

BOOK REVIEWS



Winning and Losing in the Civil War: Essays and Stories. By Albert Castel. University of South Carolina Press, 1996. 216 Pages. \$29.95.

Leadership and Command in the American Civil War. Edited by Steven E. Woodworth. Savas Woodburg Publishers (1475 S. Bascom Ave., Suite 204, Campbell, CA 95008), 1996. 248 Pages. \$24.95. Reviewed by Dr. Charles E. White, Infantry Branch Historian.

After 132 years, the Civil War remains the most fascinating subject in American history. And it is books like these two that continue to make it such an interesting field of study.

In *Winning and Losing in the Civil War: Essays and Stories*, Albert Castel looks back 40 years and reflects on his role as a historian and the state of Civil War scholarship in general. Castel is one of our finest Civil War historians, winner of the 1992 Lincoln Prize for *Decision in the West*, a challenging study of the 1864 Atlanta Campaign. In this collection of essays, Castel reexamines his own writings on the Civil War, as well as the reasons Americans continue to rehash, reenact, and reassess that war. He also provides some excellent advice on the future of Civil War studies, particularly for those who feel that nothing new or original can be said of the epic story of the American people.

Castel's book contains 14 essays and stories grouped into four parts headed: The Probable versus the Inevitable, Setting the Record Straight, How the Civil War Was Fought, and Of Women and War. All but two of these writings have appeared in print before, but this does not detract from the quality of the book. Indeed, many of them are difficult to obtain in their original form, and Castel's reevaluation of his previous works clearly adds another dimension to his scholarship. As he writes in his preface and acknowledgments, these essays and stories "represent most of the best that I have been able to do during four decades of writing articles about America's favorite war."

His discerning eye seems to miss nothing, and his incisive mind addresses virtually every aspect of Civil War history, including many of the "might-have-beens" that have captivated both scholars and buffs

for decades. Additionally, within each chapter is a bibliography of Civil War and U.S. historiography that demonstrates the breadth and depth of the author.

Castel is certainly not timid toward his subjects. He asks some challenging questions and presents some interesting answers. For example, was Dr. Mary E. Walker—the first and only woman awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor—a Samaritan or a charlatan? Were Quantrill's men "Bushwhackers" or legitimate partisans? Was there really a "massacre" at Fort Pillow? In other articles, Castel defends the honor and reputation of Robert E. Lee, discusses *Gone With the Wind* as history, details the amorous adventures of a Union officer during the Civil War, and analyzes the way the war was actually fought on the battlefield.

For anyone seeking to understand the complexity of America's greatest tragedy, *Winning and Losing in the Civil War* offers some fresh perspectives, some compelling arguments, and some forceful conclusions. You may not agree with all of the author's conclusions, but you will not be disappointed.

Another superb work that re-examines traditional Civil War topics is Steven E. Woodworth's *Leadership and Command in the American Civil War*. Of all the Civil War topics, generalship certainly has been studied the most. Yet this book clearly demonstrates why numerous subjects and personalities from the Civil War still await original study and thoughtful contemplation. And this book provides those fresh interpretations as Castel suggested in his book.

Woodworth has compiled five magnificent essays that provide a refreshing and provocative perspective on Civil War generalship. Richard M. McMurray's "Ole Joe in Virginia," helps the reader understand why Jefferson Davis (and others in the Confederate government) had little confidence or trust in General Joseph E. Johnston. Johnston was truly unfit for high command, and his life-long enmity (bordering on hatred) of Robert E. Lee only served to hinder the Confederate war effort.

George E. Pickett was another general unfit for command. In her superb treatise "The Seeds of Disaster," Lesley J. Gordon

completely shatters the flamboyant Pickett. One wonders how he was ever entrusted with command in the first place. The answer, of course, is the Virginia aristocracy and the grip it held on appointments within the Army of Northern Virginia. Unfortunately, as Gordon points out, Pickett was "a disaster looking for a place to hit."

