

BOOK REVIEWS



***My War.* By Andy Rooney. Times Books, 1995. 318 Pages. \$25.00.** Reviewed by Major General Albert H. Smith, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired.

Andy Rooney says in the Preface, "For three of my four years in the Army, I saw the fighting from close up. I can't forget much of what I saw, and I want to write it down." In this, his latest book, he does just that, and makes a unique and most welcome contribution to our understanding of World War II. His experiences and observations during his service in the United States Army, from induction in July 1941 until honorable discharge in August 1945, are fascinating, to say the least.

Although he was a junior noncommissioned officer, his duties as a reporter for *Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper for U.S. Forces, enabled him to view the war in Europe literally from top to bottom—from the Supreme Commander's headquarters, to a B-17 on a bombing run over Germany, to an infantryman's foxhole at Normandy. As a novice journalist he learned his trade from Ernie Pyle, Walter Cronkite, Don Whitehead, Jack Thompson, Bob Capa, and other great war correspondents. His special legacy to American veterans and their families lies in his more than 200 stories published in *Stars and Stripes*. In this book, he weaves these and other firsthand accounts into an exciting reading adventure, especially for the "old soldiers" who served in the European Theater of Operations between 1942 and 1945.

The titles of his six chapters summarize his journey through those turbulent times: "Drafted," "Private Andy Rooney," "The Air War," "The Land War," "Germany, At Last," and "Going Home."

The reader takes a liking to the young Andy Rooney within the first dozen pages. On the Colgate football team, he was small and neither fast nor agile. He was highly intelligent, but had only a marginal interest in college academics—except for some creative writing classes. Toward the end of his Junior year, he was unexpectedly drafted, with a reporting date of 7 July 1941.

Private Rooney's first year in the Army was not an easy one. Although capable of

performing any military duties assigned him, he was constantly "goofing off," frustrating his sergeants and lieutenants at every turn. This period was not, however, without its bright moments, such as his marriage to Margie Howard and their honeymoon in Saint Augustine, Florida. That happy sojourn soon ended when his unit was shipped to England for pre-invasion training. There, good fortune smiled upon him when his application for transfer landed him the position as a correspondent for *Stars and Stripes*.

Beginning with Chapter 3, Rooney relates his wartime experiences skillfully and with emotion, candor, and pride. He uses a wide range of eyewitness accounts to support his contention that "the best story in the British Isles for a reporter was the air war against Germany." There were 68 U.S. air bases—each with countless stories—in the British Isles, under the Eighth and Ninth Air Forces. One of the most memorable of Rooney's war stories is that of how Sergeant Maynard (Snuffy) Smith, of the 306th Bomber Group, U.S. Army Air Corps, earned his Medal of Honor on a mission over Europe on 1 May 1943. To better appreciate his subject, Rooney flew on three bombing missions over France in B-26s and two raids on Germany with B-17s. Together, he and Sergeant Bud Hutton wrote *Air Gunner*, which was published by Farrar and Rhinehart.

Sergeant Rooney landed on Utah Beach in Normandy several days after the amphibious assault on D-Day and quickly moved inland to carry out his duties as a war correspondent. He received what he calls "a crash course in land warfare," observing the U.S. divisions' fight through the hedgerows of the Cotentin Peninsula to capture Cherbourg. June and July 1944 were learning months for him; he not only mastered the basics of Army operations but also worked closely with seasoned reporters such as Ernie Pyle and others who taught him how best to cover the ground war.

Since I moved along the same general axis of advance through France and Belgium into the heart of Germany, I found Rooney's reports of what happened along that road to victory particularly interesting. I regret that

I was not able to enter Paris with General Leclerc's French Second Armored Division as he did—and then stay on for a week or so to savor the liberated city.

