

BOOK REVIEWS



The Osprey Publishing Company of London, England has sent us the first two books in its new CAMPAIGN SERIES, which—according to the general editor, David G. Chandler—will present “concise, authoritative accounts of the great conflicts of history.” Each is 96 pages in length; each is filled with excellent graphics and a tightly written narrative:

- **NORMANDY 1944: ALLIED LANDINGS AND BREAKOUT.** By Stephen Badsey. Campaign Series Number 1. Osprey, 1990. No U.S. dollar price listed.

- **AUSTERLITZ 1805: BATTLE OF THE THREE EMPERORS.** By David G. Chandler. Campaign Series Number 2. Osprey, 1990. No U.S. dollar price listed.

Each volume concludes with a brief guide to the battlefield today and detailed notes to wargamers.

One brief note for U.S. readers concerning the Normandy book—most of the narrative reads as though it could have been written by the long-dead Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery.

Osprey has also sent us several of its other series publications:

- **GERMAN COMMANDERS OF WORLD WAR II.** Text by Anthony Kemp, color plates by Angus McBride. Men-at-Arms Series 124. Osprey, 1990. 40 Pages, Softbound.

- **ALLIED COMMANDERS OF WORLD WAR II.** Text by Anthony Kemp, color plates by Angus McBride. Men-at-Arms Series 120. Osprey, 1990. 40 Pages, Softbound.

- **SOLDIERS OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR (2): THE CAVALRY.** Text by John Tincey, color plates by Angus McBride. Elite Series 27. Osprey, 1990. 64 Pages, Softbound.

We have received from the Macmillan Publishing Company two more en-

tries in its popular Great Battles series. Both maintain the high standards set by their predecessors and are welcome additions to the library of military literature:

- **GREAT BATTLES OF THE CIVIL WAR.** By John Macdonald. Macmillan, 1988. 200 Pages. \$39.95.

- **GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR I.** By Anthony Livesey. Macmillan, 1989. 200 Pages. \$39.95.

Two very fine bibliographies have also come our way within recent months. These are most useful publications, and we commend them to your attention and use:

- **SHIELD OF REPUBLIC/SWORD OF EMPIRE: A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF UNITED STATES MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1783-1846.** Compiled by John C. Fredriksen. Greenwood, 1990. 446 Pages. \$65.00. It covers the first 60 years of U.S. military history.

- **MILITARY AND STRATEGIC POLICY: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY.** Compiled by Benjamin R. Beede. Greenwood, 1990. 360 Pages. \$55.00. Its emphasis is on the post-1960 era and, in particular, the years following the U.S. involvement in the wars in southeast Asia.

A most interesting little book printed in the Soviet Union has come to us by way of Hippocrene Books (1990. 94 Pages. \$5.95, Softbound). It is **A RUSSIAN IN THE U.S. ARMY**, by Artyom Borovik, a Soviet journalist who spent considerable time in Afghanistan covering the war there for the Soviet press. He is now a staff writer of *Ogonyok*, a popular Soviet weekly magazine.

During the summer of 1988, the author spent almost a month at Fort Benning as part of an exchange program. Here are his views on what he saw and whom he talked with. He and his publisher have put together a good story,

and it is a book for all of us to read.

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

- **THE TRAINING OF OFFICERS: FROM MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM TO IRRELEVANCE.** By Martin van Creveld. The Free Press, 1990. 134 Pages. \$19.95. This particular author has never thought much of the U.S. Army's officers and soldiers. Apparently, he thinks less of the officer corps today. Although he pretends to be writing about officer education in all major armies, this book attacks the U.S. Army's present officer school system. In fact, the subtitle of his book pretty much sums up his feeling about that system. Criticism is never easy to take, but it is particularly hard to take from a writer who knows so little about his subject.

