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Book Reviews

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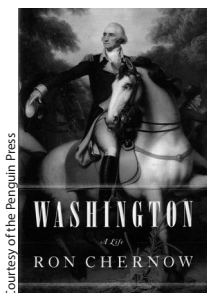
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Book Reviews



New York: The
Penguin Press, 2010

904 pages

\$40.00

Washington: A Life

by Ron Chernow

Reviewed by John K. Walmsley, LTC USA, Assistant
Professor of History, United States Air Force Academy

Building on his recent biography of Alexander Hamilton, Ron Chernow has written an impressive biography of George Washington. Chernow's portrayal of Washington succeeds in presenting a fresh perspective that is both informative and inspiring. Unlike some of the more recent publications on Washington, Chernow presents him in a realistic manner that does not give in to attempts to mythologize his subject. Overall, the book provides a detailed analysis of the situations that influenced Washington and culminated in his earning the title of "the father of his country."

As the title implies, Chernow's study offers a complete account of Washington's life. Dividing his analysis into six phases, the author discusses Washington's role as frontiersman, planter, general, statesman, president, and legend. The result is an in-depth character study describing his family background, personal and professional relationships, and constant quest to improve himself and his standing in the eyes of others. The early analysis depicts a young man who was deeply ambitious, but struggled with insecurities due to his "defective" education. Denied a formal education due to his father's early death, Washington toiled hard to sharpen his intellect, all the while believing himself at a disadvantage when working with better-educated contemporaries. Undoubtedly, this inspired Washington to develop "a seriousness of purpose and fierce determination to succeed, that made him stand out in any crowd." Chernow emphasizes that Washington, although often very lucky in his circumstances, benefitted most from his own resolve.

Chernow's study demonstrates how Washington matured and grew into his responsibilities. It is the depiction of his subject's growth that is the most intriguing aspect of this work. His time in the wilderness as a surveyor and later as a militia leader during the French and Indian War inured him to hardship and prepared him for the challenges he would face as a commanding officer. Although an elitist, his time as Commander of the Continental Army transformed him into a more egalitarian individual who would slowly learn to love the men he initially looked down upon during the early days of the American Revolution.

His time as Commander also reinforced a conviction of the importance of a strong centralized government. A weak Congress that was continually unable to collect sufficient funds from the states to support his forces plagued Washington throughout the war. Washington also benefitted from his political experience in Virginia's House of Burgess and the two sessions of the Continental Congress. He had learned early on the value of silence, and despite

being surrounded by “talkative egomaniacs,” he grew into a “calm figure of sound judgment” able to unify the dynamic personalities that surrounded him as commanding general and president.

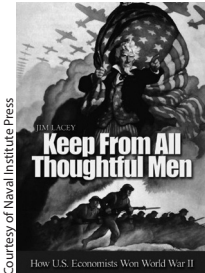
Chernow knocks Washington off his pedestal and displays the man’s faults and weaknesses. He discusses Washington’s infatuation with Sally Fairfax, the wife of his friend George Fairfax. Unfortunately, Chernow does not fully explore the implications of Washington’s disloyalty to George Fairfax. He views Washington’s “passionate attachment” to Sally as an impractical, youthful obsession that allowed for the more enduring relationship he had with his wife Martha. Martha would serve as an outlet for his innermost thoughts and doubts and provide the emotional stability and devotion lacking in other relationships.

Chernow also emphasizes Washington’s mercurial struggle with slavery. A slave owner since the age of eleven, he was both a harsh disciplinarian and a humane administrator. He provided his slaves with a certain degree of comfort and ample medical care, but was incredibly demanding of their workload and production. He was at his most baffling when, after he had secured the freedom of the colonists from Great Britain, he set about reclaiming his human property from the British. Surrounded by the abolitionist sentiment of numerous aides during the war, Washington gradually modified his views on slavery and even amended an earlier decision not to allow African-Americans to serve in the Continental Army. During his final years, he recognized the moral dilemma and threat slavery represented to the nation he had sacrificed so much for and, in an attempt to establish some precedent, was the only founding father to free his slaves upon his death.

The most significant aspect of *Washington: A Life* is its examination of Washington’s development as a leader. Leadership was not a trait that came naturally, but one that Washington meticulously created. As a leader, Washington displayed incredible courage under fire, demonstrating a desire to lead from the front, an openness to dissenting opinions, an ability to motivate and inspire loyalty, aggressiveness, and adaptability. Two of his greatest assets were his ability to learn from his mistakes and an understanding of his limitations. Commissioned as a Lieutenant Colonel at the age of twenty-two, Washington made numerous mistakes throughout his military career, but rarely repeated them. Through his experiences during the French and Indian War, he learned the value of “patient moderation,” a trait he continued to use for the remainder of his life. His experiences during the American Revolution taught him to recognize, despite his desire for a “climactic battle that would end the conflict with a single stroke,” it would be necessary to follow a strategy of attrition. The loss of New York City, followed by the losses of Fort Lee and Fort Mifflin in 1776, demonstrated the futility of defending fixed positions or towns against the British. Despite the frequent criticisms levied against him by members of Congress and fellow officers, Washington knew it was the preservation of the Army that would decide the outcome of the Revolution.

Chernow offers a welcomed and insightful look into a personality of one who so many think they already know. Although the length of the book

appears daunting, the careful construction of chapters keep the reader moving. Meticulously researched, this work relies heavily upon secondary sources and *The Papers of George Washington* project sponsored by the University of Virginia. Chernow does a marvelous job of depicting George Washington as a man struggling to rise to the occasion, and succeeding.



Keep From All Thoughtful Men: How U.S. Economists Won World War II

by Jim Lacey

Reviewed by Michael J. Fratantuono, Associate Professor, Department of International Studies and Department of International Business & Management, Dickinson College

Annapolis, MD:
Naval Institute
Press, 2011

304 pages

\$34.95

Over the past two decades, economic forces have contributed to changing structure and rising interdependence within the global system. As a result, national leaders and security analysts now factor economics into their strategic thinking. Despite that contemporary

mindset, Professor Jim Lacey—a one-time US infantry officer and now consultant, analyst, and Ph.D. historian—believes that the majority of his colleagues and nearly all of the general public neither understand nor appreciate the leading role that professional economists played during the years 1941 to 1944. He attributes that blind spot to shortcomings in previous scholarly work. His goal is to set the record straight.

Professor Lacey's central premise is that a small group of economists were able to demonstrate in authoritative terms that the strategic plans formulated during 1942 by political leaders and military officers were not economically feasible. As a result of their analysis, leaders decided to postpone a full-scale invasion of Europe from 1943 to June of 1944. If the economists had not been persuasive and the United States and her allies had moved ahead in 1943, soldiers, sailors, and airmen would not have had the material assets needed to achieve a decisive outcome. An earlier invasion of Europe would have certainly prolonged World War II which, in turn, would have necessitated much higher costs in terms of both blood and treasure; more speculatively, it may have even led to a different ultimate outcome.

