
This collection of essays by an impressive stable of contributors provides the reader with an objective and contextual analysis of George W. Bush’s defense program. The book analyzes military transformation, the exit strategy in Iraq, the status of civil-military relations, coalition war fighting in Afghanistan, and the status of nuclear policy. Unfortunately, the collection does not address many of the topics completely or does not address others that should have been included.

Stephen J. Cimbala and C. Dale Walton’s essays on nuclear policy are comprehensive, well-written primers for anyone concerned with the development of nuclear policy, particularly in light of the recently ratified New START treaty. Peter Kent Forster’s essay on coalition war fighting looks at the problems confronting NATO in Afghanistan and during the post-Cold War period. An entertaining read, Colin S. Gray’s opening essay is a spirited and lighthearted look at the pitfalls inherent in defense planning.

The book has a number of major shortcomings. There is no comprehensive analysis of the decision to invade Iraq and simultaneously limit the resources available for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Several essays address the planning shortfalls in the run up to the invasion of Iraq as well as some of the invasion’s unintended consequences. However, there is no stand-alone analysis of the decision. Given the decision’s tremendous impact of on defense policy, then and now, it deserves an essay all to itself.

President Bush is addressed almost nowhere in the essays, unlike Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and many of the top military officers, including Secretaries Colin Powell, Robert Gates, and Condoleezza Rice (Rumsfeld is, in fact, excoriated in several of the essays). Yet, the president, the man whose policy all of this ultimately represents, is given barely a mention. To analyze Bush’s defense program, it would seem critical that one should understand the president’s worldview, thought processes, and objectives.

In addition, so much has taken place in Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Iran, and North Korea since the essays were written that many of them border on no longer being relevant. We need more time to analyze Bush’s role in the policies ultimately executed. I look forward to the book being revised in five or ten years.

MAJ Mark Battjes, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


One key to a successful book is an interesting title. Though Kathleen Barry has succeeded with the title Unmaking War, Remaking Men, she has not managed to write a compelling book. The topics are wide-ranging: the expendability of men; how military training brainwashes soldiers; psychopathic national leaders; Israel’s illegal war on Lebanon; the unmaking of war; and the remaking of man. Barry, a sociologist, seems to live in a world where people are products of social constructs. To put it simply, men are aggressive and women are nurturing because society has conditioned them to be that way, not because they might naturally be that way. Because society determines such tendencies, they can be unmade. In the end, she wishes for a world “reshaped” by empathy.

While some of her claims would seem obvious to a person with military experience, other observations are surprising. She maintains that the military trains soldiers to kill without remorse and develops teams where great shame falls upon those who fail their fellow soldiers. Frankly, any responsible citizen who pays taxes to provide for the general defense would neither desire nor expect any other outcome. Oddly, Barry sees military brotherhood, seemingly a virtue, as dangerous and almost pernicious, for it creates an elitism where “everyone who is not one of them is their enemy.” Dehumanizing words such as raghead and haj make killing the enemy easier. Using such derogatory terms is a fairly obvious defense mechanism; consider similarly demeaning descriptions for Germans and Japanese in World War II. Barry breaks no new ground here; one need look no further than Thomas Hardy’s 1902 poem “The Man He Killed” to realize that soldiers recognize—but at times must ignore—the enemy’s humanity.

Barry seems to live in an alternate reality, where valor is a vice and cowardice a virtue. She explores a Tim O’Brien fictional story about a young man who lacks the courage to swim 20 yards from Minnesota into Canada, an act that would have allowed him to avoid the draft during the Vietnam era. Because of his cowardice, his failure to flee the country, he reports for duty. In Barry’s world, true heroes run to Canada while cowards serve in the armed forces. Perhaps her most outrageous claim is “the military functions outside the law, human ethics, and just plain decency.” If that is not outrageous enough, try this: the military sees as heroes those who “attack people who are weaker or unable to defend themselves.”
Much of this book seems to advance a political agenda. She dedicates a full chapter to “psychopathic leaders” and names Osama bin-Laden, Ariel Sharon, and George Bush as such. Her treatment of President Bush operates at the simplistic “Bush lied. Kids died” level. In a public reading of this book, Barry sealed the deal by mentioning Hitler and Bush in the same breath; when Barry makes the Hitler comparison, she can no longer be taken seriously. Consider Barry’s analysis of President Obama: “Although he does not have the characteristics of a psychopath, he adopted the behaviors of his predecessor.” One would think that acting as a psychopath might be a step toward some classifiable dysfunction, even if only a minor one.

How can the nations of the world “unmake” war? Demilitarization is the answer, Barry says; get rid of all nuclear weapons and state armies and replace the armies with a global peacemaking force manned by people dedicated to serving and protecting people. Ensure all sociopaths, racists, and misogynists do not serve. Train the “force” on developing “an understanding of human rights . . . and a reverence for human beings.”

In fairness, Barry recognizes that her dream is utopian, but this raises a question. What value is a proposal that can exist only in fantasy? Some may find inspiration in William Ward’s “If you can dream it, you can achieve it” axiom, but a realist would likely observe that many dreams go unfulfilled, particularly delusional ones.

The proposal to “remake men” also lies in a gauzy realm. Barry recommends creating a more empathetic world, again assuming that we can condition people to be what we wish them to be. America’s first step would be to “face the atrocities our country commits.” Barry claims that patriotism ruptures our humanity because it divides us and makes empathy impossible, but most will find her definition lacking. She claims the days immediately following 9/11 were days of consolation and empathy. We helped and comforted each other. Then patriotism reared its ugly head, and we went off to war when we should have “mobilized a defensive network against future attacks.”

Barry misses the point. Patriotism elicited empathy and brought Americans together, reminded us that out of many we become one, and showed the world that if you attack one of us, you attack all of us. Barry fails to understand that a purely defensive network would have us fending off endless attacks. Barry consistently demonstrates confirmation bias, the ability to look only for evidence that supports her position. Once she finds such evidence, her search ends. Moreover, she draws conclusions from insufficient data. For example, she cites Josh Stieber and Conner Curran, two ex-soldiers who display what she terms a new masculinity. They left the military and spread an anti-war message as they biked across the country on what they called the “Contagious Love Experiment.” It is good that Stieber and Curran feel better as they travel, show empathy, and commit random acts of kindness. However, a sample size of two is hardly convincing that the rest of the world is so malleable. For an empathetic person, Kathleen Barry certainly seems to hold great eminence for many Americans who enable her empathy.

