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# Fundamentals of War Gaming

Jeff Shaw

Francis J. McHugh

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### A HISTORY OF GAMING

McHugh, Francis J. *Fundamentals of War Gaming*. Newport, R.I.: Naval War College, 2012. 238pp. \$40

War gaming is part of the Naval War College's storied past. Then as now an integral part of the College's curriculum, throughout the first half of the twentieth century, gaming provided the Naval War College's faculty and students an opportunity to examine various courses of action and operational plans that would later be put to use in the Second World War. Many observers have noted that the games conducted at the College were important to the successful outcome of the war in the Pacific against Japan. Frank McHugh's *Fundamentals of War Gaming* explains the techniques and procedures that the Naval War College developed and utilized in the games of those years.

McHugh's half-century with the War Gaming Department began in 1934, precisely the time when the College faculty was testing and evaluating various contingency plans for the expected conflict with Japan. McHugh planned and participated in games, later he served as an analyst, and in 1957 he helped to deploy the Naval Electronic Warfare Simulator. He was known both nationally and internationally for his lectures on gaming techniques. In this work

McHugh does not present a general thesis examining gaming's effectiveness, value, or importance. Rather the book describes in detail the technical aspects of gaming, with chapters outlining various gaming techniques and procedures. McHugh provides a thorough overview of all aspects of war gaming that the Naval War College employed in the first half of the twentieth century.

The first chapter provides an introduction to war games, explaining the types of games most likely to be employed and the roles of the players, participants, and observers. This is followed by a chapter on the history of gaming, from its beginnings in the Prussian military. McHugh gives the reader a thumbnail sketch of gaming as it developed in the nineteenth century and was eventually adopted by most major combatants prior to World War II. He explains that the U.S. military adopted war gaming as a tool to examine emerging doctrine at the service colleges. It was not just the Navy that integrated war games into its service school curriculum but the Army and the Army Air Corps as well. Following the chapter on the history of games, which

comprises about seventy pages, McHugh presents four chapters that delve into the mechanics and details of how games were organized and conducted. The concluding chapter introduces the reader to the computer system that revolutionized naval gaming in the late 1950s (since replaced by successive generations of more sophisticated machinery). Four appendixes provide greater detail on determining chance and probability, as well as a glossary of war-gaming terms. However, no index is included. Not necessarily geared toward a general reading audience, *Fundamentals of War Gaming* delivers a technically oriented war-gaming operator an essential handbook on the history and importance of the craft. It is a user's guide, and some of the techniques and methodologies for planning, executing, adjudicating, and analyzing war games are still in use today.

This is a reprint of the third edition of McHugh's book, which was originally published in 1966. If there is an heir to Frank McHugh—a nationally recognized gaming expert with the expertise that once set McHugh apart from his peers—perhaps he or she would consider updating the text by bringing the reader into the twenty-first century. This is a potential avenue for further inquiry, one that would be of great interest to those looking to what the future holds for the profession of gaming, or to the relationship in the twenty-first century between war games and curriculum at service schools. This additional insight would provide enough material for a useful fourth edition. However, as it stands, McHugh's book chronicles the history of gaming and describes the various techniques, procedures, and parameters employed by war gamers throughout the first half of the twentieth

century. It is an interesting and useful book, one that I highly recommend.

JEFF SHAW  
*Naval War College*



Gordon, Michael R., and Bernard E. Trainor. *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*. New York: Pantheon, 2012. 800pp. \$35

At the end of *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (2007), Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor concluded that Americans and Iraqis had created an Iraq of “chaos, suffering, and a future that is still vexed.” Six years later that vexed future is realized in their latest book, *The Endgame*. Thoroughly researched, this book leverages not only documentary sources but interviews with American and Iraqi leaders who shaped the post-Saddam Iraq to give the most encompassing narrative to date of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. Nearly eight hundred pages in length, this is the best single-volume study of the American and Iraqi experiences in postinvasion Iraq from 2003 to the U.S. withdrawal in 2011. Any future histories of the Iraqi war will have to acknowledge this comprehensive research and account.

After retracing some territory familiar from *Cobra II*, Gordon and Trainor present a detailed account of the American occupation and effort to create a new Iraq. What becomes clear in this volume is that President George W. Bush, his administration, and the first team of military leaders failed to create an adequate policy and strategy to transform the fractious Iraqi people into a stable nation. Sectarian violence, internal