

Books

Vietnam: A History, by Stanley Karnow.
New York: Penguin Books, 1983, revised 1991. Pp. i-xvi,
1-768. \$15.95

by E.H. Petersen

Readers will already be familiar with Stanley Karnow's *Vietnam: A History*, published in 1983, and received with high praise. In his revision, the new printing undertakes to rectify inescapable error from the previous edition, update the text as new information has become known, alter some of the supporting photographs, add new members to the cast of Principal Characters, and record further and later references for Notes on Sources to his chapters. The revision is a major one, and brings vividly back to mind the frightening aspects of a period in United States history when there were searches for communist sympathizers, assassinations, race riots, civil protests over the war, and daily television news programs covering the war as no war until then had been covered, which culminated in KIAs, MIAs, and WIAs. Karnow's book reminds us of how harrowing these times were.

In preparing the book for publication in 1983, after a successful showing on the Public Broadcasting System, Karnow wrote, "I undertook this book with no cause to plead" (p. x). But time has caused a personal reassessment, for the 1991 revision altered that sentiment to: "Like everyone else involved in it, I was emotionally scar[r]ed by the war, and for me to claim a detachment from the experience would be dishonest. But I approached this book with no thesis to promote or cause to plead" (p. xii). Indeed, Karnow is not detached, nor was he in the earlier printing; the facts he adduces are compelling and persuasive, with the chronicle revealing the forces at odds with

one another in a way that questions our intentions and involvement. The book also removes some of the journalistic aspects of the prose and places instead a more historical tone on the recounting of events.

The major addition to this text comes in Chapter One: "The War Nobody Won," which gains its fresh perspective from the interviews Karnow held in 1990 on a visit to Vietnam, and an analysis of the American involvement in Operation Desert Storm, as it applied to the "quagmire" of Vietnam.

Karnow returned to interview General Vo Nguyen Giap, Vietnam's foremost military figure, and learned more about how the North Vietnamese approached the war. Giap explained that

We were not strong enough to drive a half million American troops out of Vietnam, but that wasn't our aim. We sought to break the will of the American government to continue the conflict. Westmoreland was wrong to count on his superior firepower to grind us down. Our Soviet and Chinese comrades also failed to grasp our approach when they asked how many divisions we had in relation to the Americans, how we would cope with their technology, their artillery, their air attacks. We were waging a people's war, . . . In war there are two factors—human beings and weapons. Ultimately, though, human beings are the decisive factor. (20-21)

What was little understood by the Westerners, the British, French, and Americans, was the culture, made clear by Ho Chi Minh to a French visitor to Vietnam; this was a holy war against foreign invaders in a country xenophobic in nature: "You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours. But even at those odds, you will lose and I will win" (197-98). From an intellectual family whose father taught at a local school, Giap would adumbrate Ho's words with this Vietnamese poem written three thousand years before Christ:

We are descended from the Hong Bang.
Ancient shame is never forgotten. (154)

In that poem, Giap said, “. . . I discovered our forebears, our martyrs, our duty to expunge our past humiliation” (154).

These conversations with the Vietnamese revealed several American successes in the war, ones which were not immediately considered so, notably the ARC light bombing missions and Operation Phoenix. Of the first, Colonel Bui Tin said, “The B-52 attacks were terrible. The planes flew at high altitudes [40,000 feet], so that we had no warning. Suddenly the bombs were exploding around us” (22). And of the latter CIA-sponsored program, which infiltrated South Vietnamese into cells of North Vietnamese terrorists, Colonel Bui Tin said, “We never feared a division of troops, but the infiltration of a couple of guys into our ranks created tremendous difficulties for us” (617).

Turning to the present day, Karnow reviews Operation Desert Storm in the wake of the Vietnamese war, where President Bush “sought to exorcise the specter of Southeast Asia by pledging that” [Karnow’s words], “. . . this will not be another Vietnam” where troops were “asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back” [President Bush’s words] (15). And, to be sure, the United States ensured this end by committing 600,000 troops to Saudi Arabia, 100,000 more than were in Vietnam at the height of the war there. The specter of Vietnam was still strong in the 1990s, and debates in Congress over the use of U.S. forces in Iraq focused on exactly this issue: the Vietnam war had become a *bête noire* for America, which foreign allies had warned us against at our earliest moment of involvement, and would wonder at us as we “prosecuted” that war.

And the naiveté of Alden Pyle in Graham Greene’s *The Quiet American*—which was required reading for any foreign service officer sent for duty to Vietnam—is seconded by Karnow, who reveals that Pyle was modelled after Colonel Edward G. Lansdale, an American military advisor, who like Pyle resorts to sabotage early in the American involvement in Vietnam. To this comment, Karnow adds an anecdote: Westmoreland often said during the war, “They are Asians who don’t think about

death the way we do" (22). His reference is, of course, to the North Vietnamese, but what of the allied South Vietnamese he was fighting to liberate? Were they different?