**LTC James Varner, USA, Retired, Platte City, Missouri**

**VICTORIOUS INSURGENCIES:**

In *Victorious Insurgencies*, Anthony James Joes examines four conflicts in which guerrillas exploited population grievances, counterinsurgents made mistakes, and foreign actors presented opportunities to defeat counterinsurgents. The book’s primary contribution is that it provides the historical context missing in many cursory examinations. Joes provides a deeper understanding of the factors that ultimately enabled insurgent success. His exposure of common counterinsurgent errors, such as failing to commit appropriate troop levels and failing to isolate insurgents from outside support, is a secondary but important contribution.

Like many texts on insurgencies, Joes begins his book with an examination of Mao Tse-Tung’s guerrilla (and eventually conventional) campaign against the Kuomintang and Japanese. Rather than exalting the infallibility of Mao’s strategic genius, Joes points to the effects of the Japanese invasion and subsequent occupation of China as the decisive factor for Mao’s ultimate success. Although Joes mentions Chiang’s opportunities had Japan not invaded China, his discussion does not devolve into a fruitless “what if?” experiment. On the contrary, he presents evidence to debunk the invincibility of the Maoist approach.

In the second case study, Joes provides well supported facts for France’s ultimate withdrawal from Vietnam. He explores the personalities and decisions of the Vietminh and French leaders, reviews the manpower required for the counterinsurgent task at hand, and finds the French commitment sorely lacking.

When Joes turns his attention to Castro in Cuba, he finds similar counterinsurgent errors and concludes that foreign actions, Cuban military incompetence, and the seeming indifference of Batista were the primary factors for Castro’s success. Finally, Joes takes the reader to Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, which is of obvious contemporary interest. Much like the Japanese occupation of China, the Soviet tactics of economic deprivation created a net gain of support for the insurgencies. Again, individual counterinsurgent conduct was abhorrent.

Although each case study provides a deeper contextual understanding of the conflict, Joes is forced to use sweeping generalizations to explain complex subject matter due to text constraints. For example, the historian will revolt
He argues that the absence of a clear State and Department of Defense and indecision at the Department of Defense have created gaps that have caused consternation and inability to make the transformational changes to fully exploit this new way of fighting and thinking. Joes’ book is a must read for counterinsurgency practitioners if they wish to arm themselves with more than a checklist of principles in their efforts to outthink their insurgent adversaries.

MAJ Dustin R. Mitchell, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


Since the introduction of information operations (IO) into the Department of Defense lexicon in 1998, the Joint community has had an ongoing debate about how best to use this combat multiplier and establish U.S. dominance in it. In Information Operations Matters: Best Practices, Leigh Armistead enters the fray with an astute study of IO policy and theory and the federal bureaucracy’s unwillingness and inability to make the transformational changes to fully exploit this new way of fighting and thinking.

Looking back over two decades, Armistead conducted over 100 background interviews and interpreted the results from two prominent research projects completed by the RAND Corporation, the Defense Science Board, and the Quadrennial Defense Review Board. The author’s research provides an overview of IO’s many facets, including paradigm-changing technological advances in computer technology—computer network attack, computer network defense—and critical infrastructure protection.

The author outlines shortfalls and gaps that have caused consternation and indecision at the Department of State and Department of Defense. He argues that the absence of a clear IO definition has created a large gap in IO theory and concept and that a lack of integration among the services has led to a lack of unity in the IO community. He uses a pointed example to best illustrate this dilemma:

Currently, a variety of U.S. government organizations and commands teach over 70 IO courses. These courses have little or no interaction or integration with one another, and if a service member or Department of State or Defense employee completes IO training in one service, he or she cannot serve in a Joint organization without receiving additional specialized training. This example identifies a lack of cohesion that resonates across the IO community.

What emerges from Information Operations Matters is a better understanding of the power of IO and the nuances associated with the policy decisions. Although skeptical about the government’s ability to close the gaps, Armistead provides innovative recommendations that address the need for development of a set of IO standards and a push to upgrade IO training and education curricula. Armistead believes these initiatives will ultimately lead to a long-term solution. Contemplating his recommendations, I wonder whether the author is too optimistic. Time will tell whether his recommendations will come to fruition, but in my opinion there must be more emphasis on integration and coordination within the IO community before any real change can occur.

Senior leaders across the Departments of State and Defense and students attending the various service-related IO courses should read Information Operations Matters. The book will provide decision makers at all levels the ability to articulate their services’ needs, goals, and objectives. In the end, the book will be an invaluable foundational tool to allow the development of an integrated and comprehensive IO campaign strategy for the counterinsurgency fight.

COL James L. Davis, USA, Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


Inscrutable.

Rightly or wrongly, Westerners have long used the cliché-charged word stereotypically to describe the tantalizing, seemingly unknowable mysteries of Far Eastern cultures—and the dizzying array of labyrinthine philosophies, thought processes, and diplomatic dynamics that comprise them.

Arguably, no culture—East, West, North, or South—is more inscrutable, more impenetrable to the world’s probing eyes and inquiring minds, than North Korea’s. The tiny, impoverished Communist country seems itself still technically at war with both South Korea and the United States nearly 60 years after the unfinished fight for dominance over the Korean peninsula began.

In the fevered hearts and minds of the regimented millions who look to Dear Leader Kim Jong Il for inspiration, Kim’s curtained country and its renegade, irrational regime afforded the Korean conflict still rages.

It’s a given that North Korea doesn’t play by the world’s rules—or laws of the universe, for that matter—vacillating wildly between war-mongering rhetoric, conciliatory gestures, missile launches, nuclear threats, and general cage rattling, sometimes all in the course of a single week.

That’s why readers may welcome the rare ability to catch a glimpse through an unguarded window into Kim’s curtained country and its unscrupulous, irrational regime afforded by Somewhere Inside: One Sister’s Captivity in North Korea and the Other’s Fight to Bring Her Home, co-authored by Laura Ling and Lisa Ling.

Written in alternating captioned first-person accounts, the journalist sisters provide versions of a story that are like two sides of a coin: Laura held captive in Pyongyang and The View and National Geographic Explorer veteran Lisa chronicling
Laura Ling recounts.

To let me know he was serious, he
kicked my jaw and shoulder with his
heavy black boot and then delivered
another crushing blow to my shoul-
der. I felt my neck snap from the first
crush, and my whole body went numb
from the second one.”