- **PUBLIC AFFAIRS: THE MILITARY AND THE MEDIA, 1962-1968.** by William M. Hammond. A volume in the UNITED STATES ARMY IN VIETNAM SERIES. USGPO S/N 008-020-01122-3, \$23.00, Hardbound. Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988. 436 Pages. This book has no more reason for being in the Army's official Vietnam War series than a book on volleyball. It is poor history at best; the Army as such is barely mentioned; the communication media are defended no matter what they do; and the Johnson Administration's public relations policies are continually excoriated. If anything, this book should have been published by the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the U.S. Department of State, for that is the level at which it was written. Hopefully, the follow-on volume will be looked at more closely before it is published.

- **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE KOREAN WAR.** By James L. Stokesbury. Morrow, 1988. 276 Pages. \$18.95. If you have only a hazy knowledge of

the Korean War, this is the book you want to use to refresh your memory. If you have little or no knowledge of that war, this is where you want to start your reading. The book is well written, and the author has no axes to grind. He covers the entire war, offers "lessons learned and unlearned," and suggests further reading. An excellent piece of work.

• **THE ENLIGHTENED SOLDIER: SCHARNHORST AND THE MILITARISCHE GESELLSCHAFT IN BERLIN, 1801-1805.** By Charles E. White. Praeger, 1988. 264 Pages. \$42.95. Gerhard Johann David von Scharnhorst was not Prussian by birth. He was a Hanoverian who in early 1801 transferred to Prussian service in Berlin. He is generally considered the founder of the modern German Great General Staff, and in this book, a refinement of his doctoral dissertation, the author tells us how and why Scharnhorst was able to do what he did in a country that was ruled by an absolute monarch and whose aristocracy did not believe in either work or education. He also describes the establishment and operation of the military society in Berlin—a volunteer society at the beginning to discuss military affairs—whose purpose as Scharnhorst saw it was "to instruct its members through the exchange of ideas in all areas of the art of war, in a manner that would encourage them to seek out truth." The author also tells us of the various other educational activities his subject was involved in, but he emphasizes the fact that Scharnhorst was a very capable battlefield commander. All in all, this is a fine piece of work.

• **BATTLE FOR STALINGRAD: THE 1943 SOVIET GENERAL STAFF STUDY.** Edited by Louis Rotundo. Pergamon-Brassey's, 1989. 340 Pages. \$47.00. This is the second such study that we have mentioned in our book review section. This particular study was prepared and issued by the Soviet General Staff as Study Number 6 in 1943. It represents a thorough operational analysis with significant tactical instructions on one of the most important military campaigns of World War II.

• **MACHINEGUNS: A PICTORI-**

AL, TACTICAL, AND PRACTICAL HISTORY. By Jim Thompson. Paladin Press, 1989. 238 Pages. The author has written his book primarily "on the assumption that anyone who buys this text is interested in actually shooting or owning automatic weapons, or is pondering such an expenditure." He admits there are more comprehensive machinegun books, but he feels his own book offers something they do not—practical information, enough history to understand a particular machinegun's use, and a great amount of useful information about ammunition. All Infantrymen should enjoy this one.

• **GUNS OF THE ELITE: SPECIAL FORCE FIREARMS, 1940 TO THE PRESENT.** By George Markham. Sterling, 1989. 184 Pages. \$17.95, Softbound. The author tells us of the many weapons that special force-type units around the world have used since 1940. The book is divided into sections that describe handguns, machineguns and submachineguns, rifles, sniper rifles and sights, and support weapons. More than 250 photographs, line drawings, and diagrams illustrate the text. The author includes special how-to-fire sections, a special study of the Kalashnikov, and his opinions on the merits and faults of the various firearms and their ammunition. Another one for the Infantryman.

• **COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT OF THE GERMAN ARMY, 1933-1945.** By Charles J. Barger. Paladin Press, 1989. 179 Pages, Softbound. A comprehensive reference on the tactical field equipment used by the German Army between 1933 and 1945. It covers such items as field telephones, transmitters, receivers, switchboards, and accessories. It also offers operating instructions for the various models of equipment. This book should be of great interest to the military historian, the military collector, and the radio enthusiast.

