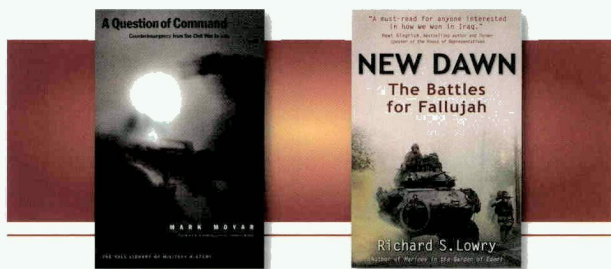


RECOMMENDED READING

# Books Reviewed

Unless otherwise noted, these books may be ordered from the MCA Bookstore. Subscribers may use members' prices. Include \$5.99 for shipping. Virginia residents add 5 percent sales tax; North Carolina residents add 6.75 percent. Prices may change. Make check or money order payable to: MCA, P.O. Box 1775, Quantico, VA 22134, call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or shop online at [www.marineshop.net](http://www.marineshop.net).



**A QUESTION OF COMMAND: Counterinsurgency From the Civil War to Iraq.** By Mark Moyar, Ph.D. Published by Yale University Press. 416 pages. Stock #0300152760A. \$27 MCA Members. \$30 Regular Price.

I have been disappointed that Dr. Mark Moyar has not rapidly followed up his excellent history of the early years of Vietnam, "Triumph Forsaken," with the promised second volume. But after reading "A Question of Command," all is forgiven. It is a valuable addition to military history in general, and to the history of insurgent or irregular warfare in particular. But "A Question of Command" is far more than a history book. Given the wars of the foreseeable future, it's a service to the Republic.

Moyar uses meticulously researched case studies of nine insurgencies to provide a must-read guide for military leaders dealing with insurgencies on the ground, from squad leaders to theater commanders, and for politicians and bureaucrats directing the effort. I wish I could afford to buy a copy for every member of the President's cabinet and the Congress.

For the history buff, Moyar's clear and concise reviews of insurgency in the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Philippine Insurrection, the Huk Rebellion, the Malayan Emergency, Vietnam, the Salvadoran Insurgency, Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate those themes that are common in such warfare, but also demonstrate that each situation is unique.

For Vietnam veterans, the review of the

lost opportunities in that conflict will be painful. One cannot read of Ambassador Elbridge Durbrow accepting the recommendations of a Michigan State University advisory team to equip the Vietnamese Civil Guard with pistols and nightsticks like American police without wishing that thus armed they had had to join in the defense of a village against a Viet Cong attack. I'm sure Afghanistan and Iraq veterans will have the same feelings about their wars, because Moyar has no hesitation in identifying those who did well—and those who failed the test presented.

Moyar, a Harvard-and-Cambridge-trained historian who teaches at the Marine Corps University, takes issue with The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual thesis that the key to counterinsurgency lies with understanding the nature of insurgency and winning the hearts and minds of the people. The most important aspect of counterinsurgency war is, in the author's view, leadership. This should resonate with Marines, although perhaps not bureaucrats and politicians. Rapid expansion of local forces without being able to provide solid leaders, which takes far longer, is often counterproductive.

Leaders who have been highly successful at conventional warfare may do very poorly at counterinsurgency, Phil Sheridan being but one example presented. Moyar draws on numerous examples in the nine case studies to identify the at-

tributes of effective counterinsurgency leaders. These are: initiative, flexibility, creativity, judgment, charisma, sociability, dedication, integrity and organization.

They are particularly key at the battalion and company levels. There are, of course, no leaders who score a perfect 10, highly gifted and proficient in all these attributes. Some traits, Moyar points out, can be learned and others are innate, but all can be enhanced. However, appointing leaders on the basis of seniority, whose turn it is for field command, or success in desk jobs, is a recipe for defeat and dead troops.

Moyar suggests testing for the 10 attributes. He notes that the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator identifies two types, ENTJs and INTJs, who are naturally strong in several of the traits. High command must be willing to relieve leaders who are not suitable for counterinsurgent command, although they may perform well in other billets. While that might end careers, it is highly preferable to losing troops' lives—or wars.

Moyar's final chapter, "How to Win," shows how good leadership can successfully pull together the other aspects of counterinsurgent warfare, although nowhere does the reader get the impression that victory will be swift, easy or painless, regardless of the leadership.

If you're deploying soon, reading "A Question of Command" is a good investment of your time.

Robert A. Hall

*Editor's note: Former Staff Sergeant Robert A. Hall served with 26th Marines at Khe Sanh in 1967, noting, "It was quiet when I left—I don't know what happened."*

*Immediately after earning a bachelor's degree in government from the University of Massachusetts, he served five terms in the Massachusetts state senate, as well as another six years in the USMCR. He's a frequent contributor of poetry to Leatherneck. His memoir, "The Good Bits: The*

*Marines, the Massachusetts Senate and Managing Associations.* was published in 2005, and a book on association management, "Chaos for Breakfast," in 2008. "I'm an ENTJ," Hall says, "so Dr. Moyer's book made me wonder if I should have joined the Army and become a general, instead of a Marine staff NCO."

