

# The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

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Volume 44  
Number 1 *Parameters Spring 2014*

Article 14

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Spring 3-1-2014

## Book reviews

USAWC Press

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### Recommended Citation

USAWC Press, "Book reviews," *Parameters* 44, no. 1 (2014), <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol44/iss1/14>

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# Book Reviews

## PREDICTING WAR

### Who Wins? Predicting Strategic Success and Failure in Armed Conflict

By Patricia L. Sullivan

Reviewed by Thomas G. Mahnken, Jerome E. Levy Chair of Economic Geography and National Security, US Naval War College

Patricia L. Sullivan's *Who Wins?* seeks to understand why strong states so often are unable to achieve their aims in wars against weaker adversaries. She demonstrates that the reason rests not merely with the belligerents' resolve or their strategic choices, but rather with the nature of the political objectives they pursue. In particular, she argues strong states are most likely to succeed when their aim is to seize territory from a weaker opponent or overthrow its regime. By contrast, victory is least likely to follow attempts to coerce a weaker adversary into changing its behavior.

This is a timely and important study, one that illuminates the relationship between political objectives, the value that statesmen and soldiers attach to them, and victory. Two centuries ago, Carl von Clausewitz wrote about the correlation between the value a state attaches to its ends and the means it uses to achieve them:

Since war is not an act of senseless passion but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in *magnitude* and also in *duration*. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced and peace must follow.

Sullivan delves deeply into this relationship, examining different political objectives and how easy—or difficult—it has been for the stronger power to achieve its aims in war. She develops several sets of hypotheses and tests them systematically in conflicts from the end of World War I to the present. It is a thoughtful and relevant work of scholarship.

That said, one suspects that “predicting strategic success and failure in armed conflict” (the book’s subtitle) using the model she describes is more an art than a science. First, one wonders just how accurately we can know *a priori* how much we, or our adversaries, value achieving a particular aim, or even what the precise aims of our opponents are. As she points out in her recapitulation of conflict between Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and the United States (31-43), such estimates are often mistaken and frequently plagued by misperception. Furthermore, both ends and assessment of the political, social, and economic costs of war often change as a conflict unfolds. States may continue fighting beyond the “rational” point of surrender when their leaders’ prestige becomes invested in the war or the passions of the people become aroused. Alternatively, heavy losses may lead to escalation of a conflict, changing its character.

Second, it is worth questioning the author’s taxonomy of political objectives. At times, she portrays them as existing on a spectrum



New York: Oxford University Press, 2012

177 pages

\$27.95

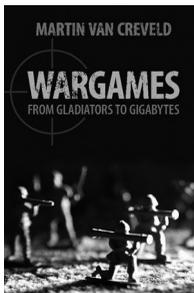
running from “brute force” objectives (including acquiring or defending territory, seizing resources, overthrowing a regime, or defending state sovereignty) to coercive ones involving changing an adversary’s policy (46). In other places, she views such aims discretely (124), although her main argument is built around the dichotomy between “brute force” and “coercive” objectives. Yet the line between brute force and coercion is hardly clear. Having seized territory (a “brute force” objective), a government must then coerce its adversary into renouncing efforts to retake it. Indeed, most of the “brute force” objectives in Sullivan’s taxonomy require a great deal of coercion to bring a war to a successful conclusion.

If there is to be a useful distinction among the varieties of aims that states may pursue in war, it is likely that which Clausewitz drew between wars fought for limited aims and those fought for unlimited aims. As he wrote:

War can be of two kinds, in the sense that either the objective is to *overthrow the enemy*—to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace we please; or *merely to occupy some of his frontier districts* so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the negotiating table.

The former is a true “brute force” aim, while the latter involves considerable coercive leverage.

These observations should not obscure the value of the volume. *Who Wins?* is a book that both scholars and policymakers will find insightful and thought-provoking.



Cambridge University Press, 2013  
321 pages  
\$27.00

## Wargames, From Gladiators to Gigabytes

By Martin van Creveld

Reviewed by Douglas B. Campbell, Director, Center for Strategic Leadership and Development, USAWC

Martin van Creveld has produced an extensively researched and exhaustively written history of wargaming. This is especially timely given that wargaming is regaining visibility within the national security community writ large. As the United States, NATO countries, and other regional leaders seek to understand the national security issues developing post Arab Spring and, more specifically, post Iraq and Afghanistan, wargames are returning as a key tool in this effort.

Van Creveld defines a wargame as a contest of opposing strategies that, while separated from real warfare, simulates some key aspects of real war. He begins his study examining the behavior of animals, then transitions into hunting, combat sports and contact sports, all which reflect issues associated with warfare and wargames. Play fights, as he describes them, provide the earliest indications of the conduct of wargames and the concepts of wargaming. During his discussion of Great Fights—staged engagements between primitive societies—he highlights some of the limitations of wargames, which are encounters prearranged in both time and place, sacrificing perhaps the most important “principle of war,” surprise. Throughout the book, van Creveld constantly returns to the theme regarding the limitations of wargames in substituting for

real war. His extensive research into the behavior of tribes throughout the world and his demonstration of similar behavior patterns where they engage in “wargames” to settle issues and disputes provide a detailed understanding of the universality of this behavior.

As he addresses single combat as wargames he starts with the interesting story of David and Goliath, attributing to David a strategy that allowed him to exploit specific advantages to defeat his opponent. The author spends considerable time discussing champions who fought in lieu of major combat throughout ancient civilization. He then leads us through the history of gladiators and ancient Rome and its eventual decline due to the incredible cost of maintaining a professional combat force used specifically to entertain people. The conduct of tournaments during the Middle Ages, where champions and later knights, who reflected the flower of their societies and fought each other for prestige, honor, and advancement, reflects the same motto as modern soldiers of fortune, “meet interesting people—and kill them.”

The changes that overtook warfare in the 15th and 16th centuries had a significant impact on these types of games. The introduction of gunpowder and firearms essentially eliminated the honor associated with champions, who fought in tournaments to demonstrate their abilities without fighting a war. Other games began to be used, and van Creveld highlights chess as an example of a game that reduces the threat of physical injury while developing strategic thinking. Although chess reinforces Clausewitz’s dictum that the objective of war is to overthrow the enemy, i.e., capturing the opposing monarch, it reflects the imperfections van Creveld continues to raise regarding wargames—the lack of any of the threats or pains associated with war.

