

Book Reviews



***The German Way of War: From the Thirty Years' War to the Third Reich.* By Robert M. Citino. Lawrence, KS: The University Press of Kansas, 2005, \$34.95.** Reviewed by Randy R. Talbot, TACOM Life Cycle Management Command historian.

Robert M. Citino's *The German Way of War* is a groundbreaking narrative on Prussian-German military operations from 1656 to 1942. Like his previous volumes leading to this unprecedented work (the award-winning *Quest for Decisive Victory* and *Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm*), Citino is changing the paradigm of military history narrative and analysis. The emphasis of *The German Way of War* "is on action rather than theory, on operations rather than doctrine." This is not to say that he negates the contributions of Clausewitz, Schlieffen and other contemporary military theorists; in fact, military theorists, contemporary military analysts and scholars all have their place in describing or ridiculing the ability or inability of the German military at operational warfare.

Each chapter follows a similar pattern: a discussion of the particular problem facing the Germany military leadership, a recounting of operations that define or dismiss the German ability to conduct warfare on the operational level, and finally analysis of German operational success and failure. Citino's analysis covers the operational implications for the German army, their missed opportunities, and how historians judged Germany's conduct of war. This is where Citino shines, synthesizing a massive amount of primary and secondary literature to offer a bright, crisp and lively narrative of the operational level of warfare of the Prussian/German army.

Citino's argument, and really the heart of his work, is a consistent pattern of the operational level of warfare throughout German military history. The problem for Prussia/Germany, surrounded by enemies and potential enemies, was to find a way to fight wars that were "*kurz und vives*" (short and lively). As a small country with limited resources, prolonged warfare would develop into a *Stellungskrieg* or positional warfare

as seen in WWI and following Operation Barbarossa. Therefore, the German army developed an operational method of warfare to keep its wars short and decisive, with victory coming with one decisive blow — the annihilation of the enemy. The result is an aggressive attacking army that sought to defeat its enemy through operational maneuver or *Bewegungskrieg*. This is the operational link from the Battle of Warsaw in 1656 to the *Wehrmacht* attack into Russia during in WWII.

Successive German military officers would look to the battles fought by Frederick William in the Thirty Years' War and Frederick the Great as the beginnings of the German way of war. These campaigns combined a similar pattern of forced marches, the operational attack on the enemies flank if available, and the use of terrain to conceal an army or to provide the best location for an attack. Operational plans were made on the fly by the commander, leaving his officers the ability (or inability) to carry out the attack as they saw fit. The battles were innovative in a time of linear armies, providing speed, surprise and shock against the enemy.

But it did not always work out as the German leadership expected. Aggressive infantry halted cavalry charges; aggressive cavalry in turn defeated linear infantry formations. As warfare progressed into the 19th and 20th centuries, armies became larger and the ability to command and control them faltered, leaving artillery to become the prominent arm on the battlefield, and breech-loading rifles and machine guns made traditional battle tactics and formations archaic. Later, tanks, planes, and airborne operations would again establish the war of maneuver to the battlefield. While the Germans paid attention to the materiel to wage war, such areas as intelligence, counterintelligence and logistics would continue to hamper the German army.

Defeated by Napoleon at Jena and Eylau in 1806, the Prussians turned inward to reform the army. Led by Scharnhorst and

Gneisenau, the German army adopted Napoleon's corps structure and developed a military educational system that produced the Chief of Staff to advise the commander. Reform brought to the field a more aggressive army against Napoleon in 1813 at Lützen, Bautzen and Leipzig, tying together "the operational link between the wars of Frederick the Great, the art of war as practiced by Napoleon, and the great nineteenth century campaigns of Helmuth von Moltke."

The rise of technology changed warfare, and no army embraced technology with more precision than Germany. Under Moltke, the German army based their war plans on railroad schedules, and exercised both war plans and technological advancements in rifles and communications during yearly war games (*kriegsspielen*). The result was three "short and lively" campaigns against Denmark, Austria and France with a goal of destroying the enemy in a *kesselschlacht* (cauldron battle). This would not be the only time that the army looked inward. Again, following WWI, Hans von Seeckt followed the tradition of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau in reforming the army, again emphasizing aggressive, offensive operations to deal a decisive blow to an enemies flank and rear. The result of these reforms would be called "blitzkrieg" in the West, but were really a rebirth of traditional German operational concepts of maneuver, aggressive attacks, decisive battles and flexible command.

Rarely do history works become "page turners," but Citino blends enough traditional history to satisfy the scholar, crisp battle recounting and analysis to appeal to military historians and military professionals, and as is typical of Citino's works, footnotes that become a lesson in historiography with a bibliography that staggers the mind. Well researched and written, the *German Way of War* not only changes the paradigm of historical work, but is a footprint for successful, entertaining, and scholarly research with an appeal to a wide audience.

Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance — And Why They Fall. By Amy Chua. NY: Doubleday, 544 pages, 2007, \$27.95. Reviewed by CDR Youssef Aboul-Enein, USN.

