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# Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War

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by his own prejudices and such obnoxious statements as that "the author has been able to anticipate every major trend, every major weakness in U.S. national defense."

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Atkinson, Rick. *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993. 575pp. \$24.95

In war, history is seldom generous to the vanquished—nor is it always kind to the victor, as evident in this work by Rick Atkinson. Written to answer the question "What really happened?" the narrative draws upon a wide array of after-action reports, personal interviews, and investigative reports. Not surprisingly, then, *Crusade* contains a degree of journalistic sensationalism that focuses on personality quirks and interservice bickering, sometimes at the expense of thoughtful analysis.

Atkinson concentrates almost exclusively on the period following George Bush's decision to launch a war against Iraq, and although the subtitle suggests new information, much of it has been repeatedly told. Many will readily recognize the dialogue regarding the special operation forces in Iraq, the multiple cases of fratricide, and the debate over the efficacy of the Patriot air defense systems; but less known, and not as well covered by Atkinson, are the contributions of the U.S. Navy and that of the Arab members of the coalition. What Atkinson does bring to the reader, however, is detail on frustrations

within the coalition headquarters and some excellent accounts of personal combat.

By far the most interesting aspect of *Crusade* is Atkinson's provocative analysis of the political and military personalities who waged the one-sided conflict. According to the author, the war enabled George Bush to rise above the limitations of his character and political philosophy to become, briefly, an extraordinary man. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney fares equally well in Atkinson's chronicle. At times a reluctant supporter of Schwarzkopf, Cheney developed a special partnership with Joint Chiefs chairman Colin Powell, one that evolved into a total commitment to the armed forces in pursuit of military and political victory.

Like most observers, Atkinson has his personal heroes. Seventh Corps commander Frederick Franks emerges as the personification of the American Army. To many admirers, the author among them, Barry McCaffrey represents the officer *par excellence*: bright, articulate, and flamboyant. First Marine Expeditionary Force commander Walt Boomer and air campaign chief Chuck Horner also receive honorable mention for their monumental contributions to allied victory. And of course there is Powell, the ultimate Clausewitzian strategist who manages a temperamental theater commander and serves as the brakeman to ensure political leaders use their military force in a humane and judicious manner.

Towering over all the decision makers, however, is the enigmatic figure of Norman Schwarzkopf. Long known for his fiery temper and

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volcanic personality, Schwarzkopf emerges as a modern Achilles, horrible in war to friend and foe alike. His Riyadh headquarters, states the author, was unique in its misery. Rarely dispensing praise, Schwarzkopf could be, and was, publicly abusive to subordinates whom he deemed insufficiently aggressive. More than once he threatened to relieve most of his principal subordinates and so intimidated his staff that they were reluctant to report information that might lead to another explosive outburst.

However, tension between a commanding general, his staff, and subordinate commanders hardly constitutes an "untold story." Also, Schwarzkopf's temperament has long been a matter of public record. What Atkinson brings to the Schwarzkopf legend is a journalistic flair that weaves what a *New York Times* reviewer termed "the storm within the [Desert] Storm" into a coherent narrative that captures the drama of waging coalition warfare in the modern era.

Less sensational than the commander in chief's vitriolic outbursts is the other side of Schwarzkopf, which the author addresses fairly well. Though his generalship was sometimes flawed and he allegedly failed to comprehend the political ramifications of the Scud missile attacks against Israel, Schwarzkopf rose to the task as CinC, Central Command. If America's armed forces were stellar in the Gulf War, it was largely due to a command vision that encouraged initiative and audacity among his chief lieutenants. Given the fact that he achieved all the president's

political objectives and that he achieved this victory at minimal human cost, Schwarzkopf's emotional tirades shrink to insignificance. Schwarzkopf may have been an "S.O.B." to his staff and commanders, but as Ernest J. King allegedly claimed, "When they get in trouble, they send for the sonsabitches."

In the final analysis, Atkinson has produced a useful analysis of certain aspects of the war. Not prone to oversimplification, Atkinson cautions the reader to draw back and examine the Gulf War through the lens of history. Only then can the real costs and achievements be determined. Until someone has access and time to analyse the veritable avalanche of official reports on the conflict, a complete history is not likely to appear. *Crusade* is certainly a start.

As such, Atkinson's work is a brush with history from the perspective of Central Command headquarters and many small-unit leaders. A number of key participants receive scant attention. Vital contributions of intermediate headquarters, including VII Corps and XVIII Airborne Corps, are virtually ignored as a result of the author's concentration on Washington and Central Command. Additionally, the author's frequent use of colorful quotations to maintain the reader's interest, such as that attributed to Colonel Tom Hill when he crossed the Iraqi border, makes for interesting reading, but one wonders about their authenticity.

What, then, are we to think of the recent conflict and of *Crusade*? To his credit, Atkinson provides at least a portion of the answer to the first question. Despite the president's rhetoric,

the war was not the greatest moral challenge this nation has faced since World War II; perhaps that challenge lies closer, on America's shores. Still, once in a generation, it is enough and sufficient to know that this nation's armed forces were ready when called upon and that the United States and its military reaffirmed their sense of common purpose and mutual respect. That in itself was a remarkable achievement—and a story that remains to be told.

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Winnefeld, James A. and Johnson, Dana J. *Joint Air Operations: Pursuit of Unity in Command and Control, 1942–1991*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1993. 199pp. \$29.95

*Joint Air Operations* has a narrow purpose: “to determine how unity of effort has been achieved in joint air operations.” The authors treat air operations as distinct from surface, land, and sea operations; this keeps the book to a manageable size, although one may question whether air operations can properly be studied if separated from associated ground and naval action. Notwithstanding that caveat and the criticisms which follow, *Joint Air Operations* is on the whole a superb book. It is an excellent starting point for serious study, as it provides both the appropriate cases and criteria for analyzing them.

Joint operations date from antiquity, but they originally tended not to require much coordination between land and sea forces. The ease with

which aircraft, however, pass across the boundary between land and sea has made air warfare a focal point for multiservice coordination and contention since World War I.

In the introduction the authors define some critical conventions and definitions, and they explain their methodology for analysis of joint air operations. The latter enables the reader to judge how well the authors meet their own criteria. Unfortunately, as they are applied to cases, these criteria undergo significant changes. For example, in the introduction Unity of Effort is considered in terms of “evidence of unity of command or, in the absence of such unity, the command arrangements used to broker various interests.” Nine chapters later, Unity of Command is evaluated in terms of “meddling by senior command echelons,” “single command for land and sea-based air,” and “single commander for land-based air forces of different services.” These reveal Winnefeld and Johnson's general support for the traditional Air Force viewpoint that—at least where air operations are involved—“unity of effort” is synonymous with “unity of command” under a single air commander. This view is not commonly shared by the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, or the post-World War II U.S. Army. In Chapter Two, the authors provide a concise overview of the philosophical approaches to aviation of the U.S. Army Air Corps, Army Air Forces, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. Understanding these competing, often antagonistic, philosophies is critical to understanding