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Book Reviews

MIDDLE EAST

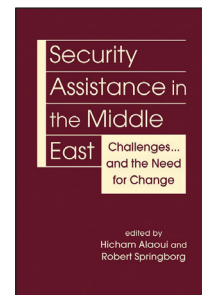
Security Assistance in the Middle East: Challenges ... and the Need for Change

Hicham Alaoui and Robert Springborg, eds.

Reviewed by Thomas W. Ross Jr., former deputy assistant secretary
of defense for security cooperation

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For decades, the Middle East has purchased more arms from the United States, and received more US grant assistance for its militaries, than any other region in the world. Despite hundreds of billions of dollars of US security assistance, American leverage to influence Middle Eastern governments remains weak and arguably on the decline. In a multifaceted, rigorously researched, and thoughtful new volume, editors Hicham Alaoui and Robert Springborg have assembled a valuable collection of voices interrogating this paradox.



The authors move from wide-lens explorations of the shape and value of security assistance across the region to careful examinations of individual actors and contexts. American security assistance to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, and the Gulf monarchies receive specific scrutiny, while other chapters consider roles of other security assistance providers, including NATO Allies, spoilers such as Iran and Russia, and hybrid recipient-providers like the Gulf monarchies.

As the editors state in their introduction, “the question becomes not whether but whither SA [security assistance]—that is, not should it be discontinued, but how can its costs be reduced and its benefits enhanced?” (4). The authors diagnose a range of challenges associated with current assistance initiatives, including mission creep, cultural imperialism, the privileging of militaries over civilian government agencies and of individual units over broader military institutions, insufficient attention to military governance and professionalization, and the development of specific capabilities without consideration of long-term strategic outcomes. In spite of these challenges, the authors do not gravitate toward discontinuing military aid, nor do they propose ambitious, wholesale reforms to current approaches.

The book also effectively dismantles the principal-agent relationship as a primary lens through which to view security assistance relationships.

Simone Tholens's chapter on regional entanglements serves as a Rosetta Stone for the rest of the book, arguing that "In the Middle East, security assistance is increasingly entangled, both spatially and temporally; that is, it cannot be analyzed as simple costs and benefits but is deeply interlinked with the practice of others, coproduced by conglomerates of different types of actors, and accompanied by existential narratives of the past and projections for the future" (196).

Other chapters provide case study after case study showcasing this entangled complexity. They demonstrate: recipient governments balancing competing and ambiguous interests and diverse, sometimes adversarial donors; providers managing competing interests and competing public narratives; states simultaneously playing roles of principal and agent and leveraging one role to perform the other better; shifting regional alliances and competitions; and what the editors term the "democratic paradox" (325). American security assistance intended to strengthen democratic institutions and build capable militaries instead "simply incites a self-perpetuating cycle of foreign patronage, deepening authoritarianism, and military subsistence" (228). The result of the book's many examples of the nuanced, complicated, and constantly shifting nature of security assistance relationships is to explode the principal-agent relationship and dramatize the fundamental messiness of the practice.

The book proposes few concrete solutions for how the costs of security assistance might be reduced and the benefits enhanced. Few chapters offer actionable recommendations. The authors ultimately endorse enhanced investments in military governance, institutional capacity building, and professionalization, though they acknowledge that such investments will produce benefits only at the margins and only over long time frames.

Security assistance is often mistaken for a strategy. It is used by various actors to achieve diverse and contradictory goals; its success is as dependent on the strength of the strategy as on the strength of the tool. The chapters collected in this volume understand that critical distinction and produce a deeply insightful, wide-ranging critique of US strategy toward the Middle East and the role the security assistance tool plays within it. Despite the dearth of actionable solutions, the volume offers tremendous value to students and practitioners of security assistance in the Middle East. Solutions will come only with a piercing, honest appraisal of the problem, to which this book makes a tremendous contribution.

The Day After: Why America Wins the War but Loses the Peace

by Brendan R. Gallagher

Reviewed by Dr. John A. Nagl, professor of warfighting studies,
US Army War College

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With the dust settling after two decades of protracted limited and irregular wars, students of American national security policy are asking hard questions about why the most expensive military in the world is not better at winning. An early and notable effort is Don Stoker's *Why America Loses Wars: Limited War and US Strategy from the Korean War to the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2019). Stoker is a pure and talented academic, and the lessons he presents are extremely valuable, but his work has now been reinforced by that of a talented young soldier-scholar who has spent much of the past 20 years studying in the hard classrooms of Iraq and Afghanistan.



Brendan R. Gallagher is an infantryman with seven combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, many of them with the 75th Ranger Regiment. His book *The Day After: Why America Wins the War but Loses the Peace* is suffused with a ground-level appreciation for the very real costs of limited wars, as well as a focus on strategic lessons to help prevent future grunts from bearing the burdens he and his friends have carried in their rucksacks. The fruit of a successful Princeton University PhD dissertation, the book uses the lens of prewar planning for postwar conditions to examine four recent limited wars: Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and Libya. He discovers dismayingly similar mistakes across the four cases and the Clinton, Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden-Harris administrations that made them, suggesting that there are systemic issues beyond the idiosyncrasies of individual decisionmakers and the challenges presented by particular countries.

Gallagher's inclusion of Kosovo, which he considers the least badly planned and conducted war, provides a useful "what right looks like" baseline to evaluate the other cases. He takes pains to point out that the Clinton administration that succeeded in Kosovo had learned bitter lessons in earlier interventions, particularly in Somalia, after which a wiser Clinton team "showed up to the marathon start line as a world-class athlete:

trained, tested, and ready to confront most of the challenges that might arise” in Kosovo. Gallagher continues, “But in the next three war zones, we showed up drunk, overconfident, and missing our running shoes while believing if we just sprinted a few seconds and handed off the baton, victory was assured” (216).