Now here are some of our longer reviews:

THE WAR FOR SOUTH VIETNAM, 1954-1975. By Anthony James Joes (Praeger, 1989. 176 Pages. \$39.95). Reviewed by Doctor Joe P.

Dunn, Converse College.

This book fills a niche in the increasing number of texts coming out on the Vietnam War—a short, readable volume for the novice student written from a "revisionist" (i.e., conservative centrist) perspective.

It has many strengths: It is quite accessible for the non-specialist; it attempts to cover the background in Vietnamese history and politics and the long origins of the conflict that are necessary to an understanding of the context of U.S. involvement; it affords balanced insight into the contending military forces without the romanticized clichés abundant in many accounts of the communist guerrillas; it incisively critiques inadequate U.S. military strategy and tactics; it challenges the "prevailing wisdom" on many issues; and it has a provocative conclusion.

The book does have certain weaknesses. For example, the author is not a Vietnam specialist. His book is based entirely upon secondary sources and his bibliography has some curious omissions. And while he perceptively confronts well established shibboleths, he tends toward the same absolute certainty that he challenges in those with different perspectives.

In sum, this is a useful book, one in line with new revisionist writings such as Phillip B. Davidson's *Vietnam at War* (1988) and F. Charles Parker IV's *Vietnam: Strategy for a Stalemate* (1989). Its price, however, is outrageous.

THE FORGOTTEN VICTOR: GENERAL SIR RICHARD O'CONNOR. By John Baynes (Brassey's [UK], 1989. 320 Pages). Reviewed by Major Harold E. Raugh, Jr., United States Army.

British Army General Sir Richard O'Connor was largely responsible for the first significant British military victory in World War II—Operation *Compass* (December 1940-February 1941—during which his 32,000-man Western Desert Force in North Africa advanced more than 500 miles, destroyed an Italian army of ten divisions, and captured

more than 130,000 prisoners and a vast amount of equipment. In April 1941, at the height of his power, O'Connor was captured. By the time he escaped in December 1943, he had already faded into obscurity and since then has been undeservedly relegated to history's hinterland.

Born in 1889, O'Connor was commissioned into the British Army in 1909. During World War I he served both on the Western Front and in Italy. During the inter-war years, he filled a number of leadership positions, all of which culminated with his command of the 7th Division in Palestine in 1938-1939.

On 17 June 1940, the day France made peace with Germany, O'Connor was promoted to lieutenant general and confirmed as commander of the Western Desert Force.

Following his escape, in January 1944 he was given command of the VIII Corps, which he led through some of the hardest fighting in Normandy.

He was reassigned to India in December 1944, promoted to full general in April 1945, and returned to England in June 1946 to serve as Adjutant General of the Forces. Always concerned with the morale and welfare of the soldiers, O'Connor argued against a plan to reduce the number of men being sent home from the Far East for demobilization. Overruled by the Army Council, O'Connor submitted his resignation, expecting the full support of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Bernard Montgomery. But that support was not forthcoming, and O'Connor was forced into retirement.

He served as Colonel of his Regiment and remained active in a number of other military and religious activities before his death in 1981.

John Baynes, a noted British military writer, has done a fine job with this book, the first full length biography of O'Connor. He has succeeded in capturing this charismatic warrior's personality, but is rather too kind in his assessment of the effect O'Connor's 32-month imprisonment had on his subsequent military performance. His well-written text is supplemented superbly by

45 fascinating photographs and 12 easy-to-understand maps.

THE SOLDIER'S WAR, 1914-1918. By Peter H. Little (Sterling, 1989. 256 Pages. \$29.95). Reviewed by Colonel David A. Rolston, United States Army.

This is the last of three volumes on the men who fought World War I. The first two covered the war at sea and in the air. This one, of course, deals specifically with ground soldiers.

The author's purpose is to relate to the reader what the war was like for the individual soldier in the trenches. Accordingly, he focuses on the regiment and below and understandably disregards strategy and politics except where they had a direct effect on the thoughts and morale of the front-line soldiers.

