

1984

The Naval Officer's Guide

James Stavridis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

Recommended Citation

Stavridis, James (1984) "The Naval Officer's Guide," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 37 : No. 3 , Article 34.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol37/iss3/34>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu.

was 12 hours too late to exploit a gap the infantry had made and should have moved into at once. The tank attack dissipated the shock effect by distributing 42 tanks over 15 kilometers. The Somme was conceived with a series of politically motivated designs rather than the result of sound strategic analysis. The grand tactic was faulty, the six-day artillery barrage did not pulverize the German defenses. It started badly with a disastrous ten minute pause in artillery support, which allowed the Germans to come out of their deep bunkers and man machine guns and inflict 57,000 casualties on that day alone. It ended badly, too.

The author does not judge. She uses the results of her own knowledge and the research support (largely volunteers from the 1981 Sixth Form of the Harvey Grammar School of Folkestone, England) which is diverse and international to let the reader have the ability to judge. Her book is the chronicle of a national tragedy that helped to disfigure Western European Civilization.

But it is really a soldier's tale, told by the fighting officers and men on both sides. Perhaps the worst indictment of the strategy and leadership in this phase of World War I is outside the covers of this book. Basil Liddell Hart writing about Passchendaele (as has Lyn Macdonald in a previous work) records the "remorse of one who was largely responsible for it . . . Growing increasingly uneasy as the car approached the swamp-like edges of the battle area, he (the general) eventually burst into

tears crying, 'Good God, did we really send men to fight in that?'"

WILLIAM F. LONG, JR.
Colonel, US Army (Retired)

Mack, William P. and Paulsen, Thomas D. *The Naval Officer's Guide*. Annapolis, Md.: US Naval Institute Press, 1983. 537pp. \$14.95

Bassett, Frank E. and Smith, Richard A. *Farewell's Rules of the Nautical Road*, 6th ed. Annapolis, Md.: US Naval Institute Press, 1982. 500pp. \$21.95

Two recent editions of classic naval works have been published by the Naval Institute Press, and both are solid additions to any maritime library. *The Naval Officer's Guide* and *Farewell's Rules of the Nautical Road* have been reference works of note for naval officers since their original publication in 1943 and 1941 respectively. Both editions are improvements and refinements of earlier efforts undertaken by highly qualified authors.

The Naval Officer's Guide is clearly aimed at the junior officer who has only recently been commissioned. It contains a wealth of very basic information covering such subjects as "The Importance of Our Navy," "Personal Administration," "Military Courtesy, Honors, and Ceremonies," and so on. It has detailed information on the various branches of the government involved with the Navy, as well as broad coverage of the naval forces themselves. Admiral Mack, a former superintendent of the Naval Academy, manages to

strike the right tone for the *Guide*—knowledgeable, accurate, and friendly. The edition is small and well-bound, a good choice for the ensign's scabbard. While there is little in the volume that most officers have not mastered at the 0-3 point, *The Naval Officer's Guide* is still useful as a reference work for any officer's library. For their next edition, the authors might consider an appendix with the officer's recommended scabbard, expanding the first chapter on the roles of the Navy, or improving the information for wives and dependents. The recommended reading list should be overhauled and the information on frocking needs to be updated. These are minor criticisms, however. Overall the *Guide* continues as a minor classic for generations of naval officers.

What can be said about *Farewell's Rules of the Nautical Road*?

First of all, this is a superb edition, published at a particularly timely moment. The dust is finally settling from a decade of tinkering with Rules of the Road, and the complete sequence of change, including the COLREGs and the new Inland Rules are all well laid out here. In fact, both sets of rules (International and Inland) are printed side-by-side, allowing for comparison and contrast during study. The illustrations are particularly clear and detailed,

and the notes provided by Commanders Bassett and Smith are useful and well-written.

Second, the sections of the book dealing with the interpretations and court rulings resulting from the rules of the road are well collected and intelligently presented. The useful appendixes are likewise well selected. There is precious little a mariner would need to know about the rules and laws of the nautical road that does not fall between the covers of this edition of *Farewell's*.

Together, the authors had a major impact on Navigational instruction in the Navy over the past decade when each served as chairman of the department of navigation at Annapolis. As the authors put it in their preface, "the book is dedicated to the proposition that obedience to the rules is the surest way to avoid collision." Having had the privilege of studying under one of the authors (Commander Dick Smith), I will personally attest that the clearest way to learn the rules (short of taking course work from one of the authors) is to study this sixth and best edition of *Farewell's*. This volume is a mandatory purchase for any marine library or naval officer—don't go down to the sea in ships without a well-thumbed copy firmly in hand.

JAMES STAVRIDIS
Lieutenant Commander, US Navy

