

BOOK REVIEWS



***Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War.* By James Kitfield. Simon & Schuster, 1995. 476 Pages. \$25.00.** Reviewed by Dr. Charles E. White, Infantry School Historian.

Notwithstanding its bizarre title, *Prodigal Soldiers* is an interesting, informative, and keenly perceptive book on the rebuilding of the United States' armed forces after Vietnam. Author James Kitfield traces the careers of a number of the senior commanders of Operation DESERT STORM from their days in Vietnam through the "hollow" force of the 1970s and the reforms of the 1970s and 1980s. He suggests that it was these men who provided the impulse that led to the renaissance of the American military from one of the lowest points in its history to the peak of perfection it demonstrated during the Persian Gulf War.

This book covers one of the most dynamic periods of change in American military history. Rebuilding the armed forces of the United States after its debacle in Vietnam was an extraordinary achievement, and Kitfield's broad-brush approach leaves the reader spellbound by the sheer magnitude of this accomplishment.

Among the topics Kitfield discusses is the establishment of the all-volunteer force in 1973, which has become one of the finest institutions in American history. Another area he addresses is the revolution in military training, which moved the armed forces away from rote classroom lecture and range firing to a new training model of fluid, force-on-force, simulated combat. At the same time, the military services revolutionized their doctrine, discarding the industrial model, attrition tactics of the past, and adopting the "AirLand Battle" style of maneuver warfare. Along the way, Kitfield imparts an enormous amount of information about military life in America. But the most important aspect of this book may be the way the military reformed itself through constructive self-criticism—a remarkable transformation that is still largely unknown to the American public.

In writing this moving narrative, Kitfield selected a few characters around whom to

create his fascinating story. The most prominent actor in his play is Barry McCaffrey, who comes on stage as a West Point graduate eager for that taste of war and emerges wearing three—and eventually four—stars after having commanded the 24th Infantry Division during Operation DESERT STORM. Army Generals Paul Gorman, John Galvin, Edward "Shy" Meyer, and Norman Schwarzkopf play supporting roles, as do Marine Generals Walter E. Boomer, James M. Myatt, and Thomas V. Draude; U.S. Air Force Generals Wilbur Creech and Chuck Horner; and Navy Admiral Stanley Arthur. Even Colin Powell makes a cameo appearance. Kitfield portrays all of these men as strong, progressive combat leaders, which they certainly are.

Prodigal Soldiers portrays a military force that is in perfect harmony with itself and the American people. Once scorned by intellectuals and rejected by popular culture (yet continually asked to surrender their lives in enterprises both wise and foolhardy), the armed forces are now ranked among the finest institutions in the United States. One comes away from reading this book feeling good. Indeed, Kitfield's style is mesmerizing, and his beautifully written book is hard to put down.

***The Nightingale's Song.* By Robert Timberg. Simon & Schuster, 1995. 543 Pages. \$27.50.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

This captivating book is the story of five graduates of the U.S. Naval Academy, all Vietnam veterans, who achieved high status in the Reagan administration, and who suffered significant failure and defeat at the time: James Webb—Marine, best-selling novelist, and controversial Secretary of the Navy—resigned after a stormy tenure. John McCain spent five and one-half years as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, returned to a meteoric political career, first in the House of Representatives and then in the U.S. Senate, before a humiliating association in the Savings and Loan scandals tainted his image. He survived, however, to become one of the highest-profile political figures in the

nation today. Bud McFarlane, a distinguished Marine in Vietnam, made his mark as a foreign policy intellectual, rising to be the National Security advisor. John Poindexter, first in his class at the Academy, had a spotless Navy career that culminated in his position as McFarlane's successor. Oliver North, the ultimate self-promoter, whether in Vietnam combat or in the halls of power in Washington, used his resourceful can-do energies to achieve power that was far beyond his maturity to handle. After brilliant careers, McFarlane, Poindexter, and North all went down to inglorious defeat in the Iran-Contra debacle.

