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The Beyond Combat Conference: Honoring the Temple Tradition in Military History

by Christopher Golding, Ph.D. student

On April 26, 2008, CENFAD hosted a conference titled, “Beyond Combat: A Conference Honoring the Temple Tradition in Military History.” The conference brought together faculty, alumni, current students, and friends of the Temple History Department to celebrate the publication of *Beyond Combat: Essays in Honor of Russell F. Weigley*. That work is a selection of essays by former students of the late Professor Weigley. The event was coordinated by Dr. Gregory J. W. Urwin with assistance from Temple Ph.D. student Kelly Shannon. Generous funding was provided by the Temple University College of Liberal Arts, the Temple University History Department, CENFAD, the Society for Military History, Roxanne and John R. Satterfield, the Boeing Company, and the American Philosophical Society.

The theme of the conference was celebratory yet scholarly. In honoring the teaching legacy of Professor Weigley, the conference addressed the role and influence that the Temple History Department has had in shaping the field of military history. In addition, the future of military history was latent throughout the discourse, and at the forefront of a round table discussion at the close of the conference.

The day opened with welcoming remarks by CENFAD acting director, Dr. William I. Hitchcock, as well as brief comments by the editors of *Beyond Combat*, Dr. Edward G. Longacre and Dr. Theodore J. Zeman. Of the nine authors who contributed to *Beyond Combat*, four presented papers at the conference. Dr. J. Britt McCarley, chief historian at the U.S. Training and Doctrine Command, spoke on “The Great Question of the Campaign was One of Supplies: A Reinterpretation of Sherman’s Generalship during the 1864 March to Atlanta in Light of the Logistic Strategy.” In this paper, he argued that Sherman’s use of logistics was highly effective in limiting Union casualties while attaining strategic goals. Next, Dr. Douglas V. Johnson, research professor at National Security Affairs and the Strategic Studies Institute, located at the U.S. Army War College, presented “Leadership Prerequisite: Col. Conrad S. Babcock and Command Developments during the First World War.” Johnson’s analysis hinged upon the question of how much technical knowledge military officers needed to command in the field. Although he felt that technical knowledge was required, Johnson determined it was not paramount for success in battle. This was followed by Dr. Christopher DeRosa, assistant professor at Monmouth University, and his presentation of “The Battle for Uniform Votes: The Politics of Soldier Voting in the Elections of 1944.” DeRosa outlined the political debates and battles surrounding the enfranchisement of soldiers in the field during World War II. He

concluded that what emerged was a stronger American democracy. The day's final speaker was Dr. Peter S. Kindsvatter, an historian at the U.S. Army Ordnance Center and Schools located at Aberdeen Proving Ground, who presented his paper, "Operation Roll-up: The U.S. Army's Rebuild Program during the Korean War." Kindsvatter outlined the reclamation and rebuild project of military hardware throughout the Pacific following the conclusion of World War II. At the outset of the Korean War, this project proved to be of extreme importance in easing mobilization of U.S. forces in the region. Thousands of trucks, jeeps, and other military hardware were closely available and in working order for embarkation to Korea.

The works presented that day represent only a portion of *Beyond Combat*, yet they illustrate the many aspects of military history that Weigley's scholarship has inspired. Scholars of military history, both in and outside of Temple, continue to research and publish sophisticated military histories that employ an array of methodologies and approaches first pioneered by Weigley.

Following these presentations, the discussion moved to the current and future role of military history in academia. Both concerns and optimism were voiced by those present. Despite argument, what was clear, however, was Temple History Department's strong role in the current state of military history, and the influence that faculty, alumni, and current students hope to have on the field in the future. The day's events offered the opportunity to assess what has been accomplished here at Temple as well as address what is to come. Additionally, it provided the opportunity for multiple generations of Temple University's military history tradition to be in the same room, and to come together in celebration of the lifelong scholarship of Russell F. Weigley and Temple's continuing tradition in military history.

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