

BOOK REVIEWS



***Battle for Korea: The Associated Press History of the Korean Conflict.* By Robert J. Dvorchak and the Writers and Photographers of the Associated Press. Combined Books, Inc., 1993. 319 Pages. \$34.95.**

Seldom have U.S. soldiers faced a more aggressive and implacable foe than the armies that poured into South Korea in the early hours of 25 June 1950, and it is encouraging to see that the Korean War is being examined anew for the lessons it has to offer. These lessons are not limited to the tactical lessons learned at terrible cost, but also include operations that require commanders to deal with masses of refugees, with unrest in prisoner of war compounds, with the evacuation of noncombatants from facilities destined for demolition.

Today, our attention is drawn to the military realities of operations other than war, and as we plan for peace operations, humanitarian assistance, civil disturbances, and a number of other contingencies, we need only look to a history of events on the Korean peninsula to see how other leaders faced similar challenges, and why they succeeded or failed. The lessons of Task Force Smith are reflected in the doctrine that guides today's leaders and trainers, but this book touches upon other issues of relevance to the Army that will defend our nation in the next century, and that makes it well worth reading.

Robert Dvorchak's superb main narrative draws upon the experience of the individual soldiers and Marines who fought in the Korean War, and includes many first-hand accounts of the wartime reporters who covered the conflict. The issue of prisoners of war—both captured enemy and UN forces seized by the North Koreans and the Chinese—receives considerable attention, addressing the conduct of Americans held by the North Koreans. The author includes a copy of the code of conduct for U.S. soldiers, which owes much of its substance to the experience of U.S. POWs.

The book contains a great many photographs, some familiar and some never before published. A number of them are not for the squeamish; they portray the atrocities committed by Communist forces against

civilian noncombatants and captured U.S. soldiers. But these, too, have their purpose, showing the nature of an enemy that we have already faced once in this century and may well have to face again.

Battle for Korea affords an excellent overview of the Korean War's chronology and subsequent events and is a bargain—for the insights it offers on the key personalities, for its lucid analysis of the decisions that led us into war, and for the accounts of incredible bravery and sacrifice of men and women who had to face and defeat a fanatical enemy in some of the worst fighting conditions in the history of our armed forces. Buy it, read it, and share it with your friends; this is a story that needs to be told.

***Reconciliation Road: A Family Odyssey of War and Honor.* By John D. Marshall. Syracuse University Press, 1993. 310 Pages. \$24.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, United States Army, Retired.

S.L.A. (SLAM) Marshall (1900-1977)—grandfather of this book's author—was, in his time, a journalist, a U.S. Army officer (eventually reaching the rank of brigadier general in the Army Reserve), and a prolific writer in the area of military affairs. He was not, and never claimed to be, a military historian. Forrest Pogue, a trained historian who served under Marshall in Europe during World War II and was later a member of the Army's Office of the Chief of Military History, said of him:

[Marshall] did not have a historian's training and, I fear, had a certain contempt for pedants who let exact facts stand in the way of a good story. At times, when he was writing an article or pushing some point of doctrine, he was capable of pulling a figure out of the air and suggesting that this was based on the solid information gathered by the 200 combat historians under his command. Some of us were in total disagreement.

Still, SLAM's development of the combat interview technique at Makin and Kwajalein and his many post-World War II writings—particularly *Men Against Fire* and *The Soldier's Load and the Mobility of a*

Nation—made him well-known throughout the Army, at least at the highest levels. In fact, the Army's leaders were so impressed that they elevated him to the status of military genius. For some 20 years—from the late 1940s to the late 1960s—everything he wrote or said was accepted as gospel. (I doubt that even Clausewitz, come back to life, would have been awarded higher honors.) Even today, SLAM's writings are on the recommended reading lists throughout the Army's school system.

