

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 30
Number 4 *Parameters Winter 2000*

Article 5

11-17-2000

Editor's Shelf

Robert H. Taylor

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

Robert H. Taylor, "Editor's Shelf," *Parameters* 30, no. 4 (2000), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2003.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

Editor's Shelf

From *Parameters*, Winter 2000-01, pp. 140-41.

The United States Army's Center of Military History continues its commitment to producing an authoritative history of the Vietnam War with the eighth volume in the series on the US Army's participation in Vietnam, *Stemming the Tide*. John M. Carland's description of the first 18 months of combat by US Army ground forces spans the period from May of 1965 through the critical transition days of October 1966. It was during this period that the first real buildup of US forces occurred. With the piecemeal arrival of Army brigades in early 1965 the first US offensive operations took place. The author masterfully places the reader in General William C. Westmoreland's mindset and permits the savoring of those initial successes associated with the battles north of Saigon and later in the Central Highlands. With the success of his 1965 offensive strategy in stemming the tide of the communist offensive, Westmoreland seized the opportunity and altered his tactics in the early portion of 1966 by initiating spoiling attacks against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units throughout South Vietnam. It was this period of offensive action that bought the time and permitted the United States to complete the troop and logistical buildup that would serve as the foundation for our involvement in the later phases of the war. John Carland and the Center of Military History are to be congratulated on their continuing dedication to this project and more specifically for this comprehensive and detailed work. The author has assembled what may well be viewed as the seminal work on this critical period of United States involvement in Vietnam.

For those in or out of uniform who have served on the Joint Staff, the service staffs, or been associated with military academe, the name Vernon E. Davis is instantaneously recognizable. Vernon Davis served in the Historical Division of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for more than 30 years. He was a dedicated and meticulous historian who always seemed to have time to help those of us in need. His latest work, *The Long Road Home: U.S. Prisoner of War Policy and Planning in Southeast Asia*, did not (unfortunately) find its way into print prior to the author's death. However, it reflects, perhaps better than any of his many other contributions, Vernon's unwavering dedication to accuracy and clarity of expression. *The Long Road Home* is the companion work for the recently released book on the prisoner of war experience in Southeast Asia, *Honor Bound: The History of American Prisoners of War in Southeast Asia*. As with most works encompassing such a broad mantle and duration, some of the author's fellow researchers and historians have contributed to the earlier drafts and final editing of the book. However, Vernon's hand is unmistakable in the final text and documentation. The book chronicles the shaping of US prisoner of war policy during the Vietnam War and reveals just how difficult and divisive a task this was. Not only did the US government have to deal with the disregard of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong for the Geneva prisoner of war convention, they also had to resolve the internal bureaucratic and interservice disagreements that marked this turbulent period in US history. Add to these factors the pressures exerted by the families and the needs of the prisoners and you have the formula for one of the most compelling and revealing accounts of the US captivity experience ever published.

William E. Simons has provided a capstone work in his *Professional Military Education in the United States: A Historical Dictionary*. The book serves as a unique resource on the educational development of the American military profession. Simons draws upon his extensive background in the Air Force, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, and at RAND Corporation to edit over 140 entries from some 65 authors into a comprehensive and useful compendium of concepts, actions, and events affecting military curricula, program development, and academic practices. The book provides the origin and evolutionary development of all major institutions from the federal service academies and ROTC programs to the Capstone program for newly appointed flag officers. Arranged in alphabetical order, each entry tells a separate piece of the story, and many provide the reader with source information for continuing study and reference. The fact that each of the contributors was not asked to conform to any preconceived notion about the failure or success of their particular entry permitted Simons to assemble an unbiased collection of events and influences that have shaped professional military education in the American military. From the early French influences on the American military to the now-statutory Joint Chiefs of Staff, with its associated joint education program, William Simons captures the traditions, professional ethos, and elements of service uniqueness that serve as the

educational foundation for today's military.

Although *Parameters* does not normally consider books for review that walk that fine line between the military and business worlds, William A. Cohen's latest contribution is an exception. *Wisdom of the Generals* is the newest addition to the author's repertoire of over 40 books on business and leadership. Dr. Cohen has assembled a unique collection of more than 150 examples of words of inspiration from great warriors throughout history and adapted each to specific applications for everyday life. The author draws on his extensive background in the American and Israeli air forces, business, and academia to provide the reader with words of inspiration applicable to any number of military or business situations. Each quotation is placed within the context of the events that inspired it and accompanied by a capsule profile of the individual who stated it. From Sun Tzu to Schwarzkopf, Cohen provides the words of leaders on such subjects as honor, commitment, integrity, teamwork, discipline, and much more. Although designed for the business audience, this handy reference should be on the shelf of every person who considers himself a knowledgeable member of the profession of arms.

The publication of a work capturing the wisdom of 4,000 years of military history in a readily usable reference might be the greatest gift any editor could provide those who toil in the worlds of literature, publication, speechwriting, or military academia. Peter G. Tsouras has made such a contribution with *The Greenhill Dictionary of Military Quotations*. The more than 6,000 quotations from over 800 military figures capture the wisdom of soldiers, leaders, military theorists, and commentators from across the ages. These memorable sayings provide immeasurable insight into the realities of war and are referenced in more than 840 categories and subjects for easy access. The quotes are drawn from experiences and observations directly related to such subjects as the art of war, leadership, danger, tactics, training, and victory. Of special interest to the American audience are the 1,330 quotations from US sources. This 574-page compendium is destined to become a hallmark in the domain of military literature. -- RHT

For details on publishers and prices of books mentioned, see "[Off the Press](#)" or call *Parameters* at 717-245-4943 (e-mail: carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil).

Reviewed 17 November 2000. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil