

BOOKS

"Follow Me"

reviewed by Col Michael D. Wyly, USMC(Ret)

FMFM 1-0, LEADING MARINES. Department of the Navy, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, DC, 1995, 124 pp. Not available in the MCA Bookstore.

This is the latest in the series of new doctrinal booklets that began in 1989 with *FMFM-1, Warfighting*. The book's purpose is stated concisely in its introduction: "*Leading Marines* describes a leadership philosophy that reflects our traditional strengths as an institution and attempts to define the very ethos of being a Marine." It does not purport to establish a new doctrine or teach Marines how to lead. Nor does it set out to add modern dimensions to leadership as we have traditionally understood it.

The book is a plethora of gritty stories of Marine combat leadership at its best. They are the classic legends: 1stLt William D. Hawkins assaulting the pier on Tarawa, the 1st Division's heroic march out of Chosin, Capt John W. Ripley blowing the bridge at Dong Ha, and the 1975 attack of Koh Tang Island to rescue the crew of the *Mayaguez*. It profiles the personalities of the Corps' unique leaders: Gens Vandegrift and Puller, and SgtMaj John Quick. It also quotes Victor H. Krulak's expression of the noble anonymity of the Marine character:

We remember that Marlborough defeated the French; Togo defeated the Russians; Scipio defeated Carthage . . . but only that the Marines won at Belleau Wood [and] Guadalcanal.

Only the most phlegmatic could read it without feeling inspired. The Marine reader will find his pride reenergized. And, if he has not heard all the stories elsewhere (as most of us have)

he may learn a few useful lessons about leadership that he can apply in combat.

We can hope that younger Marine readers will also be inspired to explore in their entirety the many works that are the sources of the 30 some brief accounts that form the separate patches in the quiltwork of legends that is *Leading Marines*. The accounts that are in the book, after all, are presented as snippets and are not told in their entirety. No Marine should reach maturity without reading the stories in their entirety.

FMFM 1-0

Leading Marines



U.S. Marine Corps

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Moral courage, an especially urgent topic today, receives a section devoted to it plus some additional remarks and anecdotes sprinkled through the text. The authors are to be commended for including it. Their summation of the issue is eloquent:

If Marines do not have the moral courage in peacetime to meet consistently the high standards and expectations of the Marine Corps, then they are not likely to have the moral

courage to make the difficult decisions that may determine the outcome of a battle or a campaign.

But only two real examples are presented and both of them are dated. There is Gen Merritt A. Edson's choice to resign in 1947 rather than rollover on the issue of Service unification so he could speak out without tarnishing the Corps' image. And Gen Oliver P. Smith's refusal to capitulate to tactics dictated by the Army general commanding the Tenth Corps in Korea because they would have placed his Marines at unnecessary risk. Really, there should be more. The presentation of both incidents, however, is cursory and shallow. The subject should occupy a more prominent place in the book. And, some attempt should have been made to make the subject relevant to today's times. The easy capitulation of senior officers to politically correct social programs put forward by the Government today is as much an irritant among young idealistic Marines as is Government corruption among principled citizens. We have to fix it.

But over all, *Leading Marines* is not designed to teach lessons or fix problems. If there were a writing contest where the task was to tell in 18,000 words or less why the U.S. Marine Corps has been a source of inspiration to generations of Americans, it would be the uncontested winner. But it is not a book you can use to practical purpose.

All examples are drawn from the Corps' own history, no member of any other Service is ever mentioned, and all the Marines who appear seem flawless heroes. The bias is excusable. The book is intended to inspire and it does.

The rest of the new series FMFMs, however, were written to educate. From a didactic standpoint, *Leading Marines* presents two difficulties. Both these problems will cause the serious student to see the book as hype instead of education. First of all, no one reading it for the purpose of learning

is going to believe that there have never been any weak leaders in the Corps along with the many strong ones represented, nor that all great combat leaders were U.S. Marines. Secondly, the student with a questioning mind will be continually wondering, "Who says?" For instance, on page 55 we are told "Fear of the unknown breeds paralysis. It is best overcome by vigorous leadership . . ." Obviously this is the opinion of one or more of the persons involved in writing the book. And the statement is self-serving to their purpose. We are not told who any of these writers are, and they make no attempt to support their opinion. Yet their opinion is clearly arguable. Most combat veterans can think of a time they experienced what might have become a paralyzing fear. Those who overcame it did so by varied means. Some few can tell of overcoming their fears with the help of a "vigorous leader." Others recall overcoming fear not because of a vigorous leader (even though one might have been present) but because of friends whose esteem was valuable to them. Others remember discovering some inner strength, perhaps a muttered prayer. Some may have recalled advice from a parent or a family story about a courageous ancestor. Or, it may have been the sight of a nearby unit advancing into the unknown.

Though the book remains true to its purpose of "reflecting tradition and defining ethos," and does it powerfully, the purpose itself raises a question, why publish a new book that doesn't say anything new? It does include a section in the last chapter entitled "Decentralization." And decentralization, though not new in itself, is certainly an idea that has gained more attention over the past decade than ever before in the Corps' history. Yet even

here, the book draws from the past sketchy and unrelated examples from Haiti, Nicaragua, and China in the 1920s and 30s and then World War II. Examples from Vietnam are included in this section, but not as lessons that set a trend for the future.

That *Leading Marines* offers more hype than education stems from the method of using selected fragments instead of whole accounts. They are too many, too brief, too disparate, and too shallow. This presents another difficulty. I found myself constantly curious about the source material. A standard requirement of good writing is to identify the source briefly in the text as well as the footnote when it is apparent the reader's curiosity will be aroused. Again, in the interest of hype, this is not done. Obviously the authors did not want to interrupt the dramatic flow of the stories. As a consequence, the serious reader is continually flipping pages back and forth to read the notes, which instead of appearing at the bottom of the page are inconveniently placed at the end.