Professor Lacey highlights two innovations in the field of economics that were important to the war effort. First was the revolution in the conduct of monetary policy that proved to be essential in financing the war. That is, the policymakers at the Federal Reserve, the central bank of the United States, became adept at influencing the actions of commercial bankers for the purposes of indirectly controlling the US money supply. They did so by using the tools that are now commonplace, such as altering required reserve ratios and discount rates and engaging in open-market operations. Those actions helped maintain high levels of liquidity in the banking system. That meant that private

sector firms could borrow the funds they needed for investing in new plants and equipment at relatively low rates of interest. The key implications of those policies are first, that in contrast to the experiences of other countries in other wars, the US mobilization was financed as much by money creation as it was by government borrowing. Second, that in light of that first fact, mobilization occurred in a growing economy rather than in an economy of fixed magnitude.

The second innovation was the creation of the so-called National Income and Product Accounts, which provide to this day the conceptual framework for measuring economic activity on a national level. The framework, which was developed by Simon Kuznets (an accomplishment which earned him the 1971 Nobel Prize in Economics), enabled the team of economists responsible for ramping industrial activity toward military ends—a team which also included Robert Nathan and Stacey May—to make plausible estimates of economic magnitudes; to assess the feasibility of the “wish-list” and “must-need” items identified by military strategists; and to make recommendations about the allocation of scarce resources to competing channels and the sequencing of production activities.

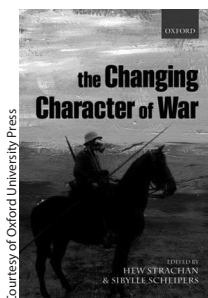
Professor Lacey describes the efforts of the three protagonists—who worked in the Planning Division of the Office of Production Management during the war years—to detail the economic logic for the war effort in an environment characterized first by newly emerging government agencies that at the outset often worked at cross-purposes, and second by powerful and combative bureaucrats and military officers who frequently had their own agendas.

Professor Lacey references that context when he finally reveals the inspiration for the rather unusual title of his book. He describes the reaction of General Brehon Sumervell (who as head of the US Army Service of Supply reported directly to Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall) to reports written by Kuznets that called for scaling back expectations and delivery schedules in order to ensure smooth delivery of munitions, and for creating a “super-organization” within the federal government that could coordinate military strategy and economic production. After reading the report, Sumervell wrote to division-head Nathan: “To me this is an inchoate mass of words. . . . I am not impressed with either the character or basis of the judgments expressed in the reports and recommend they be carefully hidden from the eyes of thoughtful men.”

In part prelude to and in part by-product of making the case for the economists, the author acknowledges at the outset that he must debunk four myths shared by many historians. First, contrary to popular belief, a document authored by Lieutenant General Albert Wedemeyer in 1941 did not provide the foundation for the US strategic planning effort. Second, it was not British intransigence at the Casablanca Conference in January of 1943 that led General George C. Marshall to change his thinking about a possible allied invasion of Europe in 1943; instead, it was the estimates made by the economists. Third, the nearly impossible production goals that President Roosevelt articulated in early 1942 did not serve either a useful or inspirational purpose; if they had not been harnessed by the logic of the economists, the US economy would have

enormously suffered. Fourth, although American households had to forego purchases of durable goods such as automobiles and appliances, they did not experience undue hardship or an overall decline in consumption; instead, household consumption levels rose along with the overall economy.

Professor Lacey successfully develops his arguments in painstaking and methodical fashion, as reflected in the fact that the book includes nearly 120 pages of appendixes, notes, and bibliographic references. For that he deserves strong compliments. Nonetheless, the book is essentially a retrospective work of narrative history. Since it is not informed by any overarching theoretical framework from fields that might be relevant, such as leadership or organizational theory, the book does not explicitly offer any forward-looking lessons learned or generalizations. Furthermore, with respect to style, the narrative is densely packed with details and is not an easy read. For those reasons, while the book will find favor among those who have a strong interest in military history or in rethinking the role of economics and logistics in warfare, it will not be popular with a wide audience.



Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011

564pages

\$110.00

The Changing Character of War

edited by Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers

Reviewed by John Nagl, President of the Center for a New American Security

In the aftermath of al Qaeda's attacks on the United States in September 2001, the British Leverhulme Trust awarded Oxford University a grant for a five-year study to examine what it called "The Changing Character of War." The result is this ambitious edited volume, consisting of twenty-seven essays along with an introduction and conclusion that attempt to tie them together into a coherent whole—a remarkably difficult task, given their widely varying subjects.

The leader of this effort is the exquisitely qualified Hew Strachan, Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford's All Souls College and noted historian of the First World War. Assisted by Sibylle Schiepers, who teaches at St. Andrews, he has assembled many of the United Kingdom's best thinkers on war and international relations, along with several Americans and a scattering of authors from around the world. The focus was to understand what appeared to be, at least on this side of the Atlantic, a revolution in the character of warfare in which nonstate actors were suddenly able to challenge the most powerful state in the world.

The historians who wrote most of the essays are unsurprisingly skeptical about the magnitude of the apparent change—a skepticism which appears more firmly grounded the more the September 11th attacks recede into history. They find more continuity than change in the relationship between the state and war as best explained by Carl von Clausewitz. Napoleon harnessed the power of

the state to raise armies and wage war in a true revolution that remains the most important change in the character of war in modern times despite the increasing ability of nonstate actors to use the technology developed by states against them.

The book begins with a section titled “What Has Changed?” and an excellent essay by Azar Gat, who observes the same decline in the occurrence of great power war over time noted by Stephen Pinker in *The Better Angels of Our Nature*, for many of the same reasons: modernization, democratization, and technological innovation. The section concludes with Audrey Kurth Cronin’s “Change and Continuity in Global Terrorism,” which similarly casts doubt on the idea that the character of warfare has changed dramatically despite al Qaeda’s innovations in motivations, methods, mobilization, morphology, and mindset; her essay is a significant remedy to what she describes as “the ahistorical and amnesiac approach to global terrorism that prevailed in the post-9/11 era.” Between these two essays rest very different ones on “The Western Way of War Before 1800” and “The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars” that are but tangentially related to the immediate questions the volume intends to address.

This problem of connecting disparate and disconnected strands continues through the remaining four sections; an essay on “Democracy and War in the Strategic Thought of Giulio Dohet,” while one of the best pieces written on that thinker, is not especially on point, although Alia Brahim’s “Religion in the War on Terror” and Stathis N. Kalyvas’ “The Changing Character of Civil Wars, 1800-2009” offer significant insight into the core questions that the editors have set for themselves. Other notable submissions include Bruce Hoffman’s “Comparative Demographic Depiction of Terrorists and Insurgents in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries,” which notes that the average age of terrorist fighters has for generations held steady at 24, with leaders less than a decade older; P. W. Singer’s “Robots at War: The New Battlefield,” a succinct summary of his groundbreaking book *Robots at War*; US Army War College Professor Antulio Echevarria’s short essay on “American Strategic Culture”; and Hew Strachan’s excellent “Strategy in the Twenty-First Century,” which discusses the difference between the Cold War, when “the relationship between war and policy lost its dynamic quality precisely because it was used to prevent war, not to wage it.” This offering continues with an examination of the current era of long, irregular wars in which governments and military forces unused to waging protracted wars have had to relearn old lessons about the relationship between the people, their governments, and their armies.

