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Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence

Walter J. Johanson

Robert L. Taylor

William E. Rosenbach

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last voyage; in the events related to his command of HMS *Bounty*; mutinous incidents in HMS *Defiance* and during the widespread rising at the Nore; and his imprisonment for seventeen months while governor of New South Wales during the Rum Rebellion.

My only disappointment was that Guttridge did not begin his history further back than Georgian times. The discipline problems encountered by Magellan are only briefly covered in the first chapter. Drake's problems that led to the execution of Thomas Doughty in the southwest Atlantic are not discussed at all, but they would seem to offer an additional and different slant on the officer-as-mutineer subtheme so aptly covered in *Mutiny*. I know Guttridge could have told those stories well.

The author avoids lecturing his readers on leadership and communication; rather, he straightforwardly uncovers the situations leading up to each incident. André Marty's entrance into French naval service as a known anarchist, a captain's refusal to acknowledge (or correct) the serving of maggot-infested meat to the men in *Potemkin*, and the German government's inability to connect lower-deck labor movements and the Independent Social Democratic Party in 1917—all are presented without the pedantic twenty-twenty hindsight so often seen in works like this. Additionally, the author uses repeated examples showing that the characteristics and temperament of leadership that brought success to wartime naval commanders were not necessarily those needed for effective

action when confronted with hostility from those commanded.

In an effort to put the worldwide post-Bolshevik reaction in perspective, Guttridge cleverly uses the ironic though non-mutinous tale of Captain Clark Sterns, USN, whose egalitarian initiatives as captain of USS *Roanoke* won acclaim for efficiency; the ship's performance earned him a Distinguished Service Medal in 1918. Three years later, Captain Sterns, after only 107 days in command of USS *Michigan*, was relieved by the Secretary of the Navy for reflecting "a Soviet spirit [which] had crept into the Navy," as evidenced by his establishment of Morale and Discipline Committees within the enlisted ranks, one of the keys to his former success.

This book takes a hard look at how throughout the last two hundred years the common and often repeated errors of good men ignited volatile situations. The events so well documented in this book actually happened; they happened to real people in ships deployed afar, and in ships alongside their home berth. The art of communication has not changed with the ages, nor has human nature. Every commander should read and understand the lessons of *Mutiny*.

MORRIS E. ELSEN
Captain, U.S. Navy

Taylor, Robert L. and Rosenbach, William E. *Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1992. 204pp. \$49.95

The quality of leadership is critical in any organization, and its significance

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grows as resources become scarcer. However, our national culture is ambivalent toward leadership. As a result, it is difficult to learn how to be an effective leader. This book, a collection of essays by practitioners and behavioral scientists, can help in this task.

A major theme throughout the book is the question of whether leadership can in fact be learned or if the potential is innate. The editors of the anthology hold that while leadership requires inner qualities such as intelligence and character, it must be fine-tuned if one is to be able to lead. The articles they chose for this volume support that position.

A significant contribution of this volume is its emphasis on the otherwise neglected subject of "followership." Taking as given that every leader is a follower to the next echelon and that one cannot be a leader without the consent of those who follow, several essays examine this side of the equation. Robert E. Kelley's valuable "In Praise of Followers" points out that "follower" and "subordinate" are not synonymous. Kelly argues that all subordinates can be assessed according to two variables: first, independent and critical thinking, and second, the extent to which they are active rather than passive. Effective followers are those who rate highly in both areas. They are by no means inferior to those who lead. Followers, then, are the key to the success of any organization, and follower-development programs should be instituted.

The conclusion of the section on followership is that factors which

contribute to developing a good follower are the same as those necessary for a good leader.

A passage from James MacGregor Burn's 1978 book, *Leadership*, presents two opposing forms of leadership. "Transactional" leadership exists when two parties, one a subordinate, enter a *quid pro quo* transaction, such as an exchange of labor for wages. "Transformational" leadership, on the other hand, occurs when a leader-follower relationship results in both becoming better people and their organization being advanced. Several of the essays in this book take this analysis as a starting point for their own presentations on the subject.

Another issue the book extensively addresses is the difference between management (which aims to control complexity) and leadership (which deals in vision and in moving the organization toward it). Management seeks to eliminate the unpredictable, while leadership deliberately rocks the boat or directs it into uncharted waters. All organizations need a combination of both, in a state of dynamic tension that gives an appropriate mix of stability and movement.

This book addresses many facets of leadership, but it is not comprehensive, nor was it intended to be. However, it can be used to develop a checklist of necessary characteristics of military leadership.

One surprise is that, despite the subtitle, the authors do not mention Tom Peters's landmark works on organizational quality, or Total Quality Management (or Leadership), which is an important subject in today's military.

Some may get a case of sticker shock from the price. Nevertheless, the attention paid to followership is itself a service to military leaders.

WALTER J. JOHANSON
Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve
Yonkers, New York

Oliver, Dave, Jr. *Lead On! A Practical Approach to Leadership*. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1992. 207pp. \$9.95

This is the best book on naval leadership currently in print. It is also, without question, one of the most honest assessments of shipboard leadership techniques—both good and bad—ever published. Rear Admiral Oliver, the director of the General Planning and Programing Division of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, makes it clear in the opening sentence that he is going to pull no punches: “I was inordinately fortunate during my early professional career. I worked for some truly awful leaders.” What follows are the lessons learned from a career in the submarine service, written in a style most short-story writers would envy.

Lead On! consists of twenty chapters of ideas on leadership, each based on a major incident that Oliver either experienced or investigated. These are not dry case studies—although I would recommend them for any business school—but lively and carefully crafted tales reminiscent of a nautical Aesop. No officer who reads this book will fail to find at least one situation, complete with leadership dilemma, that he or she has had to face without help. If only we had had this

source of patient wisdom beforehand! Each chapter focuses first on situations and issues that demanded dynamic leadership but instead got inept management. It then provides a nugget of wisdom—hence the allusion to the morals of Aesop’s Fables. These summarize Oliver’s thoughtful insights into what motivates people in general, and naval personnel in particular, to achieve (or not achieve) excellence.

The tone of the book is one of a penetrating and warm conversation, the caring advice of a sage mentor. Along the way, the reader learns a great deal about basic submarining, but in a way that is understandable and enjoyable and makes the book an equally fine introduction to everyday submarine operations.

Oliver also examines the limits to leadership and how the Navy decided that urinalysis was the only practical way to enforce zero tolerance of drugs. Moreover, he offers evidence for the argument that many have long suspected: that enlisted retention, the subject of competitive unit awards, is a poor indicator of a commanding officer’s leadership skills. (Officer retention, on the other hand, is probably the best.) The book also discusses injustices that occur within the naval bureaucracy—how “the bad guys win”—when “briefing in color” vanquishes the truth. I suspect the author’s willingness to be this honest may have deterred a few potential publishers before Presidio accepted.

Clearly the message is one of leadership by example and by involvement, with the requirement for the leader