

## Military Adaptation in War

*Military Adaptation in War* addresses one of the most persistent, yet rarely examined, problems that military organizations confront: namely, the problem of how to adapt under the trying, terrifying conditions of war. This work builds on the book that Dr. Williamson Murray edited with Allan Millett on military innovation (a quite different problem, although similar in some respects). In Clausewitzian terms, war is a contest, an interactive duel, which is of indeterminate length and presents a series of intractable problems at every level, from policy and strategy down to the tactical. Moreover, that the enemy is adapting at the same time presents military organizations with an ever-changing set of conundrums that offers no easy solutions. As the British general James Wolfe suggested before Quebec: “War is an option of difficulties.” Dr. Murray provides an in-depth analysis of the problems that military forces confront in adapting to these difficulties.

Williamson Murray is Professor Emeritus of History at The Ohio State University. At present he is a defense consultant and commentator on historical and military subjects in Washington, D.C. He is co-editor of *The Shaping of Grand Strategy* (with Richard Hart Sinnreich and James Lacey, Cambridge, 2011) and *The Making of Peace* (with James Lacey, Cambridge, 2008); *The Past as Prologue* (with Richard Hart Sinnreich, Cambridge, 2006); *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300–2050* (with MacGregor Knox, Cambridge, 2001); *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (with Allan R. Millett, Cambridge, 1996); and *The Making of Strategy* (with Alvin Bernstein and MacGregor Knox, Cambridge, 1994).

**Military Adaptation in War**  
*With Fear of Change*

WILLIAMSON MURRAY



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*Dedicated to*

*Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, USMC (ret.)  
Marine, educator, intellectual*

*Colonel Richard H. Sinnreich, USA (ret.)  
Soldier, educator, historian*

*And to the members of the Class of 1957, U.S. Naval Academy  
for their commitment to strategic  
education and military history*

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## Preface

Innumerable people have helped with this effort to suggest the extent of the problems associated with the adaptation that military institutions involved in the conduct of combat operations invariably must confront. In particular, I must thank Andrew Marshall for the trust he showed in my work by providing the funding for much of the research and writing of the manuscript on which this book rests. I must also thank my colleagues at the Institute for Defense Analyses, who read and commented extensively on all of the chapters in their various iterations. In particular, I am grateful for all the work and hours that Karl Lowe, Jim Lacey, Kevin Woods, Jim Kurtz, and, in particular, Katy-Dean Price put in in attempting to whip ill-formed thoughts and syntax into a presentable whole. Outside of the Institute for Defense Analyses, I am particularly grateful for the succinct, sharp, and intelligent comments that Richard Sinnreich provided as he read through various drafts. I also need to thank Shimon Naveh, Dov Tamari, and Ofra Gracier for all their work in arranging, translating where necessary, and supporting my research efforts in Israel. I would be remiss if I were to not also thank the Class of 1957 of the United States Naval Academy for the Chair that the members endowed at the academy and which they allowed me to hold for two years. Finally, I must thank my long-suffering wife, Dr. Lesley Mary Smith, who patiently read and reread chapter after chapter and who attempted to force me to support my suppositions with real arguments and real facts. In the end though, whatever mistakes exist in this work are mine and mine alone.