

# BOOK REVIEWS



World War II unit histories are being published in increasing numbers today, although they now have a look somewhat different from those published in the years immediately following the war. Today's unit histories are far more personal, as may be seen in the following:

• **ORCHIDS IN THE MUD: PERSONAL ACCOUNTS BY VETERANS OF THE 132d INFANTRY REGIMENT**, edited by Robert C. Muehrcke (J.S. Printing, 1985. 464 Pages. \$22.50). This book is truly a labor of love on the part of the editor, who is now a medical doctor in Oak Park, Illinois. He has devoted countless hours during the past years to collecting and processing the purely historical accounts; the purely personal accounts; the maps, charts, and photographs; and all of the other material that appears in this, his final product. The members of the regiment should be both pleased with and proud of Dr. Muehrcke's efforts.

Part of the Americal Division, the 132d Infantry fought at Guadalcanal in 1942 and 1943; on Bougainville in 1944; and in Leyte, Burias, Trias, and Cebu in 1945. On 8 September 1945 it moved to Yokohama, Japan, as part of the Allied occupation forces.

Dr. Muehrcke served as an enlisted man in the 132d Infantry until the end of the Bougainville campaign when he was sent back to the States and Fort Benning to officer candidate school. After he received his commission, he returned to the Pacific, joined the 383d Infantry Regiment, and fought in the bloody battles on Okinawa in 1945.

He uses the then-and-now approach, which is so popular with those who write unit histories today, showing the soldiers of the regiment as they were during the war years and as they are now 40 years later.

• **THE MEN OF COMPANY K: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A WORLD WAR II RIFLE COMPANY**, by John D.

Campbell and H.P. Linebaugh (William Morrow, 1985. \$18.95). Like Dr. Muehrcke, the authors of this book draw on the memories of their company's survivors to tell the story of their unit—Company K, 333d Infantry, 84th Infantry Division—during its more than 100 days of combat in Europe from early November 1944 to early May 1945. The company fought in the Siegfried Line, in the Battle of the Bulge, and from the Roer River to the Elbe River.

Linebaugh commanded the company during most of its combat days, while John Campbell, the company's first replacement officer, fought with the company until he was badly wounded on the last day of the Battle of the Bulge. Like the previously mentioned book, the authors present their living compatriots as they were during the war and as they are today. Unlike Dr. Muehrcke, however, they concentrate on the actions of a single infantry company, which gives their book a special aura. Together, the books point out graphically the difference between infantry combat in the Pacific and in Europe.

• **HEDGEROW HELL: NORMANDY, 1944**, by John S. Allsup (Personal printing, 1985. 160 pages). This history, too, is a very personal one, although it contains more graphics than either of the previous two. It is the story of a single infantry platoon—the 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division—as it fought its way from Normandy Beach through the *bocage* country of Normandy toward St. Lo in June 1944. Allsup was its platoon leader until he was wounded and evacuated on 18 June; the platoon's story ends at this point.

**NOTE TO READERS: All of the books mentioned in this review section may be purchased directly from the publisher or from your nearest book dealer. We do not sell books. We will furnish a publisher's address on request.**

The photographs are particularly good, and Allsup carries the 29th Division's story (through the captions on the photographs) up to its capture of St. Lo on 20 July. An interesting feature is the fact that the story is told in both English and French (the book was originally published in France). An errata sheet corrects the numerous typographical errors.

A personal history of quite another kind is **MONTY AT CLOSE QUARTERS: RECOLLECTIONS OF THE MAN**, edited by T.W. Howarth (Hippocrene Books, 1986. 180 Pages. \$17.50). The author has pulled together 11 separate essays and one memorial address apparently to counter a number of recent critical accounts about Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery, a noted British World War II commander in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and northwest Europe. The finished product is but another song of praise for a British commander who is steadily being elevated by British writers to military sainthood. Where there is muted criticism, it is more than overcome by fulsome praise. At the end, the reader knows precious little more about Montgomery the soldier than he did at the beginning.

Although the flood of books about the Vietnam War has slowed, we have two recently published ones that should prove immensely interesting and helpful in recalling the events of that war: **VIETNAM WAR ALMANAC**, by Harry G. Summers, Jr. (Facts on File, 1985. 414 Pages. \$24.95) and **THE VIETNAM WAR: AN ALMANAC**, by World Almanac Publications. General Editor: John S. Bowman (World Almanac Publications, 1985. 512 Pages. \$24.95).

