

BOOK REVIEWS

PARALLEL THINKING

Hore, Peter, ed. *The Genesis of Naval Thinking since the End of the Cold War*. Maritime Strategic Studies Institute Paper 2, March 1999. 109pp.

Over the past decade, the U.S. Navy has undergone a profound shift in its strategy and thinking. This collection of thoughtful essays written by senior Royal Navy officers between 1992 and 1998 makes it clear that soul-searching by naval thinkers has not been confined to the United States. Eric Grove's foreword, tracing the evolution of British naval thought over this period, and Captain Edwin Atkinson's essay, "The Influence of Sea Power upon Peace," demonstrate how closely the thinking, assessments, and recommendations being made in the United Kingdom paralleled those made in the U.S. Navy's ". . . From the Sea" process. It is certainly an interesting commentary on the eternal verities of naval thinking that what Grove calls an "intellectual revolution" occurred without any formal exchange between these two very different groups, each of which was engaged in an "in house" effort.

The real value of these essays, however, lies not in the history of post-Cold War naval thought but in what they say about a continuing revolution in naval thinking on both sides of the Atlantic—especially the efforts to stretch declining force levels to deal with extended commitments. A

particularly salient essay in this regard is Vice Admiral Alan West's "1919–1991: The Need for a United Kingdom Grand Strategy." West's forthright analysis of Britain's failed attempt to adapt to a new strategic environment after World War I points to the lack of a coherent national "grand" strategy, to destructive interservice rivalries, and to military planning driven by costs alone. The lack of a grand strategy in particular left Britain unable to make any meaningful trade-off between the limited means accorded the military in the interwar years and the far-reaching commitments that British forces were directed to meet. Compounding the problem was the policy makers' assumption that Britain "will not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years," a fiscally convenient dictum that persisted well into the 1930s despite evidence to the contrary and that ultimately left Britain unprepared for war. All of this should have a familiar ring to today's readers. Indeed, it is the currency of these problems that gives this essay its greatest impact.

Of equal, if different, significance is a series of essays by Brigadier Robert Fry,

Vice Admiral J. J. Blackham, and Admiral Sir Peter Abbott, written between 1995 and 1998. These provide perceptive British insights on the changing maritime dimension of our post–Cold War world and the increased roles for maneuvers and forward presence in shaping a new strategic environment. These are exactly the kinds of issues with which the U.S. armed forces are now struggling.

The essays' chief drawbacks are their brevity and what they do not say. The in-



Berkowitz, Bruce D., and Allan E. Goodman. *Best Truth: Intelligence in the Information Age*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2000. 203pp. \$22.50

The U.S. intelligence community, as it currently exists, is fundamentally flawed and must be remade. With this opening premise, Bruce Berkowitz, a senior consultant at RAND Corporation, and Allan Goodman, former dean of the Georgetown University School of Foreign

Service, present their blueprint for the future of American intelligence.

According to the authors, a trio of factors threatens to leave the intelligence community ineffective and irrelevant. First, it is no revelation that the end of the Cold War has left the intelligence commu-

nity without a single clear threat as a focus for its analytic efforts. The past emphasis on the Soviet Union offered intelligence analysts historical continuity. Change tended to be evolutionary; for example, one generation of Soviet submarines offered insights into the next. Today, however, nations and nonstate actors have unprecedented access to technology and information and with it a new capability to organize and operate rapidly across borders. These developments create the prospect of an “instantaneous threat” against the United States from entirely unexpected sources.

Second, if Carl von Clausewitz was correct in defining intelligence as “every sort of information about the enemy and his country,” fundamental changes in information management must create fundamental changes in intelligence. Berkowitz and Goodman observe that the intelligence community was created on an

A book reviewer occupies a position of special responsibility and trust. He is to summarize, set in context, describe strengths, and point out weaknesses. As a surrogate for us all, he assumes a heavy obligation which it is his duty to discharge with reason and consistency.

ADMIRAL H. G. RICKOVER

sights presented are clearly worthwhile and for that very reason deserve expansion. For example, what were the working-level debates that undergirded the flag officers' presentations? The fact that the essays cover the seven-year period up to only three years ago would indicate that the issues raised with regard to the changing role of naval forces in the new century are still as far from being fully resolved in the Royal Navy as they are in the U.S. naval service. This suggests room for both an equivalent American publication and another Maritime Strategic Studies Institute paper, as both navies continue the process of rethinking naval power that collectively began in 1991.

EDWARD A. SMITH, JR.
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Washington Studies and Analysis
The Boeing Company
Arlington, Virginia

industrial model designed for the efficient production of standardized products. But today, consumers receive customized, on-demand information from their stockbrokers, news services, and on-line retailers; they expect nothing less from their intelligence suppliers. Further, intelligence products have become just one of the numerous data streams used by decision makers—and not necessarily the most important one. Americans are increasingly skeptical of “received wisdom” from authority (institutional or individual) and will “channel surf” for the intelligence support they expect.

Finally, the authors discuss the challenges posed by changes in American political attitudes toward intelligence. Where Americans once allowed intelligence agencies to be accountable to but a handful of elected officials, today they increasingly expect much more transparency to the public. Further, political realities suggest that for the foreseeable future intelligence agencies will receive no additional funding.