SLAM learned one important thing during his World War II service—how to make it pay off when he returned to civilian life in 1946. With few exceptions, everything he wrote during and after the war was commercially printed and brought him monetary profits. For these publications, he used not only his own field notes (which can no longer be located) but also the official after-action reports of the units involved and the field notes submitted by other historians, records that were probably not available to other writers. He even took his well-received *Armed Forces Officer*—written under contract for the Army—massaged it a bit, and republished it commercially under the title *The Officer As a Leader*.

In a sense, then, SLAM had the best of both worlds: He was permitted access to official records, many probably classified at the time he saw them, and with a passing nod to the Army—a brief report, an incomplete study—used the information as a basis for his war stories *The River and the Gauntlet*, *Battle at Best*, *Pork Chop Hill*, *Ambush*, and all the rest. And the Army's leaders blessed each and every one.

SLAM did have his critics in the Army, particularly in the ranks of combat infantrymen, of which I am one. We could not understand how a newspaperman—someone who had never led men in battle (despite his claim to have done so during World War I) and who had never spent a day with a rifle platoon or company in battle—could be so revered by our senior commanders. To us, most of *Men Against Fire* was a joke, or perhaps a fraud perpetrated by a master storyteller, a voyeur-warrior who had ingratiated himself with the “right” people. We did not

feel he could in any way compare to the likes of Ernie Pyle.

Today, there are more critics, who have raised serious doubts about Marshall the man and Marshall the military writer. They point out that he lied about his World War I military service; lied about the number of combat interviews he conducted during World War II; had no basis in fact for stating that no more than 25 percent of the Army's infantrymen ever fired their weapons in combat; masqueraded as a general officer from 1952 to 1957; and was often photographed wearing the Combat Infantryman Badge (I have my doubts about the bronze arrowhead he is pictured wearing on his Pacific ribbon, along with three campaign stars). And finally, the critics say, his concept and purpose of combat interviews could not approach that developed by Hugh Cole, an outstanding military historian who served with the Third Army during World War II and who spelled out his concept in a strongly worded reply to Marshall in a memorandum dated 9 December 1944. (That memorandum is found in Appendix B of Major Williams's TRADOC historical monograph mentioned in this book.)

To counter the growing criticism, John D. Marshall, a former Army officer himself, set out from his homebase in Seattle on a cross-country tour to talk with the people who knew and admired his grandfather and to confront certain of SLAM's critics. And yet, it seems to me that John's personal "odyssey" was far more important to him than his grandfather's legacy. After graduating from the Army's senior ROTC program at the University of Virginia in 1969, and after receiving his commission and attending a basic officer course at Fort Benning, John became a conscientious objector (CO) and left the Army. This action, during the Vietnam War, caused SLAM to write him a blistering letter of condemnation, and the two never again spoke with or saw each other.

The sting of that letter went deep and apparently still festers in John's inner being; he cannot forget it. He believes he was right in what he did, and what he needs from this trip is the support of other, certain kinds of people. During his interviews, therefore, he often raises the subject, trying to draw out the interviewees' thoughts on his CO status.

Some give him great solace. Along the way, however, he falls into a pattern: Those who consider SLAM a great historian are pictured in a flattering manner: John Westover is a "real salt-of-the-Midwest"; Lucian K. Truscott, III, "a tough-talking, hard-charger"; Frank Vandiver, "a man of great

exuberance"; Sidney Berry, "an unmistakable presence for a general"; and so on. But his critics are handled differently: David Hackworth is "a person marked by his limited education and intellect"; Bud Leinbaugh (now dead), "slim of build, with a hound dog face and a countenance so dour it appears he has been sucking on a lemon"; and me, I am "professionally jealous" of SLAM, whatever that means (since John never used this term during our talk at Fort Benning, I do not know).

At the end of his almost three-month "odyssey," John Marshall concludes that his grandfather was not a fraud, saying that his work still "stands, not perfect, but solid, important, even historic." I prefer Roy Appleman's description: "SLAM's work is of uneven proportions and must be used with discretion."