Summers, a retired U.S. Army colonel and a frequently published author, not only served as an infantry officer in Vietnam, he has written one other book on that war—*On Strategy*—that attracted a goodly amount of critical acclaim several years ago.

In his book, he pulls together 21 maps and more than 120 photographs to supplement his text—the major part of which is devoted to 450 separate entries on people, battles, weapons, units, and the like—and produces an outstanding reference work. An interesting feature is a suggested list for further reading found at the end of most of the entries.

Another interesting feature is the author's willingness to give his own views on the people and events he mentions in those separate entries that make up the bulk of the book.

Bowman's World Almanac book is also a fine reference work. Although it is similar in some ways to Summers' book, it uses a more detailed chronology and a series of separate essays on the land, air, naval, and irregular force operations to present its information. There is also a separate section that contains short biographies of the key personnel on both sides. The book has no maps, but does have one section of color photographs and more than 100 black-and-white photographs.

For some reason, the German Army of World War II is of greater interest to many U.S. infantrymen today than the U.S. Army of that war. In fact, it is difficult to find many infantry leaders today who know very much about the U.S. Army of the World War II era and its exploits. That being the case, here are three books those infantrymen should enjoy:

• **FORGOTTEN LEGIONS: GERMAN ARMY INFANTRY POLICY, 1918-1941.** By S.J. Lewis (Praeger, 1985. 189 Pages. \$29.95). The title of this book is somewhat misleading, for the author's primary concern is more with the disintegration of the German Army General Staff after Adolf Hitler came to power than with German Army infantry policy between the wars.

On the other hand, Lewis, who is with the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, does make certain needed corrections about the German Army of World War II—its organization, leaders, and methods of operation. He feels that many people in the United States have "been unduly influenced by the memoirs of former German generals," particularly Heinz Guderian's, to the extent that they have almost totally ignored 80 per-

cent of that Army's field units.

In the book's introduction, Charles Burdick, who is also a student of the World War II German military establishment, suggests that because "the books on the Second World War published over the last two decades show an amazing similarity to each other . . . The result is a frightening distortion of German military history in particular." To him, this book "heralds the long-needed change in our approach to the subject of German military history."

We think you will agree with that statement, but at the same time we would welcome a good history, in English, of the German infantry of World II.

• **THE ONSLAUGHT: THE GERMAN DRIVE TO STALINGRAD.** Edited by Justus Goepel (Norton, 1985. 192 Pages. \$24.95). This book was originally published in West Germany in 1984. It contains 152 color photographs (selected from several thousand) taken by three German soldiers. Never before published, the photographs track the German Army from June 1941 when it crossed the Russian border to October 1942, when it bogged down in Stalingrad. There are few "action" photographs as such in the collection. Rather, the ones that are used were chosen to show the everyday reality of life as the German soldier experienced it on the Eastern Front. An essay by Herbert Kraft and the editor's postscript tell something about the soldiers who took these photographs, the organization of the book, and color photography in World War II.

• **MOSCOW, 1941.** By Janusz Piekalkiewicz (Presidio, 1985. 287 Pages. \$20.00). This book was also originally published in West Germany, but in 1981. The author is a native of Poland who has written extensively on World War II military history. In this book, he reconstructs—from actual news reports, military dispatches, and radio accounts—the 1941 German military campaign in Russia. These are supplemented by the author's own analyses of the events, including short accounts of Napoleon's similar disastrous campaign for comparison. Maps and photographs nicely complement the narratives. There are also brief biographies of the "men in command," a copy of the German Army

General Staff's May 1941 report containing military geopolitical data on European Russia, some weapons and organizational data, and a summary of losses suffered by both sides—human and materiel.

We have also received an interesting publication from *Rivista Militare*, a leading Italian military magazine. It is a collection of late 19th century watercolors by Quinto Cenni, an Italian painter who is known in Italy as "the most important historiographic painter of soldiers." This particular collection, titled "IL SOLDATO ITALIANO DELL'OTTOCENTO, VOLUME QUARTO," has 17 full-color reproductions of Cenni's paintings plus an equal number of smaller black-and-white photographs accompanied by descriptive data.