Author Robert Timberg, also a Naval Academy graduate and Marine Corps veteran of Vietnam, was the White House correspondent for the *Baltimore Sun* during the Reagan years and is now Deputy Chief of the *Sun's* Washington bureau. This weaving of the lives of the five individuals has several objectives. Timberg claims to show how a generational chasm exists between those who did and did not serve during the Vietnam war, how unresolved conflicts over Vietnam played out in the Reagan administration, and how the Iran-Contra affair was an after-flash of Vietnam.

Although Timberg's effort to give his topic a more cosmic significance is not very successful, the book warrants attention merely as a collective biography of five very interesting individuals, men of monumental talent and equally monumental flaws. Their mutual experiences at the Academy, their Vietnam sagas, their rise to power in the Reagan years, and their downfall constitute a powerful story that needs no larger context. With the exception of the reckless and immature North, Timberg clearly respects his subjects. He also clearly portrays the inadequacies of Ronald Reagan (the Nightingale of the title).

With many similarities to Rick Atkinson's *The Long Gray Line* (1989)—an account of the Vietnam experience and after of the West Point class of 1966—*The Nightingale's Song*, all pretensions aside, is simply a fascinating book.

Who Will Lead? Senior Leadership in the United States Army. By Edward C. Meyer, R. Manning Ancell, and Jane Mahaffey. Praeger, 1995. 268 Pages. \$59.95. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.

Former Army Chief of Staff General Edward C. Meyer, assisted by R. Manning Ancell and Jane Mahaffey, wrote this book ostensibly to evaluate the leadership of Army full (four-star) generals during and since World War II and the formative experiences of those who later achieved that rank. Since the last half-century has been a period of profound change in the world, the authors have further attempted to draw conclusions "concerning the impact of those changes on the officer corps and its leadership."

Beginning with "Marshall, Arnold and Their Generals," this study concentrates on the professional development of the 17 men who earned four stars in World War II; their common leadership, staff, and educational experiences; and their frequently intertwined careers during the interwar years. From that point on, the study chronicles the careers of the Army's senior leaders through Barry R. McCaffrey, who was promoted to general on 17 February 1994.

The authors' theme, although ambiguous and underdeveloped, seems to be the role and importance of mentorship. Although it is never actually defined, the infrequent references to mentorship imply it is the same as "sponsorship," includes influencing "others through efficiency reports," and is perhaps a form of favoritism. This is in conjunction with a subtle pro-West Point stance that permeates the book. The study concludes that future leadership will require three unique areas of expertise: politico-military, manager/technician, and operational commander. Like the senior leaders of the past, future leaders must also be "leaders of character dedicated to a lifetime of service to our nation."

This confusing book seems to be Meyer's memoir, interspersed with long quotes—often irrelevant, gratuitous, and out of context—from generals lauding the accomplishments and attributes of fellow generals. The study is disjointed, with the only continuity being provided by a general chronology of the events described. In addition, the text contains inconsistent capitalization of terms and titles, unexplained abbreviations, an incomplete and inaccurate index, and numerous quotations for which no source is cited (three on page 77 alone). In addition, the use of nicknames

when introducing general officers—which might be acceptable in an autobiography—is not appropriate in what is supposed to be a serious study. Neither are such phrases as computers being "more of a pain in the ass than a help."

Although the study of leadership and the stated intent of *Who Will Lead?* are certainly worthwhile, this book is not a success. It is inadequately researched, poorly written, and badly edited. Infantrymen should not spend their valuable time or money on this muddled and wholly unsatisfying book.

This Kind of War. By T.R. Fehrenbach. Brassey's, 1994. 483 Pages. \$28.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

This is a reissue of a book originally published in 1963 under the title *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness*. It was well received then and is still widely read by U.S. infantrymen. It is one of the most popular studies of the Korean War.

Today's readers should understand that Fehrenbach's version of the Korean War may or may not be historically correct in all of its details. He admits this and in an introductory note states that "portions of the book may be more hearsay than history—and a sense of personal outlook must color each narrative."

