

John Pettegrew, *Light It Up: The Marine Eye for Battle in the War for Iraq*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2015. Bibliography, Index. 240pp. ISBN: 978-1-42-141785-1. Hardback. £22.50.

In *Light It Up*, John Pettegrew seeks to illuminate the crucial role that contemporary visual technologies and cultures occupy in the American capacity for 'force projection' in the early twenty-first century. Through the prism of the U.S. Marine Corps's participation in the 2003 Iraq War, this thoughtful and stimulating book traces the outline of the 'synthetic eye for battle' emerging from 'a composite system of seeing that coupled high-tech sensors for killing from ever-greater distances with a visual culture of motion pictures and video simulations that eroticised and stylised the action and violence for ground war' (p.155).

With regard to the first component of this martial system, Pettegrew explores the reliance of deployed Marines upon various sensor technologies that mediate the human perception of the battlefield, from night vision goggles and thermal sights to drone camera video feeds and GPS-enabled cartographic visualisations of friendly forces. Increasingly linked together via a vast grid of information processing and exchange, this array of perceptual prostheses constitutes a key element of the Pentagon vision of a revolutionary network-centric way of warfare whose most feverish promoters see as delivering an omniscient and omnipotent war machine. While such grandiose ambitions have been frustrated to date, not least by the course taken by the intervention in Iraq, these new assemblages of technology and human materiel undoubtedly furnish new sources of combat power in the form of 'enhanced situational awareness' in conditions of both night and day.

The second facet of the 'marine eye' concerns the modes of representation and simulation of conflict that prepare and prime the individual soldier for the act of killing. Pettegrew begins by charting the historical evolution of the medium of the moving image from Hollywood's Golden Age productions to amateur YouTube videos, highlighting in particular the latter's genre of 'war pornography' in which frenetic war footage and music are combined in such a way as to elicit titillation and pleasure from its viewers. The extent to which the viewing and vicarious enjoyment of such films actually translates into a determination to emulate the actions represented therein in real life is of course difficult to ascertain but they certainly contribute to shaping soldiers' expectations of combat and enact a powerful aestheticisation of war that draws on a wider cinematic repertoire. As for video games and combat simulations, they immerse their users in interactive environments that not only allow them to play out martial fantasies but also demand hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness that serves to set 'muscle memory for fighting' (p.86) and instil battle tactics. Pettegrew does however underline the tension that

REVIEWS

arises between this psychological and somatic readying for the delivery of lethal violence and the restraint required in the pursuit of counter-insurgency.

The final chapter considers the long-term implications of these above trends, discerning the ascendancy of a post-human military culture that presents a profound challenge to the Marine Corps's identity and, beyond that, to some of the fundamental traits of the human experience of war throughout history. Indeed, when the Pentagon's advanced R&D arm asserts that soldiers with 'no physical, physiological, or cognitive limitations will be key to survival and operational dominance in the future' (p.128), it suggests there will be very little place for the human and its foibles on tomorrow's battlefield. Increasingly subsumed within cybernetic architectures of perception and cognition involving sensor fusion, artificial intelligence decision aids, and synthetic visual environments, the contemporary warfighter can already be understood as merely one information-processing node connected to the wider military network of organised violence. Pettegrew sombrely notes that 'one senses a computational model eclipsing an anthropological conception of marines and soldiers and a convergence in perspective between the human warfighter and automated weapons system' (pp.159-160). Among its most fateful consequences is the delimiting of 'warrior subjectivity [as] a self-reflexive perspective on one's place and actions' (p.160) that must surely be the basis for individual ethical decision-making on the battlefield, however fraught any such moral agency can ever be.

While some readers will perhaps balk at some of Pettegrew's boldest conclusions, they will all certainly find in *Light It Up* a provocative and important investigation of the optics of modern combat and a considered reflection upon its ramifications for a warrior ethos that is central to the Marine Corps's self-identity and the repository of an age-old search for meaning amidst the searing experience of combat.

ANTOINE BOUSQUET

Birkbeck College, University of London

David French, *Fighting EOKA: The British Counter-Insurgency Campaign on Cyprus, 1955-1959*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. 384pp. ISBN 978-0-19-872934-1. Hardback. Price £65.00.

David French's *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1954-1967* (Oxford University Press, 2011) provided a reliable, comparative and thematic guide to Britain's postwar campaigns, with categories such as the 'Colonial State', 'Varieties of Coercion', 'Dirty Wars' and 'Winning Hearts and Minds'. It also advanced the thesis that, however nuanced and politically aware Britain's campaigns might have been, at one level they