

Book Reviews

Special Warfare

Fighting for the Future: Will America Triumph? By Ralph Peters. Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1999. ISBN: 0-8117-0651-6 (hardback). 210 pages. \$19.95.

Ralph Peters is quite frankly the most gifted military theorist of his generation. He is a genuine forward thinker who is brutally honest, thoroughly believable, and very often profound. Peters ferrets out truths that many others would find difficult to articulate. A best-selling novelist and a retired U.S. Army intelligence officer and foreign-area specialist, Peters writes with conviction, integrity and unusual artistry.

Fighting for the Future is a compilation of 12 superb essays on the future of warfare. In these essays, Peters critically examines warfare and culture, combat in cities of the future, nationalism and fundamentalism, military ethics, future armored warfare, and ways of fighting and winning the battles that America is likely to face in the next millennium. His analyses are solidly grounded in the facts of the present, even when he is projecting some alternative and very nasty futures.

By combining political, cultural, economic and military analyses, Peters is able to paint extraordinarily credible pictures of likely future American combat. Joltingly realistic, the scenarios are frightening because today's Army is largely ill-equipped and ill-trained to handle them.

The author rightly points out that the next millennium is likely



to be characterized by urbanization on a massive scale. America's likely future adversaries may use these cities and their civilian populations as shields for their activities. No current world army would wish to face the American Army on a traditional battlefield: Our military technological superiority is too overwhelming. Peters predicts that potential adversaries will desert the traditional battlefield for the urban jungle, where America's massed firepower will be of extraordinarily limited utility. The power of cruise missiles, stealth bombers, multiple-launch rocket systems, conventional artillery, and the combined might of America's air forces will all be horribly truncated in cities.

Collateral damage (civilian deaths) is much more likely to occur on a battlefield that can be described in terms of concrete, brick, and steel. The urban sce-

nario creates terribly complex moral and ethical dilemmas for combatant commanders and for individual soldiers. Potentially, millions of noncombatants could be crowded into an area the size of six or seven city blocks. Among these noncombatants could hide an urban Army that will not fight by any recognized rules.

The U.S. Army is neither trained nor equipped for urban combat. Moreover, our nation is not psychologically prepared for this often-brutal warfare — warfare in which women and children could easily become casualties by merely rounding a street corner at the wrong time.

Peters also speaks of what we call asymmetrical warfare. In this kind of warfare, our potential enemies will not be wearing uniforms. Villains such as drug lords, petty warlords, international criminal organizations, terrorist cells, corrupt governments and their leaders will not present the American military establishment with clear-cut "legal" targets.

The ambiguity created as a result of our legal system serves to hamstring our efforts against such antagonists. The author asks the long-overdue question, "Why is it acceptable to slaughter — and I use the word advisedly — the commanded masses but not to mortally punish the guiltiest individual, the commander, a man stained with the blood of his own people as well as that of his neighbors?" Peters asks good questions. Many of his questions go to the heart of our morality, which the author suggests that

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FM 24-31, *ARSOFC⁴*, is a new publication that will cover command, control, communications and computers for all ARSOFC units. It will include the organization of the 112th Signal Battalion. The manual will describe the architecture of command-and-control, or C², in operational commands and the information flow from ARSOFC operational units to C² systems at the special-operations-command, theater and national levels. FM 24-31 was published in July 2000. The project officer is Major Alexander Fletcher; DSN 239-5393/8689; e-mail: fletchea@soc.mil.

FM 34-31, *ARSOFC Intelligence*, is a revision of FM 34-36, *SOF Intelligence and Electronic Warfare Operations*, dated 1991. FM 34-31 will describe the organization and the capabilities of intelligence elements within ARSOFC units. It will also describe the intelligence structures of theater SOCs, joint intelligence centers, and higher-level agencies, as well as their connectivity with ARSOFC operational units. The initial draft of FM 34-31 is being staffed by SOF units. The project officer is Captain Martin Glynn; DSN 239-5393/8689; e-mail: glynnm@soc.mil.

FM 63-31, *ARSOFC Combat Service Support*, is a revision and an expansion of FM 63-24, *Special Operations Support Battalion*, dated 1995. FM 63-31 will provide users with a base document for determining future CSS doctrine and procedures. It will address ARSOFC CSS structure, capabilities and support requirements. FM 63-31 will offer guidance on operational planning and on educating personnel; and it will include the structure of both the Special Operations Support Command and the Special Operations Support Battalion. The project officer is Major Alexander Fletcher; DSN 239-5393/8689; e-mail:

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TC 31-25, *Special Forces Waterborne Operations*, dated October 1988, is being converted into a field manual. The new publication, FM 31-25, is titled *Special Forces Waterborne Operations*. Areas of expanded information will address the duties of diving supervisors and of dive medical technicians; small-boat navigation techniques; infiltration techniques; principles of open- and closed-circuit diving; and planning for waterborne operations. FM 31-25 is intended for use with FM 20-11-1, *Military Diving*. The project officer is Master Sergeant Sean Fleenor; DSN 239-5952; e-mail: fleenors@soc.mil.

