

The following entries provide excerpts of and links to recently published articles that are relevant to how members of the Chaplain Corps can serve in an evolving operational environment.



Leadership and the Profession of Arms

Adapting the Mold: Preparing Leaders for Complexity

by Cole Livieratos, Ph.D.

The year is 2040 and the United States is locked in a high-intensity conflict with a near-peer adversary. An Army division is tasked with controlling a major highway to provide security and support another division's assault to seize an objective on key terrain. To control this highway, now currently in enemy hands, the division must breach defensive obstacles and clear the enemy off the route. After employing its unmanned aerial and ground reconnaissance systems, launching loitering munitions, conducting electronic warfare attacks, and employing precision fires, an infantry brigade prepares to breach. Several hundred kilometers away, the division commander walks into the operations center at one of the small, mobile command posts the division is employing. He quickly issues orders to his staff and demands to see the live video feed from the infantry brigade's drones so he can control the battle at the decisive point—the breach. This is exactly the kind of situation this commander had prepared for. At Fort Bragg, he routinely trained for scenarios like this, developing a mental playbook so he could quickly react to the enemy's actions. He is prepared to control the battle through advanced communications platforms and a state-of-the-art battlefield tracking system that utilizes cutting-edge artificial intelligence.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/adapting-the-mold-preparing-leaders-for-complexity/>

Better Curricula, Better Strategic Outcomes: Irregular Warfare, Great Power Competition, and Professional Military Education

by Heather S. Gregg, Ph.D.

On April 29, 2021, cyber hackers broke into the networks of the US Colonial Pipeline system through a compromised VPN account and installed ransomware, effectively shutting down the largest fuel pipeline in the United States a week later. In the following days, US citizens up and down the Eastern Seaboard waited in hours-long lines, fearing that gasoline supplies would run out. Panic buying resulted in some states nearly running out of fuel before executives paid the ransom, ending the crisis. A postmortem investigation of the incident tied the attack to individuals from the “ransomware as a service” group Darkside, who reportedly resided in Russia and had ties to the Russian government, intelligence services, or the military. This attack, which was perpetrated by a near-peer adversary but with a degree of plausible deniability, directly targeted the American public with the goal of achieving a strategic effect. It demonstrates that the United States and its allies are in an age of strategic competition with a range of actors, including near-peer adversaries, rogue states that do not conform to international laws and norms, as well as nonstate actors who seek to challenge the status quo. These strategic competitors leverage a wide variety of means below the threshold of armed conflict, including cyber activities, to provoke the United States and offset its conventional military capabilities.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/better-curricula-better-strategic-outcomes-irregular-warfare-great-power-competition-and-professional-military-education/>

Thoughts on “Winning Wars”

by B.K. Greener, Ph.D.

There are books aplenty about war and strategy. Even so, only a few consider the notion of victory as a concept—Richard Hobbs’ 1979 book the *Myth of Victory* and William Martel’s *Victory in War* (2011) are notable exceptions. Even fewer books focus on how victory is imbued with different meaning in different contexts. This focus, then, is the main contribution of Matthias Strohn’s edited collection on *Winning Wars*, a bringing together of a range of scholars who have answered the question: what does victory look like? in varying times and places. Hew Strachan opens the book with a nuanced introduction. He notes that the United Kingdom’s Defence Doctrine avoids terms like victory and instead focuses on the idea that war is about maintaining advantage. This theme of the use of military force to attain or maintain an advantage emerges in other chapters, as does Strachan’s suggestion that the West’s engagement in contemporary conflicts shows a divergence between tactics and strategy, ends and means. Other themes that recur throughout the contributions include discussions about the idea, perhaps expressed most clearly in the chapter on Africa by Richard Reid, that war is pursued for objectives such as “ownership, effect, ideas,” with these three broadly translatable to territorial gains, influence, and ideological battles.

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2022/4/27/reviewing-winning-wars>

From Understanding Levels of Command Authority

by SGM Jeremy Crisp

Command is integral to military operations but is not just a simple surface

structure. It has different levels and missions as the commander’s intent is passed down through multiple echelons. This article will analyze command relationships and authorities in the joint environment, use historical vignettes to demonstrate how different aspects of command were used both successfully and unsuccessfully in wartime environments, and highlight how senior NCOs can best affect the battlefield.

