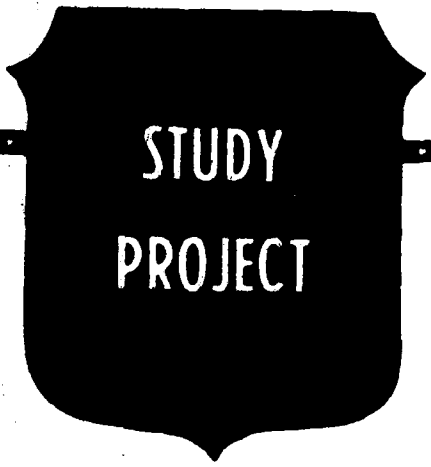


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CLAUSEWITZ, ON SHAKESPEARE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL LYNN D. MOORE
United States Army

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Carl Von Clausewitz advises us in his book, On War, that the distinctive feature of the great generals is "genius," the ability to see through the "fog of war" and make the correct decision at the critical time. If one agrees that war is as much art as it is science, then it would make sense to develop those parts of our personality and intellect that deal with artistry so that whatever level of genius we are blessed with may be fully realized. The approach this study recommends is the inclusion of literature, fiction, in professional development programs as this offers the best possibility for addressing and understanding the "essential truths" of the profession of arms. The examples used are two plays by Shakespeare, Othello and Henry V, Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Roger Malvin's Burial," and Herman Melville's novel Billy Budd.

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Clausewitz, On Shakespeare

An Individual Study Project

by

Lieutenant Colonel Lynn D. Moore

United States Army

Doctor Jay Luvaas

Project Advisor

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U. S. Army War College
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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lynn D. Moore, LTC, USA

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Carl Von Clausewitz advises us in his book, On War, that the distinctive feature of the great generals is "genius," the ability to see through the "fog of war" and make the correct decision at the critical time. If one agrees that war is as much art as it is science, then it would make sense to develop those parts of our personality and intellect that deal with artistry so that whatever level of genius we are blessed with may be fully realized. The approach this study recommends is the inclusion of literature, fiction, in professional development programs as this offers the best possibility for addressing and understanding the "essential truths" of the profession of arms. The examples used are two plays by Shakespeare, Othello and Henry V, Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "Roger Malvin's Burial," and Herman Melville's novel Billy Budd.

"If we then ask what sort of mind is likeliest to display the qualities of military genius, experience and observation will both tell us that it is the inquiring rather than the creative mind, the comprehensive rather than the specialized approach, the calm rather than the excitable head to which in war we would choose to entrust the fate of our brother and children, and the safety and honor of our country." 1

"A sensitive and discriminating judgment is called for, a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth." 2

Carl Von Clausewitz, On War

Studying and quoting from Von Clausewitz seems to be much in vogue these days, and I found his comments in Book One, Chapter Three, "On Military Genius," very interesting with regard to what he felt was critical for being a successful general. In summary, he indicates that neither an appreciation for terrain, nor diligent study of military subjects, nor hard work, nor any of the other attributes that we normally attribute to success in the military will make up for a lack of genius. Genius in this case, when applied to the military man, indicates a mind that can cut through the "fog of war," that maze of information, much of it conflicting, to discern the "essential truth" and act on it.

Finding this "essential truth" in our profession defies a mathematical approach. As LTG Kelly, J3 of the Joint Staff, told reporters, war is more an art than a science. 3 It would seem appropriate then to pursue those activities that will develop whatever artistic capacity we have, which for most of us is small indeed, and the rote study of military history will not give the solutions we need. The West Point Atlas can tell you where and at what time Pickett made his charge at Gettysburg, but we also need to go to a novel, The Killer Angels, to find out how, with the

concurrence of intelligent experienced leaders, such a disaster could have been permitted. And it was not just permitted; it was ordered.

A visit to most modern battalion and brigade tactical operations centers gives good insight into the genius of many of our current leaders. There, next to the operations and intelligence maps, are the charts and matrixes that show how they are checking every block. The staff or commander carefully documents that each battlefield operating system is covered, that the engineer work plan is progressing according to the established priority, and that all classes of supply are in the green. All of it seems to be designed to compensate for either a real or imagined lack of Clausewitzian genius. The sad thing is that we seem to have bred a group of commanders who are on the whole unwilling to take risks, whose fear of failure overrides their initiative, and who only want to be sure that their decisions are supported by doctrine when the after action review is given. It was interesting to read General Norman Schwarzkof's comments about the "guff" he got from his subordinate commanders regarding his "hail Mary" plan which, while applying very fundamental principles of attacking the flank, was characterized as audacious by merely avoiding a frontal attack. 4 It appears that we have a system or attitude permeating the Army which does not reward boldness and initiative, or that we have a generation or two of officers whose minds cannot innovate beyond the recitation of the battlefield operating systems or principles of war.

My feeling is that the source of these problems lies partly in what we read. Our Army educational institutions can only go so

far in developing our war fighting skills. Once an officer gets past basic doctrine and tactics, he is pretty much on his own in maturing through personal experience and professional development programs originating in his unit or done on his own time. This is normally where a reading program comes into play which in most cases places heavy emphasis on a factual study of military history. My recommendation and the argument of this paper is that we should turn more to literature for our development for several reasons. Struggling with the language or attempting to find meaning that is buried in what might seem to be superficial material does much to develop a more sophisticated approach to problem solving. Literature deals more directly with "essential truths," things that do not change on the battlefield like fear and human nature. Fiction often offers practical examples of combat lessons learned put forth in a way that makes them more memorable for the soldier who has not had the experience himself. Finally, for most of us, literary works are more enjoyable to read than history or manuals, which means we are more likely to read when we have the chance, and in the end, we get the added benefit of becoming "literate."

In this short introduction, I hope that I have piqued your curiosity about the value of fiction in our development. If that is the case, and you are willing to read on, I have chosen four works to illustrate how literature may be used both to reaffirm your own life's experiences and to mentor your subordinates. The first is Othello, by William Shakespeare. Sun Tzu advises us to "Know the enemy and know yourself; (for) in a hundred battles you will never be in peril." 6 Othello does not know himself. His

is the classic story of the field soldier, the combat hero, who lacks the sophistication to survive in a political environment. This is must reading for all of those going to Washington. The second is Henry V, also a play by Shakespeare. In this work, we broach military subjects that range from the need to whisper at night to killing your prisoners to what constitutes "Just War." The third is "Roger Malvin's Burial" by Nathaniel Hawthorne. In addition to the practical problem of care for your wounded and dead on the battlefield, this short story addresses the question of what really is the difference between history and fiction. I would argue that there is none. The last is Billy Budd by Herman Melville. This is a short novel that deals with the tough decisions that fall to the commander when justice before God runs counter to the needs of discipline in a unit.

I chose Dr. Jay Luvaas as my advisor on this project for a very particular reason. I knew that many of my arguments would run counter to the study of military history as a means of professional development, and I wanted the sponsorship of this noted historian to lend it a degree of credibility that it may not otherwise have had. Our conversations about each of the works presented here were lengthy, and they ranged far afield at times from whatever agenda either of us had brought to the conferences. I have included the notes from our meetings at the end of each chapter to give the reader the benefit of his observations and to show the breadth of subjects engendered by discussing the literature. On my part, I must admit that Dr. Luvaas awakened a long dormant (if ever present) interest in history. On his part, he was glad to concede that it was indeed a

very narrow line that separates literature from history, but he has known that all along. I will offer no other conclusion than to say that if you find any part of the remainder of this paper interesting, or that it reaffirms lessons that you have learned the hard way, or that you see how it could be used to mentor subordinates, or even that your curiosity is aroused enough to want to read an original text instead of my summary, then my purpose has been served.

ENDNOTES

1. Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, p. 112.
2. Ibid., p. 101.
3. LTG Kelly, USA, J3 Joint Staff, Pentagon daily briefing during Desert Storm.
4. "Schwarzkof: 'I Got a Lot of Guff'," Newsweek, March 11, 1991, p. 34.
5. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p. 84.

1. OTHELLO THE MOOR OF VENICE by William Shakespeare
from The Complete Pelican Shakespeare, Viking Press, New York, NY
1969, General Editor Alfred Harbage. All references are to this
text and indicate the act, scene, and line number.

2. MAJOR CHARACTERS:

Othello - a Moorish (black) general who because of his
record in combat, both in leadership and personal valor, has been
hired by the nation-state of Venice to command their national
defense force. He is the epitome of the combat leader, the kind
of officer we all aspire to be like, which is exactly what leads
him to his ruin.

Desdemona - Othello's bride, the daughter of a Venetian
senator. She has no higher calling than to support her husband
whom she dearly loves. She may be a little bit naive, but what
can you expect from someone as young (about half Othello's age)
and protected as she.

Iago - Othello's executive officer. Prior enlisted with
multiple combat tours and a battlefield commission. He feels he
should be at least the Deputy Commander if not the Commanding
General. He has come up through the school of hard knocks and
has no delusions about how things work in the real world.

Cassio - Othello's Deputy Commander. Graduate of the
Venetian Military Academy, a bachelor, owes a lot of his success
to smooth talk and good looks; although, he is competent and
absolutely loyal to his commander. Has trouble with alcohol.

Emilia - "she's a good hearted woman in love with" one of
the most despicable characters in all of literature, Iago. The
best, and sometimes only, friend that Desdemona has.

3. THEME: I use Othello to examine the military mind. The overwhelming majority of the officers in the military are ISTJ's, a fact that Shakespeare identified late in the sixteenth century. He chose Othello as the vehicle that he would use to reveal to his audience, and to us, what the great benefits, and dangers, are of such a mindset.

4. PLOT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

The author wastes no time at all in letting us know what Iago feels like after he has received his orders telling him that his next assignment will be as the XO to Othello, a position that places him almost directly subordinate to a younger officer straight out of the War College named Cassio. Iago was no fool though. As soon as he found out what his next position would be, he asked, "Three great ones of the city, (to go) In personal suit (and ask Othello) to make me his lieutenant." (I,i,8-9). Lieutenant in this instance means the second in command. Iago certainly felt that he was "worth no worse a place" (I,i,11), but Othello refuses to even speak to the gentlemen, "...for, 'Certes,' says he, 'I have already chose my officer.'" (I,i,17). And what does Iago feel about the officer Othello has chosen:

"(Cassio is) a Florentine (not a compliment from a Venetian)
...That never set a squadron in the field,
Nor the division of a battle knows
More than a spinster...Mere prattle without practice
Is all his soldiership..."(I,i,20)

This is especially hard to take for Iago since he served under Othello in battles "at Rhodes, Cyprus, and on other grounds Christian and heathen", (I,i,28), which is probably why he was not hired. When asked by a friend if there is no remedy for the situation, he answers:

"Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service.
Preferment goes by letter and affection (favoritism),
Not by old gradation, where each second
Stood heir to th' first (seniority)..."(i,i,38)

It is apparent that even in Shakespeare's time, it is not "what" you know; it is "who" you know.

So, this is the basis for Iago's hatred of both Othello and Cassio, a simple case of professional jealousy. Ever felt that before? Iago, as we, has the option of turning the assignment down, but decides instead to take the position in hopes of turning his close relationship to the objects of his hatred to his own advantage.

Iago has found out that Othello and Desdemona have eloped and are spending their wedding night in the local. The entire courtship has been carried out without the knowledge of Desdemona's father, Brabantio, a senator. Iago sees this as a grand opportunity to discredit his boss and goes to Brabantio's house to deliver the good news. It sounds a lot like the start of a medieval "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," but this is no comedy. Iago, not known for his subtlety, uses some choice phrases to both inform and incite the new father-in-law in the dark of night:

Awake! What, ho, Brabantio! Thieves! Thieves! Thieves!...
Zounds, sir, y' are robbed! ...
Even now, now, very now, an old black ram
Is tugging your white ewe. Arise, arise!...
Or else the devil will make a grandsire of you...
I am one, sir, that comes to tell you your daughter
and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs.
(I,ii,79-116)

Iago, not wanting to be identified as the one who brought the news, escapes into the night as Brabantio gathers his kinsmen to hunt down Othello. As it happens, on this very night, the

Duke (governor of the state) has received information indicating that the Turks have launched a fleet for the island of Cyprus and has sent messengers to convene the National Security Council. Both Othello and Brabantio are intercepted in town so the showdown over the marriage occurs in the Duke's office.

Details about what went on at the confrontation are not that important, but you need to know a few things. Iago was the first to find Othello, and he warned him about Brabantio saying that it was all that he could do to keep from killing the senator after some of the things he said about Othello. When Othello and Brabantio finally do meet, swords are drawn on both sides except for Othello who will not be provoked into a fight for foolish reasons and honors his father-in-law saying:

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.
Good signior, you shall more command with years
Than with your weapons. (I,ii,59-61)

Needless to say, the Duke and the other members of the council are surprised to hear Brabantio's accusations about his daughter being seduced by the heathen Othello's magic potions and pagan rituals. In answering the charges, Othello instructs us in the Warrior Ethic:

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble, and approved good masters (loyalty)
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true I have married her. (honesty)

...

