

BOOK REVIEWS



The U.S. Army: A Complete History
Edited by Colonel Raymond K. Blum,
Jr., U.S. Army, Retired. Army Historical
Foundation, Hugh Lauter Levin
Associations, Inc., 2004. 960 pages, \$75.
Reviewed by Z. Frank Hanner.

In its 960 pages and illustrations, this book outlines North American military history from 1607 until 2004. It is a unique reference source that offers the reader with a single volume source chronology of dates and events that have not only helped to form our Army but also have created our nation. The volume contains hundreds of black and white and color images, vignettes, and biographical information on important military leaders and the events they influenced. The book helps the reader understand the story of how the U.S. Army evolved from colonial militia forces formed for defense of the Thirteen Colonies, and tells how this institution in time become the most important catalyst for establishing and sustaining the United States of America. It is an epic story of the "...embattled farmers..." at Concord Bridge and our shop keepers and their fellow citizens banding together to form an army that would grow to become the most powerful land force in the history of warfare.

The book includes the work of many contributors on a wide array of subjects, and a bibliography showing these authors' sources would have been most helpful to historians, students of military history, or just for the history buff wanting to know more about our Army's past. Unfortunately, no such bibliography or footnotes were included. Likewise, no sources are provided as to where the information came from for writing the chronology. These omissions, along with a number of historical errors, make the book hard to recommend as a scholarly reference source, but as a coffee table book it is an ideal gift. I can, however, highly recommend it as a source for what

military artwork is available; it has a wealth of excellent works rendered by some of the best military artists in our country. Because of a number of errors on dates and typographical errors, it is a book that you should use more for its entertainment value than as a definitive source. A great deal of work went into creating the book, and it is unfortunate that it is not as the title claims *The Complete History of the U.S. Army*. It barely scratches the service of what would take many more volumes to even come close to having a complete story of one of our nation's oldest institutions. I was, for example, surprised that the establishment of the Infantry School at Columbus, Georgia, in October 1918 was not mentioned in a text that claims to be the complete history of the Army.

Beyond Baghdad: Postmodern War and Peace. By Ralph Peters. Stackpole Books, 2003. 337 Pages, \$22.95 (Hardcover). Reviewed by Command Sergeant Major James Clifford.

Beyond Baghdad is an anthology of Ralph Peters' published columns and essays spanning the period from before September 11th until just after major combat operations in Iraq ceased. Peters is a well-known former Army military intelligence officer-turned-writer. His columns are seen in newspapers and magazines across the country, and he's appeared on numerous television news programs. The tenor of his columns is supportive of our goals in fighting terrorism and spreading freedom. Although he frequently takes issue with specific actions of the current administration, especially those of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, he is rock solid behind the military.

His columns lecture liberals and the uneducated about the history, tactics, and strategy of Islamic terrorism. He cuts

through side issues and focuses on the critical aspects of the global war on terrorism. His previously published essays reveal his ability to foresee events and his depth of understanding of the issues.

Peters takes issue with those who suggest that we somehow brought the terrorist attacks on ourselves. He educates readers on the nature of Islam and the Arabic culture, explaining exactly why these cultures will continue to clash with the Judeo-Christian Western culture until they find a way to overcome their basic fear of women. His premise that Western equal treatment of women threatens Muslims and Arabs so greatly that they can find no response other than terrorism will likely find opponents. He sees explanations rooted in perceived economic injustices as simply excuses for what boils down to a backward religion and culture.

His support for our war in Iraq is unshakeable. While pundits were predicting defeat for our forces prior to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, he was confident of victory. As others wrung their hands in despair over every minor development, he kept his eye on the ultimate goals, recognizing that in war bad things do happen but defeat only comes when one gives up. His one serious criticism of the Iraq War is that he feels the Defense Secretary has tried to fight the war on the cheap. He frequently mentions that we should have had more troops deployed before invading Iraq and claims that military commanders' requests were rebuffed by him. Like all good Soldiers he's appreciative of airpower, but he understands that you can't win a war without a massive ground commitment. He takes issue with the massive expenditure of funds to develop aircraft and ships while ground troops suffered comparatively.