A maddening theme in the book is that administrations appear almost completely incapable of learning from their predecessors’ mistakes. Gallagher also notes the importance of implementing the lessons of postwar condition setting immediately; the “golden hour” of medevac is echoed by the moment at the immediate aftermath of hostilities when American power to shape a country’s future trajectory is at its zenith. In Iraq and Afghanistan, America squandered that golden opportunity, making future progress far harder than it needed to be, even given the many difficulties presented by both postwar scenarios; Gallagher cites a Pentagon official who argued that we were “sort of flat on our butt” for years attempting to determine what we wanted to achieve in the early years of the Afghanistan War (22).

Gallagher suggests recognizing that postwar planning is hard and success is rare and that planners beware magical thinking and instead study history. He recommends empowering the National Security Council to coordinate the efforts of the many US agencies (and allied partners) involved in postwar stabilization and reconstruction and avoiding mission creep. Most of all, Gallagher says, decisionmakers should be selective in choosing when to topple a regime.

That advice is easier given than followed. The Obama administration was elected to office in no small part in reaction to the George W. Bush administration’s planning and execution failures in Iraq and Afghanistan; President Barack Obama described his foreign policy philosophy as “don’t do stupid [stuff].” Still, it was his team that “led from behind” in Libya and remade there many of the mistakes that it had so vociferously decried in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Limited wars are hard. Studying them intently does not guarantee that we will do better the next time we (inevitably) engage in them, but not studying them makes that already all-too-likely outcome a near certainty. Professionals should look harder at the wars we lose than the ones we win; Gallagher’s book is a terrific place to start that study.

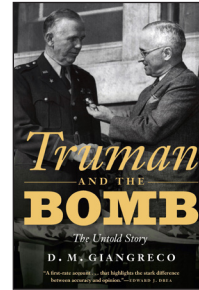
NUCLEAR ISSUES

Truman and the Bomb: The Untold Story

by D. M. Giangreco

Reviewed by Dr. Clayton K. S. Chun, retired faculty, US Army War College
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Author D. M. Giangreco examines the events surrounding President S. Harry Truman's momentous decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan to end World War II in *Truman and the Bomb*. His extensive research and incisive analysis provide ample evidence that Truman chose to use nuclear weapons to finish the war by the fastest means and, more importantly, with the least American casualties. At the war's closing, Truman feared the potential of suffering horrendous American wounded and killed by invading Kyushu and Honshu, Japan. Throughout the book, Giangreco takes aim at "revisionist" historians who claim Truman's motivation to authorize employing the atomic bomb was made for nefarious reasons. The book explores these counterarguments and debunks them with well-argued rationale backed by ample historic evidence, organized in detailed appendices for the reader's consideration.



As the Americans proceeded toward Tokyo, they were met with increasingly stubborn Japanese resistance. American loss rates skyrocketed as a result. For Truman and his Joint Chiefs of Staff, the projected American casualties for the invasion of Japan appeared ominous. The Imperial Japanese Army leadership could easily trace the American advance through the Philippines, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and to Okinawa. The next logical step was Kyushu. Tokyo started to prepare a vast and deadly resistance. To man these defenses, the Japanese could shift hundreds of thousands of troops from Manchuria. Japan was still at peace with Russia, but Tokyo could redeploy these forces home. Giangreco invests much effort to demonstrate how Truman was determined to gain a Soviet declaration of war against Japan and subsequent invasion of Manchuria. Attaining this agreement was Truman's main objective at the 1945 Potsdam Conference. This declaration would tie down the Japanese in Manchuria and potentially reduce opposition for the upcoming American assaults on Kyushu and Honshu. Releasing the atomic bomb was an added threat that might compel Tokyo to surrender. If it worked, the proposed invasion would be canceled and spare American lives. Giangreco investigates other areas that influenced Truman's "hardest decision" of his presidency, including providing logistical and

training support to Soviet forces preparing for a future Manchurian invasion. Additionally, Giangreco assesses how Truman, as a senator, was aware of the Manhattan Project but knew few specifics about the nuclear weapon itself. He also dismisses the idea that Japanese leadership, dominated by the military, was concerned about seeking peace in early 1945.

Giangreco spends considerable effort proving that Truman, contrary to the revisionists, considered the projected fatalities for the Japanese invasion well before he authorized using the atomic bomb. Truman consulted his staff and asked for casualty estimates. One calculation, by former President Herbert Hoover, of 500,000 to 1 million losses was not dismissed and had a significant impact on Truman. This assessment and others shocked Truman, who sought ways to reduce the number of American deaths. In contrast, Truman's critics claim the president's apprehension about casualties was merely a postwar justification for the atomic bomb. Giangreco disproves this claim.

Truman and the Bomb is relevant to today's national security professionals. Giangreco delivers a highly readable account that touches on the political and military aspects of a key presidential decision during war. This momentous decision during World War II is still felt today. Readers can think about all the other considerations that one might make if faced with a similar dilemma to employ a new powerful, unproven weapon. Truman made his judgment based on ending the war immediately and largely without postwar considerations or impacts. Future political and military leaders may one day grapple with decisions involving systems with consequences much like the atomic bomb.

Lincoln, NE: Potomac Books, 2023 • 280 pages • \$34.95

Keywords: Harry S. Truman, atomic bomb, World War II, Japan, Russia

Hinge Points: An Inside Look at North Korea's Nuclear Program

by Siegfried S. Hecker with Elliot A. Serbin

Reviewed by Dr. Gates M. Brown, associate professor of military history,
US Army Command and General Staff College

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One of the major problems with policy formation is that leaders cannot know their adversaries' motives, and it is difficult to comprehend actions and decisions without knowing why people made them. National security concerns only increase the complexity of this problem because of the risks of getting things wrong. In *Hinge Points: An Inside Look at North Korea's Nuclear Program*, Siegfried S. Hecker investigates the issue of misunderstood motives. A professor emeritus at Stanford University and the emeritus director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, he is well suited to explain the technical aspects of North Korea's nuclear program, though it is not the book's central theme. His thesis is that US presidential administrations—from William J. Clinton to Donald J. Trump—missed opportunities to work with North Korea on denuclearization issues. He asserts that North Korean leaders—from Kim Il-Sung through Kim Jong-Un—wanted diplomatic successes and leveraged nuclear weapons in talks and as insurance, in case diplomacy failed.

