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From the Editor

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From the Editor

In this issue . . .

When the *Parameters*' staff came to the realization that 2011 represented the 40th anniversary of the journal's founding, the immediate challenge became, "How do we recognize this extraordinary occasion?" What does one do to recognize 40 years of unparalleled contribution, in an appropriate, significant, and meaningful manner? How best to capture the essence of the entire body of work? What follows this brief introduction is dedicated to answering those questions.

The original plan for recognizing four decades of contribution to the intellectual mission of the US Army War College was to republish the ten manuscripts that had received the greatest attention. Identifying those articles would be no great challenge in that the staff accesses a software program detailing statistics associated with the publication and circulation of the journal. However, to paraphrase a former mentor, "All good ideas are not necessarily good ideas." The automated programs were only available for approximately 20 of the 40 years. Fortunately, former editors also recognized the need to monitor the preference of readers. Their records, combined with the available statistics, permitted the staff to formulate an ordinal list. Again, however, the plan to publish the ten most favored fell prey to reality. As we reviewed the manuscripts, it became evident that there were far more than ten deserving works. The ten rapidly evolved to twelve, soon blossoming into fifteen, and finally resulted in seventeen articles representing forty years of intellectual accomplishment. It is worthy to note that those seventeen articles were lovingly culled from more than seventy manuscripts that were almost indistinguishable in terms of reader appreciation.

In the process of editing the manuscripts for publication, a bittersweet sense of nostalgia rapidly came to dominate the entire process. Everyone associated with the project gained a new appreciation for the intellectual investment and sense of service demonstrated by the authors. As General Eckhardt (USAWC Commandant in 1971) so eloquently delineates in his introduction of the journal to the world, "*Parameters* will be associated with the principles of the farsighted individual to whom the first issue is dedicated, Elihu Root." Certainly, the articles that follow are reflective of that initial charter. From General Bradley's insightful analysis of "Leadership" to Secretary Gates's "Reflections on Leadership," authors have attempted to impart the tenets underpinning such diverse topics as national and military strategy, management, and ethics.

It was our intent to introduce this anniversary issue with the pithy quip, "Reflection is good for the soul." In researching the origin of that quote, however, we discovered that the actual quotation is, "Confession is good for the soul." Never wishing that such profound verbiage would go wanting, it is our sincere confession that we are extremely pleased and proud to provide our readers around the globe with this reflection on the last forty years of *Parameters*.

– RHT ☐