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“Un travail policier”?

Revolutionary War Theory and the French Army in Algeria (1954-1962)

ABSTRACT: This article examines the French theory of revolutionary war in the context of the Algerian War (1954-1962). Scholarship has focused primarily on the origins of the theory or on its merits as a military strategy but largely ignored anything not written by senior officers. This article explores revolutionary war from the perspective of the soldiers tasked with carrying out the theorists' plans. By comparing what some of its designers wrote about to the realities on the ground a more complete picture of revolutionary war emerges. The author argues that the French Army did try and put in place some aspects of revolutionary war but soldiers executed these ideas poorly, undermining its effectiveness.

KEYWORDS: modern history; Algeria; French Army, Algerian War (1954-1962); Battle of Algiers (1956-1957); *guerre révolutionnaire*; military theory; counterinsurgency; torture

Introduction

Reflecting on his role in the Battle of Algiers (1956-1957), Marcel-Maurice Bigeard (1916-2010), a colonel at the time, wrote in his memoirs: “In fact, it was not a battle but simply, and alas, police work.”¹ For professional soldiers in the French Army like Bigeard, the idea that warfare could be anything other than conventional battles was not only absurd but revolting. In the minds of these officers, waging a battle to win the support of the local population was not as romantic or heroic as killing the enemy. Yet, there was also another group of soldiers who thought the exact opposite. Professionals like Colonel Lacheroy, Colonel Nemo, Colonel Trinquier, and Colonel de Rocquigny believed the nature of warfare had evolved from traditional battles and developed a theory known as *guerre révolutionnaire* (“revolutionary war” or “counter-revolutionary war”) to adapt to these changes.² This article explores the use and effectiveness of revolutionary war in the context of the Algerian War (1954-1962) by focusing on how its ideas were implemented at the ground level by lower-ranking soldiers. While examining the origins of a military theory and exploring an army’s theoretical approaches to war is important for understanding its actions, at the end of the day wars are still fought primarily by junior officers and enlisted men. If scholars wish to learn more about how wars are conducted, they must turn to these men.

French military theorists credited the Chinese communist leader Mao Zedong (1893-1976) for pioneering revolutionary war. Mao’s influential work, *On Guerilla Warfare* (1937), recognized the important role the civilian population played in warfare, marking a shift from the traditional thinking of different spheres for

¹ Marcel-Maurice Bigeard, *Pour une parcelle de gloire* (Paris: Plon, 1975), 276. “En fait: il ne s’agit pas d’une bataille, mais tout simplement, et hélas, d’un travail policier.” The English translation above is mine.

² This article uses the term “revolutionary war” when referring to “*guerre révolutionnaire*,” even though it was the purpose of the respective theory to help defeat revolutionary movements.

civilians and soldiers.³ During the French-Indochina War (1946-1954), French soldiers experienced Mao's theories firsthand, as well as those of the Viet Minh leader Vo Nguyen Giap (1911-2013) who also wrote a treatise on his ideas.⁴ From this experience, French officers wrote their own theories on revolutionary war, outlining what they believed were its key characteristics and how it could best be defeated.⁵ The first chance the army got to put these theories into practice was the Algerian War which erupted almost immediately after the end of the Indochina War (1946-1954). Both professional soldiers and conscripts who served in Algeria wrote memoirs about their experiences, and by analyzing these works a more accurate picture of how the French Army fought the Algerian War emerges.⁶

The scholarship on revolutionary war theory began shortly after the failed Generals' Putsch of Algiers (1961) and the signing of the Évian Accords (1962), the treaty that effectively ended the war. The theory originally caught the attention of political scientists who focused on revolutionary war's influence on civil-military relations and the two army mutinies during the war.⁷ While some military historians began studying revolutionary war and the Algerian War in the 1970s and 1980s, scholars did not show much interest until the terror attacks on

³ Mao Zedong, *On Guerilla Warfare* (1937; San Bernardino, CA: CreateSpace, 2017).

⁴ Vo Nguyen Giap, *People's War, People's Army: The Viet Cong Insurrection Manual for Underdeveloped Countries* (New York: Praeger, 1962).

⁵ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," *Military Review* 37, no. 5 (August 1957): 103-108, trans. and digested from an article in the *Revue militaire d'information* (February-March 1951); Jean M. Nemo, "The Place of Guerilla Action in War," *Military Review* 37, no. 8 (November 1957): 99-107; Colonel de Rocquigny, "Urban Terrorism," *Military Review* 38, no. 11 (February 1959): 93-99; Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, trans. Daniel Lee (1961; London: Praeger Security International, 2006; first published 1961 in French as *La guerre moderne*); David Galula, *Pacification in Algeria, 1956-1958* (1963; Santa Monica: RAND Corporation 2002); Marie-Catherine Villatoux and Paul Villatoux, "Aux origines de la 'guerre révolutionnaire': Le colonel Lacheroy parle" ["The Origins of 'Revolutionary War': Colonel Lacheroy Speaks"], *Revue historique des armées* 268 (September 2012): 45-53.

⁶ Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, trans. Ronald Matthews (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957); Pierre Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon: Memoirs of a Paratrooper*, trans. Max Lerner (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964); Jacques Massu, *La vraie bataille d'Alger* (Paris: Plon, 1971); Bigeard, *Pour une parcelle de gloire*; Simon Murray, *Legionnaire: An Englishman in the French Foreign Legion* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978); Paul Aussaresses, *The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-1957*, trans. Robert Miller (2001; New York: Enigma Books, 2002; first published 2001 in French as *Services spéciaux : Algérie 1955-1957*); Ted Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers: A Memoir* (New York: Smithsonian Books/HarperCollins Publishing, 2005).