The violence of the capture—it
also eventually included a soldier
striking Ling’s forehead with a rifle
butt—was not publicly revealed
until after Ling and Lee returned to
the West; nor were the Draconian
conditions of her captivity: incessant
interrogations in dark rooms; no hot
water, little electricity, and at first, no
reading materials or other creature
comforts.

Perhaps through some form of
Stockholm syndrome, Laura Ling
eventually forged uneasy bonds with
her captors and two young female
guards assigned to watch her day
and night. Because of the relentless
interrogation, she and Lee ultimately
congraded to charges of attempting
to “bring down” the North Korean
government. However, her journal-
istic powers of observation seem
undiminished during her ordeal,
giving her recollections the sharp
string of reality.

Lisa’s turns at chronicling the dip-
loymatic efforts are detailed and com-
pelling in their own way. It helped
that Laura’s Current TV employer
was former Vice President and
Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore.
Nevertheless, readers may find
themselves perplexed, and maybe
even a little angry, that Laura Ling
and her crew blindly blundered into
a situation spurred by questionable
journalistic values that ultimately
forced her country to kowtow to
Dear Leader’s desire to make the
U.S. come calling, hat in hand. Kim
managed to reel-in former President
Bill Clinton in the quid pro quo deal
to save Ling and Lee from years of
hard labor in a North Korean prison
camp, allowing Dear Leader to bask
in the kind of prestige he has so long
craved.

In the end, many aspects of
Somewhere Inside are likewise
inscrutable—but fascinating, none-
theless.

Carol A. Saynisch,
Steilacoom, Washington

A TRANSFORMATION GAP: American Innovations and European Military Change, edited by Terry Terriff, Frans Osinga, and

In A Transformation Gap: American Innovations and European Military Change, the authors, a
group of European political and
military scholars, set out to deter-
mine the extent of the techno-
logical and conceptual gap between
European NATO members and the
United States. The book’s operating
premise is that European NATO
member states are increasingly
lagging behind the United States in
transforming their respective mili-
taries, creating a capabilities gap that
undermines the inherent ability of
NATO to operate as an effective and
cohesive force—a force equipped to
undertake the full spectrum of opera-
tions in line with the alliance’s level
of ambition.

Utilizing a structured case-study
approach in probing for military
transformation, a representative
cross section of European NATO
members (Britain, France, Germany,
The Netherlands, Spain, and Poland)
are analyzed to determine the degree
and pace of military transforma-
tion. Each country’s assessment
is conducted using an analytical
framework consisting of three
distinct elements: network enable-
ment, effects-based operations, and
expeditionary warfare. The elements
are further analyzed in terms of
their technological, doctrinal, and
organizational innovations. The ele-
ments and factors selected proved
well-suited to substantively measure
transformation.

A full chapter is devoted to
each of the six assessed coun-
tries. Appropriate subject-matter
experts accomplish each assessment.
Individual chapters are laid out
similarly, making for easy country
comparisons, yet each chapter can be
understood independently. The book
concludes with detailed synthesis of
country outcomes.

Challenged by myriad weighted
factors (e.g., economic recession,
growing national debt, shrinking
defense budgets, inconsistent
political will, and diverging defense
priorities), the authors reveal an alli-
ance that is not only struggling to
transform state militaries in line with
the United States, but also trans-
forming at significantly different
rates. Exacerbating matters further
are the differing interpretations of
what exactly transformation really
means, the dichotomy in transformational purpose among nations (e.g., tailoring force capabilities for peace operations over combat operations), and that national defense priorities are consistently taking precedence over NATO-driven priorities. The result is an alliance with ever-fragmented capabilities/capability development that is less relevant and increasingly dependent on the United States to meet its prescribed level of ambition.

The scholarly research and descriptive analysis in this book are beyond reproach. The authors utilize important NATO and government source documents and top-tier scholarly journal articles and make effective use of interviews with top-level country officials in conducting their assessments. This insightful book is best read by senior European or U.S. military leaders and government officials, international relations or political science scholars, and anyone else interested in a detailed understanding of the dynamics shaping the military capabilities gap between the United States and its European NATO counterparts.

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


U.S. foreign policy failures, particularly in terms of Iraq and the 10-year UN Security Council regime, have been widely debated over recent years, but not as comprehensively and shockingly depicted as in Joy Gordon’s Invisble War. She describes in detail the moral and ethical dilemmas associated with U.S. foreign policy, international law, and governance. The author has no misgivings on attributing the high mortality rate in Iraq before the second Gulf War in 2003 to the U.S. bombing of critical infrastructure in 1991 and subsequent U.S. policy decisions throughout the 10-year period of the UN economic sanctions. Gordon’s study also reveals that the origin of the ongoing insurgency in Iraq was a result of the 10 years of economic sanctions. Her book is a compendium of knowledge on U.S. strategy, foreign policy, UN resolutions, and the shift of international influence associated with globalization.

A must read for all military and State Department professionals, Gordon’s 10-year study exposes a lack of transparency, bureaucracy, and fissures in U.S. policy and incompetence within the UN Security Council committee. She documents how U.S. policymakers continually exploited dual-use prohibitions on humanitarian supplies and equipment to inhibit rehabilitation of critical infrastructure and thus contribute to the large-scale human catastrophe in Iraq: “Despite the frequent protests of the other committee members, the United States blocked salt, water pipes, children’s bikes, materials for the production of diapers, equipment to process powdered milk, and fabric for children’s clothing.”

She also provides evidence associating the economic collapse with the lack of basic Iraqi government structure, policies, and corruption. In later chapters, Joy thoroughly details the Oil-for-Food Program scandal and asserts that the actions of the Security Council “constituted war crimes in violation of the Geneva Convention.” Gordon provides sufficient evidence to support her primary supposition that the United States and UN are to blame for the human suffering experienced in Iraq from 1991 to 2003.

Gordon’s research methodology is virtually flawless. Over several years, she compiled and analyzed significant amounts of sanction committee meeting notes, UN and Congressional documents, and interviewed numerous civilian officials directly connected with the economic sanctions. However, what the reader may find disconcerting is the author’s disclosure that she had never traveled to Iraq. She relied on second- and sometimes third-hand written and verbal accounts of the evolving environmental conditions in Iraq. Also not surprisingly, the author had no access to classified information. Outside of classified channels, we cannot be entirely sure of the extent of the Iraqi government’s involvement in UN sanction violations or what Saddam’s foreign policy or civil priorities were over the 10-year period between 1991 and 2001.