Rude am I in my speech,
And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace; (humility)
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest action in the tented field; (campaigning)
And little of this great world can I speak
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;
And therefore little shall I grace (help) my cause
In speaking for myself (simplicity). (I,iii,76-89)

His final argument is for them to send for his lady and ask her about the relationship, staking his life on her answers. This short speech is very revealing about Othello. It is the first time in the play that we really hear from him, and unlike Iago, this is a soldier whose every word we should believe. In a very few phrases, Shakespeare reveals what this warrior is. He is a man raised on the battlefield, intent on following the orders of those appointed over him, and who knows little of worldly things (or else he would never have bet his life on what his wife would say next). The one key aspect of his personality that we do not see here though is that as with most great warriors, passion and emotion form a large part of his personality, but that will come. Desdemona arrives, proclaims her love and loyalty to Othello, and Brabantio gives up his protest; although, he is far from happy about the whole situation.

The council gets down to the business of what to do about the Turkish fleet that is on its way to Cyprus, or is it Rhodes? Is it a "hundred and seven galleys" or "two hundred?" Are they sure that one of these fleets is not just a feint? Shakespeare demonstrates to his audience in a considerable part of this scene what we all know, that the first report is always wrong. Finally it is determined that Cyprus is the target and Othello departs immediately to take command of the forces on the island with Desdemona following a day later with the hold baggage. So Othello is "once 'Moor' into the breach," and we would all feel comfortable had it not been for the final words of advice that Brabantio had for his new son-in-law:

Look to her Moor, if thou hast eyes to see: (wish he did)

She has deceived her father, and may thee. (I,iii,292-293)

or as we hear from Iago in a soliloquy to end the first act:

...He (Othello) holds me well (respects me);
The better shall my purpose work on him.
Cassio's a proper man. Let me see now:
To get his place, and to plume up my will
In double knavery - How, how? -Let's see:-
After some time, to abuse Othello's ears
That he (Cassio) is too familiar with his (Othello's) wife.
He (Cassio) hath a person and a smooth dispose (a flirt)
To be suspected - framed to make women false.
The Moor is of a free and open nature
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so (gullible);
And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
As asses are. (I,iii,384-396)

I need to give you a little bit of a literary hint here. There are a certain number of ways that the audience is given the truth; one of those is through a soliloquy (when an actor is on stage and apparently speaking to himself). In this instance, Iago has revealed the manner in which he intends to bring about the downfall of both Othello and Cassio. But of more importance, he has identified what in literature is called the "hamartia"; the fatal character flaw in the hero that will ultimately lead to his demise. We need to talk about this for awhile because outside of expanding our brains, becoming literate, and the pure joy of reading Shakespeare, it is the main reason for studying Othello.

Othello believes what he is told, especially if he is being spoken to by someone else in the military, and this is something, my fellow officers, that we all need to realize. It is the nature of the military mind to believe the information we are given by our brothers in arms. Probably each of us though has an example that we could give of an instance where we were deceived (lied to) by an officer or senior NCO that we trusted implicitly. The damage that occurs when the truth is known is irreparable both to the

relationship and to our faith in humanity. Lying is so loathsome to us and so alien to our profession that questioning another officer's honesty (a word that appears continually in Othello) would rarely occur to us. Shakespeare knows it; so should we.

Meanwhile, the major characters have all made it safely to Cyprus, miraculously surviving a storm at sea that destroys the entire Turkish fleet. Alas poor Othello, now that we know him well, we all realize that he has become the proverbial fish out of water, a warrior with no war to fight and forced to undertake a leisurely life at court. In the next few scenes, Iago gives us more details about his plot. Cassio shows that he is a harmless flirt who has something of a problem with alcohol, but who is intensely loyal to both Othello and Desdemona. Iago has also enlisted the aid of one of Desdemona's old suitors, Roderigo, who wants her back and has been convinced that both Othello and Cassio stand in his way. You must remember that Iago has already told us how he intends to accomplish his ends; the great entertainment for the audience is how he gets it done.

The first night in town, Cassio is named officer of the watch. He takes this duty very seriously, but Iago entices him into a few after dinner drinks and songs until it gets late and Cassio realizes that he still has duties to perform:

...Gentlemen (says Cassio), let's look to our business. Do not think, gentlemen, I am drunk. This is my ancient (he picks Iago out of the small group); this is my right hand, and this is my left. I am not drunk now. I can stand well enough, and I speak well enough. (honest officer, I only had two beers).
(II,iii,107-110).

Once Cassio is out of the room, Iago speaks to Montano, the governor of Cyprus:

You see this fellow (Cassio) that is gone before.

...
I fear the trust Othello puts him in,
On some odd time of his infirmity (drunkenness),
Will shake this island. (II,iii,115-122)

Meanwhile, Iago, knowing the condition Cassio is in and that he is a mean drunk, sends Roderigo out into the night to provoke a fight with Cassio. We never find out what Roderigo says to Cassio, probably something about a relationship that was rumored to have developed between his mother and a gondolier's pole, but soon they are back in the dining room with drawn swords. Montano attempts to intervene and is wounded in the ensuing fight. The alarm bell summons Othello, and when he finds out it is a fight between his Deputy Commander and the governor he is incensed and for very good reason:

...What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel?
In night, and on the court and guard of safety?
'Tis monstrous. (II,iii,203-207)

After receiving what explanation there is to give, Othello makes the obvious decision, "Cassio, I love thee; But never more be officer of mine." (II,iii,238-239) The part that Iago has played in all of this is obvious. What is also obvious at this time is that Iago receives a new name; from here forward, he will most often be referred to as "honest Iago" by all the other characters. The word "honest" itself will also begin to appear monotonously throughout the rest of the play to further emphasize Othello's inability to distinguish truth from lies.

Cassio naturally feels that he is ruined by this and makes a great deal about the fact that he has lost his reputation which is the, "immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial."

(II,iii,251-252). This makes a lot of sense to us but not to Iago who replies, "Reputation is an idle and most false imposition; oft got without merit and lost without deserving," (II,iii,260-261) which also makes sense. His advice to Cassio is for him to go to Desdemona and, "Confess yourself freely to her; importune her help to put you in your place again...This broken joint between you and her husband entreat her to splinter..." (II,iii,302-308). This exchange sets the stage for the rest of the play as Iago says, after Cassio has departed to seek Desdemona:

...For whiles this honest fool (Cassio)
Flies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence (this lie) into his ear,
That she reveals (seeks his recall) for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all. (II,iii,336-344)

With your permission, I would like to take another brief meander into dramatic devices at this point. The tension has been building in the play for quite some time now, as I am sure you have noticed, and Shakespeare understands that if he is to keep our attention and not exhaust us, we have got to have a break. He does this in all his tragedies, at times with songs or jousting with words between major characters, more often with the introduction of clowns or musicians as happens here:

CLOWN: Why masters (musicians), Ha' your instruments been in Naples, that they speak i' th' nose thus? (Naples was notorious with the British for its association with venereal disease).

MUSICIAN: How, sir, how?

CLOWN: Are these, I pray you, called wind instruments?

MUSICIAN: Ay, marry, are they, sir.

CLOWN: O, thereby hangs a tail.

MUSICIAN: Whereby hangs a tale sir?

CLOWN: Marry, sir, by many a wind instrument that I know.
(II,iii,3-9)

That is not bad for Shakespeare

Iago's first opportunity to work his plot comes on a tour of the battlements that he is on with Othello. At one point they stop, and at some distance, Othello sees Desdemona and Cassio just concluding a conversation and asks, "Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?" (III,iii,36). Iago is sly with his reply:

Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing your coming. (III,iii,34-39)

When the pair moves on to join Desdemona on the ramparts, she begins her campaign to have Cassio reinstated. She badgers her husband until he capitulates, agreeing that if she will drop the subject, he will see Cassio as soon as possible. Once Desdemona departs, a very long and intricate conversation takes place between Iago and Othello which plants the first seeds of doubt in Othello's mind about his wife's fidelity. How Iago is able to accomplish this is a real study in human psychology. While seeming to be very reluctant to say anything that could possibly be construed as directly accusatory, Iago plays on the fact that Cassio was the go between for Othello and Desdemona, and that she seems a bit over concerned about his reinstatement. He finally strikes home with references to Othello's age, race, upbringing, and the very advice that he received from his father-in-law prior to leaving Venice. Although Othello says he still wants proof and challenges Iago to get it, he has obviously gone from the self-confident warrior, absolutely in control, to a deeply troubled, jealous man.

Othello then is off-stage for a short time during which Iago acquires a handkerchief, given to Desdemona by Othello as a wedding gift, which because of its importance to her husband, she pledges never to part with. This is the proof positive that Iago intends to use to convince Othello of Desdemona's infidelity. When Othello comes back on stage, he is a changed man:

Avaunt! be gone! Thou (Iago) hast set me on the rack.
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little (ignorance is bliss).

...
I had been happy if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines (artillery) whose rude throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone. (III,iii,335-357)

How could this be? The last time we saw Othello, he was still demanding proof. Now he only wants a reason to believe the worst. The answer to the question lies in the kind of man that Othello is. He is a military man, ruled by the passions of Mars, skillfully led astray by a liar in whom he puts absolute trust. If in your forty odd years of life you have not had the experiences to understand how Othello's mind has been working on itself, and how he could come to be in the mental state that he is in, then you have led a very cloistered life indeed.

Well, things go rapidly down hill from here. Othello, in a very round about way, is given the proof that he has demanded when Desdemona cannot produce, on his demand, the

strikes home with references to Othello's age, race, upbringing, and the very advice that he received from his father-in-law prior to leaving Venice. Although Othello says he still wants proof and challenges Iago to get it, he has obviously gone from the self-confident warrior, absolutely in control, to a deeply troubled, jealous man.

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Avaunt! be gone! Thou (Iago) hast set me on the rack.
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little (ignorance is bliss).

...
I had been happy if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!
And O you mortal engines (artillery) whose rude throats
Th' immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone. (III,iii,335-357)

How could this be? The last time we saw Othello, he was still demanding proof. Now he only wants a reason to believe the worst. The answer to the question lies in the kind of man that Othello is. He is a military man, ruled by the passions of Mars, skillfully led astray by a liar in whom he puts absolute trust. If in your forty odd years of life you have not had the experiences to understand how Othello's mind has been working on itself, and how he could come to be in the mental state that he is in, then you have led a very cloistered life indeed.

Well, things go rapidly down hill from here. Othello, in a very round about way, is given the proof that he has demanded when Desdemona cannot produce, on his demand, the

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handkerchief that Othello gave her for a wedding present. Watching the demise of this once great soldier as he is consumed by the "green-eyed monster of jealousy" is what makes the play really tragic. We more and more loathe Iago for his continuing part in the destruction of this noble couple, but the amazing thing is that we do not really believe that the path they are on can be changed. That is the great skill of Shakespeare. We understand why Othello is the way he is; we see fully where he is misinterpreting the signs, but he is unstoppable in the journey to his own demise.

The final scene occurs in Othello's bedroom where, despite Desdemona's explanations (all true) and her pleas to be spared, Othello smothers her. In a very emotional scene, Emilia discovers what has been done and then explains to Othello, whom she calls a "...dolt, As ignorant as dirt!" (V,ii,165), the history of the handkerchief and the role that Iago has played in all of it. Iago kills his wife. Othello wounds but does not kill Iago, then commits suicide. Before his death, Othello is asked, "What shall be said to (of) thee?" (V,ii,293). His answers are worth repeating here:

...Why, anything:
An honorable murderer, if you will;
For naught did I in hate, but all in honor...
(Shakespeare was not a big fan of "honor")
... Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away
Richer than all his tribe. (V,ii,343-348)

5. THE LESSON FOR THE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL:

Duty, honor, country are taken as the watch words of our profession, and I could argue that honesty, simplicity, and devotion could be taken as the watch words of our professionals. Unfortunately for us, the world (once we come out of the field) is neither honest nor simple nor does it any great measure reward devotion. Does that mean that as individuals we have to depart from our Warrior Ethic in order to survive in this environment? No, I don't think so. The Army today seems more and more driven to uphold the ideals of ethical conduct. But there is need for warning. The man who immerses himself so deeply in ideology that he loses sight of reality, and you do not have to go very far down to go blind, is in for some very painful and destructive awakenings.

