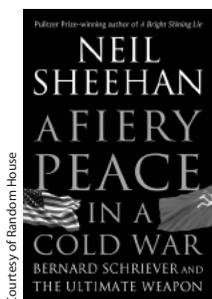


leadership. That, not the bomb, is why we have a strong (not monarchical) President.



New York: Random House, 2009

534 pages

\$32.00

## ***A Fiery Peace in a Cold War: Bernard Schriever and the Ultimate Weapon***

by Neil Sheehan

**Reviewed by Colonel Jeffrey L. Caton, USAF, Retired,** former Director of Research, Development, and Acquisition Management and Defense Transformation Chair, US Army War College.

A family escapes a horrible war in their home country and starts a new life in America. The father's death in a tragic industrial accident forces two young brothers to live in an orphanage. Through his mother's determination, as well as patronage from influential mentors, one of the brothers rises to the military's highest ranks, where he develops the most devastating weapons ever known.

This is not fiction from Dickens, but rather the true story of General Bernard Schriever told in compelling narrative by Neil Sheehan. An established expert on Vietnam, Sheehan had never heard of Schriever before he started to research a book on the Cold War nuclear arms race. Captivated by the incredible contributions made by this individual, he decided to make "Bennie" the common thread of his work. He chose wisely, crafting a fresh historical account that includes heroes and villains, courage and treachery, triumph and tragedy, most of which occurred in a mere decade between "Mike," the first thermonuclear test in 1952, and the first operational alert of the "Minuteman" intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in 1962.

Born 14 September 1910, in Bremen, Germany, Schriever's first eight years of life indeed included a family move to America, the untimely death of his father, and residence in an orphanage until his mother found employment in San Antonio, Texas. Luck and hard work brought the family back together, and Bernard ("Bennie" for short) excelled in school and sports, eventually earning his degree from Texas A&M. In 1932, he became an Army Air Corps pilot and within a year reported to Lieutenant Colonel Henry "Hap" Arnold's unit.

In the chapters covering the next 12 years, Sheehan presents professional trends that would become Schriever's hallmarks as a leader. By 1944, Schriever became a young colonel after winning over the ill-tempered Brigadier General "Ennis the Menace" Whitehead in Australia. After enduring unfair "chew out" sessions from Whitehead, Bennie responded by applying his technical prowess to solve persistent maintenance issues as well as by showing courage as a B-17 bomber copilot. The author highlights the autumn of that year, when Hap Arnold (now a five-star general) called Bennie to the Pentagon and entrusted him to continue innovating the Air Corps as he himself had done before World War II, and especially to aggressively embrace new technologies.

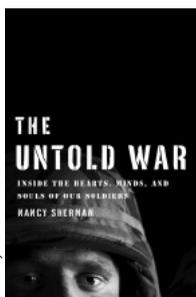
Schriever spent most of the next nine years as a leader in the newly formed US Air Force, trying to bolster the nuclear might of the Strategic Air Command, but often drawing ire from General Curtis LeMay for sticking to the facts instead of appeasing “the Cigar.” In 1952, when the United States successfully tested the world’s first thermonuclear device, Schriever saw his future venture revealed; Sheehan expertly chronicles the resulting paths Bennie traveled to fulfill Arnold’s quest. First, he had to conquer the sheer physics of building a small nuclear weapon, launching it thousands of miles, having it survive a fiery reentry, and making it accurate enough to be of military utility. Once such a capability was demonstrated, it had to be mass-produced, fielded, tested, and declared operational—all in a race with the Soviet Union. And if this was not enough, Schriever had to overcome the bureaucracy of getting any program to survive approval from 42 agencies, let alone to become the nation’s top defense priority. He excelled at building effective teams from brilliant, but sometimes flawed, individuals and by focusing them toward a common vision. Sheehan’s commentary of how Bennie’s teams tackled service rivalries, political intrigue, and a rapidly changing geopolitical environment offers a number of positive examples for today’s leaders to consider.

