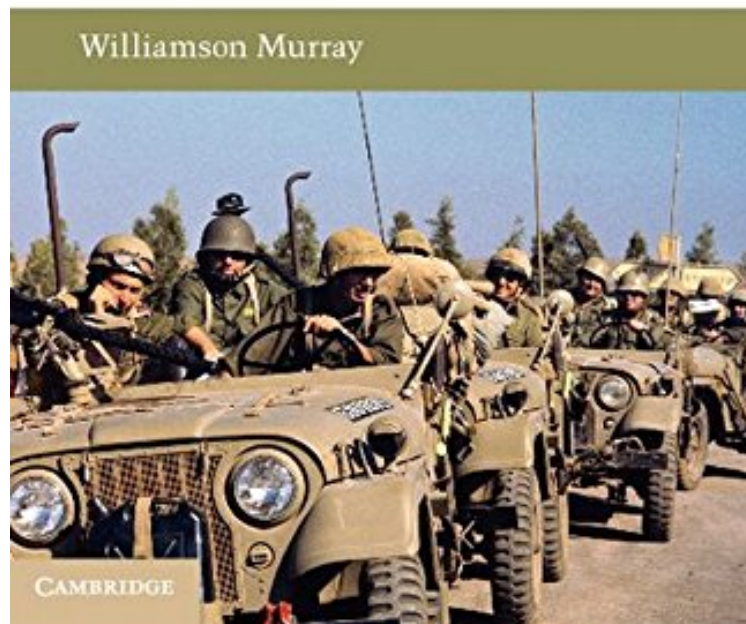


Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change

Williamson Murray

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Williamson Murray : Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very good review of the subjectBy Otavio Maia ChelottiThe book is essential reading on the subject of adaptation and flexibility in war. The main point the author makes is actually simple: each military creates and lives within a cultural milieu, which essentially has the power to blind most of its

members to their own weaknesses and reduces their sense of reality. Add to this the well-known adage that no plan survives the first contact with the enemy, who will also be continuously adapting, and one has all too often a recipe for disaster, from outright defeat to higher casualty rates. To this, the best antidote, in the author's opinion, is to create a system of critical analysis and prompt feedback at a tactical and operational levels, as well as enabling frank discussion at strategic levels.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Adaption vs Innovation* By Jon E. Jeckell
Simply amazing. Williamson Murray differentiates military adaptation (what you do in war) from military innovation (which is done in peacetime to prepare for war) and uses several case studies to examine why some organizations succeed or fail at this. Moreover, the book shows that some organizations were very effective at one time or in certain conditions, but utterly failed under others. For example, the German Army was extremely good at critical, frank examination of the current operational environment and their performance within it to facilitate tactical adaptation. However, they failed to adapt at the operational or strategic level and failed to maintain their ability to adapt as the war progressed. He also demonstrated the interactive nature of war by revealing what appeared to be a stalemate was actually a result of both sides adapting to each other's changes. The book also contrasted the relationship between the British government's partnership with its scientists, with the Nazi regime's use of its scientists. Like the Soviet Union, the Nazis discouraged research into radio or information technologies for fear of malcontents stirring up the population. Murray also does a great job of untangling the interdependency of doctrine, tactics, and technology, and how these fit within the operational, economic and strategic context. He emphasizes the role of technology within the larger system to achieve strategic ends. My only complaint is that Murray sometimes reduces failures to lack of imagination or incompetence, rather than to systemic patterns of activity inherent in organizations. Organizations tend to optimize their performance against known conditions, even if they do so tacitly, and can become dysfunctional when conditions change. I'd love to see a mod of this using technology strategy or organizational theory in addition to the analysis he's done here.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Understanding adaptation wins wars.* By Markmnk
This is an extremely useful book for students at Military Staff Colleges. The book covers five periods of history where dramatic adaptation has taken place. The book highlights that the armed forces that can adapt the fastest will win. Importantly the winning combatant adapts fastest at the tactical, operational and strategic level.

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 volume that Professor Williamson Murray edited with Allan Millett on military innovation (a quite different problem, though 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, the fact that the enemy is adapting at the same time presents military organizations with an ever-changing set of conundrums that offer up 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.

"Murray's analysis of the leadership of Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding during the Battle of Britain is alone worth the price of the book." David T. Zabecki, *Military History*
"Williamson Murray has crafted a compelling argument that adaptation in war is a difficult, problematic process." Captain Stanley D. M. Carpenter, *Proceedings*
"This is a rich field to be explored, not only by academics and military historians, but, most importantly, the armed forces themselves - but Murray could not be expected to cover everything. He has produced not only an excellent historical account of adaptation in twentieth-century warfare, but a forensic dissection of the common factors and approaches that can be applied to improve the chances of a military organisation successfully adapting to future challenges. It is the best single volume study of the subject yet written, and deserves a place on the bookshelf with Smith's *The Utility of Force* and Cohen and Gooch's *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* - and alongside Sun Tzu and Clausewitz." Ben Barry, *Survival*
"... an important work for those interested in the events it covers, as well as for anyone concerned with how armed forces tick." A. A. Nofi, www.strategypage.com
About the Author
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 Making of Peace* (with Jim Lacey); *The Past as Prologue* (with Richard Hart Sinnreich); *The Dynamics of Military Revolution, 1300-2050* (with MacGregor Knox); *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period* (with Allan R. Millett); and *The Making of Strategy* (with Alvin Bernstein and MacGregor Knox).