In his next-to-last chapter, Rooney recounts experiences with U.S. forces from mid-September 1944 until late April 1945. His *Stars and Stripes* articles highlight major historical actions such as the capture of Aachen, the crossing of the Rhine River, and the first meeting of U.S. and Soviet forces, at Torgau on the Elbe River. Other accounts describe the human dimension, recalling what happened to individuals: the liberation of American POWs, many of whom were captured when their bombers were shot down; the horrors of concentration camps such as Buchenwald; the death of Major General Maurice Rose on 30 March 1945, as he led his renowned 3d Armored Division to victory; and countless stories of soldiers' courage. As the German surrender ended World War II in Europe, Rooney and his *Stars and Stripes* colleagues could reflect on a job well done—they had kept their Army, Navy, and Air Corps buddies informed on a daily basis.

The final chapter—"Going Home"—chronicles further memorable and enjoyable episodes during Rooney's return to the United States and civilian life, including a post-discharge adventure in Hollywood.

The most obvious audience for *My War* includes the veterans of World War II, in whom this superb book will strike many a responsive chord. However, its interest and relevance extend beyond those men and women who served. Today's military history buffs will find it fascinating for the perspectives and historical anecdotes it offers, and for this personal glimpse of a respected reporter whose name is recognized across the Nation.

Purchase *My War*, read it, share it with your friends, and think about its message to future generations.

***Hitler's Last Gamble: The Battle of the Bulge, December 1944-January 1945.* By Trevor N. Dupuy, David L. Bongard, and Richard C. Anderson, Jr. HarperCollins,**

1994. 565 Pages. \$30.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

This is a difficult book to read. It has too few maps, contains a lot of material that has little to do with the course of the campaign, and has material in the footnotes (all gathered at the end of the volume) that would have strengthened the main narrative. In fact, as the book is organized, I recommend the reader look over the footnotes for each section of the book before tackling the various chapters and appendixes.

The main narrative of some 358 pages differs little from that found in the official U.S. Army histories of the Bulge. Unfortunately, the authors throw into their narrative—particularly in the early chapters—brief division histories and biographical material on general officers (division, corps, army commanders). These break a reader's concentration and should have been moved to an appendix.

In addition, West Point graduates commanding battalions and regiments are identified by class year in the early chapters, and it is not clear what these nuggets of information have to do with the campaign story. (For example, several lines are devoted to a regimental commander who "was one of a group of 405 officers known in the U.S. Army as the 'thundering herd,' the graduates of the West Point Class of 1924, the largest class to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy before 1939." That officer is never mentioned again. The reader is also alerted to the fact that an infantry battalion commander in the 1st Infantry Division "had a Ph.D. from Clemson University.")

In later chapters, instead of biographical data, the reader is subjected to almost weekly U.S. and German casualty figures without any explanation of the principal effects those casualties had on unit performance.

The book contains an epilogue in which the authors give their answers to 16 frequently asked questions about the Bulge; eight lengthy appendixes, including one on the Malmedy massacre and the post-war trials concerning this incident; a list of the source materials used in preparing the volume; and a 15-page index that contains a number of errors.

As a rifle company commander in the 84th Infantry Division during the Bulge, I take exception to the authors' rendition of the Verdennes action, although I admit it closely parallels the version in Hugh Cole's official history.

There are other items on which I disagree with the authors:

First, Terry Allen was not relieved from command of the 1st Infantry Division in Sicily in August 1943 "largely because of his exasperation with superiors who resisted accepting his tactical precepts, and his acerbic tongue." There were other more important reasons, one of which was the division's actions in North Africa after the fighting there had ended.

Second, James Van Fleet was not solely responsible for turning around the 90th Infantry Division. That honor falls to Raymond McLain.

Finally, as in most of the late Trevor Dupuy's writings about the war in Europe, the reader is subjected to yet another Dupuy computerized model that supposedly demonstrates conclusively "the Germans were better fighters than we were unit for unit" and we won the war only "because the Allies overwhelmed the Germans with numbers of men and machines."

The strength of this book lies not in its narrative but in the epilogue, footnotes, and appendixes. The authors must be complimented for much of the information in those sections.

