

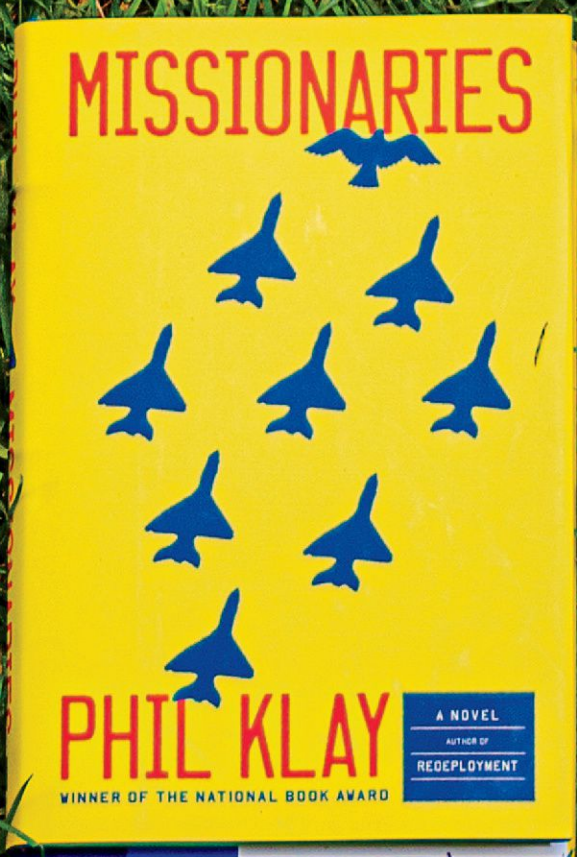
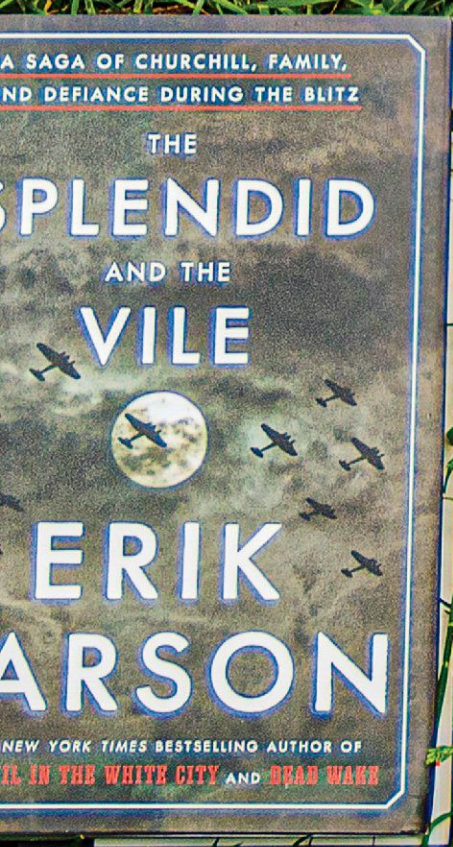
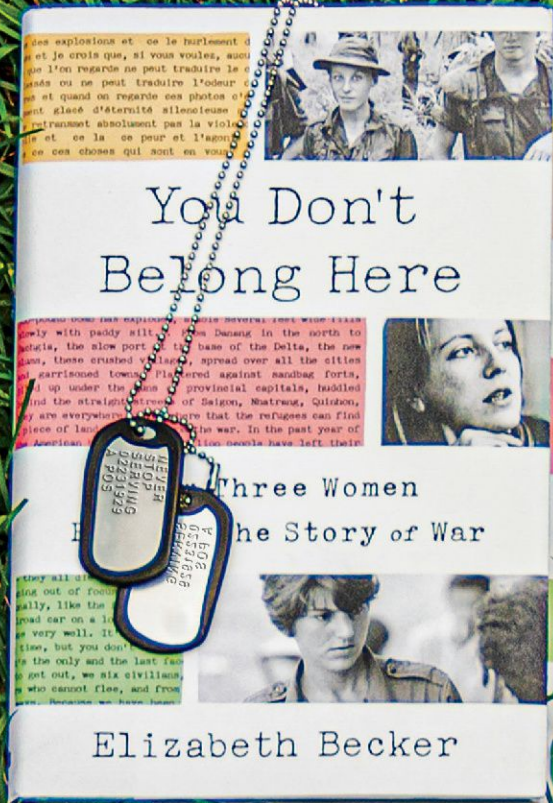
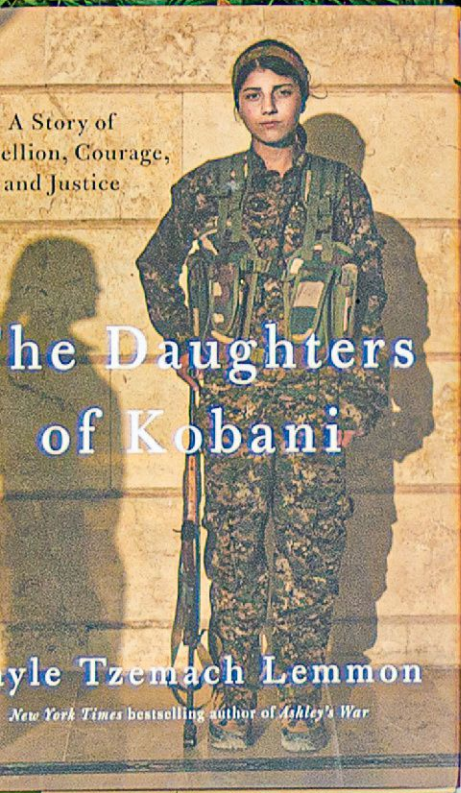


# 2021 SUMMER READING

Interviews with bestselling authors, including Erik Larson and Phil Klay, and curated reading lists to get you through these hot summer days. 38



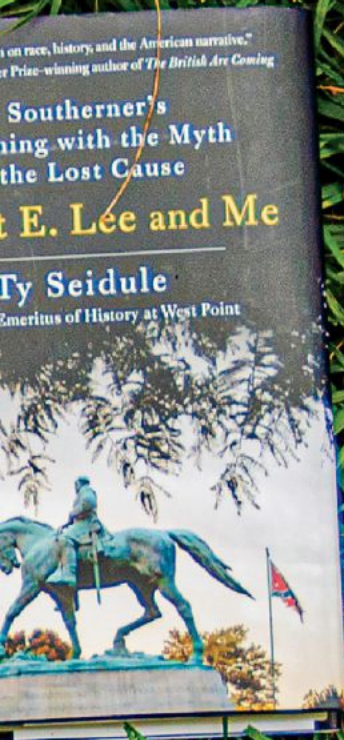






# SUMMER READING

THESE LONG, HOT DAYS AT THE POOL MAY BE  
LANGUID, BUT YOU CAN KEEP YOUR MIND  
IN TOP FORM BY CHECKING OUT THESE  
MILITARY-RELATED BOOKS.



