

Culture In Conflict: Irregular Warfare, Culture Policy, and the Marine Corps

Paula Holmes-Eber. Stanford, CA: Stanford Security Studies, Stanford University Press, 2014. 249 pp. Illus. \$24.95.

Reviewed by Captain Nathaniel L. Moir, U.S. Army (Reserve)

C*ulture In Conflict* describes the Marine Corps' assimilation of Department of Defense-directed culture and language training policies since 2003 and how the Corps innovatively structured

and standardized its approach to these areas. Marine Corps University Professor of Operational Culture, Dr. Paula Holmes-Eber, meticulously details this complicated process, a work that is enriched by first-hand experience and a clear writing style.

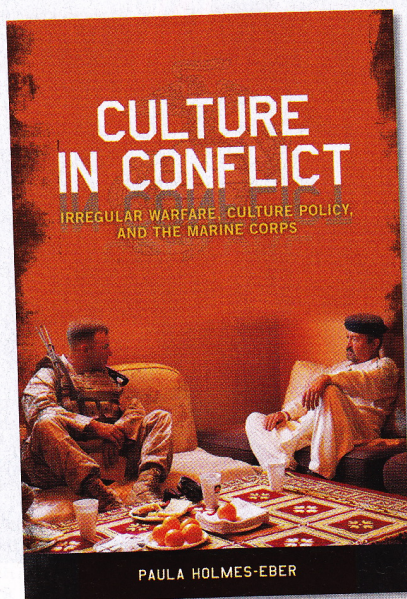
The introduction explains the author's anthropological approach to the subject and comprehensively details the book's organization. Part One (Chapters Two through Five) covers the culture of the Marine Corps. Primary topics of this section include the Marine Corps' history, organization, ethos, and its expeditionary capabilities and mindset. Part Two (Chapters Six through Nine), "Realities: 'Marinizing' Culture," is particularly useful for military readers and presents the book's core topic: how the Marine Corps transformed its training in the field of operational culture.

The purpose of the book is multi-pronged, and it is written for both civilian and military audiences. This is a complex task in which Dr. Holmes-Eber largely succeeds, although military personnel may find explanations of basic military information distracting at times. However, the book serves a larger purpose: bridging existing gaps between members of the military and civilians—especially academics and policy makers. To accomplish this goal, Dr. Holmes-Eber describes the book's purpose in the following terms:

Military and organizational change is not a simple unidirectional process—where changes in the external strategic culture of the state or society are merely mirrored in parallel shifts in the military (the prevailing view in the contemporary literature on military change today). . . . Rather, military change is an interactive process, in which external shifts and pressures

from the state, society, and the battlefield are integrated and reworked into the unique internal cultural and structural patterns of the specific military organization.

The author commendably charts the Marine Corps' ability to adapt to changes in the operational environment throughout the world and especially to changes in the operational (and economic) environment



at home where policy is developed. These developments are not linear, predictable, or easily managed by a force whose reason for existence is to provide readiness for immediate deployment. However, the Marine Corps has historically demonstrated an ability to embrace culture as demonstrated by the Combined Action Patrols of the Vietnam War. This type of adaptability is a focus of Part Two, which details processes the Marine Corps utilizes in order to train culture and language.

According to the author, the Marine Corps' framework for modifying and

inculcating DOD-directed policies, especially those focused on training culture, may be broken down into four broad methods: simplification, translation, processing, and reshaping. They are discussed in Chapters Six through Nine, one for each method. Dr. Holmes-Eber notes that the first two methods, simplification and translation, are short-term and may achieve positive results quickly. The latter methods, processing and reshaping, are long-term and include modification to the way TECOM (Training and Education Command) adapt training from recruit depots through higher echelons of training, such as the Marine Corps University. It is with these types of modifications that organizational transformations occur. Dr. Holmes-Eber's research on this type of transformation is substantiated with data and convincingly explained.

The book is set apart from others not only by the author's research but by her insider approach. As a faculty member of both the Marine Corps University and the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL), she has witnessed and contributed to the Marines' modification of training culture in order to better accomplish irregular-warfare-oriented missions. This perspective provides a "bottom-up" approach that is worth noting in detail.

The Marine Corps has improved its training of culture in several ways. One example is incorporating a theoretical framework (closely related to one used in anthropology) that was developed by CAOCL. This framework, the "Five Dimensions of Operational Culture," focuses on the environment, exchange and economy, social organization, political organization, and belief systems and includes principles that help Marines think about the cultures of regions to which they deploy.

These five principles serve as a conceptual framework, which are processed and inculcated into the Marine Corps' training curriculum through the formal process of Systems Approach to Training (SAT). Altogether, these principles and the formal process of SAT contribute to how the Marine Corps has simplified, translated, processed, and reshaped DOD policy. How this change comes together to improve training in culture is obviously complex. Yet, Holmes-Eber explains the overall transformation in terms that are

clear and benefit both civilians and military personnel seeking to learn more about organizational adaptation.

A short conclusion succinctly reviews the Marine Corps' ability to transform policy in terms that works for it as an organization. After the conclusion, a short appendix and useful bibliography are provided. *Culture In Conflict* is a valuable and worthwhile book for civilians and military personnel of all branches. It fills a void in the literature on organizational change and deserves wide readership.