The United States and the Iraq Sanctions is important because it highlights important lessons learned. UN economic sanctions “were in gross violation of the principle of proportionality” as a result of flawed policy. The author also notes that globalization created a “risk posed to humanity by international governance.” An equally critical lesson for professional strategists is that the prolonged economic sanctions were a means to insurgency. Gordon’s findings warrant further study and possible citation in contemporary counterinsurgency manuals.

MAJ Richard H. Hetherington,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


Bing West’s The Wrong War is a compelling study of close combat, a thoughtful examination of the application of counterinsurgency theory, and a recommended exit strategy from the longest conflict in American history. As with much of his writing, West brings events to life by stepping outside the safe confines of his study to document history as it unfolds. The result is a book that spans the levels of war and guides the reader on a thought-provoking journey through the war in Afghanistan.

More than half of The Wrong War takes place on the ground with soldiers, marines, and special operations forces engaged in direct combat with the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. This is West’s forte, bringing the grit of the fight to the
Wrong War

sible for the war in the Middle East.

The wrong strategy.

ended; this was the wrong war with

Our strategy was flawed and open-

ting the work of others for ten years.”

our greatest mistake was to “do

and treasure, he says, adding that

justify further investment of blood

Afghanistan is helpful, although

ter (an anti-climactic seven pages

exit strategy, the book’s final chap-

forces.

months, as the insurgency suffered

insurgents seems to run counter

pursuing operations against the

analysis and conclusions. West’s

war will find flaw with the author’s

his critique of what he perceives to

with the conduct of the war through

reason alone,

story home remarkable. For that

As a tactical narrative, The

Wrong War ranks among the finest

literary accounts of contemporary

conflict. West’s writing is superb,

his credibility unmatched, and

his determination to bring the

story home remarkable. For that

reason alone, The Wrong War is

reminiscent of the writing of C.J.

Chivers, Craig Mullaney, and

Nate Fick. West is at his very best

when sidled up to the warfighter,

and few other writers have the

fortitude at any age to do what he

does at 70.

LTC Steve Leonard, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

UNEMBEDDED: Two Decades of Maverick War Reporting.
Scott Taylor, D&M Publishers Inc.,
Vancouver, BC, 374 pages, $34.95.

After finishing Scott Taylor’s

introductory description of his ter-

rifying captivity and inquisition by

Turkomen insurgents in Iraq, the

reader is likely to think the book

might be an exciting read. Well, it

slows down markedly through the

next 50 pages in this, the author’s

seventh book, written along the

lines of a memoir. Taylor’s youth

and upbringing and his early ven-
tures into publication subsidized by

the Canadian military are mildly

interesting, but the truly newswor-
thy periods of his reporting life

were centered around his dogged

investigations into corruption,

incompetence, and betrayal of the

common soldier by the senior ranks

of the Canadian officer corps, par-

ticularly in Somalia. When he really

started digging, Taylor found the

Canadian military establishment to

be a “resourceful, recallitant, and

vengeful foe.”

Taylor’s articles resulted in

military investigations, which were

more like whitewashes that pointed

a finger of guilt at a “few bad

apples” within the enlisted ranks.

(The author set out to argue and

then explain how news initiative is

stifled by the protection and logis-
tical support of reporters housed

in military units (called “embedding”).

When Taylor transformed Espirit de Corps magazine, essen-
tially a Canadian military house

organ, into a hotbed of investigative
digging, he even accomplished

some of the early revelations on the

army’s own nickel.

Taylor reaches his narrative

zenith in this book when he tra-
verses dangerous back alleys and

trails to report on the warring fac-
tions in the Balkans. His ability to

infiltrate areas with hazy borders—
such as the Western Sahara—places

him in a small circle of reporters

including those who set up shop in

prewar Baghdad.

The unembedded paths he cov-
ered included the Balkans and later

Iraq. His excursion into Afghanistan

lacks the reporting depth of the

others, but it is nonetheless an inde-
pendent view gathered during an

outside-the-wire, unsanctioned trip

in 2006 into the volatile Kandahar

region. His reporting at that time did

not parrot the pie-in-the-sky press

releases accepted then (and now) by

the Western press. (Here we are five

years later, and Kandahar remains

volatile.)

Along the way we—

● Learn how Turkomen insur-
gents concluded—erroneously—

that his regimental coin from ser-

vice in Princess Patricia’s Canadian

Light Infantry was an electronic

device designed to guide Hellfire

missiles up the tailpipe of an emir’s

Land Rover.

● Experience a stop at

Casablanca’s Holiday Inn (en route

to the Western Sahara) where As

Time Goes By was rendered not by

Sam, but by a player piano.

● Hear the words of a UN police

officer in Kosovo, who says: “The

only locals who were organized

and funded to run a campaign in

postwar Kosovo were the warlords,
thugs, and drug dealers. As a result,

Kosovo went from a state full of

thugs, and funded to run a campaign in

prewar Baghdad.

In the final analysis, Taylor

neither proves nor disproves

whether a straighter line to the

truth emerges from reporters

under military care and feeding.

However, we should well remem-

ber the words of a war correspon-
dent covering the Bulgarian insur-

rection in 1902. He telegraphed

his employer:

“Arriving in Sorrowitz, I was

delayed by a dinner with the

Turkish general, which it would

have been a great impoliteness to
delay. Later, visiting a nearby

hamlet with my escort of 25

Turkish cavalry, the only native

I could find to talk with about

Turkish atrocities was a some-

what incoherent 80-year-old

Greek. What chance did I, a lone

American with a frightened trans-

lator, have to find out the truth?”

George Ridge, J.D.,
Tucson, Arizona

The author views World War II as a period when young men journeyed to distant, global battlefields to fight an evil force bent on world domination. Through his interest of World War II and the release of the mini-series, “Band of Brothers,” Larry Alexander developed a friendship with Dick Winters and other members of Easy Company. Their story eventually became so iconic that the author felt compelled to walk in their footsteps.

As a result, the book’s organization allows the reader to travel a path known only to a few during a dark period of history. It begins with the perils of training to become a World War II paratrooper at Toccoa, Georgia, where the battle cry “Currahee” developed. Arriving in England, the author tours the town and accommodations of the Easy Company soldiers. Then an aging soldier remembers his preparation for the D-Day invasion, and the action he saw during battles at Market Garden and Bastogne. The stories come to life through the memory of historical events that made a lasting impression on a country, a unit, and a soldier.

