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The Military Revolution

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As the Bomber Command's strength grew in 1942, high debates resulted concerning its best use. Harris argued passionately for focusing solely on the industrial kernel. In June 1942 he wrote to Churchill: "We are free, if we will, to employ our rapidly increasing air strength in the proper manner. In such a manner as would avail to knock Germany out of the war in a matter of months, if we decide on the right course." Churchill was cool to this grand promise: "I do not however think Air bombing is going to bring the war to an end by itself, and still less that anything that could be done with our existing resources could produce decisive results in the next twelve months."

Churchill's view prevailed, and Bomber Command's squadrons were used in a number of ways to support the many facets of the war against Germany. Seward does not criticize Churchill's decision directly but does seek to demonstrate that this was a mistake. He bases his case on postwar interviews with Albert Speer (the German minister of production), which indicate that the Allied bombing did impede German military production by 10 to 20 percent (at its peak) and did result in the reallocation of fighting forces from the front to homeland defense. The absolute impact of this on the pace and duration of the war remains unclear.

Seward's detailed account of the wartime debates over the use of Britain's heavy bombers contains a number of historically important

insights, especially his use of Harris' and Churchill's correspondence. However, his material from Speer and his vast statistics on tonnage of bombs dropped do not resolve the debate over the effective use of big bombers. Seward's book should be read for its source material on the rise and use of air power, but not for its implicit conclusion: that air power, if used as Harris wished, would have ended the war with less pain.

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Parker, Geoffrey. *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500-1800*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988. 234pp. \$27.95

Taking his cue from Michael Roberts' important 1955 lecture, "The Military Revolution 1560-1660," Professor Geoffrey Parker of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, delivered these superb Lees Knowles lectures at Cambridge University's Trinity College in 1984. They are a model of synthesis, clarity, and comparative strategic history, and are drawn from primary and secondary sources in over a half-dozen languages to provide new and revealing information to English-language students of military history. What the author lacked in knowledge and sources, he elicited from scholars of many lands, all of whom he justly acknowledges.

The book is a major treatise on the role of military innovation in the rise of Western European civilization over the rest of Europe and indeed over Asia, Africa, the Middle East and the Americas during the early modern period: 1500 to sometime between 1750 and 1800 (the author properly avoids a precise and thus artificial date).

Although Parker accepts Roberts' general thesis, he projects it over a much longer period of time. The emergence of the new imperial powers "depended precisely upon those improvements in the ability to wage war," namely, a new system of defensive fortifications (the *trace italienne*) with the attendant siege artillery, increased reliance upon massed infantry firepower, and a dramatic growth in the size of armies. He examines each in detail and with relation to the course of European and world history.

Of particular note are his treatment of overland logistics (drawn from his first book, the excellent *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road 1567-1659*) and his treatment of strategic manpower needs. For example, although Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden had 183,000 troops available in 1632, all but the 20,000 of his main army were tied down in "sideshowes." It might be added that tactical control reached its limit at that size, which was about that of both armies at First Bull Run in 1861. Parker's attention to the key contribution of the Netherlands in late 16th and 17th century warfare, especially early tactics based on Roman exam-

ples, is noteworthy. His use of statistical examples and original archival illustrations is especially judicious.

As land warfare became stalemated, "the leading states sought a decision through naval power," certainly after 1650. To the author's credit, he devotes almost as much attention to navies as he does to armies—Mediterranean galleys, Atlantic sailers, and even Far Eastern warship types. What we now regard as the Third World—India, China, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East—receives its own chapter and reveals that, often as not, lack of genuine need by these armies accounted for their slow adoption or adaptation of European weapons and tactical techniques.

But did all these changes constitute a "revolution"? Revolutions, including the Industrial one, do not encompass centuries; such lengthy change is generally accepted as an "evolution," i.e., gradual, which is one reason that Michael Roberts confined his original hypothesis to 100 years. Even in this book, Parker notes "a further" military revolution after 1800, heralded by the appearance of light infantry and cavalry, mobile artillery, and the division organization. And, on the final page, he even hints at yet another revolution on land and sea—that of machine weapons.

What Parker and Roberts saw was not a revolution but was instead one dramatic component of the emergence of European civilization, the gradual change from the Renaissance

to the Enlightenment. However, the drawback to using convenient historical packaging, like "revolution" in this case, is primarily semantic. This set of published lectures, like Roberts', remains a major contribution to the literature of war, to be read with profit by military professionals and historians alike who are interested in understanding the pace of continuity and change in the art of war.

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Lider, Julian. *Origins and Development of West German Military Thought: Vol. 2, 1966-1986: Swedish Studies in International Relations*, 21. Brookfield, Vt.: Gower Publishing, 1988. 637pp. \$113.95

The first volume in this series dealt with the Konrad Adenauer era (1949-66); the present volume takes the story from there to 1986. It is much better written than the first, devoid of the sociological jargon that plagued its predecessor. The bibliography is exhaustive, citing virtually every article and book on the topic in the major European languages. Archival sources are absent owing to the current nature of the investigation.

Lider investigates German military thinking through the various stages initiated in 1967 by Nato's decision to combine the military policy of defense by deterrence with the political policy of detente (or as the West Germans term it, *ostpolitik*):

the strategy of flexible response, the new interpretation of forward strategy and the principle of incalculable risk, and the notion of military equilibrium in place of the erstwhile reliance upon American nuclear superiority. The book balances the position of the conservatives, who regained power in 1982, with that of the peace researchers, who question much of the present military doctrine of Nato. Both camps converge, at least physically, insofar as they operate mainly out of government-supported universities and research institutes.

The heart of the book deals with what Lider perceives to be the contradictory development of Nato's doctrine and force posture as well as the paradox that while the Federal Republic returned to the ranks of political and economic powers, it had severe limitations placed upon its military power. As a result, German military thinkers remain in a state of flux, apparently unable to determine how the strategies of deterrence and flexible response should actually be implemented. Moreover, there remains the historical baggage of the past. Neither allies nor adversaries want the *Bundeswehr* to become too strong. The West can hardly demand that it acquire offensive capabilities—which, at least in theory, are forbidden by the Basic Law of 1949. And no one could accept a German call for nuclear weapons. Therefore, German strategists are limited to being sideline commentators in discussions concerning the use of