Sheehan takes the reader through the winding path from the conception of the ICBM to its eventual operational success as the Cold War’s ultimate weapon. He demonstrates admirable skill for simplifying complex scientific details and engaging the reader with vignettes about the personalities surrounding the events. The final sections of the book extend the story into space when Schriever is tasked to use ICBM rockets to boost America’s first photographic reconnaissance satellites into orbit. In a way, this brings the saga full circle; such space-based intelligence was used by the United States and Soviet Union to add stability to deterrence.

*A Fiery Peace in a Cold War* puts a human face on the global struggle for nuclear superiority. Fortunately for readers, the author adds new depth and details from his 52 interviews with General Schriever, as well as from dialogue with over 118 others who knew the general well. He brings to life such men as Trevor Gardner, the work-hard, play-hard Welshman who navigated the often-treacherous waters of Washington, DC; General LeMay, the mercurial nemesis who considered ICBM development as an “extravagant boondoggle” siphoning funds away from his precious nuclear bombers; Lieutenant Colonel Ed Hall, the caustic genius who designed the Atlas liquid rockets as well as the solid-fueled Minuteman; and Colonel “Moose” Mathison, who built rocket pads in swamps and perfected the art of plucking a satellite’s film from the sky. These and many more such characters bring insight and empathy to this tale of two cities—in this case, Washington and Moscow.

Perhaps the only shortcoming of the book is that it gives the impression that all is well with Schriever’s legacy. Indeed, Sheehan ends with the thought that Bennie may be smiling on what he accomplished, but one might wonder how he would reflect on our military’s recent string of careless events that endanger the stewardship of US nuclear weapons—and by logical extension,

the safety of the world. Without having to call upon Jacob Marley, perhaps reading Sheehan's account can cast General Schriever as the "ghost of missiles past" to visit today's leaders and help ensure that his dream does not become their nightmare.



New York:  
W. W. Norton and  
Company, 2010

248 pages

\$27.95

## ***The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers***

by Nancy Sherman

**Reviewed by Chaplain (Colonel) David Reese,**  
Director, Ethical Development, US Army War College  
and former Director of Soldier and Family Ministries,  
Office of the Chief of Chaplains.

Since the introduction of Dr. Jonathan Shay's *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*, there have been a handful of books that examine modern soldiers and combat through the lens of ancient Greek tales of iconic warriors such as Achilles, Odysseus, and Ajax. Dr. Nancy Sherman's *The Untold War*:

*Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of Our Soldiers* expertly elevates the examination with the complementary pairing of ancient Greek philosophy and modern psychology. This book fulfills its promise of revealing what Sherman describes as "the moral weight of war that individual soldiers carry on their shoulders and don't usually talk about." It is an unflinching look beyond the veil of modern warriors who try to reconstruct their ideals and their lives. The book is a worthy read by senior leaders interested in the "inner war and its subtle moral contours," and those who desire a better understanding of the impact of the prolonged war on terror.

Dr. Sherman is a distinguished professor of philosophy at Georgetown University. Associated with the military since 1995, she frequently advises the Department of Defense on issues of ethics, resilience, and posttraumatic stress. She served as the first Distinguished Chair in Ethics at the US Naval Academy and laid the groundwork for the institution's Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. During this period, serving routinely alongside soldier-scholars, she developed an interest in the relationship between the ancient Stoic philosophies and contemporary warriors. *The Untold War* follows on the heels of her previous book, *Stoic Warriors: The Ancient Philosophy behind the Military Mind*, and delves even deeper into the individual stories of soldiers as they experience war and its aftermath. Sherman relies on her background in Stoic philosophy, accompanied by her training in psychoanalysis, to unveil the existential tension that lies buried in the heart of those soldiers. In this intellectually stimulating treatise she examines the private burdens of the soldier's life and the resultant "residue of war."

Although similar in premise to works by Dr. Shay, she adds a distinctly personal dimension to the story. While Shay primarily uses the broad brush of