In the Footsteps of the Band of Brothers is highly recommended to those interested in World War II history as it relates to the airborne soldier. The book’s chronological organization makes for a captivating trip back in time as the author and a former soldier travel from Aldbourne, England, to Normandy, Belgium, and finally Holland. As the author states, “As you visit the now silent battlefields and stop and listen real hard, you will find that an echo remains in the footsteps of those you follow.”

Allen D. Reece, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


Keith W. Nolan wrote his first book on Vietnam battles when he was still a high school student in suburban St. Louis, Missouri. Search and Destroy is his 12th book but, sadly, the last. Nolan passed away in 2009 from cancer at the young age of 44. In describing Nolan’s key role in writing the history of the Vietnam War, perhaps St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Bill McClellan said it best in the 101st Airborne Division’s Ripcord Association webpage:

“He developed a following among Vietnam veterans. There is nobody else in the country who has done what he has done. He has written gripping and honest historical accounts of battles and operations that would otherwise have been overlooked by everybody except the people who participated in them.”

Search and Destroy is no exception to that pattern. It is a terrific book that tells the story of the 1-1st Cavalry Squadron, from deployment preparations in the United States to a year of combat with the Americal Division in the northern part of I Corps’ area of operation. Like all of Nolan’s books, this one tells its story from the first-hand accounts of the soldiers and junior officers who fought the war on the ground and from extensive research of official Army records.

Through interviews with dozens of 1-1st Cav veterans, Nolan tells it like it is, warts and all. There are accounts of breathtaking heroism, of leadership that ranges from superb and courageous to badly flawed, and disturbing accounts of atrocities and mindless violence against Vietnamese civilians. We follow combat at the platoon and company level and meet a wide cast of participants. There are the tough NCOs who led green troops, many of whom won well-deserved medals for courage and heroism. But we also meet a rear area executive officer who manipulated the awards system to his undeserved benefit. There is a squadron commander who repeatedly flew into combat to support his troops, and a platoon leader whose inability to read a map and use a compass brought casualties to his soldiers. We meet a courageous sergeant whose record of atrocities against civilians was ignored, and we meet the young soldier described by another as “the conscience of the squadron.” Nolan draws the reader into the squadron, shows the best and perhaps the worst, but concentrates on the struggle to survive in a hostile environment.

As with his other books, Nolan leaves us with an epilogue that tells what happened to those he interviewed “after the war.” Some were career soldiers, reaching general’s stars and the top stripes of an NCO. Others left the army after their obligated service and took regular jobs, got married, found a career—in other words, found a life after the terror and hardships of a year in Vietnam. Vietnam veterans will enjoy this honest account of a cavalry squadron’s experience during a difficult and challenging year of unrelenting combat.

COL John B. Haseman, USA, Retired, Grand Junction, CO


Bernd Greiner’s position in War Without Fronts: The USA in Vietnam is that the My Lai massacre was not an aberration but merely an extreme example of the targeting of civilians. Given the ambiguities of a war with unclear objectives at all levels, frustration was inevitable, and conditions were ripe for frustration to break loose in atrocities such as My Lai and comparable episodes. Because the crimes were systemic rather than individual, the blame for My Lai lay not solely with Lieutenant William Calley but also with those who created the necessary preconditions for war crimes. Indicted as part of a broken system are the military chain
of command, the civilians overseeing the war, and the American people. A cultural milieu made American involvement in Vietnam highly likely if not inevitable and success in that involvement highly unlikely.

My Lai is not central to the argument although it receives a detailed examination. Because he believes the killings were representative rather than aberrational, Greiner emphasizes their context: the Cold War, politicians afraid of failure, careerist officers and NCOs, and an overextended military scraping for officers and GIs. All this made Vietnam an aimless war fought by drugged or terrified GIs on search-and-destroy missions that took no territory but added to the body count sought by careerist officers on six-month tours and generals and politicians who used body counts to measure success.

What sets this work apart is the depth of the research. Greiner examined hundreds of boxes of primary documents. Unfortunately replication of the research is now impossible because many records of the Vietnam War Crimes Working Group that became available in 1994 and that Greiner explored have been closed once more. Greiner makes extensive use of the multi-volume Peers Commission report as well as Vietnamese sources and eyewitness accounts. Even so, he continually acknowledges that casual to non-existent record-keeping at all levels made his recapture of the various massacres more difficult than expected.

The decay of the army in Vietnam is well established. The commonness of brutality toward enemies and civilians alike is established by the Winter Soldier testimony of the 1970s. Still, many Americans refuse to acknowledge American forces engaged in atrocities and that superior officers either ignored or covered up those atrocities.

John H. Barnhill, Ph.D.,
Houston, Texas

Edward H. Barnhill, Ph.D.,


Isaac “Ike” Shapiro has written a charming memoir of growing up in wartime Japan. The fourth son of Russian-born, stateless Jewish musicians, Shapiro was born in Tokyo in 1931, though he spent most of his young life in Yokohama. His grandparents lived for a time in Tokyo, and so the young Shapiro early took to calling himself an Edokko, literally, an Edo child, Edo being the pre-Meiji-era name for Tokyo. Technically speaking he was not; an Edokko is someone who is of the third generation to be born in Tokyo, but Shapiro found the Japanese were willing to tolerate the fancies of a young, blonde gaijin (foreigner). The author spends a short chapter on life in Harbin, Manchuria, where his mother, his three brothers, and he moved when he was only a few months old. The family moved back to Yokohama in 1936, and the bulk of the memoir focuses on Shapiro’s school years at three English-language schools in Yokohama and Tokyo (all of which still operate). Along the way, in addition to the Russian spoken in his home, Shapiro picked up Japanese, English, French, some German, and a life-long love of learning and appreciation for other cultures.

During the war years, Shapiro and his family evacuated to Tokyo and then farther inland. After the war, Shapiro returned to Yokohama in order to see the Americans landing, and the Americans immediately hired him as an interpreter. From there his life took another fateful turn. Taken under the wing of then-colonel, later lieutenant general, Toby Munn, U.S. Marine Corps, Shapiro finished high school in Hawaii, attended Columbia, naturalized as an American citizen, and embarked on a 50-year career as an international lawyer.

I have two small quibbles. I disagree, when the author declares, “The Japanese especially valued a foreigner’s ability to speak their language.” While the Japanese tend to be unfailingly polite when a foreigner makes an even minimal attempt to speak Japanese, I heard, more than once while I was there, that many Japanese do not feel comfortable when a foreigner is “too fluent” in their language. I also think the author missed an opportunity when he discussed living across from the Sirota family, when the Shapiro family evacuated to Tokyo, by not mentioning that Beate Sirota, the daughter, played a key role in writing Japan’s postwar constitution, introducing the equivalent of the Women’s Equal Rights Amendment.

