

short on quality. It is a volume which will appeal to and greatly benefit a wide variety of readers. Be it on the battlefield, the boardroom, or the athletic field, leaders and future leaders will find this to be an invaluable book and tremendous resource. Unquestionably, there is much to be gained from reading *Hal Moore on Leadership*.

Triumph at Imphal-Kohima: How the Indian Army Finally Stopped the Japanese Juggernaut

**By Raymond Callahan
Lawrence, KS: University Press
of Kansas, 2017, 212 pages**

Reviewed by Maj Timothy Heck,
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In 1942, the Imperial Japanese Army, simultaneous with its lightning advance down the Malay Peninsula to Singapore, thrust into British-controlled Burma and relentlessly advanced towards the Indian border. The Indian Army was revealed to be nearly inept and was all but destroyed in the process. Smashed British and Commonwealth units, including the 17th Indian Infantry Division, trickled back to India to refit, recover, and eventually re-engage the Japanese. Under the leadership of General William Slim, the reborn Indian Army — with American and British assistance — pushed back into Burma in 1944 and administered the largest defeat to the Japanese up to that point in the war. The fall, rebirth, and rise of the Indian Army, along with perceptive analysis of British-American combined warfare and logistics, make *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima* a valuable work that offers lessons for today's military.

British policy from the outbreak of war in Europe through 1942 was a large part of the reason the Indian Army suffered such staggering initial defeats at the hands of the Japanese. The Indian Army was largely considered a manpower pool for British interests, with its long-service regular troops sent to Africa and the Middle East to support colonial defenses and the war against the European Axis. These regulars were largely led by British officers as Indian officers were limited in numbers. To backfill the Indian Army, drafts of replacements were leavened with some regulars, but over time there were fewer and fewer experienced troops, NCOs, and officers to spread among the new recruits. The over-expansion resulted in an Indian Army without the requisite experience or command skills needed to master combat operations, as was displayed in the retreat across Malaya and Burma.

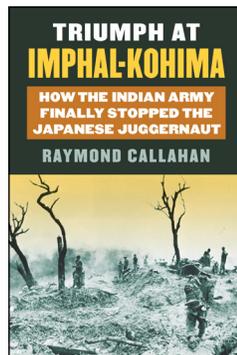
The Indian Army's rebirth is central to the narrative of *Triumph at Imphal-Kohima*. Leaders like Slim enacted several policies that allowed for the rebuilding. By capping expansion, Slim prevented further dilution of the experienced soldiers

under his command. Furthermore, he enacted fundamental changes in how the army trained, which impacted all units and individuals in the revitalized army. Under Slim's leadership, however, "the training regime was so intense that even the babus — the Indian non-combatant clerks... were required to do physical training." Furthermore, an emphasis on jungle warfare training refocused the Indian Army on the task at hand. The standardization of jungle warfare training helped incorporate lessons learned and disseminate the best tactics, techniques, and procedures to defeat the Japanese.

The impacts of terrain, logistics, weather, and disease also played a major role on the campaign in Burma. Perhaps most striking was the impact of logistics on sustaining combat units. The Indian Army had to rely on single track roads that were not designed for heavy traffic and were incapable of surviving monsoon seasons. This anemic infrastructure significantly hampered mobility and sustainability of Indian operations. As an example, "in August 1942, only seventy-two truckloads of supplies made it through from Dimapur to Imphal," a distance of several hundred kilometers and a major axis of Allied advance. Immense efforts were undertaken to strengthen the lines of communication throughout India and into Burma in order to support the Indian Army. Those logistics assets, however, were low-density, and high-demand units such as the Americans needed the same trucks, trains, and airfields to support Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Chinese, putting further strain on an already weak system and requiring cooperation between the Allies.

Author Raymond Callahan does an excellent job of describing the differing political objectives of the British and Americans in the China Burma India (CBI) Theater. America's desire to support Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Chinese forces came into conflict with British desires to recapture their colonial possessions of Burma, Malaya, and Singapore. Coupled with personality conflicts between the British leadership and American General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell, the difficult nature of combined warfare in Burma becomes readily apparent. As Churchill remarked, "the only thing worse than fighting with Allies is fighting without them."

