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In My View

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IN MY VIEW

DOUBLE LIVES

Sir:

I read the article by Captain Light entitled “The Navy’s Moral Compass” [*Naval War College Review*, Summer 2012] with great interest. The Navy has tied personal conduct to the careers of commanding officers as a matter of public concern. I am writing to provide some insight into how the behaviour of “immoral and dissolute” commanding officers has a troubling ripple effect into the civilian world the Navy is charged to protect and not plunder.

Recently, I was formally engaged to a commanding officer as part of a three year relationship that included his entire command at sea. I relocated to Guam because he repeatedly asked me to, against my objections. He told me he had orders to go there after his command. A few days after I arrived on island to begin my new job and on the night before his Change of Command ceremony, he e-mailed me that he was in love with someone else and cut off all contact. He, of course, did not ever go to Guam. I later discovered that he was deceiving yet another woman, who lived elsewhere, during the same three years. He was also planning to marry her after his command ended until, in her words, “he pulled a cowardly breakup.” One may try to dismiss this because a sailor has “a girl in every port” but who can actually respect a commanding officer who shanghaied the girl and sent her to a remote port while he stayed ashore for a desk job?

I was badly shattered and very confused. Nonetheless, I understood that a man entrusted with national security matters had not suffered from a momentary lapse of judgement or a minor lapse in character and courage. He had led a fundamentally dishonest and secretive life every day for at least three years. I quickly informed his chain of command and the DOD Inspector General about his tawdry behavior. I received only one response. “In your now mixed experience with the Navy, I want to assure you that your efforts on behalf of the crew and families of BOATNAME are much appreciated. I’m grateful for your contribution.”

I had interrupted my twenty year career as a research scientist to find myself abruptly isolated, thousands of miles from anyone I had ever known, and without

any of my possessions only because a commanding officer in the U.S. Navy was so cowardly that it strains credulity. The least of my concerns was appreciation for my efforts on behalf of some people I had only casually known because they were also associated with a boat.

Recently, I found that he is back in a leadership position. After concerns were again expressed to the Navy and, after a few questions from them, they responded, "There is no current evidence to question the fitness or ability of — . . ." After ignoring this, the word "current" was a nice touch.

First, the proportion of commanding officers with questionable conduct is small but is probably higher than 3%. There is no reason to believe that I am the only civilian who has raised concerns that the Navy decided not to address.

To my surprise, his actions had grave consequences for my personal security. I suspect other civilians have faced this but also suspect that this particular issue is rarely acknowledged in your community. Because the Navy was not willing to question the veracity of its senior officer, no civilian system would either. The most inconsequential of the personal problems I faced was that I was not able to recover some of my belongings (that he had stored in his name before my move) because there was no way to find out why they went missing. He did not acknowledge my requests for assistance. The police and courts were unwilling to believe that the possessions were mine if he, an officer, would not assist.

One reason that personal conduct is a matter of public concern is because unstable personal situations, in any sailor's life, can lead to distractions that could become harmful to the entire command, especially one confined at sea. Commanding officers are expected to serve as a role model. Although he kept his "double/triple" life hidden from the women whom he placed at risk, he led them in view of his wardroom and crew.

A commanding officer at sea has little scrutiny and so there are few restraints placed upon his behavior other than his conscience. Sailors who report to him and form the allegiances that arise from time at sea cannot be expected to be the only source of information regarding his conduct.

My former fiancé repeatedly described to me how he screened all e-mails to the boat for specific situations that might create distractions for a sailor and, consequently, the command. Those situations included monitoring potentially explosive relationship issues such as multiple relationships. If a sailor's unstable life could lead to distracting drama that is harmful for the command, then the CO's does as well. An obvious suggestion is for his sailormail to also be screened by a superior officer. This would quickly eliminate any issue that sets a poor example or has the potential to distract the command.

Clearly, the Navy has long argued that honorable personal conduct is an essential quality in a commanding officer. I do not have the expertise to know what qualities go into being an excellent commanding officer but the subject

is a matter of public concern and deserves a thoughtful, honest and consistent statement from the Navy. Like any well-educated citizen, I have read classics that explore this topic (e.g., the Stoics or Sun Tzu). There is a solid argument that a fine warrior is not purely a paragon of virtue because other qualities are essential. For lack of a better word, the “sinister” could be exactly what is required. My understanding of my former fiancé suggests that a “yin/yang” dynamic is inked into his nature. I acknowledge that he is likely quite good at commanding a boat even if I do not think much of him as a man.

Requiring PCOs to sign an agreement that they will avoid “immoral and dis-solute behavior” is very odd to the public when many of us just call that “being an adult” and, for those of you in the military, the UCMJ already has the “conduct unbecoming . . .” clause. Something is amiss if the normal rules are not enough to rein in these few senior officers in the Navy.