As for his personal "odyssey," John Marshall believes, to paraphrase John F. Kennedy's words, that the conscientious objector will eventually enjoy the same reputation and prestige the warrior does. That day has certainly come for those COs who served willingly and well in non-combatant positions. It may never come for those who chose to turn their backs to their country.

***How Great Generals Win.* By Bevin Alexander. W.W. Norton and Company, 1993. 320 Pages. \$25.00.** Reviewed by Dr. Charles E. White, Infantry School Historian.

How Great Generals Win is an interesting book that probes the secrets of great generals, 13 dynamic leaders from ancient times to the present: Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Stonewall Jackson, William Tecumseh Sherman, Lawrence of Arabia, Allenby, Mao Tse-tung (Zedong), Heinz Guderian, Erich von Manstein, Erwin Rommel, and Douglas MacArthur.

Author Bevin Alexander admits that his choice of the "great" generals was conditioned by his experiences in Korea:

The lesson I learned from Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge was that great generals do not act as did the generals who ordered the ridgeline battles in Korea. Great generals do not repeat what has failed before. They do not send troops directly into battle for which the enemy is prepared and waiting. On the contrary, great generals strike where they are least expected against opposition that is weak and disorganized.

From this experience and his later study of military history, Alexander developed a penchant for generals who practiced maneuver warfare and Liddell Hart's concept of the

"indirect approach." As a result, this book focuses on what Alexander considers the essence of "great" generalship.

He says that "great" generals are those who seek to envelop their opponents through the "indirect approach." Generals who use frontal, attritional assaults (including Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant) are roundly condemned. But this definition of greatness is so narrow that it leaves the author open to criticism. For example, it is a gross misinterpretation of history to say, as he does, that Lee could "easily have swung past" Meade's army at Gettysburg (and on to Harrisburg and Philadelphia), while Grant's campaign in Virginia in 1864 nearly cost the Union the war. The facts simply do not support such conclusions.

Any reasonable study of the U.S. Civil War will show that both Lee and Grant were great generals who practiced maneuver warfare. Both tried to outmaneuver their opponents whenever possible. Unfortunately, there were times when their opponents were very capable adversaries who took steps to prevent being enveloped. Does this mean that Lee and Grant are not to be considered "great"? Sadly, Alexander misses this subtle point.

A closer look at the 13 "great" generals will reveal some striking inconsistencies. First, all of the generals had secure bases from which to operate while their opponents did not. Second, Alexander's generals had organizations that were generally more flexible than their enemies' structures. Third, all 13 had intelligence apparatuses that were superior to those of their opponents. Last, they all sought to envelop their opponents by means of the "indirect approach." In other words, all of Alexander's great generals had a distinct advantage over their opponents at the particular times and places the author chose to illustrate his point. And this is why Lee and Grant are not considered "great."

Why, then, is Napoleon on the list? When discussing the generalship of Napoleon, Alexander conveniently ignores the attritional battles Napoleon fought against Russia in 1812 and the Allied coalition in 1813. Moreover, he fails to discuss that great frontal assault Napoleon attempted at Waterloo in 1815. Instead, he concentrates on those aspects of Napoleonic warfare that fit his model of maneuver warfare and the "indirect approach." Why did Alexander not do the same for Lee and Grant?

What about all the other generals in history who do not fit the author's paradigm? What about Alexander "the Great," or Frederick "the Great"? Any reader of this book

needs to understand the author's intent and realize that he has ransacked history to produce a list of "great" generals who practiced what *he* preaches. The reader must therefore ask probing questions when confronting such arguments as those put forth in this book.

Nevertheless, *How Great Generals Win* is an interesting and informative book, and the author brings out many good points to prove his theory of "greatness." Just keep his agenda in mind.

***Rangers At War: Combat Recon in Vietnam.* By Shelby L. Stanton. Orion Books, 1992. 382 Pages. \$25.00.** Reviewed by Leroy Thompson, Manchester, Missouri.

