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Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Theory and Practice

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reference work for issues in the nuclear age.

It is difficult to imagine anyone more qualified to write this book than John Newhouse. He was a staff member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and served as counselor and subsequently as assistant director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in the mid and late 1970s. He was intimately involved with America's maturation as a nuclear power and the efforts to develop a coherent nuclear policy. As a staff writer for *The New Yorker* and a guest-scholar at the Brookings Institution, he has had unique access to many who have been, and are, key decision makers in the United States. Additionally, he has had access to newly released documents and has conducted exhaustive research on nuclear issues.

It is impossible, in any short review, to capture the essence of the entertaining and thought-provoking narrative that Newhouse presents. He relates a fascinating account of world events that is much deeper than a mere recounting of headlines. He manages to put events into context and focus. His examination of successive presidential administrations offers insight into why each president and his advisors were, or were not, equipped to deal with the awesome nuclear issues. Throughout this fast-moving account, Newhouse explains how the superpower struggle for strategic supremacy and the ongoing interual conflict over

methods of managing nuclear weapons has had a profound impact on international events for the past half century, such as how nuclear weapons have never been used and how they have altered relations between allies and enemies.

It is only after much reflection that the reader realizes how much he has learned about the extraordinary impact that nuclear weapons have had on world history, intergovernmental relations and our day-to-day lives.

This is a wonderful book. It is easy to see why the PBS documentary of the same name was so critically acclaimed. It has the excitement of a "whodunit" and yet is able to serve as an excellent historical work chronicling the past five decades. Its weakness, if it can be called one, is that it covers some important subjects in little depth. It could easily have been twice as long.

War and Peace in the Nuclear Age is a valuable resource book for the national security community. It offers policymakers valuable acumen into how the awesome weapons that we live with today have affected world events, and in so doing may enable them to more effectively deal with these weapons tomorrow.

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McInnes, Colin and Sheffield, G.D., eds. *Warfare in the Twentieth Century: Theory and Practice*. Lon-

don: Unwin Hyman, 1988. 239pp.
\$9.95

This book is another collection of essays by professional historians and scholars who have attempted to reconcile the theory and the practice of warfare in this century. Touted by the publisher as "essential reading for all students and teachers of strategic and war studies," the book falls short of anything "essential."

The editors, Colin McInnes and G.D. Sheffield, have, at one time or another, been lecturers at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. They and six other noted authors, all university scholars from Great Britain, have produced nine essays, each one about a different aspect of warfare in the twentieth century. One, Geoffrey Till, will be recognized by Naval War College students as a prolific writer on naval affairs. The others will not be so well known to them.

The book is targeted for the "intelligent general reader," and is intended to bridge the gap between academic tomes and more sensational works on warfare and its impact in the 20th century. In examining the theory of war in relation to its practice, each author arrives at the same conclusion—"that in war things rarely go according to plan." Theory, then, has little to do with the practical reality of war. That is hardly a new conclusion.

The surprises, however, come in three of the nine essays. They are surprising not because they contain anything new, but because they are

written with great clarity and smooth, flowing format. They are not only informative, but also entertaining.

The best essay is Geoffrey Till's, "Naval Power." In thirty pages, Dr. Till takes the reader on a delightful cruise from the Kaiser's navy in 1904, to the modern "Maritime Strategy." He, of course, includes Mahan, Corbett and Mackinder with a refreshing dose of Admiral Gorshkov. Till's writing is fluid and highly readable. His underlying conclusion is that, despite the continual development of technology, the established functions of naval warfare have not changed and are as valid today as they were ninety years ago.

Two other essays well worth reading are Sheffield's "Blitzkrieg and Attrition: Land Operations in Europe, 1914-1945," and McInnes' "Nuclear Strategy." Sheffield's essay focuses exclusively on land operations in two world wars and is purely historical in nature. His premise is that most military innovation in the 20th century originated in World War I, not in World War II. Despite the accepted wisdom that the two world wars were vastly different from each other, one characterized by attrition, the other by maneuver, Sheffield argues that there was actually little difference and that the Second World War represented continuity, not change! McInnes' essay on nuclear strategy gives a concise history of global nuclear strategy in just twenty-one pages. Brief it may be, but it provides an excellent explanation of point and

counterpoint among the nuclear family of nations.

The remaining essays are interesting, but certainly not "essential." As a text the book has great limitations, one being its lack of relevance to today's world. With the exception of the three essays mentioned, the book has limited use for the student of warfare or strategy. The "intelligent general reader" may find the book of interest, but others will be disappointed for its lack of forward-thinking. Perhaps it is true that historians are best at predicting the past.

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Blackburn, Tom. *The Jolly Rogers*.
New York: Orion Books, 1989.
260pp. \$22.95

Ah, for the good ol' days, back to the last one that we won, when real fighter aircraft had 6X.50s, and real fighter pilots wore leather helmets and Marine Corps issue field shoes, and cooled their beer at 30,000 feet in the wing-ammo-cans and went to Australia for R&R.

Tommy "Big Hog" Blackburn, a real ace of a WWII fighter pilot, recounts his memories as skipper of VF-17, in his book, *The Jolly Rogers*. His memories are unusually sharp and detailed—nearly 45 years after the fact, with the authentic ring of sea stories often told over many beers at happy hours, and at the inevitable tail-hookers' reunions in Las Vegas.

Blackburn focuses on two main points: "Big Hog," the beautiful F4U-gull-wing-Japanese-Zero-killing-machine, which he and his squadron can bring aboard any U.S.S. Boat around; and his combat training/screening system, implemented in the VF-17 Jolly Rogers squadron to select and develop the type of fighter pilots required to win a war.

Blackburn's system was to select pilots for their aggressiveness, intelligence, endurance and loyalty, then put them in their "offices," i.e. the cockpits, and "drill"; that is, to fly simulated-combat and low-level missions, day, night and in all weather conditions, until the man becomes part of the machine and all apprehensions about night and weather disappear. For seasoning, throw in the typical fighter pilot's disdain for spit and polish, a pilot's "*de rigueur*" abhorrence of the mud and wrenches of aircraft maintenance and logistics, add a dozen nonconforming individualists (NCIs) who might last 5 minutes in the polished passageways of the admiral's flagship, perhaps less in the pompous portals of today's Pentagon, and slow-cook in the 20-20 hindsight of the author who was ". . . horrified [and] . . . incredulous at the ineptitude of our Pacific commanders [following Pearl Harbor]."

Proof of the pudding, they say, is in the eating, and the resulting VF-17 Jolly Rogers had Japanese Zekes, Hamps and Tonys for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks: 154.5 kills