

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### “OUR FIRST TRUE WAR”

Maffeo, Steven. *The Perfect Wreck—“Old Ironsides” and HMS Java: A Story of 1812*. Tucson, Ariz.: Fire-ship, 2011. 382pp. \$19.95

Singapore Harbor, 1845—Commodore Henry Ducie Chads, Royal Navy, is rowed over to an American frigate visiting the port where he is senior officer. Chads is met by the second in command of USS *Constitution* and ushered below to pay his respects to the captain. After a friendly chat, Chads notes that he has been on the ship before, in 1812. He had then been first lieutenant of HMS *Java*, and he had stood on that very spot while surrendering his ship to Commodore William Bainbridge. This opening scene is a poignant and accurate account of an actual meeting.

So begins this outstanding and fascinating novel by Steven E. Maffeo, a retired U.S. Navy captain and author of two previous books on the age of sail.

During the war between Britain and France, both countries routinely violated American neutrality at sea. The stakes were high, and the sensibilities of small powers were easily overlooked. The depredations of the British were much worse, however, than those of the French, and in June 1812 the United States declared war.

The two sides were not a match. The Royal Navy possessed 180 ships of the line—the battleships of the day, sporting at least seventy-four guns (some had over a hundred). The U.S. Navy had nothing so large, but its pride was six frigates, some carrying over fifty guns. The most famous of these was USS *Constitution*, nicknamed “Old Ironsides” during a victory over HMS *Guerrière* when British round shot bounced off its thick oak sides. The Royal Navy hoped to redress this embarrassment, but the frigate HMS *Java*, commanded ably by Captain Henry Lambert but saddled with a raw crew, left Portsmouth in November with a load of passengers and cargo, hoping to avoid a fight.

In contrast, *Constitution* was newly commanded by Commodore William Bainbridge. Not well liked, Bainbridge was known throughout the service as “Hard-Luck Bill.” He had been the first U.S. Navy captain to surrender his ship to the enemy; indeed, within a period of five years Bainbridge “hailed down the flag of the United States *three times* in the face of the enemy—*without any fighting*.” Nonetheless, *Constitution*

left Boston in late October to seek out and engage British shipping.

Maffeo alternates between the two vessels and their crews, providing an outstanding primer on the workings of a large warship two centuries past. He is adept at describing everything from victualing to lading and storage, rigging, discipline, sail maintenance, and gunnery. In a clever device, the author uses three British Army officers traveling aboard *Java* as props. These men—who were actually present on the voyage—are tutored by Chads on the strategy and tactics of naval warfare. The reader listens in on these chats and learns a great deal.

The climax of the book occurs on 29 December 1812, when the ships meet off the coast of Brazil. The description of the battle itself is masterful. Lambert worries about his largely untrained crew of “landmen,” but Maffeo implies that he had not trained his green crew nearly often or rigorously enough. Bainbridge, a stickler for discipline, had made no such mistake. The sea battle at close range, with heavy cannon disgorging round shot, grape, and canister—as well as the continuous musket fire of the marines on board both ships—takes a murderous toll. Although initially *Constitution* suffers worse and Bainbridge himself goes down twice with wounds, the battle slowly and inexorably reverses. The bigger guns and thicker sides of the American frigate, combined with its more seasoned crew, allow “Old Ironsides” to wreak havoc on *Java*. Dismasted and its bowsprit shot off, *Java*’s ability to maneuver is lost. Lieutenant Chads, taking command from his mortally wounded captain, sees that all hope is illusory—an attempt

to board *Constitution* so as to carry on the fight with cutlasses and pistols is skillfully thwarted by Bainbridge. *Java* is a perfect wreck and strikes its colors.

This ripping yarn fascinates, educates, and entertains. The exploits of the U.S. Navy in our country’s first true war after independence should never be forgotten. This terrific account is a must-read for naval personnel of all ranks.

