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The Barometer - Readers' Comments

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THE BAROMETER



READERS' COMMENTS

This section has been established to provide a forum for the useful exchange of ideas between *Naval War College Review* readers and the Naval War College.

Unofficial comments by the readers on articles which appear in the *Review* are encouraged and will be considered for publication in subsequent issues.

Comments should be addressed to:

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"Decision-Making and the School of Naval Command and Staff"

Commander Ashurst's fine article, "Decision Making and the School of Naval Command and Staff," in the

October Review, is an excellent analysis and description of the School. However, in a recent conversation, Commander Ashurst has suggested that a third educational subobjective can be identified in the mission of the School. This subobjective has to do with the skills required by every successful staff officer or commander to communicate his recommendations or decisions in the most effective manner.

The staff officer with a knowledge of the factors for consideration and a clear understanding of the scientific method in solving military problems is of little use if he cannot communicate to his superiors his ideas and recommendations. Has there been a successful military commander who was not skilled in the arts of communication from one human being to another? The School of Naval Command and Staff has for many years included in its curriculum instruction in some of the elements of effective communication: writing, reading, speaking, and listening.

Therefore, I would divide the educational subobjectives as follows:

- a. That the student is able to apply the scientific method in military problem solving, i.e., the decisionmaking process;
- b. That the student be able to define the major factors which influence military planning and to analyze their interactions;
- c. That the student be able to communicate effectively the analysis of problems that affect military planning.

Ian E. M. Donovan
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"Prisoners of War and the Code of Conduct"

The thesis "Prisoners of War and the Code of Conduct" by Lieutenant Commander William P. Lyons in the December 1967 *Naval War College Review* appears to be a comprehensive, reasonable, and well balanced study of what has happened, where we are now, and what we ought to do.

One important omission, however, from his lengthy bibliography is *A Ride to Panmunjom* (Henry Regnery Co., 1956) by Lt. Duane Thorin, U.S. Navy (Ret.). Lieutenant Thorin was the helicopter pilot publicized by James Michener in his book *The Bridges of Toko Ri*. After many rescue missions Thorin was captured by the North Koreans and held prisoner for 18 months. After his release he was commissioned an officer and served as a consultant for many of the studies listed by Lyons, and he wrote many of the BuPers publications on the Code of Conduct.

Thorin wrote *A Ride to Panmunjom*

as fiction in order to express the feelings of the POW's (and a number of direct or implied criticisms) that he could not put in official reports. Though published a dozen years ago, *A Ride to Panmunjom* corroborates, as though written today, the facts, interpretations, and "strong" recommendations given by Lyons. Because it is written in story form it will be easier to read for most people than the reports and studies in Lyons' bibliography.

As the Vietnam roll of POW's increases and the Korean problem heats up again (this letter is written 8 February 1968 when the papers are full of Vietcong "victories," the North Korean intransigence over the U.S.S. *Pueblo*, and the negotiations at Panmunjom) the subject will become more and more important. The timing of Lyons' article is most — though sadly — appropriate. It is also time to bring out again Thorin's *A Ride to Panmunjom*.

Frederick C. Dyer
Commander, U.S.N.R.



These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Thomas Paine: The Crisis, 1776