Diaries, letters, photographs, and interviews—the author uses all of these to piece together a picture of everyday life. From going over the top to regimental smokers, nearly every aspect is touched. Troop riots, brothels, drunkenness, and self-inflicted wounds are counter-balanced by heroics, daring exploits, and dedication to the regiment.

This is a well-written book, generously filled with photographs, that should be of interest to the military reader. Unfortunately, by covering all of the war's different theaters, the author has had to limit his discussion on specific campaigns and fronts. But he made the correct choice, and this has resulted in totally enjoyable and informative reading.

BROWN WATER, BLACK BERTS. By Thomas J. Cutler (Naval Institute Press, 1988. 425 Pages. \$21.95.) Reviewed by Leroy Thompson, Manchester, Missouri.

Although several histories have been written and published about the Navy's riverine forces during the Vietnam War, they have tended to be little more than broad overviews. This book spotlights the sailors who made the riverine forces work. At the same time, the author manages to do a good job of describing

the strategical goals that determined the riverine mission.

Although the book deals with sailors, their experiences will not seem unfamiliar to infantrymen. Search and clear operations, helicopter-supported sweeps, ambushes and counterambushes—these and many other types of operations carried out by the riverine forces were tactically similar to those carried out by infantrymen throughout Vietnam.

Of particular interest to the Army reader is the section that deals with the Mobile Riverine Force's operations with the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong delta. The evolution of the tactics used and the adaptation of naval and army logistical systems to fit the combined mission showed a remarkable flexibility and willingness to make things work.

Lessons learned during the Civil War and later in China had to be relearned or updated to face this new riverine war. It is important, therefore, for infantrymen today to remember the lessons cited here, for they may well find themselves in the future fighting along waterways similar to those encountered in Vietnam.

The book is highly recommended. It is sound military history mixed with good "there I was" yarns, always a hard combination to beat.

TREAT 'EM ROUGH: THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN ARMOR, 1917-1920. By Dale E. Wilson (Presidio Press, 1989. 257 Pages. \$24.95). Reviewed by Captain David Niedringhaus, United States Army.

The United States Army has had a heavy tank and mechanized force orientation since World War II, and the performance of U.S. tank units and the development of tank doctrine during that time has been well documented. Until now, however, there has been no comprehensive account of the inception, early development, and initial combat performance of U.S. tank units during World War I. That void has now been admirably filled by this book.

The author, a serving U.S. Army

officer, presents a straightforward chronicle of the Army's efforts to become familiar with a strange new way of waging war after the country's entry into the war in 1917. He tells a fascinating story, which is made more intriguing by the prominent role that two young Army captains—George S. Patton and Dwight D. Eisenhower, played in the training of U.S. tankers and in the development of early U.S. tank doctrine.

Patton's contributions, in particular, were monumental. The first U.S. soldier officially assigned to duty with tanks, he was appointed to head the AEF's Light Tank School at Langres, France. In this role, Patton had an opportunity to make recommendations about unit organization, armament, training, and tactical doctrine that would eventually form the basis of U.S. tank employment during the 1918 fall offensives.

Eisenhower, meanwhile, back in the United States, commanded a tank training center at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which was responsible for seeing that prospective tankers received adequate training despite the fact that there were, initially, no tanks available to train them on. By the end of the war, Eisenhower was a lieutenant colonel, and his post—Camp Colt—at any given time was home to more than 10,000 enlisted soldiers and 600 officers.

The author has incorporated a wide range of primary sources, and the book contains a superb collection of previously unpublished photographs. It also has a large number of maps, but many of them, unfortunately, are of marginal value at best. This, along with the author's tendency to use the same phrases repeatedly, is annoying but is not a significant flaw. Overall, it is a valuable and informative book.

NAPOLEON AND HITLER: A COMPARATIVE BIOGRAPHY. By Desmond Seward (Viking Penguin Press, 1988. 319 Pages. \$19.95). Reviewed by Colonel John C. Spence III, United States Army Reserve.