OTHELLO, Instructor Notes

25 Jan Conference

1. What is the Meyers/Briggs depiction of Othello? I mentioned in my written report that I would guess he is an ISTJ as are most military leaders and leaders of business. There may be some interest or grounds for such a study of leaders in literature.
2. Considerable discussion revolved around how one would motivate young officers to read fiction, especially something as difficult as Shakespeare is for the uninitiated. The obvious answer is that you can tell them to do it, then hope that they see the value of the exercise once the discussion is finished. Dr. Luvaas related the story of how Fox Conner was able to get Dwight Eisenhower back to the study of military history through reading works of fiction. A reverse approach may work well with young officers who have an elemental interest in history that they could better appreciate through insightful works of literature. Whatever the approach, it seems obvious that the student needs a minimum of guidance with the hope that he will "discover" the lessons to be learned thereby giving them more value. It is key also to understand that not everyone will draw the same lessons or make the same interpretation of what they are reading which will be a great benefit to the discussion of the works wherein lies the greatest value.
3. "Othello, suffers from the defects of his strengths."
4. Othello begins his remarkable transformation in Act III. One interesting approach to the play's study would be to have an officer read only acts I and II then prepare an officer efficiency report on Othello to contrast with how the hero

appears in the end. We may find that he has changed greatly, but we may also find that he is essentially the military man that he was from the beginning.

5. I will mention it in the introductory chapter of my MSP, but as a reminder here I will say that I suspect that senior officers reading this work will have a number of things reaffirmed from their own experience. For example, they may remember times when they suffered from misinformation or a deliberate lie or the pangs of jealousy and self-doubt. Junior officers, for the most part, will not have had the same extent of life's experiences to base their reading on. This is where the process of mentoring comes in as the senior gives the benefit of his experiences to the junior. At best we may be able to help our subordinates avoid some of the pitfalls of life and our profession; more likely though, there will be times in the future where our protege will think back and say, "So this was what the old man was talking about," and he will derive some solace from the fact that others have gone down the same path and survived if not benefited from the experience.

6. My last point is that there is certainly a much larger theme presented in Othello than the portrayal of personal foibles, and that is the conflict between the soldier and the court/courtier. In modern times this could well be represented in the difficulties we in the military have in dealing with Congress and the press. Both of those institutions are here to stay and we would do well to stop complaining and learn to work the situation to our favor.

1. THE LIFE OF KING HENRY THE FIFTH by William Shakespeare from The Complete Pelican Shakespeare, Viking Press, New York, NY 1969, General Editor Alfred Harbage. All references are to this text and indicate the act, scene, and line number.

2. MAJOR CHARACTERS:

King Henry the Fifth - the young King of England who through most of his life has developed a reputation of indifference to his responsibilities to the throne of England. Lately there have been indications of repentance and significant changes in his lifestyle, but images of his former life still linger, at least in the minds of the governors of France. For us he is best remembered as the commander of English forces at the battle of Agincourt in 1415.

Charles the Sixth, King of France, and the Dukes of Burgundy, Orleans, Bourbon, and Britaine - governors and military leaders of the French forces which include a large segment of mercenaries.

Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph - former running mates of Prince Harry (later Henry V), now members of his Army.

3. THEME: There are a number of important military themes presented in this play. In the chronological order that they appear in the play, they are JUS BELLUM (just war), the maturing of a leader, and the issue of war crimes.

4. PLOT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

A little bit of knowledge about English history would be a good way to start out a study of this play, with the added benefit of placating some of the historians out there who have already started to wonder why they are reading this paper. The

first people to enter the British Isles were the Celts who got there sometime in the Bronze Age after having traveled across Europe from what is now the western Soviet Union. The next group to enter England were the Romans who arrived during the reign of Julius Caesar about 50-100 BC. They remained the dominant force in the islands until the collapse of the Empire around 500 AD when they withdrew leaving the area open to invasion by the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons which were Germanic tribes better known to us as Vikings ala Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis. They were opposed unsuccessfully by Celts trained by the Romans whose most famous leader was King Arthur. The Anglo/Saxons ruled Britain until 1066 when a Norman (French) army under William the Conqueror defeated them at the battle of Hastings, which for all practical purposes wiped out the English ruling class. England continued to be considered by the French as a possession until the English developed their own sense of nationalism which took several hundred years. In fact, Chaucer is considered to be the first author to write in the English language, and he died in 1400. Before him, French was the national language, at least in the courts. Finally we arrived at a point where the ruler of England came to consider himself to be a peer of the King of France and reversed the claims for ownership of properties located across the English Channel. This argument of claims is where Henry V, the play, picks up.

Shakespeare opens with a conversation between two of the heads of the Church of England, Canterbury and Ely. Henry the Fourth, before his death, decreed that those lands and possessions which had been inherited by the church from members

of the aristocracy (trying to buy their way into heaven) would be returned to the State. At the same time, the Church would be taxed, something that was unheard of before. Canterbury and Ely have devised a plan whereby they hope to divert the new King's attention and at least delay the execution of the decree. Many national leaders have taken the advice that if you want to cure domestic problems, find an enemy abroad. That is the message that the Church has for the King.

Their argument to the King is that he has a just claim to lands and revenues that are being denied to him by the rulers of France. But the way the argument is presented says much about Shakespeare's attitude toward wars in general and this one in particular. Without going into great detail, Canterbury says that the French base their claim on Salic Law whose history is:

That the land Salic is in Germany,
Between the floods of Sala and of Elbe;
Where 'Charles the Great, having subdued the Saxons,
There left behind and settled certain French;
Who, holding in disdain the German women
For some dishonest manners of their life,
Established then this law: to wit, no female
Should be inheritrix in Salic land;
Which Salic, as I said, 'twixt Elbe and Sale
Is at this day in Germany called Meisen.

So, what does this all mean?

Then doth it well appear the Salic Law
Was not devised for the realm of France. (I,ii,44-56)

and France has no legal right to deny the land to King Henry just because he had a woman lurking in his chain of inheritance. The quotation I gave is a very minor excerpt from a very long, and noticeably ridiculous, recounting of who begot whom leading down to Henry V. If this is not enough to show the absurdity of the claim, Canterbury goes on to quote the Bible, reference Henry's

ancestor the Black Prince Edward who defeated the French at Crecy, and promise a degree of financial backing from the Church the level of which no King has ever seen before. Still, the King seems undecided because he realizes the great cost in humanity that a war entails and that, as always, there is a civil disturbance brewing along the border with Scotland. Henry is finally swayed by Canterbury's argument that England could win the war easily with only a quarter of the Army that is available.

So Henry is resolved, not just to a battle, but to a war to conquer all of France and establish himself as King of both countries. All of this based on an argument of inheritance. Do we think in these modern times that this reasoning would give "just cause" for a war? Certainly not, and if you read very shallowly between the lines of the play, both here in the first act and in later conversations of troops in the field in France, you see that this reasoning was considered fallacious even in Shakespeare's time. The question that confronts our own nation now with our involvement in the Middle East is the same one; what is there that is worth going to war over?

When dealing with this play with Cadets at West Point and asking this same question, I was often amazed when they felt there would be good reason to go to war in the Middle East but not in Central or South America. This was long before any consideration that would have to be given to the morality of the invasion of Kuwait. They were basing their response solely on the vital economic interests that the US has in the region. They were in fact saying, and in very clear terms, that they would sooner fight for economic reasons than for human rights issues in

a region where there were few resources vital to our nation. To me, the Viet Nam veteran/crusader for human rights/dominoe prop, this was absurd, and I think my view has been upheld by the Bush administration in both JUST CAUSE and DESERT STORM, or has it? Certainly the rhetoric surrounding our nation's last two ventures into war (last three if you count rescuing medical students in Grenada) has been that our motivation for fighting has been very ideological. We are going to drive invaders out, restore legitimate government (democratic or otherwise), and give "certain inalienable rights" to whomever wants them. The biggest blow yet to the unity of our effort has not been SCUD attacks on Tel Aviv, but Secretary Baker's comment that the basic issue was "jobs." It did not take long to learn that mothers and fathers were not going to send sons and daughters out to fight for employment security. So the rhetoric changed but the doubt still lingers about why we, as a nation, are really there.

Of course for the soldier, the reasons for fighting are very different. I was interested to hear a Marine Private's answer when he was asked why he was in Saudi Arabia getting ready to cross the border into Kuwait in what could become be the bloodiest battle in modern history. I cannot quote him, but he said something like, "Red, white, and blue, that's all there is." Private or not, this was a man who is dangerously naive. Soldiers fight for other soldiers, to maintain their reputation and the respect of their comrades, at times for personal glory, but never for old glory or any ingredient of apple pie. It is incumbent on us as senior leaders to ensure that those we are mentoring understand that for the battlefield at least, ours is

"not to reason why;" ours is but to cover our buddies.

The play continues through an assassination plot sponsored by the French, which Shakespeare pretty much had to include because it was a well known part of history, and on to the English siege of the French port town of Harfleur. There are two very memorable speeches delivered by Henry; one of them occurs outside the walls of Harfleur where the English have opened a breach in the battlements but have been repulsed in their first attempt to storm the citadel. The King rallies his troops with:

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead!
In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility,
But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
Then imitate the action of the tiger:
Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,
Disguise fair nature with hard-favored rage;

...
Hold hard the breath and bend up every spirit
To his full height! On, on, you noble English

...
Dishonor not your mothers; now attest
That those whom you called fathers did beget you!

...
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start. The game's afoot!
Follow your spirit; and upon this charge
Cry 'God for Harry! England and Saint George! (III,i,1-34)

I feel compelled to include Harry's other speech now; although, I know that it is out of order here. It is given just before the French attack at Agincourt as the English prepare to man their defenses. Henry's cousin Westmoreland has remarked that he wished they had some reinforcements for their meager force that has been depleted by the campaign and marched into the ground trying to get to winter quarters in Calais. Henry responds:

What's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin.
If we are marked to die, we are enow (enough)

To do our country loss, and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honor.

...

This day is called the Feast of Crispian.
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is named
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall see this day, and live to old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors
And say, 'Tomorrow is Saint Crispian.'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
[And say, 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.']

...

This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it (who fought here) shall be remembered-
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he today that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother. Be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition (make him royal);
And gentlemen in England now abed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day. (IV,iii,18-67)

How many of us have been faced with the task of pumping up our troops for an event? All of us I am sure, and what a struggle it is to come up with the exact words to fit the occasion. I know from my own experiences at trying to motivate people in situations ranging from being captain of a football team to commander of a battalion going into combat during JUST CAUSE in Panama, that I never did it as well as Shakespeare did. The language has certainly changed, but the sentiments, never. It is not my intent to disparage, nor do I think most people should weep from reading Shakespeare, but I would say that if you do not at least marvel at the eloquence and artistry of these passages, you need to get a second opinion about whether or not you are clinically as well as sensibly dead.

Henry V could easily be regarded as the third part of a trilogy that takes Henry from his days as a troublesome prince to

being the King that united France with England. Prince Hal, as he was called in Henry IV parts I and II, became very popular as a hell-raiser with Shakespeare's audience along with Hal's running mates Falstaff (a medieval Sgt Bilko), Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym. Shakespeare is faced with the problem of converting this Lieutenant (Hal) into a General with the stature of a conqueror. This requires splitting Hal away from his former compatriots, and Shakespeare does it with a vengeance. In Henry IV part II Hal has already broken Falstaff's heart by telling him that he will never more consider him a friend. The effect of this is so devastating to Falstaff that he dies in Act I of Henry V. Bardolph's end comes during the campaign in France.

Bardolph is apprehended for pillaging a church during the march toward Calais. His friend, Pistol, pleads the case with his commander, asking him to intervene and prevent the execution. It finally comes down to the King who, facing his long time friend, sentences him to death, saying:

We would have all such offenders so cut off (hanged). And we give express charge that in our marches through the country there be nothing compelled from the villages, nothing taken but paid for; none of the French up-braided or abused in disdainful language; for when lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner. (III,vi,103-109)

Two important principles are addressed here. The first is maintaining discipline in the Army even at the expense of executing a friend, and I would like to delay discussion of this idea until we address it in Billy Budd in a later chapter. The second principle deals with the proper treatment of the civilian populace in a country that you have invaded. We faced this problem in Viet Nam and for the most part failed to find a

solution, which did us great harm in many areas. We developed no relationship with the people we were there to protect, so our soldiers had no appreciation for this very worthwhile reason for being in that country. We also denied ourselves our most important source of information about the enemy. I know of very few instances where Vietnamese civilians came forward with intelligence of real military value. The difference in Panama was remarkable. There the flow of information was overwhelming. This was partly because we were treated as liberators, partly because we were not there long enough to poison the well by doing typically American things that alienate any populace, but largely because we addressed the need to respect the lives and property of those we came to assist. There were some breakdowns in discipline, but they occurred mostly in units that followed on after the initial assaults and were dealt with harshly in the fashion of Henry V.

The night before the great battle, the King disguises himself as a junior officer and wanders the camp hoping to get some insight into the morale of his Army. Much of what he learns is still important to us and certainly gives an indication of what Shakespeare learned himself in his days as a soldier. As here where he addresses the need to whisper at night on the battlefield, a technique that I stressed for two years in my battalion with only limited success (at least so it seemed to me):

GOWER (an officer) - Captain Fluellen!