⁷ Raoul Girardet, "Civil and Military Power in the Fourth Republic," trans. Martha Finkelstein, in *Changing Patterns of Military Politics*, ed. Samuel P. Huntington (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., 1962), 121-149; Orville Duane Menard, "The Army and the Fifth Republic: The Role of the Army in French Politics" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 1964); George Armstrong Kelly, *Lost Soldiers: The French Army and Empire in Crisis, 1947-1962* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. University Press, 1965); John Steward Ambler, *The French Army in Politics, 1945-1962* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1966); Philip Maynard Williams, *Wars, Plots and Scandals in Post-War France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

September 11, 2001, and the subsequent launching of the "Global War on Terror." The military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq brought counterinsurgency theories to the forefront of military scholarship, as soldiers and scholars looked to the past for ideas on how to wage this type of war. Research led to the French experience in Algeria, as historians and soldiers hoped to find new ideas and understand the success and limitations of their style of counterinsurgency warfare.⁸ Some scholars analyzed revolutionary war from a more theoretical perspective and tried to ascertain where it fits into the different styles of war.⁹ Others explored the relationship between revolutionary war and torture.¹⁰ The Algerian War itself has been covered by scholars from a variety of perspectives, though revolutionary war is not the main emphasis in many of their works.¹¹

While all these works have contributed to the understanding of revolutionary war, they have relied too heavily on the works of senior officers or army reports found in the archives to support their arguments. As the Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminds us, however, archives are selectively created to preserve

⁸ Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972); Michael L. Martin, *Warriors to Managers: The French Military Establishment since 1945* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1980); Frédéric Guelton, "The French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation in Counter-Guerilla Warfare' (CIPCG) at Arzew," trans. Martin S. Alexander, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 25, no. 2 (2002): 35-53; Alexander J. Zervoudakis, "From Indochina to Algeria: Counter-Insurgency Lessons" in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies*, ed. Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and John F. V. Keiger (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 43-60; Christopher Craddock and Michael L. R. Smith, "'No Fixed Values': A Reinterpretation of the Influence of the Theory of *Guerre Révolutionnaire* and the Battle of Algiers, 1956-1957," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 68-105; Etienne de Durand, "France," in *Understanding Counterinsurgency: Doctrine, Operations, and Challenges*, ed. Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (New York: Routledge, 2010), 11-27; Zachary E. Rish, "Failure, Success, and Lessons Learned: The Legacy of the Algerian War and Its Influence on Counterinsurgency Doctrine" (M.A. thesis, Clemson University, 2010); Jacques Frémeaux, "The French Experience in Algeria: Doctrine, Violence, and Lessons Learnt," *Civil Wars* 14, no. 1 (2012): 49-62.

⁹ Peter Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare from Indochina to Algeria: The Analysis of a Political and Military Doctrine* (New York: Praeger, 1964); Michael P. M. Finch, "A Total War of the Mind: The French Theory of *la guerre révolutionnaire*, 1954-1958," *War in History* 25, no. 3 (July 2018): 410-434.

¹⁰ Rita Maran, *Torture: The Role of Ideology in the French-Algerian War* (New York: Praeger, 1989); William B. Cohen, "The Sudden Memory of Torture: The Algerian War in French Discourse, 2000-2001," *French Politics, Culture and Society* 19, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 82-94; Jo McCormack, "Torture during the Algerian War," *Modern and Contemporary France* 10, no. 3 (August 2002): 392-396; Louis A. DiMarco, "Losing the Moral Compass: Torture and *Guerre Révolutionnaire* in the Algerian War," *Parameters: United States Army War College Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (2006): 63-76.

¹¹ See, for example, Paul Henissart, *Wolves in the City: The Death of French Algeria* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970); John E. Talbott, *The War without a Name: France in Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Random House, 1980); Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (1977; New York: New York Review of Books, 2006); Martin Evans, *Algeria: France's Undeclared War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Matthew James Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

a certain narrative and should not be fully trusted to relate the whole historical truth.¹² Therefore, this article approaches revolutionary war from the lower ranks to understand to what extent the theory was implemented and whether or not it was successful. The French Army did try to implement some core ideas of revolutionary war, but the soldiers tasked with carrying out these ideas did so in an ineffective manner, which ultimately undermined it. Since revolutionary war was executed so poorly and appears to have never been fully understood by French soldiers, it was a failure. In war, success on the battlefield is the only thing that matters, and while a theory or strategy may look promising on paper, if it does not succeed, it should be considered a failure. The article begins with a brief examination of the roots of revolutionary war, then compares some of its key components, as espoused by some of its main theorists, before examining a handful of memoirs written by junior officers and enlisted soldiers to compare the realities on the ground with the theory. This "history from the bottom" approach has been missing in the scholarship on revolutionary war, and it is hoped that a more accurate picture of its effectiveness will emerge from this study.

I. The Origins of "Guerre Révolutionnaire"

When a senior officer was asked why the Algerian War needed to be won, he replied: "We want to halt the decadence of the West and the march of Communism. That is our duty, the real duty of the army. That is why we must win the war in Algeria. Indo-China taught us to see the truth."¹³ His answer sheds light on the origins of revolutionary war. The theorists of revolutionary war were influenced by three main things: the theories of Mao Zedong, the experience of the Indochina War, and their perception that every colonial conflict was tied to the Cold War.¹⁴ Mao's work, *On Guerilla Warfare*, not only provided a successful blueprint for revolutionary armies to follow, it also stressed the importance of politicizing both the army and civilians for victory to be achieved. In the Indochina War, France's professional soldiers fought against and were defeated by a highly motivated and politicized army that enjoyed the support of the local population and had essentially been formed from scratch. In the early years of the Cold War, France's wars of decolonization led her to see a worldwide communist conspiracy behind everything. While some of this was due to the inflammatory rhetoric coming out of Moscow and Beijing, by playing the communist card French soldiers were able to craft a narrative that they were the ones on the frontlines holding back the communist "hordes" from overrunning Western civilization.

¹² Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995; Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 48-58.

¹³ Antoine Argoud, quoted in Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, 165.

¹⁴ For a dissenting opinion, see Finch, "Total War of the Mind," 411-413, 428-431. Finch argues pre-World War II ideas about total war and population control had the most influence in shaping revolutionary war.

