

REPORT

West Point Undergraduate Historical Review



Volume 16
Spring 2026



WEST POINT
PRESS

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Volume 16, Spring 2026



WEST POINT PRESS

Published in 2026 by West Point Press
Taylor Hall, Building 600
West Point, NY 10996

REPORT: West Point Undergraduate Historical Review is published under the direction of the Department of History & War Studies at the United States Military Academy.

ISSN: 2993-5989

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

In support of West Point's Academic Year 2025-2026 theme, **"Projecting Lethality: Addressing the Multidimensional Challenges in the Indo-Pacific,"** this year's edition of the *REPORT* examines the foundations of military power beyond the battlefield. The theme asks cadets and faculty to think seriously about deterrence, alliances, and power projection in one of the world's most important strategic regions. This edition contributes to that conversation by turning to the past. Its essays show that military effectiveness depends not only on weapons but also on the systems and ideas that enable states to build and sustain their forces.

The 2026 *REPORT* features four works; each selected for its distinct approach to military history. Together, these essays study the relationship between strategy and execution. They move from the railroads of the American Civil War to revolutionary China, Cold War Korea, and the early nuclear age. At West Point, the study of history supports the Academy's broader mission of preparing cadets for thoughtful and responsible leadership. Such preparation requires cadets to examine both achievement and failure across time. These four works offer insight into the demands of command, the limits of technology, and the difficulty of translating power into lasting advantage.

Claire Russell's essay on Herman Haupt and the Gettysburg Campaign examines the decisive role of railroads and telegraphs in Union victory. She argues that Haupt's management of military rail operations sustained the Army of the Potomac before, during, and after the battle. Her work reveals that logistics did not merely support battlefield success but rather made continued operations possible.

Elizabeth Fetter analyzes Mao Zedong's use of the

Yan'an Rectification Movement to consolidate power within the Chinese Communist Party. Her essay shows that Mao Zedong strengthened his position by reshaping party doctrine and distancing Chinese communism from Soviet models. Through ideology, Mao turned political influence into institutional control.

Angus MacKellar examines South Korea's pursuit of self-reliant national defense under Park Chung-hee. He argues that Chung-hee's leadership and militarized economic policy drove South Korea's strategic catch-up against North Korea. His essay offers a timely study of defense industrialization and alliance dependence on the Korean Peninsula.

Jacob Battle explores the reality behind America's early nuclear monopoly after World War II. He argues that the United States possessed atomic weapons before it had fully developed the doctrine, intelligence, and delivery systems needed to use them effectively. His essay challenges the assumption that technological superiority automatically creates strategic advantage.

This edition of the *REPORT* highlights the difficult work behind military power and reminds us that lethality depends on logistics, political authority, industrial capacity, and sound strategy— not just advanced weaponry. Through these essays, we invite readers to think more deeply about military history and the strategic problems that continue to shape national defense.

We hope you enjoy this year's edition.

Sapientia Valet, "Wisdom Prevails!"

Thomas Chute
CDT Thomas Chute,
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