The other three papers in this book examine Longstreet and Bragg at Chattanooga, Sumner at Antietam, and P.G.T. Beauregard during the Bermuda Hundred campaign. All three are equally original and interesting. And the delightful essay titles give the reader a clue to the content: For example, "On Smaller Fields" is Woodworth's study of Beauregard, who was a disaster as a theater commander in the West. Davis, thinking that Beauregard might perform better "on smaller fields," entrusted him with command during the Bermuda Hundred campaign. But as Woodworth concludes, Beauregard's behavior during this campaign was consistent with his performance in the West. "His talents and failings were as they had been since his arrival on the Manassas line some three years before."

Leadership and Command is one of the most important books recently published on the American Civil War. It is a compelling look at generalship and a fine reassessment of Civil War leadership. Many myths regarding Southern generalship are exposed, and many halos removed, in this fine study.

War Comes to Alaska: The Dutch Harbor Attack, June 3-4, 1942. By Norman E. Rourke. White Mane Publishing Company (P.O. Box 152, Shippensburg, PA 17257), 1997. 166 Pages. \$12.95. Reviewed by Colonel Christopher B. Timmers, U.S. Army, Retired.

This brief but very readable work sheds light on a little-known campaign of World War II. Operation *AL*, the Japanese code name for the Aleutian campaign, does not command the attention of a Stalingrad, a Midway, or a Coral Sea (nor should it). But the attack on Dutch Harbor and the subsequent occupation of the island of Attu for almost 14 months represented the first time U.S. soil had been seized by an aggressor

since the Civil War. Further, Washington did its best to suppress news of the action in the Aleutians for fear that even a tenuous Japanese toehold on U.S. territory so early in the war, could spread panic among the American people.

Despite the success of the surprise attack in December 1941, five first-class aircraft carriers (not at Pearl Harbor that day) had escaped destruction. Japanese Admiral Yamamoto, an early advocate of military aviation, was acutely aware that if he was to control the Pacific theater, the remnants of the U.S. fleet, together with these aircraft carriers, would have to be drawn into open battle and destroyed. He chose for his battlefield the vicinity of Midway, an atoll in the north Pacific with an area of barely two square miles. An attack on the Aleutians would be launched with the goal of diverting at least some of the U.S. aircraft carriers from the main battle farther south.

Yamamoto felt the pressure of time in this endeavor. He claimed that if the United States was not knocked out of the Pacific within six months of the Pearl Harbor attack, a year at the most, the balance of power would shift. Having studied at Harvard earlier in the century and traveled about the country, he had come to know America's people and her industrial might.

The Americans won at Midway and, as it turned out, the Aleutians did not play a decisive role. While this campaign may be a mere footnote to history, it is nonetheless a fascinating one. Rourke has done a good job of assembling maps and photographs of the campaign, which make his already well-written narrative easier to follow. Small defects sometimes mar this book's scholarship; for example, referring to Army General Simon Bolivar Buckner as Simon Bolivar Butler. But such flaws do not detract from the overall contribution the book makes to understanding what has come to be called "the Thousand Mile War."

Typewriter Battalion: Dramatic Front-Line Dispatches from World War II. Edited by Jack Stenbuck. William Morrow, 1995. 397 Pages. 23.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

Beginning probably in 1944, the late Jack Stenbuck, an old-line print journalist himself, began collecting newspaper columns about the war that he considered special. Each had been written by a top-rated print journalist who was with an Allied army, navy, or air force unit. These journalists,

many of whom were still at the front in various theaters of operation, had served with the fighting men and knew what war was all about. Many of them had been foreign correspondents; some had covered other wars before this, "the big one."

Stenbuck apparently intended to publish the columns in anthology form but died before he could do so, in 1975. When his wife died in 1992, his son and daughter discovered various uncompleted manuscripts, including this one. The siblings—Jerry and Nancy—set about preparing this manuscript for publication as a tribute to "the great journalists of World War II" and in particular to the 32 members of the U.S. press who died while covering the war.