He traces the rise of the hex-based board games that allowed leaders to conduct complex wargames as we understand them today. By the 19th century, wargames that used complex rules and a hex-based board system allowed leaders to use them for military training and education. They encouraged leaders to practice command and control and exposed them to the world of strategy and dealing with the paradoxical and unexpected. He also highlights the introduction of what we today call the “after action review.” Each game ended or was supposed to end with a thorough discussion. The objective was to find out what had been simulated, what had not been simulated, and what had and had not worked and why. One of the other interesting points he raises is that while military leaders selected the scenarios to wargame, the vast majority of them were never translated into reality. Van Creveld does identify the key objective of military wargames is to allow participants to try their hand at dealing with the unexpected, whether a scenario is ultimately realized is almost irrelevant. Wargames also allow participants to understand simple but essential ideas regarding the conduct of war.

Van Creveld also highlights the introduction of the political dimension into wargaming. He quotes President Kennedy as saying, following the Bay of Pigs operation, that senior American military did not understand the political implications of their recommendations, opening up a new perspective to wargaming. The key factor of political games is that there are no detailed rules as to what constitutes victory. The author also discusses nuclear wargames and the implications of computer-based

wargames as leaders continue to replicate all aspects of warfare within their wargames.

He details the fact that conventional warfare is far more complex than ever before and that wargames must be connected to the real world as these games are serious business on which many lives depend. Much of what van Creveld addresses in this book is deep history and of questionable value to someone trying to understand the issues of wargames and their value to the military; however, the sections that outline the current uses of wargames and, more specifically, the issues that limit their value are worth consideration.

## STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY

**Strategic Thinking in 3D: A Guide for National Security, Foreign Policy, and Business Professionals**

By Ross Harrison

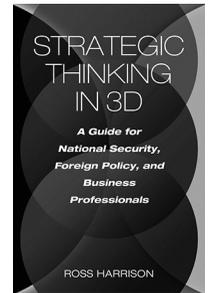
Reviewed by Charles D. Allen, Colonel (USA Retired), Professor of Leadership and Cultural Studies, US Army War College

As a former corporate chief executive officer, current professor of practice of international relations at Georgetown University, and having worked with corporate and nongovernmental agencies, Ross Harrison has an enduring professional interest in developing strategies. Over the past decade, he has had substantial engagement with US Army War College (USAWC) and other senior level college faculty members as a contributor to the Teaching Strategy Group. A quick review of the book's bibliography, endnotes, and in-text references reveals that Harrison is steeped in materials used in the curriculum for the Army War College's Theater of War and Strategy course. Accordingly, the author's approach is familiar to this reviewer as well as reflective of the USAWC curriculum in its Strategic Leadership and Defense Management courses.

While many critics lament the current state of American strategy and offer commentary on the paucity of the strategic thinking among US leaders, Harrison gets to the core question long posed by USAWC colleagues and other scholars, "Why is strategy difficult?" (Jablonsky, 1992). His *Strategic Thinking in 3D* offers a framework for how to think about strategy and how to think strategically. The former is about discernment of individual as well as organizational purpose and goals and the creation of a viable approach to attain each. The latter is about posing questions to gain situational awareness of the factors that influence the development and successful execution of strategy.

The author succinctly presents the many conceptions about the nature of strategy as it is interpreted across traditional domains—government, military, and corporate/business. He adopts an overarching definition from Andrew Krepinevich and Barry Watts, where "Strategy is fundamentally about identifying or creating asymmetric advantages that can be exploited to help achieve one's ultimate objectives despite resource and other constraints, most importantly the opposing efforts of adversaries or competitors and the inherent unpredictability of strategic outcomes" (2-3).

Harrison's presentation of eight underlying assumptions about strategy is very useful and helps to define its nature—subject to human agency, intentional, competitive, and possessing system properties as it interacts with other systems. The assumptions are formed around: interests, opposing wills, choices, limits, passion, integration causality, and leverage. While he offers a base definition of strategy, the author does not provide one for strategic thinking. Our USAWC definition is complementary and would be useful: strategic thinking "is the ability to make a creative and holistic synthesis of key factors affecting an



Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, Inc., 2013

197 pages

\$29.95

organization and its environment in order to obtain sustainable competitive advantage and long-term success.” (Allen and Gerras)

The book is well organized and presented in three parts: the inward face of strategy, the outward face of strategy, and the power of integration. The “3D” in the title is the author’s suggestion that strategy is best thought of and executed in three dimensions: systems, opponents, and groups. Understanding one’s own system is imperative to determining the existing and needed capabilities. Examining current and potential opponents’ systems as sources from which competitors generate their capabilities allows the targeting and disruption of opposing strategies. Leveraging one’s own stakeholder group adds resources to prosecuting a successful strategy. For each discussion of the strategic dimensions, Harrison provides practical examples to illustrate concepts and principles in the application of his framework. Harrison’s concluding section offers a refreshing twist as the framework is applied to a prominent and persistent security threat to the United States today—al Qaeda. Rather than developing a US strategy against its foe, he uses the “3D” framework to examine the al Qaeda strategy and, in doing so, provides interesting insights.

Harrison appropriately establishes disclaimers and caveats in his preface and conclusion. Perhaps the most important is, “the general framework is intended to be used suggestively rather than dogmatically.” So there is a duality with the internal and external focus of strategy that requires balance—adapting the organization/enterprise to its environment as well as designing methods to shape that same environment to attain its goals and objectives.

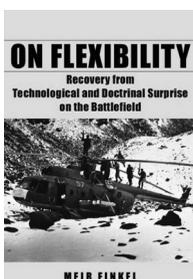
This book is an effective primer on strategy. Harrison holds his own against several more cerebral and complex treatments of strategy and strategic thinking—he does not promise too much. Readers should be wary of any book about strategy and strategic thinking that is so compact, lest they think strategy is merely about determining ends, ways, and means. To paraphrase Clausewitz, “Everything in [strategy] is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult.” Far from an easy read, *Strategic Thinking in 3D* is accessible, thought provoking, and pragmatic for a wide range of individuals who may wrestle with the challenges of an uncertain and competitive environment. The value in Harrison’s work is not that it provides answers but asks the questions that drive leaders and their organizations to explore factors which may have strategic effect and substantive impact—then enables the crafting of viable strategies.

