

# BOOK REVIEWS



During the past few months, INFANTRY has received many books for review on the subject of the 6 June 1944 invasion of Normandy by Allied forces. The following are some that should be of interest to our readers:

***D-Day, 1944.* Edited by Theodore A. Wilson. Published for The Eisenhower Foundation, Abilene, Kansas, by the University of Kansas, 1994. 420 Pages. \$45.00, Hardcover; \$22.50, Softbound.** This book is a revised edition of *D-Day: The Normandy Invasion in Retrospect*, published in 1971, with an added foreword by John S.D. Eisenhower. In it, 20 noted authors—including Robin Higham, Forrest C. Pogue, and Mark A. Stoler—reassess Operation OVERLORD and show why it retains such a prominent place in our national memory. This text is noteworthy because it draws upon a number of newly available sources to examine coalition warfighting, a concept most recently exploited to great advantage in the Gulf War.

***The Longest Day.* By Cornelius Ryan. Touchstone Books, 1994. 350 Pages. \$11.00, Softbound.** This is, of course, a reprint of the classic book originally published in 1959, and is well worth the modest price. The author complements accounts of the events on D-Day with vignettes narrated by the soldiers and civilians who lived through the invasion. If you haven't read the original edition, or if you want to again experience the excitement and heroism of those days in the early summer of 1944, this is the book that will take you back.

***D-Day. Those Who Were There.* By Juliet Gardiner. Collins & Brown. Distributed by Trafalgar Square (North Pomfret, VT 05053), 1994. 192 Pages. \$34.95.** This book is about the way preparations for the invasion of Normandy, and the final assault, affected the lives of the people of Great Britain, and of the American forces. The author allows "those who were there" to tell the story, in their own words, wherever possible. Beginning with the dark days following the evacuation of more than 338,000 troops from the beaches of Dunkirk and continuing through the disastrous raid on Dieppe, the author recounts events, using a number of excellent, previously unpublished

photographs and contemporary cartoons to complement the interviews and first-hand accounts. Among the last observations in the book are those of British servicemen held prisoner by the Japanese; the reactions of these men and their captors to news of the invasion remind the reader that in the Pacific Theater the war was as much a reality as on the beaches of France. Great book; buy it.

***D-Day and the Invasion of Normandy.* By Arthur Kemp. Abrams, 1994. 192 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.** This compact book tells the story of D-Day from both Allied and German points of view. It is chiefly a collection of superb photographs and maps, both black-and-white and color, on high-quality coated paper, which is rare for a softbound book. Imaginative illustrations vividly portray the terrain and the sequence of actions during the invasion, and the remarkable quality of the photographs will capture the reader's attention. While its size prevents detailed descriptions of D-Day's major actions, it is sufficiently well-written both to entertain a reader unfamiliar with the invasion and to evoke the desire to learn still more about what happened 50 years ago on those fire-swept beaches.

***D-Day Normandy: The Story and Photographs.* By Donald M. Goldstein, Katherine V. Dillon, and J. Michael Wenger. Brassey's (US), 1994. 102 Pages. \$30.00.** This official 50th anniversary volume of The Battle of Normandy Foundation, measuring 8 1/2 x 11, tells the entire story in maps and more than 400 black-and-white photographs—American, German, and Allied. Clearly one of the best pictorial histories I've seen, this volume communicates a sense of being in the midst of the action and is well worth the purchase price.

***D-Day Plus Fifty Years. Text and Photography* by Henry Rasmussen. Howell Press (1147 River Road, Suite 2, Charlottesville, VA 22901), 1994. 192 Pages. \$29.95, Hardcover.** This large-format book (10 1/4 x 10 1/4), commemorates the 50th anniversary of the invasion with a mixture of old and new photographs, 166 of them in color and 205 in black-and-white, and all of them fine-art quality. The historical narrative takes the reader through each stage of the

invasion, comparing armies, leaders, tactics, and weapons. The juxtaposition of historical and present-day photographs of the landing sites, the emplacements, and items of equipment serve well to bridge the gap of 50 years and to impress the reader with a sense of being present on that portion of the Channel Coast where history was made. This was a difficult book to put down.