**T**his summer, *Military Officer* explores the inspiration behind six recently published books by esteemed authors like popular historian Erik Larson; National Book Award winner and former Capt. Phil Klay, USMC; West Point professor emeritus Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule, USA (Ret); and journalists Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, Joby Warrick, and Elizabeth Becker. These reviews and Q&As, based on interviews with the writers, cover conflicts as distinct as the civil wars in the U.S. and Colombia; the blitz in London during World War II; the experiences of female journalists covering the Vietnam War; and the fight against ISIS in Syria.

We have also curated six reading lists for your enjoyment: Col. Bill Bushnell's favorite books on leadership; tales of grit and determination; bestselling author and MOAA Life Member George Wallace's best fiction bets; new perspectives; MOAA staff member picks; and recommendations for military children and their peers.

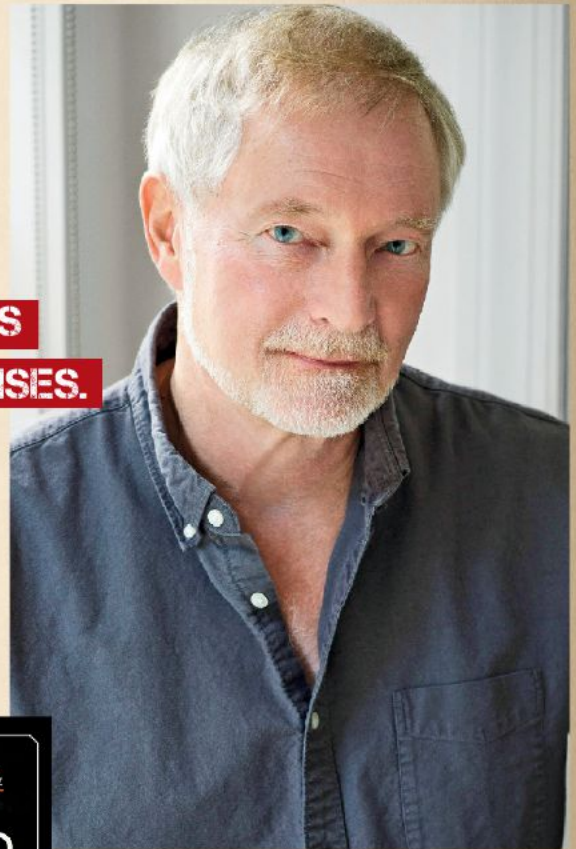
And the best part? There will be no pop quiz come fall.



# ERIK LARSON

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S LEADERSHIP GAINS

NEW APPRECIATION IN MODERN-DAY CRISES.



Erik Larson didn't intend for his latest book about Winston Churchill to be a source of solace to readers during the coronavirus pandemic, but he has heard from many who say it helped them through the global crisis.

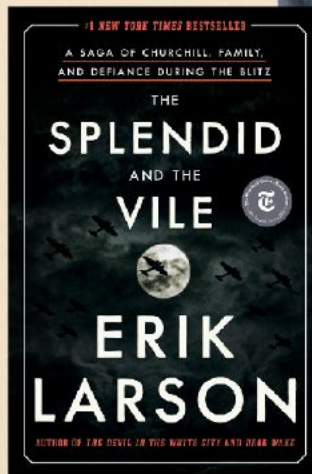
The British prime minister, Larson told *Military Officer*, likely would've approached the health crisis that has killed more than 3 million people worldwide in the same direct way he dealt with the devastating months-long German bombing campaign that took the lives of 45,000 Britons during his first year in office.

"No happy talk, no denial," Larson said. "He'd have ended [any] speeches with some soaring bit of rhetoric that would, for that moment at least, have calmed his listeners."

It wasn't Larson's plan to write about Churchill as a leader, but that's exactly what he did in *The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz* (Crown, 2020). Books about the legendary prime minister, who served in the British Army, are not rare — but Larson got ahold of never-before-accessed records that provide a personal look at Churchill's trying first year leading his country through crisis.

Opening with Churchill's 1940 appointment to prime minister, Larson uses the same style of gripping nonfiction storytelling made famous in his book *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair That Changed America* (Crown, 2003) about the infamous serial killer Dr. H. H. Holmes. *The Splendid and the Vile* focuses solely on how Churchill led his people through the Blitz.

"I wanted to find out how people in London managed to survive the German bombing campaign of 1940 to '41 — how they really went about



it, on a daily basis," Larson said.

The idea arose after the author moved to New York City in 2015. He said he developed a new appreciation for what people who lived there during the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks experienced.

"I almost immediately began thinking about London, and how during the Blitz phase of the campaign London was bombed for 57 consecutive nights — in effect, 57 9/11s in a row," Larson said. "How did anyone endure it?"

He set out to profile a family who lived in London in the early 1940s. Then, he thought, "Why not write about the quintessential London family, the Churchills?"

Larson credits a "random bit of luck" with giving him perhaps the most important collection of first-person observations of day-to-day life in London during the Blitz. Churchill's 17-year-old daughter Mary documented her everyday reflections in a diary, which was at the Churchill Archives Center in Cambridge, England.

"It told me exactly what I hoped to learn — how Mary, and her family, went about their daily lives amid that prolonged nightmare," Larson said of

'He understood that fearlessness is infectious.'



**A RECENT NOVEL EXPLORES THE MORAL COMPLEXITIES OF ASYMMETRIC WARFARE.**

the diary. “She proved to be a charming raconteur, revealing her delight in [Royal Air Force] dances, occasional ‘snogging’ sessions in the hayloft, her friends, and especially her deep love for her father.”