FLUELLEN - So! in the name of Cheshu Christ, speak fewer (whisper)...If you would take the pains but to examine the wars of Pompey the Great, you shall find, I warrant you, that there is no tiddle taddle nor pibble pabble (noise) in Pompey's camp. I warrant you, you shall find the ceremonies of the wars, and the cares of it, and the forms of it, and sobriety of it, and the modesty of it, to be otherwise (very quiet).

GOWER - Why, the enemy is loud; you hear him all night.

FLUELLEN - If the enemy is an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb, is it meet (wise), think you, that we should also, look you, be an ass and a fool and a prating coxcomb? In your own conscience now?

GOWER - I will speak lower. (IV,1,64-79)

Or here, where the King speaks to one of his soldiers and gets some very down to earth views of the "glory" of the upcoming battle:

WILLIAMS - ...Who goes there?

KING - A friend.

WILLIAMS - Under what Captain serve you?

KING - Under Sir Thomas Erpingham.

WILLIAMS - A good old commander and a most kind gentleman. I pray you, what thinks he of our estate (chances to win)?

KING - Even as men wracked (tied down) upon a sand (beach), that look to be washed off the tide.

BATES - He hath not told his thought to the king?

KING - No; nor it is not meet (a good idea that) he should. For though I speak it to you, I think the king is but a man, as I am...Therefore, when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his fears, out of doubt, be of the same fears as ours are (he is just as afraid, and of the same things, as everyone else). Yet, in reason, no man should possess him with (show) any appearance of fear, lest he, by showing it, should dishearten his army.

BATES - He may show what outward courage he will; but I believe, as cold a night as 'tis, he could wish himself in Thames up to the neck; and so I would (wish) he were, and I by him, at all adventures, (just) so we were quit (away from) here.

KING - By my troth, I will speak my conscience of the king: I think he would not wish himself anywhere but where he is.

BATES - Then I would (wish) he were here alone. So should he be sure to be ransomed, and many poor men's lives saved.

KING - ...Methinks I could not die anywhere so contented as in the king's company, his cause being just and his quarrel honorable.

WILLIAMS - That's more than we know.

BATES - Ay, or more than we should seek after, for we know enough if we know we are the king's subjects. If his cause be wrong, our obedience to the king wipes the crime of it out of us.

WILLIAMS - But if the cause be not good, the king himself hath a heavy reckoning to make when all those legs and arms and heads, chopped off in a battle, shall join together at the latter day and cry all, 'We died at such a place,' some swearing, some crying for a surgeon, some upon their wives left poor behind them, some upon the debts they owe, some upon their children rawly left. I am afraid there are few die well that die in a battle... Now, if these men do not die well, it will be a black

matter for the king that led them to it;

KING - ...The king is not bound to answer (responsible for) the particular endings (deaths) of his soldiers...; for they purpose (offer) not their death when they purpose (offer) their services. Besides, there is no king, be his cause never so spotless, if it come to the arbitrement of swords, can try it out (fight the battle) with all unspotted soldiers...Every subjects' duty is the king's, but every subject's soul is his own.

(IV,i,18-163)

It is obvious to both Bates and Williams that there is neither glory nor great adventure in the battle to come. They could not care less about the need to show courage as a leader or whether or not the cause of the battle is just. Their vision of what is to come at dawn is that of a charnel house of men dying badly with no hope of being taken prisoner and held for ransom which is what normally happens with a king or high ranking lord. And even the King's answer regarding duty and obedience gives little solace to these common men. This is something that we as officers need to be reminded of on a fairly regular basis. We have the greatest soldiers in the world who do a super job for us, often in spite of our leadership rather than because of it, and above all, they are highly motivated. But they are not, for the most part, motivated by the same things that we are. Thank God for Sergeants Major who can bring us back to reality when we forget it.

At last we come to what I think is the most significant event in the play, King Henry's order to kill the prisoners. Shakespeare had a real problem in how to portray this incident. He could not ignore it since his audience was as familiar with the details of the Battle of Agincourt as we are with the major events of our own revolution. But to show one of England's greatest kings in the bad light of committing such an atrocity would set very poorly with the people paying money to see his

play. So he handles it thusly. At the end of the battle, after much excitement and movement has occurred on stage, and in the middle of a teary-eyed speech provoked by the King's just having learned about the brave death of the Earl of Suffolk, an alarm/bugle sounds off stage. The King reacts:

But hark! what new alarum is this same?
The French reinforced their scattered men.
Then every soldier kill his prisoners!
Give the word through. (IV,vi,35-38)

The king and others depart the stage as Gower and Fluellen enter to discover that the trains have been raided, ostensibly by the French, and that all the boys, who because of their youth have been left out of the battle, have been killed:

FLUELLEN - Kill the poys (boys) and the luggage? 'Tis expressly against the law of arms (chivalric code). 'Tis as arrant a piece of knavery, mark you now, as can be offert. In your conscience, now, is it not?

GOWER - 'Tis certain there's not a boy left alive; and the cowardly rascals that ran from the battle ha' done this slaughter. Besides, they have burned and carried away all that was in the king's tent; wherefore the king most worthily hath caused every soldier to cut his prisoner's throat. O, 'tis a gallant king!

The brief dialogue that follows between Fluellen and Gower is difficult to interpret as to whether Shakespeare would agree that Henry is indeed a "gallant king." Henry arrives on stage, and in viewing the carnage, states:

I was not angry since I came to France
Until this instant. Take a trumpet, herald;
Ride thou unto the horsemen on yond hill.
If they will fight with us, bid them come down
Or void (leave) the field. They do offend our sight.
If they'll do neither, we will come to them
And make them skirr (run) away as swift as stones
Enforced (thrown) from the old Assyrian slings.
Besides, we'll cut the throats of those we have;
And not a man of them that we shall take
Shall taste our mercy. (IV,vii,50-60)

The word that Henry gets back is that the English have won the

day and the incident is closed.

Not even the youngest soldier in the army would feel that it is proper to kill prisoners. And in fact, Henry's own knights refused to carry out his order and the killing was done by a squire leading a group of archers. We are all bound by our own humanity, much less the laws of land warfare, to protect those who have fallen to us as prisoners. There is also the practical aspect of treating PWs fairly since it causes the enemy to fight less fanatically (surrender more readily) and gives us an immediate source of battlefield intelligence. But what of the instance where you are being pursued hotly by the enemy, and you have prisoners that are slowing you down? This one usually is not that tough for them either. Normally the solution given is to bind the PWs where they will not soon be found then make your escape. But eventually in this discussion of the broader issue of war crimes, there comes a point when disagreement occurs between soldiers over whether an action is illegal/immoral or not. In my conversations with my junior officers, this breakdown occurs somewhere between them agreeing that we should not cut the ears off enemy dead, but that we should be allowed (their opinion) to place "calling cards" on enemy bodies. A practice that I thought had died in Viet Nam, but which, according to "NEWSWEEK," has been adopted by a battalion of the 101ST ABN in Saudi Arabia.

I belonged to an American Ranger company in Viet Nam that left "wooden nickels" and had soldiers who kept personal scrapbooks of pictures of enemy dead. This company was one of the most successful in the Division area of operation in terms of

enemy kills, intelligence provided, and awards for valor. But there was never the sense that they were engaged in something worthy, or that they were members of an elite profession with rules of conduct which, among others, included respect for your enemy. We treated the enemy as something less than soldiers, which in turn, made us less than soldiers when we killed them. Eventually, discipline and morale in the unit went to pieces resulting in fights between team members and disobedience to orders. A lot of factors contributed to our demise. The US was pulling out, and no one cared to be the last Ranger killed in combat. We had four killed in the space of about a month after having gone almost an entire year with no deaths in the unit. And as people went home, we had to break teams up to fill others resulting in a loss of unit integrity and cohesion. But all things considered, I honestly feel that a stronger sense of purpose, that would have come from knowing that we were soldiers doing an important job, would have gotten us through.

This ends my lessons learned from this play, but I would like to make two other points. Shakespeare's plays were written to be seen, not read. For that reason, I would recommend that you rent a copy of the new film version of Henry V which in my opinion does a pretty good job of presenting the drama with two exceptions. First, the leading actor, whose name escaped me even when I saw it, is no Olivier and does not make the language as easy to follow as do other members of the cast. Second, to me, the most pressing issue regarding the military profession contained in the play is the order to kill the prisoners. Shakespeare tries to hide it; the film version leaves

it out entirely. I suppose Henry is getting better with age.

Finally, the Globe Theatre, where most of Shakespeare's plays were performed, was a relatively small structure with an equally small stage. There were no props to speak of and limited costumes for the men who played the parts; women were not allowed on stage. To this you add dialogue written in iambic pentameter, and you wonder how he could make a living. Part of the answer to this lies in our own modern experience with television situation comedies (sitcoms) and soap operas. If I asked a cross section of the War College class what their favorite sitcoms were, we would undoubtedly see Cheers, Barney Miller, and Designing Women high on the list. Some programs such as CHIPS and Air Wolf probably would not appear. There are a lot of reasons why some are preferred over others, but I would argue that a principal reason would be that a series like Cheers, which takes place solely in an area the size of the Globe Theatre's stage, relies on good dialogue, acting, and a diversity of believable characters on whom we can rely to respond "in character." Contrast that with CHIPS which attempts to substitute 60 MPH freeway traffic for a plot. That is a very simplistic explanation, but you can see the validity of the argument that Shakespeare was forced by circumstances to be great in those areas that a producer cannot compensate for with cinematography.

Another comparison is worthwhile between the Battle of Agincourt as portrayed on the stage of HENRY V and the invasion of Normandy as shown in the film The Longest Day. The film's producer had the advantage of being able to show the panorama of the beach landings through aerial sweeps of the French coast line. However, when he

wanted to show the intensity of the battle and communicate the fear and anguish, the real guts of warfare, what did he do? He focused in on John Wayne and the small group of soldiers he was able to gather following the drop, or he singled out Red Buttons hanging from the Church Steeple in St. Mere Eglise, or he showed Sal Mineo hiding behind a rock wall just before he was fooled by the "cricket" sound that a German mauser's bolt makes when chambering a round. Shakespeare does the same thing. He makes use of a "chorus" to give the audience key information about scene changes in addition to offering apologies for the limits imposed by a stage in recreating anything as enormous as a battlefield. But in the end, he satisfies his audience by acting out a select collection of small vignettes occurring over the entire battlefield from the actions of the Kings of two warring superpowers down to a small boy's decision in the midst of the battle, to go to the trains where the audience knows he will be unmercifully slain in the French raid.

5. THE LESSON FOR THE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL:

There are a multitude of things that occur on the battlefield that are unique to that particular situation. We cannot foresee them, we cannot predict with any degree of certainty how we will react to them, and trying to find a precedent in history to guide our actions carries its own pitfalls. But some things do not change. Fear, morality, motivation, pride, and a host of other aspects of the human condition will always be the same no matter what technology does to the battlefield and tactics. You do not get insights into humanity from reading military history, and the leader who ignores or is poorly equipped to deal with the human dimension of warfare will, at best, realize only a very small portion of his own potential; at worst, he will be a danger to all of those around him.

HENRY V, Instructor Notes

1 Feb Conference

1. There was a form of nationalism operating in England at the time of Henry V. So in effect, at Agincourt Henry commanded a relatively homogeneous force fighting with unity of command and purpose (just or not); whereas, the French were fighting as a coalition of units each with its loyalty to a region of France and the Duke who ruled that region. There were no French "nationals" until after their own revolution.
2. There was no trained infantry around. The companies of Swiss pikeman are just starting to form in the 15th century. Most of what would be called infantry at Agincourt were serfs pressed into service for a particular campaign. The exception were the longbowmen, who were of the yeoman class, and required by law to maintain proficiency in their weapon. They were hired for a campaign.
3. Machievelli argued for a national (standing) army for two reasons. First, mercenaries are fickle. They will give their loyalty to the highest bidder and are very reluctant to fight. No mercenary leader wants his men killed because of economic reasons. He would have to spend money to train and equip replacements. Second, Machievelli felt that society was basically corrupt. For him, compulsory military service would teach military virtues to the masses which would improve the society overall.
4. The island nature of the British Kingdom furthered the feeling of nationalism in Henry's army.
5. At this time, there was no law of land warfare, and the laws

of chivalry applied only to the ruling class. This had a lot to do with who was killed in these battles and how you were treated if captured. The lives of serfs had no value; they had no rights under the law. The chivalric code has continued in certain areas until modern times. Clausewitz was captured and spent several months in very luxuriant surroundings. We certainly see a preservation of the code in the air arm in WW I and later.

6. Orders to kill those who we are normally required to protect deserves a lot of attention. For example, what if you are on a mission behind enemy lines that is so sensitive that you must kill anyone who discovers you? How do you justify, to yourself, cutting the throat of a child who happens to stumble into your hiding place.

7. General Eichelberger had serious problems in the New Guinea campaign trying to get PWs. They were being killed at the front lines for reasons that had racial dimensions and out of pure hatred for the enemy. It was difficult to convince these soldiers of the necessity to keep PWs as it was not a professional army fighting in WW II. The men and women were in for the short term to get the war over and get back to their lives.

