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Matthew S. Muehlbauer and David J. Ulbrich, *Ways of War: American Military History from the Colonial Era to the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Pp. xxi, 536. ISBN 978–0–415–88677–2.

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In *Ways of War*, Matthew Muehlbauer and David Ulbrich seek to provide a comprehensive analysis of the various ways the pre-revolutionary American colonies and later the United States have fought their wars up to the present day. The book encompasses not only battle tactics and operations but also grand strategy, logistics, political and diplomatic history, and the influence of war and the military on societal issues of race and gender. Primarily a work of military history, it reflects contemporary trends in historiography, with a focus extending beyond purely military matters to political and resource constraints that have shaped US military efforts.

Both authors are academics with considerable experience in teaching and writing about military history. Muehlbauer (Manhattan College) has previously taught at the US Military Academy. Ulbrich (Rogers State University) has published two earlier books,<sup>1</sup> both on the history of the Marine Corps, and has served as command historian for the US Army Engineer School.

An introduction provides brief, preliminary definitions of various relevant types of war and military service, their levels of intensity and engagement, and their impacts on society. The book's fifteen chapters are organized chronologically and their titles are a convenient précis of its contents:

- 1: "Early Colonization and Conflict, 1607–1689"
- 2: "Wars Imperial and Regional, 1689–1763"
- 3: "The American Revolution, 1763–1783"
- 4: "Challenges in the Early Republic, 1783–1815"
- 5: "Expansion, 1815–1861"
- 6: "The American Civil War: Confederate Defiance, 1861–1863"
- 7: "The American Civil War: Union Triumph, 1863–1865"
- 8: "Transitions: Force in Domestic, Frontier, and Imperial Contexts, 1865–1902"
- 9: "Early Twentieth-Century Reforms and the Great War, 1902–1918"
- 10: "Transformations in the Interwar Years, 1918–1941"
- 11: "Mobilizing for the Second World War, 1941–1943"
- 12: "Winning the Second World War, 1943–1945"
- 13: "American National Security and the Early Cold War, 1945–1960"
- 14: "Confrontations in the Cold War, 1960–1973"
- 15: "From Cold War to Pax Americana to Uncertainty, 1973–2012"

Each chapter includes at least a dozen labeled sections (some of them featuring bulleted lists), a timeline, maps<sup>2</sup> and illustrations, primary sources parceled out in boxed inserts, and a short bibliography. Besides actual military actions, the chapters also address peacetime operations, the tension between military readiness and budgetary exigencies, and, where pertinent, social issues of race and gender. The book also has a companion website giving fuller detail on, for instance, the causes of the American Revolution or the Civil

1. *Thomas Holcomb and the Advent of the Marine Corps Defense Battalion, 1936–1941* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Univ., 2004), and *Preparing for Victory: Thomas Holcomb and the Making of the Modern Marine Corps, 1936–1943* (Annapolis: Naval Inst Pr, 2011), reviewed at MiWSR 2013-026.

2. Though the maps are generally a valuable enhancement to the text, errors appear in some of them: a map of the major northern cities and battles (72) labels battles as French forts in the legend. A map of the Cold War (417) misidentifies the alignment of Cuba, Taiwan, and North Korea; labels treaty allies of the United States (Thailand) and the Soviet Union (Angola) as unaligned; and mislabels Poland as East Germany!

War, which would have made a long book longer. The reader gets a strong sense of a skilled classroom lecturer “giving good notes,” as in the following sample.

Due to space constraints, this chapter will focus on the War of the American Revolution from 1775 to 1783. Students wishing to review the events that preceded it can visit the companion web site to this book at [www.routledge.com/cw/muehlbauer](http://www.routledge.com/cw/muehlbauer), though two points are noteworthy here. One is that over the course of the imperial crisis from 1763 to 1774, American Patriots became well organized. Groups such as the Sons of Liberty and the committees of correspondence created a foundation that allowed rebels to exert political control in many areas and strengthen colonial militia establishments. The other is that given the prominent role of New England's colonists in confronting British authority, royal officials viewed their task as suppressing revolt in that region when the war began. (70)

The authors provide a wealth of detail about persons and events, mostly in conformity with the current scholarly consensus. But they also encourage readers to ponder the military's place and function within American society at large, as well as its influence on the integration of foreigners and the clash of ideas and ideals among citizens. The following selection shows, for example, the authors' concern to clarify the role of the militia or National Guard in the US military establishment:

Since its founding, the U.S. had relied upon a small regular army and militia system for its military needs. Maintained by the individual states, the latter was supposed to impart military skills to male citizens, who could then be mobilized in the case of a major war. The system raised hundreds of regiments to fight the Civil War, though mandatory peacetime militia training was essentially defunct by the mid-nineteenth century. Volunteer militia units, though, had remained active in some American cities. Interest in them plunged just after the Civil War, but revived in the 1870s. Volunteer militia units then began adopting the name “National Guard,” the term by which they are now known. (271)

Muehlbauer and Ulbrich frankly stake their positions in several current historical debates. Most significantly, on the question whether there is actually a distinctive American “way of war,” as Russell Weigley (to whose memory their book is dedicated) proposed some forty years ago,<sup>3</sup> they generally side with more recent historians like John Grenier,<sup>4</sup> who conclude that America's way of war has changed in response to many variables—the availability of resources, the nature of the enemy, and the political will (or lack thereof) of the people and their leaders, among others.

One identified consistent strategy of the United States in prolonged conflicts has been to seek to limit its enemy's resources, whether by destroying crops and Indian villages in the colonial era and early Republic; devastating the Confederacy's agriculture and ability to protect its population, as during the campaigns of William T. Sherman and Philip Sheridan; strategic bombing in the Second World War; or “pacifying” insurgents (sometimes through atrocities) in the Philippines, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The American military's enormous logistical advantages during and since World War II have enabled it to outlast opponents and deprive them of essential resources. This is not to say that the military establishment has had its way in all things: the Pentagon must deal with frustrating budget cutbacks during peacetime, with the result that the United States has often begun wars with less than optimal preparation.

One notable metric of successful change in the American military has been its increasing reliance on the service of women (or their work on the home front, à la “Rosie the riveter”). And, too, military service has opened a path toward integration into American society for immigrants and, more recently, gays and lesbians. But the authors also note the disproportionate impact in the past of the draft on poorer and minority populations. In the realm of organizational experiments, attempts to reinvent divisions have shown that the traditional three-brigade design is superior to four- and five-brigade models and hard to manage “grand divisions.”

The authors occasionally make pointed criticisms of US political leadership. They maintain, for instance, that presidents of both political parties have been guilty of ill-advised restraint or unwise aggress-

3. *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (NY: Macmillan, 1973).

4. *The First Way of War: American War Making on the Frontier, 1607–1814* (NY: Cambridge U Pr, 2005).

siveness and have since World War II had trouble calibrating the use of the armed forces to treaty obligations and geopolitical concerns, sound military practice, and domestic political realities. They consistently base their judgments on thorough research and analysis in order to avoid any political bias.

As a whole, *Ways of War* (and its website) are rich in detail and will lead serious students to examine—or re-examine—the primary source material in their areas of particular interest. Matthew Muehlbauer and David Ulbrich deserve high marks for refusing to whitewash recent or long-ago mistakes made by the American military. Their open and honest approach serves them well in their effort to convey the broad scope of US military history and its relevance to American society as a whole. Their ambitious book merits a place on the same shelf as the work of Russell Weigley and in undergraduate or graduate survey courses in American military history.