



Innovation and Warfighting

U.S. Army

Innovation is the enabler of the future. In a seminal article entitled “Revolutions in Military Affairs,” James FitzSimonds and Jan van Tol examine how innovation can lead to a revolution. They outline criteria for winning the innovation battle and advocate fostering a military culture that promotes thinking in an unconstrained fashion about future warfighting.

Colin Gray then examines the strategic implications of such revolutions in “RMAs and the Dimensions of Strategy.” He argues that RMAs can change the conduct and character of warfare but are not an antidote for strategic ills. The dimensions of strategy are eternal and ubiquitous.

While historians have largely ignored RMAs, Williamson Murray accepts the challenge in “Thinking about Revolutions in Military Affairs.” He suggests ways to conceptualize RMAs of the past and interpret the implications of history for the future.

Kenneth McKenzie appeals to history to illustrate the difficulty of harnessing technology to military purposes in “An Ecstasy of Fumbling:

Doctrine and Innovation.” He looks at the German effort to integrate the technology of gases during World War I. More importantly, he shows how it cost dearly in the short and long term. As he states, we “should not hesitate to apply the lessons in current situations.”

Many innovative concepts currently being discussed were framed by Thomas Mahnken in “War in the Information Age,” which won first prize in the *JFQ* RMA Essay Contest in 1995. He addresses the need to integrate a myriad of systems: sensors, shooters, and command and control. This will result in shock warfare—actions that foreclose enemy options—and establishes the need to target information nodes. Ultimately, an information advantage will be decisive.

Finally, today’s RMA will have an impact on things temporal. It will compress the decision-making cycle and require that operations be planned and executed faster than before. Ajay Singh explores the implications of this phenomenon in “Time: The New Dimension in War.” **JFQ**