The likely bureaucratic answer to these challenges is to reorganize, seek efficiencies, and work more closely with the customer. However, the authors believe that seeking greater efficiency within the current intelligence model is not an effective answer. While they give the intelligence community high marks for satisfying identified customer requirements, they believe that today’s world of “instantaneous threats” and operations other than war makes it impossible for most customers to identify intelligence requirements early enough to permit the intelligence bureaucracy to respond. Simply put, today’s structure is a recipe for always being a step behind.

The solution proposed in *Best Truth* is a transition to what Berkowitz and Goodman dub an “adaptable intelligence organization.” Ad hoc groups would address specific customer problems. Expanded use of contractors or part-time employees with specialized skills would provide expertise for unanticipated threats. Further, the authors suggest the establishment of what they call a “virtual economy” to fund the intelligence community. Major intelligence consumers would control funding dedicated to their intelligence requirements and would have the option of spending it on any intelligence organization or discipline they believe could satisfy their needs. Intelligence agencies would cease to have “lanes in the road”; any agency could propose a solution to a customer problem. One intended effect of this virtual economy would be to force government agencies out of tasks that can be performed more efficiently by the private sector. Intelligence organizations would focus on emerging technologies not yet profitable for private industry, and on unique, high-risk espionage operations that only government organs can perform.

The bottom line of this work—a design for the future U.S. intelligence community—is not particularly satisfying. The broad outline presented leaves the reader looking for more—more specifics, more examples, more justifications. In its defense, however, the book is offered as a “manifesto” and not an exhaustive study. Its value lies in the clear and insightful statement of the challenges facing the intelligence community and the questions that they raise. Although it falls short of what its title promises, *Best Truth* is thought-provoking reading for intelligence professionals and naval officers

who are interested in the challenges of the information age.

DALE C. RIELAGE
Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy
Norfolk, Virginia



Peters, Ralph. *Fighting for the Future: Will America Triumph?* Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1999. 210pp. \$19.95

The introductory pages of this book are suffused with a disagreeable arrogance and condescension. Speaking of the U.S. Army in which he spent his career, Ralph Peters states that he is “loyal to it still, much as one might care for an old lover felled by drink and bad decisions.” With a metaphorical sad shake of the head but his face set nobly toward a higher truth, he sets out on a twelve-essay description of his vision of the future and the blindness of today’s military leaders. This reviewer was quite prepared for an annoying slog through a tendentious book.

Yet *Fighting for the Future* turned out to be a provocative, if strident, collection of essays (published separately between 1994 and 1999). Although Peters’s intellectual arrogance does not lessen throughout, he offers many cogent arguments and observations on a variety of themes that ought not to be dismissed out of hand, even if some ultimately are not persuasive. They directly address core issues underlying many of the most difficult problems facing today’s civilian and military leadership.

Peters depicts a dark and violent future. In the opening essay, “The Culture of Future Conflict,” he argues that “future wars and violent conflicts will be shaped by the inabilities [*sic*] of governments to function as effective systems of resource distribution and control, and by the

failure of entire cultures to compete in the postmodern age. . . . Basic resources will prove inadequate for populations exploding beyond natural limits. . . . There will be fewer classic wars but more violence. . . . Intercultural struggles, with their unbridled savagery, are the great nightmare of the next century.”

The post–Cold War U.S. military is singularly unprepared to deal with this future. Politicians and military leaders alike fundamentally misunderstand this brave new world. As a result, we will “face a dangerous temptation to seek purely technological responses to behavioral challenges” and will “need to struggle against our American tendency to focus on hardware and bean counting to attack the more difficult and subtle problems posed by human behavior and regional history.” The forces we are buying today at exorbitant cost may prove unusable against actual future threats. Peters argues that against a broad range of emerging threats, new rules of engagement rather than new weapons are needed, since no nation or other entity can face us head to head in conventional terms. “We are constrained by a past century’s model of what armies do, what police do, and what governments legally can do. Our opponents have none of this baggage.”

One essay takes issue with the notion of a technologically based revolution in military affairs (RMA). Though to a degree he argues against straw men, Peters’s main point is that technological issues are secondary to understanding the human nature of future foes—no argument there. On the other hand, in another essay he claims that “current and impending technologies could permit us to reinvent warfare,” allowing us to attack instigators of violence rather than their populations. Ironically, two other essays

deal with future urban combat and armored warfare in futuristic terms that some leading RMA proponents would endorse gladly.

The essay “A Revolution in Military Ethics?” is perhaps the best in the book. It is a hard-nosed look at “ethics” as a crutch: “Ethics in war on the part of a Western society do not so much protect the objects of our violence as they shield us from the verity of our actions.” Peters argues that current Western “ethics” have separated combatants from directly seeing the consequences of their actions, in essence “dehumanizing” warfare through stand-off precision. There are other perverse “ethics.” We are unwilling to assassinate Saddam, but we are willing to strangle the Iraqi population in vain hopes of undoing him. “We might discover that our current military ethics are the least humane thing about us.”

Peters makes a compelling argument that Americans are psychologically unprepared to understand the nature of their future foes. The United States will face implacable forces in nationalism and fundamentalism. Americans cannot imagine the level of brutality required to deal with “warriors,” as opposed to soldiers. Peters’s warriors are “erratic primitives of shifting allegiance, habituated to violence, with no stake in civil order,” and their defeat will require a toughness and seriousness of purpose that may be inconsistent with the moral values for which we claim to fight. Part of the problem is a feckless multicultural relativism. “What of all that self-hobbling rhetoric about the moral equivalency of all cultures? Isn’t it possible that a culture (or religion or form of government) that provides a functional combination of individual and collective security with personal liberties really does deserve to be

taken more seriously than and emulated above a culture that glorifies corruption, persecutes nonbelievers, lets gunmen rule, and enslaves women? Is all human life truly sacred, no matter what crimes the individual or his collective may commit?” Unless the United States stops fooling itself about the nature of its foes, it risks defeat, or at best military ineffectiveness.

Fighting for the Future, for all its provocative arguments and pithy language, sometimes borders on the apocalyptic. Its culminating essay is positively messianic. Peters argues for a “Strategic Enforcement Initiative” to assure American global dominance. “The goal, initially, is not to interfere in the affairs of foreign states, as long as they behave humanely toward their populations. The first . . . step is to force an end to interstate warfare. We alone will have the wealth and power to do it—plus, we could collect defense taxes from states that benefit from our actions. As the world’s only extant empire of law and justice, we also have the right and responsibility to do it. We need have no moral reservations about outlawing aggression and then enforcing that prohibition.” In short, the United States should “dominate the earth for the good of humankind.” Notwithstanding the fun of making French (and Chinese) readers hyperventilate, advocating aggression in pursuit of a “higher good” is unacceptable; the world has had enough recent experience with utopianism. Peters might better have reserved this essay for his novels.

For all its stridency, however, *Fighting for the Future* offers thought-provoking arguments and is well worth reading. If Peters is too convinced he knows the future, that is still a lesser sin than smug,

Luddite, self-assurance that tomorrow will look just like today.

JAN VAN TOL
Captain, U.S. Navy



Osiel, Mark J. *Obeying Orders: Atrocity, Military Discipline & the Law of War*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1999. 398pp. \$39.95

It is a fundamental belief of thoughtful military personnel that what they do, even in the heat of battle, remains a moral enterprise. This important and careful volume critically assesses an important legal pillar of that belief: that moral soldiers are to obey only *lawful orders*. It is often said that soldiers are expected to disobey unlawful orders, especially those ordering atrocities or violations of the laws of war. Since Nuremberg, it is held that “superior orders” do not constitute a defense against charges of war crimes. Osiel makes it abundantly clear that these nostrums are far from certain or legally reliable as presently understood.

Mark J. Osiel is a professor of law at the University of Iowa and the author of *Mass Atrocity: Collective Memory and the Law* (Transaction, 1999). He knows whereof he speaks: he has interviewed extensively the perpetrators and the victims of Argentina’s “dirty war,” and his grasp of the relevant literature (legal, philosophical, and military) on the subject of obedience is capacious.

With care and precision, the author challenges the present standard, which requires soldiers to disobey orders that are “manifestly” illegal. This standard, he argues, is fraught with unclarity and is far too permissive of illegal acts in war.

The book is much more than a dry legal treatise about a point of law. Osiel writes with real passion and breadth. He includes important chapters on the psychology of small military units and the requisites for their cohesion and combat effectiveness. He is careful throughout to acknowledge the limitations of law as a constraint on combat behavior. He argues with zeal for the legal and practical possibility of doing better than the present legal standard in encouraging moral responsibility in officers and soldiers. In the end, Osiel transcends the genre of legal analysis entirely, grounding his ethical appeal in the very nature and basis of the military profession itself. He is Aristotelian when he closely links moral conduct in war with the virtues that define excellence in the profession of arms itself.

In addition, Osiel is helpful in a practical sense. He suggests how best to use Judge Advocate General advisers on military staffs, and he offers concrete examples of subordinates who, faced with unclear orders (deliberate or otherwise), managed by means of requests for clarification to avoid committing war crimes.

Osiel dissects the various ways in which atrocities are committed: “(1) by stimulating violent passions among the troops (‘from below’); (2) through organized, directed campaigns of terror (‘from above’); (3) by tacit connivance between higher and lower echelons, each with its own motives; and (4) by brutalization of subordinates to foster their aggressiveness in combat.” Since the causes are diverse, each type will require its own unique approach to control it; but Osiel’s overall point is profound: “The evidence examined here suggests that effective prohibitions against atrocity depend much less on the foreseeability to soldiers of criminal prosecution after the fact

than on the way soldiers are organized before and during combat.” In other words, *post-facto* law enforcement is only one tool, and not a powerful one at that, in the struggle to prevent atrocities and war crimes.

It is this breadth of treatment that lifts Osiel’s discussion far above stereotypical legal analysis and makes it a truly significant contribution to the literature of military professionalism and military ethics. *Obeying Orders* connects the moral argument deeply to the professional commitments of soldiering. Members of the military profession should be encouraged to exercise their ethical judgment over as wide a scope as possible within the functional requirements of military effectiveness and efficiency.

It would be a shame and a mistake if only military and civilian lawyers chose to read this profound meditation on the moral foundations of soldiering itself. Informed by military practicality, and respectful of the possibilities of deepening and widening the highest senses of military professionalism, *Obeying Orders* is the first book on professional ethics that a seasoned officer ought to read.

MARTIN L. COOK
Professor of Ethics
U.S. Army War College



Smith, George W. *The Siege at Hue*. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1999. 195pp. \$49.95

George W. Smith has provided an excellent historical summary of the battle of Hue, based on his personal experience as an information officer assigned to the 1st Division of the Army of the Republic of (South) Vietnam (ARVN), and on after-action reports, articles, and

interviews. The book highlights the complexities and dynamics of conducting military operations in urban terrain, particularly in a combat environment.

Hue had been the imperial capital of Vietnam, and it was the country’s cultural and intellectual center. It was South Vietnam’s third-largest city, strategically located in the country’s narrowest part, near the coast. One of the few cities where until 1968 there had been no U.S. combat presence, it was virtually undefended and consequently a lucrative target for the North Vietnamese army and the Viet Cong.

The battle of Hue was the largest single engagement of the Vietnam War. It lasted from 31 January to 25 February 1968 and (not counting civilian deaths) claimed 5,713 casualties on both sides. Smith describes the battle as a classic joint and combined operation. The city was divided into two areas of responsibility, with the South Vietnamese army assigned the mission of retaking the northern portion and the U.S. Marines that of regaining control south of the Perfume River.

The urban conditions in Hue were comparable to those of Dodge City in the American “Old West.” Some buildings had wooden fronts, porches, and sidewalks; the streets were narrow, and buildings were densely concentrated. In the middle of Hue, however, was a virtually impregnable fortress known as the Citadel, with towers, ramparts, moats, concrete walls, and bunkers. The walls were twenty-six feet high and in some sections forty feet thick. The moat was ninety feet wide at many points and up to twelve feet deep. The Imperial Palace, another enclave within Hue, was surrounded by a twenty-foot wall.

Smith identifies three costly errors made by the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong on the first day of their attack. First, they failed to overrun the 1st ARVN Division headquarters. Second, they failed to assault the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) compound. They had sufficient forces to accomplish both missions. Third, they failed to destroy the An Cuu Bridge, south of the city, leaving open a route by which the Marines could reinforce and resupply the MACV compound. The bridge was destroyed five days later by enemy sappers, but too late. These errors most likely prevented the enemy from holding Hue for longer than they did.

The value of this book lies in the lessons learned by the forces fighting in Hue. The first lesson was the value of accurate intelligence. At the operational level, the allies falsely believed that the massive buildup of enemy troops around Khe Sanh near the Demilitarized Zone meant that the enemy did not have enough manpower for a countrywide offensive. At the tactical level, commanders routinely made decisions in the absence of any specific intelligence about enemy strength or dispositions in Hue. The importance of intelligence is best illustrated by the events on the night of 16 February. The enemy suffered a tremendous setback when, on the basis of an intercepted radio message, allied artillery destroyed a battalion-sized force trying to infiltrate through a gate on the southwestern wall.

The second lesson involved the use of air and artillery fire support. These supporting arms greatly facilitate fire and maneuver in any environment, especially in cities; however, authorization for their use in cities is normally restricted by rules of engagement in order to limit collateral damage, and Hue was no

exception. Unfortunately, the buildings were fortresses, with interlocking lines of fire from roofs, attics, and windows. The South Vietnamese government eventually lifted all restrictions on the use of heavy weapons south of the Perfume River. However, another limitation on heavy firepower is weather. Naval gunfire, eight-inch howitzer fire, and tactical aircraft support were frequently not readily available because of poor conditions.

The third lesson is the complexity of house-to-house fighting. Heavy weapons, such as tanks, 106 mm recoilless rifles, mortars, and 3.5-inch bazookas, were used in Hue for street fighting. Objectives could be reached only by going through buildings. The Marines dug holes in walls through which they rushed, clearing the rooms on the other side and establishing sniper positions in preparation to take the next buildings. Streets could be crossed only under a barrage of covering fire. Mortars provided local indirect fire support that could be used in lieu of larger weapons that were either unauthorized or unavailable. Mortars helped reduce the personnel-for-building casualty ratio. The enemy forces in Hue were well dug in, well supplied, and prepared in some cases to fight to the finish. None of the Marines had had any training in street fighting prior to Hue.

Today's efforts by the Joint Staff to develop urban-combat doctrine and by the Marine Corps and Army to produce tactics, techniques, and procedures are meant to ensure that the United States does not face the same dilemma in the future. Seventy-five percent of the world's population now resides in cities. This will equate to eight to ten billion people by the year 2025. The U.S. military used to fight *for* cities; now it is required to fight *in* them—cities similar to

Hue. George W. Smith offers a very good perspective on what such street fighting is all about.

Joseph Anderson
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Naval War College



Shultz, Richard H., Jr. *The Secret War against Hanoi: Kennedy's and Johnson's Use of Spies, Saboteurs, and Covert Warriors in North Vietnam*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999. 408pp. \$27.50

At its core, this is a remarkably well told story of failure—heartbreaking failure to be sure, and failure despite the heroic efforts of some remarkable men to achieve success, but still failure. The U.S. covert war against Hanoi was, as this book makes clear, patently unsuccessful. That it could have been otherwise makes the story all the more compelling.

A leading expert on low-intensity conflict and covert warfare, Shultz has filled a gap that has troubled those who for decades have been trying to understand the Vietnam War. Using meticulously documented research, and writing in a reader-friendly style, Shultz lays out the history of the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam Studies and Observations Group (usually referred to simply as “SOG”) from 1964 to 1972. Such a book is arguably long overdue, but classification of material and the lack of documented interviews with former SOG members crippled previous attempts. At worst, the operations of SOG have suffered gross distortions, turning one of the war’s most interesting features into farce and pulp fiction. Happily, this is no longer the case. Now, using newly declassified documents, Shultz lays to rest many of the myths—including the now-infamous

CNN claim that Operation TAILWIND involved killing U.S. deserters and the use of the nerve agent Sarin.