These columns will bring back vivid memories of particular events to the millions of surviving World War II veterans in this country. Some will certainly remember Ernie Pyle and his magnificent column titled "The Death of Captain Waskow," datelined Italy, 10 January 1944. Others will recall Richard Tregaskis, who covered the war both in the Pacific and in Europe, as well as Ross Munro, Walter Cronkite, John Lardner, Bob Considine, Richard Strout, and the dozens of others whose names appear in this book. One female correspondent is accorded a place in this anthology—Catherine Coyne, whose column was titled "The German Women Haven't Quit."

Writings such as these are often referred to as "instant history," and so they are. Military historians turn to such writings to flesh out their more scholarly studies, and to get a feel for the people and the times.

All of today's readers who work their way through the dozens of columns in this book will gain a far better appreciation of what the war was really like for the soldiers of earlier wars.

United States Army Logistics: The Normandy Campaign, 1944. By Steve R. Waddell. Greenwood Press, 1994. 190 Pages. \$55.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.

Logistics in general has been an unglaorious aspect of combat and military planning, usually overshadowed by operations on the ground. This is ironic, because the success of military operations frequently depends upon logistics. In few cases has this been more true than in Operation Overlord—the Allied invasion of continental Europe in June—and the subsequent breakout and pursuit across France.

Although it is recognized that the initial landings achieved surprise and hard-fought success, few realize that logistical plans for the operation barely survived contact with the enemy. The author, an assistant professor of history at the United States Military Academy, says, "As the invasion succeeded and the battle for Normandy intensified, logistical planners dealt with a supply system that achieved much but failed to operate as planned." These shortcomings were due to a cumbersome, frequently overlapping system of logistical commands, elements, and staff sections; port and supply point congestion; and "a serious error" in overlooking or underestimating the effect of the terrain and impact upon operations of the hedgerows in Normandy.

There were supply shortages, especially in ammunition, during the bocage fighting. The breakout from Normandy generated a new set of logistical difficulties, including fuel shortages and increasing distances from the ports. Throughout the campaign, the planning shortfalls and distribution problems led to supply shortages. In the end, the author says, "the American supply system in Europe did move millions of tons of cargo and performed well enough to support an Allied victory." And this is the important part.

This slim but important volume is superbly researched and well written. It includes five charts, six maps (although without distance scales or direction indicators), and five photographs. Each of the seven chapters contains excellent tables and bar graphs and detailed endnotes. The bibliography is very complete, including numerous references for further research.

This excellent book will certainly inform, or remind, readers that it takes much more than a grease pencil on an operations overlay to conduct military operations. In the Normandy campaign, "the Army Service Forces often functioned at less-than-peak efficiency and encountered difficulties that should have been anticipated." Fortunately, the U.S. Army apparently learned the lessons it needed to learn from that campaign.

Commando! The M/Z Unit's Secret War Against Japan. By A.B. Feuer. Praeger, 1996. 208 Pages. \$55.00. Reviewed by Michael F. Dille, Davidsonville, Maryland.

Australian independent companies and Z Force units played a small but important role in the fighting in the southwest and far Pacific areas during World War II. Initially

an Australian operation, control of these and other units was taken over by the Allied Intelligence Bureau when General Douglas MacArthur decided he didn't want the British Special Operations Executive and U.S. Office of Strategic Services operating in his theater. It is hard to find descriptions of these units, let alone histories of them, and A. B. Feuer's *Commando! The M/Z Unit's Secret War Against Japan* fills some of that gap. It is an excellent retelling of behind-the-lines operations by daring teams of saboteurs and special operators.

In late 1941 and early 1942, the control mechanism for special operations in the Pacific area went through several name changes, as did some of the operational elements. The longest lasting (and probably most familiar) of the operational names is Z Unit or Z Force. This force consisted of small infantry units made up of volunteers who underwent special selection and training before being assembled into teams and sent on missions throughout the target area. The Z Units were delivered by a variety of seaborne means: submarines (both conventional and mini-), PT boats, collapsible boats and even a captured fishing vessel. Their missions fell into three general categories—raiding specific targets, raising and training a guerrilla force, and gathering intelligence. Occasionally a unit in place was sent out to recover a downed aircrew or to assist local Coastwatchers.