## On Flexibility: Recovery from Technological and Doctrinal Surprise on the Battlefield

by Meir Finkel

Reviewed by Raphael D. Marcus, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of War Studies, King’s College London.

Adapting to surprise on the battlefield has been a challenge militaries have faced since the beginning of history. In the progressively growing field of scholarly literature pertaining to military innovation and adaptation, there are few works which convey the complexity and



Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Security Studies, 2011

324 pages

\$25.95

difficulty of military change as thoughtfully as *On Flexibility*. Written by Colonel Dr. Meir Finkel of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), *On Flexibility* provides an original and elegant theoretical framework for analyzing military adaptability, as well as offering practical recommendations for modern militaries to enable rapid recovery from battlefield surprise on the doctrinal, operational, and techno-tactical levels.

Finkel's main thesis is that modern militaries must maintain a flexible and adaptable doctrine and organizational culture to cope with inevitable battlefield surprise and the constantly changing operational environment. He convincingly makes his argument by elucidating seven historical case studies which pertain to doctrinal, operational, and techno-tactical aspects of warfare: four case studies exemplify successful recovery from surprise due to the flexibility of the military organization, and three case studies highlight military failure to recover from surprise due to inflexibility. These cases are drawn from select British, French, and German experiences in World War II, the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, and the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan, and highlight the degree of organizational flexibility of each military and their ability or inability to "recover from battlefield surprise.

Finkel provides succinct definitions of technological and doctrinal surprise while also outlining sensible criteria for "successful recovery" from surprise on the battlefield, which, he notes, is not confined to the techno-tactical level of war. Using a graded criteria scale, successful recovery is defined as the military's complete recovery and ability to devise a counterresponse; the next best response would be neutralizing the damage from surprise without devising a counterchallenge, followed by minimizing (but not neutralizing) damage caused by the surprise. "Failure" of recovery would be inability to minimize damage from the surprise. The theoretical framework also discusses various forms of flexibility present in military organizations: conceptual and doctrinal flexibility, organizational and technological flexibility, flexibility in command-and-control and cognition, as well as mechanisms for implementation of lessons learned.

Case studies of successful recovery are drawn from German experiences in WWII dealing with the T-34 Soviet tank and the British chaff, and the IDF during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. The case study focusing on IDF surprise to the Egyptian introduction of anti-tank weapons in the Sinai in the 1973 War is particularly compelling. The informal and improvisational organizational culture of the IDF fosters tenacity and promotes mission-command principles; armored corps commanders on the ground were able to adapt their tactics fairly rapidly (despite a lack of weapons diversity—a key enabler of flexible responsiveness). Hence, Finkel notes that IDF organizational culture and individual unit initiative was of paramount importance.

Case studies of failure to recover from surprise are drawn from the slow British recovery from bouts with German armor, the French experience with the German blitzkrieg, as well as the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan. The Soviet failure to recover from surprise in low-intensity conflict (LIC) while engaged in Afghanistan against the mujahedeen is a relevant historical study of inefficient military learning during LIC. Soviet doctrinal dogmatism and a hierarchal command-and-control structure inhibited decentralized autonomy of soldiers and prevented

Soviet recovery from the surprise of its own ineffectiveness on the Afghan battlefield.

Given the timely nature and current focus on low-intensity conflict and counterinsurgency (COIN) by many military organizations, the book could have benefitted from additional case studies of military adaptation and recovery from surprise during LIC or COIN, which for the most part (with exceptions), has been absent from the broader military innovation literature until recently. As we know, adapting “under fire” was an immense challenge that confronted United States, British, and Israeli forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and elsewhere, and further case studies could have provided additional relevant lessons for Western militaries that, in the present operational environment, are doctrinally and tactically focused on COIN and “hybrid” warfare.

Given that surprise is inevitable, Finkel’s solution for recovery lies in sensible and flexible force-planning and doctrine development, rapid techno-tactical adaptability, and officer education grounded in a military culture which promotes agile thinking. Col. Finkel’s own experiences and expertise as Director of the IDF Ground Forces’ Concept Development and Doctrine Department are evident, as he deemphasizes the ability to make accurate, “perfect” predictions based on intelligence, instead focusing on organizational and technological adaptability (while also underscoring technology’s inherent limitations).

Col. Finkel’s work is a compelling contribution to the existing literature on military innovation, and in his conclusion, he appropriately places his work among the major works in the subfield, “filling the gap” left by others who analyzed interwar and long-term innovation. Finkel’s work also nicely complements other very recent publications by Stanford Security Studies scholars Dima Adamsky, Eitan Shamir, and James Russell that deal with topics on military culture and innovation, mission command, and “bottom-up” learning.

In sum, *On Flexibility* is an interesting and challenging book which adds to the current conceptual thinking regarding militaries’ ability to recover from surprise and adapt, something that has been emphasized in various recent US and British military manuals, and will certainly continue to remain relevant in the future.

## URBAN FIGHTING

**Concrete Hell: Urban Warfare from Stalingrad to Iraq**

By Louis A. DiMarco

Reviewed by Gregory Fontenot, Colonel (USA Retired), Lansing, Kansas

In *Concrete Hell*, Louis A. DiMarco surveys historical trends in urban combat since World War II. Lieutenant Colonel DiMarco brings to his task both professional and personal interests. An experienced soldier and historian, DiMarco has focused his recent professional life on the problem of urban combat as a doctrine writer and teacher at the Army Command and General Staff College. DiMarco seeks to make three contributions related to understanding the urban battle space, providing insights into the nature of urban combat and its evolution—drawing from tactical, operational, and strategic considerations he believes will remain relevant. Regarding the last item, he explores the transition of urban combat from “simplistic conventional” fights in Stalingrad and Aachen to a “complex hybrid mixture” found in Chechnya and Iraq, concluding these “hybrid” fights in Chechnya and Iraq foretell the future.

