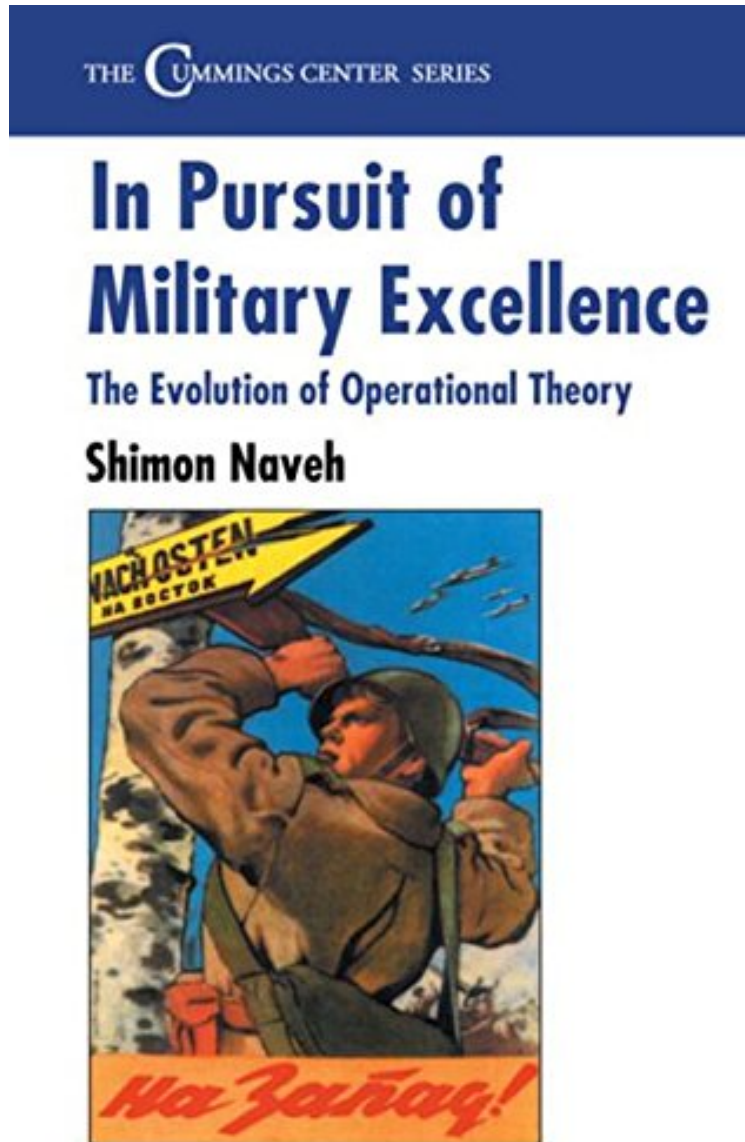


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In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory (Cummings Center Series)

Shimon Naveh

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Shimon Naveh : In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory (Cummings Center Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory (Cummings Center Series):

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful. JHBy JHThis is an interesting, well-researched book in a field of study lacking accessible studies. However, the material in this book is not accessible without a high level of knowledge regarding the history and theories of operational level warfare (OLW). Even with a working knowledge of OLW, the reading was slow and difficult due to the prevalence of academic jargon and assumptions introduced without explanation of their origins. I found the historical aspects interesting and helpful, but again, there seemed to be an assumption that the backgrounds of many of the theorists and practitioners of OLW were already known. I do not recommend this book for beginners.

21 of 22 people found the following review helpful. "Operational Art," from its Soviet roots and until today.

By A CustomerThis book is an academic but readable work which analyses of the development of what is known as "operational art," or in other words, the intermediate field of theory, which connects strategy with tactics. This is a relatively new and unfamiliar cognitive field in the Western world, and has only been begun to be understood since the late 1970's. Naveh combines complex theory within a historical context, beginning with the doctrines of von Clausewitz, continuing through the debacles of World War One and to the first Revolution in Military Affairs which took place in the Soviet Red Army of the 1920's. The latter half of the book concludes with the development of operational thought in the US Army which began in 1976. This followed the realization in the US military that their tactical doctrines provided no answer to the threats east of the iron curtain. This process of thought culminated with the Gulf War, which saw the successful implementation of the theory, independently developed to that of the Red Army, but remarkably similar. This book is unique, not in that it analyses operational theory, but in that it outlines the pioneering processes that took place in the Soviet Union during the 1920's and 30's. This information has remained hidden and unknown to the West until only very recently, and has been revealed here by the author who has researched the field intensively.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. AN INCOMPLETE AND SLANTED THEORY OF THE OPERATIONAL THEORY

By Enrique AlonsoThe author realizes a methodical and deep critique of the different fighting forms in each of the historical epochs. It is specially hard and mordant with the form of fight of the Germans during the World War II. His aim is to degrade and minimize it, to reduce its importance and validity in the history of the ground operations. Depriving this way the evolution of the American theory on the those operations, of any intellectual influence or debt with the doctrine of the German war.