Nightclubs were full and Britons commuted to work as always — albeit with gas masks, Larson said, largely because of the example Churchill set. He’d always known that Churchill was courageous, but Mary’s diary and others Larson consulted for *The Splendid and the Vile* gave him a new appreciation for the prime minister.



**Winston Churchill**

“He understood that fearlessness is infectious, and he made every effort to demonstrate his own defiance, to the point of racing to the nearest rooftop as air-raids unfolded,” Larson said.

The book also gives readers new insight into the difficult military decisions Churchill made, such as the July 3, 1940, Royal Navy’s attack on the French navy at Mers-el-Kébir. Churchill could not let the fleet fall into German hands, but he also made a powerful statement to the world that Britain was in the war for the duration.

“The obvious message there is that in a crisis a leader can’t temporize by sticking a wet finger in the air to see how the political winds are blowing,” Larson said. “That’s the path to appeasement.”

Churchill, Larson surmises, would lead today with the same rousing speeches on everything from the Afghanistan withdrawal to the pandemic. The leader never shied away from addressing the sober reality of a situation — as he did during a 1940 speech rallying British forces and the public during the Dunkirk evacuation.

The famous leader dealt with the big questions head-on, Larson said. He led by example.

“He understood the power of symbolic acts,” Larson said. Today, “he’d also have worn a mask.” ❧

— By Gina Harkins, a military journalist



**PHIL KLAY**

Faced with long days and tough workouts, plenty of boots memorize rhymes. Author and former Marine Capt. Phil Klay, however, went well past cadence calls and learned T.S. Eliot’s

*The Waste Land* by heart. After four years in the Marines, Klay left the service and entered a Master of Fine Arts program. He continued to engage with the military experience through his works of fiction. In 2014 he released the short story collection *Redeployment*, which won the National Book Award for Fiction. In 2020, after six years of travel, research, and writing, he released his first novel, *Missionaries*, a story of career military dealing with interconnected wars, set in Colombia.

Klay spoke with *Military Officer* about his work. The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**How is your military experience reflected in your writing?**

I was in Iraq [as a public affairs officer] during the surge [of 2007], so I was in Anbar province. I was



PHOTOS: FROM LEFT, NINA SUBIN; HULTON ARCHIVE / STRINGER/GETTY IMAGES; HANNAH DUNPHY; OPEN BOOK BACKGROUND THROUGHOUT; SAMIG MUNG-ARODN / EYEEM/GETTY IMAGES; PREVIOUS SPREAD, JOHN HARMAN/STAFF



there when it went from an incredibly violent place to one that was much touted as a sign of progress. ... I've always thought about that intersection of one's personal relationship to the war that they've been in and how policy seems to be going at the time — the kind of fog of uncertainty you operate under in complex environments.

If you're a special operator doing a raid, that seems like a very clean and clear narrative. There's a bad guy, and we're gonna go get them, and then the world is going to be a better place. If you're doing counterinsurgency, though — the sort that a lot of folks were doing in 2007 — it meant a lot of messy political bargains. You were operating with the understanding that simple violence could never actually fix the problem, that you needed to have stable political settlements that would enable some kind of growing peace within the region. But the nature of that means that you don't have any ... clear ideas about the choices that you're making.

*Missionaries* is a novel where those debates about military tactics and strategies are closely related to the moral choices and worldview of the characters who are operating within the frameworks. It was important to me to dramatize both.

**Documented war narratives go back thousands of years. Has the asymmetry of modern warfare set a darker tone for how people write about it?**

Modern literary fiction, especially 20th-century literary fiction ... tends to focus on the horrific aspects of the war. But *The Iliad* is a brutal piece of work. And if you read Renaissance or late medieval accounts of war, some of them are absolutely horrific. It's just that they also tend to uphold more sort of honor or glory that can be won in war, and that is something that, particularly since the First World War, literary folks tend to be more skeptical of.

But then you'll find George Gascoigne, the English poet, who wrote about broken sleep, dreadful dreams, murdered innocence. ... Nonetheless, he's quite proud of his service in war.



**Author Phil Klay** took this photo while driving through Ramadi, Iraq, during his deployment there.

'If you're doing counterinsurgency, though — the sort that a lot of folks were doing in 2007 — it meant a lot of messy political bargains.'

I think capturing both sides is very important. That's one of the reasons I wanted to write a book about people who are professionals in war, who are well aware of the horrific aspects, but who do find value in their work and feel it's important and challenging and morally bruising — but nonetheless morally important. And that comes with the kind of decisions that get thrust upon them within the context of asymmetric

wars, because that's what we're dealing with in ... these wars where we have tremendous technological capabilities.

It's very easy for them to reach into rural areas and kill somebody ... to project violence from afar. But oftentimes, that violence is being projected into local regions where there are very complex social structures and power structures that we often don't fully understand, so what happens is you pick out one actor and there is a sort of reshuffling of the deck of cards in terms of power and that leads to new threats. That is kind of a pivot point in my novel, an event that ultimately brings all the characters that I created together, an example of existing in the consequences of an act of violence that sort of breeds second- and third-order consequences of great importance.

**What advice would you give for someone who wants to write vividly and efficiently about the military experience?**

Read voraciously. The more you read, and especially the more that you read outside of your comfort zone, [the more you can] look at yourself from the outside in a way that's very, very helpful. Don't just read military memoirs. Read everything. I read a lot of poetry and try to stay very attuned to language. And there's nothing better than poetry to help you pay close attention to what you can do with rhythm and tone and syntax to try and express something as deeply, as viscerally as possible. ■■■

— By Tony Ware, a military culture and entertainment reporter



# GAYLE TZEMACH LEMMON

**A JOURNALIST REVEALS HOW A FIERCE, ALL-FEMALE  
KURDISH FIGHTING FORCE TOOK ON ISIS.**



In *The Daughters of Kobani: A Story of Rebellion, Courage, and Justice* (Penguin Press, 2021), bestselling journalist Gayle Tzemach Lemmon tells one of the most unlikely stories of the Syrian civil war: how a small group of Kurdish women banded together into a militia that turned the tide of the fight against the Islamic State.