***LBJ and Vietnam: A Different Kind of War.* By George C. Herring. University of Texas Press, 1994. 228 Pages. \$29.95.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

George Herring is the nation's leading student of the diplomacy and policy-making of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, and this is the best study of policy-making during the Johnson administration. Herring discusses how the limited war theory, the military structures that had evolved to conduct this type of conflict, and Johnson's leadership style created the strategy, or actually lack of it, and implementation of the war. Incisive chapters are devoted to the command system in Vietnam, the early pacification effort, the varied private and third-country peace offensives, and the attempt to mold American public opinion. He demonstrates how these elements failed to be coordinated into a coherent effort and how the deficiencies of the system became glaringly evident in the period following Tet 1968.

Although the Johnson administration recognized that no real strategy existed and that the war was unsuccessful, no alternative was proposed or even any serious discussion undertaken. Each military service and each civilian component largely went its own way with little coordination or joint effort. Johnson's political style of giving everybody something and not allowing himself to be

pinned down to a precise procedure and goal, as well as his intolerance for any form of organized dissent, created a morass. Johnson sought various viewpoints but demanded that every view be presented only to him. He demanded total control and allowed no open exchange or any potential factions. His dominance of his military advisors further exacerbated the problem of a valid assessment of strategy.

Herring's characterizations of Johnson, McNamara, Rusk, the Joint Chiefs, and other leaders are exceptional—a marvelous study of the role of personalities in the decision process. Robert McNamara, in his memoir, *In Retrospect*, bows to Herring's evaluations several times and recognizes the authority of the book by citing it as he challenges other interpretations.

Although Herring vividly clarifies the errors, he makes no attempt to propose an alternative approach; indeed, he is doubtful that other strategies would have been any more successful. His ultimate conclusion is that "American policymakers thus took on in Vietnam a problem that was in all likelihood beyond their control."

In the vast literature on the Vietnam War, this book is one of the central and most fundamental interpretations. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the conclusions, every student of the war must confront this masterful analysis.

***General Vasey's War.* By David Horner. Melbourne University Press, 1992. 364 Pages. \$39.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.

Australian Major General George A. Vasey was the epitome of the combat infantry commander, always concerned with the accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of his men. Commissioned in 1915, Vasey served on the Western Front during World War I, then persevered as a professional soldier during the difficult interwar years of retrenchment and stagnation (he served 20 years as a major).

World War II gave Vasey an opportunity to demonstrate his leadership abilities. He served as chief of staff of the 6th Australian Division in North Africa, 1940-1941, then commanded a brigade in the little-known 1941 Greek and Crete campaigns. On New Guinea, he commanded both the 6th and 7th Australian Divisions during the battles of Kokoda and Buna. After reconstituting and retraining the latter unit, he took it back to New Guinea in August 1943 and commanded it for more than seven months in ferocious, debilitating jungle warfare.

The strain of incessant combat in a tropical environment took its toll as Vasey in 1944 developed polyneuritis, the widespread poisoning of the body's nervous system, and almost died. The biggest battle of his life may have been his recovery and appointment in March 1945 to again command the 6th Australian Division on Hollandia, but fate intervened, and he was killed in a plane crash enroute to his new command.

Author David Horner, a noted Australian military historian and soldier, has presented his balanced portrait of Vasey with the General's many descriptive and insightful (although censored) letters to his wife as a background. The letters especially reveal Vasey's compassion and concern for his soldiers, whom he frequently referred to as "these wonderful men I command." The author has used many other primary sources in his research, including personal papers, diaries, and interviews. Dozens of photographs and 14 maps vividly illustrate the text.

Vasey's War chronicles interesting campaigns that are not generally known to American readers and also describes the tactics and techniques of jungle and other types of warfare. Vasey, whom General Douglas MacArthur considered "an excellent soldier in every sense of the term," cared about his mission and soldiers more than life itself. This interesting, inspirational study deserves a wide readership.

***Leaders & Battles: The Art of Military Leadership.* By W.J. Wood. Presidio, 1995. Hardcover edition published in 1984. 352 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.** Reviewed by Colonel George G. Eddy, U.S. Army, Retired.

