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The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory and Air-Land Battle

Gary Anderson

Robert R. Leonhard

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many officers who fear it will displace hard training in the field, the only school short of combat where weather, fatigue, and systems failure—in short, the frictions of war—can be truly experienced. General Brown's assertion that noncommissioned officers are today capable, if necessary, of commanding combined-arms formations at the company level will not find general agreement among our officer corps. There is little discussion of the debilitating effects of massive, simultaneous, system-wide change that the Army must endure—is enduring—even if it undertakes no internally generated institutional changes at all.

Yet if there is anything that the Army (and all the services) needs now, it is vision and enthusiasm for rigorous self-examination. As the author himself suggests, the questions raised in *The U.S. Army in Transition II* are more important than the tentative answers provided. He has done a service in probing the status quo as only an experienced, senior insider can. He strikes the right note in urging the Army not to become complacent in the wake of the Gulf War but to build on the core values of the institution to shape a twenty-first-century Army that incorporates lasting strengths and exploits the opportunities that now present themselves.

RICHARD D. HOOKER, JR.
Major, U.S. Army
National Security Council

Leonhard, Robert R. *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory*

and *Air-Land Battle*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991. 315pp. \$24.95

Major Robert Leonhard, U.S. Army, has written a provocative book that will stir heated controversy within the ranks of the Army and also offer the Navy and Marine Corps a few points to ponder as those services embark upon their "maneuver from the sea" doctrinal approach. At the risk of oversimplification, Leonhard believes that the Army's adoption of maneuver warfare doctrine is less maneuver-oriented and more wedded to traditional firepower and attrition tactics than the Army is willing to admit. No doubt, the Army hierarchy will be displeased with this view.

In an effort to prove his thesis, the author presents a number of examples from his own experience along with historical evidence demonstrating pure maneuver theory at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. One of the most interesting of these models is one the author calls the "Alcyoneus Principle"—after a Greek giant of mythology who was invulnerable on his home territory but whom Hercules defeated by lifting him off the ground and carrying him away from his homeland. Once displaced from his "center of gravity," Alcyoneus was helpless. Leonhard stresses that this concept of dislocating the enemy is a key point of maneuver warfare. Here lies the point of divergence with most conventional (and even most unconventional) military thought—which holds that an enemy's "center of gravity" is that place or thing that is the source of his strength, and that his "key vulnerability" is that weak point by which the "center of gravity" may most easily

be approached. Leonard instead defines the weak point, or vulnerability, itself as the enemy's center of gravity.

One real weakness of the book is Leonhard's failure to defend sufficiently this unusual thesis. This is an important point because the view of the distinction between "vulnerability" and "center of gravity" is not merely part of the Army lexicon but has become fairly standard in the evolving joint doctrine. Leonard has an intriguing argument, and it is plucky of him to take on such accepted doctrine, but he offers little proof to back it up. Another weakness is that the chapter on the Gulf War is treated as an appendix; apparently the manuscript was completed before the war. Although it does support some of the author's arguments, the subject cries out for further discussion. The editor would have been wiser to have incorporated Leonhard's views on the war into the text.

The author is at his best when attacking Army artillerymen for their undue emphasis on centralized firepower planning at the expense of rapid and decentralized maneuver. This reviewer, as an old Marine light armored commander, has seen some of the same problems in Marine Corps artillerymen. However, the Gulf War did show some of the reason for the attitude of the "cannon cockers." "Friendly fire" casualties and their attendant public scrutiny have shown how dangerous a cavalier attitude toward fire support coordination can be. Notwithstanding, and though artillerymen are not agents of evil, they can be some of the most doctrinaire and mechanistic of our late-twentieth-century warriors. We must

find a more coherent way of ensuring troop safety in a fast-moving environment if more advanced maneuver warfare concepts are to be taken seriously. The author also questions the Air Force's dedication to close air support on the Air-Land battlefield. In this he is no different from thousands of other infantrymen and tankers in the Army who have struggled with that problem for over forty years.

However imperfect this book may be, it is worth reading for two reasons. First, it is full of good, new ways of looking at old problems. Second, and more important, it challenges the conventional wisdom of our profession in a way that should make us all examine our convictions, no matter how deeply we may hold them. This is what professional reading is supposed to be about.

GARY ANDERSON
Lieutenant Colonel,
U.S. Marine Corps

Hilsman, Roger. *George Bush vs Saddam Hussein: Military Success! Political Failure*. Novato, Calif.: Lyford Books of Presidio, 1992. 273pp. \$21.95

First there was the "mother of all battles," then the "mother of all retreats," and now we have the "mother of all hastily written books" on the Persian Gulf War. This is a recounting—I would refrain from calling it history—of the 1990–1991 war with Iraq. Roger Hilsman, a distinguished World War II veteran and Cold War policy analyst, unfortunately possesses expertise