

and they approached General Dwight Eisenhower with their findings. Eisenhower had no power to stop them, but did not need it, for the reporters had decided not to file the story. "Our conclusion," they told him, "is that we're Americans first and correspondents second." By the time the story broke four months later in the United States, it rated no more than a small notice. "The Machine," as Collier called the American information bureaucracy, "had triumphed again."

One wishes that Collier, with his knowledge and insight, had tried to answer the questions that he indirectly raises. What are legitimate security interests? When is censorship justified, and when does it become excessive and self-serving? What are the responsibilities of a reporter in wartime? What is the relationship between a reporter and the military? Between a reporter and his or her superiors? What are the reasons for and consequences of "The Machine's" triumph? These are the types of questions that a small but growing body of literature has been asking about other military and national security situations, most prominently the Vietnam War, the Falklands campaign, the American invasions of Grenada and Panama, and inevitably, Operation DESERT STORM. To have at least partial answers to these questions regarding World War II would be a significant contribution to this important field of inquiry.

Again, Collier has told one aspect of his story marvellously well, so well in fact, that we wait for him or someone else to tell the rest of it in a similar fashion.

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van Creveld, Martin. *The Training of Officers: From Military Professionalism to Irrelevance*. New York: Free Press, 1990.

The title of this recent work from the author of such well-known studies as *Technology in War* and *Command in War* is slightly misleading. This is not, as van Creveld explains in the opening chapter, a look at how men and women in modern armed forces are trained from their enrolment and commissioning to retirement. Instead, it concentrates on the education of those middle-ranking officers potentially destined for future senior command appointments — that is, on the nature of modern staff schools, colleges, and related institutions. Given the subtitle, it is hardly surprising to find that he is not always impressed with recent trends — least of all in the United States, the focus for a penultimate chapter of recommendations for radical improvement.

But before dealing with the current situation, the author considers it necessary to explain how the modern system of staff training arose. As he convincingly argues, the skills involved in leading armies in war have for most

of human history not been considered sufficiently difficult or complicated to require specialized study: the main criterion for command from classical times until two hundred or so years ago generally being either battlefield experience or social pedigree. Subsequently, however, nations acquired the economic, administrative and technical skills to allow for standing armed forces which steadily grew in size and complexity. And it was this military revolution which, in conjunction with changing attitudes to education, led during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries — as the author demonstrates through a comparative survey of developments within the Great Powers — to the creation and evolution of staff officer training establishments ranging from the Prussian *Kriegsacademie* to the School for the Application of Cavalry and Infantry at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Little of the book thus far, to be sure, is particularly novel; indeed much of the background has already been covered at greater length in van Creveld's own *Command in War*. Some of the author's comments about the low quality of various establishments, furthermore, tend toward overstatement. Is it entirely fair, for example, to ignore the presence of Bernard Montgomery, Alan Brooke, and other dedicated instructors who would go on to achieve great things, and argue that between the two world wars the British Army's staff college at Camberley "became what it still is, namely a highly cultivated place where the atmosphere is pleasant and the food very good," a place where socially acceptable officers "spend a none too strenuous two years playing games, thinking about war, all the while consuming large quantities of alcohol and socializing among themselves"? (p. 51)

On the other hand, the historical section of the book is clearly not meant to be more than the most general of introductions to the nature and evolution of the education and training considered necessary for senior command, and viewed in this light it is both trenchant and lucid. This survey of past developments also serves as the background to the second and potentially more controversial half of the work, which examines what van Creveld sees as the decline of senior officer education in the West since 1945 and what can be done to improve matters.

In essence, van Creveld believes that Western armed forces, unlike those of the Soviet Union, have increasingly lost sight of what advanced officer training should really involve: the rigorous preparation of a selected elite for command in war. Instead of looking to tried and proven models such as the old German *Kriegsacademie*, the author argues, they have got themselves into a situation, through expanding definitions of war and changing socio-economic mores, where more and more officers attend irrelevant civilian graduate school courses and where the various staff colleges themselves — especially in the United States — have become vast ticket-punching factories catering to all and lacking any serious intellectual standards. The solution to this sorry state of affairs, in van Creveld's vigorously expressed opinion, involves an end to *de rigueur* attendance by middle-ranking officers at civilian graduate schools plus a drastic upgrading in the quality (and decrease in the number) of staff colleges.

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That the education of staff officers in the United States is not what it might be, few will dispute; whether the author's root and branch reform of the current system is advisable — or even possible given the various external pressures which he himself sees as having led to contemporary problems — will undoubtedly be a matter for debate.

With only one hundred-and-ten pages of text, *The Training of Officers* is really an extended essay rather than a book, but no less stimulating for that. Provocative yet insightful, it deserves to be read and debated by all with an interest in the history and current state of officer training and education.

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