Generally, DiMarco makes his case effectively. He begins by noting that at the turn of the century the Army was “particularly wary” of urban combat. DiMarco is absolutely right. The Army and, for that matter, US armed forces sought to avoid fighting in cities. This tendency may have come, in part, from focusing on defending cities in Europe. The Army in Europe, in particular, gave considerable thought to how to fight in towns and cities in the context of defense but far less thought on offensive urban combat. At the end of the Cold War, few soldiers imagined the United States would find itself in any kind of urban combat. Moreover, there were a great many “defense experts” who claimed that various revolutions in military affairs precluded ground combat let alone urban ground combat. Some believed that the nature of warfare itself had changed and that “contactless” battle would result.

But DiMarco’s argument, at least where the US Army is concerned, would have benefited from reviewing what the Army did do. Shortly after Operation Desert Storm, General Fred Franks (commanding the Training and Doctrine Command) confronted the idea that urban combat would be among the missions the post-Cold War Army might have to undertake. He did not have the money to develop large urban combat training centers and instead focused on developing a single “world class” venue at Fort Polk. However, Fort Polk’s urban combat venue was useful at the tactical level only.

The absence of large venues did not prevent the Army thinking and writing about urban combat. DiMarco played an important role in this effort providing a chapter in one of several books on urban combat published by the Army. These included Roger Spillers’ *Sharp Corners* in 2001 and William G. Robertson and Lawrence Yeats, *Block By Block* in 2003. These major studies were accompanied by lively arguments in journals as well. In the fall of 2002, the Army’s angst over urban combat came to a head as the possibility of war with Iraq loomed. Accordingly, the Army organized Operations Group F within the Battle Command



Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2012

232 pages

\$24.96

Training Program to study and teach the principles of urban combat to all deploying divisions including the 1st Marine Division. Although DiMarco did not personally play a role in this effort, he was part of the team at Fort Leavenworth that developed the means to educate units. Simultaneously, the Army sought to learn from the Israeli experience that DiMarco describes in his chapter on Israeli Operations on the West Bank in 1992.

Despite this observation DiMarco, for the most part, delivers on his desired contributions. At the strategic level the central insight he offers is the role policy and politics play in decisions that led to urban combat. In several examples that DiMarco chose, politics proved central not only on the decision to fight in cities but also on how the attacker chose to fight. His assertion is absolutely right and demonstrable. For example, the operations of 1st Brigade 1st Armored Division in Ramadi in 2007 were driven by political considerations first. The Ready First Combat Team, as that brigade was styled, used classic conventional tactics to take the city while engaging local leaders simultaneously in an effort to separate them from the insurgents. The Ready First also sought to avoid destroying the city while saving it. DiMarco argues this operation demonstrated a transition from “simplistic conventional” fights in World War II to a “complex hybrid mixture of conventional and insurgent combat.”

This assessment is not convincing. In the chapter devoted to the US operations to seize Aachen in 1944, it is clear the US commanders did not care whether they reduced Aachen to rubble. Yet DiMarco points out that, although the Army did reduce much of the city to rubble, US commanders provided for what they considered a hostile population. They did so to separate them from the German Army defenders but also to avoid killing civilians unnecessarily. He further notes that US government troops arrived on the heels of the infantry. In other words, at least some of the characteristics of complex “hybrid” operations existed even in 1944. What seems more likely than the fundamental change DiMarco posits is that the means used depend on the ends the attacker intends to achieve. If in October 1944, the US Army had wanted to encourage the inhabitants of Aachen to switch sides or at least be neutral, then their approach would have been different. DiMarco and others miss this essential point when they conclude the means have changed for any other reason than the ends have changed. Finally, describing Stalingrad and Aachen as “simplistic” is simply not accurate. Fighting to seize a vigorously defended city may well be merely complicated rather than complex but it is not simplistic.

DiMarco’s conclusions on the operational and tactical levels are all on the mark. His consideration of Stalingrad not only reviews the thoroughly bad strategic choices that Hitler made but also the poor operational decisions by German commanders. The risks they chose to take with respect to flank security are only one of several bad choices. Although DiMarco discovered little that is new, his study reaffirms some lessons which armies have had trouble learning. For example, one lesson learned again and again is that tanks are useful in cities. This idea is one that just will not stick. German tactical guidance in 1938 deemed tanks too heavy, too awkward, and too vulnerable to flank attacks from side streets to operate in cities. Yet in each case DiMarco studies, with the exception of Algiers, tanks proved essential. Generally, this observation

is a subset of the more important notion of combined arms. Urban combat absolutely demands a combined arms approach.

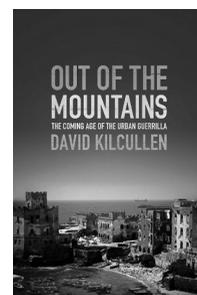
Colonel DiMarco's book is a useful survey of combat operations in cities. He deserves to be read and, more importantly, the conclusions he reaches considered carefully and critically as fighting in "concrete hell" is likely to remain a feature of operations in the future. Doing so will help realize DiMarco's goal of the US armed forces taking on board the often repeated lessons of fighting in cities.

## **Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla** By David Kilcullen

Reviewed by José de Arimatéia da Cruz, Visiting Research Professor at the U. S. War College, and Professor of International Relations and Comparative Politics at Armstrong Atlantic State University, Savannah, GA

David Kilcullen, author of *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* and *Counterinsurgency*, delivers another essential work in *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla*. Kilcullen is no stranger to the study of insurgency and counterinsurgency. He is a former soldier and diplomat. He also served as a senior advisor to both General David H. Petraeus and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Out of the Mountains* offers a new way of looking at the nature of future conflicts given four powerful tectonic forces impacting the world of the twenty-first century: population, urbanization, coastal settlement, and connectedness. Kilcullen's thesis is that the cities of the future—mostly coastal, highly urbanized, and heavily populated—will be the central focus of tomorrow's conflicts, which will be heavily impacted by the four megatrends of population growth, urbanization, littoralization, and connectedness. He asserts that "more people than ever before in history will be competing for scarcer and scarcer resources in poorly governed areas that lack adequate infrastructure, and these areas will be more and more closely connected to the global system, so that local conflict will have far wider affects" (50).