Another example is recorded from General Maxwell Taylor, who convinced President Kennedy to escalate the war by sending 8,000 troops as "advisors" in the 1960s; he would echo this view in 1987:

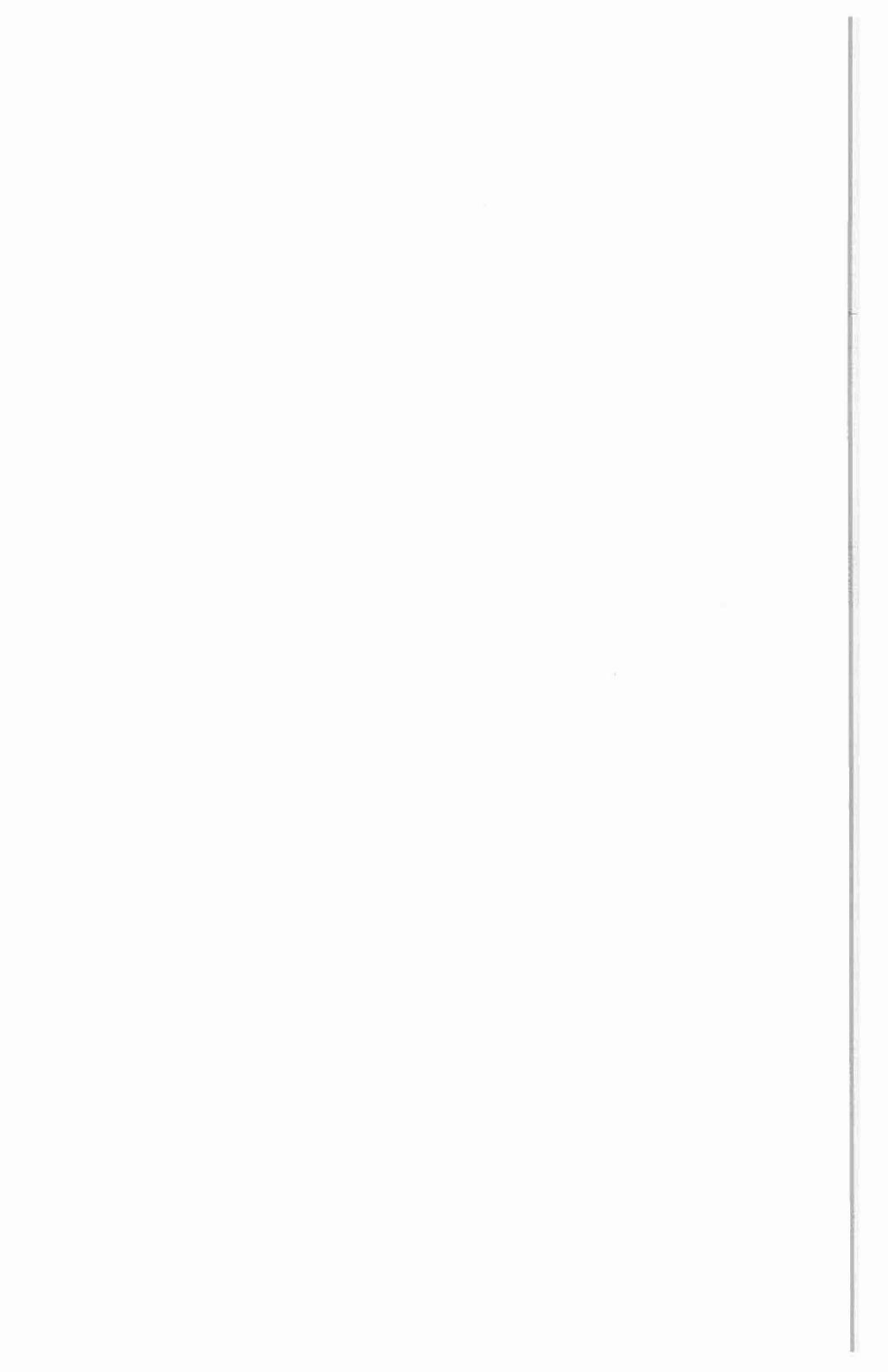
First, we didn't know ourselves. We thought that we were going into another Korean War, but this was a different country. Secondly, we didn't know our South Vietnamese allies. We never understood them, and that was another surprise. And we knew even less about North Vietnam. Who was Ho Chi Minh? Nobody really knew. So, until we know the enemy and know our allies and know ourselves, we'd better keep out of this kind of dirty business. (23)

A summation of the war began before the U.S. even entered the conflict, when Karnow records the mood and events of the 1950s:

In Washington, right-wing demagogues like Senator Joseph McCarthy meanwhile fueled a febrile atmosphere of anti-communism, driving normally rational U.S. officials to excessive lengths to prove their devotion to the defeat of the "Red menace." By 1954, consequently, American aid accounted for nearly 80 percent of French expenditures on the conflict, and the compulsion to win created the illusion of imminent success. Admiral Arthur Radford, chairman of joint chiefs of staff, assured a congressional committee on the eve of France's defeat at Dienbienphu that France had arrived at "a favorable turn of the war." Georges Bidault, the French foreign minister, asserted during the battle: "Ho Chi Minh is about to capitulate. We are going to beat him." (185)

Stanley Karnow has had the last word on the period before and after the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. One could only wish that so handsome a book had better source documentation for the quotes he uses. This aside, his work to understand this "quagmire" of U.S. history is redoubtable and enduring.

United States Air Force Academy



Flights of Passage: Reflections of a World War II Aviator,
by Samuel Hynes.
New York: Frederic C. Beil and Annapolis:
Naval Institute Press, 1988. Pp. vii - 270. \$16.95.

by David O. Boxwell

Samuel Hynes waited forty-three years to produce this splendid distillation of his life as a Naval Aviation Cadet and as a Marine pilot in the final months of war in the Pacific. Hynes recalls the years between his eighteenth and twenty-first birthdays, remembering not only the big events one would expect to be included in a memoir of growing up in the middle of World War II, but also the really important moments and emotions—the feeling of flying an open-cockpit plane; a first glance at a girl whose hair swung and dress twirled as she moved; trains stopped in the bleak piney woods at Flomaton Junction, Alabama. *Flights of Passage* will prove emotional reading to anyone who went through the Navy flight program during and immediately after the war.