Feuer has neatly arranged the contents of his book to tell the stories of several "typical experiences," relying on extracts from personal interviews with participants as well as from the official written accounts of the various operations. Whenever possible, he uses the first-person words of these participants to evoke a more personal feeling about the developing action.

A section at the end—an extract from an after-action account of a downed flier's experiences during his evasion—may at first seem unrelated to the operations of Z Unit. But this account serves the author's purpose very well in discussing both life with the friendly people in the area and life on the run from the pursuing Japanese. The pilot's eventual rescue after more than eight months in the jungle is an excellent ending for the book.

Commando! is easy to read because Feuer makes sure there are no slow-down points in the stories. He does an outstanding job of cutting from first person to third person, thereby keeping the action moving. His sketch maps are placed to provide a ready reference in the narrative. Altogether, this is

a first-rate book, one I particularly recommend to military history students and enthusiasts. Although the price is high, in this case, it is worth spending.

***Marching Through Georgia: The Story of Soldiers and Civilians During Sherman's Campaign.* By Lee Kennett. HarperCollins, 1995. \$27.50. 418 Pages.** Reviewed by Major Don Rightmyer, U.S. Air Force, Retired.

Two excellent histories have been published in recent years about the Atlanta and Georgia campaigns of General W.T. Sherman during 1864. The more traditional of the two books is Albert Castel's *Decision in the West: The Atlanta Campaign of 1864* (University Press of Kansas, 1992). This is the most comprehensive military history yet published on that campaign, prepared by one of the most highly respected historians in the Civil War field today. The second book, published in 1995, is *Marching Through Georgia*, written by historian Lee Kennett. (Although this is his first Civil War history, Kennett has written several well-received histories on the military and civilian aspects of World War II.) These two studies complement each other and will provide any reader with an excellent appreciation for Sherman's 1864 campaigns.

Kennett's work follows the movements of Sherman's three armies (Tennessee, Ohio, and Cumberland) as they began their movements from Chattanooga in mid-1864. His treatment of this portion of the Civil War action, from the initial steps into Georgia territory until the capture of Savannah, takes more of a social history approach, looking at the realities of war for all those present at the time: Union and Confederate soldiers as well as the civilian and refugee inhabitants of Atlanta and numerous villages and homesteads throughout the state.

Castel's history offers a detailed rendering of the military movements and operations under the command of Sherman, Johnston, and Hood. Kennett's work, on the other hand, provides an enlightening view of the experiences of those who fought, observed, and suffered from the consequences of war during this time. If it was possible (and it was), the war had taken on an even more complex and serious military aspect as the troops routinely used barricades and fortifications each day as they took new positions. Often, the rails and wood used in reinforcing trenches came from the fields of nearby farms. Of course, that damage was minor compared to the destruction suffered

by many of the homes and farms throughout the campaign.

Kennett provides an evenhanded appraisal of General Sherman and his military operations. Along with military actions, there were certainly other actions that were considered extreme by civilians whose produce, livestock, and poultry were requisitioned for use by the Union or Confederate armies. And this book adds the flesh-and-bones reality of what war was like for everyone—combatants and civilians alike.

Marching Through Georgia should not be considered representative of the experiences of soldiers and civilians in every section of the country where the armies traveled and fought. But it does provide an excellent grasp of what life was like for many inside the city of Atlanta and the state of Georgia during the latter half of 1864.

***Pay Any Price: Lyndon Johnson and the Wars for Vietnam.* By Lloyd C. Gardner. Ivan R. Dee, 1995. 610 Pages. \$35.00.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

I approached this book with some suspicion. How many more books do we have on Lyndon Johnson's handling of Vietnam? Like all the recent books, the dust jacket on this one says that the volume uses recently declassified materials from the Johnson Library. Although Lloyd Gardner is a very good historian, his past leftist orientation raised questions in my mind. The effusive blurb on the dust jacket by a radical scholar known for quite ideological work on the war didn't reassure me. Nevertheless, this is a very good book, a balanced, insightful blending of political biography and diplomatic history and one of the most readable books on the topic in print.

