two thousand years after their deaths.

Neither turns out to have been quite what we expect. Cleopatra has more glamour, but in terms of sheer power was the far less important of the two. She was a Greek, not an Egyptian, her rule contingent on Roman support. It was Rome that dominated the world, and Antony was an aristocrat who implicitly believed that it was his birthright to lead the Republic. His own propaganda styled him as a great soldier, but the truth was that he spent very little time with the army and displayed modest talent. The world changed as the Roman Republic turned into an empire ruled by Caesars. Through Antony and Cleopatra's lives we see not just this story, but the transition of the Greek and Roman world into a culture that would have such a profound influence on our own.

From the Publisher.



KAMIKAZE ATTACKS OF WORLD WAR II: A Complete History of Japanese Suicide Strikes on American Ships, by Aircraft and Other Means, Robin L. Rieley, McFarland, Jefferson, NC, 2010, 384 pages, \$55.00, www.mcfarlandpub.com.

Drawing on U.S. government reports, interrogation reports of Japanese officers, ship action reports, and secondary sources, this book details more than 400 kamikaze attacks by Japanese aircraft, manned torpedoes, suicide boats, and suicide swimmers against U.S. ships during World War II. Part One focuses on the traditions, development, and history of the kamikazes, including the origins of the samurai class and its ethos, the development of kamikaze aircraft and watercraft, and the indoctrination of children in the Japanese school system. Part Two details the kamikaze attacks on ships in the waters around the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Taiwan, Okinawa, and Japan. Appendices list all of the U.S. ships suffering kamikaze attacks along with casualty figures, outlines, and silhouettes of various U.S. ships involved in kamikaze attacks, and silhouettes of Japanese kamikaze aircraft.

From the Publisher.