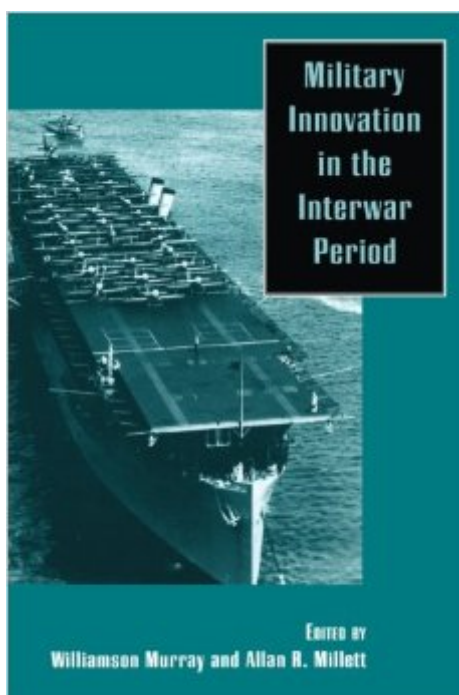


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Military Innovation In The Interwar Period



Synopsis

Book by

Book Information

Paperback: 428 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press; Revised ed. edition (August 13, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521637600

ISBN-13: 978-0521637602

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (33 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This may be the one book Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld should read. It is a serious systematic look at military innovation between the first and second world wars and its ten chapters run the gamut from aircraft carriers to submarines to mechanized combined armed warfare (the Blitzkrieg) to the development of radar, the emergence of amphibious landing capability, and the evolution of strategic bombing campaigns. There is a wide divergence of patterns both between topics and between countries. The British led in aircraft carrier development but made a series of organizational and technological choices that left them far behind the Japanese and the Americans. The British also led in the development of the tank but then rejected it as a mobile warfare system and were rapidly supplanted by the Germans who used the 1920s British tests as a basis for their development of Blitzkrieg. The submarine was rejected politically by everyone but was then developed effectively by the Americans and the Germans. The American torpedo failures are a maddening study in bureaucratic rejection of reality and a sober warning to the current peacetime Pentagon. This book captures the complexity and the lessons of peacetime military innovation as well as any that has been written. It should be required reading for everyone who wants to work on the current problems of transforming the Pentagon.

The acclaimed scholarly team of Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett have edited an anthology of

essays encompassing the technological innovations in weaponry during the 1920's and 1930's. These innovations span the research and developments of all the major belligerents that play a major role in the coming global conflict. Each scholar was instructed to compare and contrast his or her topic country with two other countries making this work not only a significant contribution in and of itself, but also a vital comparative study as well. In addition, the researchers were asked to structure their essays around three concepts: the strategic framework of the period, the organizational factors of the institutions under study, and the doctrinal framework of the services. Many of the contributing factors to victory and defeat in World War II are covered within the pages of this important work. Williamson Murray takes a look at "Armored Warfare: The British, French and German Experiences," and "Strategic Bombing: The British, American and German Experiences." Richard R. Muller examines "Close Air Support: The German British and American Experiences, 1918-1941." Geoffrey Till discusses "Adopting the Aircraft Carrier: The British, American, and Japanese Case Studies." But perhaps the most important chapter is Allan R. Millett's "Assault From the Sea: The Development of Amphibious Warfare Between the Wars-the American, British, and Japanese Experiences." Millett compared the development of amphibious doctrine in Japan, Britain, and the United States. The author concludes the U. S. led the way in amphibious warfare doctrine, initiating combined arms operations between air, sea and land that would prove to be a critical advantage in the pacific campaign. According to Millett, Japan started out impressively as was evident by its ever-expanding Pacific empire in the 1930's. Since every landing force became an isolated island garrison, however, Japan's whole amphibious program literally faded away. Great Britain, on the other hand, never had the economic resources necessary to implement a successful amphibious program. Millett concludes that factors such as budget and innovative foresight are vital contributing factors in technological innovation. The author is also quick to point out that in many cases, new weapons become obsolete as soon as hostilities begin. Generally, books of essays are usually disjointed and inconsistent. The guidelines and structure the editors have chosen have tied all the chapters in this book together nicely. This is arguably the best work on the inter-war period to emerge in years. Highly recommended.

This is an anthology of various articles. Generally anthologies are the pits as they tend to lack a central theme and the quality will vary. These articles are generally by the authors and as such they are of an even standard. There are a number of chapters that discuss a range of issues from the use of Tanks to the development of the Aircraft Carrier. The book is interesting although the area covered is naturally enormous and the amount of space that can be devoted to complex subjects is

naturally limited. Despite this most of the essays are interesting and not only for what they say. In the first essay about the development of armored warfare by way of an aside the writer attacks Guerdian as a sycophant and also as a person whose reputation was largely the result of self publicity. Later the English theorists Fuller and Liddell Hart are critiqued as presenting overly schematic histories of the First World War which warped the truth to fit in with their own theories. Interestingly the essay then goes on to suggest that the first world war infantry battles were so complex that even now we struggle to understand them and for that reason it was no surprise that Douglas Haig had the problems that he did. All in all an interesting book although again very much a starting point for the issue it covers.

A collection of essays on Military developments amongst the future major combatants of WW2. Specifics are slim, more of a conceptual study, and decidedly dry in places. Reads more like a college text book at the service academies.

This is a book that looks at a variety of important tactics between the wars. It also looks at the militaries that were involved with those tactics development. It also takes a look at how militaries innovate and why some succeed and others fail. It is a just read for any WW 2 fan. Any one in the military who works with change would get a lot out of the book. Also anyone working in a bureaucracy would also like it. It is very interesting from many perspectives: military, history, innovation, or how to affect change.

This book was written as a study to draw attention to the decisions at the various levels of warfare (tactical, operational, and strategic) that led to success and failure of those countries involved in WWII. Before reading this book I would watch WWII movies wondering why certain tactics were not being utilized. Well, this book answers many of those questions and a whole lot more. Great Read, in-depth study, and well researched as it provides invaluable insight of how innovation influenced operations on land, in the air, and at sea.

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