Hynes employs a plain vocabulary so straightforward and simple that the reader is never aware of technique or mannerisms. For example, Hynes describes his first visit, as a lad, to a hangar at the Minneapolis Reserve Naval Air Station:

Inside it was cool and shadowy. I remember the light coming down, soft and unfocused from the high ceiling, and the soft cries of the swallows that nested in the roof beams, and the smell of hydraulic fluid and oil. Planes in for repair were scattered around the hangar floor, half-dismantled, surrounded by cowlings and tools, and the mechanics worked beside

the open engines. Sometimes one man would speak a word or two to another, or tap a tool on an engine, but the sounds were muted and lost in the tall emptiness under the roof; and the effect was of a careful quietness, as though the hangar were a church, and the mechanics priests engaged in some ritual that we were too young, and too earthbound, to understand. (14)

Hynes entered the Navy by way of the CPT—Civilian Pilot Training. A very long train ride fetched him up in Denton, Texas, for a course in flying Piper Cubs at North Texas State Teachers College. The Navy used this training to weed out those unfit to fly. The instructors were an odd collection of crop-dusters and pilots too old or unsuited for active military service. Here, Hynes roomed with Ike and Bergie and Johnson, and they became friends.

The quality of flight instruction in CPT was uneven. Columnist Russell Baker, going through CPT about a year after Hynes, had an instructor so high-strung and nervous that he constantly rode Baker's controls on their dual flights, so Baker never flew at all until his first solo flight which proved terrifying and only partially successful.

Hynes was lucky; he drew a skilled instructor, and soon found that although he was not a natural flier—everything coming easy—he could fly and he began to believe that he would be a pilot.

Twelve weeks of Pre-Flight at the University of Georgia was next. Hynes and his mates Joe Baird, Wally and Taylor hated all of it. The Navy attempted to get a bit of Annapolis spit and polish into their AvCads and they resented the phony atmosphere intensely. Their days were spent in ground school mornings and organized sport afternoons, with generous stretches of close-order drill and the dreaded obstacle course in between.

We learned to hate our enemies—not the Germans and the Japanese (nobody ever mentioned them), but the non-flying, attitude-talking martinets who

commanded us, and the military system they represented. After Pre-Flight we would never quite join the Navy; we had joined instead a smaller, more independent and anarchic group, the community of fliers. The Navy was our antagonist, muscle-bound and dumb like those football-coach officers; but because it was dumb we could beat it. With a little imagination we could circumvent, muddle, and exploit the regulations, and we could fly. "Fuck the Navy," Taylor said as we packed to leave Athens. "That's all, just fuck the Navy." We were moving on, out of the chicken-shit, back to our proper element, the air. (37)

(I regret to say that two years later, as I packed to leave Pre-Flight at Chapel Hill, my own attitude was much the same. I don't doubt that some of my former superior officers can be persuaded to testify that I did not improve much, attitude-wise, over the years.)

Hynes was sent to NAS Memphis for Primary training in the N2S Stearman open-cockpit biplane. Here he met Spanish John, Rock and T, a rebel like Taylor. The flying was marvelous. They learned to fly the Navy way—full-stall landings; slips to a circle; acrobatics of any sort. The Stearman was nearly unbreakable. Because the cadets were without radios, the landing pattern resembled bees returning to the hive when each flight period ended.

The sound of aircraft engines echoed all day, and part of the nights. Hynes admits to being really spooked by night flying. No landing lights on the aircraft were used—they were not used on aircraft carriers so Cadets were learning the Navy way.

The exhaust stacks, which in daylight are just pipes sticking out of the right-hand side of the engine, are red mouths spitting fire at night. If you're flying in a left-hand landing pattern you'll be looking over the left side of the cockpit and won't notice the stacks; but one cadet looked over the other side, saw those

streams of flame and thought his plane was on fire,
and bailed out. (53)

At Memphis, Hynes learned what it meant to be a segregated minority, being neither enlisted or officer, being always with other cadets. Cadets also went on liberty together. On Saturday nights Memphis beckoned. Someone would get a room at the Peabody or the old Gayoso Hotel and the parties would last until dawn. Hynes met a pretty girl in a record store and dated her for a while, and he wrote to Alice, the girl back home, but he was a nineteen-year-old virgin and despaired of ever encountering, let alone passing, the Big Test.

In late November, nearing the end of his Primary flying, Hynes recalls a late afternoon flight:

Below me lights began to come on in houses and farms, and everything that was not a light became dark and indistinct, so that the ground was almost like a night sky. But still I flew on in sunlight. The surface of the plane seemed to absorb and hold the light and color of the sunset; brightness surrounded me. It was as though the earth had died, and I alone was left alive. A sense of my own aliveness filled me. I would never die. I would go on flying forever. (60)

Hynes was sent to Whiting Field, Florida for Basic and Instrument flying in the SNV aircraft known as the "Vultee Vibrator." This plane was thoroughly detested by all. Here the Navy offered Cadets a rare chance to make a choice: Navy or Marines; single or multiengine aircraft. Hynes and most of his friends chose single-engines and the Marines: any other course seemed "like wearing your rubbers or voting Republican." (76)

Advanced Training in the SNJ (AT-6) took place at Bronson Field, near Pensacola. Cadets were divided into six-man flights and Hynes flew with T and Rock and Taylor. They vowed to work hard to make it through the course with a perfect record—no down checks, no missed flights, no demerits.

The SNJ was like a real combat plane—six-hundred horsepower radial engine, retractable landing gear and a machine gun. They flew formation, night formation, cross-country navigation, bombing and aerial gunnery flights. Aerial gunnery was what they had been waiting for. Firing was done on a towed sleeve, with hits on the sleeve counted after the flight—each pilot had a different color dye on his bullet tips. Never mind that most cadets saw few hits; this was the Real Thing. The High Side Attack was the most difficult. From a position above, ahead and to the side of the target, and on the same course, a long diving S-turn was made to approach the target from a forty-five degree angle (vertical) and at ninety degrees to the target's course at the moment when your plane is one thousand feet from the target. Done properly, it's a beautiful thing to see.