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/nco-journal/images/2021/July/Command-Authority/Command-Principles.pdf>

The Most Difficult End to a Most Difficult War

by Benjamin Van Horrick

War plays tricks. Its cruelest trick is making participants, individuals and countries alike, think they can walk away from conflict on their terms. After multiple deployments to Afghanistan, Elliot Ackerman left his military service behind him to embark on what would become a successful literary career. Like many veterans, Ackerman believed he could depart war on his terms, but the collapse of Kabul in August 2021 drew him—and others—back into its grasp. In his new book *The Fifth Act: America’s End in Afghanistan*, Ackerman documents the maddeningly frantic, tragic, and sometimes triumphant actions that assisted in evacuating Afghan citizens as the Taliban tightened its vice on Kabul. In telling the story of the Afghan airlift, Ackerman pulls back the curtain on the two decades of conflict that this episode punctuated. Ackerman takes the readers to Arlington National Cemetery’s Section 60, Farah province in Afghanistan, and the E-Ring of the Pentagon before framing the chaotic final days of the Kabul evacuation. His rendering of the events of August 2021

and his service paints a compelling picture of why the Afghan airlift was urgent and why so many veterans dedicated themselves to the task of facilitating the exit of Afghans they knew, who they had worked and fought side by side with to secure and stabilize a country rapidly and violently returning to the status quo ante bellum. How Afghanistan ended will mar America’s memories of the war, the longest in our nation’s history.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/the-most-difficult-end-to-a-most-difficult-war/>

Healthy Worry About Healthy Civil-military Relations

by Kori Schake

“Civil-military relations” is a term that covers a multitude of sins. Scholars of civil-military relations write on topics ranging from recruiting and retention to military coups to norms of professional military behavior. This week’s *Horns of a Dilemma* speaker, Dr. Kori Schake, argues that civil-military relations in the United States have historically been strong and stable. So why are U.S. civil-military relations an important topic of study and debate? As Schake observes, Americans tend to put off addressing potential problems until they are worried about them. So, especially in light of challenges to the norms of strong and stable civil-military relations associated with a highly polarized partisan environment, worrying about healthy civil-military relations is ... healthy. This talk was delivered at the Clements Center Summer Seminar in History and Statecraft held in Beaver Creek, Colorado in July.

<https://warontherocks.com/2022/08/healthy-worry-about-healthy-civil-military-relations/>

Why Intrusive Leadership in the U.S. Military is Actually a Good Thing

by Marcus Candy

In June of 2020, I wrote an article published by the U.S. Naval Institute entitled Racial Tension in America Requires Intrusive Military Leadership. I wrote this article because I was struggling with the gut-wrenching murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. I wasn't doing okay. I needed someone to ask how I was doing and be prepared to listen to my struggle as an African American man, and as a husband and father. I knew I wasn't alone, so I wrote the article in the hopes that it would motivate people across the country to engage in some difficult conversations, with the goal of increasing unit cohesion and providing everyone with a sense of care and support. That experience made me passionate about intrusive leadership and the positive impacts it can have on people and organizations. I have worked for intrusive leaders before in my career, and those leaders had a profound impact on me. I remain in contact with many of them today and still seek their guidance from time to time. So, I decided to turn that passion into a purpose. I wanted to study intrusive leadership and talk to senior leaders about their experience with this leadership style. I wanted to find out if it is taught and if it is desired by the generation entering the workforce today. Through qualitative interviews, literature reviews, and a survey, this is what I discovered.

<https://taskandpurpose-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/taskandpurpose.com/opinion/what-is-intrusive-leadership-military/?amp>

The Paradoxical Trinity of Leadership

by COL Al Boyer and Cole Livieratos, Ph.D.

Last month, the United States Military Academy at West Point graduated around one thousand cadets from the class of 2022 and commissioned them as second lieutenants into an Army emerging from two decades of war. While the Army's newest officers are physically fit, incredibly smart, and qualified to lead, dozens of cadets we have taught during their four years at the academy admit that something is missing from their experience, leaving them genuinely concerned about their preparation to lead in future wars. These admissions are not simply the natural trepidation of people taking a major step in their lives. Their concerns are much more specific, with many divulging that they feel more adequately prepared to fight the conflicts of the past than those they see around the world today. As officers who have spent a good deal of our own careers fighting America's post-9/11 wars, we recognize a host of tactical, leadership, and life lessons these wars have imparted on us. The past few years at West Point, we taught and mentored many cadets in the graduating class, but we did not focus on our experiences fighting these wars of the past. Rather, we centered our instruction on the future of warfare. And what we found was astonishing. As with most professional military education in the Army, West Point does an excellent job imbuing its graduates with general attributes and competencies expected of military leaders in all environments. However, there is too little attention paid to how these traits should be applied in a context characterized by conventional and irregular threats from

