

# Ares Considers a Career Change

*by* Gary Hardaway

I miss the old wars. Adversaries lived  
within the boundaries everybody knew.

Combatants wore uniforms  
like targets on their backs.

Barbarians and savages wore feathers  
or frightful face paint or skin tones

one could recognize and aim for  
with weapons one could feel

the heft and sharpness of in hand.  
There was no bother with collateral damage—

the sack, pillage and rape were by the rules  
and we all knew the rules. The winner

made the rules and carried off the spoils  
in palpable silver, gold and precious stones

and the usable living flesh of livestock,  
concubines and slaves. The spoils

weren't conceptual, strategic, or  
a rate of growth in glossy quarterly reports.

War has gotten so much murkier. The goals  
are muddied and confused.

The makers of weapons don't wield weapons  
but spread sheets and data points

that track the trends and revenues. They pick  
no sides and know prosperity lies

in endless skirmishes and squabbles  
and the preparations for that massive

conflagration profits can't allow. The violence  
becomes its own end and can never be allowed stop.

I grow tired of all this petty and inglorious  
crap. I think I'll buy a football team instead.