Hecker's first hinge point is the George W. Bush administration's decision to leave the 1994 Agreed Framework, which came about during the Clinton administration because of North Korea's threat to leave the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The framework mitigated the risk of North Korea's movement toward a nuclear weapon by promising two light-water reactors that were more proliferation proof than the North Korean graphite-mediated reactors and immediate shipments of heavy fuel oil to address energy needs. The second Bush administration, determined to be firmer with North Korea and catalyzed by the September 11 attacks, decided the Agreed Framework was too lenient. Hecker criticizes this decision because it did not effectively balance the risks and benefits of the framework. Key to proliferation concerns, the Agreed Framework mandated that North Korea stay in the Non-Proliferation Treaty and allow for International Atomic Energy Agency inspections. By unilaterally leaving the agreement, Hecker argues that the Bush administration allowed North Korea to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to resume its weapons program without foreign inspectors. *Hinge Points*



contends that US policymakers never understood North Korea's need for security guarantees or their desire to normalize relations with the United States to counter China's influence. North Korean leaders—from Kim Il-Sung to Kim Jong-Un—used a dual-track strategy of diplomacy and nuclear weapons. Hecker asserts North Korean leaders saw their nuclear weapons program as a diplomatic tool to be used to receive promises from the US government not to use military force (especially nuclear weapons) against North Korea. If diplomacy failed to garner this goal, then a nuclear weapons arsenal provided similar security. Hecker criticizes US policymakers for too often seeing aggression and dishonesty in North Korean actions when North Korean leaders were open to real progress toward denuclearization.

Hecker does not discuss the broader context of US-North Korean relations, including the aggression and subversion that characterized North Korean actions from the initial partition of the Korean peninsula. The Korean War confirmed in the minds of US policymakers the inherently aggressive and secretive character of the North Korean regime. Subsequent actions, like the 1968 seizure of the USS *Pueblo* and the attack on US soldiers, Republic of Korea soldiers, and Korean Service Corps personnel in 1976 while they were trimming a poplar tree in the Joint Security Area, further confirmed this view. Acts of aggression—from ballistic missile tests to civilian airplane bombings—continued through the 1980s and 1990s. Presidents must consider these actions when assessing the trustworthiness of any individual North Korean proposal. With this broader view, it is easier to understand why the George W. Bush administration and subsequent administrations were skeptical of North Korea's offers of cooperation.

Hecker's work is most effective in his area of expertise—nuclear technology. He masterfully describes the details of North Korean nuclear weapons technology and explains to readers unfamiliar with the field the proliferation concerns with different reactor and refinement technologies. While lacking integration of the subject into a broader diplomatic and security context, *Hinge Points* should be read by anyone who wants to know more about the development of the North Korean nuclear program and the importance of understanding the technological implications of diplomatic policy and as a good counterpoint to the usual interpretation of North Korean actions as inherently aggressive.

REGIONAL STUDIES

Power and Restraint in China's Rise

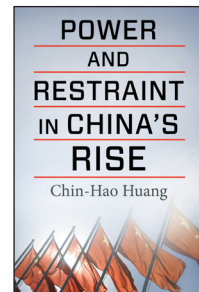
by Chin-Hao Huang

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Georgia Southern University
and US Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership

Author Chin-Hao Huang's *Power and Restraint* argues that small state actors are not as helpless in the international system as we may believe. Huang is an assistant political science professor and head of global affairs studies at Yale-NUS College in Singapore.

Huang's work adds to the existing literature on small-state actors or middle powers, with three crucial theoretical and empirical implications for students of international relations theory. First, it provides a new framework to explain the political phenomenon of China's rise. Second, Huang's probative argument delimits the claim that material and narrow self-interests undergird all state behavior in an anarchic environment. Finally, Huang points out that "strong-state restraint as an observable outcome implies that small states have agency and an important role in inducing such behavior" (6). The critical question as it relates to Huang's work is why would a superpower, in this case China, not force submission of its weaker neighbors?

Huang contends that the argument for restraint rests on a critical causal factor: the consensus of regional security norms. According to Huang, the key to preventing and restraining China's imposition of power on its smaller and less powerful neighbors is a unity of consensus. When China's neighbors speak in unison about geopolitical strategy and security they are more likely to restrain China's use of force. As Huang asserts, "When small states band together and cooperate to develop a strong consensus on their preferred security norms, the clarity in their collective agreement provides a powerful incentive for their large neighbor to consider and adopt foreign policy changes that reflect the shared preference of the smaller states" (14). When small states or middle powers band together and their message is cohesive and unified, China's behavior is more likely to reflect the region's consensus. Conversely, when there is discordance among China's neighbors, China is more likely to exercise its material power capabilities, and power politics become more prominent when there is visible regional disunity. Another important concept discussed by Huang is the idea of legitimacy—the recognition of something (a law passed) or someone (an authority) being



recognized as right and proper. According to Huang, a rising power's aspirations for acceptance and recognition of legitimacy become "key incentives for restraint, even if the material source of power—coercion, threats, and the use of force—are tempting and easily within its reach" (25). In China's case as a rising regional and global power, the Chinese leadership recognizes that in an anarchic world or world of "legitimate great power," legitimacy is a strategy. Huang argues that consultative authoritarianism is "a new model of state-society relationship that encourages the simultaneous expansion of a fairly autonomous civil society and the development of more indirect tools of state control" (36).

