

## THE ANNALS OF IOWA

do-nothing bureaucrats and independently maneuvered six million dollars from congressional coffers to establish the beginnings of the federal wildlife refuge system.

Lendt's book is far from a chauvinistic recitation of the life of one of Iowa's favorite sons. The author, an administrator at Iowa State who holds a Ph.D. in higher education, fuses together many aspects of Darling's personality and interests to delve into the personal motivations, the successes and failures of a man whose life was larger than life. The result is a rich, but dispassionate, account of a rural American shaped by and shaping the growth of this country in the nineteenth century.

Darling espoused the most progressive, liberal notions of conservation, and at the same time through his syndicated cartoons brought the views of a conservative, often reactionary farm state to the front pages of America's most sophisticated urban newspapers. Both audiences loved him. The paradox merits pondering.

**Elizabeth Ballantine**  
**Des Moines Register**  
**Des Moines, IA**

*Gordon Gammack: Columns from Three Wars*, by Gordon Gammack, edited by Andrea Clardy. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1979. pp. ix, 150. Photographs. \$10.95.

This book is about the traditional business of wars—men and boys of various nations killing each other, or trying to do so. But mostly it tells of their lifestyle while doing it, rather than of the killing itself.

The book consists of several hundred columns selected from those Gammack sent back to his newspapers from the combat zones of World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Gammack was at the "front" of each of these conflicts and was present at their finales: the reoccupation of Paris; the exchange of prisoners at Panmunjom; and the arrival of American prisoners from Hanoi at Clark Air Base, the Philippines. He wrote masterfully of it all. The first of Gammack's columns quoted was written in 1943, the last in 1973.

The columns appeared originally in the *Register* and the *Tribune* at Des Moines, Iowa. Gammack was an ace reporter for the papers when sent to Africa and Europe for the world war. At the end of that war he became a front page columnist for the *Tribune*, but took time out for the wars in Korea and Vietnam. He had come to the Des Moines

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papers from college in New England, and spent his entire career with them. Likewise, the editor of this book, Andrea Clardy, worked for newspapers, specifically the *Ames Daily Tribune*, while living in Iowa. She now resides in Ithaca, New York.

The book, in addition to the columns by Gammack, has on its final pages the account written by Michael Kjome of Decorah, Iowa of his five years as a prisoner of the Viet Cong.

Gammack's columns in their detail emphasized the difference in the wars: the way they were fought, in the "back-of-the-lines" way of living, in the quality of the people—or lack of it—in the areas of the battles, and, emphatically, in the attitudes of the American soldiers.

World War II was fought in what had been the traditional way up to that time: two armies facing each other across an area, maybe from trenches. The Korean fighting was done up and down mountain sides, nearly all the movement made at night. The Vietnam conflict was a matter of searching out the enemy in the jungle and decimating him.

In the world war the enemies respected each other, according to Gammack. In the Korean war there was some respect, he said, but mostly there was cruelty. In Vietnam there was little but cruelty.

Of the attitude of the Americans, Gammack wrote in a March 1, 1971 *Tribune* column: "For each American soldier in Viet, this is an individual war, unlike the wars of the past. In World War II men went through basic training and joined a unit. They became part of that unit. They went overseas together. They fought together. . . . There was camaraderie that lingers to this day. Even in Korea there was a feeling that the Red Chinese and North Koreans had to be defeated to save the countries." By comparison, Gammack went on to note that in ". . . Viet men go through basic training and board a plane for Saigon, sharing their cabins with strangers. . . . Then when they arrive in Vietnam they are shunted off in many directions and ultimately join a unit. Again they are among strangers, at least some of whom are near the end of their tours and couldn't care less about the troubles of a new man. Almost immediately the new men begin counting the days until the end of the individual war."

Gammack wrote almost bitterly of attempts by the American military in Vietnam to control or censor what the correspondents wrote for their newspapers. He contrasted this with the almost eager cooperation between the military men and the correspondents in the world war and to a lesser degree in Korea. Thus, even for the war correspondent, the wars had changed.

John M. Henry  
Des Moines, IA

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