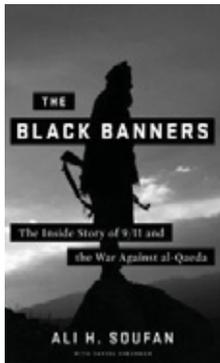


MR BOOK REVIEWS



THE BLACK BANNERS: The Inside Story of 9/11 and the War Against Al-Qaeda,

Ali H. Soufan with Daniel
Freedman, W.W. Norton
& Company, New York,
2011, 572 pages, \$26.95

FEATURED REVIEW

ALI SOUFAN, AN FBI

agent and interrogator, was in Yemen investigating Al-Qaeda's attack on the USS *Cole* when the 9/11 attacks took place. Many of his friends and colleagues died in the twin towers, including John O'Neill, his mentor and former boss. The next day, his headquarters ordered him to reinterrogate Fahd al-Quso, a member of Al-Qaeda in Yemen. The CIA sent him a file explaining why. When Soufan read the file, his hands shook. He ran to the bathroom, fell to the floor next to a toilet and threw up, unable to comprehend why the CIA had withheld such key intelligence for more than a year. If this intelligence, which the FBI had repeatedly requested, had been shared with the FBI before 9/11, "at a minimum, Khalid al-Mihdhar [one of the hijackers] would not have been allowed to just walk into the United States on 4 July 2001, and Nawaf al-Hazmi, Atta's deputy [another hijacker], would have been arrested." The interrogation of either of these hijackers could have then led to more arrests, and perhaps, foiled the entire plot.

This powerful anecdote is just one of many in Soufan's remarkable memoir, *The Black Banners: The Inside Story of 9/11 and the War Against Al-Qaeda*. An Arabic-speaking Lebanese American, Soufan served at the "tip of the spear" in America's fight against Al-Qaeda from 1997 to 2004. During this period, using traditional, noncoercive interrogation techniques, Soufan's team convinced many die-hard Al-Qaeda members that they should cooperate. After his team questioned L'Houssainne Khertchou, this Kenyan Al-Qaeda operative became the star witness in a trial that put four other operatives in prison for the 1998 East African embassy

bombings. Interrogations of Quso and Jamal al-Badawi led to confessions and convictions for their roles in the 1999 bombing of the USS *Cole*. His team "turned" Abu Jandal, Osama bin-Laden's personal bodyguard, which led to testimony that convinced Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's president, that Al-Qaeda was indeed behind the 9/11 attacks. Soufan's interrogations of Abu Zubaydah, a mid-level Al-Qaeda facilitator, yielded the intelligence that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed had orchestrated the attacks. Notably, during these and other interviews, his team uncovered Al-Qaeda plots that were then stopped.

As spectacular as these successes are, history will find far more interesting the institutional failures that Soufan's experiences illuminate. There is the failure of the CIA to adequately share intelligence with U.S. law enforcement agencies, thus ensuring the 9/11 attacks could take place. Just as damning is Soufan's eyewitness testimony concerning the utter ineffectiveness of so-called "enhanced" interrogation techniques. Soufan describes multiple interrogations in which he earned the trust and cooperation of Al-Qaeda operatives, only to have psychologists and amateur interrogators from the CIA destroy the rapport through brutality. He reports that once they used harsh techniques, detainees stopped providing substantial intelligence. Even more troubling, Soufan describes how the Bush administration extradited even cooperative sources to Arab countries, where they would be tortured, murdered, or soon released to rejoin Al-Qaeda's ranks.

However, *The Black Banners* is more than a book about American successes and failures; it is the most valuable primary source published to date on Al-Qaeda. This stands to reason. The terrorist organization was extremely small when Soufan fought it, so he could thus interrogate a sizeable percentage of its members. Through these interviews, we get a detailed, comprehensive view of the group. We learn that what "binds the operatives together is this narrative that convinces them that they're part of a divine plan." The narrative includes cherry-picked, apocryphal sayings of the prophet Mohammed ("hadith"), such as the suspect hadith, "If you see

the black banners coming from Khurasan [a medieval kingdom that included much of Afghanistan], join that army, even if you have to crawl over ice; no power will be able to stop it.” This alleged saying explains Al-Qaeda’s black flag and the group’s interest in Afghanistan. We also discover the degree to which Al-Qaeda’s rank and file are uneducated and, thus, easily manipulated by its leaders. Surprisingly easily, Soufan is able to convince many members to cooperate simply by teaching them the actual words of the Koran—words that contradict much of Al-Qaeda’s propaganda.

The Black Banners does have flaws. The CIA reviewed the manuscript, and those sections that cast the CIA in a negative light are heavily redacted. Indeed, some sections are barely readable. The book is also rather haphazardly organized, and its prose—while capable—is unexceptional. Nonetheless, future historians may one day deem this book the most important memoir of our generation. Ali Soufan not only personally exemplifies who Americans are at our best, but he vividly and uniquely describes—to our great shame—who we have been at our worst. Any American would benefit from reading this book, and it is a must-read for U.S. warfighters, foreign policy makers, historians, and intelligence and law enforcement personnel.

LTC Douglas A. Pryer, U.S. Army, Afghanistan

LTC Pryer is the author of *The Fight for the High Ground: The U.S. Army and Interrogation during Operation Iraqi Freedom I, May 2003–April 2004*.

**CHINA AND COEXISTENCE: Beijing’s
National Security Strategy for the
Twenty-First Century,**

Liselotte Odgaard, The Johns Hopkins
University Press, Baltimore, MD,
2012, 264 pages, \$45.00

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT the Royal Danish Defence College, Institute for Strategy, Liselotte Odgaard has written a compelling book arguing that China will remain merely a would-be great power for the foreseeable future. She believes legitimate great power status comes about primarily through the combination of military and economic means, and that China will not soon

achieve this stature. However, China will pose a challenge to U.S. geopolitical interests and the U.S.-led international order by way of its peaceful coexistence policy.