With that caveat in mind, the infantryman who selects this book to read will find it one of the best collections of well-written accounts of war he is likely to encounter. Fehrenbach can write, no doubt about it. But his style concentrates on the personal story, and this means that certain individuals—Brigadier General Hayden Boatner, for example—receive a disproportionate amount of coverage while others equally deserving of mention get short shrift or no mention at all.

Throughout his narrative, Fehrenbach throws in numerous and pungent comments about all manner of things, although most of these are directed at the poor condition of our soldiers and their equipment and their almost total lack of professionalism. He blames the latter on the "civilianization" of the Army between 1945 and 1950. As he puts it (page 60), the America of 1950 "had an army of sorts of civilians, who were as conscious of their rights and privileges as of their duties. . . . Citizens. . . are apt to be a rabble in arms."

The reader should pay particular attention to Fehrenbach's cutting remarks on pages 291-299, and to the lessons he draws

from the Korean War in his last chapter. At the same time, the reader should not ignore the five volumes in the Army's official Korean War series or the four semi-official volumes written by the late Roy Appleman in more recent years and published by the Texas A&M University Press. These nine volumes will fill the historical void in Fehrenbach's book.

Elite Warriors: The Special Forces of the United States and its Allies. By George Sullivan. Facts on File, 1995. 132 Pages. \$17.95, Hardcover. Reviewed by Michael F. Dilley, Davidsonville, Maryland.

This book offers an overview of special operations forces. More than half of it is devoted to various U.S. units—Army Special Forces, Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, and Air Force Special Operations. The rest briefly covers units of eight countries, with the last paragraph mentioning an additional three. Considering the size of the page (about 4x7½ inches of print area), and the large type and photo format, that's not enough room to devote to this subject.

Sullivan never really makes it clear what criteria he used in choosing certain U.S. units, other than a passing reference to the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Even so, he doesn't go into detail about that command or how it employs its forces. By limiting himself this way, he has not included any discussion of Marine Corps special units (Raiders, Paratroops, Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company, and Reconnaissance) or the Air Force Pararescue units and combat control teams. The result is a superficial coverage of the subject matter except in two places: SFOD-Delta is a separate chapter, but further discussion of other U.S. counterterrorist capabilities is buried in a paragraph here and there. This chapter and the section that deals with the Special Air Service resolution of the Iranian embassy siege in Princes Gate contain the best writing of the book.

Other problems, I think, indicate a lack of editing, although the author should have caught them as well. He explains three times how a "flashbang" works but cannot make up his mind how many Israeli athletes were murdered in Munich in 1972, saying nine in one chapter and eleven in another.

Although Sullivan tries to give some historical background on the units he discusses, he is inconsistent. In some cases, he includes information going back to World War II, but in others barely offers any historical information. The history of the

German *Gebirgsjaeger* units is covered in detail, while the chapter on Israeli units concentrates mostly on the Entebbe raid. In addition, some of his history is incorrect; for example, the unit known as "Merrill's Marauders" was not flown to India—it went by ship (the S.S. *Lurline*, in fact). Air Force Special Operations history is covered in a single sentence. He spends five pages discussing World War II Ranger units but dismisses the Ranger long-range reconnaissance patrol efforts in Korea and Vietnam in two short paragraphs. And he neglects to mention the U.S. Army Ranger School, in my estimation a significant part of Ranger history. In some sections, he discusses recent operations, but with no mention of Mogadishu, where special operations forces he had included earlier were employed. A short section on Canada fails to mention the recent scandals and disbanding of its parachute unit, even though this unit is discussed.

