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J. P. Clark. *Preparing for War: The Emergence of the Modern U.S. Army, 1815-1917.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017. 352 pp. $39.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-674-54573-1.

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In *Preparing for War*, J. P. Clark, a US Army lieutenant colonel and Duke University PhD, examines the debates among United States Army officers about how preparation for war affected the evolution of the army between the War of 1812 and World War I. He argues that Progressive Era concepts of professionalism and four generations of officers possessing differing personal experiences of military service during war and peace transformed the army from a militia-dominated force into a modern organization capable of waging industrial war. By showing how Progressive Era concepts of professionalism influenced the developing professionalism of officers, Clark challenges Samuel Huntington's conclusion, offered in *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957), that American military professionalism flourished in the late nineteenth century due to social isolation. *Preparing for War* focuses on the intersection of a changing notion of what preparation for war meant to officers, regarded throughout the period as a central activity of the regular army, and the shift in the way officers thought about the profession of arms. Clark reasons that the reforms brought about by Secretary of War Elihu Root fail to explain fully the emergence of a new professional officer paradigm because new intellectual ideas infiltrated the military from civilian society in the form of newly commissioned officers and concepts that modified the views of senior officers.

Over the course of eight chapters, Clark investigates a changing notion of what preparation for war meant to officers by undertaking cross-generational analysis of how rivalry among four generations of American officers within the context of a prevailing American cultural milieu produced institutional change. He begins the analysis with the "foundational" generation, composed of the veterans of the War of 1812 and graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point. The professionalism of this generation rested on the belief that military competence was a product of character, common sense, and natural aptitude. Foundational generation officers understood these elements of military competence as innate abilities of the individual and beyond the capability of an institution to teach. Preparations for war consisted of instilling discipline in the enlisted ranks through parade ground drill and maintaining equipment and fortifications. The Civil War generation, shaped by rapid promotion and commanding large formations of volunteers engaged in pitched battles between large bodies of troops, exhibited an indifference to professional expertise. Clark asserts that with the exception of Emory Upton, the Civil War generation continued to understand preparation for war in the same way as the

foundational generation. Both the foundational and Civil War generations of officers focused professional development and education on technical schools of application rather than the study of strategy, high command, or staff duties. The third generational cohort of officers, the "composite" generation, was composed of officers commissioned from the end of the Civil War to about 1889. These officers perceived the increased complexity of war and recognized the need for reforms in the education of professional officers. However, they failed to develop a consensus about the form those reforms should take because their perception of required reform was shaped by different professional experiences. As a result, individual officers, such as Arthur Wagner and Eban Swift, worked at cross purposes when implementing improvements in education, training, or doctrine. The fourth generation, dubbed the "progressive" generation, was composed of officers commissioned after 1890 and included such officers as George C. Marshall and Bruce Palmer. This generation understood that securing military victory required officers to think and act alike to overcome the complexity of war. Although the establishment of a General Staff and professional military education system influenced the development of the fourth officer generation, Clark asserts that societal factors led these officers to aggressively centralize and bureaucratize army practices that help explain American military performance during World War I.

Clark excels at explaining why an individual or group advocated or resisted a particular reform initiative. He is at his best juxtaposing the controversies surrounding Upton's advocation for a new tactical system in *A New System of Infantry Tactics, Double and Single Rank, Adapted to American Topography and Improved Fire-Arms* (1867) and Upton's suggested reforms of civil-military relations published in *The Military Policy of the United States* (1904). Clark's analysis explains why and how Upton's revolutionary tactical system, detailed in *A New System of Infantry Tactics* and employing column-based formations rather than linear-style tactics to attack enemy breastworks, prevailed in debates within the officer corps and was adopted as official doctrine. Clark's analysis also explains why and how Upton's advocacy of reducing the influence of the secretary of war on field operations, establishment of advanced military schools, promotion of officers by examination, and adoption of a general staff system based on the Prussian model, all points presented in *Military Policy*, were not accepted in a wholesale manner but influenced Root's reform program. In addition to luminaries, Clark shines by bringing to life lesser-known personalities—for example, Eban Swift, Arthur L. Wagner, and J. Franklin Bell, all of whom experimented with ideas furthering officer professionalism.

Clark draws on a wide array of primary and secondary sources to construct his analysis and narrative. Citations of sources appear in endnotes. *Preparing for War* does not include a bibliography. The secondary sources include interpretive works, such as William B. Skelton's *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861* (1992), and more intellectual works, such as Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff's *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (2002), that explore theories of military adaptation. Clark both extends and deepens the existing body of literature by exploring the divergent opinions of serving officers as they prepare for an imagined future war.

Clark concentrates on investigating reforms related to the cavalry, artillery, and infantry branches of service; their associated schools; and the creation of national military organizations, such as the War College or General Staff. *Preparing for War*, however, does not provide detailed discussion about debates regarding reforms in other important American military organizations —for example, the War Department Bureaus or the transformation of organized militia into the National Guard. Readers interested in the develop-

ment of these organizations will find *Preparing for War* disappointing.

By remaining focused on his topic, Clark provides a dramatic, sweeping, and well-written study of the regular officer's quest for professional legitimacy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In doing so, he presents a well-researched compelling account of the US Army undergoing cross-generational transformative change with connections to the larger social and cultural contexts that defined the United States and its military forces. Suitable for upper-level undergraduate courses and graduate colloquia, *Preparing for War* succeeds in challenging the notion that the army was as socially isolated as suggested by Huntington and in explaining the causes as well as the historical path of army officer professionalization prior to World War I.