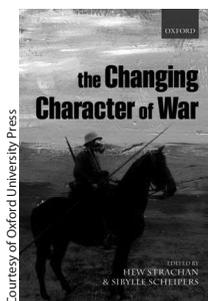


enormously suffered. Fourth, although American households had to forego purchases of durable goods such as automobiles and appliances, they did not experience undue hardship or an overall decline in consumption; instead, household consumption levels rose along with the overall economy.

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



Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011

564pages

\$110.00

The Changing Character of War

edited by Hew Strachan and Sibylle Scheipers

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Patton's Third Army in World War II

by Michael Green and James D. Brown

PATTON'S THIRD ARMY
IN WORLD WAR II



Michael Green & James D. Brown

Courtesy of Zenith Press

Minneapolis,
Minnesota: Zenith
Press, 2010

288 pages

\$50.00

Reviewed by James R. Oman, COL (USA Retired),
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Defense Acquisition University

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

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

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