8. What makes modern war "just?" Paul Fussel's Great War in Modern Memory may be a good start point.

9. The motivation of the troops and their morale was not an issue until the American Revolution. How are troops motivated? Why do they fight? Henry V had some inspiring words, but is the modern soldier motivated by words?

1. "ROGER MALVIN'S BURIAL." by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

2. MAJOR CHARACTERS:

Roger Malvin - a middle aged New England frontiersman who embodies all the characteristics that we attribute to our puritan ancestors; hard work, selfless devotion to family and friends, and willingness to sacrifice.

Reuben Bourne - a young frontiersman and close friend of the Malvin family.

Dorcas Malvin - Roger's daughter, of marriageable age.

Cyrus Bourne - Dorcas and Reuben's teen-age son.

Captain Lovewell - leader of a raiding party that decisively defeated a superior number of Pequawket Indians in a battle that ended The Seven Years War.

3. THEMES: First, American soldiers have come to expect that if they are wounded in combat, they will receive prompt and expert medical care, normally in a safe haven somewhere far removed from the battlefield. Additionally, they expect, as do their families, that if they are killed, their bodies will be recovered and shipped home for burial. This was not always the case, and we have a responsibility to make our leaders and soldiers realize, ahead of time, that there may arise certain circumstances where they will have to be abandoned on the battlefield. Or will they? Second, there is a very thin, often indistinguishable, line separating fiction from history. Third, as much as we criticize the press and writers in general, along with War College writing requirements, we need to understand and appreciate the power of the written word and how to use it to our advantage.

4. PLOT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

I think that I realize now how Fox Conner was able to use literature to get Dwight Eisenhower back into the study of history. Hawthorne, in his opening paragraph, gives an intriguing allusion to an incident that occurred during the wars that our colonists fought against the American Indians, backed by the French, in the 17th and 18th centuries.

One of the few incidents...susceptible...(to) romance was that expedition undertaken...in the year 1725, which resulted in heroism of a little band who gave battle...in the heart of the enemy's country...The battle...was not unfortunate...for it broke the strength of a tribe...Some of the incidents contained in the following pages will be recognized...by such as have heard, from old men's lips, the fate of the few combatants who were in a condition to retreat after "Lovell's Fight." 1

There are many devices that an author may use to increase the "believability" of his work. In literary terms, this practice is referred to as lending verisimilitude. This is exactly what Hawthorne has done by basing his short story, which is entirely fiction, on an incident drawn specifically from the history of a period with which his readers are likely to be very familiar. It seemed obvious to me then, that I had to know the details of the combat action in order to fully appreciate what the author is doing.

I found an account of Lovell's Fight in Volume III of Indian Wars of New England by Herbert Milton Sylvester. It is an interesting book to me for two particular reasons. First, although it was copyrighted in 1910, the language Sylvester uses is very close to that in which Hawthorne wrote a half century earlier and which most of us would deem a bit archaic. The effect is that it becomes difficult at times to distinguish

between what is Sylvester's style of writing what is purported to be historical "fact." Who is to say that when we read Sylvester's "history," we are not getting his interpretation of the events which in the end makes it Sylvester's "fiction." Does it not?

Second, by looking at the chapter titles in Volume III, we find that what was called "Lovell's Fight" in Hawthorne's time, has been elevated to "Lovewell's War (Seven Years' War)" by the time the story is written in 1910. I think this is a tribute to the power of the written word wherein, to quote Hawthorne, "...the captain of a scouting party of frontier men has acquired as actual a military renown as many a victorious leader of thousands." 2 There can be no better argument for the military professional's need to learn how to handle the news media than that it is the only way that you will get your unit's or your own story preserved for posterity.

The approach that I would like to take with Roger Malvin's Burial is to tell the story of Lovewell's Battle and the following retreat by members of the English raiding party using excerpts from both Sylvester's history and Hawthorne's short story. The lessons for the military will be the same regardless of the source, but just how well this amalgam will turn out interests me. As with many military actions, this one begins with an appreciation of the enemy:

The savage was an expert reader of the woodland floors. The leaves and twigs underfoot were like the leaves of an open book. To have escaped his ear a footfall must have been lighter than the leaf dropping through the air; to have escaped his vision one must have had the power to dissolve into the intangibility of the atmosphere one breathed. What was silence to the English settler was a medley of audible sounds to the savage. His nostrils were those of the fox, and the latter's pad was no lighter than the Indian's footfall. 3

This was a formidable foe indeed and his reputation for savagery as well earned as Quaker John Hanson found out on the day in 1724 when he took his eldest daughter to a weekly meeting of their religious sect:

His two eldest sons were at work in a meadow at some distance from the house, where the wife had been left with her four children. It was the opportunity for which the savages had been waiting. They went to the house, and before they had left it they had killed and scalped the children; but the wife and her infant of fourteen days of age, with the nurse, two other daughters, and a younger son, they carried off. 4

The hostages were normally taken into Canada and sold to the French who held them for ransom. But the savagery of this war was not limited to the Indians as we see on 24 February 1724 when Lovewell returned to Dover from a raid that destroyed the Norridgewock tribe including the women and children. On that day:

Lovewell, with his company, came into Dover, "the ten scalps stretched on hoops and elevated on poles;" after which they went to Boston, where they were paid one thousand pounds out of the Provincial treasury. 5

The going rate throughout this period was 100 pounds sterling for every indian scalp. More often than not, this scalp bounty was the motivation for raids rather than the security of a settlement or revenge for another savage act.

To the English settlers, the terrain that they must venture into to find the enemy was no less frightening than the savages they hunted. "About them was an unbroken wilderness, an unawakened theater of undreamed-of possibilities, the haunt of prowling beasts of prey hardly less savage than themselves (the indians)." 6 One has to remember that the people we are dealing with here in 1725 are the same ones who burned innocent women for

witchcraft in a previous generation. They saw the forest as the haunt of Satan and the indians as his offspring. Such ideas would play strange games with the mind as anyone knows who has been on patrol at night in enemy territory.

It was into this wild country, that Lovewell was to make his final adventure. He left Dunstable, April 16, 1725, with forty-six men, for the Pequawket settlement. Lovewell was made captain of the unit. Joseph Farwell and Jonathan Robbins were lieutenants. John Harwood was ensign. They followed the course of the Merrimac and the trek soon began to take its toll. Toby, the indian guide, fell ill. William Cummings, suffering from a wound from a previous fight, was dismissed. At Ossipee Lake, Benjamin Kidder was unable to go on, and the company halted while they constructed a small fort where the company surgeon, a sergeant, and seven men were left to care for Kidder. This reduced the fighting-force to thirty-four men. At this fort they left a considerable portion of their stores, lightening the load for a faster march. Their intent was to rendezvous at the fort if it became necessary to fall back. 7

Leaving Ossipee, they pushed on into the bleaker wilderness of the mountains. On the evening of May 7, they had crossed the Saco to come to the northeastern edge of a considerable sheet of water. Here in the woods they made their camp for the night, which was broken by strange noises, like the scuffing of feet among the dead leaves, and the crackling of twigs; but the guard discovered nothing of hazardous import. When the morning broke, they were alert. It was a sublime moment as they stood within the slant shadows dropped by the morning sun, while, almost at

their feet, the flush of dawn was on the stream that was to show a deeper stain before the day had sped. 8

The chaplain's prayer was abruptly punctuated by the report of a musket up the pond. Making their way to the pond's edge, they saw a lone Indian outlined in the morning sunshine. Lovewell half suspected that the savage might be a lure to induce his company to move in that direction. Wherefore, the Captain calling his men together, proposed whether it was best to engage them or not; who boldly replied, 'that as they came out on purpose to meet the enemy, they would rather trust providence with their lives and die for their country, than return without seeing them.' Upon this they proceeded and killed the indian, but not before he returned fire wounding Capt. Lovewell in the belly. 9

Lovewell's men had cached their packs when they started for the indian but had not camouflaged them well. The packs were discovered by a band of Pequawkets who had crossed the English' trail the day before and had been following them ever since. They had avoided contact until, by counting the packs, they determined that they had sufficient force (41) to ambush the colonists. The English had no sooner learned that their packs had been taken than the air shrilled with a riot of warwhoops of the Pequawkets who swarmed upon them from behind the huge trees where the savages had been patiently waiting. With the Dunstable men it was now a fight to the death. The indians expected a stampede, but the English took to the shelter of the trunks of the trees to fight their foe after the aboriginal fashion, but not before the fatal bullet had sped its way to Lovewell. Farwell and Robbins, his two lieutenants, were wounded in this

first fire, along with eight more of the company. The others fought on in desperation - all but one, a fellow named Hassell, whose courage got down into his legs, which took him so rapidly away from the uproar that he was not long in making the little fort at Ossipee. 10

The savages were repulsed with a heavy loss, and the English were able to fall back on the pond shore under the direction of Ensign Wyman. The fight began about mid-forenoon, and once they reached the pond it was a question of endurance. The steadiness of the English fire undoubtedly had its effect upon their savage assailants; for after a time the latter drew off somewhat among the bushes, where they held a powwow. They were so busy with their medicine-man and his incantations that Seth Wyman crept out somewhat from his cover and shot the conjurer. Wyman was the life of the defense, and under his direction they maintained a sturdy fire for ten hours, during which Jonathan Frye, the chaplain, was mortally wounded; Ensign Robbins as well, and two others. 11

The fight went on after a desultory fashion until about sundown, when, disheartened by the loss of their sachem (chief), Paugus, the savages drew off without stopping even to take the scalps of their victims. When Lt. Wyman called the roll that night among the pines of Pequawket, out of the thirty-four men who that morning watched the lone Indian up stream, nine were without serious hurt; eleven were badly wounded, the other thirteen, not counting Hassell, had been killed outright or were dying. Worn and hungry, as they had lost their food with their packs, it was obvious that they must get back to the Ossipee fort. 12

They waited until midnight, and when the moon had risen, those who were able to travel made their preparations to return to Ossipee, twenty miles away. Three of the wounded were living, but in such condition as made their chances of surviving the movement back very doubtful. One of these was Ensign Robbins, who only asked Wyman to load his musket that he might have one more shot at the savages, who would be after his scalp the next morning. No one knows who received Robbins' last bullet. Malvin and Bourne started with the survivors on the return journey, but they later dropped by the way; they had not been able to keep up to any great distance. 13 After a long journey the little band, with Wyman at their head, came out upon the Ossipee water. They found the fort deserted; but the frightened garrison had left some bread and pork behind, by which they were enabled finally to reach Dunstable. 14

Malvin and Bourne passed the rest of that first night upon a small level space, at the foot of a rock situated near the summit of one of the gentle swells by which the face of the country is there diversified. The mass of granite, rearing its smooth, flat surface fifteen or twenty feet above their heads, was not unlike a gigantic gravestone. The severe wound of the elder man, Malvin, had deprived him of any rest, and the despairing glance which he sent forward through the depths of the forest proved his own conviction that his pilgrimage was at an end. 15 His problem now was to convince Reuben that he must leave him behind:

"Reuben...this rock beneath which we sit will serve for an old hunter's gravestone. There is many a long mile of howling wilderness before us yet...(and)The Indian bullet was deadlier than I thought...There is not two days' life in me...Your wounds are deep and your strength is failing fast; yet, if you hasten onward alone, you may be preserved." 16

Reuben argued with him that with some rest they both could make it, but Roger was not convinced, and assured him that his thoughts in his last moments would not be eased in knowing that by Reuben's staying there, he would surely die also.

Bourne is finally convinced to leave by the story Roger tells of his previous escape:

with one dear friend from Indian captivity near Montreal. We journeyed many days through the woods, till at length, overcome with hunger and weariness, my friend lay down and besought me to leave him; for he knew that if I remained, we both must perish; and, with but little hope of obtaining succor, I heaped a pillow of dry leaves beneath his head and hastened on. I came upon the camp of a hunting party before sunset of the same day. I guided them to the spot where my comrade was expecting death; and he is now a hale and hearty man upon his own farm...Now, go my son, and Heaven prosper you!" But there was, perhaps, a change both in his countenance and voice as he spoke thus; for, after all, it was a ghastly fate to be left expiring in the wilderness. 17

Reuben Bourne, but half convinced that he was acting rightly, at length raised himself from the ground and prepared himself for his departure. Then climbing to the summit of the rock, he bent an oak sapling down, and bound his handkerchief to the topmost branch. This precaution was not unnecessary to direct any who might come in search of Malvin. As he did this, he vowed by the blood that stained the handkerchief, his own, that he would return, either to save his companion's life or to lay his body in the grave. Roger's parting words of advice regarding the youth's journey through the trackless wilderness were given calmly; not reflecting his understanding that the human face that was about to leave him would be the last that he

would ever behold. He asked Reuben to carry his blessing to his daughter Dorcas and "bid her to have not hard thoughts because you left me here." Roger's last request, which showed his exact understanding of what his fate would be, was for Reuben to "...return when your wounds are healed and your weariness refreshed--return to this wild rock, and lay my bones in the grave, and say a prayer over them." Before he departed, Reuben helped Roger to a sitting position against the rock, then left. 18

When Hassell (the coward) got to Dunstable, and had related his story of the destruction of Lovewell's party, Colonel Tyng was order by the governor to recruit a party among the border towns and to make all speed into the Pequawket country; to find the battle-ground; to attend to the wounded, if any were alive, and to attack the savages--if he could locate them. Tyng called upon Hassell to guide his party; but the poltroon was suddenly taken ill, when one of the men who had come in, who had been in the fight volunteered his services. 19 Enroute to the lake, the search party came across Reuben Bourne, unconscious from exhaustion and starvation. They conveyed him to the nearest settlement, which chanced to be that of his own residence, and left him in Dorcas' care. 20 The rescuers continued from there.