As with Shelby Stanton's other works on the Vietnam War, this one combines excellent scholarship with the feel for the war of one who served. The organization of this work is especially appealing, as it offers first an overall view of the development of the Rangers as well as the evolution of combat reconnaissance in Vietnam. Once this background has been established, much of the rest of the book is organized by unit, primarily divisions but also independent brigades and field force reconnaissance elements. This organization allows the researcher or veteran who is interested primarily in one unit to find the relevant information easily. A separate chapter deals with Ranger advisors who served in Vietnam, and a concluding chapter examines the Ranger course during the conflict, the MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) Recondo School, and the lessons learned from combat reconnaissance in Vietnam. Finally, a well-organized group of appendixes allows rapid analysis of Ranger unit organization, logistical requirements, losses, and the like. Rounding out the book are some of the best maps available in any work on the conflict. The index is also a comprehensive reference aid.

Rangers At War has information to offer to those who are interested in Special Operations history, as well as those interested in the Vietnam War. Since so few Vietnam Ranger or long range reconnaissance patrol veterans remain on active duty to pass on their experience by word of mouth, light infantry, Ranger, or airborne personnel should find this a worthwhile addition to their store of professional knowledge.

In addition to reviewing the book, I have already had occasion to refer to it numerous

times to answer factual questions about unit designations, areas of operation, and tables of organization and equipment. I recommend the book highly. My only problem with it, in fact, is deciding whether to put it on my Vietnam shelf or my Special Operations shelf so I can find it easily the next time I need it.

***The Chiefs: The Story of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff.* By Bill Jackson and Dwin Bramall. Brassey's (UK), 1992. 508 Pages. \$39.95.** Reviewed by Major Harold E. Raugh, Jr., United States Army.

Although it is the infantryman behind the bayonet who closes with and destroys the enemy, the tactical success can be lost by those who are responsible for the direction of the war at higher levels. The evolution, policies, personalities, and effectiveness of the United Kingdom Chiefs of Staff—those responsible for the higher conduct of war—is the subject of the superb study *The Chiefs*.

After introducing the general topic and placing it in its historical context, the authors begin with the formation of the Committee of Imperial Defense in 1904 in the wake of the British Army's near-disastrous performance, in the South African (Second Boer) War. The evolution of the UK Chiefs of Staff—collectively and individually, in success and failure—is recounted and assessed in rich detail.

Through world wars, colonial campaigns, and perhaps an even greater enemy—fiscal retrenchment—the Chiefs became a much more effective instrument for waging war. (Indeed, their institutionalization in the early 1920s set the pattern for strategic coordination and policy cooperation that the United States later emulated with great effect.) The next-to-last chapter, focusing on the tremendous victory in the Falklands campaign, clearly illustrates the unparalleled effectiveness of the Chiefs of Staff system.

This superb study is well written and frequently witty as well. Each of the 13 chapters includes a detailed chronology and a list of key personages, and more than 50 excellent photographs enlivens the text. The use of primary and secondary sources is generally good, with the significant exception of the authors' heavy reliance, in the two World War II chapters, on Winston Churchill's self-serving and fact-distorting "personal history" of the conflict. Three appendixes, references, bibliography, and index conclude the book.

The authors, listed on the dust jacket as simply Bill Jackson and Dwin Bramall, are in fact, General Sir William Jackson, who served as an Assistant Chief of the General Staff (1968-1970) and in other senior command and staff positions, and a noted military historian in his own right; and Field Marshal Lord Bramall, who served as Vice Chief of the Defense Staff (1978-1979), Chief of the General Staff during the 1982 Falklands War, and Chief of the Defense Staff (equivalent to the U.S. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff) from 1982 to 1985. By virtue of their professional and personal experience and their previous contributions to military history, no better authors could have been found to write this study.