Captain Moir served as a psychological operations officer in Afghanistan and subsequently worked as a senior research analyst at the Naval Postgraduate School. He is currently working on a PhD in history at the State University of New York-Albany.

The Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur

Mark Perry. New York, Basic Books, 2014. 280 pp. Index. Illus. Maps. \$29.99.

Reviewed by Commander John T. Kuehn, U.S. Navy (Retired)

After reading the title of Mark Perry's new book, my first thought was, "Does he know about FDR's famous comment that Douglas MacArthur was one of the two most dangerous men in America?" Three pages into the prologue the answer is of course he does. The other most dangerous man is mentioned on the very first page of this book—Louisiana Governor Huey P. Long. Needless to say, Perry's title is both provocative and well chosen. Much ink has been spilled on General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, including by the general. Why another volume on the topic, the reader may ask? As Perry makes clear in the informative essay on sources at the end of the book, there is a need to reexamine MacArthur more objectively and perhaps, as this book does, more narrowly.

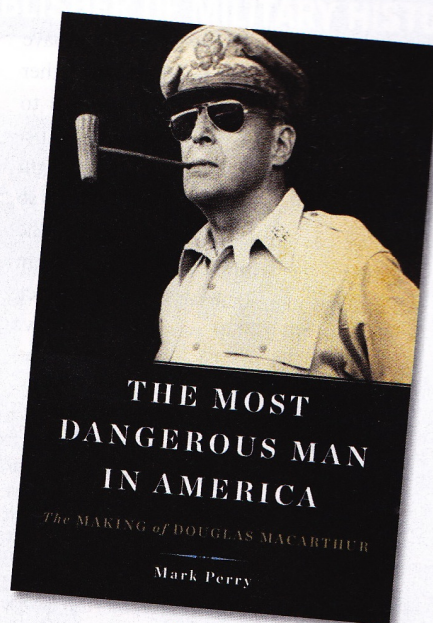
Perry's book picks up MacArthur's life at the point when he is Chief of Staff of the Army and Franklin Delano Roosevelt becomes President of the United States and continues the narrative through the end of World War II. After this point, those familiar with his life may wonder, "isn't the most dangerous point still ahead?" referring to his relief under contentious circumstances

by Harry S. Truman during the famous civil-military spat while the Korean War raged. However, Perry argues that the younger Douglas MacArthur, as Chief of Staff of the Army during the Great Depression, could have represented a greater danger to the republic had it not been for the deft touch with which FDR managed him.

Perry's book is really about the civil-military relationship between MacArthur and President Roosevelt, although the existing title certainly gets one's attention. It examines the political-military history of this critical period, 1932–45, at the very highest levels of strategy, policy making, and grand strategy. Readers that keep this in mind will be well rewarded, since Perry's sources and focus really bring out the story at these levels in colorful and gripping ways. Perry gives the reader behind-the-scenes explanations of the political fights over military budgets in the lean interwar years during the Great Depression as well as the maneuvering and jockeying for resources by MacArthur and FDR during the global total war from 1939–45.

Early on Perry makes clear his admiration for MacArthur's campaign in the Southwest Pacific after his daring escape from the Philippines in somewhat breathless language: ". . . [he] fought one of the most complex and visionary campaigns in history—the first combined arms operation ever conducted in warfare." Hyperbole aside, military readers will scratch their heads, given that many of them, this reviewer included, think combined arms involve synchronizing the combat arms of a single service. In fact, Perry is using older terminology—combined operations—for what is today called "joint" operations where air, sea, and ground forces are used in concert with each other.

Nonetheless, Perry's point about MacArthur's skill in this one campaign, from after Buna (late 1942) until the seizure of Biak in mid-1944, is incontestable. However, it does cause one to wonder about some of his other assessments given MacArthur's clear military shortcomings at other times during the war, especially his conduct of the first Philippine campaign (1941–42), the Buna-Gona campaign, and even his later efforts in Leyte and Luzon in late 1944 and 1945. Perry also makes occasional factual errors, indicating that FDR had had polio for "over twenty years" upon his first inauguration



when in fact he had contracted the disease 12 years earlier in 1921.

There is much in this book that is really an apology, in the explanation sense of that word, for the negative assessments that populate the literature on MacArthur. Perry muses that had MacArthur retired in 1945 he might have gone down in history as one of America's greatest generals, but his subsequent high-handed actions as "shogun/pro-consul" in Japan and especially in Korea have caused to him to be rated in one recent poll "America's worst commander." The change in attitude toward MacArthur is understandable given that for years he was venerated by military historians and others. The correctives of time and scholarship have whittled him down to size as just another human being. However, Perry is right to laud MacArthur's enlightened application of joint warfare during Operation Cartwheel, and despite the book's title, this other argument might be titled "MacArthur—Unsung Apostle of Joint Warfare." If the book does anything it will balance out the negative assessments and enlighten readers about his audacious, but often forgotten, "tri-phibious" blitzkrieg in the South Pacific.

Those readers interested in the rest of the story vis-à-vis MacArthur and his political masters in Washington would be well served to read John Dower's *Embracing Defeat* (W. W. Norton and Company, 1999), which covers the period of MacArthur's pro-consulship in Japan. For Korea, more recent objective scholarship is best captured by Michael Pearlman's *Truman and MacArthur* (Indiana University Press,