When they reached the little brook beside which Wyman and his fellows had fought their way to victory they came upon the bodies of Lovewell, Robbins, and the others. These they buried on the spot where they fell. Of the Indian dead they found three buried in one shallow grave, one of whom was Faugus. On this expedition no Indians were met. The Pequawkets were beaten, and their war-spirit against the English had been cowed. Tyng had

the names of the twelve English carved on the adjacent tree-trunks, after which the relief party returned to the frontier. 21

Reuben Bourne remained unconscious for several days, but finally awoke to the prying questions of not only Dorcas, but also others in the community who had friends or relatives who had been involved in the action. He answered their questions as best he could except that he was never able to admit to anyone that he had abandoned Roger Malvin, alive, in the Saco wilderness. The evasive manner in which he answered questions about Roger was taken to be the humbleness of a true hero, and all acknowledged that he might worthily demand the hand of the fair maiden to whose father he had been "faithful unto death." Reuben married Dorcas and inherited the land which her father had cleared. There was, however, a continual impulse, a voice audible only to himself, commanding him to go forth and redeem his vow; and he had a strange impression that, were he to make the trial, he would be led straight to Malvin's bones. But year after year that summons, unheard but felt, was disobeyed. His one secret thought became like a chain binding down his spirit and like a serpent gnawing into his heart; and he was transformed into a sad and downcast yet irritable man. 22

To be brief, the world did not go well with Reuben Bourne; and, though not till many years after his marriage, he was finally a ruined man, with but one expedient against the evil fate that had pursued him. He was to throw sunlight into some deep recess of the forest, and seek subsistence from the virgin bosom of the wilderness. And so it was that he and his only son, a fifteen year old named Cyrus, set upon an expedition for the

purpose of selecting a tract of land and felling and burning the timber, which necessarily presided the removal of the household goods. Two months of autumn were thus occupied, after which Reuben Bourne and his young hunter returned to spend their last winter in the settlements. 23

It was early in the month of May that the little family snapped asunder whatever tendrils of affections had clung to inanimate objects, and bade farewell to the few who, in the blight of fortune, called themselves their friends. Cyrus Bourne was sufficiently skilled in the travel of the woods to observe that his father did not adhere to the course they had pursued in their previous expedition of the preceding autumn. On the afternoon of the fifth day, they halted, and made their simple encampment nearly an hour before sunset. Reuben and his son, while Dorcas made ready their meal, proposed to wander out in search of game. Departing in separate directions, they soon lost sight of each other. Reuben, alone in the forest, was musing on the strange influence that had led him away from his premeditated course when he was aroused from these thoughts by a rustling in the forest at some distance. Perceiving the motion of some object behind a thick veil of undergrowth, he fired, with the instinct of a hunter and the aim of practiced marksman. And with that shot, Reuben shed blood dearer to him than his own and the vow that the wounded youth had made, the blighted man had come to redeem. At that moment, the withered topmost bough of the oak loosened itself in the stilly air, and fell in soft, light fragments upon the rock, upon the leaves, upon Reuben, upon his wife and child, and upon Roger Malvin's bones. 24

On the farm of Daniel Smith, Esq. of Ossipee, may be seen the remains of the Fort built by Lovewell and his company, in 1725. It is situated near the west shore of Ossipee Lake, in an extensive meadow containing about two hundred acres. Near the center of the great meadow, and about 50 rods west of the Fort stands a mound of earth, forty-five or fifty feet in diameter, of a circular form and about ten feet high. From this mound the timber was removed many years since. The soil composing this mound is not that of the meadow, but exactly like that of the pitch pine plain which lies west and north of it. No extensive excavations have been made in the mound; yet there have been taken from it, only by digging from the top, three entire skeletons, one of which was full grown, and when found, was in a sitting posture, with a piece of birch bark over its head. 25

5. THE LESSON FOR THE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL:

It is hard for me to tell how successful I was in mixing Sylvester's history of Lovewell's War with Hawthorne's fiction about it. If I did well, the reader should have had a difficult time determining where Roger Malvin's story departs from the historical account. But even if I failed miserably, I hope the point was made that history is one man's interpretation of the information he is given and who then is the judge who decides either that the original information was indeed accurate or that how the author presents it is correct. At least the writer of fiction admits from the start that even if what he writes has a basis in fact, it is only a start point for his own imagination. And in many instances, who then is to say that it really did not happen the way the author has imagined it.

We have had any number of very important people recommend to the War College class that single book, above all others, that we should read. I was impressed that the Commandant, MG Cerjan, named The Killer Angels, a work of fiction, as his choice, and an inordinate number of faculty members would certainly agree with him. So what is the attraction of this novel? I feel its great value is the way it lets you inside the minds of a few of our greatest military leaders during the climactic days of the battle that determined our nation's destiny. And the marvel is that no "historian" would have attempted such a feat. It took a real artist, and artists, if you did not know, are different from you and I. They see things more clearly. They are sensitive to a degree that most of us, in our brutish ways, can never appreciate. That is why Michael Shaara can make us feel Longstreet's anguish as he watches Pickett's charge, and how Hawthorne can turn an incident in history into something we can deal with on an emotional level where it belongs.

The decision that Reuben Bourne had to make was a very tough one, but it is one that has been made innumerable times on countless battlefields. It is also a decision that deserves some serious brainstorming among our leaders. Just what are the circumstances that would justify leaving your wounded to die or be captured by the enemy? We all know that American fighting men expect good medical care and to be evacuated soon after they are wounded. During JUST CAUSE, my battalion hit seven different targets at H-hour in an area of operation that covered 800 square kilometers. My most seriously wounded were in the hospital at Howard Air Force Base before the 82ND jumped at H+45, and I do not

think we were any exception. I belonged to units in Viet Nam who would have died to the last man before they would have left a wounded soldier in the field. Unfortunately, we also know of units that paid a dear price to recover the bodies of their comrades.

But the American fighting man knows this, and it has to have a positive impact on how hard he is willing to fight even though he may not think about it in the heat of battle. What happens to that unit though, and its leaders, who make the decision to abandon someone? Certainly there have been, and we can all imagine, circumstances that would lead to such a decision. Hot pursuit by the enemy, a mission deep behind enemy lines with too high a priority to allow for delay are common examples my lieutenants come up with. But in the end, we had to agree that no matter how much everyone in a platoon agreed that wounded would have to be left behind, something would go out of that unit, and its soldiers would be less inclined to "hang it out" for their buddies. The final example that I would give them of what a leader must be willing to do for the sake of his troops comes from Bernard Fall's Hell in a Very Small Place. In a very brief account, he tells about a young French officer's actions during a withdrawal at Dien Bien Phu:

Lieutenant Guerin, the deputy commander of the Indochinese Company, had both his legs mangled by an artillery shell on the way back across the airfield. Rather than risk the lives of his men who began to crawl back onto the exposed strip to rescue him, he committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. 26

Why didn't Roger Malvin think of that?

ENDNOTES

1. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Roger Malvin's Burial," p. 7.
2. Ibid.
3. Herbert Milton Sylvester, Indian Wars of New England, Volume III, p. 230.
4. Ibid., p. 223.
5. Ibid., p. 246.
6. Ibid., p. 175.
7. Ibid., pp. 259-261.
8. Ibid., pp. 261-262.
9. Ibid., pp. 262-265.
10. Ibid., pp. 265-267.
11. Ibid., pp. 267-269.
12. Ibid., pp. 269-272.
13. Ibid., p. 273.
14. Ibid.
15. Hawthorne, p. 8.
16. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
17. Ibid., p. 12.
18. Ibid., pp. 12-14.
19. Sylvester, p. 273.
20. Hawthorne, p. 15.
21. Sylvester, pp. 273-274.
22. Hawthorne, pp. 15-18.
23. Ibid., pp. 18-19.
24. Ibid., pp. 19-27.
25. Sylvester, pp. 260-262.
26. Bernard B. Fall, Hell In a Very Small Place, p. 276.

"ROGER MALVIN'S BURIAL," Instructor Notes

15 Feb Conference

1. I came to the conference with the agenda of discussing three different issues. They were:

A. The manner that Fox Conner used in getting Dwight Eisenhower interested in the study of military history after he had been turned off by the subject as a cadet at West Point. This entailed having Eisenhower read a piece of literature regarding a period or war which served as the springboard to interest him in further studies of the subject.

B. The relationship of fiction and history.

C. The issue of care for the wounded and dead on the battlefield.

2. Historians are essentially tied to their note cards. A good historian may make a leap beyond what he can document through other sources, but he will always qualify that leap so as not to be faulted for an over active imagination by other historians. Simply put, historians must have a reference. A good example of this is what Kenneth Roberts mentions in his book I Wanted to Write. In it he talks about men spotting smoke on a distant ridge. The historian may record the fact and continue on with his narration. The novelist must put people around the source of the fire and give them a plausible reason to be there, otherwise the smoke never would have been spotted in the first place.

3. Biographers have to deal with the "essential truth." To be successful, they are almost required to take a leap of faith beyond what is supported in documentation in order to capture the

spirit of their subject. But this insight into the subject must have come from extensive research; they must have come to know their subject inside out in order to make a believable prediction about how he would or could have acted or spoken in a particular instance.

4. A good novelist through research and creativity can get even closer to the essential truth of situations and events. Shaara does this in The Killer Angels. For example, he portrayed Lee as having a heart condition. He surmised this from the fact that Lee never went up into the Seminary Cupola even though this was the obvious place for him to get intelligence and direct the battle. Climbing the steps would have been much too difficult for someone with a heart condition and this was confirmed by Lee's biographer, Freeman, later. Shaara spent an entire year on the research for Pickett's charge. He was mindful of Pickett's friendship with Hancock; he read everything that was available. But he admits in the end, that it was not until he walked the battlefield following the advance of Armistead's Brigade that what he was looking for hit him. You must understand the actor whose eyes you will use.

5. Does an author have to experience something himself to be able to adequately write about it? One of Dr. Luvaas' students commented after reading The Killer Angels that Shaara obviously was a man who had walked a long way on a hot day with a heavy pack. This was true, as Shaara had been a Sergeant in the 82d ABN DIV. Hemingway was another who had extensive personal experience in combat particularly on the Italian front in WWI. But what about Stephen Crane who wrote one of the most gripping accounts of an

individual experience in combat in The Red Badge of Courage?

Crane had seen war only as a reporter in Europe, and then at some distance. Remarque says that the last years of his war experience became a blur, probably due to a psychological phenomenon that enabled many of the veterans to survive the horror of the experience. Yet All Quiet on the Western Front is the standard for war novels. What we find often is that authors caught up in trying to relive their own history instead of building the experience in the minds of their readers, recreating instead of creating, are unable to supply the right detail to be successful.

6. The period in which an author is writing makes a significant difference also. Dr. Luvaas used the example of two different authors writing about the Salem witch trials, one in 1900, the other in 1950. With no additional information available in 1950, who do we suppose could capture the "essential truth" of a society that could burn innocent women at the stake? The 1900 author is living in the birth of an age of progress and confidence pervaded by the feeling that technology could solve any problem. The 1950's brought McCarthyism, decent normal intelligent people going after Communists. People or an author in this period would probably understand quite well what would lead to witch hunts.

7. There is not "a" history. A German military historian, Justus Scheibert, who followed Lee for a considerable time during the Civil War uses the same quotation, attributed to Lee, in several different texts. They were significantly different each time. One wonders if Lee ever said it at all. "History" will always have a point of view, usually that of the author, sometimes his source.

History is just another man's fiction.

8. Perhaps the most interesting conversation that came from this conference regarded "The American Way of Death." I made the comment in my paper that American fighting men expect elaborate medical care and that if they should be killed, that their bodies would be recovered for shipment back to their families. The two part question I had for Dr. Luvaas was, "Has this always been the practice in the American Military? United States? And, is this the practice of other nations?" The answers were very enlightening.

We, Americans, were the first society to accept responsibility for the burial of war dead and this occurred in the Civil War. At the end of a battle, and sometimes during a pause in the fight, burial details from each side would roam the battlefield collecting the dead and burying them. During the war the government took responsibility in the form of creating national cemeteries, like the one Lincoln dedicated at Gettysberg, and transferring remains to marked graves in hallowed ground making an attempt in the process at identification of the bodies. Owning the battleground after the battle improved your ability to do this certainly, but the government eventually got around to doing something about confederate dead also. The policy in Chamberlain's Brigade was that they buried their own dead.