COL. PHILLIP S. MEILINGER, U.S. AIR FORCE,  
RETIRED  
*West Chicago, Illinois*



Vogel, Ezra F. *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap of Harvard Univ. Press, 2011. 928pp. \$39.95

For those seeking to understand China’s place in the world, Ezra Vogel has performed a great service through his meticulous decadelong work on this biography of Deng Xiaoping, who emerged as China’s leader following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. Vogel may be overstating the case when he suggests that Deng was the most important world figure of the twentieth century, but it is hard to find a serious rival for the last quarter of that century.

Deng ruled China between 1978 and 1992, when he retired at the age of eighty-eight. Since his retirement, to the present day, Deng’s policies have continued, in contrast to the immediate changes that took place following the death of Mao. No Western scholar of China in 1976 predicted the “rise of China” that resulted from Deng’s leadership. How did Deng come to be central to the transformation of China?

Born in 1904, Deng took the reins of leadership at age seventy-four, long after most give up trying to change the world. Despite many hurdles, he energetically steered China back on track, continually pursuing his vision. He was an unwavering nationalist as well as a communist. His focus was on a competent, proud, and successful China, not the humiliated China into which he had been born, the descendant of literati in Sichuan Province, to which he never returned. His years in France and Moscow in the 1920s developed in him a mind cognizant of the ways of the world, well before his leadership role began. Deng went on to do political work with Zhou Enlai, his mentor, during the 1930s, and he jointly commanded the 129th Division of the Eighth Route Army from 1937 to 1949 in Shanxi. Although he worked side by side with Mao to become general secretary of the Central Committee, Deng was purged by Mao as a “capitalist roader” early in the Cultural Revolution. Vogel offers a vivid account of Deng’s exile in Jiangxi.

The author emphasizes that Deng was very successful in his conduct of foreign affairs. While many scholars consider Deng a student of Zhou Enlai, less polished and capable than his teacher, Vogel turns this idea on its head, using the example of how Deng broke through the U.S.-China normalization impasse during the December 1978 talks with American negotiator Leonard Woodcock. Despite Deng’s red-faced ranting that China would never accept weapons sales to Taiwan, he, perhaps realizing that Woodcock was unable to guarantee subsequent decisions by Congress, in the end simply said “*Hao*,” fine. The deal was finally complete six years after the Nixon-Kissinger initiatives.

Regarding domestic affairs, Vogel outlines a mixed record for Deng. Once in control, he consistently moved China toward the First World and increased the country’s wealth. However, Deng is most remembered for the cloud he cast over what Vogel calls the “Tiananmen tragedy.” The author has come under attack by Fang Lizhi and others for glossing over Deng’s repressive role in crushing the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989.

While Deng was being elevated to the position of power over Hua Guofeng at the Eleventh Party Congress Third Plenum in December 1978, in what the author refers to as “succession without coronation,” Vogel was just publishing his best-selling nonfiction work *Japan as Number One*. Vogel directed the East Asian Studies program at Harvard University, subsequently publishing more on China than on Japan, until his retirement in 2000. Like Deng, Vogel wished to make an impact in his later years and so determined to write a detailed account of the man who had transformed China during his own lifetime of studying East Asia affairs. To prepare himself, Vogel spent a year refreshing his Chinese, so he could conduct his interviews unassisted and read primary sources more easily. He interviewed scores of Deng’s colleagues and most of his family. It took him ten years to complete the project.

This work raises the research and literary standard for political biography. We must thank Ezra Vogel for giving us this detailed and measured look at China’s great man at the hinge of history between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

GRANT F. RHODE  
*Brookline, Massachusetts*



Swaine, Michael D. *America's Challenge: Engaging a Rising China in the Twenty-First Century*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011. 690pp. \$49.95

Since 2009, U.S.-China relations have lurched from crisis to crisis, jeopardizing the “long peace” that has enabled an extraordinary era of prosperity in East Asia and beyond. As Washington gropes for a new paradigm to structure this all-important bilateral relationship, diplomats, military strategists, and concerned citizens on both sides of the Pacific would do well to reflect carefully on Michael Swaine’s new treatise, which is a masterpiece that will set the standard in the field of policy analysis for decades to come.

