

2005

## Battle Ready,

Henry Bartlett

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Bartlett, Henry (2005) "Battle Ready," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 58 : No. 1 , Article 20.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol58/iss1/20>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).

doctrine to be useful. He argues cogently that advanced intelligence systems have their own vulnerabilities, and that lacunae of information are inevitable both before and during war. Moreover, by using examples from the American Civil War, Lowenthal demonstrates that good information about the enemy's moves and intentions is not enough for winning the battle. It is generalship, the human factor, that will continue to be decisive in the outcome of a war.

This is an excellent introductory collection for students and the professional reader to the gamut of issues with which the field of intelligence grapples.

EFFRAIM INBAR

*Director, Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies  
Bar-Ilan University, Israel*



Clancy, Tom, with General Tony Zinni (Ret.) and Tony Koltz. *Battle Ready*. New York: Putnam, 2004. 440pp. \$28.95

This excellent book documents the military and postmilitary career of General Tony Zinni, USMC (Ret.). It should appeal to any reader interested in the U.S. military, the U.S. Marine Corps, and national security affairs.

The book follows an engaging and mixed style. Clancy and Koltz use short biographical sections to introduce phases of General Zinni's career. At the end of each phase, Zinni's own words (in italics) pick up the action. One has the sense of being right there with the general, sharing his experiences and watching him develop into an exceptional military role model and leader.

The book actually begins with the end of Zinni's career. It is November 1998, and he is halfway through his last

assignment as the sixth commander in chief of Central Command. We are introduced to the refined thinking of a fighting soldier and leader, thinking based on his extensive tactical, operational, and strategic experience in war, conflict resolution, and peacemaking. At that time, Zinni's immediate focus was Saddam Hussein and supporting the UNSCOM (United Nations Special Commission) inspectors under Richard Butler. By mid-December, UN teams began departing Iraq. What follows is the four-day, preplanned attack of Operation DESERT FOX. Although the planning for the attack provides insight into General Zinni's war-fighting skills, such as the importance and execution of surprise, it is the introduction to his breadth of strategic thinking that is most interesting.

At the start of his command in August 1997, Zinni proposed a six-point strategic program for Central Command to President Clinton's secretary of defense, William Cohen. His objective was to take a more balanced approach to a wide range of evolving security issues, not just Iraq and Saddam Hussein. After presenting the program to Cohen and senior members of Congress, Zinni was politely told to "stay out of policy and stick to execution." That raises an important point for military officers preparing themselves for high command. Civilian control of the military and selfless military service to the country are fundamental to our government, going back to George Washington and George Marshall. Based on the rest of the book, it is apparent that Zinni consistently struck that delicate professional balance between the truthful, informed, and forceful advice and respect for civilian authority.

A further example of this followed DESERT FOX. General Zinni asked himself what would happen if Iraq suddenly collapsed. Who would pick up the pieces and help rebuild the country? To examine these questions, Zinni sponsored a war game called "Desert Crossing" in late 1999, with a wide range of government agencies and representatives. In his words, "The scenarios looked closely at humanitarian, security, political, economic, and other reconstruction issues. We looked at food, clean water, electricity, refugees, Shia versus Sunnis, Kurds versus other Iraqis, Turks versus Kurds, and the power vacuum that would surely follow the collapse of the regime (since Saddam had pretty successfully eliminated any local opposition). We looked at all the problems the United States faces in 2003 trying to rebuild Iraq. And when it was over, I was starting to get a good sense of their enormous scope and to recognize how massive the reconstruction would be." Although the game failed to stimulate government-wide planning, the episode at the start of the book is compelling. One wonders at Zinni's background, and how he developed the interest, knowledge, and experience to conceptualize and deal with such complex theater-level issues.

The general served two tours in Vietnam, where he suffered life-threatening combat wounds and illnesses. His time there was fundamental to his development: "The biggest lesson, in fact, is learning how to be open to surprising new experiences and then turning that openness into resourceful and creative ways of dealing with challenges you face." Zinni builds on that insight along with the sensitivity and ability to work

effectively within other cultures, a skill he developed during his first tour as an adviser with the South Vietnamese marines.

Zinni's rise to the rank of general in December 1986 followed command, staff, and professional military education assignments, emphasizing operational competence. However, it is his first assignment as general to deputy director of operations at the U.S. European Command in 1990 that impressed upon him the nature of the rapidly changing world following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The reader is taken through Zinni's subsequent assignments: director of operations for Combined Task Force RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), and commander in chief of Central Command. After his retirement from the military in the summer of 2000, Zinni's experience and diplomatic skills are further called into service for peacemaking and conflict resolution around the world, offering us further insight into such complex, ongoing situations as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

*Battle Ready* makes clear that Zinni has the credentials, both professional and personal, to present his forceful and unvarnished opinions, honed by a lifetime of service to his country. This book should be of particular value to military officers of all services preparing for higher command in this volatile world.

HENRY BARTLETT  
*Naval War College*