Shultz begins his tale by explaining how an aggressive Kennedy administration, angered and humiliated by the Bay of Pigs, formally placed CIA-controlled covert operations against North Vietnam under military leadership. President Kennedy, his brother Robert, and other key advisors wanted immediate results, and they ignored the fact that a covert operation takes time to achieve its desired effect. Nor was the military high command ecstatic about gaining this new responsibility. A generic aversion to special operations, fear of where Kennedy might be taking the Army, and distrust of many involved in Special Operations, resulted in a bureaucratic struggle of rare intensity and duration. One of the tragic ironies emerging from Shultz’s research is that from the beginning, senior U.S. military and political leaders effectively prevented SOG, which was charged with the new covert mission, from achieving its full potential.

Thus, the cards were stacked against SOG from the start. One obstacle was an administration that, following President Kennedy’s assassination, seemed hesitant to take advantage of apparent opportunities. Nor did SOG ever receive proper support from the military or CIA leadership. Opposition from senior members of the State Department was at times ferocious. In addition, SOG’s South Vietnamese counterpart was never fully trusted, possibly with good reason. As a result SOG rarely had the right mandate or qualified people, operated under byzantine restrictions, and never achieved a rapport with the one organization that could have dramatically increased its effectiveness. Shultz also

points out that from time to time SOG created its own problems. There was concern over discipline and, more problematic, security vulnerabilities of which the group seemed unaware.

Nonetheless, SOG managed to carve out a role for itself, eventually running four major types of operations against the forces of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam: cross-border commando operations in Laos and Cambodia, aimed at observing and interdicting the Ho Chi Minh Trail; insertion of South Vietnamese agents into North Vietnam to carry out resistance operations and deception; maritime interdiction and commando operations against the North Vietnamese coastline; and psychological warfare operations aimed at North Vietnam. While some of these, such as the insertion of agents into the North, were carried out only by Vietnamese personnel, others, such as actions against the Ho Chi Minh Trail, also involved Americans. Shultz extensively covers these operations, and the reader cannot help but be impressed by the courage of those who carried them out. However, because these efforts were never integrated into the overall strategic plan (if ever such a plan truly existed), the results were less effective than they might have been. Yet despite it all, SOG came close enough to offer a tantalizing vision of what could have been done. This is one of the most depressing and intriguing aspects of the entire book.

If Washington and Saigon did not take SOG's efforts seriously enough, the same cannot be said of Hanoi. The North was extremely sensitive to SOG's actions and worked hard to counter them. In this the North Vietnamese were remarkably successful. If the United States did not get covert operations right, the North Vietnamese certainly got counter-covert

operations right. The book explores the Vietnamese actions in some detail, much of it for the first time. This facet of the book makes fascinating reading.

For students of U.S. national security decision making, this book is a superb case study. Shultz not only discusses the operations of USMACVSOG but examines and describes how these issues were handled in the Pentagon and the White House. Furthermore, he does not limit his examination to the actions of cabinet members, military commanders, or key presidential advisors but sheds light on organizational structures, procedures, and lower-ranking action officers. This aspect of the process is all too often overlooked.

There are many familiar names to be found here. These include such Special Forces legends as Dick Meadows, who was to be responsible for advance ground reconnaissance during the failed Iranian hostage rescue attempt; and Colonel "Bull" Simmons, who led the brilliantly executed but unproductive prisoner-rescue raid against the Son Tay prison. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General William C. Westmoreland both have their say, as do the general's Navy and Marine Corps counterparts. Some readers might feel that presenting these disparate viewpoints is enough, but given the failure of SOG to live up to its potential and its losses in lives and treasure, reasoned judgments of responsibility and accountability should be made. Shultz does not shirk from this task, and his conclusions are convincing.

Richard Shultz wraps up with a masterful summation and analysis of the longest U.S. covert campaign in wartime. He also provides a brief overview of the status of the Special Operations community today. In doing so he poses

interesting questions for covert operations of the future.

If this were all *The Secret War against Hanoi* accomplished, it would be a significant contribution to our understanding of the Vietnam conflict, thereby earning a place on our bookshelves. But Shultz has also performed a long overdue and badly needed service in recognizing the tremendous human cost associated with SOG's operations. The casualty figures are simply staggering. For example, of approximately five hundred agents placed in North Vietnam, apparently all were killed or captured; some were "doubled." Only slightly less appalling are the casualty rates suffered by the U.S.-led reconnaissance teams that operated against the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The worst year was 1969, in which counter-trail operations in Laos experienced a 50 percent casualty rate. It is only fitting that the danger these soldiers faced and the sacrifices they made be part of the public record of the Vietnam War.

RICHARD NORTON
Naval War College



Bradley, James, with Ron Powers. *Flags of Our Fathers*. New York: Bantam, 2000. 353pp. \$24.95

On the northern perimeter of the Arlington National Cemetery, clearly visible from the adjacent highway, stands a huge bronze monument embodying perhaps the world's most famous war photograph: the flag-raising on Mount Suribachi during the seizure of Iwo Jima in February 1945. *Flags of Our Fathers*, told by the son of one of the men represented by the figures, is an intensely personal history surrounding this event, a riveting story guaranteed to evoke emotion in any reader interested in what

Tom Brokaw has called "the greatest generation."

