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# Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News

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The design layout and choice of information presented allow for the voluminous facts and figures pertaining to World War II to be comprehensible not only to specialists but to students and general readers. It will withstand both the requirements of scholarship and the expectations and desires of general readers. Such balance is difficult to obtain.

Although the volume is one of graphics and not pictures, the saying that "a picture is worth a thousand words" is certainly applicable and accurate in the instance of *World War II Infographics.* Coupled with a good historical atlas of the war, it should be a ready reference work for research and pleasure browsing by anyone with more than a nominal interest in World War II. There are several helpful infographic books on World War II on the market, but, from this reviewer's perspective, this volume goes far beyond the others.

TIMOTHY J. DEMY

*Messing with the Enemy: Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News,* by Clint Watts. New York: HarperCollins, 2018. 304 pages. $27.99.

Many books have been published on "cyber" in recent years, many of which leave the reader with the sense that cyber must be important, while never clearly communicating what cyber actually *is* or what a "cyber warrior" might do all day. Clint Watts's *Messing with the Enemy* is distinctive in providing an accessible yet detailed account of what Watts and his colleagues did to detect, analyze, and disrupt online two very different adversaries: jihadist terrorist organizations and the Russian

government. The book is not technical and does not hide behind buzzwords, nor does it imply that the subject is too classified or too specialized for the reader to understand. The social media world in which Watts works may depend on technology, but ultimately the story in *Messing with the Enemy* is of very human communication and manipulation. The book is an engaging read and, while it is not a scholarly study, its "operator" perspective fills a niche likely to interest the *Naval War College Review* audience.

Author Clint Watts is a West Point graduate who became a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) counterterrorism field agent, returned to West Point as cofounder of its Combating Terrorism Center, went back to the FBI in counterintelligence, and today is an independent consultant. Watts's writing is lively, conveying plenty of personality while still delivering serious substance. Watts comes across as someone who would be fascinating to share a drink with; would be maddening to supervise; and, on balance, is an asset to America.

With respect to terrorists, Watts and his teams mapped organizational and intellectual networks faster than the U.S. Intelligence Community did, using public social media posts and open-source data ranging from weather reports to donkey prices. Watts directly "messed" with terrorist leaders, who—as if they were Bond villains—proved surprisingly willing to converse with a counterterror operative. Watts recounts goading jihadists into incautious revelations or, for one U.S.-born leader, into angering his al-Shabaab hosts by tweeting about preferring Applebee's to Somali cuisine. Such "messing" is a staple of conducting counterintelligence or fighting organized crime, yet official U.S.

"countering violent extremism" efforts often consist of milquetoast declarations that violence and extremism are bad.

Watts could not mess so personally with the Kremlin, but he was among the earliest voices warning of Russian social-media-influence operations. The book details Russian support to pro-Assad trolls and hackers in 2011, then an exponential increase in Russian actions targeting the United States after the occupation of Crimea in 2014. Russia-linked sources promoted all manner of conspiracy theories, extremist ideologies, racial animosity, and negative news stories. Watts's description of the 2016 Russian efforts to help Trump specifically may be old news in the wake of the Mueller report, but the book places the 2016 election story within the proper context of a much larger Russian campaign predating Trump.

The book's title promises survival tips for a new world of online adversaries. Watts has some logical policy suggestions, but their implementation is unlikely politically, so one comes away pessimistic. For individuals, Watts encourages readers to think critically, read widely, and vet sources. Someone motivated enough to read the book might follow that advice, but effecting widespread social change will be very difficult. Ideas such as content "trust" ratings on social media sites quickly run into issues with the First Amendment, the power of tech companies, and the ability of seductive bad content to migrate to new platforms. Watts has justifiably harsh words for the federal government's social media outreach and its cumbersome bureaucracy and contracting rules. How one might scale up the expertise of street-smart iconoclasts such as Mr. Watts is unclear, however.

In fairness, Watts does not claim to have easy solutions (however confident he is of his own talents). He recognizes that the fundamental problem is with us, not our adversaries. So long as American society is polarized, distrustful, and weak in critical thinking, enemies will have ample opportunity to mess with us.

DAVID T. BURBACH



*Smoke 'Em If You Got 'Em: The Rise and Fall of the Military Cigarette Ration,* by Joel R. Bius. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2018. 328 pages. $39.95.

As a child living on Army posts during the Vietnam War, I noticed that most interior spaces had a distinctive, common odor. I later realized that what I thought of as "Army building smell" was actually the odiferous residue of thousands of smoked cigarettes, coupled with gallons of pine-scented cleaning products. The "soldier-cigarette bond" and the historical ubiquity of smoking within the U.S. military—particularly the Army—constitute the subject of Joel R. Bius's *Smoke 'Em If You Got 'Em: The Rise and Fall of the Military Cigarette Ration*. His book charts the "rise and entrenchment of [the] soldier-cigarette bond from 1918 to 1945" before turning to its "demise and dislodgement . . . from 1973 to 1986" (p. 2).

Bius and the Naval Institute Press should be commended for producing this well-written and -researched work of political and cultural history. Additional credit is due to Matt Simmons for an exceptionally striking and clever cover design.

*Smoke 'Em If You Got 'Em* explains well the military's role "in establishing and entrenching" an American