And from the Combat Studies Institute of the Army's Command and Staff College we have received two of its most recent publications, the titles of which are largely self-explanatory: **SEEK, STRIKE, AND DESTROY: U.S. ARMY TANK DESTROYER DOCTRINE IN WORLD WAR II.** By Christopher R. Gabel. Leavenworth Papers Number 12, September 1985. 92 Pages; and **THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR,** CSI Historical Bibliography Number 3, December 1985. Compiled by Elizabeth R. Snoke and annotated by the CSI Research and Teaching Committees. Both of these publications are extremely useful to all infantrymen. In particular, Gabel's study does much to clear away the confusion that has surrounded our use of tank destroyers during World War II. Few infantrymen knew what to do with them at the time. The armor community did not want them then, and probably would not like to see the concept resuscitated. The tank destroyer units that did get into action were generally misused and misunderstood; that they accomplished anything at all—and they did accomplish some notable things—was a tribute to the men who fought in them, and not to the establishment.

Finally, we have received from the Monch Publishing Group its massive, three-volume **DEFENCE EQUIPMENT CATALOGUE, 1985/86.** It is divided into two main parts: the companies and

organizations in 25 countries that sell military equipment to other countries and information on the procurement organizations in those countries (Volume I), and information on the actual devices, equipment, and services offered for sale (Volumes II and III). The latter part has been arranged according to the U.S. Federal Supply Classification (FSC), which is used by many countries and has become a standardized supply system within NATO and most of the free world. Prices are not included. (No information from any of the Warsaw Pact countries or their allies is shown.) Most of the entries in Volumes II and III are presented in full color together with a significant amount of technical data for each. For the infantryman, these volumes are excellent reference sources.

Here are a number of other books we want you to know about:

**THE UNION CAVALRY IN THE CIVIL WAR, VOLUME III: THE WAR IN THE WEST, 1861-1865.** By Stephen Z. Starr (Louisiana State University Press, 1985. 616 Pages. \$32.50). Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, United States Air Force.

The first volume in Stephen Starr's three-volume work on the Union cavalry in the Civil War, published in 1979, was met with praise by the noted Civil War historian, Bell I. Wiley, for the author's freshness and excellent style. That volume covered the cavalry operations in the eastern theater through the battle of Gettysburg. The second volume, released in 1981, continued the story of the cavalry experience in the east through the remainder of the war. Finally, with this book, Starr's trilogy is complete, although, unfortunately, he passed away in early 1985 just as he completed work on the book.

In this volume, Starr crosses the Allegheny Mountains to look at what went on with the mounted forces in the western theater of operations from early 1861 to the end of the war four years later. When the cavalry units were first organized in the west, they were apparently ill-equipped in comparison with the cavalry units serving with the Army of the Potomac. And if the "spit and polish" of the eastern troopers left something to be desired, the western

cavalrymen were even more lax in their organization and military discipline. That comparison is not too surprising in light of similar descriptions of the infantry forces in each theater.

Much of the early cavalry maneuvering took place in the border area of Kentucky where the initial posturing centered on that state's alleged neutrality. As time and events moved on, cavalry actions spread throughout the western theater in coordination with the Army's campaigns. In addition, Federal cavalry commanders frequently found themselves pursuing such Confederate raiders as John Hunt Morgan and Nathan Bedford Forrest. Starr particularly emphasizes the role played by the cavalry units in the battles at Vicksburg, Chickamauga, and Nashville. The book ends where the author began his first volume—at Selma, Alabama, where the progress and evolution of Union cavalry capabilities during the war were amply demonstrated.

This series was recognized in 1985 for its outstanding contribution to history, and it will certainly stand as the authoritative work on the subject for years to come. The books are thorough and yet readable, a quality not often found in all military history books. For those who are interested, all three volumes are still in print.

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**"THE BEST SCHOOL IN THE WORLD": WEST POINT, THE PRE-CIVIL WAR YEARS, 1833-1866.** By James L. Morrison, Jr. (Kent State University Press, 1986. 267 Pages. \$27.50). Reviewed by Colonel James M. McGarity, United States Army Retired.

The author is a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and a former faculty member of West Point. In this book he has produced a detailed description of the early development of West Point as a military and academic institution. He focuses on the period from 1833 to 1866, which some writers have labeled the Military Academy's "Golden Age," because it was during this time that the influence of the Corps of Engineers on the institution was most pronounced. The title of the book is taken from a letter President Andrew Jackson wrote to his

nephew, a West Point graduate, in which Jackson stated that the Military Academy was "the best School in the world."

