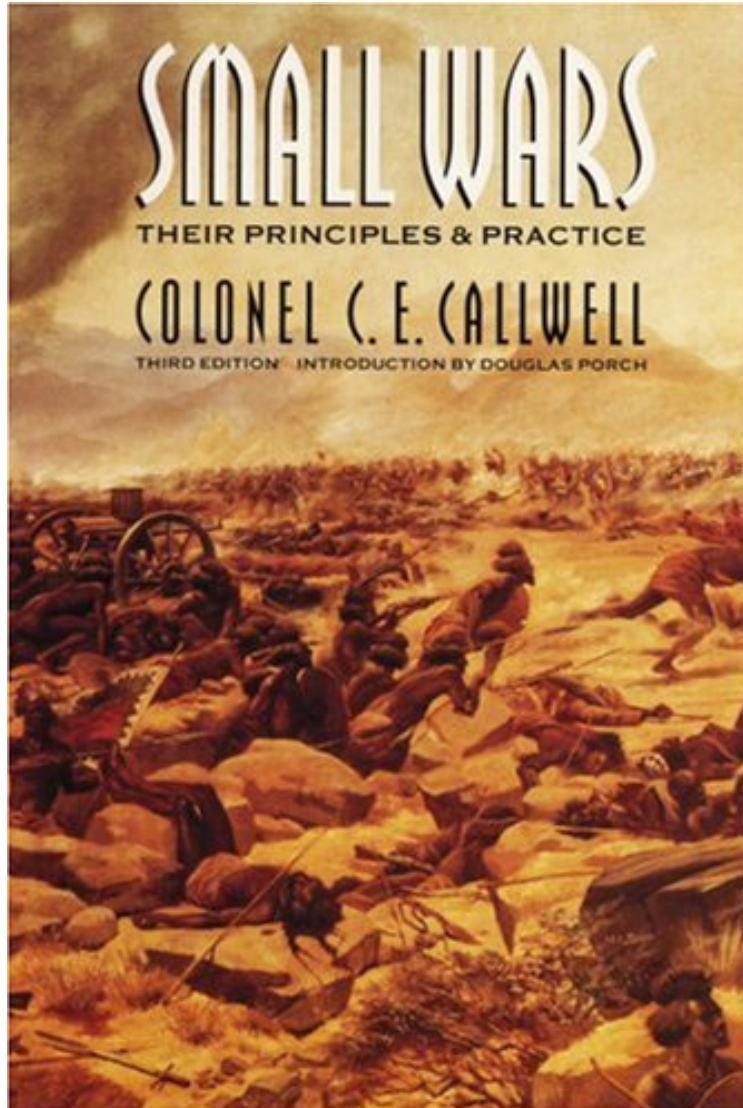


[Library ebook] Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice (Third Edition)

Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice (Third Edition)

C. E. Callwell

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C. E. Callwell : Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice (Third Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice (Third Edition):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. 19th Century Irregular WarfareBy fitzallingThe author reviews the strategy and tactics largely of European colonial powers in what he calls irregular, and we now call asymmetric, warfare. First off, he refers to the European's local opponents as "semi-civilized, savages, Asiatics", etc. So, if you are possessed of a strong dose of political correctness, I predict that you will have difficulty with the book. With this observation duly noted, Major Callwell sees the basic strengths of the western forces arising from their discipline and

generally superior weaponry. Their opponents' basic strengths lay in superior knowledge of the territory in which the western forces must operate and a general ability to avoid battle on unfavorable terms. Indeed, bringing local opponents to battle must be the chief objective of the colonial forces. Aggressively forcing battle, even when facing great odds, is, in the author's view, essential to success. The book is very detailed on the issues of warfare, even including a short section on the use of camels. Maintenance of morale, intelligence gathering, difficulties of logistics, battle tactics, the leadership of small units and much more are addressed in great detail. As I read the book, I thought of what has changed and what remains a constant. Communications in the 19th century was a constant challenge with the ability to contact troops or forces sometimes almost non-existent. Communications may still fail today, but communications should generally be much improved. Automatic weapons were just coming into use at this time and the author notes both the advantages of these weapons and their limitations. I don't believe that the author fully appreciated the incredible impact these weapons would have just a decade or two later in the First World War. Logistics created grave difficulties then, as now. Supplying troops with food, water and ammunition, and protecting these supplies, demanded careful attention. In my mind, the book forced me to consider the challenges of supplying forces in combat more than I had previously done. If you have an interest in this area, I recommend this book for an historical perspective on asymmetric warfare in the 19th century. For further reading, Max Boot's "The Savage Wars of Peace" provides an American perspective on this type of warfare focused more on the early 20th century; Robert Kaplan's "Imperial Grunts" and David Kilcullen's "The Accidental Guerrilla" provide a more current view of the American approach to this type of warfare.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Exhaustive study of Small Wars