Among the book’s many virtues are the balance and objectivity of its assessments. Swaine explores alternative strategies, such as a more zero-sum approach, on the one hand, that would rely on a “grand coalition of democracies” to balance China, as well as, on the other, the possibilities of a more positive-sum approach that would emphasize both compromise and joint action against common, nontraditional security threats. Ultimately, Swaine concludes that the above approaches are both “extreme . . . because they do not share many of the assumptions underlying America’s current strategic objectives.” The judgment is based on dozens of interviews with this country’s most esteemed Asia hands. He reports that a consensus exists on a mixed strategy, incorporating a delicate simultaneous balance between hedging and engagement.

Another key strength of this volume is the extraordinary attention to detail—a feature that will make this work, with

its more than two hundred pages of endnotes, an extremely valuable desk reference and a capable survey of what we collectively understand about U.S.-China relations. The fact that the book covers issues as disparate as naval strategy, trade negotiations, and energy cooperation—handling each of these complex topics and many others with admirable sophistication—is a tribute to the wide experience, intellectual depth, and solid research of the author. In this respect, the book is without peer.

What makes this work truly exceptional, however, is the bold and sober recommendations that flow from Swaine’s dense analysis. To be sure, he offers a panoply of practical solutions, such as advocating the creation of a genuinely strategic (vice policy) planning entity in the White House and promoting a much-needed regular, trilateral forum bringing together Tokyo, Beijing, and Washington around one table. However, he also directly challenges current conventional wisdom among U.S. policy makers, asserting that “U.S. maritime predominance in the Western Pacific is probably unsustainable over the long term . . . [and] attempts to sustain this predominance . . . are likely to prove . . . destabilizing.” Also, breaking with longtime U.S. policy, Swaine is critical of Washington’s “hands-off” approach to the Taiwan issue, an approach that has traditionally included a refusal to negotiate with Beijing regarding arms sales to Taiwan. Finally, Swaine also boldly declares (contrary to deeply embedded U.S. political culture) that “China’s democratization should not be a strategic objective of the United States.” Such conclusions collectively offer American strategists a new approach and much food for thought.

In short, this comprehensive volume offers a much-needed corrective to tendencies in American strategic discourse that significantly favor military solutions to the dilemmas posed by China's rise over the hard work of cooperation and compromise.

LYLE GOLDSTEIN  
*Naval War College*



Arquilla, John. *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits: How Masters of Irregular Warfare Have Shaped Our World*. Lanham, Md.: Ivan R. Dee, 2011. 336pp. \$27.50

Irregular warfare has been the topic du jour over the last few years. A search of any bookseller's website turns up literally hundreds of recently published titles on the subject. While not a bad thing, this makes it harder for nonspecialists to separate the wheat from the chaff. Much recent literature in the field centers on irregular tactics and techniques, especially U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, while a smaller portion focuses on armed groups. John Arquilla, however, takes a different approach in *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits: How Masters of Irregular Warfare Have Shaped Our World*, by focusing more on irregular warriors than on irregular wars. Like the figures he portrays, Arquilla attacks the conventional-war methods and heroes of military history. He laments continuing overreliance on traditional methods and classical theorists, given the evidence that the world is now far from conventional. As a Naval Postgraduate School professor, Arquilla has studied and taught this topic for over two decades.

At the time of this book's publication there were more than thirty ongoing conflicts worldwide, all irregular in nature, "primarily conducted through acts of terrorism or more classic guerrilla hit and run tactics." This supports the argument that "irregular is becoming the new regular." Arquilla asserts that we must now look closely at the masters of earlier times to understand the implications of this new age. The eighteen individuals chosen here come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some, such as Nathanael Greene and T. E. Lawrence, will be familiar to most readers. However, warriors like Abdelkader and Christiaan de Wet are probably largely unknown to all but specialists in the field. Instead of trying to categorize each of them, he draws out common themes they exhibited, most notably their "sheer indomitability" and recurring encounters with advanced technology.

