

for additional research is Austrian, Italian, Ottoman, and Russian views on the subject) and did not consider it to be important, per se. From the first days of the war, German action triggered this kind of response and, indeed, British and French formal inquiries into Germany conduct. Germany's response to Belgium's refusal to stand aside was draconian—executions, arson, hostage-taking, use of human shields, killing of unarmed prisoners, and pillage (for example, 850 civilians were shot between August 5 and 8, 1914). These events highlighted the lack of civilian control of the military in Germany. Atrocities happened with embarrassing frequency to reinforce growing information warfare (propaganda) vilifying Germany—for example, the execution of nurse Edith Cavell for helping Allied soldiers and civilians escape to Holland, the execution of the captain of an unarmed British steamer for evading a U-boat (based on an alleged ramming), the burning of the Louvain University library of hundreds of thousands of medieval books and manuscripts (to “teach them to respect Germany and to think twice before they resist her” (p. 53), the calamities of unrestricted submarine warfare such as the sinking of the RMS *Lusitania*, the use of poison gas, the use of incendiary weapons, and the bombing of cities such as London. As early as 1915, the German military even sent covert agents to the United States armed with anthrax and glanders (a disease that affects livestock) to infect horses and draft animals bound for the Allies. This effort led to the establishment of a laboratory for biological agents for sabotage.

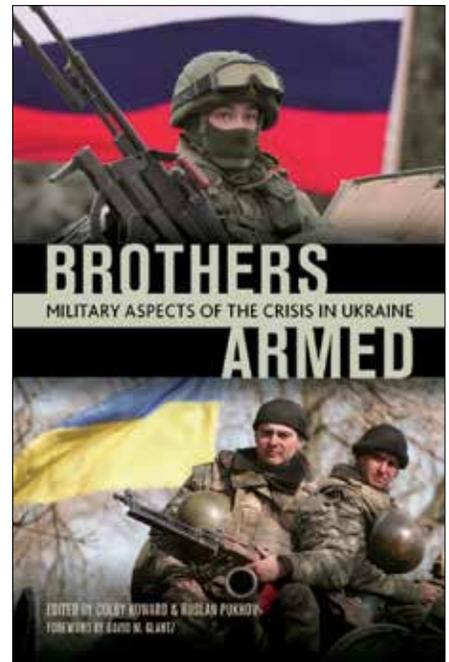
Each of these events involved assessments of the existing law of armed conflict, whether pertaining to occupation and the treatment of civilians or the war at sea and the treatment of merchant shipping, neutral or not. The German approach to legal issues in this context differed markedly from the British and French. For the British the most important test involved the blockade: what was required by the technology of war at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, whether starving an opponent was lawful or even worthwhile, and related questions about

close and continuous blockade as well as the rights and obligations of neutrals. The British interdepartmental cabinet system ensured that civilian and legal views were continuously part of the decisionmaking process. French decisionmaking also coordinated civilian and legal views, particularly where potentially explosive issues were involved. German decisionmaking followed different patterns. The Germans used poison gas for the first time without leaving behind a paper trail to illuminate the decisionmaking process, unlike in the case of unrestricted submarine warfare, meaning sink without warning. *A Scrap of Paper* principally compares British and German (and here and there French, Austrian, Russian, and American) approaches to the problems presented by the nature of World War I, the rules of international law, and the evolution of warfighting and international law during the conflict. The result is a cautionary tale for the contemporary policymaker and warfighter.

*A Scrap of Paper* is an illuminating study in relations between civilian and military establishments and the terrible impact of self-regard and hubris. The book is deeply learned (the author appears to have taught herself much international law), well written, arrestingly original, and accessible to the ordinary reader. It is recommended for serious students of international relations and strategy. It reminds us forcibly both that Clemenceau, France's World War I prime minister, had it right when he stated that war was too serious a business to be left to generals alone and that military necessity and military convenience are not synonymous. JFQ

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### Brothers Armed: Military Aspects of the Crisis in Ukraine

Edited by Colby Howard and Ruslan Pukhov  
 East View Press, 2014  
 236 pp. \$89.95  
 ISBN: 978-1879944220

Reviewed by Michael Kofman

**B**rothers Armed is an edited anthology comprising several essays detailing the history of Crimea, the post-Soviet history of the Russian and Ukrainian armed forces, and a detailed account of Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014. This volume is timely, especially given the dearth of existing scholarly sources on some of the subjects covered. It provides great insights into the annexation, comprehensively analyzes the historical context as well as the existing military balance, and delivers a full accounting in an objective and dispassionate manner.