One debate among those immersed in questions of America's national security is whether the United States is ascendant or descendant? Answering this singular question eventually leads to the discussion and exploration of past superpowers, analyzing what happened and the rate of and the reasons for decline. Yale Law professor Amy Chua has published a new book exploring various societies which she has selected as hyperpowers that combine military and economic dominance of most of the globe. The term hyperpower was coined by French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine, in a scathing criticism of the United States. Vedrine was part of the unconstructive aspects of Franco-American relations, which has thankfully abated with the election of President Nicolas Sarkozy. Chua examines the Persian Empire, considered the first global hyperpower, Rome, China's Golden Age, the Dutch World Empire, Medieval Spain, the British Empire, and ends with the United States and a discussion of why Axis powers like World War II Germany and Japan failed?

The book begins with 600-500 BCE, the Empire of Darius the Great of Persia saw a Persian emperor who upheld rulings of Egyptian judges and sanctioned Judaic law as the law of Israel. Darius did not waste resources trying to Persianize his subjects or destroying conquered peoples; instead, his policy focused on harnessing their different skills and talents. When Darius' successors reversed the policies of Darius the Great, they became more oppressive, and this overbearing intrusion began to fragment the Persian Empire. The book also highlights a counter-trend to diversity that explains how as more diverse peoples entered the Persian Empire, they lacked a common language or experience and with this

expansion the forces of disintegration crept upon the Persians. So diversity on its own does not guarantee the preservation of great powers, but must be tempered with a commonality between diverse peoples; this commonality may take the form of a common language or civic values.

Rome would see its ascendancy as a massive free trade zone with at least the opportunity for upward mobility. One story is that of a North African third son of a local Berber farmer who rose through the imperial ranks, becoming Governor of Britain and expanding Roman dominance over Scotland. The boy, Quintus Lollius Urbicus, would die as city prefect of Rome. By the late fourth century, Rome limited its opportunity to German tribes imposing apartheid policies. In Rome's apex they did not fear diversity, by the fourth century Roman leaders did not capitalize on the talents of Germans. Mutiny, invasion and the taking of Rome by force would ensue and by 476 AD, the Western Roman Empire would splinter into warlike kingdoms and the Eastern Byzantine Empire would rule for another 1,000 years. The author highlights how the Christian Byzantine Empire would not allow religious dissent and engaged in fierce infighting over Christian doctrine, they would fall to the Muslims who took advantage of this disunity.

The book continues with discussions about China, Spain, and the United States. The central theme involves empires that are great because of their ability to be inclusive. However, there are anomalies in this trend, where inclusivity without the common bonds of citizenship becomes destructive. The chapter on Axis regimes shows the economic costs of intolerance; scarce resources such as transport, raw materials, and human effort that could have been used in the war effort were diverted to mass genocide. The book is thought provoking for those with a passion to ponder how America can reinvent, reinvigorate, and change to remain a benevolent superpower in the 21st century.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

KOREAN WAR

1. The Korean War began on 25 June 1950 when:
 a) Communist Chinese forces shelled the outskirts of Seoul
 b) The North Korean Peoples Army crossed the 38th parallel, invading South Korea
 c) Josef Stalin declared to the United Nations that the government of South Korea was "illegitimate" and was committed to uniting the Korean peninsula under Communist hegemony
 d) Border patrols on both sides of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) clashed in a chance encounter

2. The Korean War spanned the years:
 a) 1950 – 54
 b) 1950 – 51
 c) 1950 – 53
 d) 1950 only

3. The amphibious landings of 15 September 1950, often called "MacArthur's masterstroke," took place at:
 a) Pusan
 b) Seoul
 c) Changjin
 d) Inchon

4. The general chosen by President Harry S. Truman to replace MacArthur upon his relief of command was:
 a) Mark Clark
 b) James Van Fleet
 c) Matthew Ridgway
 d) Walton Walker

5. The river separating North Korea from mainland China is the:
 a) Yalu
 b) Taedong
 c) Han
 d) Changchon

6. In terms of total military deaths, rank the wars below from highest killed in action casualties to lowest:
 a) Civil War
 b) WWII
 c) WWI
 d) Vietnam
 e) Korea

7. Place these battles in their proper chronological sequence:
 a) Heartbreak Ridge
 b) Chosin Reservoir
 c) Pusan Perimeter
 d) Inchon

8. The South Korean chief of state who lead his country through the Korean War but was later forced to abdicate and flee to Hawaii (where he died in 1960) was:
 a) Syngman Rhee
 b) Kim Seong-su
 c) Han Tae-yeong
 d) Kim Gu

9. The only airborne operation during the Korean War featuring the drop of U.S. Army paratroopers was with the:
 a) 502nd Airborne Infantry Regiment
 b) 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment
 c) 325th Regimental Combat Team
 d) 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment

(Answers on next page)

Quiz courtesy of Chris Timmers



Kim Smith

Soldiers with the 172nd Infantry Brigade prepare to clear a room during a joint training exercise near Bahbahani, Iraq, on 5 June 2009.

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ANSWERS TO QUIZ: 1) b) 2) c) 3) d) 4) c) 5) a) 6) a, b, c, d, e) 7) c, d, b, a) 8) a) 9) b)