

On War. By Carl von Clausewitz. Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984. ISBN 0-691-05657-9 (cloth), 0-691-01854 (paper). 732 pages. \$47.50 (cloth), \$18.95 (paper).

Carl von Clausewitz's magnum opus, *On War*, is one of the most-quoted but least-read classics of military literature. This is indeed unfortunate because it is the single most comprehensive military-political work on the nature of war ever written, and this translation by scholars Peter Paret and Michael Howard is the best available.

Written in the early 1800s against the backdrop of more than two decades of European warfare, *On War* is in a class by itself. Clausewitz is able to bring the force of his personal experience as well as in-depth historical knowledge into his analysis. Unlike other works on the same topic, he does not consider conflict in isolation, but analyzes warfare as an extension of politics.

The son of a soldier, Clausewitz first experienced war first-hand as a 12-year-old lance corporal in

1793. He rose in rank rapidly because of personal competence, as opposed to noble birth. He attended the most prestigious military school of his day, the Berlin War College, under the brilliant military scholar, General Scharnhorst. Clausewitz graduated first in his class in 1803 and began a highly successful career as an officer in the Prussian Army. He fought in numerous campaigns across Europe against the French under Napoleon, and he later fought against a short-lived alliance of France and Prussia in the service of the Czar of Russia. His most distinguished positions were those of chief of staff of two different corps and superintendent of the War Academy in Berlin.

Although Clausewitz discusses all manner of war-fighting in his eight chapters, it is his discourse on understanding the true nature of war that is most valuable to contemporary military scholars. Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, reflects a great deal of his wisdom.

Clausewitz takes the position that war is always subordinate to political goals. He differs from Sun Tzu, who believed that once war began, it was the general who conducted the war until the enemy was defeated. In other words, military, not political concerns dominated the strategic war-planning process. Clausewitz supports a concept of limited war, defined by a limited political goal: one where the complete destruction of an enemy army might not be necessary.

This is not to imply that Clausewitz was in favor of conducting war by half-measures. He firmly believed that all possible force should be brought to bear on the enemy's "center of gravity." To be successful in war, one must find and destroy the single most critical element of national power which allows his adversary to fight — whether it be national will, logistics or economics. It was a radical thought for its time: the clash of armies had decided political questions in Europe for hundreds of years.

Clausewitz's work was published, unfinished, after his death. The editors make it clear in their introduction that Clausewitz recognized that *On War* required a great deal of revision, but his death prevented him from completing the work.

Even with the understanding that *On War* was unfinished, and that it was written in the context of his times, Clausewitz's book remains the single most valuable text for understanding war, and it should be required reading for all professional soldiers.

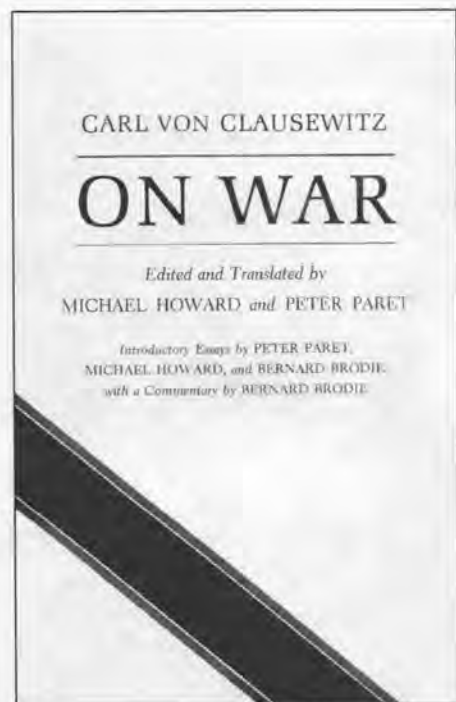
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The OSS in Italy 1942-1945: A Personal Memoir. By Max Corvo. New York: Praeger Publishing Co., 1990. ISBN: 0-275-93333-4. 334 pages. \$29.95.

This book is all that it says it is and more. It is indeed a personal memoir by the chief of operations of the Office of Strategic Services' Special Intelligence Section in Italy. It is also a carefully prepared, well-written and documented study of all aspects of the fight to establish an intelligence network in Italy in World War II.

Corvo is obviously interested in straightening out what he perceives as misconceptions or half-truths contained in other accounts of the OSS in Italy. He does so in an authoritative and complete fashion. His work should stand as an invaluable primary source for anyone attempting to tell the story of the OSS in World War II. It is the insider's story, providing accounts of numerous nasty bureaucratic struggles about methods, control, lines of authority and intelligence practices.

Corvo certainly has a fascinating story to tell: one with continuing application to the special-operations and intelligence communities today. One is continually struck by the resemblance in the goals, meth-



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AND JULIE SHERMAN



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bureaucrats and the warriors. His contention is that in Vietnam, contrary to other U.S. conflicts, the peacetime leadership was not superseded by the warriors. The result was that the Army made numerous mistakes in policy matters and in tactics.

This book is believable reading and is well-presented. The problems it describes are, to a large degree, still with us, and Hackworth's final section discusses some of our current faults. It is constructive criticism which professional soldiers should take as such. It is also good professional reading for the topic of the "next Vietnam" and how we should do things differently if we fight again in another unconventional war.

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Armed Forces and Modern Counterinsurgency. Edited by Ian F.W. Beckett and John Pimlott. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985. ISBN 0-312-00449-4. 232 pages. \$12.95.

Armed Forces & Modern Counterinsurgency examines major coun-

terinsurgency campaigns conducted by seven countries since World War II. Rather than merely presenting historical descriptions or tactical analyses of those counterinsurgency campaigns, the book examines the civil-military philosophies, strategies and tactics used.

In the introduction, the editors discuss elements necessary to conduct a successful counterinsurgency: integration of military, political, and economic efforts; a unified political and military chain-of-command responsible for conduct of the campaign; a chain-of-command that is both "clean," and clearly understood by all prosecutors of the campaign; effective intelligence collection and dissemination; use of local assets (e.g., people) whenever possible; and, the need to be flexible. The book then examines the campaigns in light of the presence and effectiveness, or lack thereof, of these essential elements.

The first two chapters, the book's best, examine the British Army's campaign in Dhofar, Oman, and the French Army's campaigns in Indochina, Algeria and Chad. These chapters present both armies' philosophies, strategies and tactics, as they evolved through the campaigns.

The third chapter examines American involvement in the Vietnam War. The author focuses on the war's counterinsurgency aspects and blames America's failed effort on three problems: an almost total lack of integration of military, political and economic efforts; a divided political and military chain-of-command responsible for conduct of the war; and a chain-of-command so convoluted and complex that no one could understand its intricacies. Additionally, problems in the dissemination of intelligence contributed to the failed effort. While the topic will generate at least some controversy among American military readers, the chapter presents a perspective on the war that should interest all SOF personnel.

The analysis of Uruguay's fight against the Tupamaros is interesting for two reasons: it is the only urban insurgency examined in the book; and, in the process of crushing the insurgency, the Uruguayan Army also crushed the country's democracy. Analyses of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa are interesting not only in themselves, but also because of the influence the British Army and its experience in Malaysia had on both these African armies and their campaigns against black nationalist guerrillas.

An interesting lesson of this book is that all of the campaigns examined, with the exception of Uruguay (the only urban insurgency), used resettlement as a counterinsurgency technique — with varying, though often negative, results. However, those negative results were due to the ineffectual and short-lived commitments to making resettlement work. *Armed Forces & Modern Counterinsurgency* is not merely an interesting historical account of various counterinsurgency campaigns, it is also a valuable "lessons learned" text.

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