In addition to thematic threads of continuity, the author weaves connecting strands along national lines. The French appear in seven chapters, six times fighting against insurgents and once, during the American Revolution, on the side of the insurgency. The experience gained in these conflicts is another theme used by the author to bind several hundred years of warfare. A similar continuity exists among supporting actors. British involvement in multiple insurgencies provides several opportunities to study Winston Churchill's personal connections.

Of note, most of the irregular warriors highlighted in these chapters gained fame by opposing the conventional masters of their time. Commanders like Charles Cornwallis or Ulysses S. Grant usually found traditional methods insufficient when facing guerrilla or

other unusual techniques. In these cases, the raiding tactics of Greene and Nathan Bedford Forrest simply proved too effective. The obvious implications are made clear by the author and should give readers plenty to reflect on, in terms of evaluating the U.S. position in either regular or irregular warfare.

This is a useful book for both specialists and general audiences, although the themes presented here in plain, clear writing have special implications for military readers. *Insurgents, Raiders, and Bandits* represents an important and unique contribution to the crowded field of books on irregular warfare.

LT. COL. FREDERICK H. BLACK, JR., USA  
Naval War College



Stone, Peter G., ed. *Cultural Heritage, Ethics and the Military*. Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.: Boydell, 2011. 228pp. \$90

When the National Museum of Iraq (originally the Baghdad Archaeological Museum) was damaged and looted in 2003, along with archeological sites across Iraq, international concerns were raised by a wide variety of political, military, and other professional leaders regarding the protection of historical and cultural treasures. Observers around the world were reminded that the consequences of military operations across the spectrum of war are far-reaching and long lasting. So too are the responsibilities of political and military leaders during conflict. Proponents of the just-war tradition have long understood this and have thus shaped ideas regarding the parameters of actions before, during, and after a conflict. But there is

sometimes a failure to appreciate fully the breadth of responsibility. The editor of this collection, Peter Stone, addresses several of the many issues pertaining to protecting and maintaining the cultural heritage within the space of a battle. The work also addresses questions surrounding the tension (and sometimes hostility) between the military and civilian specialists from, for instance, the archeological, anthropological, religious, and medical communities. Drawing from a wide range of Western and non-Western authors, the editor has assembled a useful volume for both military and nonmilitary professionals.

The volume consists of fourteen chapters on various ethical challenges and professional responsibilities of parties involved in the preservation of cultural heritage in war zones. After an introduction, in which the editor (who served as an archeological adviser to the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence in 2003) provides context, there are essays on restitution, World War II, African perspectives on cultural preservation, academia and the military, archeology in war zones, and case studies from Lebanon and Iraq.

Three essays stand out as particularly helpful for gaining perspective: Margaret M. Miles provides a historical overview of the issue of restitution in "Still in the Aftermath of Waterloo: A Brief History of Decisions about Restitution"; "Christian Responsibility and the Preservation of Civilisation in Wartime: George Bell and the Fate of Germany in World War II," by Andrew Chandler, shows the influence of the Anglican bishop of Chichester, who as a member of the House of Lords and vocal cleric was an outspoken critic

of area bombing and the decision to pursue the unconditional surrender of Germany; and Fritz Allhoff's "Physicians at War: Lessons for Archaeologists?" looks at ethical dilemmas of medical professionals with respect to military ethics, medical ethics, and torture in an endeavor to provide insight and parallels for other professions.