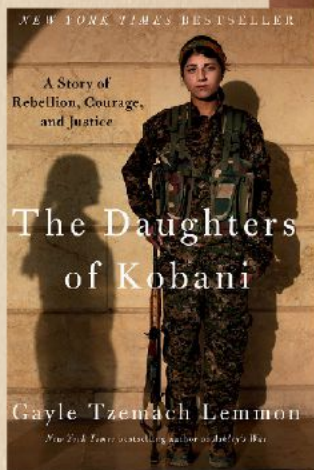
The Kurdish Women's Protection Units, or YPJ, were not just an effective fighting force; they were one of the few that could go toe-to-toe with ISIS at a time when the militant group was tearing across Iraq and Syria.

They also spread a message of women's equality that stood in direct opposition to ISIS's beliefs that women were inferior and to be subjugated — and the YPJ's prowess on the battlefield proved their point.

"What made [the YPJ] different [and] effective was a deep sense that they were fighting for justice, fighting against the enslavement of women," Lemmon told *Military Officer*. "Their goals were really about showing what the world looked like when women were equal."

Lemmon learned about the YPJ when one of the female special operations troops she wrote about in her previous book, *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield* (Harper, 2015) called her in early 2016, urging her to come see the "unbelievable" sight.

She did, and she was amazed enough to make



'You can't hear that there are women fighting the men who bought and sold women without wanting to know more.'

seven reporting trips to northeastern Syria over three years.

"You can't hear that there are women fighting the men who bought and sold women without wanting to know more," Lemmon said. "And that they were leading women and men in the fight, I thought, was deeply important. And they were fighting ISIS room by room, and house by house, and street by street, and town by town."

When American special operators showed up to assist the YPJ face to face, they quickly realized the women were a genuine force.

"Hey, how many ISIS did you kill? I bet I killed more ISIS than you did," one young, slight woman trash-talks to a muscular U.S. special forces operator, who laughs and admits she probably had.

At 212 pages, *The Daughters of Kobani* makes a brisk, entertaining read. Lemmon tells her story in a handful of well-crafted vignettes highlighting key points in the war: a nick-of-time airstrike during the siege of Kobani, the daring nighttime crossing of the Euphrates River before the battle of Manbij, and street-to-street clashes during the devastating and climactic battle for Raqqa.

PHOTOS: FROM LEFT, COURTESY PHIL KLAY; FRANKIE BATISTA



**BEHIND THE INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO  
DESTROY CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN SYRIA  
IN THE MIDST OF A CIVIL WAR.**



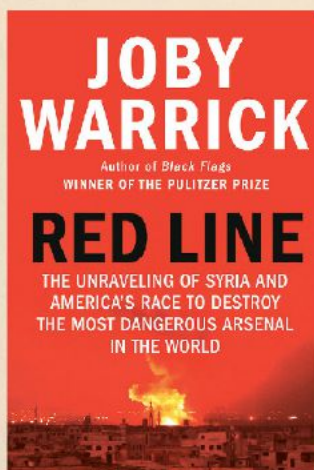
**JOBY WARRICK**

Joby Warrick, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winner and reporter for *The Washington Post*, has written authoritatively on Middle Eastern conflicts for the past decade. His latest book, *Red Line: The Unraveling of Syria and America's Race to Destroy the Most Dangerous Arsenal in the World* (Doubleday, 2021), recounts the urgent international effort to destroy Syria's chemical arsenal.

**Your book is a masterclass in narrative nonfiction storytelling. How did you distill so much detail into this story?**

It's going to the individuals and getting them to relate conversations and then going to other people in that conversation and getting that echo — getting those details about the weather and the mood and the food; all the things you would want to have in a novel. If you're telling a

good story, readers connect with it in a different way than if they're reading a dry tome about a chemical weapons problem.



She largely centers her story around four Kurdish women “whose lives told the stories of their campaign”: Nowruz, a YPJ commander and veteran fighter; Azeema, a brash and deadly sniper whose name ISIS fighters learn to fear; Rojda, Azeema’s introverted friend who leads other women with quiet confidence; and Znarin, Nowruz’s aide who starts to command troops as the war progresses.

In the process, Lemmon personalizes a war that, for many Americans, has occurred distantly and through social media.

“I was hoping to move people, and to introduce them to people who fought the Islamic State for all of us,” Lemmon said.



**Rojda stands** in Naim Square after the Battle of Raqqa against ISIS.

Lemmon said she purposely chose this narrative style, as opposed to a more comprehensive history of the YPJ and Syrian civil war, to bring the story of the women who fought ISIS to a wider audience.

“I want people who don’t usually read books about foreign policy to get engaged” with this tale, Lemmon said.

But even in that limited space, Lemmon sketches enough background to bring an unfamiliar reader up to speed on the last 100 years of history of the Kurds, the rise of ISIS, the Assad regime and the eruption of the Syrian civil war, and the origins and ideology of the Kurdistan Worker’s Party, or PKK.

HiddenLight Productions recently bought the rights to make the book into a series. It’s too soon to say when or where the show might air, but the production team is working with creators in the region to make sure the story is told authentically.

“I think everyone is very excited for [audiences] to meet Azeema and Rojda and Nowruz, and to see their courage and their heart and their friendships,” Lemmon said. ■■

— *By Stephen Losey, a military culture reporter*



Here was a country where there are hundreds of tons of sarin. Enough to fill many swimming pools. And you can put it on a truck and take it across the border to Turkey, across into Europe — or it can show up in the U.S. ... With all the chaos and turmoil in Syria, even a few gallons going missing is a recipe for one of the greatest terrorist attacks of all time. Part of the book's story is explaining how we really dodged a bullet.



A Syrian child receives medical treatment in 2015.

#### What's Syria's endgame with these weapons?

They were supposed to be Syria's answer to Israel's nuclear arsenal — to put sarin inside a Scud missile. It's not a very good military weapon. But what the Syrians discovered, as there was concern about a regime collapse in 2012 and early 2013, was that sarin was a really great terror weapon. You can end a siege or a blockade with just a little bit of this stuff. They achieved a lot until they went too far. Then the world came and smacked them down.

