



2012-012

WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT: AN OMNIBUS REVIEW:

Charles E. Closmann, ed., *War and the Environment: Military Destruction in the Modern Age*. College Station: Texas A&M Univ. Press, 2009. Pp. iii, 210. ISBN 978-1-60344-115-5.

J.R. McNeill and Corinna R. Unger, eds., *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010. Pp. xi, 362. ISBN 978-0-521-76244-1.

Chris Pearson, Peter Coates, and Tim Cole, eds., *Militarized Landscapes: From Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain*. New York: Continuum, 2010. Pp. xv, 301. ISBN 978-1-4411-1702-1.

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The environmental impact of warfare is a newly emerging sub-field in environmental history, intended to complement military historians' traditional alertness to the influence of climate and terrain on the conduct of war. It also extends the well developed field of warfare and society, since no discussion of the effects of mass violence on natural systems can ignore social processes (or economic, political, and strategic, for that matter). Three new volumes of conference proceedings give an excellent overview of the state of this nascent research network. They address a great diversity of ideas, institutions, and environmental impacts. In the introduction to *War and the Environment*, Charles Closmann points to the wide range of possible subject matter, defining "environment" as "climate, landscape, flora, fauna, soil, water, and built settlements." In this conceptually tolerant field, that opens vast horizons.

The breadth of material here is suggested by five papers on Europe during and after the two world wars: Dorothee Brantz's on trench warfare; Frank Uekoetter's on the administration of the natural environment in both wars; Marcus Hall's on malaria in Italy during the wars; Chris Pearson's on a region of southeastern France; and Jeffrey Diefendorf's on German cities and city planners in the rebuilding process after 1945. Two essays address American settings: Lisa Brady's on General Sherman in the Civil War, and Robert Wilson's on wildlife conservation in California during the Second World War. Another two study the spread of American interests beyond US borders: John McNeill and David Painter's on US military bases (a survey global in scope) and Greg Bankoff's on the Philippines.

This volume links at many points to the second, *Environmental Histories of the Cold War*, which covers a wider geographical reach—into central and Soviet Europe, Asia, and the Pacific—and indicates the severe social dislocations of the early Cold War. A major concern of the book's contributors is, naturally, the activities of the United States and the Soviet Union. One of the most important contributions is Mark Merlin and Ricardo Gonzalez's rigorous survey of the ecological consequences of nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific. Toshihiro Higuchi adds a discussion of the debate within the United States over atmospheric nuclear tests before the partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963; he is alert to the pervasive problem of access to scientific data. David Zierler considers similar issues of information restrictions in summarizing his recent book on the policy process in Washington surrounding the application of chemical warfare in Vietnam. Matthew Farish and Jacob Hamblin extend the review of policy discussions to cover planning for additional scenarios of environmental warfare and American global hegemony.

The grim realities of American Cold War planning pale in comparison with the appalling contemporary environmental damage in the Soviet Union. In this volume's only essay on the USSR, Paul Josephson incisively treats the strategic and ideological contexts of massive nuclear projects and river basin plans. Some of the most grandiose of the plans to transform major rivers fortunately were not carried out, despite the hubris of planners in Moscow. In contrast, an essay by the present reviewer examines the complex and often destructive consequences of major multi-purpose river basin projects around the southern periphery of the Soviet Union, all of them undertaken with substantial American involvement.

These books recognize that the most devastating damage to ecosystems occurred during World War II and the first two decades of the Cold War and that (at least in lands that have not suffered further warfare since the late 1970s) improved military management of environmental resources has become a significant issue. But in all societies in all lands, as we come to greater awareness of militarized landscapes, we will have to take the additional step of better defining what militarized *societies and economies* actually are.

While the term “militarized landscapes” is much bruited, the scope of its meaning remains unclear. The third book, *Militarized Landscapes from Gettysburg to Salisbury Plain*, centering on the work of Peter Coates and other historical geographers trained at the University of Bristol, is the most valuable publication to date on the subject. Of course, the most immediate and deleterious effects on landscapes and natural resources result from mass conflict. But military control and management of wide areas often expand in peacetime (see McNeill and Painter in *War and Environment*). The editors note that today’s permanent military establishments maintain vast base operations, training grounds, and weapons testing facilities—covering more than 241,000 hectares in Great Britain, nearly 260,000 in France, 3 million in Australia, and over 10 million in the United States alone. Civilians and the military often compete for control and management of the bases. These rivalries reflect in complex ways the cultural significance of landscapes, both those that memorialize wartime carnage and those that enshrine previous settlements or sacred sites.

Although *Militarized Landscapes* focuses on the years since 1945, two papers consider the American Civil War and its legacies. Katherine Shively Meier’s essay on one of the bloodiest theaters of that war discloses the soldiers’ changing perceptions of the battered landscapes they moved through from year to year. While valuable on its own terms, this analysis is oblique to the question of ecological change in battle-scarred landscapes, which would require additional study of the post-bellum years. From a longer perspective, Brian Black considers recent landscape reconstruction against the background of natural succession at the Gettysburg battle site. Discussing management controversies over limiting the resurgence of vegetation and wildlife, he illustrates the conundrum of restoration ecologists everywhere: precisely which moment in a location’s changing history should be restored and preserved?

Several chapters concern military management of landscapes in Britain since World War II, detailing the shifting relations between military priorities and civilian interests, including the complexities of the Ministry of Defence’s publicity campaigns. Matthew Flintham considers the Shoeburyness complex; Tim Cole probes management and historical nostalgia at two sites, Tyneham and the Epynt; and Marianna Dudley discusses military operations on the Salisbury Plain. Sam Edwards describes restoration processes in East Anglia, after the construction of American air bases there during bombing offensives against Germany in 1942–45. In all these locations, civilian and military priorities coexist with varying degrees of tension over the priorities of land management in peacetime.

In the United States, the terrible weight of Cold War militarization is expressed in the vast landscape of the uranium industry and nuclear weapons testing in a wide swath of the arid West. Ryan Edgington describes the bizarre memorializing of the first nuclear bomb explosion, at the Trinity site in New Mexico. David Havlick perceptively surveys the history of the military’s conservation campaigns, under pressure from national legislation and citizen protest movements, a theme closely paralleled in the papers by his British counterparts.

Although geographically the papers are mostly confined to Britain and the United States, three chapters look to other places and themes. In the most trenchant study of military secrecy in this collection, Rachel Woodward describes the work of landscape photographers in northern Norway. Julia Adeney Thomas’s essay on Korea’s Demilitarized Zone is an elegantly articulated report on the inadvertent but important wildlife refuge that the military stalemate created there after 1953. This paper and others emphasize that military control of lands often preserves them from civilian over-development. In one of the book’s most wrenching chapters, Shelley Egoz and Tim Williams investigate the fragmentation of civilian life and geographical continuity caused by Israel’s erection of security barriers on the Palestinian landscape.

Edmund Russell’s concluding observations offer two vital reminders. First, there is a continuum from locations entirely civilian in their historical uses to others entirely dominated by military priorities. All mili-

tarized landscapes fall somewhere and shiftingly along that continuum. Second, military impacts not only affect specific, restricted locales, but reverberate throughout ecosystems like river basins, and beyond to the world's oceans and atmosphere. Asserting that "battlefronts mark the thin edge of the wedge of military impact on the environment" (236), Russell likens the encroachment of militarization on lands and resources to a food chain pyramid, concluding that "militarization grows ever more pervasive as it becomes ever less visible" (237). Plainly, much more work remains, if we are to trace the worldwide repercussions of military action and consumption.