Within this heavily populated, highly urbanized, littoralized, and connected world, "adversaries are likely to be nonstate armed groups (whether criminal or military) or to adopt asymmetric methods, and even the most conventional hypothetical war scenarios turn out, when closely examined, to involve very significant irregular aspects" (107). Kilcullen defines nonstate armed groups as "any group that includes armed individuals who apply violence but who aren't members of the regular forces of a nation-state" (126). Under this broader definition of nonstate armed groups, Kilcullen includes "urban street gangs, communitarian or sectarian militias, insurgents, bandits, pirates, armed smugglers or drug traffickers, violent organized criminal organizations, warlord armies, and certain paramilitary forces. The term encompasses both combatants and individuals who don't personally carry arms or use violence but who belong to groups that do" (126). Those nontraditional nonstate armed groups not only undermine the authority and legitimacy of the state but also corrupt the social fabric of society. The "new warrior class" or "conflict entrepreneurs" are those individuals in society part of the "bottom billion" who have lost all hopes of a better future, social



London: C. Hurst & Company Publishers, 2013  
288 pages  
\$27.95

advancement, and have resorted to the use of force to partake in the spoils of society.

In Kilcullen's analysis, as the world is greatly impacted by the four megatrends, some cities in the Third World will become a breeding ground for conflict. Those cities will become "urban no-go areas," where government presence and authority are extremely limited. Those so-called "urban no-go areas" of a megacity in the Third World which have become "safe havens for criminal networks or nonstate armed groups, creating a vacuum that is filled by local youth who have no shortage of grievances, whether arising from their new urban circumstances or imported from their home villages" (40). Kilcullen explains, "rapid urban growth in coastal, underdeveloped areas is overloading economic, social, and governance systems, straining city infrastructure, and overburdening the carrying capacity of cities designed for much smaller populations . . . the implications for future conflict are profound with more people competing for scarcer resources in crowded, underserved, and undergoverned urban areas" (35-36). Those so-called "urban no-go areas" are the feral city of the twenty-first century. The concept, derived from the field of biology, was first introduced to the political science literature by Richard J. Norton a decade ago in his influential article entitled "Feral Cities," which appeared in the *Naval War College Review* 66, no. 4 (Autumn 2003), pages 97-106.

According to Norton's definition, feral cities are "metropolis with a population of more than a million people, in a state the government of which has lost the ability to maintain the rule of law within the city's boundaries yet remains a functioning actor in the greater international system" (quoted in Kilcullen, page 66). This definition of feral cities or urban no-go areas fits any larger urban centers today in the Third World, such as Mumbai, Karachi, Rio de Janeiro, and Kingston, to mention only a few locations. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the host of the World Cup (2014) and the Olympic Games (2016) is currently facing the problems defined by Kilcullen in his assessment of feral cities or urban no-go areas. Rio has one of the largest "favelas" or shantytowns in Latin America: Rocinha. With a population over a million people, Rocinha was recently appeased by the Pacifying Police Units (UPPs). Prior to the pacification, Rocinha was controlled by the notorious drug lord Antonio Francisco Bonfim Lopes, also known as Nen, and his Amigos dos Amigos gang. Nen is now in prison, but even in prison he controls drug trafficking and issues commands to his foot soldiers or "new warrior class."

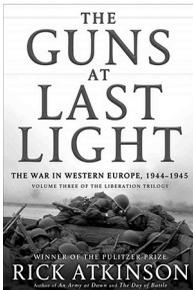
This text can be especially useful to students at the United States Army War College, particularly the book's theoretical framework. Kilcullen argues that the basis for the control systems applied by non-state armed groups of all kinds is what he calls the theory of competitive control (126). Kilcullen defines the theory of competitive control as follows:

In regular conflicts (that is, in conflicts where at least one combatant is a nonstate armed group), the local armed actor that a given population perceives as best able to establish a predictable, consistent, wide-spectrum normative system of control is most likely to dominate that population and its residential area (126).

Kilcullen's theory of competitive control basically holds that, "non-state armed groups, of many kinds, draw their strength and freedom of action primarily from their ability to manipulate and mobilize populations, and that they do this using a spectrum of methods from coercion to persuasion, by creating a normative system that makes people feel safe through the predictability and order that it generates" (114). Despite their control mechanisms, often by using violence and intimidation, some people in the feral cities of Third World countries support non-state armed groups due to their false sense of security and order. Since the police and law enforcement authorities are seen as criminal elements in uniform, the population responds to predictable, ordered, normative systems that tells them exactly what they need to do, and not do, to be safe (126). This author has seen this kind of behavior personally in two of Rio's most notorious favelas, the Nova Holanda favela in Bonsucesso and Jacarezinho favela in the Maria da Graça neighborhoods. The theory also suggests "a behavioral explanation for the way in which armed groups of all kinds control populations . . . . It also suggests that group behaviors may be an emergent phenomena at the level of the population group implying that traditional counterinsurgency notions, including "hearts and minds" may need a rethink" (127).

In conclusion, I highly recommend this text to anyone interested in insurgency and counterinsurgency studies. The traditional view of insurgency and counterinsurgency in the mountains of Afghanistan is quickly changing. Conflicts in the twenty-first century will more likely occur in increasingly sprawling coastal cities, in peri-urban slum settlements that are enveloping many regions of the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Those so-called "mega-cities" will be the source of much urban political exclusion and violence in the years to come (see Kees Koonings and Dirk Kruijt, *Mega Cities: The Politics of Urban Exclusion and Violence in the Global South* (New York: Zed Books, 2009).

## WORLD WAR II



New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013

877 pages

\$40.00

## The Guns at Last Light: War in Western Europe, 1944-1945: Volume Three of the Liberation Trilogy

By Rick Atkinson

Reviewed by David T. Zabecki, Ph.D., Major General (USA Retired)

The 1944-45 Allied World War II campaign in Northwest Europe is an oft-told story. In *The Guns at Last Light*, the third volume of his award-winning Liberation Trilogy, journalist-turned historian Rick Atkinson revisits this key episode of the pivotal event of the 20th century. Is there anything fresh in the way he retells this familiar story? If you already have read many books on the subject, is this one worth reading? The answer to both of these questions is an unqualified yes.

This is a large and complex story. As historian Will Durant once noted, “History is so indifferently rich that a case for almost any conclusion from it can be made by a careful selection of instances.” The craft of history, therefore, is based on the art of selecting what to include in your narrative, and what to leave out. In the case of very large and complex events, that largely becomes a function of where you focus the story.