Napoleon's battlefields were different. The dead were left to rot unless local civilians or impressed labor buried them to avoid the stench or health problems. No commemorative markers were raised. In World War I, Gladstone's nephew was brought back to England for burial and this special treatment caused such a furor

that the decision was made to bury all the dead in France. In what I am sure was a very moving gesture at the time, the officers determined that they would be buried with their men. The British commander in the Falklands decided to ship the dead back to England, and later stated that he wished that he had decided otherwise. The tradition is for soldiers to be buried where they fall. There were other examples given, and they all seemed to point to the idea that retrieving bodies for burial was a peculiarly American thing.

We spent some time searching for the beginnings of this phenomena, for lack of a better word, and I remembered a passage from "Roger Malvin's Burial":

An almost superstitious regard, arising perhaps from the customs of the Indians, whose war was with the dead as well as the living, was paid by the frontier inhabitants to the rites of sepulture; and there are many instances of the sacrifice of life in the attempt to bury those who had fallen by the 'sword of the wilderness.' (p. 13)

So we have at least some indication of the impact of the frontier on how we treat the dead.

9. The last point is a brief one. I have already mentioned that what was "Lovell's Fight" in Hawthorne's day had become "Lovewell's War" in history written just 50 years later. I would just like to repeat what Hawthorne writes about the power of the scribe:

History and tradition are unusually minute in their memorials of this affair; and the captain of a scouting party of frontier men has acquired as actual a military renown as many a victorious leader of thousands. (p. 7)

1. BILLY BUDD Sailor (An inside narrative) by Herman Melville.

2. MAJOR CHARACTERS:

Billy Budd - a foundling, probably of noble birth; blond, handsome, strong, innocent, a Christ figure. "He has only one fault: when faced with something he cannot understand, he is unable to speak, and he is likely to lash out with tremendous force against his adversary." 1

John Claggart - the Master-at-Arms of the Indomitable, a British man of war. Tall, pale, intellectual, he personifies cold, calculated evil. "Claggart envies and hates Billy's simplicity" for no reasonable cause. 2

Captain Starry Vere - Commanding officer of the Indomitable. "In Melville's eyes...comes close to being the perfect commander. He understands his men, knows the sea, and applies to his command all the wisdom he finds in books....a man of principle, common sense, and action." 3 In a word, the officer that we all aspire to be.

3. THEME: One of the aspects of command that most of us enjoy least is the administration of justice. No matter what time of the day or week that we chose, courts and boards was never something to look forward to. This was particularly true when we faced young soldiers whose service, except for the infraction that brought them before our desk, was exemplary. It was then that we most often wandered into the jungle of punishments awarded "to set an example" or "for the good of the unit." Trying to make a private, and his immediate chain of command, understand that the offender was to be eliminated from the service in disgrace in order for you to maintain good order and discipline

in the Battalion/Brigade was never easy, and seldom if ever successful. The problem of command influence also arises. How much "mentoring" can one do before the line is crossed? These are the questions Captain Vere faces in his floating world in weighing the requirements of discipline against the demands of justice and spiritual innocence against legal guilt.

4. PLOT SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION:

The story takes place in 1797, and an understanding of significant events of that period is key. France was undergoing the throes of a revolution, the spirit of which had effects around the world. As Melville points out, "it was something caught from the Revolutionary Spirit" that emboldened British sailors at Spithead and the Nore, and in other minor instances, to rise up against abuses of seamen that had been long standing practice in the British Navy. This "Great Mutiny" doubtless led to important reforms, but only long after the ringleaders were hung in full view of the anchored fleet. 4 Add to this the fact that the English were at war with France and actively pursuing its fleet around the world, and you can sense the environment aboard the Indomitable on its patrol, away from the fleet, during which the events of this story occur.

"Knowing" Billy Budd is vital, and Melville dedicates a tremendous amount of space and time to this. In appearance, he was the "Handsome Sailor," blond, bronzed, blue-eyed, above average height; when moving in the company of others he was the bright star "among the lesser lights of his constellation...It was strength and beauty." Ashore, he was the champion boxer and wrestler; afloat, the spokesman; on every suitable occasion

always foremost. Close reefing topsails in a gale, there he was...And the moral nature was seldom out of keeping with the physical make. 5 At age 21, Billy entered the king's service "having been impressed on the Narrow Seas from a homeward-bound English merchantman (the Rights-o-Man) into a seventy-four outward-bound, H.M.S. Indomitable." 6

One might have thought that any sailor would rightfully object to being taken off a ship for service in a Navy at war, but that was not in Billy's nature. His only reaction, outside of uncomplaining acquiescence, came as he was being taken to his new duty. "But now, when the boat swept under the merchantman's stern, and officer and oarsmen were noting - some bitterly and others with a grin - the name emblazoned there; just then it was that the new recruit jumped up...and waving his hat...bade the lads a genial good-bye. Then, making a salutation as to the ship herself, 'And good-bye to you too, old Rights of Man'" 7

The lieutenant aboard the dinghy took this action as meant to convey a covert slur at impressment in general, but "to deal in double meaning and insinuations of any sort was quite foreign to his (Billy's) nature." 8 Well, enough of description of Billy, I am sure that you have the point about good looks being matched by good nature. Is this character believable? Yes, I think so. None of us has ever met anyone who so completely embodies what is best in humanity, as Billy does, but most of us have glimpsed these qualities in lesser forms often enough to understand "Billy's nature."

Billy's life goes well initially. "He was soon at home in the service, not at all disliked for his unpretentious good looks

and a sort of genial happy-go-lucky air." 9 And he was very surprised when he ultimately found himself getting into petty trouble about matters such as stowage of his bag or something amiss in his hammock. These matters were under the police oversight of the ship's corporals, marines who worked directly for the master-at-arms, John Claggart. Billy, with his typically unsuspecting nature, went to an old salt for some advice about what was happening. The explanation mystified him, "Baby Budd, Jemmy Legs" (meaning the master-at-arms) "is down on you." 10 And for reasons totally beyond Billy's comprehension, he most assuredly was.

The following pages of the novel are taken up by Melville's rather philosophical discussion of why Claggart is "down" on Billy. The first suggestion is that Claggart is jealous of the physical beauty of Billy. Although the master-at-arms himself is in no way depicted as ugly, he certainly cannot match the natural beauty of the "Handsome Sailor," and for the reader who would like to dig deeper, there may be something of a homosexual aspect to those feelings. A second offering by Melville is the juxtaposition of so dissimilar characters aboard the very limited confines of a warship. Such constant grating of differing personalities could well lead to the conflict that emerges. A third explanation is that Claggart suffers from "the mania of an evil nature, not engendered by vicious training or corrupting books or licentious living, but born with him and innate, in short 'a depravity according to nature'" 11

I would like to pause now for just a moment to consider this last idea as I think it is one of the most intriguing arguments

in philosophy and literature. The question posed, "Does evil occur naturally in our universe? Or is it man-made?" Melville's answer to this question was the basis for his greatest work, Moby Dick. Whether we view Ahab as an insane man whose monomania leads to his destruction or as an epic hero driven by noble ambition, we would generally agree that the great white sperm whale, wreaking havoc throughout the warm waters of the Pacific Ocean, characterizes evil occurring naturally in the world. We can compare that to Mary Shelly's Frankenstein where evil is brought to mankind by the ill-advised works of science. Who would ever have thought that "Freddie" had a deeper meaning, but certainly no author or philosopher has solved the riddle yet. Now, back to the story.

One day in the mess, Billy inadvertently spilled his soup, some of which ended up on the shoes of Mr. Claggart. This incident, as innocent as it was, served to confirm in the Chief's mind "certain tell-tale reports purveyed to his ear by Squeak, one of his more cunning corporals...the corporal having naturally enough concluded that his master could have no love for the sailor, made it his business...to foment the ill blood by perverting to his chief certain innocent frolics (and) epithets he claimed to have overheard him (Billy) let fall." 12 But as yet, Claggart had no specific charges or evidence so he decided on an experiment.

A few nights later Billy was approached in his sleep by someone he did not immediately recognize. In a guarded conversation, the stranger offered money in return for Billy's promise to help the other impressed sailors in a "pinch." Budd

sprang to his feet and threatened to throw the conspirator overboard if he did not leave immediately. Billy's naivete shows once again as he is unable to connect this affair with Claggart and makes the further mistake of not reporting the contact to the ship's officers as it was his duty to do. The master-at-arms now had sufficient reason to approach the Captain.

There is no reason to go into great detail about Claggart's report to the Captain. Claggart stated that he suspected a mutiny was brewing involving the impressed sailors, and that the rebellion was being led by Budd. He also tied this insurrection to Billy's actions in bidding good-bye to his former ship, the Rights-of-Man. The Captain's reaction was understandable. He resented the suggestion that mutiny was possible on his ship and felt that Budd was neither inclined nor capable of the actions the master-at-arms suggested. Vere was certainly not going to lend credence to this rumor by making a public show of an investigation.

His decision was to bring Budd and Claggart face to face and determine by what followed whether or not he would pursue the case. The outcome of the encounter between Budd and Claggart was predictable. When confronted with the accusation, Billy was struck dumb. The harder he tried to respond to the charge the more tongue-tied he became until finally, in a desperate attempt to comply with Captain Vere's command to "Defend yourself," he struck Claggart killing him almost instantly. Seeing him laying motionless on the cabin floor, Captain Vere breathed, "Fated boy, what have you done!" 13

The Captain called for the surgeon to confirm what he already knew, and part of his explanation to the surgeon of what

had happened included the exclamation, "Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!" 14 A strange statement by someone charged in any circumstance with the administration of justice, and it seemed so to the surgeon as he felt "The thing to do...was to place Billy Budd in confinement and in a way dictated by usage, and postpone further action in so extraordinary a case, to such time as they should rejoin the squadron, and then refer it to the admiral." 15 The surgeon felt that perhaps the incident had in some way unhinged the captain, but to argue his order to prepare to convene a drum-head court would be insolence and to resist would be mutiny. What follows in the trial is a studied case of command influence. But one could argue that the importance of the case and the jury's decision were too great to be left to a group of junior officers without some very clear guidance?

Captain Vere's feeling was that the court martial would best be conducted in some haste and with a certain degree of secrecy. If there was in fact a mutiny brewing on board, he in no way wanted knowledge of the incident, or that it was proceeding to trial, to serve as the spark that would ignite the fire. Accordingly, a drum-head court was convened of three officers appointed by Captain Vere, who reserved to himself ultimate accountability for the results, the right of maintaining supervision of it, and the ability to informally or formally interpose at need. 16 As to the three members of the court, the officer of marines was "a man who tho' he would always maintain his manhood in battle might not prove altogether reliable in a moral dilemma involving aught of the tragic. As to the first lieutenant and the sailing master...their intelligence was mostly

confined to the matter of active seamanship and the fighting demands of their profession." 17 Although hand picked by Captain Vere, they are not a jury that I would want to decide my fate in a capital case.