The battle itself is rather quickly covered in the book. Slim's objective of pinning the Japanese at the gateways to the Imphal plain while his XXXIII Corps reopened the Dimapur-Imphal Road were accomplished through the use of combat boxes which broke up Japanese attacks, slowed their advance, and fixed them while they were in turn counter-attacked or surrounded. Fighting in and around these boxes devolved into a "conflict of platoons, companies, and occasional battalions." The logistics efforts before and during the battle were leviathan. "Delivering 12,250 reinforcements and 18,800 tons of supplies, and flying out 13,000 sick and wounded and 43,000 noncombatants, [Operation] Stamina's 7,500 sorties were absolutely essential to Slim's victory." In short, Slim designed the battle, the rebuilt Indian Army fought it at the small unit level, and Allied transport planes kept it supplied through to victory.

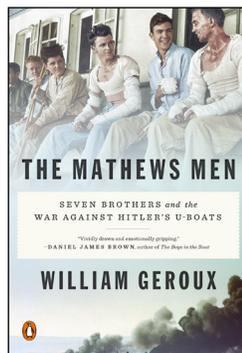


Triumph at Imphal-Kohima focuses on the operational nature of this critical battle and the political elements therein. Despite the nature of the fighting around the Imphal plain, there is a limited sense of the combat involved at the battalion level or below. The lack of maps requires readers to consult their own in order to track units, staging areas, and events throughout the text. Despite these minor shortfalls, Callahan has written a readable study on rebuilding armies, combined warfare, and the importance of logistics at the operational level in an oft-overlooked theater.

The Mathews Men, Seven Brothers and the War Against Hitler's U-boats

**By William Geroux
NY: Penguin Random House, 2016, 371 pages**

Reviewed by LTC (Retired)
Keith Everett



This story of the World War II service of U.S. Merchant seamen begins with the cutting open of a shark caught by a Cuban fisherman, who finds human remains including a forearm and ring with the initials G.D.H. This ring traces back to George Dewey Hodges, a U.S. Merchant seaman from Mathews County, VA, who was killed along with 17 other men, when a U-boat torpedoed and sunk their American steam merchant vessel, the Onondaga, on 23 July 1942. The Hodges family contributed seven sons, including Dewey, to wartime merchant sea service, and many other men from Mathews County went to serve onboard merchant ships. William Geroux, the author, captures many of these seamen's stories for a greater understanding of the tremendous risks taken on a daily basis to keep the supply routes open.

Looking at Mathews County on the map in the prologue, readers will immediately see a scattering of small towns with no large urban centers dominating the landscape. The story of the courageous contributions of the merchant seamen is told through the experiences of not only the seven sons of the Hodges family but also other members of the Mathews County community; it is a fascinating read, which includes details of sinking ships, desperate attempts to survive, and efforts to sink the enemy before he can attack. The 300 million tons of cargo the U.S. Merchant Marines transported through U-boat hunting grounds brought "ammunition, aircraft, fuel, tanker trucks, landing craft, ambulances, locomotives, food, clothing, and medicine" to Allied troops throughout World War II. This heroic effort was instrumental to overwhelming the Germans and Japanese.

The author, who served as a newspaper journalist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for 25 years, also worked

for Maersk, the largest container shipping company in the world so he knows the fine points of shipping. He tells of how the U.S. Merchant Marines kept the supplies coming despite the violently active U-boat hunting grounds they had to cross. The details of U-boat warfare are included, such as how magnetic torpedoes explode when entering a ship's magnetic field and how acoustic torpedoes home in on the sound of a ship's propellers. He goes on to explain British countermeasures for each torpedo type and the limitations and effectiveness of depth charges and sonar at the time. In just two years from 1941 to 1943, U-boats sank more than 1,000 British merchant ships and killed more than 20,000 British seamen, so the efforts of the U.S. Merchant seamen helped keep Britain in the war.

This volume looks at various aspects of World War II shipping and the fight against the U-boats. The sections of the book provide stand-alone stories telling various parts of the efforts to resupply by sea. If you are looking for one continuous story, this is not the book for you, but the combined stories make a compelling read. I loved the last sections of the book which include a map showing where many of the merchant ships sank and a listing of many of the merchant seamen in the book with what happened to each of them during and after the war — if they survived.

Have you read a book lately that you think would be of interest to the Infantry community and want to submit a review? Or are you interested in being a book reviewer for *INFANTRY*?

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