In support of her thesis, Odgaard systematically details the evolution of China’s national security strategy over the last 20 years, highlighting its balance of peaceful coexistence and nationalism. She describes peaceful coexistence as a strategy that nations with less than great power status use to wield political influence (relying on diplomacy and statesmanship) as a means to influence global order to suit nationalist aspirations. In other words, peaceful coexistence is a tool used to persuade, not provoke. China seeks to use this strategy to influence global order by way of multilateral and international security institutions, such as the United Nations and smaller regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, to buy time to build its economy and military to achieve great power status.

Odgaard places this peaceful coexistence security strategy into effective historical context, drawing on early Soviet doctrine, China and India’s mid-century experience, and country case studies from the 19th and 20th centuries (e.g., Austria, Prussia, and Britain). She analyzes China’s application of its coexistence strategy to some border and sea disputes (e.g., Japan, Russia, India, and the South China Sea). China’s coexistence strategy allows China to expand its control while improving relations. Historically, this type of strategy has failed in the long run because it ultimately seeks benefits beyond a country’s relative international power base. Odgaard thinks this overreaching may prove problematic for China. Going forward, when considering China’s economic reliance on foreign trade and direct foreign investment to fuel its economic growth, the country must contend with its lack of support from politically reliable and loyal partner nations.

In contrast to the policy of peaceful coexistence, China has used coercive measures in dealing with Japan over economic and geopolitical issues by withholding much-needed rare-earth materials. China has also methodically isolated Taiwan from the international community by making economic arrangements with other nations contingent on them not recognizing Taiwan as an independent

state. Odgaard rightfully questions China's real strategic intent, signaling a note of caution to the United States.

This well researched, substantive, and thought-provoking book is laid out well and is easy to read and digest. Whether or not you agree with the author's logic and conclusions, the book is worth the read for its superb analysis. Military and inter-agency professionals, international relations and political science students and academics, as well as others interested in the emergence of China, its foreign policy, and its evolving role in international affairs would benefit from reading it.

*David A. Anderson, Ph.D., LtCol, USMC,
Retired, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

**DRIFT: The Unmooring of American
Military Power,**

Rachel Maddow, Crown Publishing,
New York, 2012, 264 pages, \$25.00

FEW MODERN BOOKS written by political commentators provide *Drift's* ideological dichotomy. Its author, Rachel Maddow, is a well-known television host on MSNBC who consistently takes a liberal, witty, and informed view of the news. However, the message in the book is as conservative as they come: that our government has overstepped its bounds and is incapable of representing our people, at least in respect to our national security. As she says, "Our political process doesn't actually determine what we do [in national security]. We're not directing that policy anymore; it just follows its own course." Despite the mechanisms put into place by the Founders to prevent the executive branch from solely conducting war, today there are no institutional brakes to warmaking.

Based mostly on historical anecdote and storytelling, *Drift* primarily concerns how the United States finds itself in this situation. This subtle shaping of a political narrative is the unfortunate direction the book takes. While the topic Maddow addresses is eminently pertinent to our contemporary military and society, she goes about describing it incompletely, leaving the reader unsatisfied.

However, one key point Maddow makes bears some additional thought: the placement of necessary warmaking capabilities in the Guard and Reserves

following Vietnam to better balance how our nation conducts war (referred to as the Abrams Doctrine). Throughout her narrative, she describes how this one institutional brake was bypassed in the 1990s and ultimately co-opted to conduct operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This has created a situation in which no societal mechanisms remain to prevent a president from beginning and conducting war.

Those who automatically change the channel when Maddow appears on television will not enjoy the book—semantically and stylistically, *Drift* is an extension of her TV show. However, the topic she discusses bears further debate from all sides and is well worth reading.

*CPT Nathan K. Finney,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

**WE MEANT WELL: How I Helped Lose the
Battle for the Hearts and Minds
of the Iraqi People,**

Peter Van Buren, Metropolitan Books,
Henry Holt and Company, LLC, New York,
2011, 261 pages, \$25.00

*"My goal was not to embarrass people but
instead draw attention to what we as an
organization have done."*

— Peter Van Buren, Interview on National
Public Radio, 5 October 2011

PETER VAN BUREN'S *We Meant Well* contains valuable lessons for leaders both military and civilian. Among its revelations, it raises ethical questions concerning the complexities of reconstruction in Iraq, and it does so from the perspective of an embedded provincial reconstruction team (PRT) leader. Van Buren's goal is to inform readers of flaws in our approach to the reconstruction of post-war Iraq. Many portions of his book do just that. However, readers should be aware that the book seems tendentious in places where the author delivers sarcastic, acerbic, and apparently vengeful observations. The author is humorous and articulate, and he delivers several useful discussions informing potential leaders of pitfalls in the vital work of reconstruction. This book can inspire reflection on how to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Central to Van Buren's argument is that reconstruction efforts focused on input (spending money on programs) more than output (the results of those programs) and anyone attempting to change the status quo was punished. Van Buren reflects on the damaging impact this lack of fiscal accountability had on him. He states that none of his supervisors in the reconstruction offices at the U.S. embassy ever questioned a program he approved; however, he got into a great deal of trouble when he cancelled two programs he deemed fiscally irresponsible.

Van Buren got the message: spend your budget. Not only spend the budget, but also don't let on that projects are not going well. Van Buren describes taking a member of the media through a chicken processing plant built with U.S. funds. The plant never processed any chickens except when the media visited. During these visits, the sheik in charge of the plant would buy chickens and process them solely for the benefit of the visitor—a kind of chicken plant kabuki theatre.

This account does put reconstruction efforts in a poor light. The author himself felt compelled to participate in such actions. The fact that he did may alienate his readers. After all, others have used the excuse "I was following orders" to justify all kinds of wrongheaded activity. It is unclear if anyone actually ordered this charade, although the author does relate the trouble he got into for resisting it.