Most military history writing tends to focus at either the high level or the low level. As S. L. A. Marshall wrote in his 1947 book, *Men Against Fire*:

The body of military history is almost exclusively a record of the movement of armies and corps, of decisions by generals and commanders-in-chief, of the contest between opposing strategies and the triumph of one set of logistical conditions over another. The occasional rare passages from the battlefield which are thrown in to illuminate and make zestful the story of the overall struggle are usually of such glittering character or dubious origin to warrant a suspicion that they have little real kinship with the event.

Atkinson is one of those rare writers who can focus on those two widely-separated levels and integrate them into a unified and cohesive story. As he did in his first two volumes, he deftly zooms his lens down to the level of the individual American GIs, British Tommys, and German *Landsers* fighting it out on the line of contact; and then he slowly pans back out, up the chain of command to the senior commanders at the operational and strategic levels and their political masters in Washington, London, and Berlin. The result is a rich tapestry that is a clear and intelligible picture of the western half of the end game of World War II.

Interweaving his own skillful narrative with the voices of those who fought from the shores of Normandy to the banks of the Elbe, Atkinson helps the modern reader understand the agonies and the hardships endured by the soldiers on both sides who faced each other across the line of contact, while at the same time appreciating the gut-wrenching and all too often lose-lose decisions forced upon their generals by the grinding friction of battle and impenetrable fog of war. Nowhere do these conundrums appear more starkly than in Operation Market-Garden and later in the fight for the Hürtgen Forest, arguably the single worst defeat ever suffered by the American Army.

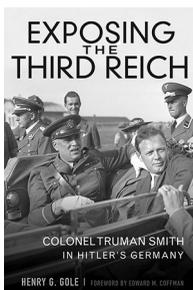
One of the most impressive features of Atkinson's writing style is his authenticity of voice. Any military historian or professional soldier can read his narrative without having to stumble over terms and concepts that are used incorrectly or tossed out loosely in an attempt to establish some sort of level of authority. Yet at the same time that he manages to use precise military expressions in their proper contexts, Atkinson does so without lapsing into jargon or getting bogged down into pseudo-military babble. His narrative is one that can be read, understood, and appreciated by laymen and by military insiders alike—no mean feat of writing.

Although he was never a soldier himself, Rick Atkinson spent a considerable portion of his life around the American military. The son of a career US Army officer, Atkinson was born in Munich, Germany, and grew up on military posts around the world. A three-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, he was, from 1983 to 1999, a reporter for the *The Washington Post*, specializing in defense issues. During that period, he was one of the very small number of journalists widely respected by common soldiers and general officers alike. From 2004 to 2005, he held the General Omar N. Bradley Chair of Strategic Leadership at the US Army War College. He understands soldiers at all levels and the world they live in. His empathy shows clearly in his writing, not only for the soldiers on the line, but also for their commanders all the way up the chain. Even when he is dissecting, analyzing, and critiquing the commanders' battlefield decisions, he does it objectively, without moralizing or preaching. In 2010, he received a well-deserved Pritzker Military Library Literature Award for Lifetime Achievement in Military Writing.

Journalism and history are not quite the same things, and as a historian Atkinson does his homework. The research he has put into all three volumes of the series is impressive by any standards. To develop an understanding for the ground, he went out to many of the key battlefields, including for this volume the still dark, foreboding, and all too-seldom visited Hürtgen Forest. As he wrote in the second volume of the trilogy, *The Day of Battle*, "The ground speaks even when eyewitness no longer can . . ." Any experienced soldier will know exactly what he means here, and Atkinson has taught himself to "read the ground" as a soldier would.

This third volume's exhaustive listing of his chapter notes and sources totals 198 pages. The sources run from books to contemporary newspaper and periodical accounts; to papers, letters, personal narratives, and diaries; and to interviews he conducted with surviving participants of the actions. He made 23 visits, averaging two to three days each, to the US Army Military History Institute, part of the Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, which he accurately describes as "among the greatest military archives in the world and a priceless asset to anyone studying World War II."

No matter how many other World War II books you may have on your bookshelf, make room for this one.



Lexington: University Press  
of Kentucky, 2013

354 pages

\$40.00

## Exposing the Third Reich: Colonel Truman Smith in Hitler's Germany

By Henry G. Gole

Reviewed by Richard G. Trefry, Lieutenant General (USA Retired)

The period of time between World War I through World War II is a fascinating story that has produced a myriad of books covering the military history familiar to professional soldiers. Henry Gole has examined what might be called a second order of history of this era and has outlined the evolution of US military strategies in earlier works such as *The Road to Rainbow* and *Preparing the Army for Modern War*. These two books provide studies of the maturation of the profession of arms in the US Army from World War I through the twentieth century.

Keeping with that theme, Henry Gole's *Exposing the Third Reich* is a story of how influential a single officer was in his service from WWI culminating in the development of NATO in the early 1970s. Colonel Truman Smith was the son of a West Pointer who was killed in the Philippines. Truman himself was a graduate of Yale University, class of 1915. He secured a commission in the National Guard of New York and was accepted into the Regular Army. After service on the Mexican border, he was assigned to the 4th Regiment of the 3rd Division. Colonel Smith was an outstanding officer in combat in World War II, commanding up to Battalion, and was awarded a silver star for his actions. After the armistice, he was assigned occupation duty in Coblenz, Germany, and then to duty in the American Embassy in Berlin, Germany.

The years between 1918 and 1924 provided Truman Smith with the experience that developed him as an expert on occupation duty and attaché duty in Germany. He developed many contacts and friendships with German officers that would last through World War II and the formation of NATO. Both he and his wife developed linguistic capabilities that made both of them very effective members of the Embassy staff. Of particular note was an interview Smith had with Adolph Hitler in Munich in November of 1922.