The one that the author considers to be more opportunist and tactics, that complete and scientific. And he thinks that it was favored in its results by the lacks and the mistakes of its enemies. It is possible that an academic analysis of the form of German fight, approaches to give this verdict. But, the evidence is the touchstone of the reality without appearances. And the case is that the Germans triumphed widely and extensively with that one, during the first stage of the World War II in Europe: 1939 1942. During which, his enemies could learn of the tactics, technologies and the German operational strategy. Since it extended too much in the time, on having multiplied the theatres of the war.

Naveh grants wide quality and esteem to the military doctrine of the Soviets. That he considers to be scientific, because it was following a linear process of arguments, logic and results (that for a long time, were only longed for or foreseen). And that was adapting and guiding specifically and really, to an army of slightly educated masses and nourished by a resounding demography. That always had an insufficient logistic support, when it was not precarious. The mechanization of the infantry to collaborate with the tanks, was always a longing and a hope, more than an average real capacity.

At the first times after the Bolshevik revolution, even directed by the young theorist of the deep maneuver, general Mikhail Tujachevski, the Russian armies remembered "slow and exhausting hordes" in their marches. That were living for the sustenance from the own or strangely territory where they were advancing. The men more relatively educated, always scanty, were enlisted in the technical weapons: artillery, engineers, aviation. Or in the most effective and necessary branches for the penetration and the exploitation of the enemy operational rear: tanks, Guard infantry.

Finally, Shimon Naveh concentrates his efforts, summary and praises in the long process of development of the American AirLand Battle doctrine and his following updates. Whose kindness and efficiency got reality in the air and ground offensive against the Iraqi regime in the War of the Gulf of 1991, looking for the liberation of Kuwait from the power of Saddam Hussein. War that was the touchstone of that doctrine supposedly culminated.

Naveh, nevertheless, does not approach, far from it penetrates and analyzes, a type of war that already existed from a lot of time ago. Before the genesis and ripeness of the American operational strategy. And that is the guerrilla warfare, word taken from the Spanish by all the languages. The one that, pompously, the Anglo-Saxons called war of IVth generation. Though it is almost as ancient as the human conflict. The modern technological armies find difficulties to face this form of fight. Using the means, the doctrine and his regulations, the order of battle and the trainings with which they are provided.

The guerrilla war is synonymous of long and deeply rooted conflict in the civil society, where it appears and develops. It is of low military intensity, except in its last stage (if she reaches it) and of great ideological politicization and polarization of the rivals. These characteristics do that inevitably the civilians are involved in her and that the military conflict is arbitrary, hard and cruel. There face positions and antagonistic interests, which, in the use of the violence, derive towards her limits and that of the suffering of whom involve her.

The author might speak about the application of the operational strategy in the guerrilla warfare. Or used in the direction and the operations of the elite units (marines, rangers, SEALs, etc.), that realize counterinsurgency missions. Here, the gravit centers of the efforts, globally coordinated, include the economic, military, political and social areas. And will

exist in these fields and will be applied in a harmonic, joint and coordinated way. Working for a common and convergent effort, using different combinations of means in the different cases that appear.

This book offers a scientific interpretation of the field of military knowledge situated between strategy and tactics, better known as operational art', and traces the evolution of operational awareness and its culmination in a full-fledged theory. The author, a Brigadier General (ret.) in the Israeli Defence Forces and Doctor of History, King's College, London, clarifies the substance of operational art' and constructs a cognitive framework for its critical analysis. He chronicles the stages in the evolution of operational theory from the emergence of 19th-century military thought to Blitzkrieg. For the first time the Soviet theories of Deep Operations' and Strike Manoeuvre' that emerged in the 1920s and 1930 are discussed. The author argues that it is these doctrines that eventually led to the crystallization of the American Airland Battle theory, successfully implemented in the Gulf War.