The images of Lyndon Johnson and the interpretation of his conduct of the Vietnam War cover a wide spectrum. The problem is that Johnson was so multi-dimensional, a conflicting mosaic from one minute to the next, that he was often a caricature of himself. Depending upon which evidence one highlights, one can make a case for almost any view of Johnson and his handling of the war. The only Johnsonian consistencies were his vanity, his energy, and his pompous conviction and insecurity. Many authors have touched parts of this mosaic, and so does Gardner. The Johnson who emerges in this volume is anguished and conflicted, but in charge. Gardner suggests that, to some degree, Vietnam was a moral

drama played out in Johnson's tortured mind and conscience.

Beyond trying to understand and assess Johnson, Gardner provides fresh insights into the other major players, including McNamara, Rusk, Rostow, Ball, and Clifford, to name a few. In addition, he provides glimpses into the role of the so-called Wise Men and of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower as they all provided input into the decision process centered in Johnson. The book is a good introduction to the complexity of the formal and informal advisory system, as employed and misemployed by the President, and the intra-administration battle to control Johnson's Vietnam soul. Gardner focuses especially on how the Kennedy men within the Johnson administration continued to treat Vietnam as "crisis management," to be conducted successfully in the Cuban Missile Crisis mode. Finally, he does an excellent job of depicting the interplay of domestic and foreign policy priorities.

With new perspectives on decision making at the time of the Gulf of Tonkin incident, cooperation with the Soviet Union concerning the Vietnam theater, and dealing with our Vietnamese allies, this is a very interesting and provocative addition to the literature. I recommend it highly.

High Command: The Genius of Generalship from Antiquity to Alamein. By John Laffin. Barnes & Noble, 1995. 304 Pages. 1995. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army.

Studies of military leadership and generalship are currently very popular. Although *High Command* may seem to be a new addition to the genre, one finds upon closer observation that it is a republication of the author's well-received 1966 *Links of Leadership*. Nevertheless, the earlier book has been out of print for many years, and its reappearance deserves to be brought to the attention of military readers.

The "links of leadership" of the original title, according to author John Laffin—a prolific historian and World War II combat Infantry leader—refers to "Great generals [who] are the links in my chain of leadership, while the chain itself is made up of their collective experience, transmitted from one commander to the next by the reading, study, and appreciation of military history."

Beginning with Gideon and his innovative victory over the Midianites about 1200 B.C., Laffin highlights significant battles, including Marathon, Cannae, Teutoburger

Wald, Crecy, Breitenfeld, Naseby, Leutehn, Austerlitz, Solferino, and (Second) Alamein. This book is not, however, a compilation of disjointed battle studies but a continuous chronology, emphasizing these battles, the evolution of military theory and tactics, the relationship of technology, and the effect of these factors upon the practice of generalship.

The theme of this study is that great generals, while commanding at a unique time in history, share with their predecessors "an intangible but powerful and enduring philosophy of command." This assertion is true, as the human element of leadership, in spite of tactical and technical progress, has remained relatively constant.

The evolution of warfare, according to the author, has generally been progressive, with great captains, based on historical precedence, thinking out tactical innovations before executing them. But they have also looked into history to learn from their forebears. World War I, however was an exception: "Generalship was obstinate, criminally stupid, ridiculously rigid, almost totally unenterprising, pathetically feeble, and absolutely inhuman." The battles and leaders selected for study are generally sound, although the selection of Montgomery as the prototype great general of World II may be arguable.

Laffin says that those generals who have experienced notable success frequently have done so by studying the campaigns of their predecessors, "profiting by their mistakes, capitalizing on their successes." This advice is timeless and particularly sound, as is this book, for company grade infantry officers and noncommissioned officers.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

Wonderful Flying Machines: A History of U.S. Coast Guard Helicopters. By Barrett Thomas Beard. 280 Pages. \$32.95.

