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### Assignment Pentagon: How to Excel in a Bureaucracy, 4th ed.

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Presence—achieved by living, and conducting river and foot patrols, among local people to gain their trust and to build sound knowledge about the enemy—is equally important, as is, at the same time, keeping the insurgents off balance through the use of deception and irregular patrol patterns, a combination the Portuguese were able to achieve because units were deployed in two-year cycles.

The Portuguese also learned the importance of joint effort. Wherever the navy and army disagreed and failed to operate together, which happened in Bissau particularly, results were affected. Also, that no campaign could be isolated from the wider political context was a lesson that became painfully apparent following a militarily successful but politically damaging raid on Conakry, the capital of Guinea, to free hostages and destroy insurgent sanctuaries.

In short, all practitioners and students of riverine warfare will be grateful that John P. Cann has written such an excellent account.

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Smith, Perry M., and Daniel M. Gerstein. *Assignment Pentagon: How to Excel in a Bureaucracy*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007. 273pp. \$22.95

For this, the fourth edition of his well received book, Major General Perry M. Smith, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), has added a coauthor, Colonel Daniel M. Gerstein, U.S. Army (Ret.). Colonel Gerstein served for twenty-six years in combat, peace, and humanitarian operations.

He also served in the Pentagon for almost ten years in senior advisory and leadership roles.

This edition has been expanded into sixteen chapters, each adding considerable value to the publication. One of the more interesting and vital chapters for properly grasping the workings of “the building” is devoted to “understanding the process.” This chapter succinctly describes the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), and the Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC). These entities are extremely complex by their very natures, but it is vital to understand how they all fit together for our nation’s defense. The authors do a superb job of simplifying these systems, giving additional references for in-depth understanding.

Smith and Gerstein also briefly address military ethics, touching upon military interaction with Congress and ethics within the executive branch. Problems are identified and solutions are suggested, but it is beyond the scope and intention of this book to address these issues other than superficially. The reader should already be educated regarding ethics and ethical behavior; this chapter serves simply to remind us that doing the “right thing” continues to be difficult at times.

As with the earlier editions, the present one addresses many day-to-day business elements related to serving at the Pentagon. The book allows the reader, whether a newly assigned military member or civilian, to obtain a preliminary understanding of the complex nature of this intense mixture of military and civilian bureaucracies.

One of the primary values of this book is that the views and perspectives shared are not the authors' alone but those of many uniformed and civilian sources, both inside and outside of the Defense Department, as well. For example, two of many fact-filled chapters address working with defense contractors and "the interagency." Both these areas are discussed in a way that allows the reader to gain perspective that might prove helpful when sitting across from a contractor or an employee of the State Department.

This work serves the reader very well, providing knowledgeable insight into the formal and informal processes of this important element of national security and the Department of Defense. The perspective and information contained here is particularly important for the military member or civilian assigned to the Pentagon for the first time.

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Ford, Daniel. *Flying Tigers: Claire Chennault and His American Volunteers, 1941–1942*. New York: HarperCollins (Smithsonian Books), 2007. 384pp. \$15.95

In this vivid and fact-filled historical account of aerial combat, Daniel Ford completely updates and revises his 1991 work describing the extraordinary accomplishments of the pilots and support crews of the 1st American Volunteer Group (AVG) in the earliest days of World War II. Ford—a writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, a recreational pilot, and author of *Incident at Muc Wa* (made into the Burt Lancaster

movie *Go Tell the Spartans*)—has used recent American, British, and Japanese sources to both improve and shorten the original book. Famously known as the "Flying Tigers," the AVG was a group of American volunteers recruited by Claire Chennault from the aviation ranks of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps to help protect China and key areas of Southeast Asia from unremitting attack by the Japanese army air force. In their Curtiss P-40 Tomahawks, with their iconic shark's teeth motif painted on the noses, the Flying Tigers flew combat missions from three days after Pearl Harbor until July 1942, when the unit was absorbed into the U.S. Army Air Corps. During this seven-month period, the AVG, never numbering at any one time more than about seventy pilots and a roughly equal number of aircraft, inflicted disproportionate damage on the Japanese (1:28 ratio for aircrew losses). This deadly aerial struggle kept the vital 750-mile supply line from India across Burma and into China open and operational for as long as possible during the Japanese onslaught. The men of the AVG did this while living in mostly deplorable conditions, with at best erratic maintenance and logistic support.

The author's depictions of air combat are especially gripping, often describing individual pilots flying for both sides, while providing ample technical information on the types of aircraft in the engagements. Of course the primary characters are all here, from Chennault, a chain-smoking, tough, and innovative leader, to pilots Tex Hill, Eddie Rector, and Greg Boyington (later of VMF-214 "Black Sheep" fame). Ford's history is serious, but it is also rich with stories about this colorful and adventurous