This book appears to have been, originally, a series of separate articles put together in book format without cohesive transition and balance. For anyone interested in a broad treatment of special operations forces, several other recent books are much better. These include: *The Commandos: The Inside Story of America's Secret Soldiers*, by Douglas C. Waller (Simon & Schuster, 1994); *Secret Armies: Inside the American, Soviet, and European Special Forces*, by James Adams (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1987); *Special Operations and National Purpose*, by Ross S. Kelly (Lexington Books, 1989); *Swords of Lightning: Special Forces and the Changing Face of Warfare*, by Terry White (Brassey's, 1992); and *The World's Elite Forces*, by Walter N. Lang, Peter Eliot, and Keith Maguire (Military Press, 1987).

***The Anzac Illusion: Anglo-Australian Relations During World War I.* By E.M. Andrews. Cambridge University Press, 1994. 274 Pages. \$49.95. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.**

History has led us to believe, as a result of experiences in World War I, and especially at Gallipoli, that the Australian soldiers were recognized by the British as superior troops and that as a result the Australians enjoyed a special relationship with the British. This is one of the many—albeit perhaps the most significant—legacies of Australian participation in the Great War that the author demonstrates as being "myths"

Dr. E.M. Andrews, an associate professor

at the University of Newcastle, focuses on the "Anzac [Australian and New Zealand Army Corps] illusion"—how, why, and by whom these "illusions" were created and perpetuated. He chronicles in rich detail the relationship between Great Britain and Australia during the decade preceding World War I, stressing all aspects of their military, economic, political, and psychological relationships. These relationships were dynamic, with Britain wanting Australia to share the "burden of Empire" and to be integrated into British defense plans. In 1941 Australia was part of the British Empire, not an independent sovereign state, which meant that when the King of England declared war, Australia was also at war.

Gallipoli was crucial to the development of the Anzac legend. Combined with press censorship, the Anzacs were glorified to cover up incompetent military leadership (both British military and Australian), poor tactics, and scandalous transport and medical arrangements. Subsequent military performance on the Western Front, notably at Fromelles, Pozieres, and Bullecourt, reveal that the Anzacs—or at least the Australians (since the New Zealanders seem to have been more competent and disciplined soldiers)—did not deserve the lofty reputation fabricated for them. Indeed, in 1917 the Australians had an absent-without-leave rate 12 times higher than that of the other divisions in the Third Army, and in March 1918, nine times more Australian than British soldiers were in prison. (Admittedly, Australian military performance seemed to have improved in 1918—as the quality and strength of the German Army declined.)

The author has mined numerous primary source document repositories in Australia and England, and the detailed endnotes indicate the depth and soundness of his research. Some two dozen contemporary photographs and three maps enhance the easy-to-read text.

Although not strictly a military history, this thought-provoking and well-written book sheds great light on British-Australian relationships in the early 20th Century (especially World War I). In doing so, it reveals numerous historical "myths" that have continued to this day and deserves a wide readership.

***Sheridan: The Life and Wars of General Phil Sheridan.* By Roy Morris, Jr. Crown Publishers, 1992. 464 Pages. \$25.00. Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, U.S. Air Force, Retired.**

For several years, General Philip H. Sheridan has been considered one of the leading Union Civil War generals deserving of a more complete biography. His rise in rank was meteoric, from lieutenant in the early days of the war to major general with a leadership role in numerous decisive actions in the eastern theater by the war's end. With the publication of this book by Roy Morris, Jr., editor of *America's Civil War*, Sheridan has finally received his long-awaited, in-depth biographical treatment.

An 1853 West Point graduate, Sheridan began his active army career in the far western United States and gradually moved eastward. He first reported to the "most out-of-the-way posting on the entire frontier"—Fort Duncan, Texas. Later, he went to Fort Reading, California, and subsequently into the northwest areas of what are now Oregon and Washington in response to unrest among the Indians.

When the Civil War erupted, Sheridan, who had gone without a promotion for eight years, abruptly became a first lieutenant and then a captain two months later. He wrote to friends that if the war persisted, he might even hope to make major. The early days of the conflict, however, still found him in the western backwaters, yearning for combat. In fact, assignment to a more likely combat theater still found him straightening out the muddled supply affairs of the western Union army forces, where he came to the attention of General Henry W. Halleck.