The Changing Character of War, despite its occasional diversions down historical rabbit holes, is essentially a story not of a dog that didn’t bark but of a dog that won’t hunt. The shibboleths that resounded in the United States in the immediate aftermath of al Qaeda’s attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center—the ideas that “September 11th changed everything,” that the rules which had historically governed strategy no longer applied, that the United States could and should take not just preemptive but preventive actions

against states that presented possible threats—have been seen in the cold light of the morning after to have been not just incorrect, but deeply harmful to their originators. It was not the attacks themselves, but America's mistakes in responding to them, that caused the most damage to the well-being of the world's sole superpower.

Strahan challenges those who labor in these vineyards with the observation that "Strategic theory has still not adequately responded to the absence of 'general war', not just since 1990 and the end of the Cold War, but since 1945 and the end of the Second World War." With this book, many of the world's best strategic theorists have responded to the challenges of the post-September 11th world and found them not to be particularly new or even especially challenging when examined in the proper historical context. This is a real service to the United States, one for which both Strachan's collaborators and the Leverhulme Trust deserve genuine American gratitude. Understanding the hard lessons of the past decade will be the work of a generation that has been schooled in war but has not had much time to reflect on what it has seen. *The Changing Character of War* is a good place to begin contemplating what is new and what is not, but has had to be relearned at such a heavy cost because of our own errors.

Patton's Third Army in World War II

by Michael Green and James D. Brown

PATTON'S THIRD ARMY
IN WORLD WAR II



Michael Green & James D. Brown

Courtesy of Zenith Press

Minneapolis,
Minnesota: Zenith
Press, 2010

288 pages

\$50.00

Reviewed by James R. Oman, COL (USA Retired),
Director, Senior Service College Fellowship Program,
Defense Acquisition University

Authors Michael Green and James D. Brown have collaborated to produce a richly illustrated publication that provides a comprehensive battle history of the United States Third Army in World War II. As is the case with most illustrated tomes, this work is loaded with photographs, more than 400. The majority of these photographs are from the National Archives and to a lesser extent from the Patton Museum as well as from other assorted collections. Notably, each of the photographs is accompanied by a detailed caption. The captions provide context and tell the "rest of the story" of the daily life of the soldier, the weapons of war, and the horrors of combat and its aftermath.

Patton's Third Army in World War II differs from many similar books in that it includes high-quality maps, detailed biographies on key American and British leaders, and excellent excerpts from earlier publications. The excerpts provide snippets into Patton's views on war, weaponry, the enemy, and the military profession in general. The inclusion of each of these broad topic areas contributes to the overall richness of the text and make for an interesting read.

While the first two chapters provide the strategic setting and address Patton's role in Operation Overlord and Cobra, the heart of *Patton's Third Army in World War II* traces the Third Army's combat operations from its activation in

France on 1 August 1944 through Victory in Europe (V-E) Day on 8 May 1945. Central to the August 1944 to May 1945 bookends is the richly described, well documented, yet nearly unbelievable feat of arms exhibited by the leaders and soldiers of the Third Army during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. Particularly notable was the skillful manner in which the command pivoted 90 degrees, changing their direction of attack from East to North as they led the Allied effort to relieve the beleaguered American forces in Bastogne. These operations occurred during one of the worst winters on record. To place their feat in modern parlance, a paragraph found in the Introduction says it best:

To understand the significance of Third Army's turn to relieve the Bulge, imagine a morning rush-hour commute in a large city. Add to the problem a severe snowstorm. Now imagine what would happen if everyone in the gridlock received a new job in a different town while on the way to work. Further imagine that all the gas stations and restaurants along the new route are closed, because they didn't expect the morning traffic. Imagine that everyone in the traffic stream slept in his car the previous night, and most hadn't slept in a real bed for over three months. Lastly, imagine that everyone had to arrive at his new job in the order in which he started his original destination. You have only scratched the surface of understanding what it takes to move an army in the middle of battle.

Each contributor provides a wealth of knowledge, research, and bonafides to this effort. Green is an accomplished researcher and a prolific writer, having written several books on Patton. Brown served twenty years in the US Army as an armor officer to include a stint as a professor of engineering at the United States Military Academy. Green and Brown have worked together previously and published *War Stories of D-Day* and *War Stories of the Battle of the Bulge*. Their individual backgrounds as well as their earlier collaborations undoubtedly played a significant role in the production of this well-crafted book.

The 13 exceptionally detailed and illustrative color maps are appropriately placed to add value, clarification, and further definition to Third Army's actions. Each map provides a chronological snapshot of a major operation or campaign. The maps graphically depict Third Army's relentless eastward push across central Europe, beginning in France, through Belgium, and into Germany sweeping the Wehrmacht and SS units before it.

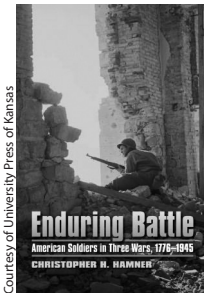
The nearly one dozen biographies culled from the National Archives are focused on the general officers who either supervised or worked with or for General Patton. They include familiar names such as Eisenhower, Bradley, and Montgomery, and some who are not as well known such as Weyland, Walker, Gaffey, and Gay. Each leader's biography adds to the overall insight into the individual's diverse background and, in a number of cases, includes Patton's perspective on the individual.

The more than two dozen excerpts from *War As I Knew It* by Patton and *The Unknown Patton* by Charles M. Province expand the picture of Patton as a leader. The topics included Patton's thoughts related to the duties of an officer, military cemeteries, forward observers, fire and movement, and decorations, to name but a few.

At the end of the day, an organization and its commander are evaluated based on their achievements. In this regard, the Third Army led by General George S. Patton, as measured by the US Army's statistics, was a highly effective organization. The following makes that case:

In 281 days of combat, Third Army saw 21,441 men killed, 99,224 wounded, and 16,200 missing. Non-battle casualties stood at 111,562. Patton's *Third Army* managed to seize 81,823 square miles of territory Estimated casualties among the German forces that faced Third Army in battle accounted for 47,500 killed and 115,700 wounded. In total, Third Army captured 1,280,688 German military personnel between 1 August, 1944 and 13 May 1945.

Patton's Third Army in World War II is a superb book as well as a great read; it captures the Third Army's many exploits and General Patton's accomplishments, as well as graphically depicting the human dimension of leadership and the cost of war.



Lawrence:
University Press of
Kansas, 2011

281 pages

\$29.95

Enduring Battle: American Soldiers in Three Wars, 1776-1945

by Christopher H. Hamner

Reviewed by Robert Previdi, author of *Civilian Control versus Military Rule*

The book is an attempt to compare the combat experience of American forces in three wars: the War of Independence, Civil War, and World War II. The author's primary thesis is to explain the role of fear on the part of soldiers as the technologies of war make it an ever deadlier environment. Hamner, an assistant professor of history at George Mason University, opens with a chapter contrasting the Battle of Cowpens during the War of Independence, the Battle of Shiloh during the Civil War, and the Battle of the Hurtgen Forest during the Second World War from the combat soldier's viewpoint.

There is a great deal of interesting factology in the book, but its overall comprehension would have been greatly increased if greater attention had been applied to its editing. For example, if the paragraphs were condensed, the readability would have been markedly improved. There is little question the book makes a number of poignant observations; but in terms of supporting the author's thesis, the book is missing an overarching concept that would link the material together in a cogent manner. The result is a great deal of redundancy of facts and conclusions.

