

Also, included in the book is a comprehensive listing of the references used and of particular note is the number of primary source documents cited by the author. Overall this is an outstanding rendition of the turbulent period encompassing the three conflicts. The author has drafted a narrative that recounts the characteristics of the conflicts themselves, the underlying causes (primary, secondary and beyond) and the results politically, militarily and societally thus providing the reader with a complete understanding of the period. Fermer's book is an excellent account and source.

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Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2016. x + 444pp. 20 illustrations. ISBN: 978-0-674-73768-6. £22.95.

With *Elvis's Army*, Brian Linn assumes the mantle of the late Russell Weigley as the dean of historians of the U.S. Army. In his earlier *The Echo of Battle*, Linn surveyed the intellectual currents running through the history of that army. *Elvis's Army* scope is much narrower: the period from the end of World War II through the beginning of large-scale American involvement in Vietnam. Linn casts a wide net, covering strategy, doctrine, equipment, the composition of both the officer corps and other ranks, the operation and influence of the draft, the integration of blacks and women, attempts at moral education, and public relations campaigns. This scope precludes an overarching framework like the Hero, Guardian, and Manager typology postulated in *Echo of Battle*. Yet the reviewer regards that as an improvement: Linn provides a nuanced portrait of a powerful organization filled with thoughtful, dedicated individuals but undermined by a deep institutional insecurity stoked by hostile political trends, impossible strategic demands, and rapid technological change.

Throughout *Elvis's Army* lurks the dilemma caused by the incongruity of a national desire for the forceful containment of communism and President Dwight D. Eisenhower's refusal to spend what he considered to be unsustainable sums on defence. His solution was the 'New Look'—a policy of reliance on the overwhelming use of nuclear weapons to be delivered by air and naval forces. Out-of-favour army leaders discerned the absurdity of the New Look as a military strategy but struggled to offer politically and military feasible alternatives.

Linn begins by contrasting the vision of an implausibly professional and technologically advanced army offered by then-Brigadier General William Westmoreland with the

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actual experiences of uneven leadership, comrades of mixed quality, and obsolete equipment of the surprisingly martial Elvis Presley, a rock-and-roll star turned conscript in the 3rd Armoured Division. That juxtaposition between Pentagon aspiration and field reality recurs throughout *Elvis's Army*, with the title suggesting which prevailed.

Linn skillfully exposes the flawed arguments and assumptions within the army's doctrinal and organizational adaptations, but the same can be found in Andrew Bacevich's durable 1986 monograph, *The Pentomic Era*. Linn's great original contribution is a devastating exploration of the army's failure to overcome personnel weaknesses caused by factors such as a culture of micromanagement and the inability to recruit the high-quality career soldiers necessary for a technologically advanced army.

Documenting the divide between headquarters perception and unit reality across an entire army poses significant methodological challenges. The bias towards elite officers endemic to military history is only partly countered by the inclusion of sources like *Overseas Weekly*, a scrappy newspaper catering to enlisted soldiers. Sergeant Presley would be excused for mistaking most of Linn's voices from the field for those of 'the brass': majors writing in professional journals to major generals issuing directives. Linn is particularly effective in tapping war college studies prepared by promising colonels and lieutenant colonels, but these students were hardly Bill Mauldin's archetypal GIs, Willie and Joe. Yet the evidentiary tilt towards regular officers only makes Linn's depiction of the wide gap between headquarters and the field all the more striking. Even 'they' thought something was amiss.

With little secondary literature to draw upon - William Donnelly's 2012 *Journal of Military History* article "Bilko's Army: A Crisis in Command" is the next best recent overview - Linn must make some brave characterizations. For instance, on page 44 he writes that in 1949 after several years of laxity 'field commanders began to assert discipline, revive training, improve living conditions, and restore morale'. Perhaps, but the quoted figures on administrative and criminal punishments only partially validate a claim that would require extensive research to satisfactorily support. Fortunately, *Elvis's Army* will likely inspire such detailed investigations into that and other issues as Weigley's scholarship did for previous generations.

Linn's clear explanations, illuminating examples, and easy, occasionally cutting, prose make *Elvis's Army* accessible to casual readers. Yet it is also a seminal work. No historian of the American army during the Cold War can ignore this important book, whilst its comprehensive treatment of the subject will make it an invaluable source for any scholar whose work intersects in any way.

J. P. CLARK
U. S. ARMY

Daniel Owen Spence, *A History of the Royal Navy: Empire and Imperialism*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015. Notes, bibliography, index, illustrations, 239pp. ISBN: 978-1-780-76543-3 Hardback. £20.00.

To try and condense the interactions and connections between the Royal Navy and the British Imperial experience in just over 200 pages is a daunting task. Spence does an admirable job in selecting the parts of that enormous historical storehouse that make for not only a good story, but a useful overview of the complexity of that relationship. His analysis emphasises the point that the Royal Navy was the Empire, and vice versa. One did not, and could not exist as it did without the other. Therefore, which phenomenon is causal is a question that is dependent on the methodological lens one wishes to look through.

Spence follows the evolution of the Royal Navy as a fighting force, from its modest and local ability to project power into the European balance of power, to a more global reach. The links between trade and commerce, ports, societies and exploration of a globalising world are all addressed in this quick tour through the various tasks and missions of the Navy for the empire. Therefore, there is a subtle sophistication to the book as it moves from British culture, maritime literature, identity, commerce, technology, politics and military elements in a seamless and logical progression. What is provided is a nuanced and complex picture of how the Navy not only protected the empire but connected it as well. Sports, science, religion, law, and ethics were all transmitted throughout the world through the medium of the Navy as the life-blood of the empire. It is from this formative perspective that Spence makes the case of the Navy and British Empire being the bedrock of the modern globalised world.

The book's analysis of the rise of land and air power within the British arsenal raises interesting questions that can be of use to policy makers even in today's post-Brexit Britain. Without a major naval contribution to make, either to its own national security or in alliance with other necessary powers, the fate of the island state was in peril. Lapses in naval focus allowed other powers to erode either the territorial,