After his time in Berlin was over, he was assigned to Fort Hamilton in New York, which he later described as the worst assignment he had in his total career. However, that assignment led to selection for attendance at the Infantry Officers Advance Class at Fort Benning in 1926-27 immediately followed by attendance at the Command and General Staff College in academic year 1927-28. He returned to Ft. Benning to serve on the faculty of the Infantry School from 1928-32, which was under the direction of Colonel George C. Marshall. Many of his fellow instructors became Division and Corps Commanders in World War II. His experience in Germany brought him to the attention of Colonel Marshall and that established a personal and professional relationship that lasted through their lifetimes. From 1932-33, Smith attended the Army War College and his assignments to the 25th Division in Hawaii provided two years as a commander of a battalion in the 27th Infantry Regiment (The Wolfhounds).

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is number seven, entitled "Marshall's Men." It provides the best description of how Colonel Marshall and his faculty revolutionized military instruction. His methods of instruction and the capabilities of his faculty provided the keys to military instruction that have lasted until today.

Of particular note is Smith's relationship with German Army officers. One, Captain von Schell, was an invited German student officer in the 1930-31 Infantry Advance Course. This relationship provided close personal and professional friendships that lasted through World War II and into NATO.

Smith was a model officer in the field of military intelligence. Probably his most significant coup was inviting Colonel Charles Lindbergh to Germany where he was given the opportunity to inspect and fly all the types of planes of the Luftwaffe. Smith and Lindbergh were so effective they were accused of being pro-Nazi. Smith's intelligence efforts were so successful that, in essence, he became General George C. Marshall's personal intelligence officer.

During the formation of NATO, Smith played a major role. His relationship with German officers was essential in securing their participation in NATO. His personal and professional friendships with General Speidel, who had been Rommel's Chief of Staff, was particularly relevant.

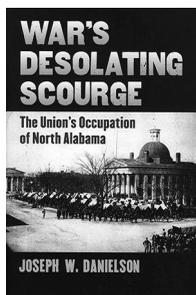
Colonel Truman Smith deserves this book. Colonel Henry Gole has provided us with a publication all professional officers should include in their libraries.

## THE CIVIL WAR

**War's Desolating Scourge: The Union's Occupation of North Alabama**

By Joseph W. Danielson

Reviewed by Robert H. Larson, Ph.D., Professor of History, Lycoming College



Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012

234 pages

\$34.95

The origins of the Civil War as a total war has long been identified solely with William T. Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas in 1864-65. Recently, however, some historians have challenged this view, arguing instead that the shift towards total war began far earlier. In his book *The Hard Hand of War*, Mark Grimsley argues that McClellan's defeat in the Peninsula Campaign in the summer of 1862 marked the turning point when Northern opinion became convinced that only a harsh policy toward Southern civilians would restore the Union. Charles Royster's *The Destructive War* goes back even further, claiming that calls for the absolute destruction of the enemy appeared in both the North and South from the very beginning of the conflict. In this latest contribution to the subject, *War's Desolating Scourge*, Joseph W. Danielson examines the experience of the sixteen counties of northern Alabama occupied by Union forces for much of the war and concludes that, at least for this area, local resistance by pro-Confederate civilians led Union forces to adopt a "hard war" approach to the conflict.

Union forces first entered northern Alabama in April 1862 when 7,000 troops of General Ormsby Mitchell's 3rd Division of the Army of the Ohio entered Huntsville, Alabama, and proceeded to extend their authority over the entire region. They were under explicit orders from the commanding general of the Army of the Ohio, Don Carlos Buell, to avoid any action against Southern property or civilians in the hope of winning over the local population with a policy of conciliation. The policy lasted less than a month. The people of northern Alabama were overwhelmingly devoted to the cause of secession and not at all interested in reconciling with the North. Almost immediately, they began to engage in acts of resistance, ranging from snubs and insults to outright attacks on Union soldiers and supply trains. The Union troops responded with arrests of community leaders, censorship, the destruction of private homes in the vicinity of the attacks, and even the confiscation of food and cotton. The struggle only ended when Braxton Bragg invaded Kentucky in the summer of 1862, and Buell was forced to evacuate Alabama and follow him. According to Danielson, this five-month occupation neither dampened the support of northern Alabamans for the Confederate cause nor led them to doubt that it would be victorious.

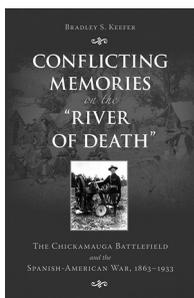
For the next seven months, the region remained peaceful, but in April 1863 Union cavalry began to launch raids into northern Alabama from bases in Tennessee and the following fall occupied the region once again. This time their actions were guided by a new War Department directive commonly known as the Lieberman Code which allowed for direct action against civilians if military necessity warranted it. It was, in fact, much like Ormsby Mitchell's policy the previous year. This second occupation was far harsher than the first and slowly but steadily—just

as “a continued dropping of water will wear away a rock”—wore down the Alabamans’ enthusiasm for independence. By 1865, the region was reduced to a wasteland, many civilians were forced to rely on the Union occupiers for food or else starve, and acts of resistance to the Union occupation “dramatically decreased.” The strength of the rebellion had been broken, but its spirit had not. Alabamans recognized that secession had failed and that slavery was over, but they remained fiercely determined to protect white supremacy and willingly used violence and terror to achieve it.

Detailed regional studies can perform a valuable function in illuminating and giving depth to broader trends. Danielson has combed numerous archives to uncover letters and diaries to document the changing attitudes of both Union soldiers and Southern civilians in northern Alabama. He convincingly demonstrates the depth of the Alabamans’ determination to achieve independence as well as the shallowness of the Union soldiers’ initial support for the policy of conciliation. He also makes an effective case that, in the example of northern Alabama, the breakdown of the policy of conciliation was a response to local resistance and not to changes in national attitudes or policy. This contention directly challenges Grimsley who dismisses the role of guerilla resistance in the hardening of Union attitudes. Finally, he makes a strong argument—whether he intended to or not—that only a policy of hard war directed against Southern civilians would have sufficed to bring them back into the Union, and even then it would not change their core beliefs or unwillingness to embrace racial equality.

Unfortunately, Danielson’s presentation is marred by repetition and at times a curious vagueness. One has to read—and perhaps reread—carefully to understand exactly when the two periods of Union occupation occurred. The information is there, but its presentation is anything but clear. More seriously, he provides little concrete information on that second occupation in contrast to the first. We do not know when it began beyond “the fall of 1863,” nor how many troops or which units were involved, nor who commanded them. Most curiously, he notes that Sherman made his headquarters here periodically in the spring of 1864, but outside of a letter the following October expressing pleasure to his wife that his soldiers “take to it [foraging] like Ducks to water,” he provides no indication of anything else he did during these months.