**ONCE AN EAGLE. Miniseries (DVD Set), Stock #104698. \$17.98 MCA Members. \$19.98 Regular Price.**

Some readers will recall the miniseries developed for television from Anton Myrer's enduring classic novel, "Once an Eagle." The book has been on the Marine Corps Professional Reading List for years and truly is a primer for military leadership. Television viewers lobbied to have the 1976 miniseries released on DVD for a long time, and success has rewarded persistence.

"Once an Eagle" is one of the most acclaimed miniseries of all time, alongside "Winds of War" and "War and Remembrance."

Actor Sam Elliott takes on the role of Sam Damon, a courageous and compassionate man who finds his calling leading men in war and in peace. Cliff Potts plays Courtney Messengale, a ruthless achiever who will let nothing stand in his way to the top. The two men meet on a World War I battlefield, and as their professional careers unfold, the vast difference in their personalities leads to career-long competition, a life-and-death struggle of good versus evil.

If you want the book, that's available too: Stock #0060084359. Call toll-free: (888) 237-7683, or place your order online at [www.marineshop.net](http://www.marineshop.net).

*Leatherneck*

**NEW DAWN: The Battles for Fallujah. By Richard S. Lowry. Published by Savas Beatie. 312 pages. Stock #1932714774. \$26.96 MCA Members. \$29.95 Regular Price.**

During spring 2004, responding to the murder and desecration of American contractors, Marines were ordered to attack the insurgent-infested Iraqi city of Fallujah. Operation Vigilant Resolve, as it was designated, soon became a media fiasco and the operation was terminated, and Islamic militants continued to maintain possession of the city. Plans, however, soon were undertaken for a coordinated all-out rematch.

Operation Phantom Fury, or *al Fajr*, also known as Operation New Dawn, would be a carefully detailed, well-executed and decidedly successful military engagement. Marines had not been faced with such a complex inner-city urban fight

since the Battle of Hue City during the Vietnam War. In fact, the New Dawn military planners reached back to the 1977 writings of Lieutenant General Ron Christmas, USMC, for assistance in planning this inner-city battle.

The author of "New Dawn," Richard Lowry, described the nasty streets of Fallujah as a perilous cross between the olden-day Wild West and the futuristic movie "Mad Max." Fallujah is located 43 miles northeast of Baghdad in the Sunni-dominated province of Anbar. Positioned on the old-world Silk Road and bordering the Euphrates River, this Byzantine metropolis has been fought over since early antiquity; and it was a long-established headache for countless would-be rulers.

The city always had been a sanctuary for close-knit and independent tribal factions; but by 2004, the city also had become a haven for Saddam supporters, former Baath party members and diehard Iraqi Republican Guard soldiers. Additionally, the hot-blooded city had become a magnet for hardcore fundamentalists from a range of Islamic countries. Fallujah became a symbol of resistance to the recently formed Iraqi government.

On Nov. 8, 2004, a combined Army, Navy and Air Force personnel joined Marines, in "full body rattle," in the new assault upon Fallujah. Regimental Combat Teams 1 and 7, supported by U.S. Army armored units, attacked south through the city. As expected, the prolonged fighting was fierce. Marines assaulted through a maze of narrow streets and multistoried concrete buildings.

Clearing fortified structures, house by house, was a dirty, agonizing and thankless affair. "Grunts" used a "whack-a-mole" approach, wielding grenades, bayonets and well-placed small-arms fire to dislodge and destroy well-motivated, well-armed insurgents. The deft use of combined arms—armor, artillery and well-coordinated air support—helped decide the intensely violent conflict. In some instances, armored D9 bulldozers were employed to hammer down hardened enemy fortifications.

On Nov. 10, and before resuming the attack, Captain Drew McNulty read former Marine Commandant, General John A. Lejeune's Marine Corps Birthday message. Over the citywide loudspeaker, the captain ended his message with this compelling pronouncement: "Slow is smooth and smooth is fast. Today, I expect the enemy to stand and fight. Kill him and kill him twice. Oorah, Semper Fi, and Happy Birthday."

By New Year's Day 2005, the insurgents had suffered a major defeat. Importantly,

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and thanks to the skillful uses of embedded news reporters, the always difficult media war had been won.

"New Dawn: The Battles for Fallujah" is a well-written, well-researched account of this monumental battle in Marine history. Thanks to Richard Lowry's fine book and "Operation Phantom Fury" by Dick Camp, the Battle of Fallujah will take its rightful place in Marine history and in the lore of the Corps.

"New Dawn" paints a dust-choked graphic look into the intricacies of modern urban combat. The author skillfully includes the personal accounts of nearly 200 combatants in the book's first-rate narrative. The reader will be awed by the courage of Marines, sailors and soldiers who battled in the Iraqi city. Within the fire-swept stairs of well-fortified buildings, desperate men struggled in a maze of close-quarter gunfights. Talk about reality-based action: this saga of Marines is a combat thriller!

Robert B. Loring

*Editor's note: Marine veteran "Red Bob" Loring is a frequent reviewer for Leatherneck and a year-round volunteer for Toys for Tots and other community programs in East Pasco County, Fla.*