The author presents a general background of the U.S. Army as it was in the early 1800s and an account of the early development of the Academy. It was during the summer of 1833 that the Superintendent, Colonel Sylvanus Thayer—known later as the "Father of the Military Academy"—resigned following a dispute with Jackson over the restoration of a delinquent cadet. Thayer was convinced he had established a perfect academic system and worked to see it retained even after he had left the Academy. In fact, his struggles, and the struggles of others to retain the system, constitute the central theme of the book.

Of special interest is the author's discussion of West Point and the Civil War. Morrison believes the Academy was more nationalistic than pro-Southern in its orientation and that, overall, it strengthened rather than weakened loyalty to the country. The many graduates who rose to high positions in the Federal armies gave the Academy an additional reason for its existence.

Morrison concludes that in 1866 the Academy took on an attitude that exempted it from further educational progress. Even with the removal of the direct influence of the Corps of Engineers, the "new" postwar West Point continued with the curriculum, customs, and parochial biases of previous days.

The book is valuable to the serious student of the early days of West Point and the U.S. Army, and to the history buff of the Civil War period. Morrison's research was most detailed and seemingly complete, as shown by the fact that his text of 154 pages is supported by detailed footnotes, 12 appendixes, illustrations, and a lengthy bibliography.

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**OPERATION TORCH: THE ALLIED GAMBLE TO INVADE NORTH AFRICA.** By William B. Breuer (St. Martin's Press, 1986. 272 Pages. \$18.95). Reviewed by Major General Albert H. Smith, Jr., United States Army Retired.

This historical treasure is as exciting to read as it is informative, and while

this, our first major operation against Germany and her allies, has been described before, it has never been told in such a comprehensive, easily read style.

As a participant in Operation TORCH, I found the book almost impossible to put aside. The author weaves the complex events that surrounded the operation into a simplified, chronological, fiction-like narrative. Our present Joint Chiefs of Staff and all of the members of our armed forces can find some situations in this book that parallel those they now face throughout the world.

More important, though, this book is for soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion conducted our first airborne combat mission. "El Darbo," Bill Darby, led a newly formed U.S. Ranger battalion in a successful assault on the guns at Arzew. Major General Terry Allen and other veterans of the fighting during World War I somehow got their troops ashore after weeks at sea to capture Oran, Casablanca, and Algiers. Individual Allied fighting men did their jobs or died trying. After the first 72 hours, U.S. and British forces were victorious and French soldiers were once again our allies.

Infantrymen are encouraged to read this book and look for the lessons that were learned the hard way in November 1942 but that may still be valuable today. This is one of the best short references

on our first European campaign of World War II.

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**THE 25-YEAR WAR: AMERICA'S MILITARY ROLE IN VIETNAM.** By General Bruce Palmer, Jr. (University of Kentucky Press, 1984. 236 Pages). Reviewed by Doctor Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

Although the various military services are well into major multi-volume histories of the Vietnam War, we have needed a good one-volume military assessment of the war to augment Dave Richard Palmer's earlier *Summons of the Trumpet* (1978). General Bruce Palmer's book is that and more. Besides providing a sound narrative history of the conflict, Palmer deals with the command structure, strategy, tactics, and larger lessons of the war. His judgments on U.S. strategy and the context of the experience are wise and fair. Although many of his key points are not new, nowhere are they better stated and explained. The book far surpasses Harry Summers' *On Strategy* (1981), which has attracted so much attention.

Few have better credentials for such an undertaking. General Palmer served in the highest levels of staff and command during the long war. We benefit from his insight and personal experiences as assistant to the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff

for Operations (1963-1965) where he regularly attended JCS deliberations; commander of II Field Force and later deputy to General Westmoreland (1967-1968); and Vice Chief of Staff and Acting Chief of Staff (1968-1973).

The list of General Palmer's assessments and lessons is too vast to address. It must be sufficient to note that the author gives the military services high marks on their operational performance and innovation, but raises serious questions about larger strategy issues and the domestic political influences that dominated decision making.

This book should be read by anyone with serious interest in the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam and in the military services' role in future conflicts.

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**HAWAII UNDER THE RISING SUN.** By John Stephan (University of Hawaii Press, 1984. 228 Pages. \$16.95). Reviewed by Colonel Robert G. Clarke, United States Army Retired.

