

1812: NAPOLEON'S RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN. By Richard K. Riehn. McGraw-Hill, 1990. 525 Pages. \$24.95. Reviewed by Colonel John C. Spence, III, United States Army Reserve.

The author of this book dispels much of the mythology that has surrounded the military genius of Napoleon during the Russian campaign. This well-documented book provides the explanation for the statement that in "only 5 months and 21 days, the mightiest army the world had ever seen was all but totally destroyed."

Riehn places the invasion in the context of the social and political era of a Europe that had been convulsed by wars since the French Revolution. This was a period marked not only by the massive mobilization of armies and the extensive redrawing of the maps of countries but also by the rise of nationalism.

Conventional wisdom has taught that the unexpected bitter cold of the Russian winter was the primary cause of the disaster in Russia. Throughout this book, however, the author demonstrates that the weather factor was only an excuse and that it led to the myth of Napoleonic invincibility.

There is ample documentation to show that shortsighted judgment, faulty tactical decisions and, above all, inattention to logistics contributed to the defeat of the Grand Army. Napoleon exhibited great genius in raising mass armies from the civilian population. In fact, his troops in the Russian Campaign were a multi-national and multi-ethnic force. But because his military organization was best-suited for short and decisive campaigns, long-range and long-term logistical support was sorely neglected.

Fighting in Russia, given its massive territory and sparse resources available for foraging, was an unprecedented experience for Napoleon. The limits of a mass army were readily displayed in this disaster. The author suggests that without railroads and telegraph, which had yet to be invented, such a mass army was an anachronism.

As in many recent books on this period, this book contains an excellent appendix, detailing unit strengths throughout the campaign. It is therefore a valuable resource work for this period of history.

RETREAT HELL. WE'RE JUST ATTACKING IN ANOTHER DIRECTION. By Jim Wilson. William Morris and Company, Inc., 1988. 349 Pages. \$19.95. Reviewed by Mike Fisher, Kansas State University.

On 24 June 1950, State Department cable #925 alerted the United States that the uneasy peace that followed World War II had ended. North Korean communist soldiers had invaded South Korea, a U.S. ally.

This book relates the epic struggle of the U.S. First Marine Division during its retrograde movement from the mountainous Chosin Reservoir area in Northern Korea during November and December 1950. The heroism and sacrifice of those Marines have become benchmarks of U.S. feats of arms, told and retold in countless history books. *Retreat Hell* differs dramatically from these other accounts; here, for the first time, the Marines who fought the battle tell their own story.

The echo of those voices cuts across four decades to the windswept ridges and icy mountain passes traversed by automatic weapon fire and marked by the dead and wounded. Despite the passage of time, the events of those two weeks of terrible agony and unbelievable sacrifice remain fresh. Time has mellowed, but not dimmed, the memory of the Marines who, outnumbered ten to one, reversed their advance from north to south, fighting their way through ten divisions of the veteran Chinese Communist Army of the Fourth Route. Marine casualties from 28 November to 11 December would number nearly half the 25,000 Marine effectives who began the march to the sea.

Jim Wilson, an Army Korean War veteran, now an editor for the Los Angeles *Times*, spent three years recreating the story that consumed the men of the First Marine Division 40 years ago. For these men, the problems of high strategy and low politics of the war meant little. What was important was the destruction of the Chinese divisions while bringing the wounded and dead soldiers and the equipment down the 70 miles from Chosin to Hungnam, the sea, and safety.

Those men who lived through the Chosin battle brought with them an added appreciation of the gift of life. As the calm, almost reverent narrative emphasizes, those men who survived never again forgot the value and the fragility of their own lives. For them, life would always remain the answer to the combat infantryman's prayer: "Lord, give me just one more day."

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED
THE RISE AND FALL OF THE THIRD REICH: A HISTORY OF NAZI GERMANY. By William L. Shirer. Complete and Unabridged. First published in hardcover in 1950. Ballantine Books, 1991. 1,599 Pages. \$6.95, Softbound.

TERRAIN AND TACTICS. By Patrick

O'Sullivan. Contributions in Military Studies, Number 115, Greenwood Press, 1991. 182 Pages. \$40.00.

FROM SPEAR TO FLINTLOCK: A HISTORY OF WAR IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION. By Frederic J. Baumgartner. Praeger Publishers, 1991. 368 Pages. \$45.00.

NIXON: VOLUME III, RUIN AND RECOVERY, 1973-1990. By Stephen E. Ambrose. Simon and Schuster, 1991. 667 Pages. \$27.50.

LITTLE FRIENDS: THE FIGHTER PILOT EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR II ENGLAND. By Philip Kaplan and Andy Saunders. Random House, 1991. 256 Pages. \$50.00.

THE LOST EMPIRE: PERCEPTIONS OF SOVIET POLICY SHIFTS IN THE 1990s. Edited by John Hemsley. Brassey's (UK), 1991. 289 Pages. \$63.00.

YANK: THE STORY OF WORLD WAR II AS WRITTEN BY THE SOLDIERS. By the Staff of *Yank*. Brassey's (US), 1991. Originally Published in 1984. 264 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

THE ALMANAC OF TRANSATLANTIC POLITICS: 1991-1992. By Matthew Cossolotto. Brassey's (US), 1991. 448 Pages. \$32.00 Softbound.

HOW TO LOCATE ANYONE WHO IS OR HAS BEEN IN THE MILITARY: ARMED FORCES LOCATOR DIRECTORY. By Lieutenant Colonel Richard S. Johnson. Military Information Enterprises (P.O. Box 5143, Burlington, NC 27216), 163 Pages. \$16.00, Softbound.

THE WORLD WAR II QUIZ BOOK. By John Malone. A Quill Book. William Morrow and Company, 1991. 210 Pages. \$9.00, Softbound.

BEYOND THE UNIFORM: A CAREER TRANSITION GUIDE FOR VETERANS AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES. By W. Dean Lee. John Wiley and Sons, 1991. 215 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

SHERMAN'S MARCH. By Richard Wheeler. HarperCollins, 1991. First published in hardcover in 1978. 241 Pages. \$10.00, Softbound.

THE SIEGE OF VICKSBURG. By Richard Wheeler. First published in hardcover in 1978. HarperCollins, 1991. 257 Pages. \$10.00, Softbound.

ALWAYS HOME: 50 YEARS OF USO—THE OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC HISTORY. By Frank Coffey. Brassey's (US), 1991. 190 Pages. \$29.95.

ROMANCING VIETNAM: INSIDE THE BOAT COUNTRY. By Justin Wintle. Pantheon Books, 1991. 464 Pages. \$25.00.

DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS: MILITARY INFORMATION YOU'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO KNOW. By James F. Dunnigan, with Al Nofi. William Morrow and Company, 1990. 464 Pages. \$19.95.

TANKS IN THE WIRE: THE FIRST USE OF ENEMY ARMOR IN VIETNAM. By David B. Stockwell. Daring Books, 1989. 205 Pages. \$17.95.

SCRAPS OF PAPER: THE DISARMAMENT TREATIES BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS. By Harlow A. Hyde. Media Publishing, 1988. 456 Pages. \$18.95.