***The D-Day Atlas: The Definitive Account of the Allied Invasion of Normandy.* By John Man. Facts on File, Inc., 1994. 143 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.** An unusually concise and well-written text on the Normandy invasion, this is an excellent choice if the reader is looking for an affordable and easily readable book on D-Day. The maps are plentiful and superbly drawn, complementing the author's narrative of the most significant events from 6 June 1944 until the liberation of Paris at the end of August. A number of hitherto unpublished photographs convey the immediacy of the bitterly fought engagements and tastefully present the human dimension of war. The presentation of combat from both Allied and the German perspectives affords a balanced understanding of the momentous events that changed the course of history, and portrays the staggering losses inflicted on the Wehrmacht during those two months. Such appendixes as the schematic of the Allied and German command structure, the chronology of events from 23 January to 1 September 1944, and the listing of operational code names for both sides contribute to the clarity of the book. Buy it, read it, put it on your coffee table for others to enjoy.

We are continuing to receive books on D-Day and will be providing full reviews on some of them in later issues of INFANTRY.

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***Expert Witness: A Defence Correspondent's Gulf War, 1990-91.* By Christopher Bellamy. Brassey's (UK), 1993. 252 Pages. \$29.95.** Reviewed by Major Harold E. Raugh, Jr., United States Army.

Christopher Bellamy, instead of writing his account of the second Persian Gulf War, in 1991, immediately after its conclusion,

waited and continued to observe related events, hoping "to identify errors and misperceptions and to give a more complete picture of what happened than would have been possible had the book been completed sooner."

He brings a great deal of expertise to this study, including previous service as an officer in the Royal Artillery; a civil servant in the Ministry of Defence; a Ph.D. recipient and senior research analyst at the University of Edinburgh; and Defense Correspondent for the British newspaper, the *Independent*. As Defense Correspondent, he was based in Saudi Arabia covering the war and later returned to the Middle East for a brief visit to cover Operation PROVIDE COMFORT to the Kurds.

After providing an overview of the conflict and placing it within its historical and cultural context, Bellamy superbly chronicles the evolution and current understanding of the operational level of war—a real strength of this study—and its impact on the planning of the campaign. Having written his dissertation on the Soviet view of the character of future war, he introduces Soviet military tenets of deep encirclement and the use of the operational maneuver group, and juxtaposes this with U.S. AirLand Battle doctrine. These concepts clearly influenced the campaign, which was executed in the vast expanses of flat, featureless desert terrain, with the Coalition fully using its overwhelming superiority in firepower, technology, and "brainpower."

The entire narrative reflects the author's deep understanding of warfare and knowledge of military technology. The latter is reinforced by the adroit use of JSTARS (joint surveillance target radar attack radar system) pictures that, according to the author, "are the manifestation of a matching of military theory and practice of which military theorists and historians have long dreamed." A detailed chronology, some 40 excellent maps, and almost 50 photographs supplement the text. Appendixes include the text of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's 27 February 1991 Central Command news briefing, and ground, air, and naval orders of battle.

The story is not tabloid journalism or sensational reporting, but a uniformly superb chronicle and an insightful assessment of the 1991 Coalition victory in Southwest Asia. As such, it makes a solid contribution to the literature of the conflict and deserves a wide readership. *Expert Witness* easily falls into the category of objective and thorough books

that a reviewer can fully recommend as being well worth the money.

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***Aces Against Japan: The American Aces Speak, Volume 1.* By Eric Hammel. Pre-sidio Press, 1992. 318 Pages. \$24.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Jack Mudie, U.S. Air Force, Retired.