Van Buren's credibility as a whistle blower may seem suspect to some, but many military leaders might find his discussion of civilian-military relations informative and forthright. Brigade commanders in Iraq who had PRT teams assigned in their operational environment may have found working with them problematic due to differences in organizational culture. Those who have served on combat advising teams might have found similar challenges; working with fellow Americans can be more challenging than with Iraqi counterparts. Van Buren describes this challenge stating, "Most of the diplomacy I practiced in Iraq took place inside the wire." The irony that fellow Americans from different governmental agencies might face communication and cultural challenges is engaging and relevant. Leaders who must build effective teams consisting of diverse members, such as State Department employees, would benefit from this discussion.

Although vindictive at times, Van Buren is articulate, describing relevant problems as long as he stays on topic. For example, in one chapter he discusses a certain PRT member's sexual missteps down range using only a first name—this would fool no one and seems mean spirited. This account calls into question his statement on National Public Radio that he did not intend to embarrass people. Such lurid sections distract from his overall goal to inform American society of a problem with how taxpayer funds are being used in reconstruction.

Nevertheless, *We Meant Well* is for anyone who would like to see the Iraqi reconstruction environment through the eyes of this PRT chief's often perceptive account. This book is loaded with great discussion points for those studying ethics in a complex environment. *We Meant Well* would be a good book for senior leader discussions at brigade level and above. This is a cautionary tale for those who are involved in reconstruction efforts: This is how *not* to do reconstruction.

*LTC Richard A. McConnell, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

HUMAN SECURITY IN A BORDERLESS WORLD,

Derek S. Reveron and Kathleen A. Mahoney-Norris, Westview Press, Boulder, CO,
2011, 256 pages, \$32.00

ALTHOUGH THE STATE has historically exercised primacy in international relations and security matters, the landscape of the dynamic, often ambiguous contemporary operating environment has expanded to include many more nonstate and transnational actors and belligerents. Over the last 20 years, this new "norm" has facilitated a shift in focus of international and national security from classic state-centric security issues to a broader set of issues that center on individuals who have transnational implications.

In *Human Security in a Borderless World*, authors Derek S. Reveron and Kathleen A. Mahoney-Norris, both experts in the field of national security affairs and national security studies, advocate the concept of human security—a people-centered approach focused on individual human beings and their rights and needs—to examine various security challenges that threaten individuals, societies, and governments

from a U.S. policy and security perspective. These challenges include poverty, disease, bad governance (failed or failing states), crime, corruption, and human rights abuses. Historically, the United States has taken a realist approach to national security focusing with other states on hard-power (military, economic) means to protect national interests (sovereignty, territorial integrity, government, institutions, and society).

This approach focused on protecting against the most catastrophic possibilities of nuclear attack and conventional attacks of rogue states. The security environment of the 21st century, complicated by the effects of globalization and economic interdependence, has challenged states to take a more constructivist approach to security focused on using soft power (diplomacy, pursuit of shared values, and human rights) to deal with the most likely threats posed by nonstate actors and transnational challenges. This timely and thought-provoking book's premise is that the only effective way the United States can contend with security concerns is to move beyond the traditional state-centered approach to national security to a broader human-security approach.

In their well-organized book, Reveron and Mahoney-Norris define and compare national security and human security, and review the international relations theories (realism, liberalism, and constructivism) that inform varying perspectives and approaches to security. The authors examine civic, economic, environmental, maritime, health, and cyber security, defining and framing the security problem, its relationship to national security, examining U.S. approaches and policy, and providing recommendations for improvement.

In the last chapter, the authors provide a model that incorporates and highlights the relationship between a broad spectrum of security challenges: traditional issues (nuclear and conventional attack, civil war, and insurgency); interrelated seam issues (civic, economic, environmental, maritime, health, and cyber security); human issues (crime, disease, poverty, corruption, bad governance, and human rights); military and nonmilitary means; and required capabilities.

Field Manual 5-0 states that "developing a thorough understanding of the operational environment is a continuous process . . . This understanding

will never be perfect, attempting to comprehend its complex nature helps identify the unintended consequences that may undermine well-intentioned efforts." *Human Security in a Borderless World* helps government officials and military leaders gain understanding of the operational environment and its various actors by capitalizing on multiple perspectives and varied sources of knowledge.

The book is a rewarding read for senior and midgrade military officers desiring a synopsis, analysis, and implications of transnational security issues affecting the United States.

*LTC Edward D. Jennings, USA, Retired,
Leavenworth, Kansas*

GHOSTS OF EMPIRE: Britain's Legacies in the Modern World,

Kwasi Kwarteng, PublicAffairs Press,
New York, 2012, 480 pages, \$29.99

WHILE NO SHORTAGE of literature exists on the subject of the British Empire, *Ghosts of Empire* provides a fresh perspective that reminds us of our shared history and parallel paths. Its author, Kwasi Kwarteng, examines Britain's colonial legacy through a contemporary lens, drawing on the Crown's experience to frame a cautionary tale for America in the 21st century. At a time when many leading thinkers are pressing the United States to take a leading role in policing global unrest, Kwarteng cites the decline of the British Empire to urge restraint.

Britain's colonial period represented an era of great confidence and opportunism for the Empire, when the Crown ruled the seas and the territories were flush with resources. The phrase, "The sun never set on the British Empire," was more than a euphemism for global reach; it was an undisputed truth, with colonies spanning the world from Iraq to India, from Burma to Hong Kong. However, administering those colonies proved more than challenging, and inconsistent foreign policy ultimately weakened colonial bonds to the point of failure. Unable to provide consistent and coherent policy, the Empire fell in decline through short-sighted decisions and broad failures in administrative oversight.

The author summons the lessons of colonialism to serve warning to the United States. More than

once, Kwarteng intimates that the only consistent aspect of American foreign policy over the past century has been inconsistency. This inconsistency threatens our global standing, limits our reach, and saps our influence and confidence. Kwarteng warns that America should heed the lessons of the *Ghosts of Empire* in charting a future course away from our shores. In many cases, the ghosts of the colonial period are at the root of our contemporary problems around the world.