#### How much on-ground fact-finding can a reporter even do in Syria?

It was always hard, and it's gotten harder. My trips were just across the border on the southern and northern sides but also to Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq. One of my favorite interviews is with an ISIS chemical weapons scientist ... who was recruited to help them make mustard gas. The Americans got wise to him and snatched him up in a desert raid in 2016, and he wound up confessing to everything. Turns out, he was still alive.

One of the most surreal experiences of my career was walking to this prison in northern Iraq and spending almost an hour with him. That's the kind of thing you could never do by Zoom. ■■■

— By Andrew Lawrence, a reporter based in South Carolina

'Even a few gallons [of sarin] going missing is a recipe for one of the greatest terrorist attacks of all time.'

## BRIG. GEN. TY SEIDULE, USA (RET)

THE FORMER HEAD OF WEST  
POINT'S HISTORY DEPT. RECKONS  
WITH HIS CHILDHOOD HERO.



Military officers are a well-intentioned, forward-thinking community of highly educated men and women, always considering their people, their missions, how to do things better, and more important, how to do what's right. A few officers stand out for their outspokenly bold ideas and convictions, even putting their careers in jeopardy. Think of Capt. J.F.C. Fuller, Maj. Gen. B.H. Liddell Hart, and Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell.

Now think of Brig. Gen. Ty Seidule, USA (Ret). His new book, *Robert E. Lee and Me* (St. Martin's



Press, 2021), directly challenges the hero worship of Robert E. Lee, the myth of the Confederacy's Lost Cause, and the Civil War's continuing toxic influence on racism and white supremacy even today. Seidule asserts that Lee may have been a great general, but he was also a traitor, and that the Confederacy's sole reasons for waging war against the U.S. were to preserve slavery and white supremacy in the South, despite claims of states' rights.

Seidule grew up in the South. He was raised to believe in the righteousness of Southern culture, glorify the Confederacy, and revere Lee.

"The purpose of the [Lost Cause] myth was to create a system of racial hierarchy and white supremacy through terror, law, disenfranchisement, and Confederate memorialization," Seidule told

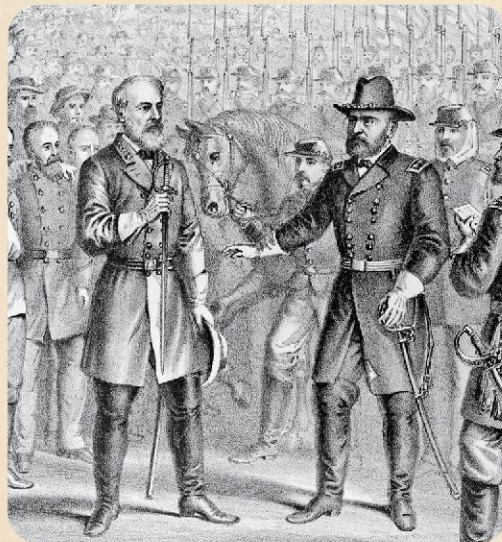
*Military Officer* in an interview conducted over email.

As the former head of the history department at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Seidule knows "history is dangerous" and that "if someone challenges a sacred myth, the reaction can be ferocious."

Seidule's book is part history, part memoir, and part social commentary. He took a principled risk publishing it; he retired from the Army to allow himself the freedom to say what he really thinks.

"I had to be honest about my past," Seidule said. This is not revisionist or apologetic history; rather, it is an eye-opening, provocative revelation."

Seidule's basic premises are these: That Lee committed treason when he resigned his commission in the Army to fight against the U.S. and the



**This lithograph** depicts Robert E. Lee surrendering to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865.

Constitution and that "the Confederates chose slavery and treason over nation." He is unsparing in his criticism of Lee, revealing the Virginian to be an unrepentant racist, even refusing to acknowledge the South lost the war.

As a history professor, Seidule then explored how and why the myth of the Lost Cause and Lee's hero worship gained strength after the war. He examines the post-war growth of white supremacist feelings, the Ku Klux Klan, and the institutionalized reign of terror in the South, fueled by ex-Confederate generals. He also describes how

Reconstruction-era "Redeemers" seized state government control and "rewrote state constitutions to exclude Black people and used terror campaigns, Jim Crow segregation laws ... to enforce and enshrine white political power for generations."

Seidule also examines why the Army named so many posts after Confederate officers.

Seidule notes only one low-level Confederate officer was hanged as a war criminal, but Gen. George Pickett summarily executed 22 U.S. soldiers and was never charged. He also reveals that Lee was indicted for treason after the war, but never prosecuted, and the reasons why are stunning.

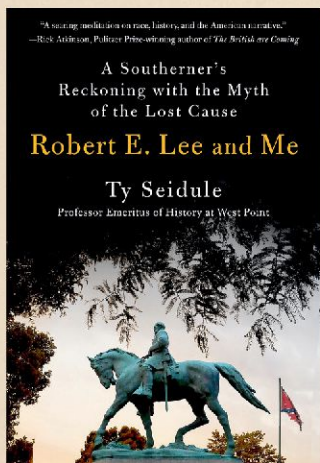
When asked what surprised him most during his research, Seidule replied, "The war crimes committed by the Confederates. The brilliance of Grant. Lee's continued racism after the war. He testified to Congress that all Black people in Virginia should be expelled from the state."

Seidule continued, "We will continue to have reckoning after reckoning because we have not dealt with our past honestly — not with slavery, not with segregation, not with white supremacy. Racism is our eternal pandemic."

His book is an honest appraisal of an uncomfortable history. Like Billy Mitchell, Seidule is trying to do the right thing. ❏

— By Col. Bill Bushnell, USMC (Ret), Military Officer's book reviewer

'If someone challenges a sacred myth, the reaction can be ferocious.'







# ELIZABETH BECKER

## HOW THREE FEMALE JOURNALISTS BROUGHT UNIQUE SKILL SETS TO COVER THE VIETNAM WAR.

When Elizabeth Becker set out to write *You Don't Belong Here: How Three Women Rewrote the Story of War* (PublicAffairs, 2021), she wanted to tell the stories of French photographer Catherine Leroy, American writer Frances FitzGerald, and Australian reporter Kate Webb, three women who broke barriers with their coverage of the Vietnam War. But that wasn't her only goal.

"I wanted it to be a book that you could read, and you'd understand the history of the Vietnam War. Journalists could read [it] and know what it was like to cover one of the most pivotal wars in our history," she said.