If you would like to read one book that will give you a broad overview and yet a detailed look at what the fighter pilot's air war was like in the Pacific Theater during World War II, this is the book. Eric Hammel is an eminent military historian and interviewer whose 40 individual stories of Navy, Marine, and Army Air Force pilots are smoothly put in chronological order from the initial action over Pearl Harbor to the final dogfight over Kyushu.

Each chapter covers a different phase of the war and includes up to four individual oral histories in which each pilot describes his own combat experiences, which keeps the reader apprised of the changes in equipment and tactics as the war progresses. Each of the 40 individual air-to-air actions is a surprisingly different story.

What results is a highly readable history in which the main players are primarily American junior officers who, initially, pit their individual flying abilities against unexpectedly skilled Japanese pilots in aircraft that could outperform their own. This mismatch changed appreciably as improved U.S. aircraft and experience gradually took their toll. Attrition reached the stage where newer Japanese pilots had far less flight training before entering combat. Nevertheless, enough veteran Japanese pilots remained to make every combat action a mixture of uncertainty, surprise, and fear, along with the anticipation and exhilaration of occasional victory.

Preceding and following each narration is an italicized addition by Hammel describing what the pilot was doing before his military service and what he did after it—a unique format and style that makes each pilot a distinct individual. This is an excellent book that puts a different perspective on the "Hot-shot Charley" image of many World War II fighter aces. (Volume II, *Aces Against Germany*, is also available from the publisher.)

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***Riviera to the Rhine.* By Jeffrey J. Clarke and Robert Ross Smith. U.S. Army in World War II, The European Theater of Operations. U.S. Army Center of Mili-**

**tary History, 1993. CMH Pub 7-10. GPO S/N 008-029-00213-2. 605 Pages. \$34.00.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, United States Army, Retired.

This is the final volume in the Center of Military History's series of operational histories treating the activities of the U.S. Army's combat forces during World War II.

The authors first discuss the convoluted 14-month decision-making process that ended in one of the major compromises of the Anglo-American partnership during the war. (In short, the United States wanted to do the operation, while the British did not.) They move on to describe the command structure and organization of the forces, the invasion plans, the assault itself, and the follow-on campaigns in southern France, the Vosges Mountains, and Alsace.

Excluding the pages devoted to the decision-making process, the volume covers the period from August 1944 (the invasion began on 15 August) to early March 1945. (Although the original code name assigned the operation—ANVIL—was changed to DRAGOON shortly before the invasion, the authors stay with ANVIL. Some historians use ANVIL/DRAGOON, others DRAGOON.)

The authors also include an excellent evaluation chapter in which they discuss command personalities and consider the strengths and weaknesses of the U.S. and German soldier, a subject of considerable discussion during the past 50 years.

As the authors point out, ANVIL is probably the least known of the major Allied operations in the European theater. It has also remained one of the most controversial. They conclude that the forces engaged in ANVIL "conducted one of the most successful series of campaigns during World War II," and that "perhaps the greatest contribution of the southern invasion was placing a third Allied army group. . . with its own independent supply lines, in northeastern France when the two northern Allied army groups were stretched to the limit in almost every way."

This is a well-done, if long overdue, volume that has 35 excellent maps and numerous photographs to complement the fine narrative. It has been produced in the Center's usual professional manner and is worthy of study by all U.S. military personnel.

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***Sam Houston: A Biography of the Father of Texas.* By John Hoyt Williams. Simon & Schuster, 1993. 448 Pages.**

**\$25.00.** Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, United States Army.

Sam Houston was one of the most remarkable figures of American history. Even before his decisive victory over Mexican General Santa Anna at San Jacinto in 1836, he had lived a full life that included suffering a near mortal wound in the War of 1812, a term as both congressman and governor of Tennessee, and a member of Andrew Jackson's inner circle. Simultaneously, his near life-long addiction to alcohol resulted in the dissolution of his first marriage and led to a scandal that drove him from the governorship of Tennessee. Still, following the battle that gave birth to the Republic of Texas, he served several terms as President of Texas, and later served the State of Texas as governor and U.S. senator.