Kwarteng, a conservative member of parliament from Spelthorne in Surrey, was born to Ghanaian parents in London in 1975. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, he attended Harvard University as a Kennedy Scholar before returning to Cambridge to complete his doctorate. He was elected to Parliament in 2010.

As strategic thinkers increasingly suggest that we are compelled to global action with a “responsibility to protect” the embattled populations of the world, *Ghosts of Empire* serves as a stark reminder of the lessons of the past. Already stretched thin by events in Iraq and Afghanistan, America lacks both the resources and the national will to extend a veil of protection across the planet. Our foreign policy is not sufficiently stable to maintain such a veil. Moreover, we simply cannot express such action in terms that support our national security interests.

Ghosts of Empire is not just a great read, engaging readers from beginning to end. It is a thought-provoking historical study with startling modern implications that will prove informative for any student of imperial history.

*LTC Steve Leonard,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

**DEMOCRACY’S ARSENAL: Creating a
Twenty-First-Century Defense Industry,**

Jacques S. Gansler, MIT Press,
Cambridge, MA, 2011, 452 pages, \$45.00

THIS IS THE fourth major work on the defense industry by Jacques S. Gansler, a well-respected scholar and former Department of Defense (DOD) official. He writes that deep systemic change is needed to prepare the DOD and related defense industries for the coming decades. The shift of threats to nonstate actors using terrorism, nuclear

proliferation, and electronic warfare makes the development of new technologies and expanding international military cooperation growing challenges. The defense industry’s ability to respond is greatly threatened because its current development and acquisition model depends on outdated strategic concepts and budgets no longer sustainable due to an aging populace, an increasing debt load, and rising pension and healthcare costs.

Gansler begins with overviews of the defense industry and then goes on to provide detailed investigations of industry sectors along with the needed advice and direction on future policy changes. While recognizing that a single buyer dominates the current defense market, he believes the reintroduction of competitive elements among producers will reinvigorate the industry. Industry mergers, tight export controls, heavy government regulation, and the reluctance to rely on the technical expertise of non-U.S. researchers have stifled growth and innovation in the science and technology fields. Due to the high cost of dealing with DOD, many commercial companies have left the defense field and developed technologies that far outpace those sometimes available to the military.

To prepare for the coming challenges, Gansler argues that the government must revise tight regulations that reflect an isolationist approach to technological exchanges to make it easier for successful commercial companies to reintegrate their commercial operations with defense research and development. The United States must embrace globalization, realizing that the use of advanced technologies from other nations will ensure it fields the most up-to-date systems and provides greater interoperability with allied systems as coalition actions increase. The government should also concentrate on revitalizing its acquisition force and developing a logistics system that responds like a successful commercial operation. The Defense Department must pursue these changes within a model of development and acquisitions that builds cost reduction and schedule into the process. This new model must be based on developing net-centric systems, not individual platforms. Only then can DOD achieve the commercial phenomenon of paying less to get more, instead of the current trend of more expense for fewer and fewer platforms.

Gansler's work is a timely call to action. Defense needs and budgetary constraints are on a collision course. This work provides a framework for the change needed to avert that crisis. Senior leadership across acquisitions, logistics, and R&D in both the civilian and government sectors will benefit from engaging the arguments and observations raised by Gansler. The ability of the U.S. defense industry to respond to the coming challenges rests on how well these needed changes will be implemented.

Jonathan E. Newell, Nashua, New Hampshire

**MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE
21ST CENTURY: Science and Practice,**
Kim-Yin Chan, Star Soh, and Regena Ramaya,
CENGAGE Learning Asia, Singapore,
2011, 257 pages, \$65.50

LEADING IS FUNDAMENTAL to officer-ship. Officers should be students of leadership throughout their career. *Military Leadership in the 21st Century: Science and Practice* was written as a textbook to provide Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) junior officers and other military institutions around the world an introductory-level appreciation of the key concepts related to military leadership. Retired SAF officers Kim-Yin Chan, Star Soh, and Regena Ramaya are psychologists specializing in military psychology and sociology who had the chance to learn from the doctrine and leadership development and education practices of armed forces in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and Israel. Thus, *Military Leadership* transcends SAF approaches to leadership and is useful for any junior military leader who wants to understand the social sciences that underpin contemporary military leadership doctrine.

The authors explain fundamental leadership concepts such as stress, the psychology of human behavior in combat, motivation and morale, leadership styles and values, leading military teams in complex environments, and the profession of arms. They ask: Are leaders born or made? What is the difference between command and leadership? What is the difference between direct, organizational, and strategic leadership? The reason *Military Leadership* belongs on a professional officer's bookshelf is the manner in which the authors link leadership

theory to doctrine to illustrate using social sciences to improve individual and team performance.

Military Leadership may be designed to provide academic education to junior officers, but it provides a great reference book on foundational leadership principles. It is an excellent book not only for personal professional development to become a better leader, but also for discussion and education at the team or unit level to enhance performance.

*LTC Ted A. Thomas, Ph.D., USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

**LIONS OF KANDAHAR: The Story of a
Fight Against All Odds,** Rusty Bradley and
Kevin Maurer, Bantam, New York,
2011, 304 pages, \$26.00

IN *LIONS OF Kandahar*, Major Rusty Bradley delivers a dose of reality through a rare first-hand account of Special Forces in action on the battlefield in southern Afghanistan during Operation Medusa.

In the summer of 2006, Taliban forces had gained momentum and massed in the Panjwayi Valley within striking distance of their ultimate prize, Kandahar City. In response, the NATO forces of Regional Command South planned Operation Medusa to clear the thousands of Taliban from Panjwayi and eliminate the threat to Kandahar. The plan utilized Afghan Army forces operating under the tutelage of three Special Forces A-teams, one commanded by Bradley, to conduct reconnaissance of the valley, distract Taliban forces, and establish blocking positions to the south while Canadian forces conducted the main attack. As often happens in war, operations diverged from the plan.