The author explores how the soldiers of the three wars experienced fear and what could be done to alleviate it. Hamner makes the point that for every soldier fear, at some point in combat, causes immobilization. A soldier can only fight so long before fear incapacitates him for combat. The reality associated with fear and overcoming it was understood by America's military

as it transitioned and adopted its training, conditioning, and leadership from the War of Independence to World War II.

Professor Hamner explains that even when the battlefield adapted to new technologies, soldiers often had a difficult time inculcating these changes. He quotes from a 1941 US Army Field Manual to make this point: “Man is the fundamental instrument in war; other instruments change but he remains relatively constant.”

Hamner believes imagination is one of the leading causes of fear and cowardice in combat. That is why, to teach individuals about the horrors of combat, soldiers received far more innovative training related to the hardships of war during World War II. The thought being that there are actions soldiers can take to decrease fear, thereby increasing their survival in combat. Most interesting is the author’s belief that training can help offset fear but it cannot eliminate it to the point where a soldier can fight indefinitely. The determination is that a man can only deal with the many aspects of fear for a limited duration.

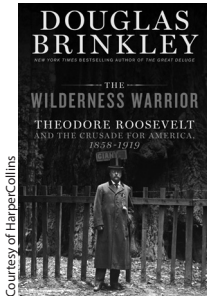
The author concludes that being shot at in combat had varying impacts as the technology changed. “The isolation of the empty battlefield [during World War II] helped encourage that sensation of being singled out and targeted specifically.” Therefore, when the battlefield was dispersed, the result was a greater focus on the individual.

According to Professor Hamner, leadership in combat is based on competence. Effective leadership can help to offset some fear—but the reality of the battlefield will eventually overwhelm the positive effect of leadership. He writes: “Combat leadership derives much of its power from the simple fact that people in stressful situations often want to be told what to do.” The main function of a leader in combat then is to take responsibility for the men being led. Leadership involves not only competence and experience but also an attitude that soldiers can believe in and identify with.

Professor Hamner uses a quote from Civil War General Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain to explain valor: “love or bond of comradeship.” He also determines there are other reasons to explain courage and persistence on the battlefield. The Americans did well in the defense of their country during the Revolutionary War because of the character and determination of men such as George Washington. Another outstanding example of such character and determination was the Finns when, against all odds, in the defense of their country, this little nation fought the Soviet Union in the Winter War of 1939-40 and in the Continuation War of 1941-44. Finland exists today because of the character, courage, and will of its people. There are a number of lessons to be learned from what the Finns accomplished.

The author references the work of S. L. A. Marshall in *Men Against Fire* to support a number of his assertions. I would recommend accepting such support with a grain of suspicion and reading John Whiteclay Chambers II’s article “S. L. A. Marshall’s Men Against Fire: New Evidence Regarding Fire Ratios” in *Parameters*’ Autumn 2003 issue.

This book has value, but it should have been condensed into a more logical form. The redundant manner of presentation detracts from its logical flow of information, readability, and understandability.



New York:
HarperCollins, 2009

940 pages

\$34.99

The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America

by Douglas Brinkley

Reviewed by Dr. William P. Leeman, Assistant Professor of History, Salve Regina University, and author of *The Long Road to Annapolis: The Founding of the Naval Academy and the Emerging American Republic*

Portraying Theodore Roosevelt as a “wilderness warrior” and employing military imagery to describe his environmentalism and crusade for conservation, Douglas Brinkley provides a detailed study of Roosevelt’s interaction with the natural world and his efforts to preserve it before and during his historic presidency. Brinkley’s Roosevelt is a great, if sometimes contradictory, champion of the American wilderness, obsessively striving to protect American wildlife while frequently indulging in big game hunting. Brinkley credits Roosevelt with launching the modern conservation movement in the United States and confirms his status as the nation’s first true environmental president.

The first 400 pages of the book examine Roosevelt’s encounters with nature and his early conservation efforts during the period before his rise to the presidency. As a child with health problems, young Roosevelt found comfort in the fresh air of the outdoors and quickly became a naturalist and wildlife enthusiast. A devoted disciple of Charles Darwin, Roosevelt first read Darwin’s classic work, *On the Origin of Species*, as a teenager and ultimately adopted Darwin’s theory of evolution through competition and struggle as his philosophy of life. Often advocating what he called “the strenuous life,” Roosevelt was convinced that true American manhood required an immersion in nature and the wilderness for ultimate fulfillment.

Perhaps the most formative experience for Roosevelt came in 1884 when, following the death of his wife and mother on the same day, Roosevelt temporarily abandoned his career in New York politics and moved west to the Dakota Territory to live a rancher’s life. This experience gave Roosevelt a new dimension to his character and public image—an elite and scholarly eastern politician, but also a frontier cowboy and big game sportsman. Roosevelt was equally comfortable in the aristocracy of New York society, the ultra-competitive world of New York politics, and the rough and pure masculine environment of the Dakota Badlands. Even his writings demonstrated this unique character. He was the author of a number of scholarly works on naval history and western expansion as well as ornithological studies, books on hunting, and accounts of his adventures in the Dakota Territory.

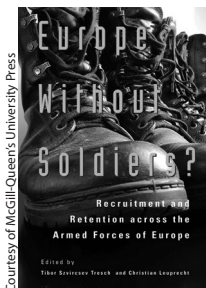
After completing his Dakota sojourn, Roosevelt continued to advance his political career, serving on the US Civil Service Commission, as police commissioner of New York City, and as assistant secretary of the navy. Roosevelt, in the words of naturalist John Burroughs, was a “live wire,” full of energy and enthusiasm on a wide range of subjects including politics, urban reform, civil service, military affairs, conservation, history, and wildlife. Roosevelt was the force behind the establishment of the Bronx Zoo and used his social Darwinist theories to justify the Spanish-American War. Resigning his position at the Navy Department to become colonel of the Rough Riders, a volunteer cavalry unit, Roosevelt used his military service in Cuba to continue his observations in ornithology and natural history. Capitalizing on his wartime fame, Roosevelt was elected governor of New York in 1898. As governor, he sought scientific solutions to environmental problems, strictly enforced fish and hunting laws, incorporated geography and natural history into New York public school curricula, created forest reserves in the Adirondacks and Catskills, and replaced political appointees with professionally trained scientists for the New York State Fisheries, Game, and Forest Commission.

After briefly serving as vice president, he ascended to the presidency upon the assassination of William McKinley in 1901. Clearly recognizing the threats to the environment posed by industrialization, logging, overgrazing, excessive hunting, oil drilling, and population growth, Roosevelt built on the limited conservation efforts of his predecessors and made environmental protection one of the main features of his administration. A strong sense of nationalism colored Roosevelt’s environmentalism. America’s natural wonders should be a source of national pride for all Americans and the president was determined to preserve them for future generations. To Roosevelt, national parks reflected America’s democratic principles by offering all Americans, not just the elite, the opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. Among his legislative triumphs were the Newlands Act of 1902, a revolutionary irrigation program for the West, and the Antiquities Act of 1906, which authorized the president to designate “historical landmarks, historic preservation structures, and other objects of scientific interest” as national monuments. Roosevelt wielded this act like a weapon against congressional intransigence and corporate greed, unilaterally protecting America’s landscapes, wildlife, and natural wonders. During his presidency, he created or enlarged 150 national forests, 51 national bird reservations, 6 national parks, and 18 national monuments (some of which, such as the Grand Canyon, were later enlarged into national parks).