It was this duality that led author John Hoyt Williams to explore the career of the man he terms "contradiction incarnate." In this compelling biography, Williams seeks to dispel the myths surrounding Houston while clarifying his major achievements and failures. Using a wide range of primary and secondary sources, Hoyt succeeds admirably in presenting a balanced assessment of his controversial subject.

The Houston who emerges from these pages is hardly the legendary figure of Texas lore. Driven by an early desire to succeed, he found refuge in the military and politics, chiefly under the patronage of Andrew Jackson, the hero of the American frontier. Using Jackson for political refuge, Houston emerged as a leading figure of Tennessee politics, until his overindulgence in alcohol led to repeated scandals and forced him into obscurity with his adopted Cherokees. Known as "the Raven," Houston more than once represented the Indians' interest in Washington, and in the process gained an extraordinary number of political enemies.

It was Texas, however, that gave birth to the Houston legend. An active land speculator who had visions of creating a vast trans-Mississippi state, Houston was a vocal leader of the War Party that advocated independence from Mexico. As commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas, his inability to control the semi-independent commands of William Barret Travis and James W. Fannin was partly responsible for the debacles at the Alamo and Goliad. Even his decisive victory at San Jacinto haunted him in later life, as political opponents cried that "the battle made Sam Houston" and that "Sham" Houston's performance as a tactical commander was mediocre at best.

Houston's later life revolved around

Texas. An ardent Unionist, he argued forcibly against secession and relinquished the governorship rather than swear an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. Forced from office, he remained in self-exile until his death in 1863. He had said the Confederacy was doomed to failure and lived long enough to witness that failure. Although he, more than any other man, had been responsible for the entry of Texas into the Union, he reasoned that it was far better for Texas to resume its former independent statehood than to cast its lot with the Confederacy.

In the final analysis, the reader of this biography is no closer to understanding Houston's complexity than at the beginning. Williams seems equally perplexed but suggests two characteristics as possible explanations for unraveling the mystery. The keys, states Williams, lie in Houston's penchant for secrecy—or for hinting, rather than revealing—and his chronic vacillation at crucial moments. It is as if Houston wanted others to do what he only imagined, whether it was leading an expedition to conquer Mexico or actively seeking the presidency of the United States. Williams concludes that Sam Houston was not what he seemed to be to most people, and therein lies the controversy.

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***Daring to Win: Special Forces at War.*** By David Eshel. Arms & Armour Press, 1992. 214 Pages. \$27.50. Reviewed by Leroy Thompson, Manchester, Missouri.

This book on special operations of World War II and later is designed more for the general reader than for the infantryman; most of the 39 operations examined are summarized, but few conclusions are drawn that are applicable to the military professional.

The book is divided into four sections: "Great Commando Actions, which covers raiding forces in World Wars I and II; "Post-War Elite Actions," which deals with modern raiding missions; "Raiders from the Sky," which deals with aviation missions; and "Warriors of the Sea," which covers seaborne operations.

Many of the most famous World War II operations are covered, including Eban Emael, Vaagso, Bruneval, Dieppe, Gran Sasso, and Arnhem. In the post-World War II period, on the other hand, the fact Eshel was an Israeli officer is obvious from the preponderance of coverage given to operations by forces of the Jewish state. In fact, five of the 12 postwar ground special operations missions in the book are Israeli. On the

positive side, the coverage of these missions is the best in the book because of Eshel's access to Israeli sources. On the negative side, for a work intended to give an overview, it neglects many scenarios that were highly important in the development of special operations theory and practice. For example, SAS operations in Malaya, Borneo, and Oman are ignored, as are Soviet special operations in Afghanistan.

The maps in the book help clarify operations but maps are included with only a few of the chapters. I would have liked to see maps with virtually every chapter. Once again, I would have liked to see a broader selection of operations to give a better overview of tactical developments. In the section on naval special operations, for example, the U.S. Navy Sea, Air, Land Forces (SEALs) and the British Special Boat Service are completely ignored.