The book will probably appeal most to readers like me who have spent a great deal of time in Japan, but this is unfortunate. Shapiro’s story, and that of his family, encapsulates our troubled previous century. His grandparents left Russia during the 1917 revolution, his parents spent time in the British mandate of Palestine. He, his brothers, and his mother arrived in Manchuria spare months before the Manchurian Incident, the start of Japan’s 15-Year War, and they left one month before the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which widened Japan’s war into mainland China. His account of the (less nationalistic and more muted than one would expect) reactions of the Japanese people during World War II, of the rationing and hunger, and of the incendiary bombing of Tokyo, has a common-man perspective other historical accounts often lack. This is a well-written account of an interesting life.

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


In an extensively well-researched and written study, historian Thomas Bruscino shows conclusively that World War II was a defining moment in American history. In A Nation Forged in War: How World War II Taught Americans to Get Along, Americans, many for the first time, showed new appreciation for each other. With the large-scale mobi-
lization needed to fight the war. Americans from all over the United States gathered to train and live together in a new and tough environment. This newly found close-ness put Americans of different religions, ethnicities, and regions together for the first time. The tough training, poor living conditions, and general discomfort of the newly enlisted soldiers bonded them together and dissolved many long-standing differences.

The author starts and ends the book with the 1928 and 1960 presidential elections. To some readers, it may seem odd, but it works brilliantly. Starting with the 1928 defeat of Democratic candidate and Catholic, Al Smith, Bruscino puts the election in context and writes convincingly that Americans were not ready for a Catholic president, and were not tolerant of Catholicism, Judaism, and people of other ethnic backgrounds. Ending in 1960, the author shows how far American tolerance had grown with John F. Kennedy’s election. However, the transformation did not happen overnight, and even during and after the war intolerance lurked under the surface. Instead, it happened over time through military indoctrination and training, hours of boredom at camp and overseas, and ultimately fighting in the war itself. While World War II did teach Americans to get along, the author also states that it still did not teach them to get along with everyone.

While religious and regional tolerance grew out of the war effort, equality for African-Americans remained elusive. However, African-Americans did make gains. The war was, as Bruscino argues, the “jumping off point in the civil rights movement.”

_A Nation Forged in War_ is an exemplary study on World War II that will instantly appeal, not only to military history enthusiasts, but also to readers of religious, cultural, and ethnic history. Bruscino makes a convincing case that the change in ethnic and religious relations in the United States came from the military experience in World War II.

**Jon Mikolashek, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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_Guns Against the Reich_ is a fascinating, personal account of life on the German-Russian front during World War II. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, Petr Mikhin was a 20-year-old college student, but by the war’s end in 1945, he would be a seasoned field artillery battalion commander preparing for operations against Japan. The events in between are an intense and often graphic account of war along the front lines.

The story begins with Mikhin and his college classmates eagerly anticipating the romanticism and glory of a quick and decisive victory against Germany. Mikhin and his friends quickly enlist in the military where the author’s “political reliability” earns him a commission as an artillery officer. However, after three months of training, he leaves behind the warmth and comfort of school and begins to experience the brutal cold and hunger that came to characterize the German-Russian front. Mikhin vividly captures these images for the reader through such stories as the need to sleep five-to-a-bunk just to keep warm, or his soldiers breaking ranks to ravenously graze on the first shoots of spring grass.

As a young artillery officer, Mikhin began his service as a forward observer supporting the Soviet defense of Moscow. His initial experience with that campaign was the anxiety of having his first live fire exercise also being his first combat mission. However, his account of that event soon pales in comparison to his vivid and horrific descriptions of traversing back and forth across “no man’s land” from his battery to his observation post. Undoubtedly the strength of this book is the recounting of these and similar wartime experiences where through a combination of great skill and luck, Mikhin survives and continues progressing through the officer ranks.

If the memoir has a drawback, it is that Mikhin does not place his extraordinary personnel experiences within their overall historical context. For example, in the chapter titled “Kursk,” there is no discussion of the great tank battle, only a thrilling account of when Mikhin, now a battery commander, leads a raid to capture a German soldier. Nevertheless, an understanding of the historical framework that surrounded Mikhin’s actions would enhance the reader’s appreciation of his exploits. The occasional map would also be useful in tracking Mikhin as he moves from Moscow, Stalingrad, Kursk, Ukraine, and into Czechoslovakia.

One of the book’s surprises is Mikhin’s treatment of the Communist Party. The book was originally written in 1984—several years before the fall of the Soviet Union. And while the author portrays himself as a loyal, brave, and patriotic Communist Party member, he is less generous toward the political officers assigned to his units. Several times, he relates how his career and even his life were subject to the “cowardly” and absurd behavior of Communist Party officials.

The book is a fast-paced, interesting read that recounts stories of courage under fire and dedication to duty. In addition, Mikhin reinforces many concepts crucial to all levels of warfare such as initiative, technical, and tactical competence and shows the importance of understanding and respecting your “evil, cunning, agile, technically educated, tough, and arrogant” enemy. I highly recommended this book.

**W. Kenna McCurry, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**
military historians to gain an insight into understanding Patton’s decision making process.

MAJ Steven J. Swingle, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas


The massive base at Rabaul formed the lynchpin in Japanese operations in the southern Pacific, playing a key role in the famous battles of Guadalcanal, New Guinea, and the Philippines. For months, it was a staging point for Japanese expansion, threatening Australia and the fragile American presence in the southwest Pacific. Later, it would become a critical target in the Allies’ effort to defeat the Japanese Empire.

Despite its title, Bruce Gamble’s book focuses more on stories of individuals and small units involved in the air campaign against Rabaul than the operational significance of the base. Those interested in the tactical challenges of mounting an air campaign over a vast expanse such as the southwest Pacific will find the study interesting.

Well-versed in the nuts-and-bolts of air operations, Gamble illuminates the difference between the realities of the air campaign and what it looked like on a planner’s map. Reading Gamble’s recaps of air missions, one can understand why massive raids of heavy bombers often produced skimpy results. Particularly intriguing is the tendency of both sides to vastly exaggerate kill reports, shedding light on why supposedly “successful” air missions rarely produced decisive results. By extension, Gamble’s observations can help explain why ground assaults were usually necessary to defeat Japanese island garrisons.

