

From the Editor

This issue brings together six articles, all on twentieth-century topics. A number are slightly longer than some journals offer to publish these days, but *Vulcan* welcomes in-depth investigations of topics along with more focused contributions. I certainly have found myself writing up a research project, getting about two-thirds the way done and realizing I am already over 8,000 words. So here we will top out a little over 10,000 if the topic merits it.

The first three of our papers derive from a session from the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) conference in Milan in 2019 on “Visual Representations of Military Technology in the Great War: What Happened and Why It Mattered.” Andrea Siotto, Noemi Quagliotti, and Bart Hacker all delve into different new technologies of WWI—respectively: sound-ranging, photography (and particularly the panorama), and camouflage; German camouflage techniques and rhetoric, but also their vertical camouflage in particular; and how soldier-artists stationed with troops on the Western Front perceived and reproduced tanks—to explore how this was not only the “war to end all wars,” but the war that started to much with respect to new technology, technologists, and society’s reaction to them. Common among these three authors is the recognition that new techniques and technologies are often adapted to the needs of wartime, but so too does society (both within and without the military) adapt to their arrival and meanings.

Then follow two articles on the era of the Second World War, the first by John Moremon that explores the important but neglected role of the Thompson submachinegun (SMG) in a particular early conflict in the Pacific Theatre in New Guinea. By investigating unit-level contemporaneous reports and later histories, oral histories from the soldiers, and numerous military and government production and equipment orders, he has managed to piece together the importance of that particular gun in the first year of the conflict, before it was supplanted by other SMGs for operational, technical, and even nationalistic reasons. Yoel Bergman’s article that follows, on the possible “true” founder of the 4.2 recoilless rifle, takes a fairly well known class of weapons and interrogates its WWII origins by examining contradictions in official histories. Comparing these with other sources—notably the patent record—Bergman manages to show how Clarence Hickman’s work on these weapons may extend all the way to late 1950s tactical nuclear systems like the Davy Crockett.

Rounding out our issue is a detailed study of the birth of Israel's military R&D establishment through the lens of the players in the formation of Hemed, the Israeli Science Corps, during WWII and through the Israeli War for Independence and statehood at the end of the 1940s. By exploring the co-construction of science, technology, politics, and artefacts by the Israeli military in the context of needing to build their own capabilities in the face of the British departure, Ari Barrell demonstrates quite thoroughly how David Ben-Gurion stood central in the Israeli scientific-political-industrial nexus (indeed, perhaps the early Israeli military-industrial complex) and balanced the competing interests from military leaders, scientists, academics, and manufacturers. In the process, he and they created governmental organizations that could fuse them all into a successful whole that has made Israel a scientific and industrial powerhouse today, particularly militarily, despite its small size.



It is also very pleasing to see some of *Vulcan's* research being repurposed for a more popular audience. Kelly DeVries and David Zimmerman have repackaged their *Vulcan* vol. 7 (2019) articles on technological determinism for Kwarsarmay's bimonthly magazine, *Medieval Warfare*, edited by Peter Konieczny. Volume 11, no. 1 is a theme issue on "Technology and Warfare in the Middle Ages" with articles on why "Catapults are still not atomic bombs" by DeVries, and "Neither catapults nor atomic bombs" by Zimmerman. The issue also includes ones on fourteenth and fifteenth-century English fortification in Calais by Dan Spencer, on astral magic (a type of technology, after all) and warfare by Peter Konieczny, and one (full disclosure) by yours truly that hopefully, finally retires the 'stirrup thesis' of feudalism and technological determinism. Having trimmed their papers considerably, it is great to see our authors offer other military history aficionados insights into the arguments that they made in longer format in these pages.

As a reminder, *Vulcan* remains open to research articles on technology in military affairs in all periods and cultures, so although there may be more technology in evidence in warfare in the last century or so, we would like to expand the conversation, including into comparative and cross-cultural analyses. If you or someone you know is working on the history of military technology from any angle, please consider getting in touch to discuss a project idea or submit your work through our EditorialManager™ portal at www.brill.com/vulc. And if you are aware of recent books on military technologies that we should be aware of for review, please contact our book review editor, Rich Hamerla (rhamerla@ou.edu).

Despite editorial challenges faced by all journals these days—indeed, I am seeing discussions of declining and delayed submissions, slow reviewer behavior, and even various products just not coming through in the end, from publishers and other editors (and even in granting agencies) for the last year and more now—journal publishing seems to remain as an important bastion of academic publishing that has not quite yet been fundamentally challenged by a global pandemic. Certainly there is a demand for information as well as outlets out there, and it is hoped that once the conference circuit returns to whatever the new normal is going to be in the future (though I write this just as the omicron variant of Covid is emerging...) and we all figure out how to live in this brave new world, we all will set the proverbial pen to paper to share our research with the world. I wish you well in your own researches and hope that you may consider *Vulcan* as an outlet for them in the future.

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