Mao's successful employment of guerilla forces in World War II and the Chinese Civil War offered proof that a well-disciplined and highly motivated revolutionary army could defeat larger conventional ones. Mao "combined an excellent comprehension of the age-old rules of guerilla warfare with an intelligent communist's organizational talent and ideological zeal."¹⁵ Not only did Mao's under-equipped forces wage a successful guerilla war against highly trained Imperial Japanese troops, they also managed to defeat the American-backed Kuomintang forces of Chiang Kai-Shek. Mao placed an emphasis on politicizing soldiers, writing, "all guerilla units must have political and military leadership," believing this would motivate them more than enemy soldiers who might have no idea what they were fighting for.¹⁶ By elevating the political aspect of guerilla warfare to the same status as the military component, Mao recognized the importance of politics in war. Of course he was not the first person to appreciate this interconnectedness, as the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831) famously wrote: "War is merely a continuation of policy by other means [...] The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it."¹⁷ However, Mao expanded this to mean everyone in a revolutionary military organization had to understand the political goal of their cause. Simply being a soldier and following orders was no longer enough and would result in defeat if rank-and-file soldiers did not understand why they were fighting and dying.

Mao also took the political aspect one step further. Not only did soldiers need to understand what they were fighting for, but civilians also had to be politicized to support the war effort. The "relationship of guerilla warfare to the people," Mao wrote, must "coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy."¹⁸ No guerilla or revolutionary movement could survive without the support of civilians, as they became an essential part of the battlefield. The support of civilians gave guerillas areas in which to store their weapons and supplies while also conducting training and political activities. Without civilian support, guerillas would not be able to operate freely as civilians would simply disclose their activities to government forces. Mao's maxim that guerillas must be as reliant on the support of the population as a fish is dependent on water for survival reflects this belief.¹⁹ In war, it was no longer enough to have a well-trained army of soldiers and superior technology to win. Soldiers and civilians now had to believe in and understand what they were fighting for. Without the support of the civilian population, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements could not succeed, as rebels would have nowhere to hide and train. While French soldiers

¹⁵ Ambler, *French Army in Politics*, 151.

¹⁶ Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare*, 6.

¹⁷ Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984; first published posthumously in German in 1832), 87.

¹⁸ Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare*, 5.

¹⁹ Mao, *On Guerilla Warfare*, 53.

largely ignored Mao's writings for years, they would unfortunately soon learn their "Mao Tse-tung the hard way," namely, in the Indochina War when Chinese military advisors helped the Viet Minh put many of these ideas into practice.²⁰

The French-Indochina War, perhaps more than anything else, had a profound influence on the French military and revolutionary war theory. The nature of the war, where the Viet Minh appeared to be "everywhere and nowhere," gave French military theorists a firsthand look at Mao's theories, causing them to re-evaluate their understanding of how wars were fought.²¹ The war also challenged French soldiers to question what they were fighting for and strained the already tense civil-military relations in the Fourth Republic (1846-1954). When the war ended in a humiliating defeat at Dien Bien Phu (1954), "one of the truly decisive battles of the twentieth century" where over 49,000 Viet Minh troops defeated the nearly 13,000 strong garrison of the French Far East Expeditionary Corps, many troops returned home with *mal jaune* and full of contempt for their government.²²

One of the founders of revolutionary war, Colonel Charles Lacheroy (1906-2005), was deeply influenced by his tour in Indochina. Colonel Lacheroy arrived in Indochina in 1951, some four years after the war had broken out, at the behest of General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny. He was given command of an area in Cochinchina where guerilla activity was rampant. Having no experience in Indochina, Colonel Lacheroy set out to determine why France had not yet won. He soon realized, "that the whole [Vietnamese] population was engaged in the fight," and this was why the French were not winning.²³ Believing he was seeing the, "communist system in its pure state," Colonel Lacheroy saw Mao's theories on guerillas blending with the civilian population in practice.²⁴ Recognizing that in this type of conflict brute force was the "solution of laziness," Colonel Lacheroy realized the importance of psychological warfare in undermining civilian support for guerillas.²⁵ Unlike conventional warfare, where the goal is to kill or capture the enemy, psychological warfare aims to not only demoralize the enemy but tries to

²⁰ Bernard B. Fall, introduction to Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, xi.

²¹ For works on the French experience in the Indochina War see Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy: The French Debacle in Indochina* (1961; Harrisburg: The Stackpole Company, 2005); Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* (1966; Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002); Lucien Bodard, *The Quicksand War: Prelude to Vietnam* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967); Martin Windrow, *The Last Valley: Dien Bien Phu and the French Defeat in Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004); Fredrik Logevall, *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York: Random House Publishing, 2012).

²² Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, vii. *Mal jaune* literally translated means "bad yellow," but was army slang to describe veterans of the Indochina War who detested the Fourth Republic.

²³ Quoted in Villatoux and Villatoux, "Aux origines de la 'guerre révolutionnaire'," 48: "C'est là que j'ai compris que toute la population était engagée dans la lutte."

²⁴ Quoted in Villatoux and Villatoux, "Aux origines de la 'guerre révolutionnaire'," 48: "C'est le système communiste à l'état pur."

²⁵ Quoted in Villatoux and Villatoux, "Aux origines de la 'guerre révolutionnaire'," 52: "ce qui est une solution de paresse."

win over enemies and civilians, hostile or neutral, largely through the use of propaganda. By the time he left Indochina in 1953, the seeds of French revolutionary war theory had been planted in Colonel Lacheroy's mind, and he returned to France looking for disciples for his new gospel.