China's restraint in its decision-making process and political actions also legitimizes China's idea and vision of China's peaceful rise and the concept of the "Chinese Dream" (102–3). China's peaceful rise is the notion that China's rise does not represent an economic threat to the rest of the world. Instead, China's rise benefits the world economy and prosperity of all nations. The "Chinese Dream," a concept put forward by China's President Xi Jinping, is based on two aspirations. First, China aimed to develop a "moderately well-off" society by 2021. Second, China seeks to become a fully developed nation, or in Walt Rostow's stages of economic development, China will enter the age of high mass consumption by 2049. The years 2021 and 2049 are significant in China's history. The year 2021 represents the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CCP, and 2049 represents the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Given China's rising power and strategic trajectory, Beijing will face two distinct and diametrically opposed foreign policy objectives. On the one hand, China can continue to augment its material capabilities and exert those advantages unilaterally. On the other hand, to legitimize its rise, China can maintain a path of cooperative diplomacy.

Whether China is "destined for war" or becomes a member of a rules-based international system will determine what kind of international system the world will inherit. *Power and Restraint in China's Rise* should be a mandatory reading for sinologists and students at the US Army War College concerned with the future of China's rise.

New York: Columbia University Press, 2022 • 240 pages • \$35.00

Keywords: China, Xi Jinping, Chinese Dream, authoritarianism, diplomacy

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Command: The Politics of Military Operations from Korea to Ukraine

by Lawrence Freedman

Reviewed by Dr. Frank G. Hoffman, lieutenant colonel, US Marine Corps Reserve (retired), and distinguished research fellow, National Defense University

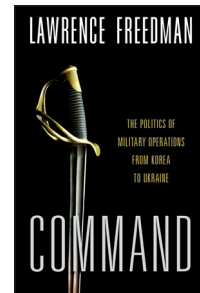
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This book is a valuable set of historical case studies and perspectives that addresses a central element of senior leadership in the conduct of war. *Command* combines a remarkable breadth of history with the insight, subtlety, and clarity that marks all of Lawrence Freedman's works.

The central theme is the impact of politics, both high and low, on operational matters in wartime. Freedman rejects the false premise of the Huntingtonian model, which allocates autonomy to military officers in return for staying out of politics, since an astute sense of politics is essential to high command and the impact it has on strategic and military objectives. As he states in the opening chapter, “[P]olitical sensibility is an essential part of a professional competence, enabling officers to understand the contexts in which they operate, and how the way they act affects these contexts” (8). He extends its influences on other sources of friction, such as institutional politics, personal animosities, bureaucratic frictions, and annoying civilian policymakers that impinge upon seemingly rational decision making.

These overlapping forces strain the skill set of high command, blurring the characteristics of aggressive battle leaders like General George S. Patton with the nuanced negotiating skills of a coalition leader like General Dwight D. Eisenhower. The list of leaders who have mastered the intensive cognitive and emotional demands of this level of command is short but worthy of detailed study.

The Falklands chapter is the book's finest, with meticulous detailing of British political ambitions. The case is a rare example of strong civil-military relationships in London and highlights the importance of Joint integration, given the United Kingdom's lack of a theater commander in this conflict. Equally valuable is the Iraq chapter, which captures the challenges of coalition warfare and the difficulty of aligning allies and the divergent positions of field commanders with their masters back in their capitals. Future civilian policy leaders and military



officers aspiring to higher responsibility will glean numerous lessons from this superb chapter, despite its British perspective.

The one minor fault in the book lies in the author’s reduced emphasis on national and military cultures, which frame each country’s approach to civil-military relations. The Clausewitzian subordination of military matters to civilian control is not a universal construct, though it is a strong norm in Western democracies. That said, Freedman acknowledges the influence of culture and the professional ethos in the case study centered around Ariel Sharon. That chapter, titled “The Very Model of Insubordination: Ariel Sharon and Israel’s Wars,” captures the uniqueness of Israeli politics and its acquiescence to intense disagreement among its senior commanders.

Freedman’s concluding chapter explores the future and the changing character of war, including the impact of artificial intelligence (AI). The rapid introduction of AI will undoubtedly impact staff processes—the synthesis of multisource intelligence, the gaming of options, logistical planning, and so forth. This change should help commanders maintain a competitive edge by facilitating faster decision cycles and freeing up commanders and their teams from mundane matters for more creative applications of human ingenuity. Yet, AI-supported systems will not be capable of understanding the politics that must shape command decisions. Freedman agrees with the British scholar Kenneth Payne, who labeled current AI-enabled decision capacity as strategically naive.

I recommend Freedman’s *Command* because of its valuable exploration of the influence of politics and personality. All higher command courses should embrace this book for its central theme on the confluence of politics and personal character and their impact on operational decisions. The book is also invaluable for recognizing that command evolves with the changing character of war.

Command is a leadership function over people who need to be inspired to achieve success by making great sacrifices under adverse conditions. In the political and military spheres there is no substitute for leadership, and certainly not by neural networks and algorithms. The formations that modern commanders must inspire are not inanimate pawns on a game board. The moral and human dimension of warfare is what gives senior command its most demanding cognitive challenge. The model general of the twenty-first century, like the great captains over the last millennium, cannot escape that reality.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2022 • \$37.99 • 624 pages

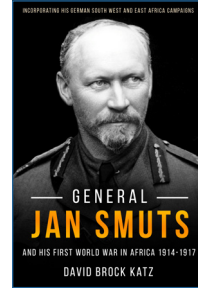
Keywords: Samuel P. Huntington, Carl von Clausewitz, Dwight D. Eisenhower, George S. Patton, Kenneth Payne

General Jan Smuts and His First World War in Africa, 1914–1917

by David Brock Katz

Reviewed by Dr. James D. Scudieri, senior research historian,
Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Jan Smuts represented a senior Afrikaner “bitter ender” who wanted to prolong the struggle against the British during the Second South African (Boer) War of 1899–1902 (8–9). He typified Whites who dismissed Black South Africans’ rights. This biography on his World War I years is impressive. The sources number 26 pages and include South African archival documents, official and otherwise, plus books from publishers in Johannesburg and Praetoria, materials rarely cited in North America.