COL David D. DiMeo, USA, West Point, New York


He studies twisted props of disbelief
Wondering what ruin to touch . . . —John Ciardi, “The Pilot in the Jungle”

Daniel Swift teaches literature, drama, and history at Skidmore College, in New York. During the Second World War, his grandfather, Royal Air Force (RAF) squadron leader Eric J. Swift, served as a pilot in a Lancaster bomber squadron. With the opening line of BOMBER COUNTY, “The beach where the body washed up,” the reader is confronted with the heavy toll of war as the author reveals with haunting intimacy that his grandfather vanished off the coast of Holland after a night raid on Muenster on 11 June 1943.

In his research, Swift, along with his father, accessed his grandfather’s logbooks, attended his old squadron’s reunions, examined RAF and British government documents, and German wartime records kept by the cities his father had participated in bombing. Yet Swift’s story is more comprehensive than indicated by the title and encompasses a wider field than the sole history of one man. Framed against this background, the author has woven a narrative from poetry, memoir, and biography, as well as literary, cinematic, classical, and military history sources. He sees bomber and bombing poetry as “always of the near distance, its suffering always at a remove . . . The bombed city was quick with literary imagining, and most of all with poetry.” As such, Swift includes many excerpts of the finest poems of aerial bombardment that emerged from the war.

Much of Swift’s research took place at the Imperial War Museum in London. Here, he uncovered a wealth of poems, unpublished prior to their appearance in BOMBER COUNTY. They are valuable not for being great verse, but for their creative response to the deaths of
RAF bomber poets. Particularly poignant are many poems and letters of airmen who didn’t survive the war, and letters addressed to a chaplain from family members of the missing or killed.

Poets took aesthetic regard of the rubble and ruins in the streets of London. In this regard, the first poetry he discusses at length is the haunting, liturgical-like quality of Dylan Thomas’s verse, and the emergence of the wartime poems of T.S. Eliot. Virginia Woolf found the terror of it all mesmerizing, as it incited her literary imagination in the days before her suicide.

Swift engages not only British, but American poets as well, especially Army Air Corps poets Randall Jarrell, John Ciardi, and James Dickey. Human frailty and isolation amid war’s machinery were these poets’ dominant themes.

Throughout, Swift details not only the operational flying experiences of his grandfather, but also his brief excursions home, his letters to his wife, his airplane drawings for his son (Swift’s father), all of which heighten the reader’s sense of loss as the story proceeds.

The close of Swift’s journey is a painstaking reconstruction of his grandfather’s last mission, derived from facts and well-reasoned deductions. Swift made some amazing discoveries. His sources include intercepted German radio traffic transcripts, the diary of a Muenster doctor present during the city’s bombing, the Royal Netherlands Air Force Salvage and Recovery Unit, a summer day’s last annotation in an RAF squadron operations log: “S/Ldr Swift failed to return.” On 17 June 1943, having drifted 20 miles in a northbound tide for six days, he came ashore in the middle of a Dutch holiday.

*Bomber County* comes with my highest recommendation for those interested not solely in aerial bombardment refracted through poetry, but for anyone truly interested in the wartime lives of participants and victims, especially lives affected forever by the European Allied bomber offensive. Swift’s research is refined and exhaustive. He tells a deeply human and heart-rending story, eloquently wrought.

**Jeffrey C. Allier,**
*Torrance, California*


We tend to think of global jihad as a modern phenomenon, something that dates back to events as recent as the Iranian Revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and 9/11. However, in his new book, *The Berlin-Baghdad Express,* historian Sean McMeekin argues the first attempt to spread Islamic jihad around the globe dates back to World War I. The Allies and Central Powers wanted to bring the Ottoman Empire into the war on their side, Germany had a special interest in bringing the “Sublime Porte” into the conflict. German interest was based on a geo-strategic analysis conducted well before the war began.

It went like this. Whatever the weakness of the Ottoman regime, it was still the seat of the Islamic Caliphate with some degree of spiritual authority over all the world’s Muslims. With the right incentives, this authority might serve as a powerful tool in war against the Kaiser’s three imperial enemies, France, Russia, and Great Britain. The French ruled millions of Muslims in North Africa, the Russians ruled millions of Muslims in Central Asia, and the British had a hundred million Muslims within their Indian empire. If these Muslims could be inspired to rise up in holy war against their imperial masters, the effect might be decisive.

Thus, the chief title of the book is deceptive. The real topic of the book is not the railway that symbolized the German-Ottoman connection, but rather the Germans’ attempt to use that connection to strike at the Kaiser’s enemies around the world. However, as with so many ambitious schemes that cross disparate cultures, the plan briefed better than it executed. Its chief author, a strange character named Baron von Oppenheim, failed to allow for the divisions within the Islamic world (particularly between the Turks and Arabs) as well as the long reach of British naval power and British gold. So, for example, when the Germans sought to recruit Ibn Saud into a war against the Allies, they found that the Arab leader was already on the British payroll. After courting the Sherif of Mecca, the Germans were thwarted by Lawrence and the Royal Navy’s control of the sea routes to the holy city. When a German mission attempted to entice the Emir of Afghanistan into attacking India, they found they could not match British bribes.

McMeekin, who teaches at Bilkent University in Turkey, has used Ottoman, German, Russian, and British sources to create a fascinating account of a little known aspect of the “Great War.” The book is full of colorful characters, daring exploits, and secret diplomacy. It reads well and provides invaluable perspective to today’s headlines from the Middle East.

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


Few topics in historical debate are as contested as the causes of the First World War. William Mulligan, writing for Cambridge’s New Approaches to European History series, admirably summarizes current scholarship on the topic. Mulligan refutes traditional explanations for the war. He argues that the war was not inevitable, but instead a unique breakdown of the usual restraints against war. Mulligan notes the incentives that European powers had against war. His approach is refreshing and enlightening, given the decades-long lull in fighting in Europe after the Franco-Prussian war.
Before 1914, there had been several wars between Serbia and its neighbors. Mulligan argues that concerted action by the Great Powers halted wars in the Balkans in 1912 and 1913, but that “self discipline in Vienna and St. Petersburg was [a] vital element in successful crisis management.” Similar discipline is visible in many of the colonial conflicts, such as the Moroccan Crisis. Mulligan correctly points out that self discipline likely happens only when the vital interests of the state are not at risk. Conflicting claims on tracts of Africa may lead to diplomatic crisis, but no European nation was willing to risk a general war for the Congo.

