Routledge Handbook of Ethics and War: Just War Theory in the Twenty-First Century

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that in these three cases, at the very
least, the upgraded award was justified.
Being identified as “the lost battalion”
rankled survivors of the 141st, who
claimed they were neither lost nor
rescued. The first claim is true: the
battalion’s location was known from
beginning to end. The second claim is
harder to adjudicate. As the five days
wore on, food, ammunition, medical
supplies, and other necessities dwindled
to dangerous levels, and the battalion
was judged unable to effect its own
extraction. McGaugh makes a compel-
ling case that this was indeed a rescue.
At the end of the day, despite minor
flaws, Honor before Glory is a book
worth reading. The story of the nation’s
nisei families and their soldier sons’
battle experiences remains well worth
telling as an example of extraordinary
patriotism and courage in the face
of reprehensible actions taken out
of pain, prejudice, and fear.
RICHARD J. NORTON


In an anthology of provocative and
insightful essays both comprehensive
and diverse in nature, the editors of
this work on just war theory make a
significant contribution to the genre
of applied ethics. Allhoff, Evans, and
Henschke enlist professors, retired
military officers, journalists, theologians,
and computer scientists as essayists to
examine the efficacy and applicability of
the just war tradition vis-à-vis the latest
developments in technology, culture,
and politics. Although the writing style
is accessible to the novice who wants
to understand better the essentials
of just war theory, this collection of
essays provides the scholar-warrior and
professor with substantive research and
the latest modifications to a theory that
has been tried and trusted for millennia.
The editors incorporate a wide range
of theorists, including both those who
reject the just war tradition as obsolete,
given the evolution of warfare, and
those who support just war criteria as
reliable principles for the conduct of
warfare in the twenty-first century.
In this exciting forum of ideas, oppo-
nents and proponents of just war theory
introduce concepts worthy of serious
consideration. While the book resembles
a recent installment of the Star Wars
movies in its probing of the morals of
unmanned drones, lethal autonomous
robots, cyberspace nonkinetics, and
more, the writers call on the great phi-
losophers of the past to help address the
latest trends and projections of national
security measures. Under the category
“Theories of War,” contributors critique
and defend the criteria to justify the
commencement of war (jus ad bellum),
the criteria by which war is conducted
(jus in bello), and the criteria by which
war is concluded with postconflict
stabilization, reconstruction, and hu-
manitarian assistance (jus post bellum).
The editors do not stack the deck to bias
the reader toward or against just war
theory, and this illustrates the distinct
virtue of this scholarly undertaking: its
diversity of themes and perspectives.
Whether it is Jeff McMahan’s argument
that the soldier has an epistemic respon-
sibility to ascertain whether the war in
which he or she fights is just, or Richard
Werner’s psychological thesis that most
wars are justified as in-group exceptionalism and collective self-deception, or Jeff Whitman’s insistence that just war theory in its criteria toward war and in war minimizes the suffering of combat, the editors expose the reader to age-old debates and new-age innovations. For instance, what are the moral implications of the child-soldier who constitutes a lethal force but in some ways is still not accountable as an adult warrior? How does just war theory interface with the increasing use of private military contractors within the world’s armed services, as combatants or civilians? Are robotic warriors morally culpable, or are their software programmers? Can scientists produce research papers on the positives of the latest medical breakthrough without also considering the multiuse of viruses for human harm? Can nonkinetic information attacks on, say, banks constitute acts of aggression that warrant a kinetic response of self-defense? Are torture and indefinite imprisonment acceptable as an ethics of exceptionalism for terrorists? All these questions and more acquaint scholar and student alike with the burgeoning moral dilemmas of war in the last decade.

Poised between the idealism of pacifism on the one hand and the cynicism of realism on the other, theorists on all sides of the debate directly state or indirectly insinuate the value of just war theory. Critics suggest just war theory’s value by making improvements that presuppose its core principles as foundational standards from which to upgrade. Just war advocates and revisionists apply the necessary criteria to the changing landscape of war, maintaining that the principles are flexible enough to embrace the latest invention, yet firm enough to respect the collective wisdom of bygone centuries. The just war tradition is not a static canon of dogmatic tenets, but rather a dynamic canon of robust precepts that are adaptable but faithful to the central concepts of justice. After all, policy makers and warfighters, in contemplating the tremendous costs of war and peace, cannot easily turn a deaf ear to great thinkers such as Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas, to name only a few. Indeed, to deny the validity of the just war tradition would be to countermand the Geneva Conventions, international humanitarian law, and the UN Charter, all of which are predicated in some way on the insights of those ancient and ageless core premises known as just war theory. As long as philosophers and ethicists deliberate the values of justice and peace pertaining to statecraft, just war ideas will be relevant, and so will any compendium of essays that explore the topics of *jus pax* (the law of peace). Illuminating and profound in scope, the *Routledge Handbook of Ethics and War* is one of the best additions to the just war dialogue in many years and promises to inform the scholar-warrior on the most challenging issues of our day.

EDWARD ERWIN

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**Our Reviewers**

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