To the pilot in the towplane, the experience is not quite so aesthetic, though. He can see the planes entering their runs and see the tracers' tracks. And when an attacker gets too intent on the target and slides round behind the sleeve, the towpilot can feel the tracers reaching for his own plane, and his own vulnerable flesh. And it's his own friends who are back there taking shots. I remember the voice of Taylor, plaintively: "Hey you guys, stop shootin' up mah ass! (81)

Hynes' flight did well and moved to mainside Pensacola for what might be the most wonderful day of their entire lives. They would pin on their wings and gold bars: they were now Aviators and Marine Officers. As officers, they would rate a salute from enlisted men, and they could give orders to enlisted men, if they could think of a proper sort of order to give. They could get married, or live in the BOQ. They could drink in the Officer's Club. "And women—women would fall on their backs before him, stunned by his golden glory." (87)

On leave, before reporting to DeLand, Florida for operational training in SBD Dauntless dive bombers, Hynes went with the whole flight to Birmingham for T's wedding. T's sister Liz met

them at the bus station. She was pretty and vivacious and very Southern. Hynes had never met any girls like this in Minneapolis. He was instantly in love.

At DeLand, the aircraft and the instructors were combat veterans. The Lieutenant assigned to Hynes' flight was a Cherokee from Oklahoma, a veteran of the Midway battle, called "Chief" as were all Native Americans in the armed forces. He was a quiet, careful man who taught his flight the proper technique of dive-bombing. As a flight maneuver it's simple enough. Roll the aircraft inverted at about twelve thousand feet above the target, pull hard on the stick to aim the plane straight down toward the earth, retard the throttle and extend the divebrakes. There are two main difficulties. First, and most easily overcome, is the sheer terror of a dive toward the earth, standing on the rudder pedals, weight on your shoulder harness, noise of engine and rushing air rising to mind-shattering levels. The second difficulty is actually striking the target with the bomb. This was a matter of experience and "Kentucky Windage," as the bombsight was a simple illuminated pip and circle—no computers here. You had to figure wind, target movement, angle of attack, bomb trajectory and drop altitude. And yes, the target might well be shooting at you all the way down.

After the fear is under control, all this gets to be a lot of fun. Hynes and his flight, Joe, T, Rock, Taylor and Wally delighted in flying together, trying always to be perfect in their formations, their bombing, their landings. It was a marvelous summer.

On weekends, there was Daytona. There were lots of girls, not all of them "nice." Hynes heard the story of the sailor who had gotten syphilis in his big toe while sitting in a booth at a beach-side bar opposite such a girl wearing a bathing suit.

T's wife came down to Daytona and rented an apartment. Liz came to visit and she and Hynes dated. They went to the casino on the Daytona pier and danced to Glenn Miller tunes and held hands and were in love. One night, the sudden roar of engines drowned out the music as three SBDs flashed by the casino, lower than the dance floor. Taylor and a couple of buddies paying their respects.

Hynes left DeLand with orders for the West Coast. On leave in Birmingham after visiting his father in Chicago, he and Liz were married. They had a one-night honeymoon in the Tutwiler Hotel, and he and T embarked on the long rail journey to the coast. He was nineteen.

They were assigned to a TBM training squadron at Santa Barbara. This was the aircraft they would fly in combat. Affectionately called "The Turkey," the TBM was no beauty. It could carry torpedoes or bombs and flew well and had no vices.

They spent months training in the Turkeys, very anxious for orders to the Pacific. They were aware that the final phase of the war in the Pacific was near and they did not want to miss the Final Test.

Orders came for assignment to VMTB-232, on Ulithi Atoll reequipping for the invasion of Okinawa. They were put to work flying anti-submarine patrols. It was very boring work and the squadron was eager to get into combat. VMTB-232 was to be the first Marine bomb squadron ashore on Okinawa. The invasion began on the first of April 1945. On the 5th, the squadron flew to Saipan. Storms were battering Okinawa and the landings were behind schedule. Kamikaze attacks had begun on the invasion fleet and the losses in ships and men were shattering. The squadron waited for two weeks on Saipan, drinking and generally raising hell in the Navy clubs on the island, and then flew the final leg of their long journey to war.

We flew past the island, and over the fleet, where here was more drifting smoke from the guns of battleships and cruisers, and then turned back toward the island and began our landing approach. As we descended and crossed the beach, I saw the part of the island that American troops controlled, and familiarity returned. It looked more like a construction site or a highway project back home than like a battlefield—slashes of raw earth everywhere, bulldozers, steamrollers, cities of tents and temporary buildings, heaps of supplies. Seebes were building roads and airstrips, and the scene was full of

American energy and bustle. It was only when we had landed and I was standing uncertainly on the flight line waiting for orders that I became aware of the presence of war—a distant rumbling, like a trolley car passing late at night, that was the sound of guns. (200)

Hynes, Rock, Joe, T and Bergie moved into a tent in the squadron area on a low hill overlooking the muddy airstrip at Kadena. Their first flying missions were to carry artillery spotters low over enemy lines. It was boring and dangerous work. After only three days the squadron area lost their first plane and three days later Bergie and his crew took off on the same kind of mission and simply disappeared forever.

The loss of Bergie hit hard. It was especially difficult as there was almost nothing of him to mourn—his few possessions were collected and sent home, his cot taken apart and removed. The patch of dry wheat that had been under his cot was soon trampled down and no sign of Bergie's existence remained.