powerful competitors, the increasing use of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems on the battlefield, the rising importance of electronic warfare and signature management, and the erosion of truth itself. In other words, we train young leaders on the nature of leadership while often disregarding its character altogether. Preparing leaders for future war is about anticipation and adaptation, not prediction. As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates aptly noted, "When it comes to predicting the nature and location of our next military engagements, since Vietnam, our record has been perfect. We have never gotten it right."

<https://mwi.usma.edu/the-paradoxical-trinity-of-leadership>

A Strategist's Cast of Characters: The Critical Attributes and Skills of Strategic Decision-Makers

by Roni Yadin

Since the day when Thespis made dramatic history and first took to the stage as a character in a play, the ancient Greeks used theatrical productions to provide social commentary, impart lessons, and inspire action. These publicly funded events helped the audience understand their history and role in society. The Greek use of drama imbued a tragic sensibility in the citizenry, warned them of dangers facing their community, reminded them of their responsibility to the collective and helped them develop national strategy. A key tool in these dramas was symbolic characterization in which the characters on stage represented moral concepts and imparted desired lessons. Greek drama was itself embodied in the masks representing Melpomene, the

Muse of tragedy, and Thalia, the Muse of comedy. This concept of characterization also provides an allegorical framework through which to consider some of the critical characteristics and skills necessary for strategists.

<https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2022/9/2/a-strategists-cast-of-characters-the-critical-attributes-and-skills-of-strategic-decision-makers>

Ambiguous Ethical Situations and the Letter “A”

by LTC Daniel Pace

As a leader in the Special Forces, I frequently chew on how my organization makes ethical decisions, particularly when we are working in morally uncertain environments. What concerns me most is the potential disparity between what I think is ethical and what the folks that are executing my guidance think is ethical when I am not around. In my experience, units I have served in have tried to address this issue through large auditorium briefings from the JAG or Chaplain. Most of us on the ground-pounding side of the Army aren't a very theoretical lot, so the briefings on Just War Theory or The Hague Convention frequently lead to dozing audiences, and the question and answer sessions at the end frequently end up with “you'll

know it when you see it” as the answer to the ever-present question: “how will I know if what I'm doing is immoral or illegal?” Unfortunately, the way I see it, the way the 15-6 officer sees it, and the way the guy that took the action sees it rarely line up, which results in undesirable consequences for everyone involved. While chewing on this problem and thinking about how to improve moral agency in my unit, it occurred to me that at the unit level, the problem isn't necessarily that I need to improve the quality of my troops' moral education, but rather that I need to ensure we have a similar enough understanding of what moral and immoral decisions look like that I can trust them to execute on my behalf. For operational purposes, the disparity in our opinions is more important than the specifics of either of our interpretations.

https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2022/09/07/ambiguous_ethical_situations_and_the_letter_a_852183.html

We're Doing It Wrong: Returning the Study of War to the Center of Professional Military Education

by James Lacey

After what was effectively a bloody, three-year master's course on

operational level warfare, the Red Army, in June 1944, unleashed an offensive—Operation Bagration—that in mere weeks tore apart three of the four armies comprising Germany's Army Group Center. In a stunning display of its recently acquired competence, the Red Army proved it had fully absorbed the intricacies of operational warfare. Fortunately, for the fate of Ukraine, at some point in the decades since Bagration, the Russians appear to have forgotten all they had learned. Just as Operation Bagration forced the world to take notice of the Red Army's operational skills, the level of Russia's military incompetence put on display for the past several months has equally stunned the world. What has gone wrong? Undoubtedly, there are many answers to this question. But please allow me to offer one essential item that likely lies at the root of Russian military ineptitude—Russia's professional military education ceased taking the study of war seriously. The supposed experts of the new forms of war—hybrid warfare, conducted in the gray zone by little green men, with heavy doses of cyber and information operations—have forgotten how to execute more traditional forms of war.

<https://mwi.usma.edu/were-doing-it-wrong-returning-the-study-of-war-to-the-center-of-professional-military-education>