Much has been written about Japan's World War II aims in the Pacific in general and about her attack on Pearl Harbor specifically. But little has been written about Japan's plans for Hawaii and how those islands fitted into Japan's overall strategy.

The author, who teaches at the Univer-

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sity of Hawaii, here presents a well researched and well written volume on that interesting subject. He concentrates on both the military and the political plans Japan had for the Hawaiian Islands and includes a discussion of the social and political positions of Hawaii's Japanese community. One interesting chapter gives Japan's views on how Hawaii's cultural and political orientation might be changed after the islands had been secured and how they might be incorporated into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The political side of the Japanese government was never able to articulate clearly what it had planned for Hawaii, nor did it have a clear idea of how the islands would be incorporated into the empire. On the other hand, from the very beginning Japan's military leaders clearly saw the military importance of the islands.

Regardless, after the battle of Midway in June 1942, the Japanese never again had the military strength to secure the islands, and Hawaii quickly faded from view as a valid military objective. Nevertheless, the Japanese political bureaucracy continued to write and talk about a take-over of the islands as late as 1944 when all practical hope had long passed.

This is an interesting study in what might have happened in Hawaii, but it is even more interesting when one consid-

ers our present close and cooperative relationship with Japan and its current government.

## RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

**OVER THE HUMP.** By Lieutenant General William H. Tunner. USAF Warrior Series. New Imprint of the 1964 Edition. USGPO, 1985. S/N 008-070-00557-3. 368 Pages. \$8.00, Softbound.

**THE KNIGHTS OF CHRIST.** Text by David Nicolle. Color Plates by Angus McBride. Osprey, 1984. Men-at-Arms Series 154. 40 Pages. \$7.95.

**LINCOLN FINDS A GENERAL: A MILITARY STUDY OF THE CIVIL WAR, VOLUME ONE.** By Kenneth P. Williams. A Reprint of the 1949 Edition. Indiana University Press, 1985. 443 Pages. \$10.95, Softbound.

**OPERATIONAL ART AND TACTICS — A SOVIET VIEW.** By V. Ye. Savkin. Translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force. Reprint of the 1972 Edition. USGPO, 1985. 296 Pages. S/N 008-070-00342-2. \$7.00, Softbound.

**PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY WAR — A SOVIET VIEW.** Translated and published under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force. Reprint of the 1977 edition. USGPO, 1985. 304 Pages. S/N 008-070-00343-1. \$7.00, Softbound.

**LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATION,** by the United States Military Academy. USGPO, 1985. 682 Pages. S/N 008-027-00003-0. \$28.00.

**LATIN AMERICAN INSURGENCIAS.** By Georges Fauriol. National Defense Uni-

versity. USGPO, 1985. 148 Pages. S/N 008-020-01030-8. \$3.25, Softbound.

**SOVIET STRATEGIC DEFENSE PROGRAMS,** by the Department of Defense and Department of State. USGPO, 1985. 30 Pages. S/N 008-000-00433-1. \$1.75, Softbound.

**DEFENSE ORGANIZATION: THE NEED FOR CHANGE,** by the Committee on Armed Forces, United States Senate. USGPO, 1985. 656 Pages. S/N 052-070-06067-1. \$14.00, Softbound.

**ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS,** by the Department of Defense. USGPO, 1986. 340 Pages. S/N 008-000-00446-3. \$14.00, Softbound.

**DOCUMENTS ON GERMANY, 1944-1985,** by the Department of State. USGPO, 1986. 1,468 Pages. S/N 044-000-02062-9. \$24.00, Softbound.

**INTO THE ASSAULT: FAMOUS DIVE BOMBER ACES OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR.** By Peter C. Smith. University of Washington Press, 1986. 236 Pages. \$20.00.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF AIR POWER.** By James L. Stokesbury. William Morrow, 1986. 313 Pages. \$18.95.

**THE UNITED STATES NAVY IN WORLD WAR II.** Selected and Edited by S.E. Smith. William Morrow, 1986. 1,049 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.

**THE MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK.** By Walter Lord. The Viking Press, 1982. 323 Pages. \$17.95.

**ALLIES: PEARL HARBOR TO D-DAY.** By John S.D. Eisenhower. Doubleday, 1983. 500 Pages. \$24.95.

**FOLLOW ME AND DIE.** by Cecil B. Curry. Stein and Day, 1984. 320 Pages. \$18.95.

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