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Getting It Right describes some of the crucial issues facing today's military. It provides the reader with plenty of material from which to develop informed opinions of our military forces and their role in a New World Order.

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Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power. By Peter Paret.
Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992. ISBN: 0-691-00090-5 (paper). 229 pages.

Peter Paret, professor of history at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, is perhaps America's foremost expert on Karl von Clausewitz and his political-military writings. Therefore, any of Paret's thoughts and opinions need to be taken seriously.

This book is a collection of Paret's essays and speeches on Clausewitz and war in 19th-century Europe, compiled over his illustrious academic career. Paret provides dozens of insights into Clausewitz's thinking and the times in which he wrote. As such, this book is an excellent companion to Paret's and Michael Howard's translation of Clausewitz's *On War* — the best translation of Clausewitz on the market. Perhaps a better title for this latest work would be, "Understanding Clausewitz and His Times" — for this is what the book does best.

Since Clausewitz lived and fought during the Napoleonic era, Paret gives much space to the discussion of Napoleon and his war-fighting strategies and their effect on political and military figures and theorists of the day. Paret deserves congratulations for his synthetic approach to the subject. By examining the social, economic, political and military means for making war in the 19th century, he enhances our understanding of the total envi-

ronment of central Europe at that time.

As in all compilations of different works, Paret's book suffers from a lack of continuity, but this observation need not be interpreted as criticism. In fact, because of the way the book is divided into three parts, with 16 chapters, it makes superb bedtime reading. No essay is so long that it would keep you up late.

Although many of his chapters make for interesting reading, Paret's expositions on "Nationalism and the Sense of Military Obligation," and "Conscription and the End of the Ancien Regime in France and Prussia," are most thought-provoking. These two essays go to the heart of the body politic and its relationship to nationalism — which is what made Napoleon's draft of two million Frenchmen into his military possible. Many of Paret's observations about the 19th century retain value today.

For instance, he writes, "Nationalism implies a measure of sacrifice of men's immediate concerns for the greater good; but on occasion the common cause may appear to be imperfectly represented," and "However men have felt about fighting for their country — ecstatic, resentful, resigned — whatever their attitude, it has rarely been in perfect harmo-

ny with the principles and expectations of their governments."

Paret's discourse concerning the American Revolutionary War and its effect, or more correctly, its lack of effect, on European military thought is also fascinating. Of particular interest to Clausewitzian scholars will be Paret's observations in "Clausewitz: Life and Thought," and his publication, with commentary, of two of Clausewitz's previously unpublished letters concerning strategy.

A possible criticism is that the book assumes knowledge the reader may not possess. Paret's essays appear targeted at graduate-level audiences who have already read *On War* and have studied the wars of 19th-century Europe. If the reader does not have this scholastic background, then the book may be of limited utility.

Moreover, Paret's style of writing tends toward the "old academic" — his sentences are sometimes overly long and complex. Paret also assumes the reader's knowledge of 19th-century French, British and German history. This is understandable, but unfortunately, again, limits his audience to graduate students or well-read military-history buffs.

Overall, and with an understanding of their limitations, Paret's essays are illuminating and interesting. *Understanding War*, although too grand a title for a collection of any one person's essays, is enlightening reading.

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