I recommend *Daring to Win* as an interesting book from which to get a superficial overview of special operations for those with little knowledge of the subject. But military professionals or students of special operations will find little in it that is new, other than perhaps a few details on Israeli special forces.

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***The Defense of Hill 781: An Allegory of Modern Mechanized Combat.*** By James R. McDonough. Presidio Press, 1988. 202 Pages. \$12.95. Reviewed by Captain Kelly C. Jordan, Watertown, New York.

Although this book has been around for a while and continues in print, I do not believe it has received the attention it deserves. A modern version of the classic *Defense of Duffer's Drift*, it offers many valuable tactical lessons for today's infantry leader.

The author uses the National Training Center (NTC) as the setting for his tale, in which a deceased airborne lieutenant colonel, A. Tack Always, must serve time in a kind of purgatory (the NTC) to atone for his lifelong sin of regarding with contempt anyone outside the airborne community. He takes command of a balanced mechanized task force (equipped with M1 tanks and M2 Bradley fighting vehicles) and is told he cannot leave until he has forged it into a disciplined combat unit that can soundly defeat a determined enemy force. As he attempts to train and lead his unit to victory, Colonel Always experiences the many frustrations of mechanized combat, which are presented at the end of each chapter as concise lessons learned that are remarkably illuminating.

The author makes valuable observations regarding the importance of first impressions and early assessments and goes on to highlight the need for the commander's initial guidance for an operations order and his involvement in the entire orders process.

McDonough, while recounting the commander's dawn attack against an opposing force (OPFOR) reinforced motorized rifle company in which he suffers his first crushing defeat, emphasizes the importance of intelligence, task organization, the commander's position on the battlefield, and massing combat power. Then he introduces the reader to the most confusing of times at any combat training center, the change of mission. He portrays in detail the task of reconstituting a unit while maintaining security and preparing for a subsequent mission.

He goes on to a detailed discussion of standard infantry missions—a defense in sector, a deliberate attack, a night attack, and a battle position defense—conducted in rapid succession. In each instance, the task force commander incorporates the lessons learned from the previous battle only to encounter new and more difficult hardships. The author covers a wide range of operations including the seven battlefield operating systems, tactics, principles of war, and soldier issues in a readable and comprehensive fashion.

Instead of introducing numerous ancillary characters to demonstrate certain points, he uses Command Sergeant Major Hope and Specialist Sharp (the commander's driver) to bring out the NCO and soldier points of view. CSM Hope offers insight into the soldiers' lot during an NTC rotation and relays the effects of poor planning and leadership on the average infantryman. Sharp's comments on morale and unit cohesion add a new dimension to the aspect of sustained operations. Few authors recognize the importance of such issues, and fewer still communicate it as clearly.

Colonel Always ultimately leads his task force to victory against the OPFOR by executing a splendid battle position defense anchored around Hill 781 and wins his discharge from purgatory. By gaining his release in this fashion, Always conquers his former prejudices and gains a greater understanding of the nature of war. He is a better commander with a deeper appreciation for the complexities of modern mechanized combat. He has learned the value and adaptability of Air Land Battle doctrine and has demonstrated how a disciplined unit can apply sound doctrine to any tactical situation.

This book is less an NTC account than a tactical primer on how to assemble a collective force of decentralized units, synchronize it with the common vision of a commander's intent, and energize it with the freedom to act to produce a superior combat unit. The lessons are fundamental and applicable to leaders at every level, beginning with the platoon.

I believe this book is essential reading for all professionals, and I highly recommend it for anyone with a light infantry background who is about to embark upon a tour of duty with a mechanized infantry unit. The colonel's final realization that all infantry units are essentially the same, especially in an Army where infantry officers are bound to serve in several different types of units is the book's most valuable lesson.