Whether one is interested in archeology and cultural preservation in a war zone, the archeology of military and battle sites, the erection of military monuments, or considerations for military planners and those who subsequently execute their plans in combat zones, there is much to consider in this book. The final chapter consists of a series of responses from archeologists to queries concerning relations between them and the military during the war in Iraq. Some of the respondents have had experiences both in Iraq and with the military, and some have not. However, the respondents all have connections with the preservation of cultural heritage, and their comments show that professionals outside the military must also evaluate the ethics of their own disciplines with respect to war. For example, should a member of a community outside the military, such as an archeologist, provide information and advice before a conflict commences, or only later? Though these are not questions for the military professional, military professionals should be aware of them. Stone is to be commended for bringing together in a single volume essays and perspectives on this important issue. Interested readers will not be disappointed.

TIMOTHY J. DEMY  
*Naval War College*



Tillman, Barrett. *Whirlwind: The Air War against Japan, 1942–1945*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2010. 336pp. \$28

Over sixty years after its conclusion, the air war that was waged against Japan remains one of the most controversial and brutal campaigns conducted by any of the Allied powers during World War II. The debate centers on the questions of the morality and necessity of the bombing campaign against Japan, primarily its cities, that culminated in the dropping of two atomic bombs, and whether the campaign hastened the end of the war.

In his richly detailed and well written *Whirlwind*, Barrett Tillman addresses these two arguments and the decision making that led the United States to wage aerial war. He starts by laying the groundwork with the surprise bombing of Tokyo by U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) B-25s led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle in April 1942, relating how Japan's leaders, shocked at the audacity of the carrier-borne attack on the home islands, moved forward with a complex plan to eliminate the U.S. Pacific Fleet once and for all, thus setting the stage for Japan's strategic loss at the battle of Midway less than two months later.

However, the USAAF and its chief, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, had bigger plans of their own for Japan. Arnold, a disciple and friend of General Billy Mitchell, resolutely believed in the power of strategic bombing to bring about an enemy's surrender. The Royal Air Force and USAAF had thoroughly tested this theory in the skies over

Germany, with mixed results. Despite a relentless and costly air campaign, the German Wehrmacht could only be defeated on the ground. A basic concept of strategic-bombing theory held that heavy civilian casualties would force enemy leaders to sue for peace, but the theorists and practitioners did not factor in the callous nature of despotic leaders who cared little for the welfare of their citizenry. (For more information on this subject see *Among the Dead Cities: The History and Moral Legacy of the WWII Bombing of Civilians in Germany and Japan*, by A. C. Grayling.)

Japan was a different story. Arnold envisioned unleashing the as-yet-unfielded B-29 Superfortresses on Japan en masse. The USAAF first tried conducting operations from China, but that proved untenable for a variety of reasons. Eventually airfields on Guam, Saipan, and Tinian, islands that were taken at great cost, came into existence for sustained B-29 operations.

The air war against Japan was much more than the story of B-29 raids on Tokyo and other targets. One little-known operation went under the dark moniker of Operation STARVATION, the deployment of aerial mines by B-29s. These sorties proved quite effective in whittling down Japan's merchant marine, thus devastating Japan's morale and eroding its capability for war production. USAAF crews delivered twelve thousand mines, sinking 293 ships between March and April 1945. Yet for all the successes that the United States had in the skies over Japan, the USAAF and U.S. Navy cooperated little in the planning and implementation of the overall campaign. Each service pursued its own air operations, the Army going

after Japan's cities and the Navy after Japan's fleet and coastal shipping.

Tillman's excellent book is well researched and well written. He reintroduces the reader to the pivotal leaders who played a role in the execution of the air war on Japan. He rounds out his narrative with accounts from B-29 aircrews and naval aviators who flew at the tip of the spear aimed at Japan; their observations and recollections add an excellent sense of humanity to the story. His account also serves to validate joint operations, a lesson borne out by the experience of this war and one that our military continues to observe today.

This book will not end the debate on the value and moral justification of the U.S. air war on Japan. Tillman clearly makes the point that while the air war against Japan did not end the conflict on its own, it did affect Japan's ability to continue to wage war. In the end it is clear that Japan was willing to fight despite the destruction of its cities and that it was preparing mightily for the expected invasion of the home islands. However, it was the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki that finally forced Japan to seek peace and end the slaughter.

