

# Pioneers of Technology

## Sun Tzu

(Around 500 BC)

"War is a matter of vital importance to the State; the province of life or death; the road to survival or ruin. It is mandatory that it be thoroughly studied." -- Sun Tzu, "The Art of War"

Sun Tzu, with his book *The Art of War*, was the first and clearly most influential military strategist history has to offer. The only argument that could be made is in questioning the authorship. Written before the Bible, it suffers the same unknowns but also possesses the same quality of endurance: the written words have survived for centuries and continue to be studied.

Certainly one reason for Sun Tzu's enduring popularity is that the basic theorems he proposes can be applied to various areas of life and not just war. Building on that, what now follows are excerpts from his 13 chapters.



Statue of Sun Tzu in Yurihama, Tottori, Japan

From *The Nine Variables*: There are five qualities which are dangerous in the character of a general: "If he is reckless, he can be killed; if cowardly, captured; if quick tempered you can make a fool of him; if he has too delicate a sense of honor you can calumniate him; if he is a compassionate nature you can harass him.."

From *Offensive Strategy*: "Generally in war the best policy is to take the state intact; to ruin it is inferior. Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle. From *Weaknesses and Strengths*: "And as water has no constant form, there are in war no constant conditions." And he warns us that "there are some roads not to follow; some troops not to strike, some cities not to assault; and some ground which should not be contested." From *Energy*: "When the strike of the hawk breaks the body of its prey, it is because of timing." "Management of many is the same as management of few. It is a matter of organization." From *Maneuvre*: "Do not gobble proffered baits."

From *Attack By Fire*: "There are five methods of attacking by fire. Equipment for setting fires must always be at hand." Curtis LeMay took this one to heart in WWII as we firebombed 66 Japanese cities to the ground as well as Dresden, Germany. Under *Ground and Terrain*, Sun Tzu has extensive recommendations for all nine varieties but makes clear the response in ground where the army survives only if it fights with the courage of desperation.

**"In death ground, fight."**

Jim Webb (2004). *Born Fighting: How The Scots-Irish Shaped America*. Broadway Books, New York: 379 pages.

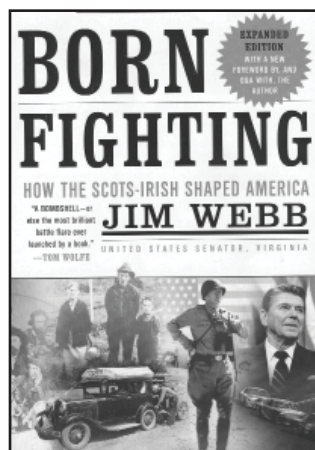
To the great fortune of the reading public, James Webb can write. He can also fight, as evidenced by his combat in Vietnam in the Fifth Marine regiment as a rifle platoon and company commander where he was awarded the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, two bronze stars and two purple hearts. Equally fortuitously for America is his continued public service, now fighting on the political front with his election in 2007 as Virginia Commonwealth United States Senator.

Webb has written seven books. His first, a Vietnam novel, *Fields Of Fire* (1978), was the only worthy work of that war, according to my brother Dave, a Vietnam Marine vet. A harsh critic of both film and written accounts of that war Dave said, "He got it right."

However good the novel, I believe that history will judge *Born Fighting* Webb's most important work to date. The United States may be the giant melting pot of ethnic groups, but some of the ingredients for this cultural stew add distinct but subtle flavors. For the 27 million Americans who can trace their family tree to the Scots-Irish, it can be said they have had an enormous effect on what America is today; but it is an effect that has gone largely unnoticed in the annals of written history. Until now.

Webb found it necessary to go back 2000 years to provide readers with a comprehensive overview of how this group has influenced the social, political and cultural personality of our nation. *Born Fighting* is not dry history. Flowing from the mind and pen of Webb is a tale that will keep your attention, expand your mind and make clarifying connections on every page. You will learn more about American history than you thought possible from a paperback book. There are surprises, shocking facts and tales of courage.

Webb says that "I wanted this book to be right and I wanted it to be read ---" Three decades of research and thousands of letters of confirmation he has received assure the "right." The "read" part is ongoing, and for my small part, I encourage you, get this book and read it!



# Quarter Inch Drive

A quarterly newsletter for friends and graduates of Tom Hull's shop programs

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A Sikorsky UH-60 Blackhawk pulls medavac duty in Iraq over the Tigris River. While not as glamorous as the Cobra or Apache attack helicopters with their wailing armament, the Blackhawk is an important military warhorse. Photo credit, Colonel Brad Kohn, fellow Marshfield teacher who recently spent 14 months in Afghanistan mentoring an Afghan general.

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