Among the strengths of the book are its unifying theme of Roosevelt being a “wilderness warrior” and its generally balanced approach to the subject. Brinkley uses military imagery throughout the book, portraying Roosevelt as waging a crusade to preserve the environment. Comparing Roosevelt’s efforts to secure wildlife protection legislation to a cavalry charge, Brinkley depicts Roosevelt as an environmental commander-in-chief, with park rangers and game wardens as “soldiers” in his war against pollution and the destruction of America’s wilderness. The author also includes some interesting information

on the US Army's role in protecting America's national parks during the period 1886-1918, to include defense against poaching, trespassing, timber harvesting, mineral extraction, and the defacing of natural wonders. Brinkley's study is generally balanced in its analysis of Theodore Roosevelt. While clearly favorable to the president, Brinkley points out the apparent contradictions in his character (for example, Roosevelt's hatred of animal cruelty and his obsession with hunting) as well as his less-than-noble, "white man's burden" view of western expansion and American imperialism. Brinkley also ably describes Roosevelt's motivations for forest preservation as not simply environmental, but also based in personal animosity: "In a sadistic way that no historian, no journalist, and no political commentator can overstate, Roosevelt *enjoyed* making the timber companies suffer."

The book does, however, have some significant weaknesses. It is plagued by an excessive amount of detail. While every author wants his study to be comprehensive, Brinkley takes it too far and includes too much minutiae, particularly concerning Roosevelt's ornithological observations, camping trips, and hunting expeditions. The excessive detail inevitably leads to tangents of limited relevance. A more serious weakness is the book's conclusion. Brinkley ends abruptly with the inauguration of Roosevelt's hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft. While this was the culmination of Roosevelt's presidency, it was by no means the end of Roosevelt's environmental crusade. Several post-presidential events of significance are omitted, including Roosevelt's famous African safari, his quarrel with Taft (which was in part because of their differences concerning environmental policy), and his 1912 Progressive Party presidential campaign. Although the inclusion of these events would lengthen an already hefty volume, more rigorous editing earlier in the book would have made space for an examination of Roosevelt's later years.



Kingston, Ontario:
McGill-Queen's
University Press,
2010

272 pages

\$85.00

Europe Without Soldiers? Recruitment and Retention across the Armed Forces of Europe

edited by Tibor Szvircsev Tresch and Christian Leuprecht

Reviewed by Matthew D. Morton, LTC, USA, Regional Fellow, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

This book is a collection of papers presented at the Tenth Biennial Conference of the European Research Group on Military and Society (ERGOMAS) at the Swedish National Defense College in Stockholm in June 2009. In total, the fifteen chapters and introduction cover a wide variety of issues in a host of European countries focused on the subjects of recruitment and retention. Chapter authors represent a diverse field of academics, researchers, military sociologists, historians, and political scientists. The collection of narrowly focused chapters are loosely organized into four topics: demographic aspects and

minorities in the armed forces; conscript-based armed forces and recruitment; the professionalization of armed forces; and the recruitment and retention of professional soldiers in the armed forces. Fortunately, the editors have prepared an overarching introduction that distills the independent findings into broad conclusions while highlighting the notable offerings contained in each chapter.

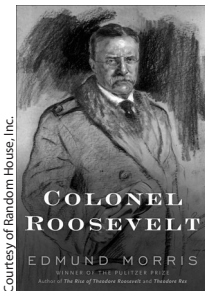
Having abandoned conscription as a national policy nearly forty years ago, an American might ask what could possibly be gained by wading through a book solely focused on Europe's growing pains with the same transition. Those calling for a return to conscription as a means to reconnect the United States' people to the United States' armed forces will be equally disappointed to learn that two of the three countries featured in the conscription section have subsequently abandoned the practice, most notably Germany. For all the differences between the United States and Europe, common themes do emerge such as the influence of demography, education, personal values, health, and the effect of expeditionary operations.

As it turns out, the United States is not as unique as we often think it is, at least when it comes to gathering the raw material to build an army and retaining those who have been trained. Tradeoffs associated with quality versus quantity are present on the Continent and in the United Kingdom. The volatility of the labor market precludes long-term planning as well. And perhaps the most interesting term to emerge from the book, "post materialist," captures the idea that European youth is just not that interested in national service. Post materialism, when combined with obesity, alcohol abuse, and a demographically shrinking pool of available youth, poses increasing challenges in Europe. Free access to higher education in much of Europe further complicates the equation. At the other end of the spectrum, retaining the best among those who have been trained, especially women and minorities, is an increasing challenge in Europe where professional military service continues to be perceived as being the domain of white males. This challenge is further complicated by the more recent emphasis on expeditionary operations, which come with the associated costs of social disconnection and potential risks to life and limb.

Perhaps the most important, even if unintended, message to emerge from this collection of essays is that in the post-Iraq era of increasingly restricted defense budgets and decreasing manpower, the United States can little expect its European allies to do any more than they have over the last ten years. A renewed focus on capacity building will require American servicemembers with the maturity and intelligence to adapt to the nuances of the new tasks presented. The authors of these essays, in many cases, have recognized the same need, but point to the challenges they are currently experiencing in recruiting and retaining the kinds of people needed for the tasks so different than those the conscript armies once fielded. No doubt the current worldwide economic crisis will help maintain a steady flow of talented young people to the offices of recruiters in Europe and North America looking for challenges, but this too shall pass. Europe will never be without soldiers, nor will the United States, but

attracting the right kinds of people to perform the missions anticipated in the post-industrial age will present increasing challenges.

At a cost of \$85.00, and given the ephemeral nature of the statistical studies at the heart of what started out as working group findings presented at a conference in 2009, this is an unlikely candidate for an individual's bookshelf. If it is available at one's local library, it would be worth the time to peruse those chapters that are of particular interest. The current Euro Zone crisis will certainly drive new studies with updated findings that will be readily available in military and academic journals.



Courtesy of Random House, Inc.
New York: Random House, Inc., 2010

766 pages

\$35.00

Colonel Roosevelt

by Edmund Morris

Reviewed by Leonard J. Fullenkamp, COL (USA Retired), Professor of Military History, US Army War College

Colonel *Roosevelt*, the final installment in Edmund Morris's three-volume biography of our 26th president, covers the last decade of Theodore Roosevelt's (T.R.'s) life, spanning the events between 1909, when he left the White House, and his death in 1919. Had T. R., Harvard graduate, New York State Assemblyman, rancher, big-game hunter, explorer, author of more than 20 books,

Civil Service Commissioner, New York City Police Commissioner, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Spanish American War hero, Governor of New York, Vice President and President of the United States, to mention only some of his achievements, lived the life of a recluse for the first 50 years of his life, it would be no exaggeration to observe that he had packed a lifetime's worth of living into 10 years.

In *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, which won a Pulitzer Prize, Morris examined T. R.'s early life, his rise to political and military prominence, and concluded with his ascendancy to the Presidency following the assassination of William McKinley. Volume two, *Theodore Rex*, published in 2002, covered the White House years. The long hiatus between the first and second books on T. R. can in part be explained by Morris's work on his biography of another president, *Dutch: A Memoir of Ronald Reagan*. One need not have a familiarity with T. R.'s life before and during his years as President in order to enjoy *Colonel Roosevelt*. Morris, an accomplished biographer, is careful to provide context, and, where necessary, biographical details on the various friends, acquaintances, antagonists, protagonists, and others who figure prominently in the narrative.