CDR. DAVID L. TESKA, U.S. COAST GUARD RESERVE  
San Diego, California



Jordan, Jonathan W. *Brothers, Rivals, Victors: Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, and the Partnership That Drove the Allied Conquest in Europe*. New York: NAL Caliber, 2011. 672pp. \$28.95

This is an exceptional book. Although it has its share of strategy, logistics, and technology, it is primarily a book about relationships and leadership.

In what is ostensibly a triple biography, George S. Patton, Jr., and Omar Bradley get their fair share of attention, but in the end it is Dwight David Eisenhower who dominates the pages. Jordan has produced what is in many ways a paragon of modern biographies. The darker sides of his subjects are not overlooked or glossed over, as in E. B. Potter's *Bull Halsey*, nor does the book descend into the merely salacious and prurient, as sometimes occurs in Evan Thomas's *Sea of Thunder*. Jordan paints pictures of whole men, and with remarkable fidelity. Meticulously researched, this work neither shies away from nor lingers on the flaws each man possessed. For example Patton's philandering and alcohol abuse in the 1930s are reasonably depicted as characteristic of an ambitious warrior trapped in a peacetime army, bored, restless, and desperately worried that his moment had come and gone. Likewise, Eisenhower's relationship with Kay Summersby is addressed directly. The relationship was inappropriate and, from a security point of view, reckless. Bradley worried about this, as did Marshall and members of Eisenhower's personal staff. However, Jordan concludes that Eisenhower needed Kay to maintain some sense of stability in his life and that whatever degree of infidelity it entailed was compensated by Ike's resulting performance. Jordan also discusses in detail the episode in which Eisenhower reached a point where he was willing to force his superiors to fire either Montgomery or him. This was an example of superb political acumen and the use of power. Jordan documents Patton's remarkable churlishness and childishness, as well as his extraordinary drive and sense of the

operational moment. Jordan displays both a keen understanding of and sympathy for the flamboyant Patton, just as he does with Eisenhower. With Bradley, however, Jordan is just a touch less sure-footed, perhaps because Bradley was by nature a more private man. Yet for all that, there are few passages more moving and superbly depicted than those describing Bradley's reaction when, during the Battle of the Bulge, Eisenhower took the First and Ninth Armies and assigned them to Montgomery. Bradley's rage and hurt were only magnified when his threat of resignation was ignored. However, his rage was nothing compared to the mean-spiritedness of Patton, who, removed from command, savaged in his diary his boss and former friend, alleging that Eisenhower suffered from moral turpitude and cowardice.

Because Jordan understands the nature of these men's relationships, he is able to convey the tragedy that accompanied them. Above all, he documents with marked sympathy the forging and the gradual undoing of the Eisenhower-Patton friendship, as much a casualty of Patton's selfishness and lack of empathy as the inevitable consequence of friends occupying different levels of command responsibility. The friendship between Eisenhower and General Bradley was equally damaged but much more rapidly, stemming from what Bradley felt was a betrayal.

These friendships would in time be, if not fully repaired, reconciled. Eisenhower, following the death of Patton, focused more and more on his late friend's sterling qualities. Perhaps this was easier in Patton's absence. Paradoxically, when Patton's reputation had threatened to eclipse those

of other generals, Eisenhower went out of his way to laud Bradley as the “best combat general of the war.”

Although the troika holds center stage, Jordan looks at other relationships these men had. The central role of George Marshall is explored, along with that which Bedell Smith played in supporting Eisenhower. Junior combat commanders such as Lucian Truscott and Mark Clark are given their due.

If all this book delivered were a deeper understanding of these three

iconic military figures, it would be well worth the read, but it provides much more. For, in addition to revealing the human side of three generals, it also compares and contrasts their very different leadership styles and methods. Although understated, this comparison elevates the book even further and makes it a must-have for any shelf of serious leadership texts.

RICHARD NORTON  
*Naval War College*