Author W.J. Wood claims that battles can be won through leadership that embraces certain *attributes* found in proven battle leaders. His book could be a companion piece to *Brave Decisions*, by Colonel Harry Maihafer (reviewed in INFANTRY's September-October 1995 issue, page 52). Maihafer stresses the importance of moral courage, while Wood identifies six leadership attributes: physical courage, moral courage, will, intellect, presence, and energy. *Will* includes boldness and tenacity, and *intellect* includes imagination, flexibility, and judgment. Not specifically mentioned are competence, knowledge, and integrity, but we can assume these belong to intellect.

In his 11 battles, ranging from Scipio in Spain in 206 B.C. to Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck in German East Africa in 1914, the author takes us on a near worldwide journey

of military triumphs involving American, French, German, British, Spanish, and Roman officers. Each battle and each leader is described selectively in terms of the six attributes. Wood states that he scanned more than 1,500 battles from Megiddo in 1469 B.C. to the present, and concluded that six dynamics appear regularly and consistently in the battlefield area: danger, chance, exertion, uncertainty, apprehension, and frustration.

Except for readers whose knowledge of military history is extensive and who are familiar with the military leaders Wood cites, most readers will probably recognize only the names of Scipio Africanus, Hernando Cortez, Daniel Morgan, Anthony Wayne, and George Armstrong Custer. But the other leaders not so well known, such as French Marshal Davout, also selectively illustrate Wood's attributes.

Using the "living history" approach, Wood imagines conversations and thoughts under fire. While this technique breathes life into the unfolding events, some realists may object that Wood's "words" improperly color the events, creating impressions that may be false even though the outcomes of the battles are beyond dispute. Nonetheless, this method makes for absorbing reading, especially the account of the battle against the Zulus at Rourke's Drift in 1879, and that of von Lettow-Vorbeck against the British in German East Africa in 1914. Most readers probably will agree that Wood has not taken undue license with his imaginative "conversations" and that this approach actually enhances the drama of the battles and the aims of the book.

In the book's conclusion, Wood summarizes the attributes illustrated in his examples to include 26 more from other battles (from 37 B.C. to 1954) not described in the book. This compilation shows that the single attribute found more than any other in successful battle after battle was courage (94 percent of the time), followed by intellect (89 percent), and will (86 percent). When attributes were combined, with all the battles he describes and the 26 others to which he refers, the combination that predominated in triumph was courage, will, and intellect (58 percent of the time).

As leadership is taught at all military schools, this book should be required reading.

***Fields of Glory: A History and Tour Guide of the Atlanta Campaign.* By Jim Miles. Rutledge Hill Press, 1995. (Originally published in 1989.) 192 Pages. \$14.95.**

***To the Sea: A History and Tour Guide of Sherman's March.* By Jim Miles. Rutledge Hill Press, 1989. 321 Pages. \$18.95.**

***Piercing the Heartland: A History and Tour Guide of the Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Perryville Campaigns.* By Jim Miles. Rutledge Hill Press, 1991. 176 Pages. \$12.95.**

***Paths to Victory: A History and Tour Guide of the Stone's River, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Knoxville, and Nashville Campaigns.* By Jim Miles. Rutledge Hill Press, 1991. 187 Pages. \$12.95.**

***A River Unvexed: A History and Tour Guide of the Campaign for the Mississippi River.* By Jim Miles. Rutledge Hill Press, 1994. 594 Pages. \$24.95.** Reviewed by Dr. Charles E. White, Infantry School Historian.

These books—the first five of a proposed eight-part Civil War Campaigns Series—are an ambitious attempt to place the Western Theater in its proper perspective.

According to author Jim Miles, the outcome of the Civil War was decided in the heartland of the Confederacy, not in Virginia, Maryland, or Pennsylvania. Unlike those in the Eastern Theater, Union and Confederate armies in the West marched incredible distances and fought fierce battles for control of entire states. Unfortunately, the sacrifice and valor of the soldiers who fought on both sides in the Western Theater "has been too long neglected." Far too much attention has been given to the Eastern Theater, where Robert E. Lee fought a valiant struggle that essentially amounted to nothing. Indeed, it was not until "Western" general Ulysses S. Grant arrived in the East that Lee met his match and was decisively defeated.

