

J. F. C. Fuller

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(Redirected from J.F.C. Fuller)

Major General **John Frederick Charles Fuller** CB, CBE, DSO, commonly **J.F.C. Fuller**, (1 September 1878 – 10 February 1966), was a British Army officer, military historian and strategist, notable as an early theorist of modern armoured warfare, including categorising principles of warfare. He was also the inventor of "artificial moonlight" and an occultist.

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John Frederick Charles Fuller	
	1878 – 1966
Place of birth	Chichester
Allegiance	UK
Years of service	1899 – 1933
Rank	Major General
Battles/wars	Second Boer War World War I
Awards	Companion of the Order of the Bath Commander of the Order of the British Empire Distinguished Service Order
Other work	Military historian

Biography

Fuller was born in 1878, in Chichester, West Sussex, England and educated at Malvern College and Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from 1897 to 1898. He was commissioned into the Oxfordshire Light Infantry and served in South Africa from 1899 to 1902. He then attended Staff College at Camberley and served as an adjutant to a territorial battalion. During World War I, he was a staff officer with the Home Forces and with 7 Corps in France, and from 1916 in the HQ of the Machine-Gun Corps' Heavy Branch which was later to become the Tank Corps. He planned the tank attack at Cambrai and the tank operations for the autumn offensives of 1918. His Plan 1919 for a fully mechanised army was never implemented in his lifetime, and after 1918 he held various leading positions, notably as a commander of an experimental brigade at Aldershot.

In the 1920s, he collaborated with his junior B.H. Liddell Hart in developing new ideas for the mechanisation of armies. However, in what came to be known as the "Tidworth Incident", he turned down the command of the Experimental Mechanized Force which was formed in 1927. The appointment also carried responsibility for a regular infantry brigade and the garrison of Tidworth on Salisbury Plain. Fuller believed he would be unable to devote himself to the Experimental Force and the development of mechanized warfare techniques without extra staff to assist him with the additional extraneous duties, which the War Office refused to allocate.

His ideas on mechanised warfare continued to be influential in the lead up to World War II, ironically more

with the Germans, notably Heinz Guderian, than with his countrymen. In the 1930's, the Wehrmacht implemented tactics similar in many ways to Fuller's analysis, which became known as Blitzkrieg. Like Fuller, practitioners of Blitzkrieg partly based their approach on the theory that areas of large enemy activity should be bypassed to be eventually surrounded and destroyed. Blitzkrieg style tactics were used by several nations throughout World War II, predominantly by the Germans in the invasion of Poland, Western Europe and the Soviet Union. While Germany, and to some degree the Western Allies, adopted Blitzkrieg ideas, they were not much used by the Red Army which developed its armoured warfare doctrine based on deep operations. Deep operations was developed by Soviet military theorists, among them Marshal M. N. Tukhachevsky, during the 1920s based on their experiences in World War I and the Russian Civil War.

On his retirement in 1933, and impatient with what he considered the inability of democracy to adopt military reforms, Fuller became involved with Sir Oswald Mosley and the British Fascist movement. As a member of the British Union of Fascists he sat on the party's Policy Directorate and was considered one of Mosley's closest allies.

On 20 April 1939 Fuller was an honoured guest at Adolf Hitler's 50th birthday parade and watched as "for three hours a completely mechanised and motorised army roared past the Führer." Afterwards Hitler asked, "I hope you were pleased with your children?" Fuller replied, "Your Excellency, they have grown up so quickly that I no longer recognise them."

Fuller was a vigorous, expressive and opinionated writer of military history and of controversial predictions of the future of war.

Fuller was also a long-term acquaintance of Aleister Crowley and was familiar with his, and other forms of, magick and mysticism. He wrote about a number of occult topics, including the Qabalah and to a lesser extent yoga (which was at the time seen as potentially dangerous in Western eyes).

Books by Fuller

Fuller was a prolific writer. The following is only a small selection of his works.

- *The Star in The West: a critical essay upon the works of Aleister Crowley* (Walter Scott Publishing Co., London, 1907)
- *Yoga: a study of the mystical philosophy of the Brahmins and Buddhists* (W. Rider, London, 1925)
- *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (Murray, London, 1929)
- *Grant & Lee: a study in personality and generalship* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1933)
- *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier* (Nicholson & Watson, London, 1936)
- *The First of the League Wars* (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1936) [About the Italo-Ethiopian War]
- *The Secret Wisdom of the Qabalah: A Study in Jewish Mystical Thought* (W. Rider & Co., London, 1937)
- *The Second World War, 1939-1945: a strategical and tactical history* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1948)
- *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and their Influence upon History*, 3 vols. (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1954-6)
 - *Volume 1: From the earliest times to the battle of Lepanto*
 - *Volume 2: From the defeat of the Spanish Armada to the battle of Waterloo*
 - *Volume 3: From the American Civil War to the end of the Second World War*

A two-volume edition, abridged by John Terraine to omit battles outside the European continent, was published in the early 1980s.

- *The Generalship of Alexander the Great* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1958)
- *Julius Caesar: man, soldier and tyrant* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1965)
- *A Military History of the Western World*, 3 vols. This is the American publication of *The Decisive Battles of the Western World and their Influence upon History*. Titles of individual tomes are same as in the British edition. Originally published: (Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1954-7). Republished: (Da Capo Press, New York, 1987-8).
 - v. 1; ISBN 0-306-80304-6.
 - v. 2; ISBN 0-306-80305-4.
 - v. 3; ISBN 0-306-80306-2.

Further reading

- "Boney" Fuller: *The Intellectual General* by A.J. Trythall (London, 1977)
- Alaric Searle, "Was there a 'Boney' Fuller after the Second World War? Major-General J. F. C. Fuller as Military Theorist and Commentator, 1945-1966", *War in History*, 11/3 (2004), pp. 327–357.
- *Generals*, by Mark Urban (London, 2005) — the chapter on Fuller is available as a downloadable PDF (http://faber.lateral.net/media/files/medialibrary_34184.pdf)

External links

The full texts of several of Fuller's works are available online:

- *The Star in the West*
(<http://www.93beast.fea.st/files/section1/fuller/Star%20In%20the%20West%20TNR.pdf>)
- *The Foundations of the Science of War*
(<http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/fuller2/fuller2.asp>) hosted by U.S. Army Command & General Staff College
- *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure*
(<http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/Fuller/Fuller.asp>) hosted by U.S. Army Command & General Staff College

For examples of the use of Fuller's Campaign Theories in the Business World see:

- "Tactica Principles for Campaigns" a free pdf for download (<http://www.tactica.org.uk/10.html>)

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