Although Bradley is neither a strategist nor a military historian, he understands the significance of Iwo Jima and places it properly in the context of World War II. This is not revisionist historiography. Bradley solidly affirms Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb to save American—and Japanese—lives, because the alternative would have been even more horrific. The author's depiction of the training regimen, camaraderie, and exploits of the U.S. Marine Corps will make all Marines proud. However, he is not so kind to other services, often portraying them as weak willed, unprofessional, even incompetent.

James Bradley is the son of John "Doc" Bradley, a Navy corpsman who joined five Marine brothers-in-arms during the Herculean struggle to wrest "Sulfur Island" from the Japanese. In the course of the battle, these six members of "Easy" Company were memorialized for raising the American flag, an image captured by Joe Rosenthal's Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph. Three of the six never returned home—a testimony to the overall casualty rate of 84 percent for E Company in the thirty-six day conquest of an island a third the size of Manhattan.

The complete story of the flag raising was never told, because the principals considered the photograph insignificant when compared to the sacrifice of those who did not return. Like many of their fellow veterans, the three survivors adamantly refused to discuss the details of their war experiences, even keeping secret their awards for heroism under fire. Following his father's death in 1994, Bradley interviewed the friends and loved ones of all the men to tell the "real story" behind the photograph.

The author delights in the pure integrity and patriotism of his protagonists. Nonetheless, Bradley's anecdotal evidence makes a strong case that the principal source of battlefield bravery has little to do with national allegiance—it's your buddies who count. He wrestles with the term "heroes"—a title of honor strenuously rejected by all the flag raisers. There is little doubt, however, where the author places these men who stood atop Suribachi, beneath their flag.

TOM FEDYSZYN
Naval War College



Jablonsky, David, ed. *Roots of Strategy*, Book 4 (Four Military Classics). Mechanicsburg, Penna.: Stackpole Books, 1999. 533pp. \$19.95

In this useful fourth installment of Stackpole's "Roots of Strategy" series, David Jablonsky of the Army War College presents substantial selections from four classics of strategy: *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, by Alfred Thayer Mahan; *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, by Julian S. Corbett; *The Command of the Air*, by Giulio Douhet; and *Winged Defense*, by William Mitchell. The editor provocatively pairs American authors with non-Americans writing on the same subjects and bonds them with two unifying arguments. Jablonsky contends that all four writers were coping with monumental technological changes in warfare and were struggling to reconcile continuity with change, while peering into the future.

The two naval theorists, Mahan of the United States and Corbett of Great Britain, sought inspiration and guidance for future warfare in the putatively unchanging principles of the age of sail. The airpower innovators, Brigadier General

Mitchell of the U.S. Army and Brigadier General Douhet of Italy, concluded that the heavy bomber rendered the study of past warfare antiquarian and irrelevant to those planning for future combat.

As an American born in 1879 (one year before Douglas MacArthur and eleven years before the "closing of the frontier"), "Billy" Mitchell remained convinced that the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans gave the United States a security from land invasion unique among great powers. In the editor's opinion, Mitchell consequently was slow to confront Douhet's truly horrifying prescription for mass bombing of cities to pulverize "the material and moral resources of a people" in order to achieve "the final collapse of all social organization." For most of his contentious career, Mitchell envisioned large land-based American bombers primarily as instruments for sinking enemy warships advancing toward the American coastline, with fighter aircraft indispensable for downing long-range bombers headed for inland U.S. cities, which were now "as subject to attack as those along the coast."

Defense also plays a large role in Sir Julian Corbett's 1911 masterwork, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, the distillation of a lifetime of careful reflection upon the age of fighting sail from Drake to Nelson. A lawyer by training and a minor novelist by avocation, Corbett is the only author in this volume who never served in the military. He was, however, an intimate of Admiral Sir John Fisher, who presided over the dawn of the age of the dreadnought.

Some Principles of Maritime Strategy shows a linguist's familiarity with the figure considered today the Zeus of strategic thinkers, Carl von Clausewitz. It contains the best short summary of Clausewitz's

principal ideas currently in print in the United States. Equally riveting to anyone formulating realistic strategy is Corbett's disenchantment with supposedly "decisive" grand battles, his concept of geographically shifting and limited command of the seas, and his praise for interservice cooperation and amphibious operations. He was the first English-speaking writer indissolubly to link the military-naval, diplomatic, and economic elements of strategy.

As Jablonsky notes, Captain A. T. Mahan's scope is narrower than Corbett's. The American naval officer was writing in 1890 to further the technological and strategic revolution unleashed by the recent advent of the steam-driven, heavily gunned, thickly armored battleship. Jablonsky reprints only the first sections of Mahan's opus, those in which Mahan makes his "political-economic argument for sea power." The editor has omitted entirely the great bulk of the book, the thirteen historical chapters concerning both grand strategy and "the art and science of command," as derived from Anglo-French naval battles in the age of square-rigged ships of the line. This is a regrettable exclusion, because Jablonsky has adopted and emphasized the imaginative thesis of Jon Tetsuro Sumida that Mahan was as interested in "teaching command" as in the strategy of sea power. The limited excerpt from *The Influence of Sea Power* is insufficient to permit the reader to judge the validity of Sumida's proposition or to assess the utility of Mahan's ponderous dissections of sea battles, which were fought with a technology that had already disappeared when the naval officer wrote more than a century ago. Half a loaf is nonetheless better than none, and Jablonsky's balanced arrangement of Corbett, Douhet, and Mitchell

alongside Mahan should earn this volume a place on the bookshelves of all students of strategy who are sated with the current deification of Clausewitz and Sun Tzu.