In May 1862 he was promoted to the colonelcy of a Michigan cavalry regiment and in the summer of 1862 was reassigned to infantry and sent to Kentucky to help counter the invasion of Braxton Bragg's Southern forces. He served with distinction at Perryville, Stones River, the early 1863 campaign through Tennessee, and the Union defeat at Chickamauga. In May 1864, Sheridan moved to the command of a corps of cavalry in Meade's Army of the Potomac. He served alongside that army throughout the early battles such as the Wilderness and defeated Confederate cavalry general J.E.B. Stuart at Yellow Tavern. Dispatched to command the Army of the Shenandoah, he roamed throughout that valley and defeated the Southern army at Cedar Creek. As the war drew to a close he was again in the Petersburg-Richmond area and with the Union army as it cornered Lee's forces near Appomattox Courthouse.

After the war ended, Sheridan continued on active duty and helped quell problems along the border with Mexico as well as with unreconstructed rebels in the South. Most of

his postwar years were again spent in the West where he commanded army forces trying to deal with the Indians. In November 1883 he was moved to replace W.T. Sherman as Commanding General of the Army.

Morris has written an outstanding military biography of this controversial Army leader. He provides a fairly even-handed look at Sheridan, a figure who presents a challenge for objective historical analysis. His recounting of Sheridan's far-ranging military career also provides an excellent appreciation of the life and experiences of soldiers in the army from the mid-1850s through the later part of the century.

Brave Decisions. By Colonel Harry J. Maihafer. Brassey's, 1995. 224 Pages. \$23.95, Hardcover. Reviewed by Colonel George G. Eddy, U.S. Army, Retired.

A book that presents 15 decisions of moral courage in desperate situations by renowned military officers—many known worldwide, such as U.S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Douglas MacArthur, and Norman Schwarzkopf—is bound to attract attention. This highly readable and well-organized book offers many dramatic events that hold a reader's eager attention throughout. Spanning the period from the Revolutionary War to Operation DESERT STORM, it describes circumstances that inspire and episodes that brought out the best in top leaders—men who did not fail when faced with crisis situations.

Those who have read a considerable amount of military history will find much familiar ground here, but they may have overlooked the moral courage that was often the foundation for the physical courage that followed. The author helps provide the right perspective. While some readers may believe that there are other more noteworthy examples, the author's choices clearly illustrate the significance of moral courage.

Grant demonstrated his moral courage throughout his illustrious career, probably more strongly later than in Panama; for example, the near catastrophe at Shiloh after which he seemed ready to quit. A challenge could be made that Lee's agonizing decision to resign his commission to join the Confederacy was not of the same order as his subsequent battlefield decisions. He repeatedly risked defeat by substantially weakening strong positions to put everything into slashing flank attacks, in the manner of Stonewall Jackson.

After Japan's surrender in 1945, MacArthur's decision to land unarmed was a

courageous move. But it was not as courageous as his blunt challenge to Franklin D. Roosevelt that the president would have to answer to the nation for the consequences of his severe budget cuts that weakened the Army. MacArthur reportedly said, "When we lose the next war, and an American boy with an enemy bayonet through his belly and an enemy foot on his dying throat spits out his last curse, I want the name not to be MacArthur, but Roosevelt."

As for Al "I'm-in-charge-now" Haig, he should have been replaced in the book by someone more worthy, such as Chester Nimitz. Nimitz had the moral courage to risk all his precious major naval forces in the turning-point battle at Midway based on his trust of his intelligence officer, Commander Rochefort. American POWs such as John McCain deserve recognition for the ultimate in moral courage in holding out against ceaseless physical and psychological torture year after year when all chance of rescue seemed lost.

Perhaps the author will consider a sequel to highlight other sterling examples of moral courage. In the meantime, we can appreciate what he has revealed to us.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

Paladin Zero Six: A Desert Storm Memoir by a 101st Airborne Attack Helicopter Company Commander. By Rafael J. Garcia, Jr. McFarland (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640), 1994. 168 Pages. \$17.50, Softbound.