The impact the Indochina War had on French soldiers is something scholars have long recognized.²⁶ Even officers who had not yet come to embrace revolutionary war tried to wrap their heads around how they could have lost to an enemy they considered inferior. Besides re-evaluating the changing nature of war, French troops felt a bitterness to the Fourth Republic which they blamed for losing the conflict. As Laurent Cesari, a historian at the Université d'Artois has demonstrated, the war was a tremendous financial burden for France.²⁷ Had it not been for American financial and military aid in 1949, France most likely would have evacuated Indochina before the fortress at Dien Bien Phu fell. Even then, French troops were chronically underfunded, especially the Far Eastern Air Force.²⁸ As the war dragged on, anti-war voices grew louder in France's National Assembly, and the press became more critical of the war.²⁹ The lack of funds and political support led French troops in Indochina to believe politicians were weak, and that their sacrifices were made in vain. As one French officer wrote, "I had lost too many comrades at Dien Bien Phu and didn't want to see that happen again."³⁰ From now on it would be up to the army to ensure there were no more defeats.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the role the Cold War played in shaping the ideas of revolutionary war. Some officers believed "the world has been in an uninterrupted war since 1917" with communism.³¹ However, they did not believe this would necessarily turn into a "hot war" between the West and the Soviet Union. Wars of decolonization in the Third World would be the preferred method of communists attacking the West. According to this worldview, every revolutionary movement in the Third World was backed by an international communist conspiracy. Every battle against any communist group was therefore linked to the wider struggle between the West and communism. In a 1950 article for the American journal *Foreign Affairs*, titled "Indo-China and Korea: One Front," Jacques Soustelle, an anthropologist and former minister of the colonies, argued, "the entire strategy of the West in Asia must be conceived as a whole and [...] it

²⁶ See Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare*, 6-7; Kelly, *Lost Soldiers*, 76-90; Williams, *Wars, Plots and Scandals*, 192-193; Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, 165-167; Cradock and Smith, "No Fixed Values," 72.

²⁷ Laurent Cesari, "The Declining Value of Indochina: France and the Economics of Empire 1950-1955," in *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis*, ed. Mark Atwood Lawrence and Fredrik Logevall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 175-195.

²⁸ Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place*, 457-458.

²⁹ Logevall, *Embers of War*, 348-352.

³⁰ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 8.

³¹ Jacques Hogard, "Cette guerre de notre temps," *Revue de la Défense nationale* 161 (August-September 1958): 1304-1319, here 1318: "Le monde est en guerre ininterrompue depuis 1917."

would be foolish to consider Korea and Indo-China separately."³² One year later (1951), on a goodwill tour of the United States, the commander of the French forces in Indochina, General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, argued, "Korea, Indo-China and Malaya [...] are only different battles of the same war; they should be fought with an overall plan."³³ With their top commander espousing such views, it is little wonder other officers soon picked up on the idea that all communist groups were an equal threat against which the West had to unite.

Six years later, Colonel Lacheroy, a disciple of General de Lattre, expanded this line of thinking in an address to a group of reserve officers. In an imaginary conversation between Soviet leaders Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev, Bulganin tells Khrushchev they will never have to resort to an all-out war on the West, because they simply have to get others to do the fighting for them and "hit the targets that seem most promising: to begin with, the links in the chain of the French and British colonial empires."³⁴ The proponents of revolutionary war saw a worldwide communist conspiracy behind all anti-colonial wars and believed they were the only ones who could stop this "disease."³⁵ The experience in Indochina against an avowed communist group, combined with the strong anti-communism of the army, explains why some soldiers suspected a communist conspiracy behind everything. When the war in Algeria began in November 1954, less than four months after the ending of the Indochina War, French troops saw the specter of communism behind it. This time however, they believed they carried the winning formula.

II. Transforming Algeria into a "Military Province"

One of the most difficult things for military planners to accomplish is turning their theories and plans into reality. What works on paper or in a training environment may not work on the battlefield. French military theorists believed all revolutionary movements followed a similar pattern. An author using the pseudonym "Ximenes" has described these steps as "intimidation," "demoralization," "elimination," and "constructive techniques."³⁶ During "intimidation," the purpose is to, "alienate the population from the government"

³² Jacques Soustelle, "Indo-China and Korea: One Front," *Foreign Affairs* 29, no. 1 (October 1950): 56-66, here 65.

³³ "The French MacArthur," *Time*, September 24, 1951, 32-35, here 35. See also Marilyn B. Young, "'The Same Struggle for Liberty': Korea and Vietnam," in *The First Vietnam War: Colonial Conflict and Cold War Crisis*, ed. Mark Atwood Lawrence and Fredrik Logevall (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 196-214.

³⁴ Charles Lacheroy, "La guerre révolutionnaire," talk on July 2, 1957, quoted in Paret *French Revolutionary Warfare*, 3-4. French officers also believed the Cold War changed international relations, as no major power would risk war, but guerilla warfare would be the preferred option. See Nemo, "Place of Guerilla Action in War," 106.

³⁵ Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare*, 4-5; Kelly, *Lost Soldiers*, 9; Cradock and Smith, "No Fixed Values," 75-78.

³⁶ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," 103.

by using "systematic terrorism, sabotage, and guerilla actions."³⁷ During "demoralization," efforts are made to undermine the morale of the forces of order, as well as the population's support for the government, in "an attempt to influence neutrals."³⁸ "Elimination" targets individuals and groups who oppose the revolutionaries, forcing "the neutrals [...] to name their choice."³⁹ Lastly, "constructive techniques" includes the forming of a shadow government and ensuring the population is "changed into an organized and animate group" supporting the revolutionaries.⁴⁰ Absent from this list is anything pertaining to fighting a traditional battle. All these phases have the ultimate goal of undermining the government and shifting popular support to the rebel cause. French officers believed they had a solution to ensure this would not happen.

Taking Mao's teachings to heart, the theorists of revolutionary war maintained that population control was the most important counter to the rebels. As Colonel Roger Trinquier (1908-1986) wrote: "We know that the *sine qua non* of victory in *modern warfare* is the unconditional support of the population."⁴¹ In revolutionary war, the two opposing forces fight not just on the battlefield but also, in American military parlance, for the "hearts and minds" of civilians. Revolutionary war theorists believed the army played an essential role in this task, as only they understood how to properly defeat insurrections.⁴² To properly control the population, there were three steps that needed to be followed. Firstly, all civilian organizations, including the police, had to be subordinated to the needs of the army,⁴³ essentially resulting in the army assuming government powers and the creation of a parallel state. Secondly, soldiers had to be out and about, mingling with the population, not only to keep them safe but also to build trust and form relationships. Lastly, a robust psychological and propaganda campaign needed to be launched to counter anything a revolutionary movement might put out. These three steps were mutually supportive and dependent on each other, and only the army had the knowledge and will to carry them out.