Furthermore, in the civilian world, someone who behaved this way on a daily basis over years would have been quickly flagged for numerous security clearance violations. Simply speaking, dishonesty is unacceptable and “double lives” involving sex are all the more so because they trigger additional lies born out of cowardice and shame. These lead to the potential for duress. If the Navy cannot take these issues seriously with its line officers in command, why would anyone else take them seriously? Yet, we cannot all count on having our indiscretions ignored until they are no longer “current.”

Finally, the claim that COs are models of virtue is a potential risk to the Navy’s reputation because it places private citizens in jeopardy. Hypothetically speaking, claims of moral superiority are the perfect cloak to veil a predator. If the prey complains, those same claims can be used to give the predator safe harbor. This is clearly not an adequate defense of the citizenry but instead it is one from which a private individual needs protection.

I will close with a final suggestion. Because the Navy has repeatedly announced that it is concerned about the behavior of some of its COs, it would be helpful for the Navy to provide practical guidance to citizens on how concerns should be broached. This should include assurance that concerns are considered in an impartial way free of the Navy’s understandably biased interest in protecting the individual senior officer and its own reputation. Such bias brings a significant cost to a civilian who, while acting out of her own desire to protect the public good, faces the intimidating command structure of the U.S. Navy after she has been badly weakened by one of its officers.

DR. ELISE A. RALPH

FUCHIDA'S WHOPPERS

Sir:

Mr. Bennett has produced here in the *Naval War College Review* ["Parshall's 'Whoppers' Examined: Fact-Checking the Various Claims and Conclusions of Jonathan Parshall," Winter 2013] essentially a *Reader's Digest* version of a very long blog entry he posted in March 2012. He then quietly removed it for "updating" after receiving an equally lengthy point-by-point rebuttal from me. Intriguingly, Mr. Bennett has incorporated *none* of that feedback into this article. I won't bore the reader trying to reproduce the details of my rebuttal here. Those with a masochistic bent can view it here: <http://www.combinedfleet.com/BennettRebuttal.htm>.

However, a quick summarization and rebuttal of the underlying themes of Mr. Bennett's arguments is easily presented. He has produced an impressively cited article that will seem superficially plausible to a casual reader. However, his scholarship on these matters is equally superficial and does not withstand serious scrutiny.

Regarding Pearl Harbor, Mr. Bennett's basic argument is that it was not Fuchida who originated the myth surrounding a hypothetical attack against Pearl Harbor's fuel tanks. However, a careful review of Fuchida's statements (see "masochistic bent," above) given in several interviews from 1945 to 1963 reveals a different picture. Fuchida's account changed dramatically over that time, and by the end he was relating to Gordon Prange the "classic" myth regarding a follow-up attack aimed at these facilities. His myth persists to this day.

Regarding the Battle of Midway, Mr. Bennett attempts to chip away at Anthony Tully's and my account of what occurred on the Japanese flight decks immediately prior to the fateful 1020 dive-bomber attack. His general line of attack is to try splitting mathematical hairs without any positive data to back him up. A symbolic refutation of Mr. Bennett's computational methods is thusly:

(Wrong) – (Wrong) ≠ (Right).

In the course of this exercise, he overstates his case so badly that he has no choice but to cast aspersions on the credibility of various Japanese sources, including both the Japanese official war history series (*Senshi Sōsho*) and the air unit records (known as *kōdōchōshos*) of the Japanese carriers themselves.

His attack on these sources is more serious, because of what it represents to the study of history. In essence, Mr. Bennett is saying that operational records must take a backseat to personal accounts. This is folly. And frankly, it is a folly born of his incomprehension and inability to use the sources he criticizes.

Consider the following example, wherein a hypothetical modern historian produces a book on the Battle of Midway. Based on Japanese aviator accounts,

this author might claim that eyewitness accounts “proved” that the Japanese struck the carrier *Yorktown* with five bombs during the battle. However, in the face of such “eyewitness evidence,” more prudent naval historians would be well within their rights to say, “Wait a minute! We have the *Yorktown’s* after-action report, which describes precisely where each of the three bombs hit her. She’s an American ship, and they ought to know!” This same principle applies *exactly* in reverse to the Japanese unit records and what they have to say about what occurred on board the *Japanese* carriers at Midway. Any sensible modern historian would use Japanese operational records as the bedrock of his/her account and then flesh out the narrative with personal recollections. This is precisely what Tully and I did in *Shattered Sword*.