KENNETH J. HAGAN
Adjunct Professor of Strategy
Naval War College



Smith, Gene A. *Thomas ap Catesby Jones: Commodore of Manifest Destiny*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2000. 223pp. \$34.95

Thomas ap Catesby Jones is best known for his mistaken seizure of Monterey, California, on 20 October 1842, believing that the United States and Mexico had gone to war. The occupation lasted barely overnight before the American flag had to be ceremoniously lowered and the Mexican flag rehoisted. Locally, the event was an occasion for many banquets and dances, but on the national level more serious repercussions caused a crisis in relations between Mexico and the United States.

Living in Monterey, I had often wondered about this incident, which is mentioned only briefly as a footnote in local histories. Now, with this biography of Thomas ap Catesby Jones, I have a much better understanding of a colorful part of Monterey history.

But this book offers much more. It explores the life of a controversial and complicated man whose naval career lasted half a century, from 1805 to 1855. In this period the United States went through a transformation from a young coastal nation on the Atlantic seaboard to a power that spanned the continent, a nation pursuing a "Manifest Destiny," with interests stretching well beyond its borders.

While Jones made no truly significant, long-lasting contribution to the U.S. Navy, his career personified the times. He was a contemporary of better-known Isaac Hull, Oliver Hazard Perry, Matthew F. Maury, and John Dahlgren, and like them he contributed to the evolution of the American navy. He was a hero of the War of 1812, introduced innovations as an inspector and superintendent of ordnance, carried the Stars and Stripes to Hawaii in the 1820s, and helped to incorporate California into the United States. Yet Jones was not an atypical commander of his day; he was a striking personality in an age in which individual temperaments helped shape the Navy.

Gene A. Smith does a masterful job in chronicling the life of Thomas ap Catesby Jones, from his appointment as a midshipman in 1805 to his court-martial in 1850 on charges that included fraud against the United States, libel, neglect of duty, and oppression. The court found him guilty and suspended him for five years. Today's standards for court-martial were not applied to the Jones case; it is doubtful that due process and rules of evidence were followed. Attitudes about naval discipline were changing, but unfortunately, Jones had not changed with them. He was probably convicted because of his past behavior as an old-fashioned tyrant, making him a useful example with which to enforce new attitudes concerning shipboard discipline. Richard Henry Dana's *Two Years before the Mast* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, among others, had so changed public perception that attitudes such as those of Jones were no longer acceptable. In a sense, one might liken the 1840s and 1850s to the 1980s and 1990s, where attitudes of acceptable behavior changed, and those who did not change along with them

eventually paid the consequences. The earlier era dealt with naval disciplinary methods such as flogging, while the more recent attitude change concerned male behavior and sexual harassment.

Although the book is well researched and documented, it may be somewhat difficult to follow for those unfamiliar with the geography. For example, the actions of Jones in the War of 1812 and around New Orleans and the Hawaiian Islands in the 1820s would have been easier to follow if maps had been provided. I could easily follow the discussion concerning Monterey and California only because I live there.

Beyond the life of Jones, the book describes well the mores, attitudes, and practices of the era. For example, career patterns of naval officers; the relationship between private, financial, and military affairs; ambivalence toward slavery; the chaos created by the California gold rush; and many other apparently disconnected topics are presented in a natural and informative manner.

XAVIER MARUYAMA
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California



Padfield, Peter. *Maritime Supremacy and the Opening of the Western Mind: Naval Campaigns That Shaped the Modern World, 1588–1782*. New York: Overlook Press, 2000. 340pp. \$35

“Maritime supremacy is the key which unlocks most, if not all, large questions of modern history, certainly the puzzle of how and why we—the Western democracies—are as we are. We are the heirs of maritime supremacy.” So begins the argument of naval historian Peter Padfield’s latest work. Like Nelson, Padfield is prone to bold acts, and in this

case, it is his thesis. Beginning with a look at the Spanish Armada of 1588, Padfield leads the reader through several pivotal naval battles, including The Downs (1639), Beachy Head (1690), Quiberon Bay (1759), and the American Revolution's naval campaigns. He contends that these battles not only were critical from a tactical or strategic standpoint but played a long-term role in the development and political, economic, and social lives of the countries involved. Put simply, maritime power and success lead to such liberty as has been enjoyed by the Western democracies over the recent centuries. "Our faith in democracy, personal freedoms and human 'rights,' and other comforting prescriptions of the humanist liberal credo, stem from the supremacy of maritime over territorial power."

Drawing primarily upon published materials, the author builds a strong argument for the relationship between naval and maritime power and the success of such liberal democratic states as the Dutch United Provinces, England, and the United States.

The success of these maritime nations was and is based on the principles so well outlined by Alfred Thayer Mahan. Control of the sea is a two-stage issue—control of trade, and naval protection of that trade. Padfield reminds the reader that during the period of royal absolutism only a state with a strong merchant class could be a true maritime power, and only a strong merchant class could enable a kingdom or state to finance and operate successfully naval fleets—"by far the greatest industrial-bureaucratic organizations of the time." The result of the merchant influence was a decline in royal prerogative. Fleets cost money, and the merchants had the money; as a result,

merchants gained an increasing role in official decision-making circles. Along with the rise of the merchant class in the early modern states came a rise in the belief of political and social freedoms. According to Padfield, "Liberty has always been the pride and rallying cry of powers enjoying maritime supremacy."