Unlike in Indochina, where the French government recognized early on they were involved in a war, the situation in Algeria was different. Algeria was not a colony but—as a *département* of the nation—a legal part of France. A state of war was never officially recognized or declared. Using the army, therefore, was a complicated issue. All suspected rebels had the same legal rights that had to be afforded to all other criminal suspects. For an army trying to combat a growing insurgency this was a huge impediment, since soldiers, in essence, had to do police

³⁷ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," 103.

³⁸ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," 104.

³⁹ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," 104.

⁴⁰ Ximenes [pseud.], "Revolutionary War," 104.

⁴¹ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 6; italics original.

⁴² Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 37.

⁴³ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 37.

work – in the words of Marcel-Maurice Bigeard: “un travail policier.”⁴⁴ The French Army needed an opportunity to assume full government powers to remove what it considered the legal obstacles to winning the war. The Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN, “National Liberation Front”) would soon provide such an opportunity.

The best example of the army assuming government powers during the Algerian War is the Battle of Algiers. While this has been well covered by historians Christopher Cradock and Michael L. R. Smith, some important points are worth revisiting.⁴⁵ After a series of terror attacks across Algiers, Resident Minister Robert Lacoste called in General Jacques Massu’s elite *10e Division Parachutiste* (10 DP, “10th Parachute Division”) to take command of Algiers and restore order.⁴⁶ Massu was given *carte blanche* to do whatever he saw fit in this task, and Algiers essentially fell under martial law, especially the Muslim neighborhood of the Casbah. Massu and his staff immediately went to work and set up a parallel government to the one of Lacoste. Colonel Trinquier created the *Dispositif de Protection Urbaine* (DPU, “Urban Protection Operation”), an organization consisting of “policemen, gendarmes, CRS, and even soldiers.”⁴⁷ One of the first tasks of the DPU was to take a census and label each building in the Casbah.⁴⁸ In addition to establishing a census of the Muslim population, the army subjected the police to their command. Police detectives were assigned to assist each intelligence officer of the 10 DP with tracking down suspected members of the FLN.⁴⁹ Throughout the Battle of Algiers, the army, not the civilian government, ran the city, resulting in the temporary defeat of the FLN.

When assuming government powers, taking a census and controlling the police is not enough. According to revolutionary war theorist Colonel Trinquier, “extensive and generous social assistance will be of prime importance in bringing to our cause many people who are unhappy and often disoriented by the military operations and who will not have always understood the underlying reasons for them.”⁵⁰ This policy was also known as “Destruction and Construction” and called not just for the enemy to be destroyed but also for the protection and establishment of “a new order” among the population.⁵¹ Again, it was assumed the army would play a leading role in such operations, and indeed it did. In some cases, conventional troops performed this task admirably, as demonstrated by

⁴⁴ Bigeard, *Pour une parcelle de gloire*, 276.

⁴⁵ Cradock and Smith, “No Fixed Values,” 83-97.

⁴⁶ Massu, *Vraie bataille d’Alger*, 15.

⁴⁷ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 87. CRS (*Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*) are units of the French National Police specializing in riot and crowd control.

⁴⁸ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 87-88.

⁴⁹ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 89.

⁵⁰ Trinquier, *Modern Warfare*, 42.

⁵¹ General Allard, quoted in Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare*, 30-32.

Alexander Zervoudakis in his analysis of the *584e Bataillon du Train* (584th Transportation Battalion).⁵² The battalion, made up almost entirely of conscripts, established a great relationship with the local population by opening up animal care facilities, medical clinics, movie theaters, and a school. The local population came to support the French and voluntarily provided intelligence on the FLN.⁵³ However, this was more the exception than the rule.

The senior officers who devised the ideas of controlling the population, assuming police powers, and operating like a civilian government rarely had to carry out the day-to-day work of making their theories a reality. This is not to suggest that the theorists were all passive throughout the Algerian War. Colonel Trinquier was very active with the creation of the DPU, but he had a massive staff to assist him. Senior officers could not implement their ideas alone and relied on rank-and-file soldiers to do the heavy lifting. Scholarship on revolutionary war has largely ignored the works of junior officers and enlisted soldiers. Only by comparing their experiences to the principles of revolutionary war can a more accurate understanding emerge of how the Algerian War was waged.

III. The Army as "Policemen" among the Population

Conventional armies are ill-suited for dealing with a civilian population. Unlike the police whose job it is to ensure people follow the rules of the state and who thereby engage in some form of population control daily, soldiers are trained to kill their enemies, ideally far away from any civilians. In the Algerian War, soldiers were routinely called in to do the job of policemen to ensure people remained loyal to France. Making this matter more complicated was the fact that Algeria essentially had two populations. The *pieds noirs*, settlers of European descent who numbered around one million people, and a Muslim population of nearly nine million, who had lived under colonialism for over one hundred years.⁵⁴ The *pieds noirs* could generally be relied on to support the army, and a majority of them wished to remain part of France, so the real battle was with the FLN for the support of the Muslim population. French soldiers were often out among the people, just as revolutionary war theorists had advocated. An examination of several soldiers' memoirs reveals efforts were made to win the people over, but the army struggled in this task. Some of this was due to the FLN's propaganda and terror campaigns, but other times the behavior of French troops alienated the Muslim population and drove them into the arms of the FLN.

In his memoirs, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber (1924-2006), a reserve lieutenant recalled to active duty in Algeria, described how two Indochina veterans in his

⁵² Alexander Zervoudakis, "A Case of Successful Pacification: The 584th Bataillon du Train at Bordj de l'Agha (1956-57)," in *France and the Algerian War, 1954-1962: Strategy, Operations and Diplomacy*, ed. Martin S. Alexander and John F. V. Keiger (London: Taylor and Francis, 2002), 54-64.

⁵³ Zervoudakis, "Case of Successful Pacification," 60-61.