Napoleon's invasion of Russia on 23

June 1812, and Hitler's invasion of Russia on 22 June 1941, form only one of the many intriguing parallels between these two warlords. Many other comparisons are drawn in this short, but fact-filled book.

Both men rose from relatively meager beginnings. Each had an insatiable lust for power. Each skillfully manipulated the existing military establishment to consolidate his own power. Each demanded and commanded the total allegiance of their subordinates. Once in power, each arrogantly disregarded the sound military advice of professional officers.

Each engaged in coalition warfare by using troops from satellite states to attack Russia. Each maintained irrational concepts of victory, even when total defeat was imminent and apparent. Finally, as a result of their unlimited ambitions, each left Europe in ruin and chaos.

Desmond Seward, a British writer, does describe the many parallels in the careers of the two men. But, as he correctly points out, the contrasts should be considered as well as the comparisons. Above all, Seward draws careful moral distinctions between Napoleon and Hitler. Although each recklessly sent soldiers into combat to meet certain death and maiming, Napoleon was not the genocidal maniac that Hitler was.

Finally, it should be noted that while Napoleon died in exile and disgrace, his legacy was not altogether negative. The Corsican gave the French people a legal code and an administrative political structure that endures to this day. His remains rest in honor at the Hotel Des Invalides in Paris. On the other hand, the Austrian corporal left a legacy of death, destruction, and a division of Europe that is only slowly being overcome today.

GEORGE B. McCLELLAN: THE YOUNG NAPOLEON. By Stephen W. Sears (Ticknor and Fields, 1988. 482 Pages. \$24.95). Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, United States Air Force.

General George B. McClellan was

probably the most controversial general serving during the Civil War, particularly on the Union side.

The author, a well known writer on Civil War affairs, has brought together this new biography of McClellan from a varied selection of the general's personal papers and letters, official documents, and the written accounts of numerous participants. It will certainly stand as the authoritative biography on the subject for some time to come.

Sears provides an excellent survey of McClellan's military and civilian careers, as well as coverage of his unsuccessful presidential campaign in 1864 when his opponent was Abraham Lincoln. He provides interesting insights into the ways in which McClellan's reliance on faulty intelligence sources and estimates of enemy strength was allowed to cripple his own planning and campaigning.

Finally, if you have ever wondered why U.S. military personnel are prohibited from participating actively in politics, this book provides a clear explanation.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

ABOUT FACE: THE ODYSSEY OF AN AMERICAN WARRIOR. By David Hackworth and Julie Sherman. Touchstone Books. Originally published in hard cover in 1989. Simon and Schuster, 1990. 875 Pages. \$14.95. Softbound.

MARCH OR DIE: A NEW HISTORY OF THE FRENCH FOREIGN LEGION. By Tony Geraghty. First published in hard cover in 1987. Facts on File, 1990. 352 Pages. \$12.95. Softbound.

DIVISION COMMANDER: A BIOGRAPHY OF MAJOR GENERAL NORMAN D. COTA. By Robert A. Miller. The Reprint Company, Publishers (P.O. Box 5401, Spartanburg, SC 29304), 1989. 202 Pages. \$19.00.

THE MAKING OF A PARATROOPER: AIRBORNE TRAINING AND COMBAT IN WORLD WAR II. By Kurt Gabel. University Press of Kansas, 1990. 288 Pages. \$25.00.

CAPTURED ON CORREGIDOR: DIARY OF AN AMERICAN P.O.W. IN WORLD WAR II. By John M. Wright, Jr. McFarland and Company (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640), 1988. 192 Pages. \$20.95.

A TIME FOR GIANTS. By D. Clayton James. Franklin Watts, 1987. 346 Pages. \$19.95.

OUTPOSTS AND ALLIES: U.S. ARMY LOGISTICS IN THE COLD WAR, 1945-1953. By James A. Huston. Associated University Presses, 1988. 349 Pages. \$39.50.