By E. M. Van Court

Col. Callwell wrote an exhaustive study of the tactics and strategies of guerrilla warfare and insurgency... a hundred years ago. Because of this, it is utterly unacceptable in delicate and sensitive company, as it assumes that the reader implicitly accepts the empire and its colonies as the norm. But if you are neither delicate nor sensitive, and have an abiding interest in the theory and practice of unconventional warfare, counterinsurgency, guerrilla warfare, stability and support operations, and all the rest of those various names for what fall under the collective term "small wars". Col. Callwell discusses strategy and tactics in the greatest imaginable detail, with extensive examples for every point. He starts with overarching principles like the need for robust logistics and intelligence and the imperative to be flexible and not be limited to conventional formations and doctrine. He addresses in detail the impact of terrain, vegetation, and local culture on operations. The attention to the need for security and to night operations was fairly innovative for the time, and hinted at the commando tactics that were going to emerge only a decade or so after this book was published. One of the most telling lessons of the whole book is "deal not with a hostile army, but with a hostile population", a premise that is often forgotten by militaries prepared for symmetrical, national armies. The only drawback with this work is that it is written from the perspective of an imperial officer dealing with colonies. As tempting as punitive operations may be, they are effectively banned by the Geneva accords and international law. And many other aspects of this work are no longer acceptable when the jaundiced eye of the 24 hour news cycle rests upon our military, and every viewer can voice their opinion of what they thought they were seeing on the internet. A comprehensive study with great vignettes to illustrate each major point, and meticulous attention to detail from an era unencumbered by PowerPoint and instantaneous communication. An excellent historical document with valid lessons for today.

E.M. Van Court

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must read for Senior Leaders and Politicians involved in foreign policy.

By Stephen Becket

A great read, if not very politically correct by modern standards. This book proves that the British Officer of the 1900s was as professional in his career as any in the world and better than most and certainly comparable to the Imperial German Officer, if not more adaptable and less doctrinaire. The lessons of this book are as relevant today as they were then. This book should have been read by the Allied leaders of the recent Iraq and Afghan Wars. There is more to small wars than overwhelming technological advantage and this book demonstrates that.

Originally published in 1896, *Small Wars* is an ambitious attempt to analyze and draw lessons from Western experience in fighting campaigns of imperial conquest. The quality of C. E. Callwell's analysis, the sweep of his knowledge, and his ability to integrate information from an impressive variety of experiences resulted in *Small Wars*'s reputation as a minor classic. For the historian, *Small Wars* remains a useful and vital analysis of irregular warfare experiences ranging from Hoche's suppression of the Vendée revolt during the French Revolution, to the British wars against semi-organized armies of Marathas and Sikhs in mid-nineteenth-century India, to the Boer War of 1899–1902. The military specialist discovers in Callwell lessons applicable to what today is called "low-intensity conflict." his message is clear, and it is relevant to current debates about conflicts as diverse as those in Bosnia, Somalia, and Vietnam. Technological superiority is an important, but seldom critical, ingredient in the success of low-intensity operations. An ability to adapt to terrain and climate, to match the enemy in mobility and inventiveness, to collect intelligence, and above all the capacity to "seize what the enemy prizes most," will determine success or failure. This reprint adds vital historical dimension to the growing literature on unconventional conflict.

From the Back Cover

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About the Author Douglas Porch is a professor of strategy at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island. His most recent book is *The French Secret Services*.