With the Special Forces teams and their Afghan partners watching from the other side of the valley, the main coalition attack ran into stiff resistance and a counterattack that threatened the success of the entire operation. Realizing this, Bradley and his comrades quickly identified Sperwan Ghar, a decisive piece of high ground in the valley, as the key to regaining the initiative and enabling the attack to continue. The small force assaulted the hill and entered into a brutal firefight with close to 1,000 enemy fighters who also realized its importance. Against all odds, through grit and enthusiasm and discipline and craft, the extremely outnumbered

Afghan and Special Forces detachment took the ground, ending any chance the Taliban fighters had for success.

While it conveys a small but important piece of the history of the war in Afghanistan, *Lions of Kandahar* is not a history text; it is a story about the men involved and well worth the read. Writing in the first person, Bradley intermingles classic Special Forces bravado with his penchant for storytelling to bring his pages to life. Further, he juxtaposes the relative comfort of life in the United States with the realities of war by including such personal memories as his arrival in theater and a conversation with his daughter on the phone.

Bradley's detailed, evocative description of the Special Forces and Afghan warfighters' selfless and herculean actions is a tribute to those who took Sperwan Ghar. This book will appeal to anyone interested in military operations in Afghanistan. In addition, those who wish to learn more about the capabilities of U.S. Army Special Forces will find *Lions of Kandahar* an entertaining and informative read.

Shane Vesley, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

FALLEN ELITES: The Military Other in Post-Unification Germany,

Andrew Bickford, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, CA, 2011, 268 pages, \$22.95

EVER WONDER WHAT happened to the East German Army? Veterans of the Cold War, especially those stationed in West Germany during this era, may conjure up images of a sinister, monolithic force that was the first line of defense for the Warsaw Pact in Central Europe. What happened to this vaunted adversary after the end of the Cold War and the German reunification? Did it simply go quietly into the night? How exactly did it become part of the present-day German Army?

Assistant professor of anthropology at George Mason University Andrew Bickford examines this and related questions in a fascinating study of the military reunification process in post-Cold War Germany. Bickford's tells us the East German Army, or NVA (*Nationale Volksarmee*) became the "military other" in the new Germany. Bickford

convincingly argues that the reunified *bundeswehr* quickly and systematically emasculated the NVA, because it sought to distance itself from an entity it considered illegal, irrelevant, and hopelessly linked to the former communist regime.

Virtually overnight, the NVA disbanded and the majority of its members became jobless. Officers above the rank of lieutenant colonel were automatically retired, while only a small portion of other NVA members joined the new army. Perhaps most egregious, Germany now considered former NVA constituents as "members of a foreign military," treating them as nonsoldiers and de facto second-class citizens. An unequal pension system and the denial of military burials further humiliated the NVA. A segment of reunified Germany thus quickly became politically and economically isolated and disenfranchised.

Why should we care about the demise of the NVA, a military associated with the losing side in the Cold War? Bickford argues that Germany mishandled the NVA issue, and it is difficult to disagree with him. Members of the NVA should have had full status as German soldiers and greater equality (parity was untenable) in the *bundeswehr*. The NVA's marginalization made the path to reunification more difficult, and attested to East Germany's general treatment as an unequal partner in the reunification process.

Meticulously researched, highly readable, and instructive, Bickford's work gives tremendous insight into what it means to be a soldier serving a state associated with the losing side. *Fallen Elites* has applicability to future reunification scenarios, such as the Korean peninsula. I strongly recommended it to students of the Cold War and German reunification and civil-military relations specialists.

Mark Montesclaros, Fort Gordon, Georgia



**STRIKING BACK: Combat in Korea,
March–April 1951,**

Edited by William T. Bowers,
University Press of Kentucky, Lexington,
2010, 450 pages. \$40.00

**PASSING THE TEST: Combat in Korea,
April–June 1951,**

Edited by William T. Bowers and
John T. Greenwood,
University Press of Kentucky, Lexington,
2011, 486 pages, \$40.00

STRIKING BACK and *Passing the Test* are the second and third in a series of Korean War combat narratives edited by William T. Bowers. They describe events from March to June 1951 from battalion and below. Bowers died in 2008 after the first volume was published; he had a second volume nearly ready for publication and a third volume in draft. John Greenwood, a former colleague, saw the second volume through to publication, completed work on the third, and shares credit as editor.

Bowers uses Army historian post-combat interviews to narrate the fighting at the battalion, company, platoon, and individual soldier levels. He intersperses the interviews with passages from division and corps combat reports to provide context by describing the larger tactical situation, and concerns himself with the operational or strategic aspects of the war only as they provide context for tactics. As he compares the interviews with other primary sources, he shows that the confusion of combat remains after the fighting ends.

In *Striking Back*, Bowers narrates parts of the UN Counteroffensive in the winter of 1951, concentrating on the actions of UN forces in the central mountains, the areas north of Seoul, and in central Korea. In March, UN forces advanced to liberate Seoul, killing as many communists as possible and taking positions north of the 38th parallel in a series of limited offensives. As their offensive wound down, UN troops prepared themselves to meet the fifth Chinese offensive as described in *Passing the Test*.

In *Striking Back*, Bowers follows regiments of the 7th Infantry and the 1st Cavalry Divisions in their actions in the central mountains. Here one sees

the importance of logistics in an austere environment characterized by poor or nonexistent roads in rugged, mountainous terrain and the ingenious ways logisticians kept the units supplied. The problems occurred as battalions resupplied their companies.

Bowers follows the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team as part of an armor-infantry task force, as it traps and destroys a large portion of the Chinese and North Korean troops concentrated north of Seoul. He then shifts attention to central Korea and follows the attacks of the 2nd Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions around the Hwach'on Reservoir to destroy the Communist forces there and seize the dam that controlled the river waters flowing through UN forces' rear areas.

