

This Ain't the First Time We Cut the Grass: Military Innovation in the Interwar Period



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In 1929, William Lassister, a veteran of the First World War, wrote the following:

It is terribly difficult for military men to keep their methods adapted to rapidly changing times. Between wars the military business slumps. Our people lose interest. Congress concerns itself with cutting the Army than with building it up. And the troops... find a large part of their time and energy taken up with caring for buildings, grounds, and other impedimenta. In view of all the inertias to be overcome, and in view of the fact that our lives and honor are not in peril from outside aggression, it is not likely that our Army is going to be kept to an up-to-the-minute state of preparedness.

For many, his description of garrison life in between the wars accurately describes their experiences serving today. It is for this reason that leaders can benefit from studying the leadership, the innovations, and the training methodologies of those officers and NCOs who prepared our Army to fight and win in World War II. The stories of Conner, Marshall, Eisenhower, and Patton provide tremendous insights into the leadership required to prepare our organizations for future conflicts. Additionally, by studying the reforms of the Germany

military led by Hans Von Seeckt or their method of educating their officer corps in tactical decision-making, leaders might find practices that would prove beneficial today.

Below is a list of books that give leaders a glimpse into the period between the two World Wars. Obviously, this list is not all encompassing, so I encourage you to add additional books in the comments section below.

[*Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*, by Dave Johnson](#)

[*The Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans Von Seeckt and German Military Reform*, by James Corum](#)

[*Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, by Murray and Millett](#)

[*Grey Eminence: Fox Conner and the Art of Mentorship*, by Edward Cox](#)

[*Patton: A Genius for War*, by Carlo D'Este](#)

[*Command Culture*, by Jorg Muth](#)

[*Battalion Commanders at War*, by Steven Barry](#)

[*The Generals*, by Thomas E. Ricks](#)

[*At Ease: Stories I tell to Friends*, by Dwight Eisenhower](#)

[*George C. Marshall , Vol 1: Education of a General*, by Forest Pogue](#)

[*Cry Havoc: How the Arms Race Drove the World to War, 1931-1941*, by Joseph Maiolo](#)

[*The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War*, by Brian McAllister Linn](#)

["Innovation for the Interwar Years," *Proceedings Magazine* — February 1998 Volume 124/2/I, I40, by Captain James Carman, USN; Colonel Mitchell Triplett, USMC; Commander James Nault, USN; Lieutenant Commander Russell Bartlett, USN; Lieutenant David Adams, USN](#)

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