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U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standown, 1969

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enemy—if done swiftly enough—with a “succession of rapid, violent and unexpected actions which create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope.”

Warfighting accepts chaos as the norm of battle and proposes maneuver warfare as a means of exploiting it. Leaders at all levels are expected to be speedy, bold, and enterprising—the elements of maneuver—so they can achieve their commander’s intent. Mission-type orders and a clear picture of the *purpose* of the commander’s intent, two echelons up, are essential to permit the decentralized decision making required of the OODA loop. The aim is to concentrate all available force at the decisive time and place. Victory depends on repetitive concentration, so a competitive rhythm, or tempo, must be created in order that the greatest combination of concentration and speed can be brought upon and sustained against the enemy.

By contrasting attrition to maneuver in style, operational to tactical in level, offense to defense in form, and general war to low-intensity conflict in spectrum, *Warfighting* presents the reader with a thoughtful analysis of the Marine Corps’ requirements. The four chapters, entitled “The Nature of War;” “The Theory of War;” “Preparing for War;” and “The Conduct of War,” are short and easy to read. They offer no prescriptive solutions.

Though this book has been widely discussed within the Corps, it

deserves more analysis and debate for its potential contribution to naval operations. It will be interesting to see how the Navy-Marine Corps team implements the maneuver warfare concept. In *Warfighting*, the Marine Corps has added philosophical meaning to its tactical doctrine.

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Smith, Charles R. *U.S. Marines in Vietnam: High Mobility and Standdown, 1969*. Washington: History & Museums Division Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1989.

One of the criticisms we frequently hear about U.S. participation in the war in Vietnam is that we didn’t know what we were doing. I never agreed with that argument and this book doesn’t either. It begins with a lucid discussion of U.S. strategies in Vietnam followed by a detailed account of how III MAF (and other forces in I Corps) planned and fought the war in accordance with the broad goals of Vietnamization, Pacification, and continued pressure on the enemy.

U.S. Marines in Vietnam is not limited to the role of the III MAF Marines. It includes all of the forces operating in I Corps, as well as the contributions of other Marines: the Special Landing Force, advisors, ANGLICO, MACV staff officers and the embassy guards.

The heart of the book is the detailed account of the day-to-day

operations of the 1st and 3rd Marine divisions. Quite often the operations are discussed at the rifle company level. That is as it should be; that is where much of this war was fought.

In general, the 1st and 3rd Marine divisions were fighting different kinds of war. This becomes clear in the text, where the author and his assistants have done a very good job at the tactical level without overwhelming the reader with too much detail at the very small unit level. The contrast between the two divisions is very important. As many observers of war have said, "No two wars are alike." "Within a war," one could probably add, "no two campaigns are alike and no two battles are alike." The lesson is that there are no panaceas; successful techniques in Quang Nam province (1st Marine Division) probably would not have fit Quang Tri Province (3rd Marine Division) and vice versa.

The author does not avoid controversial subjects such as single manager control of air assets, disagreements between Marine air and ground commanders about the employment of helicopters, and changes in operational concepts after General Abrams replaced General Westmoreland. Similarly, drug abuse, racial conflict in the Marine Corps, and "fragging" are not ignored. Rather, Smith cites examples and discusses the attempted solutions.

Air, artillery and logistics are covered in separate chapters that highlight their contributions. It

would have been very easy to weave them into the ground-war story, but I think their importance would have been lost.

I cannot testify to the accuracy of the entire volume, but I will go on record by saying that the operations in which I participated or had knowledge of are accurately and correctly described. Furthermore, comments I submitted on the "draft" edition have been incorporated, including an uncomplimentary remark I made about our Korean allies.

The U.S. Marines in Vietnam, 1969 should prove valuable as an accurate and detailed history, a compendium of lessons (good and bad), and a reminder that war can be more dirty and dangerous and less exciting than the novelists would have their readers believe.

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Taylor, John M. *General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen*. New York: Doubleday, 1989. 457pp. \$22.50

When John M. Taylor initiated this biography of his father, he stated that he wanted to strike a balance between portraying the General Taylor that he knew, and the soldier-statesman whose life merits close examination. Clearly, he achieved that goal. Even so, *General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen* certainly is not the definitive biography of the general.