

Naval War College Review

Volume 69
Number 2 *Spring*

Article 22

2016

The East Asian War, 1592–1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory

James B. Lewis

Jeffrey Shaw

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Lewis, James B. and Shaw, Jeffrey (2016) "The East Asian War, 1592–1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 69 : No. 2 , Article 22.

Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol69/iss2/22>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

conducting realistic training. Privratsky's insights could also apply to humanitarian affairs operations, especially if a natural disaster has destroyed piers or off-loading equipment, or occurred in a remote location without prepositioned stores. Military operational planners and military history enthusiasts should add this book to their professional library.

CYNTHIA K. SEXTON



The East Asian War, 1592–1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory, ed. James B. Lewis. London: Routledge, 2015. 418 pages. \$178.

The Japanese invasion of Korea, known in the West as the Imjin War, has been largely overlooked by Western scholars. While Stephen Hawley's *The Imjin War* and Kenneth Swopes's *A Dragon's Head and a Serpent's Tail* are excellent works, those wishing for a more thorough treatment of some of the issues leading to the war and a more succinct history of the war itself have had to rely on Korean- or Japanese-language sources. However, James B. Lewis's *The East Asian War, 1592–1598: International Relations, Violence, and Memory* now fills the void, offering a variety of perspectives on this seminal conflict among Korea, China, and Japan.

Lewis has assembled an impressive list of international scholars representing a variety of academic specialties. This book is far more than a simple military or political history of one of Asia's largest conflicts prior to the twentieth century. It is divided into three parts, the first an examination of the international and domestic background to the conflict. Japanese and Korean scholars assess the issues that led to a deterioration

of relations between Korea and Japan. Economic issues, including trade disputes, predominate in this section, and set the stage for a review of the war itself, which is the subject of the next part of the book, simply entitled "War."

The nine chapters that compose the section on the Imjin War present the reader with a wealth of information previously unavailable to an English-language audience. These chapters rely almost exclusively on either primary-source material in Japanese and Korean or secondary sources from scholars in Korea, Japan, and China who have provided their own accounts and interpretations of this conflict. Each of the belligerents gets a thorough review, covering political, military, cultural, and social forces that shaped the six-year-long tragedy that has come to be known as the Imjin War. From a military perspective, readers will find plenty of groundbreaking information on the naval aspects of this war, which featured the largest maritime expedition in history up to that time. The valiant resistance put up by the Korean navy against the invading Japanese is worth a separate book in itself.

The third and final part of this book should not be overlooked. Examining the "impact and memory" of the Imjin War, these five final chapters provide the reader with a review of the ways in which this conflict helped shape attitudes among China, Korea, and Japan over the ensuing centuries. Whether through literature, art, or fashion, this conflict left a lasting impact that Western audiences would have had a difficult time discerning prior to the publication of this book.

There is a comprehensive glossary and index at the end of the book; however, the term "glossary" is a bit misleading,

as this section is a traditional index, albeit an inclusive and very useful one. The references are all listed at the end of each chapter, and readers will be impressed with the breadth of sources used to put this book together. In light of the many challenges facing East Asia in the twenty-first century, Lewis's book should be read by anyone interested in some of the antecedents to the political and cultural tensions that exist in that volatile part of the world. Both general readers and scholars alike will find something of interest in this impressive work. It is highly recommended.

JEFFREY SHAW



The U.S. Naval Institute on Naval Cooperation, ed. Sam J. Tangredi. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2015. 224 pages. \$21.95 (paperback).

Naval Cooperation is an anthology of essays on the employment of maritime forces in security cooperation and partnership missions, taken from the U.S. Naval Institute's periodical *Proceedings*. The Naval Institute Wheel Book series represents an analogy to the practice of a naval officer keeping a pocket-size notebook, or "wheel book," that served as a ready reference of accrued and evolving knowledge and experience. This book places maritime force partnership and cooperation in a strategic context by evaluating the relationships among maritime partnership, operations, and strategy. This approach facilitates examination of the relationships among strategy, strategic objectives, and global maritime partnership, moving the reader to consider not only the relationship of partnership to strategy but the intended outcome of partnership activities.

One of the interesting elements of this collection is the variety of experiences and perspectives its authors represent: U.S. and international chiefs of service; flag officers who commanded fleets; maritime theorists; and senior and junior naval officers from U.S. and international navies. The articles reflect these contributors' personal experiences in cooperation operations ranging from counter-piracy patrols off the coast of Africa to disaster-relief missions in Asia, multilateral exercises such as Rim of the Pacific exercises (i.e., RIMPAC), and military-to-military maritime training events. Each article receives an editor's introduction to both its topic and author. These introductions are especially helpful in contextualizing the different periods in which the articles were written and the relevant cooperation and participation issues.

Geoffrey Till's 2005 piece "Navies and the New World Order" is notable for its assessment of trends within the contemporary security environment affecting the international maritime system. Till argues that the sea is transforming from a domain of peer-to-peer naval competition to one that requires collective action in defense of the established norms and rules of the international maritime system. This will require partnership and cooperation among navies to guarantee maritime security in support of the global economy, while protecting an international system of transportation at sea from the constant threat of criminals, terrorists, and pirates, and to project power ashore in support of stability.

Admiral Michael Mullen's "1,000-ship navy" concept, the Global Maritime Partnership (GMP), and the 2007 maritime strategy "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower" (as well