

How the Afghanistan War Influenced the Content of *Armed Forces & Society*: An Editor's 20-year Reflection

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Perspectives on the
Afghanistan War

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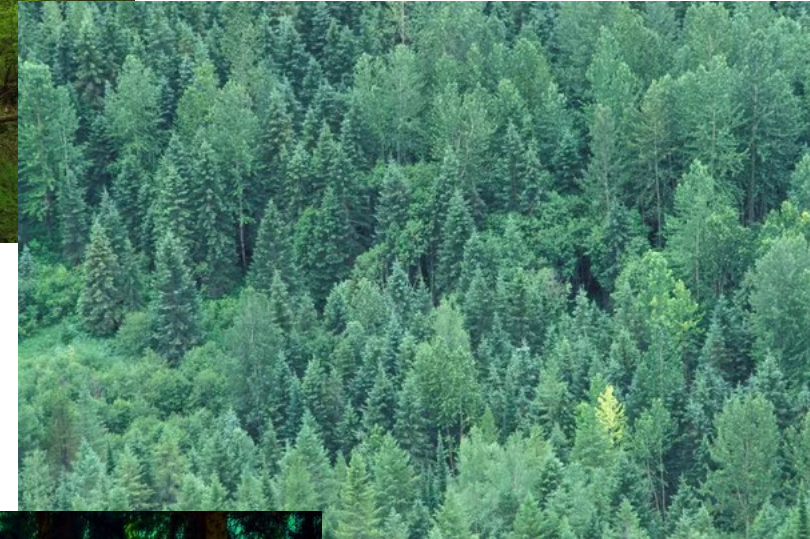
Virtual Special Issue — Aug 2022

- 13 commentary on Afghanistan war
- this paper part of this special issue
- How did the War influence the content of AF&S?

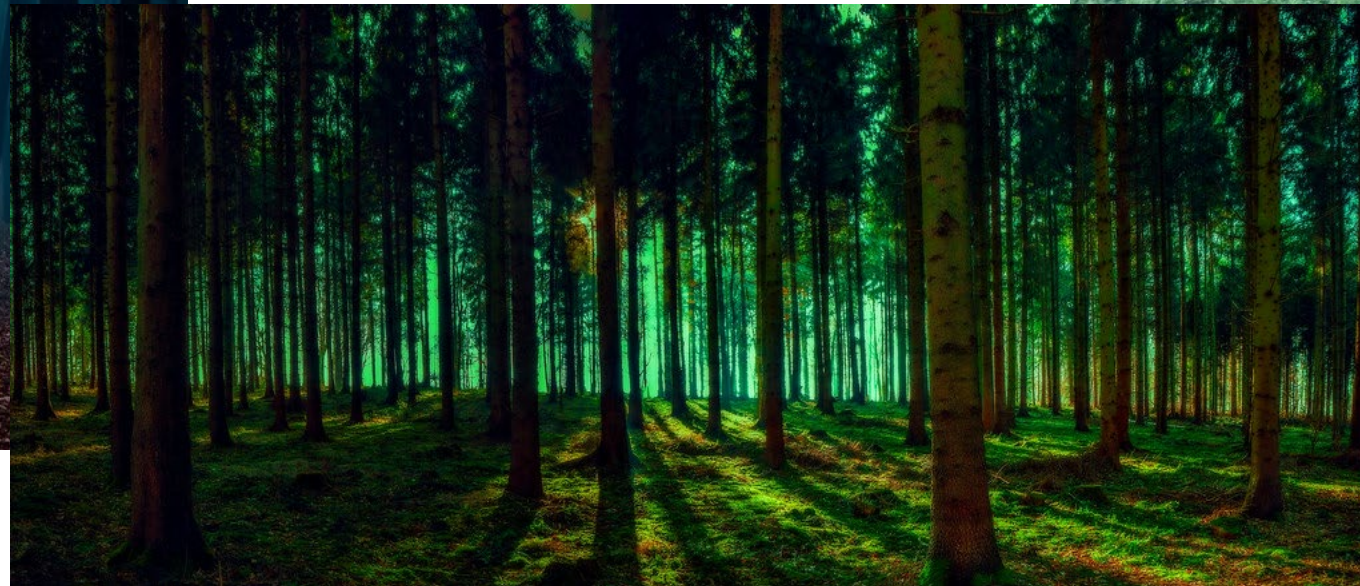




Journal like a forest



Editor Steward of forest



Afghanistan War

Event that could
change the forest

Armed Forces & Society

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ARTICLES

War and Commitment to Military Service: Deployment and Combat Experiences Associated With Retention Among Army National Guard Soldiers

Why Nurses Are Leaving Veterans Affairs Hospitals?

