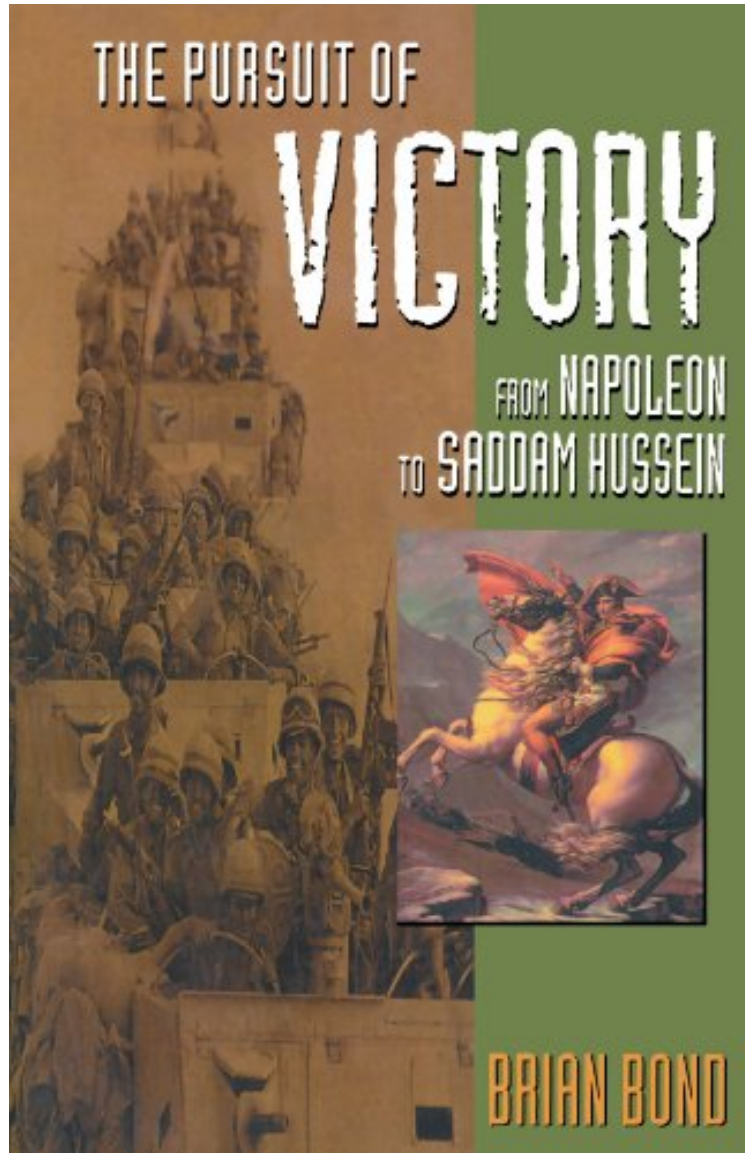


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The Pursuit of Victory: From Napoleon to Saddam Hussein

Brian Bond

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In Western Europe and North America the idea that war can deliberately be used as an "instrument of policy" has

become unfashionable, not least because of the carnage of two World Wars and the Americans' humiliating experience in Vietnam. But wars are still fought. Those who start wars clearly believe they are worthwhile. Why? In this original study, Brian Bond discusses the successes and failures of military and political leaders in their pursuit of victory over the last two centuries. Professor Bond argues that in order to be counted victorious, a leader has to progress beyond military triumph to preserve the political control needed to secure an advantageous and enduring peace settlement. Napoleon was a brilliant general, but failed as a statesman. Bismarck, on the other hand, was a success in skillfully exploiting Moltke's victories on the battlefield to create a unified Germany. In the First World War, Germany and her allies were defeated but at such great cost that confidence in the idea that war could be controlled, and the pursuit of victory made rational, received a terrible shock. Germany and Japan exploited their military opportunities between 1939 and 1942, but lack of political control and moderation brought them catastrophic defeat. After 1945, nuclear weapons and the increased complexity of international relations blurred the identity of "victors" and "losers" and seemed to make the idea of a "decisive" victory almost unthinkable. But this study warns against the assumption that war as an instrument of policy has now been completely discarded. The Falklands and Gulf conflicts show that aggressors are still prepared to risk war for tangible goals, and that their opponents are quite capable of responding successfully to such challenges.

"[Bond] has produced a work that both professional historians and the general public will find interesting and provocative."--History
A rich narrative of the major figures and the watershed events in the course of international conflict for the past 250 years."--Journal of Military History
From the Back Cover
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About the Author
Professor of Military History at King's College, London, Brian Bond is the editor of *The First World War and British Military History*, (1991, OUP) and a contributor to *The Oxford Illustrated History of The British Army*, (1994)