No Victor, No Vanquished: The 1973 Arab-Israeli War. By Edgar O'Ballance. Originally published in 1978 with the sub-title *The Yom Kippur War*. Presidio, 1997. 384 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

Citizen Warriors: America's National Guard & Reserve Forces and the Politics of National Security. By Stephen M. Duncan. Presidio, 1997. 336 Pages. \$24.95.

The Grim Reaper: Machine Guns and Machine-Gunners in Action. By Roger Ford. Sarpedon, 1997. 320 Pages. \$22.95.

Tank Killing: Anti-tank Warfare by Men and Machines. By Ian Hogg. Sarpedon, 1997. 288 Pages. \$22.95.

Follow Me I: The Human Element in Leadership. By Gen. Aubrey "Red" Newman.

Originally published in 1981. Presidio, 1997. 342 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.

Follow Me II: More on the Human Element in Leadership. By Gen. Aubrey "Red" Newman. Originally published in 1992. Presidio, 1997. 304 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.

Follow Me III: Lessons on the Art and Science of High Command. By Gen. Aubrey "Red" Newman. Originally published in 1987 with title *What Are Generals Made of?* Presidio, 1997. 342 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.

The Admiral's Baby: An Extraordinary Episode in Twentieth-Century History. By Laurens van der Post. William Morrow, 1997. 340 Pages. \$27.00.

Reluctant Warrior: A True Story of Duty and Heroism in Vietnam. By Michael C. Hodgins. Ballantine, 1997. 330 Pages. \$25.00.

Lincoln's Foreign Legion: The 39th New York Infantry, The Garibaldi Guard. By Michael Bacarella. White Mane (P.O. Box 152, Shippensburg, PA 17257), 1997. 330 Pages. \$34.95.

A Very Long Weekend: The Army National Guard in Korea, 1950-1953. By William Berubitsky. White Mane (P.O. Box 152, Shippensburg, PA 17257), 1996. 293 Pages. \$29.95.

Dark Eagles: A History of Top Secret U.S. Aircraft Programs. By Curtis Peebles. Presidio, 1995. 400 Pages. \$17.95, Softbound.

The War in the Pacific: From Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay. By Harry A. Gailey. Originally published in 1995. Presidio, 1997. 560 Pages. \$18.95, Softbound.

Clear the Bridge! The War Patrols of the U.S.S. Tang. By Richard H. O'Kane, Rear Admiral, USN. Originally published by Rand McNally, 1977. Presidio, 1997. 480 Pages. \$17.95, Softbound.

Death on a Distant Frontier: A Lost Victory, 1944. By Charles Whiting. Sarpedon, 1996. 256 Pages. \$21.95.

The Anglo-Boer War: The Road to Infamy 1899-1900. By Owen Coetzer. Sterling, 1996. 294 Pages. \$24.95.

The Great War: And the Shaping of the 20th Century. By Jay Winter and Blaine Baggett. Penguin, 1996. 432 Pages. \$40.00.

Strategic Exposure: Consequences of Proliferation Around the Mediterranean. By Ian O. Lesser and Ashley Tellis. Rand, 1996. 130 Pages. \$15.00, Softbound.

Arms Proliferation Policy: Support to the Presidential Advisory Board. By Marcy Agmon, James L. Bono, Michael Kennedy, Maren Leed, Kenneth Watman, Katherine Webb, Charles Wolf, Jr. Rand, 1996. 178 Pages. \$20.00, Softbound.

Adolf Galland: The Authorised Biography. By David Baker. Windrow & Green, Great Britain. Combined Books, 1996. 248 Pages. \$27.95, Hardcover.

The March on London. By Charles Whiting. Imprint of Pen & Sword Books, Ltd. Combined Books, 1997. 256 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

Werewolf. By Charles Whiting. First published in Great Britain by Redwood Books, 1972. Combined Books, 1997. 208 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.

Blood and Water: Sabotaging Hitler's Bomb. By Dan Kurzman. Henry Holt, 1997. 274 Pages. \$27.50.