STEM Degrees and Military Service: An Intersectional Analysis

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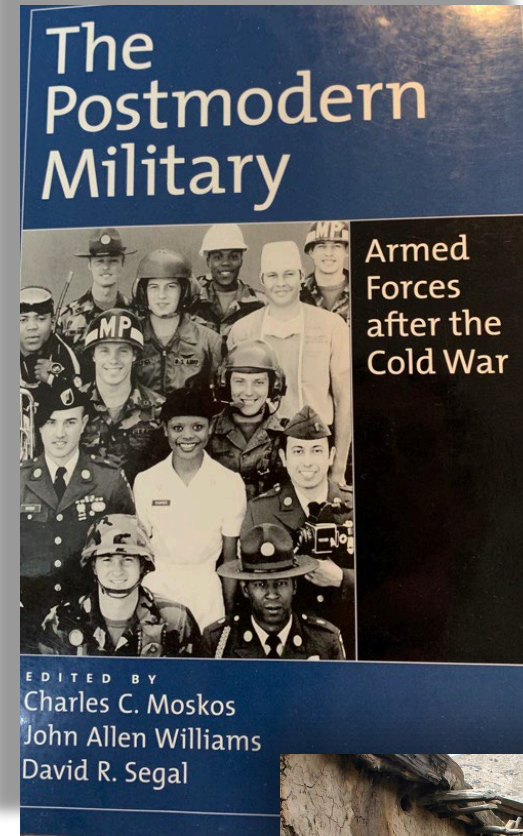
Sept. 2001

Afghanistan War Timetable

Important Dates	Influential Events
September 2001	Attack on US by terrorists
October 2001	US and British Air campaign in Afghanistan to root out al-Qaida Operation Enduring Freedom
December 2001	International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) begun (Multinational force) Mandated by UN
March 2003	Iraq war begins
August 2003	NATO takes over ISAF –.
2006	ISAF expanded to cover the whole country. Nation building mission
2007 - 2008	Insurgency grows
2009	New counter insurgency launched 40,000 new troops
December 2011	Iraq war ends
December 2014	ISAF ended as did NATO's responsibility.
January 2015	NATO launched Resolute Support Mission - training the Afghan security forces
February 2020	US and Taliban sign agreement to withdraw international forces by May 2021
August 2021	Withdrawal of forces. Evacuation of 120,000 people airlifted from the Afghanistan airport.

Postmodern Military

- Volunteer Force
- New missions – small wars
- Multinational divisions –
- led international organizations



(2000)

Biggest Test



How was this test reflected in the pages of Armed Forces & Society?



How did the forest change?

- Reviewed all titles every volume (2002 – 2021)
- Printed abstracts of Afghanistan related articles
- Sorted the abstracts into piles (topics that adhere)
- Labeled the piles
- Used labels to do search of website - find additional articles



My reflections as the decision-maker

Key themes

- Lives of service members
- How military organizations responded
- Public Opinion
- Civil Military Relations
- Dark Outliers



Lives of Service members

Veterans Literature

- Traditional themes Transition to civilian life with
- greater emphasis – PTSD, Disabilities and suicide
- more papers on women veterans



Military Families (highly cited)

Emphasized the stress associated with multiple deployments

Physical and Mental Health

- Prior to war, seldom got a paper on health – Major shift (2015- 2021)
- Physical & Mental health
- Cross category complication – Health of veterans, service members, contractors

How the Institution Responded

AVF smaller force



Reserve forces

- Marked uptick in this topic -- Two special issues (2011/2021)
- Topics began to mirror the force – retention, health, family
- Transmigrant

Contractor – private security



- Effectiveness of contractors, hidden costs as move closer to deployed forces
- Missing voices -- motivation, medical care, new veterans
- Unique data – contractor deaths (secret proprietary info)

How the Institution Responded

Small, Unconventional, Multilateral War

- changing mindset
- Soldiers' role, diplomat, peacekeeper...
- Relationships with host nationals – interpreters/linguists
- Management challenges



Public Opinion

- Public support or lack of support for war
- Returning veterans media characterization
Hero
Victim
- Veterans' reaction to media characterization



Civil Military Relations

Janowitz – greater applicability

- pragmatism
- small war context
- Constabulary force



Dark Themes

- Green on blue murder
- ISAF caused civilian casualties
- Torture
- War traumatized offenders – Military Catch 22



How did the forest change?

Multiple deployments

- Veterans/military family (Health)
- Volunteer Forces -major adjustments (PTSD health)
- reserve forces/contractors

New missions – small wars

- Multinational
- Management challenges/roles
- Janowitz perspective compatible



Virtual Issue -- October 2023 Special Issue

Armed Forces & Society

Perspectives on the
Afghanistan War



Call for additional commentary/Papers

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