The 20th century has been a tumultuous era of unprecedented world wars and regional conflicts, many involving the armed forces of the United Kingdom. Their many successes reflect the increasingly effective direction of the war by the Chiefs of Staff. This insightful study is highly recommended to all who are interested in British military history and the often fragile relationship between military leaders and their civilian superiors.

***No Shining Armor: The Marines at War in Vietnam: An Oral History.* By Otto J. Lehrack. University Press of Kansas, 1992. 398 Pages.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

Add this excellent book to the best of the several outstanding oral histories on various aspects of the Vietnam War. Author Otto Lehrack spent five years collecting more than 3,000 pages of interviews with members of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, the unit in which he served during the war.

During its four years in country—from its initial mission of security at Chu Lai in May 1965, through service around Danang, on and into the DMZ, at Khe Sanh, on the Rockpile, through standdown on 1 October 1969—the battalion fought in every section of I Corps. The battalion's experiences are representative of Marines and other combat soldiers during the height of the war.

To provide a framework, the author injects brief narratives drawn from the battalion's command chronologies and the work of other scholars to augment the story, essentially told by the participants at the ground level. This model of combat oral history belongs alongside Eric Hammel's equally fascinating narratives *Ambush Valley*, *Fire in*

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the Streets, and *Khe Sanh: Siege in the Clouds*, as the Marine combat histories of the war.

Sykes' Regular Infantry Division, 1861-1864: A History of Regular United States Infantry Operations in the Civil War's Eastern Theater. By Timothy J. Reese. McFarland & Company, 1990. 466 Pages. \$45.00. Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, United States Air Force, Retired.

When you read about the history of the Civil War, most of the units you'll see mentioned were volunteer forces raised by individual states in the north. But look closer, and you'll also see several noteworthy units with such designations as 2nd U.S. Artillery, 2nd U.S. Infantry, and so on. These are the Regular Army units that were in active Federal service before the war began.

During the years just before 1861, the Regular Army was spread primarily throughout the vast spaces of the American west trying to keep the peace. When the conflict began, most of these units were brought east, although some were taken captive by Confederate forces in Texas and kept prisoner for quite some time.

The Regular Infantry Division, primarily under the command of Colonel George Sykes (hence the title of this book) saw major action from the battle of Bull Run through the beginning of Grant's 1864 campaign. After the Union rout at the first battle of Bull Run, the Regular Army units provided both the nucleus that ensured the protection of Washington and also the continued development and organization of the Union Army in its early months. It also played a significant part in the 1862 Peninsula Campaign, Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and the Wilderness. The Regulars were also used to control the New York draft riots of 1863. Unfortunately, by the time Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox, the Regular Army units had suffered such major losses that none of them were left to be represented there.

Reese has done an outstanding job in writing this divisional history of the Regular Army units that saw action during the Civil War. He concludes the book with several tables that provide the order of battle for Regular units at each of the major battles in which they fought. The well-documented book relies upon numerous personal accounts in addition to the standard official sources and other unit histories.

Overall, this new history completes the picture of the roles both the volunteer troops and the Regular forces of the United States played in bringing the war to a successful conclusion for the North.

To the Gates of Richmond: The Peninsula Campaign. By Stephen W. Sears. Ticknor & Fields, 1992. 468 Pages. \$24.95. Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, United States Army.

The Peninsula Campaign of 1862 was the largest campaign of the U.S. Civil War. Conceived in early spring as a joint operation to bring General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac to the gates of Richmond, it actually encompassed several major battles, including Yorktown and Williamsburg, Fair Oaks, and the Seven Days Battle. More than one-quarter million troops were assembled on the Virginia peninsula for this battle for the capital of the Confederacy.

This book, written by noted Civil War historian Stephen Sears, is the most comprehensive account of the campaign, combining campaign analysis, unit history, and first person accounts of the fighting and leaders who struggled on the peninsula. When the first shot was fired on Malvern Hill on 1 July, McClellan's grand scheme to end the war lay in shambles, a victim of Southern aggressiveness, coupled with his own mediocre generalship and tactical incompetence.