In short, Danielson provides some useful information and insights into the evolution of the Civil War into a total war on a regional level, but his work lacks the perspective to be of wide interest.



Ohio: The Kent State  
University Press, 2013  
406 pages  
\$58.50

## Conflicting Memories on the “River of Death”: The Chickamauga Battlefield and the Spanish-American War, 1863-1933

By Bradley S. Keefer

Reviewed by Richard J. Norton, Professor of National Security Affairs, US  
Naval War College

While *Conflicting Memories* is a welcome addition to the mountain of works dealing with the US Civil War and its effects on this nation, the book is less about the battle of Chickamauga as it is about remembering and enshrining the battle. The result is much more than a history, as interesting as that history is; rather it offers insights and raises questions as to how we remember and shape history and what happens when different histories occupy the same ground.

The battle of Chickamauga, fought between 19 and 20 September 1863, was a bloody affair which pitted the talents of Confederate General Braxton Bragg against those of Major General William Rosecrans, commanding the forces of the Union. Other notable figures from both north and south include Lieutenant General James Longstreet, who, with his Corps, had been temporarily detached from Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia and Major General George H. Thomas, whose determined defense of the Union line at Horseshoe Ridge would make him a national hero. Although the battle ended in a Confederate victory, all rebel gains would be lost by November as Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan won the battles of Lookout Mountain and Lookout Ridge, and ended the siege of Chattanooga by rebel forces. As a result of these operations, Grant would rise to command all Union Armies and the heart of the Deep South would be open to the Union advances of 1864 and Sherman’s “March to the Sea.” Chickamauga was the second most costly battle of the Civil War—the first was Gettysburg—and has been the subject of many books, of which Peter Cozzens’s *This Terrible Sound* may well be the best.

Thirty five years later, Chickamauga experienced another seismic historical event, one that could have potentially supplanted or at least could force a sharing of historical pride of place with the civil war battle. In 1898, as the United States prepared for and fought a war with Spain, Chickamauga served as a vast training camp for many of the regiments earmarked for service overseas. Although the leading wave of these forces passed through Chickamauga in reasonably good shape, those who followed them were ravaged by disease with attendant death tolls that exceed any combat casualties. The memories of these deaths with concomitant allegations of government incompetence and malfeasance were potential competitors with those recollections of Civil War heroics and sacrifice. A war of sorts—a war of memories—would be fought and although the Civil War narrative would prevail, the story of needless deaths of thousands of newly recruited volunteers for the Spanish American War would not be completely silenced.

Keefer does a commendable job showcasing how efforts to create a military park at Chickamauga played out against a national backdrop where southern proponents of the romanticized “Lost Cause” were

countered by the increasingly politically powerful membership of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). At stake was the place of veterans and the units in “the national memory,” and in the case of Chickamauga the most determined veteran was Henry Van Ness Boynton who would make preserving the battlefield and its “lessons” his life’s work.

As Keefer relates, establishing a Chickamaugan narrative satisfactory to north and south, the hundreds of regiments, batteries, divisions and other units that had fought there, and to leaders, many of whom bore great antipathy toward one another was no easy task. Battle lines had to be recreated, and one common version of events agreed upon. Creating the park also required congressional approval and the support of local communities. At every turn, new issues arose. Which units would be the most prominently featured? What requirements if any, would be applied to memorials and monuments? How accessible would the battlefield be to tourists?

It took Boynton and others until 1895, but at last the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park was dedicated and officially opened. The park would celebrate “American valor and sacrifice,” serve as instructional terrain for students of history and future military officers and, as Gettysburg had done in the east, to “sanctify” the ground upon which so many had given their lives. In a marked difference from Gettysburg, Chickamauga would also boast Camp Thomas, an army installation, for the park was also intended to serve as a site for military training and maneuvers.

Camp Thomas, as it turned out, was instrumental in initiating a series of events which resulted in the greatest challenge to Boynton’s vision. As war with Spain loomed, militia and volunteer units flocked to the colors and Chickamauga was selected as a logical training facility where regiments would be brought to fighting trim and then deployed to the war. To some degree the martial display of thousands of men preparing for war fit nicely with the story of the Civil War battle and the depiction of American, vice northern or southern, heroism. However, predictably, the less noble pursuits of young soldiers, including drinking and frequenting of bordellos that sprang into existence near the camp, caused friction with local authorities and did not fit as well with the narrative. Such issues in themselves could likely have been dealt with—except for the shockingly high mortality rates that resulted from a variety of illnesses associated with putting vulnerable populations of young men together in close proximity with insufficient sanitation and a lack of modern medical knowledge.

It was perhaps inevitable that the illness and death at Camp Thomas became intertwined with other Army “scandals” of the day. In particular, there were allegations the Army’s tinned meat rations were toxic, and that Army medicine as a whole was deficient. The response of senior medical and Army officers at Camp Thomas was that the War Department failed to provide adequate resources, Chickamauga was an unhealthy locality in general, local water supplies were tainted, and there was a lack of hygienic discipline among the volunteers.

Boynton mounted an interesting defense of the Army and the military park. He blamed certain senior officers for falsely attacking the War Department to excuse their own failings while at the same time

implying the volunteers themselves were not made of the same tough and manly material as their Civil War forebearers. This defense of the War Department was clearly over the top. As Graham Cosmas, in *An Army for Empire* brilliantly recounts, the War Department and the Army, although not as ill prepared as popular recounting would have it, were not ready for the demands of the Spanish-American War and subsequent Philippine insurrection, and this lack of readiness was reflected in a medical department that in many ways was far inferior to that of the Civil War.

In the end, however, Boynton prevailed. Chickamauga remains to this day primarily a Civil War battlefield, with memories of Camp Thomas relegated to marginalia. Chickamauga's memories are martial, its sagas of sacrifice, courage, and eventual national reconciliation. What Keefer has done, and done exceptionally well, is to remind us that such commemorative landscapes do not simply appear as much as they are manufactured and negotiated and that the story of that creation and bargaining is not only essential to understand the evolution of such national historic shrines but important in itself.