The narrative shifts west to study the 24th Infantry Regiment's actions conducting an assault crossing of the Hant'an River. *Striking Back* concludes as the Chinese finish their preparations for their fifth (spring) offensive, which they launched in late April.

In *Passing the Test*, the focus is on the Chinese spring offensive. Much of the narrative concentrates on blocking the communist advance to Seoul. The Chinese goal was to seize Seoul after destroying the UN forces and then proceed to Taejon, Taegu, and Pusan to unite Korea under Kim Il Sung. The stubborn defense in all sectors destroyed the plan, and the UN counteroffensive ended in June.

Bowers concentrates on the actions that took place during the first week of the Chinese offensive. He details the actions of the hard-pressed troops guarding the northern approaches to Seoul on the Imjin and at Kap'yong. He describes the effects of the disintegration of the ROK 6th Division on the UN units holding its flanks. The hard fighting that led to the destruction of the Gloucestershire Battalion allowed its neighboring units to retreat in good order and establish a new line.

Bowers concentrates on the fighting below the Soyang River from May to early June that stopped the Fifth Chinese Offensive. He emphasizes the difficulties UN forces faced, especially in maneuver and supply, while fighting in mountainous terrain. Bowers shows there is still much to learn from the 38 months of combat in Korea, which, between January and June 1951, was a series of limited offensives designed to destroy communist fighting power using superior firepower. At the end of the

fighting, the tactical situation changed for both the UN and the communists. From July 1951 until the armistice two years later, attacks were predicated on the desire to fight while negotiating.

Weaving together accounts of the fighting at different tactical levels gives one an understanding of particular military aspects of the Korean War, casting new light on a forgotten war. These two books and their predecessor volume are well worth reading.

Lewis Bernstein, Ph.D., Seoul, Korea

**THE LAST MISSION OF THE
WHAM BAM BOYS: Courage, Tragedy,
and Justice in World War II,**

Gregory Freeman, Palgrave MacMillan,
New York, 2011, 236 pages, \$26.00

THE LAST MISSION of the *Wham Bam Boys: Courage, Tragedy, and Justice in World War II*, is the story of a downed B-17 crew in 1945. During their first bombing mission, their aircraft was hit by flak, the crew bailed, and eventually—after capture—found themselves confronted by a hostile civilian mob in Rüsselsheim, Germany. Six of the American crewmembers were beaten and shot to death and later hastily buried in the town's cemetery. After the war, American military authorities prosecuted 11 Rüsselsheim citizens for murder.

Gregory Freeman's telling of the story is uneven, but his handling of trial dialogue is excellent. Perhaps the book's greatest strength is its ability to convey the simple pain, uncertainty, and raw emotion experienced by the crew's stateside families, who for so long held out the hope that their loved ones were still alive. Three crewmembers survived—and Freeman tells their stories in a particularly effective manner.

That said, there are several places where *The Last Mission of the Wham Bam Boys* falls short. This is not an exhaustive scholarly work, and it contains only a short bibliography, which itself lacks what are usually considered the definitive works on the American strategic bombing campaign. Equally odd is the salient fact that this exact topic was thoroughly covered in an earlier book, *Wolfsangel: A German City on Trial* by August Nigro. Other than some interviews with the crew's families, there is

little added and much omitted in this new telling. Indeed, some of the "borrowing" from Nigro's work is too close for comfort.

Freeman is not a subject matter expert in either strategic bombing or the nuances of military justice. There are several factual errors (e.g., stating that the Army Air Corps became the Army Air Force [sic] in 1944—it happened in June 1941 and it was the Army Air Forces.) Although Freeman takes great pains to walk through the post-war trial, he entirely skips over the chief reason the trial is important. It was one of the fledgling applications of war crimes law to civilians, something not previously envisioned under the Geneva Convention's rules against the abuse of prisoners of war.

Army prosecutor, and later Watergate special counsel, Leon Jaworski is a central character in Freeman's account, and Freeman deftly portrays Jaworski's role. However, what is puzzling is his omission of Jaworski's earlier (and more famous) role in the 1944 Lawton, Oklahoma, court martial of 43 African-American service members charged with rioting and murder. Jaworski likewise successfully prosecuted several German prisoners of war for the murder of a fellow prisoner turned informant—all this before reporting to Darmstadt to begin the trial of the Rüsselsheim citizens.

New looks at existing scholarship are welcome, provided there is truly value-added. Unfortunately, *The Last Mission of the Wham Bam Boys* does not deliver on that.

Mark M. Hull, Ph.D., Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

**AXIS SALLY: THE AMERICAN VOICE
OF NAZI GERMANY,**

Richard Lucas, Casemate Publishers,
Philadelphia and Newbury,
2010, 321 pages, \$29.95

IF ANYONE was tailor-made for cable TV movie-of-the-week treatment, it was Mildred Gillars, a failed showgirl and actress whose background included a miserable midwestern small-town childhood, brushes with the law, a stint as a nude model, a suicide attempt, and a lifetime's worth of tragic love affairs. She longed for stage and screen stardom—but settled in middle age for international success as a radio performer.

It all sounds pedestrian enough in a clichéd, melodramatic movie-of-the-week kind of way, except for the fact that Mildred’s life played out against the backdrop of the Great Depression, the rise of Nazism in Europe, World War II, and the start of the Cold War—and that Mildred Gillars was the notorious “Axis Sally.” The same Axis Sally whose velvet, come-hither voice cajoled thousands of lonely G.I.s scattered in foxholes across Europe and North Africa to tune in to her daily Reichsradio broadcasts where she introduced contemporary music and induced homesickness. Her carefully scripted patter interwoven with running commentary espoused Nazi principles and anti-Semitism.

In his thoroughly researched book, *Axis Sally, The American Voice of Nazi Germany*, author Richard Lucas traces the path of the woman eventually arrested and tried for treason for her role in attempting to convince Americans to abandon “Roosevelt’s War” and see the light of day from the German perspective. Hunted down and arrested by U.S. authorities after the war, she was convicted in federal court on only one of 10 counts, and sent to prison for more than a decade. On parole, she lived out her years as a music teacher in an Ohio convent school. Never marrying, she died in poverty in 1988.