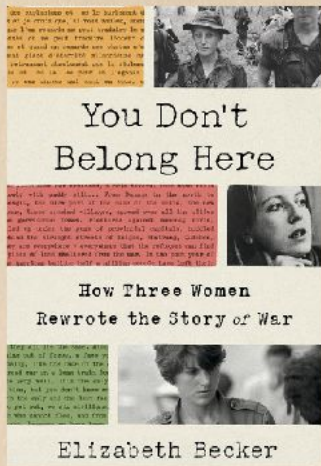
It was a tremendous undertaking, but one Becker was perfectly suited for: The award-winning journalist started her career as a war correspondent in Cambodia in early 1973. On her way there, she met Webb at the Hong Kong airport while carrying FitzGerald's book in her backpack.

*You Don't Belong Here* weaves in details of the war and the time period, gleaned from Becker's personal experiences and extensive research.

**Each of the women in the book covered war in a completely different way than anyone else then or before. Why is that so important?**

They set a whole new standard. Three very different skill sets. ... And they came from three different cultures. ... Most importantly, they were untrained, and they were outsiders. So they were not following the script that all the men were following.

Their biggest vulnerability turned out to be their biggest asset. When they looked at war, they reported it the way they thought it should be reported, without any blinders.



'When they looked at war, they reported it ... without any blinders.'

Because they were untrained and looked at everything differently, they saw the whole country. And that's what really stands out when you look at their work. They did not limit themselves to the political chatter of Saigon and the battlefield losses and victories. They wanted to see what it was doing to the country, how the South Vietnamese Army was fighting — not just the Americans. They burrowed themselves into the cultures.

**Did they know they were among the first women to cover war on the battlefield?**

No. ... I followed after them, and I had no idea, either. I mean, this is the era when the employment section of the newspaper ... is divided between men and women, and when women's liberation is just at the beginning.

**How did your experience in Cambodia as a war correspondent help inform your reporting and writing about these women?**

I couldn't have done it if I hadn't. It was totally essential. In the epilogue, I explained what finally forced me to write it. ... I was testifying at the Khmer Rouge genocide tribunal, and the only thing the defense had against me was a knock on me because I was a journalist who was writing a significant history, and he didn't think journalists could. But the same historian always loved it when men did it. This was 2015, and I thought, 'This is never going to end.'

So I had to, because I suffered from it, too. I ... knew where to look for their footprints. I knew the people who had supported them and those who hadn't. I knew so much, and I didn't know how much I knew until I wrote it. ■■■

— By Jennifer Hlad, a military culture reporter



# WHAT TO READ NOW

CURATED BOOKS THAT WILL MAKE YOU THINK, REFLECT, LAUGH, AND CRY.

## COL. BILL BUSHNELL'S LEADERSHIP PICKS

French statesman and soldier Chevalier de Boufflers (1738-1815) said it best: "The warrior who cultivates his mind polishes his arms." Reading is solitary, can be done any time, and allows the officer to absorb and reflect. These books have proved valuable to countless officers over the years and are just as timely today as they were when published.

### BATTLE LEADERSHIP

Capt. Adolf Von Schell, 1933

This gripping memoir of a German infantry company commander who fought the Russians on the Eastern Front from 1915-18 vividly describes the theater's fluid maneuver warfare as well as the psychological factors of leadership under fire.

### GENERALSHIP: ITS DISEASES AND THEIR CURE

J.F.C. Fuller, 1933

Fuller (1878-1966) harshly criticizes general officers who forget they are leaders of people, not managers of machines. He argues that general officers must participate in battle, not just watch from afar.

### THE VAAGSO RAID

Joseph H. Devins Jr., 1968

This is the exciting story of the successful joint British-Norwegian raid on the German-fortified port of Vaagso on Dec. 27, 1941, and it describes how an amphibious raid (or any raid) should be conducted.

### THE LAST HUNDRED YARDS

H.J. Poole, 1996

This is an outstanding handbook for developing NCO tactical and technical proficiency as well as solid leadership skills. Officers also need to understand and embrace these lessons.

### MANEUVER IN WAR

Lt. Col. Charles A. Willoughby, 1939

This book was intended as a primer for the responsibilities of high command, focusing on the principles of war — especially maneuver — to dislocate, disrupt, and defeat an enemy.

### THE RIVER AND THE GAUNTLET

S.L.A. Marshall, 1970

Brig. Gen. Marshall (1900-77) tells of the disastrous tactical defeat of the U.S. Army's 2nd and 25th Infantry Divisions during a six-day battle in Korea in November 1950 in a brutally critical appraisal of an Army woefully unprepared for war.



### DID YOU KNOW?

These four memoirs topped *The New York Times'* nonfiction bestseller list 10 years ago: George W. Bush's *Decision Points*; Laura Hillenbrand's *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption*; Donald Rumsfeld's *Known and Unknown*; and Dick Cheney's *In My Time*.

## TALES OF TRUE GRIT

These stories of combat and leadership will inspire you.

### MARATHON WAR

By Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser, USA (Ret), 2021

A memoir of leadership by the former commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division and Regional Command-East.

### THE RIFLE

Andrew Biggio, 2021

A veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan interviews WWII veterans by placing a 1941 M1 Garand rifle in their hands, awakening memories.

### WALK IN MY COMBAT BOOTS

James Patterson and Matt Eversmann, 2021

A collection crafted from original interviews by bestselling author James Patterson and 1st Sgt. Matt Eversmann, USA (Ret).

### MODERN WARRIORS

Pete Hegseth, 2020

Thrilling stories from 15 servicemembers based on FOX Nation's show of the same name.