Colonel Roosevelt (the title by which he preferred to be addressed after leaving the White House) begins with a chapter-length prologue that chronicles T. R.'s six-month Africa Expedition. His epic journey began in British East Africa (modern-day Kenya), progressed into the heart of Africa, across Lake

Victoria to the head waters of the Nile River, and concluded with a descent down the great river to Egypt and the coast. Along the way, T. R. collected specimens for the Smithsonian Museum's collection (while substantially reducing the big game population along the way) and visited historical sites, even as he prepared for a speaking tour that would take him to the major capitals of Europe.

In Rome, Paris, Berlin, and London he addressed prestigious academic and scientific societies, while rubbing elbows with monarchs and politicians, quite literally so when at the end of his journey he represented the United States in London at the funeral services for King Edward VII. Upon his return to the United States in June 1910, where he was met by cheering and adoring crowds, he was hailed in both the domestic and foreign media as "the most famous man in the world." What possibly could the youngest man to have held the office of president (to that time) choose to do with his life that would be a suitable encore? Ironically, on his first day in the White House in 1901, T. R. had considered this very question, concluding that whatever he did he did not "want to be a loose cannon." Seven and half years later, having served the balance of McKinley's term and one of his own, he chose not to run again. Convention dictated, but no law required, that he relinquish the office after two terms. Seeking to perpetuate initiatives in conservation, government, and political reforms, an interlocking patchwork of initiatives collectively styled as the "progressive" movement, he engineered the succession of his hand-picked candidate, William Howard Taft. Hardly a year would pass before T. R., disappointed with Taft's policies and lackluster leadership, sought a return to the White House, a quest that dominated the narrative for the rest of his life.

Morris chronicles Roosevelt's campaign to claim the Republican Party's nomination in 1912, only to see the party bosses and his dearest political friends desert him in favor of Taft. Denied the nomination, T. R. bolted the party, formed the "Progressive" or "Bull Moose" party, and ran on a platform of policies that to many in the rank and file, seemed to embrace "socialism." Taft and T. R. lost the 1912 election to Woodrow Wilson and the Democrats. Temporarily out of politics Roosevelt turned to making a living with his pen. A prolific author, T. R. wrote books on history, biography, travel, natural history, chronicles of his various travels, his exploits in the west, but always he was quick to return to political commentary, confirming that, as Abraham Lincoln once observed, "Once that presidential grub gets to gnawing on a man there's no stopping it."

Between political campaigns, Roosevelt in 1916 undertook one of the most remarkable journeys in a life already brimming with remarkable exploits. Accompanied by Kermit, his eldest son, who was likewise a veteran of the African expedition, Roosevelt traveled to South America and deep into the heart of Brazil, where he proceeded to explore an unmapped tributary to the Amazon River. His arduous journey through disease-infested, steaming rain-forest, down an uncharted river teeming with rapids, nearly cost him his life. Ultimately he emerged from the jungle having lost a third of his body weight and was near death from disease and injuries incurred during the journey.

Morris's skills as a biographer and expert storyteller are at their best in these chapters. Indeed, the reader literally feels T. R.'s exhaustion, elation, and relief at the end of this journey.

While never losing its focus on Roosevelt, Morris skillfully weaves a narrative that describes the deteriorating situation in Europe that would lead to the Great War in 1914. T. R.'s belligerency, his call for action, and preparations for war contrasted starkly with Wilson's aloof, detached pacifism. One of the most interesting threads of the narrative concerns the emergence of views in various political camps about the creation of an international body to confront threats to peace and security. Both T.R. and Wilson supported the idea, but from different points of view. Whereas Wilson believed that reasonable men could settle differences rationally and amicably, T.R. insisted that any such body must have the capability of enforcing, with force if necessary, its arbitration of disputes.

Roosevelt allowed himself to be drawn back into the political contest for the White House in 1916, only to suffer the humiliation of seeing the nomination go to a colorless party regular who Wilson soundly defeated. As the war in Europe raged, so did Roosevelt in his writing and political advocacy. Beginning in 1914 and for years afterward, Colonel Roosevelt, with unbridled confidence in his military leadership abilities, beseeched the Wilson administration to allow him to raise a division of cavalry for immediate deployment to Europe. Although his offer was politely but insistently refused, he reiterated it when the United States finally entered the war in 1917. Unable to go himself, he took great pride in the fact that all four of his sons volunteered for service, and ultimately all saw combat in Europe. The death of his youngest son, Quentin, came as a terrible blow and likely contributed to his declining health. A battery of diseases of the heart and lung led to his passing shortly after his 60th birthday in January 1919.

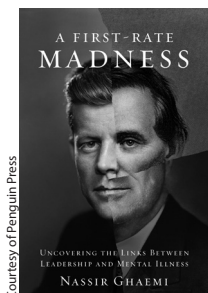
In the epilogue, Morris not only offers a measure of his subject, but offers as well a survey of the works written by and about him. The 570 pages of text are followed by 150 pages of endnotes, crammed with information so interesting as to be worth a reading on their own. For example, one note summarizes the eight safaris that comprised the Africa Expedition, with details on the numbers and kinds of animals taken, places visited, people met, etc.

Although Morris's knowledge of his subject is extraordinary, it is not, as he is quick to admit, unlimited. He often admits to his inability to explain definitively T. R.'s words or actions. At these times one is reminded of Napoleon's observation that "History is made up of material facts and moral intentions." And that, "often the historians cannot agree on the facts, and moral intentions can never be known." Even when buttressed by voluminous research (over 430 pages of endnotes and bibliography in the three volumes) Morris refuses to assume "moral intentions." Where he believes he has cause to opine he does so, but only so far as his research allows, and not one step beyond.

In closing, *Colonel Roosevelt* may be read as the third act of a great life, or as an interesting and thrilling story about a decade in the life of an incomparable

American statesman, explorer, politician, author, adventurer, and father. Those with time will want to, as I have done, read Morris's first two volumes on T. R., as each is as enjoyable as the third.

Reading back over what I have written I realize I forgot to mention that T. R. narrowly escaped death at the hands of an assassin when he was shot in the chest, point-blank, during a campaign stop in Chicago. Come to think of it there are many other things I would call to the reader's mind, but rather than do so, best to close by simply strongly recommending the book as a gem to be read.



New York: Penguin Press, 2011

340 pages

\$16.00

A First-Rate Madness: Uncovering the Links Between Leadership and Mental Illness

by Nassir Ghaemi

Reviewed by Charles Allen, COL (USA Retired),
Professor of Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

The title of the book bends the quip about an iconic American leader, President Theodore Roosevelt, who was described as “having a second-rate mind, but a first-rate temperament.” Teddy Roosevelt, even with his quirkiness, seemed to have the right presence of mind to lead the nation into the changing environment and uncertainties of the dawning twentieth century. The author, Dr. Ghaemi, offers a provocative premise—individuals who experience mental illness are better suited to lead organizations, societies, and nations more so than “normal” people. He presents a counter proposition that individuals who are mentally healthy can be successful leaders in times of stability and certainty but fail during times of crisis.