Beginning with the United Provinces, Padfield contends that their maritime power, along with their fairly urban nature, created "the first mass market in intellectual and artistic properties." Padfield states further that in essence the seventeenth-century Dutch burghers "produced a prototype of late-twentieth-century Western civilization." In short, the Dutch were the "harbingers of the modern West." With the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, the mantle of maritime greatness passed to England.

These are strong assertions. However, as Padfield outlines it in *Maritime Supremacy*, his thesis that maritime supremacy and the "opening of the western mind" are inseparably linked is convincing.

If there is a shortcoming to *Maritime Supremacy*, it is in the naval history used to illustrate Padfield's points. Although his descriptions of these famous naval engagements are interesting, there is entirely too much detail. This section of the work could be an entire book by itself, without the discussion of Western freedoms and democracy. The naval battles within the work represent simply the author's canvas, whereas his focal point is the thesis concerning the relationship between maritime power and the development of the liberal democratic state. This reviewer's suggestion is to ignore the battle minutiae and enjoy the argument. With its brief glossary of nautical terminology, bibliography of the leading secondary literature concerning the subject,

and decent annotation, this work will make a welcome addition to the library of the naval specialist, professor, and armchair admiral alike.

Today's naval powers operate in a global theater. Padfield's research not only demonstrates the origins of this global maritime arena but reinforces the importance of maintaining a nation's maritime heritage, diversity, and power. The book's dust jacket calls the United States of America the "ultimate successor" to this maritime past. If the United States is to maintain the position Padfield claims its maritime history has granted it, then its naval leadership—if not its citizenry—should be reading this work, to understand the past and prepare for the future.

ANDREW G. WILSON
The George Washington University



Gibson, Andrew, and Arthur Donovan. *The Abandoned Ocean: A History of United States Maritime Policy*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2000. 362pp. \$39.95

The Abandoned Ocean has been published at an opportune time in the history of the U.S. merchant marine. The latter half of the twentieth century has seen the flags of the traditional maritime nations of Europe and the United States almost disappear from the sea. The fleets of developed nations operated under national regulation. Competing with shipping lines under foreign registry that paid minimal registry fees in lieu of national taxes, employed cheaper crews, and obtained and maintained their ships at fluctuating world market prices rather than in conformance to engineering and safety standards, the merchant fleets of developed nations were increasingly at a

disadvantage. When the Western European shipping lines found they were unable to operate their vessels under existing national regulations, many legislatures eased those standards by allowing the formation of international registries that established conditions similar to those of their competitors. Some countries, such as France and Great Britain, established ship registries in their colonies that provided similar competitive conditions.

The Abandoned Ocean is a historical study of American shipping policy over the past two hundred years. It was drafted in the hope that it would help future maritime policy makers to understand better the competitive environment that exists today.

As might be expected, given the academic background of its authors, the book will be equally valuable to students of maritime affairs. It is a case study of the strategic, economic, and political issues that have influenced American policy makers at the highest level from the colonial period. Readers are provided with the essential facts about what has, and what has not, been beneficial to U.S. maritime industry. They may draw their own conclusions.

The book is divided into three parts. The first, "Free Trade and American Enterprise," addresses the years 1600 to 1914, the period of the greatest growth of the American merchant marine, and of its steep decline following the Civil War. The second part, "War-Impelled Industries," guides the reader from 1914 to 1960, discussing the issues that gave rise to the great merchant fleets of both world wars, and the New Deal legislation culminating in the Merchant Marine Act of 1936. The third part, "The Approaching

End,” covering 1960 to 1990, will be of greatest interest to the serious student.

The senior author, Andrew Gibson, sailed as master of a Liberty ship in World War II and rose in the maritime industry to become the senior vice president of the Grace Line and president of the Delta Line. In government, he served as administrator of the U.S. Maritime Administration and assistant secretary of commerce. Gibson held the Emory S. Land Chair of Merchant Marine Affairs at the Naval War College, in Newport, Rhode Island, and he continues there as an Advanced Research Fellow.

Arthur Donovan is a teacher of maritime history at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. He has been published widely on the history of science and technology.

The authors contend that present American maritime policy was designed to solve specific problems. The policy, beneficial at the time it was implemented, has since been manipulated in a contest between shippers, shipowners, shipbuilders, and representatives of labor to the detriment of the whole. As a consequence, the industry does not speak with one voice; it rarely has been able to agree upon a common policy, because proponents and opposition groups exist in the executive

branch and in both houses of Congress. All are influenced by an extensive group of lobbyists and trade associations operating in the interests of their respective constituencies.

The authors conclude: “In all maritime nations except the United States it is accepted that the sole purpose of a merchant ship is to make a reasonable net return on invested capital. In the United States political considerations tend to dominate because there are many beneficiaries other than investors. The government is compelled to continue payments to make sure that the expectations of these many other recipients are satisfied. . . . Anyone familiar with America’s proud record of maritime preeminence must be saddened by this prospect of final decline. . . . But in the absence of a truly new departure, of strong leadership and collective commitment to fundamental renovation, extinction is the most likely outcome.”

The Abandoned Ocean should be read by those who wish to comprehend the issues facing U.S. maritime policy makers in the restructuring of an American merchant marine for the twenty-first century.

ROBERT K. REILLY
Naval War College



The Mahan Rotunda