### THREE WISE MEN

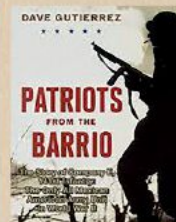
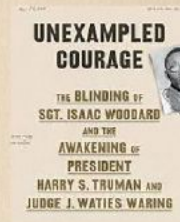
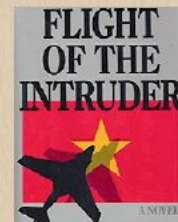
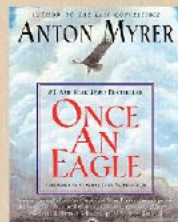
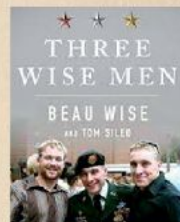
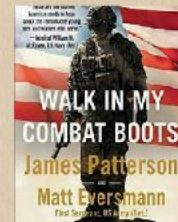
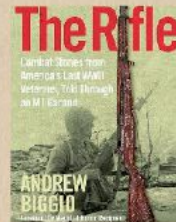
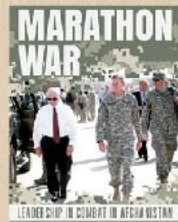
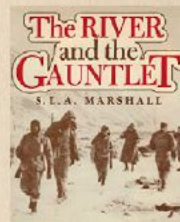
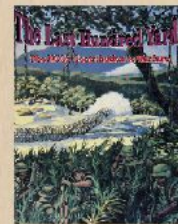
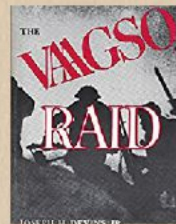
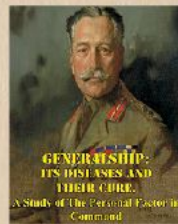
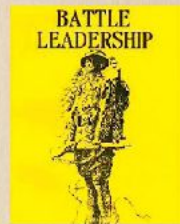
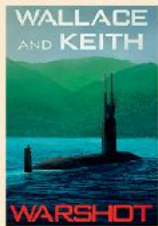
Beau Wise and Tom Sileo, 2021

A memoir of family, service, and sacrifice by a Marine who lost both of his brothers in combat in Afghanistan.



## GEORGE WALLACE'S FAVORITE FICTION

Cmdr. George Wallace, USN (Ret), a MOAA Life Member and the author of the bestselling *Hunter Killer* series, reveals his favorite works of military fiction. The sixth installment of his series, *Warshot*, in which the U.S. Navy squares off against China for trillions of dollars' worth of gold at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, was released in May.



### ONCE AN EAGLE

Anton Myrer, 1968

The story of a soldier named Sam Damon, and his lifetime adversary, fellow officer Courtney Messengale.

### THE LAST LIEUTENANT

John J. Gobbell, 1995

A WWII thriller about the American defeat at Corregidor and the subsequent Midway victory.

### FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER

Stephen Coonts, 1986

The classic novel about Navy aviators flying the A-6 Intruder during the Vietnam War.

### RED STORM RISING

Tom Clancy, 1986

A Third World War is fought in the mid-1980s between NATO and Warsaw Pact forces with conventional weapons rather than nuclear warfare or WMDs.

## NEW PERSPECTIVES

Untold accounts of heroism, service, and perseverance, both in and out of the military.



### UNEXAMPLED COURAGE

Richard Gergel, 2019  
How the blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard changed the course of America's civil rights history.

### FACING THE MOUNTAIN

Daniel James Brown, 2021  
The story of four Japanese American families and their sons, who volunteered for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and were deployed to France, Germany, and Italy during WWII.

### PATRIOTS FROM THE BARRIO

Dave Gutierrez, 2018  
A background of Company E, 141st Infantry, the only all-Mexican American Army unit in WWII.

### LET US FIGHT AS FREE MEN

Christine Knauer, 2014  
A historian recounts the conflicts surrounding Black military service and the fight for integration.

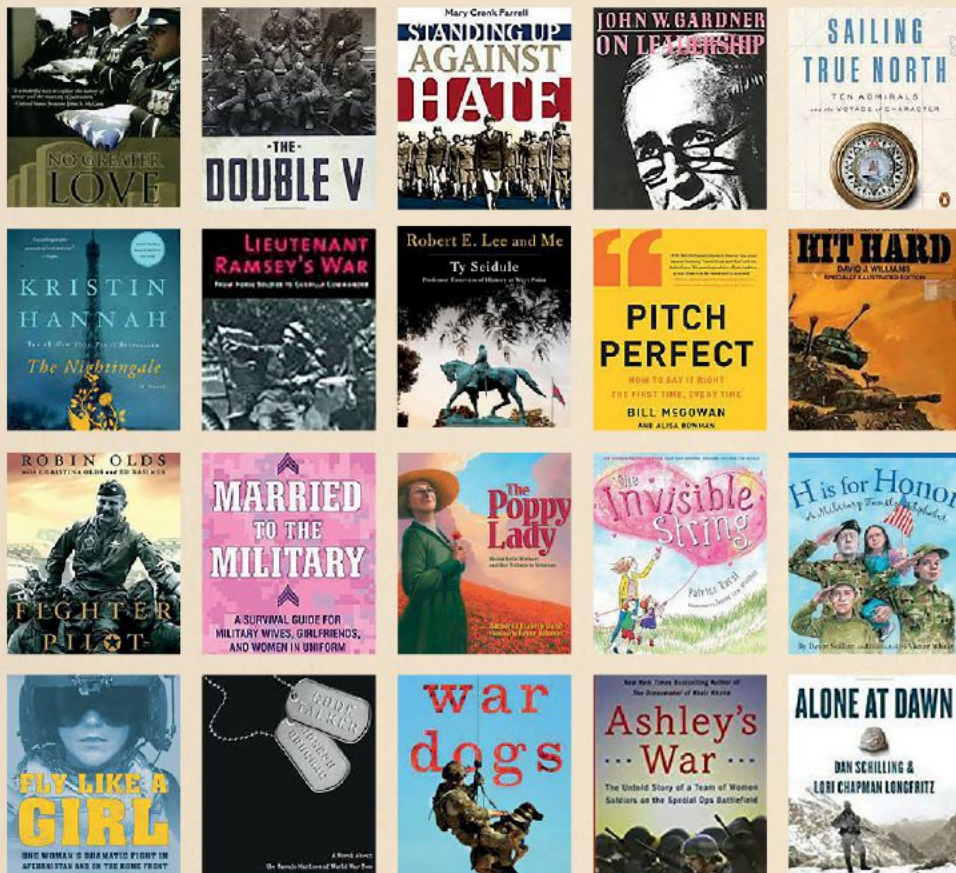
### AMERICAN SUTRA

Duncan Ryūken Williams, 2019  
How Japanese American Buddhists launched a defense of religious freedom during WWII.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Fantasy authors J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were both World War I veterans.