There is no mandate from the Commandant like *FMM 1's* "I expect every officer to read—and reread—this book . . . in war and peace, in the field and in the rear, [it] dictates our approach to duty." Instead we get a Commandant's message that is less pointed: "[*Leading Marines*] is intended to help [Marines] come to terms with their own personal leadership style." *Leading Marines* is only a historical marker at the side of the road to remind Marines of their past. Whether it will affect the behavior of young Americans joining the Corps and whether they will grasp the significance of the old stories so briefly alluded to is the question. That it will tweek the emotions of teary-eyed old colonels and generals is a certainty.

What we really need now is a leadership philosophy that sustains our proud tradition, draws on past experience, and leads us forward to face the demands of a changing world.

For our world has changed. This is not to suggest that "our traditional strengths" or "the ethos of being a Marine" are less relevant today than before. Some of the changes that affect today's fighting forces make the old strengths and ethics more relevant than ever. Courage and decisiveness for instance have always been traits prized by Marines. They are repeated in *Leading Marines* along with the other familiar 14 "leadership traits." But now that small units expect to be more widely dispersed than ever, young Marines will need a new kind of courage and decisiveness. These are new requirements, different than when larger units fought intact. Our modern tactical style demands new interpretations, including special focus on courage and decisiveness, but *Leading Marines* fails to give them the renewed emphasis they deserve. Instead, they share the same old equal time with the other 12 traits that they always have.

Leading Marines adds another brief volume to the wealth of material that already exists to stir the aging and fire the souls of the young. However, it does nothing to carry us forward. As corporations, law enforcement agencies, and Governments seek ways to remain viable in a changing world, so must Marines



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Quote to Ponder

My comment as to the overall effect of the reading [*Leading Marines*] is that it explains why Marines, without combat experience, are able to stand and meet the enemy their first time under fire. It is as if in their education and training a dormant "sense of history" gene comes alive; for the message is clear: "These are the legacies that we have inherited and that we must pass on."

—Karl Montor, Ph. D.

Author of *Naval Leadership: Voices of Experience and Ethics for the Junior Officer*

On Strategy

reviewed by Mark M. Lowenthal

THE MAKING OF STRATEGY: Rulers, States, and War. Edited by Williamson Murray, Macgregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein. Cambridge University Press, 1994, 680 pp., \$34.95. (Member \$31.45)

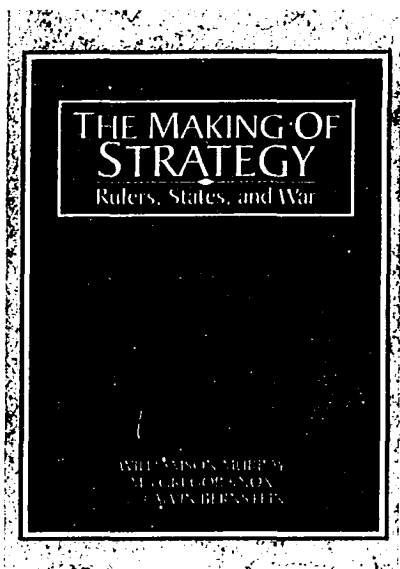
In the realm of strategy, students of military history tend to focus on the outcome and not the process. Highly successful or deeply flawed strategies may be studied to discover "why" they exhibited these traits, but there are few systematic treatments of the process by which nations arrived at and executed national strategies. This book makes major strides towards closing that gap.

Beginning with a very strong introductory chapter, Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley not only set forth the theme for the book but also carefully dissect the major factors that influence all nations' strategic processes and choices—geography, history, the nature of the regime, religion, ideology, culture, economics, government, and military organization. Involving the highest levels of the state, the strategic process cannot escape any of the factors that make each state unique.

The reader is then treated to a fairly wide-ranging examination of specific cases. Most are European, although the United States is discussed twice (1783–1865 and 1945–1991); 14th–17th century China and Israel are also analyzed. The time period ranges from 5th century B.C. Athens to the United States up to its Cold War victory.

As with any collection of essays, some are better than others, but the reader will not feel short-changed in any of them. Readers well-versed in modern western military history may find themselves more intrigued

by those cases that are less familiar. Arthur Waldron's essay on Ming China stands out in this regard, with a special emphasis on the perils of cultural snobbery vis-a-vis one's enemies. Similarly, Donald Kagan is as rewarding as ever in his discussion of Pericles' brilliant but politically difficult strategy for Athens, which



was abandoned much to the city's peril.

Readers will find themselves on more familiar ground in the various essays concerning the great European powers before the two World Wars. Even here, there are important but often forgotten points. For example, Holger H. Herwig points out repeatedly that—despite all of the vaunted German organizational capabilities—the Kaiser's government was chaotic, a major factor in its ill-advised plans. Wilhelm Deist is also very good both on Weimar and on the huge gap between Hitler's plans and his ultimately inadequate capabilities, which were hidden by early successes through 1940.

There are a few curious omissions,

particularly France between its defeat in 1871 and its entry into World War I and Japan between the World Wars.

There are many themes that thread themselves through most of the essays, but at least two bear being stressed. First, ideology can either give purpose or can cripple—as was the case in Ming China and Hapsburg Spain. Unless ideology reflects both internal and external realities it almost becomes a weapon in the hands of one's enemies. Second, strategy—like all other government processes—is a matter of choices. Governments with a keen sense of self-interest, adequate processes, and an appreciation of long-term resources tend to do well. But this very good book is also a strong cautionary tale on how easy it is to choose one's national strategy poorly.

USMC

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