Hynes' first large-scale dive-bomb attack was on Japanese positions on Naha airfield. The air over Naha was full of Navy planes and their flight had to circle and wait for traffic to clear before the flight leader was able to peel off and begin his dive. The members of the flight followed in turn and when Hynes began his attack he tried to remember the things he must do—bomb bay open, bombs armed, guns armed. When he was nearly down to the altitude at which he had to drop, he spotted a gun position as a target, but it was too late, he had no chance to place his bombs on target—he had to jettison them and pull out and join up with his squadron. It was a bitter pill.

The squadron began flying solitary night missions over Japanese lines intended to interdict supply operations and interrupt sleep. Hynes hated these flights—he was never keen on night-flying anyway, and stooging around about a thousand feet above enemy guns gave him the heebie-jeebies.

Heavy rains began in May. Roads on the island became impassable and getting supplies to troops at the front was a problem. The squadron began flying parachute drop supply

missions. The squadron flew nearly five hundred drops during this period; Hynes flew nine of those in the first five days of June. He recalls, bitterly, "It was surely the most useful thing we did during the whole campaign." (237)

In June, the weather cleared and the Army and Marines tightened the noose around the last Japanese defenders. VMTB-232 flew their last strike on Okinawa on the 19th, then began attacks on neighboring islands. These missions were the classic strikes the squadron had been waiting for—well-defined targets, well-briefed and led missions. Hynes remembers these attacks with fondness, but on one of them Joe was lost. His aircraft flew straight into the ground.

The Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki and the war ended officially on August 12th. On the 29th, Hynes flew his last mission—a long night patrol far out over the China Sea. It was his birthday. He was twenty-one.

Flights of Passage is not a tale of heroics or larger-than-life characters. Rather, the memoir distills actual images of things familiar and ordinary seen during the years of war: snippets of barracks life, week-end-long parties in hotel rooms, the frantic drama of railway stations, rented rooms occupied by country girls working in the city, the remarkable sound of a southern drawl.

Hynes also offers in memoriam, the vivid faces of those who were lost: Wally, Nick, Frenchy, Steve, Bergie, and Joe.

And we see a formation of TBMs in perfect echelon high over a Pacific atoll, each cockpit occupied by a familiar shape, sun glinting off the canopies, the closest bonds of friendship holding the planes together. The strike leader looks back for a moment at his flight and then signals with a nod of his head and rolls left into the attack. The rest follow in perfect cadence and then it is our turn and we're rolling and pulling through hard and standing on the rudder pedals as the earth reaches for us and down we dive, down and down.

Sequim, Washington



The British Military Dilemma in Ireland: Occupation Politics, 1886-1914, by Elizabeth A. Muenger.
Lawrence: University Press of Kansas and Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991. Pp. vii-254. \$29.95.

by Tom F. Baldy

Elizabeth Muenger has tackled a subject, that though dealing in events long distant, resonates with the politics and issues troubling Britain and Ireland today. To escape the merely academic, any work must pose some relevance for the present. Muenger's account does this—with care and skill, Muenger traces the troubled relationship between these two island nations. Muenger focuses on a relatively unremarked event in March 1914 which involved 57 British military officers at the Curragh Military Camp in County Kildare, and uses it as a telling indictment of British military rule in Ireland.

The Curragh Incident was the culminating event in a decades-long search by Irish nationalists for home rule which had begun to gather serious momentum after 1886. The incident at Curragh centered on a worrisome notion for British policymakers. Would the British Army in Ireland, particularly its officers, many of whom were Anglo-Irish, Protestant, conservative, and landed gentry, be reliable if, "at the end of the day" it became necessary to coerce Ulster to sever its connection to Britain? Coerce, because after years of nationalist agitation for autonomy, Unionist opposition and British government vacillation, home rule for Ireland became a near certainty in the wake of the Parliament Act of 1911. The passage of this Act served as a rallying cry for competing factions in Ireland. Two hundred fifty thousand Ulster Unionists signed the Solemn League and Covenant in September 1912 vowing to maintain the British connection. The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) formed to

forcefully resist home rule. By March 1914, the UVF had over 100,000 volunteers with some of the regiments commanded by British Army Reserve Officers. Nationalists organized their own army in response.

At the time of the Curragh Incident, the British Army in Ireland consisted of two infantry divisions and two cavalry Brigades. Many of these forces were quartered in the military camp at the Curragh. Winston Churchill, Minister of the Admiralty, ordered that security be tightened in Ireland in light of the deteriorating situation. On 18 March 1914, the Commander-in-Chief in Dublin, General Sir Arthur Paget, met in London with members of the Cabinet to discuss contingencies for moving troops to protect munitions stores and to aid the police should civil disturbances occur. General Paget raised the possibility with his superiors that some of his officers might be unwilling to act against Ulster. The War Office reassured Paget that officers quartered in Ulster, would be exempted from any operations and be allowed to "disappear." However, those officers outside Ulster who refused orders would be dismissed with prejudice. On 20 March, Paget met with his senior commanders and advised them measures were being taken to safeguard ammunition stores in Ulster. He acknowledged such moves could cause trouble and, hyperbolizing, stated that "the whole place would be ablaze by tomorrow." He then issued an ultimatum: Officers must either agree to participate or resign from the Service. General Sir Hubert Gough, Commander of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, informed Paget that he and 56 other officers preferred dismissal. Infantry officers also desired dismissal rather than act against Ulster. Only the quick action of Sir Charles Fergusson, Commander of the 5th Division, persuaded these officers otherwise. The dissatisfaction spread beyond Ireland to Britain and General Douglas Haig's command at Aldershot. Haig warned the War Office that every officer in his command would resign if moves were made against Ulster (Kee 193). Faced with the distinct possibility of a mutiny, the Government backed down. No action would be contemplated against Ulster. Politicians on both sides screamed; officials resigned. The issue of the Army's reliability remained largely unresolved. Home rule

for Ireland was a dead issue. The British government had no way to enforce it against the will of 100,000 armed Unionist vigilantes. The stage was set for civil war and eventual partition.