Regardless of our activities in the Persian Gulf region and Afghanistan, he sees an even greater challenge looming in

other locations. Pakistan is of particular concern to Peters, along with parts of India. He also warns that one day Europe could reemerge as a reflection of their war prone past. His message is that while we battle terrorists in the Persian Gulf region, we must be on the watch and be ready to go wherever the threat takes us.

He doesn't limit his writing to America's wars; a few of his essays address the unrest in Palestine. He sees the contention between Palestinians and Israelis as being an extension of our problems with Islamic terrorists.

Beyond Baghdad closes with an essay published in Germany's *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. In *Au Revoir, Marianne...Aug Wiedersehen, Lili Marleen*, he lectures Germans and Frenchmen on the serious mistakes and miscalculations they've made by opposing America in Iraq. Europeans may not get the message, but Americans reading this essay will surely gain a new understanding on why President Bush stood up to European pressure and did what he knew was right in Iraq.

Many of these essays seem negative, but the overall message of this book is anything but. Under each essay is a subtle tone of optimism, faith, and admiration for the American Soldier, American citizen, and the American way of life. Only in reading these essays consecutively is the reader likely to pick up on that. His are messages of deep faith in America and its future, messages that aren't often found in the media today. For that reason alone, *Beyond Baghdad* is highly recommended.

***The Chatham House Version and Other Middle Eastern Studies by Elie Kedourie.* First published by Prager, New York in 1970. Paperback edition published in 2004 by Ivan R. Dee Publishers, Chicago. 488 pages.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Commander Youssef Aboul-Enein, MSC, U.S. Navy.

The late Iraqi scholar Elie Kedourie spent a lifetime teaching, explaining, and expanding our understanding of modern Middle East political history. Most of his career was spent at the London School of Economics, and he began his academic career with some controversy. While

pursuing his doctoral studies at Oxford, his dissertation involved going back into the British archives to learn the mistakes of British policies in the Middle East. His central argument was that the abrupt dismantling of the Ottoman Empire left millions of Arabs and Muslims vulnerable to self-appointed and despotic leaders. In the England of the 1950s, that kind of exploration and criticism of colonial policy was not tolerated and he withdrew his doctoral dissertation from Oxford and published it as a book entitled, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire*. Not to say Ottoman administration was not dictatorial, but he dissects British policies for those who grapple with the problems of the region to understand how to manage a collapsing state towards stability and self-governance. Kedourie has edited and published a dozen books on the Middle East, but *The Chatham House Version* is perhaps the most important for members of the U.S. military wanting to expand their understanding of the region. Chatham House is a nonprofit British center for the study of international relations that was established in 1920 in the former home of three British Prime Ministers in London. It mirrors in concept to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. An ulterior motive for highlighting this book is to draw attention to Chatham House and encourage the potential exchange of U.S. military and government officials to this organization. The first paperback edition of this book was published in 2004 and is essential reading for serious students of Islamic militancy and Middle East affairs.

The first chapter is a rationalization of how sedition, treason, and civil war is common throughout Middle East history, but only in the current century as people from the region cope with failures and defeats has revolution been glorified as part of the political process. He writes that violence is beneficent and treason a sacred obligation. Add to this the interposition of two doctrines in the Arab world that has emerged in competition with other ideologies to explain the decline of Islamic civilization. One is Arab Nationalism and the second Islamic radicalism. Both, the author argues, are subversive to international stability. Islamic militancy recognizes only war or subjugation of the

infidel (to include Muslims that disagree with their world vision), and Arab Nationalism can be seen as the occult of victimization and the glorification of displacing blame on colonialism, Israel, the United States, the Mongols, and the list from history goes on.