The heartland of the Confederacy contained most of the South's vital raw materials, manufacturing facilities, and agricultural bounty. Here, iron, copper, munitions, gunpowder, cotton, and food were produced in abundance. The heartland was also the key to the Confederacy's vital interior transportation network, which consisted of half a dozen major rivers and several long railroad lines that permitted the quick transfer of troops and material between fronts.

The battlefield of the heartland stretched for nearly 500 miles, from the Mississippi River in the west to the Cumberland Gap in the east. It included an area of more than 150,000 square miles in Kentucky and Tennessee, northern Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. This prize was so valuable that many of the war's bloodiest battles were fought to control it. For example, the cam-

BOOK REVIEWS

paign for control of the Mississippi stretched for more than 500 miles, touched seven states, resulted in 20 major battles and sieges, lasted for more than two years, and involved more than 200,000 soldiers.

Nothing in the Eastern Theater could compare to this. While Lee in the East achieved a series of brilliant but hollow victories against inept Union generals, Grant in the West was busy capturing Confederate armies, resources, and population, and occupying Southern territory. After two years of bloody war in the East, Lee had little to show for his efforts, while Grant had sealed the fate of the Confederacy with victories at Forts Henry and Donelson and at Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. Miles is certainly correct when he asserts that the Civil War was won in the West.

As their titles suggest, these books provide both a history of the campaigns and a number of driving tours that enable the reader to see firsthand the battlefields and important sites of the Western Theater. Good maps supplement each text. Miles also includes the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of national, state, and local agencies that can assist the traveler.

For anyone seeking to understand the campaigns that won the U.S. Civil War for the Union, these books provide the best starting point.

***Hunters and Shooters: An Oral History of the U.S. Navy SEALs in Vietnam.* Edited by Bill Fawcett. William Morrow, 1995. 350 Pages. \$23.00.** Reviewed by Michael F. Dilley, Davidsonville, Maryland.

Although oral histories have been around for a few years, they do not seem to sell very well in book form. The technique of using oral histories or interviews is more closely associated with historical research intended to preserve the memories of participants while they are still alive. This technique is more often used as a research tool by historians or history students than it is by writers as the basis for a book. There are two notable exceptions dealing with the Vietnam War—*Everything We Had* and *Bloods*—and *Hunters and Shooters* ranks with these. It, too, apparently started as a research project to preserve unit history, as it was written in cooperation with the Underwater Demolition Team (UDT)/Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) Museum.

This book might more accurately be subtitled "An Oral History of SEAL Team Two in Vietnam" since 14 of the 15 soldiers interviewed served on that team. The other had

belonged to Team Two but was transferred to Team One to be sent to Vietnam.

This book covers a very broad perspective of the experiences in SEAL Team Two as well as in Vietnam. Some of those interviewed had previously served in UDT units and were original members of Team Two, so the author also discusses the expansion of the Navy's special warfare capability. Some of them, and not just officers, did not stay assigned to the SEALs. One, Third Class Electrician's Mate Dick Pouliet, later designed and oversaw the manufacture, assembly, and deployment of a "sail" to fix NASA's *Skylab*. All of those interviewed, regardless of when they went through, shared the training (whether it was UDTB, UDTR, or BUD/S) as a common base. All, that is, except a hospital corpsman, Greg McPartlin, who was not permitted to receive some of the training, including "Hell Week," because of then-current interpretations of the Geneva Conventions. All also served in combat, some of them at the same time. Interestingly enough, McPartlin had served in Vietnam as a corpsman with Third Marine Force Reconnaissance before transferring to the SEALs.

Singling out one experience as being better than others, or even as typical, is not necessary. They all form the mosaic that made up SEAL Team Two at the time. This book is a valuable contribution to the history of special operations forces, Navy Special Warfare operations, and the Vietnam War. I recommend it to all who have these interests and to students of military history in general. I look forward to a similar oral history of SEAL Team One.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

***The World Factbook: 1994-95.* By the Central Intelligence Agency. Brassey's, 1994. 512 Pages. \$32.00.**

***The Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century.* Second Edition. By Larry H. Addington. Indiana University Press, 1994. 384 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.**