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***The Trail: A History of the Ho Chi Minh Trail and the Role of Nature in the War in Viet Nam.* By Richard L. Stevens. Garland Publishing, 1993. 258 Pages. \$35.00.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

This book, which had such promise, is a great disappointment. As the author correctly asserts, the struggle for control of the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail was the most significant military theater of the war, "strategically. . .the only battle. . .that really mattered." It was the backbone of the North Vietnamese effort, literally the structure to which everything was tied, the nerve center, and the lifeline. To sever it would have been a deadly blow. But the author argues that the United States was doomed to failure because no matter what it did, it could not cut the Trail, and thus could not win the war. In his words, "We fought against nature while there, and we lost because we could not conquer clouds, trees, rain, night, heat, microorganisms, and mountains."

An objective study of the origins, development, and growing centrality of the Trail to the Communists' war effort, and the United States' failed efforts to neutralize it would have been an important contribution to Vietnam War literature. The author's credentials were well-suited for the undertaking. He first went to Vietnam in 1960 as a young Marine and later returned as a civilian with various agencies, including the Agency for International Development and the Foreign Service. During this time, he went on reconnaissance forays along the Trail and became absorbed with the subject.

Although the thesis is plausible and the book provides some interesting insights

about the Trail, the author badly overextends himself. He pummels the reader with his thesis and pushes it much too far. He defines the book as ecohistory, the struggle between man and nature, and elevates his lessons to mythic proportions: "We—as man—will lose in our continuing war on nature all over the world." Indeed, he defines his effort as "an attempt at atonement" by one "who brought death and destruction to the Trail." His writing style—present tense through the persona of the Trail itself—fails miserably.

Someday, a history of the Trail will be written that divulges the secrets of those who fought their war on that logistics highway and the unsuccessful efforts of electronic warfare, high lethal technology, and clandestine operations to combat the war's central nerve system. Sadly, this is not that book.

### RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

*Saddam Hussein's Gulf Wars: Ambivalent Stakes in the Middle East.* By Miron Rezun. Praeger, 1992. 164 Pages. \$39.95.

*Philip II of Macedon: A Life From the Ancient Sources.* Compiled, edited, and translated by Alfred S. Bradford. Praeger, 1992. 224 Pages. \$39.95.

*Coast Watching in the Solomon Islands: The Bougainville Reports, December 1941-July 1943.* Edited by A.B. Feuer. Praeger, 1992. 208 Pages. \$42.95.

*The Duke of Wellington and the British Army of Occupation in France, 1815-1818.* By Thomas Dwight Veve. Contributions in Military Studies, No. 114. Greenwood Press, 1992. 240 Pages. \$45.00.

*African American Soldiers in the National Guard Recruitment and Deployment During Peacetime and War.* By Charles Johnson, Jr. Greenwood Press, 1992. 232 Pages. \$49.95.

*American Merchant Ships on the Yangtze, 1920-1941.* By David H. Grover. Praeger, 1993. 256 Pages. \$47.95.

*Brave Men—Dark Waters: The Untold Story of the Navy SEALs.* By Orr Kelly. Presidio Press, 1992. 320 Pages. \$22.95.

*Ramparts: A History of Fortification From the Renaissance to West Point.* By Marguerita Herman. Avery Publishing Group, 1992. 216 Pages. \$50.00.

*The Laws of Land Warfare: A Guide to the U.S. Army Manuals.* By Donald A. Wells. Contributions in Military Studies, No. 132. Greenwood Press, 1992. 224 Pages. \$47.95.

*The Spanish Armada of 1588: Historiography and Annotated Bibliography.* By Eugene L. Rasor. Bibliographies of Battles and Leaders, No. 10. Greenwood Press, 1992. 295 Pages. \$59.95.

*Beyond Glasnost: Soviet Reform and Security Issues.* Edited by David T. Twining. Contributions in Military Studies, No. 127. Greenwood Press, 1992. 184 Pages. \$45.00.

*The Odyssey of a U-Boat Commander: Recollections of Erich Topp.* By Erich Topp. Translated by Eric Rust. Praeger, 1992. 258 Pages. \$49.95.