The book consists of an introduction, eight chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction provides an overview of his major accomplishments and a critique of earlier biographies. Chapter 1 covers the years 1870–1910. Chapter 2 explains the state of domestic South African politics in 1910–14. Chapters 3 and 4 analyze the campaign to conquer German South West Africa, now Namibia. Chapters 5 through 7 detail the operations against German East Africa, now Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda. Chapter 8 is the epilogue and is followed by a conclusion.

The book has several threads of continuity. The first is a historiographical essay on the shortcomings of existing works. Second, Smuts ardently supported British objectives in Africa to promote a Greater South Africa with expanded territory. Katz is not the first to cite South African strategic aspirations and does so with Smuts at center stage. Third, the development of a United Defence Force capable to fight and support these campaigns had to reconcile two conflicting force structures that, in turn, represented two distinct “ways of warfare.” One was English colonial, reflecting British doctrine and methods and noted as slower and prone to frontal attack. The other way was Afrikaner, adept and fond of maneuver warfare with turning movements key for envelopment. Smuts is personification of the latter school. He succeeded British command in East Africa on February 12, 1916, following embarrassing British reverses. This coverage of his German East African operations is as much historiographical treatise as campaign analysis. Katz underlines Smuts’ cumulative experience in the Second South African War, German South West Africa, and

the subjection of the Afrikaner rebellion before taking command in East Africa. The narrative recognizes the punishing climate and geography and is critical of dismissive attitudes on sideshows.

Chapter 8 highlights Smuts and his service at higher levels for the rest of the war. He handed over command in East Africa on January 8, 1917, and joined the Imperial War Conference in March–April 1917. His positive reputation moved him to the British War Cabinet. He intervened to end three domestic strikes in Britain (226–27) and contributed to the reports that ultimately established an independent Royal Air Force in April 1918 (230–37). The conclusion is a summary of chronological events, political and military, closely interwoven with his corrective to the extant historiographical record.

There is considerable tactical detail, including 22 functional maps and several detailed tables. Katz has integrated the strategic, theater, operational, and tactical levels masterfully, demonstrating their iterative relationships. His sharp dichotomy between Boer and British doctrine and ways of warfare is perhaps overdone.

This work is a case study in senior leadership. The context is an emerging nation state with chronic, deep-seated internal divisions. Katz underlines how Britain’s “colonials” had their own national aspirations and strategic interests. They also had to devise a defense policy with forces to wage what is now labeled as large-scale combat operations.

Of greatest importance, Katz renders observations of significance to all historians. He does not submerge Smuts or his individual shortcomings or note how he was representative of racist Afrikaners. An extract from the introduction is worthy of quotation in full: “Contemporary historians who are unable or unwilling to transport their minds into the past, fall into the trap of anachronism. Historians have a duty to account for their subject’s historic conduct in terms of the standards of the time in which it occurred”(xv).

Haverton, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2022 • 288 pages • \$37.95

Keywords: Jan Smuts, South Africa, World War I in Africa, German South West Africa, German East Africa

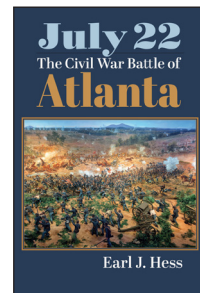
MILITARY HISTORY

July 22: The Civil War Battle of Atlanta

by Earl J. Hess

Reviewed by Dr. Richard L. DiNardo, professor of national military affairs,
US Marine Corps Command and Staff College

Arguably the key event of the Civil War in 1864 was the monthslong campaign conducted across north Georgia by General William T. Sherman's small group of three armies against the Confederate Army of Tennessee, led initially by Joseph Johnston and later by John B. Hood. Sherman claimed the ultimate prize of the contest, Atlanta, on September 2, an event that many claimed guaranteed the reelection of Abraham Lincoln. Earl J. Hess, a prolific scholar of the Civil War, takes a close look at one of the key tactical events of the campaign—Hood's attack on the Army of Tennessee, commanded by Sherman's favorite, Major General James B. McPherson—known to history as the battle of Atlanta.



Hess's account is a blow-by-blow description of the actions of July 22, accompanied by close and shrewd analysis. Far from being an unthinking exercise in hurling men against entrenched troops, Hess credits Hood with employing elements of two corps against a potentially open flank, while Sherman engaged in what he described as a "delicate maneuver" to sever Atlanta's communication lines to the east and south. Hood was aided by Sherman, who had to some degree mismanaged his cavalry, and by Army of Tennessee commander James B. McPherson.

The ultimate failure of the attack, according to Hess, was unfavorable terrain for the attackers, poor command and control by the Confederates, better performance by the Union subordinate commanders than the Confederate commanders (a necessity as McPherson was killed very early in the battle), and determination by Union soldiers to hold the key position, a rise known as Bald Hill. The result was that Sherman still held the critical position, suffering more than 3,700 casualties while inflicting 5,500 on Hood, who could ill afford the losses.

Hess applies criticism and approbation to the commanders on both sides fairly and judiciously. Once engaged, Hood exerted little effort to control the battle. Sherman did a bit more than Hood but, like Hood, left the

tactical actions to his subordinates. Sherman also made no effort to employ his largest force, the Army of the Cumberland, under George Thomas. Although Hess notes that they were confronted by a Confederate corps that was well entrenched, Hess is much more justly critical of McPherson, whose faulty deployment of the Union XV, XVI, and XVII Corps left them vulnerable to a flanking attack. The commander most responsible for Union success was John Logan of the XV Corps, who took over after McPherson's death, and who handled the situation admirably. He was aided by several division and brigade commanders who performed well.