***Fires and Furies: The Los Angeles Riots of 1992.* By Major General James D. Delk, Retired. ETC Publications (700 East Vereda del Sur, Palm Springs, CA 92262-4816), 1994. 390 Pages. \$28.95.**

***War Against Japan.* By Sidney C. Moody, Jr., and the Photographers of The Associated Press. Presidio Press, 1994. 192 Pages. \$19.95.**

***Hero of Beecher Island: The Life and Military Career of George A. Forsyth.* By David Dixon. University of Nebraska Press, 1994. 257 Pages. \$32.50.**

***Once a Legend: "Red Mike" Edson of the Marine Raiders.* By Jon T. Hoffman. Presidio Press, 1994. 432 Pages. \$24.95.**

***Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution.* Revised edition. By Major General Jeanne Holm, U.S. Air Force, Retired. Presidio Press, 1994. 544 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.**

***Quest: Searching for the Truth of Germany's Nazi Past.* By Ib Melchior and Frank Brandenburg. Presidio Press, 1994. Originally published in 1990. 344 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.**

***Captive of the Rising Sun: The POW Memoirs of Rear Admiral Donald T. Giles, Jr.* Naval Institute Press, 1994. 235 Pages. \$27.95.**

***Let the Sea Make a Noise: Four Hundred Years of Cataclysm, Conquest, War and Folly in the North Pacific.* By Walter A. McDougall. Avon Books, 1994. 793 Pages. \$17.50, Softbound.**

***The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers.* Edited by Paul Stillwell. Berkley, 1994. 304 Pages. \$15.00, Softbound.**

***Armored Cav: A Guided Tour of an Armored Cavalry Regiment.* By Tom Clancy. Berkley Press, 1994. 325 Pages. \$15.00, Softbound.**

***On Air Defense.* By James D. Crabtree. Praeger, 1994. 256 Pages. \$19.95.**

***Blood on the Shores: Soviet SEALs in World War II.* By Viktor Leonov. Translated by James F. Gebhardt. Ballantine, 1994. 287 Pages. \$5.99, Softbound.**

***Leading the Way: How Vietnam Veterans Rebuilt the U.S. Military.* By Al Santoli. (Originally published in 1993.) Ballantine, 1994. 409 Pages. \$5.99, Softbound.**

***Odd Man Out: The Story of the Singapore Traitor.* By Peter Elphick and Michael Smith. Hodder and Stoughton, 1994 (distributed by Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT 05053). 265 Pages. \$13.95, Softbound.**

***Killing Zone: A Professional's Guide to Preparing and Preventing Ambushes.* By Gary Stubblefield and Mark Monday. Paladin, 1994. 240 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.**

***Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885-1945.* By Martin Blumenson. (Originally published in 1985.) William Morrow, 1994. 320 Pages. \$15.00, Softbound.**

***Forces Sweethearts: Wartime Romance from the First World War to the Gulf.* By Joanna Lumley. Bloomsbury, 1994 (distributed by Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT 05053). 192 Pages. \$34.95.**

***Tenting on the Plains: Or, General Custer in Kansas and Texas.* By Elizabeth B. Custer. University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. 424 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound.**

***Timelines of War: A Chronology of Warfare from 100,000 B.C. to the Present.* By David Brownstone and Irene Franck. Little, Brown, 1994. 576 Pages. \$29.95.**

***Imperial Spies Invade Russia: The British Intelligence Interventions, 1918.* By A.J. Plotke. Contributions in Military Studies, Number 131. Greenwood, 1993. 304 Pages. \$55.00.**

***Naval Warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean, 1940-1945.* By Charles W. Koburger, Jr. Praeger, 1993. 192 Pages. \$49.95.**

***One Tough Marine.* By D.N. Hamblen and B. Norton. (Published in hardcover in 1993.) Ballantine, 1994. \$5.99, Softbound.**

***Element of Surprise: Navy SEALs in Vietnam.* By Darryl Young. (Published in hardcover in 1993 by William Morrow.) Ballantine, 1995. 275 Pages. \$4.95, Softbound.**

***Den of Lions.* by Terry Anderson. Ballantine, 1994. 418 Pages. \$5.99, Softbound.**