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## The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare

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rations for the cruise were essentially naval, not diplomatic. The fleet's greatest triumph was the fact that, far from breaking down, it ended its 45,000 miles of steaming in better trim than when it began. Its major vulnerability proved to be its dependence on foreign colliers that nearly brought the fleet to a halt when three of these vessels failed to appear on schedule in Australia. For that fleet, war in the western Pacific would have been a logistic nightmare.

Though the cruise may have been conceived as a fleet exercise, one cannot ignore the international, even diplomatic ramifications of such a major naval demonstration. When Roosevelt rejoiced that the cruise had been a "knock-out for mischief-makers" in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, he obviously had in mind the evolving informal system of naval power in which the British Navy concentrated against the German fleet in the North Sea while the United States built naval power sufficient to restrain Britain's Pacific ally, Japan.

Reckner is undoubtedly correct in concluding that the Americans and Japanese would probably have worked out accommodations on immigration, China, and Pacific security even had there been no world cruise. On the other hand, the friendly outpouring by the Japanese to welcome the fleet to Japan notwithstanding, we may never know how significant the cruise may have been in strengthening the conviction among Japanese naval

men that Japan needed a navy 70 percent the strength of the American navy to assure the island empire security in the western Pacific.

Papers of Rear Admiral Charles M. Thomas, Midshipman (later admiral) H. Kent Hewitt, Midshipman Louis Maxfield and others provide fresh insights into the actual conditions in the fleet during the cruise. Reckner's thoughtful, carefully prepared monograph is a valuable addition to the surprisingly slim literature on Theodore Roosevelt's navy.

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Hagerman, Edward. *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare*. Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1988. 366pp. \$37.50

In a classic formulation in the history of ideas, Isaiah Berlin contrasted the "fox," who knows many things, with the "hedgehog," who knows one. Edward Hagerman, of Canada's York University, brings a hedgehog's perspective to his analysis of the Civil War. That conflict has been described as ushering in the era of modern war in so many ways that its key, according to Hagerman, has been overlooked. He argues that the essential problem of mid-nineteenth century warfare was the threat of stagnation created by firepower—specifically, the rifled musket. Its introduction created an interrelated, comprehensive network of tactical, operational, and

strategic problems, and the solutions represented the beginning of a new military age.

This technological change was particularly significant in the context of the civilian mass armies raised by both the Union and the Confederacy. The individualistic ethos of "democrats as soldiers" meant that these uniformed civilians expected reasonable conditions of employment in war as well as in peace. Hagerman leaves little room for any concepts of *furor celticus* or a northern equivalent. His soldiers, and their officers as well, emerge as military businessmen concerned with calculations of risks, profit, and loss; and clearly recognizing their own vulnerability to minie balls.

One solution to the problem emerged on the battlefield itself—an emphasis on entrenchment. The rifled musket dominated American battlefields from 1861 to 1865. It reduced artillery to the status of a defensive weapon. It prevented cavalry from playing a tactical role. Civil war tactics, in short, were infantry tactics. And Hagerman demonstrates that these tactics depended increasingly on the spade, whether in fortifying positions to the point of impregnability or in supplementing the quick rushes that increasingly became the preferred form of attack.

Entrenchments, however, only exacerbated the problem of tactical mobility. Another reply to the challenge of firepower was on the operational level. In a sparsely settled land where distances were

exponentially greater than those of Europe, armies that could be kept supplied had corresponding opportunities to go around positions that could not be forced, save at disproportionate cost. Hagerman perceptively supplements Martin von Creveld's *Supplying War* by demonstrating the development—by both the Union and the Confederate armies in the eastern and western theaters—of logistic structures based on railroads, steamboats, and a carefully reorganized system of animal transport that acted as a flexible link between railheads and landings on one hand, and ammunition pouches and nose bags on the other.

A third key factor in responding to tactical deadlock involved organization. Hagerman credits both combatants with a common-sense willingness to abandon the mechanistic traditions exemplified in Jomini for a more flexible, empirical approach that stressed problem solving at the expense of formulas. The Union in particular, beginning with McClellan, developed a staff system able to coordinate grand-strategic planning, bureaucratic organization, and operational control. And if the Confederacy never quite matched its rival, Southern armies were nevertheless able to keep the field for four years against an enemy exponentially superior in the sinews of war.

Tactical stalemate generated a fourth consequence as well. With decisive battles an impossibility, total war developed as a practical

alternative. Sherman in particular, according to Hagerman, fulfilled the predictions of Clausewitz by making war against his enemy's will and resources. But he did so through maneuver rather than direct attrition, by going around Confederate armies to strike their more vulnerable rear areas and ultimately their heartland—a case of compensating for the absence of shorter roads to victory.

Hagerman's view of the Civil War is strongly ethnocentric, stressing indigenous responses to indigenous problems at the expense of any European influences. Comparison with the experiences of Prussia, France, even Austria, suggests that Americans were not alone in their search for intellectual and institutional structures for a developing industrial society. Any limitations of scope in this work are, however, more than balanced by Hagerman's demonstration of the importance of tactical factors in shaping the responses of military systems to changes in the circumstances of warfare. War's sharp end, so long neglected by practitioners of the "new military history," is coming into its own as a subject of analysis as well as description.

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Eisenhower, John S.D. *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico*

1846-1848. New York: Random House, 1989. 436pp. \$24.95

The Mexican War abounds with colorful incidents appropriate to narration by a military historian of the literary skill and forcefulness of John S.D. Eisenhower. Beyond that, however, this reviewer confesses that he opened *So Far from God* with skepticism over whether we need another one-volume survey of the war, when an excellent and relatively recent similar work is at hand in Karl Jack Bauer's *The Mexican War 1846-1848*, a volume in *The Wars of the United States*, Louis Morton, general editor. Yet reading Eisenhower's latest book offered at least some measure of reassurance that the effort was worthwhile.

Particularly, the time is probably right to survey the war with Mexico from a perspective different from Bauer's. His 1974 book was written under the shadow of the Vietnam War, so that the Mexican conflict emerges from it largely as a forerunner of subsequent military confrontations of the United States with underdeveloped countries. John Eisenhower by no means neglects that aspect, and he is much troubled by the moral dimensions of the war. Significantly different, however, Eisenhower suggests a strategic parallel between the course of the Mexican War and the course of World War II, remarking near the outset that the campaign in northern Mexico might be considered the equivalent of the North African campaign of 1942-1943, while Major-General Winfield Scott's