But in his treatment of her story, Lucas points out the many paradoxes that plague any in-depth analysis of how Mildred transformed into Sally. Was she merely a sad, vulnerable spinster-to-be, manipulated by paramours who used her for their own personal and propagandistic purposes, or was she a scheming opportunist? Did she only agree to become Axis Sally under Nazi threat of deportation to a concentration camp, or was it simply a shrewd career move? Was her trial a travesty of justice, presided over by a biased judge unwittingly aided and abetted by her own inept defense counsel, or did she get what she deserved?

The author seems to be wrestling with his own doubts about Gillars’ culpability, often sympathetically referring to her as “friendless” and her situation “tragic.” He notes that other American wartime radio propagandists such as Iva Toguri d’Aquino (“Tokyo Rose”) and Rita Luisa Zucca (Rome’s “Axis Sally”) received lesser (in the case of d’Aquino) or no punishment (Zucca had renounced her U.S. citizenship prior to the war and was therefore immune from prosecution for treason).

In his research, the author unearths some long-forgotten aspects of the now mythic Axis Sally. Known primarily in pop history for her programs aimed at G.I.s, Gillars also performed as “Midge at the Mike” in a series of homespun broadcasts aimed via shortwave radio at hometown America, where her audience was the “girls” back home. However, Lucas does not present any evidence that anything Axis Sally said or did prompted Americans to change their minds about the Nazis or the war. Many people on the home front and G.I.s on the front lines did look forward to her broadcasts, but seemed to tune out the rhetoric while listening to the music. Stateside audiences gleaned information about casualties—the injured, missing, or dead, the kind of reporting Sally later said was her patriotic duty to do.

The author tries mightily to do justice to his complicated subject, but shoddy editing and a limp, convoluted literary style often get in the way of what should have been a fascinating story about a complex woman, at once powerful and powerless, talented and talentless, vain and insecure.

Carol Saynisch, Steilacoom, Washington

**BROTHERS, RIVALS, VICTORS:
Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley and the
Partnership that Drove the Allied
Conquest in Europe**, Jonathan W. Jordan,
NAL Trade, New York,
2011, 547 pages, \$28.95

IN *BROTHERS, RIVALS, Victors: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley and the Partnership that Drove the Allied Conquest in Europe*, Jonathan W. Jordan discusses three unique, influential military figures. Each made his mark on history, each worked toward the same end state, but each saw the path through war and politics differently, and the journey along these paths shaped the relationship of these men as they strove to eliminate tyranny.

General Eisenhower matures in years, as he develops into the statesman and commander responsible for making difficult decisions and managing an Army of historical proportions. General Bradley is the faithful and methodical leader who always places the Army ahead of personal ambition, and finally, General Patton comes through as the

hammer, a brilliant tactician overshadowed only by his own foibles.

The book's organization allows the reader to meet each of these great generals in their younger days and appreciate the establishment of their relationships. It portrays General Marshall as a behind-the-scenes manager setting conditions for each to reach a destiny. It presents Eisenhower's ability to organize the team and use both Bradley and Patton's strengths in such a way to strike fear into the enemy. Additionally, the author does his best to shield both so they receive the deserved credit for their fighting abilities.

One of the book's strongest qualities reveals a clashing of personalities not often seen in the movies or in documentaries. On more than one occasion, Eisenhower displayed a temper when dealing with Patton that most would find hard to believe. (Eisenhower is usually portrayed as the great statesman who appears calm and in control at all times.) Additionally, Bradley is constantly at odds with the decisions made by Patton. Patton's need to achieve success impairs his military judgment on more than one occasion.

As the book discusses Bradley's reflection on his career, it becomes apparent that he is somewhat bitter about how he is overshadowed. Bradley reveals that "Eisenhower was a political wizard, but a tactical bumbler." As for Patton, he revealed that he was "the most ambitious man and the strangest duck he had ever known."

Brothers, Rivals, Victors is highly recommended to those interested in the leaders who guided our military through one of the most difficult struggles of the 20th century. The author grabs the reader by offering insights not commonly known about these generals.

Allen D. Reece, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Gordon Satellite Campus

**GUERRILLA LEADER: T.E. Lawrence
and the Arab Revolt,**

James J. Schneider, Bantam Books,
New York, 2011,
313 pages, \$28.00

THOMAS EDWARD LAWRENCE was an extremely effective battlefield officer, a brilliant writer and military theorist, and protagonist in a personal drama that has captured the attention

of people across the world. James J. Schneider has taken on quite a subject and produced quite a book. All biographers have to focus. Basil Liddell Hart, interwar England's foremost writer on military affairs, tried to establish a faithful narrative of events in *Colonel Lawrence: The Man Behind the Legend* (1934.) (He had direct help from his subject matter, a friend, who answered Liddell Hart's inquiries.) And, Harvard psychiatrist John Mack emphasized personal compulsions originating in birth out-of-wedlock, in his Pulitzer Prize winning *A Prince of Our Disorder* (1976).

Schneider, an expert on military theory, which he taught at the School of Advanced Military Studies, places Lawrence's military role in the Middle Eastern theater of World War I. That subject is not as obvious as it might first appear. The character in question was simply overwhelming, and he remains so. It is well to remember the context that Schneider provides: that the ultimate purpose of the theater was to expose Germany's southeast flank, to preserve a lifeline into Russia, and to disrupt Turkish railroad lines and troop formations so that Edward ("Bloody Bill") Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force could penetrate into the heartland of Turkey's Arab empire. Lawrence knew his military role and his limitations. His guerrilla operations behind enemy lines helped set the stage for the success of 1918. The campaign never proved decisive for World War I but, to coin a phrase, a legend was born.

Lawrence remains a source of wisdom. Soldiers and Marines in Iraq have been following his advice from *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917: "Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is." To learn a lot more, read *Guerrilla Leader*.