The case was quickly arraigned with Captain Vere appearing as the sole witness (no one else knew that there was a trial on). In deference to the court, the Captain temporarily shed his rank, "though singularly maintaining it in a matter apparently trivial, namely, that he testified from the ship's weather-side (up hill), with that object having caused the court to sit on the lee-side." 18 Vere gave an honest account of all that led up to the catastrophe. When Budd was asked for his response, he said only that, "Captain Vere tells the truth. It is just as Captain Vere says, but it is not as the master-at-arms said. I have eaten the King's bread and I am true to the King." 19 Statements which everyone at the court believed to be true. When asked if he harbored any malice toward the master-at-arms, he responded, "Could I have used my tongue I would not have struck him. But he foully lied to my face and in presence of my captain, and I had to say something, and I could only say it with a blow." 20 Again not wanting to be a tell-tale, Billy told the court he had no knowledge of any mutiny. When finally the lieutenant asked the natural question of why Claggart may have wanted to lie about Billy, the Captain intervened, "Quite aside from any conceivable motive actuating the master-at-arms, and irrespective of the provocation to the blow, a martial court must needs in the present case confine its attention to the blow's consequence, which consequence justly is to be deemed not otherwise than as the striker's deed." 21 In simple terms, the Captain told

the board that extenuating or mitigating circumstances were not an issue, and that they should confine their efforts to the facts of the case. This statement had a marked effect on the court as "Couched in it seemed to them a meaning unanticipated, involving a prejudgment on the speaker's part." 22

The soldier (marine) was especially surprised by this remark, and argued, "Nobody is present - none of the ship's company, I mean, who might shed lateral light, if any is to be had, upon what remains mysterious in this matter." Captain Vere overruled him saying that the "mystery" should be left for theologians to ponder. The military court had only to deal with the prisoner's deed. "To this...the soldier knowing not how aptly to reply, sadly abstained from saying aught. The first lieutenant...now overrulingly instructed by a glance from Captain Vere" resumed his position as the president of the board and asked the prisoner if he had anything else to add. Billy, taking a hint from the appearance of Captain Vere that confirmed his own instinct that silence was best, replied that, "I have said all, Sir." 23

Billy is escorted from the room and a debate opens between the Captain and the other members of the court. It is obvious that they all feel the same way. Merely striking a superior, much less killing him with a blow, is a capital crime punishable, especially in those troubled times, by death. But as Captain Vere asks, "How can we adjudge to summary and shameful death a fellow-creature innocent before God, and whom we feel to be so?" But this is the case of "natural law," and the uniforms that they wear shows their allegiance is to the King's law. His arguments

continue and are at times very convincing:

When war is declared are we the commissioned fighters previously consulted? (No) We fight at command. So in other particulars. So now. (If we condemn) Would it be so much we ourselves that would condemn as it would be martial law operating through us? For that law and the rigour of it, we are not responsible. Our vowed responsibility is in this: That however pitilessly that law may operate, we nevertheless adhere to it and administer it...let not warm hearts betray heads that should be cool...But something in your aspect seems to urge that it is not solely the heart that moves in you, but also the conscience, the private conscience. But tell me whether or not, occupying the position we do, private conscience should not yield to that imperial one formulated in the code under which alone we officially proceed? 24

So far these arguments have had little impact on the members of the jury, one of whom states, "But surely Budd purposed neither mutiny nor homicide." Vere continues:

Surely not...And before a court less arbitrary and more merciful than a martial one, that plea would largely extenuate. At the Last Assizes (judgment) it shall acquit. But how here? We proceed under the law of the Mutiny Act...And the Mutiny Act, War's child, takes after the father. Budd's intent or non-intent is nothing to the purpose...(We are at war and) the enemy may (soon) be sighted and an engagement result. We must do; and one of two things must we do - condemn or let go." 25

Now comes the obvious question, one that we have each been asked by our subordinates, and one we have often asked ourselves, "Can we not convict and yet mitigate the penalty?" The question is asked interestingly enough by the junior lieutenant on the board; it is the first thing he has said so far. I feel that I should not paraphrase Captain Vere's response; although, it may be lengthy:

Lieutenant, were that clearly lawful for us under the circumstances, consider the consequences of such clemency. The people" (meaning the ship's company) "have native-sense; most of them are familiar with our naval usage and tradition; and how would they take it? Even could you explain to them - which our official position forbids - they, long molded by arbitrary discipline have not that kind of intelligent responsiveness that might qualify them to comprehend and discriminate. No, to the people the foretopman's deed however it be worded in the announcement will be plain homicide committed in a flagrant act

of mutiny. What penalty for that should follow, they know. But it does not follow. Why? they will ruminare. You know what sailors are. Will they not revert to the recent outbreak at the Nore? Ay. They know the well-founded alarm - the panic it struck throughout England. Your clement sentence they would account pusillanimous (cowardly). They would think that we flinch, that we are afraid of them - afraid of practicing a lawful rigor singularly demanded at this juncture lest it should provoke new troubles. What shame to us such a conjecture on their part, and how deadly to discipline. You see then, whither prompted by duty and the law I steadfastly drive. 26

The court sat silent on the opposite side of the ship from the Captain. Loyal sailors, who though they may have dissented from some of the points the Captain made, had neither the faculty nor the inclination to second guess one whom they felt to be an earnest man, superior both in rank and intellect. The argument that rang truest to them was his appeal to their instincts as sea officers and their understanding of the needs of discipline. "In brief, Billy Budd was formally convicted and sentenced to be hung at the yard-arm in the early morning-watch, it being now night." 27 Captain Vere assembled the ship's company and addressed them saying the master-at-arms was dead, and that the man who had killed him had already been tried by summary court and sentenced to be hung at dawn. The Captain specifically did not use the word mutiny, and refrained too from making any preachments on the requirements of discipline "thinking perhaps that under existing circumstances in the navy the consequence of violating discipline should be made to speak for itself." 28

At the appointed hour, Billy was brought forth and hanged. His last words were, "God bless Captain Vere!" Words that were echoed by the assembled crew. As he hung suspended from the yard-arm, an uneasy commotion began to build in the crowd of

witnesses which was abruptly cut short by the command to change the watch followed by the shrill of the Boatswain's pipe. This same movement started again following Billy's burial at sea; dissolved this time by the drum beat of a call to battle stations followed by drill. Captain Vere very smartly was allowing no opportunity for resentment or discontent over the proceeding to grow. The novel ends quickly after this. Shortly after Billy's execution, the Indomitable fell in with the French warship Atheiste. During the engagement, Captain Vere was wounded by a musket and died later of the wound.

5. THE LESSON FOR THE MILITARY PROFESSIONAL:

I am not sure when I first read Billy Budd. It may have been in graduate school, but I know it was long before I took command of a battalion. I may have even taught it to Cadets at the Military Academy. But I knew the lesson it had to offer about the demands that discipline and the greater good of the unit place upon the commander when I faced one of my platoon sergeants accused of going AWOL. He was divorced and had found out that his daughter, living with his former wife, was being abused and becoming involved with drugs. He lost his good judgment and drove to New York from North Carolina to get her and bring her back to Fort Bragg missing two work days in the process. He offered no excuses for his absence, could not explain why he had not told anyone what he was doing, and stood ready to accept whatever punishment I deemed appropriate. I judged this to be one of those cases that demanded leniency on my part so I administered a letter of reprimand and sent him back to his platoon which he and the platoon leader had promised would

follow him to hell if he asked them too. What a mistake.

It only took until breakfast the next morning for me to hear the troops talking about the E-7 that had gone AWOL and been let off. The very next private I had in my office for an offense used the platoon sergeant's case as part of his mitigating circumstances. And to top it all off, the sergeant deserted the next month. I felt like a lieutenant all over again. But that was a valuable lesson for me, one that Captain Vere had obviously learned before his encounter with Billy Budd. And it is a hard lesson to teach your junior officers. Because of my experience, there was always a minor officer/nco professional development session after every court action I conducted to insure the chain of command, more so than the soldier being punished, understood the reasoning behind an action.

But the learning never stops. I had a First Sergeant in my battalion who, because of an incident that occurred during JUST CAUSE, was charged with murder. The details surrounding the case would take a book much longer than Billy Budd to recount, but suffice it to say that the sergeant's entire chain of command up through the Brigade Commander agreed that he was not guilty of any crime based on our personal investigation of the incident. This finding was supported by the Article 32 investigating officer. Just when we thought the case would be laid to rest, the Division Commander intervened and sent the case to a General Court Martial.

I can only assume that the General felt that it was for the good of the Army to have the case go to trial. In my outbrief prior to reassignment, we discussed the case. I said the man

was innocent, and it should not go to trial. He said that a jury of his peers should decide his innocence, which also was the only way that he could be completely cleared of the charges. I said that it was not the job of courts in the military to decide guilt or innocence; that is the job of commanders. Courts only decide if the commanders were right or wrong. He said nothing. The man was found innocent. The New York Times wrote that his innocence was so obvious that the Army had picked his case to send to trial in order to draw attention away from other more heinous crimes. So, in the end, everyone lost except the civilian defense council who made a mint on the case and the publicity.

ENDNOTES

1. Herman Melville, Billy Budd Sailor (An inside narrative), pp. iv-v.
2. Ibid., p. v.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 2.
5. Ibid., pp. 3-4.
6. Ibid., p. 5.
7. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
8. Ibid., p. 12.
9. Ibid., p. 13.
10. Ibid., p. 46.
11. Ibid., p. 54.
12. Ibid., p. 59.
13. Ibid., p. 90.
14. Ibid., p. 92.
15. Ibid., p. 93.
16. Ibid., p. 97.
17. Ibid., p. 98.
18. Ibid., p. 99.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 100.
21. Ibid., p. 102.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 104.
24. Ibid., pp. 106-108.
25. Ibid., p. 109.

26. Ibid., p. 110.

27. Ibid., p. 113.

28. Ibid., p. 117.

BILLY BUDD, Instructor Notes

1 Mar Conference

1. The phrase "line is crossed" needs explanation on the first page of the chapter that I wrote. In this instance, it refers to command influence when a commander crosses the line between what might be considered "mentoring" and what is unlawful influence on those empowered to make a legal decision. It is a tough issue for commanders to deal with, especially when subordinates come looking for guidance or advice when they are involved in a legal action.

2. I came to the conference with six points on my agenda that I wanted to discuss. As usual, we addressed a few, ignored others completely, and discovered still others that were far more interesting than either of us had thought of prior to the conference. My agenda was:

A. Military discipline and the needs of the unit.

B. The term "decimate," its origin and meaning.

C. The history of military courts and tribunals.

D. The background of the authority to use capital and corporal punishment.

E. The differences in authority of a ship's captain over a ground commander.

F. Known/historical instances of command influence.

G. The notion of evil occurring naturally in the world.

3. It is my intent to add to my text the idea that troops in a unit only hear about or know the crime and the punishment that is administered; they are never privy to any of the discussions or reasons why a particular punishment is awarded. And in

particular, they are never aware of why leniency is shown. Additionally, a letter of reprimand that may end an officer's or senior NCO's career is "getting over" to a private.

4. It has become very clear in our discussions that at the start, this should have been a multi-media project. There are a lot of high quality motion pictures in existence that deal with the problems we are addressing and all are almost surely an easier pill to swallow than the works I have reviewed so far. In this particular session, the following movies were discussed:

A. "For King and Country" - One that I have not personally seen but which deals with the issue of discipline for the good of the unit. The plot is that an outstanding soldier who has been with a unit since the start of the war goes AWOL, for a very important personal reason, just before a major attack is to be launched. The high command insists that an example be set. The man is so respected by the members of the unit that the firing squad will not execute him. It then falls to the battalion commander, who loves him dearly, to do the job. Jay mentioned that it is probably something you need to see, but that you would never want to watch again.

B. "Command Decision" - Concerns the tough decisions commanders must make between going after the high value targets that invariably will cost more lives rather than staying on the "milk runs." In this case, Walter Pigeon, who has been trying to sell air power to the congress and the nation since the Wright Brother's flight, wants to minimize the casualties in the unit during a congressional visit. Clarke Gable decides to go after the tough targets instead. The argument between the two

following the mission makes it extremely difficult to decide who is right.

C. "Twelve O'Clock High" - I saw it the same night that we discussed it. The old commander, a friend of the hero, has become too attached to the men in the unit which is contributing to low morale and a feeling in the unit that it is a bad luck outfit. The hard nosed hero, Gregory Peck, steps in, alienates everyone from the start, but finally brings everyone around while gradually developing the same syndrome of caring that the former commander was infected by.

D. "Paths of Glory" - Stars Kirk Douglas and deals with the French incident in the First World War which gave us the modern example of what "decimate" means.

E. "The Court Martial of Eddie Slovac" - The only US soldier executed for desertion in the Second World War.

F. There was also a great Australian movie about two soldiers executed for an attack on an officer's wife (which never happened), whose title neither of us could remember.

5. The discussion that revolved around these works of fiction, regardless of the medium, dealt with the question of what was the best way to capture the essence of the problem presented in Billy Budd? The requirement is to portray the "essential truth" of the victim, which primarily deals with his humanity and innocence before God, and the anguish of the persons making the decisions. Billy Budd has some failures here, especially in trying to portray Captain Vere's personal difficulties in carrying on with what he feels is necessary. There may be good arguments about whether motion pictures or literature would do it best, but there can be

no argument, in my opinion, that the work would have to be fiction, even if based on a historical incident.

6. Without doubt, the best way to get at these problems is through the sharing of personal experience. I suppose that I was fortunate in this regard in having a soldier charged with murder in my unit from an incident during JUST CAUSE. The problems of command influence, discipline for the good of the unit, and many others were staring all of us right in the face. Hopefully, not many units will get to benefit from such an object lesson.

7. Dr. Luvaas made a final point which I think is key to everything I am doing here, and the example he used was General George Patton. In the movie "Patton," he is depicted as having Rommel's book at his bed side just prior to the battle in which he defeated Rommel's "plan." The truth of the matter was that Patton had "read his book" years before. It had not even been translated into English by the Second World War. What Patton was doing with the books which were constantly on his night stand was getting any sort of "leg up" on his opposition that was available. He found out that as a battalion commander, Rommel preferred to attack at night in the rain, this was useful. Such things as terrain, weather in a region during a particular time of year, and people do not change. You do not have to read a book about Pickett's charge to know that you should not make a frontal attack at the enemy's main defenses. Even Pickett knew that. It would be useful though to know "why" he did it. Young officers need to realize that the system is not going to do it all for them. The Army institutions of formal education can only do so much. At some point, the individual must take over and improve on even his

own experience through personal study and reading. Until you experience it yourself, you will not be totally educated. But reading and study can give an individual a basis for dealing with confrontations.

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