Reverberating through the British military establishment just five months before Britain's entry into World War I, the Curragh Incident reflects, in Muenger's view, the culmination of years of ambivalence and divided attitudes in Britain's policy towards Ireland. She dissects the social attitudes of the day, the political climate, the various players in the saga and offers insights into the minds of the English and Irish, their comically and tragically divergent perspectives.

There is obvious applicability in Muenger's work to the current dilemma in which the military and the other players in Northern Ireland find themselves. Because the situation there defies a political solution and certainly a military one, the military has been consigned to the role of police in a peace-keeping effort with no goal grander than keeping "a lid on things." Muenger's work also deals with the toll taken on a military trained to bring overwhelming force to bear against an enemy, and yet expected in Ireland to keep peace between factions undesirous of that peace or unable to find it. This lesson, of course, goes beyond Britain and Ireland and applies to any nation dealing with insurgency, to the relationship between government and those governed, coercion and conciliation, legitimate and illegitimate force, peace and war.

For Muenger, the Curragh Incident provides a metaphor for all that was wrong with Anglo-Irish relations at the turn-of-the-century. What attitudes, both English and Irish, formed opinion in this period? What characteristics of the British Officer Corps might explain their sympathies to Ulster? What role did the various elements of Irish society: Protestant, Catholic, the Military, and the ruling civil bureaucracy play in creating a dilemma for Britain in Ireland? What was the role of the police in Ireland in relation to the military? How did the army relate to the civil-military bureaucracy in the War Office, and the political authorities in Dublin Castle?

Muenger explores each of these questions, asserting early on

that England and Ireland operated from two very different views of the world:

While the Irish dealt in myths rife with symbolism, the British dealt in the realities of empire, in statistics. Conversely, where Irish concerns were often simple matters of land and food, British assumptions regarding those concerns included the probability of devious motives, larger agendas, and general Celtic treachery. (2)

Undeniably, history and circumstance fostered basic divisions between the English and Irish. Foremost among these is the potato famine whose horror forever marked the Irish psyche. Between 1845-1851 out of a population of eight million, one million died and a million and a half emigrated. Nicholas Cummins, a magistrate of Cork wrote,

I entered some of the hovels.... In the first, six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearances dead, were huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering which seemed a ragged horsecloth, their wretched legs hanging about, naked above the knees. I approached with horror, and found by a low moaning they were alive—they were in fever, four children, a woman and what had once been a man...in a few minutes I was surrounded by at least 200 such phantoms, such frightful spectres as no words can describe, either from famine or from fever. Their demoniac yells are still ringing in my ears.... (Downing 29)

Those who survived harbored a sense of resentment and hatred against the landlords and British government whom they blamed for the famine.

The Irish from the 1860's on were caricatured in British cartoons in weeklies like *Punch* as barbaric, subhuman, and ape-like. John Bull, representative of Britannia, however was

portrayed as all that Paddy was not: calm, patient, enlightened, and protective. Paddy, inherently violent, was unfit to govern himself. John Bull was eminently qualified to govern (Downing 42).

Muenger has raised an important point. Britain remained confused as to the best way to proceed in a colony that was never truly friend or foe and that presented no clear choice for policymakers. An essentially Protestant, industrialized, Anglo-Saxon England confronted a largely Catholic, rural, Gaelic Ireland. English politicians, civil servants, the English people did not understand Ireland. Little wonder that the Army did neither.

If there was general misunderstanding between the British and Irish, if each were indeed caught up in their respective worlds, Muenger sees the British Officer Corps as perhaps the most visible symbol of that problem. She muses about a "collective mentality" among the officers and its effect on relations between the two groups. Here is, to my mind, the strongest and most interesting chapter of her book, and one that she handles with ease.

The British Army in the years before the Great War was small (165,000 in 1899 with 6670 officers). Their small numbers seems remarkable when considering the Empire over which the Army then presided. Muenger maintains the upper class was over-represented in this Army's Officer Corps and that they identified closely with landed interests in society and were dedicated to the status quo.

The requisite financial means, coupled with the belief that a military career offered sufficient social prestige and status, induced many Anglo-Irish to enter the service. Further coloring the unique nature of the officer corps was the exclusion for many years of Roman Catholics.

To illustrate the feelings of superiority of the officer class, Muenger quotes Colonel Chaille-Long, an officer posted to Egypt in the 1880's who describes a meeting with a Frenchman in a cafe: "I was polite, but there was something in my manner, I recall, something of the hauteur of the officer, which I could

not well conceal" (21). In his study of the British soldier, John Keegan describes officers who risked maiming or death in the Battle of Waterloo rather than avoid an incoming cannon shot: "...to lie down, or even to duck, was thought at best cowardly, at worst a dereliction" (Keegan 178).

Disdain is recorded for a military doctor who hearing a shot passing too closely, ducks:

...down he dropped on his hands and knees...and away he scrambled like a great baboon, his head turned fearfully over his shoulder as if watching the coming shot, whilst our fellows made the field resound with their shouts and laughter. (Keegan 178)

Muenger cites the importance of leisure, sport, and amateurism in the officer's outlook. Hemingway explored this notion in his short story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." The following exchange comes between Wilson the British safari hunter and the American Macomber who the day before had run in terror from a lion.

You know, I'd like to try another lion," Macomber said. "I'm really not afraid of them now. After all, what can they do to you?"