The book continues with what was called in World War I, "The Arab Question." This chapter examines infamous figures of Middle East policy, such as Sir Henry McMahon, Sherief Hussein of Mecca, Sir Reginald Wingate and Lord Cromer. From 1915 to 1918 several competing policy issues plagued the great powers of England and France. It included the granting of self-rule to Arabs after the defeat of the Ottoman-German alliance, independence for Egypt, the status of the Sudan, debates of Israel as a Jewish homeland, the next Caliph after the Ottoman Sultan, and the status of the Levant vis-à-vis France. Readers will learn that London had overpromised to those who sought answers to these questions. In 1918, the British government made a Declaration to the Seven, declaring that London would recognize the independence of Arab lands liberated from Ottomans by Arabs. What really occurred was the eviction of Prince Feisal from Damascus by French forces, in an Alamo-like battle at Maysaloon in 1920. What can be determined from reading the book, is that different sectors of the British government controlled Middle East policy; they included the War Ministry, the India Office, the Home Office (in charge of British colonial affairs), the Royal Navy, the British High Commissioner in Egypt among others. Each not knowing what the other departments or agencies had already promised.

Chapters 5-7 provide an excellent overview of how the British attempted to maintain control of Egypt and the Suez Canal. What is important for readers of today to glean from these chapters is that the father of Egypt's independence movement Sa'ad Zaghlul was not an Islamic radical, nor did he use religion to justify freedom for Egypt. Instead he relied on arguments of democracy, a constitutional monarchy, and a check against absolute colonial or monarchic power. Zaghlul is an interesting figure in Egyptian history and is still revered by Egyptians; he rose to Prime Minister, was exiled to Malta, and

returned to a Prime Ministership once again after fierce public protest.

Another valued chapter in the book is the 1923 debates that framed the Egyptian constitution. The debates center on the role of the King and the Parliament, the author also highlights British meddling that assured oversight of Egyptian defense and foreign policy.

If there is one chapter to read, it is Chapter 7 entitled "Egypt and the Caliphate," a debate that lasted from 1915 to 1952. At its height in 1924 until the death of Egypt's King Fuad in 1936, books and articles were produced debating the whole concept of the Caliphate. The caliph was the successor to Prophet Mohammed and was abolished in 1924 when Kemal Attaturk deposed the Ottoman Sultan. Reestablishing the caliphate is a core justification of Islamic militants today. One of the most important books de-emphasized in Islamic education and Arab schools is the 1925 book *Islam and the Foundations of Authority* by Islamic judge Ali Abdal Raziq. In his book, Abdal Raziq makes a compelling historical thesis that as Prophet Muhammad did not leave clear guidance on how Muslims should govern themselves after his death, early Muslims resorted to the pre-Islamic form of governing urban centers and that was the selection of a caliph by the different tribes. In essence, the caliphate is a pre-Islamic concept of government adopted by Muslims after the death of Muhammad and is not a religious obligation or an ordained form of government in the Quran (Islamic book of divine revelation) or Hadith (prophet's sayings). This caused a firestorm of debate at the time and sadly Abdal Raziq was stripped of his judicial position. The clerical establishment in Egypt represented by the Al-Azhar institution attacked him. King Fuad who coveted being named the next caliph also attacked him. This unconventional exploration of Islam today would bring Abdal Raziq a death sentence by Islamic militants. A revival of such discussion is necessary in the struggle to win the ideological aspects of the current war on terrorism.

Kedourie continues his essays on discussing the creation of modern Iraq, pan-Arabism and much more. This is an exceptional grouping of 12 essays that is a must read for those involved in Middle East intelligence analysis, Middle East Foreign Area Officers, and those civil affairs personnel working in the region.



Specialist Elizabeth Erste

Soldiers from the 28th Infantry Division out of Pennsylvania head towards the site of where a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated in Bayji, Iraq, January 17, 2005.

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E-mail — Inf.MagazineDep@benning.army.mil

Telephone — (706) 545-2350/6951 or DSN 835-2350/6951

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