The author has substantial credentials as practicing psychiatrist and director of the Mood Disorders Program at Tufts Medical Center, teaching faculty member at Harvard Medical School, and writer of numerous articles and books on mental illness. His charter seems an attempt to validate the approach that combines psychiatry with history (so-called psychohistory). The “hook” of the book and his approach are the links to the examination of senior leadership and discerning the traits of successful leaders. In this very readable work, the author effectively integrated his academic experience—in history, philosophy, medicine, and psychiatry—with a pragmatic application in an effort to identify leadership potential.

As is common in most texts in the leadership domain, the author asserts there are four characteristics required for successful leadership during crisis: realism, creativity, empathy, and resilience. Realism recognizes the brutal facts and challenges of the environment. Creativity generates other perspectives, potential methods, and innovative solutions to address emerging problems. Empathy provides an understanding of those people being led, partners, and adversaries. Resilience allows facing and overcoming obstacles—personal, organizational, and societal. Dr. Ghaemi posits these leadership characteristics

are more likely associated with individuals who experience mental illness and deemed to suffer from some form of “insanity.” The insanity is not psychosis or multiple personality, but the more commonly recognized diagnoses of mania, depression, and bipolar disorder. While lesser known, the author offers that hyperthymic (high extroversion, sociability, and energy) personality disorder is also characteristic of successful crisis leaders.

The book’s jacket is a composite of three American presidents—Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and John F. Kennedy—which leads the reader to infer that they were all afflicted with some “madness.” The success of these leaders and others (William Tecumseh Sherman, Winston Churchill, Mahatmas Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc.) examined in the text presents evidence that the consequences of the mental disorders made positive contributions to their performance in key leadership positions. Dr. Ghaemi focuses on a number of historical figures: national leaders (presidents, prime ministers, and dictators), military generals, as well as social and business leaders to support his case.

The author obviously did not personally observe or treat the subjects in the book, but he did have access to extensive medical records and notes, personal letters and journals, and public records. With those materials, he presents a reasonable four-step framework to diagnose the mental illness of each subject.

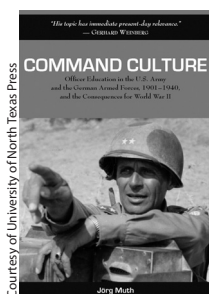
To contrast the leadership performance of mentally normal leaders, he appropriates the term “homoclitites” and offers matched pairs case analyses of individuals in similar eras but with different environmental requirements. For example, Sherman is contrasted with George McClellan; Churchill with Neville Chamberlain; and Kennedy with Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan. He also offers up President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as homoclitites who were unsuccessful leaders in times of national crises.

While interesting and provocative, the author is unconvincing in proving his two major propositions—that we need the “insane” to lead in crisis and “normal” leaders fail during crises. While the case study method can provide examples to illustrate both premises, it does not address equivocality and equifinality for the outcomes of success and failure. The historical studies of George Washington, Charles de Gaulle, Eisenhower, Mao, Margaret Thatcher, Golda Meier, Nelson Mandela, Muammar Gaddafi, and Saddam Hussein could easily challenge the insane and normal leader premise. In addition, the author makes assertions about contemporary leaders while their histories have yet to be written. Failing to follow his own methodology regarding historical figures, Dr. Ghaemi declares “normal” psychological profiles and diagnoses without benefit of medical records that he used as the validation of a previous leader’s mental health.

In spite of the book’s shortfalls, readers will readily accept its call to remove the stigma of mental illness. Our life experiences demonstrate there is a great deal of variance in the normal distribution of mental health—probably a flat rather than steep bell curve. The author effectively argues that mental illness if properly diagnosed and treated (by medical professionals and medication) should not preclude individuals from being contributing members of

society and among its leaders. By extension, those afflicted by cancer or other debilitating illnesses who survive (with the assistance of the medical profession, luck, and personal fortitude) are held in high esteem and the subject of many inspirational biographies.

Similarly, for the military, our wounded warriors demonstrate toughness and perseverance under formidable circumstance with afflictions not of their doing or choosing. Illness and injury—physical or mental—may serve as the crucible experience that develops character and builds confidence in the ability to meet and overcome obstacles. We have seen this with contemporary military leaders such as amputee Generals Fred Franks and Eric Shinseki from the Vietnam era to those in the post-9/11 era who acknowledge their post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) like serving Generals Carter Ham, David Blackledge, and Gary Patton. It would seem imprudent to exclude a proven leader, regardless of disability, from the opportunity to continue to serve others.



Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2011

367 pages

\$29.95

Command Culture: Officer Education in the U.S. Army and the German Armed Forces, 1901-1940, and the Consequences for World War II

by Jörg Muth

Reviewed by Henry G. Gole, author of *General William E. DePuy, Preparing the Army for Modern War* and the biography of Colonel Truman Smith, US Military Attaché in Hitler's Germany, to be published by the University Press of Kentucky

Command Culture is a provocative book. It will probably elicit shrieks of outrage from some readers and grudging praise from others intimately familiar with both the US Army and the German Armed Forces. In brief—*kurz um*, as Muth would say in his native German—compares the German and American systems of selecting, educating, and promoting military officers from 1901 to World War II and finds the German system superior. He is particularly critical of American cadet training at West Point and officer education at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He much prefers the German emphasis on acculturation resulting in bonding called *Kameradschaft*.

This reviewer's initial impression was that Muth is a brash young German academic freely and happily tossing intellectual hand grenades into the American Officers' Mess. As one carefully studies his thesis and sources, however, it becomes apparent that Muth has done his homework. His impressive research ranged widely and plunged deeply into German and American archives and secondary sources. His 217-page narrative is supported at every turn by 95 pages with 977 endnotes.

His research included interviews with American scholars Edward M. Coffman and Dennis Showalter, who suggested that he address the possible charge of bias for the German system. He took that advice and explains in an Afterword his lifelong fascination with the US Army begun as American soldiers allowed “the enthusiastic German kid” to climb on military equipment in the training area near the small town where he grew up. A later highpoint was his participation in the 2005 West Point Summer Seminar in Military History. He praises the teaching and dedication he experienced, calling West Point “a magical place.” Gratitude, however, did not soften objectivity as he reminds us: “History is by its very nature a harsh profession.”

Indeed! He writes, “The US Army did not have good officers because of West Point but in spite of it. During these first decades of the twentieth century, the Academy presents the spectacle of a monstrous waste of youthful enthusiasm.” And despite the lack of evidence supporting the utility of such monstrous waste, the institution consistently resisted change. He is particularly critical of the hazing of plebes (first-year cadets) by other cadets, pointing to the immaturity of those doing the hazing, the cruel and mindless practices, and the memorization of nonsense plebe “knowledge” (instead of useful military information). He has a similarly sceptical view of the relationship between the tactical officers and the cadets in their charge, regarding it as martinet to tin soldiers.

His point is that neither the harassment by other cadets nor the nagging by tactical officers (some soldiers would properly identify both as chickenshit), promotes what the Germans prize most in the acculturation of German cadets and junior officers: *Kameradschaft*. They attach great value to *Nachwuchs*, new blood or the rising generation. Certainly there is substantial challenge and rigorous discipline in the German system of training and educating. But fraternal trust is cultivated and nurtured at every stage of an officer's professional life by methods akin to that of big brother to cadet and uncle to junior officer. Muth wonders why a US Army that celebrates *Band of Brothers* employed harassment and nagging suitable for the eighteenth century rather than a brotherly or avuncular style to bond fellow professionals in the twentieth.