The same could not be said on the Confederate side. Hess could have extended his argument a bit. Historians Douglas Southall Freeman and Gary Gallagher have argued that by 1864, the Army of Northern Virginia was facing a command crisis, owing to the loss of so many able and experienced subordinate leaders. Hess could argue that by July 1864, the Army of Tennessee was in a similar condition. Command at lower levels, especially corps and division, too often had to be entrusted to people promoted to a level beyond their competence, such as Ben Cheatham, who had taken over Hood's Corps. Poor coordination helped foil the initial phase of Hood's attack when the chances of success were greatest, especially after division commander William H. T. Walker was killed.

Regarding the place of the battle in Civil War history, Hess gives it much less importance than previous scholars, most notably Gary Ecelbarger, who argues that the battle of July 22, 1864, was a turning point in the campaign. Instead, Hess regards it as one of a series of engagements in the Union extended campaign that began at Nashville in 1862 and concluded with the capture of Atlanta.

Since the battlefield ultimately disappeared amidst southern suburban sprawl, Hess includes an interesting chapter on the most notable artifact from the battle, *The Battle of Atlanta*, the cyclorama painting that tourists and students of the battle still visit. The research is exhaustive and thorough, a standard one would expect from any work authored by Hess.

Taken all together, this book adds considerably to our knowledge of one of the critical campaigns of the Civil War. Novices and experienced students alike will benefit from reading it.

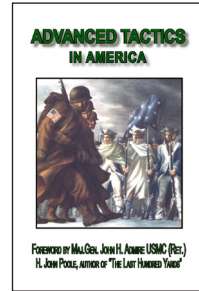
Advanced Tactics in America

by H. John Poole

Reviewed by B. A. Friedman, strategic assessment analyst

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Likely no one knows more about small-unit tactics than H. John Poole. After 28 years of service as an infantryman in the Marine Corps, including tours in Vietnam from 1966–67 and 1968–69, Poole has spent the last 25 years researching small-unit tactics and teaching military units from all US service branches and special operations forces. *Advanced Tactics in America* is his 23rd book on the subject, a prodigious accomplishment. In it, he looks back at American military history, finds a wealth of examples of American small-unit tactics, and concludes with a warning: the US military is ignoring its small infantry units, to its peril. He is undoubtedly correct.



As Ukrainian squads and platoons successfully execute the kind of tactics Poole specializes in, the United States is seemingly uninterested in the actual combat occurring today. The Army is refocusing on division and corps tactics, and the Marine Corps focuses on battalion and regiment tactics. Special operations tactics remain shrouded behind a phalanx of security classification guidelines, their efforts unable to inform the wider infantry community. Even the Close Combat Lethality Task Force, begun in 2018 by Secretary of Defense General James N. Mattis, seems to have done nothing for the effectiveness of American small infantry units, the success of which is the foundation of any tactical and strategic success on land.

Poole's style should be familiar to readers of any of his numerous other books. He writes at a snappy, sometimes frenetic pace that easily holds a reader's attention and is ideal for his intended audience of small-unit leaders. Poole covers a vast array of small-unit actions throughout the American infantry's experience from the French and Indian War to Afghanistan. His strength here, as in his other books, is his devotion to finding sources of insight into tactics anywhere they might be: if even a sentence of an article in some obscure newspaper pertains to his subject, Poole finds it. This devotion has served him well in studying the tactics of adversaries in the previous 22 books, as sources tend to be difficult to find and inaccessible.

Unfortunately, while Poole may be right about his thesis, he also undercuts it. First, while Poole, as usual, assembled a great deal of sources, he includes

many that are questionable and unreliable, like a painter's depiction of World War I combat and the works of military historian S. L. A. Marshall. Other statements are not sourced at all or are insufficiently annotated, like the frequent quotations of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, without any indication of which translation Poole consulted.

The lack of solid sourcing leads Poole to some erroneous conclusions, such as attributing the 2007 success of Coalition sources against insurgents in Sadr City, Iraq, to the use of local militias. The author of this review was there, embedded with the Iraqi Army infantry units that entered Sadr City, and local militias certainly were not. This error is unfortunate because the manner in which the Iraqi Army assaulted Sadr City would have bolstered Poole's argument far better.

Second, he frames the evolution of ground warfare in the long-discredited generations of war style. Third, he paints Russia and China as proponents of bottom-up, decentralized command-and-control systems. While that may have been true at one point, it is certainly not true of today's Russian armed forces and the People's Liberation Army, both of which employ command-and-control philosophies that are far more centralized than the United States'. Fourth, Poole employs an unfortunate amount of racially charged slang—like referring to the Germans as Huns—that has no place in serious analysis.

What *Advanced Tactics in America* lacks in rigor it makes up for in focus. Poole is correct that there is not enough scholarly and analytical focus on small-unit action and maneuver. American infantry personnel should have more than just doctrine and training to help them prepare for combat. The few works of outstanding merit, like Bruce I. Gudmunsson's *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914–1918* (Praeger, 1995), are not always easily available. He also hits the mark for why there is too little upper-echelon attention paid to small-unit tactics—excessive focus on standardization and simplistic drills, which stifle creativity and innovation. For readers interested in the US military's long history of small-unit success, *Advanced Tactics in America* is a good place to start, but without a better foundation in reliable sources, it cannot be a place to stop.

