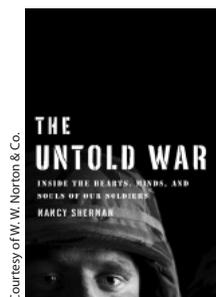


the safety of the world. Without having to call upon Jacob Marley, perhaps reading Sheehan's account can cast General Schriever as the "ghost of missiles past" to visit today's leaders and help ensure that his dream does not become their nightmare.



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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

psychiatry to interpret soldier narratives revealed through classic Greek texts such as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Sherman paints a portrait of warriors with the colors of philosophy. Her canvas is Stoicism, the ancient Roman philosophy marked by a distinct decorum and management of emotions. *The Untold War* adroitly fills in the details with the fine brush of personal narrative drawn from more than 40 personal conversations with veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This distinction thoroughly engages the reader mentally and emotionally.

The author's portrait of soldiers' attempts to reconstruct their moral and psychological world is rife with the pain associated with both physical trauma and the invisible psychological trauma of war. In a culminating narrative, the author painfully shares the story of Colonel Ted Westhusing, a colleague at West Point. Westhusing was a professor of English and philosophy when he volunteered to deploy to Iraq in January 2005. Six months later, he apparently took his life when "his moral idealism collided with the reality of the war in Iraq and the corruption of contractors whom it was his job to oversee." In his suicide note, Westhusing appealed to the self-sufficiency of virtue reflected in the philosophy he taught. "I came to serve honorably," he wrote, "and [I] feel dishonored Death before being dishonored anymore." Sherman reports that Westhusing "felt sullied, and in a tradition that Stoics made famous he took his life to preserve his honor."

Sherman's portrayal of soldiers' struggles against the backdrop of the Stoic philosophy of Aristotle, Epictetus, and Seneca is captivating. From the guilt-ridden commander, Major John Prior, who lost a soldier to a horrific, yet accidental fratricide, to the starkly analytic approach of Captain Ray Longworth, a retired counterintelligence officer whose liaison duties often placed him at the scene of questionable interrogation activities, the reader is given literary permission to accompany Sherman in her interviews. The author also draws on recollections from soldiers in both World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam, lending even more weight to the thesis that the challenges of war to one's moral and emotional health remain unchanged.

Sherman's latest addition to the body of literature is well-researched, well-written, and helpful. What is most impressive is her gentle handling of the veterans' stories alongside the dialogue about Stoicism. She advocates for a "gentle Stoicism" that retains the necessary insulation from those aspects of war that are beyond one's control, yet is permeable enough to allow adequate reconstruction of the human soul and psyche following war. Coupled with her previous book, *Stoic Warrior*, this new exploration of gentle Stoicism will be an excellent addition to the required reading lists for both intermediate and senior-level professional military education.