ST 31-184, *U.S. Army Special Forces Forward Operational Base Field Standing Operating Procedures*, dated 1976, is being revised. The special text will serve as a basis for the establishment and operation of an SF battalion forward operational base. ST 31-184 is intended for use with FM 31-20, *Doctrine for Army Special Forces Operations*. The project officer is Ed Sayre; DSN 239-8689/5255, email: sayree@soc.mil.

Drafts of the publications will be posted on the DOTD web site (<http://asociweb.soc.mil/swcs/dotd>), and they will be available through TRADOC's Automated Systems Approach to Training.

3rd SF Group gets new commander

Colonel Mark V. Phelan took command of the 3rd Special Forces Group from Colonel Gary M. Jones during a ceremony held at Fort Bragg's Meadows Field July 7.

Phelan was formerly the deputy chief of staff for personnel for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC. His previous SF assignments include detachment executive officer, detachment commander, company commander, bat-

talion executive officer and battalion commander with the 5th SF Group. He also served at the U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Fla., where he established the Special Operations Forces Personnel Monitorship Division.

Jones is now the USASOC deputy commander.

Videotape to serve as PSYOP doctrine

A new videotape is being produced by the Directorate of Training and Doctrine, JFK Special Warfare Center and School, for students and soldiers in psychological-operations units.

The videotape will provide users with an introduction to the PSYOP development process. It will outline the process from target analysis through test and evaluation, and it will include an overview of the functions of both the joint PSYOP task force and the PSYOP task force.

The videotape's primary target audience will be PSYOP soldiers who are attending advanced individual training at SWCS; however, the videotape will be distributed to all active and reserve PSYOP units and will serve as doctrine until FM 33-1-1, *Psychological Operations Techniques and Procedures*, is published.

The videotape is being produced through the collaborative efforts of two offices within the SWCS: the PSYOP Training and Doctrine Division and the Audiovisual Branch.

It is scheduled for distribution in the fall of 2000. It will also be available (production number 711195) at no charge through the Defense Visual Information web site (dodim-agery.afis.osd.mil).



we adapt to emerging realities.

Peters is a loyal fan of special-operations forces. For the better part of a decade, he has championed the cause of multiservice Special Forces, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs.

In his view, only SOF and the U.S. Marines are adequately trained and sufficiently adaptable to succeed against the new realities of future warfare. Every SOF soldier will benefit from a close and careful reading of Peters' essays.

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Our War Was Different: Marine Combined Action Platoons in Vietnam. By Al Hemingway. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1994. ISBN: 1-55750-355-9. 189 pages. \$25.

Our War Was Different chronicles the mission and the accomplishments of the U.S. Marine Corps' Combined Action Program in Vietnam from 1965 through 1971. The story is told by Marines who describe what they did and what they saw. It is not an official history; rather it is an intimate look at life in the villages, as experienced by members of the different Combined Action Platoons, or CAPs, in the I Corps area of operations. The Marines, who were all volunteers, were enthusiastic about the program, and they empathized with the popular forces and the villagers whose confidence they sought to win.

The basic goal of the Combined Action Program was to bring peace to the Vietnamese villages by integrating the local knowledge of the popular forces with the professional skill and superior equipment of the Marines. The Vietnamese knew who the guerrillas were and where they hid; the Americans knew how to defeat them.

Although the U.S. Army employed soldiers as advisers, it had no organization quite like the Marine CAPs. Led by Marine NCOs, CAPs consisted of a Marine rifle squad and 35 Vietnamese soldiers. Army mobile advisory teams consisted of two U.S. officers, three U.S. enlisted men and a Vietnamese-army interpreter. Special Forces A-detachments were composed of 12 men.

The SF detachments had several advantages over the CAPs: long stateside training, the presence of officers and senior enlisted men, reinforcements of Montagnards or Chinese Nungs, and language skills. In fact, language was one of the CAPs' two major problems. As CAP Marine Michael Peterson states, "There was no real attempt to systematically utilize enlisted graduates from the Defense Language Institute." The other major problem was the selection process: All CAP Marines were supposed to have six months of in-country experience; such was not always the case.

The Combined Action Program was also not fully supported by the Marine Corps. There were approximately 80,000 Marines in Vietnam

at the height of the war, but the CAPs never had more than 2,500 assigned Marines — less than four percent of the total USMC force.

In spite of the disadvantages, the CAPs were highly successful. No village captured from the Vietcong was ever retaken, and 60 percent of the CAP Marines volunteered to extend their time with the program.

Today, as U.S. war fighters are increasingly being tasked to perform peacekeeping and peace-enforcement missions for which they are ill-trained, the lessons of the Combined Action Program may be relevant. The transition from war fighter to peacekeeper has never been easy, but in Vietnam, the Combined Action Program helped ease that transition. *Our War Was Different* will cause readers to consider whether similar programs might work in other countries and in other conflicts.

In the words of Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak, USMC (ret.), "This book serves as a series of guideposts, with its credible examples of right and wrong in the critical task of winning the support of the people. Without their support, as Vietnam taught us, victory is out of reach."

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