Emerald Isle, NC: Posterity Press, 2023 • 362 pages • \$13.95

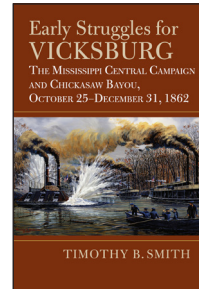
Keywords: Close Combat Lethality Task Force, Secretary of Defense General James N. Mattis, Russia, China, Iraq

Early Struggles for Vicksburg: The Mississippi Central Campaign and Chickasaw Bayou, October 25–December 31, 1862

by Timothy B. Smith

Reviewed by Dr. Mitchell G. Klingenberg, US Army Command and General Staff College

Author Timothy B. Smith is one of the most prolific historians writing about the American Civil War today and perhaps its leading authority on military affairs in the Mississippi River Valley. He has undertaken an ambitious five-volume history of the Vicksburg Campaign, of which this work is the third published installment (though chronologically and sequentially the first title) in the series.



Early Struggles for Vicksburg examines the initial, twin-drive attempt of US forces under General Ulysses S. Grant to capture Vicksburg—the “Gibraltar of the Confederacy.” Smith presents a Grant new to department- and theater-level command and strains to interpret the early phase of the Vicksburg Campaign according to principles outlined in the writings of the nineteenth-century theorist Baron Antoine-Henri Jomini. Throughout, the reader sees a Grant who waged warfare in autumn 1862 by the proverbial book: moving and massing his forces against decisive points; securing advance bases of supply; turning flanks; and threatening lines of communications. Thus, in this first phase, Grant evidenced what Smith and other scholars have identified as the rational science of war—as opposed to its art—more closely associated with Jomini than with other expounders of Napoleonic warfare.

With the privileged place he accords Jominian theory, Smith frames this book as a command study, requiring almost 600 pages to chronicle two months of action culminating in the defeat of US forces at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou. His grasp of the sources is strong, but there is a problem of perspective: the character of the historical evidence marshaled favors a bottom-up, not top-down, approach. Soldiers’ diaries and missives never fail to inspire, but often they are detached from the considerations of senior command. As a result, there exists an interpretive gap between the central premise of the study and the evidence the author employs to advance that argument.

Grant’s autumnal 1862 movements met tactical defeat. While Confederate forces checked Grant’s initial moves on Vicksburg, however, they failed to seize the operational or strategic initiative—the measure of which is the character,

diversity, and number of military options available to a commander to impose his will on the adversary. Even in the grand-strategic picture, despite their victory at the Battle of Fredericksburg in Virginia, Confederates confronted problems as manpower waned, US forces consolidated incremental territorial gains in the South, and decisive victory in the eastern theater remained elusive. In January 1863, despite previous failures, Grant retained the initiative at the operational and strategic levels of war, though his campaign for Vicksburg remained difficult and the movements necessary to capture it complicated.

One wonders whether Chickasaw Bayou proved an inflection point after which Grant jettisoned Jomini's approach to warfare (as Smith suggests) and whether Grant was limited to waging war "by the book" (as Smith imagines). True, Grant hoped his campaign would appeal to the sensibilities of Henry Halleck—a graduate of the United States Military Academy, a student of Jominian theory, the author of *Elements of Military Art and Science* (1846), and in 1862, Commanding General of the Army—in Washington. Nevertheless, to whatever extent Jomini's principles animated Grant's campaign, military operations under review here—Grant's overland approach utilizing the Mississippi Central Railroad and Sherman's joint, expeditionary operation down the Mississippi River from Memphis to the Yazoo River—demonstrate a departure from, not strict adherence to, Jominian principles: for example, Grant utilized exterior (as opposed to interior) lines and divided his forces (separated by the Mississippi River Delta), thereby violating Jomini's principle of mass. In a foreshadowing of future operations, Grant created military dilemmas for the enemy, accepted prudent risk, and demonstrated significant trust (a central tenet of mission command) in General William Sherman.

Early Struggles for Vicksburg delivers mixed results. Smith assembles an impressive amount of research and offers a colorful narrative of the Vicksburg Campaign to December 1862. Yet, his effort to square Grant's early operational art with the principles of Jomini is neither novel nor altogether convincing. Nevertheless, this book illustrates how Grant's setbacks provided important lessons by which the soldier was able to profit. Never an excellent tactician, Grant committed mistakes in this campaign and throughout the war, but he never allowed those errors to assume a quality of finality. So determined, and with tremendous competence, Grant retained the confidence of his troops and President Abraham Lincoln, and thus his command, which increased in scope as the war protracted. In this sense, Smith provides a meaningful picture of General Grant's maturation in the art—and science—of war.

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2022 • 632 pages • \$45.00.

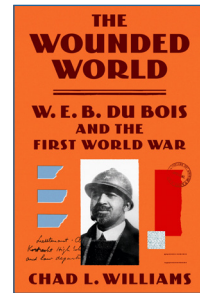
Keywords: Vicksburg Campaign, Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Chickasaw Bayou

The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War

by Chad L. Williams

Reviewed by Dr. Nathan K. Finney, lieutenant colonel, US Army,
Indo-Pacific Command, founder of *The Strategy Bridge* and the *Military Writers Guild*

Following up on his award-winning book *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), Brandeis University professor Chad L. Williams again demonstrates his brilliance and extraordinary writing ability in *The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War*. Although on the surface a biography of W. E. B. Du Bois in the context of World War I, *The Wounded World* approaches the subject from multiple angles and uses the famous intellectual and activist as a lens to interrogate layer after layer of the history of 1914–1963, weaving in war, race, politics, ideology, international relations, citizenship, and memory. It is a tour de force that is also easily digested and, like few books do, leads to frequent moments of simply pondering the beauty of specific sentences. *The Wounded World* must be read with a pencil and tablet in hand.



The beauty of Williams’s latest book is that it wraps four highly complex stories into one. It is a biography of Du Bois and an analysis of his work, including thoughtful and diligent criticism of the work and the ego of the man. It is also the story of the relationships of Black men of the “Talented Tenth” striving for equality among their people, as well as a criticism of Du Bois’s relative dismissal of Black women in that project. At the same time, *The Wounded World* is the story of Du Bois’s unpublished “The Black Man and the Wounded World,” which was to describe and analyze the contribution of Black Americans in World War I. Finally, the book is a masterfully crafted history of World War I and the aftermath for Black Americans. While telling these four rich stories, Williams details how:

“through disillusionment, frustration, and anger, [Du Bois] evolved. World War I and its lessons, personal and historical, fueled his dogged critique of [W]hite supremacy, empire, and, most of all, war itself. His maturation into an uncompromising peace activist would not have been possible without his struggle to write “The Black Man and the Wounded World” and the failure that came with it” (427).