⁵⁴ Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, 64.

unit wrote a memorandum to the Army High Command advocating for more "contact with the Moslem population," otherwise "the Algerian rebellion may not need nearly as much military strength as the Vietminh army to put the French Army in a difficult position."⁵⁵ This resulted in the creation of the "Black Commandos" in Servan-Schreiber's unit's area of operations. To become a Black Commando, a soldier had to volunteer and take a pledge to "regard every Moslem as a friend and not as a suspect, unless [...] [he had] proof to the contrary."⁵⁶ The commandos sent out small squads of five to six soldiers with an interpreter to reestablish contact with the Muslims in the rural areas and ensure their loyalty to France. Similar types of units were the *Sections Administratives Spécialisées* (SAS, "Special Administrative Sections") which performed comparable tasks throughout Algeria. Like the Black Commandos, the SAS were small detachments led by junior officers tasked with reestablishing contact and building trust with the Muslims population.⁵⁷ This type of work was incredibly dangerous, as the FLN was fully aware what these groups were trying to accomplish and targeted them. Since these units regularly served far from any support and frequently slept in the villages they visited, they were easy targets. However, units such as these were necessary in revolutionary war. The creators of both the SAS and the Black Commandos recognized the real battle with the FLN was not on the battlefield, but in the villages for the support of the people. However, any good will these units managed to gain with Algerians was frequently negated by other soldiers who refused to "regard every Moslem as a friend."

While specific units were created to win the hearts and minds of the Muslim population, they were not the only soldiers who interacted with civilians. The nature of the Algerian War meant nearly all French troops came into contact with non-combatants as they searched for the FLN in the villages and towns across Algeria. Since there were never enough Black Commandos or SAS troops to cover the whole country, interaction between regular French troops and civilians played a prominent role in deciding who the people would support.

Pierre Leulliette, a volunteer who reached the rank of corporal in the *2e Régiment de Parachutistes Coloniale* (2 RPC, "2nd Colonial Parachute Regiment," one of the regiments of the 10 DP), recalled the attitude of his comrades toward the Muslim population: "We are beginning to say to one another that all these good people we see cultivating their stony little fields or driving their mules along the quiet roads are probably rebels out of uniform. 'They're all rebels, all! We're silly! We should talk to these people with submachine guns! And flamethrowers!'"⁵⁸ In many cases they did. After a platoon leader was killed in a small town, Leulliette's company commander decided to call in artillery to level the town. As they

⁵⁵ Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, 97-98.

⁵⁶ Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, 100-101.

⁵⁷ Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, 108-109.

⁵⁸ Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon*, 106.

watched the carnage unfold, some soldiers commented: "That's what we should have done long ago, everywhere, to all the villages [...] We're too soft on these people."⁵⁹ Even when they went on operations to distribute food to remote villages up in the mountains, this worked against the army, as people who took the food became suspected French sympathizers in the eyes of the FLN.⁶⁰ Since Leulliette's unit rarely stayed in one area for an extended period of time, villagers could not trust the army would protect them and would side with the FLN.

When the 2 RPC and the rest of the 10 DP was redeployed to secure Algiers, it was decided the army would send small patrols out to restore a sense of security. These patrols, however, often had the opposite effect. Instead of reassuring civilians, they frequently visited bars, demanding free drinks, and broke into bathhouses to see naked women.⁶¹ Many of the bathhouses were in Muslim neighborhoods, further straining any relationship that might have been forged with the population they needed to win over.

In addition, the systematic use of torture, and summary executions during the Battle of Algiers further burned bridges.⁶² According to General Paul Aussaresses (1918-2013), summary executions and torture were "an inseparable part of the tasks associated with keeping law and order" and, "tolerated if not actually recommended."⁶³ The 2 RPC, like all army and police units, engaged in torture during the Battle of Algiers. The 2 RPC set up their "interrogation" center in an empty candy shop where suspects were stripped and tortured from "morning to night."⁶⁴ While not personally engaged in torture, Leulliette was fully aware it was taking place and later remembered: "All day, through the floor-boards, we heard their horse cries."⁶⁵ The preferred method of torture was the use of the *gégène*, "an army signals magneto from which electrodes could be fastened to various parts of the human body," but beatings were common as well.⁶⁶ Highly valued prisoners, such as the leader of the FLN cell in Algiers, Larbi Ben M'Hidi (1923-1957), were executed without a trial, since the army did not trust turning them over to the courts.⁶⁷ While many bodies were secretly buried, when family members failed to return home after several days, few had any doubt to what their fate had been.

⁵⁹ Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon*, 118.

⁶⁰ Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon*, 64-65.

⁶¹ Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon*, 282-283.

⁶² For a personal account of someone who committed torture and summary executions, see Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*. For a personal account of someone who was tortured, see Henri Alleg, *The Question* (New York: G. Braziller, 1958).

⁶³ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 120.

⁶⁴ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 286.

⁶⁵ Leulliette, *St. Michael and the Dragon*, 286-289.

⁶⁶ Horne, *Savage War of Peace*, 199.

⁶⁷ Aussaresses, *Battle of the Casbah*, 125-134.

The targeting and mistreatment of the population was not unique to the 2 RPC. In contrast to the members of the Black Commandos, a fellow officer and Indochina veteran in Servan-Schreiber's unit suggested treating any "Arab as a suspect, a possible *fellagha*, a potential terrorist – because that, my dear sir, is the truth."⁶⁸ Shortly after this conversation, Servan-Schreiber's battalion did just that. While on patrol, one of the companies took fire from a single house in a small village. In response to this, artillery was called in, leveling most of the village as punishment for harboring rebels.⁶⁹ Simon Murray, a British volunteer in the Foreign Legion's *2e Régiment Étranger de Parachutistes* (2 REP, "2n Foreign Parachute Regiment"), recalled that it was standard operating procedure in his unit to go into the villages and start burning people's homes.⁷⁰ On one of the rare occasions when some men were captured in one of the villages, they refused to talk to the intelligence officer. According to Murray, "[t]his all changed when they were put inside one of the huts and it was set ablaze. They started to scream blue murder and when we let them out we couldn't stop them [from] talking."⁷¹

French atrocities in Algeria have been well documented by scholars, with some going as far as to suggest them a natural component of revolutionary war.⁷² Yet, the wanton use of violence against civilians goes against the principle of revolutionary war to win the population over to your cause. To be fair, there were French troops who recognized this. After watching a village being shelled into oblivion, one sergeant complained: "We might as well be living in a Communist caricature [...] we're turning all the inhabitants into *fellagha*. For one rebel we kill, we're making twenty [who are] ready to replace him."⁷³ Indeed, the offenses committed by French soldiers aided the FLN in their "intimidation" and "demoralization" steps. While it is debatable whether the Battle of Algiers could have been won without the use of torture, its widespread use turned the French victory into a Pyrrhic one. According to American historian Matthew Connelly, torture and "disappearances" of nearly ten percent of the Muslim population of Algiers could not be hidden from the public and caused outrage in both France and around the world.⁷⁴ Like destroying villages, it also played right into the hands of the FLN.