"That's it," said Wilson. "Worst one can do is kill you. How does it go? Shakespeare. Damned good. See if I can remember. Oh, damned good. Used to quote it to myself at one time. 'Let's see. By my troth, I care not; a man can die but once; we owe God a death and let it go which way it will he that dies this year is quit for the next.' Damned fine, eh?" (Hemingway 150)

In Hemingway's story, the lion hunt has a quality of war about it. Certainly Macomber, who runs from his first lion, is as frightened as if he were in combat. He's made a mess of things the first day in front of his wife and Wilson. He comes of age in time to die.

Even the horror of World War I failed at first to expunge this quality of sport. In the Battle of the Somme, in which over 60,000 British were killed or wounded during the first day, the men were encouraged to kick a football as they advanced toward the German positions. A survivor described the scene.

As the gun-fire died away I saw an infantryman climb onto the parapet into No Man's Land, beckoning others to follow. As he did so he kicked off a football. A good kick. The ball rose and travelled well towards the German line. That seemed to be the signal to advance. (Fussell 27)

Amateurism—that is, the view that a systematic training was unnecessary in light of an officer's unceasing ability to exercise common sense in any situation—was also a popular notion that Muenger explores. She quotes Major General J.F.C. Fuller, an Army critic, who deplored the lack of preparedness of military officers:

The officer breakfasted at about 8 a.m., brushed up and attended Orderly Room at nine: this was the grand ritual of each day. Here prisoners were brought up, soiled crime sheets handled; there was much marching, about-turning, and saluting, planning for the afternoon, and on one occasion an Adjutant discovered a hen netted up in one of his documentary pigeonholes.

After Orderly Room ante-room; a glance at the newspapers, perhaps a slice of cake and a glass of port. Then round one's Company, a chat with the Colour-Sergeant, and the day's work ended except for the Orderly Officer.

... It was a delightful life, mostly duck-shooting and hunting in the winter and tennis and cricket in the summer. (25)

This quality of ease, seems in particular, endemic to the British. I recall my father's recollections of his Army experiences with the British in Palestine during WWII. The Brits were appalled that my father lacked a "batman" and insisted that he share theirs. After all, what was life without hot water in which to shave, or someone to care for your boots in the desert. I have personal recollections as well, formed during a visit with my brother to the Far East in 1980. We visited British forces posted in the New Territories on the border with the People's Republic of China. British officers in the Gurkha regiment enjoyed a style of life reminiscent of service in India a century before. After awakening to orange juice delivered by Gurkha recruits to our door, we went for a brisk run, changed into newly laundered clothes provided by our attendant, and retired to the Officer's mess for fresh-squeezed orange juice served in crystal and delivered by an orderly in crisp dress whites and carrying a silver tray.

Life in Ireland could be equally gracious. When not called in emergency to aid the police, the army had ample time for leisure activities. Civil disturbances were sporadic and more the exception than the rule, which meant for the officer much socializing with the Anglo-Irish landed gentry of Dublin, hunting and the attending of races.

Noblesse oblige, one's obligation to society, was a sentiment real and heartfelt as well, though occasionally spilling into self righteousness. Muenger quotes General Sir James Willcocks: "It is one of the reason of our country's greatness that her sons toil and moil and seek no recompense save that which comes from the consciousness of duty well done" (27).

Barbara Tuchman says of the British:

No nation has ever produced a military history of such verbal nobility as the British. Retreat or advance, win or lose, blunder or bravery, murderous folly or unyielding resolution, all emerge alike clothed in dignity and touched with glory.... Everyone is splendid: soldiers are staunch, commanders cool, the fighting magnificent. Whatever

the fiasco, aplomb is unbroken. Mistakes, failures, stupidities, or other causes of disaster mysteriously vanish. Disasters are recorded with care and pride and become transmuted into things of beauty.... Other nations attempt but never quite achieve the same self-esteem. (Fussell 175)

Noblesse oblige, leisure, amateurism, privilege all led to a certain sense of moral superiority which could take the form of either condescension or, in its uglier form, racism. W. Beach Thomas seemed to feel that even in death the British soldier was somehow superior, "Even as he lies on the field he looks more quietly faithful, more simply steadfast than others" (Fussell 175).

The British officer corps remained a rather elite group despite reforms. In fact, it was only the First World War that changed the character and size of the Army and ultimately shattered its illusions. War and death served as a remarkably democratizing influence. A small, elitist, patrician force opened suddenly and by necessity to the middle classes.

Muenger examines what she believes were distinct groupings in Ireland, groups who while aware of one another, lacked any real understanding of each other. Catholic Ireland, Anglo-Irish Protestant Ireland, Dublin Castle Ireland, and military Ireland. There are no real surprises here. Muenger's responsibility is to simplify while maintaining accuracy. Any chronicler of Ireland is faced with this problem of labels. If Catholic must they be nationalists? If Protestant must they be Unionists? Bureaucrats and civil servants, that amorphous mass, seem the same everywhere. But Muenger does not oversimplify and she does further illuminate why British policy in Ireland has been so troubled. The isolation of Protestant, Dublin Castle, and Military Ireland from the mainstream of Irish life would bring rueful consequences later. Their differing attitudes and mores and aspirations—their identities—left them permanently estranged from the majority Catholic Ireland.

The Army and the two branches of police (Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan Police) suffered as great

an ambiguity in their relationship as did the four groups in Ireland. The competence of the police in Ireland was a crucial factor since the Army's role as an aid to the civil power turned on the performance of the police.