By focusing on Du Bois and the unfinished “The Black Man and the Wounded World,” Williams uses the man and the manuscript as symbols of the unfinished work of inclusive democracy, racial equality, economic justice, and the promise of World War I.

The Wounded World is organized into 12 chapters broken into three sections. The sections detail the chronological sequence of hope, disillusion, and failure—from Du Bois’s hope that World War I would bring positive change to the lives of Black Americans to the disillusionment found in the peace process and the treatment of Black soldiers during and following the war to the failure seen in the deeper retrenchment of White supremacy in the 1920s. These three sections also describe Du Bois’s crafting of “The Black Man and the Wounded World” to capture and publish a history of Black men in the war and detail the frustration in finishing the book and the recognition of the challenges to the legacy of Black participation in the war and to the failure to complete the book due to the vast undertaking and the intervening activity, ultimately overshadowed by the outbreak of World War II.

The Wounded World should be used in professional military education and by soldiers as a staple text for self-study. The themes of historical change, intellectual growth, and impact of military policies will equip leaders with a better understanding of identity, politics, power, and the role of the military in shaping society. As Williams quotes Du Bois’s analysis of World War I, “A nation with a great disease set out to rescue civilization; it took the disease with it in virulent form and that disease of race-hatred and prejudice hampered its actions and discredited its finest profession” (180). Military leaders need to understand that their actions and policies are based in, and flow from, the politics of the day and that the political world impacts the lives of soldiers and civilians alike.

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Keywords: World War I, World War II, W. E. B. Du Bois, Talented Tenth, 1920s

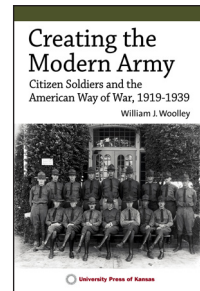
Creating the Modern Army: Citizen-Soldiers and the American Way of War, 1919–1939

by William J. Woolley

Reviewed by Dr. Robert S. Burrell, assistant professor of interdisciplinary studies,
Joint Special Operations University

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Author William J. Woolley, a professor emeritus at Ripon College in Wisconsin, has written a historical gem with *Creating the Modern Army: Citizen-Soldiers and the American Way of War, 1919–1939*. These two decades proved crucial to the US Army that emerged in World War II, and these events shaped the Army in fundamental ways that remain visible. *Creating the Modern Army* offers an enhanced institutional understanding of one of America's finest and most important organizations.



The prevalent topics include the new citizen army, professional military education, the Army vision for itself (in the midst of budget crisis and congressional constraints), and the advancement of Army branches. Woolley also briefly discusses issues regarding race and segregation. This topical approach facilitates a wide discussion on these important subjects without merging them into one timeline. One prevalent theme revolves around the Army's pursuit of training and making ready the ideal citizen soldier, an ideal based on the principles in the US Constitution and the Jeffersonian model—common citizens ready to defend the United States when called upon. Even during this period, the industrialization of America and urbanization of its population created challenges for maintaining a citizen army. Remarkably, Army leadership, Congress, and multiple presidents continued to support this idea—one that might seem antiquated today in light of the professional modern Army, where less than half of one percent of the American public serves.

Another element of the text illuminates the cuts made by Congress and presidential administrations following World War I. The 1920 National Defense Act minimized the Army to fewer than 165,000 soldiers and 14,000 officers. What makes these figures so striking is the growth of the Army two decades later to more than 8 million. Fielding a massive army in such a short time is directly tied to the programs instituted during the interwar years, particularly the implementation of the Reserve Officer Training Corps, the federalization of state militias into a National Guard during

emergencies, and the investments in Citizen Military Training Camps. Despite deficiencies, the Citizen Military Training Camps offered up to 100,000 officers for service in 1939. Meanwhile, the National Guard mobilized 18 of the 29 divisions called up for war following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. In short, “the American army that fought World War II was clearly a citizen army whose leadership was largely trained within the framework of the intuitions created by the National Defense act of 1920” (253).

Woolley describes another important development in the interwar years, the evolution of Army branch structures, including infantry, artillery, coastal artillery, and armor. Simultaneously and relatedly, he outlines the evolution of respective Army bases to include Fort Benning (now Fort Moore), Fort Knox, Fort Leavenworth, Fort Monroe, Fort Riley, and Fort Sill. This breakdown explains how and why infrastructure developed during this critical time, including bases and stations that continue to support Army branch requirements today. Woolley also details the opinions and actions taken by influential key figures in the Army, including generals John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and George C. Marshall (and many other officers and congressional elite), and demonstrates the power and limitations of personal leadership over the evolutionary process.

Woolley draws information from the Library of Congress, the National Archives, US Army archives, and Army-related journals. He demonstrates a commanding knowledge of the debates and internal machinations occurring within the Army during these decades. His professional proficiency as a gray-bearded historian makes this book stand apart as first-rate history published by an expert at the peak of his knowledge and skill. My only complaint about the book is the font. The words appear so small on the page the content can prove challenging to read. That stated, I recommend the book for soldiers as part of their professional education and development. It also proves informative for sailors, airmen, and Marines in understanding their US Army counterparts. Due to the Sustainable History Monograph Pilot, the work is free to download at <https://kansaspress.ku.edu/9780700633029/creating-the-modern-army/>.

If you are looking to expand your knowledge about the US Army, then *Creating the Modern Army* is a must-have on your bookshelf.

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