While groups like the Black Commandos and the SAS were attempting to counter the FLN, other army units were jeopardizing any progress that was being

⁶⁸ Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, 31-33.

⁶⁹ Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, 40-46.

⁷⁰ Murray, *Legionnaire*, 158.

⁷¹ Murray, *Legionnaire*, 158-159.

⁷² See Martha Crenshaw Hutchinson, *Revolutionary Terrorism: The FLN in Algeria, 1954-1962* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1978); Maran, *Torture*; Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*, 130-132; DiMarco, "Losing the Moral Compass," 63-76.

⁷³ Servan-Schreiber, *Lieutenant in Algeria*, 40-46.

⁷⁴ Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*, 130-133.

made. The soldiers' lack of effort to connect with civilians showed their fundamental failure to understand revolutionary war theory. The fact that the army was given precedence in the fight against the FLN, while the Black Commandos and the SAS were out among the population, demonstrates that some revolutionary war practices were being followed. However, it is clear French troops did not understand or appreciate the tasks they were charged with, thereby undermining the effectiveness of revolutionary war's ideas of the army being out among the population.

IV. Psychological Operations

While population control may be "the *sine qua non* of victory," assuming government powers and sending the army out to be among civilians will not get the job done. Without psychological warfare there can be no revolutionary war. "All wars," according to General Jacques Hogard (1918-1999), "are ultimately wars 'of persuasion'."⁷⁵ Killing one's enemy on the battlefield was no longer enough if their ideas remained alive. To counter the propaganda and ideology of revolutionary movements, the army had to wage an aggressive psychological campaign of its own. Psychological operations, however, were not something draftees and even most professional soldiers would have been instructed in at this time. Historian Frédéric Guelton's examination of the counterinsurgency school in Arzew (Oran Province, Algeria) provides the best example of how the French tried to rectify this problem.⁷⁶ Founded in 1956 with the intent of introducing officers and senior non-commissioned officers to the peculiarities of the Algerian War, the school originally placed emphasis on tactics. In 1957, however, control of the center was transferred from the *3e Bureau* (Operations and Planning) to the *5e Bureau* (Psychological Operations) and placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel André Bruge.

An Indochina veteran who had spent nearly five years in Viet Minh internment and re-education camps, Lieutenant Colonel Bruge was deeply interested in psychological warfare.⁷⁷ After taking command of the school, he dramatically changed the curriculum away from an emphasis on tactics to one that taught revolutionary war.⁷⁸ For men like Lieutenant Colonel Bruge, fighting was of

⁷⁵ Hogard, "Cette guerre de notre temps," 1306: "Toutes les guerres sont donc finalement des guerres 'de persuasion'."

⁷⁶ Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation,'" 37. See also Paret, *French Revolutionary Warfare*, 129-140 ("Use of the Psychological Arm in the Armed Forces"); Nacéra Aggoun, "Psychological Propaganda during the Algerian War: Based on a Study of French Army Pamphlets," in *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962: Experiences, Images, Testimonies*, ed. Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans, and John F. V. Keiger (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 193-199.

⁷⁷ Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation,'" 41.

⁷⁸ "Training Syllabus on Revolutionary Warfare," in Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation,'" 50.

secondary importance in these types of wars. Soldiers now took courses in "Psychological Action," "Psychological Warfare," "Laws of the Psychology of Crowds," "Propaganda Techniques," "The Psychology of the Muslim," "The Soldier as Psychological Agent," "Psychological Action over the Populations," and "Psychological Warfare against the Rebels," among others.⁷⁹ As one attendant wrote of his time at Arzew, "[t]his course is stamped by the deep desire to give us Faith. This is undoubtedly its chief quality and the outcome is certain."⁸⁰ Under the guidance of Lieutenant Colonel Bruge, over seven thousand officers received instructions in revolutionary and psychological war, and they brought this faith back with them to their units.⁸¹

Much like in the case of population control, however, officers who were instructed at Arzew could not conduct psychological warfare by themselves. Soldiers who lacked any formal training in psychological operations were frequently tasked with creating and distributing propaganda among the population. Considering there were nearly half a million French troops in Algeria for most of the war, this meant the overwhelming majority likely had no experience in these types of operations.⁸² One such soldier was Sanche Charles Armand Gabriel de Gramont, today known as Ted Morgan (b. 1930), a conscripted lieutenant who, before being drafted, had studied journalism at Yale University. Originally assigned to a colonial infantry regiment made up primarily of Senegalese, while on leave in Algiers, Morgan attended a dinner party where he was introduced to General Massu. General Massu, it should be remembered, had recently been brought into Algiers to restore order and crush the FLN. Upon learning Morgan had experience as a journalist, General Massu had him transferred to an army-run newspaper, titled *Réalités Algériennes* ("Algerian Realities").⁸³ The paper was funded and published by Colonel Trinquier's DPU but had the appearance of a regular, civilian newspaper. The staff was small, and Morgan and his comrades wore suits instead of uniforms to work in order to keep up the appearance of *Réalités Algériennes* being a legitimate paper.⁸⁴ Of the three men working on the paper, only the "commander" was a professional soldier with some kind of experience in psychological operations.

