



Millett, Allan R. and Williamson Murray, eds. *Military Effectiveness*, 3 volumes. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

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Cambridge University Press has seen fit to re-release this seminal three-volume work, produced under the stewardship of Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray and originally published by Unwin Hyman in 1988. This work, covering the armies of most of the major powers in the First World War (volume one), the Interwar Period (volume

two), and the Second World War (volume three), contains essays from a veritable who's who of military historians: Earl F. Ziemke, Brian Sullivan, MacGregor Knox, Paul Kennedy, Holger H. Herwig, and many more. Well regarded upon its original release, it has been cited again and again by scholars over the past twenty-five years, both by those looking to understand the nature of military effectiveness as well as by those seeking deeper insight into a particular nation's armed forces, and a reissue is more than welcome.

Why do some military forces succeed? Why do others fail? In their introduction, Williamson and Murray lay out a series of questions that seek to illustrate why a given factor is vital to an understanding of military effectiveness, as well as to separate what is essential from what is not. For example, they correctly point out that victory alone cannot be the final arbiter of effectiveness, else we would be forced to conclude that the Red Army's bloody, blundering 1940 victory over the Finns through sheer weight of numbers made them the more effective fighting force. Ultimately they define military effectiveness as "the process by which armed forces convert resources into fighting power. A fully effective military is one that derives maximum combat power from the resources physically and politically available" (Vol. 1, 2).

With this definition in mind, each author was instructed to examine their subject's military effectiveness in light of their performance in the political (using three criteria), strategic (seven criteria), operational (six criteria), and tactical arenas (seven criteria); summation essays then tie together each volume as a whole. The frequent complaint made of collections such as these—that overall focus is lacking and that each writer appears to have been working in a vacuum—is certainly not the case here.

The heart of the series consists of twenty-one national case studies (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the United States, examined in each volume). The very breadth of the essays, as well as the new ground which so many of them broke, means that any one reader will find room to quibble with some of the conclusions drawn. Nonetheless, the overall standard of scholarship is excellent. In brief, the most compelling entries are those that take roads less travelled. For instance, Ian Nish's First World War entry on Japan which illustrates a military establishment only recently modernized and heavily influenced by its earlier war with Russia; David Jones on Imperial Russia, arguing for a much more appreciative analysis of that nation's

performance than is traditionally offered; Ronald Hood's French Second World War entry, abandoning the tired method of examining 1940 and nothing else and instead bringing us a two-tiered analysis of Vichy and Gaullist performance through to the war's end; and the entirety of the second volume, observing the great powers wrestling with the legacy of one war while attempting to foresee the shape of the next. No author tackles his subject more than once, so that each nation is approached from three different viewpoints across the thirty-year period in question.

Also offered are five summation essays—one per volume clarifying the main trends of each time period, and an additional two concluding essays in volume three. "Challenge and Response at the Operational and Tactical Levels, 1914-45," by John H. Cushman, offers a letter-grade for each of the combatants for each time period in question. Russell F. Weigley concludes the work with an essay on the political and strategic dimensions of military effectiveness, a summation of the three-volume work as a whole.

With the same nations featured in each volume and a strong sense of editorial direction throughout, the work overall benefits from a strong sense of continuity. Unfortunately, continuity appears to have been a bit of straightjacket in this regard. The analysis of Japan's First World War military forces in volume one (relatively fallow ground), though a welcome analysis of an overlooked topic, only serves to highlight the absence of both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires from the work. The fact that both states imploded after the First World War, thus excluding them from any possible participation in the other two volumes, does not provide a real reason to exclude these great powers from the first. Austria-Hungary in particular, whose millions of men fought for years on three major fronts, outlasting Russia while enduring a host of unique difficulties due to its polygot nature, is ripe for such an analysis.

Though prominently advertised as a new edition, on spine, cover, and internal plate, the revisions amount solely to a new introduction by the editors explaining the genesis of the project. While informative and enjoyable, it hardly warrants the mantle of "new edition," especially when Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary remained overlooked. If you already own the first printing of this excellent effort, you are just as well off as you were twenty-five years ago, a tribute to the quality of work within.

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