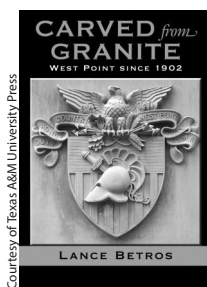
Muth takes his cudgel to Kansas to thump the CGSC as soundly as he whacked the United States Military Academy. What was a virtue, “a common professional language and shared military value system and common assumptions,” became a vice, “uniformity in judgment that stifles creative thinking.” Citing George S. Patton, “no one is thinking if everyone is thinking alike,” he damns the “school solution” that discouraged challenging the instructors at Leavenworth, “if an officer student wanted to leave the school with a respectable grade. Just as at West Point, the motto was ‘cooperate and graduate’ instead of ‘question and challenge.’ This was not a learning atmosphere for adults at all, especially not for officers who had by then considerable professional experience of their own to offer.”

In sharp contrast to milthink, at the *Kriegsakademie*, Erwin Rommel, Heinz Guderian—even Clausewitz—who were considered mavericks by their peers, were free to teach their ideas without restriction. Other experts in their

fields, who were also war veterans who had displayed an aptitude for instructing, taught their courses on a *primus inter pare* basis. In the course of map problems and war games, students would be asked to take over. The real point is that alternative student solutions were actively sought in the realization that insistence upon an approved or school solution might inhibit creativity and imagination. Muth says, “The heritage and idea of the officer remained the same until 1942.”

Albert Wedemeyer, who attended the *Kriegsakademie* in the 1930s, said that even on a bus with students returning to Berlin from a field exercise, the officer in charge would suddenly say, “Wedemeyer, *Lagebeurteilung!*” That is, what is your estimate of the situation? Recently one hears that called situational awareness. Muth points out that in the US Army before World War II, only at George C. Marshall’s Infantry School at Fort Benning were such methods used.

The book is based upon Muth’s Ph.D. dissertation submitted at the University of Utah in 2010. Writing in his second language, he is blunt and absolutely lucid in his conclusions. The source of his doctorate and incendiary style suggest that he did not find the German academic community congenial. American military professionals may be offended by the bluntness, but your reviewer strongly recommends the careful study of *Command Culture*.



Courtesy of Texas A&M University Press
College Station:
Texas A&M
University Press,
2012

544 pages

\$40.00

Carved from Granite: West Point Since 1902

by Lance Betros

Reviewed by Cole C. Kingseed, COL (USA Retired)

In a popular vignette surrounding the fiftieth anniversary of West Point’s fabled Class of 1915, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower turned to his classmate Omar Bradley and reportedly stated that West Point had not changed in the half century since their graduation. Ike was wrong. West Point had changed and it had changed significantly in the fifty years since he and Brad had graduated. Changes in virtually every area of cadet development had transformed the institution in ways that “the class the stars fell on” would never have envisioned.

After two centuries of existence, the mission of the United States Military Academy remains fixed and foremost—to prepare leaders of character for service as commissioned officers in the United States Army. Since its founding in 1802, thousands of West Point graduates have secured the Military Academy’s reputation as one of the foremost leader development institutions in the world. In *Carved from Granite*, BG Lance Betros (USA Retired) takes on a formidable challenge—to determine how effectively West Point has accomplished this mission of developing leaders of character over the course of the last century. Though his observations may run counter to the prevailing wisdom surrounding the Military Academy’s senior leadership, both past and

present, Betros deserves kudos for confronting the problems that he perceives are hindering West Point's full potential.

Betros is no stranger to West Point history. A West Point graduate from the Class of 1977 and former chairman of the Military Academy's Department of History, Betros served as editor of *West Point, Two Centuries and Beyond* (McWhiney Foundation Press, 2004). The twenty-four essays in that volume convinced Betros that continuity—not change—dominated West Point and the Corps of Cadets during the Academy's first two centuries of existence. Additional research focusing exclusively on West Point since 1902 has caused Betros to revise his earlier assessment.

The result is a *tour de force*—an outstanding example of historical research, interpretation, and fair-minded analysis intended “to prod the institution to confront issues that have gone unresolved for too long” in order for West Point to continue its heritage of producing the best possible military officers for the nation. Betros's brilliantly researched analysis demonstrates conclusively that change, not continuity, best describes the history of West Point since the centennial.

The author wastes no time in addressing the central problems that he views currently confront the Military Academy as it enters its third century. Betros states emphatically that West Point remains a premier leadership institution, but “the carved-from-granite exterior belies the growing problems within.” Throughout its history, West Point has been most successful when its leaders “focused on character and intellect as the preeminent developmental goals for cadets; conversely, the institution experienced the greatest difficulties when its leaders gave unwarranted priority to other, less important goals.”

In analyzing the transformation of the Military Academy over the last century, Betros organizes individual chapters along thematic lines. Following an introduction describing the popular image of the traditional West Point, he dedicates a chapter each to governance, admissions, academics, military training, the physical fitness program (including intercollegiate athletics), leader development, and character building. The concluding chapter, which Betros describes as subjective and interpretive, suggests ways of improving the institution. Informative appendices and one hundred pages of detailed notes further enhance the text.

As he examines the changes in West Point's academic, military, and physical programs over the past half century, Betros sees many positive trends that have advanced the cadets' intellectual growth and physical development. The culture of positive leadership and a comprehensive program of instruction in honor, respect, and professional ethics that now characterize the Military Academy contributed to the development of more well-rounded officers. Betros assigns high marks to reforms in the admission process that succeeded in raising the overall quality of the Corps of Cadets, though important improvements are necessary for West Point to reach its full potential.

Betros is less sanguine about systemic problems that have grown increasingly worse in the aftermath of the 1976 cheating incident. According

to the author, “These problems, most evident in the areas of governance, admissions, and intercollegiate athletics, have blurred the Academy’s focus on character and intellect as the key developmental goals.” Such observations will surely generate a great deal of controversy and will most probably result in a highly emotional response from West Point’s institutional hierarchy and among the Military Academy’s Association of Graduates.

Of the three most pressing problems facing West Point today, Betros opines that the heightened emphasis on intercollegiate athletics may be the most dangerous and most difficult problem to solve. According to the author, the “win-at-all cost” mentality to field competitive teams not only has caused incongruity in the admissions system, but it has resulted in a diversion of Academy resources in areas tangential to West Point’s core mission of providing the Army with strong and capable leaders of character. Furthermore, he posits that intercollegiate athletics have assumed a level of importance that undermine institutional priorities and lessens the overall quality of the Corps of Cadets. Such opinions will hardly endear Betros to the Military Academy’s Association of Graduates or Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

Despite a few misgivings in the direction West Point is now tending, Betros concludes his analysis with an optimistic tone. Noting that the Academy’s greatest leaders have always been those who understood that West Point’s past success was due to graduates who viewed leadership “a lot more art than science,” there is no surer way to produce even better officers in the future than to focus intensely on character and intellect as the most important developmental goals. Future leaders, Betros urges, would do well to follow their example.