Throughout the Battle of Algiers, *Réalités Algériennes* published fake and misleading stories to combat the propaganda of the FLN. Some articles appeared benign, such as the one advocating Muslim children should continue to attend

⁷⁹ "Training Syllabus on Revolutionary Warfare," in Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation'," 50-51.

⁸⁰ "Some Student Opinions About the CIPCG," in Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation'," 51.

⁸¹ Guelton, "French Army 'Centre for Training and Preparation'," 47.

⁸² Connelly, *Diplomatic Revolution*, 3.

⁸³ Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers*, 124-127.

⁸⁴ Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers*, 127-129.

school, something the FLN did not want, while others condemned the FLN and encouraged people to "[h]ave faith in the forces."⁸⁵ On at least one occasion, however, an article using misinformation was used to flush out a wanted bombmaker from hiding, eventually leading to her death.⁸⁶ As scholars acknowledge, "it is almost impossible to gauge how successful the psychological warfare was" during the Battle of Algiers, but it was one of many tools used by the French to win the battle.⁸⁷ While Morgan never mentions revolutionary war in his memoirs, he was nonetheless very much engaged in it, showing efforts were made to follow its principles. Morgan, however, was against the war, and he and a fellow reporter would also write articles revealing French atrocities for other papers under pseudonyms.⁸⁸ Torture during the Battle of Algiers was the worst-kept secret in Algeria, but leaking information potentially undermined any progress *Réalités Algériennes* might have made with the Muslim population. This shows a lack of understanding and acceptance of the ideas of revolutionary war by the soldiers tasked with making the theory a reality. The fact that the French Army was unable to convince its own soldiers of the righteousness of its cause demonstrates another weakness in its implementation of revolutionary war theory.

Conclusion

This article has shown that while many of the theories of revolutionary war were put into place during the Algerian War, French soldiers were largely ineffective in executing the theorists' plans. The destruction of villages, murdering of civilians, and widespread use of torture negated any progress made by groups like the Black Commandos and the SAS to win over the population. While psychological operations were put in place, the fact that members of the army-run newspaper actively undermined the war effort shows that soldiers were not convinced of the war they were fighting. Across Algeria, rank-and-file troops showed little appreciation for and understanding of revolutionary war. This is not to suggest that, had the theories been perfectly executed, it would have resulted in a French victory. To paraphrase the Prussian Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke (1800-1891), "no plan survives the first contact with the enemy."⁸⁹ This article serves as a reminder of the truth of that statement. It is important for historians to appreciate that there will always be a gap between theory and practice. If one really wants to properly understand a theory's success, it is important to move away from the senior officers and look at the people tasked to carry out their plans.

⁸⁵ Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers*, 145-146.

⁸⁶ Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers*, 164.

⁸⁷ Cradock and Smith, "No Fixed Values," 98.

⁸⁸ Morgan, *My Battle of Algiers*, 149.

⁸⁹ "Kein Plan überlebt die erste Feindberührung." Referenced in Correlli Barnett, *The Swordbearers: Studies in Supreme Command in the First World War* (1963; London: Cassell Military, 2003), 35.

Revolutionary war theory fell out of favor after the Algerian War. This was largely due to the fact that several of its most ardent supporters, including the theory's founder Charles Lacheroy, became leaders of the ill-fated 1961 coup against Charles de Gaulle and members of the *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS, "Secret Army Organization").⁹⁰ Some of its ideas, however, continue to live on in modern counterinsurgency warfare. While the U.S. Army's Field Manual is highly critical of the French Army in the Algerian War, writing, "failure to comply with moral and legal restrictions against torture severely undermined French efforts and contributed to their loss despite several significant military victories,"⁹¹ the U.S. Armed Forces have since adopted some of their ideas, either directly or indirectly. Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units are tasked with making contact with civilian populations and creating propaganda to win local support. Additionally, the so-called "surge" in Iraq in 2007 called for the deployment of more U.S. soldiers to be among the population.⁹² Like their French counterparts, though, it is unlikely that many American rank-and-file soldiers were aware of what their senior officers' plans were.

Much of the potential for research on revolutionary war remains untapped. While this article has relied on only a handful of published memoirs written by French soldiers, there likely exist numerous journals and diaries that have never seen the light of the day. Unlike in Indochina, where only colonial and professional troops were used, conscripts made up the backbone of French forces throughout the Algerian War. This means nearly an entire generation, albeit an aging one, served in some capacity during the war. If more veterans come forward, this could shine more light on how the theories of revolutionary war were implemented on the ground, and reveal more about how the Algerian War was waged. Yet, veterans may be hesitant to come forward, especially after General Paul Aussaresses was put on trial for the crime of justifying war crimes after the 2001 publication of his memoir.⁹³ France continues to remain bitterly divided over the war, as President Emmanuel Macron found out in 2018 when he publicly apologized for French atrocities, perhaps making more veterans hesitant to speak out.⁹⁴ The theory of revolutionary war and assigning the army police work all

⁹⁰ The O.A.S. (*Organisation Armée Secrète*) was a right-wing terror organization that fought against both the French government and Algerian rebels to keep Algeria French. The organization attempted to assassinate Charles de Gaulle in 1962. See Alexander Harrison, *Challenging De Gaulle: The O.A.S. and Counterrevolution in Algeria, 1954-1962* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

⁹¹ United States Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual: U.S. Army Field Manual No. 3-24* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 252.

⁹² George W. Bush, "Address to the Nation," Washington, DC, January 10, 2007, accessed May 25, 2020.

⁹³ Suzanne Daly, "France is Seeking a Fine in Trial of Algerian War General," *The New York Times*, November 29, 2001.

⁹⁴ Henry Samuel, "France May Have Apologized for Atrocities in Algeria, but the War Still Casts a Long Shadow," *The Telegraph*, September 15, 2018.

makes sense on paper, but wars are not won because of ideas and theories alone. While French officers may have found a way to defeat revolutionary movements theoretically, rank-and-file soldiers were either unaware or did not care about revolutionary war. In the end, it is always the common soldier who makes military theories either a success or a failure.

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