The first chapter by Vasilij Kashin briefly covers the history of Crimea until its controversial transfer from Russia to Ukraine in 1954 by Nikita Khrushchev. A change of borders intended mostly for pragmatic reasons, the transfer proved unpopular with Russians and became

a lasting problem between the two successor countries when Boris Yeltsin pushed for a hasty dissolution of the Soviet Union. Kashin explains that “the Crimean issue was never completely forgotten, but it was seen as relatively unimportant” as long as Moscow sought to achieve other goals in Ukraine, sacrificing Crimea in an effort to “draw the whole of Ukraine into its orbit.” An added insight is that Russia made little official effort to retain its influence in Crimea during the 1990s, or stir up trouble there, but a personal crusade by Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov deserves most of the credit for preserving Russian influence on the peninsula.

Sergey Denisentsev next describes the Ukraine’s military inheritance from the Soviet Union. Ukraine received “the second most powerful armed forces in Europe after Russia, and the fourth most powerful in the world.” He describes the degradation of a formidable force, left without a budget, purpose, or political support as “completely unprecedented in terms of its speed and scale.” The chapter assesses some roughly \$89 billion of inherited military assets (\$150 billion adjusted for inflation), detailing some of the Soviet Union’s best technical assets.

Anton Lavrov and Aleksey Nikolsky then discuss why Ukraine largely neglected its armed forces, letting them deteriorate. Ukraine drastically cut manpower but maintained the Soviet mobilization-centric configuration and large stockpiles of equipment that were costly to maintain but provided little capability. Interestingly, the forces were all stationed on the western front because of existing Soviet infrastructure, and no funding was ever allocated to rebase units in the eastern half of the country. The reforms that did occur were pushed through by a pro-Western government in Kiev, starting in 2005, because of its desire to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Ukraine’s parliament, however, consistently underfunded the defense budget, undermining any attempts at reform, training, or modernization.

Russia’s war with Georgia had an unexpected suppressive effect, suspending Ukraine’s hopes of joining NATO and

thus nullifying any impetus for further military reforms. A disastrous scheme by the government in 2009 to fund a large percentage of the defense budget by selling surplus equipment fell through, leaving the armed forces bankrupt and without food or electricity. As a cumulative consequence, by 2012 “some 92% of Ukraine’s hardware was at least 20 years old, and 52% was older than 25 years.” Lavrov and Nikolsky paint a clear picture of how and why Ukraine ended up having barely 5,000 combat-ready troops in 2014, as well as few flying aircraft and hardly any functioning ships.

Mikhail Barabanov follows up with two excellent chapters on Russia’s own efforts at military reform. First came a series of fruitless attempts by defense ministers prior to 2008, when Russia fought two wars in Chechnya by creating ad hoc task forces and seeking to create a small combat force within a large mass mobilization army composed of skeleton units. The country was unable to “support or execute either.” Russia’s units sent untrained soldiers into Chechnya, sapping overall strength to field individual units, which combined into ineffective task forces.

This pattern changed when Vladimir Putin appointed Anatoliy Serdyukov as minister of defense to execute a radical transformation. The goal was to abandon mass mobilization in favor of an army that was consolidated, fully manned, employed a brigade structure, and intended for conflicts on Russia’s periphery instead of a major war with NATO. The process described is fitful, consolidating and transforming the military but throwing it into turmoil. Some of the essential reforms were ultimately discarded or partially rescinded by Sergei Shoigu, the current minister of defense. By 2014, Russia had a radically more capable and combat-ready force to deal with Ukraine than it did in the Russian-Georgian war, but many of its fundamental problems, such as undermanned formations and dependence on short-term conscription, remain unresolved.

Aleksey Nikolsky details the formation of Russia’s new special operations forces in 2011; these forces were designed for

independent operations as Western analogues, leading to their eventual debut in the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Dmitry Boltenikov navigates the military and political status of the Black Sea Fleet, both the force itself and its political relevance, from Ukraine’s independence to the present. This history segues into an intricate account of Russia’s operation to annex Crimea, where Moscow took advantage of several unique factors, including its naval base, local concern and trepidation at events in Kiev, political missteps by the interim national authority, and an early tactical advantage.

A disguised insertion of special operations forces, supported by local marines already garrisoned, rapidly isolated and nullified Ukraine’s forces throughout Crimea, which were numerically superior and retained much heavier firepower. Reinforcements via airlift and sealift established complete control, while proximity to mainland Russia allowed for heavier gear to arrive. With some exceptions, the affair was bloodless and surprisingly civil, concluding with the majority of Ukrainian troops joining Russia in the end. It is a remarkable account of tactical success, and a testament to select improvements within the Russian armed forces, but qualified by unique factors that make it almost impossible to repeat elsewhere.

The book concludes with Vyacheslav Tseluyko’s chapter on how to reform and modernize Ukraine’s force with an eye to further conventional conflict with Russia. He proposes a defense mindset, repairing existing systems and relying on standoff artillery, along with hopes for high-tech Western military assistance. It provides great background and ideas, though the scenarios discussed in Ukraine’s Donbass region are dated given current events on the ground.

As a whole, this volume is an excellent compendium for experts on Russia’s and Ukraine’s militaries, but is equally accessible to newcomers, offering background, context, and insights on the annexation of Crimea. JFQ

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