Michael Pearlman, Ph.D. Lawrence, Kansas

LEE: A Life of Virtue,

John Perry, Thomas Nelson, Nashville, 2010,
226 pages, \$19.99

WHO WAS ROBERT E. Lee? What made him important? Author John Perry tells Lee's

story with skill and simplicity. Readers who are experts on Lee will find *Lee: A Life of Virtue* a pleasant read, and readers wanting to know more about Lee will find the book informative and interesting.

Here is an example: during the Mexican War, General Winfield Scott held a planning meeting with Captain Lee and Lieutenants George Gordon Meade, George B. McClellan, Joseph E. Johnston, and P.G.T. Beauregard. Lee's father-in-law was George Washington Parke Custis [Washington was his legal guardian]. Custis's daughter, Mary Anna Custis, was Lee's wife. Light Horse Harry Lee, who fought in the Revolution, was Lee's father. Light Horse Harry composed the famous phrase "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen" to describe George Washington. On 14 October 1824, the Marquis de Lafayette visited the Lee family—the same Lafayette who fought during the Revolutionary War with Washington and who became extremely close to him. Robert E. Lee was a man in the tradition of George Washington. Character, virtue, and honor are what defined Lee. This is what makes his career worth studying.

Lee ranked second in his class at West Point and became adjutant of the corps. He graduated without a single demerit at a time when cadets could not drink alcohol, play cards, use tobacco, or read novels. Lee wrote, "Though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States." Lincoln said something quite similar in his 4 March 1861 inaugural address: "I have no purpose directly or indirectly to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists; I believe I have no lawful right to do so."

Lee had much to overcome when he took over as commander of the Confederate Army. The North had a population of 22 million people, the South just 9 million, giving the North a massive advantage over the South. In 1861, the North had 10 times the advantage in industrial production; it had a 30-times advantage in firearms over the South. These facts helped drive Lee's strategy.

Unlike today, no instant communications existed, so when Lee gave an order to his generals, he included the words "if practicable." Perry argues this was a mistake. Lee was being too much of a gentleman. However, knowing that the situation might have changed by the time his order reached the field commander, Lee gave his field commanders the flex-

ibility to do what the latest intelligence called for.

After the war, Lee became president of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. Something Lee said at the time sums him up as a leader and as a man: "We have but one rule here, and that is that every student must be a gentlemen." Readers will understand and like Lee more after reading this book.

Robert Previdi, Manhasset, New York

HELLCAT: The Epic Story of World War II's Most Daring Submarine Raid

Peter Sasgen, NAL Caliber, New York,
2011, 336 pages, \$26.95

WHY SHOULD A land-warfare-oriented person bother to read a book about World War II submarine warfare? What could he possibly learn? Quite a lot, actually. Small unit leadership, leader development, operational-level senior leadership, strategic-level senior leadership, force management, materiel acquisition, technology integration, risk-benefit analysis, leadership accountability, grief counselling, and service member family relations.

Up until the summer of 1945, it was too risky for Allied subs to enter the Sea of Japan because of its sea mines. As long as Japan had freedom of navigation in the Sea of Japan, it continued to support its war effort with raw materials, finished goods, and food. Japan was effectively isolated, except for its secure lines of communication in the Sea of Japan. Despite the results of a devastating air campaign, Japan was not likely to be defeated until it was completely cut off from the Asian mainland.

Hellcats, The Epic Story of World War II's Most Daring Submarine Raid enjoys the advantage of the passage of time, the declassification of rich sources, and a global picture retrospective—for example, learning where the critical sonar system came from and what it took to get it and use it as a tactical enabler.

Peter Sasgen addresses the irony of such a risky effort and acknowledges the impending use of the atomic bomb, something even very senior Navy leadership did not know at the time. He asks if the losses were worth the results, but he also puts both the question and its answer in an appropriate context.

He asks, “Given what they knew (and didn’t know), were these good decisions?” I remembered an old saw from business school: “Never judge the *quality* of a decision by its outcome. Bad decision makers can get lucky, and good decision makers can get very unlucky.”

Sasgen approaches the subject on various levels. At the strategic level, how could Japan be truly defeated, and what emerging materiel and technology could bring that about? What resources were required, and how could the Allies obtain them? At the operational level, what operations would effect Japan’s isolation, and how could the forces available accomplish that? At the tactical

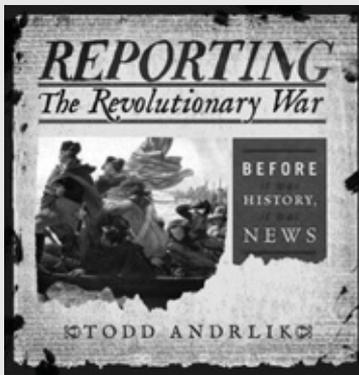
level, how could task forces maneuver be to inflict maximum damage on Japan’s war effort? These are interrelated questions, and Sasgen addresses their interrelation masterfully.

He also weaves a very human story throughout the book. Warfighters who venture out to combat do not always return unscathed, if they return at all. How do they maintain family relationships in such an environment of uncertainty, and how do their families cope?

I recommend this book. There are lessons for almost everyone. Sasgen’s *Hellcats* delivers the fascinating real story of this mission.

*Thomas E. Ward, II, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*

MR We Recommend



REPORTING THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR: Before It Was History, It Was News

*Todd Andrlik, Sourcebooks
Naperville, IL, 2012, 400 pages, \$39.99*

COLONIAL PAPERS PUBLISHED between 1763 and 1783 fanned the flames of revolution in America, provided critical correspondence during the war, sustained loyalty to the cause, and ultimately aided in the outcome. Reporting the Revolution brings an unprecedented look at colonial newspapers detailing the biggest battles, milestones, and major events of the American Revolution. Written by colonists and revolutionaries themselves, these newspapers are a look back in time and tell the story of the battle for independence unlike any version that has been told.