

1970

Selective Service: Conflict and Compromise

R. P. Hanson
U.S. Navy

Harry A. Marmion

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

Recommended Citation

Hanson, R. P. and Marmion, Harry A. (1970) "Selective Service: Conflict and Compromise," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 23 : No. 1 , Article 16.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol23/iss1/16>

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.

This is an excellent volume, especially suited to the curricula of the War College's first few months.

J.N. LACCETTI
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force

Le Masson, Henri. *The French Navy*. New York: Doubleday, 1969. 2 v.

The French Navy was handicapped in many ways during the Second World War. Within a year all of the Atlantic and Channel ports were occupied by German forces, while French African possessions were threatened by De Gaulle's Free French movement. The action at Oran and the seizure by the British of all French vessels in ports under their control deprived the French Fleet of much of its fighting power, and the scuttling of the vessels in Toulon in 1942 further reduced its resources.

Henri le Masson has collected in two volumes a valuable historical reference work for the French Navy during World War II and during the interwar period. The average reader will be interested mainly in volume I, which describes the warships of the French Navy. Volume II deals with sloops, minesweepers, and other small auxiliary vessels.

In addition to the reference sections, the author begins his first volume with a brief commentary which sheds valuable light on French naval planning during the interwar years. In it he expresses criticism of the Popular Front government of Leon Blum and the social laws which that government enacted, claiming that they slowed down the rearmament efforts of the Third Republic.

In dealing with the 1940 defeat, the author defends the loyalty which the major units of the navy gave to the Vichy regime. He is critical of the British operation at Oran, pointing out that orders had already been given Admiral Darlan not to surrender the fleet—orders which were obeyed at Toulon 2 years later. As he was himself a naval liaison officer in London at the

time, his opinion on this matter is relevant.

While the primary benefit of this effort is its research effort, compiled from official sources, the author does neglect to discuss certain important facts about the French Navy. During these years, ship designs were very general in nature, and the details were usually supplied by engineers in the naval yards. This improvisation resulted in great variations in layout and performance.

A second factor the author fails to consider is the wisdom of allocating large resources to the French Navy at a time when the obvious enemy would be invading by land. Masson notes that the navy absorbed 21 percent of the French military budget until 1938, but he does not address himself to the question of whether such an expenditure was justified in the light of France's strategic situation. The French were naturally unwilling to rely on the British for the protection of their colonies, but could they, in fact, maintain simultaneously an army strong enough to contain Germany and a navy strong enough to play an independent role? The author apparently thinks this was possible, but the verdict of history leaves the question open to doubt.

D.G. WHITE
Ensign, U.S. Naval Reserve

Marmion, Harry A. *Selective Service: Conflict and Compromise*. New York: Wiley, 1968. v.p.

This book is a short, but informative, effort to analyze the Selective Service System. The author's intent is to demonstrate the shortcomings of the present "draft" and to point up the need for reforms in the law beyond those incorporated in the 30 June 1967 Act (Public Law 90-40) which amended the existing Universal Military Training and Service Act. The volume contains a valuable brief history of the Selective Service

System and an equally valuable discussion of the nation's manpower needs as related to seeking an equitable basis for deferment policy. The author's conclusion is that although selective service in some form is necessary, the present system is outmoded and should be abolished. It is unable fairly to cope with a situation in which only a relatively small portion of the nation's available manpower pool is required at any given time. The result, he contends, is that the burden of military service tends to be borne disproportionately by low-income families in no position to engage in deferrable activities.

Mr. Marmion discusses the major alternatives to the present Selective Service System and concludes that a random selection or "lottery" system is an absolute necessity, especially during periods requiring less than total manpower mobilization. A voluntary army is dismissed as a useful concept, after discussion leading to the implication that it is not economically feasible and to the inference that it would be morally repugnant in a democratic society. The author feels that necessary manpower to maintain national security should be raised in such a way that everyone is called upon to share the burden and that an all-volunteer system would create a socially and economically isolated elite. Universal military training is also considered impractical because of the cost and because the number of men reaching the eligible age at any given time exceeds military requirements. National service is considered a possible means of selectivity, utilizing all available manpower in an acceptable manner; however, to date, the high cost, vagueness of proposals for its inception, and the colossal problems of coordination among various Government agencies render any immediate achievement unlikely.

Mr. Marmion makes it apparent that he is no fan of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, the Selective Service Director,

upon whom he places much blame for failures to reform the system; this approach tends to place his objectivity in some doubt. The book is well documented, however, and in three appendices contains the 1967 report of the Civilian Advisory Panel on Military Manpower Procurement to the House of Representatives (Clark Report), a summary of the Report of the National Advisory Commission on Selective Service (Marshall Report), and Public Law 90-40 with Executive Order 11360 of 1967 amending the selective service regulations, making it a valuable reference work in an area which should be of professional interest to the military officer.

R.P. HANSON

Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy

Moynihan, Daniel P. *Maximum Feasible Misunderstanding*. New York: Free Press, 1969. 218p.

According to Dr. Moynihan, social programs such as the war on poverty and community action, which were based on maximum feasible participation by those people who should benefit from the programs, failed because of a phenomenon called "maximum feasible misunderstanding." In this well-written book the author explains the failure of the Great Society. Dr. Moynihan delves into the enormity and complexity of the problems associated with improving the lot of the underprivileged element of contemporary American society. Isolation of the real problems of the underprivileged, though difficult, is an ongoing project that has made significant progress. The search for solutions to these problems, according to the author, has not progressed nearly so far. While the Government has the financial wherewithal, it possesses insufficient knowledge to use its money effectively in solving the problems. The close relationship between political power and money guarantees, at least for the present, political control of antipoverty