### NO GREATER LOVE

Maj. Gen. Freddie Valenzuela, USA (Ret), 2008

In 2003, the author presided over the funeral of the first casualty of the Iraq War, a soldier who was not yet a citizen of the U.S., and wondered what had motivated him to make the ultimate sacrifice.

### DOUBLE V

Rawn James Jr., 2013

From Crispus Attucks to President Barack Obama, this book illustrates African Americans' vital place in U.S. military history.

### STANDING UP AGAINST HATE

Mary Cronk Farrell, 2019

The stories of the African American women who enlisted in the newly formed Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in WWII.

### STAFF PICKS

MOAA staff members reveal their favorite military-related books across an array of genres.

#### ON LEADERSHIP

John W. Gardner, 1989

It offers tips and traits of effective leaders, which I found especially helpful in trying to develop young leaders/officers.

— Capt. Pat L. Williams, USN (Ret), Ph.D. | Program Director, Engagement and Transition Services

#### SAILING TRUE NORTH

Adm. James Stavridis, USN (Ret), 2019

A study on character that profiles 10 different admirals across the arc of history. I was pleasantly surprised by how inter-

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Mark Twain once called Ulysses S. Grant's *The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* "the greatest piece of English literature written in the 19th century."

esting it was and by how much I learned about admirals I thought I already knew.

— Capt. Patricia Cole, USN (Ret) | Program Director, Career Transition Services

• To learn about Adm. James Stavridis' latest book, turn to page 26.

### THE NIGHTINGALE

Kristin Hannah, 2015

This book is inspired by the actions of historical figures, particularly women, during the Resistance in German-Occupied France during WWII. The horrors of that time are unimaginable, yet somehow the human spirit endured.

— Col. Jim O'Brien, USAF (Ret) Chief Operating Officer

### LIEUTENANT RAMSEY'S WAR

Edwin Price Ramsey, Stephen J. Rivele, 1990

After the fall of the Philippines in 1942, Ed Ramsey refused to surrender. This book chronicles a remarkable true story of courage and perseverance.

— Col. Jess Ramirez, USA (Ret) Program Director, Outreach

### ROBERT E. LEE AND ME

Ty Seidule, 2021

His book is eye opening!

— Lt. Col. Suzanne Walker, USA (Ret) | Director, Membership Events

• For a review of this book, turn to page 45.

### PITCH PERFECT

Bill McGowan, 2014

One of the best books I have read discussing best practices for presentations, interviews, panel discussions — anything you can imagine where you're



in front of an audience and you need to be at the top of your game.

— *Capt. Jim Carman, USN (Ret)*  
*Vice President, Council/  
Chapter and Member Support*

### HIT HARD

**David J. Williams, 1983**

A book about the 761st Tank Battalion “Black Panthers,” an incredibly valorous tank battalion of Black soldiers that spearheaded the attack into Germany under Gen. George Patton. During their successful penetration into Nazi Germany, the 761st suffered nearly 50% casualty rates.

— *Lt. Col. Mark Belinsky, USA (Ret), Director, Currently Serving and Retired Affairs, Government Relations*

### FIGHTER PILOT: MEMOIRS OF LEGENDARY ACE ROBIN OLDS

**Robin Olds, Christina Olds, Ed Rasimus, 2010**

A very entertaining book about Olds’ journey, starting from the early 1940s through the Vietnam War.

— *Col. Dan Merry, USAF (Ret)*  
*Vice President, Government Relations*

### MARRIED TO THE MILITARY

**Meredith Leyva, 2009**

An oldie but goodie. It’s easy to use this book to reference things as you need them if you don’t have time to sit down and read the entire thing at once.

— *Cathy Artino, military spouse*  
*Program Manager, Development*

## ON THE KIDS’ SHELF

In April, the Sandhills (N.C.) Chapter sponsored the Purple Up Book Drive to provide school libraries with books relevant to the experiences of military children. The books were selected based on recommendations from the Military Child Education Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to resolving education challenges with the military lifestyle.

“Military children are wonderfully resilient, yet there are times when they do struggle,” said Rollie Sampson, a Sandhills Chapter board member and project coordinator who also works for her local school district as their military liaison counselor. “It’s important that our schools understand the impact these changes have on our children.”

The book drive will help ensure schools have books that reflect military life.

Here is a selection of the books the chapter provided to local schools.

### FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOLERS

#### THE POPPY LADY

**Barbara E. Walsh (author), Layne Johnson (illustrator), 2012**

How a schoolteacher from Georgia worked to establish the red poppy as the symbol to honor soldiers at the onset of U.S. involvement in WWI.

#### THE INVISIBLE STRING

**Patrice Karst (author), Joanne Lew-Vriethoff (illustrator), 2000**

A book for kids experiencing separation anxiety, loss, and grief.



### HIS FOR HONOR: A MILITARY FAMILY ALPHABET

**Devin Scillian (author), Victor Juhasz (illustrator), 2006**

An alphabet book with full-page illustrations and short poems to explain different military terms.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The first military-related book to top *The New York Times*’ nonfiction bestseller list this year was *Walk in My Combat Boots: True Stories from the Battlefield*, by James Patterson and Matt Eversmann. As the creator of fictional detective Alex Cross, Patterson has an impressive pedigree. So does Eversmann: as a former member of Task Force Ranger, the unit memorialized in *Black Hawk Down*.

### FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

#### FLY LIKE A GIRL

**Maj. Mary Jennings Hegar, ANG, 2020**

In this memoir, the author tells how her actions saved the lives of her crew and their patients when they were shot down on a medevac mission in Afghanistan.

#### CODE TALKER

**Joseph Bruchac, 2005**

A novel about the Navajo Marines who served in WWII.

#### WAR DOGS

**Rebecca Frankel, 2014**

All about military working dogs and the handlers who love them.

### FOR HIGH SCHOOLERS

#### ASHLEY’S WAR

**Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, 2015**

A team of female U.S. service-members served alongside special operations soldiers on the battlefield in Afghanistan.

#### ALONE AT DAWN

**Dan Schilling and Lori Longfritz, 2019**

The story of John Chapman, a Medal of Honor recipient and special ops combat controller, and his heroic one-man stand in Afghanistan.