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Mobilizing for War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1865-1919

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The personal accounts describe the conversion of the collier *Jupiter* to the Navy's first aircraft carrier, renamed *Langley*, and its early vital use as a trainer for carrier aviators. An interesting aside relates how early air operations were frequently filmed, so that aviators could study launching and recovery techniques. As a natural result, a lot of mishaps, crashes, and near misses were caught on film. Where did all that film go? Given the terrible storage practices as well as the deterioration that old motion picture film suffered, it's likely it has disappeared long ago. Pity.

The danger of flying wood-and-canvas aircraft is clearly shown and can be juxtaposed against the current hazards. Maybe the planes of today are more durable, but when they fail or their operators do not fly them properly, the results are the same as sixty years ago.

This book highlights a basic difference between today's way of doing business and how things were done then. One recent review notes this difference also, but with more sadness at perceived freedoms lost than I am ready to allow. It is an interesting quandary: operations between 1919 and 1941 seem to have accepted losses in lives and machines for the sake of greater freedom and more colorful personalities. Do we now enjoy our far greater margin of safety and mission readiness at the expense of our professional souls and individual expression? We can wax philosophical on this question forever and probably never resolve a thing. However, reading this book certainly tells me we have lost our innocence over the years, that we have exchanged it for a more worldly, even tougher,

outlook on what it takes to fly military machines, especially from such tenuous places as aircraft carriers.

This book also features forty-six photographs. I place great store in a book's selection of photos, and I sometimes lament poor layout or presentation, to say nothing of poor reproduction, especially at today's highly inflated retail prices. Current publishers often print photos on the same stock as the text, which is usually uncoated paper—fine for black type but not for the often graying black-and-white images. The Naval Institute Press occasionally falls in this category, and it does in this case. *The Golden Age Remembered* has some excellent photos, but I wish the publisher had spent a little more money and used traditional folio of coated stock. There are several really good views of men and aircraft—a few I have never seen before, such as photo numbers 40, 41, and 42—that show close-ups of SBUs, PM-1s, and P2Ds on the flight deck, at anchor, or in flight. Though not nearly as well known as some types of the day, these evocative aircraft were part of a truly colorful era.

Tim Wooldridge is doing a great service in his project by giving the U.S. Naval Institute's oral histories a public airing. They represent primary sources far too important simply to keep on file.

PETER MERSKY
Norfolk, Virginia

Koistinen, Paul A. *Mobilizing for War: The Political Economy of American Warfare, 1865–1919*. Lawrence:

Univ. Press of Kansas, 1997. 391pp.
\$45

This work constitutes the second volume in a five-volume series on the political economy of warfare in America.

One of this book's strengths is the documented depth of the author's research. The very richness of detail concerning the motivations and interactions of "elite" individuals in government, industry, and the military can, however, quickly overwhelm, and test the resolve of, the reader.

Of particular interest to the student of naval affairs are the sections dealing with the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century modernization and expansion of the Navy. There are multiple references to the pivotal role assumed by the Naval War College in the command of the Navy. The author specifically notes the initiative of Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, who "[breathed] life into the Naval War College by making attendance important for all officers and mandatory for senior officers." The Naval War College, naval logistics organizations, and the U.S. Navy itself are cited throughout the text as organizationally efficient and effective, as opposed to the antiquated and dysfunctional organizational structure of the U.S. Army. The author repeatedly notes that the president and civilian leadership controlled the naval bureaucracy and that on the whole the Navy adapted to the nation's foreign policy "instead of shaping it any significant way." He remarks that "in retrospect, the building of a modern navy at least suggested that heavy military spending over a prolonged period of time in an industrialized economy

could lead to circumstances in which the armed services could significantly and dangerously distort the nation's defense and foreign policies and its economic structure."

The reader is then left to wonder if, despite his own observations, the author is intentionally casting the Navy (and Army) as shadow usurpers of the nation's foreign policy. If he is, Koistinen's earlier socioeconomic classification of the United States' power centers as "elites" may be central to that view.

"Elites" and "elitist structures," one assumes, must consist of the decision makers of industry and those of capital formation and finance, commerce, and the armed forces. If so, one can only conclude that the author has made the case for a self-evident fact. Conversely, he may be surreptitiously interjecting a pseudo-Marxist issue into his text, the issue being the lack of an egalitarian decision process during times of national crises, and responses at the ultimate expense of the worker. If the latter is true, Koistinen fails to pursue his thesis adequately. He simply proves the obvious—that power elites do exist, that they attract other power elites, often to the exclusion of others, and that our system of constitutional democracy serves to control them. One cannot deny that wealth often begets wealth, that wealth often begets influence, and that influence often determines national policy and practice. The categorization of such individuals as either "elites" or "nation builders" must then remain a function of personal political choice.

The author's liberal views on the profit principle and power of wealth are

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further demonstrated in his observations of the 1915 agreement between J. P. Morgan and Company and Great Britain, which designated Morgan as the U.S. commercial agent for His Majesty's government.

The later sections of this volume bear greater relevance to contemporary debates on the questions of continued research, the development and production of the American arsenal, and on the role of the military in today's global affairs. Who is best qualified to research new technologies, to test new technologies, to develop modern industrial capabilities, and to produce the many wants of war? If the military is best qualified, will that process become inbred and therefore inefficient? If civilian industry is best qualified, will that process be solely a profit-oriented one, without ultimate regard to true military need? The answer then, as today, is that a combination of the two is effective, albeit not always efficient. War is a process of destruction and waste, despite motive and slogans, or social beliefs to the contrary. Controlling waste while determining the most efficient forms of defensive capability remains a valid national objective. An egalitarian approach to the management of conflict may have been successful in certain instances of war during the eons of man's existence. In this age of global threat and involvement, military power is most certainly an instrument of a nation's foreign policy, and decisions as to its effectiveness and use must remain within the purview of the nation's elected and appointed power elites.

The author notably succeeds in pointing out and documenting numerous instances of abuse in both

government and private-sector actions leading up to, and during, national mobilization for World War I. Sadly, contemporary examples of such abuses, as excessive cost and profiteering, exist today. The author concludes with a realistic assessment of U.S. World War I economic experiences.

This book is recommended for the fact driven, for the student of organizational behavior within large organizations, and for the student of evolving power structures within the U.S. constitutional form of democratic government. It is also recommended background reading for the serious student of military mobilization theory and practice. However, it is recommended only with reservations for the casual reader of military history.

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Shulman, Mark Russell. *Navalism and the Emergence of American Sea Power, 1882-1893*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. 239pp. \$39.95

Mark Shulman's study of the emergence of the "New Navy" is a thoroughly reworked version of the doctoral dissertation he completed some years ago at the University of California, Berkeley. His thesis is clearly summarized in the opening paragraph to his concluding chapter: "A new aggressive American naval strategy emerged in the 1880s and nineties as the product of a distinct political agenda formulated and effected by a small group of energetic, progressive, intellectual timocrats.