Mr. Bennett should think *very* carefully before attacking our methods and source selection. By so doing, he attacks not only us but also such experts as John Lundstrom, Osamu Tagaya, Henry Sakaida, J. Michael Wenger, James Sawruk, and other members of the research community surrounding the Pacific War, whose collective wisdom on these matters *vastly* outweighs Mr. Bennett’s. Indeed, Lundstrom, Tagaya, and Sawruk personally reviewed our original manuscript and vetted its approach and conclusions. Mr. Bennett’s credibility in questioning *Senshi Sōsho* and the *kōdōchōshos* is precisely nil. In essence, Mr. Bennett is saying, “Stop the historical train: I want to go back to the 1980s and just use Grandpa’s sources!” Fortunately for the study of history, this isn’t going to happen.

Regarding Mr. Bennett’s defense of Fuchida’s claim of having been on board USS *Missouri* for the Japanese surrender ceremony, I need simply point out that no one has ever produced a corroborating account placing Fuchida at this event. The only “evidence” we have comes from Fuchida himself. Extraordinary claims require positive proof. Yet Mr. Bennett presses his case by demanding that historians prove a negative. That’s not cricket. Likewise, the photograph Mr. Bennett puts forth purporting to show Fuchida on board *Missouri* was analyzed by the curator of the Battleship Missouri Memorial and shown to be that of an American sailor.

In closing, it is perhaps not surprising that Mr. Bennett’s relentless attacks on my scholarship and intellectual honesty have not resulted in my taking a more sanguine view of Fuchida’s misstatements. This is compounded by Mr. Bennett’s failure to incorporate any of my previous criticisms of his work into this *Naval War College Review* article. Though I previously had no interest in pursuing these matters further, during the course of refuting his original blog post I took the time to examine several more of Fuchida’s wartime accounts. As part of this rebuttal I am presenting three more Fuchida whoppers for readers interested in such matters. They can be found here: <http://www.combinedfleet.com/ThreeMoreWhoppers.htm>.

All are short. Each comes with annotated Japanese sources presenting the data in a form that will be easily comprehensible to anyone. And one of them is a real howler. They demonstrate yet again—if any further proof was possibly needed—that Fuchida is not a reliable witness to the history of the Pacific War. If Fuchida is to be used at all, he absolutely must be used in conjunction with other, corroborating sources. I have no doubt that Mr. Bennett will never willingly accept that the central subject of his screenplay was clearly a man who was overly fond of spinning *very* tall tales. But any objective historian cannot help but be convinced by the evidence the Japanese sources provide us on these matters.

JONATHAN PARSHALL

WORLD'S FIRST "CARRIER KILLER" BALLISTIC MISSILE

Sir:

The excellent article on Aegis ballistic-missile-defense (BMD) development by Messrs. Hicks, Galdorisi, and Truver provides the official U.S. intelligence community conclusion that China has developed the world's first "carrier killer" ballistic missile (Summer 2012 edition of the *Naval War College Review*, page 69).

While U.S. officials have long believed that the earlier Soviet anti-carrier ballistic missile never became operational, several Russian sources now confirm that this feat was accomplished under the Soviet regime. In 1962 the Soviet government approved the development of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) for use against surface ships, especially U.S. aircraft carriers that threatened nuclear strikes against the USSR.

At the time the advanced R-27/SS-N-6 SLBM was under development in Makeyev's SKB-385 bureau. The decision was made to provide the nuclear missile with a terminal guidance for the anti-ship role, to be redesignated R-27K. The R-27 and R-27K missiles were identical in their size and external appearance. (The NATO designation was SS-NX-13; U.S. intelligence analysts initially used the designation KY-9, the prefix *KY* indicating the Kapustin Yar test facility.)

The missile system and trials submarine *K-102* were accepted for operational service on 15 August 1975. The complexity of the weapons system (D-5) had led

to delays, with the *K-102* joining the fleet more than 13 years after the project was approved.

The R-27K/SS-NX-13 was targeted prior to launch with data provided from aircraft or satellites tracking U.S. and British aircraft carriers and other surface ships. Western intelligence credited the missile with a range of 350 to 400 nautical miles and a homing warhead that had a terminal maneuvering warhead to strike targets within a “footprint” of about 27 n.miles. Warheads of 500 kilotons to one megaton could be fitted. The weapons system—capable of striking land or sea targets—was to be fitted in the later Project 667A/Yankee SSBNs.

However, the R-27K missile did not become operational, because the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) agreements of the 1970s would count every SLBM tube as a strategic missile regardless of whether it held a land-attack or anti-ship (tactical) missile. Some Western analysts also postulated that the missile also might be employed as an *anti-submarine* weapon. This evaluation fit with the U.S. shift of sea-based strategic strike forces from carrier-based aircraft to missile-armed submarines, and the related shift in the Soviet Navy’s emphasis from anti-carrier warfare to anti-submarine warfare in the 1960s. Sergei Kovalev, the dean of Russian SSBN designers, told this writer that “ASW calculations for the R-27K were made.”