The Forgotten Front in Northern Italy. By Robert H. Schmidt. McFarland (Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640), 1994. 192 Pages. \$24.95.

From Hot Air to Hellfire: The History of Army Attack Aviation. By James W. Bradin. Presidio Press, 1994. 256 Pages. \$21.95.

The Magnificent Bastards: The Joint Army-Marine Defense of Dong Ha, 1968. By Keith William Nolan. Presidio Press, 1994. 320 Pages. \$24.95.

Marching Toward the 21st Century: Military Manpower and Recruiting. Edited by Mark J. Eitelberg and Stephen L. Mehay. Contributions in Military Studies Number 154. Greenwood Press, 1994. 272 Pages. \$57.95.

Anzio: Epic of Bravery. By Fred Sheehan, with new foreword by Martin Blumenson. (First published in 1964.) University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. 256 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

Following the Guidon. By Elizabeth B. Custer, with an introduction by Shirley A. Leckie. (Reprint of the Harper & Brothers 1890 edition.) University of Nebraska Press, 1994. 416 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

Following the Guidon: Into the Indian Wars with General Custer and the Seventh Cavalry. By Elizabeth B. Custer, with an introduction by Jane R. Stewart and a new foreword by Robert M. Utley. Western Frontier Library, Volume 33. Reprint of 1966 new edition. University of

Oklahoma Press, 1994. 412 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.

The Laws of War: A Comprehensive Collection of Primary Documents on International Laws Governing Armed Conflict. Edited by W. Michael Reisman and Chris T. Antoniou. Random House, 1994. 448 Pages. \$13.00, Softbound.

Changing Orders: The World's Armies Since 1945. By Peter G. Tsouras. Facts On File, 1994. 368 Pages. \$40.00.

Battle Group!: German Kampfgruppen Action of World War Two. By James Lucas. (Published in Great Britain by Villiers House, 1993.) Sterling, 1994. 224 Pages, 65 Illustrations. \$24.95.

Normandy, 1944: Allied Landings and Breakout. By Stephen Badsey. (First published in Great Britain in 1990.) Osprey Military Campaign Series Number 1. Reed Consumer Books, 1994. 96 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

Seize and Hold: Master Strokes on the Battlefield. By Bryan Perrett. Sterling, 1994. 240 Pages. \$24.95.

When the Eagle Screams: America's Vulnerability to Terrorism. By Stephen Bowman. Carol Publishing Company, 1994. 248 Pages. \$21.95.

Bravo Two Zero. By Andy McNab. (Published in Great Britain by Bantam Press, 1993.) Island Books, 1994. 412 Pages. \$5.99, Softbound.

Dirty Little Secrets of World War II: Military Information No One Told You About the Greatest, Most Terrible War in History. By James F. Dunnigan and Albert A. Nofi. Morrow, 1994. 414 Pages. \$25.00.

Foundations of Moral Obligation. The Stockdale Course. By Joseph Gerard Brennan. Presidio Press, 1994. 286 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.

The Army Times Book of Great Land Battles: From The Civil War to The Gulf War. By Colonel J.D. Morelock. Berkley Press, 1994. 331 Pages. \$28.95.

To Protect and To Serve: The LAPD's Century at War in the City of Dreams. By Joe Domanick. Pocket Books, 1994. 497 Pages. \$23.00, Hardbound.

Fighting by Minutes: Time and the Art of War. By Robert R. Leonhard. Praeger, 1994. 216 Pages. \$55.00.

Guide to Military Installations. Fourth Edition. by Dan Cragg. Stackpole, 1994. 480 Pages. \$18.95, Softbound.

Misfire: The History of How America's Small Arms Have Failed Our Military. By William H. Hallahan. Charles Scribner, 1994. 580 Pages. \$30.00.

The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns. By Captain David Power Conyngham. Irish in the Civil War Series. Fordham University Press, 1994. 616 Pages. \$27.50.