Muenger spends little time on the Metropolitan Police and the reader leaves with no firm idea of their abilities. Muenger is much better, however, on the Constabulary. The first paramilitary police force in Europe, the RIC was a model for Britain's other colonial police, even serving as a source of recruitment and training for such forces as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Palestinian Police Force. Muenger captures well the general climate and feeling towards the police forces with a quote from Maud Gonne Macbride from the early 1880's:

Places had been reserved for us in the window of the Kildare Street Club to watch the Viceregal procession and the state entry of Lord and Lady Spencer. The streets were lined with military and Royal Irish Constabulary, while Dublin Metropolitan Policemen kept order behind the lines. There was much talk among the ladies who stood in the window about the shocking state of the country and the chances of disloyal demonstrations. From their vantage point on the railings of Trinity College the College boys were throwing paper bags of flour on the helmets and blue uniforms of the policemen. I gathered they did not approve of the D.M.P.; they said the Royal Irish Constabulary were a far better lot. An old colonel standing behind us disapproved of these foolish pranks and said the D.M.P. were a decent body of men trying to carry out a difficult duty; he liked them better than the R.I.C., who, he said, were neither flesh nor fowl, but a police force trying to ape the military. (86)

Trouble surfaced in other military-civilian relationships as well. Muenger demonstrates that the frustration of the British military establishment extended to the civil government of

Dublin Castle and the War Office. General disillusionment with the Irish problem and its refusal to go away was only exacerbated by the lack of a regular line of communication between these groups. Given the strains and suspicion, it is little wonder the incident at Curragh could occur.

Besides the ambiguous nature of the Army's role in Ireland, Britain could ill afford, given the demands of their empire, the permanent stationing of 30,000 troops in Ireland. As tensions in Europe increased in the early 20th century, Britain was faced with the dilemma of meeting crises without, while suppressing threats from within. This dilemma created a desperate need for a coherent system of reserve, a need the War Office seemed unable to fill. In truth, Ireland had been such a problem through the years for the British government that it was not clear to policymakers whether Ireland could serve as a source of manpower in the event of mobilization or whether it would be a target of mobilization (145). At issue was whether Irish troops could be trusted if employed in Ireland.

The idea of an Irish National Reserve died finally because it was overtaken by events. By August 1914, Britain was at war. The British Territorial Army defended Irish ports. Muenger states:

...the procrastination of four years can thus be seen not as another case of British malevolence toward Ireland but as an instance of a bureaucracy unable to take decisive action simply because the individuals within it were unable to decide what their Irish policy was. (163)

Like the question of the Irish National Reserve, the Curragh Incident had its roots in the failure of civil-military authorities to communicate with one another. The Curragh Incident typified the numerous misunderstandings and miscalculations of the principals involved and demonstrated the mutual distrust between the army and the War Office. At Curragh, fifty-seven officers requested dismissal rather than coerce Ulster. The irony here is that the War Office had no intention of mobilizing anyone

from the 3rd Cavalry Brigade. Muenger reports that one observer noted that the “proceedings of Ministers have given to the whole transaction the character of a shuffling imbecility” (198). Many felt the government had no right putting the military in such an untenable position. Muenger quotes from a letter of a young British officer:

Can you imagine a subaltern of 22-26 making up his mind in an hour as to whether he should shoot down Loyalists in Ulster or try to start a civil career without a bib?...Imagine anything more criminal than making us decide a matter which might affect our whole careers, without giving us time to think or get advice from anyone. (190)

The Curragh Incident, though quickly over, did not solve the many problems facing the British in Ireland: their confusion over the use of troops in quelling civil disturbances, indecision over using the Irish as reserve forces in their own defense, and complications over mobilizing for possible war on the continent remained (205).

When the World War began, members of the Expeditionary Force left Ireland for France. Many of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade’s men died at the Marne, the Aisne, and Ypres in the fall of 1914. Calls to arm the Irish in their own defense went unheeded. Departing troops from Ireland were replaced by Territorials from Britain. The Irish would serve only on the continent.

Muenger wonders at the significance of the Irish situation in explaining Britain’s management of her Empire. Policymakers did not know how their army was to be used, nor how often, nor in what numbers. Muenger observes that these “questions were never really satisfactorily answered by the British as they sought to govern, as smoothly as possible, an empire as varied in circumstances as it was farflung in its territories” (207).

The war in Europe came upon England and Ireland like a fierce storm. Two considerations—home rule, rebellion—were held in abeyance in a time of greater crisis. Unionists volunteered in great numbers for a war increasingly in demand for bodies.

Within six months the minimum height requirement for volunteers slipped from 5'8" to 5'5" to 5'3" (Fussell 9). The commitment of Unionists to the Empire was underscored by the loss of 5500 officers and men from the 36th Ulster Division in the first two days at the Somme. Moderate Irish nationalists, hoping to reassure British officials that home rule was compatible with survival of the Empire, promised full Irish support for the war effort. Only as the war dragged on interminably did this support wane and separatists win out over constitutionalists. Any ambivalence in the Irish position ended with the Easter 1916 Rising and Padraig Pearse's messianic notions: "Life springs from death, and from the graves of patriotic men and women spring living nations" (Foster 477). James Connolly, executed with Pearse, believed that revolution in Ireland would spark all of Europe. In fact the Rising only belatedly ignited Ireland, culminating in the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty which partitioned north from south.

In *Finnegan's Wake* the whole history of man is a perpetual cycle of rising and falling and rising again. Joyce calls death "the grave and constant." In Muenger's highly worthwhile book, it is no small irony that in Ireland it is not only death, but misunderstanding and misdirection which count so greatly.

Seabrook, Maryland

Works Cited

Downing, Taylor. ed., *The Troubles*. London: MacDonald, 1980.

Foster, Robert. *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*. London: Penguin, 1988.

Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford UP, 1975.

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories*. New York: Scribner's, 1927.

Kee, Robert. *The Bold Fenian Men*. London: Penguin, 1972.

Keegan, John. *The Face of Battle*. New York: Viking, 1976.