According to Mulligan, the July Crisis was a complete breakdown of early diplomatic and political norms. He places much of the blame on Austria-Hungary. In 1914, Vienna placed Austria’s position in the Balkans above the general opinion of Europe and the general balance of power. Mulligan does not point out, as John Keegan does, that if Austria had acted unilaterally and quickly against Serbia after Franz-Ferdinand’s assassination rather than waiting for Germany’s “blank check,” Austria might have crushed Serbian independence without a European-wide escalation. The key flaw in 1914, Mulligan argues, was that the preservation of a military alliance had become an end in itself. Germany did not go to war to assist Austria-Hungary. Germany went to war simply to preserve its alliance. The same could be said of France. Mulligan rightly points out that much of the history of the prewar period is a teleological search for causes for the First World War. This makes the turn of the century appear much more unstable than it probably was. Emphasizing peace and stability is somewhat counter-intuitive, considering the brutality and cost of the First World War. Mulligan’s suggested perspective on the 44-year peace between the Franco-Prussian war and the First World War, emphasizes that restraints to the use of power, great power diplomacy, and a period of increasing globalization. This helps put the period into its proper place and is consistent with the nostalgia for the stability of the prewar era common among post-war intellectuals.

John E. Fahey, Lafayette, Indiana

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William Thayer, San Diego, CA—I totally disagree with Jeffrey Sluka’s argument in “Death from Above: UAVs and Losing Hearts and Minds” (Military Review, May-June 2011) that UAVs targeting terrorists are a net loss in the War on Terror. Either we can let the terrorists sit with impunity in a sanctuary such as Waziristan or we can attack them. We could attack them on the ground such as the Seal Team 6 attack on Osama bin-Laden. However, such attacks probably increase the negative response in Pakistan vs. UAVs. Furthermore, even though Seal Team 6 was very, very good, it is inevitable that there would be U.S. losses, and perhaps some troops would be captured, which would be a truly ugly hostage dilemma. If a UAV is “killed or even held hostage,” it is a total non-event. Therefore, I totally support the current UAV operations.

Air Power and the subset of UAV operations give us a clear advantage over the terrorists. Since they cannot shoot them down (very often), they will try a propaganda campaign against them. Consequently, we will hear protests from Libya to Waziristan that planes or UAVs have attacked weddings or civilians.

Evangelists of human progress meet their opposite in Matthew White’s epic examination of history’s one hundred most violent events, or, in White’s piquant phrasing, “the numbers that people want to argue about.” Reaching back to 480 BCE’s second Persian War, White moves chronologically through history to this century’s war in the Congo and devotes chapters to each event, where he surrounds hard facts (time and place) and succinct takeaways (who usually gets the blame?) with lively military, social, and political histories. With the eye of a seasoned statistician, White assigns each entry a ranking based on body count, and in doing so he gives voice to the suffering of ordinary people that, inexorably, has defined every historical epoch. By turns droll, insightful, matter-of-fact, and ultimately sympathetic to those who died, The Great Big Book of Horrible Things gives readers a chance to reach their own conclusions while offering a stark reminder of the darkness of the human heart.

From the Publisher.


In July 1883, just a few days after the twentieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, a group of editors at The Century Magazine engaged in a lively argument: Which Civil War battle was the bloodiest battle of them all? One claimed it was Chickamauga, another Cold Harbor. The argument inspired a brainstorm: Why not let the magazine’s 125,000 readers in on the conversation by offering “a series of papers on some of the great battles of the war to be written by officers in command on both sides.”

Hearts Touched by Fire offers stunning accounts of the war’s great battles written by the men who planned, fought, and witnessed them, from leaders such as General Ulysses S. Grant, General George McClellan, and Confederate captain Clement Sullivane to men of lesser rank. This collection also features new year-by-year introductions by esteemed historians who cast wise modern eyes on the cataclysm that changed America and would go down as the bloodiest conflict in our nation’s history.

From the Publisher.


When states are threatened by war and terrorism, can we really expect them to abide by human rights and humanitarian law? David P. Forsythe’s bold analysis of U.S. policies toward terror suspects after 9/11 addresses this issue directly. Covering moral, political, and legal aspects, he examines the abuse of enemy detainees at the hands of the United States. Forsythe places the Bush administration at the center of the debate because it displayed disdain for international law, in contrast to the public’s support for humanitarian affairs. Forsythe explores the similarities and differences between Presidents Obama and Bush on the question of prisoner treatment in an age of terrorism. The book traces the Pentagon’s and CIA’s records in mistreating prisoners, providing an account which will be of interest to all those who value human rights and humanitarian law.

From the Publisher.
This order of battle is more than a simple listing of units. It is an encyclopedia of Army tactical organizations in existence during what has commonly become known as the “interwar” period. This four-volume set was written to fill a distinct void in the history of Army tactical units, especially those of the Organized Reserve (now U.S. Army Reserve). This comprehensive work details the history of every U.S. Army tactical organization from separate battalion to field army, as well as certain other major commands important to the administration and support of the Army. It includes the various units’ changes of station, commanding officers, training camps, accomplishments, and key events such as major maneuvers and, for National Guard units, active duty periods for state emergencies. Also included are maps showing command boundaries and charts illustrating the tables of organization germane to the organizations of the time. In short, this order of battle is the definitive reference for the historian who wishes to understand the history and organization of U.S. Army units between the World Wars.
DAYS OF THE WEEK ARE DEAD TO ME

Days of the week are dead to me.
Monday, Friday, Sunday, Saturday;
They are all the same.
Days of the week are dead to me
And so they will remain.

The day I saw an IED
Through a Predator’s eye
Take out that convoy of Humvees,
That day of that week
With me will remain.
The day I heard the “All Clear” call
After rockets fell from the sky,
That day I will remember, laugh a little and cry.

The day of the week that the sergeant killed
Five of his brothers over by Commo Hill,
I can’t recall.
But that day of that week
Was the worst of all.
Days of the week are dead to me
And so they will remain.

But when I return
And enjoy the life
That blood has paid
Many times over and more the price,
I shall rejoice in the days I spend
With family and friends
And not worry about
What day it is, or what day will come,
Because they’re all the same to me now
And I will cherish every one.

CPT Thomas J. Carnes, III
Brigade Provost Marshal, 56th IBCT
Texas Army National Guard

1LT Carnes was the night Battle Captain for the Victory Base Defense Operations Center, 11 May 2009, the night a distraught soldier opened fire in the counseling center at Camp Liberty, Baghdad, killing five. Creating art, such as poetry, can build resiliency by strengthening emotional and spiritual fitness.