What makes this history so applicable to today's leaders is the analysis of why Robert E. Lee won in the campaign even though his casualties far exceeded those of his opponent, and his own staff and battle coordination were substandard. The Lee who emerges from these pages is a confident commander who seizes the initiative throughout the campaign and strives to synchronize his subordinate elements in a classic battle of annihilation. According to Sears, Lee was perfectly confident that his strategy would produce a decisive result.

Equally important for contemporary officers are the lessons to be learned from the Peninsula Campaign. While McClellan seemed incapable of constructive self-analysis, Lee reorganized his army, appointed battle-proven lieutenants to higher commands, ruthlessly dismissed officers who failed to demonstrate combat leadership, and established a stronger commissary system. The net result was the emergence of one of the most famous armies in American history, the Army of Northern Virginia. Within a month of assuming command, Lee took this army

north to Manassas and Sharpsburg, far from the gates of Richmond.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

The End of a Military Century? By Albert Legault. International Development Research Centre, Canada, 1993. 116 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

Korea: The First War We Lost. Revised edition. By Bevin Alexander. Published in hard cover in 1986. Hippocrene Books, 1993. 580 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

Jungle in Black. By Steve Maguire. Bantam Falcon, 1992. 288 Pages.

God's Dodger. By G.W. Stephen Brodsky. Elysium Publishing Company (8598 Moxon Terrace, Sidney, B.C., V8L 1K6, Canada), 1993. \$16.00, Softbound.

After the Storm: The Changing Military Balance in the Middle East. By Anthony H. Cordesman. Westview Press, 1993. 811 Pages. \$65.00.

Hoodwinking Hitler: The Normandy Deception. By William B. Breuer. Praeger, 1993. 272 Pages. \$24.95.

The World Factbook: 1993-94. By the Central Intelligence Agency. Brassey's (US), 1993. 430 Pages. \$30.00.

Crusade: Undercover Against the Mafia & KGB. By Tom Tripodi with Joseph P. DeSario. Brassey's (US), 1993. 288 Pages. \$23.00.

Colleges and Universities in World War II. By V.R. Cardozier. Praeger, 1993. 264 Pages. \$49.95.

Assignment: Pentagon: The Insider's Guide to the Potomac Puzzle Palace. Second Edition, Revised. By Major General Perry M. Smith, USAF, Retired. Brassey's (US), 1993. 298 Pages. \$16.00, Softbound.

"Mad Jack": The Biography of Captain John Percival, USN, 1779-1862. By David F. Long. Contributions to Military Studies, No. 136. Greenwood Press, 1993. 288 Pages. \$55.00.

Warhog: Flying the A-10 in the Gulf War. By William L. Smallwood. Brassey's (US), 1993. 288 Pages. \$22.00.

Courage in the Skies: Great Air Battles from the Somme to DESERT STORM. By J.E. Johnson and P.B. Lucas. Trafalgar Square (North Pomfret, VT 05053), 1993. 208 Pages. \$39.95.

In Many A Strife: General Gerald C. Thomas and the U.S. Marine Corps, 1917-1956. By Allan R. Millett. Naval Institute Press, 1993. 456 Pages. \$39.95.

Crossed Currents: Navy Women from WWI to Tailhook. By Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall. Brassey's (US), 1993. 356 Pages. \$24.00.

Not for Sale at Any Price: How We Can Save America for our Children. By Ross Perot. Hyperion, 1993. 155 Pages. \$5.95, 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, VT 27216), 1993. 264 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

Verification: The Key to Arms Control in the 1990s. By John G. Tower, James Brown, and William K. Cheek. Brassey's (US), 1992. \$32.00.

Chemical Soldiers: British Gas Warfare in World War I. By Donald Richter. University Press of Kansas, 1992. 320 Pages. \$35.00.