NORMAN POLMAR

Coauthor with K. J. Moore of Cold War Submarines: The Design and Construction of U.S. and Soviet Submarines (2004)

BRASS AND ACADEMICS

Sir:

Just wanted to pass along my thoughts of Thomas Nichols’s book review of Howard Wiarda’s *Military Brass vs. Civilian Academics at the National War College: A Clash of Cultures*, in the Autumn 2012 *Naval War College Review*.

While I’ll say the review was good enough for me to conclude not to read Wiarda’s book, this was not the reviewer’s intent. Nichols begins by describing *Military Brass* as “amassed anecdotes that point to dire flaws in the way military education is conducted in the United States.”

Dire flaws? Can the review at least provide one example of a negative outcome derived from these flaws? Whether in academia or not, who accepts one-sided anecdotes as fact? Perhaps there are kernels of truth to Wiarda's stories but Nichols rightfully grants that such author-only perspective lacks corroboration. So I ask, what constructive value or inherent merit lay here beyond entertainment derived from "salty" sea stories? Does the reviewer seriously advocate that schools be restructured based on the ruminations of a peeved professor? Nichols concedes the point but then ignores it with "too many legitimate points will be too quickly dismissed" and later concludes the book is "an important step in illuminating serious and continuing problems in the PME [professional military education] community."

Now, this book may be 100 percent accurate in identifying important issues that require to be addressed but . . . How can Nichols expect us to trust Wiarda's veracity when his view is presented, in my opinion, as whiny diatribe from an annoyed academic by a reviewer who blindly accepts the teller's tale of gross injustice and dictatorial "brass" buffoonery at academic military establishments?

Sounds like we've got here a disgruntled academic reviewing the work of a like-minded disgruntled academic. In light of this, it's hard to accept Nichols as an impartial reviewer; he seems to share the same bias about the military brass and thus assumes the book will be useful in identifying areas for reform and improving the civilian academic's experience with the pesky military ogres.

Again, an example of a real-world military-education travesty would perhaps lend some credence, but none is offered. So by the end of the review I find myself asking, If the military "brass" is so bad, why is there no mass exodus of civilians from the war colleges? Have they all been thrown in the brig to prevent escape?

The serious underlying issue that Nichols ignores is Big Academia, not military academia. A national university system in crisis, where adhering to vast and arcane government regulations to ensure immense revenue sources requires student happiness trump educational quality. This is a national "disease," with likely no remedy in sight until the college "bubble" bursts. That Nichols doesn't offer this perspective and strictly focuses on the "obvious" negativity of the war college professorial experience leads me to conclude he should not have been chosen for this review. And also for me to recommend the Naval War College keep this man happy or perhaps one day you'll experience a fusillade of anecdotes, a biographical broadside, or diatribe-filled memoir shot across your bow.

ROBERT J. LIPSITZ

*Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Navy
Bureau of Medicine and Surgery*

Professor Nichols replies:

Robert Lipsitz is quite angry with Howard Wiarda's book—which he admits he hasn't read—and is none too pleased, either, that I agreed with much of it (although I was quite critical of the way Wiarda wrote it). Unfortunately, Captain Lipsitz's letter is a perfect example of the military disdain for civilian academics that Wiarda was describing in his book.

Indeed, Captain Lipsitz's vitriol serves only to confirm the points Wiarda and many others in PME have made about the difficulty of reforming military education. Any criticism of the system, and especially any that touches on the attitudes of military officers, immediately generates an urge to "shoot the messenger," followed by the inevitable dismissal of civilian professors as ingrates who just don't get it, who should either love PME or leave it, and who—at least in my case, according to Captain Lipsitz—should be disqualified from writing about, or reviewing, anything about military education.

More to the point, Captain Lipsitz seems to think Wiarda is just a single academic with a grudge, but he should have read my review more carefully. I emphasized at the outset that almost any civilian academic working in PME—and I speak from over two decades of association with military education—could verify Wiarda's experiences. But Captain Lipsitz doesn't have to take my word for it: if he would like concrete examples of the kinds of flaws in the military educational system raised by me and Wiarda, he might consider reading not only Wiarda's book but the numerous writings of other PME scholars—educators whom I named in the review—such as Joan Johnson-Freese, Judith Stiehm, George Reed, Diane Mazur, and others.

At the very least, Captain Lipsitz should refrain from impugning the personal motives either of the author or the reviewer, since the clear goal of such ad hominem attacks is to shut down discussion and debate. Not only does this inhibit innovation and improvement, but it is exactly contrary to the spirit we should expect in the senior war colleges of a healthy democracy.

TOM NICHOLS

Professor, Department of National Security Affairs